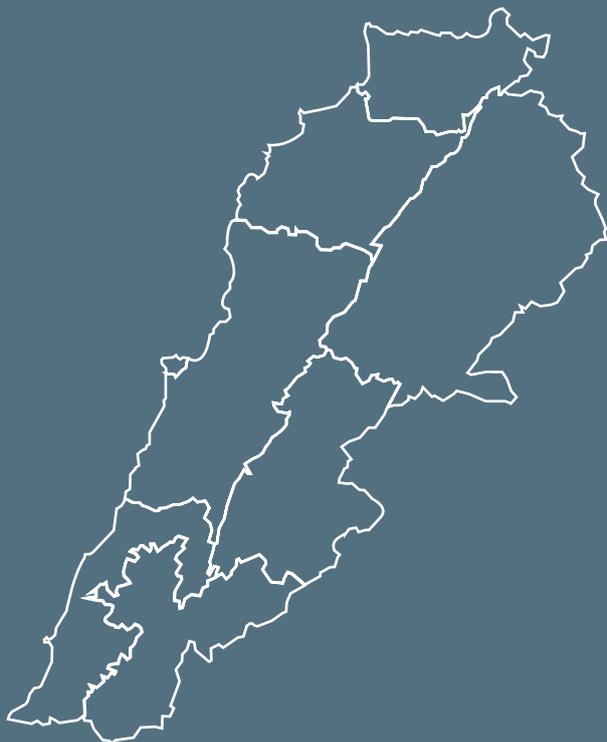


Lebanon: field perspectives on the Grand Bargain

22 October 2018 • Findings from round 2



GROUND TRUTH
SOLUTIONS



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Introduction

This research is part of a project to understand how people affected by crisis and humanitarian field staff perceive the impact of the Grand Bargain commitments. The first survey was conducted face-to-face with 895 Syrian and Palestinian refugees across all eight governorates of Lebanon. The second included 290 staff members of national and international aid agencies, with data collected using an online survey tool.

The research is a joint effort by Ground Truth Solutions (GTS) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Secretariat with financial support from the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID). Lebanon is one of the seven countries covered by this research. The others are Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Haiti, Iraq, Uganda and Somalia.

This summary covers the key findings from the affected people and humanitarian staff surveys. Detailed answers to all questions are included in subsequent sections, as well as comparisons with the results from previous surveys carried out by Ground Truth Solutions in 2017.

Key findings

- **A majority of respondents (79%) say aid does not adequately cover their priority needs.** They identify food, cash assistance, and shelter support as the most important unmet needs. Those in South Lebanon are most negative, with 98% of respondents there saying aid is insufficient. There is also a prevailing sense among affected people that aid does not reach those who need it most, notably the most vulnerable, widows/divorcees, and those with medical/health conditions.
- **Affected people are particularly discouraged about their ability to influence decisions that affect their lives,** with lowest scores in South Lebanon, where 99% say that aid providers do not take their opinions into account at all, or not very much. While most respondents indicate that they are aware of how to file a suggestion or complaint, they say the process is complicated and their concerns are unlikely to be taken seriously.
- **Over half of respondents (52%) feel uninformed about the kind of aid they are entitled to,** with lower ratings compared to 2017. Affected people in Mount Lebanon, Nabatieh, and South Lebanon are least aware of the humanitarian assistance available to them. Female-households are also less aware than male-households on this topic. **There is a strong preference for face to face information sharing.**
- **Participants tend to feel safe where they live (74%),** although both Syrian refugees and Palestinian refugees from Syria less so than Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon. **They see relations with host communities as markedly more negative than in 2017** (56% feel 'not really' or 'not at all' welcome). Larger families feel least welcome. Bad treatment, general anti-refugee public sentiment, and discrimination are the most commonly cited reasons for their poor reception.
- On the whole, people still do not feel that the aid they receive empowers them to live independently in the future, with respondents calling for better employment opportunities. **Very few say their life is improving.** In South Lebanon, nearly all respondents say their lives are getting worse.
- **The gap is widening between the views of affected people and humanitarian staff on the performance of the aid system.** Staff see fairness, participation, and the relevance of aid more positively than they did in 2017, while affected people's perceptions are increasingly negative.

- **While quite positive on performance, humanitarian staff are relatively negative about the balance between funding for emergency needs and durable solutions**, with the majority of staff members (82%) calling for more investment in durable solutions.
- **This echoes affected people's call for greater efforts to facilitate their empowerment through increased employment opportunities.** While 100% of respondents say they or their family members have tried to find work in the local economy, some 80% say they are NOT able to make a living and support their families. What are the key challenges? Affected people point to the weak economy and job scarcity, restrictive laws on labour market participation, complex permit requirements, and discrimination against refugees.

Executive summary

We have aligned our primary questions with the core principles and commitments as outlined in the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2017-2020 (2018 update), namely: 1) the protection of vulnerable populations; 2) providing immediate assistance to vulnerable populations; 3) provision of support services through national systems; and 4) reinforcing Lebanon's economic, social, and environmental stability.

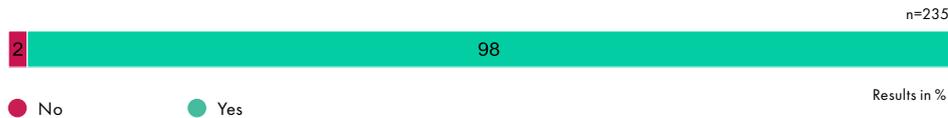
Protection

- **Humanitarian staff say refugees are treated with respect by aid providers**, and that in cases of abuse or mistreatment, complaints and suggestions are dealt with in an appropriate manner. This is in stark contrast to the refugees' point of view – **90% of affected people say their complaints go unanswered while 98% of field staff feel that complaints are adequately addressed.**

Affected people survey: Have you received a response to your suggestion or complaint?

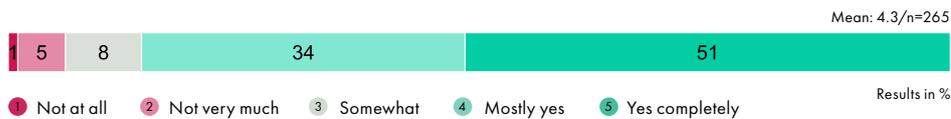


Humanitarian staff survey: If refugees make a complaint to your organisation, will they get a response?



- **Some 85% of staff members say they would have no difficulty reporting instances of abuse or mistreatment to the appropriate authorities.**

Humanitarian staff survey: Do you feel comfortable reporting instances of humanitarian staff mistreating affected people?



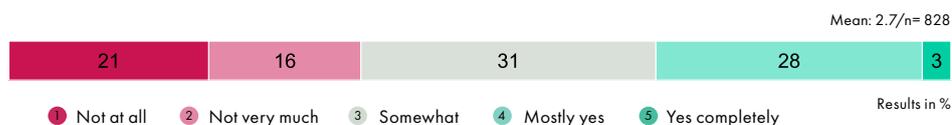
- **Over half (52%) of affected people who have provided feedback to aid agencies say the process was 'very' or 'somewhat' difficult.**

Affected people survey: How easy or difficult did you find making a suggestion or complaint?



- **The majority (66%) of affected people feel they are treated with respect by humanitarian staff**, although only 31% say they trust staff to act in their best interests - with a general tendency to believe that they do not have their best interests at heart. Most affected people in South Lebanon (68%) express scepticism in this regard.

Affected people survey: Do you trust aid providers to act in your best interest?

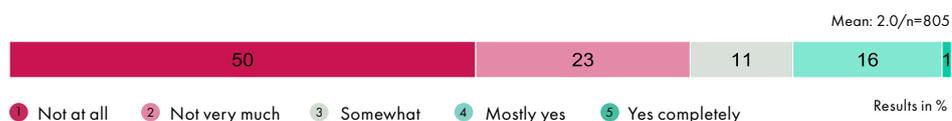


- **Awareness of refugee rights is low**, with most affected people (59%) saying they lack this vital information. Of the minority that are aware of their rights, **89% feel that these rights are NOT adequately respected**.
- **Safety concerns are low among affected people and humanitarian staff**, with 90% of staff and 74% of affected people reporting no issues on this front.

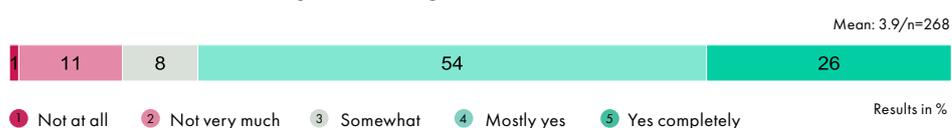
Assistance

- **People are less aware of the aid they are entitled than in 2017**. While less than a third (32%) of respondents said they were unaware in 2017, 52% now say they do not have adequate information on this. Female-headed household and people with disabilities are among the least aware demographic groups, with 69% and 71% respectively saying they are unaware.
- **Humanitarian staff are positive about aid targeting**, with 80% saying that aid goes to those most in need. **Affected people see things differently, with 73% saying aid does 'not really' or 'not at all' go to the most vulnerable**.

Affected people survey: Does aid go to those who need it most?



Humanitarian staff survey: Does aid go to those who need it most?



- **The majority of humanitarian staff (68%) see that aid sufficiently covers the essential needs of beneficiaries**. Affected people are less positive, as 79% say the aid they currently receive does NOT cover their most important needs. What are the gaps? Affected people point to food, shelter, and cash assistance as their top unmet needs.

Question to affected people:

Do you feel informed about the kind of aid available to you?



Question to affected people:

What are your most important needs that are not met?



70%
Food



68%
Cash



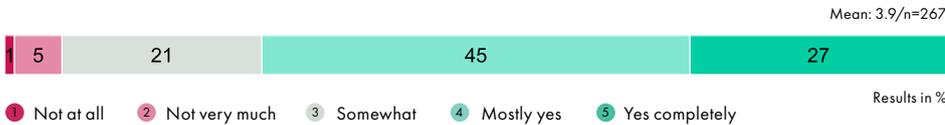
58%
Shelter

n=2,323

Note: Percentages do not total 100% because respondents were able to choose multiple options.

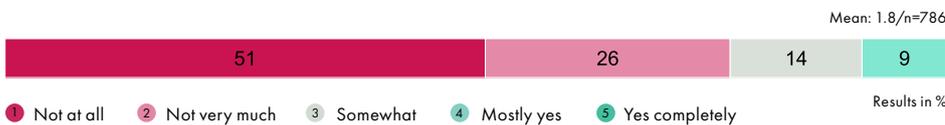
- **Humanitarian staff say they feel well informed about the perceptions of affected people**, and they are increasingly positive that opinions and feedback from affected people is helping to inform aid programmes. Nearly half the staff members who participated in the survey say that feedback from affected people is used to change and amend the implementation of aid projects and programmes. **Once again this differs dramatically from the views of affected people.**

Humanitarian staff survey: Does your organisation have enough information about the way refugees see aid programmes?



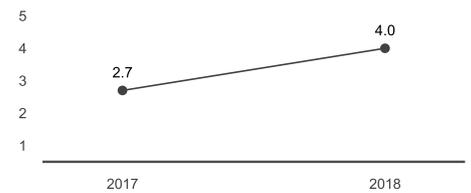
- **Affected people feel less positively about their ability to influence aid provision than last year.** Some 77% of affected people say aid providers do NOT take their opinions into account when providing aid. A general absence of consultation, aid not meeting priority needs, and a lack of awareness about aid programmes are commonly cited as reasons for participants feeling disempowered.

Affected people survey: Do aid providers take your opinion into account when providing aid?



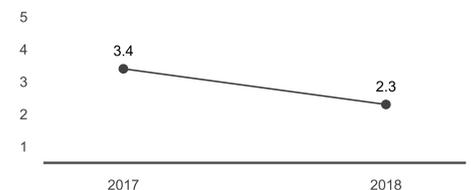
Question to humanitarian staff:

Does your organisation take opinions of affected people into account during design and implementation of programmes?



Question to affected people:

Do you feel welcome in Lebanon?



Stability

- **The percentage of affected people who do not feel welcome in Lebanon has doubled**, with a majority (56%) saying they do not feel accepted by the host community. Respondents say bad treatment, anti-refugee sentiment, and discrimination lie behind their feelings of exclusion.
- **Respondents feel quite despondent about their ability to live without aid in the future and their prospects for a better life in Lebanon.** The prevailing sense of the inadequacy of aid is matched by a perceived lack of job opportunities. Some 80% of affected people say they (themselves or their family members) are unable to make a living from work. Why is this the case? They point to exploitation, unfair labour practices, and low wages/exploitation in the context of a weak economy. But they see a general lack of jobs as the main factor.

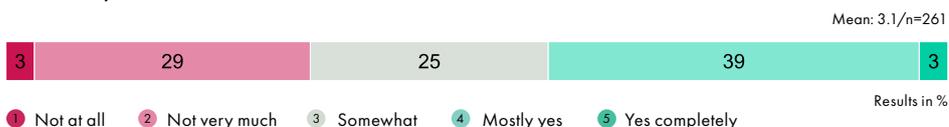
Affected people survey: Overall is life improving for refugees in Lebanon?



