



The Popular Aid
For Relief & Development
Build Empowered Communities

ANNUAL REPORT 2023



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SPECIAL THANKS

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Introduction

The Popular Aid for Relief and Development (**PARD**) is an independent grassroots organization working on gender justice and women's empowerment, youth empowerment, environmental health, and relief for people in distress among Palestinian and Lebanese communities and refugees from Syria. It was founded in 1985 under the name of "The Relief Agency" by a group of volunteers. It received official recognition under the name of Popular Aid for Relief and Development through notification number 44/AD in 23/4/1990.

PARD believes that in addition to providing relief and support to the Palestinian refugees at times of disaster, there is a great need to provide environmental, health and social services to the marginalized and vulnerable groups in the Palestinian camps and gatherings in Lebanon at times of stability as well. These services are extremely crucial to the refugees' wellbeing and substantially contribute to building their resilience and ability to participate meaningfully in their communities.

PARD adheres itself to the Millennium Development Goals which include the following:

- Eradication of extreme poverty and hunger by supporting small local projects •
- Achieving universal primary education: by providing remedial lessons to students, combat illiteracy and vocational trainings •
- Promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women: through the formation of women's committees; awareness-raising and income-generating projects •
- Improvement of maternal health: through the mother and child health program •
- Combatting HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases: through health education for prevention •
- Environmental sustainability: by providing environmental health programs •
- Developing a global partnership for development: through networking with local and international NGOs and UN agencies. •

PARD also adheres to the SPEHERE principles through 10 core principles:

- The humanitarian imperative comes first. •
- Aid is given regardless of the race, creed or nationality of the recipients and without adverse distinction of any kind. Aid priorities are calculated on the basis of need alone. •
- Aid will not be used to further a particular political or religious standpoint. •
- We shall endeavor not to act as instruments of government foreign policy. •
- We shall respect culture and custom. •
- We shall attempt to build disaster response on local capacities. •
- Ways shall be found to involve program beneficiaries in the management of relief aid. •

Relief aid must strive to reduce future vulnerabilities to disaster as well as meeting basic needs. •

We hold ourselves accountable to both those we seek to assist and those from whom we accept resources. •

In our information, publicity and advertising activities, we shall recognize disaster victims as dignified human beings, not hopeless objects. •

Mission and Vision

Mission

The Popular Aid for Relief and Development is a nonprofit, grass-roots, rights based NGO that aims to promote gender justice and the right of marginalized and vulnerable groups, especially in the Palestinian gatherings, to access social, health and environmental services. PARD does so by providing access to healthcare, environmental health and education services, and by empowering women, youth, and children to practice their rights and participate effectively within their communities. PARD also provides support and relief to people affected by disasters.

Vision

Refugees in Lebanon enjoy civil and social rights and gender justice, and are empowered to participate meaningfully in life-determining decisions. Palestinian women have the right to participate effectively and equally within the community. The Palestinian gatherings are environmentally clean, healthy and safe. PARD's programs are rights-based, need-responsive, participatory, well designed, implemented and monitored by a committed, highly skilled, efficient and motivated team.

Principles and Values

Human Rights & Social Justice: PARD believes all human beings have the same universal rights. These rights should guarantee freedom, justice, and equality to everybody. All individuals should have an equal opportunity to exercise the privileges of citizenship, freedom of speech, press, religion and to participate fully in civil life, regardless of race, religion, sex, or other characteristics irrelevant to the true value of each individual.

Gender: PARD believes that women should enjoy equal political, civil and social rights under equal circumstances that would lead to equal opportunities and capabilities. We believe that all society members and women in particular should be empowered to participate in the decision-making and implementation of issues that affect their lives.

Participation: PARD believes that all individuals and groups have the right to participate in the processes that define their lives. All individuals should have the chance to participate meaningfully in the making of decisions that influence their lives and the lives of their families.

PARD believes that the organizations' stakeholders and constituencies are integral and full partners of the planning, action and learning processes that PARD takes on.

Accountability and Transparency: PARD perceives transparency as a reflection for openness and clarity on crucial issues such as decision-making mechanisms, operations, finance and relations. We think of accountability as an expectation to the responsibility and commitment towards PARD's mission, values and promised quality performance.

Value of International Agreements: PARD is committed to all relevant international agreements and conventions on human rights, such as CEDAW, CRC, Beijing declaration and the Alma-Ata Declaration as well. PARD also believes in its role as an active participant that aims to contribute to the accomplishment of the Millennium Development Goals.

Beneficiaries

The Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon (PRL) are descendants of those who were forcibly displaced to Lebanon following the 1948 Nakba in Palestine. This displacement happened as a result of the ethnic cleansing occurring due to the Israeli occupation of Palestine. According to UNRWA, there are 475,000 registered PRL in the organization records. This number, however, is not indicative of the actual number of resident PRL as there is not one approved census that clearly specifies this figure. A most recent UNRWA and Government of Lebanon (GoL) update¹ estimates that there are around 180,000 PRL present in Lebanon. This discrepancy between the numbers is due to multiple factors including that many might have left the country.

The Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon (PRL) face all kinds of discrimination despite their long presence in Lebanon (76 years) and the fact that a big percentage of them was born in Lebanon. This discrimination is mainly represented with the fact that they are not granted the civil and legal rights enjoyed by the Lebanese citizens. Two of those denied rights that majorly affect PRL in Lebanon are the right to ownership and the right to work. Since 2001, refugees are not allowed to own property assets in Lebanon and are obliged to bequeath them to religious authorities (Waqef) if purchased prior to the passage of the Law 296/2001.

On the labor level, refugees, particularly PRL, face difficulties accessing the labor market in Lebanon due to social discrimination and isolation and due to the legal denial of their right to work in various professions. PRL are banned from 39 professions per the Lebanese labor law. These professions are distributed among the following sectors and include:

Healthcare: 22 professions, including medicine, dentistry, physiotherapy, psychology •

Engineering: 3 professions, including agricultural engineering and typography •

¹ Lebanese Palestinian Dialogue Committee, Central Administration of statistics, Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (2019). The Population and Housing Census in Palestinian Camps and Gatherings - 2017, Detailed Analytical Report, Beirut, Lebanon

Public Sector and Law: 2 professions, including law and public service •

Transport and Fishing: 5 professions, including teaching car driving and coastal navigation and fishing •

Services and Day-Care: 3 professions, including opening or managing a nursery •

Other Fields: 4 professions, including public accountant and tourist guide² •

There are different locations to where PRL reside in Lebanon. Initially, PRL reside in what is referred to as Palestinian camps. There are 12 officially recognized Palestinian camps in Lebanon that are under the mandate of UNRWA. However, it is estimated that around 45% reside in the camps³ which counts for approximately 81,000 individuals assuming a total of 180,000 resident PRL. That mentioned, around 99,000 PRL reside in areas outside the camps, mainly in areas such as the Palestinian gatherings or informal settlements, PARD's target areas.

