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Social cohesion between Syrian Refugees and Urban Host Communities in Lebanon and Jordan

Disaster Management

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Acknowledgements

About the author

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A conflict analyst and social scientist by trade and humanitarian technologist by nature, Joe has completed analysis work on projects in South Sudan (2011), the Ebola response (2014), the Nepal earthquake response (2015) and mixed migration in the Horn of Africa region (2015). In 2015 he presented his research at the US Geospatial Intelligence Foundation GEOINT 2015, at UNHCR's NGO Consultations, at Oxford's Humanitarian Innovation Conference 2015 and at a Business for Disaster Management (B4DM) roundtable in Kenya. He can be reached at j.guay@neu.edu and followed @JosephGuay1 on Twitter.

About the Social Cohesion team and project

The Social Cohesion team is composed of World Vision staff Maya Assaf-Horstmeier, Aline Rahbany and Brett Moore as well as research consultant Joseph Guay. The Social Cohesion project – an action-research project commissioned by World Vision, explores the causes and consequences of tensions between refugees and host communities to propose better short and longer term solutions for humanitarian and development programming in the Middle East region and other similar contexts.

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Preface

World Vision's Middle East and Eastern Europe Region (MEER) is committed to improving programming impact and building evidence across the region. MEER's Urban Learning Hub partnered with World Vision's internal change initiative, Disaster Management 2020[1] and the Urban Centre of Expertise to investigate and document the current literature and practice associated with social cohesion programming, particularly within the Syrian refugee context.

This literature review clearly demonstrates that social cohesion is a critical yet under-researched and under-developed area of humanitarian and development programming. With the increasing number of conflicts and the large-scale movement of refugees arising from the Syrian civil war and overall political insecurity in the Middle East, this review highlights the importance of social cohesion and also the sparsity of proven approaches, methodologies and tools to adequately address and promote social cohesion. Social cohesion is an area worthy of further investment and engagement by World Vision.

Clare Seddon, Field Support Director,
Fragile and Conflict Prone States
Middle East and Eastern Europe Region

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[1] DM2020 is a change initiative within World Vision's Humanitarian and Emergency Affairs section, which aims at increasing World Vision's disaster management capabilities in urban and conflict contexts, with a particular emphasis on the needs of children.

Executive Summary

After more than four years of civil war, the Syrian conflict has generated massive protracted displacement of over four million refugees, the majority of whom reside in non-camp and/or urban settings in countries such as Lebanon and Jordan.[2] In Lebanon, for example, since 2010 more than one million Syrian refugees have arrived, contributing to a situation of rapid, unsustainable urbanisation in an already vulnerable and fragile context.[3]

This poses new and diverse challenges to authorities, humanitarian actors and receiving host communities, who – in addition to refugees and IDPs themselves – are struggling to adjust to long-term social, economic and demographic shifts and pressures associated with displacement.[4]

One such challenge is how to foster social cohesion and mitigate rising social tensions between refugees and host communities in these non-camp, urban contexts. Tensions have emerged between refugee and host communities and between local communities and administrative authorities. In the case of Lebanon and Jordan, this is described as leading to a potential tipping point. In an effort to protect and enhance the somewhat fragile stability in both countries, key strategic objectives have been identified in this report for national, international and local stakeholders.[5]

This literature review aims to demonstrate that social cohesion (defined loosely as the nature and set of relationships between individuals and groups and between those groups and the institutions that govern them in a particular environment) matters for humanitarian action.

Studies show that rising social tensions between communities have the potential to generate secondary conflict in host countries. Access to basic goods and services and livelihood opportunities are also influenced by social tensions. As tensions rise, for example, isolation becomes an unfortunate coping mechanism for displaced populations – keeping women at home and children out of school. With economic competition leading to frustration, scapegoating and discrimination, access to equitable employment opportunities decreases among refugee men. This may also contribute to domestic violence, drug abuse and participation in radical collective action and crime.

These challenges call for new, more holistic approaches to humanitarian response and serves as the basis for World Vision International's Social Cohesion research initiative.[6]

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[2] In Lebanon, for example, since 2010 more than a million Syrian refugees have arrived, contributing to a situation of rapid, unsustainable urbanisation in an already vulnerable and fragile context UNHCR information portal, accessed February 12, 2015.

[3] UNHCR information portal, accessed February 12, 2015.

[4] Urban internally displaced people (IDPs) and refugees share a number of vulnerabilities with poorer segments of society, including loss of assets, insecure housing, limited social networks, lack of access to public services, and exposure to violence and crime.

[5] World Vision, *Under Pressure*. Recent assessments show a high level of support within host communities for discriminatory policies and collective action against refugees, with young males particularly at risk of engaging in conflict. See Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP) 2015-16 (Interagency and Government of Lebanon, December 2014), for example.

[6] The Social Cohesion research initiative is established through World Vision's Disaster Management 2020 (DM2020) strategic change program and in collaboration with the Middle East and Eastern Europe Regional Office, with a focus on urban refugee communities in Lebanon and Jordan that are recipients of Syrian refugees. The research team is led by independent consultant Joseph Guay and supported by Aline Rahbany, Urban Programming Advisor – Centre of Expertise for Urban Programming Maya Assaf, Technical Advisor to Conflict and Brett Moore, Shelter and Infrastructure Technical Advisor.

As the first step in a multi-year action-learning project, this systematic literature review discusses the problem of rising social tensions between Syrian refugees and urban host communities in Lebanon and Jordan. It explores why the investigation into the causes and consequences of these tensions is integral for humanitarian and development programming in the region. The review also provides an analysis of key studies on social cohesion and social tensions in the region, and evaluates existing approaches to social cohesion and its variants in regional, national and organisational strategic frameworks.

We are therefore concerned with answering the following set of questions:[7]

1. How are matters of social cohesion in urban settings in Lebanon and Jordan currently understood?

2. How are matters of social cohesion currently operationalised in the context of the Syria response?

Our meta scan of the research landscape has revealed that the main drivers of social tensions include structural causes that predate the Syrian crisis (such as high levels of poverty, resource scarcity and lack of municipal capacity to deliver basic services), socio-economic causes (for example differences in religious, cultural and social norms between refugee and host communities), and proximate causes (decreasing access to affordable quality housing, economic competition regarding jobs and the role of international aid in terms of perceptions of fairness, equity and corruption).

Importantly, people's perceptions of key issues matters. This includes how humanitarian aid is delivered and to whom – matters of equity of access, fairness of targeting and distribution, quality, appropriateness, and quantity.

Social, local and international media also play strong roles in the exacerbation of tensions if issues are framed in ways that blame or target minority communities. This suggests that humanitarian organisations and government need to think how their response and treatment of those in need is inextricably linked to community dynamics, and may inadvertently catalyse frictions, escalate tensions and increase negative perceptions of assistance.

Tentative recommendations suggest that relevant humanitarian agencies, civil society groups and national governments should adopt cross-sector, area-based approaches that support, work through and ultimately empower a range of local actors. These approaches should also include both refugee and host communities in the design and implementation of equitable solutions to alleviate tensions, communicate better with refugee and host communities to improve transparency and accountability, and liaise with community leadership and security officials to resolve disputes and settle tensions arising from service provision access and economic competition.

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[7] Specific questions generated by the World Vision team leading this research initiative include: (1) What are the factors (proximate, structural, systemic; direct and indirect) that contribute to social cohesion/social stability? (2) How do humanitarian relief efforts impact or influence social cohesion (with regard to both positive and negative externalities)? (3) What are the current mechanisms/organisational approaches for addressing social cohesion? (4) What are the conceptual and methodological gaps in the tools, frameworks, and approaches that address social cohesion?

However, our findings suggest that more work needs to be done to understand matters of social cohesion between refugee and host communities in crisis settings.

A number of methodological and conceptual limitations hinder current research on social cohesion in Lebanon and Jordan. Social cohesion (and its variants) remains poorly defined and operationalised leading to lack of clarity and misuse of the concept.

Sampling methods used for site selection (geographic units of which to draw cross-sectional correlations) yielded little co-variation by which to explore causal relationships. Cross sectional snapshots dominated the research, leaving little room for temporal variation (pre-test/post-test or longitudinal designs). Little analytical layering of structural and more proximate drivers of tensions (for example overlaying data on water scarcity with *perceptions of scarcity within different groups*) meant little analytical granularity.

Unfortunately, these limitations led to research that has perpetuated sector-based thinking and vague or ambiguous recommendations.

More research, better tools and frameworks and clearer advocacy are needed for humanitarian actors like World Vision to better understand and engage with social cohesion in urban, protracted conflict settings such as Lebanon and Jordan. We recommend the following:

Humanitarian agencies need to strengthen social cohesion research

This calls for:
 (a) Developing shared definitions and measuring instruments of social cohesion
 (b) Testing multivariate models on the drivers of social tensions
 (c) Conducting more long-term research
 (d) Highlighting positive case studies
 (e) Investigating the role of faith on social cohesion, social networks and spiritual capital and bridging mechanisms, and;
 (f) Paying more attention to how a lack of social cohesion affects groups such as youth, women, children and men differently.

