



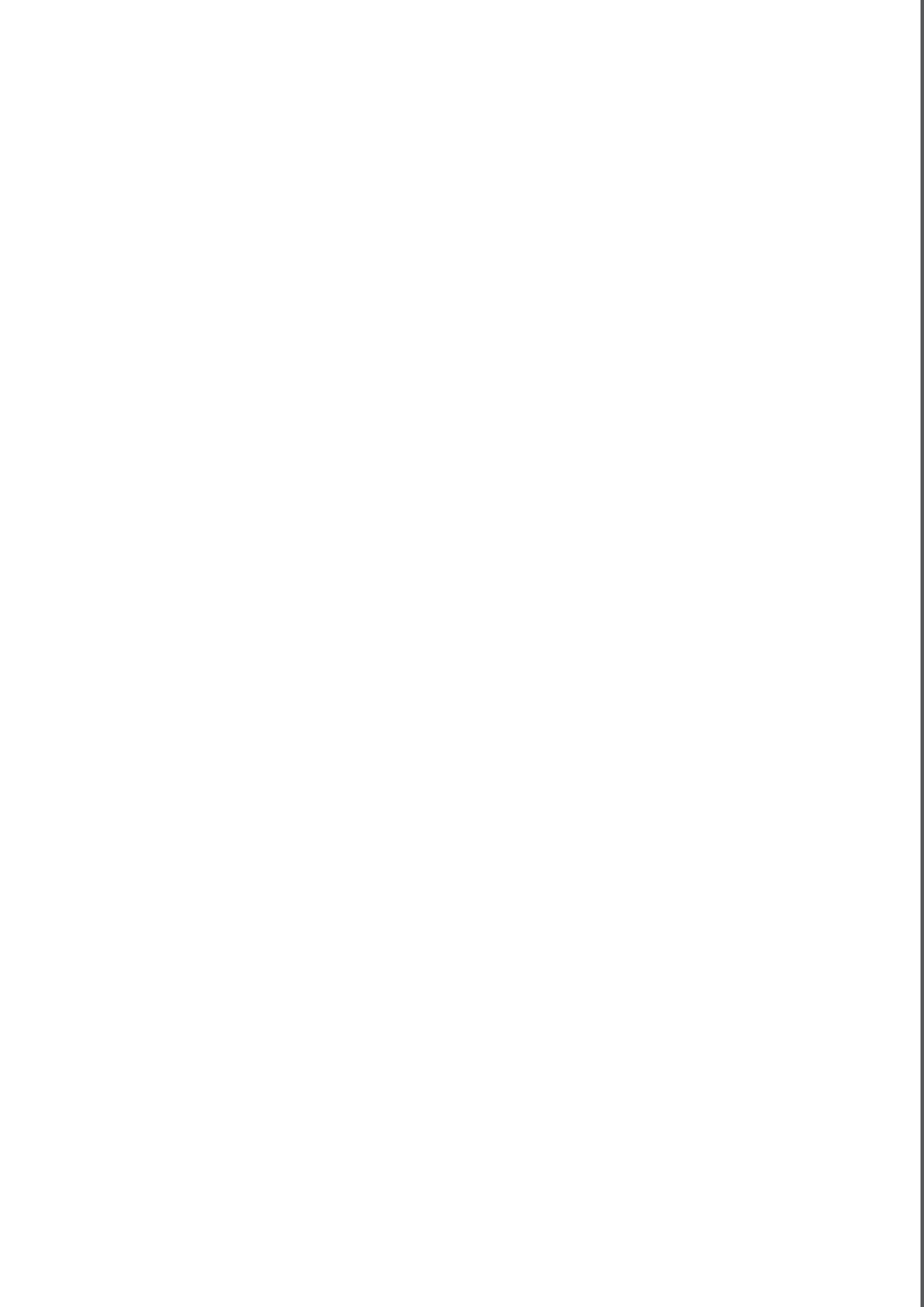
Lebanese Republic | Presidency
of the Council of Ministers
LEBANESE PALESTINIAN
DIALOGUE COMMITTEE

DRAFT

Youth Strategy for Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon

2019-2025

Summarized Draft





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Acknowledgement

This strategy would not have become what it is had it not been for the participation of the Palestinian youth themselves. Since 2016, they have been involved in the strategy development by attending and actively discussing with us their challenges and potentials as well as possible solutions and needed efforts. We hope this process and the strategy has provided a starting point from where continuous inclusion, participation, and collaboration directly with the youth will flourish.

Furthermore, this strategy has undergone several phases in its drafting, and it would not have developed to this current stage if not for the work, effort, dedication, and commitment of Ms. Lina Abou Reslan and her team consisting of Ms. Sahar Hammoud and Mr. Rabih Ibrahim.

Special thanks to UNRWA for their support and especially the Head of UNRWA's Youth Unit, Ms. Sarah Shouman, and her team Mr. Gabriele Curtacci and Ms. Edith Perman; as well as to the Palestinian Higher Council for Youth and Sports in Lebanon, and its General Director Mr. Khaled Obady. Without their continuous collaboration with LPDC and our shared vision towards the Palestinian youth in Lebanon, this strategy would not have the solid leverage it has.

In addition, we would like to thank all the stakeholders who we have had consultations and working sessions with; whether donors, international organizations and agencies, local NGOs, or Palestinian and Lebanese authorities. These meetings have enriched and nuanced our research and understandings on current efforts towards the Palestinian youth, and they have enabled us to build the strategy on valuable experiences. A special thanks goes out to the group of experts whose expertise and knowledge have greatly contributed to the strategy: Ms. Racha Najdi, Dr. Muna Khalidi, Ms. Marta Petagna, Mr. Nazih Yacoub, Ms. Sawsan Masri, and Mr. Tariq Haq.

Lastly, most of the statistical findings about the youth have been extracted from "The National Population and Housing Census of Palestinian Camps and Gatherings in Lebanon 2017," conducted by LPDC in partnership with the Lebanese Central Administration of Statistics and the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics.

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Youth Strategy for Palestine and its People

It was expected that LPDC's activities would reach the Palestinian youth, not only because they are considered the largest segment of the Palestinian refugees, but because they present a promising future despite their sufferings. The youth suffer more than other segments of the Palestinian refugee community in Lebanon, given the accumulation of problems they face, particularly in this complex political and historical moment in which their future is put in question. In these crucial changing times, where deals are being made, and conflicts are erupting throughout the entire region, the Palestinian cause is being targeted, and with it the Palestinian youth's dreams and their fate to return to homes from which their parents and grandparents were forcefully displaced. Not to ever forget what they face as a young age group at the levels of education and work, both before and after graduating, in addition to their struggles in issues such as the right to housing, and to stable work that corresponds to their qualifications and competencies, and provides them with social security guarantees. The Palestinian youth in Lebanon hence struggle to reach a secure and stable life in the country where their families took refuge 70 years ago. We must also not forget the challenges that the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) is facing as a result of attempts to eliminate the Agency. Hence erasing the sole and main international witness to the ongoing tragedy of the Palestinian refugees, and the main actor who provides them with protection and assistance in the areas of education, health, relief and other basic services. All this is the tip of the iceberg of the suffering of the Palestinian youth, which raises many serious fears of the upcoming situation. The harsh reality that surrounds them leads some to take desperate endeavors such as illegal immigration, substance use, depression and other forms of despair.

This strategy developed by LPDC is a road map and a framework of action that aims to overcome the cycle of hopelessness and offer prospects for the future. A future that we can achieve together and in cooperation with all our national and international partners who care about the fate of these young people, and see the importance of opening new pathways. Perhaps the importance of this strategy stems from the fact that it is based on the ideas of the Palestinian youth themselves, and is the outcome of hundreds of hours of discussions held with them in all camps and gatherings from the far north to the far south of Lebanon. The team that led and steered the discussions was tasked with consolidating this individual effort and transforming it into a collective product that reflects the aspiration to build a unified vision and a joint work contributing to the process of drawing an effective framework for the future through common efforts' achievements. This is also in order not to waste the modest resources available on duplicating projects that do not make a difference in the lives of the youth.

The preparation of the "Youth Strategy for Palestinians in Lebanon 2019-2025" is a culmination of the path adopted by LPDC in its methodological and scientific approaches to the Palestinian issue in Lebanon. During the past few years, LPDC succeeded in accomplishing achievements in the formation of a documented awareness of refugee issues from multiple approaches, in which it presented solutions to dilemmas that remained taboo in objective approaches. Moreover, LPDC initiated and supervised "the National Population and Housing Census in Palestinian Camps and Gatherings in Lebanon 2017", with the participation of the Lebanese Central Administration of Statistics and the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics in Ramallah. Thus, all decisions makers have now access to a solid database, capable of forming the needed ground for the preparation of sustainable development plans.

This strategy has not been prepared to be turned into a paper publication, but rather to serve as a turning point in the context of awareness, inclusion and collaborative action. It is the result of effort and action for Palestine and its youth who are the pulse of the Palestinian cause and the guarantee for its continuation.

Finally, LPDC would like to thank the support of His Excellency Prime Minister Mr. Saad Hariri for his support to our work, and for his commitment to improving the situation of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, and particularly the youth among them.

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Chairman of the Lebanese Palestinian Dialogue Committee (LPDC),

Dr. Hassan Mneimneh

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INTRODUCTION

What are the right questions we should be asking about the conditions and prospects of the Palestinian youth in Lebanon, today?

This was the initial question that kick-started LPDC's project with the Palestinian youth. It had evolved from other questions such as: What can we, as LPDC, do for the Palestinian youth in Lebanon? What can the youth do? What are they doing already? What are the stakeholders involved in youth matters doing? What are they not doing? What are we doing and what should we stop doing?

LPDC set off to directly engage with the youth, the heart of this strategy, seeking the right questions about the conditions and prospects of the Palestinian youth in Lebanon. A thorough process of deep listening and meaningful conversations was conducted, with the following intentions:

- We want to listen to each other, therefore we need to create spaces for coming together;
- We want to unfold meaningful questions and possibilities, therefore we should ground these spaces in honest and clear intentions;
- We want to understand potential, therefore we should immerse ourselves in the youth's reality;
- We want to envision change, and in order to achieve that we should collectively think strategically and ambitiously;

- We want sustainable, innovative responses, accordingly we must enrich our conversations with creative tactics and connect our ideas with practical imagination;
- We want to empower the youth, and so we have to give them the platform to think, create and inspire each other, and to be responsible of their strategy and lead its development and implementation;
- We want to align energies and resources, and in order to do so, we should develop a strategy around which all those who care about the youth can gather;
- We want everyone to invest in youth potential, accommodate for the diversity of their thinking, expand their spectrum of opportunities, and ground their visions in tangible support.

This strategy is the result of an open-ended search to improve the future of Palestinian youth in Lebanon, and tell a story that is different from the ones we hear today. We hope that it serves as a solid strategy towards improvement, and that it contains insights that will not only establish directions for working towards change but that will inspire the youth to take an active part of this change.



ABOUT THIS STRATEGY

The Lebanese Palestinian Dialogue Committee is an inter-governmental agency established in 2005 as a key interlocutor between the Lebanese government and the Palestinian Refugees. The Committee serves as a focal point among the local and international stakeholders and organizations, and provides policy recommendations to the Lebanese government aimed at improving Palestinians' living conditions. In its recommendations, LPDC takes into account both the national interests of the Lebanese people and the rights of Palestinian refugees to live in dignity and respect, until their right of return is realized. During the last couple of years, LPDC's work has seen a shift in focus to address mainly the deep-rooted complexities and challenges. This focus is manifested in the publication titled *A Unified Lebanese Vision for the Palestinian Refugees Affairs in Lebanon*¹ which was the result of over 50 meetings in the course of two years with major Lebanese political parties representatives coming together to discuss and align the vision on addressing challenges faced by Palestinians in Lebanon. This focus is also manifested in the *National Population and Housing Census of Palestinian Camps and Gatherings in Lebanon 2017*², which was conducted in partnership with the Central Statistics Department of Lebanon and the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, and in LPDC's work towards mobilizing the development of a participatory strategy for the Palestinian youth in Lebanon. This strategic plan for the Palestinian youth is structured in two parts. First, the essential question of why we need a strategy for young Palestinians in Lebanon is highlighted, which is followed by an elaboration of what the strategy framework is and what the Palestinian youth's situation, needs, challenges, and opportunities are (part 1). On this basis, the action plan is laid out (part 2) with thematic focus areas and suggested directions of actions as well as a framework for action.

The strategy aims to be of practical significance to all stakeholders and actors. On one hand, it provides funding stakeholders a ground-level perspective of the need, potential, and impact of investing in the Palestinian youth in Lebanon. On the other, it hopes to

inspire the youth to think strategically about their own potential and challenges at a deep level of individual and collective reflection. In addition, the strategy aims to enable Lebanese stakeholders to see the Palestinian youth spectrum of potential and fears. The strategy thus aims to encompass broad visions and create a space for collaboration, yet focus on specific thematic areas to set ground for tangible action.

In order to accomplish the above, the strategy is context specific and avoids generic terms and conclusions: the analysis and terminologies are derived from the ground-based research and outreach, and reflect the challenges and opportunities revealed in the process. Furthermore, this strategy aims to target a multi-levelled audience, and is hence written in a manner that avoids technical jargon and consciously speaks to the youth, and not only donors and organisations.

This strategy aims to **serve as an umbrella** to stakeholder investments and actions with the Palestinian youth. LPDC functions as **instigator, facilitator and host** of joint efforts where possible. The suggested directions of action serve as openings and inspiration to stakeholders and youth to focus their work, as spaces to explore the directions' potential, or as prototypes modelling new directions. The strategy is thus not an end-product but rather continuously evolving alongside developments in context, involvement, and practical experiences.

LPDC hopes that this strategy – with its emergence, circulation, and endorsement processes – builds empowerment for the Palestinian youth by providing them with a legitimate and official source of leverage, which they can refer to in their future actions towards change.

1. LPDC 2016

2. LPDC, Lebanese Central Administration of Statistics, & Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics 2017

PART 1: STRATEGY BACKGROUND

1. WHY A PALESTINIAN YOUTH STRATEGY TODAY

This chapter sheds light on the long overdue need for focusing on the young Palestinians in Lebanon. Different actors are beginning to focus on the youth, but the strategies and programmes are not aligned and thus risk overlapping and not making the best of existing resources. On the basis of more than two years of ground-level research with the Palestinian youth in Lebanon and continuous stakeholder mapping, LPDC advocates for a joint action plan, where different stakeholders and donors can coordinate their actions and investments, and where the participation of the youth themselves is in focus.

1.1 INVESTING IN A BETTER FUTURE

Why do we need a strategy for the Palestinian youth in Lebanon?

Because the Palestinian youth face many struggles.

Young Palestinians come face to face with daily **hardships** on socio-economic, political, cultural, and emotional levels. They are **marginalized** where they should be nurtured, and often silenced where they should be able to voice their troubles responsibly. Further, they are **manipulated** and used as pawns in political competitions and struggles over authority. The general impression among Palestinian youth from different political and socio-economic backgrounds is that they are **caught** in a seemingly turbulent yet very established hierarchical system that accommodates little for them to play a role in any decision making or achieve youth representation and political growth. This applies to both Palestinian and Lebanese contexts.

Because the donors are challenged.

Support networks seem to be either **inadequate, limiting, or unsustainable**. There is a tendency among donors and in the international development discourse to question the way aid has been provided by NGOs for so long. Most donor agendas state that the rise in hopelessness, drug abuse, emigration, and extremism among young Palestinians emphasises that **a shift in dealing with youth issues is overdue**.

Because there is a lot of potential.

Strategic visions for **youth policies and programmes are emerging** and seem to be aligning on the importance of empowering and engaging the youth in the process of improving their challenging conditions. Lebanese and Palestinian authorities have launched strategies targeting the youth, and so has UNRWA, UNICEF, and UNDP (see table below). There is thus room for **coordination** on visions and efforts under a unified umbrella to limit redundancy in work, use resources more efficiently and, as a result, increase impact.

The Palestinian youth is **resilient, capable, and communicative**, and we trust their potential. It is important that we enable the youth to lead the way through investing in their ideas and initiatives and by giving them space to listen to and accept each other, as we then ultimately invest in a better future.

Because the youth are the future.

