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TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS FOR IMPROVED LIVING CONDITIONS OF PALESTINIAN REFUGEES IN LEBANON

Final Evaluation Report

Prepared by Hala Moughanie

Acknowledgements

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List of Acronyms

AA	Adjacent Area
BUS	Basic Urban Services
CDR	Council for Development and Reconstruction
CPR	Crisis Prevention and Recovery
GWG	Gatherings Working Group
JP	Joint Programme or “Towards Sustainable Solutions for Improved Living Conditions of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon” project
LPDC	Lebanese Palestinian Dialogue Committee
MOM	Minutes of Meeting
MPTF	Multi-Partner Trust Fund
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NO	National Observatory
PARD	Popular Aid for Relief and Development
PC	Popular Committee
PT	Project Team
PRL	Palestinian Refugees from Lebanon
PRS	Palestinian Refugees from Syria
RNA	Rapid Needs Assessment
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
TOR	Terms of Reference
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Network
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UN-HABITAT	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

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Executive Summary

This report presents an evaluation of the “Towards Sustainable Solutions for Improved Living Conditions of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon” project, jointly implemented by UNDP and UN-Habitat to respond to the needs in Basic Urban Services (BUS) in Palestinian gatherings, where the overall living conditions of Palestinian refugees are considered among the worst in the Middle East. The project, which was expected to start in January 2012, was launched in July 2012 to end in October 2014. The total estimated budget of the three year project was of 3.5 Million USD; of which Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) contributed 1 Million USD. During the period of the evaluation, SDC renewed its funding and added USD 512,000 to the project that was extended till end of August 2015. This report will focus on evaluating the implementation of activities funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) during the entire period of the project for the sum of 1 Million USD.

The overall objective of the project is to enhance the “living conditions of the communities living in Palestinian gatherings (including Adjacent Areas of Palestinian refugee camps) through enhanced access to basic urban services”. The project has four outputs:

Output 1: A national framework addressing the living conditions and access to basic urban services in the Palestinian informal gatherings (including Adjacent Areas) developed and implemented.

Output 2: Collaborative mechanisms between Palestinian and Lebanese for improved service delivery strengthened and/or established in selected areas.

Output 3: Access and management of basic urban services in the gatherings and Adjacent Areas improved.

Output 4: Selected municipalities are better equipped to engage in the improvement of living conditions in the gatherings and Adjacent Areas.

The above outputs can be divided into two components: 1. Support to the Lebanese – Palestinian Dialogue Committee (LPDC), the JP partner, in designing a national policy to enhance provision of BUS in the Gatherings (output 1); and 2. Respond to the appalling living conditions through local development interventions related to BUS upgrading, by involving and empowering local stakeholders (outputs 2, 3 and 4).

Recently, due to the Syrian Crisis, the living conditions and social interactions in the Palestinian Gatherings have worsened with the arrival of tens of thousands of Palestinian Refugees from Syria (PRS). This new situation led to adapting the project activities to respond to the new rising needs during the implementation phase. Major amendments were made to the timeline, budget

allocation and planned interventions under the supervision of the Steering Committee of the Project. The scope of work and the work plan have been consequently revised in 2013, reallocating the remaining USD 353,012.88 mainly to BUS/WASH projects to take into consideration the emergency situation in the Gatherings.

An evaluation mission was conducted between 9 October 2014 and 25 November 2014. It focused on assessing the following areas: Achievement of Project; Project Design and Management; Stakeholder Participation and Ownership; and Sustainability. The evaluation also includes identification of Lessons Learned and Recommendations.

The main findings of the evaluation are as follow:

- The Joint Programme can be considered a pilot project designed based on solid theoretical background as it built on the findings and recommendations of the “Investigating Grey Areas: Access to Basic Urban Services in the Adjacent Areas of Palestinian Refugee Camps in Lebanon” study, earlier conducted and published by UNDP and UN-Habitat.
- The project fills a gap in the various emergency response plans put in place to answer the Syrian Crisis, as the “Palestinian Gatherings” are informal settlements hosting Palestinian Refugees from Syria (PRS) that have been ignored by national and local institutions and international funds.
- The JP showed flexibility in planning and management as it amended the work plan in the midst of implementation, taking into consideration a) the emergency situation in the Gatherings that arose following the arrival of PRS, b) LPDC’s changes in chairmanship which made LPDC’s support to the project vary and c) the results of the UNDP project “Improving Living Conditions in Palestinian Gatherings Host Communities” that was implemented in parallel.
- Throughout the implementation, the Project Team (PT) adopted an approach based on proximity and participation, involving beneficiaries and locally selected implementing partners. This approach a) facilitated the realization of activities which gave credibility to the project among local communities, b) contributed to develop linkages between local stakeholders especially between Popular Committees (PCs) and Municipalities, c) reduced tensions between new comers and host communities, c) fostered interest and ownership of stakeholders, especially municipalities and d) contributed to optimizing human and financial resources.

The evaluation also identified several lessons learnt:

- ✓ The Project continuously aimed at building knowledge through data gathering and analysis, which contributed to a better understanding of the needs and challenges in the Gatherings.
- ✓ By changing the scope of work during project implementation, the JP linked local development issues to humanitarian response and answered immediate needs while investing time, funds and efforts in infrastructure projects, consequently upgrading the living conditions of local communities in a durable manner.
- ✓ By gathering all concerned actors around the implementation of tangible activities, the project directly involved local and national counterparts, especially municipalities, in very sensitive areas. This is considered as a first step to the recognition of Gatherings as priority intervention zones that fall within the municipal jurisdiction.
- ✓ Recruiting a Project Manager who was involved in the “Investigating Grey Areas” study and already familiar with the Gatherings’ context and stakeholders, had a positive impact on the efficiency and effectiveness of the project.
- ✓ By taking into consideration the changes that occurred in the Gatherings due to the arrival of PRS and modifying the project scope during implementation, the JP showed flexibility and adapted to real needs in addition to limiting financial and human resources loss. It also collaborated with other UNDP and UN-Habitat Projects.
- ✓ By adopting an approach based on proximity and participation at all levels, the project team succeeded in a) accurately defining and answering the needs of new refugees and host communities, b) taking into consideration the political, security-related and social specificities of each microcosm, c) leading smoothly the required interventions, and d) building trust with and among stakeholders.
- ✓ The project addressed the concerns of both host communities in the gatherings and new refugees by implementing infrastructure projects which benefited both groups, a practice that proved critical for reducing conflicts and enhancing living conditions in targeted communities.

The evaluation also includes the following series of recommendations:

- ✓ In order to enhance the chances of success of further projects, the PT should consider the possibility to involve, along with LPDC, other administratively solid institutions in further projects.
- ✓ The proximity based approach as well as the “Learning by doing” methodology should be continued and/or replicated in further projects.
- ✓ Concerning UNDP/UN-Habitat partnership, further projects would gain in efficiency if the inputs of each partner were precisely clarified from the start, based on each agency mission and knowledge.
- ✓ An information management system for coordinating response in the gatherings, such as that formed under the Gatherings Working Group should be devised.

- ✓ Working in decentralized cooperation mode in further projects would consolidate the urban planning initiative launched by the JP and convey expertise to Lebanese Municipalities.
- ✓ BUS infrastructure projects addressed the needs of both host communities and new refugees, which widened the spectrum of direct beneficiaries; this good practice needs to be reiterated.
- ✓ Focusing on public services interventions durably upgraded the living conditions of both host communities and new refugees. This approach can also be considered as good practice and is to be continued/ reiterated.
- ✓ A “monthly Rapid Mapping” would contribute to continuously giving an overview of the needs of host communities and PRS in the gatherings therefore defining future interventions in an accurate way.
- ✓ In order to enhance the living conditions in the Gatherings, further projects should examine the means to increase the income level of the local population through low cost / high return activities.
- ✓ Clarifying the scope of the project in relation to UNRWA’s mandate, which restricts its BUS provision to the official camps, is recommended to correct any misconceptions.
- ✓ Informing local actors of the “big picture” they contribute to building in terms of strategy and information through regular half-day meetings would create an interaction between various regional stakeholders and between local and national level players.

