



REFUGEE COMMUNITIES MOBILISING IN THE MIDDLE EAST:

REFUGEE-LED ORGANISATIONS
IN JORDAN, LEBANON, AND TURKEY

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FINAL REPORT
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This report presents the final results from the Middle East portion of the project “Evaluation of Refugee-led Organisations in East Africa and the Middle East”. The Middle East component was designed and undertaken in dialogue with the team conducting parallel research in East Africa, based at the Refugee-Led Research Hub (RLRH) in Nairobi. Results from the East Africa study are available at: <https://refugeeledresearch.org/>. The Middle East research was facilitated through a collaboration between the Local Engagement Refugee Research Network (LERRN) and the Centre for Lebanese Studies (CLS).¹

LERRN is a partnership of researchers and civil society partners committed to promoting protection and solutions with and for refugees. Its goal is to ensure that refugee research, policy, and practice are shaped by a more inclusive, equitable engagement of those closest to the phenomenon of forced migration. Through collaborative research, training, and knowledge-sharing, LERRN aims to improve the functioning of the global refugee regime and ensure more timely protection and rights-based solutions for refugees. LERRN’s Secretariat is based at Carleton University, in Ottawa, Canada.

CLS is an independent academic institution established in 1984 to undertake impartial and balanced research and contribute to Lebanon’s development. CLS was once affiliated with the Lebanese American University in Beirut and the Middle East Centre at St. Antony’s College, University of Oxford, and is currently affiliated with the History Department at the University of Cambridge. Its mission is to conduct research and organise conferences that address key issues in the Middle East region. CLS opened an office in Lebanon in 2012. The research for this project was managed from its office in Amman.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The research team in Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey thank all refugees who shared with us their experiences and voiced their concerns and aspirations. Their strong will and ability to manoeuvre and mobilise despite all challenges had a significant impact that varied in different shapes and structures. We sought to reflect these diverse forms of agency in our research. We held regular Zoom meetings with our colleagues in East Africa who were leading the parallel research in Kenya, Ethiopia, Tanzania, and Uganda. Discussions were very enriching for our thoughts and often inspiring to explore new variables in our fieldwork. We thank them for sharing with us the successful experiences of refugees in East Africa in establishing Refugee-Led Organisations, as well as the challenges that faced these organisations.

Lastly, we thank the Operations team who supported us at CLS starting with Rachel Saliba and Ghenwa Makhmrah and the team at the LERRN Secretariat, Nadiya Ismaeva and Stephanie Pineau.

¹ Original report cover (below) designed by Watfa Najdi



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² All figures were created by the research team unless otherwise indicated.

RESEARCH TEAMS IN JORDAN, LEBANON, AND TURKEY

An important dimension of this research is the fact that it was designed and implemented by a research team that lives and works in close proximity to the phenomenon of forced migration in the Middle East. With a Regional Lead Researcher to oversee the project's Middle East portion, the country research teams in Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey each consisted of a Country Lead Researcher working with Refugee Researchers. Refugee Researchers were involved from the design stage of the country-level research and played critical roles in mapping the field, conducting interviews, and discussing country-level findings.³

Oroub El-Abed was the Regional Lead Researcher for this project. She is Senior Researcher for the CLS in Jordan and co-investigator on several projects taking intersectional approaches and involving diverse communities (nationals and refugees) in the Middle East. She completed her PhD in Political Economy of Development Studies from the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS). Her research has focused on socioeconomic conditions of refugees and vulnerable minorities in the Middle East. She has numerous publications on the topics of Palestinian refugees from Gaza living in Jordan, Palestinian-origin Jordanians and their access to economic opportunities, youth refugees and citizens in the Middle East and their limited opportunities, and the ability of Iraqi and Syrian refugees in Jordan to access basic rights.

Wafra Najdi was the Lebanon Lead Researcher for this project. She is an architect, urban planner, and researcher. Her work focuses on the intersection between urban and refugee studies. She has conducted and contributed to research projects on social cohesion and communal relations between refugees and host communities, refugee shelter programs and housing, land, and property (HLP) rights, as well as refugee entrepreneurship and digital livelihoods. She has published and co-authored several articles on these topics. Najdi is the program coordinator of the Refugee Research Program at the Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs at the American University in Beirut.

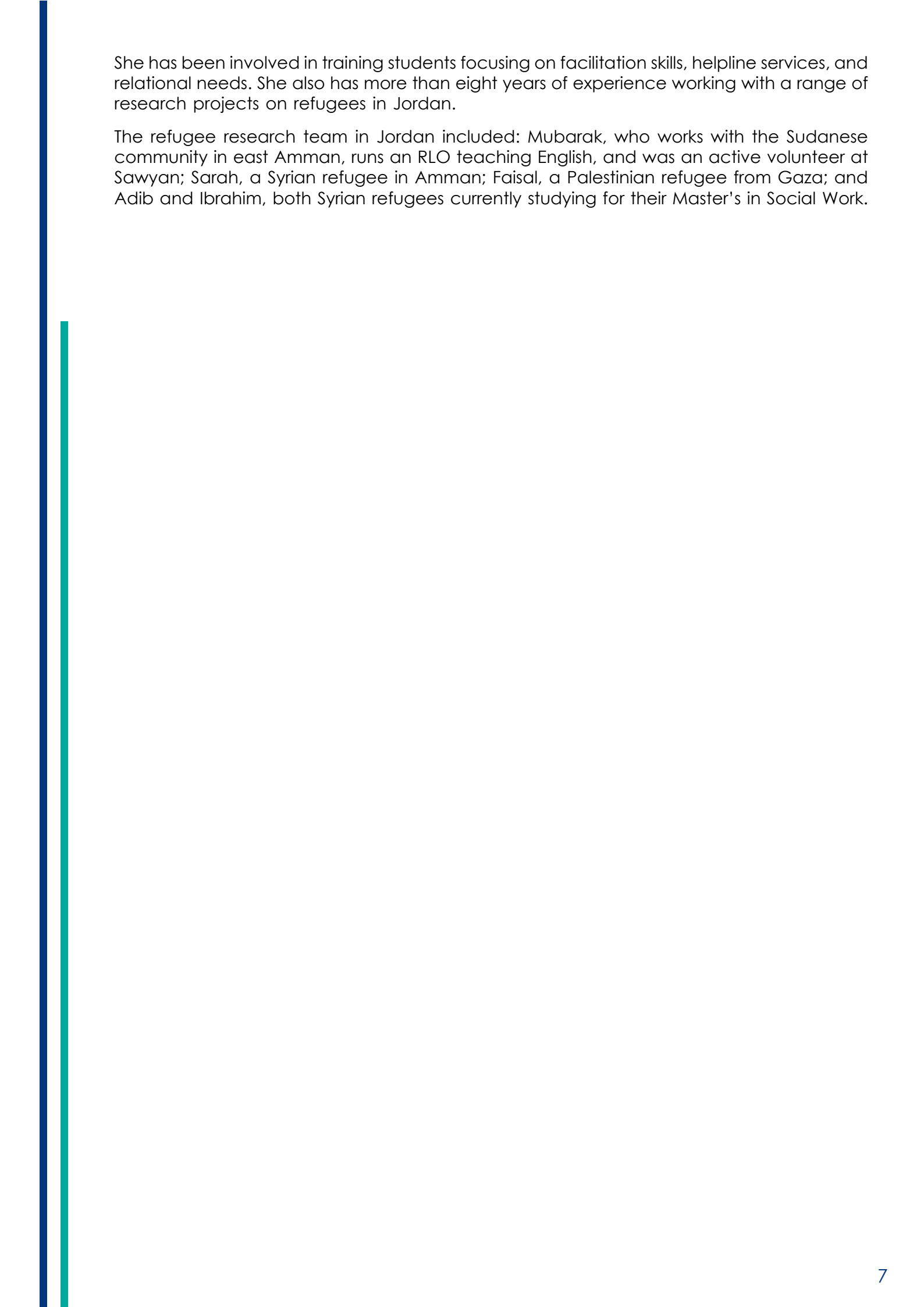
The refugee research team in Lebanon included: Kholoud, a Palestinian refugee whose work focuses on highlighting the struggles of refugees and marginalised communities, particularly women and people with disabilities in the camp of Bourj al Barajneh; Alaa, a Palestinian refugee living in the Beddawi camp, North Lebanon, who works in the humanitarian sector and recently co-founded a refugee-led initiative that aims to provide community service projects to the residents of the camp; Amin, a Syrian refugee living in the Bekaa who works at a refugee-led initiative; and Sageda, a Syrian refugee living in Tripoli.

Mustafa Hoshmand, originally from Afghanistan, was the Turkey Lead Researcher for this project. He holds an MSc in Quantitative Economics from the University of Glasgow. His lived experience as a refugee in Iran has informed his research and practice to support refugee communities. His experience of working with refugees began in 2016 when he started to volunteer with a local NGO, working on the well-being and empowerment of refugees in Istanbul. He also served as a project manager within that same NGO which provided educational and social events for unaccompanied Afghan, Iranian, and Syrian minors. Moreover, he has provided volunteer interpretation services from and to Farsi, Turkish, Dari, and English with many local and international NGOs in Turkey.

The refugee research team in Turkey included: Imad, a refugee from Syria living in Turkey since 2016 who has a Bachelor's degree in Information Technology; Mohammad, a refugee from Syria living in Turkey since 2015 who has a Master's degree in Civilization Studies; Yasmin, a refugee from Syria living in Turkey since 2017 who has a Bachelor's degree in Communication, Political Science, and International Relations; and Mohammed, a refugee from Syria living in Turkey since 2016 who has a high school diploma.

Farah Al Hamouri joined the team as Jordan Lead Researcher for the final stages of the project, replacing Osama Okour who served as Jordan Lead Researcher for the desk research and mapping phases of this project, and who conducted many of the face-to-face interviews. Farah holds a Master's in Social Work focusing on refugees and migration.

3 In response to the diversity of conditions in which this research was undertaken, some research team members are referred to only by their first names.



She has been involved in training students focusing on facilitation skills, helpline services, and relational needs. She also has more than eight years of experience working with a range of research projects on refugees in Jordan.

The refugee research team in Jordan included: Mubarak, who works with the Sudanese community in east Amman, runs an RLO teaching English, and was an active volunteer at Sawyan; Sarah, a Syrian refugee in Amman; Faisal, a Palestinian refugee from Gaza; and Adib and Ibrahim, both Syrian refugees currently studying for their Master's in Social Work.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

Since 2016, there has been a commitment by the international humanitarian community to devolve funding and decision-making power to national and local actors, known as the localisation of aid. At the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit, there was an emphasis on the importance of supporting 'crisis affected people' as first responders. Furthermore, in the Grand Bargain, the idea of strengthening local humanitarian actors' capacities, along with access to funding and information, was presented as having the potential to enhance the effectiveness of the humanitarian response due to the contextual and cultural knowledge of local and national responders. Likewise, the 2018 Global Compact on Refugees placed an emphasis on enhancing refugee self-reliance and recognising the value of refugee participation in decision-making.

In light of these developments, and the increased attention paid to refugee-led responses since the early days of the lockdown caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, this project has examined refugee-led responses in Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey and the role they have been able to play in light of the politics of the host states. Our research has been animated by four questions:

1. What is the nature and scope of refugee-led responses in diverse contexts in Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey?
2. How do various actors perceive the impact of refugee-led responses, especially in light of other forms of humanitarian response?
3. What are the opportunities and constraints, including local, national, and international politics, that shape the work of refugee-led responses in general, and Refugee-led Organisations (RLOs) in particular?
4. What are some best practices for RLOs and mechanisms to reduce the barriers that RLOs encounter in order to enhance their impact?

To answer these questions, we have contextualised the mobilisation of refugees within local, national, regional, and international ecosystems in order to understand the role they have been able to play within these structures. We situate refugee mobilisation within the diverse policy environments of the Middle East to understand the organisational structures they managed to create for themselves and the impact they are having on their communities.

Through 18 months of desk research, mapping, field research, interviews, focus groups and comparative analysis, we have identified various patterns and types of refugee-led responses, including a limited number of registered RLOs, along with a much wider range and greater number of more informal and typically smaller RLOs. Given the restrictive regulations of host countries and the requirements of donors, the majority of RLOs are not registered, especially in Jordan and Lebanon, have not been able to secure external funding, and have very limited visibility beyond the communities they serve.

Through this work, we seek to highlight the important role of the localised humanitarian support led by refugees, regardless of the size and registration status of their organisations. The findings of this research highlight the agency of refugee communities: their ability to evaluate choices and make decisions. The work focuses on the role of agency and the capacity of refugees to take action, albeit in very restrictive policy environments. These findings provide important evidence for policymakers, funders, and practitioners to guide their engagement with various types of RLOs in the region, mindful of the diverse structures, strategies, and levels of formality that refugee-led responses assume.

METHODOLOGY

To study the dynamics of the RLOs in the Middle East, we focused on three countries that have received the highest influx of Syrian refugees since 2011: Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey.

FIGURE 1: MAP OF RESEARCH SITES IN TURKEY, LEBANON, AND JORDAN

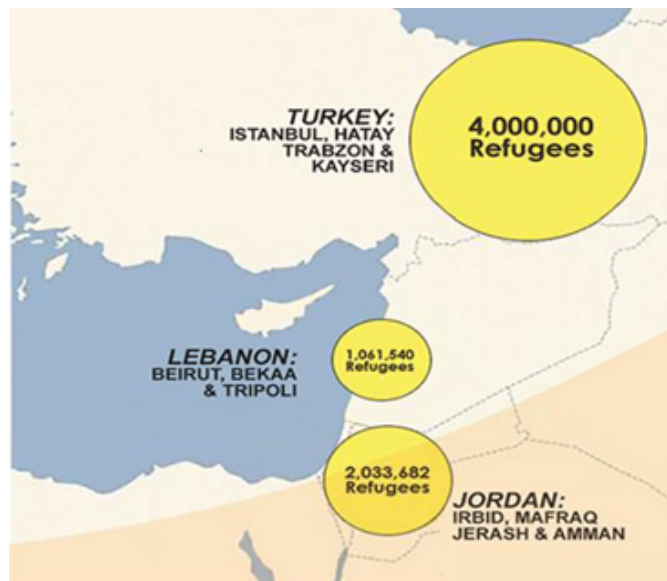
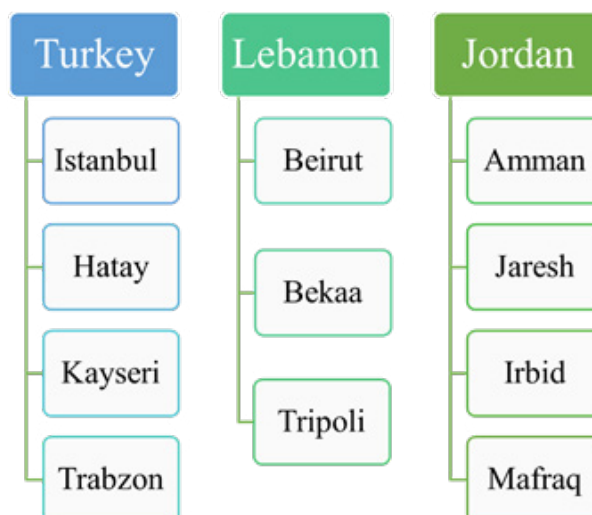


FIGURE 2: LIST OF RESEARCH SITES IN TURKEY, LEBANON, AND JORDAN



Under the overall leadership of a regional lead researcher, a team of three country lead researchers in Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey were selected to co-design the research and coordinate with a team of refugee researchers that were involved in developing the project's methodology and workplan. Together, they mapped refugee-led responses in both prominent and less visible contexts in a selection of cities in the three study countries. In Turkey, these cities included Istanbul, Hatay, Kayseri, and Trabzon. In Lebanon, these cities included Beirut, Bekaa and Tripoli. In Jordan, these cities included Amman, Jaresh, Irbid and Mafraq.

From the mapped organisations, both registered and unregistered, an average of 25 refugee-led organisations per country were selected on the basis of intersectional variables for face-to-face interviews with leaders, staff, volunteers and beneficiaries. Interviews were also held with several external actors who support the RLOs in their programmes.

KEY FINDINGS

Several key findings emerge from this research that can usefully inform future policy, practice, and research on refugee-led responses in the Middle East. They include:

1. The phenomenon of refugee-led responses in the Middle East is more present and takes more diverse forms than expected: from larger, registered and more visible RLOs to smaller, less visible and typically unregistered RLOs. Future engagement needs to reflect an appreciation for this diversity of forms taken by refugee-led responses.
2. Refugee-led responses are engaged in a wider range of activities than expected. Beyond responding to needs in the areas of social protection and assistance, refugees organise to provide support to their communities in the areas of preserving and celebrating culture as a means of re-creating a sense of homeland in exile, along with providing a space for refugees to act and demonstrate agency by supporting a range of training and self-help initiatives.
3. Only a small sub-set of RLOs currently benefit from external support in terms of funding and advocacy. They often enjoy a well-established administrative and financial management that fulfils the conditionalities of funders. External support for RLOs can be more fully informed by an appreciation for the diverse forms that RLOs take and the range of activities in which they are engaged.
4. RLOs have been found to have considerable measurable and non-measurable positive impacts in responding to the diverse needs of their communities. Access to external funding is, however, is only one factor that has limited the impact of RLOs. In fact, one of the most significant constraints on RLOs was found to be the domestic policy context in which they function. Future efforts to support and enhance the impact of RLOs needs to focus not only on financial support to RLOs, but also on understanding and addressing the restrictive domestic policy environments in which they function.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To Host States

RLOs make important contributions to addressing the otherwise un-met needs of refugees and related communities. Their impact, however, is limited by restrictive or ambiguous policies relating to refugees and the registration of RLOs. In a region with a history of receiving refugees, more permissive laws and policies are needed, including:

- Reliable access to legal status for refugees, including refugee status that meets international standards, the regularisation of status for long-staying refugees, and access to citizenship for refugees who meet national standards.
- More permissive laws for refugees to create their own organisations and serve their own communities. Refugees will always endeavour to mobilise visibly and invisibly. Host states are better off to value the refugees' agency and should make registration systematic and straightforward through communicating clearly the steps required to register an RLO according to the framework for other civil society actors and as per the conditions of reception of funding.
- A unified domestic policy, with clear measures to explain how to enhance engagement with RLOs and with refugees as civic society actors. This will affirm refugees' rights to mobilise and to localise their support as self-reliant agents acting in a welcoming environment.

To Donors

In light of Grand Bargain commitments and the principles of the Global Compact on Refugees, donors should develop more flexible and permissive policies towards funding for RLOs by:

- Establishing reliable funding streams for RLOs with the administrative capacity to receive and manage funds;
- Appreciating the diversity of RLOs and the needs they help address by ensuring that support for RLOs is not exclusively accessible to the limited number of prominent RLOs in the region. Instead, donors should develop mechanisms to ensure that funding is also accessible to smaller RLOs;
- Recognising the restrictive policy environments in which RLOs function, explore mechanisms to provide support to smaller, unregistered RLOs;
- Advocating with host states in the region to develop more permissive policies towards the registration and activities of RLOs.

To Humanitarian Organisations

In response to commitments by humanitarian NGOs to localise action and transfer power to actors closest to the communities in need of humanitarian assistance, humanitarian organisations should develop innovative mechanisms to support RLOs as they navigate restrictive policy environments by:

- Viewing RLOs as equal and valued partners within the community of humanitarian actors;
- Ensuring the equal participation of RLOs in humanitarian decision-making structures;
- Exploring partnerships with unregistered RLOs to help provide an administrative structure through which these RLOs can access external funding and other forms of support;
- Recognising the expertise of RLOs and the potential value of capacity-sharing relationships where RLOs can benefit from training while contributing deeper insight into the needs of refugees and related communities;
- Advocating for changes in national policy frameworks to allow RLOs to become registered and assert their independent identities and capacities.

To UNHCR

Given its own commitments to refugee participation and the commitments of the Global Compact on Refugees, UNHCR should:

- Advocate for policy change by host governments to create conditions more permissive and supportive for RLOs;
- Include RLOs as full partners in its planning and programming structures;
- Recognise the various patterns of RLOs and how they can address the needs of refugees and related communities.