Test, improve and build tools

Humanitarian organisations should examine a variety of context analysis tools to see to what extent they are able to measure social tensions between refugee and host communities in Lebanon and Jordan. Where collection, analysis and visualisation tools are found to be inappropriate, new ones should be designed to fill gaps identified in this study.

Mainstream social cohesion in humanitarian response strategies and operational plans

This literature review provides a methodology for assessing strategic and operational frameworks against social cohesion in the Syrian response. Aid organisations (World Vision in

particular) can and should draw on expertise from external communities of practice focused on issues such as conflict sensitivity, economic development, resilience and livelihoods in order to adequately address social cohesion in disaster management work in Lebanon and Jordan. These efforts can and should be codified into current organisational mandates and strategies.

This report is intended for humanitarian practitioners who are investigating the importance of matters of conflict resolution, peace-building and community-based resilience in complex emergencies in urban, non-camp settings. It is also useful for development and/or peace-building practitioners who increasingly find that issues traditionally associated with the humanitarian space (displacement, for example) are closely related to development and peace building agendas. Social cohesion is truly a cross-cutting area that brings with it opportunities for more successful convergence and partnerships between humanitarian and development practitioners than has previously been achieved.

This paper is organised into the following sections:

> **1. Background:** What is social cohesion and why is it important for humanitarian, development and peace-building practitioners in urban, non-camp, complex-emergency settings? What follows is an orientation to the nature of the problem and a brief articulation of potential consequences of diminishing social cohesion in humanitarian settings.

> **2. Understanding social cohesion:** How is social cohesion between refugee and host communities currently understood in urban, non-camp settings in Lebanon and Jordan? This section reviews 15 key initiatives that seek to quantify social tensions between Syrian refugees and host communities and determine the primary drivers of these tensions. The section reviews attempts to articulate the drivers of tensions and aggregates a set of themes and findings on social cohesion. It also highlights conceptual and methodological gaps in current efforts to capture social cohesion in Lebanon and Jordan, which may pose challenges for humanitarians engaging with matters of social cohesion between refugee and host communities.

> **3. Engaging social cohesion:** How is the humanitarian community (international organisations, host country governments and municipalities, international and local non-government organisations) currently engaging with social cohesion? This section provides a brief overview of regional, national and organisational strategies for engagement on the issue of social cohesion (sometimes articulated as "stability") in Lebanon and Jordan.

> **4. Recommendations:** We then conclude with recommendations focused on the need for mainstreaming social cohesion in protracted conflict-affected urban settings and the design of appropriate tools for doing so.

Background

What is social cohesion?

A major drawback to the literature assessed in this desk review is the *absence* of a widely-held, theoretically derived, clearly articulated and reasonably operationalised definition of social cohesion and its constitutive and relational dimensions. It therefore makes sense to adopt a working definition of social cohesion as pertaining to refugee-host community contexts before proceeding. Such a definition is derived from the World Vision Social Cohesion research initiative team concept note as well as a cursory adaptation of key literature on the subject.

In this study, social cohesion is loosely defined as the nature and set of relationships between individuals and groups in a particular environment (horizontal social cohesion) and between those individuals and groups and the institutions that govern them in a particular environment (vertical social cohesion).[8] Strong, positive, integrated relationships and inclusive identities are perceived as indicative of high social cohesion, whereas weak, negative or fragmented relationships and exclusive identities are taken to mean low social cohesion. Social cohesion is therefore a multi-faceted, scalar concept.

Matters of social cohesion are constituted of often changing and multiple identities. For example, along the lines of political, religious, ethnic or social affiliation. Social cohesion also requires understanding social networks – complex webs of interconnected relationships internal to groups (known as bonding) and between groups (known as bridging).[9] Conceptually close concepts also include social capital, social networks and social stability. Indicators of social cohesion – although not yet widely held and agreed upon – involve aspects of personal, political and developmental human security, trust in institutions, satisfaction and participation in civic life (within groups), and measures of intergroup perceptions, perceived threats and social distance and/or inter-group contact (between groups).

Our study is also concerned with situations of deteriorating or low social cohesion. In this regard, we are interested in conceptually close concepts (and manifestations of low social cohesion) such as social tensions, social instability and social fragmentation. These can be measured using indicators like frequency of violent inter-group incidences (harassment, bullying, discrimination, isolation) or communication of negative feelings (negative stereotypes, scapegoating, intergroup anxiety, perceptions of threat).

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[8] This working definition is derived from the following: *Predicting Peace: The Social Cohesion and Reconciliation Index as a Tool for Conflict Transformation* (UNDP, USAID, and Seed: 2015); REACH, "Understanding Social Cohesion and Resilience in Jordanian Host Communities: Assessment Report" (June 2014); Mercy Corps, "Analysis of Host Community-Refugee Tensions in Mafraq, Jordan (October 2012); Mercy Corps, "Mapping of Host Community-Refugee Tensions in Mafraq and Ramtha, Jordan," (May 2013).

[9] See Eveliina Lyytinen and Janosch Kullenberg, "Urban Refugee Research and Social Capital: A Roundtable Report and Literature Review (International Rescue Committee (IRC) and Women's Refugee Commission (WRC): February 2013).

Why social cohesion in urban settings?

After more than four years of civil war, the Syrian conflict has generated massive protracted displacement of more than seven million internally displaced and over four million refugees, the majority of who reside in non-camp and/or urban settings in countries like Lebanon and Jordan. This poses new and diverse challenges to authorities, humanitarian actors and receiving host communities who (in addition to refugees and IDPs themselves) are struggling to adjust to long-term social, economic and demographic shifts, and pressures associated with displacement.

In Lebanon, for example, since 2010 more than a million Syrian refugees have arrived, contributing to a situation of rapid, unsustainable urbanisation in an already vulnerable and fragile context.[10] This situation has exacerbated existing vulnerabilities and increased pressure on provision of basic urban services on under-funded and under-equipped local municipalities.[11]

Because the urban context is characterised by complex, fluid, diverse and interconnected communities, underlying structural vulnerabilities can intensify inequality, resource scarcity, competition, social conflict and protection challenges during crises.[12] Therefore it is no surprise that tensions have emerged between refugee and host communities and between local communities and those who administer them. In the case of Lebanon and Jordan, this is described as leading to a potential tipping point[13] and is pushing the protection and enhancement of a somewhat fragile stability into key strategic objectives identified by national, international and local stakeholders.[14]

Matters of social cohesion are therefore critical for humanitarian action in protracted conflict settings.

Rising social tensions (decreasing social cohesion) between communities have the potential to generate a secondary conflict in host countries. A 2015 International Alert report focusing exclusively on the impact of Syrian refugees on security threat perceptions in Lebanon[15] illustrates that Lebanese nationals are concerned about becoming victims of crime, risk of falling into poverty, threats to sectarian balance, service shortages, radicalisation of refugees and increasing terrorism. In some cases, tensions, resentment, animosity, hostility and frustration have already manifested into physical forms of violence toward refugees. This includes scapegoating, harassment, discrimination, demonstrations, protests, road blockages, curfews and

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[10] UNHCR information portal, accessed February 12, 2015.
[11] See DFID "Humanitarian Response to Urban Crises" workshop report (July 2014); and Mercy Corps Policy Brief, "Engaging Municipalities in the Response to the Syria Refugee Crisis in Lebanon," (March 2014).
[12] Donald Brown, Camillo Boano, Cassidy Johnson, Janani Vivekananda, and Julian Walker, "Urban Crises and Humanitarian Responses: A Literature Review" (University Collect London: April 2015); Giovanna Federici, Nuno Nunes, Jorn C. Owere, and Kim Roberson, "Urban Displacement & Outside of Camp: Desk Review" (CCCM Cluster, UNHCR, IOM, NORCAP/NRC: January 2014).
[13] World Vision, "Under Pressure". Recent assessments show a high level of support within host communities for discriminatory policies and collective action against refugees, with young males particularly at risk of engaging in conflict.
[14] See Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP) 2015-16 (Interagency and Government of Lebanon, December 2014), for example.
[15] International Alert, "Citizens' Perceptions of Security Threats Stemming from the Syrian Refugee Presence in Lebanon,", (Background Paper | February 2015).

vandalism.[16] These forms of violence increase vulnerability and hinders the enjoyment of public city spaces and reduces mobility within the city, further compromising social cohesion.

Rising tensions and secondary violence also have consequences on equitable access to public spaces, urban governance, basic services, livelihood opportunities and humanitarian and development assistance. For example, as tensions rise, so too does isolation of refugee families from the fabric of urban social life. Syrian women, preferring to avoid harassment or negative stereotyping in public spaces, remain at home – an unfortunate coping mechanism that reduces access to social capital in the community. Children are also adversely affected, as families prefer *not* to send their children to school for fear of discrimination or harassment (which in turn increases segregation and furthers social tensions). As frustration and scapegoating become common, discrimination may reduce access to employment and livelihood opportunities for young Syrian refugee men. This may increase domestic violence, drug abuse and participation in radical collective action in this demographic.

