Municipalities in the protection of human and refugee rights:

A Case Study of Jezzine and Roum

ALEF act for human rights

March 2015

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"Human rights violations are a major factor in causing the flight of refugees as well as an obstacle to their safe and voluntary return home. Safeguarding human rights in countries of origin is therefore critical both for the prevention and for the solution of refugee problems. Respect for human rights is also essential for the protection of refugees in countries of asylum"[1]

Overview

An overview of the number of Syrian refugees worldwide and more specifically in Lebanon shows the magnitude of the crisis on this tiny country. UNHCR statistics on the Syrian refugees in Lebanon show that the number of registered Syrian refugees in Lebanon is around 1,078,338 as of September 30 2015. This number does not cover the total amount of Syrian refugees in Lebanon given that there are many refugees who have not registered themselves with UNHCR, especially since the Lebanese government temporarily suspended new registration of refugees as of May 6 2015. This means that the concentration of refugees per capita ranks Lebanon at first place in absolute number of Syrian refugees.[2]

Scarcity of resources limits the ability of Lebanon to implement comprehensive solutions to the refugee crisis. The presence of so many Syrian refugees risks affecting the already fragile political and security situation and worsening the current divide in Lebanese politics. The August 2014 clashes between the Lebanese army and the Syrian Islamist militants from Syria in the northeast town of Arsal and Northern Tripoli illustrate the deteriorating security situation and the concerns over the alleged presence in Lebanon of members of Jihadist groups in or around refugees' settlements. This led to the Lebanese authorities taking decisions and measures in the absence of a comprehensive national policy for coordinated solutions and greater international solidarity that contravene with its international obligations, in particular with regard to the principle of non-refoulement. This is embodied in the Lebanese government "policy paper" adopted in October 2014, which requires Syrian nationals willing to access Lebanon to validate their entry under specific categories expressed in a memo of the General Security Office (GSO). [3]

Additionally, the fear to see a repetition of the case of Palestinian refugee mixed with the official policy of "disassociation" vis-à-vis the conflict in Syria also resulted in a sharp opposition to any solution leading directly or indirectly to Syrian refugees settling in Lebanon, a presence seen as having the potential to affect the fragile local balance of religious and political communities.

Refugee protection and human rights theory amid the Syrian refugee crisis

The most concerning practice is the curfew on Syrian nationals imposed by a number of municipalities across the country. Confiscation of IDs from refugees by municipalities is also a highly concerning practice. It has been reported that municipalities confiscate IDs of Syrians that

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[1] Human Rights and Refugee Protection, October 1995, http://www.unhcr.org/3ae6bd900.pdf

[2] UNHCR, Syria Regional Refugee Response, Inter-agency Information Sharing Portal, available at:
http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/country.php?id=122

3 Lebanese Council of Ministers, Syrian Refugees Policy Paper, Adopted on 23 October 2014. Accessed on
http://www.pcm.gov.lb/arabic/subpg.aspx?pageid=6118

do not comply with curfews for a few days in some areas, and the creation of local vigilante groups to enforce curfews, raising concerns about abuses.[4] The law of municipalities stipulates that municipal police are responsible for ensuring security in their respective jurisdictions with the support of the Internal Security Forces.[5] However, the law does not adequately delineate the respective roles of the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities (MoIM) and the municipalities. Media statements by the Minister of Interior in 2013 have confirmed that municipalities do not have the legal grounds to enact security measures without coordination and approval by the MoIM, particularly if these measures infringe on the authority of the ISF.[6] On top of such practices, Refugees today face problems such as the threat of forced evictions, prolonged or arbitrary detention, lack of due process, cruel inhuman or degrading treatment, and discriminatory practices.

As the refugee crisis enters its fifth year, tension continues to mount between the Lebanese host communities and the Syrian refugee population in Lebanon as a result of the enduring conflict in Syria. Long standing conflicts and incidents have been exacerbated by the socio-economic impact of the Syrian crisis, coupled with the lack of a comprehensive human rights and protection strategy by duty-bearers and lack of funding. Strained relations materialize on both the macro (national politics) and micro (local municipal/governorate) levels. According to governmental sources, 45 municipalities as of September 2013 have been identified as being most at risk of conflict, and immediate risk mitigation interventions are needed in these locations.[7]

ALEF compiled a series of cases in Nabatieh, Jezzine, Shouf, Tyre, Saida, Metn, and Wadi Khaled that demonstrate perceptions on the impact of tensions between host and refugee communities on safety and security. Observations based on these reported cases are the following:

- Tension is evident in formal and informal settings, as Lebanese people are frustrated with the social services being provided solely to the Syrian community.

- Frustration by the Lebanese community has resulted in violent confrontation with Syrian nationals, particularly Syrian males and migrant workers.

- Lebanese residing in areas with a high concentration of Syrian refugees reported fear of kidnapping and crime, especially in the evening and at night, which has restricted movement of residents after certain hours.

- Even for Lebanese who were previously sympathetic to the humanitarian plight of Syrian refugees, competition for jobs has left them resentful and frustrated. In some areas, this has resulted in the looting, beating, or shutting down of commercial establishments owned or operated by Syrians.

