



# youth strategic framework for palestine refugees in lebanon



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May 2018

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## About UNRWA

UNRWA is a United Nations agency established by the General Assembly in 1949 and mandated to provide assistance and protection to some 5 million registered Palestine refugees. Its mission is to help Palestine refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, West Bank and the Gaza Strip achieve their full human development potential, pending a just and lasting solution to their plight. UNRWA services encompass education, health care, relief and social services, camp infrastructure and improvement, protection and microfinance.

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# acronyms and abbreviations

<b>AAP</b>	Accountability to Affected Populations	<b>STC</b>	Siblin Training Center
<b>CBO</b>	Community-based Organization	<b>TVET</b>	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
<b>CEP</b>	Committee for Employment of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon	<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>CLA</b>	Central Lebanon Area	<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>ESC</b>	Employment Service Centre	<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children’s Fund
<b>FGD</b>	Focus Group Discussion	<b>UNRWA</b>	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
<b>GBV</b>	Gender Based Violence	<b>UNSC</b>	United Nations Security Council
<b>GoL</b>	Government of Lebanon	<b>UNSF</b>	United Nations Strategic Framework
<b>HRCRT</b>	Human Rights Conflict Resolution and Tolerance	<b>VET</b>	Vocational Education and Training
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organization		
<b>INGO</b>	International Non-Governmental Organization		
<b>LCRP</b>	Lebanon Crisis Response Plan		
<b>LFO</b>	Lebanon Field Office		
<b>LPDC</b>	Lebanese-Palestinian Dialogue Committee		
<b>M&amp;E</b>	Monitoring and Evaluation		
<b>MEHE</b>	Ministry of Education and Higher Education		
<b>MTS</b>	Medium Term Strategy		
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental Organization		
<b>PR</b>	Palestine Refugee		
<b>PRL</b>	Palestine Refugees in Lebanon		
<b>PRS</b>	Palestine Refugees from Syria living in Lebanon		
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goal		

## introduction

In 2017, UNRWA with support from UNICEF planned to strengthen its support to young Palestine refugees (PRs) in Lebanon. This support is articulated in the strategic framework below and reflects the views and needs of Palestine refugee youth in Lebanon.

The UNRWA Youth Unit in Lebanon, currently headed by a UNICEF secondee, will be responsible for providing technical guidance and support to all UNRWA LFO departments engaged with youth programming, as well as designing and implementing specific programmes, while reinforcing advocacy and strategic partnerships through external coordination.

The main focus of the UNRWA Youth Strategic Framework is to increase access to education services, improve livelihood opportunities through job creation initiatives and to increase youth empowerment, offering an innovative approach which entails the use of new technologies, innovative solutions and continuous participation and involvement of the youth.

The specific population targeted by the Youth Strategic Framework is both Palestine refugees in Lebanon (PRL) and Palestine refugees from Syria living in Lebanon (PRS) in the age range 15-24 years.<sup>1</sup>

The present Strategic Framework has been developed through a consultative process that has included a desk review, internal and external consultations, a review of current and past programmes - both within UNRWA and externally - as well as throughout the process regular consultations with Palestine refugee youth in Lebanon.

This Framework, once combined with a budgeted action plan, will form the full UNRWA Youth Strategy.

## situation analysis and context

The following section has been elaborated on the basis of the AUB-UNRWA *Survey on the Socioeconomic Status of Palestine Refugees in Lebanon, 2015*<sup>2</sup> and the *Adolescents and Youth Assessment for Palestine Refugees in Lebanon* conducted upon the initiative and through the financial support of UNICEF Lebanon.<sup>3</sup>

### Demographics

As of 31 December 2017, UNRWA had registered 469,555 Palestine Refugees in Lebanon (PRL).<sup>4</sup>

However, for the purpose of the Strategy, UNRWA will provide services and support to targeted beneficiaries based on assessed needs.

For planning purposes, UNRWA uses its own figures of current and potential beneficiaries in Lebanon based on its own data, and the actual costs of providing its services in previous years.

In 2017, a total of 204,631 persons have accessed UNRWA's services. Out of these, approximately 32,500 were PRS.

Of the total population (PRL and PRS), around 50 per cent are under 24 years, and 20-25 per cent are between 15 and 24 years of age.<sup>5</sup>

### Poverty profile

With regard to poverty, both general and extreme, the age group 15-24 is one of most affected, both for PRL and PRS populations. More specifically, over 70% of PRL youth live in poverty (where the poverty line is set at US\$ 208/person/month), and almost 5% live in extreme poverty (extreme poverty line set at US\$ 75/person/month), whereas over 90% of PRS youth live in poverty and 13% in extreme poverty.<sup>6</sup>

### Education

Lebanon is the only field in which UNRWA provides secondary education. This unique provision was necessary to address the problem of restricted access for Palestine refugees to government schools in Lebanon, and the prohibitively high cost of private schools.<sup>7</sup> Similarly, access to governmental vocational training and universities is limited by a quota system, as Palestine refugees are considered foreigners.<sup>8</sup> Yet, Palestine refugees are required to study under the Lebanese curriculum in order to obtain educational certificates recognized by the Government of Lebanon (GoL). In view of these special circumstances, UNRWA operates 9 secondary schools in Lebanon, catering for over 3,400 students in the school year 2017-2018. It also operates a vocational training centre running two campuses - the Sibliin Training Centre (STC) in the South (Chouf area) and the Sibliin Training Centre in the North (Nahr el Bared Camp) - in which about 1,000 students are currently enrolled,<sup>9</sup> 54 per cent of whom are classified as special hardship cases.<sup>10</sup>

In 2017, UNRWA Sibliin Training Centre was granted official accreditation from the General Directorate of Vocational and Technical Education/Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) and will start offering recognized diplomas as

<sup>1</sup> This age range has been chosen in order to align with the standards adopted by UNICEF  
<sup>2</sup> AUB and UNRWA, *Survey on the Socioeconomic Status of Palestine Refugees in Lebanon 2015*, 2016. Available from <https://www.unrwa.org/resources/reports/survey-economic-status-palestine-refugees-lebanon>

<sup>3</sup> UNICEF and Centre for Lebanese Studies, *Adolescents and Youth Assessment for Palestine Refugees in Lebanon*, 2017. The study adopted a qualitative and quantitative approach to assess the current situation of Palestinian adolescents and youth residing in eight Palestinian camps across Lebanon

<sup>4</sup> Whereas the results of *The Population and Housing Census in the Palestinian Camps and Gatherings in Lebanon*, conducted under the oversight of the Lebanese-Palestinian Dialogue Committee (LPDC), show that the total number of PRL individuals residing in the Palestinian Camps and Gatherings in Lebanon, as of July 2017, is 174,422.

<sup>5</sup> Calculation based on *Survey on the Socioeconomic Status of Palestine Refugees in Lebanon*

<sup>6</sup> *Survey on the Socioeconomic Status of Palestine Refugees in Lebanon 2015*, p. 58 and p. 156

<sup>7</sup> UNRWA LFO Education Department, TVET information, 2017

<sup>8</sup> UNRWA, *Strategic Plan 2016-21: Lebanon (Draft)*, p. 45

<sup>9</sup> UNRWA LFO Education Department, TVET information, 2017

<sup>10</sup> Through its two campuses, UNRWA is delivering 30 semi-professional and trade courses (13 regularly offered, 17 offered on an alternating basis), on two levels: for holders of 9th grade (Brevet certificate) and for 12th grade students (holders of Lebanese baccalaureate).

of 2019. STC has started the process of updating its curricula to comply with the MEHE requirements. This increases the employment perspective of UNRWA graduates and allows the access of vocational graduates to more advanced educational opportunities, even at the university level, until now unreachable through the vocational pathway.

As to PRL students, secondary school has the lowest enrolment rate among all school levels, averaging at 61.2 per cent. The 2015 secondary level enrolment rate is more than 10 per cent higher than that of 2010.

With regards to the PRS, secondary school enrolment rate averages at 35.8 per cent, significantly lower compared to PRL. While there are no fees to attend UNRWA schools, the low enrolment rate of PRS could be due to the inability to afford associated education costs (such as materials and transportation costs), along with inability to register, probably due to arrival in Lebanon in the middle of the school year. In general, harsher socioeconomic conditions, restrictive legal status in Lebanon and movement restrictions can be considered the main reasons behind the low enrolment rates of young PRS.<sup>11</sup> Vocational training is an important form of transitional education for PRS youth in Lebanon: around 28 per cent of 16 to 18-year-old PRS youth enroll in vocational education and vocational training short courses compared to 17.5 per cent of PRL youth of the same age.<sup>12</sup>

Less than one third of Palestine refugees who graduated from secondary school in the academic year 2016-2017 are currently enrolled in university.<sup>13</sup>

## Employment

Among all age categories of PRL, youth (15-24 years old) experience the highest rates of unemployment<sup>14</sup> (36.4 per cent).<sup>15</sup> The arrival of PRS posed additional serious challenges to the existing 'host communities' of Palestine refugees from Lebanon, placing already limited market access under additional strain. Palestine refugees with better education are more likely to be employed, and evidence shows that higher education can contribute to obtaining better jobs. Most Palestine refugees who manage to obtain a job work in casual and precarious employment, and most of the employed work in 'elementary occupations'. In addition, the vast majority of the employed (86.5 per cent) do not hold a contract and are only bound to their job through an oral agreement with their employers. Focus group discussions showed that many PRL households did not know what a work permit was or were not aware they had an obligation and right to obtain one.<sup>16</sup> Deprivation of the right to work in a number of professions for Palestine refugees, as well as limited professional competencies and a limited job market restrict their contribution in the economy to a minimum. In addition, unemployment among PRL has a strong gender dimension, where the female

unemployment rate – considering the population aged 15 and above - registers 32.4 per cent, while that of males is 20.8 per cent. The majority of employed PRL are males (81%) and females are five times less likely to be employed than males. The burden of household chores, women's mobility, familial obligations/care giving and social restrictions often placed on women, are all factors that substantially reduce their access to employment.