It is also widely held that humanitarian and development interventions can directly or indirectly contribute to increased tensions in the communities, as poorly planned aid can contribute to increased divisions between competing groups, undermine local conflict resolution institutions, and exacerbate power inequities.[17] In urban environments, where displaced communities often reside alongside the non-displaced (but in many ways are equally vulnerable) urban poor, and where complex, heavily monetised systems mean health, education, housing and food are deeply embedded in market systems, response efforts can no longer be "sector" or "beneficiary" centric.[18]

Such narrow approaches may actually *increase* social tensions when humanitarians fail to recognise linkages, multiplier effects and potential negative externalities of singularly-focused programming, such as providing rental grants that drive up rental prices and inadvertently impact poor Lebanese households. In such contexts, ineffective or inaccurate targeting and distribution of humanitarian assistance could actually reinforce existing inequalities, intensifying competition between social groups.[19]

Finally, humanitarian organisations operating in Lebanon and Jordan may need to engage with social cohesion if they wish to remain relevant because social cohesion (or stability) has been

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[16] Mercy Corps, "Analysis of Host Community-Refugee Tensions"; Mercy Corps, "Mapping of Host Community-Refugee Tensions,"; CARE International, "Inter-Community Relations: A Study of the Impact of the Syrian Refugee Influx on the Lebanese Host Community and its Repercussions on the Social Cohesion Contexts North and Mount Lebanon: T5 and Chouf", (March 2015); Mercy Corps, "Things Fall Apart: Political, Economic, and Social Instability in Lebanon" (June 2013); International Alert, "Security Threat Perceptions in Lebanon" (Background paper | November 2014); International Alert, "Citizens' Perceptions,"; L7 CVE Lab, "Drivers of Instability, Conflict, and Radicalization: a snapshot from Akkar (January 2015); International Crisis Group, "Too Close for Comfort: Syrians in Lebanon" (May 2013).

[17] Tim Midgley and Michelle Garred, "Bridging the Participation Gap: Developing Macro Level Conflict Analysis Through Local Perspectives," (World Vision International Policy and Practice Paper, 2013).

[18] Brown, et. al., 30. The livelihoods security model (adapted by Sanderson, et al in 2012) illustrates the complex systemic relationship between resources, basic needs, people, assets, and shocks and stresses in urban contexts, and understanding resources and access to those resources in terms of urban infrastructure and markets will allow for communities to build both resilience and capacity.

[19] Ibid; see also Federici et. al.; Lyytinen and Kullenberg; Huma Gupta, "Home Sweet Home: housing practices and tools that support durable solutions for urban IDPs" (MIT Displacement Research Action Network (DRAN) and Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC): March 2015); and NRC, "A Precarious Existence: The Shelter Situation of Refugees From Syria in Neighbouring Countries" (June 2014).

articulated as a strategic *priority* in regional and national response plans, either as a goal itself (to achieve social cohesion or national "stability") or as a means to another end. Social cohesion, for example, has been operationalised in the Lebanon response plan as a tool for participatory planning processes for education interventions or for expanding local employment and market opportunities.[20]

For example, social cohesion has been operationalised in the Lebanon National Response Plan with funding requirements of $157.3 million to target 242 vulnerable communities throughout 2014-16. This includes the establishment of its very own sector working group in the Lebanon response with dedicated resources and capacity for mitigating tensions, preventing future conflict and mainstreaming matters of social cohesion across other sectors.

Additionally, social cohesion is a key strategic priority in Jordan's national plan, explicitly in the programming of sectors – particularly local governance/municipal services and social protection, as well as the housing (in urban settings), employment and livelihoods, education and WASH sectors.[21]

Consideration of social cohesion for partnering organisations, then, seems like a minimum requirement for relevant refugee programming in urban contexts. Yet research on exactly how to leverage social cohesion for humanitarian action remains thin. Social capital and social networks, for example, are acknowledged to be one of "the most important factors in determining an individual's success or failure," in urban settings, but the "potential to leverage social capital and networks within urban refugee communities…remains unexploited," for humanitarian action.[22]

Opportunities exist. New research suggests that "refugee economies" can positively contribute to their environments, generating vibrant, thriving economic systems and that humanitarian programming could "unlock ways to enable those economic systems to be channelled to the benefit of refugees, host states, and donors..."[23]

Education provides another opportunity. Conflict disrupts teacher education systems, destroys physical infrastructure and promotes a culture of violence that impacts classroom pedagogy, contributing to poor quality of teaching and learning. But education, when available, can also influence governance by enabling an informed citizenry, a sense of inclusiveness and economic equality – all of which can reduce political instability and cyclical violence.[24]

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[20] The government of Lebanon, for example, is especially concerned about an already "fragile stability," especially in the most vulnerable and deprived parts of the country. Social cohesion, for the LCRP, is therefore all about the achievement of stabilisation. In fact, according to the plan, "stabilisation, in the context of the LCRP means strengthening national capacities to address long-term poverty and social tensions while also meeting humanitarian needs," (LCRP, page 4).

[21] According to the Jordan National Resilience Plan 2014-16" (Government of Jordan Host Country Support Platform and United Nations, May 2014) (the NRP), "Issues of social cohesion will gain in ascendency as the protracted and escalating nature of the crisis becomes more apparent with the passage of time. All NRP sectors have been tasked to give consideration to how their response interventions mitigate the prospect of increased tensions between Syrian refugees and their Jordanian hosts. From a conflict-sensitive perspective, the design, implementation and management of interventions can constructively build trust and understanding between communities.

[22] Lyytinen and Kullenberg, 17.

[23] Betts, Alexander, Louise Bloom, Josiah Kaplan, and Naohiko Omata, "Refugee Economies: Rethinking Popular Assumptions" (Humanitarian Innovation Project, University of Oxford, June 2014)."

[24] Dryden-Peterson, S. (Forthcoming). Policies for education in conflict and post-conflict reconstruction. Handbook of Global Policy-Making in Education (Eds. Karen Mundy, Andy Green, Robert Lingard, Antoni Verger). Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell.,(forthcoming)

Such "upstream" thinking should inform evidence-based design of humanitarian programming, especially in fragile host community contexts where addressing social tensions remain a priority. Employing social cohesion as an approach to humanitarian action presents the opportunity to revise existing World Vision frameworks and to mobilise expertise cooperatively across urban, peace-building and development disciplines of practice. Getting it right through innovative approaches could alleviate secondary violence and discrimination, help scale down the negative externalities of the refugee crisis, make humanitarian organisations more operationally effective and empower local communities by building capacities, governance, local ownership and ultimately resilience. As a first step, in the next section we turn to efforts made to understand matters of social cohesion in between refugee and host communities in Lebanon and Jordan.

Understanding Social Cohesion in Lebanon and Jordan

How is social cohesion between refugee and host communities in Lebanon and Jordan currently understood? We begin by examining 15 key initiatives[25] that seek to quantify matters of social cohesion between Syrian refugees and host communities to determine the primary drivers thought to be contributing to tensions in light of the Syrian crisis.

This section will also examine social stability/instability, social tensions, social fragmentation and other indicators related to social cohesion. Key thematic contributions of these reports as well as aggregated recommendations are discussed. Finally, we highlight conceptual and methodological gaps and errors in current efforts to capture social cohesion in Lebanon and Jordan, which may pose challenges for humanitarians engaging with matters of social cohesion between refugee and host communities in urban settings.

In the sections that follow, a variety of non-academic reports, assessments, policy frameworks and operational tools were reviewed. Using a semi-systematic method based on both search terms as well as collaborative decision-making, a list of humanitarian and development organisations, UN programs, academic research facilities, think tanks, knowledge platforms (such as Relief Web) and community portals (such as ALNAP's Urban Humanitarian Response Portal) was generated. This list included over 50 entries.