Donor and reporting requirements

- While the majority of humanitarian staff (59%) say they feel that the time spent on reporting is reasonable, their view on donor reporting requirements is less positive, with 40% saying that they are 'not really' or 'not at all' harmonised.
- Some 55% of staff view donor funding as sufficiently flexible, although a minority point to donor requirements as an obstacle to the adaptation of programmes to changing circumstances.
- Respondents to the staff survey express mixed views on whether coordination amongst key actors in Lebanon is sufficient. Competition for funding and donor requirements are mentioned as barriers to successful coordination. **Similarly, almost a third of those surveyed say the relationship between humanitarian and development organisations is ineffective.**

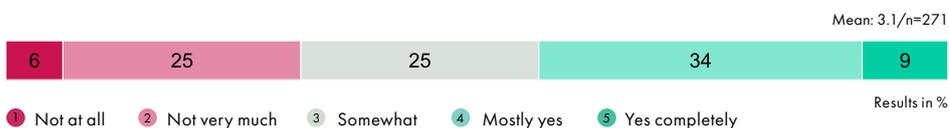
Humanitarian staff survey: Do humanitarian and development actors work together effectively in Lebanon?



Localisation

- Field staff views vary about the appropriateness of support provided to local and national aid providers. Over a third of respondents feel that local organisations are capable of delivering high quality humanitarian aid and assistance to affected populations.

Humanitarian staff survey: Do local organisations in this country have the capacity to deliver high-quality assistance?



Overview of findings: affected people

● 2017 ● 2018

Negative Positive

SO 1 : protection

1 2 3 4 5

Do you feel aware of your rights as a refugee in Lebanon?

2.4

Do you feel your rights as a refugee are respected?

2.1

Do aid providers treat you with respect?

3.6 3.8

Do you feel safe in your place of residence?

3.5 3.8

Do you feel safe in your day-to-day life?

3.6

How easy or difficult did you find making the suggestion or complaint?

2.6

SO 2 : assistance

Do you feel informed about the kind of aid available to you?

2.5 3.1

Do aid providers take your opinion into account when providing aid?

1.8 2.1

Does aid go to those who need it most?

2.0 2.2

Does the aid you receive currently cover your most important needs?

1.8 2.2

Do you trust aid providers to act in your best interest?

2.7

Are you satisfied with the education provided to refugees children?

3.1

SO 4 : stability

Negative Positive

1 2 3 4 5

Do you feel welcome in Lebanon?



Do you feel the support you receive helps you to become self-reliant?



Overall is life improving for refugees in Lebanon?



Are you and your immediate family able to make a living by working in the local economy?



87%

of affected people say that aid provision been stable over the last 12 months

n=874



77%

of affected people say that refugee children have access to education

n=809



57%

of affected people know how to make a suggestion or complaint about the aid they receive

n=893



55%

of affected people say that refugees have access to employment opportunities

n=852

Section 1 - survey data - refugees

Reading this section

The following sections use bar charts for both open and closed questions. Responses to closed questions are reported using a likert scale from 1 to 5. The mean score is also shown. The bar charts for closed questions show the percentage of respondents who selected each answer option, with colours ranging from dark red for negative answers to dark green for positive ones. The analysis includes any significant difference in the perceptions of different demographic groups. It does not, however, show the full breakdown of responses according to these categories.

For open questions, the percentage and frequency with answers pertaining to a particular question do not always total 100% where respondents are given the option to provide multiple answers.

Sample of the affected people survey

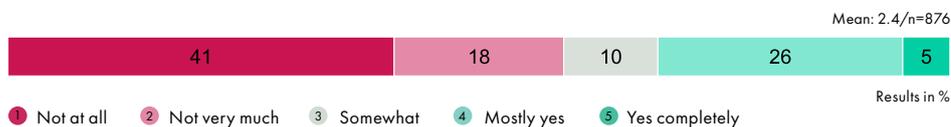
Interviews were conducted with 895 Syrian and Palestinian refugees who received aid within the last 12 months. All eight districts were included in the sample size. A more detailed breakdown of the sample size can be found in the [sample methodology section](#).

Survey questions

SO1: protection

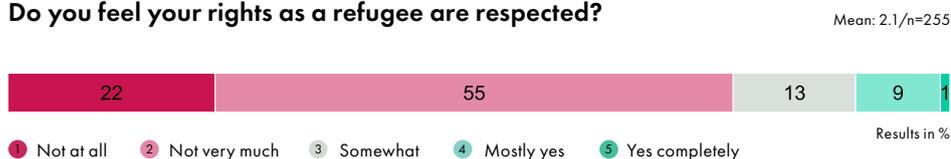
Q1. Awareness of rights

Do you feel aware of your rights as a refugee in Lebanon?



Follow up questions to those who answered that they know about their rights (Q1):

Do you feel your rights as a refugee are respected?

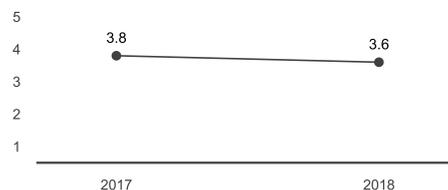


Q2. Respect

Do aid providers treat you with respect?



Trend in mean scores



They are respectful and I'm treated in a good way.



Employees are professional and competent.



The way aid staff treat us depends on the employee.

Q3. Safety

Do you feel safe in your place of residence?

Mean: 3.8/n= 878



Respondents tend to feel safe across all eight governorates, with very little variance between men and women as well as accommodation type.

Trend in mean scores



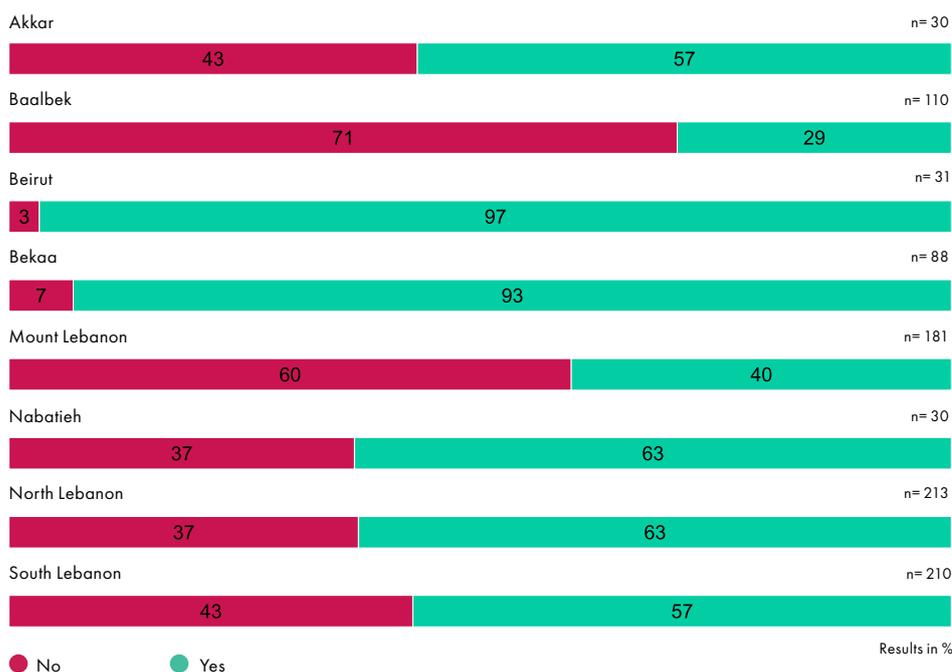
Q4. Complaints mechanisms

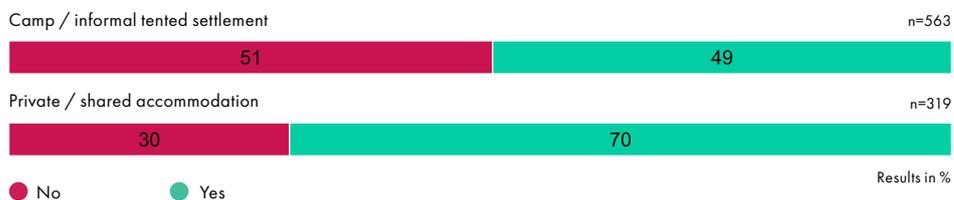
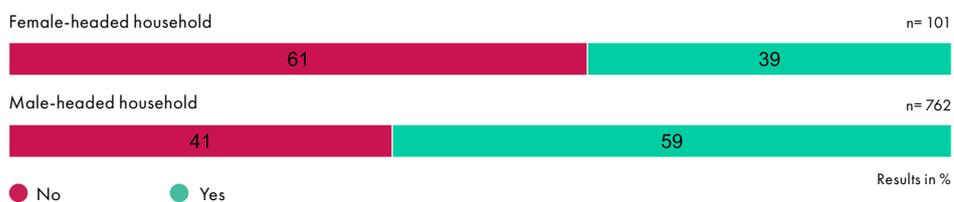
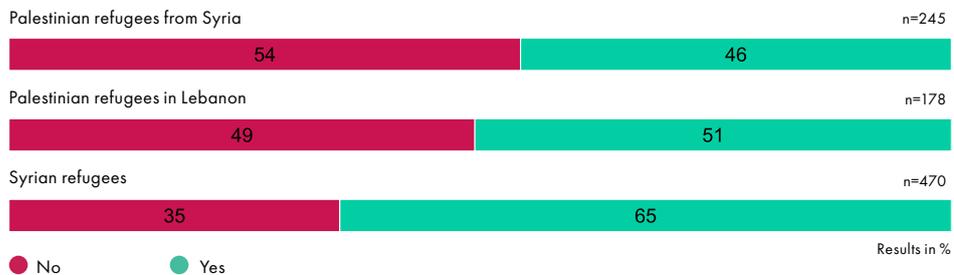
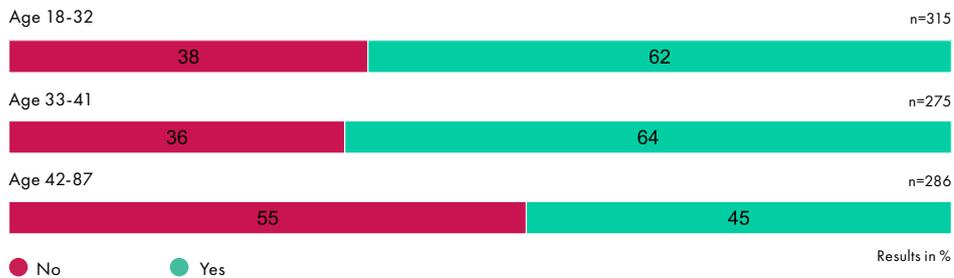
Do you know how to make suggestions or complaints about the aid you receive?

n=893



While most respondents are aware of how to give feedback on the aid they receive, such awareness varies by region, age, status, household head, and type of accommodation.





Follow up questions to those who said they know how to make a suggestion or complaint (Q4):

There are large discrepancies across all eight governorates in the percentage of respondents who have filed complaints or suggestions.

Have you filed a suggestion or a complaint?

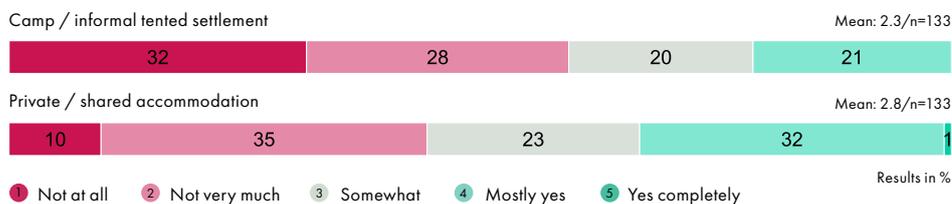


How did you make the suggestion or complaint?

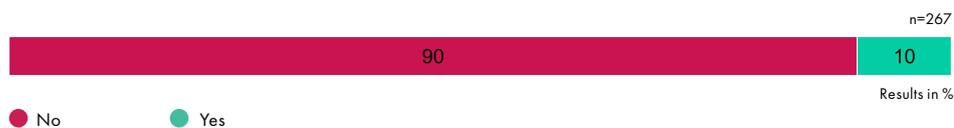
n=268



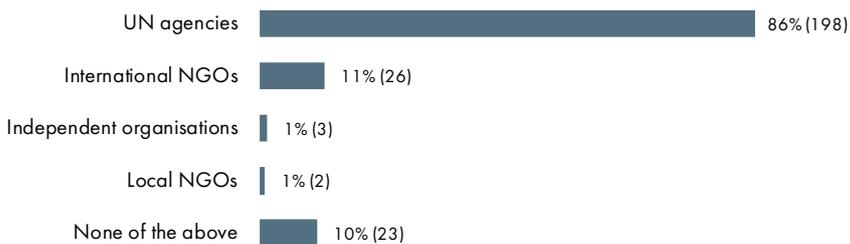
How easy or difficult did you find making the suggestion or complaint?



Have you received a response to your suggestion or complaint?



Who would you trust most to make a suggestion or complaint to?

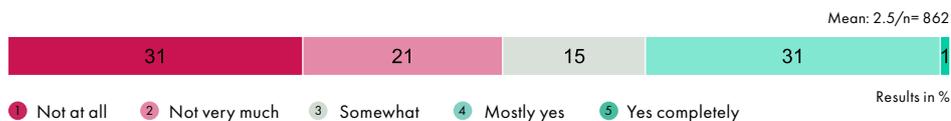


Note: Percentages do not total 100% because respondents were able to choose multiple options.

