

Action Fiche for Lebanon/SPRING/Palestine refugees

1. IDENTIFICATION

Title/Number	SPRING - Improving Living Conditions in Palestine refugee Camps in Lebanon - ENPI/2012/024-419		
Total cost	EU contribution: EUR 6 million (financed from the SPRING programme 2011/2012 ¹)		
Aid method / Method of implementation	Project approach –joint management with United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)		
DAC-code	72030	Sector	Aid to refugees

2. RATIONALE

2.1. Sector context

In spite of their longstanding presence in Lebanon, Palestine refugees remain excluded from key facets of social, political and economic life in the country. While some recent political developments have sent a positive signal², there is little to suggest that the marginalisation of Palestine refugees in Lebanon will decrease substantially in the near future.

Poverty and unemployment have remained very high among the refugees, particularly within the camp enclaves, wherein two-thirds of them reside³. In spite of the continued growth in camp population, the surface areas of the camps have not increased since they were first built. The camps in Lebanon are characterized by overcrowding, substandard shelters and infrastructure, high rates of unemployment and poor health.

In the absence of access to public services and infrastructure, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) is responsible for co-ordinating the provision of education, health, relief and social services and the delivery of infrastructure within each of the twelve camps in Lebanon.

Several studies have highlighted the worrying mental health status of Palestine refugees in Lebanon⁴. Mental health services remain a main gap in the primary

¹ C(2011)6828.

² The positive developments include the establishment of a Lebanese-Palestinian Dialogue Committee, the amendments to article 59 of the Labour Law facilitating the access of Palestinians to un-syndicated jobs, and the commitment to improve the social rights of the Palestinians in the Ministerial Statement of Mikati's government.

³ Two-thirds are poor (subsisting on less than USD 6 per day) while 6.6% of these exist in extreme poverty (less than USD 2.17 per day). Only 37% of the working age population are employed. *The Socio-Economic Survey of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon*, AUB/UNRWA, 2010 (<http://www.unrwa.org/userfiles/2011012074253.pdf>).

⁴ 30.4% of 816 interviewed women and 20% of 679 interviewed adolescents were found to suffer from psychological distress (UMG, 2006,) 31% of Palestine refugees attending UNRWA health centres

health care programme at UNRWA. The health centres do not provide integrated mental health services. The medical officers, who are mostly general practitioners, are not trained to address mental health needs and, at the same time, they are overloaded with a great number of consultations per day.

In terms of employment, according to the Socio-Economic Survey of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon conducted in 2010 by the American University of Beirut (AUB) and financed by the EU, only 37% of the working age population is employed. Joblessness among refugees has a strong gender dimension: only 13% of women are employed compared to 65% of men. Those with a job are often of low status, most often engaged in casual and precarious employment. Addressing unemployment is considered a priority in efforts to foster economic development and stability. Considering the legal restrictions on Palestine refugees in accessing the Lebanese labour market, self-employment is particularly appropriate for Palestine refugees in the country.

Young people are particularly influenced by these prevailing living conditions and lack of opportunities (57.4% of Palestine refugees aged between 15 and 24 are not working or employed), which negatively reflects on their emotional and psychological balance. As a response to the lack of job opportunities, the social exclusion and the discrimination of young Palestine refugees, through the Technical and Vocational Training Centres UNRWA aims at providing young trainees with high quality training in a safe and healthy environment. However, some of these centres need to improve the quality of their facilities and services.

This programme, which will address the above mentioned challenges through a comprehensive approach, is coherent with the priorities set down in the Joint Communications of the European Commission and of the High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy entitled "A partnership for democracy and shared prosperity with the Southern Mediterranean"⁵ and "A new response to a changing Neighbourhood"⁶. It is also in line with the SPRING Programme "Support for partnership, reforms and inclusive growth", in particular through the support to social progress, economic development and inclusive growth of Palestine refugees in Lebanon, and with the priorities agreed by the EU and Lebanon under the European Neighbourhood Policy.

2.2. Lessons learnt

The proposed action builds directly on previous EU-funded projects to support Palestine refugees in Lebanon in education and technical vocational education training (TVET), employment, reconstruction and rehabilitation of Palestine refugee camps. They are mainly implemented by UNRWA, who has acquired experience in the mentioned sectors. All related Results Oriented Monitoring (ROM) and evaluations have highlighted the high relevance and the real impact of those projects.