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4 See for example, ALEF, Two Years On: Syrian Refugees in Lebanon, op. cit., pp. 20 and ff; Human Rights Watch, "Lebanon: At Least 45 Local Curfews Imposed on Syrian Refugees", 3 October 2014 available at: http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/10/03/lebanon-least-45-localcurfews-imposed-syrian-refugees; and "Lebanon: Rising Violence Targets Syrian Refugees", 30 September 2014, available at: http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/09/30/lebanon-rising-violence-targets-syrian-refugees

5 Government of Lebanon, Ministry of Interior and Municipalities. Municipal Act: Decree-law no. 118 (30/6/1977 and amendments). Available online at: www.moim.gov.lb/ui/moim/.../Municipal_Act_Eng.doc

6 Fleming-Farell, Niamh."Aley vigilantes enforce nighttime curfews on Syrians". 8 April 2013. Available online at: http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Local-News/2013/Apr-08/212903-aleyvigilantes-enforce-nighttime-curfews-on-syrians.ashx#axzz2PrAPqCUb

7 Interview with Mr. Ramzi Naaman, Council of Ministers. (11/09/2013)

- Syrian refugees expressed significant disillusionment with the discrimination they face from Lebanese on a daily basis, with the recurrent sentiment "I didn't know Lebanese people hated us this much".

Several assessments and opinion surveys have been conducted in the course of the Syrian conflict, which have also confirmed increasing levels of tensions between refugee and host communities.[8] For example, a survey conducted by Fafo and the Issam Fares Institute of Public Policy and International Affairs at AUB revealed that three out of four Lebanese believe that Syrian refugees pose a threat to national security. Meanwhile, seven out of ten believed that the UN should establish refugee camps for Syrian refugees. According to the policy brief, "the initial Lebanese hospitality towards Syrian refugees has become strained due to the increased competition for scarce employment, particularly in the unskilled sector", with youth from lower socio-economic backgrounds being the most harmed.[9] ALEF had also conducted a survey in 2015 on perceptions of security among Syrian refugees and the Lebanese host community in the Bekaa town of Marj, which revealed increased tensions due to the size of the refugee community and the protraction of the conflict. 75% of Lebanese residents expressed their belief that the refugee presence did increase security problems in their town, and 50% expressed their discomfort at, or non- acceptance of, the refugee presence altogether. As for the refugee population, in addition to economic, health, and living conditions, personal security, threat of armed groups, and kidnapping represented 20% of their answers when asked about what threatens the lives. On top of this, a worrying 12% consider the Lebanese people and the general stability as threats to their lives. In spite of these, findings also showed that the host community did not seem to have the intention or the readiness to have these tensions escalate any kind of conflict.[10]

Role of duty- bearers on the municipal level

In this context, there is compelling necessity to design rights based solutions to address the numerous problems Syrian refugees face in Lebanon, solutions that take into account Lebanon's specific challenges resulting from this acute humanitarian crisis, and that involves relevant actors in decisions that affect their lives, helping improve refugees' readiness to return home by preserving the strengths and skills of their community. It is also critical to note that the main entities that should ideally implement these solutions are duty- bearers, namely the state. However, in the unstable political situation which is Lebanon's reality, municipal actors have a greater role and can be pioneers in fostering human rights in their constituency. Several best practices in other parts of the world where municipal structures are similar to that of Lebanon have proven efficient in doing so. For example, the Guangzhou Municipal Government in South Korea has succeeded in building management capacity to improve its openness to citizen participation in the decision-

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[8] See for example: World Vision, World Bank, FAFO, IRC

[9] IFI-AUB, FAFO. "Policy Brief: Lebanese Contraditory Responses to Syrian refugees include Stress, Hospitality, Resentment" June 2013. Available online at:
http://www.aub.edu.lb/ifi/Documents/policy_memo/20130705ifi_memo_Fafo_IFI_Policy_brief_Syria ns_in_Lebanon.pdf

[10] ALEF, "Perceptions of Security Among Syrian Refugees and Lebanese Host Community In Marj – West Bekaa", February 2016

making process. This involves the input of local stakeholders in public policy, strategic planning, and community building across all sectors.[11]

Protection- friendly local governance – ALEF's theory of change

ALEF believes that municipalities play an active and vital role in protecting human rights and in addressing the Syrian refugee crisis in Lebanon, as they are part of the state and hence are tasked with carrying certain obligations. Thus, ALEF seeks to support local municipalities in addressing the crisis in a manner that is in accordance to human rights standards through reducing the tension between Syrian refugees and host communities, reducing and eliminating tensions that are a product of the scarcity of available resources on the national level for Syrian refugees, and raising awareness about the importance of using a rights-based approach.

In order to put this theory into practice, ALEF has been working on a project entitled "Towards Protection- Friendly Local Governance", which builds the capacity of two selected municipalities in the areas of human rights, refugee protection policies, conflict prevention and resolution, and engages Lebanese and Syrian communities in joint development initiatives. This is meant to progressively raise the awareness of municipality members on their responsibilities in adopting protection- friendly rights- based policies within their communities, and their ability to independently create mechanisms that oversee this. This will be central to creating a common understanding of human and refugee rights among participants, mobilizing them towards creating a mechanism involving both Lebanese and Syrian representatives who will identify the main needs and challenges that both Syrian and Lebanese host communities feel are urgent to address. To this end, 12 municipality members attended 4 workshops on human rights, refugee protection policies, conflict prevention and resolution in targeted municipalities, and in close coordination with municipality members, 20 representatives of the Lebanese and Syrian communities designed and implemented 2 development initiatives.

Preliminary meetings

To do this, ALEF had to first select municipalities with which to conduct this project. Identifying municipalities is an essential yet delicate element of the project, as the selection criteria constitutes the following:

- Hosting Syrian refugees;
- Have detected cases of violations;
- Responsive and willing to cooperate in the project.

ALEF was able to frequently meet with municipality officials and orient them on the criteria and selection process, approaching a large number of municipalities in that regard. Following a mapping exercise, several municipalities were approached based on their compliance with the criteria. By January 30, 2015, ALEF selected two municipalities, Roum and Jezzine, which formed a selection of participants to build their capacity in human rights and refugee protection policies, conflict prevention and conflict resolution. The criteria set for the selection of participants was that they should be active municipality members with diverse positions, (at the decision-making level

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[11] Soonhee Kim, "Management Stategy for Local Governments to Strengthen Transparency in Local Governance", 2009

and implementation level) who express clear commitment to the project. Jezzine considered the project to be wider than just a simple activity and considered that this is an essential need of their constituency, acknowledging the escalation of conflict between the host and refugee communities and the understanding that the municipality should have a central role in managing the crisis and fortifying social cohesion.