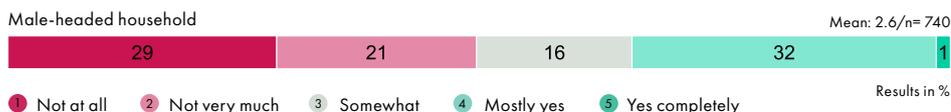
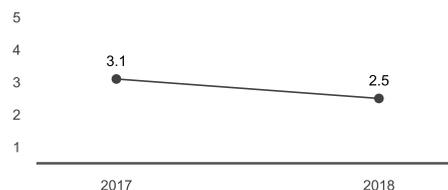
SO2: assistance

Q5. Awareness of aid

Do you feel informed about the kind of aid available to you?



Trend in mean scores



How would you prefer to receive information?



n=1194

Suggestions from affected populations include launching campaigns to raise awareness about the services available to refugees in Lebanon, providing more information generally, but also specifically in terms of their legal rights, migration options, as well as where to seek legal advice, educational opportunities, the locations of aid organisations, and being more transparent when aid ends.

Note: Percentages do not total 100% because respondents were able to choose multiple options.

Who do you most trust to receive information from?



Note: Percentages do not total 100% because respondents were able to choose multiple options.



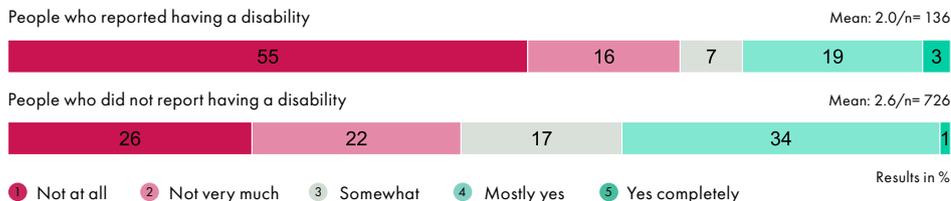
I want to know if the services stopped for everyone or only for my community.



Spreading information on a large scale in order to reach all people.

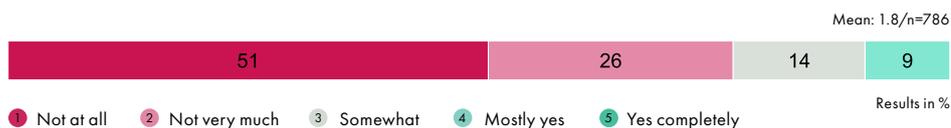


There is not enough information about where to get aid and aid providers are always trying to give aid in an anonymous way.



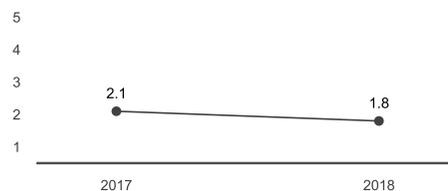
Q6. Participation

Do aid providers take your opinion into account when providing aid?



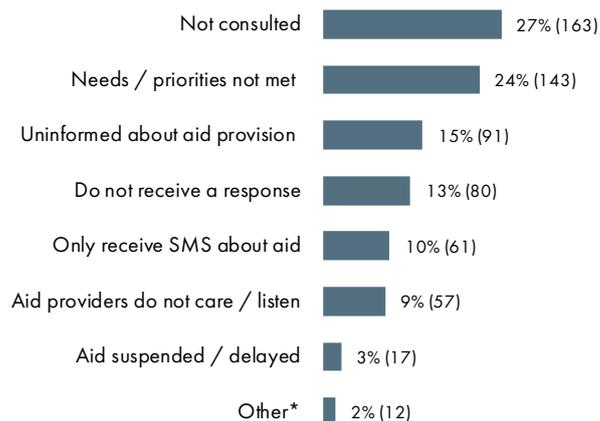
Participation is ranked lowest overall.

Trend in mean scores



Follow up question to those who feel their opinion is not taken into account (Q6):

What makes you feel this way?



*Other includes participants suggesting that aid providers are not trustworthy, provide aid based on favouritism, and that they are not present to listen to comments or complaints.



They don't listen to me and when I call them they talk to me in a bad way.



A message comes only when the [cash] aid has arrived and we are not consulted.

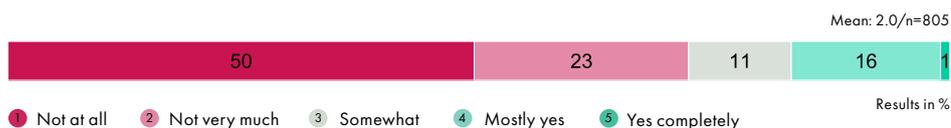


They ask about my opinion and take it into consideration.

Note: Percentages do not total 100% because respondents were able to choose multiple options.

Q7. Fairness

Does aid go to those who need it most?



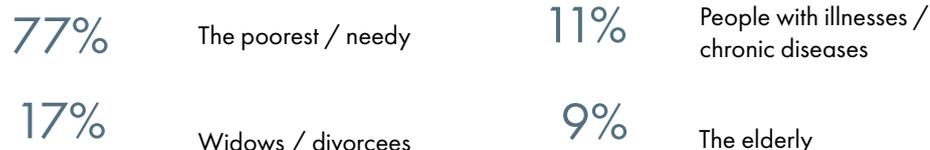
Trend in mean scores



Follow up questions to those who answered that aid does not go to those who need it most (Q7):

Who is left out?

n=750

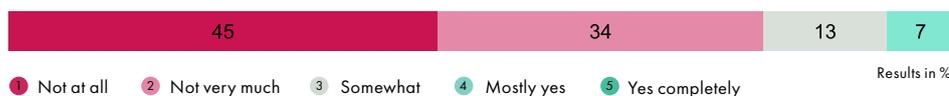


Note: Percentages do not total 100% because respondents were able to choose multiple options.

Q8. Relevance

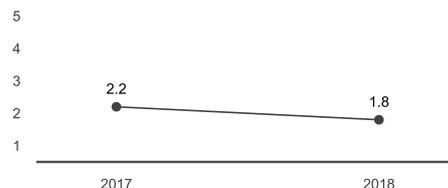
Does the aid you receive currently cover your most important needs?

Mean: 1.8/n=881



Most respondents say that humanitarian assistance does not cover their most important needs, with particularly low responses in South Lebanon where 98% of participants indicate a shortfall in aid.

Trend in mean scores



Follow up questions to those who answered that their unmet needs are not met (Q1):

What are your most important needs that are not met?

n=2,323



Note: Percentages do not total 100% because respondents were able to choose multiple options.

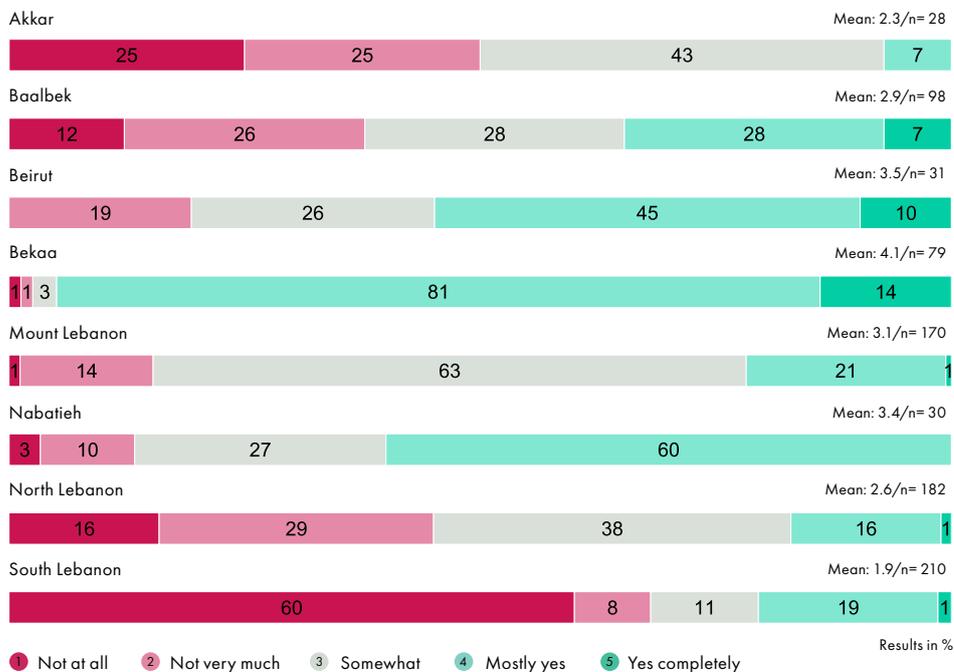
Q9. Trust

Do you trust aid providers to act in your best interest?

Mean: 2.7/n= 828



While affected people mostly feel treated respectfully by aid workers (Q2), they do not necessarily feel that aid providers act in their best interests, with more mixed responses on this front. Respondents in South Lebanon are particularly negative, with 68% expressing scepticism as to whether aid workers act in their best interests or not.



They [aid providers] work and strive and are keen to find solutions to the conditions of people and our circumstances and they are the main support for us.



No one cares about us and they [aid providers] are only working for their interests and the evidence is our bad situation for nearly seven years.

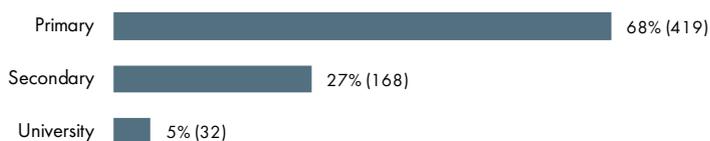
Q10. Education

Do refugee children have access to education?



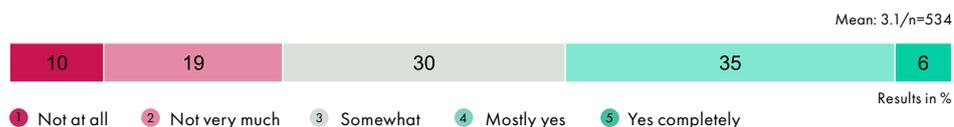
Follow up questions to those who answered "yes" (Q10):

To what level is this education provided?

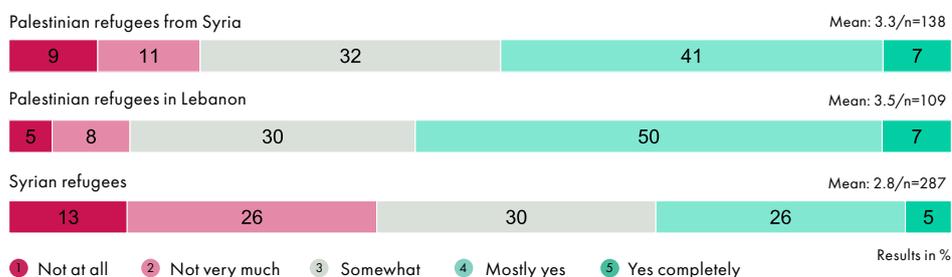
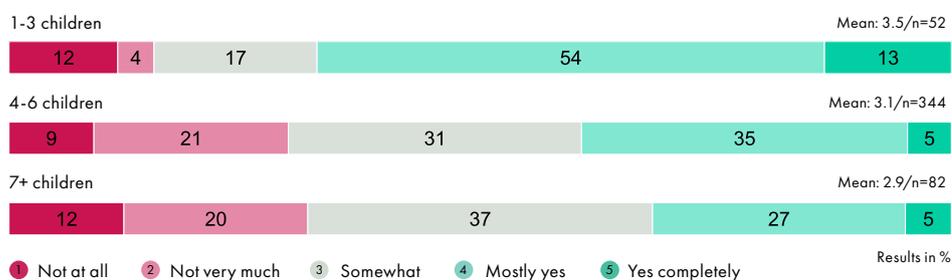
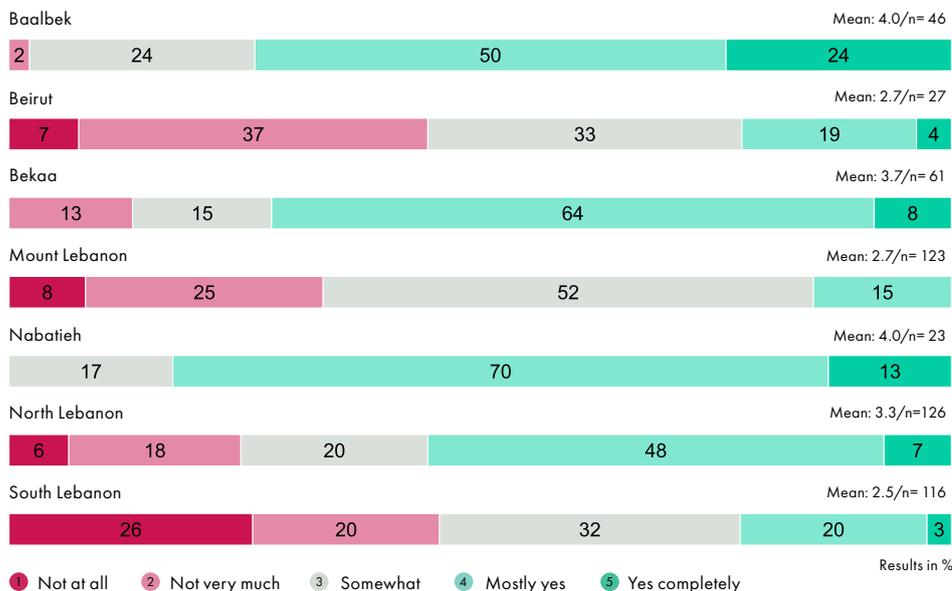


Even though the majority of affected people feel that refugee children are given the chance to go to school, our findings suggest that education opportunities are limited to the primary school level.