For the definition of the gatherings or informal settlements, there is a lack of consensus on how they are defined which therefore affects their count. In a recent report⁴, gatherings were defined by "geographic area, outside the official camps, which is home to a minimum 15 Palestinian Households". With this definition, the number of recognized gatherings across Lebanon was 154 gatherings categorized into Adjacent Gatherings – to camps- and Other Gatherings. However, the term gathering was first recognized and defined by FAFO (2003) to describe locations that accommodate groups of Palestinian refugees. According to FAFO (2003) definition, a gathering:

Has a population of Palestinian refugees, including Palestinian refugees who are registered with UNRWA and/or the Lebanese government or are not registered; •

as no official UNRWA camp status or any other legal authority identified with responsibility for camp management; Is expected to have clearly defined humanitarian and protection needs, or have a minimum of 25 Households; •

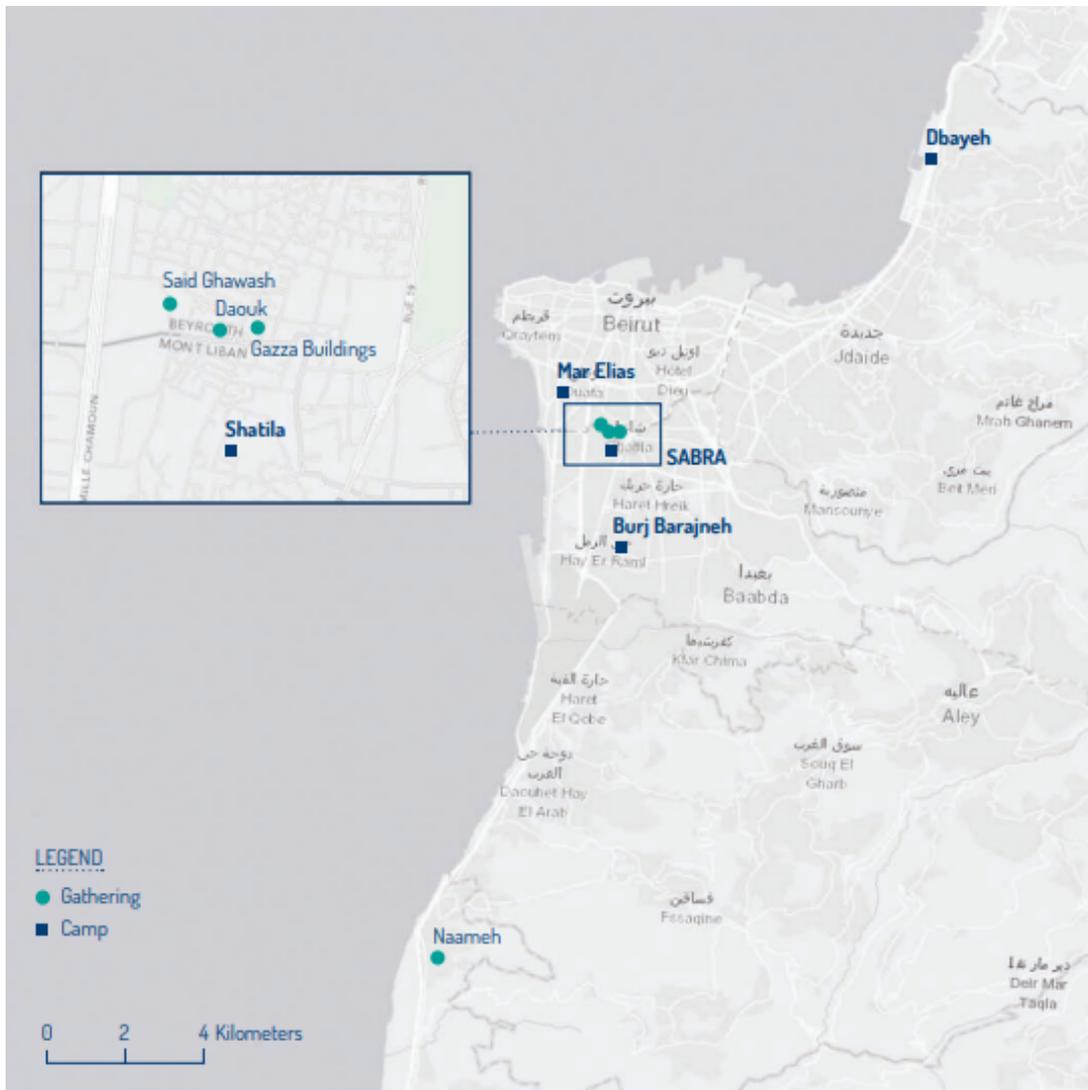
Has a population with a sense of being a distinct group living in a geographically identifiable area. •

This definition counts for 42 Palestinian gatherings in Lebanon. For the sake of its work, PARD adopts FAFO's definition of gatherings and operates in those of Tyre, Saida, and Beirut.

² Assessing Vulnerabilities in Palestinian Gatherings in Lebanon – Results of UNDP 2017 Household Survey

³ Protection brief: Palestine refugees living in Lebanon- Updated in September 2020

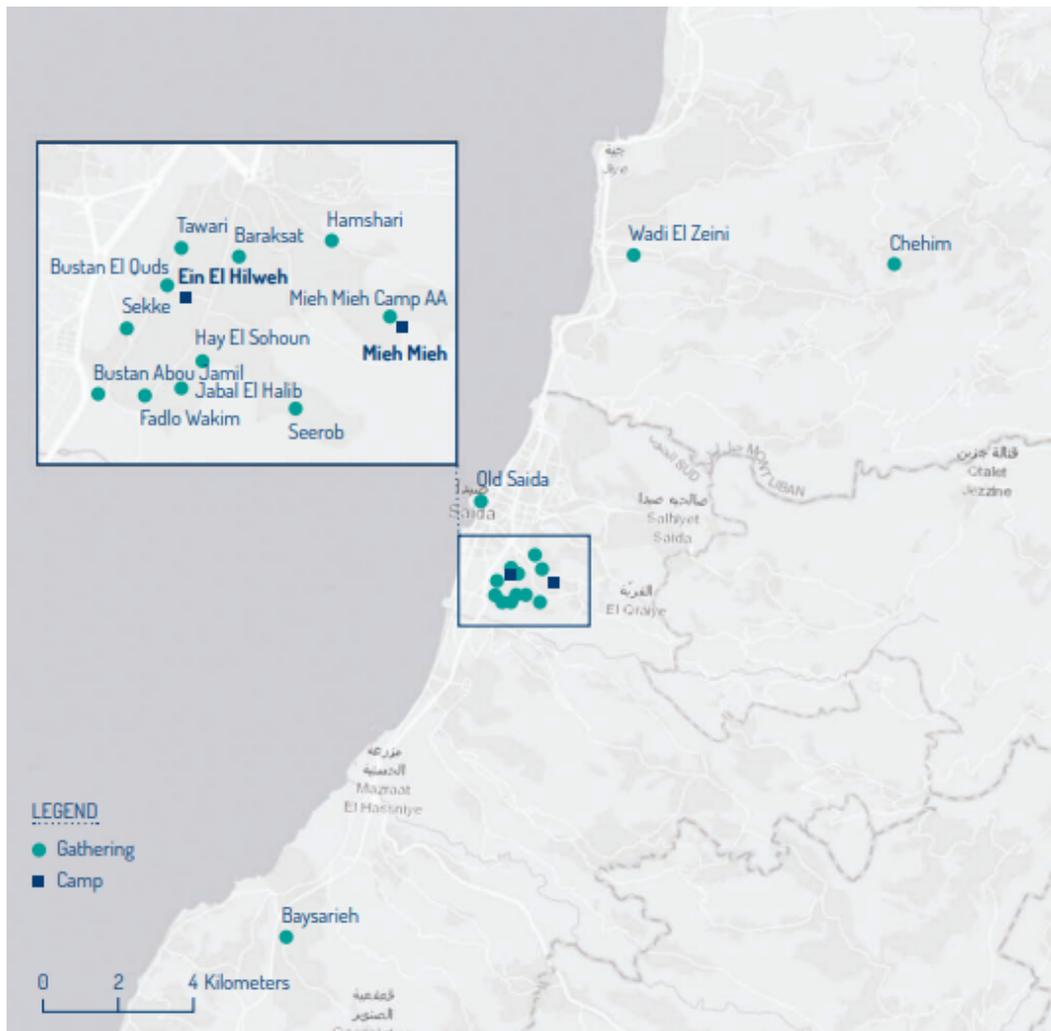
⁴ Lebanese Palestinian Dialogue Committee, OP.Cit.