To Researchers

While the focus of this research has been on the impact of RLOs, it has also illustrated the value of participatory research, led by researchers closest to the phenomenon of forced migration. Given the substantive benefits of this approach, researchers should:

- Involve refugees as full members of the research team from the design stage of research.
- Recognise the important contributions that RLOs can make to research, especially by identifying research needs, understanding local conditions, and navigating the complex environments of research.
- Establish and sustain trust-based and mutually beneficial relationships with RLOs,

recognising that while RLOs can make important contributions to research, research can make important contributions to the current and potential work of RLOs.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

CBO	Community-Based Organisation	TPR	Temporary Protection Regulation
CLS	Centre for Lebanese Studies	UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
DGMM	Directorate General of Migration Management (Türkiye)	UN	United Nations
EU	European Union	UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees
GoL	Government of Lebanon	UNFPA	United Nations Fund for Population Activities
ICDL	International Computer Driving License	WFP	World Food Program
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation	WHS	World Humanitarian Summit
JRP	Jordan Response Plan		
JOD	Jordanian Dinar		
LAU	Lebanese American University		
LCRP	Lebanon Crisis Response Plan		
LERRN	Local Engagement Refugee Research Network		
LFIP	Law on Foreigners and International Protection		
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding		
MoL	Ministry of Labour		
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation		
PDMM	Provincial Directorate of Migration Management		
PLO	Palestinian Liberation Organisation		
RLI	Refugee-Led Initiative		
RLRH	Refugee-Led Research Hub		
RLO	Refugee-Led Organisation		
RSD	Refugee Status Determination		

INTRODUCTION

Forced displacement is not only a major event dispossessing people from their homes and livelihoods, it disrupts the unit of the family and the community's connectivity (Fagan 2011, William and Shepherd 2021). This report examines the different structures through which refugees as actors in host countries seek to re-establish the community, specifically a new community or organisation (Zetter et al., 2006; Ager and Strang, 2008; Strang and Ager, 2010, Williams and Shephard 2021) to support one another and address the needs of fellow refugees. The reluctance of host states towards integrating refugees have left refugees in permanent temporariness (Haddad 2008, Hyndman and Giles 2002, Bailey et. al 2002) with limited access to basic rights in host states and limited allocated resources by the international community (Crisp 2003).

We study in this research the three countries of the Middle East that have received the highest numbers of refugees during the recent crisis in Syria: Lebanon, Turkey, and Jordan. Their geopolitical locations and their mostly open-border politics have rendered these countries as safe havens for war-affected people. Yet, the governing policies of each state towards refugees have varied and thus have affected the accessed rights by refugees. The binding grounds of the 1951 Refugee Convention, the funding of the international community and the internal politics of these three host states have shaped the governing politics towards refugees in Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan, which unfolded differently with each new refugee influx legally and institutionally (Mencutek 2019).

The socio-political environment of the host states is detrimental in the refugee experience while trying to re-organise their social capital (Williams and Shephard 2021, Pittaway et al. 2016) or trying to reconstruct the homeland through the community of the same national identity (Khalidi 1997). The organisations established by the dispossessed Palestinian refugees from their homeland in 1948, in neighbouring host countries such as Jordan and Lebanon, created a space to come together and to support one another dwelling on the common factors that brought them together (Khalidi 1997, Farah 1997): their Palestinian identity, their sorrow for their loss and dispossession, and their common needs. This space, which represented localised support led by refugees, both in refugee camps and urban settings, was but a recreation of the known Levantine family/tribal/village *Diwan*⁴ at a wider scale to safeguard the communal identity and to help in channelling services to the community supported by international organisations and the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). With time, some of this social drive has become registered organisations known for the work they provide to their communities.

This experience of dispossession in the Middle East region has not only been lived by the Palestinians. Over the years, 'crisis affected people' from Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Sudan, Somalia, Yemen, and Syria have sought, as per their needs and the possible environment in the host state, to re-organise new communities in the three countries of the Middle East. Through the different organisational structures they have managed to create, they sought to take part in the vibrant civil society as first responders who are best situated to enhance the effectiveness of the humanitarian response due to their contextual and cultural knowledge (Pincock et. al 2020). We refer in this work to Refugee-led Organisations, but they symbolise the re-organised new refugee communities defined by scholars in sociological studies as:

the ability to draw together multiple and diverse community actors for a shared purpose; introduce symbolic actions, trust and coordination within the communities, ease physical, psychological and financial suffering; and offer both flexible and customised solutions despite the disrupted, dynamic and uncertain environment (Williams and Shepherd 2021: 828).

Our goal in this report is to contribute to the emerging literature on refugee participation and the role of humanitarian localisation. We have sought to situate the various structures and patterns of RLOs in the wider ecosystem of the host states and the international community to analyse their role as effective providers of first resort (Bartolomei 2016). We conducted this research over a period of 18 months, between August 2021 and November 2022. The aims of this work were to:

- document the nature and scope of RLOs' activities in the Middle East;
- explain how such organised communities matter amidst humanitarian responses;
- understand the opportunities and constraints, including local, national, and international politics, that shape the work of RLOs;
- identify best practices from RLOs and mechanisms to reduce the barriers that RLOs encounter in order to enhance their role/impact.

Localisation has been emphasised in the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) in 2016, as a means to increase the legitimacy and effectiveness of humanitarian assistance (Pincock

4 A social cultural setting where people gather, a communal identity space.

et. al 2020). In the 2016 New York Declaration and the 2018 Global Compact on Refugees, this was reiterated through the call for self-reliant refugees who engage in decision making and participate in the multiple spheres of the everyday life (Harley 2019: 4). Paragraphs 13 and 34 of the Global Compact on Refugees highlight the benefits of including refugees in all decision-making processes that affect them. Yet, little has been said on how these calls could be implemented (Harley 2019, Pincock et al. 2020, Milner et al. 2022). In this report, our analysis of the various structures of refugees' organisations and the understanding of host state policies and international funding strategies enable us to identify the different patterns of RLOs and the barriers encountered limiting their role as civil society actors. Given the complex politics of the global refugee regime (Betts et al. 2012), and the reluctant policies of host states, this work endeavours to highlight the important role of the localised humanitarian support led by refugees, regardless of the size and legality. This study accentuates the agency of refugee communities and their ability to evaluate choices, make decisions, and take action (Bartolomei 2016).

METHODOLOGY

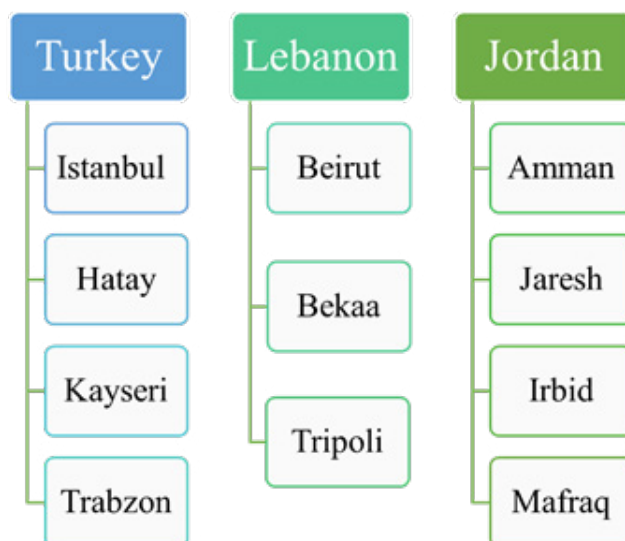
To answer our research questions and to unpack the ecosystem through which refugees seek to create their own support communities and to organise their social, socioeconomic, cultural and humanitarian intervention, our work was divided into stages. The first stage started with building up the research team where country research leads stood out with their experience in the discipline of forced migration and in working with refugee communities. Field researchers with a refugee background were recruited in the three countries to cover cities and towns within their geographic proximity. Refugee researchers from different nationalities made valuable contributions to the research through their networks and understanding of the policies and the legislative procedures of the host state. Taking into consideration that "research with refugees poses particular ethical challenges because of unequal power relations, legal precariousness" (Muller-Funk 2021), refugee researchers were not asked to go beyond their geographic areas to avoid jeopardising their safety. Rather, they provided their feedback and comments on the research questions and approaches to identify Refugee-Led Organisations, especially those that operate on a smaller scale, often invisible to the host states and to the funding bodies, and are known only by their refugee communities. This approach engages with the debate on research ethics related to refugee researchers' challenges, especially if refugees are exposed to different degrees of legal vulnerability, posing security risks to participants and researchers alike (Muller-Funk 2021).

We began with a literature review studying themes, theories, and geographic areas. Our desk review included a review of policies at the national and international levels. It focused particularly on the importance of the Global Refugee Compact which serves as a benchmark for the states and the actors to establish the permissive policies for refugees to be active members in the national and international civil society.

To identify the refugee community groupings and the nationalities for our research, we started the mapping phase, which was conducted after identifying the main cities in the three countries that have the highest concentration of refugees from different nationalities. A digital mapping was done by searching the internet and social media to identify organisations and the collective actions led by refugees. Based on this mapping, we held consultations with the identified bodies through Zoom calls. These consultations were led by general questions aiming to understand the ability to group themselves and the role of the leader to circumvent the limiting policies and bring community members together to provide the various needed services. These consultations were the springboard from which the teams in the three countries started their search. Based on the shared information received through virtual meetings, country research leaders arrived to the field equipped with some key names, key areas and key persons to access the refugee communities. In many cases, the researchers were able to participate and observe events and communal activities organised by refugee-led organisations. Participatory observations gave us a better understanding of the local dynamics. This method enabled us to build trust among the community and thereby identify an additional number of organisations. During their visits, researchers discussed the relevance of the research topic and conducted several

semi-structured interviews.

FIGURE 3: LIST OF RESEARCH SITES IN TURKEY, LEBANON, AND JORDAN



To understand closely the mobilisation of the refugee communities in the different cities and towns, the way mobilisation differs with the different shapes and agendas of organisations, and the way refugees adapt to the wider ecosystem, we focused in each country on 25-30 RLOs as per different intersectional variables such as work agenda, services provided, size of RLO, legality (registered or unregistered/small scale working at the community level only), number of beneficiaries, leadership, location (urban, rural or camp), and nationality. Face to face interviews were conducted based on a questionnaire that was gradually designed during the mapping and piloted at several phases.

Considering the nature of the RLOs and their often unseen presence, it was essential for the team to prepare for all needed ethical considerations for undertaking qualitative research, such as keeping the identity of all mapped and interviewed bodies anonymous through coding the country, city and case followed by the date of the meeting or the interview. The team worked together in drafting the questionnaire and the several consent forms addressed to RLO members in different positions (founder/manager, staff, volunteer, and beneficiary) with their hierarchical differences. For the several reviews by the Carleton University Research Ethics Board, the team developed explicit ethical principles related to conducting qualitative interviews, doing no harm for the refugee researchers nor the interviewees, and with regard to the researchers' positionality, whether local refugees from the community or refugee experts. In this qualitative research, it was important to ensure that participants' identities were protected throughout, without highlighting different cultural and national backgrounds. The consideration of ethical issues is crucial throughout all stages of qualitative study to keep the balance between the potential risks that may jeopardise the well-being of participants and the likely benefits of the research for the researchers.

In the three countries, refugees welcomed us and were delighted to share with us their experiences about their accessed basic rights and what they lacked in their daily livelihoods. They showed transparency in the way they have assembled as refugee communities and the challenges they have been facing. Some were proud of how much they accomplished and how they have managed to find ways to sustain their goal of creating an organisation that serves the community. The well explained research objectives laid the ground for an established trust between the researchers – who answered all inquisitive questions openly – and the research participants. Quite a few participants expressed their suspicion about “another” interview to be done with them. Refugees, especially Syrians, have been exhausted from being approached by researchers to set a time for an interview and answer their questions, without any effective benefit or tangible change to their situation. Research fatigue – where research participants become disengaged, bored, or annoyed with a research study due to the length, repetitiveness, or complexity of the questions asked – has created for them a negative attitude towards research. Refugees have yet to see any changes on the ground.

Seldom, research has been used to manipulate for opportunity costs, as a way to generate money that serves organisations' or funders' interests. The team did not encounter many rejections, but when they infrequently did, they explained clearly using clear and concise language that the research aims to highlight refugees' mobilisation and their ability to support one another. The fact that the research focuses on community and not on the individual's everyday struggle had rendered the interviewees rather inquisitive about the research perspective and the different approach to what they had usually experienced in other research projects.

The main limitation was related to questions about funding targeting leaders or workers at RLOs, which were often not welcomed. Some refugee leaders simply did not prefer to talk about their sources of funding and budgets as they are protective of their private donor(s) within local, regional, and transnational levels, which made us cautious about seeing the impact from an institutionalised perspective that links the funding to the achieved projects and the number of beneficiaries. It is worth noting that the largest number of RLOs we met are small and often depending on the community's support, that is not limited to financial support.

Identifying small-scale and often unregistered RLOs was another limitation. Researchers started their mapping through the virtual meetings with known RLOs identified from the social media and the internet. These meetings enabled the team to build a preliminary contact list of RLOs shared during the virtual meetings. During the physical mapping, a snowball sampling method was used. After visiting an identified RLO, the team would walk in the neighbourhood and talk to community members enquiring about the bodies which serve them. Both community members and identified RLOs helped the researchers to meet a new RLO.

To ensure confidentiality and to protect the interviewees' identity, all the interviews have been coded as follows: the consultancy interviews are coded as PIT-##, PIL-##, PIJ-## for Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan respectively; and the in-depth interviews are coded as 'first letter of the country_first letter of the city_the number of the interview.' For instance, JI001 indicates the first interview in Jordan, Irbid city.

For the analysis, the teams used the themes/variables from the mapping and the field interviews to create a codebook similar to codebooks used in NVIVO. This enabled them to unpack each question and each code within Excel sheets to highlight the variables that have been used in the interviews. The social network analysis in turn was also a useful guiding tool to understand the relations in the one community, whether existing or disrupted by displacement. It emphasised the differences amongst the members of one nationality, as a trickle down from the conflict that dispossessed them. This analysis, at the same time reflected the reasons for which refugees come together and how the networks expand.

REPORT STRUCTURE

To examine the communities' dynamics and to situate these dynamics in the Middle East region, **Chapter One** establishes the context of the host countries. It reviews the history of receiving refugees in Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey and explains the wider ecosystem within which refugees have to manoeuvre to secure their rights. It studied the governing domestic politics and policies towards refugees with different nationalities. Not all refugees have the same rights. The nuanced governing politics towards refugees have affected their needs and may have prompted them to mobilise as a community to support one another.

Refugee communities in host nations have worked to develop new structures that emphasise the value of social capital and its "enablers" (Pittaway et al. 2016 p.411). **Chapter Two** – after suggesting a definition of RLOs based on research and mapping done in the three countries – looks at the causes behind communities coming together to create RLOs. It also studies the common grounds that strengthen the bonding amongst the members of the RLOs and reflects their ability to mobilise together to provide socioeconomic services, social space, and cultural recreation of the homeland. This space has been essential for enabling refugee individuals and communities to access existing social capital as well as to build and

strengthen social capital by extending social connections and networks and creating new links in settlement.

Chapter Three studies the structural factors that shaped the various patterns, structures, and roles each RLO has been able to assume. It seeks to analyse the governing politics of each state towards refugee mobilisation and their right to officially register the RLO. This chapter presents the laws and the barriers imposed on refugees that exclude a majority of them ultimately from being considered as actors in the civil society of the host state. The second section in this chapter studies the consequences of the imposed policies and the several patterns and structures refugees improvise in order to circumvent the discretion of the host state on their mobilisation. These RLOs have varied in capacities, networks and leadership. This part discusses the layers through which refugees mobilise to advocate for their rights and to establish RLOs of solidarity to support members of their own community.

Chapter Four sought to study the impacts of RLOs, whether measurable or unmeasurable, while emphasising the significant role of the RLOs, regardless of their size and legality. These impacts have embodied the importance of weaving the human relations between the members of the RLO themselves on the one hand with members of the host community, officials in the host state, and members of international organisations on the other hand. In the chapter, these relationships have been studied as a social impact, which has been highly valued by the refugee communities, where RLOs represented for them a niche to assemble and connect them with their peers, whether from the homeland or with a similar legal status. The institutional impact of RLOs has been traced through the outreach to number of beneficiaries, the services provided, and the expenditures based on allocated funding. Such an institutional role has been tailored to respond to the international or funding body as per a strategic plan of work, with designed services and an allocated budget.

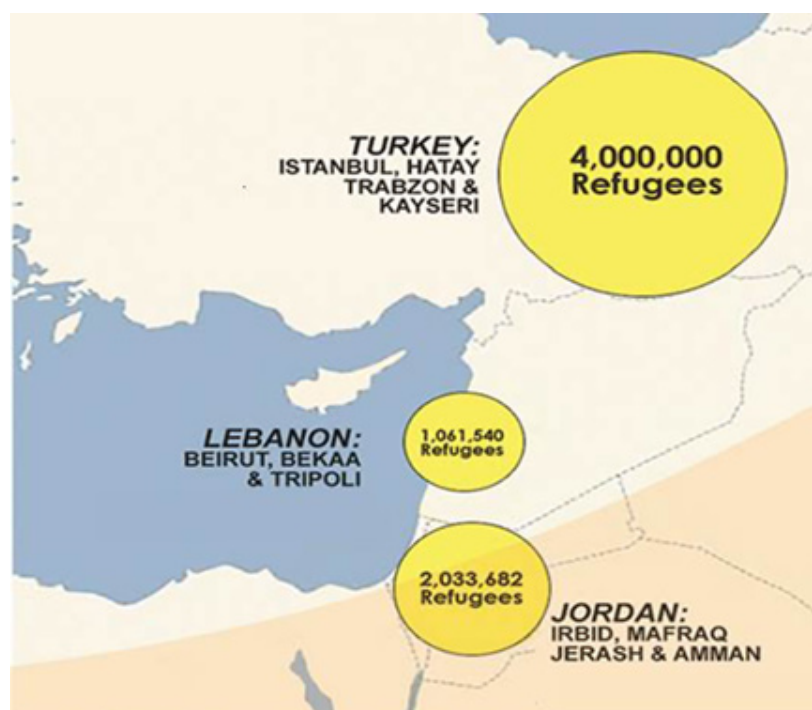
In conclusion, the objective of this work, which is an evidence-based study, has been to analyse the significant importance of the localised humanitarian assistance provided by refugees. The study concentrated on the role performed by refugee communities to serve an agenda that responds to their needs, whether through a registered and big organisation or a small and unregistered organisation at the official scale. By filling in the gaps in services by humanitarian organisations, this role has given refugees their own space and influence. This role is also consistent with the "localisation of aid" agenda pushed forward by the Global Humanitarian Summit of 2016, as well as with the UN's increased appreciation of the role played by local actors and refugee leaders.

In light of the international support for self-reliant refugees, our research sought to analyse their impact on humanitarian responses, whether measurable or non-measurable. Throughout the physical mapping, it was imperative for us to understand the ecosystem that shapes the work of RLOs, whether local, national, and international politics, and the bylaws that have enabled them to officially register or constrained them to work at a small scale away from the official radar. To make a difference with our findings, we endeavoured to identify best practices from RLOs and to propose recommendations to reduce the barriers that RLOs encounter in order to enhance their role towards their communities.

The research findings therefore provide an understanding of aspects of social capital crucial while refugees are living in host states, as well as insights about the nature of social capital and the way it functions. Several factors matter: not only networks and resources, but also norms that govern social relationships within the one community, with other refugee communities, with the host community and host state, and with INGOs and donors. These factors have been analysed as the social impact of the RLOs for both the small unregistered, and big and registered organisations. Those which got the funding and managed to secure official registration because of their legal status succeeded to secure funding and managed to fit in the conditions of the funders. We categorised these under institutional impact where they needed to tick certain boxes and conditions relating to integrity, accountability, and transparency. In this work, we advocate for wider space for RLOs to grow. We also give importance to the role that refugee communities play in relation to the provision of humanitarian services and protection, as well as community support and empowerment.