Are you satisfied with the education provided to refugee children?



While over a third of participants are satisfied with the quality of the education offered, there are some regional discrepancies.



Follow up question to those who answered “no” (Q10):

What are the main barriers to accessing education?



n=64

Other responses include the mistreatment and discrimination of refugee children in the education sphere, not having the required ID papers, and a general lack of schools. Additionally, cases of children having to work instead of going to school and physical and mental health issues are also cited as barriers to education.



I ask those concerned to provide children with an opportunity to learn in suitable places.



Aid providers do not cover education fees and I am unable to pay tuition fees.

Q11. Cash assistance

Follow up questions to those who answered that they received cash assistance in the last 12 months:

How satisfied are you with the cash support that you have received?

Mean: 2.9/n=237



Responses are mixed with regards to cash support provided, suggesting the need for further investigation. Over 90% of participants who answer that they received cash assistance in the last year say that they received a regular cash transfer from UN agencies. Participants who receive cash support point to the fact that the only communication they receive is an SMS from aid providers, suggesting a need for additional communication avenues between aid providers and affected people. Seventy-four percent of participants say they still prefer to receive cash assistance in the form of cash only, over vouchers (10%) or a mixture of cash and vouchers (14%).

SO4: stability

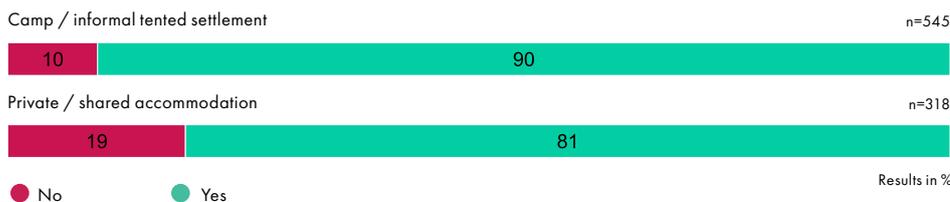
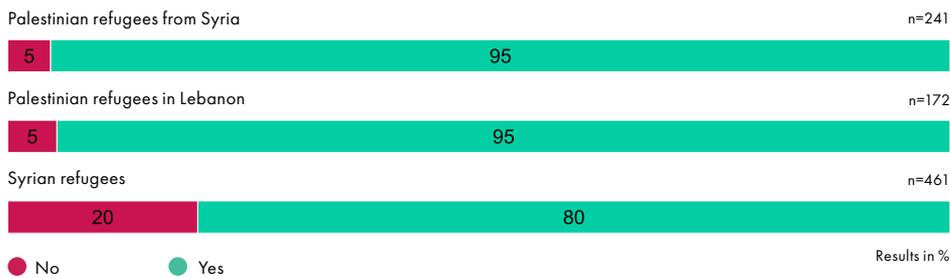
Q12. Stability

Has aid provision been stable over the last 12 months?

n=874



In all eight governorates, the majority of refugees indicate that aid has been stable over the past year.

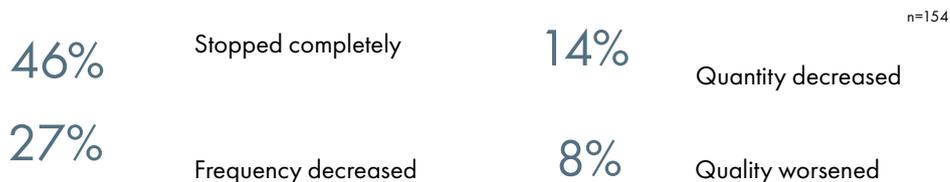


**Follow up questions to those who answered "no" (Q12):
What kind of aid has changed?**



Note: Percentages do not total 100% because respondents were able to choose multiple options.

How has aid provision changed?



Note: Percentages do not total 100% because respondents were able to choose multiple options.

How have these changes affected your behaviour?



These findings are in line with the most recent Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian refugees in Lebanon¹ that indicates almost 90% of Syrian refugees are in debt.

Note: Percentages do not total 100% because respondents were able to choose multiple options.



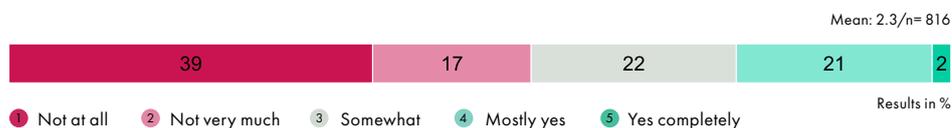
Increased tension, nervousness, and permanent problems with the owner of the place we rent from because of the rent.



Borrowing money from neighbours and the inability to pay off debts and home rent.

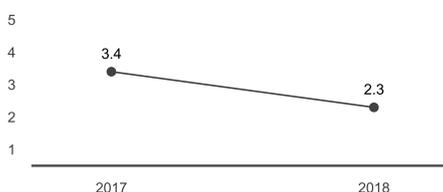
Q13. Host community relations

Do you feel welcome in Lebanon?

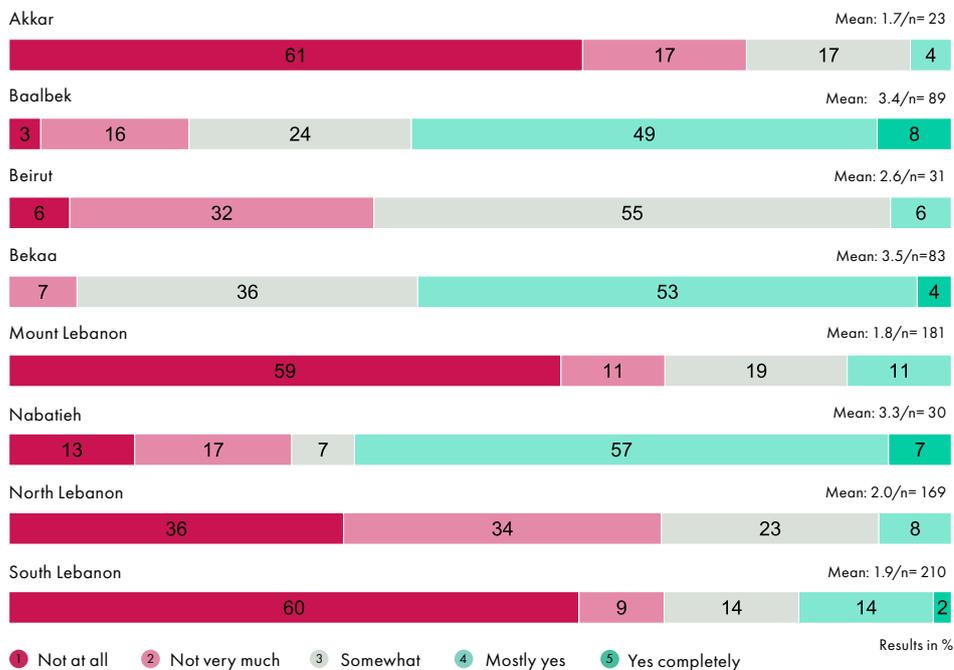


Our findings indicate that most participants feel unwelcome in Lebanon, with more negative sentiments than last year on this front. As shown in other recent surveys¹, a large majority of Lebanese see assistance from international agencies as unfair and excluding vulnerable Lebanese groups. This is in line with this report's findings on fairness (Q7). More transparent communication to affected people and the host community around eligibility criteria would be advisable.

Trend in mean scores



¹ Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2017-2020, 167



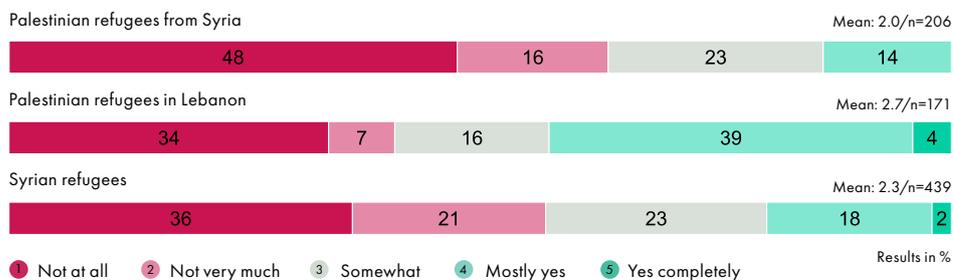
Particularly poor relations are noted in Mount Lebanon, North Lebanon, and South Lebanon.



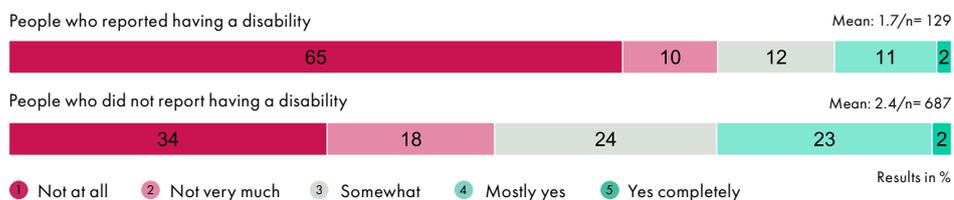
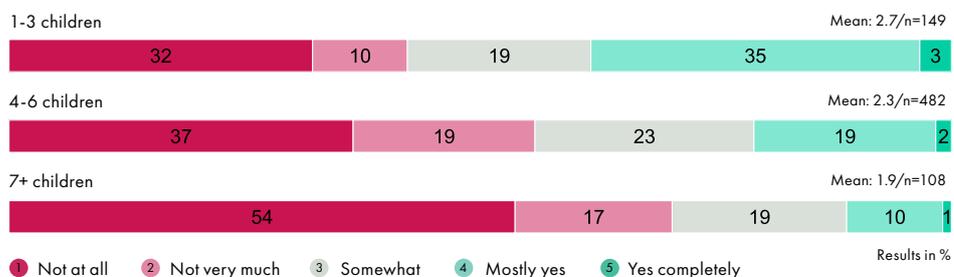
Most of the host society has adapted to the presence of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon.



We do not move much, so there is no danger to us.



Recent studies (namely by ARK²) as well as last year's survey indicate increasingly fraught host community relations.



2 "Regular Perception Surveys on Social Tensions throughout Lebanon: Wave I," ARK, August 2017

Follow up question to those who answered that they do not feel welcome (Q13):

What makes you feel this way?



Note: Percentages do not total 100% because respondents were able to choose multiple options.



The distinction between Syrians and Lebanese and the permanent humiliation of the Syrians at checkpoints.



The Lebanese are always trying to expel the Syrian and Palestinian refugees from their land by using hideous and ugly methods.

Q14. Empowerment

Do you feel the support you receive helps you to become self-reliant?



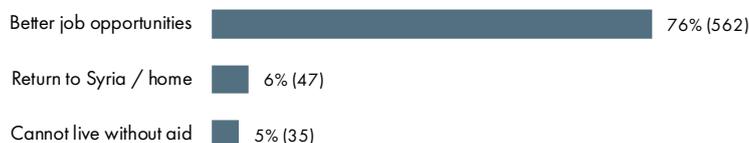
Trend in mean scores



I can't do without aid because I have a 10-year-old son who has had a car accident and has not yet finished treatment and all of my husband's income goes to treating our son.

Follow up question to those who answered that they do not feel the support helps them become self-reliant (Q14):

What would help you to live without aid in the future?



Allowing us to work legally and respecting our rights.



The possibility of having a better and more stable job, and going back to Syria if things got better.

Q15. Progress

Overall is life improving for refugees in Lebanon?

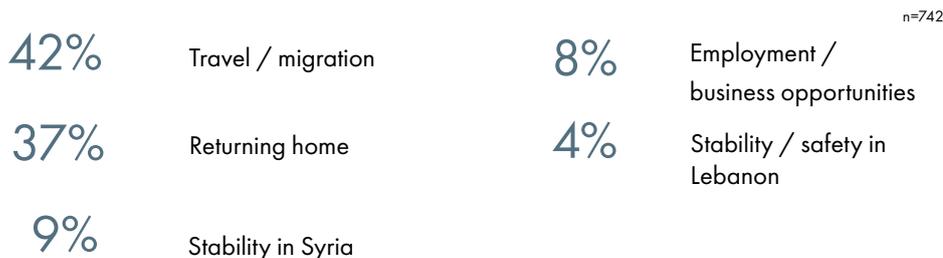


Trend in mean scores



Follow up question to those who answered "no" (Q15):

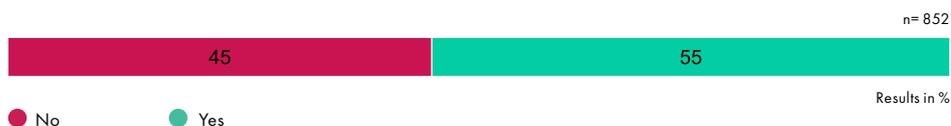
What would make you more optimistic?



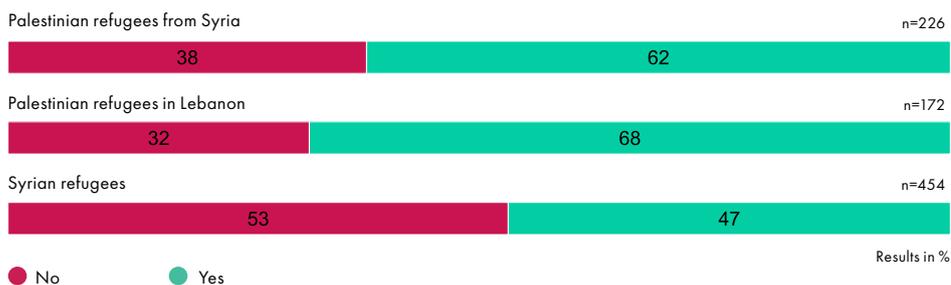
Note: Percentages do not total 100% because respondents were able to choose multiple options.