Map 1 Palestinian gatherings in Beirut ²

Being majorly but not exclusively of the Palestinian nationality, gatherings do not only include PRL. They also include Palestinian refugees from Syria (PRS) in Lebanon, Syrian, and Lebanese residents.

The residents of the Palestinian gatherings suffer multiple precarious conditions compared to those living in camps or other Lebanese areas. As UNRWA offers all services to Palestinian refugees regardless of their area of residence, if accessible, PRL in the gatherings can benefit from health and educational services at UNRWA's centers outside gatherings. However, the main concern lies in that UNRWA does not cover the rehabilitation of the infrastructure of the gatherings with excuses related to the lack of sufficient budgets. This duty is not held by municipalities of relevant areas as multiple gatherings are constructed illegally on the municipality's lands or on lands owned by private landowners.



Map 2 Palestinian Gatherings in Saida 2

The state and conditions of the housing and population in the gatherings are also a major concern to the quality of life there. As the gatherings are not legally and officially recognized, many are at constant risk of evacuation and insecurity with high levels in Jal el Bahr. The share of tenants who declared receiving eviction threats increased from 9% in 2027, to 16% in 2022. 5% of households live in overcrowded dwellings (more than 3 persons per room). Half of the Palestinian gatherings population (51%) live in apartments, 45% in single houses, 2.3% in shared houses and 2.3% in temporary shelters. Around 39% of the houses are affected by humidity and 19% are affected by darkness. These figures are expected to have increased in recent years⁵.

On the health level, 58% of dwellers in Palestinian Gatherings resort to UNRWA facilities for healthcare services, compared to 65% in 2017. The share of households that used public health

⁵ Assessing Vulnerabilities, in Palestinian gatherings in Lebanon-Results of the 2022 Household Survey -UNDP.

facilities remained stable at 13% in 2022, while the share of households relying on NGOs increased significantly. Indeed, while only 3% of dwellers in Palestinian Gatherings received health services from NGOs in 2017, this share increased to 13% in 2022.

The ratio of dwellers who suffer from a chronic health problem has increased from 20% in 2017 to 32% in 2020. This definition includes illnesses lasting for more than six months, whether physical or psychological, and any conditions due to an injury, accident, or congenital condition.

On the other hand, increased health needs and a significant exacerbation of lack of access to health care services is observed in Palestinian Gatherings. 73% of households reported that one of their members required treatment in the 3 months preceding the survey and out of these households, 21% could not receive the needed treatment, compared to 57% and 11% in 2017 respectively.

The main reason for not receiving treatment, cited by 98% of respondents, is related to inability to pay, which suggests that access to health will become increasingly more difficult as the economic crisis continues, and the health status of the population residing in Palestinian Gatherings will likely deteriorate further⁶.

On the educational level, the level of education differs depending on the age group in the PRL communities. The general level of school enrollment in the primary school age (6-12) is considerably high with 89%. For the preparatory school age (13 to 15), this number decreases to 66% with a more significant decrease in males than females.

The share of non-attendance in the current wave increases from 3% among 6–12-year-olds, to 15% among 13-15 year-olds, to 41% among 16-18 year-olds, and finally to 73% among 19-24 year-olds. This new trend initially emerged because of COVID-19-related lockdowns and continued to exacerbate due to budget constraints in many schools, including Lebanese public schools. Indeed, during the period of the survey, most UNRWA schools were opening every other week, and public schools opened a few days per week. Moreover, even when schools were open, children were often unable to attend due to the high cost of transportation. This is a highly important finding as enrolment without attendance is akin to drop-out, meaning that a very high share of young dwellers in Palestinian Gatherings is left without an education, a phenomenon that will eventually drive down educational attainment indicators in future surveys.

These illiterate children are especially at risk. 58% of them are boys and 42% are girls, which indicates that gender is not a factor in keeping them out of school. Almost half of them (51%) are SRS children, while another 31% are PRL, and the rest are Lebanese.

Attendance rates begin to drop at age 13 (81%), with a significant drop taking place at ages 15 (72%) and 16 (62%) when children are just finishing intermediate school and moving on to the

⁶ Ibid

secondary cycle. This finding is in line with the attendance rate trend in national surveys. As expected, attendance rates continue to drop upon transitioning to university, with only a third (32%) of 19 year-olds being enrolled in education. Reasons for lack of attendance among 13-15 year-olds include economic factors (high cost of education, child needs to work) in addition to a significant share relating the drop-out to the child “not liking school”. This suggests a need for education support among these vulnerable populations where the parents have low educational attainment (see previous section) and are unable to assist their children in schooling.

Drop-out rates are significantly higher among males than females. Indeed, by age 16, the male attendance rate stands at 54% compared to 71% among females. This is probably due to the early entrance of young male adolescents into the labor force. It is noteworthy that many of these young males continue to enroll in school without actually attending. Indeed, 42% of male 16 year-olds are enrolled in school but not attending while only 4% are unenrolled. This suggests that with some remedial courses and economic support, many of these children may be returned to the education path.

In terms of drop-out reasons among 16-18 year-olds, the top reasons given by girls are disliking school (22%), marriage (14%), and achieving the desired level of education (9%). Among males, the two main reasons are the need to work (32%) and disliking school (18%)⁷.

Results of the 2022 survey shown a sharp increase in employment vulnerability as reflected by two major indicators, namely underemployment and unstable employment. While underemployment increased from 35% to 53%, the share of daily labor increased from 30% to 42%.⁸

While the economic crisis did not affect the unemployment rate which was already high in Palestinian Gatherings in 2017, one of the negative impacts of that crisis is embodied in the sharp increase in underemployment, from 35% in 2017 to 53% in 2022. Underemployment affects women much more than men (64% and 50% respectively). It also affects dwellers of various nationalities to different degrees, with PRS being particularly affected (79% underemployed)⁹.

The share of households that have no employed member increased from 24% in 2017 to 29% in 2022, with PRS households being especially vulnerable in this regard. Indeed, 40% of them are without a gainfully employed member.

On average, every employed person supports 3 dependents. This average varies from a low of 2.6 in Lebanese households to a high of 3.8 and 3.9 in Syrian and PRS households respectively.

⁷ Ibid

⁸ Ibid

⁹ Ibid

The average in PRL households is 2.9. Indeed, in 46% of all households, each employed member supports 3 to 5 dependents and in 8% of households, each employed member supports 6 or more dependents.¹⁰

As was the case in 2017, sales remain the sector that employs the highest share of workers (29% compared to 30% in 2017). In contrast, while construction was the second largest sector of employment in 2017 (22%), its share fell to only 11% in the current wave. Manufacturing remained stable (13% and 12% in 2017 and 2022 respectively). Community and social services, which took up only 5% of employed workers in 2017, now employs 17% of all workers.