Introduction

The “Falling Behind: a Brief on the Living Conditions of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon” report (Faf0 2005) states that, compared to other host countries in the Middle East, the living conditions of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon are the worst. Of the estimated 280,000 Palestinian Refugees¹ living in Lebanon, almost half live in the 42 Palestinian Gatherings; 20% are settled in areas adjacent to the camps. Similarly, half the number of Palestinian Refugees from Syria (PRS) living in Lebanon is also living in the gatherings, which represent one category of Palestinian gatherings.

The definition of a Gathering was first introduced by Faf0 to indicate locations outside the camps that accommodate groups of Palestinian Refugees. According to the report, a Gathering “has a population of Palestinian refugees, including Palestinian refugees who are registered with UNRWA and/or the Lebanese government or are not registered”; “has a population with a sense of being a distinct group living in a geographically identifiable area”; “has no official UNRWA camp status or any other legal authority identified with responsibility for camp management” and “is expected to have clearly defined humanitarian and protection needs, or have a minimum of 25 households”. According to Faf0 in 2005 (ibid), 51.2% of the housings in the Gatherings did not have drinking water piped into their residence, 15.5% were not connected to septic tanks and for 64.3%, solid waste was not collected.

Being informal areas, the Gatherings remain excluded from national strategies or local development plans; they are therefore ignored by national state institutions as well as municipalities. As for UNRWA, while it provides education, health and social services to all Palestinian refugees in Lebanon irrespective of their location; services related to Basic Urban Services (BUS) mainly Sanitation and Hygiene are bounded to the 12 officially recognized Palestinian camps. Alternatively, dwellers in the 42 Gatherings resort to a number of informal self-help initiatives to access and maintain BUS. This results in inadequate and insufficient services, and has serious adverse effects on the environment and public health in the Gatherings and their surrounding areas.

¹UNRWA / AUB survey (2010).

In the aftermath of the Nahr el Bared Camp crisis in 2007, the notion of Adjacent Area (AA) emerged to indicate the informal expansion of the camp. In 2010, UNDP and UN-Habitat jointly designed and led the “Investigating Grey Areas: Access to Basic Urban Services in the Adjacent Areas of Palestinian Refugee Camps in Lebanon” study. It aimed to shed light on the situation of the Palestinian refugees living in these areas, understand the mechanisms and the governance of BUS delivery and guide future strategies and policies that would improve access to BUS in the Adjacent Areas as part of their wider context.

Adjacent Areas were defined by UNDP and UN-Habitat as a specific category of Palestinian Gatherings that are located in direct proximity along the boundaries of official Palestinian Refugee Camps.

As a response to the critical situation in the AAs, and drawing on their previous collaboration during the “Investigating Grey Areas” study, UNDP and UN-Habitat jointly developed the “Towards Sustainable Solutions for Improved Living Conditions of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon” Programme (herein after referred to as the Joint Programme or JP). The project aims at addressing the situation in the 42 Gatherings identified in Lebanon on a strategic and institutional level as well as implementing a series of infrastructure projects to answer BUS and WASH-related challenges. The project has been endorsed by the Lebanese Palestinian Dialogue Committee (LPDC) as a project partner and by the Council of Development and Reconstruction (CDR) as the official counterpart.

Recently, as a result of the Syrian Crisis, the situation in the gatherings has dramatically worsened with the influx of some 26,000 Palestinian Refugees from Syria in addition to some 4,000 Syrian refugees (UNDP & UN-Habitat, 2014). This has raised the population in the 42 Palestinian Gatherings from an estimated 110,000 to 140,000, doubling the population in some gatherings. These refugees live in inadequate shelters that are connected in an ad-hoc manner to the available networks, exerting additional pressure on the already poor and insufficient basic urban services. As a result, health and environmental risks have increased and, due to the competition on resources, tensions have risen in the gatherings between new refugees and host

The “Investigating Grey Areas” Report has developed a set of criteria for defining Adjacent Areas (AA) of Palestinian Refugee Camps in Lebanon as a specific category of ‘Palestinian Gatherings’. These criteria are:

Location: An AA is an area located in direct proximity or adjacency around the boundaries of official Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon.

Demography: An AA is inhabited by a majority of Palestinian refugees, with a sense of being a distinct group living in a geographically identifiable area.

Tenure: An AA exhibits informal access to tenure and has no official UNRWA camp status.

Access to Basic Urban Services: An AA witnesses no provision of basic urban services by the state (public agencies and municipalities), UNRWA or other institutions.

refugee communities on the one hand and between the communities in the gatherings and the surrounding areas on the other.

Consequently, while AAs were initially chosen as intervention zone because they present an opportunity to work with and engage a wide spectrum of actors (PCs in camps and gatherings, UNRWA and municipalities), the urgent needs that arose from the arrival of PRS in the Gatherings obliged the PT to enlarge the zone of intervention and to target the Gatherings as a whole.

Project Description

The “Towards Sustainable Solutions for Improved Living Conditions of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon” project is a Joint Programme implemented by UNDP and UN-Habitat in partnership with LPDC and in collaboration with UNRWA. The Programme was launched in July 2012 to end in October 2014. The three year project budget estimation was of 3.5 Million USD, of which 1 Million USD were exclusively funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). During the period of the evaluation, SDC renewed its funding and added USD 512,000 to the project that was extended till end of August 2015. This report will focus on evaluating the activities implemented thanks to SDC’s first funding.

The project seeks to improve “Living conditions of the communities living in Palestinian Gatherings (including Adjacent Areas of Palestinian Refugee Camps) through enhanced access to basic urban services”. As such, the JP is aligned with the UNDAF chapter related to socio-economic development and regional disparities, which states as an outcome “By 2014, the socio-economic status of vulnerable groups and their access to sustainable livelihood opportunities and quality basic social services are improved within a coherent policy framework of reduction of regional disparities”. It is also consistent with the UN-Habitat global agenda that focuses on improving access to adequate basic urban services for all as a key means to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the UNDP’s Country Programme Document (CPD) and Country Programme Action Plan 2010-2014, where the improvement of living conditions and building trust in Palestinian and Lebanese surrounding communities were prioritized for UNDP’s work. Using conflict-sensitive principles, the project aims at building on the already existing structures and bottom-up approach established to bring the different local actors together including Municipalities and Popular Committees (PCs) and NGOs active in the Gatherings.

One of the activities of the JP included the completion of a Rapid Needs Assessment (RNA) that covered all forty-two Palestinian Gatherings in Lebanon, which clearly revealed that the massive arrival of PRS has led to a worsening of living conditions and an increase of environmental and health risks in the Gatherings and surrounding villages and camps. To respond to those emerging urgent needs, a second project, “Improving Living Conditions in Palestinian Gatherings Host Communities” was designed by UNDP; it aimed at continuing the efforts on the institutional level and at supporting host Gatherings through the implementation of BUS projects, with focus on WASH interventions, and of shelter rehabilitation.

In parallel, the initial JP work plan was substantively revised and resulted in delaying some previously planned activities for year 2 until early 2014. Major amendments were made to the timeline, budget allocation and planned interventions under the supervision of the Steering Committee of the Project. The scope of work and the work plan have been revised consequently in 2013, reallocating the remaining USD 353,012.88 mainly to BUS/WASH infrastructure projects to take into consideration the emergency situation in the Gatherings. This decision was endorsed by the Steering Committee, which oversees the two projects, and by SDC.

The project has four outputs:

Output 1: A national framework addressing the living conditions and access to basic urban services in the Palestinian informal gatherings (including Adjacent Areas) developed and implemented.

Output 2: Collaborative mechanisms between Palestinian and Lebanese for improved service delivery strengthened and/or established in selected areas.

Output 3: Access and management of basic urban services in the gatherings and Adjacent Areas improved.

Output 4: Selected municipalities are better equipped to engage in the improvement of living conditions in the gatherings and Adjacent Areas.