Moreover, it complements and supports UNRWA operations in camp maintenance, health service provision, employment promotion and TVET and is directly based on the results of the Socio-Economic Survey of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon,

suffer from anxiety (Response International 2005), and around 28% of the Palestine refugee adults report 5 out of 7 symptoms of distress (FAFO 2005).

⁵ COM (2011)200 of 08 March 2011.

⁶ COM (2011)303 of 25 May 2011.

conducted in 2010 by AUB and funded by the EU, which extensively assesses the living conditions of Palestine refugees in Lebanon and prioritizes their needs.

It incorporates a comprehensive approach by which different sector needs are addressed to fill in gaps towards social progress, inclusive growth and economic development for Palestine refugees in Lebanon.

2.3. Complementary actions

This action is complementary to the support provided by the EU in infrastructures, education and employment for Palestine refugees in Lebanon through different instruments and thematic lines and to the assistance of some EU member States.

EU-funded projects under implementation or at contracting phase:

- Improving Infrastructure in Palestinian Refugee Camps in Lebanon (UNRWA, total EUR 5 million). This project will fund works in Sector 1 of Ein El Hilweh Camp.
- Education, Training and Employment Support for the Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon (UNRWA, total EUR 15 million).
- Improve Education of Young Palestine Refugees (UNRWA, EUR 15 million).
- Scholarship Fund for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA, total EUR 8.4 million).
- Improvement of environmental health infrastructure in Beirut camps in Lebanon (UNRWA, total EUR 4 million).
- Support to the Reconstruction of Nahr el-Bared (UNRWA, total EUR 8 million).
- Improving access to employment and social protection (International Labour Organisation, EUR 0.3 million).
- Shelter Rehabilitation and Rental subsidies (UNRWA, total EUR 12 million).
- European Training Foundation (ETF) technical assistance in developing the UNRWA career guidance programme.
- EU policy work in the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) framework: discussions on legal and institutional discrimination against the Palestinian refugees with the Lebanese government, particular attention given to the right to work, right to social security, recognition of non-ID refugees, and freedom of movement.
- EU Member States initiatives: the Spanish Agency for International Development Co-operation, rehabilitating health centres in Shatila, Mar Elias camp and Wadi el-Zeina; the Italian co-operation, funding the rehabilitation of buildings in the adjacent areas of Nahr el-Bared around the Mohajaheen area; the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) water project in the adjacent area of Nahr el-Bared and the French Agency for Development (AFD), reconstructing the Health centre and a new school in Nahr el-Bared camp.

The co-ordination will be also done with the Swiss Agency for Development and Co-operation (SDC), implementing a project for the remediation and upgrading of camp water supply networks in seven Palestine refugee camp in Lebanon.

The action is also complementary to:

- The UNRWA Field Implementation Plan 2012-2013.
- Other existing similar actions in Ein el Hillweh camp (in sector3, funded by Japan International Co-operation Agency (JICA) with a USD 2 million

intervention, and in sector 4, where funding is under discussion with another donor).

- UNRWA Health Reform programme.
- UNRWA Micro-credit Community Support Programme (MCSP).
- Improvement of Environmental Health Infrastructure in Beirut Camps in Lebanon (UNRWA EUR 4 million).
- Work of the Committee for the Employment of Palestinians (CEP), a Lebanese-Palestinian body mandated with providing information on Palestinian employment.

2.4. Donor co-ordination

The EU has a close working relationship with the Lebanon-Palestinian Dialogue Committee (LPDC), which is an inter-ministerial government body formed by the Lebanese Council of Ministers, as well as the Palestine political representation. Throughout the implementation of this project, the strengthening of these relations will be ensured. On a monthly basis, UNRWA organises a donor meeting which the EU always attends as well as the main donors. Further ad hoc meetings are organised to discuss specific areas of intervention or new initiatives. At the local level, a continuous and regular dialogue is maintained by UNRWA with representatives of Lebanese municipalities, and among Palestine refugees with popular committees and local political leaders. UNRWA and the EU Delegation in Lebanon have developed a strong partnership and the EU is always informed of any difficulty faced in the implementation of the projects.