Q16. Employment

Do refugees have access to employment opportunities?



Most respondents view employment opportunities as open to refugees, however, answers vary depending on the status of the affected person and their type of accommodation.



There are no jobs; even the Lebanese citizens suffer from unemployment.



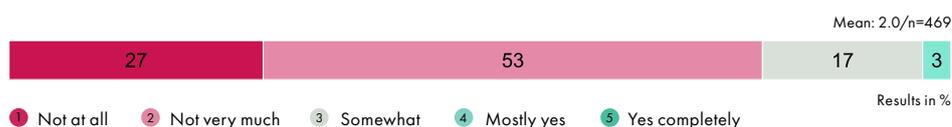
Follow up questions to those who answered “yes” (Q16):

Have you and your immediate family explored opportunities to work in the local economy?

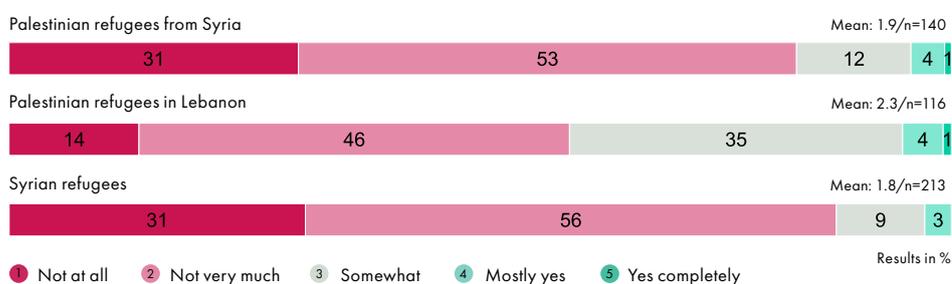


All respondents who felt there were job opportunities available for affected people in Lebanon have actively sought out employment, demonstrating refugees’ strong motivation to earn a living.

Are you and your immediate family able to make a living by working in the local economy?



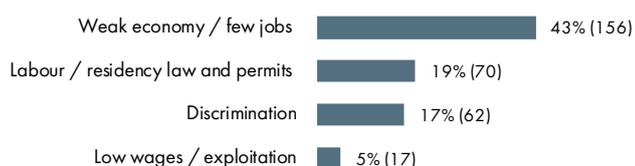
Of those who feel that refugees are generally able to find work in Lebanon, 80% respond that they themselves and their immediate family are unable to live self-sufficiently by working in the local economy. Widespread workplace violations including harassment, unfair pay, and poor working conditions may be contributing factors.³



Syrian refugees are least positive, with 87% responding that they are unable to work to support themselves. Although a number the restrictions imposed specifically on Syrian refugees in 2015 have been lifted, such as a \$200 mandatory residency fee and a pledge to refrain from working, there is little consistency. Human Rights Watch points out that the general security offices arbitrarily apply these policies even after they were officially lifted by the Lebanese government in 2016.⁴

Follow up question to those who answered “no” (Q16):

What are the main barriers to gaining employment?



The economic situation in Lebanon is cited as the main barrier to employment, with many stating that if even Lebanese citizens are struggling to find work, then it is almost impossible for non-Lebanese citizens.

Almost a fifth of participants also point to the restrictive, arbitrary, and often expensive residency and work permits that refugees are obliged to have in order to work legally. Such barriers lead to 92% of economically active refugees to seek non-formal work opportunities⁵ which increases the likelihood of being exposed to exploitative labour practises.

The lack of adequate legal routes to employment means that the majority of refugees compete for lower-skilled labour positions, creating greater tension with the most vulnerable Lebanese populations. Sixty-one percent of Lebanese surveyed by ARK say that competition over lower-sector jobs was the primary cause of tension between refugees and the Lebanese host community.⁶



The problem of residence permits is very difficult and there is no solution except by paying fines that we cannot afford.

3 “Refugee Work Rights Report: The Syrian Crisis and Refugee Access to Lawful Work in Greece, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey”, Asylum Access, August 2017, 20

4 “Lebanon: New Refugee Policy a Step Forward.” Human Rights Watch, 14 February 2017

5 “Refugee Work Rights Report: The Syrian Crisis and Refugee Access to Lawful Work in Greece, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey”, Asylum Access, August 2017, 19

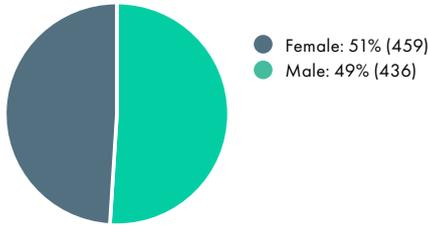
6 “Regular Perception Surveys on Social Tensions throughout Lebanon: Wave I,” ARK, August 2017, 14

Demographics

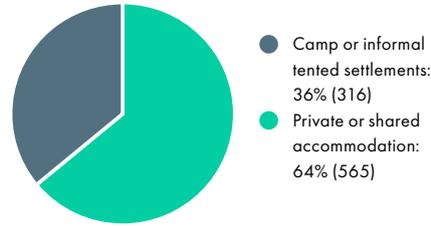
The graphs below depict the demographic breakdown of the 895 respondents, consisting of Palestinian refugees from Syria (PRS), Syrian refugees from Syria, and Palestinian refugees in Lebanon (PRL).

Each graph includes percentages, as well as the frequency in parentheses.

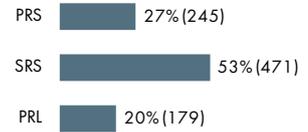
Gender of respondents



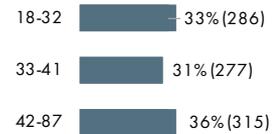
Housing of respondents



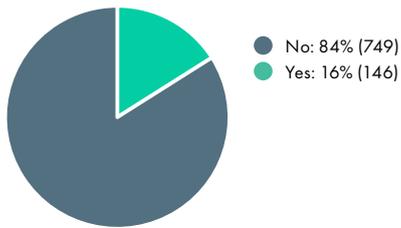
Status of respondents



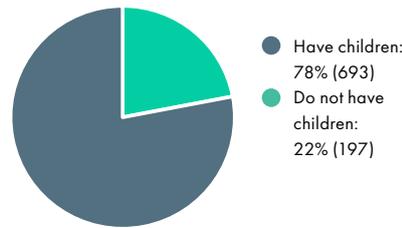
Age of respondents



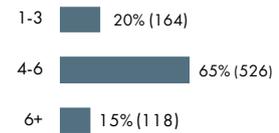
Respondents with a disability



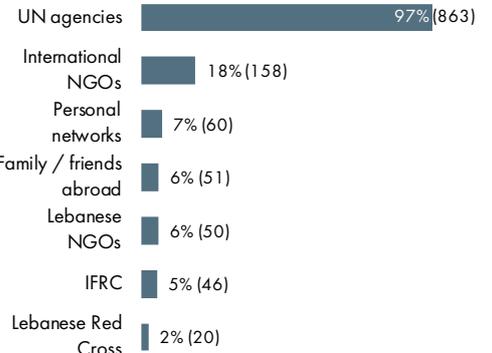
Respondents with children



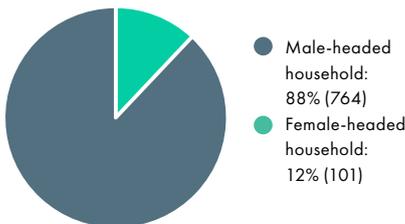
Number of children



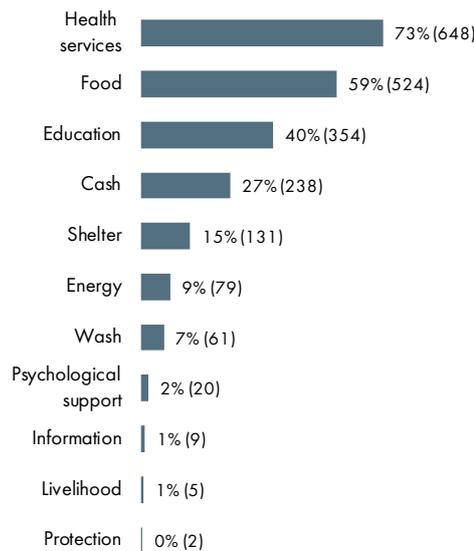
Aid providers



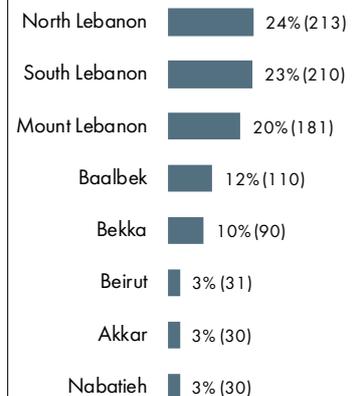
Head of household



Services received*

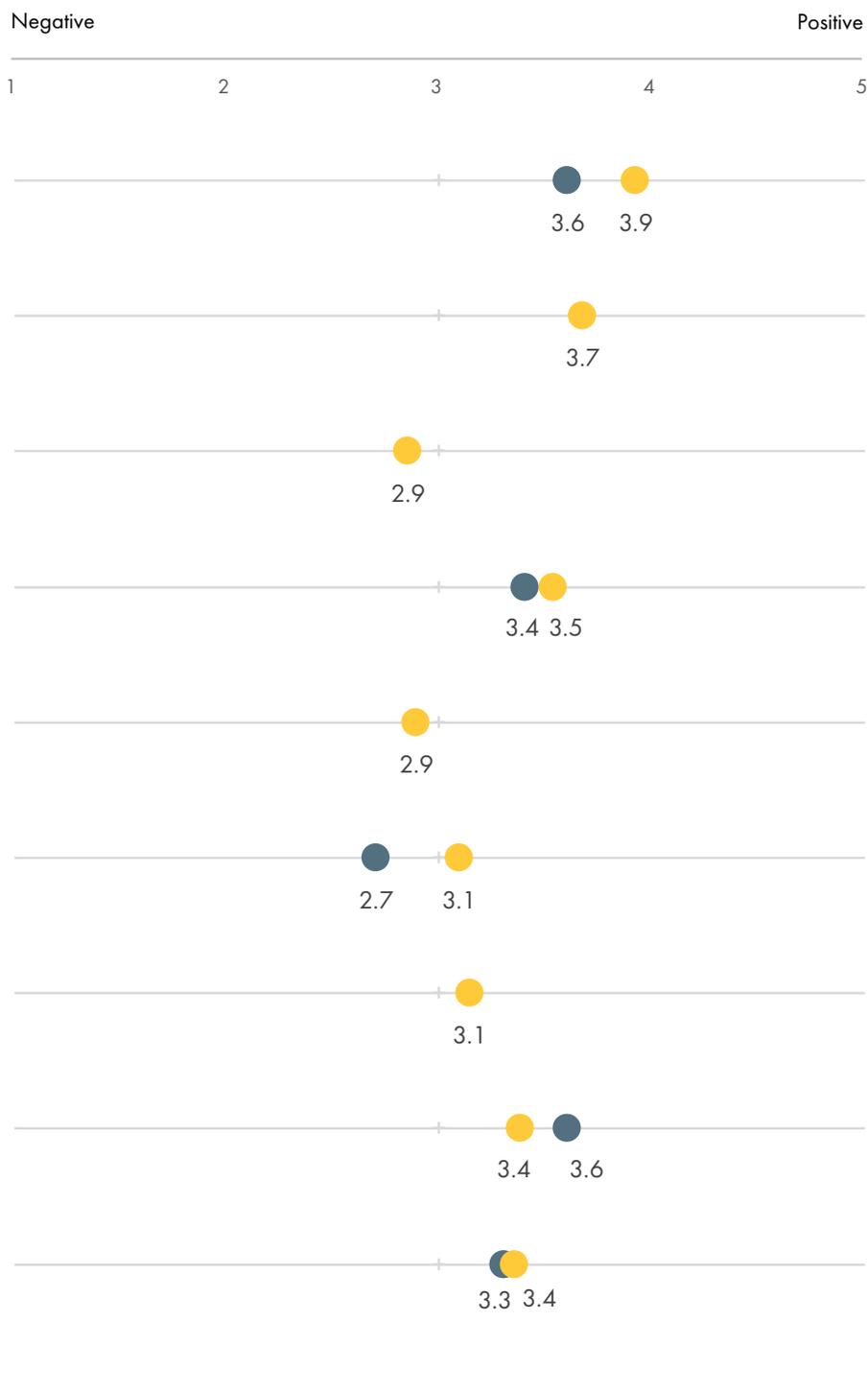


Governorate of respondents



Overview of findings: humanitarian staff

● 2017 ● 2018



Negative Positive

1 2 3 4 5

Do agencies take corrective action in project implementation based on feedback from affected people?



Are there sufficient coordination efforts between organisations?



Do humanitarian and development actors work together effectively in Lebanon?



Does your organisation take opinions of affected people into account during programme design and implementation?



Does your organisation have enough information about the way affected people see aid programmes?