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[25] REACH, "Evaluating the Effect of the Syrian Refugee Crisis on Stability and Resilience in Jordanian Host Communities: Preliminary Impact Assessment" (January 2014); REACH, "Understanding Social Cohesion"; REACH, "Perceptions of External Support in Jordanian Communities Hosting Syrian Refugees: Thematic Assessment Report" (June 2014); Mercy Corps, "Analysis of Host Community-Refugee Tensions"; Mercy Corps, "Mapping of Host Community-Refugee Tensions,"; CARE International, "Inter-Community Relations: A Study of the Impact of the Syrian Refugee Influx on the Lebanese Host Community and its Repercussions on the Social Cohesion Contexts North and Mount Lebanon: T5 and Chouf" (March 2015); Charles Harb and Rim Saab, "Social Cohesion and Intergroup Relations: Syrian Refugees and Lebanese Nationals in the Bekaa and Akkar," American University of Beirut and Save the Children (2014); Mercy Corps, "Things Fall Apart: Political, Economic, and Social Instability in Lebanon" (June 2013); International Alert, "Security Threat Perceptions in Lebanon" (Background paper | November 2014); International Alert, "Citizens' Perceptions,"; L7 CVE Lab, "Drivers of Instability, Conflict, and Radicalization: a snapshot from Akkar (January 2015); International Crisis Group, "Too Close for Comfort: Syrians in Lebanon" (May 2013). Berneis, Nora and Julia Bartl, "Understanding the Heightening Syrian Refugee Crisis and Lebanon's Political Polarization," *Carthage Research Series* (January 2013). Search for Common Ground, "Dialogue and Local Response Mechanisms to Conflict Between Host Communities and Syrian Refugees in Lebanon," (May 2014)

The author then accessed websites of the listed organisations and databases to collect sources thematically (social cohesion, social tensions, stability, etc.) or geographically (i.e. Lebanon and Jordan) related to matters of social cohesion (or concepts conceptually close to social cohesion as discussed below) for humanitarian actors in protracted, conflict-affected, urban settings as defined by the World Vision Social Cohesion research team. This means matters related to social cohesion in urban settings *not necessarily* in the Lebanon and Jordan context were initially included, as well as publications dealing with either social cohesion *or* humanitarian response in urban settings in the Syria region. The author also gained access to World Vision's internal reports, guidance frameworks and data collection and assessment tools that might be relevant for social cohesion (again, as defined below).

A preliminary database of over 625 sources was identified, and sources were narrowed down to 66 prioritised documents through the processes of:
1. Preliminary screening of article title, abstract and executive summaries;
2. Collaborative decision making (with the Social Cohesion research team but also through conference calls and emails with identified thought leaders on the subject), and;
3. Manual reverse chaining to identify the most commonly cited sources.

This literature review is not meant to be an exhaustive study, but rather a guiding framework for approaching social cohesion in humanitarian emergency response settings. Put differently, this review is a scan of current and ongoing studies, policies, projects and tools that can be used to make decisions on how to mobilise best practices, where such practices exist, and address identified gaps.

For each report, we used the following questions as a guiding framework for assessment and evaluation:

1. What is the goal of the research? What hypothesis is being tested, if any?
2. How is social cohesion (stability/instability or tensions) defined? How is it measured?
3. What is the context of the research? (Level of analysis, geographical location, type of environment – for example urban or rural?)
4. How was the context chosen? (Sampling methodology or case selection method?)
5. What kind of data was collected (qualitative or quantitative) and how (surveys, interviews, focus groups)?
6. What are the key findings/contributions and recommendations?
7. What are the methodological and conceptual gaps (if any)?

Drivers of social tensions in Lebanon and Jordan

From the 15 studies assessed in this section, drivers of tensions between refugee and host communities include:

Structural causes:
1. Structural vulnerabilities that pre-date the Syrian crisis, such as high levels of poverty, resource scarcity, lack of effective governing institutions (or support for institutions).

Socio-economic causes:
2. Differences in religious, cultural and social norms between refugee and host communities and lack of social networks.

Proximate causes:
3. Access, affordability and quality of housing (rapidly rising rental prices, poor quality of living conditions and the perception of exploitation).
4. Economic competition over jobs (formal and informal employment) and livelihood opportunities.
5. Access to and quality of basic education (concerns of overcrowded classrooms and lack of quality or access) and basic public goods and services (such as water and electricity, solid waste collection, healthcare).
6. The role of international aid (in terms of perceptions of fairness of distribution, availability and perceptions of inequity, unfairness and even corruption).
7. The role of social, local and international media and the framing of issues.

In addition to highlighting a wealth of drivers of social tensions in the region, the reports, when taken together as a whole, yield interesting thematic insights across the board.

Timing and level of analysis matter

The studies recognise that while some factors pre-date the Syrian refugee crisis (so-called "structural vulnerabilities"), other factors are the result of demographic shifts driven by massive displacement (so-called "proximate factors" or "core issues," such as resource scarcity and economic competition). Furthermore, there are other factors that enable or perpetuate social tensions (so-called "exacerbating" or "de-stabilising" factors, like the role of media or the politicisation of external security events). Such conceptualisations are critical for identifying potential entry points for mitigating or diffusing tensions.

In Jordan, socio-economic factors (poverty) and pressures on public services (as a result of demographic shifts) are prioritised as "core" issues in the literature. Safety and security, unemployed youth and the perception of the negative role of the media are also mentioned as destabilising conditions.[26] In Lebanon, competition over resources such as housing accommodation and economic competition, lack of access to quality education and the role of international aid are seen as core drivers of tension. Shortages in water and electricity, diminishing quality of public services, rising inflation, differences in social norms, the negative role of the media and lack of social networks between communities were mentioned as exacerbating factors.[27]

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[26] REACH, "Evaluating the Effect," 8.
[27] Mercy Corps, "Things Fall Apart."

History and context are crucial

In Lebanon, past events, sectarian and political identities, the role of the media, and profile of a particular geographic region (such as degree of urbanisation, proximity to Occupied Palestinian Territories or Syria, or concentration of majority demographic within a community), socio-economic status and gender differences account for variance in level of perceived security threats over time.[28] That the vast majority of Syrian refugees arriving to Lebanon are Sunnis, for example, has consequences for how Lebanese might hold perceptions of risks to their delicate confessional balance, especially because communities tend to be highly homogenous along sectarian lines.

In Jordan, too, historical, political, cultural and religious contexts play a powerful role, although arguably less so compared to Lebanon.

A 2013 comparative case study by Mercy Corps illustrates how the Mafraq and Ramtha districts of Jordan experienced different levels of social tensions between refugee and host communities due to factors such as pre-crisis economy and geographic, historic, cultural, tribal and religious ties between Jordanians and Syrians. For example, the close connections between Ramtha and the Syrian district of Dara'a, in comparison to Mafraq, have "served to soften relations between refugees and host communities." Where cultural and tribal differences were less pronounced, host residents were less likely to blame Syrian refugees for their problems.[29]

Social cohesion requires thinking beyond refugee-host community dynamics

First, social tensions are multi directional: tensions can exist between communities, for example between host and refugee families (horizontal tensions) or between communities and those who govern and administer them (vertical tensions). Of huge importance for humanitarians to understand is that the drivers of tension at the micro level (such as economic competition and housing challenges) tend to generate horizontal tensions, while factors at the macro-level (access to and quality of public services) contribute to vertical tensions.[30]

Second, identities themselves are multiple, fluid and highly dependent on context. Research on threat perceptions in Lebanon suggests that tensions exist among Lebanese nationals as a function of political affiliation and religious identification.[31] The Syrian refugee crisis thus complicates an already fragile confessional and political balance at the national level, entangling Syria and Lebanon in a complex web of alliances and rivalries. The Ramtha/Mafraq comparative case study described above confirms that a certain degree of inter-subjectivity is at play – national identity (and therefore the label of "refugee") may not be the only identity that matters.

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[28] See International Alert, "Citizens' Perceptions," 2.
[29] Mercy Corps, "Mapping of Host Community-Refugee Tensions."
[30] REACH, "Evaluating the Effect"; REACH, "Understanding Social Cohesion"; Mercy Corps, "Things Fall Apart"; Mercy Corps, "Analysis of Host Community-Refugee Tensions"; Mercy Corps, "Mapping of Host Community-Refugee Tensions,"; CARE International, "Inter-Community Relations."
[31] International Alert, "Citizens' Perceptions."

Framing is important, experience isn't everything

In Lebanon, for example, "the perception of threat levels for the whole country is clearly not based on the assessment of one's own environment". This suggests "a majority of the population hold an exaggerated perception that other areas are less safe than where they live."[32] This begs questions about the influence of television, radio, printed press, community leaders and social media on matters of social cohesion in host countries.

International Alert found that political affiliation determined popular media coverage of the humanitarian crisis and contributed to the exaggeration of the connection between the Syrian refugee influx and incidents of crime.[33] Additionally, Mercy Corps illustrated how increasing contact with people back home through social media and exposure to local and international media significantly influences attitudes toward violence among increasingly isolated Syrian refugees in host communities.[34]

Perceptions of humanitarian assistance matter

In Jordan, for example, external support was identified "to be a major source of tension in host communities that were estimated to be at relatively high risk of tension..."[35] More than two thirds of respondents who received aid and thought it was beneficial also reported negative externalities, 83 per cent cited an increase in inter-community tensions specifically related to "uneven access" between refugee and host community and "inadequate targeting."[36]

Understanding perceptions of humanitarian assistance is especially useful for aid agencies to begin thinking about how their response is linked to community dynamics, and may inadvertently catalyse frictions, escalate tensions and increase negative perceptions of assistance.

External factors matter

A CARE International study in 2015 presented a security focus by investigating regulatory incidents such as curfews and discussing the securitisation of the Syrian community as perceived by Lebanese nationals.[37] The study captured different manifestations of social tensions such as criminal activity, violence, harassment and discrimination. It also presented external factors that affect security, including events in Syria as well as clashes between Syrian conflict actors and the Lebanese armed forces that could impact inter-community perceptions.