3. DESCRIPTION

3.1. Objectives

Overall objective: To improve the living conditions of Palestine refugees and increase the chance of sustainable and inclusive growth and economic development of the Palestine refugee community in Lebanon.

Specific objectives:

- Improvement of environmental health conditions and democratic governance for Palestine refugees residing in Ein el Hilweh camp.
- Social progress and economic development of Palestine refugees in Lebanon through provision of mental health services, reduced levels of unemployment and TVET support to youth.

3.2. Expected results and main activities

Component I: Upgrade of Environmental Health Conditions and Democratic Governance in Ein El Hilweh Camp (Sector 2).

Ein El Hilweh is the largest Palestine refugee camp in Lebanon, with an estimated population of 60,000 residents. The infrastructure of the camp has been neglected and the existing networks have degenerated into a state of progressive disrepair and cannot support the growing population, which poses an unacceptable risk to public health and creates a widespread concern that may cause further instability in the camp and in the Lebanese surrounding areas.

The rehabilitation works in the whole camp has organised by dividing the required support in four packages covering four different sectors. The EU is already committed to provide for the rehabilitation of infrastructure in Sector 1, the Southern sector, through the implementation of the project ENPI/2011/023-394 "Improving infrastructures in Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon". Sectors 3 and 4 are foreseen to receive support from other donors. The Action covered by this component will address the rehabilitation of Sector 2, the central sector of the eastern part of the camp.

Result 1 –Water supply, storm water drainage and sewerage systems are improved and roads are restored.

The main problems identified in Sector 2 are the deterioration of the water distribution networks and water plants, corrosion of the sewer system and the dearth of a storm water drainage system. The project will work to install new and separate storm water drainage and sewage systems, replace the old water supply network with a new system, provide proper household connections, connect the camp storm water and sewer networks to the municipality, clear out the internal sewers and water channels, and upgrade old roads and pathways to an acceptable standard.

Access to potable water will be provided to 15,000 residents, while 60,000 residents from Ein el-Hilweh Camp will benefit from a better environment, specifically the elimination of flooding of the camp from Sector 2 high ground areas.

Result 2 – Democratic governance in Sector 2 of the camp is improved.

Ein El Hilweh is one of the most challenging camps in terms of security threats and extremism and its management by the Lebanese authorities is, at the moment, provided mainly taking into consideration a security perspective. The improvement of infrastructures will certainly have an impact on the improvement of living conditions and, therefore, on the security and stability of the camp.

Besides, additional governance mechanisms focusing on a civilian perspective can also be introduced with a participatory management and follow up of the implementation of the rehabilitation works. The communication with and participation of the community is crucial for the success of the project and the establishment of these mechanisms. A participatory decision making process, with the involvement of the two popular committees present in Ein el-Hilweh, will be established to identify, formulate and implement the overall action plan for the rehabilitation required to be carried out in the Sector 2. Furthermore, awareness raising campaigns will be undertaken among the population affected by the works in order to minimise their negative impact in the daily life of the camp. Moreover, focus groups will also be organised to provide a forum for the community to discuss about the progress and impact of the project activities. Women and youth are expected to play an important role in those groups.

Component II: Social progress and economic development of Palestine refugees in Lebanon.

Increasing the opportunities for social progress, economic development and inclusion, in particular for the youth, is essential for the improvement of living conditions of Palestine refugees in Lebanon and the security and stability of the country as a whole.

In this regard, the lack of a comprehensive mental health support, provision of TVET services and employment opportunities, accessible to Palestine refugees and tailored to their specific needs, remain as major restraining concerns.

Result 1: Mental health and psychosocial support for Palestine refugees in Lebanon is provided by specialised staff.

This will be carried out through the establishment of a referral system for mental health support within and outside UNRWA (via school counsellors and social workers), to UNRWA Health Centers and vice versa, as well as through the provision of specialized consultations by psychiatrists and clinical psychologists.

Besides, UNRWA staff (medical officers, nurses, midwives, social workers and specific school staff) will be provided with enhanced capacity in mental health and psychosocial support, both through theoretical and on-the-job training.

Special attention will be paid to children and youth with disabilities, providing them with appropriate installations and access to psychological and social support services that will enhance their chances of integration in the community.

Result 2- Capacity and outreach of the Microcredit Community Support Programme (MCSP) is enhanced and employability of Palestine refugees is increased.