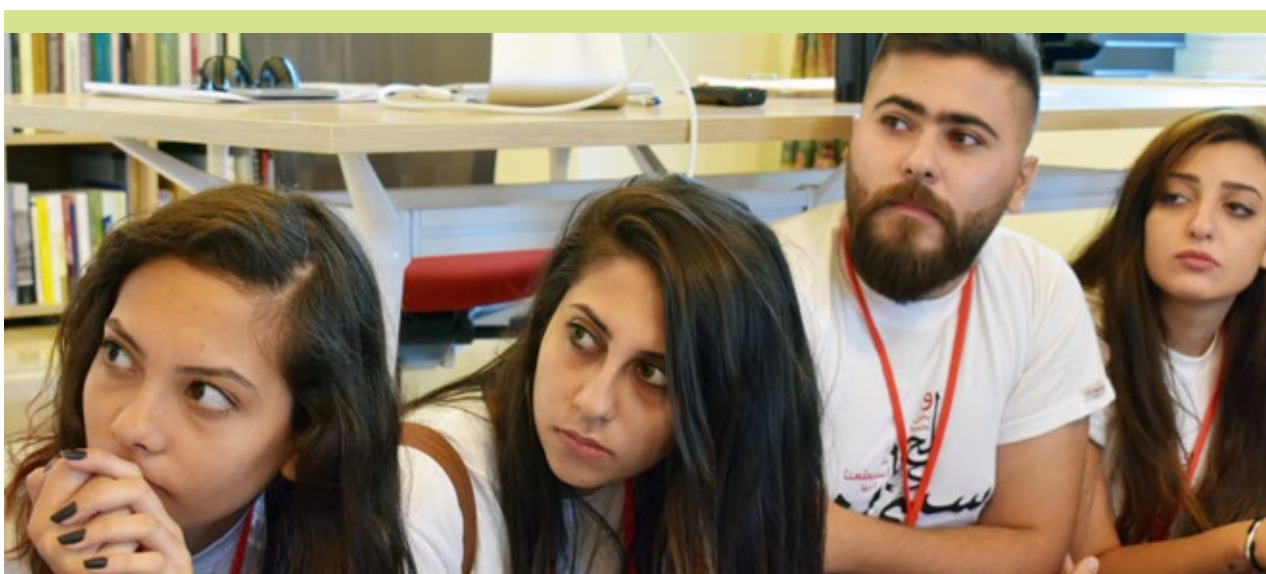


Table 1.1. Current key strategies for Lebanese and Palestinian youth

2012	The National Youth Policy in Lebanon ³	Proposed by the Lebanese Youth Forum and officially recognized by the Lebanese government in 2012. Although mainly focusing on the Lebanese youth, this strategy also pushes for the inclusion of minorities living in Lebanon and for building bridges among the Lebanese and non-Lebanese youth in areas of social, economic and political development. Currently all stakeholders, led by UNICEF, are pushing to finally start its implementation. In May 2018, an action plan was produced.
2016	UNDP's Youth Global Programme for Sustainable Development and Peace 2016-2020 ⁴	First global youth programme by UNDP. Focuses on youth empowerment and designed to sharpen UNDP's response to the challenges young people face worldwide, boost the implementation of UNDP's Youth Strategy 2014-2017, ⁵ the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, ⁶ and the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security. ⁷ In Lebanon, it is implemented by UNDP Lebanon and is targeting Lebanese youth and non-Lebanese youth in vulnerable communities.
2017	The National Youth Strategy in Palestine 2017-2022 ⁸	First youth strategy by the Palestinian National Authority, launched in June 2017 in a step towards materializing the framework of implementing priorities and policies developed by the Higher Council of Youth and Sports.
2018	UNRWA's Youth Strategic Framework for Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon ⁹	UNRWA's first youth strategy following the recent establishment of its Youth Unit, which is in line with and supported by UNICEF's Youth Programme that targets both Lebanese and Palestinian youth.

1.2 LPDC'S VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF PALESTINIAN YOUTH IN LEBANON

LPDC's vision is for all young Palestinians living in Lebanon to have the opportunities, skills, resources and support networks that tangibly empower them to improve their life conditions, engage in their communities' development, and influence decisions that affect them and their future.

To achieve this aim, the following **three main objectives** are essential in the further development and implementation of the strategy:

Reducing the unemployment rate among the Palestinian youth and thereby increasing their financial independence;

Changing perceptions about Palestinian youth in Lebanon and increasing spaces for communication between Palestinian and Lebanese youth;

Increasing the opportunities and abilities of young people to play an active role in their communities, and strengthen channels of communication between youth and other stakeholders and official institutions.

3. Lebanon & UNICEF 2012

4. UNDP 2016

5. UNDP 2014

6. United Nations 2015

7. UNSC 09-12-2015

8. Palestine, Higher Council of Youth and Sports 2017

9. UNRWA 2018b

LPDC's profile and strategic positioning

LPDC believes it can play an effective role in promoting a Palestinian youth strategy for Lebanon through its strategic role as a **mediator** among all stakeholders, its **neutrality, transparency, and inclusive outreach** towards all political parties involved, and the intention and ability to listen to and constructively support youth ideas that attempt to respond to all, including controversial, issues. LPDC has compiled this strategic vision and action plan built on an asset-based reading of its target group and a comprehensive politically-aware and ground-based analysis. LPDC continues to maintain and establish open communication with donors and official stakeholders as well as connections with various NGOs active in the field and invites all interested stakeholders to participate, support,

and align within the general framework of this strategy. With this strategy, LPDC aims to provide an **umbrella** that facilitates optimum strategic alignment and coordination between diverse stakeholders, ensuring sustainability, and youth's overall long-term benefit.

To ensure the endorsement, follow-up, and implementation of the strategy, a Steering Committee formed by the three main actors officially responsible for the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon: LPDC; the Palestinian Embassy represented by the Higher Council for Youth and Sports (HCYS); and UNRWA represented by the Youth Unit (UNRWA Youth), will push for the creation of **a framework for action** to structure the contributions of the stakeholders on one side, and the participation of the Palestinian youth on the other.



2. STRATEGY FRAMEWORK

This chapter presents the framework of the Youth Strategy for Palestinians in Lebanon. It starts out with LPDC's ambitions for the strategy, focusing on enabling joint action, then explaining the inclusive approach of the strategy through youth participation and a wide age range, and finally laying out the strategy's core values and objectives.

2.1 INCLUSIVE PARTICIPATORY APPROACH

To build this strategy on a foundation true to the challenges the Palestinian youth in Lebanon are facing, it was crucial that we thoroughly engaged the youth in the research leading up to the strategy. Similarly, for the implementation and continuous development of the strategy, participation of the youth is essential. This is therefore a cornerstone of this strategy. There are many definitions and levels of participation from informing, to consulting, to joint decision making, to acting in partnership, to supporting independent community initiatives. In the context of this strategy, the term 'participatory' refers to a progressive process that aims to reach a high level of participation with the widest possible range of stakeholders within a framework that is:

- **Operational**, where participation is seamlessly integrated into every step rather than an afterthought, or a series of activities running in parallel with the main courses of action;
- **Process-oriented and open-ended**, where the process is at least as important as the output, and hence accommodates to a large extent ideas and objectives that emerge through engaging with the various stakeholders, especially the youths themselves, for setting a feasible and ambitious joint agenda for a change;
- **Built on collective cultivation and adaptive growth**; LPDC will implement elaborate participatory processes to develop robust partnerships, sustainable collectives of active young Palestinians, and various support networks with a strong strategic sense and a long-term vision. Many processes will be experimental in nature, yet each will plant seeds towards strategic growth. LPDC will rigorously encourage the

participation of the youth and all stakeholders in this learning journey; the more the stakeholders contribute, the richer the process will become;

- **'Closely grounded'** in the complexity of the current reality of the Palestinian youth; LPDC will continue and intensify its direct ground-level outreach activities and maintain informal spaces of interaction with the youth. A ground-level team across Lebanon will support LPDC in spreading its invitation for the youth to participate in various activities and to know more about and contribute to the strategy. Further, the team will support LPDC's networking with local partners and bring direct ground-level feedback and insights to enrich the development of strategy itself and its effect on policy changes relevant to Palestinian youth in Lebanon.

In addition to the participatory approach, it is important to include rather than exclude young Palestinians, which is why LPDC has a slightly wider target age group compared to other actors: ranging from **14 to 35** years. It starts from 14 years because this is the age of the end of mandatory education. It ranges up to 35 years because our research has shown that Palestinian youth between 25-35 are having similar challenges as younger youth, while they also have high potential and capacities, and keep contributing to the active youth scene until that age.

14 -18 19-24 25- 35

This strategy will bring opportunities for various age subgroups to positively influence each other and encourage youth-to-youth exchange of ideas and mentorship. LPDC will, in some parts, target each youth segment with distinctive approaches: targeting adolescents (14-18) to build long term constructive attitudes and adequate level of engagement and taking initiative; spreading and learning from inspirational stories of older youths; enabling pioneering initiatives from the middle range (young adults); and essentially compiling from all the segments' responses to develop the approaches and tools of the strategy in a way that directly emerges from and is endorsed across all of the Palestinian youth community.

2.2 CORE VALUES AND AMBITIONS OF THIS STRATEGY

1. **Inclusion:** of all young Palestinians from a diversity of backgrounds, and regardless of their legal status;
2. **Gender mainstreaming:** Assessing the different implications for women and men, of each action step and direction of action;
3. **Reconciliation:** Among Palestinians, as well as between Palestinians and Lebanese;
4. **Fostering collaborations:** Strengthening links between Palestinian and Lebanese youth, and increasing networking and spaces of encounters;
5. **Tangible empowerment:** Alleviating economic burdens and investing in youth leadership and innovation, while bringing forth the powerful voice of youth telling their own stories;
6. **Effective resourcing:** Rethinking how funding is allocated and managed, and joining efforts;
7. **Transformative action:** Channel youth energy into action that helps them make a living and a difference
8. **Maximizing impact and learning opportunities:** Reducing the gap between the donor and the ground, and engaging all stakeholders in a journey of mutual learning towards the growth and evolution of the youth strategy.



3. UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT OF THIS STRATEGY

This chapter outlines the process and findings of the preparatory research leading up to this strategy. It sets the context of the situation of young Palestinians in Lebanon and highlights the voices and priorities of the youth themselves. This chapter is thus important for grasping the needs of the Palestinian youth and for understanding the aims, ambitions, and suggested areas of actions presented in this strategy.

Since May 2016, LPDC has conducted extensive outreach and research on the situation of Palestinian youth in Lebanon. This research showed that there is an increasing focus on the Palestinian youth from donors and stakeholders, which is important for the ambitions of this strategy to be fulfilled. However, donors' and stakeholders' initiatives are not well-coordinated and thus in risk of redundancy in work. LPDC therefore sees a need of a joint action plan under one umbrella. The research further obtained valuable insights into the perspectives and priorities of the youth and showed their readiness and capability to take action and leadership if they find the necessary support.

3.1 EXTENSIVE OUTREACH AND GROUND-LEVEL RESEARCH WITH THE PALESTINIAN YOUTH

With the increasing focus on the Palestinian youth from stakeholders, UN agencies, and governmental bodies and their respective strategies, approaches, and actions, LPDC found it crucial to map the field and get a thorough understanding of the current situation of young Palestinians in Lebanon as well as an overview of what different stakeholders are doing within this field. LPDC therefore initiated a thorough research process, which is the foundation of this strategy. Through more than two years of research, LPDC sought insights into what the most prevalent questions to ask are when it comes to young Palestinians' situation in Lebanon. As part of LPDC's strategic intention to promote youth ownership of the strategy and its implementation process, LPDC maintains open communication tools with the youth and will continue direct ground-level outreach as well as network with the youth through social media.

LPDC has compiled a **comprehensive mapping of stakeholders** working with the Palestinian youth in Lebanon. The mapping is continuously growing

and will be further verified, detailed, and updated by LPDC's prospect team on the ground as well as through feedback from all stakeholders. The mapping currently covers almost 350 stakeholders spread over the following categories:



- Palestinian youth groups, clubs, networks, initiatives, and youth-led organisations.
- Palestinian faction youth organisations
- Palestinian media outlets, especially youth-led ones.
- Palestinian local registered and non-registered organisations.
- Lebanese organisations working with Palestinian youths.
- International NGOs and United Nations agencies working with Palestinian youths
- Donor countries and donor agencies funding youth programs and projects in Lebanon.
- Palestinian and Lebanese official sides involved or

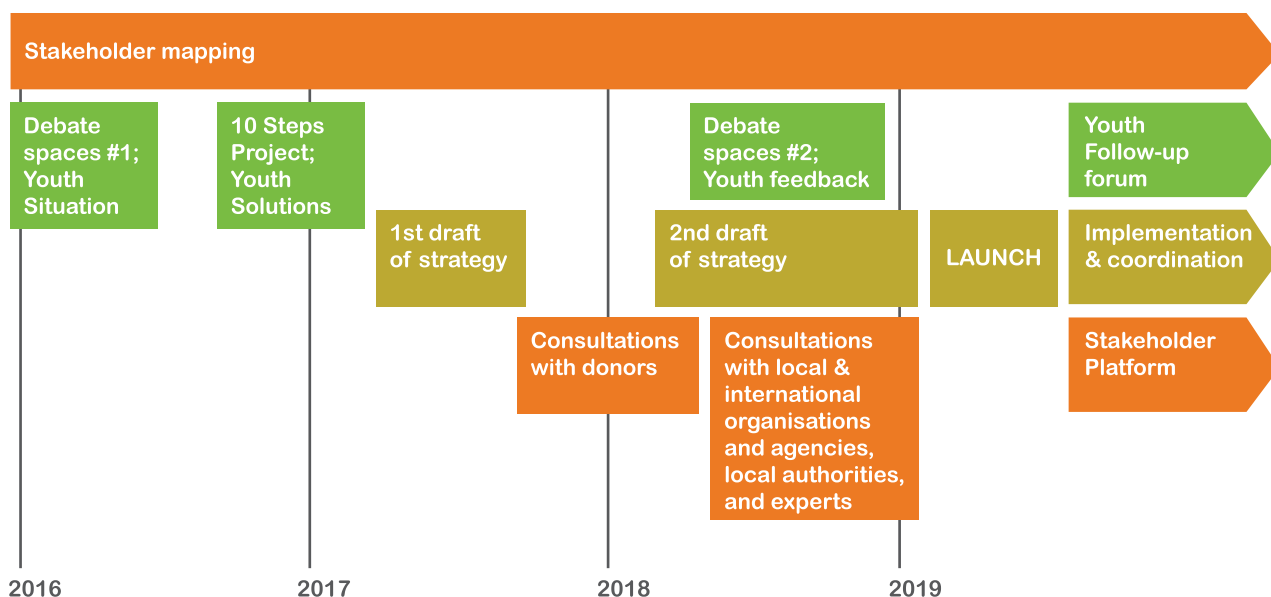
influential in the Palestinian youth sector:

- Lebanese social entrepreneurship and other civil society stakeholders that could play a role in specific areas described in this strategy.

In 2016, LPDC hosted a series of informal, interactive, open conversation sessions called “مساحات نقاش” (debate spaces) with youth from various backgrounds in six regions across Lebanon and then brought together previous and new youth participants from across Lebanon for a joint discussion at the Grand Serail. LPDC interacted with more than 100 young Palestinians and active groups and conducted brief interviews with them. Detailed interviews were limited to 4 or 5 young Palestinians from each region representing different types of youth work. The sessions aimed at listening to the young Palestinians’ experiences, understanding the forms and patterns of youth activity, identifying the factors influencing it, and analyzing the impact of factors such as political affiliation and financial dependence on their lives. Youth expectations fluctuated from enthusiasm to participate and voice their opinions to doubts about whether tangible impact would follow. Moreover, a significant number of the attending youth expressed that bringing youth from diverse political backgrounds is a near impossible challenge, although practically everyone openly voiced the desire to achieve this, and the question of how to reunite different groups among the youth was voted as the most important one. During the sessions, LPDC witnessed both mature handling of controversial topics and severe shutting off the other. The sessions generated more than 170

questions highlighted by the youth as the questions we should be asking today about the Palestinian youth’s conditions in Lebanon. These questions fall under the following 8 broad interconnected themes:

1. Relationship with and outlook from and towards the Lebanese government: representation, rights, official papers, belonging and settlement, negative treatment of Palestinians in general and youth specifically;
2. Relationship and level of communication with Palestinian official and political representatives: embassy, factions, popular and inhabitants’ committees, etc.
3. Relations with and expectations from Lebanese people, media, political parties, and youth;
4. Relationship with and outlook towards UNRWA and NGOs and the way they function on the ground
5. Basic life matters: housing, study, work, livelihood, security, etc.
6. Youth participation in political and community development processes, and the tools and potential of networking and coordination among the youth;
7. Social concerns from the spread of depression and hopelessness to social, psychological, and familial pressure, to the spread of drugs;
8. Topics that concern special groups: those with special needs, non-ID holders, Palestinian refugees from Syria, etc.



Following the “مساكات نقاش” (debates spaces) sessions, LPDC hosted working sessions called ‘10 steps’ with youth from various backgrounds across Lebanon and with the heads and representatives of student parliaments from all UNRWA schools. In these sessions, participants generated strategic plans of ten steps to create youth-led transformation in a topic of their selection, which encompassed strategic solutions to educational, political, environmental, medical, and cultural, business and sports plans, and social entrepreneurship initiatives. The participating youth presented and recorded their plans on video, and their recordings were compiled to form one final video, which LPDC has used in the analysis leading up to this strategy. The objective of these sessions was to shift the focus of the youth from raising questions into generating responses and to test the young Palestinians’ readiness to think strategically about the role that the youth can play in leading the way to implement those responses. Although most of the plans and projects presented were not feasible or developed as is (after all, it was all done in one long session), LPDC notes the following general observations:

- The youth presented a large variety of types of projects, and many were multidimensional, combining for example arts or sports and social cohesion, or environmental, social and economic objectives;
- Many showed a familiarity and experience in writing project plans, where they included for example preparatory outreach and fundraising steps and post-implementation evaluation;
- The youth displayed a visible positivity and sense of empowerment and the desire to instil hope in their community and empower other youths. The students of the ‘student parliaments’ were the most positive and confident ones;
- Many participants displayed a strategic level of thinking about how the community will perceive their steps and thought about phasing to increase leverage and fundraising opportunities for the project;
- Many projects showed ambition, community participatory intentions, a deep awareness and understanding of the complex reality of their communities and struggles.
- This shows that the youth possess fundamental

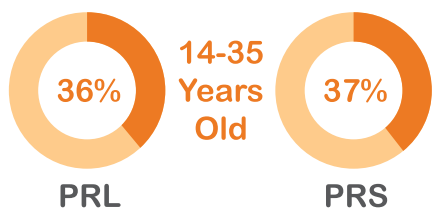
seeds of strategic thinking that will thrive if they find listening ears and a long-term vision that nurtures their potential through adequate coaching and support, flexible funding, and opening of spaces that allow them to experiment with their ideas and reach out to their peers and community in an exchange that may serve as a starting point for constructive, forward-looking conversations and strategic planning.