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[32] Between 60 and almost 90 percent of survey respondents had *not directly experienced* (personally or through close relatives) verbal threats and harassment, unofficial checkpoints, street disturbances, kidnaping, bombings, or armed clashes, although these were highly held concerns. International Alert, "Security Threat Perceptions," 6.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Mercy Corps, "Things Fall Apart," 20.
[35] REACH, "Perceptions of External Support," 4.
[36] Ibid, 1.
[37] CARE International, "Inter-Community Relations," 5.

Limitations

These studies are not without considerable methodological and conceptual limitations. Our approach highlighted a number of conceptual and methodological limitations:

1. Definitions of social cohesion

Only one study refers to academic discourse to derive important aspects and indicators germane to social cohesion, tensions and stability. Not a single study adopts an official definition of "cohesion" or "tension" and numerous studies employ a variety of indicators and proxies intended to capture its presence. Without careful conceptual treatment of social cohesion or tensions, humanitarians run the risk of being one sided. For example, one study treated cohesion between communities as how Lebanese nationals viewed Syrians. The same study used "patterns of intermarriage" as a proxy for cohesiveness, despite the agreement that such behaviour is actually a negative coping mechanism for vulnerable households. Another study operationalised "lack of access to basic services" as both a cause and definition of "tensions", which is problematic for understanding cause and effect relationships and for designing programming.

2. Sampling/site-selection bias

Prevalent throughout much of the research, the sampling methods used for site selection (geographic units of which to draw cross-sectional correlations) were purposive and not random.

In one study, communities were selected for further profile based on highest level of perceptive tensions and lowest level of resilience.[38] Such prioritisation of focus – while important for humanitarian principles – ultimately fails to uncover *why* communities have tensions. This can only be achieved by documenting co-variation between proposed drivers of tension and actual levels of tension.

The strategy of focusing only on high-tension areas also yields little information about those communities that have low tensions, which can be important for positive case studies. Such a purposive sampling of communities allows for only general conclusions to be made at the expensive of deeper, more granular analysis and can even, like the media, serve to project a one-sided picture of the relationship between refugee and host communities.[39]

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[38] REACH, "Evaluating the Effect"; REACH, "Understanding Social Cohesion"; REACH, "Perceptions of External Support."
[39] The REACH report also exhibited a number of other sampling limitations to bear in mind. First, as the study itself notes, "key informants," – the results of which fundamentally guided the prioritisation of areas for further research, "were mainly of Syrian nationality," although did include Jordanians.[39] This fact could seriously bias the results of not only the KIIs, but the remaining stages of the REACH project in Jordan (in other studies we know there are major differences in access to services, needs, and perceptions with regard to the Jordanian communities).

3. The need for layering

While some reports did include detailed background sections for discussion on the structural vulnerabilities in both Lebanon and Jordan before the Syrian crisis (such as poverty, economic inequality, unemployment or the challenges that local municipalities face when delivering public services and goods), there was little analytical layering of these structural pre-conditions. Instead, more proximate causes such as demographic, economic and pressures on municipal services brought on by the Syrian crisis were more extensively discussed. This ultimately limited the ability of these studies to connect the perceptions of local communities with actual circumstances. For example, to determine if perceived economic competition correlated with actual unemployment or if perceptions of water scarcity correlated with actual water scarcity, it would be necessary to layer results from perception surveys with indicators of actual economic conditions or water scarcity.[40]

4. Lack of temporal variation

All of the reports are cross-sectional snapshots. Not a single study utilises a test-retest method, or examines conditions over time. Conducting long-term longitudinal research is essential for predictive purposes if organisations want to understand trends over time and monitor and evaluate interventions. In addition to spatial data, temporal data is used in conflict analysis research, especially in pattern recognition that is relevant to the emergence of violence. This is because *changes in relative conditions* are the true drivers of conflict. In frustration-aggression theory, the importance is not aggregate or even relative levels of economic inequality, but the sudden change of economic inequality. Therefore, a more complete picture cannot be presented without the employment of time.

By including temporal variation, one particular area that could be expanded upon is around the connection between tensions and violence. The Mercy Corps report noted, for example, that "while certain general relations were found to increase the propensity of individuals towards using violence, there is little that alerts us to the thresholds that would tip behaviour toward aggression." This is especially important for building early warning tools, identifying coping strategies and prioritising and designing mitigation interventions at key touch points to ameliorate "triggers that would push inclination to action." [41]

5. Perpetuation of sector-based thinking

With recent movement in the humanitarian sector toward recognising that cross-cutting issues (like matters of social tensions between communities) require more systemic, integrated approaches, it remains problematic that many of the studies consulted in this section:
      a. Conceptualise drivers of social cohesion along sector-based lines (and possibly reified this discourse within the communities they were surveying), and;

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[40] See CARE International, "Inter-Community Relations," 12.
[41] Mercy Corps, "Things Fall Apart,,"12.

    b. Use sector-oriented frameworks by which to present their recommendations (as exemplified by the series of REACH publications, where healthcare, livelihoods and WASH issues are treated in separate reports).

Communities of practice, too, seem to be divided. In one study on social cohesion, recommendations are laid out into "humanitarian relief" (services and livelihoods) and "peace-building" (protection and conflict prevention) sections. These subtle but important realities may serve to perpetuate a non-systems, non-integrated approach to understanding social cohesion and how humanitarian and development actors engage with this issue.

6. More specific recommendations are needed

Many of the reports provided a list of general recommendations based on aggregate data analysis, which pose challenges for translation into actual programming or for prioritising and targeting aid.

For example, in the education section of one report, a sentence concludes: "However, given the intricate role that education plays in the community, this is a sector that needs more support in order to build convergence and cohesion within the community."[42] Questions remain about how and where this should be done and take place. Furthermore, the recommendation does not state how actors should prioritise such support against other sectors. Nor do such recommendations prioritise issues such as whether aid agencies should focus on reducing overcrowded classrooms or provide education materials that are currently unavailable to students. If required to choose between providing educational support or health support, how does an organisation make this decision?

How we define and measure social phenomena impacts how we understand and ultimately, what we do about, social phenomena. Therefore, important acknowledgement of conceptual and methodological limitations of current approaches to capturing social cohesion in Lebanon and Jordan is a necessary first step in harnessing social cohesion as an innovative approach to address instability in host communities. Next, we turn to strategic frameworks and policies that engage with matters of social cohesion in Lebanon and Jordan.

Key recommendations

These reports offer up the following set of general recommendations about how international humanitarian, development and peace-building practitioners and organisations can deal with matters of social cohesion in such settings. These reports suggest humanitarian actors should:

1. Adopt cross-sector, area-based approaches in urban, non-camp settings to support local municipalities and community-based organisations (CBOs) to provide public goods and services (such as education, health, water, employment and livelihoods, shelter and housing) to all vulnerable members of society. Such approaches will empower local actors and increase the likelihood of sustainability by reducing the creation of artificial or parallel markets and systems.

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[42] REACH, "Understanding Social Cohesion," 13.

2. Empower local actors by working with refugees and host communities to create equitable solutions to alleviate tensions over distribution. In designing livelihoods projects there should be equal participation from both communities to take leadership positions and activities should be cooperative rather than exclusionary in nature. Such approaches might improve perceptions and relations between both communities, contribute to more inclusive social networks across communities and strengthen local governance mechanisms in the short and long term.

3. Be sensitive to tensions over resources as well as identify territory and security. This includes greater communication (with refugee and host communities), transparency and accountability. This might be done by creating social spaces or platforms for two-way communication with refugee and host communities. Organisations should set up advocacy and awareness campaigns, especially around addressing negative media with clarification and positive media.

4. Liaise with community leadership and security officials where tensions exist in order to resolve disputes and settle tensions arising from service provision access and economic competition. International NGOs can facilitate the establishment of more community-based organisations and community councils with representatives from both host and refugee communities. Such networks can diffuse tensions through local capacity building and conflict resolution workshops.

Engaging with Social Cohesion: regional and national strategic frameworks

How is the humanitarian community (donor governments, international organisations, host country governments and municipalities, international and local non-government organisations) currently *engaging with* matters of social cohesion within the Syria response? This section provides a brief overview of regional, national and organisational strategies for engagement on the issue of social cohesion in Lebanon and Jordan. It explores the following:

Policy approaches to social cohesion
- How is social cohesion understood in policy?
- Are social tensions acknowledged as a driver of secondary conflict and as a barrier to social well-being?
- Is social cohesion identified as an opportunity for programming?

Operationalising social cohesion
- How is social cohesion currently operationalised?
- Is it articulated as a cross-sector issue or is it presented as a sector itself?
- Is it nested within "resilience", "community-based" and/or "participatory" approaches?