PRS, unlike PRL, are not exempted from work permit fees and are prohibited to work in several administrative and commercial professions that are otherwise open to PRL.<sup>17</sup> In addition, due to complex and costly processes to renew or extend residency documents, many PRS are residing in Lebanon without legal status, a condition that also affects their freedom of movement and further marginalizes them: in order to move in and out of many of the refugee camps and through Lebanese Army checkpoints, legal status is often a pre-requisite. PRS without legal stay do not leave their area of residence, thereby clearly restricting access to economic opportunities. Even when employed, PRS very often work in informal, low paid occupations and in precarious working conditions. The PRS unemployment rate is more than double of that of PRL and unemployment is gendered, with almost 70 per cent of PRS females aged 15 and above being unemployed. PRS youth unemployment stands at 57 per cent, higher than the average rate of PRS population as a whole (52 per cent). In conclusion, compared to PRL, PRS with the same educational attainment have lower employment rates, lower pay and their sense of insecurity is high regardless of their educational achievement level, a dangerous trend that could encourage PRS to drop out of school.<sup>18</sup>

## Housing and living conditions

With regard to housing and living conditions, PRL living in camps consider themselves as 'owners' of the house units they reside in, nevertheless Lebanese law prohibits Palestine refugees from owning property in Lebanon, so they are technically 'occupants'. Not having the right to own property, Palestine refugees are denied the right to transfer/inherit property as well.

Around a quarter of PRL households do not have any heating system and ¾ of residences are affected by dampness. About 62 per cent of houses suffer from water leakages, while poor ventilation and darkness affect 52 per cent and 55 per cent of residences respectively. Overcrowding is an additional challenge, with close to half of households having more than three persons sleeping in the same room. Furthermore, the majority of households rely on purchased water as the main source for drinking (60.9 per cent) and for cooking (50.8 per cent). In terms of assets, it is relevant to underline that about two thirds of households do not possess transportation vehicles.

<sup>11</sup> *Survey on the Socioeconomic Status of Palestine Refugees in Lebanon 2015*, pp. 70-170

<sup>12</sup> *Ibidem*

<sup>13</sup> UNRWA LFO Education Department

<sup>14</sup> The AUB-UNRWA Survey defines the unemployment rate as "the number of unemployed (have not worked last week and were actively looking for a job) divided by the labour force (employment + unemployment)

<sup>15</sup> This is also due to the fact that many of them remain engaged in education

<sup>16</sup> *Survey on the Socioeconomic Status of Palestine Refugees in Lebanon 2015*, pp. 86-89

<sup>17</sup> Since 2005, PRL have been granted the right to practice about 70 professions that were previously prohibited to them and restricted to Lebanese nationals only. However, PRL are still prohibited from practicing several professions. For further information, see UNRWA, *Employment of Palestine Refugees in Lebanon, an overview, 2017*

<sup>18</sup> *Survey on the Socioeconomic Status of Palestine Refugees in Lebanon 2015*, pp. 180-186

As to the PRS, the housing units they reside in are overcrowded (about 80 per cent of households having more than three persons sleeping in the same room) and show decaying infrastructures (deteriorated water and sewage treatment systems, contaminated water and jerry-rigged electrical wires along with open drainage ditches). Poor housing conditions and overcrowding have been linked to respiratory illnesses and the spread of infectious diseases. The high cost of materials along with the Lebanese authorities' restrictions imposed on bringing construction materials into the majority of the camps, leaves refugee families unable to carry out substantial repairs or maintenance. About one fifth of PRS live in dwellings that are between 11 m<sup>2</sup> and 20 m<sup>2</sup>, while not even 5 per cent of households possess a transportation vehicle.<sup>19</sup>

### Health and emotional wellbeing

Around 17 per cent of PRL aged 15-24 years suffer from a chronic illness, and over 6 per cent are disabled. The rates for young PRS are similar, with 16 per cent having a chronic illness and 5 per cent suffering from a functional disability.<sup>20</sup> Generally, findings show a strong positive correlation between poor housing and living conditions and poor health conditions. Furthermore, the vast majority of Palestine refugee youth with health issues – and especially those with a disability - reported that their health conditions significantly reduce their ability to carry out day-to-day activities and negatively affect their social life.<sup>21</sup> When taking into consideration the refugee population 15 years of age and above, it appears that the highest prevalence of illness is in those who never attended school, and the lowest prevalence is in those holding a Baccalaureate degree or higher. Also, employed refugees have lower rates of chronic illness and functional disability than those unemployed, demonstrating that those with health issues have reduced opportunities for employment, and that the ability of individuals to generate income protects them from chronic illnesses.<sup>22</sup>

Remarkably, it was found that nearly one quarter of young Palestine refugees reported feeling emotionally unwell. PRS and women are more likely than PRL and men to feel unwell. Housing conditions, along with the overall poor state and environment of the camps, has an impact on the emotional wellbeing of Palestine youth and has the potential to negatively impact personal growth and development. Poor economic conditions, unemployment, disability and restriction on the human rights of Palestinians in Lebanon are perceived as factors that worsen the situation.<sup>23</sup>

### Mobility and security

As to mobility and security of young PRL and PRS, it is noticeable that approximately one fourth of them never or seldom leave the camps, with females and PRS being less likely to move compared to males and PRL. Predictably, it was found that employed youth were more likely to move out of their camps than unemployed youth. Students go out frequently as well. There is a significant positive correlation between emotional

wellbeing and mobility: the less they are mobile, the worse is their emotional state. Similarly, the less mobile, the less likely they are to have a clear vision of their future. Finally, the worse the housing conditions, the less frequently youth go out of their camps.

One of the factors that affect mobility is army and police checkpoints. It was found that one quarter of young Palestine refugees consider checkpoints as a limitation to their movement (especially older male youth and PRS). One fifth of PRL and almost half of PRS say that checkpoints limit their movement. It is also relevant to consider that nearly one third of Palestinian youth do not feel safe outside the camps or gatherings, while almost half do only to a certain extent. Males and PRS were more likely to feel unsafe compared to females and PRL.<sup>24</sup>

Besides the political insecurity, focus group discussions revealed the concerns of Palestine youth and families about the unsafe environment of camps and gatherings arising from socio-economic situations. Violence, use of cold weapons such as knives, and substance abuse among youth were widely reported. Local gatekeepers addressed concern about the treatment of drug users as criminals by the Lebanese police and the lack of rehabilitation centers near the camps. Participants of focus group discussions suggested that the depressing situation that youth live in contributes to making them aggressive and results in violent behaviour.<sup>25</sup>

## youth strategic framework: principles and objectives

In April 2017, UNRWA Lebanon established a Youth Unit with the aim to strengthen its support to young Palestine refugees, by widening their access to formal and non-formal education pathways and other skills-building opportunities, to expand their knowledge and professional readiness, and by empowering them through increased civic engagement. The Agency will engage youth as partners in programming and advocacy, based on the widely recognized evidence that social involvement of youth leads them towards healthy choices.

Investing in youth is increasingly recognized to provide the longest and most effective dividend towards meeting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by building the social capital needed to foster sustainable development. This concept - along with the demographic weight and the particular vulnerability of the youth among the Palestine refugee population in the Lebanese context - are at the root of the decision to establish a Youth Unit in UNRWA Lebanon.