CHAPTER ONE: THE CONTEXT IN THE MIDDLE EAST

FIGURE 4: MAP OF RESEARCH SITES IN TURKEY, LEBANON, AND JORDAN

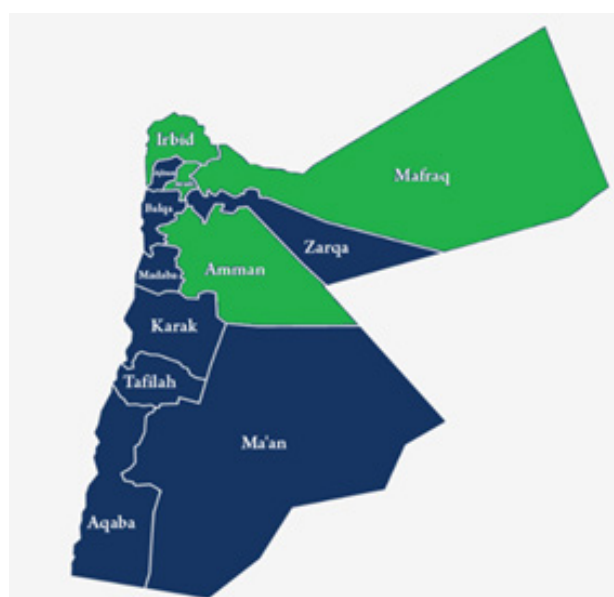


For decades, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey have been a destination for refugees fleeing neighbouring countries, such as Palestine, Iraq, Syria, Iran, Somalia, Sudan, and Yemen. Each country has had different and fluctuating policies in managing refugees. Neither Lebanon nor Jordan are signatories of the 1951 Refugee Convention and both countries have exercised different policies towards refugees of different nationalities at different points in time. The ambiguous policies adopted by these three states vis-à-vis different refugee nationalities resulted in “a heterogeneous geography of dwelling and emplacement” (Ceola, 2021). It has been reflected in the protracted refugee status with limited protection and rights. Refugees in the Middle East region – whether Syrian, Palestinian, Iraqi, Sudanese, Somali, Afghani, Yemeni or Persian – have employed various strategies, often informal, to cope with the multiplicity of actors and the restrictive environment in these host countries.

To understand the mobilisation of the refugee communities in Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey, this chapter sets out the context of each state and explains the wider ecosystem within which refugees have to manoeuvre to secure their rights, including the governing domestic politics towards refugees of different nationalities in the three countries. The nuanced governing politics towards refugees, in shaping access to basic rights, have shaped the needs and the reasons for their mobilisation as a community to support one another. The historical review in this chapter for the three countries endeavours to explain the varied political and legal policies which dictated the rights refugees have been able to secure for their basic everyday life and the different statuses refugees have as per their different nationalities.

JORDAN

FIGURE 5: A MAP OF THE KINGDOM OF JORDAN SHOWING STUDY STIES IN GREEN



THE HISTORY OF REFUGEE RECEPTION IN JORDAN

Jordan's geopolitical position has rendered it a regional transit and commerce hub. This position has been shown by Jordan's important role in transiting commerce and hosting forcibly displaced people from the region with its open-door policy. In addition, Jordan has been a safe haven for refugees throughout the centuries, particularly from the late 19th century onward, when the first wave of Circassians took refuge in Amman in 1878 (Natho 2009), fleeing the genocide of the Russian Empire seeking to conquer the Caucasus region (Allen & Muratoff 2011). The second wave of refugees soon followed: Armenians fleeing parts of Turkey at the beginning of the 20th century after World War I. These two groups are considered an integral part of Jordanian society and lend to its diverse cultural fabric.

THE PALESTINIAN REFUGEES

Palestinians were dispossessed due to the Zionist occupation of historical Palestine. Almost 41 percent of the Palestinian refugees sought shelter in what had become the West Bank of the Jordan River and in Jordan. Palestinian refugees were soon made to become Jordanians as per the Jericho Conference between King Abdulla I and the Palestinian representatives, where the West and East banks of the Jordan River fell under the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and thus gave the Jordanian nationality to all those living within the new expanded geographic space (the West Bank) (Abu-Odeh 1999). This major influx of refugees influenced many international decisions Jordan took regarding its policies towards refugees, such as not being a signatory of the 1951 Refugee Convention, mainly to safeguard the Palestinian identity and to uphold the Palestinian refugees' right to return to their homeland (Chatelard, El-Abed, & Washington, 2009).

The second Palestinian Exodus happened due to the Six-Day War in 1967, where Israel sought to redeem the remaining land of Palestine, displacing more than 350,000 Palestinian refugee holders of Jordanian nationality (Bowker 2003). This war also brought to Jordan Palestinian refugees from the West Bank and from the Gaza strip who were displaced for the second time. Refugee-displaced Palestinians arrived in Jordan as national Jordanians. Only those who arrived from the Gaza Strip were left with provisional travel documents. These Palestinians have not been given Jordanian nationality and continue to have their legal status in limbo, which gives them access to limited rights in Jordan added to their refugee registration with UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian refugees) (El-Abed 2006).

IRAQI REFUGEES

Iraqi refugees arrived in Jordan in several influxes: 1991, 1998, and 2003 after the attack against Iraq and the Baath Party led by Saddam Hussein (El-Abed 2014). After the Gulf War in 1991, the first wave of Iraqi refugees were treated as Arab guests. They could enter the borders without a visa, but their presence in Jordan shifted from guests to refugees as per the Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) signed between the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees and the Jordanian Government in 1998. This MOU expressly identifies the concept of “refugee” outlined in the Refugee Convention, and gives the right to UNHCR to interview “asylum seekers” in Jordan and determine their refugee status. Additionally, it promotes the concept of *non-refoulement*. It also outlines the responsibilities of the state, UNHCR, and refugees who should be granted legal status (Stevens 2013).

In 2003, after the fall of the Baath party and the invasion of Iraq by the United States and its coalition, the number of Iraqi refugees increased, reaching about 500,000 (FAFO/DOS 2005). Stringent entry and residency requirements for Iraqis were introduced in the wake of the hotel bombings in Amman in November 2005, which were claimed to have been perpetuated by Iraqi nationals. The open border politics of Jordan towards Iraqi refugees changed after the execution of Saddam Hussein at the end of 2006. Jordan consequently imposed visa requirements on Iraqis wanting to enter Jordan and agreed with the UNHCR to give registered Iraqi refugees the status of temporary protection until the end of the conflict in Iraq (Olwan 2009). The decline in refugee numbers in Jordan was mainly due to these Iraqis being resettled to other countries or “voluntary” return to Iraq since 2010. In 2013, the new proxy war with ISIS, pushed away minorities from northern Iraq, where the new state created its basis. Some sought safe haven in Jordan. Those who arrived at that time have had limited rights and some are still awaiting to be resettled.

SYRIAN REFUGEES

The first time Jordan welcomed Syrian refugees was back in 1981, when then-president Hafez Assad massacred the residents of a city in Syria called Hama. Approximately 40,000 people were killed, and thousands were either internally displaced or sought refuge in Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey (Quiades 2009). The current Syrian crisis, which began in 2011, pushed over 6 million to flee the country. The protracted crisis has been raging for more than a decade with no end in sight. As a result, more than 250,000 civilians have lost their lives, and more than 13.5 million refugees were internally or internationally displaced (UN 2021). Jordan hosts approximately 1.3 million Syrian refugees, with 672,952 registered with UNHCR (they constitute 46% of non-Jordanians living in the Kingdom and 12% of the overall population) throughout the influx that came with this protracted crisis (UNHCR 2022a).

The majority of Syrians in Jordan fled their home provinces of Dara'a, Homs, and Damascus during the early stages of the conflict and have resided in Jordan for several years, mainly in the Jordanian governorates of Irbid, Ramtha, and Amman (Chalmiers 2021). More than 80 percent of Jordan's Syrian refugees live outside official camps and are broadly scattered throughout Irbid, Ramtha, and Amman. Three camps (Zaatari Camp, Azraq Camp, and Emirati Jordanian Camp) are designated for Syrian refugees in Jordan (Şahin 2018). These three camps have approximately 140,000 inhabitants, half of whom are children. These refugees live in extraordinarily dire circumstances, with 80% living below the poverty line of 65 Euros per person per month (UNHCR 2022a).

YEMENI REFUGEES

Jordan is hosting 12,871 Yemeni asylum-seekers as of May 2022 (Al-Majali 2022). The conflict in Yemen has been ongoing since March 2015. The conflict has created humanitarian difficulties within the country, forcing entire segments of its population to flee. Before the current conflict, Yemenis were suffering from widespread food insecurity and severe acute malnutrition. As a result, nearly two-thirds of the population needed humanitarian assistance (Aid 2015).

The situation of Yemeni citizens who arrived in Jordan due to the conflict has not received

much media or organisational attention. Due to their insignificant number, Yemeni refugees remain largely invisible compared to the Syrian refugees (Meral, Gray, Langley, & Barbelet 2022). The Jordan Compact, signed at the high-level London Conference in February 2016, negotiated to open job opportunities in Jordan for Syrian refugees in exchange for Europe opening up export routes for Jordanian factories, and increased financial aid. However, it did not include provisions for non-Syrian refugees, such as Yemenis and Sudanese (Meral, Gray, Langley, & Barbelet 2022). UNHCR classifies Yemeni asylum-seekers and refugees not fleeing Syria as “non-Syrian refugees”. Accordingly, asylum-seekers from countries other than Syria are considered secondary refugees by humanitarian institutions, denying each refugee community’s particularities. Additionally, international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) and the UNHCR have little information on Yemeni asylum-seekers, as less research has been conducted on their communities (Davis and Taylor 2013).

SUDANESE AND SOMALI REFUGEES

As of April 2012, the UNHCR registered 2,200 (non-Iraqi, non-Palestinian) asylum seekers, most of whom hailed from Somalia and Sudan. The Somalis and Sudanese fled Somalia and Sudan in 1999/the early 2000s, citing general fear and insecurity, lack of resources, and the killing of family members (Davis et al. 2016). Most are vague about how they came to Jordan, but many went first to Yemen and Saudi Arabia and then travelled onwards to Jordan when they heard of UNHCR’s heightened presence after 2003. The Sudanese refugees were most often connected to men who migrated for work. Due to the wars and instability in Sudan, they felt unable to return. Sudanese families from Darfur expressed fear about returning and the continued instability and fighting in that part of Sudan. Most female Somali refugees are illiterate and do not speak Arabic or English. Thus, communication with Somalis forms a big hurdle in addressing their needs (Davis and Taylor 2013). As of 2021, Jordan hosts approximately 10,000 Sudanese refugees, 5,984 of whom are registered with UNHCR, and 1,000 Somali refugees, of whom 688 are registered with UNHCR (UNHCR 2021). The Sudanese and Somali refugees are amongst the most invisible group of refugees in Jordan and they have been primarily forgotten, marginalised, and underserved by INGOs and the Jordanian Government since they sought refuge in Jordan.

Some (or many) of the Somali and Sudanese are an anomaly in this housing trend and live in the centre of Amman. The area hosts 3- and 4-star hotels, large homes dating back to the 1950s and 60s, some government buildings, middle-class shopping districts, and Rainbow Street/Jabal Amman, a recently renovated area popular with foreign tourists and young Jordanians frequenting cafés and art galleries. The second problem centres on the quality of housing. Undoubtedly, Sudanese or Somali refugees live in some of the worst urban housing. Thus the Sudanese and Somalis were all in substandard housing, while others with more money could have more options.

Somali women have a much more difficult time than all others, especially if they have small children. Most of them are illiterate and without skills, and thus are entirely dependent on the aid community and charity. Somali men can negotiate the world of illegal labour more efficiently but also face discrimination because they are poorly educated, often undocumented immigrants from Africa (Davis et al. 2016).

LEGAL STATUS OF REFUGEE POPULATIONS IN JORDAN

Jordan does not have any national legislation on the status and treatment of refugees (Olwan 2007). In the constitution, few articles only refer to refugees by giving the authority to the Minister of Interior. The MOU signed between Jordan and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in 1998 was a significant illustration of a new milestone in Jordan’s governance around refugees (UNHCR 2014). This MOU, revised in 2014, outlines a framework of cooperation on several aspects of forced migration and provides a basis for protection and assistance to refugees and asylum seekers.

The MOU gives UNHCR the right to determine the refugee status of asylum seekers in Jordan. Most importantly, it established the concept of *non-refoulement*, which prevents the first country of asylum from returning asylum seekers back to their home, where their

life or freedom could be threatened because of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. It also notes religious rights and the freedom to access courts and legal assistance. Moreover, the UNHCR is allowed to interview asylum seekers who enter Jordan illegally and is supposed to make its determination as to their status within seven days. Unlike the special procedure, dictated by the Jordan Response Plan, that has been introduced to regularise Syrians' presence in Jordan, annual residency for Iraqis, Yemenis, Sudanese, and Somalis remains regulated by the standard (and restrictive) conditions of the Law on Residence and Foreigners' Affairs. The regulations are dealt with by the Public Security Directorate (PSD), which falls under the authority of the Ministry of Interior (MOI) (Stevens 2013). Below is an explanation of the legal status for each nationality:

TABLE 1: REFUGEE GROUPS IN JORDAN

Nationality	Year of Arrival	Numbers	Legal status	Accessed rights
<i>Palestinian refugees and displaced Palestinians</i>	1948 and 1967	2,307,011 (UNRWA)	Registered refugees as per UNRWA records and were granted citizenship with the right to return	All citizenship rights
<i>Palestinians from Gaza and the West Bank</i>	1967	635,000 (Census 2015)	Holder of provisional Jordanian Travel Documents (renewable every 2 or 5 years)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have minimal access to work (closed jobs in 2016 affected their access to labour opportunities) ▪ Have the right to access public education. ▪ Have to pay for higher education in high rates. ▪ Only children under six years old are included in the overcrowded public health sector. ▪ Have access to UNRWA services. ▪ Have the right to move freely.
<i>Palestinians from Syria</i>	2011-2013	18,000 (2020)	Holders of UNRWA registration cards (invalid Syrian Travel Documents)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have no rights to public services. ▪ Have access to UNRWA services

Nationality	Year of Arrival	Numbers	Legal status	Accessed rights
Syrian	2011-2019	660,892 as per UNHCR (2022)	Holders of Ministry of Interior Cards (MOI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have access to work permits in agriculture, construction, and other limited services as per Jordan compact (2016)
		1,300,000 (as per Gov of Jordan census)	Holders of UNHCR registration cards (Only registered with UNHCR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have access to Primary and Secondary education. Have the right to access public medical centres through MOI cards. UNHCR documents give them access to INGOs. Refugees in the three camps need a permit to leave camps (for work or education or family reasons).
Iraqi	1991, 1998, 2013	65,772 (UNHCR 2022a)	Iraqi passports and UNHCR registration	<p>One-month visas at the border. Department of Residency in the Ministry of Interior may extend visas for three months, upon request. Iraqis can also renew their one- or three-month visas by briefly leaving and re-entering (Spinner 2006).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have the right to public Education provided that they pay (40-60 JDs) Have the right to access other services as foreigners (health, employment, housing).
Yemeni	2015-2022	12,919	The majority did not register and enter with a visa like foreigners, the rest are asylum seekers, and a minority are refugees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited access to UNHCR financial assistance, health services, and resettlement opportunities. Allowed to work in specific fields, such as the construction sector, agriculture, and restaurants, if they obtain work permits and have a Jordanian sponsor. In Education, non-Jordanians must rely on private education or are subject to an annual fee of 40-60 JOD in addition to needing to produce a work permit.
Sudanese and Somali	2012	5,478,000 Sudanese (UNHCR 2022a) 649 Somalis (UNHCR 2022a)	Asylum seekers and a minority are refugees.	Underserved by INGOs and the Jordanian Government since they sought refuge in Jordan.

Through the Jordan Response Plan, almost all the funds for Jordan's refugee response have been allocated to Syrians and vulnerable Jordanians. The JRP was created to better channel the funding from the international community to the Syrian refugees. This funding excluded all the other refugees. Many of the working international NGOs limited their working agenda to respond to the allocated funding to the Syrians. Very few bodies from the local and international organisations served non-Syrian refugees. This funding bias trickled down also to the Palestinian refugees in the thirteen refugee camps, where very few INGOs continued to provide services for them due to the reduced funding.

Moreover, the Syrian crisis and the mass influx of refugees had the government close its borders in 2016, where an entry visa requirement was imposed. Yemeni refugees seeking a safe haven away from the conflict in their country had to either apply for a work permit prior to their arrival or register with UNHCR without the right to employment to secure residency in Jordan. This requirement limited the choices for refugees and jeopardised their status in case of violation, for which they can be arrested and deported (UNHCR 2022a).

LEBANON

FIGURE 6: A MAP OF LEBANON SHOWING STUDY SITES IN GREEN



THE HISTORY OF REFUGEE RECEPTION ON LEBANON

Despite having a long history of hosting refugees, Lebanon does not consider itself a country of asylum nor did it ratify the 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol. Although Lebanon has shown commitment towards international legal frameworks of protection through the 1962 Law of Entry and Exit, “the term refugee, in the Lebanese law, only appears coupled with the word Palestinian or in the law of 1962” (Dorai and Clochard 2006: 3). Furthermore, Lebanon does not have “formal domestic refugee legislation” (Janmyr 2017: 449) and the Lebanese constitution “prohibits any permanent settlement of foreigners” which in extension applies to the local integration of refugees (Janmyr 2022: 138).

Consequently, Lebanon has relied on UNHCR to document, register, and aid refugees (Janmyr, 2022). In attempt to enhance the “protection space” for refugees in Lebanon, UNHCR signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Lebanon's Directorate of General Security, permitting it to register asylum-seekers and conduct refugee status determination (RSD) in specific cases (Dorai and Clochard, 2006; Janmyr, 2022). Yet, in the absence of a legal framework that defines the right of asylum in the country, refugees' access to rights remains limited, and their legal situation precarious as they remain tied to their employer or *Kafeel* (Janmyr 2022; Fernandez & De Regt, 2016; Pande, 2018). As a matter of fact, Lebanon's approach to refugee issues combines “refugee protection” and “immigration policies” (Janmyr, 2016). In effect, refugees are subjected to vague, complex, and constantly changing regulations and categories.

This is not a new discussion. However, it became more relevant following the influx of Syrian

refugees to Lebanon in 2011, resulting in an unprecedented humanitarian crisis and making Lebanon the country hosting the largest number of refugees per capita worldwide. Over 1 million Syrian refugees (LCRP, 2022) joined an approximately 180,000 Palestinian refugees (UNRWA), 9000 Iraqi refugees, as well as few hundred Sudanese refugees and other refugee populations from Ethiopia and Egypt (VARON, 2018). In this section, we provide an overview of the different refugee populations in Lebanon, their legal status and accessed rights. We focus particularly on Palestinian, Syrian, and Iraqi refugees as they present the largest refugee groups in the country.

TABLE 2: REFUGEE GROUPS IN LEBANON

Nationality	Year of Arrival	Numbers	Legal status	Accessed rights
Palestinian refugees from Lebanon (PRL)	1948	479,000 (registered with UNRWA)	Refugees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Can't work in as many as 39 professions. ▪ Can't own property. ▪ Excluded from most civil and socio-economic rights.
		180,000 (estimated number currently in Lebanon)		
Palestinian refugees from Syria (PRS)	2011	30,000	Refugees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Can't work in as many as 39 professions. ▪ Can't own property. ▪ Excluded from most civil and socio-economic rights.
Syrian	2011	1.5 million (Government of Lebanon and the United Nations 2022) including 839,788 registered with UNHCR (UNHCR 2022b)	Displaced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Can only work in 3 sectors (construction, agriculture, and environment/cleaning) ▪ Residency: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ UNHCR registration certificate ○ Lebanese sponsor
Iraqi	1990s, 2003	8,931	No legal status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Temporary residence permits (6 months) for refugees who arrived after 2003. ▪ Considered as illegal migrants and subjected to migrant workers policies.
Other (incl. Egyptian, Ethiopian)		2,044	No legal status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Temporary residence permits (6 months) for refugees who arrived after 2003. ▪ Considered as illegal migrants and subjected to migrant workers policies.

REFUGEE POPULATIONS IN LEBANON: RIGHTS AND REGULATIONS

PALESTINIAN REFUGEES

Lebanon's approach when responding to refugee issues domestically has been greatly affected by its experience with Palestinian refugees. Historically, the Lebanese state has developed suspicions due to the Palestinian Liberation Organization's (PLO) involvement in the Lebanese Civil war (1975-1990). These suspicions, coupled with Lebanon's fear of a "shift in sectarian demography", extended concerns of sectarian imbalance because of the influx of Palestinians who are predominantly Muslim Sunnis. These attitudes and socio-political sentiments have affected Lebanese state policy.