Parallel to this, ALEF finalized a training module (**Annex 1**), specifying in- depth objectives for the workshops and each session. This occurred parallel to the finalization of preliminary agreements with trainers to elaborate the programs of the workshops. These trainers were selected based on being subject-matter experts in protection and human rights, conflict resolution and mitigation, and have relevant training experience. In order to grant each municipality the time and ability to share concerns that are particular to their communities, and better build their capacities in conflict transformation, the conflict resolution workshop within the capacity- building component was to be conducted with each municipality separately.

Challenges:
As the training dates approached, extreme weather conditions caused an unplanned delay that not only made travel to the municipalities completely inaccessible, but also affected the level of participation of the municipality actors. The project team also encountered additional problems in relation to changes in the municipality team, amending as such the selection of participants which had been previously set by the municipality. In spite of this , ALEF continued to facilitate and orient the choice of the concerned municipalities who put in their efforts to secure new participants who are committed, available at the training location, and can play a role in refugee protection and conflict resolution in the future.

Capacity- Building
Through the implementation of the capacity- building sessions with both municipalities, of which the first session tackled Human Rights Theory and Protection, ALEF was able to engage the participants in active discussions on the basic human rights principles of human dignity, equality, and inalienability, shedding light on the sources of human rights and their socio-cultural origins while emphasizing the universality of human rights. In this manner, were able to assess the participants' understanding of human rights and how they apply these in their daily work both through the design and implementation of policies. This was further elaborated through looking into sections of the Municipal law, which showed the responsibility of municipalities to contribute to human rights protection as per the law governing the status of municipalities, and made clear that municipalities have roles in protecting human rights. As the duty bearer is the state, municipalities are part of the state and certain forms of obligations fall on them; in such a decentralized and unstable political situation, municipal actors have a greater role, and can be pioneers in fostering human rights in their constituency.

In discussions that ensued concerning issues most relevant to the work of municipal actors in relation to human rights and the role of the municipality itself as a duty- bearer, concerns were raised about the refugee issue, which was controversial due to the fact that security perceptions towards the concerned group was generally negative. This was often exemplified by participants in the alleged competition between the Syrian and Lebanese workforce within the two towns. One of the issues that led to this, participants said, is the seasonal migration of Lebanese families to the

cities of Beirut or Sidon, creating a deficiency of Lebanese workers and allowing for more job opportunities for foreign, namely Syrian, workers.

In order to address these concerns by reflecting situations similar to that of the Lebanese case in terms of the capacities of municipalities and the policies they were able to adopt with respect to these, several cases were presented about municipalities in South Africa, Colombia, Cyprus, and South Korea that reflected different examples on how municipalities played a role in supporting human rights and democratic practices. For example, The South African (SA) case showed how SA's constitution contains strong provisions for commissions and institutions at the municipal levels to protect human rights. However, bureaucracy and politics resulted in municipal leaders to be responsive to political parties rather than citizens. The Colombian example presented a case where long-running internal conflict prevents local and provincial governments from being active in protecting human rights and promoting democratic practices. in light of these cases, participants expressed interest in the range of decisions that they can take when it comes to adopting policies and in the manner in which such policies can be designed to encourage human rights- friendly practices.

The following session on Refugee Protection, through promoting the basic principles of refugee protection and the development of refugee rights was able to address the role of local governance in the protection of refugees. By way of defining the term "refugee" under international law, and identifying basic elements of protection, as well as the basic rights of refugees, duty- bearers in refugee- protection, and the role of the municipality given the current situation, participants expressed their realization that authorities have a moral, legal, and social responsibility to protect all who fall within their constituency.

In order to assist the municipalities in doing so, the participants defined the main challenges they face with respect to refugee protection while taking into consideration the following guiding questions:

- Based on the previous presentation on the elements of protection, what are the challenges that you may face in the framework of improving the protection of refugees?
- Among these challenges, identify those that can be handled at the local level.
- Who are the allies and adversaries in the area of improving the framework of protection for refugees?

This allowed participants to have an overview of the gaps in their constituency and helped them generate practices that can be in line with both their duty as local governments and in refugee protection.

Training participants consequently formulated the following list of challenges:

- Shelter: overcrowding creates a problem to security and health; inadequate infrastructure is unable to accommodate such large numbers.
- Protection from torture/ ill treatment by authorities or exploitation by regular citizens.
- Improper transportation in not following traffic laws (danger to driver, citizens, and the environment; security threat)

- Unregistered births and deaths leading to inability to keep track of resident population (namely refugees)
- Refugees not following ministerial decisions concerning healthcare and education (compulsory education)
- Educational/ cultural clash between Lebanese and Syrian students
- Overlap of duties between authorities in monitoring and enforcement.