In this respect, particularly significant is the Resolution 2250 (2015) of the UN Security Council which – recognizing the threat to stability and development posed by the rise of radicalization among young people – urged Member States to consider ways to give youth a greater voice in decision-making at the local,

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., pp. 124-129 and pp. 222-227

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., pp. 93-203

<sup>21</sup> *Adolescents and Youth Assessment for Palestine Refugees in Lebanon*, pp. 49-57

<sup>22</sup> *Survey on the Socioeconomic Status of Palestine Refugees in Lebanon 2015*, pp. 93-203

<sup>23</sup> *Adolescents and Youth Assessment for Palestine Refugees in Lebanon*, pp. 119-120; UNRWA LFO information

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 116; UNRWA LFO information

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 117

national, regional and international levels.<sup>26</sup>

At the level of policy, UNRWA Youth Unit will support the ongoing effort of UNICEF to operationalise the National Youth Policy, developed under the umbrella of the UN Youth Task Force, endorsed by the Council of Ministers and officially launched by the President of the Republic in December 2012.<sup>27</sup>

Furthermore on the policy level, within the scope of Youth work, the Youth Unit intends to enhance the collaboration and the coordination between UNRWA and the Lebanese-Palestinian Dialogue Committee (LPDC), the latter being the body of the Lebanese government which deals with the coordination of Palestinian Refugees' affairs in Lebanon. Such collaboration envisions the involvement of the official Palestinian authorities as well, above all the Embassy of Palestine in Beirut.

According to the UNRWA Medium Term Strategy (MTS) 2016-2021, one of the Agency's strategic priorities is to build the capacities of Palestine refugees - particularly youth, women, the poor and other vulnerable groups - so they are better prepared to take advantage of livelihood opportunities (Strategic Outcome 4: Refugee capabilities strengthened for increased livelihood opportunities).<sup>28</sup> In line with the UNRWA MTS, the UNRWA Youth Strategic Framework is intended to empower the Palestinian youth and adolescents in Lebanon, by promoting quality learning, professional readiness, economic independence and healthy lifestyles.

The UNRWA Youth Strategic Framework aims to address the widespread apathy and distrust among Palestine refugee youth in Lebanon by generating inclusive opportunities that can lead to a positive change in their lives and communities. In this respect, the Strategic Framework will identify models of engagement which situate youth at the centre of the activities, by actively involving them in programming and advocacy, through a participatory approach able to make them the real agents of action and change. Special attention will be paid to the most disadvantaged and marginalised adolescents and young Palestine refugees, to provide them with equitable access and expanded opportunities. To this end, the Youth Unit will align its work to UNRWA Gender Equity Strategy 2016-2021<sup>29</sup> in order to guarantee a gender sensitive programming approach: gender mainstreaming will be taken into account and incorporated into the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all programmes and activities, to ensure that gender inequalities are not perpetuated. Similarly, disability among Palestine refugee youth will be treated as a priority and will be addressed through targeted interventions.

Furthermore, the present Strategic Framework fits neatly into and is aligned with the vision embodied in the UNRWA's Ten Youth Commitments, presented by the former UNRWA Commissioner-General during the conference "Engaging Youth: Palestine Refugee Youth in a Changing Middle East" convened in 2012, which showed consensus among all the stakeholders

on the need to work with and for youth. The Ten Youth Commitments provided a new direction and clarity to UNRWA's programming vision, with the aim to enhance the Agency's ability to incorporate youth views, to provide youth with expanded opportunities, develop their skills, empower them and advocate for their rights.<sup>30</sup>

The UNRWA Youth Strategic Framework is also aligned with UNICEF Youth and Adolescent Programme, as part of the UNRWA-UNICEF partnership in Lebanon that has been in place since 2012. In order to maximize synergies between their respective capacities, the two Agencies signed a Regional MoU in 2016, in which Youth is included among the thematic areas of focus for collaboration. Furthermore, the *UNRWA-UNICEF Partnership for Palestine refugee children and youth in Lebanon* was signed in 2017, building on a successful long-term partnership between the two Agencies. During 2017, both organizations acknowledged the need for a closer cooperation and agreed to expand their collaboration through the development of a multi-year strategic partnership. The UNRWA Youth Strategic Framework will serve as a guide, a technical framework that will be adopted with and by other UNRWA Lebanon departments engaged with youth, to identify best practices and ensure standardization.

The Strategic Framework is designed around three main outcomes:

1. Increased access to formal and non-formal quality education services to improve professional readiness and employability
2. Youth are supported/provided with entrepreneurial and life skills to expand income-generating opportunities
3. Increased civic participation through healthy lifestyles and active engagement.

### Outcome 1: Increased access to formal and non-formal quality education services to improve professional readiness and employability

Education plays a key role in all aspects of human development. It provides people with social and cognitive skills that they can use to support themselves financially through paid employment later in life. Long recognized for its socioeconomic benefits, research highlights the central role education plays in helping individuals live more fulfilled lives, perform better in the labour market, improve health, enjoy psychosocial well-being, overcome inequalities, and promote active citizenship and peaceful living.<sup>31</sup>

The vision of UNRWA's overarching education programme is to establish: "An UNRWA education system which develops the full potential of Palestine refugees to enable them to be confident, innovative, questioning, thoughtful, tolerant and open-minded,

<sup>26</sup> UNSC, Resolution 2250 (2015), December 9, 2015. Available from <http://unoy.org/wp-content/uploads/SCR-2250.pdf>

<sup>27</sup> The *Youth Policy in Lebanon* was drafted in the framework of a partnership between the Ministry of Youth and Sports, the "Youth Advocacy Process - YAP", and the "Promoting Lebanese Youth Participation and Empowering" project by the UN Youth Task Force. Available from [http://www.youthpolicy.org/national/Lebanon\\_2012\\_National\\_Youth\\_Policy.pdf](http://www.youthpolicy.org/national/Lebanon_2012_National_Youth_Policy.pdf)

<sup>28</sup> UNRWA, *Medium Term Strategy 2016-2021*, 2016. Available from

<https://www.unrwa.org/resources/strategy-policy/medium-term-strategy-2016-2021>

<sup>29</sup> UNRWA, *Integrating gender, improving services, impacting lives: gender equality strategy 2016-2021*, 2017

<sup>30</sup> UNRWA, *UNRWA's Ten Youth Commitments*. Available from <https://www.unrwa.org/userfiles/2012042914138.pdf>

<sup>31</sup> UNRWA, *Medium Term Strategy 2016-2021*

upholding human values and religious tolerance, proud of their Palestine identity and contributing positively to the development of their society and the global community".<sup>32</sup> One of the main aims of the UNRWA Youth Unit is to strengthen the capacities of Palestine refugee youth through increasing educational opportunities, thus creating employment opportunities as an indirect by-product of its operations.

As seen above in the situation analysis, a number of different challenges need to be addressed in order to increase opportunities for Palestine refugees, especially youth, who are living in a very unstable and at times volatile context. Despite positive achievements in primary enrolment, school attendance rates decline significantly at the secondary level, with the lowest enrolment rate among all school levels, particularly for PRS. Furthermore, the unemployment rate of young PRL and PRS is high, and the participation of women in the labour force<sup>33</sup> is very limited.<sup>34</sup> It is also important to emphasize that the effects of the Syria crisis and the subsequent localized emergencies are expected to continue to characterize the operating context in Lebanon during the strategic period of the MTS. Therefore, in consideration of the destructive impact of conflict on livelihoods, as well as the centrality of the latter in recovery efforts and their strong positive correlation with the educational dimension, the UNRWA Youth Unit recognizes its responsibility in fostering education, which is an essential requisite to empower youth socially, politically and economically.

Over the last few years, in line with the accreditation process of STC and the Agency-wide TVET Strategy (2014), UNRWA Lebanon has improved the quality, relevance and responsiveness of TVET services by upgrading and modernizing the learning and recreational facilities to make them more inclusive. Also, the ongoing process of developing and upgrading the curricula is being carried out with the objective of making them more relevant to the needs of the labour market and to integrate student-centred learning methodologies.<sup>35</sup>

Significantly, the employability rate for STC students who graduated in 2016 is registered at 76.5 per cent, much higher than the employment rate for refugees with a bachelor's degree or with only a high school diploma, demonstrating the strong positive correlation between practical technical vocational courses, education and employment.<sup>36</sup>

Moreover, the UNRWA Scholarship Programme provides access to university education for young Palestine refugees who excel academically but would otherwise be unable to afford tertiary education. The financial support to the Scholarship Programme has been considerably limited recently as focus on UNRWA primary services has taken precedence. For this reason, only 14 scholarships (13 females and 1 male) were awarded in 2017 and the number is set to decrease further for the academic year 2018/2019.<sup>37</sup>

Since 2007, UNRWA Employment Service Centres (ESCs) in Lebanon have supported Palestine refugees' employability in

terms of capacity building and integration into the labour market. Through its four ESCs (Beirut, Saida, Tyre and the North), the Agency provides quality employment services ranging from those aimed at reinforcing employability to direct referral and placement of job seekers into identified job opportunities.

The Youth Strategic Framework is aligned with the programmes and the interventions undertaken by the LFO UNRWA Education Department, among others. More specifically, with respect to the relevant age group, the Youth Unit will contribute to the development of the TVET Programme, which encompasses the two sub-programmes related to Career Guidance and to the Employment Service Centres (ESCs). The contribution will be in terms of coordination and technical assistance, through the provision of a technical framework with relevant and up-to-date guidelines. The Youth Unit will contribute to the Agency's effort to increase demand and access to education, to upgrade centres, improve the learning environment, improve inclusion as well as the quality of training, and to develop and upgrade curricula according to the current and future needs of the labour market. It also aims at strengthening the collaboration between universities, career guidance structures and ESCs, by reinforcing and creating channels to match youth with employers and by linking student profiles with universities and other scholarship providers.