Palestinian refugees are classified into four categories according to a UNHCR report on Palestinian refugees (UNHCR 2016). The categories are "Registered" Palestinian refugees, "Non-registered" Palestinian refugees, "Non-ID" Palestinian refugees, and "Palestine refugees from Syria who have arrived in Lebanon since 2011". It is important to note that the legal status of a Palestinian refugee defines what quality of life they will have. The most affected by legal status are Non-ID Palestinian Refugees who have no form of legal status that would entitle them to basic human rights. For example, Non-ID refugees do not entertain the right to cross the Lebanese borders restricting their right to leave and re-enter Lebanon. Only Palestinian refugees who are registered with the Lebanese Authorities are granted international travel documents. Concerning labour, Palestinian refugees are allowed to obtain a work permit at no cost, however, this is contingent on their employers requesting access from the Lebanese Government through a lengthy administrative process, which minimises this possibility for employment (UNDG 2015). As such, the number of Palestinian refugees that have access to formal employment is minimal and most resort to informal employment for economic mobility (UNHCR 2016; UNDG 2015; Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2011).

SYRIAN REFUGEES

Lebanon's complicated history with the Syrian regime and the prolonged presence of Syrian troops in Lebanon after the Civil War informed the country's response to the refugee influx in 2011. At the onset, the Lebanese government took a "policy of inaction" which followed a prohibition of camp establishment, enacted an open-border policy, and granted municipalities the ability for greater decentralisation and securitisation in Syrian refugee governance (Mourad 2017: 49). However, following the 2014 Syrian elections, a new policy approach was taken by the Lebanese government which aimed at reducing Syrian Refugees in Lebanon. The two-dimensional policy was a joint initiative between the United Nations and the Lebanese State. The Lebanese Crisis Response Plan (LCRP) was created and aimed at targeting short and long-term solutions for underprivileged Lebanese as well as Syrian Refugees. The scope of the LCRP included support for Lebanon's stability through addressing social, economic, environmental and institutional sectors (Janmyr 2016). The "policy of inaction" was overturned in early 2015, when the Government of Lebanon informed UNHCR to cease Syrian refugee registration, sealed its borders, and changed Syrian refugees' status to 'displaced people' (Janmyr 2016), reiterating that Lebanon is a transitory country rather than for asylum (Lebanon Support 2016: 6). This change in status and designation came with policy changes in the labour market restricting Syrians from official economic mobility by the Ministry of Labour. Administrative hurdles were added by the Government of Lebanon to decrease the possibility of Syrian refugees attaining employment. The Government of Lebanon issued decrees that necessitated certain criteria be met prior to Syrian refugee employment, such as maintaining a 10:1 ratio of Lebanese workers to foreigners. Moreover, in mid-2017 and mid-2019, the Ministry of Labour began tackling unauthorized labour, and Ministry of Labour inspectors began issuing violation notices to business owners who employed unauthorized workers (Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs 2020).

IRAQI REFUGEES

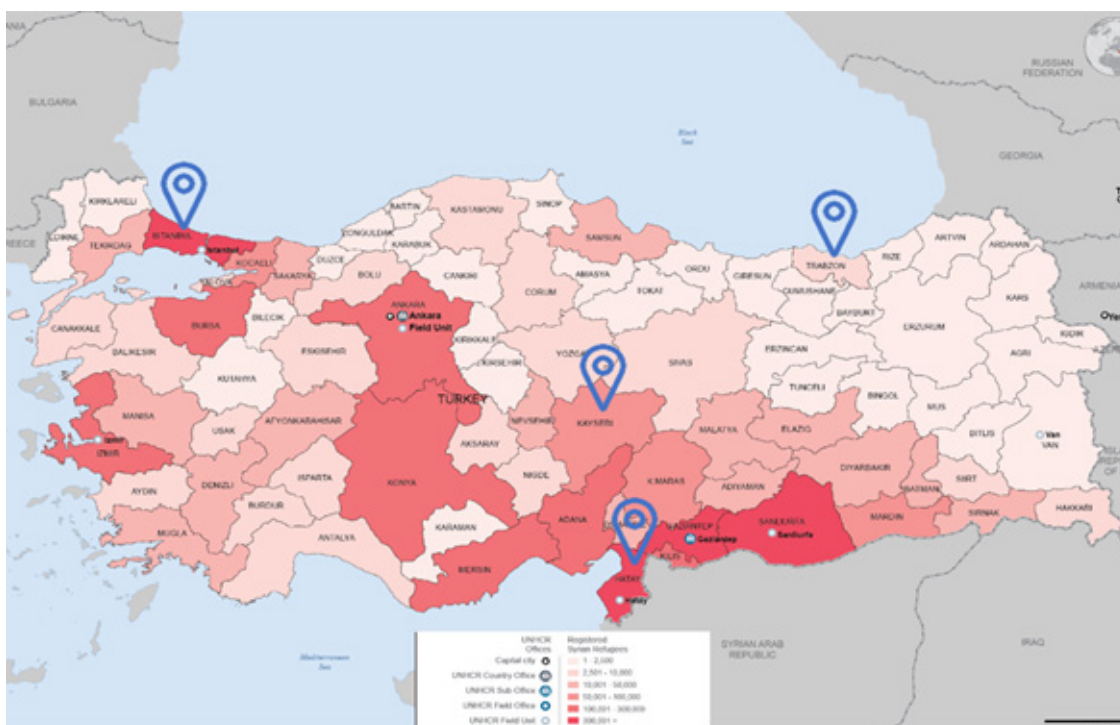
Official numbers for Iraqi refugees are not available, however, there is an estimated 40,000

or more present in Lebanon who have entered through Syria. Most Iraqis have entered Lebanon illegally due to the impossibility of obtaining an entry visa. Regardless of their UNHCR registration, this means of entry puts Iraqi refugees at threat of legal ramifications for illegal entry. Efforts by UNHCR were made in 2003 that called for the inclusion of Iraqi refugees under temporary protection (even rejected cases). The logic behind temporary protection was to mitigate an accumulation of refugee status procedures and ensure the likelihood of return when a political settlement is reached in the country of origin. Maintaining that the 'right of return' is the best solution, this action is anchored on the belief that the reasons for mass displacement will soon be resolved (Trad and Frangieh 2007). However, this ambition was not realized. The situation in Iraq soon became protracted and led to further displacement over the years. Thus, Iraqis were neither refugees nor non-refugees and limited to voluntary repatriation (Trad and Frangieh 2007).

The only international legal instrument that can regulate Iraqi refugees is the 1962 law concerning entry and stay of foreigner's legal status (Government of Lebanon 1962; Sassoon 2011). The Lebanese government, similar to the case of the Syrian refugees, asserted that any asylum seekers not registered under the framework of the MoU are considered illegal and can incur legal ramifications (HRW 2007). Furthermore, the Government refused to accept the Temporary Protection Status of Iraqi refugees, which means that Iraqi refugees cannot be guaranteed resettlement in a period of 12 months since registration as the MoU states (HRW 2007). This refusal created a pathway for the economic mobility of the Iraqis in the labour market. To acquire a work permit, they would have to apply through the Ministry of Labour, which requests a notarized contract with a Lebanese employer for a period of six months (HRW 2007).

TURKEY

FIGURE 7: A MAP OF TURKEY SHOWING STUDY SITES (SOURCE: UNHCR TÜRKIYE)



THE HISTORY OF REFUGEE RECEPTION IN TURKEY

For many years, Turkey, formerly the Ottoman Empire, has been a safe destination for refugees. One of the significant refugee arrivals during the Ottoman Empire dates back to 1492, when a substantial number of Jews from the Spanish Inquisition sought refuge in the Empire (Kirisci 1991b). Turkey is a signatory of the 1951 Refugee Convention. In light of this

Convention, Turkey categorizes refugees into three groups (Kirisci 1991a):

1. Convention refugees: those who originate from Council of Europe member countries,
2. Non-Convention refugees: those who originate from outside of Europe,
3. National refugees.

NATIONAL REFUGEES

National refugees constituted the most significant number of refugees in both the Ottoman Empire and the republic periods in Turkey, hitherto the Syrian refugee influx in 2011. National refugees who essentially are of Turkish origin are often referred to as “immigrants” rather than refugees in Turkey (Kirisci 1996). Since the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1923, the republic has followed a liberal approach toward refugees with Turkic or Turkish backgrounds arriving in Turkey from neighbouring countries (Kirisci 1996). According to the Law on Settlement published in Official Gazette on 21 June 1934, only individuals with Turkish ethnic and/or cultural backgrounds can obtain Turkish citizenship and settle in Turkey. Although this law was essentially introduced to cover Turkish speakers in Asia, the Caucasus, and the Balkans, several Bosnians, Albanians, Circassians, Pomaks (Bulgarian-speaking Slav-Muslims) and Tatars who are not Turkish by ethnicity have also been considered within the scope of this law (Odman 1995). Based on their country of origin, the national refugee inflows in Turkey after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire were mainly from Greece, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Romania, and Turkistan (central Asia and the region in western China). Moreover, some national refugees such as Azeris from Iran, Turkmens from Iraq, and Turks from Afghanistan have also been treated as national refugees or immigrants.

NON-CONVENTION REFUGEES

Iranians, Iraqis, and Kurds, mainly from the Middle East, and a modest number of refugees from Africa and Asia, fall within non-convention refugees. The most significant number of non-convention refugees were Iranians fleeing the new regime led by Khomeini following the Islamic Revolution in Iran. As there was no visa requirement, most Iranians with valid passports could enter and stay in Turkey without a permit. Although those who arrived in Turkey illegally were fined, they ultimately were allowed to join the others in seeking refuge in a third country. Iranians were not officially recognized as refugees; instead, the government treated them as tourists, which means they were obliged to leave Turkey every three months and had no protection and other rights in Turkey.

With respect to Kurds/Iraqis, Turkey has received three major refugee inflows from Iraq. The first wave was in 1988, following a cease-fire between Iran and Iraq, when 51,542 Northern Iraqis entered Turkey. The second influx occurred during the Iraq invasion of Kuwait between 1989 to 1991 and resulted in the arrival of 600,000 Iraqi refugees. The last and largest wave of Iraqi refugees was in March 1991 when 460,000 refugees, mainly Kurdish rebels along with their families, sought refuge in Turkey due to the military operation against them by Saddam’s regime (Altoik and Tosun 2020).

CONTEMPORARY POLICY TOWARD REFUGEES IN TURKEY

Turkey hosts approximately 4 million refugees, mainly from Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Iran (UNHCR 2023a). This population of asylum seekers, depending on their country of origin, is subject to two different regulations and asylum procedures. That is, Turkey follows a dual system towards refugees: temporary protection and international protection. Syrians, which form the largest population of refugees in Turkey are subject to temporary protection, while refugees from other nationalities such as Afghans, Iranians, and Iraqis are subject to international protection.

Technically, Turkey maintains the geographical limitation clause in the Geneva Convention

(1951) and its Additional Protocol (1967), therefore it does not provide refugee status to individuals originating from non-European countries (Mencutek 2021). This limitation clause led Turkey, in April 2013, to adopt a thorough, EU-inspired Law on Foreigners and International Protection (LFIP), which founds the grounds for a comprehensive legal structure for asylum in Turkey and states all the obligations that Turkey has towards all individuals under refugee/asylum seeker status who need international protection irrespective to their nationalities. This law established the Directorate General of Migration Management (DGMM) as the bureau in charge of all migration and asylum-related affairs. As of September 2018, the DGMM took the responsibility of registering refugees under international and temporary protection from the UNHCR and became the sole authority to register, process and manage the refugees in Turkey (UNHCR 2018).

Considering Turkey's geographical limitation policy, the LFIP defines the international protection status under three categories:

1. Individuals originating from a European country⁵ who fall within the definition of refugee by the 1951 Convention qualify for refugee status under LFIP.
2. Individuals who are not originating from a European country but fall within the refugee definition of the 1951 Convention are provided with conditional refugee status under LFIP. LFIP introduced the concept of conditional refugee status to distinguish the refugees coming from Europe and those coming from non-European countries in terms of treatment.
3. Individuals who fall within neither refugee status nor conditional refugee status but who would be persecuted to death or mistreated in their country if returned, or who would face "individualized risk of indiscriminate violence" because of war or conflict, qualify for subsidiary protection status under LFIP. The subsidiary protection status in Turkey aligns with the definition of subsidiary protection provided by the EU Qualification Directive.

The temporary protection scheme on the other hand is employed by the decision of the Presidency in times when a mass influx of refugees occurs, and the personal assessment process of international protection is not practical because of large numbers of refugees entering at once (Articles 1 and 3 of the Temporary Protection Regulation). Article 91 of the LFIP provides the legal base for the Temporary Protection Regulation (TPR) issued in 2014.

5 For this specific law Turkey considers Council of Europe member countries as European countries.

TABLE 3: REFUGEE GROUPS IN TURKEY

Nationality	Year of Arrival	Numbers	Legal status	Accessed rights and treatment
Syrians	2011	3,611,143 (Directorate General of Migration Management 2023)	Temporary Protection	Education, healthcare, employment, mobility and freedom of movement, social benefits and assistance, and naturalisation. Syrians who arrive in Turkey from a third country are not entitled to apply for temporary protection. Albeit, by law, they should be permitted to file an application for international protection, in reality, they are only allowed to apply for a short-term visa and then a short-term residence permit.
Iraqis	Three waves: 1988, 1989, and 1991; inflow continues	142,410 (UNHCR 2023b)	International Protection	Education, healthcare, employment, mobility and freedom of movement, social benefits, and assistance. Iraqi applicants who want to apply for international protection are generally persuaded to apply for a short-term residence permit instead of international protection (AIDA 2020). However, Turkmens arriving in Turkey from Iraq are granted international protection after they receive a confirmation about their Turkic Background from Turkmenli Dergi in Ankara.
Iranians	Started in 1978; inflow continues	19,620 (UNHCR 2023b)	International Protection	Education, healthcare, employment, mobility and freedom of movement, social benefits, and assistance.
Afghans	Started in 1982; inflow continues	143,839 (UNHCR 2023b)	International Protection	Education, healthcare, employment, mobility and freedom of movement, social benefits and assistance. Since the DGMM took the responsibility of registration in 2018, single male Afghans have been reported to face impediments in accessing the registration procedure compared to applicants from other nationalities as several Provincial Directorates of Migration Management are said to be unwilling to take their applications. This refusal leads to the illegal stay of Afghans without IDs.

Nationality	Year of Arrival	Numbers	Legal status	Accessed rights and treatment
Other (incl. Daghestani, Egyptian, Yemeni, Chechen, Tajik)		13,044 (UNHCR 2023b)		These individuals are normally given humanitarian residence permits. Even if their applications are rejected and a deportation decision is taken against them, applicants from these countries usually are not deported to their countries (AIDA 2022).

Note that only the registered refugees can access the above rights. For education, both international and temporary protection status holders can access primary and secondary education (Article 89(1) LFIP; Article 28 TPR). For healthcare, since 2019 refugees under international protection can access healthcare only for one year following their registration. Syrians under temporary protection are entitled to access healthcare (Article 27 TPR). However, they can no longer benefit from free of charge services in primary and emergency health services as well as medicine, as an amendment to TPR on 25 December 2019 states that status holders must pay a contribution fee specified by the Ministry of Interior Affairs (Article 27(1)b as amended by Regulation no. 30989). By the end of 2019, 187 Migrant Health Centres were founded under SIHHAT⁶ project, funded by the EU, where Syrians can go and visit Syrian doctors (AIDA 2020). Applicants with special needs⁷ who are approved by the DGMM are exempted from limited healthcare access. In terms of employment, refugees under international and temporary protection become eligible to apply for a work permit 6 months after the date of lodging their application (Article 89(4)(a) LFIP; Article 29 TPR). Refugees who work in agriculture and livestock are exempted from taking a work permit, but they shall obtain an exemption from the Provincial Directorate of Family, Labour, and Social Services (Article 9(1) Regulation on Work Permit for Applicants for and Beneficiaries of International Protection; Article 8(1) Regulation on Work Permit for Foreigners under Temporary Protection). According to the Law, applicants must be paid at least the minimum wage (Article 17 Regulation on Work Permit for Applicants for and Beneficiaries of International Protection; Article 10 Regulation on Work Permit for Foreigners under Temporary Protection). In terms of mobility and freedom of movement, refugees who want to travel outside of their satellite city must obtain a permit from the Provincial Directorate of Migration Management. For social benefits and assistance, refugees identified as “in need” can approach local governorates and ask for social assistance (Article 79(2) LFIP). The provisioned assistance includes coal and wood for winter, hygiene and food, and financial assistance. Furthermore, municipalities, the Red Crescent, EU bodies, and the Ministry of Family and Social Services also provide some social assistance. In terms of naturalisation, holders of international and temporary protection can be naturalized only by marrying a Turkish citizen or through exceptional circumstances. According to Population and Citizenship Affairs until 19 August 2022, 201,908 Syrians under temporary protection have been granted citizenship through the exceptional procedure (Mülteciler Derneği (Refugees Association) 2023).

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Lebanon, Jordan, and Turkey all lack one clear domestic policy regarding their diverse refugee populations despite having hosted a sizable number of refugees over the course of their histories. To understand the mobilisation of the refugee communities in Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey, the chapter sought to present the historical context of each state and explain the wider ecosystem within which refugees have to manoeuvre to secure their rights. Understanding the governing domestic politics towards refugees of their different nationalities

⁶ Improving the Health Status of Syrians Under Temporary Protection and Related Services Provided by the Republic of Turkey.

⁷ Unaccompanied child, disabled, elderly, pregnant person, single mother or father with her/his child, or a person who has been subjected to torture, sexual assault or other serious psychological, physical or sexual violence.

in the three countries is necessary to better situate the mobilisation of the refugees and their actions as communities. Moreover, understanding the nuanced governing politics towards refugees, in accessing basic rights, justified the discrepancy in needs and the reasons for refugees to act as a community to support one another.

This rationale is seen in the impression of refugees as not being included among civil society actors. Government initiatives emphasise the need to depoliticise civil society and restrict activism to citizens. This focus meant that refugees would not be accepted or allowed to participate in society. As a result, it is challenging for refugee groups to receive support from the international community, which restricts cash provision to formal bodies acknowledged by the host country.

CHAPTER TWO: REFUGEE COMMUNITIES

The protracted nature of displacement with limbo rights in host countries compels refugee communities to organise for action, resources, and opportunities (Williams and Shepherd 2021). While in displacement, refugees seek to bond with like communities, with similar legal status and similar uncertainties. They establish relationships with other refugees, create bridges with host communities, and seek to foster social connections (Easton-Calabria and Wood 2020), hence creating communities of their own. Refugee communities in host countries have sought to create new structures which tend to engender the importance of the social capital and the importance of social capital 'enablers' (Pittaway et al. 2016: 411). These enablers encompass individual capacities, community capacities and socio-political factors that are critical for "enabling refugee individuals and communities to access existing social capital, and to build and strengthen social capital by extending social connections and networks and establishing new links in settlement" (ibid). This chapter proposes a definition of RLOs based on what has been mapped and studied in the three countries of the Middle East. It then examines the reasons for which communities create RLOs and the motivation that enables them to mobilise together, whether through providing socioeconomic services, or creating a social space for the community members to interact, or a cultural niche for safeguarding the identity and the culture. The last section analyses the bonding grounds that brings people together and strengthens their mobilisation to act within their own community, whether at an official level or unofficial one.

DEFINITION OF RLOS

Based on our research, we propose the definition below to cover the wide range of RLOs from grassroots and small-scale unofficial organisations to official, large-scale organisations:

An organized formal or informal response initiated, led, or managed by a forcibly displaced person(s) to provide the community with humanitarian, socioeconomic, cultural and/or protection services.

The registration in Jordan and Lebanon for RLOs has been done by nationals, while refugees in such RLOs are the leaders and the decision makers. In Turkey, registration is conditioned with a board of holders of legal residency. In our definition, we put the emphasis on the act to respond led by a refugee or group of refugees addressing certain needs for the community. Moreover, building on Bartolomei (2016), we highlight in the definition the process through which organisations are teased out of social relations, *often building on existing social networks between people of the same religion, sect, ethnicity, nationality, or profession*; and they seek to explore their ways in the midst of host state's policies and international community's ecosystem. In turn, the UNHCR in its Refugee-Led Innovation Fund developed in 2021, defined a Refugee-Led Organization (RLO) as "an organisation established and led entirely by refugees or asylum seekers or having them in over half of the decision-making roles" (UNHCR Innovation Service 2021). It focuses on RLOs and Community-Based Organizations (CBO) led by refugees that group themselves with a common goal of providing services to the community. It defines a CBO as a non-profit, grassroots organization that depends primarily on volunteers. A CBO must show that "People of Concern" are in leadership positions. In this chapter, we shall elaborate further on these keywords explaining the reasons for refugees to assemble and the factors that brought them together.

WHY DO REFUGEES CREATE RLOS?