The above outputs can be divided into two components:

1. Support to the Lebanese – Palestinian Dialogue Committee (LPDC), in designing a national policy for enhancing access to basic urban services in the Gatherings (output 1).
2. Respond to the appalling living conditions through local development interventions related to BUS upgrading, while engaging and empowering local stakeholders (outputs 2, 3 and 4).

Purpose and Scope of Evaluation

The evaluation assesses the implementation of the activities funded by SDC for a total amount of USD 1 Million from July 2012 to October 2014. The specific objectives of the evaluation are to:

- Determine the overall status of the project;
- Review and evaluate the approaches and processes set in place by the project, focusing on the role of the National Observatory for Palestinian Gatherings in Lebanon;
- Identify lessons learned at the national and local levels;
- Provide recommendations that aim at providing strategic guidance to the team in terms of the design of complementary projects and/or future interventions.

In pursuit of these objectives, the evaluator adopted the five classic project evaluation pillars as guidelines to question the Project: Relevance, Efficiency, Effectiveness, Impact and Sustainability.

Based on the preliminary meeting that took place between the Evaluator and the Project Manager on 10 October 2014, a decision was taken to pay specific attention to the approaches and structures set on national and local levels by the Project.

Also, because of the similarities between the JP and the “Improving Living Conditions in Palestinian Gatherings Host Communities” Project, the work undertaken under the latter has been taken into consideration in drafting this report.

Accordingly, the findings were grouped in the following key areas:

- 1) **Achievement of Project**– The extent to which overall project objectives and outputs/results were achieved;
- 2) **Project Design and Management** – The management processes used throughout project implementation;
- 3) **Stakeholder Participation and Ownership**– Networks and partnerships in support of project implementation and the degree of national and/or local ownership developed;
- 4) **Sustainability**–Key actions that were put in place to ensure sustainability of project outcomes.
- 5) **Lessons Learned**– The main managerial and institutional lessons that were learned and which can be applied on other projects.

Methodology

The overall methodology adopted in this evaluation was guided by the latest draft of the UNDP Outcome-Level Evaluation Handbook and the UNDP Project Monitoring and Evaluation Handbook.

Depending on the evaluation criteria, the following methods of data collection were applied²:

- Review and analysis of documents: “Towards Sustainable Solutions for Improved Living Conditions of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon” Project Document, various documents including TORs, BOQs and Grant Agreements, narrative and financial progress reports, Mapping and Rapid Need Assessment documents, including the “Profiling Deprivation report”; as well as the “Improving Living Conditions in Palestinian Gatherings Host Communities” Project Document, yearly reports and evaluation report³.
- Interviews: Between 15 October and 5 November 2014, semi-structured individual interviews were conducted with key representatives of national or local stakeholders. These include but are not limited to: UNDP and UN-Habitat representatives, LPDC representatives, various Implementing Partners such as local NGOs, and coordinating stakeholders such as UNRWA⁴.
- Field visits in the Gatherings: Meetings with local stakeholders, mainly municipalities and PC members were scheduled in Saida, Tyre and Beddawi; randomly chosen direct beneficiaries were also interviewed during the visits and direct observations from the field were taken into consideration in the evaluation.

²For detailed questions by area of evaluation, data collection methods and data sources refer to the Evaluation Matrix developed in the inception report, in Annex 1.

³For complete list of documents consulted, refer to Annex 2.

⁴For complete list of interviewees, refer to Annex 3.

Limitations

About the project activities

As the transfer of funds from SDC was delayed for internal administrative reasons, part of the activities planned for output 3 (BUS interventions) were launched but still not completed at the time of the evaluation. However, these activities were adequately designed and deemed ready to launch. Related expenditures were included in the financial reports.

About the project implementation

The initial project work plan was drastically revised during implementation. Therefore, part of the activities that were realized, although designed in a way to serve the purpose of the project outcome, are different from those mentioned in the Project Document. The work plan revised in 2013 reallocated USD 353,012.88 of the total budget. In order to evaluate the JP, the evaluator focused on understanding the processes and approaches set in place by the project and the role of each partner.

Main Findings

Project Outcome and Project Objectives

Project Outcome

Living conditions of the communities living in Palestinian gatherings (including Adjacent Areas of Palestinian Refugee Camps) improved, through enhanced access to Basic Urban Services.

The Joint Programme can be considered a pilot project based on solid theoretical background as it built on the findings and recommendations of the “Investigating Grey Areas: Access to Basic Urban Services in the Adjacent Areas of Palestinian Refugee Camps in Lebanon” study. It initially planned to a) implement BUS infrastructure projects at the local level, involving and empowering local stakeholders and b) intervene on the national level by supporting LPDC in developing a knowledge-based strategy that aims at improving the living conditions of Palestinians Refugees in the Gatherings mainly through enabling and enhancing the provision of BUS.

The first part of the project, constituting the hardware component, was successfully implemented and tangibly supported progress towards the stated outcome.

The second part of the project consisted of the design of a national policy for the Gatherings. The dialogue on a national strategy had already been initiated during a series of consultative meetings with various stakeholders (public service providers, municipalities, NGOs and PCs) that had been lead prior to the project and hosted by LPDC⁵. However, this component was interrupted upon the request of LPDC in 2013 due to the political and security situation in the country. Part of the budget allocated to related activities has consequently been reallocated to BUS infrastructure projects similar to the ones already planned and executed. However, the JP

⁵ The key findings of these meetings are presented in the “*Access to Basic Urban Services in the Adjacent Areas of Palestinian Refugee camps in Lebanon, Consultations with National and Local Stakeholders – Synthesis report*”- July 2012

succeeded in filling the information gap about the Gatherings, which is necessary to identify the needs on the ground, by a) designing a GIS database for the Gatherings that was meant to serve as a basis for a National Observatory under LPDC, b) undertaking a Rapid Need Assessment (RNA) in the 42 Gatherings and analyzing it in the a report “Profiling Deprivation: An Analysis of the Rapid Needs Assessment in Palestinian Gatherings Host Communities in Lebanon” and c) reactivating the Gathering Working Group that as a platform for planning and coordination.

The JP was interrupted in 2013 in order to implement the “Improving Living Conditions in Palestinian Gatherings Host Communities” project. This project was designed by UNDP to answer the emergency situation in the Gatherings following the arrival of PRS. It kept the same collaborative mechanisms on the local level, working jointly with PCs and municipalities, and tried to complement the JP activities. It therefore a) addressed the financing of more BUS/WASH projects b) rehabilitated shelters in the Gatherings and c) initiated WASH soft activities, such as a hygiene campaign and hygiene kits distribution.

By building on the findings, experiences and results of the latter project, the Project Team (PT) drastically amended the JP’s work plan for the third year of implementation. By a) consolidating the first results of the JP, b) selecting specific interventions and c) making the best out of human and financial resources to have a maximum impact on the ground; the PT aimed at achieving, within the remaining resources, the stated outcome.

The political, human and security conditions in the various areas of interventions are very complex as the Gatherings seem to have their own *modus operandi*. However, through the involvement of local stakeholders at all the stages of implementation, from needs assessment to follow-up on activities, the PT succeeded in smoothly performing the required interventions. Together, members of local NGOs, Palestinian Popular and Local Committees along with municipalities and UNRWA’s local officers when possible, actively contributed to the identification of needs in the Gatherings. More precisely, the PT developed solid relations with the PCs that enjoy certain legitimacy in the Gatherings and the local committees under them. The PCs are semi-official committees that play an important role in the provision of basic services and conflict resolution in the gatherings. They therefore act as catalysts between all the entities involved in the Project and can play the role of mediators when needed. This approach allowed the project team to develop direct contact with local stakeholders and beneficiaries.

In addition, the project involved the municipalities that include Palestinian Gatherings within their territories in the different stages of the project from discussions to planning, decision-making and implementation. Infrastructure projects implemented in the Gatherings were approved by these municipalities, which were consulted to secure proper connection to the related public networks where applicable. Moreover, three municipalities were provided with grants to take the lead in implementing projects that targeted both Lebanese and Palestinian communities living within their territories, including those in Palestinian Gatherings.