Possible solutions:

- Renters: to specify the maximum number of residents per living space with respect to area. To provide the minimal sanitary needs for living. To increase inspections in order to make sure that these rules are being applied (to be carried out by municipalities or municipality groups)
- Municipality to work on implementing the traffic law and take immediate action.
- To facilitate the submission of lists of newborn children of to the concerned ministry.
- Increase awareness on health, education, and vocational studies and the dangers of extremism on refugee families especially in the current security situation.
- Awareness- raising
- Establishing a complaint mechanism
- Establishing a conflict resolution mechanism

Based upon this exercise, participants were able to suggest procedures that will help improve the framework for the protection of refugees for immediate implementation, and to prepare an action plan for measures to be implemented within the upcoming months. (**Annex 2**)
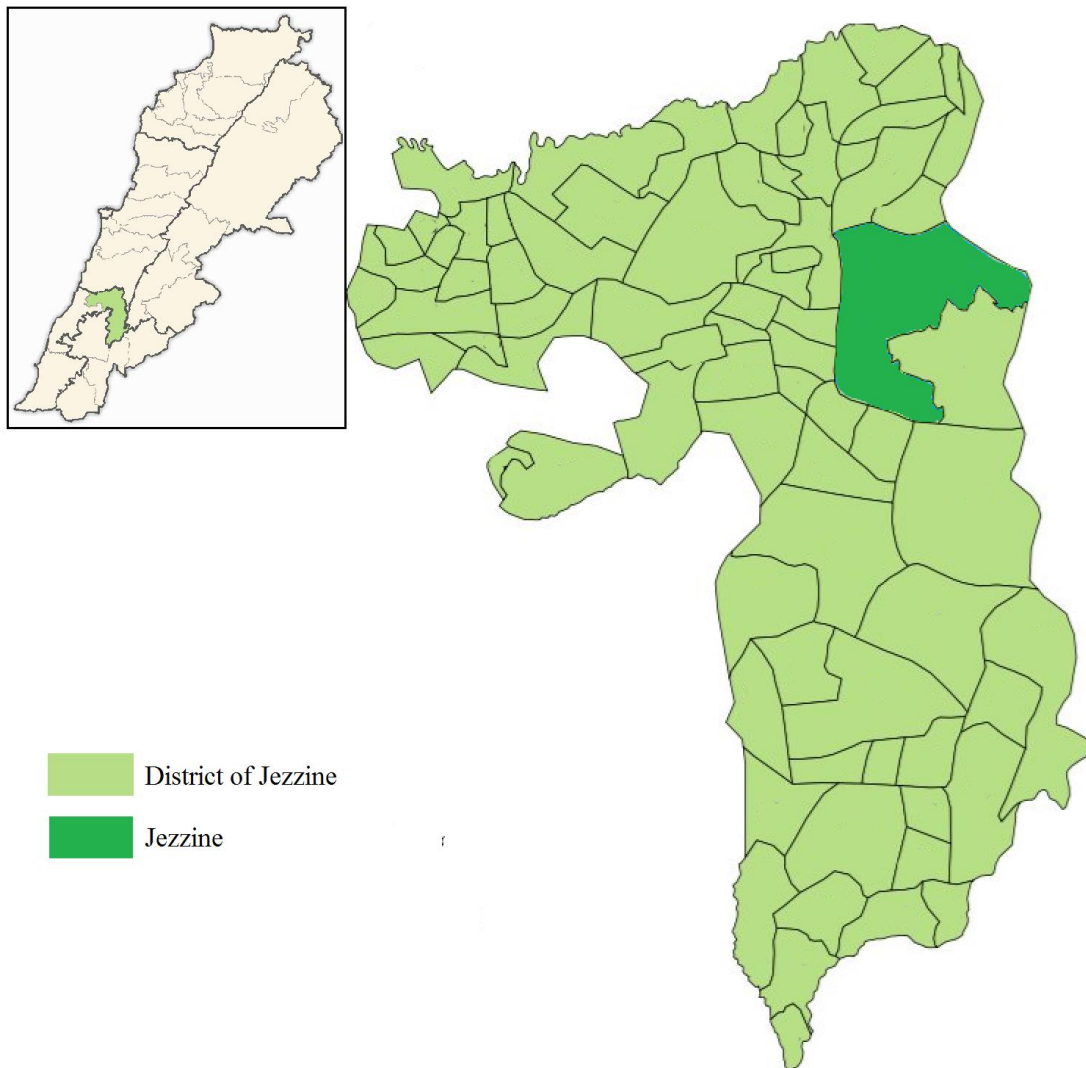
The third workshop concerned Conflict Resolution. This was in order to put participants in perspective of how they will be dealing with the challenges stemming from the Syrian- Lebanese animosity within their towns. After they fully grasped the concepts and methodologies of conflict resolution, participants were able to map conflict resolution challenges, which the municipality is faced with. These included illegal construction, waste disposal, and refugees "becoming too comfortable" or "feeling too welcome" in the community.

This quickly developed into a discussion about refugee- generated issues. Participants mentioned that the refugee population makes up approximately 15% of the residents of Roum, and 25% of the residents of Jezzine. The main issues they said this brings forth concerned a clash in culture and in educational settings, particularly when it comes to sanitary health and social behavior. Participants also voiced concerns about the vast imbalance at schools and jobs between the number of Lebanese and Syrians. Some participants said that the social class of Syrians present in Lebanon does not conform to the Lebanese way of life, which makes certain people uncomfortable in their presence.

Based on these points, ALEF realized a clear shift in many of the participants' attitudes toward the issue, after it was pointed out that some of these socio- political and socio- cultural perceptions towards Syrian refugees can be generalizations and assumptions which do not have to apply to all;

and some may be a result of the way of life that they were forced into instead of a culture that they brought with them from home. It was emphasized that differences in culture or nationality do not have to lead to disagreement, (which is only relevant when the interest of one party contradicts that of the other) and this disagreement can in turn lead to conflict. Hence in light of the protracted conflict in Syria, and the responsibilities that fall upon municipalities in this context, creating mechanisms to settle disagreements will help to avoid such conflict.