Do you think that if affected people make a complaint to your organisation they will get a response?



Do humanitarian staff in Lebanon treat affected people with respect?



Do you feel comfortable reporting instances of humanitarian staff mistreating affected people?



Do you feel safe in the area where you work?

 30% of staff say their organisation shares logistical assets with other humanitarian organisations n=182	 74% of staff say their organisation regularly conducts joint need assessments with other organisations n=167	 77% of staff think joint donor field visits are better than individual ones n=160	 98% of humanitarian staff say that if refugees were to make a complaint to their organisation, they would receive a response n=235
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Section 2 - survey data - humanitarian staff

Reading this section

The following sections use bar charts for both open and closed questions. Responses to closed questions are reported using a likert scale from 1 to 5. The mean score is also shown. The bar charts for closed questions show the percentage of respondents who selected each answer option, with colours ranging from dark red for negative answers to dark green for positive ones. The analysis includes any significant difference in the perceptions of different demographic groups. It does not, however, show the full breakdown of responses according to these categories.

For open questions, the percentage and frequency with answers pertaining to a particular question do not always total 100% where respondents are given the option to provide multiple answers.

Sample of the humanitarian staff survey

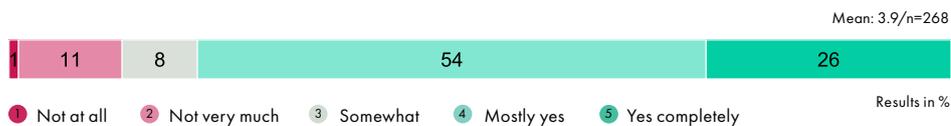
Data was collected between 18 July and 19 August 2018 using an online survey tool, from 290 humanitarian staff members working in Lebanon for UN agencies, international non-governmental organisations (INGOs), and local organisations. Each organisation participated in and distributed the online survey among their staff.

For more information on the sampling approach, see the methodology section.

Survey questions

Q1. Fairness

Does aid go to those who need it most?

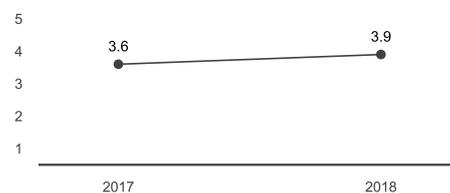


Aid is generally seen as well managed and prioritised by humanitarian staff members. However, budgetary restrictions and strict eligibility criteria are noted as challenges to aid going to those most in need.

Suggestions from humanitarian staff members:

- "More interaction with the refugees on the ground, less "middle persons." Avoid foreign auditors who are never able to capture the "hot spots" due to the specificity of the field. Engage more locals/foreigners with local experience at many stages and compare."
- "More follow up and accountability should take place."

Trend in mean scores



The selection criteria is based on vulnerability level, a pre-assessment is conducted to ensure the people in need are receiving the assistance needed. However, it's not always perfect due to budget restrictions and margins of error in the procedure.



Generally, all of those in need receive aid, but sometimes you can't reach some in need due to criteria restrictions.

Q2. Relevance

Does the aid provided cover the most important needs of affected people?



Most staff say that the aid provided sufficiently meets the priorities of affected people, although challenges such as donor restrictions, high organisational costs, and high demand for essential aid are noted. This is significantly at odds with the affected people survey, where 79% of affected people say that aid does not cover their essential needs. Food, cash, and shelter are the most important unmet needs identified by affected people.

Suggestions from humanitarian staff members:

- "More and better involvement of people and communities affected. A more aligned, comprehensive, and holistic approach in terms of how problems are addressed (including authorities)."
- "Exploring direct aid with direct monitoring by the donor. Reducing bureaucratic costs by downsizing and adjusting high staff wages. Engaging locals and refugees to advance the economic cycle of the project."
- "Nobody is looking at their global holistic needs, not only in my shelter [sector]."



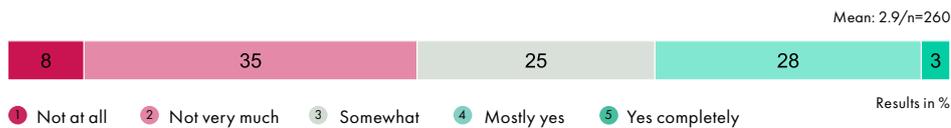
We must get much better at people-centred design in our programs and services. UN agencies will provide what donors are willing to pay for.



We have less and less direct contact with beneficiaries, so it's difficult to understand their experiences.

Q3. Durable solutions

Is there an adequate balance between funding for emergency needs and funding for durable solutions?



Responses are mixed on whether there is an appropriate balance between emergency aid and durable solutions. Not surprisingly, organisations with multi-year funding tend to answer more positively.



Tension between host community and refugees is increasing across the country, lack of resources and job opportunities, and since the Syrian crisis started seven years earlier, I believe it's time for sustainable durable solutions to improve the local economy, standards of living, and social cohesion.

Follow up question to those who answered the balance is inadequate (Q3):
Which area needs more funding?

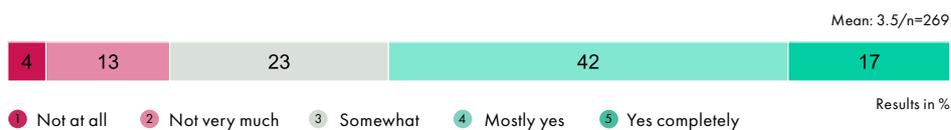


Suggestions from humanitarian staff members:

- "Enable better complementarity between emergency and durable solutions to ensure providing urgent needs whilst developing the durable solutions as these require a relatively long timeframe while vital needs can't wait."
- "Overall, I believe more and more emergencies require long-term investment and solutions...This, however, requires a different kind of funding (flexible, multi-year) and strategies that take time and that involve the government in a different way. The humanitarian machinery – its tools, processes, and governance structure don't seem to have been adjusted to that."

Q4. Reporting time

Do you feel the amount of time you spend on reporting is appropriate?

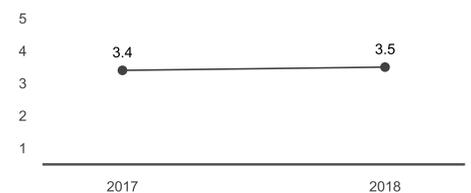


Most respondents feel that the time they spend on reporting is reasonable.

Suggestions from humanitarian staff members:

- "Simplified format and focusing on quality of program. Innovative ways of capturing people's views and opinions and increase local accountability."
- "Stronger accountability is needed, and peer pressure at the organisational country team level. Stronger internal quality assurance processes in the agencies, and incentives/reward to quality outputs. Donors should set stricter requirements for expected quality of reporting, and M&E competence and capacities must be improved throughout the system."

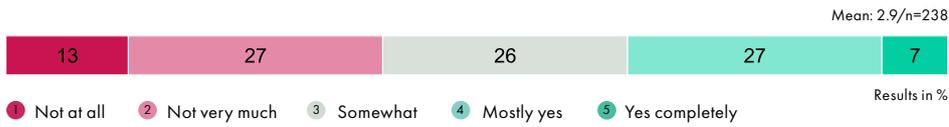
Trend in mean scores



The reporting requirements vary from donor to donor, however whilst this is onerous, it is understandable that donors require information about how taxpayer funds for which they are responsible are being utilised in the interests of accountability.

Q5. Reporting requirements

Do you feel reporting requirements from different donors are sufficiently harmonised?



Views are mixed on donor reporting requirements with roughly a third of staff members responding that there is currently insufficient harmonisation.

Suggestions from humanitarian staff members:

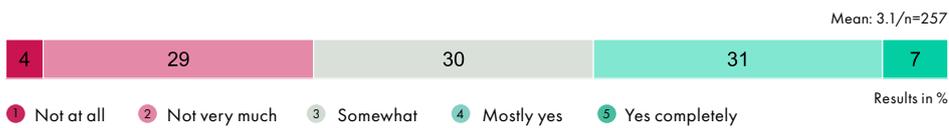
- “Donors should also come together as one to make a joint set of reporting requirements towards partners and governments.”
- “1) Allowing for more input from the organisation when drafting the log frame; 2) allowing for some flexibility in the phrasing of the indicators for the organisation to standardise its own (based on its experience and learning).”



Every donor focuses on something. Thus, there is no time efficiency. It would be better to have a common reporting mechanism for all donors.

Q6. Localisation

Do local and national aid providers receive sufficient support in Lebanon?

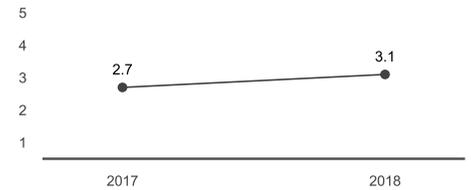


Responses differ on localisation efforts in Lebanon, with local respondents answering most negatively on this topic (43% say that local and national aid providers do not receive sufficient support). Some field staff members point to instability in funding impeding meaningful localisation initiatives, while others argue that funding reductions is a driver for localisation.

Suggestions from humanitarian staff members:

- “Build capacities of local entities to be able to abide by the international standards. Support operational costs so that the organisations are able to respond in a more qualitative manner.”
- “The national NGO community seems to be very vocal about the fact that the paperwork required to access funding is excessive... the process needs to be streamlined.”

Trend in mean scores



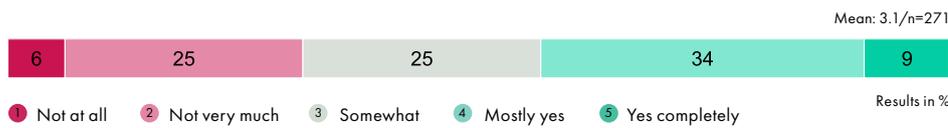
Funding is not structured. We still don't know [what funding we'll receive], so you're in survival mode all the time, which takes energy away from investing in local partnerships. There's no investment, because you're driven by funding concerns.



Now that funding is coming down and the environment is becoming more restrictive, organisations need to change the way they are working. Organisations are seeing local partnerships as the way forward. It helps with advocacy, to point out that local partnerships and the aid response is benefiting host communities.

Q7. Local capacity

Do local organisations in this country have the capacity to deliver high-quality assistance?



The response is mixed on whether local organisations can effectively provide affected populations with humanitarian aid and assistance. Given the boom in the civil society sector in Lebanon, there is some scepticism.

Suggestions from humanitarian staff members:

- “1) Increase partnership for local organisations to learn from the experience and professionalism of international ones; 2) make sure to have experienced and professional staff on board – this can partially be achieved by increasing salaries within local organisations.”



Local NGOs are looking more for funding than raising their voices or pushing for reforms. I think they could play a big role. The problem in Lebanon is that we have a lot of funds and a lot of NGOs - it does not help in a very small country if everyone is fighting for a piece of the cake.



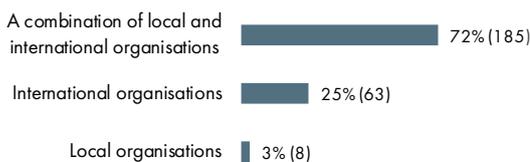
Most local agencies have the capacity to deliver high-quality assistance and services, however, only few are being supported by donors.



They have a good knowledge of the context, and better accessibility, but still need considerable capacity building to be able to provide a humanitarian response that is up to the standards and be able to adequately report on achievements and apply procedures (supply, etc.).

Q8. Aid providers

Who is best placed to provide aid in this country?



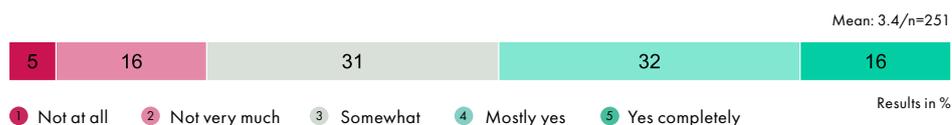
Combining local capacities with international expertise helps create new, innovative solutions to the country's problems.



Civil society is relatively new, humanitarian needs and funding are huge, and there is a very politicised environment. As long as it remains this way, and external aid is needed, it cannot be only local organisations, unless the government can really lead and it receives funding directly from donors.”

Q9. Cash programmes

Do cash programmes contribute to better outcomes than other kinds of aid?



Cash-based programmes are seen more favourably by humanitarian staff, although some problems are noted.

Suggestions from humanitarian staff members:

- “More evidence-based approach, gradual implementation, and focus on lessons learned as the basis for adjustments along the way.”
- “Look into alternatives that can provide the same outcome as cash assistance but that are more sustainable.... Look into improving the economic situation of the individual / community / country.”

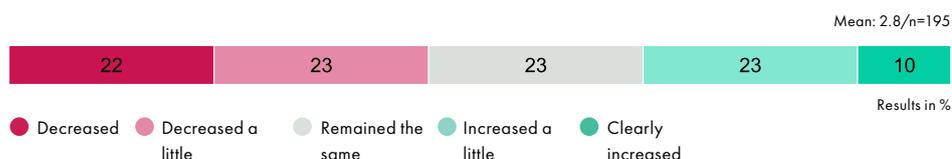
Trend in mean scores



Cash programmes are swift and fast in implementation, promote freedom of choice, dignity and self-reliance amongst the affected population... the drawback, however, is that cash in some societies might be misused by the head of families for their own personal needs thus depriving other family members from benefiting from this type of assistance.

