

EFFECTIVELY DEALING WITH THE SYRIAN REFUGEES' CRISIS IN LEBANON



Lebanon is facing major challenges because of the Syrian refugee crisis which is affecting a variety of sectors. Without a coordinated response that engages different actors, the crisis will only increase and the hardships on Lebanese and Syrians will unfortunately increase as well.

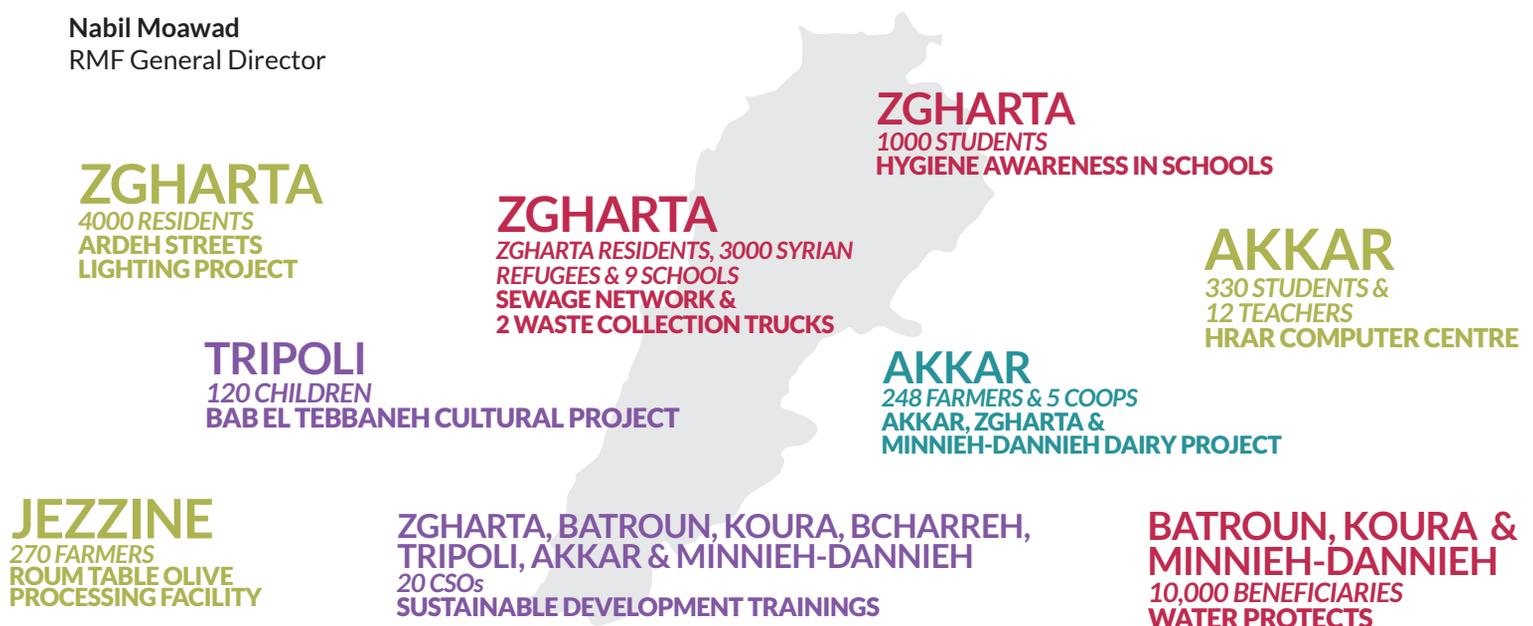
One of the biggest burdens that the Syrians have placed on Lebanon is the major strain on the already-deteriorating infrastructure of Lebanon, including transportation, solid waste, wastewater, water, and energy. For example, based on current estimates of Syrian and Lebanese population counts, Syrians are consuming almost 1/3rd of the electricity supply produced in Lebanon, and in many cases not paying for it. The Government should approach the international community and seek their support in compensating these costs by investing in infrastructure initiatives; i.e. Why not let them cover the cost of the power ships that are being procured to generate electricity for the EDL? To note very well here that the process of procuring, commissioning, operating and managing these ships should be handled by donors to ensure transparency and efficiency. This contribution will help support the Government in her ability to deal with other financial issues that have risen since the start of the crisis.