By bringing all stakeholders together, the project succeeded in a) allowing stakeholders to work in a collective and participatory manner, b) ensuring transparency vis-à-vis all stakeholders and beneficiaries at each stage of project implementation, c) enabling them to share responsibilities, and d) adapting the BUS interventions to the real needs of beneficiaries.

The impact of the BUS infrastructure projects is already visible on the ground. The following pictures show the conditions of the sewage system in Darb el Sim before and after its rehabilitation.



In Darb el Sim, the JP succeeded in bringing together the municipality and the PCs in Ain el Helwe Camp and Seerob gathering to discuss the needs and jointly decide of priority projects, along with other local stakeholders. The municipality positively responded to the situation, and directly implemented the related infrastructure projects through a grant from UNDP.

In Mieh Mieh, the series of interventions had a positive impact on sanitary and environmental levels and in terms of services for both Lebanese and Palestinian dwellers. For example, it addressed the flooding used to block the passage of individuals and vehicles, creating considerable traffic jams. It also had a positive impact on security as public lighting was installed.

Series of interventions in Mieh Mieh:

- 1. Rehabilitation of sewage pipe and manhole between Mieh Mieh village and Mieh Mieh AA;*
- 2. Implementation of sewage network and rain water channels along the road leading to Mieh Mieh Camp and AA (Kamal Medhat St.), and construction of retaining walls and paving;*
- 3. Construction of retaining wall and paving a road in Hamshari area;*
- 4. Installation of solid waste containers in Taamir and around Mieh Mieh AA;*
- 5. Installation of public street lighting in Taamir.*

Evaluating Output 1

In evaluating Output 1, the evaluator had access to financial and narrative reports and led interviews with the main stakeholders: LPDC, UNDP- Crisis Prevention and Recovery (CPR) programme and UN-Habitat Representatives.

Output 1 activities were initially divided into two components: 1) Establishing a knowledge base by designing and setting up a National Observatory for Palestinian Gatherings and 2) supporting LPDC's policy making process at the national level.

During project implementation, LPDC faced major structural changes that impacted the realization of the stated objectives:

- a. **On the management level:** Since the launching of the JP, LPDC had three different Presidents. Each President has his own vision and priorities therefore his own understanding of projects. Consequently, LPDC's support varied.
- b. **On the technical level:** LPDC needs more support in terms of human resources and capacities mainly to consolidate knowledge.
- c. **On the legal / institutional level:** LPDC plays a consultative role to the government' it currently lacks a decision-making mandate.

On another hand, even though a concept note defining the mission and role of the National Observatory had been jointly designed by LPDC and the PT, it seems that LPDC's understanding of the "National Observatory" has changed with time. For LPDC, the Observatory is meant to constitute a database that would gather exhaustive information about Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon in order to facilitate decision-making on a political level. As for the JP, based on UN-Habitat's expertise, a National Observatory aims to monitor changes in specific populations, namely Refugees in the Palestinian Gatherings in Lebanon, in order to identify and design strategic interventions in fields related to development.

Generally speaking, LPDC did confirm that the JP triggered a reflection on its role and helped in defining its mission. The JP

Output 1: A national framework addressing the living conditions and access to basic urban services in the Palestinian informal gatherings (including Adjacent Areas) developed and implemented

Initially planned activities under output 1:

- Establish and maintain knowledge base on access to basic services in the informal gatherings (including Adjacent Areas) through the establishment of a national observatory.
- Provide policy options for the national framework addressing the living conditions and access to basic urban services of Palestinians living in informal gatherings (including the Adjacent Areas).
- Facilitate dialogue and consensus building, under the leadership of the LPDC, to agree on the key elements of the national framework, with key stakeholders at the national and local levels.
- Coordinate the endorsement of the proposed national framework by the Government of Lebanon.
- Provide technical assistance for the implementation of the relevant national framework.

contribution was also valuable on a strategic level as LPDC adopted the idea of a National Observatory and included it in its 2015-2020 strategy.

USD 123, 144 were initially allocated to all activities under this output. USD 79,841 were actually spent on related activities, the remaining amount was reallocated to other activities, mainly the BUS interventions in Outputs 2 and 3.

Component 1: the National Observatory

The project developed a GIS database that would serve as a basis for the National Observatory; all information gathered by the project was transferred to LPDC. The JP also trained one member of LPDC to use Access for data collection and to access the GIS database; and provided hardware and software equipment for LPDC to operate and populate the Observatory. However, the National Observatory is not deemed operational as a) data has not been consolidated by complementary information which was expected to be gathered from various NGOs in the Gatherings Working Group, which appeared to be less cooperative than expected and b) LPDC does not possess the required human resources to maintain and regularly update the database.

Component 2: the Policy making process

During project implementation, LPDC made the decision to suspend the National Strategy component due to the difficult political situation in the country, especially following the Syrian crisis. Also, the National Strategy should have included policy discussions at the national level led by an inter-ministerial committee that meets under LPDC. During the JP implementation, the committee never met which made it impossible for the strategic component to be effectively supported.

Additional activities:

The “Profiling Deprivation: An Analysis of the Rapid Needs Assessment in Palestinian Gatherings Host Communities in Lebanon” Report

In the absence of a national intervention strategy in the Gatherings and following the successive arrivals of PRS, the project led a Rapid Need Assessment (RNA) in the 42 Gatherings in collaboration with various stakeholders, including municipalities and PCs. The objectives of the RNA were to a) collect qualitative information about the living conditions and more specifically access to BUS and WASH conditions in the Gatherings and b) understand the relations between the Gatherings and their neighbourhoods as well as the relations between stakeholders involved in the Gatherings. It was directly carried out by the Project Team (PT) in partnership with the Popular Aid for Relief and Development (PARD) local NGO that already works in the Palestinian Gatherings; it was presented and discussed with all concerned stakeholders, including municipalities, PCs and local NGOs.

The RNA provided the Project Team with BUS and shelter intervention guidelines that allowed the PT to a) accurately identify the BUS interventions that were to be implemented in the framework of outputs 2 and 3 and b) complete the JP activities by seeking funds for other projects such as the Improving Living Conditions in Palestinian Gatherings Host Communities, that includes a shelter component.

The PT also hired a consultant to produce an Analysis of the RNA that was published under the “Profiling Deprivation: An Analysis of the Rapid Needs Assessment in Palestinian Gatherings Host Communities in Lebanon” Report. The report provides a solid analytical background for the JP and sheds light on the living conditions of refugees in the Gatherings. It is a thorough document that a) gives a “snapshot” of the situation in each gathering in terms of development b) facilitates coordination between the actors that intervene in the Gatherings c) gives mid-term and long-term recommendations that could serve as guidelines for future national policies.

The Gatherings Working Group (GWG)

As there is no national institution to coordinate information sharing and project planning in the Gatherings, the GWG was created in 2012 to share information about 1) Infrastructure and Basic Urban Services and 2) Housing. It had the following objectives:

- Determine and analyse the scope of finished, on-going and planned upgrading interventions;
- Coordinate projects and activities;
- Identify remaining needs and gaps;
- Seek opportunities for funding / implementation of planned interventions and partnerships.

The GWG first met in August 2012 at UNRWA; after four meetings and by May 2014, this platform was put on hold. The PT coordinated with UNRWA and LPDC to revive it; it was reactivated on 16 May 2013 to meet bi-monthly and has been chaired since by UNDP.

On 23 September 2014, the PT organized a workshop of sectoral roundtables that gathered 60 participants representing UN Agencies and international and local NGOs active in Palestinian Gatherings. They discussed priorities and provided recommendations for the BUS / WASH and Shelter sectors (as stated in the GWG initial mission), as

Objectives of the GWG workshop – 23 September 2014

-Agree on integrated priority interventions in Palestinian Gatherings in 2015 for each sector, based on the immediate and development needs highlighted in the UNDP report;

-Suggest a roadmap for a national plan advocating for healthier environments in Gatherings;

-Assist UNDP, UNRWA and sector coordinators in their review of interventions planned for Palestinian Gatherings in the framework

well as for the Advocacy and Coordination, Education, Health and Livelihood and Protection sectors.