3.2 BEING A YOUNG PALESTINIAN IN LEBANON

The following overview of the situation of the Palestinian youth in Lebanon is based on (i) quantitative data extracted from the The National Population and Housing Census of Palestinian Camps and Gatherings in Lebanon 2017, conducted by LPDC in partnership with the Lebanese Central Administration of Statistics and the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics; (ii) LPDC’s above mentioned stakeholder mapping and qualitative compilation of input from around 500 young Palestinians who LPDC engaged with through interviews, open group conversations, and various workshops conducted between May 2016 and February 2018; and (iii) other recently published quantitative and qualitative research sources.



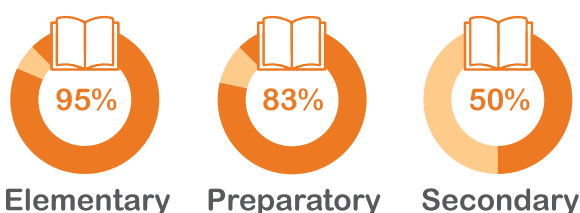
The Palestinian youth in numbers and figures ¹⁰



The Palestinian community in Lebanon is young with 36% of the total population of Palestinian refugees from Lebanon (PRL) aged between 14 and 35 years and for Palestinian refugees from Syria (PRS) the number is 37%.

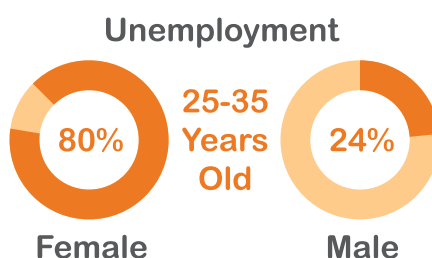


Almost 50% of the young Palestinian population are living in camps, but many young Palestinians have moved out of the camps and into gatherings due to the camps' destruction, lack of security or poor living conditions. Compared to their parents, Palestinians today are less likely to marry young.



Regarding education, the Palestinians start out with a high enrolment rate, which however falls drastically the older the students get: a study cited in the National Youth Strategy in Palestine 2017-2022 states that in Lebanon, Palestinian children's school enrolment at the elementary level starts high with 95% of children enrolled, then drops to around 83% at the preparatory level before dropping at an alarming rate to just over

50% enrolled in the secondary level.¹¹ Most of the Palestinians dropping out of school left school before taking the Brevet Lebanese Government exams and thus did not enrol at all in any secondary school class. The drop-out rate is among the most alarming indicators of the gravity of the challenges faced by Palestinians in Lebanon in the education sector. Still, today's education rates for young Palestinians are better than their parents', in particular for young Palestinian women. For higher education, vocational training trends have increased, but mostly at levels below advanced technical levels equivalent to university education.



The job situation is difficult for the Palestinian youth and especially Palestinian women are very challenged: despite being better educated than their male counterpart, their employability is lower. The female unemployment rate for those aged between 25 and 35 is as high as 80% compared to 24% for their male counterpart. For women not working, slightly more than half are full-time housewives, almost a quarter are studying or taking training courses, and almost 10% are searching for a job. Generally, most available work opportunities for young Palestinians in Lebanon are in unskilled labour and some require travelling to Beirut or far from their area of residence, which explains young Palestinian men's higher employment rate compared to young Palestinian women. However, when working, women tend to secure higher-skilled positions than men.¹² Working women in general also have a higher job security with 73% women earning monthly wages compared to 37% men, yet women earned significantly lower wages than men at every educational level, with a wage difference that increased gradually with increasing education.

¹³ Due to the exclusionary policies in the syndicates'

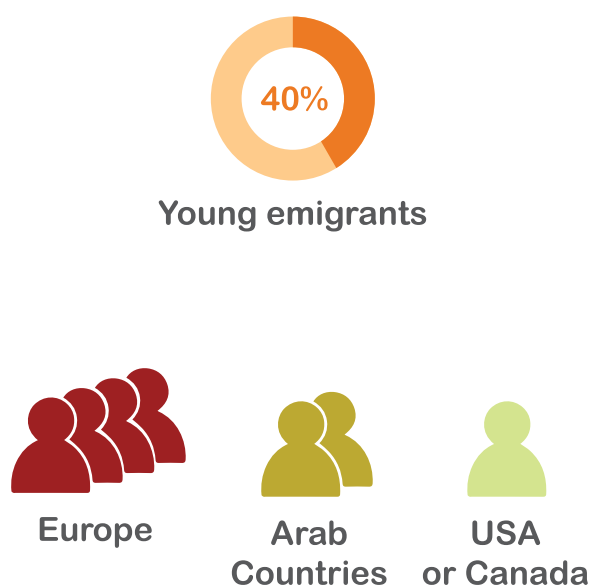
10. Unless otherwise referenced, all numbers and figures in this section are based on the census by LPDC, Lebanese Central Administration of Statistics & Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (2017)

11. Palestine, Higher Council of Youth and Sports (2017)

12. ILO 2012

13. Abdulrahim 2017

laws, which do not allow Palestinians to work in a group of professions and limit their opportunities in organizational sectors due to their treatment as foreigners, Palestinian men are forced into the less desirable segments of the mainstream economy and earn lower wages than Lebanese men in virtually all educational and occupational categories.¹⁴



More than 40% of all emigrants from Palestinian households in Lebanon are young, and men are almost twice as more likely to emigrate than young women. Around 50% of the Palestinian emigrants (of all ages, not just youth) have emigrated to Europe, 25% to Arab countries and 10% to USA or Canada.

Marginalisation and lack of prospects

During LPDC's open conversation circles with Palestinian youths across Lebanon many different struggles were heavily discussed by the young Palestinians. The youth particularly emphasised the bad physical living environment in overcrowded areas with hazardous infrastructure and housing, and how they experienced a lack of security due to frequent armed conflicts. The difficult work conditions resulting in insecure work and low salaries were also discussed as key struggles: the Palestinian youth mentioned how they feel marginalised in the employment process due to the challenge of getting work permits and to the restricted access to the labour market, cf. the

syndicate bylaws. Education was also emphasised by the Palestinian youth as a main struggle: a history of being affected by wars and clashes in Lebanon and more recently in Syria and the continuing cutback on the budget of UNRWA - the main provider of education for the majority of Palestinian students - have resulted in over crowdedness in classrooms, especially at the elementary level, deterioration in school infrastructure, and limitation in terms of facilities. According to the National Youth Strategy in Palestine there seems to be a lack of comprehensive vision in UNRWA's education programme and much negativity among the community and dropouts towards UNRWA schools' environment. Furthermore, access to fulfilling a university degree is limited by very few scholarships, which involve high competition, personal relations, and high educational performance. On a bright note, however, UNRWA's Vocational Training Centres are commended by most stakeholders. In addition, many training programmes offered to young Palestinians by international NGOs are bringing the youth valuable skills, resources, and opportunities. A challenge in this regard is, however, that these training programmes risk "widening the gap between those young people who hone the skills required to join the club, and those left behind."¹⁵

The access to basic rights is another factor highlighted by the young Palestinians, which is impacting their lives heavily: healthcare and social security coverage falls much shorter than the need and funding is diminishing, and the rights of property ownership is denied due the 2001 Law (No. 296) that explicitly banned their entitlement to property. Furthermore, the right to form associations, though legal, is hindered by complex procedures. This combined exacerbates their feelings of not belonging, not least when also considering how the Palestinian youth mention the discrimination and negative Lebanese preconception of Palestinians; most of the news from the camps cover negative incidents and portray the camps as uncontrolled enclaves of insecurity, extremism, and social degradation as well as a threat to Lebanon's security. The youth perceive collective punishment caused by the politicized and militarized view on Palestinians by the official and military Lebanese institutions, which view Palestinian issues primarily under a security umbrella.

Many of the young Palestinians expressed a legal identity crisis from not holding a legal document

14. *ibid.*

15. Haddad 2018

that clearly defines the responsibilities of the host government towards them and vice versa, and they expressed feeling an additional pressure from within the Palestinian community itself; they feel a social pressure as well as negativity and scepticism towards the possibility of success of new projects pervading the outlook of the community in general. The youth's feelings of marginalisation and lack of prospects have led to an increasing drug abuse indicating the hopelessness and desperation, while at the same time causing tension between the young Palestinians. The young Palestinians generally have a negative self-image, which is destroying their morale and amplifying their vulnerability in confronting the many socioeconomic and political challenges and limitations of living in Lebanon, of their identity as refugees, of the political divisions in their leadership and of the distressing conditions of what their country Palestine is going through. This was also reflected in LPDC's perception study that showed an overall poor life satisfaction with negative outcomes, including psychological wellbeing, depression and social unrest.¹⁶

Because it is so hard to get a job, many rely on support from Palestinian factions and charities such as UNRWA and local NGOs. Even more so for the one third of Palestinian youth in Lebanon who are sustaining a family. This financial dependency has many manifestations from aggressive competition over the limited resources, to living at the edge of survival through this reliance system, to blind allegiance to the donor side. Financial reliance may also reduce initiative, ambition and the courage to speak up. Due to the lack of prospects for young Palestinians in Lebanon, emigration has become almost every young Palestinian's dream, seeking long-term financial stability and security. Still, however, many young Palestinians talk about ways of raising hope and about the resilience of the young Palestinians.

United but divided, commonalities and differences

The Palestinian youth from various political and non-political backgrounds share a lot of common opinions, concerns, needs and rejection of the status quo. The youth are very aware and critical of own affiliations, and most agree that there should be more space for democracy and accountability in Palestinian governance structures, and for new blood and fresh ideas. However, and due to frustrated experiences, there is a general sense that

change is not possible and that all efforts towards it are futile. For this reason, many young Palestinians choose to withdraw from all kinds of activism and not take part in controversial conversations or situations. Yet, when given an informal platform, such as during the conversation sessions hosted by LPDC, many young Palestinians are willing to open up, talk about sensitive issues and think of solutions, instead of getting stuck in the needs or demands.

The typical place for the Palestinian youth to express their views and connect with each other across Lebanon and abroad as well as to advocate their issues of interest is via social media. Many of the young Palestinians in the conversation sessions spoke about how they have experienced blatant expression of controversial opinions, severe crackdowns and how opposing ideas often led to shaming, pressuring or even threatening. Further, they mentioned how clashes in virtual spaces often lead to real fights. When it comes to physical meeting spaces, there are differences between the genders: young Palestinian men often meet in coffee/shisha shops and each other's homes, while young Palestinian women mostly meet in NGO contexts, during workshops, trainings and outings.

Across the different regions in Lebanon LPDC's research



16. Harb 2013

showed commonalities in pervasive topics including the overall struggle regarding Palestinians' limited access to civil rights and lack of prospect of a dignified living. The ambiguous legal representation of the Palestinian identity was also highlighted across Lebanon's regions as a main struggle, alongside the issues of education, unemployment and scarcity of funding for income generating projects. Other prevalent topics across Lebanon included the issue of emigration, of diminishing trust in UNRWA and NGOs, of youth divisions among themselves and ways of rebuilding common grounds, and not least of the youth's marginalisation from all sides also reflected in the issue of reconciliation with the Lebanese community. Important to note, not least with regards to initiating projects with and for the Palestinian youth, is that LPDC's research also showed geographical differences in terms of prioritizing certain topics, general attitudes and conscious efforts to focus on or evade certain topics (see Annex 2 for elaboration on these differences).

3.3 AN ACTIVE PALESTINIAN YOUTH SCENE

LPDC's mapping of stakeholders identified more than 95 youth-led groups, initiatives, networks, structured organizations and media outlets. Among these, around 30 have a physical space to work from. More than 20 youth-led organizations started as initiatives and grew to become established structures running their own programs and spaces. Most of these organizations started out with one source or personal funding, but currently receive funding from many different sources. The highest number of youth-led initiatives is in Beirut and Tyre, and the lowest in Bekaa. Several networks and groups have been created along the years to run projects or campaigns, but many are inactive or barely active. More than 80 Palestinian and Lebanese organizations partially or totally target youth. All major Palestinian political factions have active youth organizations. Around 18 international NGOs target and fund Palestinian youth, and around 20 donors and UN agencies have active Palestinian youth programs. **What is it that motivates and activates the youth?**

The Palestinian youth are passionately working for their community. Many partake in social work, paid or voluntary, as trainees or project staff, dedicating their full time to social work or volunteering in their free time in various types and levels of community

support activities. More importantly, there is a general impression among the youth that volunteering and community support is or should be the norm, and many feel frustrated for not being able to give to the community as much as they would like to due to their occupation in making ends meet. Young Palestinians targeting or benefitting other young Palestinians is a relatively new direction: more than 50% primarily target children and women, while just around 15% are focused on youth's social, political and cultural advocacy. The choice of many young Palestinians to work with children rather than their peers seems to be a snowball effect of long established funding and training programs from major local NGOs.

The Palestinian cause occupies an important space in the political activism of the Palestinian youth, and this is one of the main areas where they collaborate politically with Lebanese youth. Many young Lebanese are concerned and sympathetic with the Palestinian cause; in the struggle to fulfil the due right of return to Palestine, and in the face of the systematic cleansing of Palestinian identity and culture by the occupation. The Palestinian and Lebanese youth march together on national occasions such as the commemoration of Al Nakba, or against wars, atrocities and injustices that Palestine is suffering from. What distinguishes these collaborations, is the act of joint planning and execution of these actions, and building relationships and friendships in the process. A rich, active, underground music and arts culture also brings Lebanese and Palestinian youth together. Yet, Lebanese mainstream identification with the Palestinian cause does not necessarily mean sympathising with improving the conditions of refugees in Lebanon. Palestinian youth have collaborated with Lebanese youth organizations, at different instances, to organize campaigns and actions to advocate for civil rights for the Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon. Nevertheless, Lebanese participation in these campaigns remains limited.

On the other hand, and since 2011, young Palestinian activists from different camps and gatherings in Lebanon inspired by the Arab revolts in neighboring countries, started to organize to mobilize against the practices of their own leadership, blaming the political factions for maintaining the situation of marginalization of the community of Palestinian

refugees in Lebanon and elsewhere.¹⁷ These movements succeeded in challenging and overcoming the existing political divisions, and in creating a youth-led movement in the Palestinian political scene.¹⁸ Many of these initiatives failed to continue their activity due to the loss of momentum, the strong political pressures, the lack of organizing structures, or to the difficulty in maintaining the enthusiasm of the activists who are not able to continue dedicating their time to the movement while not seeing possible results.

The Syrian refugee influx showed how the youth can be further motivated and activated to respond to an urgent need; many spontaneous youth groups formed to distribute donations, find shelter and support the newcomers in any way possible. The influx hence brought incentive to form groups, and opportunities to volunteer and gain experience in self-organization for efficient action. It also created a surge in funding as well as an awareness among NGOs to not separate allocation of funds as this brings negative competition over resources and potentially destabilize relationships in the camps. The refugees from Syria further brought a new culture into camps, new perspectives on the conditions of Palestinian refugees and their identity, new friendships, and new debates. New interaction and increased diversity can thus catalyze innovation among the youth.

How does youth activism interact with the camps and gatherings governing structures?

In the past few years, an impressive number of established youth-led organizations in camps and gatherings have emerged, and there is a general trend among major political forces to discuss the role of the youth and possibilities of empowering them. A major issue, however, is that senior generations exert control over the conduct of political action while youth's role is often confined to less influential areas, such as sports related projects,¹⁹ which is hindering youth participation in their communities. This is also reflected in the participation of youth in popular committees: if supported by Palestinian leadership, this is a promising direction; however, most experiences have ended prematurely with the

youth resigning from the committee either due to pressure or due to sensing that there is no real space for them to act effectively on the ground or contribute with fresh, less traditional ideas or ways of doing things. In addition to this, many youth clubs and even youth groups and initiatives are directly or indirectly dominated by older generations' decision making. Moreover, meagre salaries, if any, for even highly qualified young workers are not only inherently demotivating, but also reflect a mind-set of devaluing youth energy rather than investing in its potential.