Major effort should be also put forth to coordinate between various actors involved in dealing with this crisis including Donors and International NGOs, the Government, Lebanese NGOs, and the refugees themselves. To be efficient in addressing challenges, relief or longer-term initiatives should be based on in-depth assessments and/or market studies. There needs to be recognition that only local NGOs possess a real understanding of what is happening, and that they can provide updated and accurate information as to what the priorities for any planned intervention.

Efforts should be lastly concentrated on the most urgent issues that have come out of the crisis: weakened economy and increased unemployment rate. Creating markets, boosting exports to donor countries through free zones, identifying non-Lebanese competitive opportunities to Syrians where they can work, developing educational packages that support both Syrians and Lebanese are all examples of initiatives that can help in creating jobs and contribute to the improvement of the economy.

If these three main points start to be addressed, we will begin to turn the misfortunes of this crisis around, and take advantage of the support that is being offered by international donors at this point in time.

Nabil Moawad
RMF General Director



● EDUCATION &
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

● ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT

● AGRICULTURE &
RURAL DEVELOPMENT

● HEALTH &
SOCIAL CARE

● LOCAL AUTHORITIES
& DECENTRALIZATION

LEADING THE WAY TO IMPACTFUL DECENTRALIZATION

The current structure and function of the Central Government in Lebanon inhibits decentralized decision-making, service provision, and local economic development. As a result, government's allocated scarce resources are not able to address the increasing needs of communities especially the ones hosting a large number of refugees, resulting in sub-standard public service. Pluralistic participation in local decision-making processes is also not encouraged, thus limiting the effectiveness of the services offered by local governments. Despite these facts, when proactive, resourceful, and capable mayors and municipal unions' leaders are found, and surround themselves with like-minded individuals from their local communities and with a little support, improvements in local infrastructure and service delivery can be remarkable!

The Rene Moawad Foundation has developed an innovative program for empowering municipalities through the Building Alliance for Local Advancement, Development and Investment (BALADI). Since 2012 and with funding from the United States Agency for International Development-USAID, BALADI has been supporting Lebanese citizens through enabling effective and empowered municipalities and a more vibrant local economy while promoting across environmental protection, gender mainstreaming and persons with disabilities' access and engagement. RMF has put in place a strong and highly qualified team to implement this large-scale program, and outsourced technical and geographic expertise to maximize the impact of BALADI's actions.

To date, RMF has been successfully supporting more than 30 municipal-led local development projects while engaging 64 municipalities and 73 local NGOs in the districts of Akkar, Minieh-Dinieh, Bcharreh, Zgharta, Koura, Jbeil, Keserwan, Batroun, Saida, Chouf, Jezzine, and Tripoli. These projects primarily meet the needs of host communities and vulnerable populations through income generation in agriculture/agri-business and eco-tourism, back-up electric power through solar energy generation, health services, infrastructure and public school improvement, and other socio-economic services. These projects are expected to benefit more than 175,000 persons by 2017.

Through BALADI, RMF is hoping to have placed the first cornerstone to effective decentralization in Lebanon.

Natasha Marashlian Saadeh
RMF BALADI Program Director



CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF COMMITMENT TO HELPING LEBANESE COMMUNITIES

The Rene Moawad Foundation celebrated its 25th Anniversary by hosting its first fundraising dinner in Lebanon on the 22nd of September 2016 to celebrate its mission in supporting the Lebanese community. The event titled "عاللبناني، تيبقى اللبناني بأرضو" was set in a beautiful authentic Lebanese night, bringing together the best genuine rustic cuisine from all over Lebanon in partnership with "Souk el Akel", as well as a showcasing of skills and talents from all Lebanese regions with a special performance from the well acclaimed Lebanese musician, composer, and pianist Guy Manoukian.



A NEW TABLE OLIVE PROCESSING FACILITY IN JEZZINE UNDER THE USAID BALADI PROGRAM

RMF celebrated the completion of the first Table Olive Processing Facility in Jezzine District (located in Roum village), funded by the USAID BALADI program and in partnership with the Union of Jezzine Municipalities. This assistance will increase fresh olive sales for 270 farmers in 28 villages of the Union and create 10 new jobs. Implemented by Rene Moawad Foundation, the USAID BALADI project, assisted the Municipality in constructing and equipping the facility in the amount of \$250,000, which will store, sort, and grade, process, and package table olives. The facility will produce various types of processed table olive products such as pickled green olives and black olives, tapenades, and pickled sliced olives which are in high demand in the local market.