In order to decrease the poverty rate and improve employability among the Palestine refugees, the project will increase the capacities and outreach of the MCSP, providing more opportunities for the refugees in self – employment and promoting the creation of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises among Palestine refugees.

For twenty years the UNRWA MCSP has promoted economic development for Palestinian refugees, in particular entrepreneurs, through extending them with credit facilities all over Lebanon. To date, the programme created and/or saved around 4,368 job opportunities for Palestinian refugee women and men inside and outside camps.

The number of clients supported by the MCSP will be increased by 15% through targeting youth entrepreneurs, introducing demand-driven targeted schemes and organising outreach activities. Besides, the capacity of MCSP in providing Non Financial Services will be improved. The capacity of the MCSP will be developed through training for its own staff who will subsequently provide counselling to young entrepreneurs on business start-up, coaching services to existing clients, business management, marketing and use of technology.

Result 3- TVET provision for employability and social inclusion of Palestine refugees' youth is improved.

Young Palestine refugees strive to have access to relevant and high quality training that, provided in a safe and healthy environment, helps in find a decent job or in complementing self-employment schemes. The project will support UNRWA's Siblin Training Center (STC), which opened in 1962 near Saida and provides technical skills to around 870 students, in the upgrading of its sport facilities and improvement of its IT capacity and IT training provision.

Sport and recreational activities are central in personal development, enabling stress management, staying in good health and offering new opportunities to self improvement. Rehabilitation of the sports facilities, supply of equipment, establishment of a sports club and implementation of recreational activities will be facilitated through the project. Besides, in order for the Center to train their graduates to meet market demand, access to a better and updated information technology will be facilitated, providing trainees and trainers with new and more complete IT equipment and the capacity to use them.

3.3. Risks and assumptions

The proposal assumes that (i) the political and security situation in Lebanon will not deteriorate to the point that UNRWA is unable to carry out the action, (ii) the UNRWA General Fund will not suffer significant shortages so that it can continue to finance the costs of the UNRWA system, (iii) the Lebanese political climate will not turn more negative towards the Palestinians and their rights (iv) the budget will not be seriously negatively affected by the exchange rate fluctuations between USD and EUR.

Among the internal risks linked to UNRWA as the implementing party, the main ones are unclear division of roles between the different UNRWA departments, delays in recruitment and overburdening of existing staff, motivation of staff to engage in trainings and insufficient internal monitoring during the project life. In order to mitigate these risks, the contribution agreements will include clearly defined pre-conditions/mitigation measures. Equally, each component will have its own monitoring plan/system, with clear indicators.

Considering the volatile environment of Ein el-Hilweh camp, the communication with the community is crucial for the success of the project. Close co-ordination and communication initiatives will be implemented with the two popular committees present in Ein el-Hilweh in order to minimise potential controversies emerging from the political and social diversities of the camp.

As with all construction projects, regular maintenance operations and works can also be negatively affected by disruptions to the security situation in Lebanon and any violent eruptions can derail progress at any point. Access of construction materials to the camp has also been a major risk and concern in the past. Beyond the project implementation per se, there is always the risk of an unexpected increase in construction material prices (steel, concrete, etc.) as well as an increase in the price of oil.

As a major external risk there is also the limited absorption capacity of the Lebanese labour market and reluctance to hire Palestine refugees.

3.4. Cross-cutting Issues

- The action is consistent with many of the cross-cutting issues identified in the European Union Consensus on Development.
- Human Rights: To fulfil the refugees' right to quality education, health and employment are primary goals of this action.
- Gender – Women, Men, Children and Young People: The action is gender-sensitive, in that the measures will benefit all men, women, children and young people living in the communities which are being rehabilitated.

- Governance and Ownership: a participatory approach will be promoted in general. In particular, selected staff will be involved in the development of training modules and capacity building. The component to renew the camp infrastructure in Ein el-Hilweh is innovative in that it reflects a more community-oriented approach to promoting good governance as part of the implementation and ongoing sustainability of the project. While the Popular Committees are largely responsible for issues relating to camp governance, there has historically been little consultation with community residents themselves in relation to their needs. Sector Committees will be established and will be consulted in relation to the detailed design and implementation of the project.
- Environment: The infrastructure rehabilitation in Ein el-Hilweh will also contribute significantly to improving environmental sustainability of the camps concerned and will imply improved levels of hygiene, protection from the rain and cold, as well as better ventilation to reduce the risk of illnesses.