In Jezzine:

District of Jezzine

Jezzine

In order for the final project to be more personalized to each municipality's own issues, the final workshop took place in both municipalities separately. In Jezzine, participants directly identified the relationship between refugees and host community as the main problem they are facing, the roots of which include psychological and mental stress of refugees which add to the burdens of their daily life; competition over infrastructure which is leading to pollution especially in presence of the low capacity for waste management; negative perception of Syrians, who may in turn perceive locals as condescending or threatening. Participants also added that there is no specific channel of communication with refugee community, and expressed concern over the possible presence of an unofficial 'leader' within refugee population.

Municipality actors stated that the community is afraid that if services are provided to refugees, they'd be willing to stay for longer, as they receive aid frequently and have better job opportunities in Lebanon as well as a preferable security situation than in Syria. Participants also noted that there are around a thousand refugees present within the town, all of whom are renting rooms (rent costs

are not being regulated). They work in construction, restaurants, and quarries which participants think are jobs Lebanese people usually don't work in. Communication between the municipality and refugees usually occurs through the municipal police. Participants had fears that by opening this channel of communication, these 'unofficial leaders' will be somehow legitimized. There was a fear and uncertainty in giving a share in decision- making to refugees, and so they preferred to have a consultative group that relays information and coordinates between the refugees and municipality instead of a committee which shares decision- making with the municipality.

Committee formation:

This resulted in the formation of a mechanism tasked with facilitating discussions between the municipality and host community towards making decisions, informing refugees of certain measures and decisions taken by the municipality, and to improve implementation of existing policies. This mechanism will be composed of one representative of the municipality, one representative of the local community chosen by the mayor, three refugee representatives representing workers, families, and the individual responsible for coordinating between the refugee community and aid organizations, a representative of organization concerned with refugee issues, the director of the public hospital, the director of the elementary school, and a representative of the local parish priest. This committee is to meet whenever the need arises, and periodically.

ALEF met with the Jezzine municipality focal person and the mayor and specified the committee's mechanism and functionality. The mayor specified that the latter should preferably have its functions limited to resolving day to day conflicts which involve refugees, and to organizing activities that encourage social cohesion and create a sense of shared responsibility between communities towards the municipality. They showed interest in tackling cultural and environmental issues which they identified as the main factors contributing to the rise in tensions between the refugee and host community, and such should be the focus of the committee. (**Annex 3**)

In light of this, ALEF met with the committee at the Jezzine municipality to brainstorm and define the project they will work on. In the presence of its members from former municipal consultants, to school directors and representatives from the Jezzine health sector, the discussion led to the development of a three-pronged approach to be applied on a longer term concerning the activities the committee will conduct:

Firstly, organizing awareness activities throughout the school year as well as campaigns that encourage social cohesion and foster a sense of shared responsibility of both host and refugee communities towards the municipality.

Secondly, and since the committee members raised concerns about more urgent issues such as illegal housing of refugees and inappropriate waste management, it was proposed that the committee present a list of recommendations to the municipal council. This will help the municipality better impose policies that allow for refugees to live in legal and humane housing conditions, and to better monitor the conditions of refugees in Jezzine.

The third approach that was suggested was for the municipality to organize a research where high school students will survey refugee families in their homes to identify their problems and urgent needs. This will both help in breaking the ice between students in the host community and the
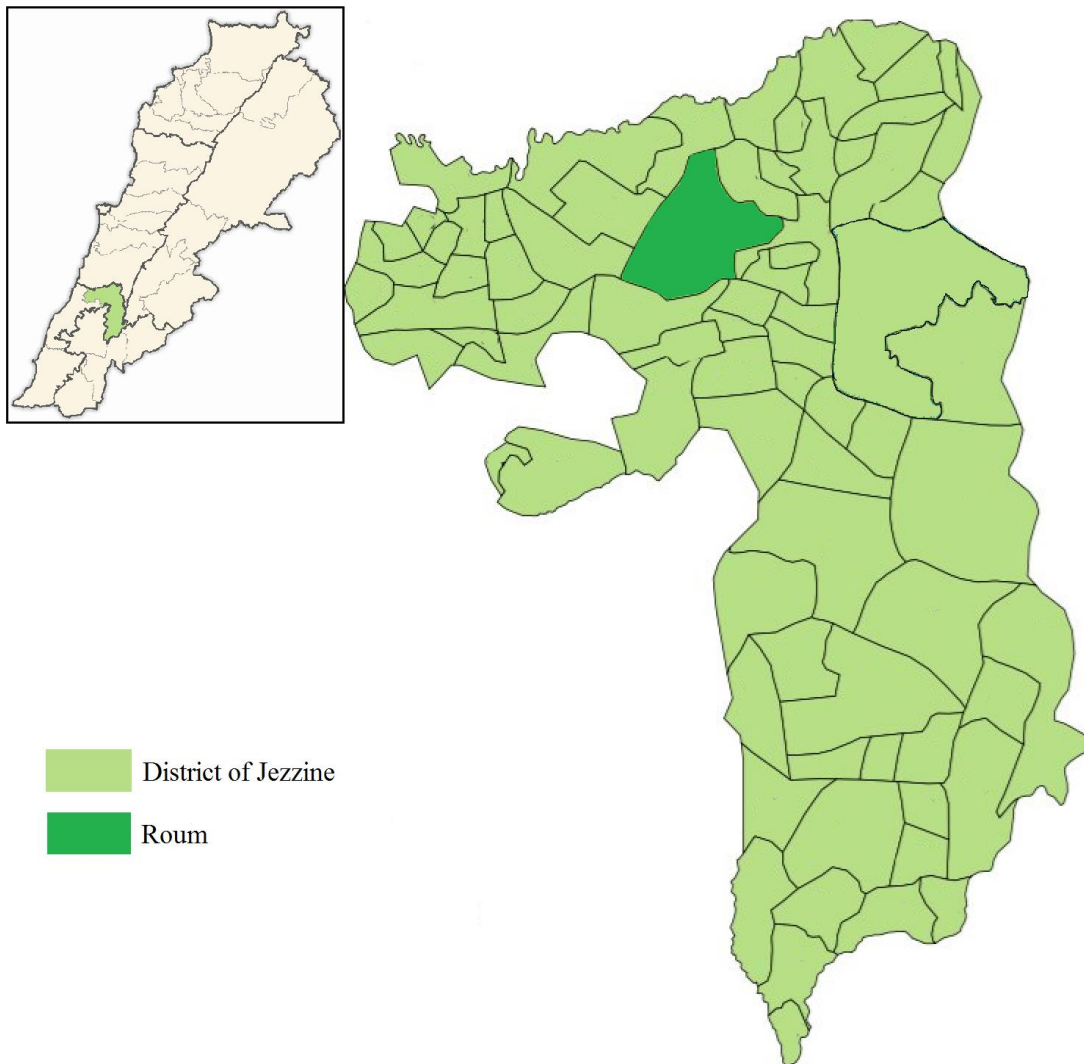
refugees, as well as it will allow for more evidence- based recommendations to be presented to the municipal council.