Although the first roundtable objectives are relevant, based on the interviews led by the evaluator, it can be alleged that they maybe are too ambitious. However, a vast majority of stakeholders do believe that the GWG is a necessary platform for a) sharing information about “Who does what” in the Gatherings, thus ensuring coordination and avoiding duplication of efforts and projects and b) sharing best practices.

Evaluating Output 2

In assessing the achievement of this output, the evaluator examined data sources that provided evidence of implementation, namely progress reports, BOQs and budgets. For the Participatory mapping of Ain el Helwe, she examined raw data sheets and analytical reports. Also, field visits were organized at various Gatherings in Saida. During these visits, the evaluator led interviews with Popular Committees, Municipalities, contractors and other local actors. Spontaneous discussions with randomly chosen direct beneficiaries also took place.

Initially designed as a “soft component” aiming at supporting more efficient interaction between Lebanese and Palestinians at the local level, the methodology of Output 2 has been reviewed during implementation. Taking into consideration the emergency situation that resulted from the massive arrival of PRS in the Gatherings and based on the RNA, the PT met the objectives of Output 2 following the “learning by doing” method. The collaboration between Lebanese and Palestinian actors in the Gatherings was therefore supported by the collaborative design of additional BUS and WASH projects. These projects were funded by the JP which explains why USD 172,273.37 was spent on Output 2 while it was originally allocated USD 96,839.00.

In order to deepen their understanding of the living conditions and the formal and informal structures in the gatherings, the PT carried out a “Participatory Community Mapping in Ain el Helwe”. The activity was jointly led by Knowledge Community Company (KDC) and local NGO PARD.

This mapping also helped determine the priorities in each gathering. The project team was present at every stage of the process and worked closely with municipalities and PC representatives and coordinated also closely with NGOs and UNRWA’s offices in the camps.

In the activities related to Output 2, the PT adopted a proximity based approach, bringing together PCs and Municipalities - that usually only meet for political or social reasons – to discuss

Output 2: Collaborative mechanisms between Palestinian and Lebanese for improved service delivery strengthened and/or established in selected areas.

Initially planned activities under output 2:

- Map existing mechanisms of interaction and analyse issues and concerns of relevant Palestinian and Lebanese stakeholders engaged in these initiatives, including in the area of service delivery.
- Facilitate the establishment and/or strengthening of these mechanisms in the targeted areas, on the basis of the mapping.
- Design and implement joint initiatives with concerned Lebanese and Palestinian stakeholders to improve service delivery.
- Build the capacity of local stakeholders to initiate, strengthen and sustain the collaborative mechanisms.
- Promote networking and experience sharing between Lebanese and Palestinian stakeholders engaged in these mechanisms.
- Strengthen linkages between

development plans and decide, together, on priority actions to be undertaken to the benefit of both Palestinian and Lebanese communities. Two municipalities adjacent to Ain el Helwe Camp, Darb el Sim and Mieh Mieh, took the lead and directly implemented projects through a grant from UNDP.

This proximity also allowed the PT to understand and evaluate people's living conditions and explain the project to stakeholders and beneficiaries. By adopting this approach, based on dialogue and participation, the PT succeeded in a) making the project transparent to all stakeholders and beneficiaries and building trust with all concerned parties; b) creating linkages between Lebanese and Palestinians and initiating dialogue based on common interests and c) clarifying the status of the Gatherings and reminding the municipalities of their role and responsibilities in these territories.

As a result, Lebanese and Palestinian representatives defined, together, the actions to be undertaken in each gathering depending on the needs on the ground. Their interventions targeted both Lebanese and Palestinians. This resulted in:

- Designing 3 BUS/WASH projects (9 interventions) with municipalities. The JP provided the municipalities of Darb el Sim and Mieh Mieh in Saida area with grants⁶ to implement BUS-related infrastructure projects. Another project in Saida was designed in collaboration with the municipality and implemented by an independent contractor. Procurement processes were adapted in consequence.
- Funding a series of hygiene activities in Beddawi Adjacent Areas (AAs), through a grant to the municipality, through the Joint Lebanese Palestinian Committee earlier established by UNDP in Beddawi.

⁶For a complete list of BUS/WASH interventions implemented in the framework of Output 2, please refer to Annex 4.

Evaluating Output 3

In assessing the achievement of this output, the evaluator examined data sources that provided evidence of implementation, namely progress reports, BOQs and budgets. Also, field visits were organized at various Gatherings in Tyre, Saida and Beddawi that aimed to understand the size of infrastructure projects. During these visits, the evaluator led interviews with Popular Committees, Municipalities and other local actors and contractors. Spontaneous discussions with randomly chosen direct beneficiaries also took place.

The PT has significantly achieved the activities of Output 3. To date, the PT has implemented 16 BUS/WASH infrastructure projects in 13 Gatherings and developed a study with Electricité du Liban in the South. The study led to the implementation of an electricity project in Maachouk Gathering so far.

The RNA as well as continuous consultation with municipalities, PCs and UNRWA local offices allowed to define the communities' priorities very accurately, which led to the design of various types of projects, based on actual urgent needs, from micro-interventions to neighbourhood-level interventions. The JP hired civil engineers in each region of implementation who acted as the technical focal point for the project, developing the engineering and technical studies and supervising the works.

BUS projects necessitated USD 496,500; budgets for each intervention varied from USD 4,988 (rehabilitation of the sewage main pipes in Bustan el Kods) to USD 133,075, of which USD 53,230 were funded by SDC, (installation of sewage and water networks in 4 Ain el Helwe Adjacent Areas), which shows that the project answered specific needs depending on the conditions of the BUS in each gathering.

In the case of camps' Adjacent Areas, the PT coordinated closely with UNRWA local offices in the camps. Engineers from UNRWA were solicited for their technical advice and met regularly with the JP's Engineer. This allowed making strategic decisions concerning the infrastructure to be upgraded and connection to the public networks available within the frontiers of the Camps or beyond.

Output 3:

Access and management of basic urban services in the gatherings and Adjacent Areas improved.

Initially planned activities under output 3:

- Rehabilitate and upgrade basic urban services through selected infrastructure interventions.
- Strengthen the skill base of the residents for operating and maintaining basic urban services.
- Promote viable approaches to manage, and sustain access to basic urban services by the residents of

The PT contracted locally based companies, individual local contractors or NGOs active in the gatherings to implement the projects. This led to a) lowering the cost of projects, b) avoiding tensions between contractors and dwellers and c) employing local labor and contributing to the improvement of dwellers' economic conditions. Works were monitored through an on-site civil engineer and through frequent field visits by the Project Team. To ensure quality control, progress of work and expenditures were monitored by the Crisis Prevention and Recovery Programme as well as by the Procurement Unit at UNDP.

Evaluating Output 4

According to the JP annual narrative reports, this output has been treated as “a cross-cutting component of the previous outputs of the Joint Programme”. USD 41,984.91 was therefore spent, mainly on Human Resources and workshops/training.

Whether the BUS projects were directly implemented by the PT through individual contractors or companies, municipalities were systematically part of the decision-making process, along with the PCs. Two projects were directly implemented by municipalities that were awarded grants by the project.

In parallel, the PT worked closely with PCs and local communities, involving them in the identification of priority projects, along with the municipalities. During a one day workshop that was held at AUB on January, 8th 2013, the PT gathered members of municipalities and PCs and women groups with the aim of issuing practical recommendations for future interventions in the Gatherings. They provided recommendations in the following fields: Governance, Education, Food Security, Employment, Youth, Resources, BUS, Shelter, Security and Health.

By involving municipalities and other concerned local actors in the decision-making process and in the implementation of the BUS infrastructure projects, the PT succeeded in:

- Reminding the Municipalities of their role in “forgotten” territories, and of the necessity to provide public services to residents instead of limiting them to electors;
- Initiating a reflection on local planning, privileging a territorial approach of infrastructure insufficiencies and understanding their impact on the gatherings and their surroundings ;
- Fostering linkages based on public interest between PCs and Municipalities who usually meet for “courtesy” and/or political reasons.