Another barrier to youth action is the structure of mediation and filtration that all initiatives need to pass before being implemented. In Palestinian camps and most gatherings, the majority of donations, UNRWA programs, and new projects are either subject to the approval of factions represented through the Popular Committees or implemented through a local NGO. While this may have advantages, and is necessary in terms of engaging local stakeholders who have long ground experience, most of these structures rarely involve any youth in decision making positions even though the youth can benefit the project with their deep understanding of the context's needs and challenges. Another severe impact on youth initiatives is the youth's perception that any new initiative, or even just voicing opinions, seems to be instantly subject to political classification, within a logic of 'if it is not coming from us, it is from the other side'. Generally, new ideas and projects, and especially if proposed and led by youth, have to go through several filters before implementation, which has created a common concern about how difficult it is to do almost any project inside camps. This overarching mediation through governance structures or local NGOs may result in filtering out creative ideas but more so it curbs youth enthusiasm, self-initiative and sense of responsibility.

What does the youth active scene look like?

The youth is generally initiating many activities and projects and they demonstrate a diverse experience in group forming ranging from institutionalised groups to more loosely formed network models. However, the initiatives are more often than not failing to endure due to three main reasons: first, due to political differences in affiliations or perspectives of the youth, leading in many cases to internal divisions inside the

17. Sijnja 2017

18. جمان مزراوي، رهام الجعفري، سماح كساب، عبد الرحمن أبو نحل، منذر أبو رموز 2016

19. جمان مزراوي، رهام الجعفري، سماح كساب، عبد الرحمن أبو نحل، منذر أبو رموز 2016

initiatives; second, due to the difficulty of maintaining the momentum, the interest and enthusiasm of youth who volunteer in them; and third, due to the difficulty of financially sustaining the initiatives. In relation to this last point, the youth dedicating their time to their community happens either at the expense of reaching their own financial stability, or is abandoned in frustration for an employment opportunity often not in the field of expertise or passion. In an attempt to counter this challenge, more and more youth have opted for opening cultural youth cafes run by youth inside - and in a few instances outside - the camps. These are spaces acting as hubs for social youth activism combining arts, dialogue, social awareness and political activism, while also making profit. The seemingly most creative ideas come out of such hubs. Moreover, they attract Lebanese youth which at times further enriches the exchange. Youth-led cafes are thus very good models of creating a space for encounters and hubs for creative initiatives to be born in, yet, their endurance depends on external funds or their owners' self-funding capacity.

The active youth scene is also being enriched by the various types and levels of trainings offered by the majority of Palestinian, Lebanese and international NGOs active in the Palestinian youth scene. This has given participating youth a lot of tangible skills, a

collective learning and meeting space, and a growing sense of appreciating self-improvement. However, there is a lack of sustainable impact as (i) the opportunities to apply the learnings are very rare, (ii) the programs are mostly short-lived, (iii) redundancy and similarities of themes limits the imagination of themes and results in youth-led initiatives, and (iv) the programs attract specific circles of youth (the known activists).

3.4 DONOR MONEY

At least 15 million dollars are available for youth projects, with the largest donor (UK) alone contributing 10 million dollars, and an increasing interest in the youth as reflected in strategies from various international donors and UN agencies. However, as expressed at the donor and UN agency roundtable at the launch of LPDC's youth project in 2016, the donors themselves perceive a discrepancy between driving vision or stated objectives behind funding and the actual impact of where the funds are going. Nevertheless, with this and prospective resources, a lot is possible. The prospect is especially promising since all these funds are promoting youth participation and sense of empowerment. That is one reason why a unified strategy is timely if donors are willing to collaborate and align efforts.



Table 3.1. Current key strategies for Lebanese and Palestinian youth

Donor	Total fund for project/total or /year	Implementation body	Duration	Project
Norway	\$780K-900K/year Youth Can Do It= \$50,000/year	NPA		Permanent youth programmes
Canada	8\$mil	Mercy Corps	3 yrs - '17-'19	Youth for Tomorrow
UNICEF's back donors	\$4.5mil	ANERA	1 yr - 2018	Youth Programme (target Pal, Syr, Leb)
	364,000; 50,000 is actual	UNRWA	1 yr - 2018	YSF, Education ,Vocational Training, Parliament
	499,400\$	Al-Jana and local partners		
	70,000\$	LPDC	1 yr - 2018	
DIFID/UK Embassy	\$7.1mil	ARK		Around 50 projects and youth initiatives for '18 - '19
Germany	\$2.5mil	GIZ	1 yr - 2018	FASPAR/LPDC
KFW/BMZ	\$432,270	NRC	4 yr - '17 - '20	Youth Education Pack (YEP)
Switzerland	\$200,000	Masar & Drops	1 yr - 2018	MASAR: Improving the Status of Palestinians in Lebanon DROPS: Community Progress-Junior Professionals
	\$125,000	LPDC		
Japan	\$1.2mil from JPN, USA PRM, GMN, Net	UNDP & local NGOs (such as PARD, NISCTV, DPNA)	8 yr - '12 - '20	Improving Living Conditions in Palestinian Gatherings Host Communities

Conversations with the youth during LPDC's working sessions in the preparatory phase leading up to this strategy, along with desk research, brought forward several critical points about how donor money is spent:

1. Imposing political agendas that create more divisions among the youth: calls for more transparency and youth participation in funding management and decision making;
2. Depoliticizing projects that are supposed to address political issues, hence status quo remains: require in-depth discussions with political factions and governance structures to lead to more youth participation;
3. Superficial/apparent participation to validate preconceived agenda;
4. Exclusion and limited outreach: it is mostly the same circle of activist youth that participates in projects and gets funds, which leaves a latent potential in the majority of the youth that are not as attracted to or perhaps adequately engaged in projects;
5. Insufficient ground knowledge and understanding of the intricacies of the Palestinian realities and social constructs: preconceived notions, lack of youth engagement;
6. Discontinuity in funding, either due to a change in donors' agendas or due to emergency relief projects,²⁰ interrupts in many cases successful projects, and hinders long-term developmental programmes;
7. Lack of transparency in project implementations through local NGOs: effectiveness and innovation could increase if the youth were more engaged in leading roles at a local level;
8. Redundancy in the type of projects and lack of

coordination among the various donors and implementing agencies: youth impression of wasted resources;

9. Abundance in training and research, and scarcity of project implementation;
10. Minimal support for income generating projects with limited availability of micro-finance and loans, and hence lack of sustainability: a project usually ends when the funds end;
11. Evaluation of projects: according to the youth, donors often do not measure impact. When they do, the stories are distinct from the youth's experiences, and highlight only success stories.

Based on these insights, there is a need for approaches that entrust the well-trained Palestinian youth with adequate funds and leadership roles for them to partake in their own growth and change-making process. Approaches such as:

- Comprehensive and collaborative sustainable development programming;
- Ethnographic research;
- Knowledge sharing among donors and major implementing agencies;

- More grounded evaluation and monitoring;
- Rethinking local partners and bringing the youth to the centre of leading projects that directly concern them;
- Pushing for medium and large scale, flexible and direct, funding for the youth;
- Supporting innovation, and including community building projects that are profitable;

A shift is needed towards more collaboration between donors and implementing agencies, and more actual youth engagement to enable effective resourcing and sustainable impact; hence the need for this strategy.

3.5 OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

An analytical reading of the current conditions of Palestinian youth in Lebanon and the available resources and stakeholders involved shows that there are many opportunities, as well as profound challenges, to push forward the endorsement and implementation of a strategic vision towards enhancing -together- the prospects of young Palestinians in Lebanon.



Major opportunities that can push this strategy forward

- Clearly voiced stakeholder alignment and intention to invest in young Palestinians' ideas, capacities and leadership roles towards changing their circumstances;
- The alignment of multiple strategies, including the National Youth Policy in Lebanon and the National Youth Strategy in Palestine, as well as those of multiple UN agencies and most donor agendas on the importance of empowering youths and promoting their participation in the economic, social and political scene. Many also focus on building bridges within the Palestinian community and with the Lebanese community in general;
- The alignment of most of the Palestinian youth on their main issues of concern, on their willingness to effectively be part of a process of change, and on their desire to come together and minimize divisions, in spite of their political and socioeconomic differences;
- Ample examples of positive interactions between the Lebanese and Palestinian youth at all levels: socialization, economic partnerships and political activism, in spite of an enduring discrimination and stigmatization between them;
- The resilience of many young Palestinians in pursuing education, searching for work prospects and engaging in the development of their community wherever an opportunity arises;
- A rising creativity in models of youth networking, social entrepreneurship and socio-political activism.

Major challenges to the endorsement and implementation of this strategy

- Mistrust, scepticism and boredom from the side of the youth and Palestinian stakeholders towards the development of projects in general;
- Established ways of planning and implementing projects by NGOs and among local governance structures and even among the youth that may be resistant to change;
- Political divisions at all levels of the Palestinian community, reflected in deep schism and aversion among the youth;
- The difficulty in directly addressing a controversial issue affecting the Palestinian youth, which is the political representation, without losing the endorsement of the Palestinian political actors;
- The burden of the lack of economic security and the enduring threat of poverty and the consequent pressure that is placed on the youth's spirit, creativity and motivation to change;
- Many broken communication channels: among the youth, between the youth and their official representatives, between the youth and the Lebanese society, and among the various stakeholders funding and working with young Palestinians;
- Many funds are driven by preconceived agendas and lack flexibility to accommodate for participation of youth in all levels of decision making;
- Establishing trust in a long-term process that may not see results right away;
- Involving and collaborating with the concerned Lebanese public institutions.

PART 2: ACTION PLAN

4. AREAS OF ACTION

Based on the research findings, and aligned with LPDC's aims and visions for the Palestinian youth in Lebanon, five thematic areas of action are identified as essential to focus on. These are: (1) Financial Sustainability, (2) Changing Narratives, (3) Physical Living Conditions, (4) Health, and (5) Education. While these areas of action are very interrelated, they are also important to differentiate in order to focus the action in specialised fields. Yet, the areas should not be isolated in inflexible silos - rather, collaborations and coordination across areas of action is encouraged where it makes sense.

It is important to note that none of the areas of action are starting from zero. Rather, they are all based on the ongoing work of the stakeholders already involved with the Palestinian youth. Some of the areas of action might progress faster than others, and some donors might want to focus on specific areas of action rather than the strategy as a whole. The pace of progress will thus vary for the five areas, which is a natural result of

a dynamic and flexible process. What is essential is to avoid following funding trends, and to ensure that the five areas are advancing simultaneously, and that none of them are left untouched.

All five areas of action are connected to the three overall aims of this strategy. The suggested directions of action in each of the areas contribute to reducing financial dependency through employment and increased funds, creating spaces for Palestinian and Lebanese encounters through work collaborations and community engagement, as well as increasing the opportunities for the youth to play an active role in their community. In addition, we are suggesting to conduct research and collaborate with academic institutions in all areas of action as this is essential for the continuous development of the strategy and to guide research institutions and university students to produce studies that are action oriented.





4.1. FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

A financially independent youth

Palestinian youth in Lebanon have a financially unsustainable situation and are thus dependent, non-governmental organisations, political factions, and families. This financial issue is one of the Palestinians' main struggles, as the preliminary research has shown. It intersects and/or is the base of multiple problems and difficulties, which can be clustered as follows: (a) Palestinians are marginalised from the labour market due to Lebanese exclusion policies and syndicate laws; (b) despite some attempts to initiate profit making projects, many youth are discouraged by the lack of access to resources and practical knowledge that helps making these initiatives sustainable; (c) even when the law allows it, Palestinian youth have difficulty in accessing jobs due to established marginalization practices and norms in the employment process, and (d) unemployment rates in Lebanon in general are high, and there's limited effort to create new job opportunities.

While the work on employment intersects with several structural issues which requires change on the political level, such as the right to work and the complex economic situation in Lebanon, this strategy suggests aiming for smaller achievements - alongside the ongoing work on the structural and political level - to reduce marginalization, increase access of Palestinian youth to employment, and foster the creation of new job opportunities. For this purpose, this strategy suggests the following four directions of actions.

4.1.a. Reducing legal and institutional marginalization

While LPDC and other actors continue to work on achieving changes in the laws, this strategy suggests to address the Right to Work and the marginalization of the Palestinian youth in the job market from a grassroots perspective; reinforcing the network of allies among the youth, and aiming for affordable achievements.

Expanding the research:

- Conducting an evidence-based research on the Lebanese job market to identify professions where there is less abundance in workforce and less unemployment.
- Analysing the distribution of labour among the Palestinian youth, based on the data gathered by the Census and the research conducted by ILO and the Lebanese Central Administration of Statistics.
- Conducting research on previous experience of advocacy campaigns to identify challenges and opportunities.

Initiating projects:

- **Network of professionals addressing syndicates:** Building on ongoing initiatives and campaigns, and based on the research outcomes: identifying allies in the syndicates and in the Lebanese civil society, and forming a network of Lebanese and Palestinian professionals to work together with the selected syndicates to allow easy access for Palestinian professionals to register, benefit, and work.
- **Legal support network:** In collaboration with active lawyers, support the creation of a legal support network that provides the youth with the legal consultation needed in case they face discriminatory practices in the employment process, and to support them in thinking of a legal framework to register enterprises/organizations.

Supporting existing initiatives:

- Making visible the work of the syndicates that are already giving work permits to Palestinians, i.e. the nursing syndicate.

4.1.b. Promoting collaboration on alternative economic models

While further research might lead to comprehensive understanding of the job market and possible responses on both the national and the Palestinian youth level, the proposed direction here is to tactfully support Palestinian youth to "transform skilled [or even less skilled] but unemployed youths into job creators,"²¹ while encouraging collective practices

21. UNDP 2014



and opening opportunities for joint entrepreneurial ventures between young Lebanese and Palestinians. This direction can push for innovation towards self-sustainable, and beyond that, profit-making initiatives that still maintain community development objectives.

Expanding the research:

- Conducting theoretical and ground research towards developing a comprehensive working definition and guidelines of collective entrepreneurship. This should be tailored to the needs and opportunities available for young Palestinians within the growing scene of entrepreneurship in Lebanon and the region.
- Mapping relevant and interested stakeholders in Lebanon and the region, and identifying and consolidating available entrepreneurship programs, in order to promote the inclusion of Palestinian refugees in them.

Initiating projects:

- **Network of social enterprises:** Forming a network of self-employment and/or profit-making projects with a social component where members can easily access guidance and continuously updated schedule of relevant trainings, events, and openings for funding opportunities, and where youths can provide peer-to-peer feedback and exchange ideas and experiences. Extra outreach efforts will encourage female entrepreneurs, youths with special needs and non-ID youth to become members in this network.
- **Coaching programme:** Building a sustainable coaching programme where the youth receive coaching, mentorship, and investments from Lebanese and Palestinian organizations/civil society, aiming to support them in developing collective socio-cultural entrepreneurship ideas and to work towards the implementation of successful prototype projects that will inspire more youths and stakeholders to invest resources in this direction.
- **Funding Pool:** Establishing a startup fund for Palestinian youth projects, based on the research findings on sustainable funding models.

- **Time Banks:**²² Providing the youth with the needed technical and logistical support to initiate time banks projects in Palestinian camps and gatherings. This model is rooted in the concepts of mutual support and the exchange and sharing of skills/resources, which are the values embedded in the existing takafol system. In addition, the time bank has the potential to boost the camps and gatherings' economy and to foster a deeper sense of community in them. We suggest to build on UNICEF's experience in Jordan²³ to develop the convenient model of time banks that would be possible to implement in Lebanon.

Supporting existing initiatives:

- **Supporting UNRWA's entrepreneurship program:** UNRWA's planned goal of providing youths with "entrepreneurial and life skills to expand income-generating opportunities",²⁴ primarily through sustaining and building on its currently UNICEF funded innovation lab (for 2018), and a similar objective in the strategic goals of both UNICEF and UNDP, shows the growing tendency to support youth entrepreneurship as alternative to a job market.

4.1.c. Increasing access of Palestinian youth to the Lebanese job market

This direction suggests action steps that facilitate access of Palestinian youth to higher-skilled jobs in established companies/organisations, and addressing the gender gap in the employment rate of the Palestinian youth. The strategy suggests achieving this goal by addressing on one hand the companies that provide, or fail to provide, jobs for the Palestinian youth, and on the other by addressing the youth themselves providing them with the needed information and skills that facilitate their access to jobs.

Expanding the research:

- Conducting a survey to identify private companies

22. A time bank is a community system, based on reciprocal service exchange. In this system, the hours are the currency; a person with an account in a time bank can trade hours of work in their skill, for equal hours of work in another skill.

23. Unicef Stories 2017

24. UNRWA 2018b: 5



organizations that are owned by Palestinian individuals, or that hire Palestinian employees beyond the low-skilled labour; identify the challenges they face in the employment process and the measures they use to overcome these challenges.

- Focus group interviews and surveys with young female Palestinians to obtain a deeper understanding of the obstacles they face regarding access to the job market

Initiating projects:

- **The Palestinian Youth Employment Office:** Establishing an employment office for the Palestinian youth that facilitates their access to employment opportunities, in coordination with UNRWA's employment program.
- **Organize job fairs directed at Palestinian youth:** Supporting the creation of job fairs aimed at Palestinian youth and focusing on job-matching. We suggest to use the fairs as a platform where good practices are highlighted, shedding light on: (1) companies/organisations hiring Palestinian youth beyond the low-skilled labour, hence allowing the youth to identify allies and potential employers, and urging other companies to replicate the good practices, and (2) entities that provide equal pay (for men and women), and who have inclusive hiring policies .
- **Network of Palestinian owned businesses:** Creating a network of companies whose owners are originally Palestinian, and supporting them into creating employment opportunities for Palestinian youth in their businesses.