In line with this outcome, the UNRWA Youth Unit recommends:

- To reinforce a system which informs educational courses according to market trends and macro/micro economies
- To provide youth with counselling and guidance in the transition between compulsory education and higher education in collaboration with UNRWA Career Guidance Unit
- To intensify the collaboration between universities, VET providers, UNRWA career guidance and ESCs by reinforcing and creating channels to match youth with employers, and by linking student profiles with universities, VET providers and scholarship providers

## Outcome 2: Youth are supported/provided with entrepreneurial and life skills to expand income-generating opportunities

The right to work and engage in productive employment is a fundamental human right.<sup>38</sup> Employment opens up a range of opportunities to access needed resources by empowering people economically, socially and politically. Empowerment is one of the primary means to mitigate poverty, build human dignity and promote human development. At both the community and individual levels, sustained employment and the opportunity to earn a decent living are critical for survival

<sup>32</sup> UNRWA, *Education Reform Strategy 2011-2015*, 2011. Available from <https://www.unrwa.org/resources/strategy-policy/education-reform-strategy>

<sup>33</sup> The AUB-UNRWA Survey defines it as "all persons above a specified age who were employed or unemployed during a short reference period (e.g. one week, one day)

<sup>34</sup> ILO, *Palestinian Employment in Lebanon - Facts and Challenges: Labour Force Survey among Palestinian Refugees living in camps and gatherings in Lebanon*, 2012, p. 50

<sup>35</sup> UNRWA, *Education Reform Strategy 2011-2015*, 2011

<sup>36</sup> UNRWA, *Strategic Plan 2016-21: Lebanon (Draft)*, p. 52; UNRWA LFO Education Department, TVET information, 2017

<sup>37</sup> UNRWA LFO Education Department

<sup>38</sup> Article 23.1, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, Article 6, *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)*

and recovery from conflict.<sup>39</sup>

The UNRWA Youth Strategic Framework aims to contribute to skills-building of young PRL and PRS through the development of more innovative, inclusive, responsive and sustainable learning systems to increase their professional readiness and employability. In addressing the learning needs of the Palestine refugee youth, this outcome is naturally linked to the previous one, however it entails interventions with a more specific focus on the provision of innovative and income-generating skills. Such interventions will provide professional, technical, entrepreneurial and life skills trainings, and will also aim at creating/strengthening structures to inform Palestine refugee youth on available business opportunities as well as channels to connect them with the employers on the market. Investing in skills-building of youth will enable them to be more independent, to contribute more to their communities, and it will progressively lead to a general improvement of livelihoods.

Under this outcome, the Innovation Lab Programme plays a central role. Valuing UNICEF expertise, UNRWA has decided to establish an Innovation Lab at UNRWA's Sibliin Training Center for both PRL and PRS youth. It is believed that one key option for Palestine refugee youth to escape from their current poverty trap is to be skilled in new technologies and knowledge of how to channel good ideas into business opportunities, enabling them to overcome the legal barriers they confront in more traditional labour market sectors in Lebanon.

The Innovation Lab is a space for youth and adolescents to be trained and involved as active partners in the design, development and implementation of business ideas that have a social impact. It offers professional readiness and employability training courses and programmes, and it's a platform to transfer to youth digital, design and web competences. Its overall aim is to accelerate the youth's potential and ideas that can be income-generating and can have an impact on their communities. The Innovation Lab Programme will also provide specific livelihood skills, such as critical and creative thinking, professional conduct, capacity to manage organizational processes, communication and interpersonal skills. By developing product or service interventions based on identified challenges within their communities, the youth are empowered to be the real agents of change. Subsequently, the students who elaborate the most viable enterprise ideas will advance to the incubation phase, where they receive one-on-one coaching and seed-funding to pilot their initiatives.

Ultimately, the Innovation Lab Programme creates a physical innovative and collaborative environment that will ideally result in progressive local economic development, able to address the social and public challenges of the whole community. In this perspective, UNRWA is considering that the Sibliin Innovation Lab and the Innovation Lab in the North Training Centre will not solely serve the students or Palestine refugees, but a wider part of the community by operating beyond school times.

In the incubation phase of the Innovation Programme - within the Mentorship Programme - youth are matched with mentors,

who are seasoned professionals and entrepreneurs who serve as technical-strategic advisors and connectors, providing support, guidance, career inspiration and experiences. The overall objective of this Programme is to provide mentorship support to Palestine refugee youth in order to increase academic retention, ease their transition to work and empower them to make informed and sound career decisions. More specific desired results of the Mentorship Programme for youth are: improved wellbeing through the establishment of new relationships; improved self-confidence and communication skills; improved motivation for academic performance; improved self-esteem; reduced social isolation; increased integration between different social groups; reduced involvement with criminality and/or extremism.

The activities and the interventions of the Innovation Lab Programme and the Mentorship Programme are designed, developed and implemented with the support of local (I)NGOs, vocational training service providers, as well as start-up and tech communities.

The Youth Unit will also support the work of the Department of Relief and Social Services in their micro loans programmes, where referral mechanisms and pathways will be strengthened and new ones created. The programme targets Palestine refugee youth, particularly university and vocational institute graduates as well as skilled and experienced individuals.

As such, the UNRWA Youth Unit recommends:

- The creation of a private sector platform that establishes links with Palestinian and non-Palestinian entrepreneurs and businesses, and advises the youth and assist them on economic trends, activities and opportunities
- In collaboration with our partners, to continue to raise awareness with the Lebanese government, civil society and the private sector about the 'Right to Work' of Palestinians and to encourage partners and stakeholders to provide work and training opportunities to Palestine refugees
- Embed a culture of social responsibility and foster the creation of work opportunities for Palestine refugee youth through innovation-related programmes

### **Outcome 3: Increased youth civic participation through healthy lifestyles and active engagement**

Young men and women are very often disillusioned with political leadership and excluded from policy development. As a global force, however, youth are increasingly demanding to be involved in the decisions that shape their societies. The key message of a side event on empowering youth for sustainable human development at the 51<sup>st</sup> Session of the Commission for Social Development was "Nothing about us without us".

From a development perspective, the involvement of young men and women in participatory processes and policymaking plays a pivotal role: it ensures that their rights are promoted and that their voices are heard, that inter-generational knowledge is

<sup>39</sup> UN policy for post-conflict employment creation, income generation and reintegration (2009)

shared, and that innovation and critical thinking are encouraged at all ages to support transformational change in people's lives and communities. From a crisis prevention perspective, such engagement further reduces the risks related to the political exclusion of large groups.<sup>40</sup> A similar message emerged from the above mentioned conference "Engaging Youth: Palestine Refugee Youth in a Changing Middle East" that resulted in the announcement of UNRWA's Ten Youth Commitments.

Despite the profound impact of the Syria crisis on Lebanon, the country has done remarkably well to maintain stable community relations. The fact that tensions - where they exist - have rarely escalated to the point of inter-communal violence is a testament to the hospitality and resilience of Lebanese host communities, yet progress in this area cannot be taken for granted. The peaceful co-existence of communities remains fragile.<sup>41</sup> In fact, it is important to point out that, according to recent research, young Palestinians in Lebanon often associate the refugee camps with violence, both symbolic and physical, where weapons are easily accessible even to under-age youth.<sup>42</sup> Similar findings emerged from the *Adolescents and Youth Assessment for Palestine Refugees in Lebanon*.

In this respect and within the scope of the UNRWA Youth Strategic Framework, equally important are the interventions aimed at increasing Palestine refugee youth empowerment through civic participation. It has been found and it's today widely recognized, that social involvement of young people leads them towards healthy choices, while at the same time it delegitimizes violence and discrimination.

Such a concept reflects the Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) framework adopted by UNRWA, defined by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee as a commitment by humanitarian organizations to take account of, give account to and be held to account by the populations they seek to assist. AAP concerns the responsible use of resources and assistance by humanitarian organizations through the systematic inclusion of feedback and accountability mechanisms across the programming cycle. UNRWA considers AAP to be a cornerstone of quality service provision, and a number of formal and informal mechanisms, standards and practices are in place to ensure the meaningful participation of the Palestine refugee population at various stages in the programming cycle. UNRWA delivers on its AAP commitments by focusing on: information-sharing; information-gathering; consultation; participation of vulnerable groups; complaints and feedback mechanisms. The UNRWA Youth Unit will incorporate the UNRWA framework for AAP into its own programming to ensure a better understanding of the youth and a greater impact, through improving communications with beneficiaries and staff, and encouraging the discussion and shift within the community, whilst measuring the theory of change throughout UNRWA's interventions.<sup>43</sup>

Through increasing access to meaningful civic engagement opportunities, Palestinian youth will be trained to develop, implement and lead advocacy campaigns and other initiatives

that will positively impact their personal wellbeing, their lives and their communities. The UNRWA Youth Unit will support the establishment and the strengthening of youth mechanisms, networks, councils and clubs to foster and ensure continued participation of young PRL and PRS in the shaping of their communities, local policies, and where possible be part of the conversation on a national level. The sense of social responsibility within their communities needs to be addressed and developed further. In this direction, the UNRWA Youth Unit will work to establish systems (and to review/strengthen existing ones) that will expand opportunities for youth to connect with and volunteer for NGOs and community based organizations (CBOs), with the overall aim to build the foundations of a youth forum for direct civic and policy engagement.