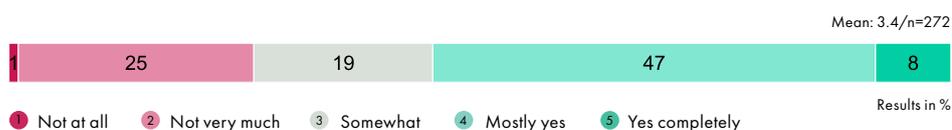
Q10. Share of cash programmes

Has your organisation increased or decreased the share of cash-based programming in the past year?



Q11. Flexibility

Do humanitarian organisations have the flexibility to adjust their projects and programmes when conditions change?

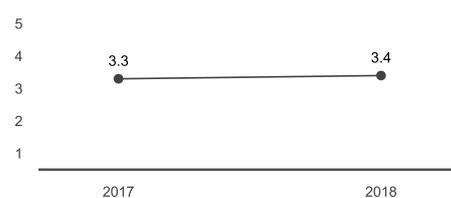


Most respondents feel that there is adequate flexibility to adjust humanitarian projects and programmes to changing needs.

Suggestions from humanitarian staff members:

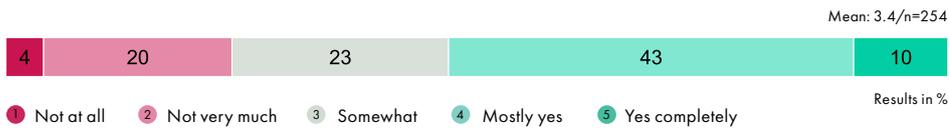
- “Multi-year donor funds could be one way. Another option could be to link humanitarian work with a development focus that might attract multi-year funding.”
- “Donors should promote truly adaptive programs and establish short ‘change approval’ systems and timelines to allow organisations to make worthwhile changes.”

Trend in mean scores



Q12. Corrective action

Do agencies take corrective action in project implementation based on feedback from affected people?



Staff members feel relatively positive about the responsiveness of humanitarian programming to the views and feedback of affected people. However, others feel there is room for improvement.

Suggestions from humanitarian staff members:

- “Deploy non-earmarked funds, consider flexibility in the agreements between humanitarian agencies and donors, improve communication/coordination/collaboration among the sectors coordinators/interagency and donors.”
- “Do frequent M&E visits throughout the whole implementation phase ensure that all beneficiaries have the hotline number.”
- “Proper feedback mechanisms, more participatory bottom-up approach.”



In a protracted crisis we need to change the way we do things. How are we accountable to beneficiaries and each other? One of the shortcomings is the feedback mechanisms. We have problems analysing the data. We [collect] a lot of data and complaints. I don't know how we are still collecting data - refugees are tired. We need to spend more time analysing it. We want our partners to implement closing the feedback cycle.

Q13. Donor visits

Are joint donor field visits better than individual ones?



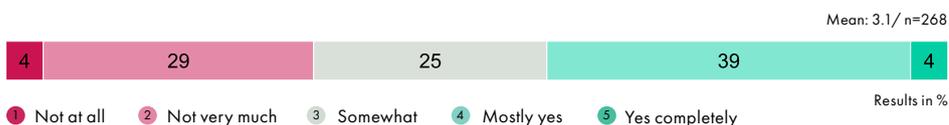
The majority of staff members who answered this question feel that joint donor field visits are more favourable than individual ones. However, while they may be more efficient, there are also downsides noted.



It is true that joint visits spare lots of logistical and organisational headaches (and costs in some cases), but the joint visits are counter-productive. The camps are cramped and characterised by a maze of alleyways and become very difficult to retain the attention of all visitors throughout the visit. In addition, different donors have different interests and the joint visits won't be able to attract the whole group based on their individual interests.

Q14. Coordination

Are there sufficient coordination efforts between organisations?



Humanitarian staff members have mixed feelings about the effectiveness of coordination efforts. However, competition for donor funding is mentioned several times as a challenge for effective and efficient coordination among organisations. Suggestions emphasise the role that donors can play in ensuring that organisations are rewarded and given incentives to coordinate in order to improve the quality of aid going to beneficiaries.



Even with all the coordinating efforts, there are always gaps and always duplications – more effort is going into being competitive to seek funding from donors than to actually address the needs and cover them together as humanitarian agencies.

Suggestions from humanitarian staff members:

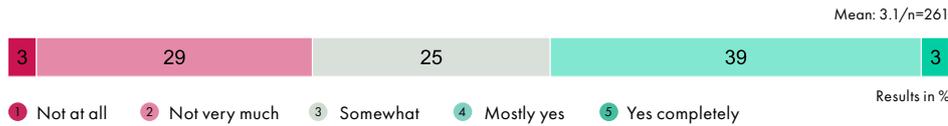
- “We should focus more on quality than quantity and recognise that it is not an issue if one organisation is not able to cover all the needs in one precise area. The coordination should be based on the interest of the beneficiaries, and not on the interest of the organisations, without competition, and in an egalitarian cooperation.”
- “Improve information sharing and transparency. Include this requirement in the agreements with donors.”



There is a sense of competition over funding. Most agencies seem to work to market themselves over the ‘competition’ to ensure that they receive the funding they need.

Q15. Humanitarian development nexus

Do humanitarian and development actors work together effectively in Lebanon?

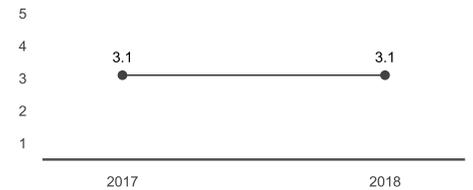


The relationship between humanitarian and development actors received differing views among staff members interviewed. Competition for donor funding again is cited as a barrier to meaningful cooperation.

Suggestions from humanitarian staff members:

- 1) Establish joint plans that include both emergency response and development projects in a way to allow efficient use of resources; 2) establish a coordination platform joining both emergency and development actors.”
- “Better analysis of long term needs from both sides including authorities, raising awareness about long-term, sustainable solutions based on resilience and joint projects (financial, resources, technical).”

Trend in mean scores



A lot has improved, but more work remains. Still highly competitive environment, politicised agendas, and a government not presenting one joint strategic direction/vision. Crowded donor landscape.

Q16. Funding

Does your organisation obtain multi-year funding?



Follow up question to those who answered “yes”(Q16):

To what extent does this contribute to better results?



The majority of field staff whose organisations receive multi-year funding say this has a positive impact on the quality of their work and outcomes. Headquarters staff are most positive in this regard, with 97% indicating that it plays a role in achieving better results as an organisation.

Q17. Joint needs assessments

Does your organisation regularly conduct joint needs assessments with other organisations?



Our survey indicates that needs assessments are regularly conducted collaboratively, where staff are able to answer this question. The Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon is cited several times as an annual joint needs assessment platform used by many humanitarian organisations.

Q18. Logistical asset sharing

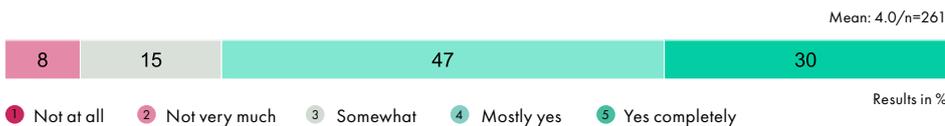
Does your organisation share logistical assets with other humanitarian organisations?



While over a third of respondents are not aware of how logistical assets are shared within their organisations, those who do know report a general absence of resource sharing. Security, transportation, and offices are the most commonly cited shared assets. Barriers to asset-sharing include organisational policy, donor policy, a lack of trust, and practical constraints.

Q19. Participation

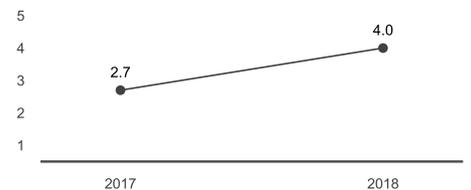
Does your organisation take opinions of affected people into account during design and implementation of programmes?



The majority of humanitarian staff members who participated in our survey say there is sufficient participation from affected people in their programming efforts. This is at odds with how affected people see things, with 67% indicating that aid providers do not take their opinion into account when providing assistance. Such a significant disconnect highlights the need for increased efforts by humanitarian providers to communicate and engage more effectively with affected populations.

Staff members point to a wide-range of activities and tools used to gauge the needs and priorities of affected populations, such as the needs assessments, key informant interviews, and focus group discussions. There is a clear disconnect between these initial assessments and regularly informing affected people about the outcomes of such assessments. Survey fatigue and a lack of trust towards aid providers was noted in the affected people surveys, where participants complain that agencies listen to them and ask their opinion on matters, but rarely “close the loop.”

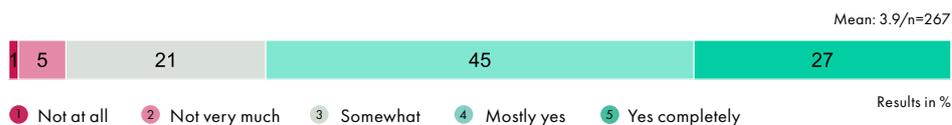
Trend in mean scores



Our project is based on participatory approach and therefore the end users' opinions are actually the baseline for design and implementation of the project.

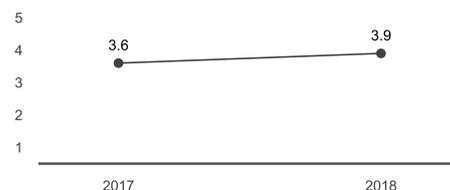
Q20. Feedback

Does your organisation have enough information about the way refugees see aid programmes?



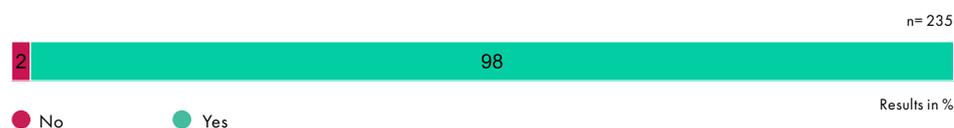
Staff members are positive about their grasp of the opinions of affected people and their perceptions of aid programmes. Again, this represents a significant discrepancy between the views of affected people and staff. Suggestions for improving this from the field staff side include increased surveys, focus group discussions, and committees. Affected people must be consulted on the results and findings of such assessments to increase their sense of participation in aid programmes.

Trend in mean scores



Q21. Complaints mechanisms

If refugees make a complaint to your organisation, will they get a response?



Most staff members are confident that if affected people were to make a complaint to their organisation, they would receive a response. However, only 10% of affected people interviewed say they receive responses to the suggestions or complaints filed. This may in part be due to the fact that people are unaware of the correct feedback channels. According to a staff member at a large NGO, it remains a challenge to follow up on complaints made about other organisations: "We receive a lot of complaints regarding other organisations. We refer them, and then it goes into a black box."

Q22. Respect

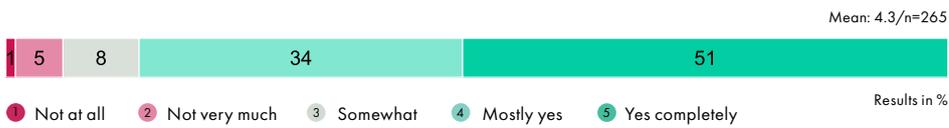
Do humanitarian staff in Lebanon treat affected people with respect?



Staff members say that affected people are treated in a respectful manner. This is relatively in line with the views of affected people who also by and large feel respected by aid providers. However, the percentage of negative responses from affected people is double that of staff members.

Q23. Reporting mistreatment

Do you feel comfortable reporting instances of humanitarian staff mistreating affected people?



Most staff members say they would be able to report any instance of abuse or mistreatment of affected people. Respondents who work with Palestinian refugees from Lebanon are most negative with 15% answering that they would not be comfortable reporting such cases.

There is confusion about direct reporting channels, and it may be wise to ensure the appropriate reporting procedures are clear to all staff members working with affected populations.



My eye doesn't blink to report a misconduct of an aid worker with the affected population. Undignified behaviour is totally unacceptable. As service providers, we do our job and in this process, we have no right whatsoever to mistreat recipients of assistance.



I would love to [report instances of mistreatment], but I don't know the proper reporting channels.



Who to report to? How to lead to the improvement? Sometimes I feel there is negligence, but there is nowhere to report to, except a direct request to rectify made to the organisation concerned.

Have you reported instances of mistreatment?



Most staff members have not reported instances of mistreatment. The lowest reporting rates are among UN staff members. This is not to suggest that instances of abuse are going unreported, but simply that UN staff members who answered our survey were less likely to have filed reports of abuse than staff from INGOs and local responders.

Q24. Safety

Do you feel safe in the area where you work?



The centres are located in a very safe place and the security team is always ready to answer and take decisions.



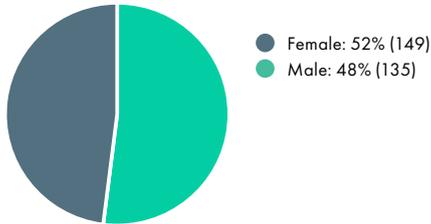
As an international staff member, I do not feel any real sense of threat to my safety in the area where I work, although some meetings with beneficiaries can be extremely challenging.

Demographics

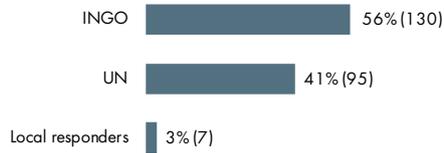
The graphs below depict the demographic breakdown of the 290 respondents in the field staff survey.