Supporting existing initiatives:

- **Supporting UNRWA's employment office.**
- **Coordinating with the Lebanese National Youth Policy in its aim to establish a permanent labour task force** which will monitor and evaluate the labor market and will create a unified open database for job seekers and employers to use freely.²⁵

25. Lebanon & UNICEF 2012

4.1.d. Facilitating the creation of new job opportunities

The high youth unemployment rates are not exclusive to the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, but also to Lebanese youth; Lebanon has a chronic unemployment problem that affects mainly the youth.²⁶ Hence, there is a need to facilitate the creation of new job opportunities.

Expanding the research:

- Mapping of potential funders of employment projects.
- Identifying plots in the surroundings of camps and gatherings which could potentially host small industries and/or commerces. In parallel, conducting a market demand research on the industries and sectors that could potentially succeed in these areas.

Initiating projects:

- **Providing spaces for small industries and commerces:** Coordinating between donors, the Lebanese Government, and development agencies, to provide spaces in the camps' vicinities, to host small industrial and commercial projects that serve the local vulnerable population of camps and urban poor pockets in the surroundings.
- **Startup Funding Pool:** Establishing a startup fund for Palestinian youth projects, based on the research findings on sustainable funding models.

Supporting existing initiatives:

- **Supporting UNRWA in implementing its micro-financing program,** which is active in its other operation field, applying the recommendation of the Gender Equality Strategy²⁷ to increase the percentage of loans to women in such programs.

26. Lebanon & UNICEF 2012

27. UNRWA 2016



4.2. CHANGING NARRATIVES

A new narrative for the Palestinian youth in Lebanon

The research leading to this strategy has revealed a generally negative self-image spread among the Palestinian Youth, which is reinforced by an existing narrative about them, one that is inherited, but no longer represents them. The current negative narrative is caused by a large number of concurring factors, which can be clustered as follows: (a) there is a very limited focus on production of content that reflects the contemporary identity of the young Palestinians, neither one that reflects the common struggles between the Lebanese and Palestinian youth; (b) there is a lack of spaces in which Palestinian youth from different backgrounds and Palestinian and Lebanese youth can address their differences and commonalities in a safe environment, and in which positive inspirational stories can arise; (c) the youth's own voice is rarely heard: on one hand, the media coverage of Palestinian youth portrays them either as potential threats, or as victims, and on the other, the stakeholders working with the youth fail to integrate the youth's vision in their way of working; and (d) the efforts of some youth who express a different narrative through artistic or cultural creation remain rather invisible and temporary, due to the lack of resources that would allow them to become sustainable.

This strategy suggests that the youth themselves produce a new narrative, or decide the changes to be made to the existing one, and that the stakeholders working with the youth adopt this new narrative and spread it. For that purpose, we are suggesting a move away from projects that focus merely on teaching tools of expression, to ones that support youth to expand their limits of thoughts and articulations, and help triggering their capacities to produce new content related to their daily struggles and potentials. Moreover, in this area of action the connection between the Lebanese and Palestinian youth is addressed, and hence, LPDC sees itself playing a major role in these efforts, considering its position that allows it to create spaces of dialogue between the Lebanese and Palestinian communities,

and between Palestinian refugees and the Lebanese government.

4.2.a. Creating a new narrative: illustrating a contemporary identity of the young Palestinian refugees

The suggestions in this direction of action aim at providing the needed tools and spaces that allow the Palestinian youth to create the content of a new narrative; one that represents their current realities, and connects it to their history and to the Palestinian cause.

Expanding the research:

- **Creative content toolkit:** Conducting research on the types of workshops and trainings that help trigger youth creativity to imagine and produce a different narrative.
- **Understanding the current narrative:** Archiving and conducting a media analysis to understand the current narrative about the Palestinian youth, and the tools that were used to spread the narrative, in order to be able to deconstruct it.
- **Revitalize the language:** The language used to address issues related to Palestinian youth often plays a role in victimizing them and reinforcing stereotypes, and usually speaks to one category of people who are already empathizing with the Palestinian refugees. Hence, there's a need to reconsider this language, by conducting a research on the language used in different international campaigns that worked on legal rights and that succeeded in attracting a wide audience, and relating this to the Lebanese context.

Initiating projects:

- **Series of workshops with Palestinian youth to produce a new narrative:** A selection of designed activities are to be conducted with the youth, to help stimulate their creativity and produce content for the new narrative. The product of these series of workshops would take the form of artistic creations (theatre show, music, audiovisuals, literature, etc.).
- **Encounter spaces between Lebanese and Palestinian youth:** In the second phase, a new



series of workshops and encounters will be targeting Lebanese and Palestinian youth working together on co-producing new narratives. The aim is to produce content that could be presented to a wider Palestinian and Lebanese audience.

- **Palestinian art and culture library:** there is a gap between researchers, historians and academics on one hand, and the Palestinian and Lebanese audience on the other. The intervention on this level suggests highlighting the history in the creative field to the younger generations, whether Palestinian or Lebanese.

Supporting existing initiatives:

- **Supporting and working closely with Palestinian cultural clubs and organizations**, such as al-Jana and Basmeh & Zaitouneh, whose work is focused on artistic and cultural production linked to the Palestinian identity and heritage.
- **Supporting existing youth cafes and similar gathering spaces** and promoting the creation of new ones. Using these spaces as platforms for public activities resulting from the workshops.
- **Supporting and replicating initiatives such as Masar's "Temsheye/stroll"**, which aims at enhancing the communication between Lebanese and Palestinian youth, and in which youth attend field visits to each others' camps/neighborhoods.²⁸

4.2.b. Story activism: exploring different perspectives through individual and collective stories

Story activism in the context of this strategy is a process that uses the tools and power of storytelling to bring together youth in active listening and co-creative settings where they can channel their conversations towards a mutual understanding, empathy and reconciliation. It accommodates for conscious surfacing of everyday individual and collective stories. Effort should be invested in finding and presenting inspirational stories of youth breaking the set limits, and in that process, contributing to changing perceptions and breaking stereotypes.

Expanding the research:

28. Masar (no date).

- Mapping potential spaces that could host storytelling activities in the different regions, making sure they are spaces that are rather neutral, and would welcome the diversity of youth.
- Researching the networks: identifying potential organizations and individuals who can contribute to training the youth in storytelling techniques.
- Building a list of inspiring Palestinian talents and successful projects.

Initiating new projects:

- **Storytelling workshops:** Through these workshops, the youth will co-create a collective space for sharing and capturing their own stories, consciously focusing on positive themes and stories that serve as inspiration and give motivation for youth-led change. The first phase of the workshops would focus on capturing the stories, and in the second phase, youth would learn the skills of storytelling.
- **Promoting inspirational stories:** Presenting some of the current stories of Palestinian youth who managed to change their own narrative, by challenging the norm and the preconceived path set for them. These stories would be presented to a wider audience, with the objective of motivating and inspiring the young generations, and to present a different narrative to the Lebanese audience.

Supporting existing initiatives:

- **Supporting existing organizations, such as Nawaya network, that uses storytelling to give visibility** for Palestinian, Lebanese and Syrian youth from marginalized areas in Lebanon, who were able to achieve some of their dreams.

4.2.c. Communicating the new narrative

This direction suggests working on two profiles of actors who play a role in spreading the narrative. First, we are suggesting working with Lebanese media: contacting journalists and reporters working in media channels, with the aim of probing them to re-visit their perceptions about the Palestinian youth, and work with them on eliminating stereotypes. Second, we are suggesting to work with NGOs and actors that identify



Palestinian youth as their main beneficiaries, and the aim is for these actors to integrate in their approach the new narrative created by the youth.

Expanding the research:

- Mapping different independent media platforms led and run by Palestinian youth, and identifying their strengths as well as their weaknesses and challenges when it comes to content and outreach.
- Identifying individuals or institutions in the mainstream media who could potentially be allies in spreading the new narrative.
- Conducting a research on local or international media strategies that succeeded in changing stereotypes, and/or in advancing political rights campaigns for marginalized communities.

Initiating projects:

- **Deconstructing stereotypes of the local media:** Conducting workshops with journalists and reporters, as well as with media students, on strategies to avoid stereotypes, to expose participants to the reality of the Palestinian youth, and to connect them with the youth themselves who will share their inspiring stories with them.
- **Developing a new approach to working with the youth:** Conducting workshops with actors working with the youth to challenge some of the preconceptions in the approach and methods they adopt, and to increase the benefit of the projects they develop.
- **Social media platforms:** Training the youth on communication strategies and e-campaigning, and applying the training to create new platforms to disseminate the content developed by the youth in the first phase of this area of action.

Supporting existing initiatives:

- Supporting independent social media platforms such as “Campji” and “Nasstopia”, assisting them to expand their outreach to different audiences, and connecting them with the youth’s creative audiovisual content resulting from the work advanced by the youth in this area of action.

4.2.d. Sustainable cultural production that reflects the new narrative

Palestinian youth often use their art as a way to reconstruct their Palestinian identity,²⁹ a form of cultural resistance, and a mean to defy the “effacement of Palestinian refugees”.³⁰ However, they are rarely able to develop a professional art career, and are often driven to abandon their art in order to be able to make a living.

Creative industries could allow the youth to invest time in their art works while increasing their financial sustainability, and at the same time help breaking stereotypes and normalizing the presence of Palestinian youth in the Lebanese society through their artistic contribution.

Expanding the research:

- Conducting a study on the art scene in Lebanon: Mapping institutions that support emerging artists, financially and/or technically, and conducting a study about existing art and crafts collectives that succeeded in becoming financially sustainable.
- Palestinian artists in Lebanon: Mapping emerging as well as established young Palestinian artists in Lebanon, and analyzing their possibility of success in different creative fields.

Initiating projects:

- **Network of artists addressing syndicates:** Forming a network of Lebanese and Palestinian artists and journalists, and with the support of established Lebanese and Palestinian art and cultural institution, lobbying together for the syndicate of professional artists as well as the press syndicates to allow easy access for Palestinian professionals to register, benefit, and work.
- **Artist career training:** Training emerging artists and art collectives in art business and marketing, to be able to start their creative career, and make a living out of their art. Additionally, supporting these artists to participate in art residencies, and connecting them to the Lebanese art and culture scene, and to the potential institutions that fund emerging artists.

29. Sijnja 2017

30. Vidal 2018

- **Mentoring program:** Developing a program that trains established artists on mentoring principles and methods, and connects them with emerging artists and art collectives in their fields, who are aspiring to build a career in art.

Supporting existing initiatives:

- **Supporting existing Palestinian art foundations,** which encourage and promote artistic production, and challenge stereotypes through art and culture, such as Dar el Nimer, by bridging the gap that might exist between such foundations and the Palestinian youth in camps and gatherings.





4.3. PHYSICAL LIVING CONDITIONS

A leading youth role in enhancing the built environment of camps and gatherings

The physical spaces of Palestinian camps and gatherings have played important social, political, and economic roles in the life of Palestinian communities in Lebanon over the past decades. However, these urban conditions have also been drastically deteriorating for a variety of reasons. These can be clustered as follows: (a) The precarious condition of tenure for Palestinian refugees in Lebanon due to legal restrictions; (b) the problematic deteriorating housing conditions and access to basic urban services, primarily caused by the densification of Palestinian camps/gatherings and the weak governance structures; (c) a deteriorating public realm caused by lack of open/public spaces and of proper infrastructure within camps and gatherings; and (d) the lack of projects that address improving the urban fabric and service provisions in camps/gatherings.

Factors affecting the built environment are complex and do not affect the youth alone, but communities at large as well. Similarly, these issues cannot be addressed by the youth alone, as they require multiple stakeholders working on multiple tracks and engaging in new forms of projects and initiatives. However, engaging the youth in strategic projects that address these issues present opportunities for the youth to play active roles in improving their built environment and playing leading roles in their communities. Hence, this strategy suggests doing so through the following four directions of actions.

4.3.a. Addressing the precariousness of land tenure and housing sector

There are two main aspects to such a strategy: the first relates to efforts to change existing laws that discriminate against Palestinian ownership, while the second aspect focuses on improving Palestinian security of tenure within existing laws.

Expanding the research:

- Conducting research on the implication of current

laws. Despite the exclusionary laws, Palestinians are able to acquire housing through tactics that work on the short term, but place them in a vulnerable state on the long run. Research into this issue can provide insight on potential measures that can protect Palestinian rights to decent housing.

- Assessing new trends of real-estate investments in construction inside some camps and its implication on the housing conditions, and on the camp's social fabric.

Initiating projects:

- **Exploring options for improving Palestinian land tenure within existing laws.** Conducting workshops with various experts to explore strategies in which Palestinian land tenure could be improved within existing laws (as a temporary measure until laws can be changed).
- **Establishing an advocate lawyer committee** to support Palestinian refugees whose home ownership is at risk and who cannot have access to proper legal counsel. Ideally the committee would be composed of both established lawyers with experience in advocacy law as well as young Palestinian lawyers.

Supporting existing initiatives:

- **Enhancing support to existing advocacy initiatives,** supporting entities such as the Norwegian Refugee Council and the Legal Agenda that are attempting to advance ownership rights through the judiciary system.³¹

4.3.b. Improving housing conditions in camps and gatherings

Shelter rehabilitation projects play an important role in rehabilitating shelters in risk of collapse or upgrading shelters suffering from structural, hygiene, functional challenges, for families with severe socio-economic conditions. However, these projects are unable to address problems caused by the lack of natural lighting and ventilation in camps and neighborhoods suffering from high density and lack of open space, for such problems require interventions at the scale of the

31. Saghieh & Nammour 2017



building, urban cluster or urban block, rather than simply at that of the apartment. In addition, there is a need to upgrade the infrastructure of basic urban services such as access to electricity, and to enhance the governance structures that manage them.

Expanding the research:

- Assessing housing conditions in terms of natural lighting/ventilation in high-density neighborhoods in various camps and gatherings.
- Evaluating and evolving current shelter rehabilitation projects in relation to their ability to address problems of lack of natural lighting and ventilation within high-density neighborhoods. This includes learning lessons from other contexts that can enhance and improve these programs.
- Assessing the impact of the restriction on entry of building materials into camps and gatherings on the deterioration of the built environment and housing conditions.
- Assessing new trends of real-estate investments in construction inside some camps and its implication on the housing conditions, and on the social fabric.
- Assessing the formal/informal urban infrastructures (electricity, telephones and other service provisions) in camps and gatherings; evaluating governance structures that manage them, as well as the accessibility to the services and their quality.

Initiating projects:

- **Training young professionals in housing and urban improvement** strategies within informal and high-density built environments. Trainings should expose young professionals to different strategies that could address the problems of the physical environment in their camps. The youth involved in these trainings should play leading roles in both existing and new projects that are to be implemented in the camps, in hopes to improve the built environments that are mentioned in this area of action.
- **Facilitating entry of construction material:** Developing new advocacy approaches to facilitate the entry of building materials into camps.
- **Upgrading electricity networks** in selected camps based on needs assessment, and developing

an efficient system for their management and maintenance.

Supporting existing initiatives:

- **Evolving current Shelter Rehabilitation projects** in UNRWA and INGOs to address lighting and ventilation issues in high density camps.

4.3.c. Implementing youth-led community-based processes for public spaces

While the previous direction of action aims at improving the private aspect of the built environment (homes), this one targets the issue of public spaces and improving the public realm.

Expanding the research:

- Assessing existing community-based processes for creating public spaces in camps, gatherings, informal settings.
- Identifying strategic sites (within camps, at borders and in adjacent areas) to implement projects (public spaces, commons, projects that can address the youth's priorities), connecting the camps to their surroundings through participatory processes. Identifying these sites should go in parallel with identifying key stakeholders and local governance structures that should be involved in the development of these projects and which youth can coordinate with.

Initiating projects:

- Training youth on participatory and community based processes for developing and upgrading public space projects.
- Initiating participatory processes to plan and implement small scale local interventions (green roofs, painting walls, planting trees, improving paving, lighting alleys, addressing small scale infrastructure challenges in local neighborhoods) in camps and gatherings, building on the available human and material resources.
- Cooperating with institutions in the camps to improve and rehabilitate their facilities and common spaces (libraries, public green roofs, open spaces in NGOs, courtyards, etc.).



Supporting existing initiatives:

- Supporting and replicating existing initiatives, such as “play in the camps” (by Public Works Studio), that aim at improving public space within camps and enhancing the role of youth in such projects.

4.3.d. Initiating and increasing the coverage of Camp Improvement Projects (CIPs)

Camp Improvement Projects have been implemented by UNRWA in different host countries since 2010 and in around 10 camps (2 of them in Lebanon). CIPs can provide an institutional set-up for improving various aspects of Palestinian refugee camps’ urban environment and for providing comprehensive strategies that can address the camps’ various social and economic challenges.

Leading CIP processes is a local Working group (WG), composed of multiple stakeholders, volunteers, committees and activists within Palestinian camps. The WG leads all the participatory processes that are integral parts of CIP methodologies. A challenge in this regard is, however, that UNRWA’s mandate does not cover camp residents who are not Palestinian refugees, and hence a big percentage of the camps’ residents are not involved in the CIP processes, which is an issue to be addressed in order to improve the physical living conditions of all residents of camps.