The Youth Unit's programming will complement and enhance the work in conflict management that begins from elementary school within UNRWA's programmes. It will help provide the right skills and space for social cohesion activities ensuring that youth who are trained with specific skills are sought out to assist with UNRWA work (campaigns, outreach etc.).

Displacement and related types of trauma affect young people's lives and thus young PRL and PRS will be provided with tailored conflict management training sessions - which include psychosocial support - to help them lead more fulfilled lives. These sessions will focus on issues such as team-building and trust among participants, intra and inter-communal conflict management, identity, freedom of religion, acceptance of diversity, dialogue and peace-building, critical thinking and changing of mindsets, as well as comprehensive reproductive health, hygiene, gender based violence (GBV), communication and healthy life styles.

The objective of encouraging healthy lifestyles through activities such as sports for development (S4D), life skills training and social cohesion activities, is meant to be carried out in combination with training sessions focusing on good health, physical, social and emotional growth and self-expression.

The School Parliaments are one of the main ongoing projects designed to increase youth engagement in their communities. The Youth Unit will support UNRWA's efforts to deepen and strengthen these participatory governance mechanisms in schools - which represent a practical application of the UNRWA Human Rights, Conflict Resolution and Tolerance (HRCRT) Toolkit - and include activities such as awareness raising events hosting human rights organizations, debates with community leaders on human rights issues, activities for students with special needs to help them integrate in the school life, as well as training on communication skills and focus group discussions involving students to identify major obstacles to full equality in their school and community.

<sup>40</sup> UNDP, *Youth Strategy 2014-2017*, 2014, p. 17

<sup>41</sup> Government of Lebanon and the United Nations, *Lebanon Crisis Response Plan*, 2017, p. 146

<sup>42</sup> Norwegian People's Aid, *Palestinian Youth in Lebanon between marginalization, exploitation and radicalization*, Lebanon, 2017, p. 15

<sup>43</sup> For more information, see *UNRWA Framework for Accountability to Affected Populations*. Available from <https://www.unrwa.org/resources/strategy-policy/unrwa-framework-accountability-affected-populations>

In order for such activities to have a greater impact, the UNRWA Youth Unit will support the Agency's effort to look at possible partnerships with relevant national and international NGOs.

Therefore, the UNRWA Youth Unit recommends:

- The standardization and integration of AAP and core Life skills in all youth programming
- Supporting Palestinian youth initiatives aimed at increasing youth participation in decision-making processes, by reinforcing and expanding systems already in place, including the ongoing LPDC youth engagement initiatives, as well as those led by official Palestinian organizations, with the overall aim to build the foundations of a youth forum for direct civic and policy engagement
- To establish a youth advocacy platform - engaging with already existing platforms, councils, clubs etc. - able to provide Palestine refugee youth with opportunities to identify and debate challenges faced by their peers, families and communities, and to allow them to influence and cooperate with duty bearers in developing policy alternatives through advocacy campaigns.

## advocacy

The UNRWA MTS 2016-21 affirms the Agency's commitment to advocating and providing for the human development and protection needs of Palestine refugees.

The UNRWA Youth Unit will contribute to the existing advocacy initiatives to empower Palestine refugee youth and promote their rights, to increase their access to services and opportunities, as well as to increase their civic participation and strengthen their role in decision-making processes in Lebanon. In this effort, the UNRWA Youth Unit will be involved on three levels:

1. **Grass-roots level:** facilitating and engaging with youth clubs/councils and community-based organizations
2. **Programmatic/partnership level:** in collaboration with civil society (NGOs and INGOs) and UNRWA's partners among the humanitarian and development stakeholders in Lebanon, within the scope of specific programmes and projects
3. **Policy level:** in collaboration with the relevant ministries of the Government of Lebanon (mainly through LPDC), the Palestinian authorities and in coordination with other UN agencies

The following key advocacy messages relevant to the present Strategic Framework have been collected from the youth and identified as in need of further efforts:

- Clarify and simplify the administrative process for Palestine refugees to obtain work permits (policy level)

- Collaborate with syndicates/orders to review their by-laws and allow Palestine refugees to work, with the view of removing the legal and administrative obstacles (grass-roots, programmatic/partnership and policy level)
- Raise concerns to the national authorities regarding the 'Right to Work' of Palestine refugees and the consequences of the limitations they face in accessing the labour market (policy level)
- Encourage the recruitment of Palestine refugees with the development and humanitarian stakeholders in Lebanon (programmatic/partnership level)
- Support joint initiatives that strengthen the inclusion of Palestine refugees within the higher education system

In addressing the above challenges, the UNRWA Youth Unit recommends:

- To develop a framework for advocating in collaboration with the Government of Lebanon
- To develop a framework for advocating in collaboration with UNRWA's partners
- To collaborate with Palestine refugee youth to articulate and agree on advocacy messages and to provide them with the necessary skills and resources to develop and lead advocacy campaigns
- To advocate with UNRWA programmes to adapt and best meet the needs of young Palestine refugees.

## internal and external coordination and partnerships

The role of the UNRWA Youth Unit consists in designing and coordinating an inclusive cross-departmental response through the internal mainstreaming of Youth, while simultaneously establishing or reinforcing strategic partnerships through quality external coordination.

With regards to its cross-departmental function, the Youth Unit will build on existing programmes to strengthen them and expand their scope of intervention, but it will also design, develop and implement new specific programmes.

In building on existing UNRWA programmes, the direct implementation of key activities will be shared among the Youth Unit and other UNRWA LFO departments, whereas the latter will remain responsible for the reporting requirements. The main purpose of the Youth Unit is to set up a framework that provides technical assistance and collects best practices for all UNRWA Lebanon departments to work within: a unified approach to monitor and improve internal coordination and coherence of all activities targeting Palestine refugee youth.

The UNRWA Youth Unit will also be responsible for the direct management of community engagement, advocacy and social mobilization projects characterized by a cross-cutting nature and that therefore are beyond the remit of any of the UNRWA departments.

In partnerships and inter-agency coordination, UNRWA will see its Youth Unit taking responsibility to lead and coordinate on all issues that concern Palestine refugee youth. Complementary strengths, expertise and resources can be combined for the common goal of delivering additional and more effective services to Palestine refugee youth.

The advantages of partnerships and inter-agency coordination are stronger advocacy and awareness raising, increased access to information and networks and improved operational efficiency. Partnerships' added value include increased access to resources, exchange of expertise and capacity building opportunities. Partnerships and inter-agency coordination can simultaneously reduce costs, increase programmatic impact and lead indirectly to enhanced and diversified resource mobilization through greater donor confidence.

When it comes to its Youth work, the Youth Strategic Framework is synergetic with UNRWA's Agency-wide resource mobilization strategy and UNRWA's Lebanon strategy on partnership and inter-agency coordination. In light of this alignment, the Youth Unit at UNRWA in Lebanon will:

1. Strengthen and deepen existing partnerships with key partners, including UNRWA's traditional donors
2. Build new and diversified strategic partnerships with prioritized partners in targeted areas
3. Contribute to reinforce UNRWA's positioning in key UN and government-led inter-agency and multi-stakeholder coordination mechanisms, the LCRP and the UNSF structures
4. Contribute to enhancing the visibility among key partners of UNRWA's key interventions and achievements in advancing Palestine refugees' rights through strategic communications

Against the backdrop of increasingly scarce resources, ambitious goals, as well as increasing needs amongst beneficiaries for UNRWA services, the need for partnerships and coordination with other UN agencies as well as non-governmental organizations has never been greater.

## monitoring and evaluation

The interventions carried out by the Youth Unit will be monitored and evaluated (M&E) through the Common Monitoring Matrix, which is the overarching M&E framework of the UNRWA Medium Term Strategy (MTS) 2016-2021. However, the reporting function remains a responsibility of the other UNRWA departments with which the Youth Unit aligns its programming, at least in the initial stage of its operation. This

provision is justified by the cross-departmental nature and the coordination function of the Youth Unit.

Yet in a later stage, it is expected that specific indicators for Palestine refugee youth will be developed as part of the action plan that will operationalise this Strategic Framework - ideally with disaggregated data by sex and age - which may for example focus on youth participation on decision-making, gender equality, outreach of specific youth groups, access to and demand for quality services, employability rate of the beneficiaries of specific trainings/programmes, reduction of bottlenecks and barriers to ensure an enabling environment. Such indicators will be developed along with surveys, perception assessments/analyses and evaluations of youth services and other tools, in order to monitor the progress and evaluate the achievements of the programmes and interventions. Reflecting the importance of the participatory approach of the UNRWA Youth Strategic Framework, direct feedback from the beneficiaries will be taken into great consideration, mainly through Focus Group discussions.