RMF CELEBRATED THE COMPLETION OF THE EU FUNDED DAIRY PROJECT IN AKKAR

Within the framework of “Enhancing The Dairy Sector in North Lebanon” project, funded by the European Union, RMF distributed Dairy Milking Units and Milking Storage Tanks to agricultural cooperatives in Akkar and the North. The project aimed at improving the living conditions of 248 farmers and 5 animal production cooperatives in Northern Lebanon, from Akkar, Minnieh-Dannieh and Zgharta Al Zawia. The main objective of this project was to develop the dairy production sector in term of skills, so farmers can increase the quality and the quantity of their milk, allowing them to sell their product for a better price.



THE SUPPORTED COMPUTER CENTRE AT HRAR VILLAGE PUBLIC SCHOOL BENEFITS 30 STUDENTS AS WELL AS 42 TEACHERS

As digital literacy becomes increasingly important in the world, bridging the gap of computer literacy in rural areas and public schools has become a priority for public schools in Lebanon. With \$18,000 of USAID funds, Rene Moawad Foundation was able to equip the computer center in Hrar Secondary Public School with 30 new computers, software, installations, an LCD projector, and chairs. Since the activity completion, 330 students (of whom 210 are females) at Hrar Public School are benefiting on a weekly basis from learning computer skills. Additionally, 12 teachers from Hrar Public Secondary School and 30 other public school teachers from the region are benefiting twice a month from computer training at the newly equipped center.



INAUGURATION AND LAUNCHING OF 3 UNHCR FUNDED PROJECTS

Under the "WASH assistance for Syrians refugees and affected population in Tripoli (T5), North Lebanon" Program, RMF and the UNHCR inaugurated a new Water Reservoir in Qalhat, Koura and, completed a project to establish a sewer line in Siir Al Dunnyeh, as well as establishing a solid waste collection and sorting facility in Rasnhash, Batroun. More than 10,000 people will benefit from these projects.



NEW SUSTAINABLE LIGHTING OF STREETS IN ARDEH

Within the framework of the project "Towards sustainable energy consumption in communities selected from northern Lebanon" funded by the European Union and implemented by the Rene Moawad Foundation in Ardeh, Harf Ardeh, Beit Awkar and Beit Obeid, RMF completed the retrofitting of street lights and installation of photovoltaic systems in 6 different plazas to bring new and sustainable lighting to the Village of Ardeh and benefit 4,000 of its residents. These new energy efficient street lights will work to reduce the energy costs of these villages, as well as ensure that their streets are well-lit at night.



RMF CONCLUDES THE "SINGING FOR PEACE" PROJECT FUNDED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION AND IMPLEMENTED IN BAB EL TEBBANEH TO PROMOTE CULTURE

Within the framework of the "Singing for Peace" project, a project funded by the European Union and implemented by RMF in collaboration with the Italian ARCI association, RMF organized the closing ceremony for the project at the Education and Protection Services Centre that it runs in Bab El Tebbaneh, Tripoli. This project focused on improving understanding and dialogue among 60 Italian, 30 Syrian and 30 Lebanese children through culture promotion. The event included Breakdance performances, rap songs and the viewing of a video clip of a rap song performed by the students of the centre as part of the project's components.



HYGIENE AWARENESS IN 9 SCHOOLS IN ZGHARTA AND MEJDLAYA



According to the World Health Organization (WHO), "Hygiene refers to conditions and practices that help to maintain health and prevent the spread of diseases." Under the UN-OCHA LHF funded project, "Bringing Adequate Sanitation Infrastructure in Zgharta and Mejdlaya", RMF conducted various awareness sessions in 9 targeted schools in the mentioned towns. Moreover, informative booklets on Water, Sanitation and Hygiene along with sanitation kits were distributed by RMF team to 1000 students in the aim of raising awareness on good hygiene practices.