Refugees employ various strategies to cope with the multiplicity of actors, vague categories, and restrictive policies imposed by the state. They capitalise on their own social networks to respond to their community needs and form groups of solidarity, assistance, and protection. These acts "highlight how refugees are not only victims of their exile but also resourceful agents producing alternative infrastructures in contexts of state withdrawal" (Ceola 2021). Furthermore, they "challenge widely held (although equally widely contested) assumptions that refugees are passive victims in need of care from outsiders" (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2018: 3).

We argue in our work that refugee-led organisations are, as put in this equation, a composition of: the agency, social capital and organised community nurtured by a permissive environment that gives the space for the refugees to act and to potentially seek to become independent actors. We adopt Ling and Dale's 'equation of agency' (2014: 8) for the analysis of the collective scale of refugee action. This equation enables us to unpack the "why, when, and how" do refugees use their agency to establish organisations:

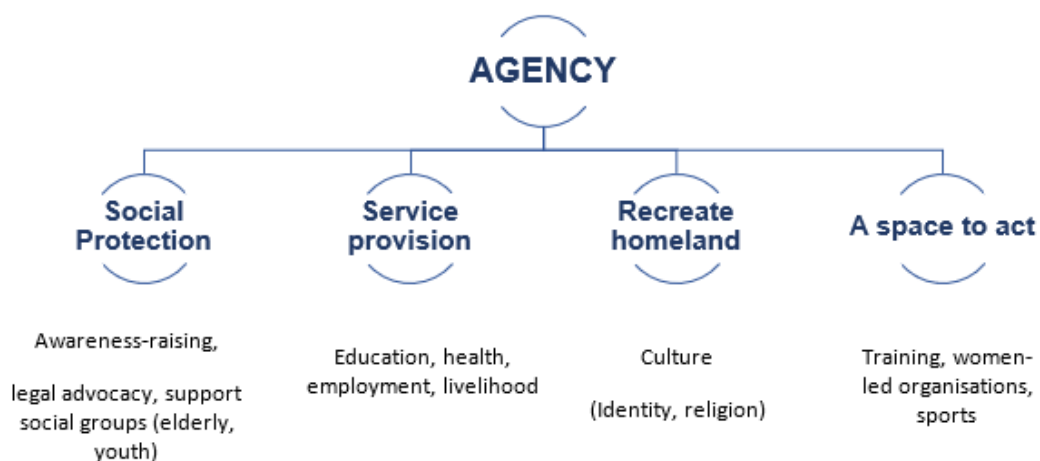
$$\text{Agency to establish an RLO} = (\text{capacity} + \text{reason to act} + \text{social capital}) - \text{barriers at the community level.}$$

When Agency is > 0, action occurs, and where Agency is < 0, action does not occur.

Agency, which leads to action, i.e., the establishment of refugee-led organisations in the context of this report, is attributed to the presence of capacity, a common concern, and most importantly, a high level of social capital. Coleman's social capital is defined by its function: it is what enables individuals to get their things done (Clairidge 2018: 22).

Based on our research, these organised groups and responses take multiple forms and shapes. Admittedly, they constitute an essential element of the refugee community that seeks to support refugees in order to either fill the gaps in the areas that the state fails to provide adequate support (namely protection, relief, awareness-raising, vocational training, education, and empowerment) or to protect and nourish their shared identity, culture, and language. Based on our fieldwork, in the section below, we present some of the main reasons that influence the act of assembling by refugees in Lebanon, Turkey and Jordan as reflected in the figure below:

FIGURE 8: THE ASSEMBLING FACTORS THAT BRING REFUGEES TOGETHER



PROVIDING SOCIAL PROTECTION

There are several groups, formal and informal, that focus on raising awareness among the refugee community, enhancing the protection space, and advocating for refugee rights. For example, the Palestinian Trade Union Confederation in North Lebanon was established in the 1960s to advocate for the rights of Palestinian workers in Lebanon and protect them from abuse. Similarly, ACHRights (Wosol), a Syrian RLO in Lebanon specialises in observing the human rights refugee situation and publishes periodic publications on mass violations with the aim of raising awareness and international advocacy to ensure the right to human dignity in the countries of asylum. Many of the bodies with whom we met use social media as a platform to reach out to their beneficiaries. Yet, using social media could jeopardise the safety and security of the leaders. In some cases in Turkey, this issue has resulted in refugees being apprehended or even deported.

PROVIDING SERVICES

Refugees also come together to address the shortcomings of the state and international organizations in several sectors, namely education, health, and livelihoods. For instance, several groups in North Lebanon have organized initiatives to provide school uniforms for

refugee kids who could not afford to buy one before the start of the academic year. The 'Going Back to School Initiative' (Mubadarat al-Awda Ela al-Madaris) and the 'Buying the School Uniform Initiative' (Ta'min al-Kamis al-Madrasa) are both volunteer groups that either collect donations or used books and uniforms to support refugees who are about to start the academic year and are unable to cover these expenses.

We reach out to our community basically. We ask for donations, used clothes, books, and stationary... anything that the kids would use in the school year. Everything is so expensive now. The parents can no longer buy these stuff for their children, and some would even consider taking their kids out of school because of this. We don't want that to happen (PIL-6, December 2021).

Some of these groups have even managed to scale-up their operations and formally register their entities to become official NGOs operating in Lebanon. For example, Basmeh and Zeitoneh, Sawa for Development and Aid, as well as Multi Aid Programs (MAPS), were all established by refugees who were able through their social networks to partner with Lebanese nationals in order to register their organisations and access international funding.

A small number of the interviewed RLOs were directly the service providers. These are the RLOs that are basically based in another country and have access to their headquarters' funds. Generally, the RLOs are a channel for international actors' funds, which enable them to act in service provision, namely in education, health, and employment. The manager of a health and training centre for children with special needs in Istanbul stated: "Only Hilfe, which is the base of our project, is supporting us financially. Life is all about money, money, money. If we didn't have support, we would have to close down" (TI006, July 2022). This statement clearly suggests that RLOs alone cannot act independently in service provision field.

Refugees in Jordans have limited access to resources and have developed different structures to regulate their presence. Some of them created individual initiatives, and others built a structure of an organisation to serve other refugees and the community around them. For instance, Gazan Palestinian refugees are marginalized and under-serviced in many aspects. Therefore, Arrowad Group, a group of volunteers under the umbrella of a Jordanian CBO, tries to offset this problem through projects regarding health, education, livelihoods, empowerment, and social relief. They are very inclusive and always try to find what the community needs from the ground up. Another model we can see in a different refugee context is Athar Platform, a refugee-led Initiative under the "Nahno" Digital platform where a group of Syrian university students gathers on Whatsapp to post work, volunteering, or any opportunities for refugees or Jordanian citizens.

We bring in young people, and we train them. For example, accounting students, law students, and many specializations. Each group of people has specific specialties. We bring them, train them, and give them the experience to be able to engage in the labour market. This was the idea of the initiative that we are working on the Athar electronic platform to support young people in the community, providing them with the necessary expertise (JM09, Jun 2022).

In addition, the Yemeni community in Irbid revolves around working in the Hadramout Yemeni restaurant that has become very popular in the last decade. They gather to find and help other Yemeni individuals to host new Yemenis in Irbid and help them in finding livelihood opportunities. This restaurant became the central gathering point, and from there, they help their community with education, health, income, and housing.

(RE)CREATING THE HOMELAND

A Palestinian refugee who founded Amqa, a social organization named after a Palestinian town said:

There are 200 Palestinian families from Amqa living in Nahr al-Bared and Beddawi camps. Our goal is to unite the people of Amqa and to strengthen social relations between them - to solve the problems they face and provide

them with assistance (PIL-22, Feb 2022).

Similarly, the founder of the Committee of Palestinians displaced from Syria said:

We follow up on 460 families (Palestinians and Syrians). We communicate with the local community, the People's Committee and other organizations in order to provide relief and health services as well as problem solving, and relationship strengthening between the displaced and the refugees in the camp (PIL-27, Feb 2022).

Such RLOs that are medium or small in size are basically there to keep their identity alive. This kind of action can manifest itself to maintain the community's religion, identity, or culture.

DEFINING A SPACE TO ACT

TO CREATE SUPPORT GROUPS FOR WOMEN, YOUTH, AND/OR ELDERLY

There are several RLOs/RLIs that target vulnerable women as agents of change in their communities. For example, The Palestinian Women's Heritage Centre, Women Now, For Each Other (Nehna La Baad), and others. These initiatives aim to "strengthen a safe space for women" said Rabea, the founder of Nehna La Baad, an RLI based in the Bekaa (PIL-20, Jan 2022). According to her:

The deterioration of the economic situation in Lebanon increased the pressure on refugee women. Therefore, the initiative works to enhance the confidence of refugee women and teach them some handicrafts that may contribute to improving their living situation (PIL-20, Jan 2022).

The founder of Jasmine Soap in Jordan started as an initiative and then became a "Social Enterprise" so they could circumvent being registered and have the right legality. Jasmine's community consists of Syrian refugee women who want to achieve economic stability and to find a role or job that can help lessen the burden of refuge in Jordan. She takes in Syrian refugees and Jordanians and teaches them how to stitch and make all handmade crafts and gives them a living wage that sustains them and their respective families. The founder has also taken other refugee nationalities, like Palestinian and Sudanese. She has also rallied around other initiatives like women empowerment, violence against women, sexual harassment in the workplace, and recycling of soap from hotels.

TO PROVIDE RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

These RLOs usually incorporate sports and/or cultural activities. One example is the 'Boys Football Academy' established by a Syrian refugee in Tripoli.

After our displacement from Syria, we were looking for a reason to live and a reason to continue and draw a smile on the faces of the displaced people who lost their homes, families and memories (PIL-25, Feb 2022).

In addition to RLOs focused on football, we identified a couple of initiatives that are dedicated to music, dancing, and arts. One of those is Mashaq, a Palestinian RLO founded in Nahr al-Bared Camp to revive the Palestinian heritage, art, and music. These initiatives go beyond the immediate relief that NGOs and INGOs provide for refugees. Rather than providing their communities with services, they create spaces for refugees to participate in recreational activities.

Dodo's English Conversation is an initiative working under the Jesuit Amman INGO. They work with the Sudanese, Somali, Yemeni, Iraqi, and any refugee marginalized community. They also hold initiatives with the host community. They have English courses and conversation, book club, dance, sports, and many other activities. Also, in Mafraq city, there is another initiative called "The Syrian Trainers Club" where different sports activities led by sports trainers try to find a fund, usually from an INGO, to gather children from the refugee and host community and give them different sports activities and physical exercises.

WHAT BRINGS RLO MEMBERS TOGETHER?

We use Ling and Dale's (2014) concept of agency as a crucial component of a group's capacity to organise and seek appropriate solutions to their shared issues to better understand the motivation that leads refugees to form RLOs. People "gain agency through a dynamic combination of bonding, bridging, and linking ties" where social capital and networks are mobilised (Newman and Dale 2005; Ling and Dale 2014: 4). In order to organise and lead their group, this agency is then joined with the social capital of people with similar concerns. Our physical mapping shed light on the following factors which have motivated the creation of these entities:

PROFESSION

There are several refugee-led entities that group refugees with the same profession, such as the Syrian Engineers Association and the Syrian Women Association. Such communities endeavour to support their members through their various activities. For example, the manager of the Syrian Women Association explained:

The members are mostly female teachers from the public sector in Syria who become a teacher in the provisional Syrian schools in [this province of Turkey]. But as the state closed the Syrian schools in 2019, the teachers were jobless. Now within this Association, we give vocational training to help them find an alternative source of income (PIT-16, Nov 2021).

Similarly, the President of the Syrian Engineers Association stated:

Our community is a group of Syrian Engineers who sought refuge in Turkey and are looking for a stable environment to start their career. We are taking the role of representing the Syrian engineers in Turkey for legal and social purposes. Besides, we work on managing the scattered efforts of our engineers under one body to make a real impact in Turkey (PIT-12, Feb 2022).

IDENTITY

According to our findings, ethnicity has been a factor in groupings among Afghans in some refugee-led entities, while among Arabs, particularly Syrians and Palestinians, in some cases groupings have been formed based on city-of-origin and/or identity. In the case of Afghan refugees, a good example is Turkistan Hands for Education, Culture and Solidarity Association, where their community mostly consists of individuals with Turkic background. Another example can be Afghanistan Hazaras Culture and Solidarity Association; as the name suggests, this association was initially created to serve Hazara (an ethnicity in Afghanistan) students in Trabzon. However, as the number of refugees, including Afghans and other nationalities, increased in Trabzon, they started to serve others as well.

Regarding Palestinians, the founder of Palestinian Women's Union in Turkey said:

Our community is a group of Palestinian youth and ladies living in Turkey. This group believes in the importance of keeping the Palestinian identity revived and the unity of diaspora abroad despite the politics and differences, including university students, mothers, and businesswomen (PIT-7, Jan 2022).

We observed that Syrian refugees, in some cases, are assembled based on their city of origin. For instance, the manager of Hama Social Club in Antakya said:

The majority of the club are people from the city of Hama. Who try to support and help each other in Turkey. People of Hama are known for the tradition of standing next to each other in hard times. They love to meet and live the nostalgia together (PIT-1, Dec 2021).

Additionally, the Vice President of Alforati House in Istanbul stressed that:

We are a group of Syrians from different cities of Eastern Syria. We share many similarities in culture, history, and family bonds. We decided to gather ourselves

under one social body to keep our bonds and protect our identity in Turkey (PIT-11, Jan 2022).

Hadramout Yemeni restaurant has become very popular in the last decade. They gather to find and help other Yemeni individuals to host new Yemenis in Irbid and help them in finding livelihood opportunities. This restaurant became the central gathering point for them and from there, they help their community with education, health, income, and housing.

RELIGION AND TRUST

Among other factors, religion has also been a strong catalyst in bringing refugees together, especially with respect to Iranians. Lack of trust in the community is said to be the main reason for the absence of many Iranian refugee-led entities. However, the issue of trust among Iranians does not exist extensively in religious groupings. There are several Iranian churches in Istanbul, Kayseri, and other cities where they assemble for their rituals and social interactions. The co-founder of Iranian Christians Community in Kayseri said:

It is hard to gain trust among the Iranian community. However, we could gain that trust since we are connected with the Church here; we have done well so far through our work. Our members trust us, and they are grateful for our assistance (PIT-27, Nov 2021).

Syrian Scholars Association in Istanbul is another example of a religious grouping. The secretary of the Association stated that:

Our members are either scholars or students of religious studies who are looking for one umbrella to unite them despite all the differences they have. And having a space to share ideas and experiences about different religious topics (PIT-18, Feb 2022).

In Jordan, one of the initiatives under Zakat Foundation of America started to teach Syrian women how to sew and use machines. This initiative started as teaching some acquaintances how to sew using sewing machines. It was expanded when the Zakat Foundation of America in Irbid initiated the first workshop. The woman "Sameera" taught Syrian and Jordanian women how to sew through a hands-on training program for nine months, where they received certificates from the Jordanian vocational training authority. She also takes religious donation sewing orders to make "Jilbab" for women to wear. This initiative started in and lasted until 2017, when the Irbid branch of Zakat Foundation of America started giving courses for the International Computer Driving License, English, and other courses through this initiative. They also distribute toys and games to kids during Eid.

CULTURE

We observed that apart from the factors above, there are refugee groupings, though not many, that have happened based on cultural activities such as music, art, and cinema. Syrian Music Institute and Addar are two examples of such groupings. The head of the Syrian Music Institute said:

This place is just a cultural place for musical gatherings. We do not provide any particular help to refugees. However, our door is open to them if they want to join (PIT-40, Nov 2021).

Similarly, the founder of Addar stated that: "Our work is culturally centred like music, art, and cinema" (PIT-32, Feb 2022).

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this chapter, the proposed definition for RLOs reflects empirically the RLOs with their different patterns and community representation. We then sought to explain the reasons that inspire community members to form their RLOs and the gaps they perceive, which can only be filled through their own drive and support. Furthermore, as per the mapping and the

interviews, we sought to analyse the common elements that bring refugees together and bond them to serve their community of interest, whether at a large or small scale. These common elements have been essential for enabling refugee individuals and communities to access existing social capital as well as to build and strengthen social capital by extending social connections and networks, bridging with wider communities at the refugee and host levels.

CHAPTER THREE: DIVERSITY AND PATTERNS OF ACTION

Refugee agency, which facilitates the establishment of refugee-led responses, is attributed to the presence of capacity, a reason to act or a common concern, and most importantly, a high level of social capital (Ling and Dale 2014). For agency to be active, it is influenced by the political, institutional, and societal environment, which can either act as enablers or barriers for communities coming together. Therefore, the points that refugees collect using their capacity, their common concern, and social capital are affected by barriers from the wider ecosystem that can be imposed on the community level to act together.

This chapter studies the structural factors that have shaped the patterns of the mobilisation and the role each RLO has been able to assume. It seeks to analyse the governing politics of each state, which has differed from one refugee community to another legally and institutionally (Mencutek 2019). The first section of this chapter studies the ecosystem of the host states and their policy environment towards refugee mobilisation to officially register their RLOs and the barriers imposed on refugees because of their status, which often exclude them from being considered as actors in the civil society of the host state.

Building on this section, the second section analyses the consequences of the imposed policies, and the several patterns and structures refugees improvise in order to circumvent the discretion of the host state's policies and funding bodies' conditionalities on their mobilisation. These refugee-led organisations have varied in capacities, networks, and leadership. This section highlights the important role of the localised humanitarian support led by refugees, regardless of the size and registration status of their organisations.

STRUCTURAL FACTORS: POLICY ENVIRONMENT AND POWER RELATIONS

The three countries included in this study have had different policies towards refugees that are responding to changing power dynamics, international relations and shifting interests. The work and impact of RLOs across the region is largely a condition of the policy context in which they are found.

POLICY ENVIRONMENT AND REGISTRATION IN JORDAN

According to Article 8 of the Jordanian Law on Societies, non-Jordanians are denied the right to form civil society bodies and if one of the members is non-Jordanian, they require special prime ministerial consent, which is extremely difficult to obtain (International Center for Not-for-Profit Law 2008). Refugees in Jordan are considered "asylum seekers" due to the fact that Jordan is not a signatory of the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, hence refugees are denied the right to organise as non-Jordanians. This policy environment largely explains the limited number of registered RLOs in Jordan relative to the number of unregistered and other refugee-led responses.

Establishing a Community-Based Organization (CBOs) or Civil Society Organization (CBOs) or Social Enterprise (Non-for-profit Companies) is unbelievably bureaucratic for Jordanians and full of hurdles that are ongoing from registration until the reception of funds from donors. There is an undeniable plight for registering any non-profit association or organization in Jordan for Jordanian citizens, so when we look at the right for refugees to open, register and own these sorts of organizations, one simply laughs because it is prohibited for any non-Jordanian "Refugee" to establish such organizations.

TABLE 4: CONDITIONALITIES FOR ESTABLISHING ENTITIES IN JORDAN

Name of Entity	Conditionalities
<p>Non-Government Organisation منظمة غير حكومية</p>	<p>Non-Governmental and non-profitable, its goals and activities may vary, from civil movements to athlete clubs. Its establishment is solely to serve the community. An NGO is a legal entity composed of a group whose number is not less than seven. Other associations are made up of at least three persons, do not exceed twenty persons, and are registered by one person only. If a non-Jordanian individual wishes to register an association, then approval must be obtained from the Council of Ministers.</p>
<p>Company شركة</p> <p>See Non-Jordanian Investments Regulation No. 77 for 2019 (as amended in 2019 & 2020)</p>	<p>A refugee community may decide to establish a company, which can serve as an umbrella for a single initiative or several initiatives and/or projects. There are several types of companies, and there are certain restrictions to the nationality of the founders who are non-Jordanians. A non-Jordanian investor's ownership shall be less than 50% of the capital in any project in most economic activities.</p>
<p>(Non-for-profit Companies) شركة غير ربحية Community-Based Organization منظمة مجتمعية Civil Society Organization or Social Enterprise منظمة المجتمع المدني أو المؤسسة الاجتماعية</p>	<p>A Non-profit company is a company that can only fulfil objectives relating to the following sectors: health sector, educational sector, financing of small projects sector, and investment promotions and training sector. Therefore, the company's profits can only be used to expand its activities and fulfil its objectives. The process to register includes filing a non-objection application for restricted nationalities with the Ministry of Interior (Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan 2023).</p>
<p>Profit Company شركة ربحية</p> <p>See Non-Jordanian Investments Regulation No. 77 for 2019 (as amended in 2019 & 2020)</p>	<p>For-profit companies are companies that may have a variety of different objectives and whose partners/shareholders can agree on the distribution of losses and profits amongst themselves. Some companies may not be fully owned by non-Jordanians, as the objectives of these companies are partially restricted to non-Jordanians.</p>
<p>Association: جمعية</p>	<p>An Association is a legal person composed of a group whose number is not less than seven. Other associations are made up of at least three persons, do not exceed twenty persons, and are registered by one person only. If a non-Jordanian individual wishes to register an association, then approval must be obtained from the Council of Ministers.</p>

POLICY ENVIRONMENT AND REGISTRATION IN LEBANON

While equally difficult to register a refugee-led organisation in Lebanon, Lebanese policies vis-à-vis different refugee groups are constantly changing. Yet, for foreign organisations,⁸ the registration process is established by virtue of a special decree issued by the Council of Ministers (governed by the provisions of Decision No. 369 LR dated December 1, 1939). The registration of an RLO follows the same procedure as a local NGO. Registration of such an organisation must include the organisation's name and address, the professions and nationalities of its members, and two copies of the organisation's statutes and bylaws. A given license could be temporary or restricted by strict conditions set by the state. It is important to note that Syrians, Palestinians, and other refugees are denied the ability to create organisations, and therefore are forced to rely on Lebanese allies to help, protect, and perhaps represent their organisation publicly before the state.