Regional Frameworks: Inter-Agency Syria Regional Response Plan and Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan

Inter-Agency Syria Regional Response Plan (RRP6)[43] represents the beginning of a shift in thinking in late 2013, when the deepening crisis required the targeting of both refugees *and* host-communities (an area-based approach), the alignment of humanitarian response with longer-term development actions (resilience-based response), and the prioritisation of stabilisation through building resilience and *through the promotion of social cohesion* as a key strategic objectives, was adopted as a strategic approach.[44]

If the RRP6 was the beginning of a shift in thinking, the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan 2015-2016 (3RP) solidified that thinking into a comprehensive, multi-year regional strategy. The 3RP advances the integration of humanitarian and development communities for scaling up resilience and stabilisation-based approaches at the local, national and regional levels. It builds on the RRP6's area-based approach to address the needs and priorities of vulnerable populations that include both refugee and host communities through refugee protection and humanitarian response and resilience through stabilisation-based development.[45]

National Government Plans: Lebanon Crisis Response Plan, Jordan's National Resilience Plan and Jordan's Response Plan for the Syria Crisis

Matters of social cohesion are also central to the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2015-2016 (LCRP), according to the Lebanon chapter of the 3RP. The plan aligns humanitarian response and development approaches toward the stabilisation of Lebanon's socio-economic situation amid the Syrian refugee crisis by ensuring humanitarian assistance and protection for both Syrian refugees and vulnerable Lebanese. It strengthens the capacity of national and local service delivery systems and reinforces Lebanon's economic, social, environmental and institutional stability.

With a clear interest in supporting Lebanese institutions, communities and infrastructure, the government of Lebanon seeks to maximise the value of longer-term development investments for Lebanon by reinforcing stability *though the humanitarian crisis.* This means integrating humanitarian response with a stabilisation strategy that counters growing threats to internal peace and stability, and addressing the humanitarian situation through innovative, cost-efficient relationships so local economies can recover and thrive.

The Jordan National Resilience Plan 2014-2016 (NRP) – the precursor to the Jordan Response Plan for the Syria Crisis 2015 (JRP, the Jordan chapter of the 3RP) is also a resilience-based, complementary approach to the RRP6. Its goals are:

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[43] *2014 Syria Regional Response Plan: Strategic Overview* (Inter-Agency: 2013) (RRP 6).

[44] In this document, social cohesion can be improved by facilitating "appropriate support for the local authorities and populations most severely affected by the conflict and large refugee presence". This is explicitly recognised as a "new aspect of strategy," ibid.

[45] Targeted beneficiaries in Jordan, for example, include 700,000 refugees and 2.7 million host community (direct and indirect) and 1.5 million refugees and 1.75 million host community members (direct and indirect) in Lebanon.

1. Reinforcing local coping mechanisms
2. Recovering and augmenting local services delivery
3. Strengthening local institutions, partnerships and participation, and;
4. Focusing on a range of cross-cutting issues, such as gender, social cohesion, environmental sustainability.

In 2015 the NRP transitioned to the Jordan Response Plan for the Syria Crisis 2015 by embedding the refugee response into its national resilience framework to meet the needs of both refugees and vulnerable host communities.[46] The plan holds the same goals of the NRP, although its strategy now includes a focus on deterioration of public services, "the erosion of social cohesion" and the strengthening and expansion of capacities at the household, community and institutional levels to cope with future shocks. As such, it too offers a framework for linking humanitarian relief and development actions.[47]

Resilience and vulnerability

Both the regional (RRP6 and 3RP) and the national (LCRP, NRP, JRP) plans are deeply oriented in resilience-based approaches for humanitarian response. According to the 3RP:

> *Resilience is the ability of individuals, households, communities and institutions to anticipate, withstand, recover, and transform from shocks and crises….Therefore, a resilience-based development approach to the Syria crisis is different from humanitarian relief. Creating resilience involves investing in the capacities and resources abilities of those communities and institutions most affected by a crisis so that they can eventually deal with their intermediate and long-term needs. The resilience approach recognizes people in need as active and creative agents and empowers them towards greater ownership of their own lives through rapid employment generation, life skills training and inclusive governance….Building resilience is not just desirable; it is economically, socially, and politically imperative.[48]*

Throughout the plans, vulnerability and resilience frameworks guide the overall approach, allowing for area-based prioritisation of programming that targets both refugee and host communities as beneficiaries, therefore embedding the prioritisation of social cohesion

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[46] JRP, 9.

[47] The Jordan Response Plan for the Syria Crisis 2015 (United Nations and Jordan Response Platform, 2014) (JRP) also articulates a shift in focus on (1) specific challenges in urban, non-camp settings and the need to develop an urban information management system, and (2) a more clear articulation of social cohesion.

[48] 3RP, page 17. See also, UNDP Sub-regional Response Facility to the Syria Crisis and UNDG Working Group on Resilience of the Arab States/MENA Region, Position Paper: A Resilience-Based Development Response to the Syria Crisis, (December 2013); and UNDP and Mercy Corps, "Stabilisation & Resilience in Protracted, Politically-Induced Emergencies: A Case Study Exploration of Lebanon" (2014). For a critical review of resilience frameworks with regard to vulnerability in particular, see Sarah Bailey and Veronique Barbelet, "Towards a Resilience-based Response to the Syrian Refugee Crisis: A critical review of vulnerability criteria and frameworks" (UNDP and Overseas Development Institute, 2014). The report examines how vulnerability is conceptualised and used to prioritise communities and interventions, arguing that "development and humanitarian actors are taking diverse approaches to vulnerability," in the face of demographic (massive refugee influxes) and economic shocks. Vulnerability, for better or for worse, is often (1) linked to categories of people considered vulnerable, (2) informs prioritisation of communities but not the substance of interventions, (3) operates at a multitude of levels of analysis, and (4) largely ignores capacity. These trends result in "limited insight on how vulnerability will be analysed in a way that informs the design and prioritisation of responses."

throughout. For example, the Composite Vulnerability and Stress Index (that is currently being developed to integrate multiple dimensions of vulnerability) includes social cohesion tensions, security threats and incidences of violence as indicators. A focus on social tensions seem to permeate all three categories of vulnerability that the LCRP, for example, adopts: (1) Human vulnerability (based off of the VaSyr, Multi-sectoral Needs Assessment and National Poverty Targeting Programs), (2) geographic vulnerability (localities where poverty levels and a pre-crisis history of weak service delivery for the local population collide with refugee density), and (3) institutional vulnerability.

How is the issue of social tension articulated and how is social cohesion identified as an opportunity?

In the regional and national plans, social tensions (reduced social cohesion) are conceptualised as a key driver of local violence and potentially larger conflict in host countries (especially Lebanon). The importance of social cohesion – and how it is articulated – is, however, different in Lebanon and Jordan.

The government of Lebanon, for example, is especially concerned about an already "fragile stability," especially in the most vulnerable and deprived parts of the country. Social cohesion, for the LCRP, is therefore all about the achievement of stabilisation. In fact, according to the plan, *"stabilization in the context of the LCRP, means strengthening national capacities to address long-term poverty and social tensions while also meeting humanitarian needs."*[49]

In Jordan, manifestations of social tensions due to the crisis are considered "social challenges, such as domestic violence, violence in schools, child labor, and early marriages,"[50] while there is recognition that "a more comprehensive strategy is needed to ensure that vulnerabilities are not exacerbated, while preventing tensions within communities and enhancing opportunities for social cohesion."[51]

For the 3RP, social cohesion seems to be identified as an innovative approach for addressing social tensions. Defined as (1) the number of interactions between communities, and (2) reduction in protection and security risks, social cohesion is formally integrated into both the humanitarian and development components of the Plan.[52] To strengthen cohesion between refugee and host communities, the 3RP pursues livelihoods, infrastructure and other socio-economic interventions to address the needs of vulnerable communities.[53] Additionally, the 3RP

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[49] LCRP, 4.
[50] NRP, 16.
[51] JRP, 24.
[52] "Livelihoods and Social Cohesion," are articulated into budget lines in the plan, comprising 10 per cent of all agency requirements for funding and targets 272,000 individuals (through wage employment opportunities and 1,100 community support projects). For Lebanon, this amounts to 333,203,736 USD, although for Jordan, no amount is given due to the fact that the sectors correspond differently (Social Protection in the JRP might be analogous to social cohesion in the 3RP).
[53] Although the report is less specific on how exactly this can be achieved. Specific examples include only "mitigation mechanisms"," whereby local stakeholders and leaders are trained to (1) identify main sources of tensions and (2) utilise conflict resolution skills like negotiation, problem solving and mediation. The report does directly acknowledge the importance of building two-way communication between refugees, host communities and humanitarian partners.

seeks to augment social capital by strengthening bonding and bridging networks through (1) community centres, (2) engaging community outreach volunteers and (3) investing in community based initiatives. Importantly, *"the 3RP…supports initiatives and projects that directly or indirectly address social cohesion needs among refugees and vulnerable populations in impacted communities."* [54]

In the national plans, social cohesion seems to be more articulated as a strategic priority. In the LCRP, social cohesion is most clearly found in Strategic Priority number three: to reinforce Lebanon's economic, social, institutional and environmental stability, which "will focus on delivering work for communities at risk of resorting to negative coping mechanisms and mitigating tensions in communities under high stress." Achievement of this priority is done through (1) expanding livelihood opportunities "to reduce tensions caused by competition for work", and (2) by "mitigate[ing] the potential for conflict within stressed communities by strengthening government, municipal, civic, and communities' capacities to promote dialogue."[55] Across the board, the LCRP will seek to roll out capacity programs to promote social stability through conflict mitigation mechanisms, neighbourhood upgrades and information sharing capacities among refugees and outreach volunteers, social development centres and through the media.[56]

Social cohesion is also a key strategic priority in both the NRP and the JRP. These plans recognise the rise and impact of social tensions in local communities as a result of increased competition for increasingly scarce resources, services and opportunities largely driven by the demographic, economic, institutional and social impacts of the refugee influx. Social cohesion is seen as a cross-cutting issue and has been integrated explicitly into the programming of sectors, particularly local governance/municipal services and social protection, and secondarily in the housing (in urban settings), employment and Livelihoods, education, and WASH sectors.[57]

Social stability working group

Most tellingly, social cohesion has been fully operationalised in the LCRP through the establishment of its very own "Social Stability" working group, with funding requirements of $157.3 million to target 242 vulnerable communities from 2015-2017.