Moreover, the M&E system of the UNRWA Youth Strategic Framework is aligned with the one developed by the UNICEF Youth and Adolescents Programme.

As mentioned in the introduction, a budgeted action plan will complement this Strategic Framework, so that the two parts will form the full UNRWA Youth Strategy for Lebanon. However, in the meantime, initial focus will be on cost-neutral activities, based on the structure and principles defined in the present document, to allow the UNRWA Youth Unit to start engaging with youth-related programmes and to ensure Palestine refugee youth in Lebanon are properly represented.

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# annex 1

unicef and centre for lebanese studies

*adolescents and youth assessment for palestine refugees in lebanon*

october 2017

## key findings

This report summarizes findings of an investigation of the living conditions of young PRL and PRS in camps, aged between 10 and 24 years old, as well as their education attainment, emotional well-being (including their health and psychosocial conditions), and their daily coping mechanisms. The assessment was carried out between February and May 2017, and measured perceptions of immediate needs and suggested solutions against the overall socio-economic conditions and life quality of PRL and PRS in eight camps across Lebanon. The study adopted a qualitative and quantitative approach comprising a quantitative survey with a randomly selected sample of 958 PRL and 102 PRS, as well as focus group discussions with 119 Palestinian youth, face to face individual interviews and FGDs with 156 gatekeepers (i.e. parents, school teachers/principals/counselors, service providers including popular and security committees, UNRWA clinics and NGO representatives).

In brief, the socio-economic and political conditions of Palestinian young camp dwellers in Lebanon have a major impact on their lives and aspirations towards the future. Their political status with lack of civil rights, unemployment, insecurity and the dire conditions of the camps limit their opportunities and aspirations for education, affect their health and trap them in hopeless situations with a poor emotional state. In this executive summary we will highlight the main findings related to living conditions, health, employment, education, security and mobility, psychosocial wellbeing and recommendations proposed by the participants. Table 1 hereafter presents key indicators of the situation of Palestinian youth in the camps in Lebanon, according to their gender and age, followed by table 2 which compares the key findings between PRL and PRS.

**TABLE 1:** key indicators on the situation of Palestinian youth in the camps in Lebanon

	Male 10-14 %	Male 15-18 %	Male 19-24 %	Female 10-14 %	Female 15-18 %	Female 19-24 %	Total %
<b>Housing</b>							
Bad condition of dwelling	11.2	7.5	14.9	13	14.9	11.2	12.2
<b>Health</b>							
Having health problems	21.6	15	16.3	12.5	10.3	9.7	13.8
<b>Economic situation</b>							
Constant difficulty in keeping up with financial commitments	36.8	20.7	27.2	25	32	29.6	28.1
<b>Education</b>							
Not in formal education	13.6	35.6	43.5	17	29.1	29.5	28.8
Having repeated 2 or more grades in school	8	14.4	12.9	6	7.4	7.6	9.3
<b>Mobility</b>							
Seldom or never moving out of camp	32.8	16.2	15.8	47.5	30.9	23	27.7
<b>Safety</b>							
Feeling unsafe outside the camp	35.2	36.3	41.8	34.5	20.7	20.4	31.3
<b>Emotional Wellbeing</b>							
Emotional distress <sup>44</sup>	48.8	56.2	68.3	69.5	64	74	64.6

<sup>44</sup> The values in this table refer to the variable of emotional distress computed to take into account gender differences, it does not refer to the general variable of emotional wellbeing which includes items referring to empowerment and decision making. For more explanation refer to footnotes 30 and 31.

**TABLE 2:** Comparison of key findings between PRS and PRL

Having reported	PRS %	PRL %
Bad condition of dwelling	38	24
Having health problems	22	13
Constant difficulty in keeping up with financial commitments	45	26
School age dropout	25	14
University age dropout	15	13
Having repeated 2 or more grades in school	16	6
Seldom or never moving out of camp	47	26
Feeling unsafe outside the camp	43	30
Bad or very bad emotional state	36	22

## annex 2

### roundtable on employment report

On Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> of December 2017, the UNRWA Lebanon Field Office organized a Roundtable under the title *Employment perspective for Palestine refugees in Lebanon: challenges and way forward*.

The event, funded by the European Union Delegation in Lebanon, was attended by representatives from Embassies (British, German, Norwegian, Sweden, Swiss), UN Agencies (UNICEF and ILO), Private Sector, NGOs, UNRWA Youth Debate Clubs, UNRWA students from STC Innovation Lab, and UNRWA Scholarship graduates.

Ms. Gwyn Lewis, Deputy Director of UNRWA Affairs in Lebanon, welcomed the attendees and presented a brief on UNRWA interventions related to employability: UNRWA Sibling Training Centre, Employment Service Centres, Scholarship Program and the Legal Aid Unit.

The President of the *Order of Nurses in Lebanon*, Dr. Nouhad Doumet, gave a presentation about the situation of nursing in Lebanon, including the shortage of nurses and the challenges in hiring Palestinians:

- Definition of nursing includes TVET three years education and University level. It does not include education that is two years. For such students, they obligate them to study a third year before they can be accepted.
- Under the “temporary arrangement” personnel can benefit from free continuing education; though, they cannot benefit from the retirement plan.
- Currently, the Union for Nursing is requesting the Ministry to make the number of allowed foreigner workers in nursing, specifically Palestinians, subject to the yearly assessment made by the Union.
- Registration: there is only one person who is currently registered under the temporary arrangement. Some of the reasons are due to:
  - Employees’ fear from declaring their work status.
  - The procrastination from the hospitals’ administration offices to initiate and follow up with the registration. This is due to the fact that the registered nurse under the “temporary arrangement” will cost the hospital more in addition to forcing them to give them benefits such as the annual leaves.
  - Involved cost to go back and forth between the hospital and the Ministry to finalize the registration.

The President of the *Chamber of Commerce in Saida and South Lebanon*, Mr. Mohamad Saleh, highlighted the contributions of

Palestinians to the labour market and to the commerce in Lebanon. Mr. Saleh discussed the access to work and creation of more and better job opportunities for the refugees, while reviving local economy, stressing on the following:

- Institutions to be further developed in a manner to create more jobs.
- Palestine Refugees to be further trained to match the requirements of the market.
- Vocational Training institutes to develop and upgrade curriculum so it meets the new technology trends.

Dr. May Hammoud from *The Lebanese Palestinian Dialogue Committee (LPDC)* presented overview of employment situation and on how LPDC evaluates challenges of Palestine refugees’ employment in Lebanon and LPDC advocacy plan:

- There are problems in the awareness and advocacy
- Within the work of the Prime Minister, 50 consultants from various ministries formed the Lebanese Working Group. Over two years of work, they met to work on the Palestinian Refugees Affairs. The outcome is the Unified Lebanese Vision for the Palestinian Refugees Affairs in Lebanon, published by LPDC in Nov 2016. The value of this document is that it carried out the decision from the various Lebanese divisions and political parties. The main points that this document cover are:
  - Reference framework
  - Lebanese consensus reached on the Palestinian refugees’ issue
  - Defining “Palestinian refugee”
  - Position on resettlement
  - Resettlement and the political sovereign aspect
  - Resettlement and the socio cultural aspect
  - Resettlement and the living related aspect
  - Forming associations
  - Security and arms
  - Right to return
  - Relationship with UNRWA
  - LPDC and managing Palestinian Refugees issues
- This document looked at a new perspective of the Palestinian issue beside the security and right aspects. It looked at the political aspect from the socio economic perspective.

After the presentations, the audience split into four working groups which focused on “Challenges, Way forward and Key-players” of Palestine Refugees employment:

## Lebanese and Palestinian private sector and Palestine refugees' employment

The discussion was moderated by the ILO, and brought to the following presented points:

### Challenges:

- Cultural restraints in which some are related to:
  - Perception of Palestinians in Lebanon;
  - Lack of regulations that allow Palestinians to work;
  - Lack of hopes;
  - The local hardship economic situation.
- Current legal framework for obtaining registration;
- Access to resources from three main points:
  - Private: since most of Palestinians have not much to inherit from their families;
  - Partnership: it has a high risk for partners, and
  - Loans: accessibility to loans for Palestinians is almost impossible, and often risky.

### Recommendations

- Education and Awareness: increase focused training on personal management, financing, etc.
- Sharing information, making it available to the community:
  - Legal
  - Labour market needs
  - Available opportunities
  - Available networks
- Business incubators: made available and institutionalize information that encourage freelancer, working from a distance, etc.

## National authorities and Palestine refugees' employment: the discussion was moderated by UNRWA Legal Aid and LPDC.

### Challenge:

- lack of coordination between Palestine refugees and the Lebanese authorities, mainly: LPDC, ministry of Labor, NSSF, Ministry of Interior, syndicates and others.