In terms of gender, the most common sector for both genders is sales (31% of females and 29% of males), the second is community and social services (19% of females and 16% of males). This is where the similarities end however. Thus, while 16% of females work in education and another 16% in personal services, males work in construction and manufacturing (14% each).

Because of the devaluation of the Lebanese Pound since the end of 2019, the monthly average earnings of the dwellers of Palestinian Gatherings fell drastically from USD 365 in 2017 to USD 100 in 2022.¹¹

the coping strategies some families had to follow which included putting children in labor where UNRWA figures estimate that around 4,500 Palestinian children engage in some form of child labor.¹²

This situation was exacerbated by the influx of refugees from Syria into the gatherings. Since the beginning of the conflict in Syria in March 2011, gatherings and camps have housed a large number of Palestinian and Syrian refugees from Syria. An estimated 52,400 Palestinian refugees from Syria (PRS) were registered in UNRWA by beginning of 2014. Virtually all these refugees have flocked to camps and gatherings. Typically following family and social relations and seeking cheaper rents. It is estimated that more than two-thirds of the PRS are renting premises while the rest are hosted by other Palestinian refugees in Lebanon (PRL).

PRS in Lebanon also suffer from employability challenges leaving 49% of them jobless in 2020¹³.

PARD’s response to the beneficiaries’ needs:

In response to the needs and vulnerabilities of the Palestinians in the gatherings, PARD responded over the years in different areas. PARD established a polyclinic in Sabra. Established in 1985, the center dealt with the following activities:

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ Ibid

¹² Protection Brief, OP.Cit

¹³ Ibid

- Curative medicine for adults and children •
- Vaccination of babies and children •
- Family planning •
- Giving lectures and instructions to child and women including home visits •
- Minor surgeries •
- Handing out milk and baby clothing •
- Laboratory tests •
- Pap smear and circumcision •

The clinic was established in response to the needs of the Palestinian displaced families of the destroyed Shatila camp during the war of camps 1985-1987, and a dental clinic was established in 2012. The clinic turned into a women’s health center running until now. PARD also established a dispensary in Saida in 1994 which was closed in 2010 due to the opening of other dispensaries in the same area. PARD had operating clinics in multiple areas like Dbaye, Wasta, and Jim Jim. Also, PARD started a mobile clinic in 1987 whose mission was to visit displacement centers, gatherings and faraway places deprived of health facilities. It used to visit Burghuliye, Jwar al nakhel – Kfar badda and Naame. It is still running visiting the gatherings of Jal Al Bahr, Maashouk, Qasmiyeh, Shabriha, Jim Jeem, Wasta, Aitaniyeh, and Sikkeh. PARD has also responded to those needs through health trainings, establishing youth and women committees, and supporting small community projects.

Multiple other programs were started by PARD in response to the PRL’s needs in Lebanon. These programs included **health education** which started in 1987 in the Palestinian gatherings. This tackled multiple subjects including reproductive health, environmental health and social issues such as early marriage, GBV and drug abuse. This activity also included a peer-to-peer approach to health education through training of trainers (TOT) which is also part of PARD’s women and youth empowerment. Another program is the **empowerment of women and youth program** that started in 2000 and included training on empowerment, follow-up on formed women and youth committees, and support to small income generating projects for women or small community projects implemented by the women. In addition, it involved vocational trainings, combating illiteracy, and awareness raising on human rights, health and social issues and gender justice. Among that is also the first aid project for youth which took place from 1998 till 2020.

And since serving children is an integral part of PARD’s work, **psychosocial activities for children** aged between 7 – 12 years started in PARD with the establishment of the center in Sabra in 1998, and continued till the present date in Beirut and South Lebanon (Shabriha, Maashouk, Jim Jeem and Wadi El Zeineh).

On another hand, PARD responded to many emergencies as part of its relief activities. Among those are a response after the Israeli aggression on Lebanon in 1996 and 2006. In 1996, PARD's response included distribution of cleaning and personal hygiene kits, baby kits, and anti-lice shampoo, water control, garbage removal, provision of hot water for bathing, provision of medical care, and health education in Saida as well as provision of medical services and distribution of cleaning materials and tools in Beirut. **In 2006, PARD provided relief activities directly after the Israeli aggression which included:**

- Provision of medical services and medications •
- Provision of first aid services •
- Health awareness raising •
- Securing shelter •
- Water and sanitation •
- Distribution of relief kits (food and hygiene kits) •
- Children activities •
- Participation in vaccination campaign against measles •

PARD also responded in the recovery phase which included:

- Distribution of school kits •
- Distribution of full fat and low-fat milk •
- Distribution of Olive oil •
- Distribution of blankets, diapers, children clothing, personal and family hygiene kits •
- Children activities •
- Water and sanitation •
- Repairing damaged houses •

Another project that was established as a response to a war context was the **environmental health project**. This project started in 1985 among the displaced refugees after the “war of camps”. It has been ongoing ever since and includes the following activities:

- Solid waste collection and sorting •
- Water testing •
- Rehabilitation of water and sewage infrastructure •
- Rehabilitation of water reservoirs and wells •

- Combating insects and rodent infestations •
- Raising community awareness on the protection of the environment •
- Training courses (local health educators, water care takers) •

Relief Projects:

- In 2003, PARD in partnership with **World Vision International**, implemented a project supported by **ECHO** to rehabilitate the water and sewage infrastructure in the Beirut displacement centers (Gaza buildings) and the unofficial gatherings of the South (Kfarbadda, Aitaniyeh, Wasta, Qasmiyeh, Burghuliyeh and Shabriha). Works included construction of sewage systems, digging of new wells, construction of water systems, rehabilitation of water reservoirs and improvement of solid waste collection project. .1
- In 2003-2004, PARD, in partnership with **CESVI**, implemented a project supported by ECHO to rehabilitate water and sewage infrastructure in Nahr El Bared camp. Moreover, PARD implemented an awareness campaign on water-borne diseases and their prevention benefiting 955 women and 1145 children. .2
- PARD, in partnership with **HumanServe International**, implemented a project to place a water network and dig a well in Sikkeh gathering in 2006. This project additionally provided a generator to work the pump of the well providing water. .3
- PARD, in partnership with **CISP**, implemented a project sponsored by ECHO to rehabilitate sanitation and drinking water infrastructure of the Tyre Palestinian gatherings. PARD collaborated in engineering, raising health awareness and water testing. .4
- PARD, in partnership with **Premiere Urgence (PU)**, implemented a project to replace the old sewage network in Sikkeh with a new one in 2008. Moreover, PARD implemented a health awareness campaign related to water and sewage. PARD was also in charge of the design, organization and implementation of the solid waste disposal project in Sikkeh. .5
- In 2009, PARD implemented with **NRC** and the Popular Committee a project to improve the water well and water network in the gathering of Daouk-Beirut. PARD also partnered NRC in the maintenance of the improved infrastructure in Gaza buildings. .6
- In 2013, in partnership with **UNDP** and **UNHABITAT**, PARD implemented a WATSAN project related to rehabilitation of sewage network, water system, and road networks in the gatherings of Saida and Tyre. .7
- In 2013, in partnership with **SIDA** (Canadian government) and **MCC**, PARD implemented a project for the improvement of Shelters for Syrian refugees in the South gatherings. .8
- In 2013, in partnership with **UNHABITAT**, PARD implemented a project to construct 18 rooms in Sikkeh (Adjacent area of Ain El Helwe camp) for Syrian refugees. .9
- In 2014, in partnership with **OCHA** and **OXFAM**, PARD implemented a WATSAN project including the provision of water storage tanks, water quality monitoring and testing, .10

rehabilitation of water wells, lowering pumps and installation of underground monitoring systems in boreholes in Ein El Helweh camp (Asohoun, Safsaf, Murshed and Hittin).