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Expanding the research:

- Evaluating the impact of CIPs in camps where they have been implemented.
- Evaluating the role of the youth in CIPs: the participation of the youth in the WGs is typically low. Reasons for such low participation should be assessed
- Exploring the possibilities of expanding CIPs’ coverage to include all residents of the camps, through collaborations between UNRWA and other organizations

Initiating projects:

- **Enhancing the role of the youth within CIP WGs.** The youth trained in urban improvement strategies mentioned in this area of action should be involved in such WGs.
- **Developing urban guidelines for individual Palestinian camps and gatherings** to guide how construction and densification processes should take place.
- **Implementing improvement projects in camp extensions in parallel and in coordination with CIP projects in camps.** This would enable developing urban improvement strategies in camps and their surroundings thus improving linkages, and spatial/social relations, while also setting up new coordination strategies between the relevant stakeholders.
- Regularizing electricity provision in a pilot project: Implementing a project in which the relationship between formal service providers (Electricité du Liban) and the refugee beneficiaries is regularized.

Supporting existing initiatives:

- **Assisting UNRWA in implementing more CIP projects in Lebanon** particularly those targeting higher density Palestinian camps and with more severe challenges relating to the built environment.
- **Supporting projects developed by UNRWA’s Environmental Health Response Plan**, specifically those that address major inadequacies in the camps’ infrastructures and in relation with surroundings.

4.4. HEALTH

Improved health services through collaborations and community involvement

Palestinian youth in Lebanon have a compromised health status, physical as well as mental. This overall problem is due to a several factors, which, based on the results of the preliminary research and as corroborated by consultations with key informants and experts, can be clustered as follows: (a) Palestinians have limited access to and sustainability of healthcare and medical services in Lebanon, in particular to tertiary care, noncommunicable diseases, emergencies, and specialised mental healthcare; (b) Palestinian youth experience stigmatization, depression, lost hope and prospects for the future, lack of basic rights, chronic poverty, substandard living conditions, inability to meet basic needs, and inability to fill normal social roles; (c) few Palestinians are educated or working as health professionals, not least due to the legal constraints that prevent Palestinians from working in the health sector.

This strategy adopts the holistic definition of health as a state of complete physical, mental and social well being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity, as adopted by the World Health Organization. As such, this strategy specifically emphasises mental health as an important and interrelated component of overall health. Simply put: there is no health without mental health.³² Another important point is that mental health is defined as a result of the interplay between biological, psychological, and social factors (biopsychosocial). As such, the social determinants of health are a very significant contributor. In addition, this strategy stresses the importance of considering the state of health of young Palestinians as a result and symptom of their living situation and urges stakeholders to address the root causes: rights and living conditions. To address the health issues of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, this strategy suggests the following three directions of actions.

32. WHO 2018; Prince et al. 2007; Al-Monitor 26-06-2016

4.4.a. Increasing access to and sustainability of health services

The demand for health care and medical services is much higher than the capacity and resources currently available for the Palestinians in Lebanon. At the same time, while UNRWA is able to reach the youth that are enrolled in school, are benefitting from Maternal and Child Health (MCH) services, or have a serious illness requiring hospitalization, a big number of the youth remains outside its reach. In addition, many health issues faced by the Palestinian youth relate to mental health, but MHPSS services are not sufficiently integrated in UNRWA's centers. Funding is a main reason for this: specialised MHPSS professionals require high salaries, while, in their very nature, MHPSS services require regular and continuous follow-up and sustainable long-term programs. Furthermore, serious life-threatening illnesses are, for the most part, not provided for, and Palestinians are not covered by social security, which leaves individuals and families facing illnesses such as cancer destitute.

A further key structural challenge is the lack of coordination and sustainability.³³ Collaboration between NGOs, INGOs, and UNRWA is essential, and so are partnerships between Palestinians and Lebanese, individual specialists and organizations, not only in order to put in place an efficient referral system, but also for encouraging cross-community collaboration and understanding.

Expanding the research:

- Collaborating with universities and researchers working on issues of youth mental health, Palestinian youth, etc. to identify gaps and needs i.e. regarding case referral.
- Researching on possibilities, rights and opportunities for Palestinians to access Lebanese health services to inform awareness raising.

Initiating projects:

- **Training the youth in the skills and tools of advocacy and lobbying** to advocate that health, decent living conditions, and access to employment are basic human rights. In line with the National Youth Policy in Lebanon, we suggest to advocate for mandatory health cards for all students in

33. Palestine Higher Council of Youth and Sports 2017: 35



schools and universities, and set reduced rates for medical services for youth.³⁴

- **Building a coordination and referral structure** for organisations working in the health and mental health sectors.³⁵ Until a functioning system is in place, we suggest identifying individual Lebanese specialists and organizations for referral and technical support. In addition, prepare and disseminate a list of providers for people to know where to go for specific services and programs.
- **Reviving the catastrophic diseases and emergency fund** to support people with emergency aid and (chronic) diseases not covered by UNRWA, PRCS, and MSF. This fund would be financed by a variety of actors along the existing ‘takafol’ system.
- **Advocating for Palestinians to benefit from their social security** to benefit from maternity and illness compensations, ensuring employers register Palestinian employees, and urging that Palestinian employees are treated fairly as per the law.

Supporting existing initiatives:

- **Supporting UNRWA in integrating mental health and gender-based violence (GBV) services in their primary care health centers** and in their Maternal and Child Health program through training nurses and physicians in mental health and GBV.³⁶
- **Supporting UNRWA in integrating mental health services in schools** through their School Health program as well as their Education program and curricula.

4.4.b. Improving mental health through the existing community structures and fostering and supporting strong social relations

In parallel with improving access to services, it is important to work on the general wellbeing of Palestinian youth as this can prevent and/or mitigate many health issues, which in turn can reduce the pressure on health

services and the need for specialised care.³⁷ Hence, promoting and strengthening positive social relations and a supportive environment are essential and go hand in hand with the recommendations in the four other areas of action.

Expanding the research:

- Collaborating with researchers and universities to (i) analyse the factors impacting mental health wellbeing, and (ii) to research what types of stigma exist in relation to mental health, and identify the sub-communities where stigma is still predominant.
- Researching what outreach methods work well, both in the literature as well as from the on-the-ground experiences of organizations working within the Palestinian community.
- Researching on how to best support and include youth with special needs.
- Researching the gaps for outreach and awareness regarding women’s rights and GBV, including the need for male counsellors for the provision of information for men on GBV.

Initiating projects:

- **Promoting the inclusion of youth-focused services** in existing health facilities, such as reproductive health, GBV, substance use, and nutrition. Ensuring accessibility by accommodating the time constraints of youth, facilitating drop-in and anonymous consultations, and by increasing the numbers of younger staff. Including outreach as an integral part of services.
- **Promoting the development and use of culturally appropriate tools to deal with mental stress and traumas** both on community and individual levels, in addition to tools to address GBV causes and impact on women and children. Tools and materials should be inspired and informed by local practices and tested for appropriateness.
- **Enhancing the infrastructure of the youth sports and recreation sector** by supporting

34. Lebanon & UNICEF 2012: 19

35. Following the MoPH mental health strategy objective 5.12 (2015: 46)

36. Following the MoPH mental health strategy (2015: 51)

37. GIZ 2015: 8-9



sports centers and other sectors (arts, music, theatre, poetry),³⁸ and encouraging the participation of Palestinian youth in Palestinian as well as Lebanese activities. Particular focus on the engagement of girls and youth with special needs. Use of these centers for MHPSS programs, including peer-to-peer support groups.

- **Exploring available innovative options for E-Help and E-Therapy** such as the tools being developed and tested by the NMHP at the MoPH. These can be especially important for reaching the youth whose mobility is restricted, or who prefer the privacy of their own home, and they can be adapted to accommodate for the Palestinian youth.

Supporting existing initiatives:

- **Supporting “creative” community-based approaches to reach youth** who are not in contact with any system/structure, that can catch them before they need specialised services, and adopt a family-based approach as the solution often involves intervention at a number of levels: individual, family, community, and health services.

4.4.c. Encouraging the youth to specialise professionally in the health sector

To increase sustainability, the largest efforts should target investments in the youth of the communities by providing them with knowledge and skills, then jobs and employment - while projects end, people will

remain, as will their skills, and those can be transferred and applied in other projects. In parallel, concerted effort should address the legal obstacles in labour laws and syndicates. Employment is important to improve both physical and mental health, not only by increased financial resources to pay for health services, but also because employment gives prospects for the future and provides some stability.

Expanding the research:

- Identifying ways to attract and encourage the youth to work as health professionals.
- Mapping of organizations and institutions supporting education and specialization.

Initiating projects:

- **Creating a health education fund** that finances scholarships/grants, training and employment for youth who would like to work as a doctor, nurse, psychologist, psychotherapist, physiotherapist or social worker.
- **Lobbying with syndicates to open up for Palestinian doctors and therapists** in order to meet the healthcare needs; inspired by the work with the nursing syndicate.
- **Identifying a number of “mentors”** (Palestinian & Lebanese) who can be a Big Brother/Sister to the youth, guiding them in their careers, while being a role model.
- **Training the youth in community health services** for them to get better employment opportunities and to inspire the youth to pursue a career as health professionals.

Supporting existing initiatives:

- **Supporting community awareness trainings/sessions on drugs, reproductive health, family planning, mental health, GBV, transpired/contagious diseases, nutrition, environment to reduce stigma and to inform about opportunities, access and rights.**

38. Following the call from Palestine Higher Council of Youth and Sports (2017: 9, 36, 45)



4.5. EDUCATION

Holistic and sustainable solutions to meet the challenges in the education scene

Palestinian youth have relatively low, and worsening, educational outcomes, and a low level of marketable skills. This overall problem is due to a large number of concurring factors, which can be clustered as follows: (a) the current severe volatility and unpredictability of funding streams is making the management of education services and the implementation of education reform strategies exceedingly complicated; (b) a substantial proportion of young people drop out of formal education due to a challenging educational environment, poor educational achievement and/or socio-economic and psychosocial reasons; (c) alternatives to formal education are limited, being either not accessible to all Palestinian youth, or accessible but of sub-optimal quality; (d) young people are discouraged from pursuing educational opportunities due to perceived lack of future prospects.

This strategy encourages stakeholders to look at education in a holistic way: addressing the structural challenges, supporting both formal and non-formal education, and engaging the community in the education system. To do so, we are suggesting the following four directions of action:

4.5.a. Strengthening governance and sustainability of the education sector for Palestinian youth

An essential issue to tackle when addressing education is the emergent situation of UNRWA's financial crisis; the cutbacks have threatening repercussions on the whole education sector for Palestinian youth. Beside prompting an increase in the funding of UNRWA, there is also a need to increase the coordination between UNRWA and the main actors involved in various ways in the schooling system in order to ensure sustainable solutions and mitigate the risks resulting from the cutbacks. Moreover, through advocating for

the inclusion of UNRWA schools in the Ministry of Education of Higher Education (MEHE) strategies and policies, UNRWA schools could receive more support through the formal channels.

Expanding the research:

- Mapping UN and NGOs' capacities and resources invested in the education sector for Palestinian refugees in Lebanon.

Initiating projects:

- **Including Palestinian students in national strategies:** Advocating for the full inclusion of Palestinian children and youth in RACE (Reaching All Children with Education),³⁹ by expanding RACE to cover both public schools and UNRWA schools.
- **Systematic coordination mechanism between UNRWA and MEHE:** on technical issues (eg. curriculum development, teachers' training etc.); and on harmonization and standardization of School Information Management Systems, and related data collection and data analysis methods and standards, to ensure comparability of outcome data across public and UNRWA schools

Supporting existing initiatives:

- Increasing UNRWA's funding: Prompting donors to improve the volume and predictability of funding streams to UNRWA.
- Coordination education mechanism: Support UNRWA in its efforts to establish a coordination mechanism between its education department and its sister UN Agencies, and civil society organizations working in education. Promoting the outsourcing by UNRWA of non-essential services, ensuring a clear regulatory and quality assurance framework.

4.5.b. Retaining a larger proportion of Palestinian youth in formal education

The drop-out rate is among the most alarming indicators of the gravity of the challenges facing the education sector for Palestinians in Lebanon.

39. MEHE 2016

Addressing drop-outs cannot be done in isolation of all its roots and without a comprehensive understanding of its immediate and cumulative impact. As the key provider of education for the majority of Palestinian students, UNRWA is the main place to look for reasons and opportunities for positive change. Additionally, to increase Palestinian youth's prospects in the job market, equal opportunities to the formal higher education should be provided, hence the importance of facilitating youth's access to the Lebanese University as well as expand the existing grants to the private universities.

Initiating projects:

- **Retention support initiatives:** Enhancing and standardizing initiatives run by civil society organizations, aiming at preventing dropouts, ensuring systematic and strategic coordination with UNRWA schools.
- **Increase access to the Lebanese University:** Activating advocacy campaigns, involving student clubs and networks, and with the support of LPDC and MEHE, to increase and facilitate access of Palestinian students to all faculties of the Lebanese University according to the law.



Expanding the research:

- Revisiting UNRWA's planned reform and suggesting modifications aimed at translating it into practice especially in the shadow of the current cutbacks; Researching obstacles of Palestinian students joining the Lebanese University (faculties that discriminate, etc.)
- Drop-out research: conducting evidence-based studies on reasons behind the increased number of students dropping out from UNRWA schools, and successful strategies of retention in Lebanon and the region
- **Expanding scholarship funds and programs** through networking with the universities to increase the amount of financial aid to Palestinian students, as well as attracting more donations and increasing the coverage of the scholarships for university and to accredited vocational training centers. Additionally, providing support to the scholarship-holders who enter private universities, to ease their integration in the new context.

Support existing initiatives:

- **Supporting the implementation of UNRWA's Education Reform:** Strengthening accountability and transparency mechanisms in school



governance, and supporting, strengthening and expanding UNRWA's Learning Support programme beyond its current scope.

- **Supporting the implementation of Inclusive Education principles;** enhancing infrastructure, policies and frameworks in UNRWA schools and public schools to ensure the integration of Palestinian students with special needs in the schools, and ensure that UNRWA schools and public schools remain safe environments free of violence, abuse, bullying and discrimination for Palestinian boys and girls.

4.5.c. Enhancing the quality and opportunities of non-formal education

Essential to this third direction of action is the targeting of youth who are outside the formal education system. Between the courses put forward by UNRWA and other NGOs, the offer for Vocational Training is abundant, however, there is a need for more coordination to modernize the methods and tools used, and to ensure the quality of the courses and their correspondence with the market needs.

Expanding the research:

- Vocational training: Conducting a market research to assess needs; conducting research on job placement (gathering data from the different centers)
- Conduct research on updated and modernized teaching methods that would correspond with the specificity of the context, in collaboration with research centers such as Tamam.

Initiating projects:

- **Bridging the gap between vocational training and the practice:** Assisting vocational training institutions to become more practice oriented, developing curricula that correspond with the market trends, and to update and modernize methods and tools.
- **Programs for youth who drop out before Grade 9:** Developing programs that are specifically oriented to early dropouts, ensuring that reconciliation between work and the courses is

allowed, and providing them and their families the psychological as well as financial support needed to be able to return to formal or non-formal education.

- **Career guidance:** In partnership with UNRWA, develop a career guidance and counseling program that offers services for Palestinian boys and girls in and out of the schooling system.
- **Enhanced pre-schooling services:** In coordination with Unicef and Taawon: Support the implementation of the "basic criteria for Kindergartens", developed by Taawon, in the existing Kindergartens in the camps; develop a unified system for early childhood development, and train the staff of the existing kindergartens on it; create a coordination mechanism among the different kindergartens and between them and UNRWA.

Support existing initiatives:

- **Support UNRWA in implementing its gender equality strategy:** Increasing vocational opportunities for women and girls through trainings that are non-gender stereotyped and more market-oriented. Support and expand the offer of technical and vocational education and training courses by UNRWA, and support their accreditation/certification to increase students' potential to access jobs.

4.5.d. Increasing the confidence of the community in the value of pursuing education opportunities

This direction of action invites stakeholders to look at education in an integral way; suggesting actions that engage the community in the education system, creating platforms of collaboration between the school and its surrounding actors, and increasing the confidence in the value of education.

Expanding the research:

- Researching successful experiences of school-community collaborations in the region, to learn useful tools and methods to engage the community of parents, local representatives, local organizations and students in a collaborative environment that ensures the quality of education.



Initiating projects:

- **Establishing school-based coordination committees:** for each UNRWA school, create a coordination committee that gathers representatives of: parents' councils, students' parliaments, school direction, local authorities (and/or political factions), and NGOs providing extracurricular activities in the area. This committee would discuss jointly challenges faced by the school, and be involved in the solutions.
- **Community-based advocacy campaign:** Involve UNRWA school parliaments, as well as UNRWA students performing community service, in campaigns promoting the value of education (academic and vocational), and addressing social and gender norms that contribute to dropping out of school;
- **Palestinian history in schools:** Strengthen the focus on Palestinian history and identity in school curricula, and engage the students' parliaments in educational activities around the history of Palestine;
- **Volunteer programs for English lessons:**

organize and train university students, particularly those who have received grants, to volunteer in providing English support classes for students of UNRWA and public schools.