The working group seeks to mitigate rising tensions, create conditions at the community level to manage and prevent tensions, disputes and conflict, and inform the overall response with

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[54] "Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan 2015-16: Regional Strategic Overview," (3RP) (UNDP and UNHCR), 20.
[55] LCRP, page 20.
[56] The LCRP approach toward The National Plan to Safeguard Children and Women in Lebanon (including sexual and gender-based violence and other forms of abuse and exploitation) is one example, which "will strengthen community-based prevention and monitoring, and reporting mechanisms, and will target civic and religious leaders, community volunteers, social development centers…" (LCRP, 22).
[57] According to the NRP, "Issues of social cohesion will gain in ascendency as the protracted and escalating nature of the crisis becomes more apparent with the passage of time. All NRP sectors have been tasked to give consideration to how their response interventions mitigate the prospect of increased tensions between Syrian refugees and their Jordanian hosts. From a conflict-sensitive perspective, the design, implementation and management of interventions can constructively build trust and understanding between communities. If treated insensitively however, projects can inadvertently fuel agitation between communities and refugees," NRP, page 27.

Protecting lives.
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analysis and tools for conflict-sensitive programming across sectors. It plans on achieving these goals through:

1. Setting up local peace-building mechanisms and initiatives at the community level and through targeting youth-at-risk.
2. Supporting local institutions (municipalities, representatives) to promote social stability through inclusive participation and reaching out to communities to identify needs and sources of social tensions.
3. Supporting law enforcement, security mechanisms and the media and civil society at the national level.
4. Taking the lead in cross-sectoral support for conflict sensitive programming.[58]

The working group is led by the Lebanon Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA) and United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and co-led by UNHCR. Membership is open to any government, UN, international organisation, non-government organisation and community partner operating in the sector and adhering to humanitarian principles.

Sector leads and co-leads must:

- Establish and maintain coordination mechanisms. This includes regularly scheduled working group meetings, use of inter-agency portal and mailing lists, providing minutes of meetings at field and headquarters, and engage with inter-agency information management structures.
- Coordinate monitoring and evaluation and strategy development with the Joint Analysis Unit through the use of common needs assessments, monitoring tools (such as activity information and quarterly sector dashboards) and guidelines.

Sector members and core group members (of which World Vision in early 2015 held a key position) must attend all meetings, provide input and review documents produced by the sectors. They must also ensure timely and quality reporting of activities. Additionally, core group members provide strategic oversight on prioritisation of resources, guidelines and policies, and support external review and lessons learned. Core group members that fail to attend more than two consecutive meetings (as did World Vision) will be replaced.

UNDP Lebanon Peace Building Project

The UNDP has also operationalised matters of social cohesion (addressing social tensions, instability and fragmentation) into its Lebanon peace-building programs. First in 2006 to 2011 with the "Peace Building Project", then in 2011 to2013 with the "Strengthening Civil Peace in Lebanon" and a third phase in 2014 to 2015 the "Lebanon Peace Building Project (ongoing).

The programmes address "new challenges to civil peace and peace building in the country posed by the Syrian crisis", through:

1. Education promoting social cohesion
2. Media interventions to promote balanced and conflict-sensitive coverage
3. Local level peace-building mechanisms to mitigate tensions between refugee and host communities, and;

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[58] Terms of Reference: Social Stability Working Group. On file with author.

4. Through an NGO platform.

As part of its education track, UNDP seeks to engage parents, teachers and students through research, training, monitoring and pilot programs to create violence-free schools that may be submitted to the Ministry of Education to develop guidelines. UNDP also seeks to leverage its Peace Building Toolbox. This teaching aid is designed to strengthen teachers' peace-building communication skills by piloting the tool in 12 schools with the intent of scaling up.[59] Teachers will also be supported to build social cohesion from a common national identity by training history teachers on how to foster critical thinking to challenge the perpetuation of sectarian historical narratives – a current collective memory that fosters fear, insecurity and divisiveness and normalises violence.[60]

Through its media track, UNDP will build on its successful "Journalist Pact for Strengthening Civil Peace in Lebanon", a collaborative pledge of 35 media outlets to build conditions of peace and tolerance through healthy debate. This work will be continued through the establishment of media monitoring and content analyses of news bulletins and talk shows with the aim of providing monthly comparative data reports for television, social media and UNDP websites. Participatory media campaigns (conveying positive messages about host and refugee communities) and joint news supplements (quarterly publications authored by a network of multi-media reporters) will be also be disseminated to reduce social tensions.

How are matters of social cohesion operationalised?[61]

In addition to the Social Stability working group and UNDP Lebanon Peace Building Projects, the protection, education, shelter and livelihood sectors emerge as the most relevant for matters of mitigating social tensions and promoting community cohesion.

For the *protection* sector, for example, community-based approaches for enabling refugees and host communities to build capacity and ownership mean that social cohesion between communities is critical. Protection plans seek to overcome challenges such as domestic violence, sexual harassment and exploitation, and early forced marriage, restriction on mobility in urban areas and lack of integration into social and economic activities (all forms of discrimination and violence that have been shown to be direct manifestations of social tensions in other research). They do this by aiming to empower communities to identify, prevent and respond to protection risks, and to protect girls and boys from violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect through equitable access to legal protection mechanisms.

Because social tensions influence access, quality and capacity issues in the education sector – for example, as concerns about safety (harassment, bullying, violence, discrimination) and the quality of education (language barriers, teacher capacity, overcrowding and diverse learner needs) diminish the capacity to learn – social cohesion is important for education-related programming. The plans focus on access to formal and non-formal education opportunities, safe transportation and social mobilisation, augmentation of teacher capacity to mitigate rising

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[59] UNDP Lebanon Project document, page 8.
[60] Ibid, page 10.
[61] This section reviews how social cohesion has been operationalised into strategic plans and how social cohesion has been carried out.

tensions, expansion of infrastructure and community monitoring and neighbourhood development, and peace-building activities. The plan also supports initiatives that aim to improve social cohesion between Jordanians and Syrians, including relationships between parents, students, teachers and schools through enhanced community involvement.

Shelter also requires a social cohesion approach. Plans recognise the cross-cutting nature and multiplier effect that housing (as a process) may have: "If properly supported, the housing sector has the potential to contribute to a wide-range of positive outcomes, including: physical security, reduced social tension, increased employment and economic growth…"[62]

The plans' propose is to bring new and unfinished housing units into the market, renovate sub-standard housing, private sector engagement (to support developers, local commercial banks and construction companies), institutional reforms and provide cash-for-rent to mitigate against negative coping mechanisms, including falling severely into debt. The sector therefore prioritises cross-cutting efforts that address issues of shelter (expansion and quality of supply as well as institutional reform), but also impact matters of social cohesion, unemployment, economic development and access and quality of municipal services.

Through strengthening institutional capacity and engagement with the private sector, the regional and national plans support a *livelihoods* agenda toward building local resilience and ownership, reducing social tensions by augmenting cohesion between communities.

Such efforts will reduce competition over economic resources as socio-economic infrastructure is rehabilitated, skills and vocational training increase employability and as access to capital becomes available to vulnerable host and refugee communities. This may mitigate some of the negative externalities associated with social tensions. In Lebanon, rapid income job creation activities, the strengthening of employment services centres, the provision of grants and training to small businesses and supporting value chain programmes and small and medium enterprise (SME) strategic development will be prioritised. One example is the Making Markets Work for the Poor (M4P) approach – which, through the adoption of the Do No Harm principle in "limiting interventions that distort markets", seeks to enhance the capacity of local service providers and SMEs to increase employment opportunities for inclusive and sustainable economic development.

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[62] NRP, 53.