In 2014, in partnership with **OCHA** and **Welfare association**, PARD implemented a WATSAN .11 project in the South gatherings.

In 2015, in partnership with **UNDP** and **SIF** (Secours Islamique France), PARD implemented a .12 WATSAN project including rehabilitation of water and sewage networks, awareness campaigns, in the gatherings of Tyre and Beirut. In addition to rehabilitation of households.

In 2016, in partnership with **OXFAM**, PARD implemented a WATSAN project in the South .13 gatherings including water control, solid waste collection, suction of septic tanks, health and hygiene awareness.

Since 2012 till now, with CFGB and MCC as donors and partners, PARD continues to support .14 refugee families from Syrian and hardship cases in the Palestinian refugees host community in the South and Beirut gatherings. The average number of refugees helped reached 4255 refugees per month and the cost of the food voucher distributed ranged from 20-27 USD.

Situation Report

Economic Situation in Lebanon

Four years into the economic and financial crisis, Lebanon's macroeconomic framework remains severely impaired. According to the latest World Bank Lebanon Economic Monitor released, the spillover effects from the ongoing conflict centered in Gaza pose yet another large shock to Lebanon's precarious growth model. Without the implementation of a comprehensive crisis resolution plan, no long-term investment is feasible, and the country's physical, human, social, and natural capital will be further eroded.¹⁴

With limited progress towards a comprehensive crisis resolution plan, Lebanon remains entrenched in a socioeconomic and financial crisis, further exacerbated by an institutional and political vacuum. A highly polarized political landscape, a Presidential vacuum, a caretaker government with restricted executive powers, an interim central bank governor, and limited legislative action by parliament have all markedly slowed the progress needed for a comprehensive crisis resolution plan. Progress on meeting the prior actions under the Staff Level Agreement (SLA) concluded in April 2022 with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) is slow. Legislation pertaining to restructuring the banking sector and the upfront allocation of the financial losses in the insolvent financial system remains elusive.¹⁵

The central bank, under a new acting governor, has initiated limited but encouraging reforms.

¹⁴ The World Bank, Lebanon's Fragile Economy Pulled Back into Recession, Beirut, December 21, 2023.

¹⁵ The World Bank, Lebanon Economic Monitor - Fall 2023: In the Grip of a New Crisis, December 21, 2023

The (leaked) forensic audit of the BdL reveals systemic and large-scale governance weaknesses and abuses. These include the absence of an internal audit function, as well as the lack of an audit committee and independent board members. The forensic audit also uncovers functional deficiencies at the central bank such as the absence of a risk management framework.

The weak transparency and reporting standards at BdL constitute another main finding of the audit.

The Government has recently set up dedicated reform committees to support reforms of public financial management in six priority areas. Committees have been tasked with the drafting of legislation and diagnostics in the following areas: (1) Law on a unified income tax system, (2) Civil service reform and SOE reform; (3) Modernizing the IT system in government, (4) Amending and updating the Public Accounting Law; (5) Customs reform; and (6) Tax on Luxury Goods.¹⁶

The reform committees are targeting much needed improvements in public financial management and government efficiency. If implemented effectively, resulting reform initiatives are expected to strengthen budget preparation and execution, increase domestic resource mobilization, and drive state modernization.¹⁷

Following the demarcation of the maritime border, exploration for oil and gas has started, but concluding results have yet to materialize.

The current account (CA) deficit is projected to narrow to 12.8 percent of GDP in 2023, following a dramatic increase to 32.7 percent of GDP in 2022.

Gross foreign currency reserves have increased by US\$ 425 million between end-July and mid-November 2023, reaching US\$14,213 million, reflecting ad-hoc policy measures and not a sustainable improvement in the net foreign asset position.

The sizeable inflow of remittances did not meet Lebanon's external financing needs.

The pace of the exchange rate depreciation has moderated, with the banknote market exchange rate stabilizing, albeit temporarily, at around 90,000 LBP/US\$ since July 2023.

Lebanon topped the list of countries that are hardest hit by nominal food price inflation in the first quarter of 2023. Nominal food price inflation stood at 350 percent in April 2023. On a global level from March to July 2023, Lebanon was also the second hardest hit country by nominal food price inflation, which stood at 280 percent, second only to Venezuela.¹⁸

¹⁶ Ibid

¹⁷ Ibid

¹⁸ Ibid

The current conflict and its spillovers into Lebanon are expected to quickly reverse the tepid growth projected for 2023, as the economy returns to a recession.¹⁹

Tourism cannot, on its own, serve as the basis for an economic recovery, nor be the single pillar of sustainable economic growth.²⁰

By 2022 and early 2023, the economy was able to find a temporary bottom following years of sharp contraction, thanks to tourism and sizeable remittances.

The temporary bottoming out helped the exchange rate to also stabilize temporarily.

Prior to October 2023, economic growth was projected—for the first time since 2018—to slightly expand in 2023 (by 0.2 percent).

The fiscal and primary deficits are projected to narrow to 1.3 and 0.3 percent of GDP in 2023, respectively.

The current account deficit is projected to narrow to 12.8 percent of GDP in 2023, following a dramatic increase to 32.7 percent of GDP in 2022.

Inflation is projected to accelerate to 231.3 percent in 2023, mainly a reflection of the continued deterioration of the underlying macroeconomic environment.²¹

The economic and financial crisis that affected Lebanon since October 2019 has significantly undermined the food security situation of those living in Lebanon, a country affected by institutional and social fragility and hosting a high number of refugees. This includes Lebanese residents, Syrian refugees, Palestine refugees in Lebanon, Palestine refugees from Syria as well as other refugee groups and migrant workers. An Acute Food Insecurity (AFI) IPC analysis was carried out in all 26 districts covering four population groups in Lebanon: Lebanese residents, Syrian refugees, Palestine refugees in Lebanon (PRL), Palestine refugees from Syria (PRS). The analysis covered over 99 percent of the population living in the country and produced the IPC current acute food insecurity phase classification for the period covering from May to October 2023.²²

Based on the current classification of the IPC analysis, 21 percent of the Lebanese population corresponding to about 811,000 people, and 36 percent of the Syrian refugee population corresponding to 540,000 people were estimated to be in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) or above requiring urgent humanitarian action to reduce food gaps, diversify food intake, protect, and restore livelihoods and prevent acute malnutrition. Of particular concern, the situation of 77,000 (2

¹⁹ Ibid

²⁰ Ibid

²¹ Ibid

²² IPC Acute food insecurity analysis, May – October 2023

percent) Lebanese residents and 45,000 (3 percent) Syrian refugees in IPC Phase 4 (Emergency) requires urgent delivery of humanitarian food assistance.²³

The destructive actions of Lebanon’s political and financial leaders are responsible for forcing most of the country’s population into poverty, in violation of international human rights law.²⁴

“Impunity, corruption, and structural inequality have been baked into a venal political and economic system designed to fail those at the bottom, but it doesn’t have to be that way,” said De Schutter, an independent expert appointed by the UN Human Rights Council.²⁵

“The political establishment knew about the looming cataclysm for years but did little to avert it. Well-connected individuals even moved their money out of the country, facilitated by a legal vacuum that allowed capital to flow out of the country.