Output 4: Better equipped selected municipalities to engage in the improvement of living conditions of gatherings and Adjacent Areas.

Activities under output 4:

- Promote the role of municipalities to integrate Palestinian communities (gatherings and Adjacent Areas) within municipal and other local development plans.
- Support selected municipalities in the development of integrated plans responding to the issues faced by the gatherings and Adjacent Areas.
- Strengthen synergies and collaboration among key local and

Project Design and Management

Project Design

The JP was jointly designed by UNDP, UN-Habitat, and LPDC, based on a) the findings of the “Investigating Grey Areas - Access to Basic Urban Services in the Adjacent Areas of Palestinian Refugee Camps in Lebanon” Report and b) LPDC’s mission as a national entity aiming at designing and implementing a policy to improve the living conditions of Palestinian refugees⁷.

In the initial JP document, three out of the four outputs were “soft components”, stressing on developing collaborative mechanisms on the local level between Palestinian and Lebanese and supporting policy-making on a national level. This document clearly mentions political and institutional risks related to such an approach which effectively led to:

- LPDC’s previous President, M. Khaldoun el Charif, requesting to interrupt the National Strategy Component due to the political and security situation in the country.
- The PT opting, in the midst of project implementation, to adopt a “learning by doing” approach with PCs and Municipalities.

These major changes in the project scope have been reflected in the 2013 revised work plan that mainly reallocated part of the budget for hardware activities therefore spending USD 450,000 on these instead of the initial USD 300,000 allocated for BUS infrastructure projects.

Project Management

The project, expected to start in January 2012, was launched in July 2012 due to a delay in the availability of funds. For internal administrative reasons, SDC delayed the transfer of the last payment which postponed the completion of activities for two additional months.

Based on the findings and on the interviews with various stakeholders and beneficiaries, the project can be described as well managed by the PT, which succeeded in creating local networks and identifying strategic interventions in coordination with local actors: UNRWA local offices,

⁷ LPDC is a national institution which objective is to play a strategic role in the planning and management of Palestinian Affairs. LPDC 2015-2020 mid-term strategy focuses on “Strategic Planning” and aims at designing a “National Observatory” and a “National Census for Palestinians in Lebanon”. Furthermore, two of the main functions of the future High Commission for the Palestinian Refugee Affairs as stated in the draft law prepared by LPDC are: “Addressing the socio-economic, legal, and security issues related to Palestinian camps in Lebanon, in collaboration with UNRWA” and “Creating and managing the National Observatory for Palestinian Affairs”(Articles 4 and 7).

Municipalities, NGOs and PCs. The management style of the Project Manager, one who delegates tasks and empowers team members, was highly appreciated by the project staff and stakeholders as well as her deep knowledge of the issues at stake and challenges faced in the Gatherings. The Project Manager also had the ability to a) take into consideration the contextual challenges on the national and local levels and adapt the project consequently, b) identify the activities funded by the project to respond to real needs and circumstances, relying on the very valuable inputs of the Field Officers and c) create linkages between the JP and similar or complementary projects in order to consolidate the results and enhance the impact on the ground.

Besides the management style, the profiles of the PT members contributed to making the project successful as the Project Manager was already involved in the “Grey Areas” study and had a sound knowledge of the complex social, political and economic context of the Gatherings.

Project Management Structure

The Project is implemented by UNDP and UN-Habitat through a common team involving staff from both agencies, each partner bringing its own expertise. Both partners acknowledge that this particular management structure was initially set up to a) optimize the use of knowledge and human resources and a better cooperation with similar projects and b) ensure convergence on project understanding and approach.

Indeed, UN-Habitat has a solid knowledge of the environments and challenges in informal settlements and UNDP has an expertise in local and sustainable development. On the other hand, both agencies enjoy good relationships with local communities and municipalities, and usually work through and with the same stakeholders.

Use of Resources

In terms of resource allocation and management, the cost of the activities is of USD 578,500, out of a total project budget of USD 925,234. USD 346,734 was spent on staff salaries and other human resources, and on office equipment and running costs, meaning that 62.5 % of the total budget has been allocated for the project activities⁸. This percentage can be rated as satisfactory; it can be explained by the following a) the first two years of the project were soft components driven to create networks of relations on ground and b) setting up collaborative mechanisms

⁸The figures do not include 1% ISS and 7% F&A

between Municipalities and PCs required time and effort hence increasing the investment in Human Resources costs.

Funding, Human Resources and Processes

The JP resource allocation and management in terms of Human Resources need to be analyzed in the light of a higher programmatic level. Indeed, UNDP designed and launched the “Improving Living Conditions in Palestinian Gatherings Host Communities”, clearly establishing linkages between the two projects either on the output level or on the approach level. Building on the findings and lessons learnt by the JP paved the way for successful implementation and optimization of time and resources. Both projects are piloted by the same Steering Committee that ensures coordination and complementarity. The linkage between the JP and the “Improving Living Conditions in Palestinian Gatherings Host Communities” project is as follows:

Table 1: Comparison between the JP and the “Improving Living Conditions in Palestinian Gatherings Host Communities” projects’ outcome and outputs

“Towards Sustainable Solutions for Improved Living Conditions of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon”	“Improving Living Conditions in Palestinian Gatherings Host Communities”
OUTCOME LEVEL	
Living conditions of the communities living in Palestinian Gatherings (including Adjacent Areas of Palestinian Refugee Camps) improved, through enhanced access to basic urban services.	Living conditions in the Palestinian Gatherings in Lebanon that host Palestinian and Syrian refugees from Syria, improved through better access to basic urban services and shelter conditions.
OUTPUT LEVEL	
Output 1: A national framework addressing the living conditions and access to basic urban services in the Palestinian informal Gatherings (including Adjacent Areas) developed and implemented.	Output 3: National database on living conditions in Palestinian Gatherings developed and maintained through support to the Lebanese – Palestinian Dialogue Committee (LPDC).
Output 2: Collaborative mechanisms between Palestinian and Lebanese for improved service delivery strengthened and/or established in selected areas.	<i>Has been kept as an approach to ensure collaboration of municipalities and local entities.</i>
Output 3: Access and management of basic urban services in the Gatherings and Adjacent Areas improved.	Output 1: Access to basic urban services improved in host Gatherings through the implementation of infrastructure projects and service interventions,

	taking into account the impact on and connections with surrounding networks.
Output 4: Selected municipalities are better equipped to engage in the improvement of living conditions in the Adjacent Areas.	<i>Has been kept as an approach to ensure collaboration of municipalities.</i>

The PT successfully built on Outputs 2 and 4 of the JP by keeping, for complementary projects, the same mechanisms and processes based on proximity and collaboration that were initiated then. Also, the RNA designed and carried out in the framework of the JP has gathered very valuable data that facilitated the identification of BUS/WASH projects in both projects. The efforts and resources invested in the framework of the JP prepared the ground for new activities and were capitalized on the “Improving Living Conditions in Palestinian Gatherings Host Communities” project.

Funding Activities

The use of resources for the BUS activities alone is to be evaluated on its own. Indeed, defining the beneficiaries’ needs in a very accurate manner ensured the optimization of financial and human resources. Working on a micro level, in collaboration with PCs and active NGOs and groups (women, youth, etc.) in the gatherings allowed to indirectly developing complementary actions with other actors. The most outstanding example of coordination on the ground is in Sekke, one of Saida’s Adjacent Area Gatherings. Through PARD, the JP financed the installation of water and installation facilities as part of the rehabilitation and the equipment of a collective

centre owned by the Bader Association with the objective of moving part of the 75 families living in tents nearby. PARD being already in charge of the implementation of other related projects that benefit these families, the NGO already coordinated on the ground between relevant

Example of complementary action in Sekke		
Activity	Specific activity	Financial partner
Room rehabilitation	20 rooms	SIDA Canada
	20 rooms	UNRWA
	23 rooms	UNDP- UN-Habitat
	12	Hamas
WASH activities	Purchase of water and chlorination pumps, solar panels, drain cleaning machines and products	UNDP- UN- Habitat
	Water, sanitation	OXFAM
Other	Kitchen	OXFAM
	Health Clinic	UNDP- UN-Habitat, Addressing Urban Hot Spots In Lebanon project

projects and donors, which paved the way to designing a comprehensive intervention, increasing the impact of the project by answering the needs of all the families.