Support existing initiatives:

- **Support and replicate programs, such as Nabaa's Remedial Education Project,** that provide PRS children with educational activities, learning support, accelerated learning programs and vocational training.⁴⁰
- **Support and Replicate the "Adopt a School" experience** (Taawon and UNRWA), where an NGO sponsors one of UNRWA's schools, identifies its needs and supports it, addressing the ones that are highest in priorities.
- **Support and replicate English programs** such as the summer schools organised by Beit Atfal Assumoud.

40. Nabaa 17-01-2017



5. FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

This section introduces the suggested process to translate the ambitions of this strategy into tangible action. Building on the analysis and strategic readings of the different actors who contribute (or could potentially contribute) to fostering an impact on the Palestinian youth in Lebanon, this section looks at the framework

for action that needs to be set up in order to organize and structure the contribution of the different actors. The objective of this framework for action is to ensure the endorsement, follow-up, and implementation of the five areas of action explained in chapter 5.

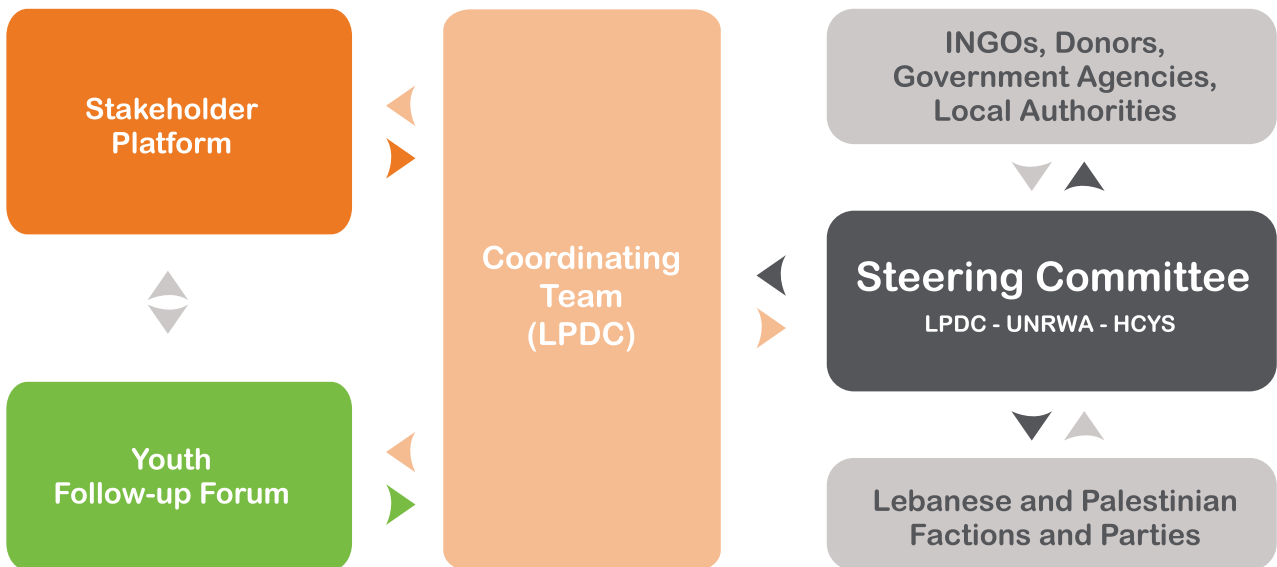


5.1. THE STRATEGY'S STEERING COMMITTEE

In order to ensure the realization and progress of this strategy, a steering committee is formed to push the strategy forward, and to ensure its endorsement by the main stakeholders and donors involved in Palestinian youth related projects, the Lebanese authority, and the Palestinian political factions. This steering committee includes the three main actors officially responsible for the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon: the Lebanese Palestinian Dialogue Committee (LPDC), the Palestinian Embassy represented by the Higher Council for Youth and Sports (HCYS), and UNRWA represented by the Youth Unit (UNRWA Youth). LPDC has the capacity and role to act as an effective mediator among all stakeholders, and offer a neutral physical and conversation space to host the platform and formalize its structure, as well as work towards effective endorsement by both Lebanese and Palestinian official stakeholders.

The main function of the Steering Committee is to:

- Supervise the creation of the Framework for Action that will ensure the development and endorsement of the strategy by the main stakeholders.
- Intervene when no consensus is reached in the Stakeholder Platform.
- Maintain an open conversation with the Palestinian factions to inform them about the Strategy and its progress and receive their feedback on it.



5.2. YOUTH STAKEHOLDER PLATFORM

As this Youth Strategy for Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon and its endorsement approach are materializing, the next step is to create a Youth Stakeholder Platform, formalize it, and structure its work. The main purpose of this platform is to achieve strategic stakeholder alignment, and to design a complementary and impactful allocation of resources available in order to improve the conditions and prospects of the Palestinian youth.

The following table portrays the issues identified in the field research as obstacles to working with the youth in sustainable ways, which should be addressed by the Stakeholder Platform. The table further suggest approaches to overcome these issues:





Issues addressed	Potential	Suggested approach
Discrepancy between driving vision or stated objectives behind funding and the actual impact of where the funds are going	Awareness of donors and implementing agencies themselves of this discrepancy and the will to act upon it Will of stakeholders to be more participatory in their programming and evaluation	Base programs on the needs, using ethnographic research to identify youth needs Develop a grounded evaluation and monitoring system that involves the targeted youth
Redundancy in types of projects, and in following global trends by focusing on certain aspects and neglecting other areas. For instance: abundance of capacity building programs, but with no sustainable impact Lack of continuity: a project usually ends when the funds ends	Clearly voiced stakeholder alignment and intention to invest in young Palestinians' ideas, capacities, and leadership roles towards changing their circumstances	Increase coordination and communication between the different stakeholders Create theme related working groups Comprehensive and collaborative sustainable development programming
Depoliticizing projects that are supposed to address political issues, hence the status quo remains	Some youth led initiatives, especially those that are able to bypass the filters of the camps' governance structures, are able to directly address political issues.	Integrating the voices of the youth who are politically active inside and outside camps in the framing of the issues and solutions
Political agenda that comes with funds is aggravating the division among the youth and inviting further crackdown on their initiatives	Existing models of joint funds	Establishing a joint funding pool that accommodates for several donors to contribute funds to support specific components of the youth strategy.
Long-term developmental programmes are often replaced by emergency relief projects to cope with new crises	The funding dedicated to Palestinians in Lebanon is usually maintained even in moments of crises.	Develop an action plan that ensures the continuity of the strategy in case of crisis (such as the increase of the UNRWA cuts and the interruption of the UNRWA services ³⁹)

Who takes part in the Youth Stakeholder Platform?

Four categories of actors will be invited to join the platform:

- 1. Donors:** Representatives of major donor countries, international governmental agencies and UN agencies involved and interested in funding projects for Palestinian youth in Lebanon. The following donors will be invited to join the platform: embassies of Germany, UK, Switzerland, Japan, Norway, Netherlands, Australia, Sweden, and Canada, in addition to the EU.
- 2. International organizations** involved and interested in implementing projects with the Palestinian youth in Lebanon.
- 3. Local Palestinian and Lebanese NGOs** who act as implementing agencies, and are in direct contact with the Palestinian youth.
- 4. Ministries and Local Authorities** who are essential for alignment with Lebanese systems in the different areas of action.

Related experiences

Some stakeholders working on youth related projects have already started to join efforts and align on a common strategy. Although on a different scale, the experience of the partnership between UNRWA's Youth Unit and UNICEF's Youth and Adolescent Programme working on the Palestinian youth in Lebanon could provide lessons for the Youth Stakeholder Platform. The UNRWA-UNICEF partnership was put in place

1 UNRWA 2018a



in 2012 with the objective to maximize coordination and synergies between the two agencies, and for that purpose a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed in 2016. UNRWA and UNICEF developed a joint multi-year strategic partnership in order to expand their collaboration.

In the preparatory phase leading up to this strategy, LPDC hosted several roundtables with representatives of major donor countries, international governmental agencies, UN agencies, as well as local non-governmental organizations involved in funding and/or implementation of projects for Palestinian youths in Lebanon. All attendees have voiced resonance with the idea of forming a joint Youth Stakeholder Platform mediated by LPDC.

What is the function of the Youth Stakeholder Platform?

Build Knowledge

The platform presents an opportunity to share knowledge and lessons learned from previous experiences of working with youth. LPDC offers its strategy, the ground-based analysis it builds on, its comprehensive and continuously updated stakeholder mapping of Palestinian youth initiatives and organisations across Lebanon, as well as all documentation that emerges from the various areas laid out in this strategy. This strategy proposes that the Youth Stakeholder Platform jointly commissions new research that could build new and needed knowledge around topics of shared interest to multiple donors represented in the platform. The research should run in parallel to and support the implementation of various components of the strategy; it is research in action that directly learns from and feeds into strategic processes.

Build Effective Coordination

The platform will be a place for continuous updating and open discussions among donors and implementing agencies on funding prospects, development of programs, and programs' impact and sustainability. A coordination team will mediate sessions at the onset of launching major youth programs so all stakeholders are informed and can possibly exchange ideas and explore areas of collaboration on the ground, as well as sunset reviews upon conclusion of major programs to compile and analyze lessons learned.

Build Collaborative Programming

The Steering Committee and the strategy's coordination team will push towards the widest possible endorsement of this strategy among all stakeholders, including the youth themselves, official Palestinian and Lebanese sides, as well as, donors and international agencies and NGOs working for the youth. The strategy's Steering Committee will work with the Youth Stakeholder Platform towards reaching a level of collaborative programming focused around this endorsed strategy and support the convergence of all donors and international agencies operating major programs to commit to using this strategy to guide their planning.

Build a Shared Agenda

In order to translate the commitment to the strategy into a first tangible action plan, this strategy's coordination team will work with the Stakeholder Platform to build a shared agenda and collaborative action plan for its YouthYear2021 vision, in collaboration with the Youth Follow-Up Forum (see chapter 5.3). YouthYear2021 is a vision for the year 2021 to hold nationwide events that will project Palestinian youth voices on all levels and celebrate their stories, achievements, and potential.

Build a Shared Funding Pool

This strategy proposes to establish a joint funding pool that accommodates for several donors to contribute funds to support specific components of the strategy. This can be a learning process for LPDC and all partners in the joint platform in working with a new model of funding strategic goals under a unified vision.

Build a ground-based evaluation method

Designing a framework that serves to evaluate projects targeting youth based on the impact they have on the youth themselves.

How does the Youth Stakeholder Platform function?

The final structure and the bylaws of the platform will be decided with key stakeholders. LPDC suggests to include in the structure two types of organs: a general assembly (GA), and thematic working groups (WG).



The General Assembly: The GA gathers representatives of primary stakeholders and representatives of the WGs. The GA does not work on the operational level, but rather on the strategic one; its main function is to take, once a year, the decisions that are related to the strategy as a whole.

The Thematic Working Groups: The main function of the WGs is to develop common programs, suggest concrete projects, and ensure sustainability of existing programs in their area of focus. These correspond to the five areas of action: Financial Sustainability, Changing Narratives, Physical Living Conditions, Health, and Education. This will ensure that all areas of actions are being worked on at the same time, and none of the main pillars of this strategy is marginalized. Each WG will include representatives of the interested stakeholders working in the area of focus.

For the sake of efficiency of the WGs, the number of members in each of them is limited to 12-15 actors. In order to ensure diversity and the participation of actors from different profiles, the following issues have to be taken into consideration when deciding on the structure and bylaws of the GA and WGs:

- There needs to be a balance of the members in the GA and in each WG, so there is a proportionate amount of donors, INGOs,² local NGOs, and Lebanese state authorities.
- The diversity of geographical regions should be represented in the GA and in each WG.

2. Considering that some international organizations sometime take the role of donors in certain programs, the decision of whether to count them as donors or INGOs will depend on the role they are actively playing in each of the areas of action.

- The bylaws of the WG and GA will take into consideration the power dynamics and potential conflicts of interests between the different stakeholders. Hence, with the help of professional facilitators, the bylaws will be designed to prevent abuse of power and to deal with the surging conflict in a way that ensures the continuity of the work.

Since the different areas of action are interconnected, continuous coordination among the different working groups is key for the success of the strategy. In each WG, or across WGs, different Task Teams will be formed to work on specific tasks and directions of action. The Task Teams will coordinate among each other in the framework of the WG meetings and working sessions. The Task Teams could also partner with stakeholders that are not necessarily members of the Stakeholder Platform, thus enabling inclusion of interested stakeholders without compromising the efficiency of the Working Groups.

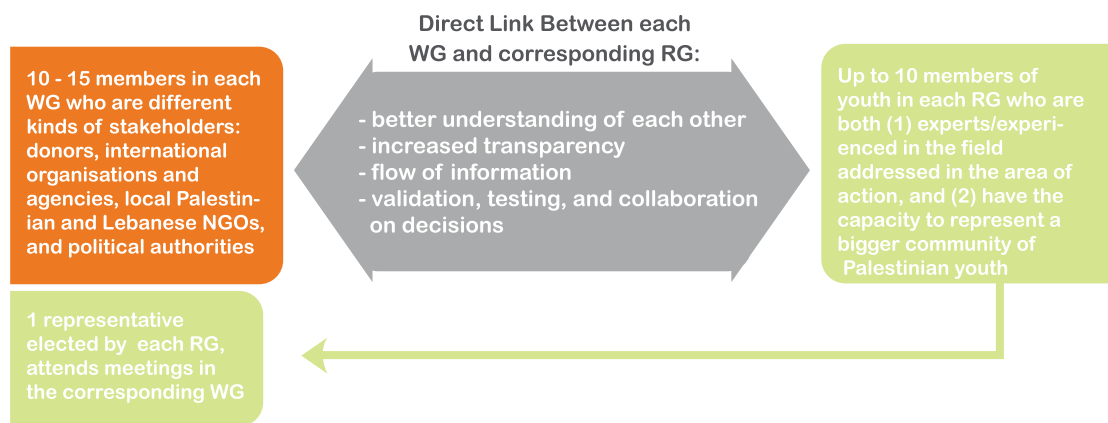
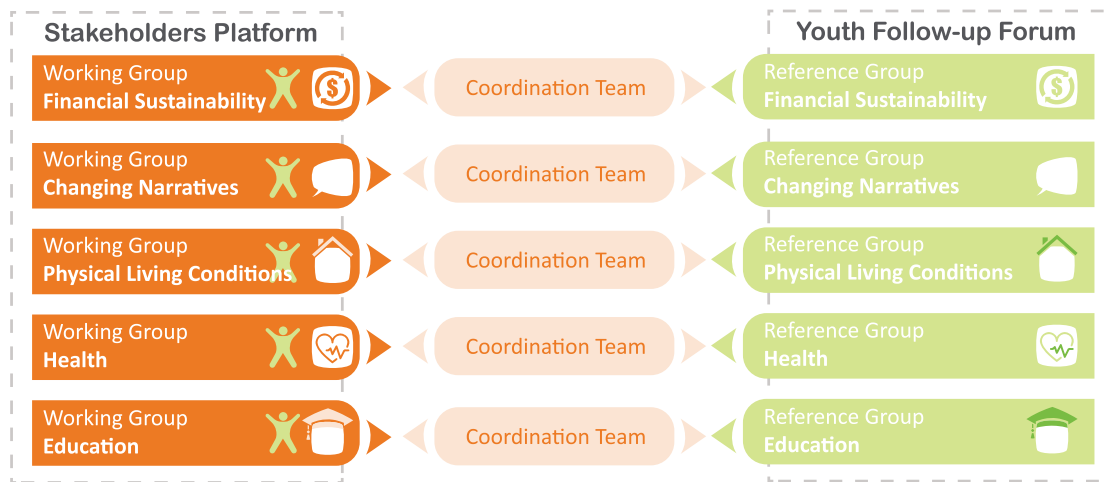
Action plan and interim goals

Interim goal for mid-2019:

- Formalize the platform through a memorandum of understanding that follows stakeholder endorsement of the strategy and agreement on a specific set of tangible goals for the platform within the context of the strategy.
- Conduct in-depth research with stakeholders to develop an understanding about the following: the flow of money, the current dynamics among them, the main challenges faced, and the relevant experiences of coordination.



Relationship Between Working Groups and Reference Groups



- Present the strategy draft and interim action plan to stakeholders; host a joint feedback session and discuss how the platform might fit into each stakeholder’s agenda, and what possible ways of collaboration may emerge from it.
- Host facilitated sessions with all stakeholders to brainstorm and decide on the final structure of the GA and WGs: hierarchy and form of communication among each other; how often they (GA & WG, together and separately) will meet, etc.
- Formalize the platform through a memorandum of understanding that follows stakeholder endorsement of the strategy and agreement on a specific set of tangible goals for the platform within the context of the strategy.
- Form the five theme-focused working groups.
- Develop a two-year working plan for the platform: schedule regular roundtables to update on the

donors’ various operating and prospect youth programs and the progress of the strategy implementation through LPDC, as well as a schedule of major events and meet-ups with the youth at key points of the process.

Interim goal for 2020:

- Set an agenda for YouthYear2021 with the Youth Stakeholder Platform members and the Youth Follow-up Forum by mid-2020.
- Evaluate the strategy and revise the areas of action by end of 2020.