Lebanon’s man-made economic crisis started in 2019, and today the country stands as “a failing State”, the UN expert said. He cited current estimates that put four in every five people in poverty.

“Political connections with the banking system are pervasive, pointing at serious concerns about conflicts of interest in their handling of the economy and people’s savings,” De Schutter said.

“There is no accountability built into the latest rescue plan, critical to restoring the lost confidence of the population and the financial sector. We’re talking about national wealth that belongs to the public in Lebanon and that was squandered over decades of mismanagement and misplaced investments by the Government and the Central Bank.²⁶”

“Central Bank policies, in particular, led to a downward spiral of the currency, the devastation of the economy, the wiping out of people’s lifetime savings and to plunging the population into poverty. The conclusion of my report is that the Central Bank has brought the Lebanese State into clear contravention of international human rights law”.²⁷

“Political leadership is completely out of touch with reality, including with the desperation they’ve created by destroying people’s lives. Lebanon is also one of the most unequal countries in the world, yet leadership seems unaware of this at best, and comfortable with it at worst.”

De Schutter said there was a serious lack of robust social protection mechanisms. “As it currently stands, it is a system that protects the rich while leaving poor families to fend for themselves,” he said. “Public services, including electricity, education, and healthcare, have been gutted, with a State that heavily subsidises private provisioning of these services.

²³ Ibid

²⁴ OHCHR, Lebanon: UN expert warns of ‘failing state’ amid widespread poverty, 11 May 2022.

²⁵ Ibid

²⁶ Ibid

²⁷ Ibid

“Over a quarter of all public education expenditures go to the private sector, which exacerbates inequality, does not lead to better education, and leads to higher dropouts among children from poor households”.

“More than half of families report that their child has had to skip meals, and hundreds of thousands of children are out of school,” he added. “If the situation does not improve immediately, an entire generation of children will be sacrificed.”²⁸

The UN expert criticized decades of underinvestment in the public healthcare system and the Government’s “disgraceful” partial removal of subsidies on essential medicines. Medicines remain in severe shortage and prices for chronic disease medication have increased at least fourfold, an all but guaranteed death sentence for those most in need,” the UN poverty expert said.²⁹

Situation of Palestinian and Syrian Refugees in Lebanon

There are more than 479,000 Palestinian refugees registered with UNRWA in Lebanon with 180,000 estimated to be in-country calculated by the number of refugees accessing services with the remainder having temporarily or permanently left Lebanon (UNRWA, n.d. f). It is also estimated that about 1,500,000 Syrians currently live in Lebanon.³⁰

Legal barriers continue to hinder the access of Syrian and Palestine refugees to formal employment, which result in their engagement in informal labour, if any, leading to exploitative working conditions, lower wages, and lack of legal protection. Hence, Syrian and Palestine refugees are reliant on humanitarian aid which do not cover the minimum requirements to meet food and other basic needs.³¹

Physical and financial access to food were the main concerns for PRL and PRS, with restricted job opportunities and limited humanitarian assistance.

The extreme levels of social and economic poverty experienced by Palestinian refugees have multidimensional causes. They include social discrimination which in Lebanon means that Palestinians are denied citizenship, property rights and excluded from practising 39 syndicated professions, such as law, medicine and engineering (UNRWA, 2018: 1). This in turn forces Palestinian workers into the low-paid, unregulated informal economy where they are denied work contracts, labour rights and social protection. Palestinians are excluded from participation in the political process and lack representation in government institutions to raise their concerns. Palestinian refugees are also subject to spatial disadvantages as their lack of

²⁸ Ibid

²⁹ Ibid

³⁰ Dsalreland – June 2023, working paper series, The Impact of Lebanon’s Economic Crisis on Palestinian Refugee.

³¹ IPC Acute food insecurity analysis, May – October 2023

economic and property rights in Lebanon mean that nearly half (45 per cent) live in the twelve camps operated by UNRWA.³²

Based on The Acute Food Insecurity, the IPC analysis mentioned previously 65,000 Palestine Refugees were estimated to be in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) and above. PRL and PRS like Lebanese residents and Syrian refugees require urgent humanitarian action to prevent further deterioration, with 30 percent of PRL and 35 percent of PRS estimated to be in the IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) and above. Among them, 2 percent of PRL (4,000 persons) and 5 percent of PRS (2,000 persons) were estimated to be in IPC Phase 4 (Emergency).³³

Rising inflation and record high depreciation of the local currency continued to be key drivers of food insecurity impacting all the analysed population groups.

The devaluation of the currency has meant spiralling prices for food and energy, a severe drop in disposable income and an increase in unemployment multidimensional poverty in Lebanon a society collapsing in key services such as health, education, utilities and housing.³⁴

UNRWA found that traditional coping mechanisms in times of economic crisis had been exhausted which meant that many families were turning to ‘maladaptive coping mechanisms’ including: ‘selling belongings, missing meals, child marriage, child labor, incurring debts and unsustainable borrowing practices’ (UNRWA, 2023c: 5). With no resolution to the economic crisis in sight, increasing numbers of Palestine refugees are risking their lives by taking overcrowded boats across the Mediterranean to what they hope is sanctuary elsewhere (Murphy, 2022).

In a 2023 emergency funding appeal for Jordan, Syria and Lebanon, UNRWA anticipates that a total of 4,000 PRL and PRS based in Lebanon will require protection interventions including: emergency cash in the case of eviction; support to survivors of child abuse and GBV; psychosocial care in the community; improved security in the camps to address an increase in crime and theft; and programs to ensure ‘gender mainstreaming, disability inclusion, [and the] prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA)’ (UNRWA, 2023c: 37). These interventions reflect the social pressures exacted on an already vulnerable population by Lebanon’s economic unravelling since 2019.³⁵

The withdrawal of Palestinian students from Lebanon’s public and private schools because families could no longer afford the fees has increased. This in turn was increasing enrolment in UNRWA schools already struggling with classroom sizes of 30-40 students. Classes of this size

³² Dsalreland – June 2023, working paper series, The Impact of Lebanon’s Economic Crisis on Palestinian Refugee.

³³ IPC Acute food insecurity analysis, May – October 2023

³⁴ Dsalreland – June 2023, working paper series, The Impact of Lebanon’s Economic Crisis on Palestinian Refugee.