A VISIT BY A USAID TEAM TO THE BAROUK-FRAIDISS PATRIOTIC TRAIL

A team from USAID visited the Rashid Nakhle information and Cultural Center which was rehabilitated under the USAID BALADI program in 2015 and implemented by RMF. The team was introduced to the project's objectives, work and socio-economic/cultural benefits, in addition to its importance to the area. The project "Promoting Sustainable Tourism in the Shouf Region-Barouk-Fraidiss Patriotic trail" aims to promote sustainable tourism in the Shouf region through the rehabilitated Rashid Nakhleh center and developing hiking sites that present natural and historic attractions and activities in an eco-friendly manner.



TRAINING SESSIONS UNDER THE EU FUNDED PROJECT "ENHANCING CSOS IN THE NORTH AND AKKAR FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT"



RMF in collaboration with the University of Saint Joseph (USJ), organized various training sessions on Managerial Procedures, Volunteering Management, Human Resources Management and Project Cycle Management (PCM), all under the EU funded project "Enhancing CSOs in the North and Akkar for Sustainable Development". The trainings took place at the Foundation's premises in Mejdlaya and were attended by Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) from Tripoli, Zgharta, Koura, Becharre, Batroun, Minnieh, Dennieh and Akkar. "Enhancing CSOs in the North and Akkar for Sustainable Development" is a project implemented by RMF, in partnership with the Lebanese School for Social Training, out of USJ and aims to build the capacity of 20 Lebanese Civil Society Organizations in the fields of management, human resources, financial management, administration, project development, proposal writing, stakeholder engagement and much more.

WASH THROUGH SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT AND IMPROVED INFRASTRUCTURE

The Rene Moawad Foundation provided the Municipality of Zgharta with two waste collection trucks, and launched a project for establishing a sewage network in Mejdlaya, both funded by the UNOCHA - Lebanon Humanitarian Fund. This activity falls within the framework of the 'Bringing Adequate Sanitation Infrastructure in Zgharta and Mejdlaya' project, funded by the United Nations Office of Coordination for Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA - Lebanon Humanitarian Fund) and benefits the resident's of the 2 villages in addition to 3640 refugees and 9 schools. The trucks will allow for an increased and improved solid waste collection by the municipality, and the sewage network will help ensure that wastewater is properly channeled to a wastewater processing facility, instead of running into local streams and rivers, contaminating water sources.



TESTIMONIAL

"Through USAID BALADI project and Rene Moawad Foundation, the improved irrigation canal system in Bazbina allows us to save water, control water flow, and have water directed to our fields to irrigate more crops" said Ward el Ward, a farmer in Bazbina as he recalled the hardship farmers went through the past years from severe irrigation water shortage due to drought and additional demand on water.



RECEIPT OF HONORARY SHIELDS

RMF was honored recently with two awards from the Mayors of two villages in which RMF has implemented projects in the last year through RMF's work with the UNHCR. These awards are a symbol and recognition of the gratitude that the people of these two villages feel for the improvements made in their lives by the work of RMF. The mayor of the village of Syr presented an honorary shield to the executive director of the Rene Moawad Foundation, Mr. Michel Moawad, thanking him for the new wastewater pipeline that has connected houses to the sewage system, and additionally has benefited other surrounding villages by connecting them to the network as well. The mayor of Qalhat presented an honorary shield to RMF, for the establishment of a new water reservoir which will allow the towns Lebanese and Syrian refugee populations to have better access to water.



RMF IN BRIEF

The Rene Moawad Foundation (RMF) is a Lebanese non-profit, non-governmental organization working to improve the lives of all Lebanese people across the country. RMF was established in 1991, in the memory of President Rene Moawad who was assassinated on November 22nd 1989, in order to carry on his vision of a progressive, modern and peaceful Lebanon, which embraces the values of democracy, human rights, moderation and pluralism.

RMF's mission is to empower people in Lebanon and guarantee their dignity and basic rights while building their capacities as responsible citizens; this is accomplished through various projects in sectors like education, agricultural development, economic development, health and social care, and local authority development. RMF works with international donors such as USAID, the EU, UNHCR, and UNICEF to implement projects benefiting people across Lebanon.



RENÉ MOAWAD FOUNDATION
مؤسسة رينه معوض