5.3. PALESTINIAN YOUTH FOLLOW-UP FORUM

The Youth Follow-up Forum (YFF) will primarily act as a space where Palestinian youth can follow up, give their input on the development of the strategy, as well as participate in updating its goals and action plans at every phase. The youth participating in the YFF will act as ambassadors for the implementation of the strategy, especially towards the youth community they represent. The Forum will also be a space

where LPDC can consult with the youth and take into consideration their input towards any youth-related policy recommendations it may propose to the Lebanese government in the future. LPDC also invites UNICEF and Masar to network this group with the Lebanese Youth Forum, which they played a key role in its creation, and with the Palestinian Youth Core Group (created by Masar), to share experiences and lessons learned in constructive group forming and operation.

Issue addressed	Potential	Suggested approach
<p>Disempowerment of youth.</p> <p>Depression, desperation, loss of hope, and skepticism among the youth about the possibility of change</p>	<p>Young Palestinians tend to be largely socially engaged and motivated about the need to improve the conditions of their community.</p>	<p>Facilitation of the emergence of youth leadership through making the youth partners in the process and involving them in the decision making.</p>
<p>Gap between the youth and the other stakeholders, trust issues with donors.</p>	<p>Will of stakeholders to have a more participatory approach, including more youth.</p>	<p>Creating a forum where the youth can voice their opinion, and connect directly with other stakeholders; thus, creating more transparency and reciprocal understanding.</p>
<p>Political divisions at all levels of the Palestinian community' reflected in deep schism and aversion among the youth.</p>	<p>Frustration about the division.</p> <p>Will of working together to contribute to a positive social change.</p>	<p>Fostering the creation of a structure that provides a framework for collaborations among youth from different backgrounds, using an inclusive and action oriented approach, and allowing complex conversations to occur among the youth.</p>
<p>Political factions' strong control of the camps leads to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Difficulty to start new projects inside camps. -Ideas are immediately rejected and classified politically. 	<p>Exceptions apply where there is full partnering up with active youth groups inside camps.</p>	<p>Provide a framework in which independent youth are able to equally participate in decision making along with youth affiliated with factions.</p>
<p>Scarcity of resources create competition and further divisions among youth-led initiatives.</p> <p>Political baggage that comes with funds is aggravating the division among youth and inviting further crackdown on their initiatives.</p>	<p>The current moment is a window of opportunity since many donors are willing to dedicate more resources to the youth.</p>	<p>Encouraging meetings of youth around the many common concerns and ambitions that unite them, and reflecting this image of a united youth in front of the rest of the stakeholders.</p>
<p>There is little understanding of the variety of priorities ,which differ according to region. The highest number of youth-led initiatives is in Beirut and Tyre, and the lowest in Bekaa</p>	<p>During the research phase, LPDC conducted focus groups in 6 different regions in Lebanon, and developed a first understanding of the geographical differences and commonalities.</p>	<p>Ensure the participation of youth from all regions in the Youth Follow-Up Forum ,by decentralizing the forum.</p>

Who participates in the Youth Follow-up Forum?

In order to achieve effective operation on the ground, youth participation in the YFF needs to adequately reflect and represent the diversity of political opinions and general youth interests. Hence the need, on one hand, for adequate tools of outreach and communication, and as importantly, adequate facilitation to deal with potential conflicts and power dynamics. LPDC will engage all politically and non-politically active youth collectives and invite them to participate and be represented in the YFF. In this light, LPDC urges PLO to develop and empower the youth network it has recently established, develop its inclusion factor, and encourage willing members from the network to be active participants in the YFF. In the same line, LPDC will reach out to previously existing networks of youth initiatives (even when they have stopped being active) to invite them to join the meetings of the YFF. Moreover, to increase the representativeness of the committee, LPDC will:

- Ensure participation of youth from all regions by holding regular debate spaces in the 6 main regions (North, Bekaa, Baalbek, Beirut, Saida, Sour).
- Ensure the inclusion of youth who do not usually have access to NGO projects; people from different circles. This should be done by diversifying the types of events, make some more action oriented, and use the various channels of communication to ensure all youth receive the invitation.
- Provide an inclusive space for typically marginalized/excluded youth to have the interest and be able to participate actively. This would be done by hiring professional facilitators who provide a safe space for everyone attending the debate spaces to feel encouraged to participate.
- Ensure women participation, by having a gender inclusive outreach strategy and facilitation.
- Ensure accessibility to the debate spaces and meetings by providing transportation when needed.

What is the function of the Forum?

- YFF functions as a platform for LPDC to launch the strategy and get feedback from the youth.
- It is the space where the Stakeholder Platform Working Groups present and discuss regularly the advances of their work with the youth.
- It is the platform that gives the youth the possibility of contributing to the strategy, monitoring its impact, and voicing their needs and those of their peers who are not able to participate.
- It provides the youth with a facilitated space where they can discuss among each other and hear each other's visions on the issues that affect them, as well as discuss their needs and the impact of the development projects on their reality.
- It allows a direct link between the youth and the stakeholders, and increases the youth's influence in decisions around projects targeting them.

How does the Forum function?

Regular regional public meetings (مسابحات نقاش)

In each of the 6 regions, the youth will be invited to attend a regular public meeting that occurs periodically. These meetings will be organized by the strategy's regional coordinator. The strategy's coordination team will present general updates on the platform work, followed by a facilitated session where the youth discuss and provide feedback on what was presented. These meetings will include different activities to break the formal meeting format, inspire the youth in creative ways, and to engage with youth who usually do not attend formal meetings and discussion fora.

Reference Groups

Five reference groups will be formed, each of them focusing on one area of action, and each of them gathering up to 10 youth who are both: experts/experienced in the field addressed by the area of action, and have the capacity to represent a bigger community of young Palestinians (from political factions as well as independent groups, clubs, and networks). The connection between the Reference Groups and the corresponding Stakeholder Working Groups is direct: the WGs will consult the corresponding RGs to validate decisions and test them with the youth themselves, and in every Reference Group, a member will be elected to



represent it in the regular meetings of the WGs. The main functions of the Reference Groups are:

- to discuss internally the different suggestions and programs in each area of action, and to suggest amendments where needed;
- to represent the youth's voice in each of the areas of action through transmitting to the WGs feedback and suggestions based on their ground knowledge and connections with the community;
- to be the link between the bigger community of youth, and the stakeholders in general;
- to transmit to the youth updates of the work being done in the WGs.

Besides their function in this strategy framework, the Reference Groups will provide an opportunity for the youth from different political backgrounds to go beyond their differences, and have focused debates, and reach concrete decisions that serve the wide interest of the youth. The criteria of how to form these reference groups, their bylaws, and the protection mechanism of their members, will be decided in focus groups that LPDC will facilitate, making sure that the criteria and bylaws guarantee diversity, representation of independent youth, gender inclusion, and protection of freedom of speech.

The Reference Groups will function on a voluntary basis, but will receive logistic support from the

strategy's Coordination Team (meeting space, snacks/ meals and drinks, transportation, and facilitation).

Action steps and interim goals

Interim goals for mid-2019:

- Establish the Forum and launch its effective operation through the following action steps:
 - Host regular meetings in the 6 regions, where the strategy's coordination team presents and discusses the Platform WGs' work with the youth.
 - Map the main representatives of youth to be involved in Reference Groups.
 - Host focus groups with a variety of youth to discuss the criteria of formation of the RGs, to decide their bylaws and protection mechanism.
 - Form the RGs and have the members of each one elect their representative who will attend the WGs sessions.
 - Start regular meetings of Reference Groups.
 - Test and improve inclusiveness and working models.

5.4. THE STRATEGY'S COORDINATION TEAM

The strategy's coordination team consists of a group of four professionals (a Lead Coordinator, two Working Group Coordinators, and a Regional Youth Coordinator and community liaison), hired full-time to organize, supervise, and coordinate the work of the Youth Stakeholder Platform and the Youth Follow-Up Forum.

The tasks of the Coordination Team are:

- Facilitate the creation of the Stakeholder Platform's Working Groups.
- Facilitate the creation of the Youth Forum Reference Groups according to the criteria decided on in focus groups.
- Coordinate and facilitate Working Group meetings and working sessions.
- Coordinate meetings of the Reference Groups.
- Organize annual meetings for the Stakeholder Platform's GA and the Youth Follow-up Forum respectively.
- Organize the regular regional debate spaces for the youth.
- Develop a communication strategy, and ensure a continuous conversation with the youth about the strategy and the updates of the WGs.

- Present the work of the WGs to the youth in the regional debate spaces.
- Inform the strategy's Steering Committee regularly about the advances of the WGs.
- Identify overlapping issues between the different WGs, and provide the needed connection between them.
- Evaluate the process of the strategy and formulate new suggestions.

In addition, the Coordination Team will have the support of the following professionals:

- Legal expert
- Communication expert
- Economy and Social Entrepreneurship expert
- Process design expert
- Education expert
- Health expert
- Urban planning expert
- A team of facilitators





6. MOVING FORWARD

6.1. FUNDING THE STRATEGY: POSSIBILITIES OF JOINT FUNDING

There are several options to fund this strategy, all aiming at the strategic vision of positioning each available fund within the larger picture of total available funds, while working out how to maximize their impact on the ground and promote coherent sustainable programming as well as youth inclusion and leadership. Moreover, LPDC is looking to explore, in close coordination with its partners, funding schemes that will accommodate for:

1. **Shared programming and collaboration among donors** at all levels including planning, implementation, and evaluation. Aiming at achieving complementary funding to maximize impact under one area or in one direction.
2. **Decentralized funding** from various sources and levels of donors.
3. **Shared fund management** - hence shared responsibility and ownership of programs - including structured inclusion of the youth in decision-making of fund utilization via the Youth Forum's Reference Groups. Empowering as well all stakeholders to participate collectively in defining funding priorities via the Stakeholder Platform Working Groups.
4. **Ambitious, long-term funding** which can enhance sustainability of programs as well as minimise administrative procedures of funds applications, thus potentially contributing to more money reaching beneficiaries.
5. **Transparency and knowledge sharing** among donors and with the community of stakeholders and youth, to avoid redundant research and projects, and hence to optimize the use of the funds.

Below are three proposed ideas for funding options, with the possibility of their overlapping or intertwining.

1. **Flexible allocation of funds along areas or various components of the strategy**, hence

funding strategic components rather than specific projects cycles. Laying the ground for this option requires a donor/funding alignment on the area(s) and developing detailed long-term comprehensive action plans.

2. **Creating a shared funding pool for the strategy**, where major governmental and international donor contributions can merge with funds from other sources that are usually less tapped into, such as: the business sectors, relevant publicly and privately funded programs that are not necessarily categorized under aid, and possibly even donations from the community itself for specific projects. Laying the ground for such an idea requires agreeing on a fund management framework that includes donors, major political stakeholders and youth representatives, and agreeing on fundraising strategies as well as on a decision-making process for choosing the projects that will be funded.
3. **Developing a decentralized, cumulative funding model for youth-led initiatives** in which part of the funds is allocated to initiatives proposed and led by a network of youth that are actively engaging with the strategy processes (for example, youth from the Reference Groups and/or Debate Spaces cf. chapter 5.3). A possible model could be the allocation of a fixed unconditional grant per youth member per year; the youth would then select to either work on their own project or choose to accumulate grants by partnering up with other members or donate (part of) their grant to other youth who they believe could make better use of it. This is a progressive model that builds on the core principle of investing in youth leadership in a tangible way. The underlying groundwork includes the alignment of youth partners with the strategy and its inclusive and participatory values; their commitment to contribute to its success; and the actual establishment of an active network (for which this funding model could serve as one motive).

Case studies of alternative funding models relevant to the proposed options

- Urban Poor Fund International (UPFI); an alliance of federations of slum/shack and urban poor groups in 33 countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America.
- The Asian Coalition for Housing Rights set up the ACCA fund. It blends US\$11 million of donor finance with savings from local groups and some state funding to provide small scale loans and grants to address urban poverty and encourage pro-poor upgrading of informal settlements, often in partnership with local governments.
- A proposal by a group of scientists of a decentralized, collective allocation of science funding as an alternative to the classical hierarchical peer review. This gives the agency of selecting scientific research to the 'collective wisdom of scientists' rather than to the hot topics or funding trends.

success in activating and sustaining the strategy's framework of action.

- The establishment of an active and structured Stakeholder Platform: measured in the success of the establishment of Working Groups on each area of action and in the Working Groups' activity and output.
- The establishment of an active and structured Youth Follow-up Forum: measured in the success of establishment of the Youth Reference Groups, and their activity and the quantitative and qualitative assessment of their input to the Stakeholder Platform Working Groups; and in the regularity and activity of the regional Debate Spaces.
- Project image, effective endorsement, and public reception: measured through monitoring the participation of youth from different regions and with different profiles in the debate spaces; the strategy image in the local and national Palestinian media outlets, websites, and social media networks; and direct feedback from youth and stakeholders.
- Available resources put to use by the major actors for implementing the strategy

6.2. MONITORING, EVALUATING AND LEARNING

To ensure achievement of the expected outcomes of the strategy, the Coordination Team will be required to develop a clear framework of an M&E plan, including the tools to be used for its practical implementation. This plan should take into account the following critical factors, and set the type of indicators that will allow measuring their success:

- Outreach and participation of the youth: measured in numbers and diversity of the youth participating in the various strategy endorsement, planning and implementation activities.
- Outreach and participation of various stakeholders: measured in numbers and diversity stakeholders including donors, active organizations, and partners at the Palestinian and Lebanese political and civil society levels as well as partners for implementation of specific strategy components.
- The establishment of an active and structured coordination framework: measured in the establishment of the Coordination Team and their





- Financial resources (figures, timelines, sustainability factor and scope of implementation as well as flexibility of use of finances).
- Funding pool model progress, management, and operation.
- Human resources supporting the strategy implementation.
- Keeping track of and discussing with the Palestinian youth where the strategy document and processes are benefiting their living situation in Lebanon.
- Reviewing stakeholders' evaluation of programs that fall under the strategy's vision and objectives, where available.
- Keeping track of changes or emergence of new developments that may affect the strategy objectives or implementation process.
- Updating the strategy according to input from the Palestinian youth and from stakeholders.

Strategy impact, and key learnings

This is the most difficult and crucial area to trace as the strategy focuses on transformative processes rather than pre-conceived outputs. In the first two years following the official launch of the strategy, where much focus will be on building and structuring outreach and effective engagement, as well as hosting conversations and potentially implementing prototype projects, LPDC will aim for at least one yearly self-evaluation of this work, primarily based on the effectiveness of the Strategy Coordination Team. Along with the implementation of the strategy's framework for action, the Stakeholder Platform and the Youth Follow-up Forum will also be evaluated on a yearly basis. This self-evaluation includes a discussion of the current status of vision and objectives and ensuring buy-in from all stakeholders directly or actively engaged in the implementation, discussion of challenges faced at every phase, discussion of having sufficient finances and the right team on board, as well as review of accomplishments.

In parallel, the coordination team will develop, in close collaboration with the strategy's active partners including the donors and the youth, a full set of tools for a comprehensive evaluation of impact to be implemented over the four years that follow. The evaluation will be ground-based and creative, using interactive tools that are coherent with the participatory mindset underlying the strategy and aiming for maximum participation among the youth and stakeholders.

Strategy benefits and updates

- Keeping track of and discussing with partners the areas where the strategy document and processes are benefiting decision making among donors and major stakeholders.

LPDC will transparently share its updates on the key success factors and its technical monitoring. The review set-up will be an open conversation and LPDC will work with the Youth Follow-up Forum to produce an engaging graphic representation that will be circulated online and displayed physically in accessible locations. This will encourage the youth and stakeholders from the Palestinian community to view it and give feedback to LPDC.

Finally, LPDC invites donors and implementing organizations to contribute to these monitoring, evaluating, and learning processes and to be part of developing a long-term impact evaluation scheme. Most evaluation is project-based and everyone can benefit from a long-term follow-up to measure the impact of programs on specific areas for improvement. Coordinated monitoring and evaluation could provide new insights and more informed conclusions and follow-up strategies.

6.3. NEXT STEPS

This strategy's ambitions and directions of action offer a roadmap provisionally until the year 2025, when LPDC will, in close collaboration with its partners, assess and revisit it as a whole. During the next six years, the endorsement of the strategy and translating this endorsement into tangible efforts will be a key challenge. How can we achieve and maintain a culture of collective awareness and action towards a common vision?

The ambition is to understand the realities of the youth and find inspiration in them with the aim of improving their situation in Lebanon through an increased financial sustainability, a focus on having the youth leading the way, as well as work on changing narratives and perceptions among Palestinians and between Palestinians and Lebanese. The key to sustain this ambition is acting 'together': building bridges across

sectors, levels, and regions; improving communication and coordination; synchronizing thinking, planning, and action; and finding answers together.

LPDC invites the youth and stakeholders to partake in the continuing process of endorsing, developing, and implementing this strategy. Through participation, collaboration, and coordination across all levels we can optimise the resources available, learn from each other, get innovative ideas about processes and models that could be more efficient, increase the level of inclusion, and further transparency and integrity. All in order to enable the move towards improving the situation for the Palestinian youth in Lebanon by impactful means. The key is to work together.



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