Considering the policy of inaction that the government adopts in Lebanon and the failure of the state to attend to the needs of its residents, the civil society usually assumes primary responsibility for service provision (Abou Assi 2006). There is no exact number of registered civil society organizations or NGOs in Lebanon, but it is estimated to be around 15,000 across various sectors, with only 5000 officially registered (Abou Assi 2006). This is excessive for a country of this size and is mostly attributed to the fact that Lebanon has one of the most enabling legal and regulatory environments for civil society in the Arab world. The Lebanese NGO law is the 1909 Ottoman Law on Associations which is derived from the French Law on Associations. It requires that newly formed associations notify the government immediately after they are created. The Ministry of Interior is the main registration body, and the formal NGO registration process is simple and inexpensive. Article One of the Lebanese Law of Associations stipulates, "An association is a group of several persons permanently unifying their knowledge or efforts for non-profit objectives". Furthermore, the law indicates that when an association is created, "the founders must submit a signed and sealed statement containing its address, goals, objectives, main office, and the names, capacity, and position of those entrusted with its governance" (Social Training Centre 2004). Once these steps are completed, the Ministry of Interior grants the association a notification allowing them to declare the establishment of the association.

For foreign organisations, the registration process is established by virtue of a special decree issued by the Council of Ministers. After that, the organisation follows through the same procedure as a local NGO. Registration of such an organisation must include the organisation's name and address, the professions and nationalities of its members, and two copies of the organisation's statutes and bylaws. A given license could be temporary or restricted by strict conditions set by the state.

While the Law on Associations is perceived as enabling, public funds or dedicated government budget support for NGOs are scarce. As such, NGOs are often dependent on private or international donors. Furthermore, it is important to note that Syrians, Palestinians, and other refugees are denied the ability to create organizations on their own. Therefore, they are obliged to partner with Lebanese nationals to help protect and represent their organization publicly before the state. This requirement is restrictive to refugees who lack the social capital that allows them to create partnerships with Lebanese nationals and/or lack the financial capital to pursue other channels of registration. Although not having legal registration might be a disadvantage, in some cases, RLOs opt not to register because they either do not want to go through the complex process of getting registered, or they want to operate without the restrictions and surveillance imposed by the authorities.

8 The association is considered foreign if its founder or director is not Lebanese, if it is based outside Lebanon, or if more than a quarter of the members of its general assembly are foreigners.

TABLE 5: CONDITIONALITIES FOR ESTABLISHING ENTITIES IN LEBANON

Name of Entity	Definition	Conditionalities
Association/ Non-governmental Organization منظمة غير حكومية \ جمعية	A civil association dissociated with governments. It is non-profit and often volunteer based. NGOs may seek to provide social or political services, or advocate for policy change.	Members must be above twenty years of age, enjoy all their civil rights, and not have any felony convictions. Enjoys a series of rights and obligations that meet its acquired legal standing. This status grants the right to manage and dispense funds; to stand before courts (as defendant or plaintiff); to accept donations, grants, and aid; to enter into contracts with its officials and employees; and other rights entitled to legal entities. Cannot access loans.
International Non-governmental Organization منظمة دولية غير حكومية	Same as above, but the founder or director is not Lebanese, and it is based outside of Lebanon, or more than a quarter of its general assembly members are not Lebanese.	License comes from a special decree issued by the Council of Ministers, before the organization follows through the same procedures as a local NGO with the Ministry of Interior.
Social Enterprise مؤسسة	An organisation that applies commercial strategies to prioritize human and environmental well-being over profit.	There is no official legal framework to register social enterprises in Lebanon. Social enterprises can be registered as associations, companies, corporations, or not registered.
Private Company مؤسسة خاصة	An organisation concerned with making revenue, returns, or proceeds in its work.	Cannot access aid provided by donors.
Collective تجمع	A group of people working together for a particular goal, with decisions usually made in a nonhierarchical manner.	Collectives are organizations that are managed without a hierarchy. Every member or sub-committee has equal decision-making power, however there are no managers, board of directors, or directors with a final say. A collective may be of any size, exist for any length of time, and is commonly based on voluntary participation of its members. One of the most common forms of collectives is a work collective, which adopts a horizontal management structure, with every worker considered as co-manager, and delegated sub-committees who take on specific tasks in the operation of the organization.

Name of Entity	Definition	Conditionalities
Cooperative (Co-ops) تعاونية	An organisation or enterprise that is managed and owned by its members and by those who use its facilities and services.	<p>A co-op is created after a group of people come together to voluntarily cooperate for their mutual social, economic, political, or cultural benefit. It is a jointly operated enterprise in which the production, distribution, supplying, and operations are run and owned by its own members. Each member owns part of the organization and has one voting share on major decisions. There can be, in specific cases, managers and board of directors, elected by everyone else, which makes the system semi-hierarchical.</p> <p>The basic rules of a cooperative fall under what is known as “the seven cooperative principles”:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inclusive and voluntary membership, 2. Democratic control, 3. Economic participation by members, 4. Independence and autonomy from state and business sectors, 5. Educational, training, and informative attributes, 6. Teamwork and cooperation, 7. Strong sense of concern for the community.

POLICY ENVIRONMENT AND REGISTRATION IN TURKEY

As Turkey treats some refugees as nationals, some refugees in Turkey have been able to create and register their own organisations if they abide by certain conditions that govern and regulate the NGO sector. Turkish law does not draw a distinction between foreigners and Turkish citizens with regards to forming an NGO in Turkey. There are a set of conditionalities that must be met in order to create a legal association or NGO in Turkey, such as having at least seven founding members (either Turkish or foreigners who have legal status in Turkey); having a charter stating the name, address, aim, and other regulations of the entity; and having an address (Directorate of Civil Society Relations 2023). After registration, the association needs to have a bank account for its financial activities and an accountant to do the bookkeeping and reporting duties. According to Turkish Civil Code no: 4721 Article 56, every individual who has the capacity to act has the right to create an association/NGO. The law does not draw a distinction between foreigners and Turkish citizens with regards to forming an NGO in Turkey. Note that, in Turkish the word 'Dernek' which means 'Association' is used instead of 'Organisation' in Turkey.

TABLE 6: CONDITIONALITIES FOR ESTABLISHING ENTITIES IN TURKEY

Name of Entity	Conditionalities
NGO, Association, Union, Initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have at least 7 founding members, either Turkish or foreigners who have legal status in Turkey, ▪ Have a charter stating the name, address, aim, and other regulations of the entity, ▪ Have an address. <p>After registration, the association/NGO needs to have a bank account for its financial activities and an accountant to do the bookkeeping and reporting duties.</p>
Business and Company	<p>Foreigners who want to open a company under their own name and account, after finishing the establishment procedures (such as publishing the company in the trade registry or chamber of commerce registry gazette and obtaining a tax number) with the relevant authorities, must apply for a work permit at the Ministry (Directorate General of International Labour Force Uluslararası İşgücü Genel Müdürlüğü 2023).</p> <p>As a result of a positive evaluation by the Ministry, foreigners who are granted a work permit along with this permit must apply to the relevant municipality and request a business and working license. Note that the Ministry grants temporary work permits to foreigners; therefore, the business and working license obtained from the municipalities will be dated according to the expiry date of the work permit. Syrians under temporary protection, according to the "Regulation on Work Permit for Foreigners under Temporary Protection" that was published on the official gazette number 29594 on 15.01.2015, must obtain a work permit from the Ministry of Labour and Social Security. Syrians who want to form a business under their own name and work independently must follow the same procedure as mentioned above for foreigners.</p>

PATTERNS OF RLO ACTION

Understanding the work and impact of RLOs in the Middle East requires a deep understanding of the diverse realities of local and national refugee governance in the region. Refugee governance in the region has been described as "meta-governance" where national, regional, international, and transnational actors contribute to "shaping" the policies of each country towards refugees (Mencütek 2018: 47). Structural factors entail the ambiguous or restrictive policies, or definition of RLO, which could limit refugees from registering or applying to funding. It could entail legal limitations imposed on the status of the refugees or their RLO, which could be a challenge for refugees to navigate through domestic laws and international policies. In meta-governance, the ruling entity "continue[s] traditional statist styles of governance in terms of bureaucratic rule making" and exercises power over refugees (Mencütek 2018: 48). This mode of governance consequently shapes the scale, the working agenda, the possible funding, and the impact on the served community.

At a micro level, several factors also affect the role and the size of the RLO internally. A defining feature of an RLO is the role of refugees in an organisation's decision-making and leadership. As such, the legal status of refugees themselves matters significantly in determining their ability to register their organisation, to be visibly active in a leadership role, and to expand the scope of their work by securing external funding. The size and scope of RLO action have further varied according to the needs of the community and the concentration or dispersal of community members (either dispersed in large urban areas or concentrated in semi-urban or rural contexts), in addition to the ability of RLOs to liaise with established humanitarian aid organisations to coordinate services and secure funding. The table below spells out the main factors that affect the structure of the RLOs:

TABLE 7: IMPORTANT FACTORS IN THE CREATION OF RLOS

LEGAL STATUS	FUNDING SOURCES	SCOPE OF WORK	SIZE OF RLO	TARGET GROUP	LEADERSHIP
Registered abroad	International donors	Humanitarian services	Large scale	Host and refugee communities	Co-led (refugee & host)
Registered in host state	Government fund	Legal advocacy	Medium scale	Specific refugee groups (youth, women...)	Operating under national NGO
Not registered	Diaspora donations	Religious/ Political	Small scale	Refugee community	Refugee-led
	Donations	Cultural recreational			

As per the above, refugees' action takes place on different layers and different approaches whether individualised, group, or group and official. The structure could also be physical, where members are actively involved with the community, or virtual, where the communication is limited to social media mobilisation and virtual channelling of funding. The section below explains the layers identified in the three countries starting from the bottom up, i.e., focusing on the organic mobilisation of refugees on a local level, then moving upward to their transnational mobilisation, when refugees manage to register their RLOs internationally.

LAYER 4: PHILANTHROPIC INDIVIDUAL INITIATIVE

This layer is defined as sustained action by a single person or a small group of people from the community who have identified a particular need and have organised themselves to respond. These initiatives are often present in the host countries as businessmen or investors. For example, a well-to do Yemeni businessman in Jordan sponsors Yemeni students in Jordanian universities. Meanwhile in Turkey, Yemeni businessmen also fund student unions at universities, expecting students to check on the Yemeni community and respond to their needs.

LAYER 3: COMMUNITY MOBILISATION

This layer is achieved when members from a refugee community are brought together, by a leader or a few leaders, who mobilise the community through networking to have a wider outreach to refugees and through securing funds and support for the community from local actors. There are not many RLOs falling under this layer, but they are prominent with their work agenda such as Basmeh and Zaitouneh, and Sawa in Beirut. Evidently, not many of our mapped organisations have been able to reach this stage because their networks and social capital were somewhat limited.

LAYER 2: INSTITUTIONALISATION OF COMMUNITY MOBILISATION

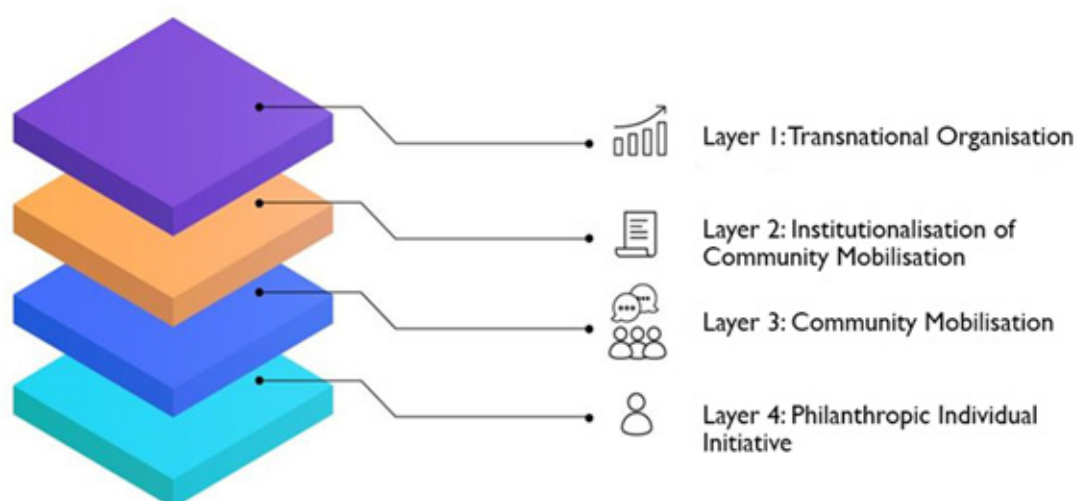
This layer is achieved when refugee mobilisation is institutionalised and becomes established and registered as an organisation, as a profit company (social enterprise), or as an association. This registration facilitates the organisation's ability to attract external funding and enables the

RLO to broaden the community it serves. This layer also includes refugee-led bodies falling under national humanitarian aid organisations, such as Bashyer el Khair in Jordan that falls under Kitab wel Sunneh, a Jordanian Islamic organisation.

LAYER 1: TRANSNATIONAL ORGANISATION

This layer is achieved when RLOs reach the capacity to work across borders and mobilise transnational networks with refugees in exile and diaspora communities. This layer represents the ability of refugees to widen their scope of services, increase the size of communities they can reach, broaden their networks with funders, and expand their relations at the international level with refugees in exile and with international donors. These refugee-led organisations have managed to combine or layer all the needed elements and gain recognition on a global scale and seek funding from international donors such as Syrian Forum in Istanbul (registered in Germany), Syrian American Medical Supports in Amman (registered in the USA). Such transnational organisations managed to circumvent the policy limitations in the host country.

FIGURE 9: LAYERS OF RLOS



Accordinging to this diagram, we can begin to disaggregate the RLOs identified during the mapping exercise in each of the countries included in this study:

TABLE 8: NUMBER OF MAPPED RLOS

Country	Transnational RLOs (Layer 1)	Registered RLOs (Layer 2)	Unregistered RLOs (Layer 3)	Total
Turkey	6	80	56	145
Lebanon	12	36	57	110
Jordan	5	5	58	81
Total	23	121	171	336

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Despite hosting a considerable number of refugees throughout their histories, Lebanon, Jordan, and Turkey do not have consistent policies towards their respective and diverse refugee populations. This lack of consensus, attributed to political power and policy paralysis, has had a major impact on the rights of refugees and their ability to mobilise as a community. It is also reflected in the perception towards refugees as excluded from the civil

society actors. State policies stress that civil society be depoliticised and activism limited to those holding residency or nationality. This focus meant excluding a good part of refugees and RLOs from being active or officially recognised. International organisations and funding bodies limit support to officially registered RLOs, bypassing the fact that small scale RLOs are also effective and professionally serving their communities. Consequently, lack of registration makes it difficult for refugee communities to receive funding from the international community, which conditions allocation of funds only to official entities recognised by host governments.

More generally, refugees have dwelled on their networks and social capital in different layers, whether an individual-led philanthropic approach, a community-led registered approach, or an unregistered approach, to serve different purposes, and seek funding and support for their activities. In some cases, these networks go beyond the immediate community to reach refugees through transnational funding and registration. Many of the identified RLOs depend on external donors and access to various forms of private funding. They are valued by the communities they serve for the positive impact they have through their programs and their ability to manage their programs in a way that is seen by the community to demonstrate utmost integrity and accountability. Yet, the vast majority of RLOs in the region are not able to access external funding due to the conditions of donors, especially in relation to their capacity to administer complex funding arrangements, or the policy environment in which they operate. In many cases, the combination of lack of registration status, restrictive policy environment, and their limited administrative capacity limits their ability to access the international sphere of funders.

CHAPTER FOUR: RLOS' SOCIAL AND INSTITUTIONAL IMPACT

Pittaway, et al (2016: 415) affirm the fracturing impacts of the refugee journey on social capital for individuals and communities, and the value of strengthening social capital as a strategy to support refugee settlement. In their work, they identify the social capital 'enablers' that constitute the context for the flourishing of social capital in resettlement, and the indivisibility of these 'enablers' from social capital itself. Putnam in his analysis for the function of social capital perceived it as an ingredient that provides societies with more effective governance and a dynamic economy that is established on horizontal networks rather than the vertical ones of patronage (cited in Claridge 2018: 22). As explained by Putnam, social capital would increase the costs of defection, create norms of reciprocity, and improve the flow of information and communication. Social capital for him provides the solution to a collective action problem. This chapter argues that the impact of RLOs – whether the small or big, officially registered or not – has embodied the importance of weaving the human relations between the members of the RLO themselves on one hand with the members of the host community, officials in the host state, and members of the international organisations on the other hand.

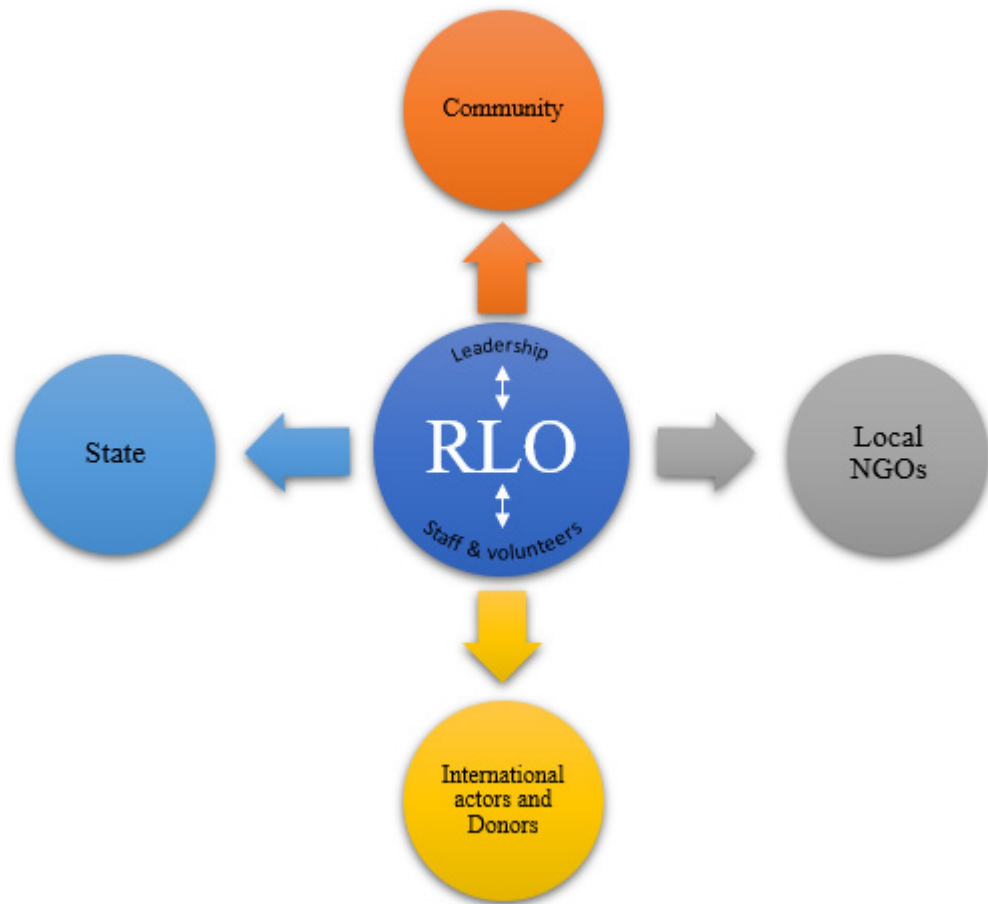
It was only possible to measure the impact of RLOs with big, registered organisations, which receive funding from multiple donors and are accountable to their funders and to their communities through an institutionalised relationship. This institutional impact of RLOs is traced through the number of beneficiaries, the services provided, and the expenditure based on allocated funding. Their institutional impact is thus tailored to respond to a strategic plan of work, with designed services and an allocated budget. Their work is situated in a very institutional framework that responds to the conditionality of their funders and the needs of their served community.