Finally, as shown in table 2 below, for an optimal use of financial resources, three of the most significant projects have been financially supported from SDC's funds as well as from other sources.

Table 2: Jointly funded projects

Gathering	Activities	Budget in USD		
		SDC	Government of Germany	Total
Tawari, Baraksat, Bustan el Kods, Sekke – Saida	Renewal of sewage and water networks	53 230	79 845	133 075
Sekke – Saida	Relocation of families to shelters + upgrading water and sewage networks	40 000	60 000	100 000
Mieh Mieh – Saida	Installation of sewage and storm water networks + upgrading roads + provision of solid waste containers	33 570	24 380	57 950

Stakeholders Participation and Ownership

The PT operates at two levels:

a) National Level

- The Project is supervised on a macro level by a Steering Committee that includes, in addition to UNDP and UN-Habitat, representatives from the Council of Development and Reconstruction (CDR), the Lebanese – Palestinian Dialogue Committee (LPDC), UNRWA and the donors.
- The Project directly collaborates on a strategic level with various National Institutions such as LPDC and other agencies as UNRWA.
- The PT also shares information through the Gatherings Working Group that includes main NGOs and donors involved in WASH and shelter activities the Gatherings.

On the national level, the main Project Partner is LPDC. LPDC was initially very committed to the JP and contributed to its design. However, various structural and external challenges made it difficult for LPDC to comply with its commitments. In order to fill the gap in terms of identification of needs and coordination of information in the gatherings, the JP created the GWG that works on the national level.

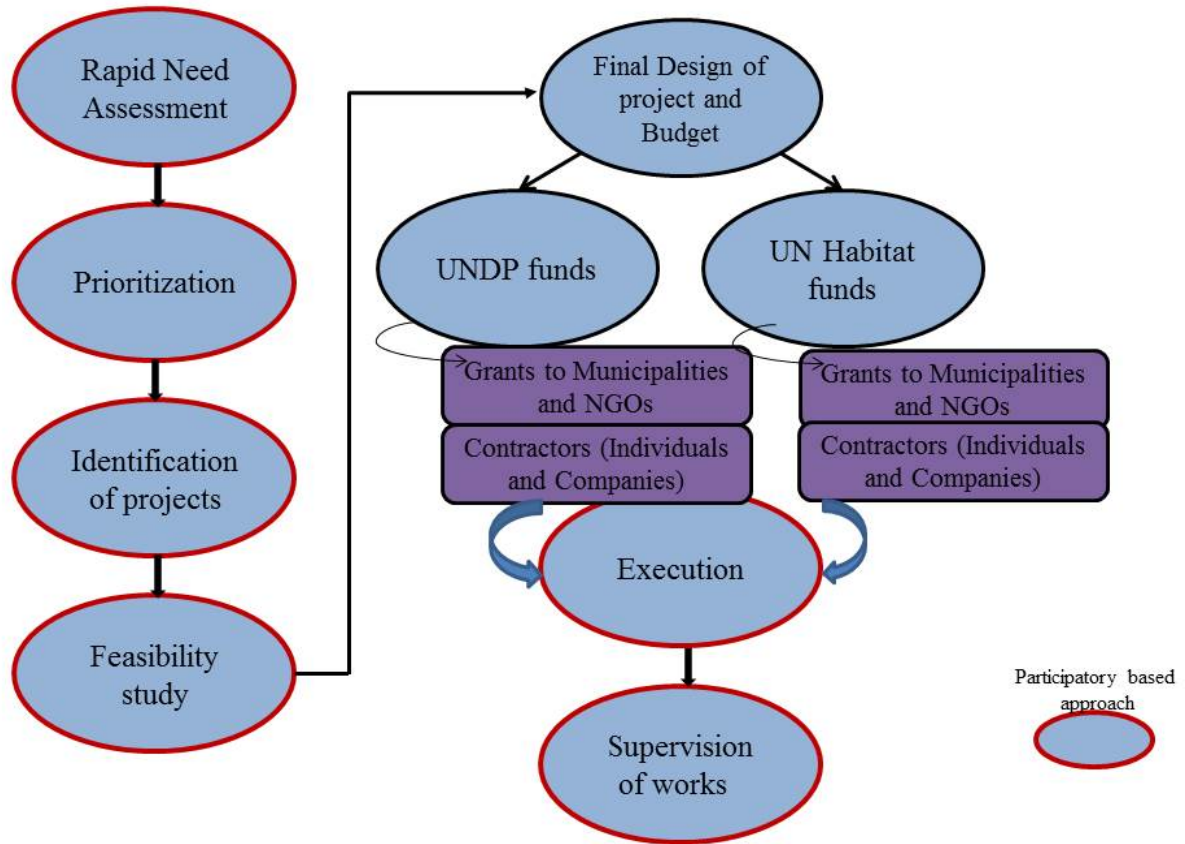
b) Local Level

- The PT collaborates with local stakeholders such as PCs, NGOs, local groups (women, youth, etc.) and municipalities, as detailed in the Findings Section.
- The PT coordinates and shares information with local agencies about specific projects. Most of the BUS projects in camps' Adjacent Areas have been implemented in coordination with the field officers of UNRWA.

On the local level, as previously stated, NGOs, PCs and municipalities were involved in the project, along with other local representatives such as women, youth groups or neighbourhood committees, when possible. Municipalities actively participated in the planning, design and selection of infrastructure projects to address their needs as they are directly concerned by the presence of refugees on their respective territories and are supposed to be in charge of ensuring adequate BUS to all inhabitants. The PT particularly focused on coordination between municipalities and PCs.

The JP approach can be described in the following Implementation Flow Chart.

Implementation Flow Chart for BUS/WASH interventions



Overall, both the municipalities and the PCs endorsed the implementation of projects as they could easily identify them, discuss their impact on the ground and their technical aspects. However, the PT participatory approach led to mixed results when it came to the ownership of the projects by the municipalities. The reasons for that are that each municipality a) has a different understanding of its role depending on the municipal council in charge and its interest in the projects; 2) has a unique relation with Palestinian refugees in general and with PRS in particular depending on the sectarian, political and social context of the village/city; and 3) gives priority to projects that would benefit Lebanese inhabitants and more specifically the inhabitants who are originally from the village/city.

Sustainability

Component 1: Support to the Lebanese – Palestinian Dialogue Committee (LPDC), in designing a national policy for the Gatherings (Output 1).

LPDC did confirm that the JP triggered a reflection on its role. LPDC definitely adopted the idea of a National Observatory and included it in its five years strategy (2015-2020) for which they will be seeking support and funds. The strategy has been presented to the donor community in Lebanon on October 23, 2014.

Component 2: Respond to the appalling living conditions through local development interventions related to BUS upgrading, involving and empowering local stakeholders (Outputs 2, 3 and 4).

By empowering local actors, the JP aimed at fostering common interest interventions in the gatherings. Mainly Municipalities and PCs were supported by a) experiencing the “learning by doing” method, based on a consensual process and on the understanding of planning b) establishing interest-based relations between stakeholders and c) clarifying the responsibilities of each in the Gatherings.

In order to sustain the use and maintenance of the BUS projects, the “Improving Living Conditions in Palestinian Gatherings Host Communities” project provided maintenance tools and equipment to the PCs and PARD for the water and sewage networks in the 42 Palestinian Gatherings.

This might not be sufficient on the long term. The Gatherings being informal settlements, it is not an easy matter to clearly define responsibilities and distribute them among local stakeholders. However, during the interviews, many of them showed their commitment to contributing to the maintenance of basic urban services. PCs or municipalities, depending on the villages/cities, considered that it was their role to be in charge of any work related to the preservation of infrastructure networks.