Recommendations

This literature review is proposing a number of recommendations to strengthen social cohesion work among the humanitarian community, including World Vision's work. Those recommendations cut across advocacy, research, operations and programming as follows:

Strengthen social cohesion research

Humanitarians have yet to (as an industry) articulate or agree on what social cohesion is, how best to measure it, what causes it or how it impacts communities in conflict-affected urban emergencies, such as in the Syrian regional context. This will require consulting academic research to leverage theoretical and methodological good practices and will also require consulting good practices and good processes from *additional* geographic contexts. Therefore, the following recommendations on strengthening social cohesion research are proposed:

- **Develop a multi-disciplinary approach to understanding social cohesion**
  Humanitarian actors should build a cross-cutting, multi-disciplinary, academically-derived taxonomy of matters of social cohesion and related concepts in urban, conflict-affected, humanitarian settings. Such a taxonomy would map the evolution, meaning and use of matters of social cohesion, agree on fundamental principles and constituent elements of social cohesion, identify a field of related terms, operationalise key indicators, and would provide a map by which to imagine and articulate entry-points – and therefore interventions – across disciplines and contexts.

- **Quantify key drivers of social tension**
  Humanitarian organisations should design and test a systemic model that makes predictions on manifestations of tensions using trend analysis to identify tipping points, early warning indicators and entry points (levers) for mitigation. One model worth exploring has been articulated by the UNDP, USAID, and SeeD Social Cohesion and Reconciliation Index SCORE card.[63] Efforts should be made to identify applicable models and adapt if possible.[64] Other models worth investigating include those in which social tensions are an intervening variable that explains other, related complex social phenomena, such as secondary mixed migration. The Institute for the Study of International Migration (ISIM) at Georgetown University (led by Dr Susan Martin) and their programs on Crisis Migration, Forecasting and Urban Refugees are relevant. They are developing and testing new early warning models and bring a wealth of data and experience from the field.

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[63] *Predicting Peace.*

[64] Some social cohesion studies analysed here offer potential starting points. The Mercy Corps analyses, for example, come close to a holistic theory of change: paying close attention to the historical, cultural, and political complexities of the region, the study develops a multi-step pathway that links *economic pressures* (the proximate causal factor) to *inter-group cohesion/tensions* (an intervening variable) and *manifestations of violence* (the dependent variable, which included scapegoating, harassment, discrimination, resentment, demonstrations, protests, road blockages, curfews, animosity, frustration, rancor). It does so while giving good consideration to important factors like *coping mechanisms* (such as eating fewer meals, selling assets, borrowing money, working multiple jobs, sending children to work or relying on credit, loans, spending from savings) and considers levels of social capital. The approach also accounts for *external factors* like the influence of social and local media and conflict spill-over incidents from the Syrian war.

- **Conduct more in-depth, longitudinal research on the impact of matters of reduced social cohesion across multiple vulnerable demographics**
This includes a focus on children who have dropped out of school due to bullying from host community children, on women who have lost social capital by way of self-isolation from their neighbours and exploring different ways for frustrated young men to find fulfilment in meaningful work within the current restrictive work environment of Lebanon and Jordan. Largely missing from research consulted here is analysis of how a lack of social cohesion affects groups such as youth, women, children and men differently.[65]

  One collaborative opportunity exists through the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative's Youth in Crisis Program, which recently established the Middle East Youth in Crisis Project where research priorities include "analyzing and evaluating new models of education and mentorship in livelihoods, microfinance, and business development in this segment of the population" and "conducting research on how to access educational opportunities for displaced and conflict-affected youth."[66]

- **Conduct research on the role of faith-based social networks in matters of social cohesion in urban, conflict-affected settings with protracted displacement issues**
While there are good examples in the region of inter-faith cooperation toward social inclusion (as well as where faith is being driven as a wedge between communities), there is little mention of the role of faith in determining matters of social cohesion or social tensions in the literature consulted outside of generic "sectarian" considerations. Faith-based affiliation can be a form of both bonding and bridging social capital – inward looking mechanisms that reinforce "exclusive identities and homogenous groups, such as ethnicity, nationality, and religion," (bonding social capital) or outward looking mechanisms that connect people across social cleavages (bridging social capital).[67] Spiritual capital with faith-based networks is considered a crucial, yet under developed aspect of success and well-being for marginalised communities like refugees, where "there is a clear gap in theorising the role of faith and religion…in urban refugee studies literature."[68]

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[65] While plenty of studies on social tensions in Lebanon and Jordan (see section two) have disaggregated data filtered by demographic profiles, it is not clear exactly *how* children, for example, are marginalised and affected by social tensions between refugee and host communities in conflict-affected, urban, humanitarian emergency settings. Or to what extent that men are impacted differently from women due to tensions driven by economic competition. At the moment, there is a major gap in research pertaining to matters of social tensions with regard to these issues.

[66] See here: http://hhi.harvard.edu/research/youth-in-crisis#current-projects. Adolescents and young adults, an "important segment of the population that is poorly addressed in international programming," have been identified as a focal point of the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative's (HHI) Youth in Crises program. A recent HHI literature review, focusing on the "needs, activities, stakeholders, and solutions related to at-risk youth and young adults in the MENA region," showed how children, especially the millions of Syrian refugees seeking asylum in nearby Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt, and other host countries in the region, are vulnerable in terms of economic opportunities, education, health-related issues, and how those vulnerabilities are intimately connected with the risk for violence and instability. The report also showed how these vulnerabilities are *inherently interlinked*, and thus require a non-sectoral approach. The interplay between post-traumatic stress disorder and opportunities for livelihoods, and the ability of education to both decrease (if done in an inclusive manner) and increase (if done in a segregated, exclusive manner) inter-community tensions mean that interventions delivered through one sector will impact (directly or indirectly) other sectors.

[67] Eveliina and Kullenberg, 23.

[68] Ibid.

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- **Consult assessment documents to shed light on the gap between operational strategy and implementation**
There seems to be little concurrent analysis of the "implementation" of the various strategies (government, inter-agency, INGO) or concrete knowledge of the implementation of strategic or operational policies with regard to matters of social cohesion. Implementation is considered to be a massive gap, especially as national governments have issued policies/directives that have blocked aspects of the response. This begs questions about how to design interventions in such environments and about the role of humanitarian organisations in addressing this problem (through advocacy, for example). Experts should be interviewed and practitioners should be surveyed to try to quantify this gap in implementation.

- **Highlight positive case studies (or at least variation in the level of tensions and vulnerabilities) or case studies of good practice**
These cases can shed light on how resilience and coping mechanisms might already be at play in mitigating social tensions between communities and how those can be used as lessons for future programming.

Improve programming approaches to social cohesion

- **Where tools are found to be inappropriate, identify existing ones (external tools if present) and/or design new tools aiming at filling gaps identified in the social cohesion review**
Gaps in the literature consulted suggest that this may require:
    - o Building a taxonomy of social cohesion, stability and tensions
    - o Designing and testing a systemic framework for scenario modelling, and;
    - o The integration of innovative data collection methodologies and new information communication technologies (outreach via mobile technologies, data exhaust through social media, and/or interactive, real-time, online mapping).

- **Collaborate with NGO and other partners that are members of regional and national strategic response plans (Lebanon and Jordan)**
These frameworks have prioritised the piloting of assessment, monitoring, evaluation and advocacy platforms and tools. The research agenda of the 3RP for example, prioritises filling critical knowledge gaps as well as developing and testing innovative tools or frameworks. This can be helped by sharing knowledge at the sub-regional level about the specific ways in which host communities respond to refugee influxes, and positive practices that can be replicated or encouraged elsewhere."[69]

- **Collaborate with new and otherwise "non-traditional" humanitarian technology, crisis-mapping, geo-intelligence, private sector and human geography communities of practice to develop and test new data collection, analysis, and visualisation tools**
As noted, there are gaps in the data collection and spatial analysis of social tensions (belief systems and human behaviour) in urban host communities. But these are also the very settings where mobile communication technologies and access to the internet, social

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[69] 3RP, 43.

media, cloud computing are growing exponentially. This potentially offers new ways to capture information about community networks, relationships, belief systems and behaviours (through participatory SMS reporting, social media content analysis and/or data mining for communications exhaust). In a world where access to information communication technologies is becoming a reality, humanitarian organisations leveraging almost real time, multi-level, mixed-method data collection, analysis and community feedback tools will be better positioned for rapid assessment and community mapping of markets, systems, capacities, vulnerabilities, pressures and proximate drivers of social tensions in protracted urban settings.

Mainstream social cohesion in strategies and operational plans

- **Use the current literature review as a first step toward reflecting on strategic and operational design in the Syria response**
  Importantly, this document provides an analysis of the RRP6, 3RP, LCRP, NRP and JRP from the perspective of social cohesion, which highlights, for example, how "The 3RP…supports initiatives and projects that directly or indirectly address social cohesion needs among refugees and vulnerable populations in impacted communities."[70]

- **Finally, organisations should envision social cohesion as it pertains to current mandates across humanitarian emergency affairs, peace-building and development departments**
  For example, through a publication of an organisation-wide document focused on the ways in which social cohesion can be programmed and operationalised could be of great value for any organisation, including World Vision.

These endeavours are especially important for organisations (such as World Vision International) that are truly multi-thematic and global in reach.

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[70] 3RP, 20.

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