In this chapter, both the social and the institutional impacts have been valued by the refugee communities. The fact that displaced people find a niche to assemble themselves and connect themselves with their peers, whether from the homeland or with similar legal status, has been highly appreciated by many of our interviewees. In Rihaniyal/Hatay, an originally Arabic speaking town with a high number of Syrian refugees, social mobilisation has been noticeably high, and most importantly, welcomed by the host community and supported by Arab funders (from the Gulf). Whether educational, cultural, socio-political, or economic, the Syrian refugee had a home recreated and a strong social safety net that brought their home closer. Syria Forum in Istanbul, Basmeh and Zaytouneh in Beirut, and Syrian American Medical Supports in Jordan, through strategic leadership and management plans customised to needs and to funding, fulfilled a gap in services. They not only succeeded in bringing people together, but also in providing essential needs and basic rights for their well-being. The impact thus varied whether measurable or unmeasurable, yet the role of the RLOs regardless of their size has been significant at multiple levels for the refugee communities.

THE SOCIAL IMPACT OF RLOS

Because RLOs, regardless of their size, scale, or funding, can operate in non-permissive environments, they are forced to not only address a multiplicity of pressing community needs, but also to operate amid constantly changing political and social circumstances. The most important matter is the way these RLOs have sustained their presence and their work by creating networks at multiple levels and strengthening their roles through the established relations. We divided these relations into these four levels:

FIGURE 10: RLOS' RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER ACTORS



RELATIONSHIP WITHIN THE RLO WITH STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

Based on our analysis and evidence from the field, the leadership plays a key role in establishing, maintaining, and expanding a RLOs' relationship with the state, local NGOs, international actors, and donors, as well as the refugee community. Factors such as the leader's language skills, legal status, educational level, and social capital has had great importance in creating RLOs and widening relationships, at the inter- and intra-community levels.

The efficiency of service provision, as well as the high integrity and accountability towards the community, have been reflected as important in building up trust with the members of the organisation and in scaling up the RLO. In Women Force Group – a RLO based in Mafraq city providing training courses aiming to empower women through creating homemade businesses and managing their own entrepreneurship – has scaled up to teaching refugee communities about their rights, through hotline services led by lawyers:

I recently volunteered with Care and was involved with Women Force Group to inform women about their rights. We discovered that in the Syrian society we are weak in terms of knowledge regarding women's rights. We do not have any knowledge of the type of gender-based violence, and we also do not have any knowledge (JM08, Oct 2022).

This expansion of services, building on the established network, was secured because of the credibility in their services and the integrity of their working agenda. This credibility has equipped them to get support from an international NGO.

RELATIONSHIP WITH THE COMMUNITY

RLOs are embedded in their communities and are heavily reliant on their social capital, which in turn determines the extent to which they can mobilise their networks and community

resources. Building the trust with the community and being close to the people's needs are indispensable factors in the established relationship between the RLOs and the served community. One thing that we noted is that as the scale of the RLO grows, the bureaucratic processes increase, or in other words distance between the RLO and beneficiaries widens. The smaller the RLOs, the more proximate it is to its community. This proximity helps in maintaining a friendly, family-like environment for the beneficiaries.

We are a group of volunteers. We do house visits to the elderly and sick people in our community to provide them with moral and financial support whenever possible. We know everyone in our community and these visits help us stay in touch and up to date on any problems one of our community members might be facing (PIL40, December 2021).

This is one of the advantages that RLOs have. From our interviews with community members and beneficiaries, it was clearly stated that going to RLOs is much more convenient for them, as they do not face a language/cultural barrier and feel heard. Moreover, the RLOs are the only place where unregistered refugees can go in Turkey, as the state does not provide any kind of service and assistance to unregistered refugees. The founder of an Afghan RLO in Istanbul told us that:

In this area, there are many unregistered refugees and of course, when they come to us, we cannot refuse to help them because other bodies do not provide help to them. Therefore, we always underreport the number of beneficiaries as it is illegal to assist unregistered refugees (TI009, July 2022).

It is important to note that some of the RLOs, operating on a large scale, still managed to maintain their initial approach within their community. Although they have grown tremendously, they created community centres in the locations where they operate. These centres allowed them to keep a close relationship with their beneficiaries who come to the community centre regularly. For example, during one of our visits to Basmeh and Zeitooneh's community centre in Bourj Hammoud, Fadi Halliso, co-founder of the organization said that he started B&Z because he wanted "to help his people and his community".

According to Mohamad Khamis, founder of Hemmet Shabab, a Syrian refugee-led organization,

We have a centre in Bourj Hammoud, in an area accessible to all our community members. Everyone feels comfortable coming to our centre to seek help. We are now also working to establish another centre in the Bekaa.

This approach is used in Lebanon by Najdeh, Sawa for Development and Aid, as well as Women Now for Development who have community centres and community kitchens in different locations, but also in Irbid/Jordan, and in several locations in Hatay and Istanbul.

RELATIONSHIP WITH THE STATE

In the three countries, the leader's or founding members' relationship with authorities matter in the way they manage their organisations in line with what is seen as acceptable by the state or in line with what the state requests from them. Their level of exposure, education and language skills play a crucial role in their relationship with the government and local RLOs. The legal status of the leaders appears to be crucial in leading a refugee-led organisation in the three countries. Our understanding from the cases shows that all the naturalised leaders have a very close relationship with important state actors.

Refugee-led organisations that are not registered and that shy away from the state due its restrictive and bureaucratic environment are affected in their services and the way they ensure to work from home away from the radar of the authorities. One RLO in Irbid-Jordan gets medical equipment for patients through established relationships with pharmacies and medical clinics. This work is done through phone calls and distribution of equipment is done through contracting delivery taxi cars to deliver the goods to the needy people (JI 004, May 2022). The founder of a refugee-led initiative in Istanbul shared his experience with us in this regard stating:

The government could shut us down at any minute they want, and they could arrest us. With the political environment, there are no guarantees, you don't know what can happen. We know that in 2017 they cracked on the NGOs after the coup attempt. So that's when we were registered but because of what happened, because they cracked NGOs and arrested people then we got rid of our registration and we started to operate below the radar because we were afraid (TI002, June 2022).

In another interview with the founder/director of a women-led community-based organisation in Istanbul; she expressed her reason for not being registered as:

We are working underground, registration as an organisation is hard. There has to be a certain number of Turkish members for registration, and I see no point in spending money on this. It has been more than five years that we are active and now we are doing better in reaching the people we are supposed to. This is better for us than being an NGO where we had to waste our time on paperwork (PIT-24, Nov 2022).

She added that:

For not being registered we have lost opportunities on funding; it's not only the paperwork but questions about the community and some agenda that is not suitable for the community. I don't want to work under some organisation's agenda who doesn't know the needs of the community.

While the language barrier was not an issue in Lebanon, the legal status of the RLO and its members was. Refugees in Lebanon are forced to navigate the socio-economic and politico-institutional environment of the country which unfolds as restrictive regulations and vague categories. According to the founder of one of the RLOs we interviewed, "Lebanese authorities impose harsh conditions that constitute an obstacle to the initiative's continuation, including the requirement that a Lebanese person must be present to lead the initiative" (PIL-18, Jan 2022). One of the founders of a Syrian RLI said that his identification papers and residency papers expired (PIL-23, Feb 2022). This issue makes it very difficult for him to expand or even continue his organization's work: "We face many obstacles with the government, including the imposition of valid residency permits, and the fact that licensing requires many security approvals" (PIL-20, Jan 2022). Many of the interviewed refugees, particularly Palestinians thought that "The Lebanese state must change its attitude towards refugees after years of oppression and injustice" (PIL-29, Feb 2022).

RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LOCAL HUMANITARIAN ORGANISATIONS

Recently, humanitarian organisations in Lebanon have been adopting local partners to supplement their work, particularly in remote or risky environments. These local partners include refugee-led organisations, which are selected because of their established trust in the community, their contextualised knowledge, and their facilitated access. It is important to note that these partnerships have enabled some RLOs that could not register on their own because they are led by refugees to overcome the challenge of registration by partnering with Lebanese nationals. The co-founder of a Palestinian RLO that supports refugee children told us:

We are officially registered with the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities through the president of the association, who is Lebanese. We submitted all the required papers through a lawyer, and he obtained the notice of recognition. There are no problems with registration because the association is registered in a Lebanese name (PIL-24, Feb 2022).

Having the RLO registered makes it easier to partner with other NGOs and INGOs working in Lebanon. The same registered RLO said that they have several national and international partners,

We coordinate with several NGOs such as, Najdeh, Naba', Children and Youth, Ajyal Al Arab, and Li Anak Ensan... We also work with international institutions

such as, Norwegian Refugee Council, Save the Children, War Child Holland, and Danish Refugee Council. We receive financial support through donations and grants from these INGO, mainly War Child Holland and Ajyal al Arab (PIL-24, Feb 2022).

Similarly, in Turkey we observed that local actors are seeking partnerships with the RLOs for better access and communication with the refugee groups, and for empowering the RLOs through different capacity building programs. Within our mapping, we found out that most of the established collaborations are with the medium or large scale RLOs as they are registered and have a good reference. A language barrier appears to be an issue in this liaison in Turkey in particular. A project manager in a large local NGO in Turkey shared her concern in this regard: "Almost in every project we have with the RLOs we face the language barrier issue. As most of the refugee community members cannot speak Turkish most of the time, we have the same people attending our trainings" (TI013, October 2022).

The networks and social capital are used by RLOs for various reasons, one of which is to secure funding. RLOs often rely on their network for funding: "Our financial capabilities are very weak (400 euros annually) collected from donations from the sons of town, people outside Lebanon (Europe, America and the Gulf states)" (PIL-22, Feb 2022). In some cases, these networks go beyond the camp boundaries to reach the diaspora. A Palestinian refugee who volunteers at the Charitable Fund Committee for Cancer Patients in Baddawi Camp told us that their initiative receives support from Palestinians living abroad: "We sometimes get donations from an initiative called 'Sons of Camps in Europe', 'Charitable Fund for Cancer Patients in Nahr el-Bared Camp', and 'Friends of Beddawi Camp in Australia'" (PIL-26, Feb 2022).

Another example from Jordan shows the dire need for RLOs to seek recognition, legality, finance, and stability. This issue has been seen in our preliminary research, as most of these unregistered RLOs were either hindered or stagnated. A Syrian founder of an RLO called Athar Platform said:

I would love to be legal or financed to some degree so that I can at least cover the cost of trainers, transportation and stationery that is needed to conduct our training. I have applied to many proposals and the number one obstacle is being legal and registered (JM05, Jun 2022).

Another example is the "Helping Syrians in Jordan" initiative, which gathered all the right information and donation assistance in one credible place and now established a webpage which has over 78,000 followers and is a cornerstone of the Syrian community. They provide health, medicine and any humanitarian assistance that comes as a donation.

Many Jordanian NGOs approached me but most of them either wanted to take a percentage of the donations or run the operations as they see fit. We work on a compassionate health initiative, so it would be amazing to be legalised, but with the offers that I got from Jordanian NGOs it felt as if I would cheat my community out of their donations, so I chose not to register (JA07, Jun 2022).

Yet falling under the umbrella of a local humanitarian organisation as a way to navigate, facilitate and work under their legality without registering under the NGO may risk taking away the power of decision-making from the refugees or may empower them to be 'legally correct'. A Somali and a Sudanese refugee took it upon themselves to teach their community of Amman, Jordan, the English language at all levels. H & M stated that:

Being under a Jordanian NGO that is registered saved us from many hassles that used to always keep us preoccupied regarding space, legality, time availability, and many other concerns. The fact we are free to conduct our initiative without any imposed narrative from the Sawiyan umbrella gives us the freedom and authority to do what the community is need of (JA03 Jun 2022).

RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE INTERNATIONAL BODIES AND DONORS

As per an Amnesty International report, “local organizations — including RLOs — are receiving less than 1% of available humanitarian funding” (Amnesty International, 2020). Despite the recent interest and the Global Compact call for supporting refugee self-reliance through empowering RLOs as essential partners in any humanitarian response, funds channelled to these bodies are still limited. As explained earlier, the conditions imposed by donors to fund an official and registered RLO is not often viable or fair for small scale organisations. The institutionalisation of RLOs as a must to receive funding imposed by donors acts as a major hinderance for most RLOs in the region.

INSTITUTIONAL IMPACT OF RLOS

RLOs registered as International Non-Governmental Organisations or Local Organisations or associations play an important role by addressing social protection and the livelihood uncertainties. They address in their projects, led usually by a big staff, essential needs to the beneficiaries that affect their socioeconomic wellbeing. Their official status enables them to receive funding from private funders, philanthropists, or state funding. This funding obliges them to adhere to community values and ensure that they are building trust with the members of the community, with their wider network, with the state, with the donors, and with the other humanitarian aid organisations.

One of these INGOs is the Syrian American Medical Society (SAMS), which was founded in 1998 as a global medical relief organization (Syrian American Medical Society 2023). Registered in the United States and funded by philanthropists, SAMS works on the front lines of disaster relief in Syria and other countries, providing life-saving services, reviving health systems in times of emergency, and advancing medical education through a network of humanitarians in Syria, the US, Jordan, and other countries. It endeavours to meet the medical requirements of patients in need, regardless of their political views, racial or ethnic heritage, or place of worship. SAMS launched SAMS Global Response in order to address the expanding medical requirements globally. SAMS primarily operates in Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey. SAMS has helped refugees from sub-Saharan Africa, including Syrians, Iraqis, Kurds, Afghans, and others, during its initial operation in Greece. In addition to their outreach, medical, and education programs, SAMS is committed to reducing barriers to healthcare by developing and utilizing high-quality, culturally appropriate, sustainable models of free healthcare.

Syrian Forum in Istanbul is another transnational NGO (Syrian Forum 2023). It was established in 2011 to rebuild the lives of Syrian refugees through sustainable programs with a yearly budget of about 57 million. They actively work in the United States, Qatar, Turkey, Austria, and Syria and assess their impact through total number of beneficiaries, total number of services, and direct impact of their services in terms of money.

In Lebanon, there are several organisations that fall under this umbrella, namely, Basmeh and Zeitooneh, Sawa for Development and Aid, Women Now for Development, and Ettijahat – Independent Culture, among others. These organisations are all officially registered in Lebanon and abroad. Moreover, they are well-established and have multiple programmes and interventions that target various sectors. For example, Women Now for Development’s work spans protection, empowerment, participation, advocacy, and feminist knowledge production. Similarly, Basmeh and Zeitooneh focuses on protection, advocacy and research, education, food security and livelihoods, civil society enablement, and peace building and social cohesion. These programmes are made possible through partnerships with and funding from international agencies and donors such as Ford Foundation, British Council, Goethe Institute, Caritas Canada, BMZ-Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, Malala Fund, Swiss Confederation, and the European Endowment for Democracy.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Based on our research, these organised groups and responses take multiple forms and

shapes. Admittedly, they constitute an essential element of the refugee community that seeks to support refugees in order to either fill the gaps in the areas that the state fails to provide adequate support (namely protection, relief, awareness-raising, vocational training, education, and empowerment) or to protect and nourish their shared identity, culture, and language. This social impact has been highly valued by the refugees: it represents a safe haven for them with people who look and feel like them in times of insecurity and uncertainty. The support such RLOs have provided cannot be measured as per the institutional terms, rather it is more social and effective in its meaningful quality. The institutional impact of these bodies is assessed through the effect of their interventions over a period of time and the changes achieved. The impact, as per the institutional terms, is to assess the effectiveness of the provided programmes, and to what extent they address gaps between the planned and achieved results. This evaluation is done in a framework of strategic planning as per a budget, a team of workers, and expected output. Only the big, well-established, and registered organisations managed to tick these criteria. The majority of RLOs established a base of social relations which made it easier for refugees to secure social, economic, and sometimes cultural support beyond numbers and formal expectations.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This work is an evidence-based study that aimed to analyse the important role of the localised humanitarian support led by refugees. Whether registered and big, or small and invisible at the official scale, the work focused on the role played by refugee communities to serve an agenda that responds to their needs. This role has filled in the gaps in services and protection created by humanitarian agencies and established the space and power of the refugees as self-reliant. This focus comes in line with the 'localisation of aid agenda' that was pushed forward in the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit as well as the UN's growing recognition of the role played by local actors and refugee leaders. This push was also part of the Grand Bargain, where the idea of strengthening local humanitarian actors' capacities, along with providing them with greater access to funding and information, was presented as having the potential to enhance the effectiveness of the humanitarian response. Likewise, the 2018 Global Compact on Refugees placed an emphasis on enhancing refugee self-reliance and recognizing the value of refugee participation in decision-making.

Our research aimed to document the nature and scope of RLOs' activities. In light of the international support for self-reliant refugees, we sought to analyse their impact on humanitarian responses, whether measurable or non-measurable. Through our physical mapping, it was imperative for us to understand the ecosystems that shape the work of RLOs, whether local, national, and international politics and the laws that enabled them to be officially registered or to work at a small scale away from the official radar. To make a difference with our findings, we endeavoured to identify best practices from RLOs and to propose recommendations to reduce the barriers that RLOs encounter in order to enhance their role towards their communities.

To understand the refugee communities' dynamics and their ability to organise as an act of agency, we held interviews with a selection of 25-30 diverse RLOs, which highlighted for us the ways the communities mobilise, the power of the leadership in supporting the refugee community, and the varied structures/layers through which they act. We contextualised these findings in the context of each host state, firstly by studying the rights refugees access and secondly by understanding the policies that empower refugees to mobilise officially and create their own registered organisations. The purpose has been to analyse the multiple structures and shapes of RLOs in light of the ecosystems in which refugees act and the way regulations affect their need to assemble. As a result of the failures of the international refugee regime to secure protection for refugees and the failures of host states to ensure basic rights to all the refugees, we studied the reasons that bring refugees together and the factors that bond members of the communities into one organisation led by a leader or a group of leaders whom they trust. The institutionalisation of their social capital along with the imposed regulations have shaped different layers of agency, from individualised to group action. These layers have shaped different structures that we sought to study in the field and to situate in the wider context, that of registration and the funding agenda.

Refugee-led organisations have always existed in the Middle East, with different structures and different shapes. Few RLOs have excelled and proven their management abilities being accountable to the refugee community they serve and to the funders who support them in their scope and working agenda. The majority of the RLOs we identified are working at a small scale, often not seen at the official scale. The regulations of host states have dictated their physical and visible existence. When they were unable to partner with nationals or to have the needed funding to register, they opted to remain in the shadow, working at their limited small scale. The activities of RLOs in the Middle East have varied from providing services and liaising between NGOs and beneficiaries to being a cherished space where refugees assemble. The value of RLOs for refugees appears to be beyond limited measurable variables of services and distribution. For the refugees, the fact that they have a space to meet, to discuss everyday issues with people like them, and to feel "like at home" has been vital for their identity and their solidarity as a community. Refugees celebrated RLOs as a venue to revive their societal and cultural values and to address the needs of their community members, including groups such as women, youth, and elderly community members.

The research findings therefore provide an understanding of aspects of social capital crucial

during refugee settlement, as well as insights about the nature of social capital and the way it functions. The study emphasises not only networks and resources, but also norms that govern social relationships within the one community, with other refugee communities, with the host community, with the host state, with INGOs, and with donors. These relationships have been analysed as the social impact of the RLOs for both the small unregistered and big and registered organisations. Those which got the funding and managed to secure official registration because of their legal status, succeeded to secure funding and managed to fit in the conditions of the funders. We categorised these actions under institutional impact where they needed to tick certain boxes and conditions relating to integrity, accountability, and transparency. In this work, we advocate for wider space for RLOs to grow. We give importance to the role refugee communities play in relation to the provision of humanitarian services and protection, as well as community support and empowerment.