³⁵ Ibid

impose enormous work pressures on teachers to cater for students of different levels of ability, particularly when some students are wrestling with psychosocial distress and consequent behavioral problems.³⁶

Non-attendance at UNRWA Schools (2017-22)³⁷

Age Range	Non-Attendance Rate 2017 (%)	Non-Attendance Rate 2022 (%)
6-12	0.1	3
13-15	0.2	15
16-18	0.2	41

Table shows the highest school drop-out rate in the 16-18 age range which can be attributed to the limited number of UNRWA secondary schools in Lebanon, the increasing cost of school fees in Lebanese public and private schools and the pressure on young people to work and supplement the family income.³⁸

A potential concern for students, parents, teachers and principals going forward is the possibility of an increasing numbers of UNRWA schools having to double-shift. This would involve the same school building being used by two different student populations every day in the morning and afternoon. The growing number of Palestinian students migrating to UNRWA schools from the Lebanese public and private education sector will add pressure on classroom sizes, teachers and resources. It will result in children receiving a part-time education when there are already so many other barriers to education in Lebanon: lack of resources and equipment; high levels of poverty and deprivation; lack of learning devices to support home schooling; and lack of residency status and documentation among PRS.³⁹

In Lebanon, there are 27 UNRWA healthcare facilities in Palestinian camps with 299 staff serving 150,000 patients per annum (UNRWA, 2023b: 7). As 55 per cent of the Palestinian population is not covered by health insurance, it will be unduly impacted by the removal of government subsidies on drugs. This problem is compounded by the collapse of the Lebanese pound which further inflates the cost of medical drugs and, as Palestinians are not naturalised, they are ineligible for state-provided social services, including healthcare.⁴⁰

³⁶ Ibid

³⁷ Ibid

³⁸ Ibid

³⁹ Ibid

⁴⁰ Ibid

Lebanon's economic slump means that many basic and essential drugs cannot be produced locally and are no longer available in pharmacies. The removal of state subsidies on essential medications has priced them beyond the reach of a large percentage of the population. This is particularly serious for Palestine refugee cancer patients who are excluded as 'non-citizens' from obtaining cancer medications at subsidised prices.⁴¹

Earthquakes in Turkey and Syria:

Starting from February 2023, earthquakes hit Turkey and Syria hard. Thousands of people were killed and displaced.

The Palestinian refugees in Lebanon camps and informal settlements collected relief materials and sent them to Ladiqiyah and Halab in Syria to support the Palestinian camps inflicted by the earthquakes in those areas.

Fights in Ein El Hilwe camp:

Starting from the 29th of July 2023, violent armed fights broke out in Ein El Hilwe camp in Saida-Lebanon, between "Fateh" and the "Islamic Youth", two Palestinian factions. The armed fights lasted for 52 days resulting in 14 dead, 60 injured and damages in house, shops and infrastructure estimated to cost about 30 million dollars in rehabilitation.

Israeli-Hezbollah Military Action in South Lebanon

Since 8 October, there have been daily flare-ups along the Lebanese-Israeli border in which either Hezbollah or Palestinian factions have traded fire with Israel.

The border tension comes as Israel widened air and ground operations in the Gaza Strip following a cross-border attack by Hamas on Israeli border towns on Oct. 7.

While they have not engaged in all-out war since 2006, skirmishes and disputes between Hezbollah and Israel are common under the terms of so-called informal rules of engagement.

A large UN peacekeeping force, Unifil, patrols the demarcation line between Israel and Lebanon – countries technically at war – along the Blue Line.

Hizbollah continues to help Hamas by simply holding their ground. "Hizbollah is already lending Hamas assistance by forcing the Israeli military to maintain parts of its troops on the Lebanese and Syrian borders on high alert," said Rym Momtaz, consultant research fellow at the

⁴¹ Ibid

International Institute for Strategic Studies. Yet Hamas's offensive follows months of Hizbollah testing the limits of the agreed-upon red lines.

"Once it's on, it's very hard to control. The situation is extremely dangerous. Even though neither side wants to get into full-scale war, they could easily trip into one"

The Israeli military said it had also deployed tens of thousands of units to the north while some residents of the country's south, close to Israel, began fleeing towards Beirut

"It seems that on a daily basis there are incidents going on, and there is a message out of these incidents," Al Jazeera's Ali Hashem said as he reported from southern Lebanon.

"These incidents aren't only meant just to relieve Gaza from pressure, but also to say that there is a new status quo, there are new rules of engagement that could be imposed on the Lebanese side of the border in case this war in Gaza continues, in case there is a land incursion, [and] in case there is an Israeli attempt to annihilate Hamas in Gaza."

Imad Salamey, an associate professor of Middle Eastern political affairs at the Lebanese American University, told L'Orient that it's expected that "the tension along the border will remain high in the next phase as both sides [Lebanon and Israel] will remain on high alert, and we should expect to see cross-border fire exchange."

"However, the crossfire will also remain within bounds and without major escalation," he added.

Mohanad Hage Ali, a researcher at Beirut's Malcolm H. Kerr Carnegie Middle East Center, told L'Orient that "Hezbollah and Hamas' 'united front' strategy means that if one side is under attack the other side will step up to help."

"If Israel executes a ground invasion, much of Hamas's infrastructure will be destroyed. If Hamas is defeated, Hezbollah, and Iran will be defeated, so it's difficult to see Hezbollah being neutral in this war," Hage Ali said.

"I don't think Hezbollah will open a second front," Paul Salem, president of the Middle East Institute, and a seasoned Lebanon hand, told POLITICO. But he had caveats to add "That assessment depends on what the Israelis do in Gaza."

"If Israel moves in a big way in Gaza and begins to get close to either defeating or evicting Hamas, let's say like the eviction of the PLO from Lebanon in 1982, then at that point Hezbollah and Iran would not want to lose Hamas as an asset in Gaza," he said.

"The internal security calculus in Israel is shifting and they are attempting to form a unity government; this could mean unprecedented support for wider engagement in the conflict. Israel has threatened Hamas leaders abroad, and many Hamas officials are now residing in Lebanon," Hage Ali explained.

This raises questions over whether Israel would strike Hamas in Lebanon if it decides to engage in a wide-scale attack against Hamas.

“We might see Israel deciding at a later stage when there is enough political endorsement, that they go forward with those strikes,” he said.

“Moreover, the Israel attack against Gaza started with unprecedented European, US and Western support, however, the more Palestinian citizens are injured, the more the support of the war will decrease, specifically from Europe.”

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said a spillover of the conflict in Israel must be avoided and that he is concerned about attacks on Israel from southern Lebanon.

“Hizbollah’s participation could also trigger retaliation in Syria, Iraq and even Iran itself. It could risk dragging in the US, which has hundreds of troops stationed in Syria and Iraq, both countries home to Iran-backed Shia militias”.

In recent weeks, Axis members (Iran, Syria, Iraq, Palestinian and Lebanese Resistance forces) have proclaimed their intention to “unite and escalate”. But they have also distanced themselves from taking credit for planning the Hamas offensive. Joining the war would be the alliance’s first real test, experts and diplomats say.

Mikati, Lebanon’s prime minister stressed "the priority of working to reach a cease-fire in Gaza to stop the ongoing Israeli aggression," following a meeting with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken in the Jordanian capital of Amman.⁴²

“Lebanon, which is committed to international legitimacy and the implementation of International Resolution 1701, and in coordination with UNIFIL, calls on the international community to pressure Israel to stop the daily encroachments and violations on its land and sovereignty on land, sea and air,” he said.⁴³

After Israeli phosphorus shells burned 462 hectares (1,143 acres) of agricultural and forestland in southern Lebanon, Beirut will file official complaints to UN officials about Israel’s “scorched earth” policy, said a Lebanese Cabinet minister on Sunday.⁴⁴

“Those shells ignited over 100 fires, spreading across extensive forested areas with high environmental significance, agricultural lands, and tens of thousands of olive trees,” he added.

“Lebanon will submit a documented complaint to the United Nations and the UN Security Council against the Israeli enemy's policy of scorched earth and the use of phosphorus,” he stressed.

⁴² Israeli aggression against Lebanon must be stopped: Lebanese Prime Minister Najib Mikati, 5/11/2023.