3.5. Stakeholders

All the stakeholders were consulted during the preparatory period.

The direct beneficiaries of this programme are Palestine refugees as follows:

- Component 1: the 15,000 residents of sector 2 at Ein el Hilweh Camp who will be provided with access to potable water, and the 60,000 residents from Ein el-Hilweh Camp will benefit from a better environment.
- Component 2: an estimated 50,000 Palestine refugees suffering from mental health diseases, 30 UNRWA general practitioners, 50 UNRWA nurses and midwives, 40 UNRWA relief and social services staff, 60 UNRWA school counsellors and health tutors, around 200 children and youth with disabilities in need psychological support, around 400 caretakers of children and youth with disabilities, Palestine refugees who will receive loans under the MCSP , MCSP staff, around 180 Palestine refugees expected to be hired by newly created businesses, 870 trainees receiving TVET at the STC and other Palestine refugees and Lebanese who will have access to the STC sports club.

The indirect beneficiaries include UNRWA and the entire Palestine refugee population residing in Lebanon (estimated 280,000 individuals) and the Lebanese business community.

4. IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES

4.1. Method of implementation

Joint management through the signature of one or two (Component 1 and Components 2) agreements with the international organisation UNRWA in accordance with Article 53d of the Financial Regulation. UNRWA complies with the criteria provided for in the applicable Financial Regulation. UNRWA is responsible for co-ordinating the provision of education, health, relief and social services and the delivery of infrastructure within each of the twelve camps in Lebanon. Standard Contribution Agreements will be concluded, in accordance with the Financial and Administrative Framework Agreement (FAFA) signed by the European Commission and the United Nations on 29 April 2003.

The change of management mode constitutes a substantial change except where the Commission "re-centralises" or reduces the level of tasks previously delegated to the Beneficiary country, international organisation or delegatee body under, respectively, decentralised, joint or indirect centralised management.

4.2. Procurement and grant award procedures

All contracts implementing the action are awarded and implemented in accordance with the procedures and standard documents laid down and published by the relevant International Organisation (UNRWA), except for evaluation and audit as detailed in section 4.5.

4.3. Indicative budget and calendar

The overall indicative budget for this proposal amounts to EUR 6,000,000 distributed on the following budget lines:

Component	EU Contribution in EUR
Component 1: Environmental health conditions and democratic governance in Ein El Hilweh camp (Contribution agreement UNWRA)	4,200,000
Component 2: Social progress and economic development of Palestine refugees in Lebanon (Contribution agreement UNWRA)	1,750,000
Evaluation and audit (services)	50,000
Total	6,000,000

Visibility costs will be included in the budget of each component.

The foreseen operational duration of the action will be **48 months as from the adoption of the Financing Decision.**

4.4. Performance monitoring

Achievements will be monitored regularly by UNWRA and the results will be reported to the EU Delegation. The key performance indicators will be detailed in the Contribution Agreement. The EU Delegation task manager will carry out at least one monitoring mission a year for each Component. It is expected that this project will also be subject to the regular ROM monitoring missions.

4.5. Evaluation and audit

The project will be subject to a mid-term and final evaluations to be contracted by the Commission.

If necessary, ad hoc audits or expenditure verifications assignments could be contracted by the European Commission on all contracts and agreements.

All auditing matters related to the contribution agreements with the international organisation UNRWA are governed by the Verification Clause annexed to and

forming an integral part of the Financial and Administrative Agreement (FAFA) signed by the European Commission and the United Nations, signed on 29 April 2003.

An amount of EUR 50,000 is earmarked for audit and evaluation purposes.

4.6. Communication and visibility

The European Commission will ensure that adequate communication and visibility is given by the contracting parties to the EU funding. A specific provision is foreseen to ensure the overall visibility of this project and will be integrated into the Contribution Agreement with UNRWA.

Adequate communication and visibility will be ensured by a) annual visibility/communication plans for each component, b) specific budget allocation for visibility/communication activities, and c) EU Delegation monitoring of the adherence to the visibility/communication plans.