### Recommendations:

- To define what UNRWA needs from each national authority;
- To engage more LPDC in the advocacy with the national authorities;
- To set meetings with the national authorities with clear written messages of what is needed;
- To develop UNRWA advocacy role;

- To study the internal laws of the syndicates which their jobs fall under the Lebanese labor law and see how UNRWA can work with them to ensure Palestine Refugees inclusion, taking the current situation of the Oredr of the Nurses as an example;
- To increase awareness sessions with the community;
- To finalize UNRWA legal mapping with other UN agencies and NGOs/INGOs to clarify the role of each one, to improve the referral of cases.

## Youth perspective: obstacles and experiences - the discussion was moderated by UNRWA Youth Unit

### Challenges:

- Need for financial assistance to complete studies;
- Need for assistance or alternatives to the usual ways of finding a work or starting business i.e: plan formal programs such as: innovation lab, design thinking;
- Need for counselling and career guidance at younger age to know what is possible for Palestine youth in Lebanon to work in;
- There are two missing links:
  - Counselling between compulsory education and higher education;
  - Between education and jobs (lack of labor market information and absence of reflective and accurate labor market assessments)

### Recommendations:

- Proper platform for business owners to advocate and be part of the conversations to create momentum for advocacy with the stakeholders and decision makers
- Awareness raising on success stories and encourage on mentorship and coaching programs done by business owners;
- Better awareness raising and sensitization of current services, "Have to have youth to advise";
- Raising awareness with civic society (NGOs and INGOs), advocate on employing Palestinians, rights and responsibilities

## Stakeholders' perspective: UNRWA, UN agencies, NGOs, diplomatic community working group: The discussion was moderated by UNRWA Protection Unit

### Challenges

- Lack of coordination among stakeholders in relation to employment/right to work initiatives;
- Current legal framework;
- Implementation of existing legal provisions;
- Perception of Palestinians in Lebanon;

- Current economic situation;
- Attitude of Palestinians (fear, lack of knowledge);
- Current political situation (Syrian crisis, Lebanese political environment; uncertain/volatile security situation);
- Economic burden for Palestinians;
- Lack of access to information

## Recommendations

- **Awareness**
  - Sensitization sessions about rights and opportunities for Palestine refugees;
  - Public campaigns
- **Advocacy**
  - Engagement with national authorities (ie Ministries, LPDC) about the existing rights' deficit and about the challenges in the implementation in the current legal provisions;
  - Engagement with syndicates/orders to "open" professions;
  - Elaboration of key advocacy messages to be shared among all stakeholders in order to ensure that employment/right-to-work issues are included in their action and to bring forward a common line;
  - Increase the involvement of the representatives of the diplomatic community;
  - Engagement with not traditional audiences (ie Academia)
- **Coordination/Programming**
  - Creation of a coordination forum;
  - Support a comprehensive labour market assessment (incl. prohibited professions);
  - Mapping of actors involved into employment/right to work initiatives;
  - Strengthen employment/career centres (with a special focus on job seekers)
- **Empowerment/Inclusion**
  - Adaptation of TVET curricula to the market needs;
  - More scholarships for Palestinian students

Ms. Gwyn Lewis concluded the day by a summary of the key messages that were comprehended from the presentations and the four work groups. The discussions offered a room for conversation on challenges and collaboration perspectives on the Palestine refugees' employment and economic participation in Lebanon. Better awareness of available interventions is needed. More collaboration and networking is essential between different stakeholders. Ms. Gwyn highlighted the importance of the roundtable in showing the different perspective and in collecting relevant recommendations that should be taken forward to improve the employment of Palestinian youth.

# annex 3

## focus group discussions

	Date	Location	Participants	Age group	Beneficiary coverage	Topics
<b>FGD 1 (FGD x6)</b>	21.06.2017	STC - Sibliin Training Centre (South)	Tot. 111 youth (53 males and 58 females)	15-24	North, CLA, South, Saida and Bekaa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Community support activities (20 youth - 10 males, 10 females)</li> <li>- Sport activities (20 youth - 8 males, 12 females)</li> <li>- School parliament activities (20 youth – 11 males, 9 females)</li> <li>- Innovations activities (18 youth – 7 males, 11 females)</li> <li>- Employment (18 youth – 9 males, 9 females)</li> <li>- Civic engagement (15 youth – 8 males, 7 females)</li> </ul>
<b>FGD 2</b>	14.07.2017	UNRWA Lebanon Field Office	10 UNRWA interns (3 males and 7 females)	19-21	STC students (South)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- awareness on UNRWA internship and mentorship sessions</li> <li>- How to foster a new generation of youth leaders</li> <li>- Feedback on current UNRWA internship program</li> </ul>
<b>FGD 3</b>	25.08.2017	STC - Sibliin Training Centre (South)	25 Innovation Lab students (15 females, 10 males)	19-24	South, Saida, CLA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Innovation Lab course review and suggestions for additional courses</li> </ul>
<b>FGD 4 (FGD x4)</b>	15-16.11.2017	Al Aqsa School in Rashidieh Camp	60 youth (35 females, 25 males)	14-18	Al Aqsa School students and youth from local community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Camp improvement and needs (15 youth – 7 males, 8 females)</li> <li>- Livelihoods (20 youth – 7 males, 13 females)</li> <li>- Education (12 youth – 7 males, 6 females)</li> <li>- School Parliaments (13 youth – 4 males, 8 females)</li> </ul>
<b>FGD 5</b>	13.12.2017	STC - Sibliin Training Centre (South)	30 youth (12 males, 18 females)	20-23	South, Saida, CLA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Current needs and priorities of Palestine youth living in Lebanon</li> </ul>
<b>FGD 6</b>	25.01.2018	Sciences Po University, Monaco	1 <sup>st</sup> year international university students, 45 youth (25 males, 20 females)	18-21	Youth from more than 15 different countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review and feedback on zero draft of UNRWA Youth Strategic Framework for Palestine refugee youth In Lebanon</li> </ul>

# annex 4

## unrwa's ten youth commitments

engaging youth  
unrwa



## unrwa's ten youth commitments

On March 19-20 2012, UNRWA convened a conference funded by the EU and hosted in Brussels by the Government of Belgium. "Engaging Youth: Palestine Refugee Youth in a Changing Middle East" saw world leaders and opinion makers, civil society and Palestinian refugee youth come together to discuss their concerns in a frank, open manner.

The youth seized the space, making clear that they were more than equal partners in the discussions. There was consensus among host and donor countries, private partners, NGOs and UN agencies on the need to work with and for youth.

The event provided new clarity to UNRWA's programming vision. At the conference's close, Commissioner-General Filippo Grandi unveiled an agenda of ten commitments. Many of these build on work that the Agency is already doing; others will enhance UNRWA's ability to incorporate youth views.

UNRWA seeks support for these commitments, which readily link to existing strengths and assets within the organization.

### 1. Education

We will make classroom life more dynamic, emphasizing critical thinking skills among our students; in part by supporting our teachers to lead student-centered classrooms as part of education reform. Children should learn how to question and know how to find the answers. This is indispensable if we want children to become young people able to think critically, and to make informed choices.

### 2. Health

We will better focus on youth issues within the new family-centered health reform. With non-communicable diseases now the single greatest threat to the health of the refugees, preventive care and learning healthy life-styles are crucial for youth. We want young people to make healthy life choices and to have their health concerns addressed sensitively.

### 3. Vocational training

We will continue to invest in making technical training more relevant. We will introduce more short-term courses, driven by labor market demands and on-the-job training. We want youth to be economically productive.

### 4. Microfinance

We will increase lending to young refugee entrepreneurs. We have already launched a project with Silatech, an Arab microfinance innovator, to give refugee youth entrepreneurs what is often beyond their reach: their first loan to start their first business. We want youth to know entrepreneurship is within their reach and holds great potential for them.

### 5. Scholarships

We will better connect students to scholarship opportunities. We want youth to have an open door to higher education, necessary in today's job market.



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# unrwa's ten youth commitments

## Refugee youth at a glance

- There are 1.42 million registered refugee youth
- Jordan hosts biggest refugee youth cohort (40.3%)
- Refugee youth numbers have tripled since 1975

as of January 2011

## UNRWA and youth

- 699 schools
- 486,754 pupils
- 49 per cent of pupils are girls
- 10 vocational training centres
- 6,652 VTC places
- 3 educational science faculties

as of January 2012

By 2020, refugee youth (refugees aged 14-29) will number over 1.5 million. This represents an overall 6% rise since 2010: 4% in Jordan, 8% in the West Bank and 15% in Gaza.

## 6. Skills development

We will expand the Engaging Youth approach, piloted in Syria, to other fields, stressing leadership, entrepreneurship, project and community development and technical training. We want youth to believe in themselves, develop career and life agendas, and see them to fruition.

## 7. Rights

We will advocate more clearly and specifically for the rights important to young refugees, such as the right to education, the right to work, the right to freedom of movement, just as we keep advocating for their rights as refugees. We want youth to have the opportunities they deserve and to be able to seize them.

## 8. Partnerships

We will build new alliances and strengthen our existing links with NGOs, the private sector, the UN system and others involved in youth programming. We want to learn from and work with others, and be swift and effective in our work with youth.