The findings of this research provide important evidence for policymakers, funders, and practitioners to guide their engagement with various types of RLOs in the region, mindful of the diverse structures, strategies, and levels of formality that refugee-led responses assume. RLOs make important contributions in addressing the otherwise un-met needs of refugees and related communities. To make their local humanitarian support effective, more permissive laws and policies are needed.

This research has theoretically unpacked the refugee community and the way refugees come together. More research is needed on the proposed alternative by RLOs: transnational humanitarian support. This future research shall unpack several variables: the policy constraints of host countries, the refugee community, and the way conflict fragments the society and travels with the community to the exile at the racial, ethnic and national levels. The transnational humanitarian refugee support is a new trend, reflecting refugee self-reliance across borders and situating RLOs on par with international humanitarian bodies.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO HOST STATES

RLOs make important contributions to addressing the otherwise un-met needs of refugees and related communities. Their impact, however, is limited by restrictive or ambiguous policies relating to refugees and the registration of RLOs. In a region with a history in receiving refugees, more permissive laws and policies are needed, including:

- Reliable access to legal status for refugees, including refugee status that meets international standards, the regularisation of status for long-staying refugees, and access to citizenship for refugees who meet national standards.
- More permissive laws for refugees to create their own organisations and serve their own communities. Refugees will always endeavour to mobilise visibly and invisibly. Host states are better off to value the refugees' agency and should make registration systematic and straightforward through communicating clearly the steps required to register an RLO according to the framework for other civil society actors and as per the conditions of reception of funding.
- A unified domestic policy, with clear measures to explain how to enhance engagement with RLOs and with refugees as civil society actors. This policy will affirm refugees' rights to mobilise and to localise their support as self-reliant agents acting in a welcoming environment.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO DONORS

In light of Grand Bargain commitments and the principles of the Global Compact on Refugees, donors should develop more flexible and permissive policies towards funding for RLOs by:

- Establishing reliable funding streams for RLOs with the administrative capacity to receive and manage funds.
- Appreciating the diversity of RLOs and the needs they help address by ensuring that support for RLOs is not exclusively accessible to the limited number of prominent

RLOs in the region. Instead, donors should develop mechanisms to ensure that funding is also accessible to smaller RLOs.

- Recognising the restrictive policy environments in which RLOs function and exploring mechanisms to provide support to smaller, unregistered RLOs.
- Advocating with host states in the region to develop more permissive policies towards the registration and activities of RLOs.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO HUMANITARIAN ORGANISATIONS

In response to commitments by humanitarian NGOs to localise action and transfer power to actors closest to the communities in need of humanitarian assistance, humanitarian organisations should develop innovative mechanisms to support RLOs as they navigate restrictive policy environments by:

- Viewing RLOs as equal and valued partners within the community of humanitarian actors.
- Ensuring the equal participation of RLOs in humanitarian decision-making structures.
- Exploring partnerships with unregistered RLOs to help provide an administrative structure through which these RLOs can access external funding and other forms of support.
- Recognising the expertise of RLOs and the potential value of capacity-sharing relationships where RLOs can benefit from training while contributing deeper insight into the needs of refugees and related communities.
- Advocating for changes in national policy frameworks to allow RLOs to become registered and assert their independent identities and capacities.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO UNHCR

Given its own commitments to refugee participation and the commitments of the Global Compact on Refugees, UNHCR should:

- Advocate for policy change by host governments to create conditions more permissive and supportive for RLOs.
- Include RLOs as full partners in its planning and programming structures.
- Recognise the various patterns of RLOs and what contributions they can make in addressing the needs of refugees and related communities.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO RESEARCHERS

While the focus of this research has been on the impact of RLOs, it has also illustrated the value of participatory research, led by researchers closest to the phenomenon of forced migration. Given the substantive benefits of this approach, researchers should:

- Involve refugees as full members of the research team from the design stage of research.
- Recognise the important contributions that RLOs can make to research, especially by identifying research needs, understanding local conditions, and navigating the complex environments of research.
- Establish and sustain trust-based and mutually beneficial relationships with RLOs, recognising that while RLOs can make important contributions to research, research can make important contributions to the current and potential work of RLOs.

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APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR REFUGEE-LED ORGANISATIONS

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE LEADER/ FOUNDER/ MANAGER

Part 1: Background

1. BACKGROUND about the leader/ founder/ manager of a refugee Community

Details about the founder/ leader/director

- Name, age, nationality
- City/ town of origin
- Could you tell us about your previous occupation in the country of origin? What was your profession
- What are you currently doing to eke out a living (the source of income).

The displacement experience

- When did you arrive in this host country? Probe about the trajectory (through official or non-official borders)
- Did you seek/receive any help from anyone/any body upon arrival in this country? Why?
- Have you been able to connect with co-nationals easily? Are they from the same family/tribe or the same village, or the same city? Probe.

2. BACKGROUND about the ENTITY

- Details about the Entity
 - Name of Refugee-Led Body/community support
 - Location (Governorate and district) and other branches
 - Date of establishment
 - Reasons for establishing it/ area of work
 - Targeted community (nationality/ special group (age/gender)
 - Number of served community
- Who founded this Refugee Support community? Explain the history of the Refugee support entity /RLI/RLO?
- Why did you think of creating such an entity?
- When have you started to manage/become involved in this refugee support community, and why?
- Have you / your father/your tribe (family members) ever led a community back home?
- How many members/staff/volunteers are part of or are involved in running this refugee-led response? How did you connect with them?
- How did you select your target beneficiary group? Do you have a familial, tribal, or village linkage with the beneficiaries of this RLI? How did you group all the members?
- Are you paid for doing this role?
- What are the main challenges you encounter in your role as a founder/ leader for the community?

Part 2: Policies

1. The rights accessed in the host country

- Do you have registration with UNHCR and /or with Host State Government? Have you been called for the interview? Are you expecting to be resettled soon? Probe on this.
- Through which entity do you access rights: Education, health, employment, housing, travel? Probe on the services provided and by which body: the government -public

- services or international organisations/ local bodies
 - Is everyone in your community accessing the same rights/ through the same bodies?
 - Are services regular or do they fluctuate as per funding or discretion of employees?
- 2. Details about the institutional status of the refugee community support**
- Is this Community support body registered? Have you tried to register it? (Either as a community support body on its own or hosted by another body)
 - What are the procedures to register officially this body? Please probe explaining which ministry/department supports in doing that.
 - Do you know how much would that cost?
 - What is the current status of the RLI?
 - Is there an administrative board of members that oversees the management of the community support body?
 - How many administrative persons help you in the work? How many volunteers? Are they paid?
 - Do you have a physical location? Do you pay yearly taxes? An auditor? Bills for water and electricity?
 - What about the social media? How active are you there?

Part 3: Mechanisms

1. Details about the activities of the Refugee Led body or the community support Committee:

- Could you tell us about the refugee group you serve (women/ youth/ family/ tribe/ village/ town/ camp)? Probe.
- What are the activities you seek to support your refugee community with? Why?
- Are the refugees able to secure the services from another body? Or are they dependent on your service provision? Like host state or local NGO/ INGO?
- Is there a time period during which you provide support (funding related)? Or is it possible to support all the time?
- Does it matter if services are provided in Rural, urban or camp areas? (Delivering services, reaching out)
- Are there any restrictions to hold activities and invite a number of people to attend?

2. Details about activities with other local bodies in the host community (refugee communities or local bodies)

- Do you collaborate with other refugee community support bodies?
- Does collaboration include funding? Training? Equipments, Other services?
- Do you collaborate with Local or International NGOs in order to fulfil the needs of the beneficiaries? How easy is it to join efforts with local bodies?
- Could you tell us about the advantage of collaborating with similar bodies? How does that affect the beneficiaries?
- To collaborate with other bodies, do you sign agreements? Do you make a verbal commitment? Probe about the procedure.

3. Details about funding and support

- Do you get any funding from anybody (local/ UN/ International)?
- Why do you get funding and how?
- Is the funding secured regularly or limited for periods of time?
- How often do you need to seek new funding? Are you affected by the timing of receiving money and by the reporting/ financial end of year (March-April)?
- Do you set your plan of activities and work programmes as per your budget?

Part 4: Impact

- How important is the kind of service you are providing for the beneficiaries? what is the impact it does on their life/ decision making?
- How are you perceived by your community: as a representative for them? As a mukhtar/ community leader, as a negotiator to bring to them support and funds, as someone with social network? Explain the role you are playing to support this refugee community?
- What are the gaps / needs you identify in your community? Where do you feel you need more help? (identity, housing, paying bills, food, schooling, higher education, work) explain.
- What is the vision you have for this entity?
 - Would you want to have more funding to expand to more people/ beneficiaries? Or to expand with more services?
 - Do you expect to continue with this work here? If you leave abroad? If you go back home?

APPENDIX B: LIST OF MAPPED RLOS IN TURKEY, LEBANON, AND JORDAN

Please note that some RLOs asked NOT to be mentioned.

TABLE 9: LIST OF MAPPED RLOS IN TURKEY

#	Name
1	Syrian Women's Committee
2	Homs League (Dar el Ezz)
3	HATAY PRESS
4	Hatay News
5	MKÜ Suriyeli Öğrenciler Birliği HATAY
6	Himma Youth Center Antakya
7	Firefly Education Centre for Syrian Refugee Children
8	Amals Healing and Advocacy Center
9	Syrian women Association
10	Hama Social Club in Antakya
11	Yemeni Students Union in Istanbul
12	Syrian Youth Forum
13	مشروع أمان The Aman Project
14	United Hands for Refugees
15	Women to Women Refugee Kitchen (Okmeydanı Sosyal Yardımlaşma ve Dayanışma Derneği)
16	Hamisch
17	Addar Community Center
18	Yusra Community Center
19	Alsham Association
20	Zedni Ilman
21	Syrian Engineers Association
22	Yemeni Friendship and Cooperation Association
23	The Arab Institute for Music and Singing
24	The Yemeni diaspora in Turkey
25	Ishraqat (Syrian Ladies Association)
26	Nasaem Khair
27	Toplum için Yenilik ve Yardım Derneği (Karam House)
28	SANA Association to Support Syrian Women
29	Yemeni Students Union
30	Kayseri Scientific Institute
31	Together to Success Institute
32	Syrian Supporters Association
33	Iraqi Students Association in Turkey
34	Afghan Refugee Solidarity Association (ARSA)
35	Afghanistan Hazars Culture and Solidarity Association
36	Iranian Community
37	Almanahel Institute
38	Daleelk
39	Arab Association for International Entrepreneurship
40	Side By Side for People With Special Needs Organization
41	Al Fayhaa Educational Organization
42	Aman Team
43	Istanbul University Student Team
44	Ihya Team
45	Girraf effect
46	وقف الكتفا -

47	Egyptian Youth Forum Turkey
48	Palestinian Women's Union in Turkey
49	Syrian Students Forum in Turkey
50	Syrian Students Union in Turkey
51	Alhikmah Institute
52	Egyptian Students Union
53	Arges/Arcis Syrian School
54	Syrian Ideas
55	Iradatai Center for the Service and Rehabilitation of People with Special Needs
56	Malath for Development
57	Misk Association for Humanitarian Relief
58	Abu Ayyub Al-Ansari Institute
59	Giras center
60	Hayat Charitable Association
61	Bahru-Noor Foundation
62	Khair Ummah Association
63	Palestinian-Turkish Conference
64	Palestinian Engineers Association in Turkey
65	Shakaik Alnouman /Anemone Cultural Foundation
66	Alforti House
67	Syrian Economic Forum
68	Syrian Entrepreneurs (Suriyeli İş Adamları ve Girişimciler)
69	Scientific Forum in Turkey
70	Ihsan Association
71	Hands for good Organization
72	Hayat Association for Human Services
73	Wifaq Humanitarian Foundation
74	Palestine Waqf
75	Rushd Educational Association
76	Himma Youth Organization
77	Al Firdaws Center for Patient Accommodation and Service
78	Ajyal Al-Thawra School
79	Syrian Social Forum
80	The Syrian Community
81	For Ummah Center
82	Chaba Rehabilitation Center for Prosthetics and Orthotics
83	Siraj School
84	Iraqi Students Association
85	Derneği Arap الجمعية العربية
86	Libya Toplum Derneği Istanbul - جمعية الجالية الليبية اسطنبول
87	Adel and Ehsan
88	Syrian House Around the World
89	Adnia Bkheer Team
90	Zadul ALjannah
91	Libyan Women's Union in Turkey
92	The Sudanese Community in Turkey
93	Alhoumsi House
94	World Association of Arab Academics
95	Maan Society
96	Family Reform Institute
97	Hikmet Association
98	Basiret
99	Balkees Yemen
100	النادي العربي ASKKD

101	Palestine Students Association
102	Goodwill Ambassadors Team
103	Syrian Forum
104	Professional Development Rizk رزق للتأهيل المهني
105	- Hope Foundation for Education وقف الأمل للتعليم Umut Eğitim Vakfı -
106	Elvefa Relief
107	Suriye Nur Derneđi جمعية النور السورية
108	Derneđi Hikmet جمعية الحكمة
109	Amal Cancer Association
110	Syrian Schoolars Association
111	Orient for Human Relief
112	Alamal Humanitarian Organization
113	Syrians Commission for Development (SCD) Org
114	Voices for Syrians
115	Insan for Psychosocial Support Organization
116	Social Assistance Association for Uzbek-Turks
117	Football Club for Youth
118	Afghanistan Associations Federation
119	Al Manahel
120	Al Wafaa
121	Al Mutasabeqoun
122	Al Haya
123	The Syrain Centre
124	Al Maher
125	Hemma
126	Ataa
127	The Syrain Forum
128	Nuwat Al Nahda
129	Nada Eđitim Merkez
130	Ma'ana Institute
131	Istanbuli Institute
132	Physiotherapy Centre
133	Bilasan Education Centre
134	Life Makers Centre for People with Special Needs
135	FLSA
136	The Syrian Writers and Authors Forum
137	Ida'at Initiative
138	Arab Students in Trabzon
139	Association of Iranians in Turkey (انجمن ایرانیان ترکیه)
140	International Social Cohesion and Youth Association (ISCYA) (الجمعية الدولية للشباب و اندماج الجماعة)
141	Afghan Women Social, Cultural Solidarity Association
142	Iranian Community
143	Bousla
144	Afghanistan Volunteer Education and Social Solidarity, Assistance Association (GESDER)
145	SKT
146	Ataa Relief

TABLE 10: LIST OF MAPPED RLOS IN LEBANON

#	Name
1	Hmet Shabab/ هممة شباب
2	WOSOL/ وصول ACHRights
3	Hamzet Wasel
4	SAWA for Development and Aid
5	Basmeh & Zaintooneh
6	Refugees=Partners
7	سيناريو Seenaryo
8	Alphabet for Alternative Learning
9	Syrian League for Citizenship
10	BIDAYYAT
11	Volunteers Without Borders
12	Women Now for Development
13	Multi Aid Programs (MAPS)
14	Gharsah School
15	Basamat for Development
16	Dammah
17	Syrian Women League
18	Jafra
19	Lamsat Ward/ المسة ورد
20	فريق فرحة
21	المركز السوري لمساعدة اللاجئين
22	فريق ملهم التطوعي Team Mulham
23	سوا منوصل
24	التقينا فارتقينا
25	خيمة لاجئ
26	مدارس الائتلاف
27	مبادرة العودة الى المدارس
28	مبادرة ايما الطبية
29	مبادرة لتأمين القميص المدرسي
30	حراك الياسر الفلسطيني
31	QUAD Business/ Baddawi Co-working Space
32	جمعية شهد
33	شاهد
34	التنمية الانسانية
35	المبادر
36	جمعية الاضوة
37	صندوق عاش
38	Pard
39	سنابل
40	الاتحاد العام للمرأة الفلسطينية
41	جمعية الجليل التنموية
42	جمعية المرأة الخيرية
43	زوداتنا زوداتنا
44	جمعية امان للعمل الخيري
45	جمعية النجدة الاجتماعية
46	جمعية احلام لاجئ
47	بيت اطفال الصمود
48	مركز التدريب المهني
49	رابطة ترشيحا
50	رابطة الكابري
51	رابطة الغابسية

52	رابطة كويكات
53	رابطة عكا
54	مبادرة نحنا لبعض
55	الهيئة الخيرية لأغاثة الشعب الفلسطيني
56	الدفاع المدني الفلسطيني
57	مركز توابل
58	مركز سما
59	مركز النقب للأنشطة الشبابية
60	مركز شهداء مخيم برج البراجنة
61	جمعية البرامج النسائية
62	نادي مجدو والجليل
63	فريق الطوارئ
64	جمعية نواة
65	مركز بيت المقدس
66	جمعية مساواة
67	لجنة الثقافة الاقتصادية
68	جمعية الغوث الانساني
69	Skills Technology Life (STL)
70	معا نبني
71	دعم الشباب السوري
72	Women's Digital Rights (WDR)
73	Together
74	مبادرة دروب
75	خبز و ملح
76	مركز شعاع النور
77	Generous Hand Organization
78	على الخير متفقين
79	سوا ربنا
80	Subol سبيل
81	كبكة وحكاية
82	فرقة مشق
83	نادي التنمية الرياضي
84	صندوق مرضى السرطان
85	مركز زاوية رؤية الثقافي
86	مركز التراث الفلسطيني
87	نادي العبرونية
88	لجنة النازحين الفلسطينيين من سورية
89	رابطة اهالي السموعي
90	رابطة اهالي عمفا الاجتماعية
91	الدفاع المدني الفلسطيني
92	اكاديمية كرة قدم
93	حملة معا للفنون
94	مبادرة الحرب قوتني
95	مبادرة حلقة نساء عرسال
96	مبادرة بترحك مشوار
97	المناصرين شركاء
98	أنا امرأة مؤثرة
99	مبادرة مكنون
100	بوتقة
101	بذرة خير
102	اسمعني
103	قوي قلبك
104	صدي التغيير
105	مبادرة مسار

106	نساء العطاء
107	مبادرة سوري منتج
108	LPI Corp (منارة سلام)
109	فريق دعني أطلع للمواهب
110	مبادرة لأجلك

TABLE 11: LIST OF MAPPED RLOS IN JORDAN

#	Name
1	Ebda'a For Small and middle size projects
2	German Center for Disability
3	Om Khlieaf Dairy Production
4	Apoxy and Wooden Accessories Domo'
5	Om Mouthali Production Kitchen
6	Lara Jasmine Soup
7	Batool Inetiative for Cancer
8	Dr. Samyia for mental health and child nurturing
9	Yasmeen Ateek Productive Kitchen And Medical Assistante
10	Apoxy and Wooden Accessories Inetiative
11	Mouath Sports Inetiative
12	Hadramout
13	Mobile fix and Mix
14	Fatema for informal agriculture work
15	Saida Carpet Plant
16	Hemmah Volunteering Group
17	Hands for Goodness
18	We are All Iraq
19	A. El Bara'a Health Inetiative
20	Nono and Sarah for Sudanese Culture and songs
21	Ruwaad Group
22	Gaza Camp Committee
23	Woman Power Group
24	Abu Dia'a helping Inetiatives
25	English Inetiative Mubarak & Hassan
26	Iqra'a Inetiative
27	Happiness Again
28	Auranitis Life Line
29	Bashayer El Khair
30	Together for Goodness
31	Jordan Iraqi Association Ekha'a
32	Sarah Production Kitchen
33	Athar Palaform
34	Dodo English conversation program
35	Gazat Hashem
36	Homs League
37	Senara
38	Saru Fashion
39	This is my life (Hathihi Hayati)
40	Martha Education
41	7 Hills Park
42	Syrian American Medical Society SAMS INGO
43	soryat Across Borders
44	Mohammad Expat Students
45	Youth for peace
46	Happiness Again
47	M& M Software Programing
48	ITS Education

49	Abu Dia'a different services and inetiatives for syrians
50	Sameera for Sewing
51	Sarmad Photography Teaching
52	Aram for Fixing Electronic
53	Husams Phone Apps for University Opprtunitis
54	Eva for stiching
55	Syrian Coaches Club
56	Mayas English Club
57	Qais Robotics Inetiative
58	Khalid for Education for children who lost their will to study
59	Mohammad for Disability RYSE Inetiative
60	Dia the Barber
61	Abu Joud Medicine Initiative
62	Nasser Abdel Naser for Crypto
63	Qusai (under the German Center for Disability)
64	Reyad Teaching ART
65	Om Khlieaf (Teaches Dairy Production)
66	Zeyanab Baker (Teaching about Beauty and NRC Volunteer)



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