Project Level: The JP has been extended with a complementary funding from SDC (USD 512,000). The objectives were also reinforced by the UNDP project “Improving Living Conditions in Palestinian Gatherings Host Communities”, which builds on its achievements and that continuously seeks support to enhance the situation in the Gatherings. To this date, the PT succeeded in complementing the JP activities by adding USD 3,854,507 to the SDC fund as detailed in table 3:

Table 3: JP and Improving Living Conditions in Palestinian Gatherings Host Communities complementary funds (in USD)

Name of project	Joint Programme	Improving Living Conditions in Palestinian Gatherings Host Communities			
Donor	SDC	Germany	PRM -US	Japan	ERF
Contribution	1,512,000	2,649,007	400,000	305,500	500,000
Total contribution	5,366,507				

Lessons Learnt

Project Approach

- ✓ The Project benefited from a solid theoretical background, as it goes in line with the “Investigating Grey Areas: Access to Basic Urban Services in the Adjacent Areas of Palestinian Refugee Camps in Lebanon” study. The following study “Profiling Deprivation: An Analysis of the Rapid Needs Assessment in Palestinian Gatherings Host Communities in Lebanon” also contributed to building knowledge, shedding additional light on the microcosm of the Gatherings and defining accurately the challenges faced by local communities.
- ✓ By changing the scope of work during project implementation, the JP linked local development issues to humanitarian response and answered immediate needs while investing time, funds and efforts in infrastructure projects, consequently upgrading the living conditions of local communities in a durable manner. It solved a number of sanitary, environmental and health problems by permanently improving BUS/WASH in many areas.
- ✓ By gathering all concerned actors around the implementation of tangible activities, the project indirectly involved local and national counterparts, especially municipalities, in very sensitive areas. This is considered as a first step to the recognition of the Gatherings as priority intervention zones. This also led to creating synergies between local stakeholders, namely municipalities and PCs, and triggered a reflection on their roles and responsibilities. In general, municipalities’ ownership in terms of infrastructure maintenance was high compared to municipalities involved in the “Improving Living Conditions in Palestinian Gatherings Host Communities” project, which shows that investing in coordination mechanisms has an influence on mentalities and gives tangible results in the mid-term.

Project Management

- ✓ Recruiting a project manager who was involved in the “Investigating Grey Areas” study and already familiar with the Gatherings’ context and stakeholders, had a positive impact on the efficiency and effectiveness of the project.
- ✓ By taking into consideration the changes that occurred in the Gatherings due to the arrival of PRS and modifying the project scope during implementation, the JP showed flexibility and adapted to real needs in addition to limiting financial and human resources loss.

Project Implementation and Partnerships

- ✓ By adopting an approach based on proximity and participation, the PT involved local stakeholders at all implementation stages, from needs assessment to follow-up on activities. By doing so, the team succeeded in a) accurately defining and answering the needs of new refugees and host communities, b) taking into consideration the political, security-related and social specificities of each microcosm, c) leading smoothly the required interventions, and d) building trust with and among stakeholders.
- ✓ The PT demonstrated flexibility and adapted the project to local needs, widening the scope of the interventions' scale and type. By doing so, the PT easily a) coordinated with other UNDP and UN-Habitat projects, as the on-going UNDP project “Improving Living Conditions in Palestinian Gatherings Host Communities” and the joint UNDP / UN-Habitat / UNIFIL project “Addressing Urban Hot Spots in Lebanon; b) secured financial support to the project through alternate funding, and c) efficiently coordinated with other partners and NGOs.
- ✓ The PT made the strategic decision to contract local NGOs, locally based companies or individual contractors to implement the activities which allowed a) lowering the cost of the projects, b) avoiding tensions between contractors, dwellers and refugees, and c) employing local labor and contributing to the improvement of the economic conditions of locals.
- ✓ The project addressed the concerns of both host communities in the gatherings and new refugees by implementing infrastructure projects which benefited both groups. By doing so, the project contributed to upgrading the living environments for the community as a whole and contributed to avoiding tensions between host communities and new refugees.

Recommendations

Partnerships

- ✓ LPDC is considered to be the main political umbrella for Palestinian affairs and has clear ambitions regarding its role in terms of knowledge building, policy-making and strategy design. However, LPDC requires additional human and financial support as well as a reinforcement of its role on a legislative level. In order to increase the chances of success of future projects, the PT could consider the possibility to involve, along with LPDC, other administratively solid institutions mandated to support refugees such as the Refugee Affairs Directorate at the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities (مديرية شؤون اللاجئين). The database that already exists at the Directorate could be further improved into a tool for development.
- ✓ By directly implementing tangible projects, the PT created and further strengthened synergies on the local level, setting a basis for efficient coordination mechanisms, mainly between municipalities and PCs, based on their common interests in the proposed activities. This is a methodological good practice that should be continued and/or replicated in further projects. It would also be beneficial to formalize this approach by a documented reflection on each stakeholder's role and responsibilities.
- ✓ As stated above, the division of tasks between UNDP and UN-Habitat has been blurred by the various changes that occurred during implementation (interruption of output1 and choice of the “learning by doing” method that brought modifications to outputs 2 and 4). It would be worth exploring, for future projects, the possibility of adding clarity to the division of tasks based on each agency's mission and knowledge.
- ✓ A number of interviewees believed that an information management system for coordinating response in the gatherings, such as that formed under the Gatherings Working Group should be devised. It should ideally seek to create synergies between actors in the Gatherings either on the strategic level or on the activity implementation level. For it to be efficient though, it should be reinforced with documented information and competent Human Resources.
- ✓ As the project focuses on the role of municipalities, working in decentralized cooperation mode in further projects would consolidate the urban planning initiative launched by the JP and convey expertise to Lebanese Municipalities. In order for this approach to be efficient though, it is necessary to research the field of low cost public services design, especially in the field of WASH and electricity.

Project design and implementation

- ✓ BUS infrastructure projects addressed the needs of both host communities and new refugees, which widened the spectrum of direct beneficiaries. This good practice needs to be reiterated, especially that some families or individuals from the host communities might be more vulnerable than the new refugees and might be more in need of support. A reflection on beneficiaries' vulnerability along with social inclusion could lead to addressing the frustration between host communities and new refugees. A discussion about this issue could be led jointly by the PT, the municipalities and the implementing NGOs.
- ✓ Focusing on public services interventions durably upgraded the living conditions of both host communities and new refugees. This approach can also be considered as good practice and is to be continued/ reiterated.
- ✓ As detailed above, municipalities were involved in the project by the PT, but their commitment was uneven, which shows that they are in need for more tangible incentives. Designing projects that would address the concerns of both the refugees and other local groups would be of more interest for the municipalities for political or social reasons and should lead to stronger ownership and guarantee future maintenance of infrastructures.
- ✓ As further support to municipalities and PCs in addressing local needs related to refugee host communities and new refugees, the results of the Rapid Needs Assessment should be further discussed and analysed with these partners. This should lead to the design and/or amendments of local development strategies or projects.
- ✓ The PRS can be defined as a “fluid population” that moves inside Lebanon depending on their needs and the opportunities they are offered. It is therefore crucial to maintain an adequate level of knowledge which can be achieved by regular update of available information gathered during the RNA. A “monthly Rapid Mapping” would contribute to continuously giving an overview of the PRS needs therefore defining future interventions in an accurate way.
- ✓ The RNA clearly identified labour as a priority. In order to enhance the living conditions in the Gatherings, further projects should examine the means to increase the income level of the local population through low cost/high return activities, for example, organic urban agriculture or recycling activities.

Communication

- ✓ Clarifying the scope of the project in relation to UNRWA's mandate, which restricts its BUS provision to the official camps, is recommended to correct any misconceptions.

- ✓ Local actors could be more involved in realizing the "big picture" they contribute to building in terms of strategy and information. Similarly for project's major activities such as the RNA or the GWG as well as LPDC's role. Equally informing NGOs, municipalities and UNRWA's local offices of these through regular half-day meetings would create an interaction between various regional stakeholders and between local and national level players. This would positively contribute to strategy definition and constantly put it to a test in a positive manner.