## 9. Participation

We will establish mechanisms to ensure that the views of young people play a real role in Agency programming. The American University of Beirut will lend space, resources and expertise to help us explore options. We want youth to know and to feel that the UNRWA is their Agency and aims to address their needs.

## 10. Communication

We will enhance direct communication between us and our young stakeholders, including through new media and social networking. We must be highly responsive in a rapidly changing environment and communicate with youth in ways they prefer to communicate.



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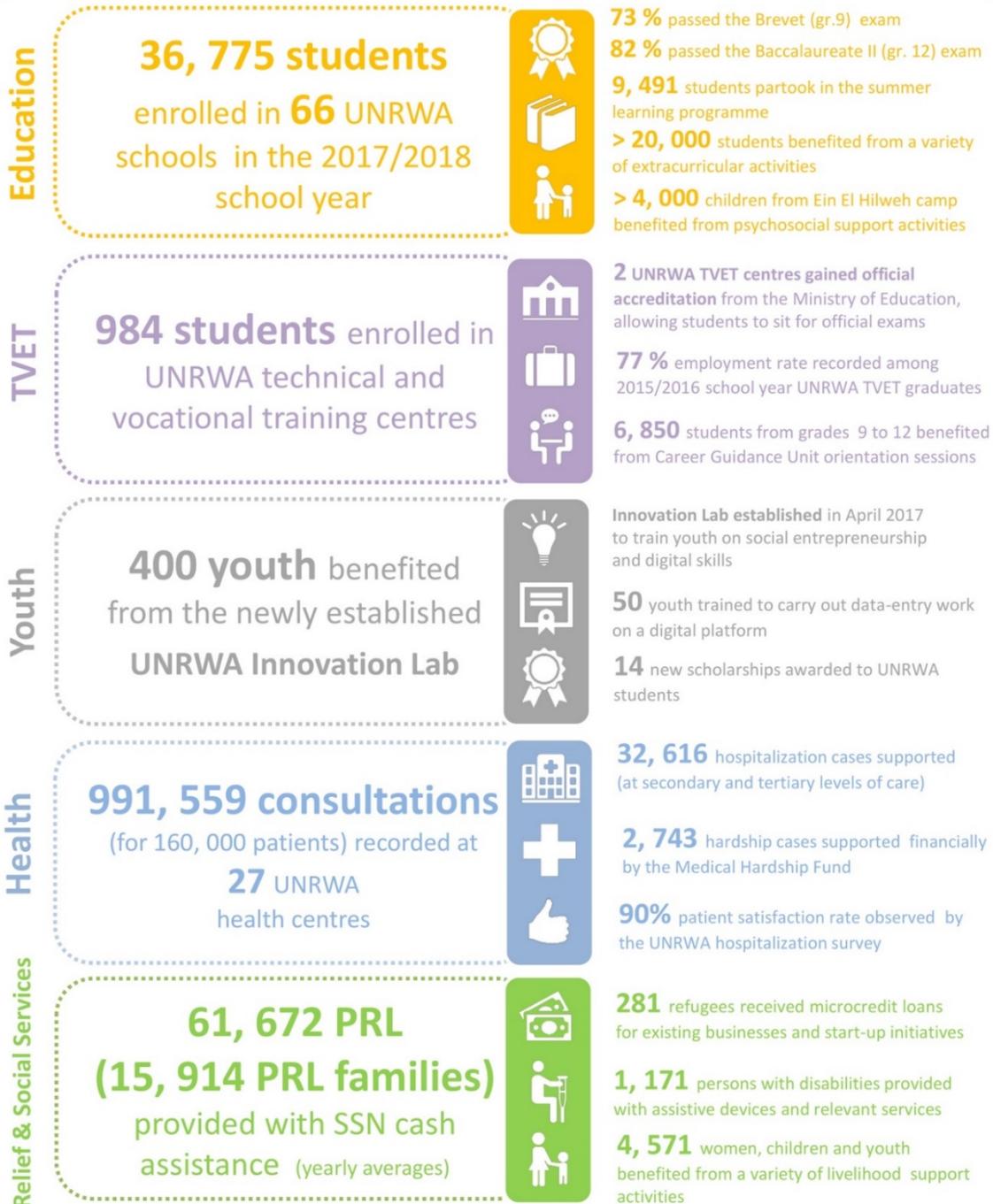
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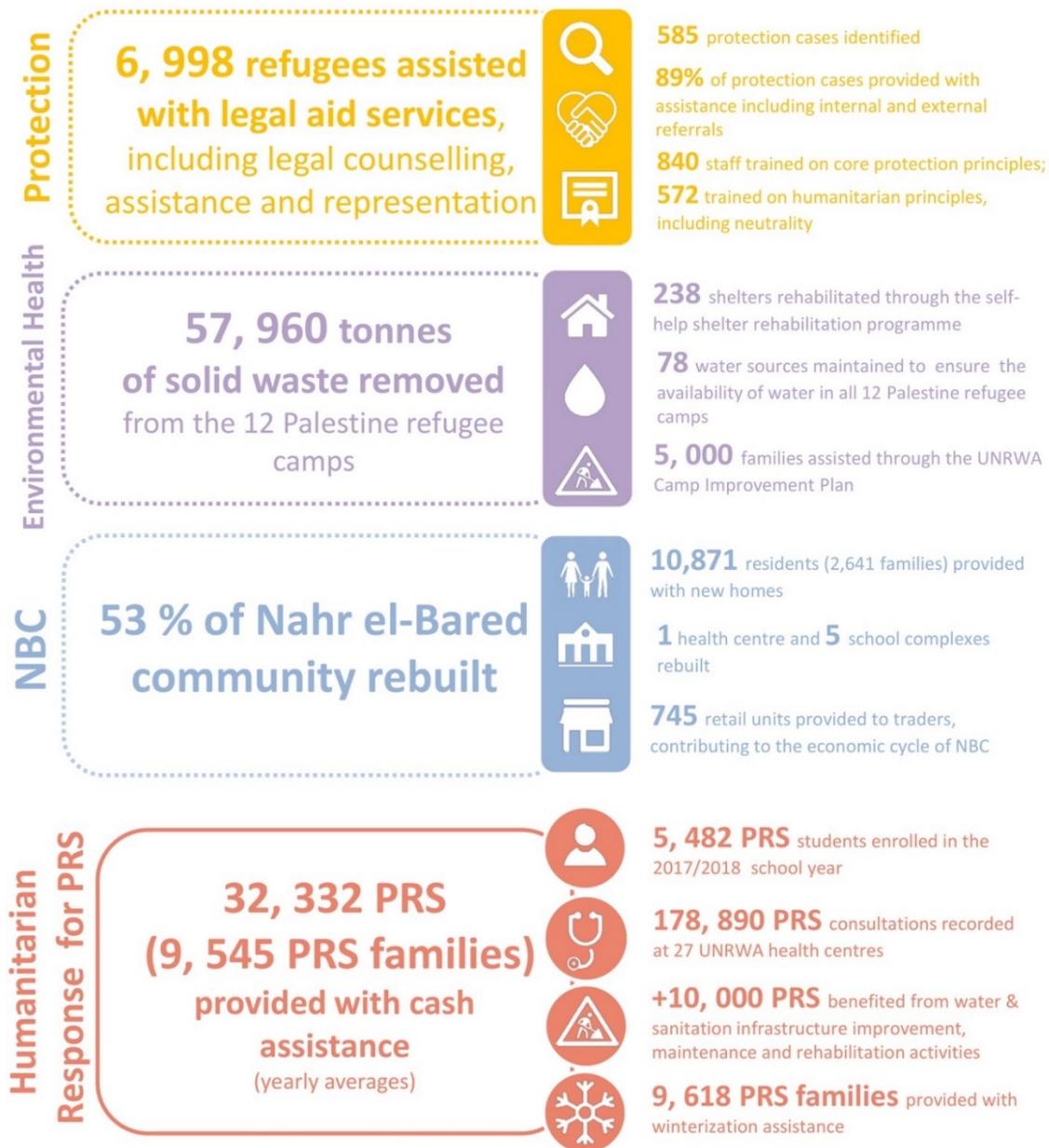




## unrwa lebanon field office key operational achievements 2017

**3, 710** Palestine refugees employed by UNRWA in Lebanon





## funding overview

UNRWA funding portal	Total requirements (US\$)	Minimum operational requirements (US\$)	Shortfall against minimum requirements (US\$)
<b>Programme budget</b> (core activities agency-wide)	<b>747 million</b>	<b>747 million*</b>	<b>243 million</b>
<b>Lebanon Crisis Response Plan</b>	<b>61 million</b>	<b>30 million**</b>	<b>26.8 million</b>

\*Budgeting for the Programme Budget (PB) has been based on maintaining existing service levels. UNRWA is considering a "needs based" budget for 2019 to align with Emergency Appeals and Project methodology.

\*\* This does not include US\$ 9.1 million carried forward from 2017.





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