The Jezzine municipality took greater interest in environmental issues which proved to be one of the main concerns that directly affect the municipality's infrastructure and the health of its inhabitants. The municipality consequently decided to tackle this issue since it believes that the host and refugee communities have a shared responsibility towards the municipality and each other to keep the environment in which they live in clean. Therefore, it was proposed that both groups are to engage together in an activity which encourages social cohesion and cooperation.

The activity was to consist of a day- long campaign in which members of the host and refugee communities, mainly Lebanese and Syrian students from Jezzine elementary schools, attend a play showcasing the importance of environmentally- friendly practices and encouraging them to take action in that regard. Following this, the viewers of the play will carry out a clean- up action to dispose of waste material in Jezzine's forests. Each participant will then take part in a tree- planting activity. This will bring Syrians and Lebanese together and foster a sense of responsibility among them towards the environment. It is noteworthy to mention that the Jezzine municipality, given its dedication to the project and the activity, and seeing the importance of implementing this action, offered to endorse its implementation by way of contributing to expenses relating to the school play.

However, several challenges were faced towards the final days of the project in awaiting the approval for the cleanup and forestation action by the Ministry of Education, as all extracurricular activities have to be vetted by the Ministry. In light of this, and seeing that the actions are complementary to each other and hence integral to the fulfillment of the activity's goal, the Jezzine Municipality insisted on moving forward with its implementation, and suggested to take the initiative to conduct the second part of the action on its own accord after the Ministry's approval is received. The play was therefore performed during the final two class hours, and Syrian students who attend afternoon classes were invited to participate in the activity. The interactive play focused on educating and raising the awareness of children about environmentally- friendly practices. As noted by the teachers supervising the activity, it created a sense of enthusiasm and motivation among both Syrian and Lebanese students, especially those who are not usually active in the classroom, towards taking action in this regard through the upcoming reforestation activity which the municipality will be conducting.

In Roum:

District of Jezzine

Roum

The same process in the Roum municipality led to the actors choosing to work on the issue of the presence of youth on the streets at night disturbing the public peace. This came up as a result of a brainstorming activity by the participants from Roum about the several causes of this issue, namely boredom, inability to participate in and lack of leisure activities and locations, as well as weak positive communication skills.

Possible solutions that were brought forward were the creation of a leisure or cultural club which involves activities such as interactive awareness- rising. A committee would be created for this club in order to provide a platform for discussion between the youth and municipality actors. The members of this committee will include a representative of the mayor, representatives of political parties who influence the village youth, youth representative from the young men, a representative from the public school, the president of the existing cultural club, a representative from the parish youth group, active youth, and a representative of Syrian youth, or a Syrian parent. (**Annex 4**)

Committee formation:

Following this, ALEF assisted the participants in submitting proposals for the formation of these committees to the respective mayors, as the committees required an approval from the municipal council. The ALEF team proceeded in meeting the municipal chairmen and the focal persons appointed at the beginning of the project seeing that the committees would be a sustainable outcome of the project that would institutionalize the response of the municipality toward social cohesion and refugee protection. ALEF met with the president of the Roum culture and sports club whom the mayor had identified as a main focal point, since workshop participants had previously identified youth issues as the main problem they would want to tackle.

The club president had identified several challenges which the committee can help overcome. The culture and sports club is currently less active than it used to be due to the lack of sponsorship for inter- school tournaments. He identified that the members of this club are all aged above 18 since they have to be registered at the Ministry of Youth and Sports. These members are not present in the town during the winter time, as they migrate to the city, which further contributes to that lack of activities organized by the club. Youth present in the town under the age of 18 are school students, the majority of which are Syrian, and members of the parish youth group. (The "Fersan") After having suggested conducting activities for the aforementioned groups, hence it was decided to host movie screenings and indoor game activities at the municipality for youth of all ages. These activities will be ongoing to finally lead up to the annual summer sports events which the club organizes yearly. However he had expressed concerns about the lack of motivation and commitment at the hand of these youth in attending such activities.

The Roum mayor approved of the suggested action, and decided to move forward with the implementation of the activity, seeing as a culture and sports club, which is situated within the municipality premises, could provide a good environment to bring youth of Roum together. The activity was to include the screening of family movies, with Arabic subtitles, in the cultural club on a weekly basis. The activity will bring Syrians and Lebanese youth together and create a healthy medium for interaction beyond the school premises.