Each graph includes percentages, as well as the frequency in parentheses.

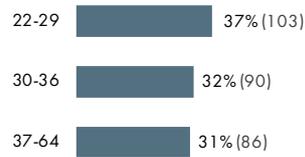
Gender



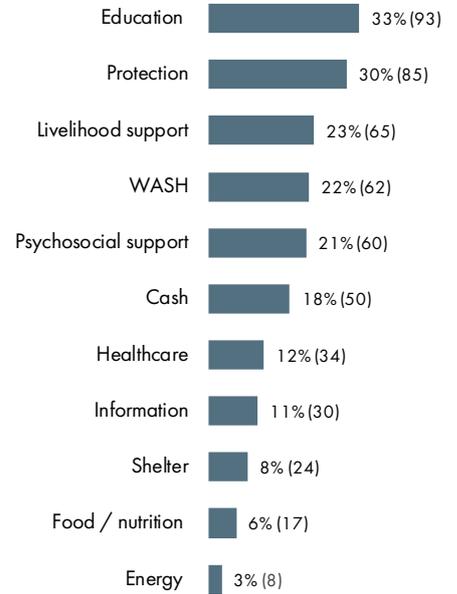
Type of organisation



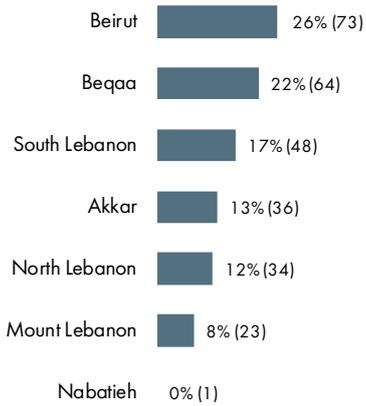
Age



Type of services provided*



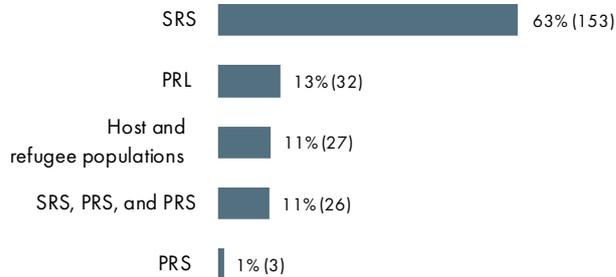
Governorate



Role of staff member



Target beneficiaries of aid/services



Annex: notes on methodology

Sampling methodology

Affected people survey

When designing the sample strategy for Lebanon, the most recent figures for the three groups in this report (Syrian refugees from Syria, PRS, and PRL) were used. These figures were provided directly from OCHA in April 2018 and stood at 1,484,169 for Syrian refugees, 509,609 for PRS, and 277,790 for PRL, for a combined total of 2,271,568 people. While proportionately these three groups represent 65%, 22%, and 12% of the combined total, the sample sizes were not based on a representative sampling methodology which would have dictated much smaller sample sizes for PRS and PRL across the country.

To strengthen the reliability of smaller population samples, and meaningfully explore differences between populations living in camps or informal tented settlement and private or shared accommodation and among the three refugee groups, we have elected to cover sample smaller groups instead of employing a representative sampling methodology. To do this, Syrian refugees make up 53% (470), PRS 27% (240), and PRL 20% (180) of the total sample size of 890. To further increase reliability, a minimum sample size of 30 people in each refugee group in any given location has been selected.

The risk of disproportionately overweighted groups skewing the results is mitigated by later weighting the means of each sample size in accordance to the proportion of the population it covers, once the data is collected from all locations and groups. As such, this methodology allows us both to maximise reliability for group comparisons as well as enabling a more reliable representative overview of the perceptions within the various camps or informal tented settlements as well as among the refugee population at large.

Actual numbers of people surveyed vary marginally (one to two respondents) from the original sampling strategy due to practical constraints on the ground. The variance is not large enough to constitute a concern.

The same geographical governorates or “muhafazat” (as last year) have been selected for this years’ sampling strategy (Beirut, Mount Lebanon, North Lebanon, the Bekaa Valley, and South Lebanon), with the addition of Akkar, Baalbek, and Nabatieh. Al-Hermel was the only region not included in our sampling strategy due to the relatively small number of affected people living in this region (no official figures for PRS and PRL were available on this region, and only 0.65% of total Syrian refugee population residing in Al-Hermel).

Additionally, where possible, the same locations – specific camps, cities, or towns – as last year, are included for consistency and comparability purposes.

The overall distribution of affected people in Lebanon is overwhelmingly (81%)⁷ in residential non-camp settings, with the exception of Bekaa (where 51% of affected people are living in camps or informal tented settlement settings).⁸ Logistically, sampling affected people in non-camp settings is more challenging for data collection. We conducted 565 interviews in camp or informal tented settlement (64%) and 319 (36%) interviews in private/shared accommodation.

A gender split of 50:50 was selected since in all six regions, the male to female ratio does not significantly deviate from this, with the overall gender split for Syrian refugees being 51% female and 49% male,⁹ PRS being 52% female and 48% male,¹⁰ and PRL being 50% female and 50% male.¹¹

7 Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2017-2020, 2018, 15

8 Ibid, 151

9 Ibid, 198

10 UNRWA Syrian regional crisis emergency appeal, 2018

11 Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2017-2020, 2018, 198

Locations	Syrian refugees from Syria	PRS	PRL	Total
Beirut				
Urban	30	0	0	30
Mount Lebanon				
Burj Barajneh	30	0	0	30
Chiyah	30	0	0	30
Chouefat	30	0	0	30
Shatila	30	30	30	90
North Lebanon				
Minieh	30	30	0	60
Beddaoui	30	30	0	60
Tripoli	30	0	30	60
Nahr al-Bared	0	30	0	30
Akkar				
Urban	30	0	0	30
Baalbek				
Baalbek Wavel	50	30	30	110
Bekaa Valley				
Qab Elias	30	30	30	90
South Lebanon				
Saida	30	30	30	90
Tyre	30	30	30	90
Ain al-Hilwah	30	0	0	30
Nabatieh				
Urban	30	0	0	30
Total	470	240	180	890

Humanitarian staff survey

Twenty organisations were approached and asked to participate in the survey. Fifteen organisations participated and distributed the online survey among a convenience sample of their staff. Participating organisations were: ACTED, CARE, ICRC, IOM, IRC, Mercy Corps, Save the Children, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNRWA, WFP, World Vision; and the following local and national responders: Association Najdeh, Kayany Foundation, Amel Association.

The confidence intervals of the full sample estimates were 10% with a 5% false alarm rate. In other words, we are 95% certain that the population attitudes fall within 10% of the values reported for the full sample, assuming no sampling biases or response biases. The sampling bias assumption is somewhat problematic here, as respondents self-selected, and it is hard to know if those who chose to respond differ systematically from those who did not.

Question formulation

Questions for both the affected people and staff survey were formulated using the Grand Bargain commitments as a framework. We look at whether there is a shift from what the Grand Bargain describes as a supply-driven model dominated by aid providers to one that is more demand-driven, with the aid system becoming more responsive to the people it sets out to serve.¹² We also probe people's views on whether they see progress in going beyond meeting basic needs to creating self-reliance and restoring opportunity.¹³

Data disaggregation

Affected people survey

Data is disaggregated by governorate, camps or informal tented settlements / private or shared accommodation, gender, age, status of person interviewed, year of arrival in Lebanon, type of accommodation, household size, number of dependents, head of household gender, and disability. The analysis in the report includes any significant difference in the perceptions of different demographic groups. It does not, however, show the full breakdown of responses according to these categories.

To identify groups of persons with disabilities within the sample, a staff member at Handicap International was consulted and participants were asked a series of questions:

- Do you have difficulty seeing, even if wearing glasses?
- Do you have difficulty hearing, even if using a hearing aid?
- Do you have difficulty walking or climbing steps?
- Do you have difficulty remembering or concentrating?

For the purposes of this survey, if a survey participant indicates having difficulty or inability to do one or more of the above activities, they are considered a person with a disability.

Field staff survey

Data is disaggregated by type of organisation, role in the field, and by governorate. The analysis includes any significant difference in the perceptions of different demographic groups. It does not, however, show the full breakdown of responses according to these categories.

Language of the surveys

Affected people survey

This survey was conducted in Arabic.

¹² "The Grand Bargain – A Shared Commitment to Better Serve People in Need". Istanbul, Turkey, 23 May 2016. P.2

¹³ Ibid

Humanitarian staff survey

This survey was conducted in Arabic and English. Ninety-seven percent of respondents filled out the questionnaire in English and 3% in Arabic.

Data collection

Affected people survey

Sayara International, an independent data collection company contracted by Ground Truth Solutions, collected data between 4 and 19 July 2018. Interviews were conducted face-to-face with 895 individuals across all eight governorates of Lebanon.

Face-to-face surveys with affected people were conducted in Lebanon last year, and the same set of questions used for that survey are supplemented by additional follow-up questions in this year's survey. These surveys encompass Syrian refugees, Palestinian refugees from Syria, and Palestinian refugees from Lebanon.

Humanitarian staff survey

Data was collected between 18 July and 19 August 2018 using an online survey tool, from 290 humanitarian staff members working in Lebanon for UN agencies, INGOs, and local organisations. Each organisation participated in and distributed the online survey among their staff.

Challenges and limitations

GTS is committed to ensuring that data collection adheres to rigorous ethical and methodological standards. GTS worked closely with Sayara International, our data collection partner, throughout survey design and development and sample strategy design. We developed data collection guides, training materials, and survey translations to ensure that our approach was contextually and culturally appropriate. The GTS team went to Beirut in July 2018 to set up the survey instruments, oversee enumerator training, shadow data collectors, and ensure the quality of data collection in various regions in Lebanon. During this process and further discussions with Sayara International, the following challenges and limitations were noted:

Affected people survey

Expectation of respondents. Enumerators were briefed and trained on managing expectations and clearly communicating the aims of the research. Before interviews were conducted, potential respondents were informed that their answers would have no bearing on the level of aid they would receive, and that participation was purely voluntary.

In addition, participants who consented to being contacted by GTS and provided their contact details received a tailored SMS within 7-10 days of survey completion. All messages were used to reiterate that participation in the survey had no connection to the level of aid to be received, and that the survey findings would be shared with them in the coming weeks. Respondents who indicated that they were uninformed about the kind of aid available to them received additional information in Arabic about aid available to refugee populations. A total of 416 text messages were sent between 8 and 19 July.

In spite of these measures, enumerators reported instances of refugees expecting humanitarian assistance, or mistaking them for representatives of aid agencies.

Access and availability. Male participants were harder to track down during daytime work hours, requiring enumerators to return to conduct interviews with them in the evening.

Scope of the survey. It should be noted that the scope of our survey includes registered Syrian refugees, PRS, and PRL who received aid in the last year. Unregistered refugees (estimated at 500,000¹⁴) and vulnerable Lebanese (figures stand at 1.5 million¹⁵) are a significant and increasingly vulnerable group within Lebanon, and their inclusion in the report would have added interesting insights on the effectiveness and relevance of aid provision. However, this was beyond the scope of this research.

Survey fatigue. An online survey conducted post-data collection with the majority (seven out of the eight) of data collectors indicated a lack of enthusiasm or interest amongst affected populations in participating in our surveys. This highlights the importance of “closing the loop” and keeping participants informed of the results of the survey, as well as providing participants with useful information, when possible and appropriate.

Perceptual data. GTS gathers perceptual data from affected people, field staff, and local partner organisations to assess humanitarian responses through their views, opinions, and perceptions. While principles of accountability, localisation, and participation are increasingly being integrated into humanitarian programmes, the voices of affected populations receiving aid are often omitted.¹⁶

Gathering perceptual data from affected populations should therefore be viewed as part of a broader systemic change in the humanitarian apparatus. It is a vital first step in closing the accountability gap, empowering affected populations to be part of the decisions that govern their lives, building relationships with communities, and localising knowledge.

Nonetheless, it is evident that perceptual data alone might be insufficient to evaluate the state of the humanitarian system and should therefore not be seen in isolation, but as complementary to other monitoring and data evaluation approaches.

Humanitarian staff survey

Survey fatigue. Responses from participants were initially low, and several reminder emails were sent in order to reach response figures which could be deemed statistically significant. Feedback from international organisations suggests that staff members are experiencing survey fatigue as the result of the increasing number of surveys they are required to complete.

Self-selection bias. Self-selection bias is applicable to any kind of social science research where participation is voluntary. Hence, the realised sample for this project is limited to humanitarian staff working in Lebanon who received the survey link and who consented to partake in the survey. We have no apriori reasons to believe that respondents differed systematically from non-respondents, but the risk of such systematic deviations are important to keep in mind when interpreting the results.

For more information about Ground Truth Solutions surveys in Lebanon, please contact Elias Sagmeister (Deputy Director – elias@groundtruthsolutions.org), Michael Sarnitz (Senior Programme Manager - michael@groundtruthsolutions.org) or Kai Kamei (Senior Programme Analyst – kai.kamei@groundtruthsolutions.org).

14 Tom Perry, “Lebanon Near ‘Breaking Point’ Over Syrian Refugee Crisis: PM Hariri,” Reuters, March 31, 2017

15 Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2017-2020, 2018, 151

16 Benini (2018), ‘Subjective Measures in Humanitarian Analysis’, ACAPS



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