The activity was therefore implemented on the 12th of March at the town hall auditorium where youth of various ages attended with their parents and other community leaders to witness the launching of the Roum Cinema Club, and watch a film together. ALEF had assisted in that regard by providing the material to implement this activity, including a carpet for the viewers to sit on, a projector, projector screen, DVD player, sound system, and four movies. Several parents expressed their gratitude as the activity provided their children with a safe space to mingle and interact in during their free time, as well as to communicate and exchange ideas on topics of interest. Many also expressed their eagerness to attend the next activity and invite other friends to be present as well. The mayor also announced that the municipality will provide a designated space within the town hall where facilities provided for the activity will be made available for youth to organize movie screenings with the help of the municipality.

Stage of the Project	Method	Challenges
Selected municipalities build their capacity in human	Identification of municipalities within the following criteria:	Fears of social disintegration: Workshop participants had

| **rights and refugee protection policies, conflict prevention and conflict resolution** | - Hosting Syrian refugees;
- Have detected cases of violations;
- Responsive and willing to cooperate in the project
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Frequent meetings with municipality officials, to orient them on the criteria and selection process.

Municipalities' selection of workshop participants who fall under the following criteria:
- Active municipality members with diverse positions, (at the decision-making level and implementation level)
- Express clear commitment to the project.

Preparation of training modules and recruitment of trainers.

Continuous coordination and scheduling of workshop dates. | well- founded concerns regarding the risks that refugee protection policies may bring to the community, perceiving the present refugees not only as a threat to security, but to the very social structure and identity of the area. There were sentiments of resentment towards refugees in the sense that the latter are perceived as being often provided with assistance and aid whereas the local community continues to be ignored, and hence left at a disadvantage. What contributed to this, ALEF noticed, was misinformation at the hand of the host community concerning the reality of refugee protection services and mechanisms.

Proximity, availability, and weather conditions: The distance of the municipality proved to be a main challenge as most workshop participants live in Beirut and only visit the municipality on weekends. This was exacerbated by a change in administrative staff within the municipality, and so participants who showed initial interest in taking part in the project were no longer eligible to participate, and were to be replaced. The mayors are also only available at the municipality at least once a week, when their time would be spent on executing much of the week's work. The weather further worsened this shortcoming as heavy rain and snowfall blocked roads and put commuters at risk, preventing participants as well as the ALEF team from reaching the municipality on the agreed |

		upon dates. This limited ALEF's ability to conduct the workshops more frequently, and amounted to a significant delay in this stage of the project.
Lebanese and Syrian communities increase their civic involvement.	Consulting with training participants on community mechanisms to be put in place and actions to be implemented Assisting in the drafting and submission of proposals for mechanisms and activities to the municipality Facilitation of consultative meetings with mayors in selecting members for the committees Continuous meetings with committees towards designing and implementing the community actions Implementation of community actions.	Delays pending Municipality approval: Annual summertime events and occasions stalled the progress of the project at this stage as municipality actors, especially the municipal council, had to concentrate their efforts and prioritize the organization of these occasions. Involvement of Syrian refugees: ALEF has observed and was particularly concerned about the absence of representatives of the refugee community in the consultative meetings. Although all participants agreed with the mayors to include Syrians in the committee, they had never been invited by the municipality during our meetings. The actions put forward by the members involved were positive and progressive, however, excluding refugees from the meetings was an impediment to the participatory approach which ALEF is persistent on applying. Delays pending approval from the Ministry of Education and Higher Education concerning the cleanup and forestation campaign.

Concluding observations and recommendations:

Although resources are highly limited, it is essential for municipalities, being primary duty- bearers, to work with the resources already available to them in order to address conflicts and limit the risk of tensions within their jurisdiction in a participatory and protection- friendly manner. There have been several success stories in this regard even outside the scope of this project, such as with municipalities surveyed in Mercy Corps's Municipal Guide, proving that applying such strategies contributes to managing the crisis in a more efficient manner, decreasing the development of conflicts that threaten the peace within the municipality. ALEF's work in assisting the Roum and Jezzine municipalities put these concepts into practice realized noticeable results in incorporating into the towns' structure sustainable mechanisms which reflect concrete willingness from all actors to participate and be involved in ensuring the compliance of local decision- makers to human rights standards. In order to facilitate such practices and guarantee the effectiveness of their results, ALEF recommends the following:

To The Lebanese Government:

- Ensure the consultation processes are envisaged to allow refugees to be associated to the design and implementation of a national policy to serve as a comprehensive framework to govern status and reception conditions, in coordination with key relevant actors;
- Conduct human rights and refugee law training of local municipal officials in partnership with the UNHCR or other local human rights organizations to ensure international standards are respected in the way they deal with asylum seekers and refugees from Syria;
- Consider a greater role to be given to municipalities in the determination of the refugee status in coordination with the UNHCR in line with international standards and include specific training to local officials for that purpose;

To Municipalities:

- Design rights- friendly policies based on available resources and the needs of both local and refugee populations;
- Facilitate access to, and the creation of, bodies which serve as mechanisms for conflict resolution and platforms for communication among the host and refugee communities together with key municipal decision- makers;
- Coordinate cooperation among existing community- based structures;
- Coordinate efforts with the relevant union of municipalities;
- Encourage capacity- building initiatives and activities which promote rights- based approaches in all fields and sectors;
- Provide a space within the municipality for activities that promote municipal visibility and encourage social cohesion;
- Involve both refugee and host communities in the organization of municipal events and activities;
- Compile and consistently update statistical information on the number of refugees residing within the municipality;

To NGOs working with Municipalities:

- Consider already available resources and capacities of municipalities;
- Coordinate cooperation among municipalities with similar capacities that are facing similar challenges;
- Establish clear channels of communication with municipalities and local community- based structures to assess needs and facilitate access to aids services;
- Ensure the fair distribution of and equal access to aids and services to all populations;
- Coordinate efforts and conduct consultations with organizations already present in the area;

Annxes

Annex 1: Training module

Training 1: General Human Rights – Theory and Protection

Time	Session
8:30 – 8:45	**Registration**
8:45 – 9:00	**1. Introduction**

9:00-10:30	**2. Introduction to Human Rights Principles**
	    a. Brainstorming "What are Human Rights?"
	    b. Highlight the Principles of *human dignity, equality, inherent* and *inalienable*
	    c. The Origins of Human Rights, Screening of the Video
	    d. Human Rights principles in Islam and Christianity
	3. Human Rights Protection
	    a. Introduction to the UDHR: Explanation of the Preamble The human rights convention: principles into obligations
	    b. UN Treaty System, the HRC and the UPR

10:30 – 10:45	**Coffee break**

10:45 – 12:30	**4. Discussion**
	    a. What is the human rights situation in the municipality?
	    b. How do you think you can protect human rights in your capacity and position?
	5. Overview on the municipal law
	    a. Different Sections
	    b. Sections related to human rights
	    c. Gaps and needs
	    d.
	6. The Role of municipalities in protecting human rights
	    a. Municipalities as a State Element
	    b. Decentralization and delegation of power

12:30 – 1:30	**Lunch**

1:30 – 2:00	**7. Case Studies**
	    a. Municipalities, Internal Conflicts in Columbia
	    b. Constitutional Guarantees in South Africa
	    c. Discussion of the case studies

2:00 – 2:45	**8. Exercise: groups will take one human rights need in their community and adopt practices and policies to protect them using the components of the municipal law**
2:45 – 3:00	**9. Coffee break**
3:00 – 3:45	**10. Discussion**
3:45 – 4:00	**11. Final evaluation**

Training 2: Reasons and frameworks refugee protection at the municipal level

• Session 1: Introductions; training objectives; session guidelines (30 min.)

• Session 2: Why refugee protection is a duty (30 min.)
- o Brainstorming
- o Discussion

• Session 3: The basic elements of protection (60 min.)
- o Trainer presentation
- o Discussion

• Session 4: The challenges of municipalities participating in the training, exclusively in issues of protection (90 min).
- o Working Groups
- o Group presentations
- o Discussion

• Session 5: practical suggestions and a plan of action (60 min.)
- o Working Groups
- o Group presentations
- o Discussion

• Session 6: Evaluation and conclusion (30 min.)

Training 3: Conflict Resolution and Mitigation

Time	Session
9:00- 10:00	Introductions; training objectives
10:00- 11:30	Methods for analyzing social conflicts and specification of its components
11:30- 11:45	Break
11:45- 1:00	Tools for dealing with conflict
1:00- 2:00	Lunch
2:00- 4:00	Methods of municipality intervention for conflict mitigation

Annex 2: Practical suggestions and action plan

الموضوع	ماذا	من	متى
آلية تأمين شورط السكن	تحديد معايير المسكن	لجنة صحة وبيئة	فور إتخاذ القرار والإعلان عنه
التشبيك بين السلطات للمراقبة والتوجيه	اجتماعات دورية تنسيق متواصل بين مختلف السلطات	رئيس البلدية أو من يكلف رسمية بذلك	بعد وضع الخطة اقله شهر واحد لإمكانية التنفيذ
القيام بالتوعية الشاملة	المؤسسات: محاضرات محصورة في المدارس مع الاهل وفي المراكز الاجتماعية	ادارات المدارس أطباء، مساعدات إجتماعية والمؤسسات الاجتماعية	فور إطلاق العمل بعد اعداده خلال شهرين تقريباً
آلية شكاوى	قرار مجلس بلدي لإنشاء لجنة لشكوى اللاجئين	اللجنة القانونية في البلدية بالتعاون مع اللجنة الاجتماعية مع من يمثل كل مجموعة من اللاجئين	ما لا يقل من ثلاثة أشهر
آلية حل النزاعات	قرار مجلس بلدي لإنشاء الآلية	مرشد إجتماعي مع مساعدة إجتماعية	بعد تأمين فريق العمل للمتابعة الدورية

Annex 3: Jezzine Committee

آلية الحوار و التواصل

في الأهداف:
•التواصل في آلية أخذ القرارات
•اعلام اللاجئين عن بعض التدابير و القرارات المتخذة من قبل البلدية
•تعزيز تطبيق السياسات المتوفرة

في الشكل:
•ممثل عن البلدية
•ممثل عن المجلس البلدي
•ممثل عن المجتمع المدني المحلي
•ممثل عن القطاع الخاص
•ممثل عن قطاع الصحة
•ممثل عن القطاع التربوي
•ممثل عن الرعايا
•ممثل عن السوريين(عمّال)
•ممثل عن السوريين (عائلات)
•ممثل عن السوريين(علاقات المنظمات الدولية)

طبيعة العمل:
الاجتماع بشكل دوري أو عند الضرورة من أجل النقاش بقضايا التي تخص المواطنين و الهيئات الممثلو في اللجنة.

Annex 4: Roum Committee

آلية تشاور شبابية

الهدف:
خلق مساحة تشاركية بين البلدية و الشباب في النطاق البلدي يهدف الى تطوير دور الشباب في المساهمة بتنمية البلدية.

أعضاء اللجنة:
-ممثل عن رئيس البلدية
-ممثل عن مصالح و قطاعات الشباب في أحزاب القرية
-ممثل عن النادي الثقافي
-ممثل عن النادي الرياضي
-ممثل عن المجموعات الكشفية
-ممثل عن الشباب الناشط في القرية
-ممثل عن الشباب السوري

آلية العمل
الاجتماع بشكل دوري و النقاش في الأمور الأساسية المتعلقة بالشباب ممّا يعزز دور الشباب في المساهمة في تطوير السياسات