⁴³ Ibid

⁴⁴ Lebanon vows to complain to UN about Israel burning 462 hectares of southern farms, forests, 5/11/2023.

According to international law, the use of white phosphorus in areas with a dense civilian population is prohibited. The smoke from white phosphorus, when inhaled, can cause sudden lung injuries and suffocation.⁴⁵

The NGOs shared videos to support their allegations showing dense white columns of smoke following the bombings. Several experts interviewed by France Info and the Washington Post confirm this hypothesis.

Israeli authorities have officially denied using white phosphorus.

White phosphorus can have devastating effects on populations. The fires it causes are difficult to control, and it can quickly burn skin down to the bone. The toxic agent is highly soluble in human flesh, meaning it is quickly absorbed upon contact, and so badly damages organs that scientists say burns affecting just 10% of the body's surface area can be fatal. Its smoke is corrosive enough to cause burns to the eyes and skin.

"Israel has used white phosphorus in military operations in Gaza and Lebanon, putting civilians at risk of serious and long-term injuries," wrote Human Rights Watch on the social media platform X. "White phosphorus causes excruciating burns and can set homes afire. Its use in populated areas is unlawful," added the statement.

Lebanese Prime Minister Najib Mikati highlighted the need to work to "stop the Israeli aggression against southern Lebanon."⁴⁶

It was two days after the Israel-Gaza conflict reignited before caretaker Prime Minister Najib Mikati spoke publicly on the matter, saying the priority was to "maintain security and stability in southern Lebanon".

Lebanese Prime Minister Najib Mikati said his government will submit an urgent complaint against Israel to the UN Security Council in response to "Tel Aviv's targeting of civilians and children in Southern Lebanon."⁴⁷

The US Navy has sent a nuclear submarine to the Middle East.⁴⁸

"On November 5, 2023, an Ohio-class submarine arrived in the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility," US Central Command (CENTCOM) said.⁴⁹

The US has sent a carrier strike group and military aircraft to the eastern Mediterranean in what General CQ Brown, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told the Financial Times was a "strong message of deterrence to contain this particular conflict".

⁴⁵ Lebanon to file complaint against Israel over white phosphorus attacks, 1/11/2023.

⁴⁶ Israeli aggression against Lebanon must be stopped: Lebanese Prime Minister Najib Mikati, 5/11/2023

⁴⁷ Lebanon to submit urgent complaint against Israel to UN Security Council, 6/11/2023.

⁴⁸ Anadolu's recap of to stories from around the globe, morning briefing: Nov. 6, 2023.

⁴⁹ Ibid

Military sources told the newspaper that the decision announced by US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin to bring the US aircraft carrier USS Gerald Ford closer to the region was part of this threat.

The huge modern battleship carries 38 F-35, F-15, and F-16 fighter planes, and has a stockpile of 1,000 tons of weapons. It is accompanied by four small warships, a ship carrying missiles, and four nuclear war submarines, and is ready for combat.

Military sources who spoke to the newspaper said Israel held talks with the administration of US President Joe Biden and requested Congress' approval to allow US forces to participate in a possible campaign against Hezbollah.

In the West, unwavering support for Israel persists. Western leaders condemn attacks on civilians but continue to provide Israel with unconditional backing. The absence of a cease-fire opens the door to a conflict that will extend instability throughout the middle East.⁵⁰

Hizbollah responded to the US moves by saying that it considered Washington “a deeply entrenched partner in the Zionist aggression and hold it wholly accountable for the bloodshed, lawlessness, blockade, destruction of homes, and horrifying massacres perpetrated against vulnerable [Palestinian] civilians”.

There have been three attacks on health care in Lebanon since the start of the clashes. Two ambulances, 1 hospital, 1 primary health care center, and 5 health workers have been impacted by these attacks.⁵¹

Four primary health care centers in Marjayoun and Bint Jbeil have been forced to close due to insecurity and armed clashes.

This comes amid fear of Hezbollah's growing military capabilities, as well as the fear of any ongoing war and the Israeli occupation's unpreparedness for it amid its successive internal crises.⁵²

Israeli media reported that “Hezbollah's growing power over the past 17 years is the biggest failure in Israel”, noting that “no one has succeeded in addressing it”.

By using force instead of negotiations, Israeli leaders hope to erase the image of a weak army that was unable to prevent the death of 1200 Israelis by a small armed organization like Hamas and to protect 22 towns and a barrier that has cost \$800 million.

Nasrallah the head of Hezbollah has repeatedly warned the Zionist entity against staging attacks against targets belonging to Hezbollah, stressing that the Islamic Resistance in Lebanon will decisively retaliate for any Israeli aggression.

⁵⁰ Lebanon to submit urgent complaint against Israel to UN Security Council, 6/11/2023

⁵¹ World Health Organization – Lebanon, Emergency Readiness and Response Situation update #7 – 24 November 2023

⁵² Al Mayadeen English, Hezbollah does what it wishes, settlers unprotected: settlement chiefs, 9 July 2023

On 16 November, WHO issued an emergency appeal for readiness and response in Lebanon. WHO is appealing for US\$ 6.7 million for the scenario that hostilities are limited in the South, and US\$ 11.1 million for if hostilities expand to the entire country.⁵³

Hezbollah Secretary-General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah said the US' "Greater Middle East" project failed in Lebanon and was terminated in Palestine, Iraq, Syria, and Iran.⁵⁴

During a speech on the 17th anniversary of the start of the 2006 Israeli war on Lebanon, Sayyed Nasrallah indicated that the war was aimed at crushing the Resistance and subjugating Lebanon, adding that the Israelis and the Americans both admitted the failure of their war on more than a level.⁵⁵

The Resistance leader stressed that the July 2006 victory laid the groundwork for a deterrence equation that still exists to this very day and led to the erosion of Israeli deterrence.

If the Israelis are to launch any attack that results in a war with Lebanon, they will quickly seek to close the escalation. The very thought of Hezbollah's 100,000-strong base of soldiers, not including allies and special forces units, strikes fear into the Zionist regime, but what makes them even more worried is the prospect of Hezbollah's precision missiles, which carry the potential to make "Tel Aviv" look like Shujayeh (Gaza) did in 2014.⁵⁶

Lebanon is hit by yet another crisis: the spillover effects of the conflict in the Middle East.

Even before the onset of the current conflict, the tepid growth that was projected for 2023 was unlikely to last as it was based on fragile drivers resting on a dysfunctional economic structure.

With the onset of the current conflict, Lebanon's economy is projected to be back in recession in 2023.

Military confrontation at Lebanon's southern border with Israel is on the rise. Cross-border shelling and military operations have been intensifying and widening along the entire southern border since October 2023. This has resulted in loss of life, injuries, and destruction to infrastructure in these areas, and sparked an exodus of people from southern Lebanon.⁵⁷

Military operations unfolding along Lebanon's southern border have escalated from low- to high-intensity fighting since October 2023.⁵⁸

⁵³ World Health Organization – Lebanon, Emergency Readiness and Response Situation update #8 – 1 December 2023

⁵⁴ Al Mayadeen English, Resistance shall never abandon Al-Ghajar village: Sayyed Nasrallah, 12 Jul 2023

⁵⁵ Ibid

⁵⁶ Al Mayadeen English, Israel's threats against Lebanon reflect its growing anxiety of conflict with Hezbollah, 6 Jun 2023

⁵⁷ The World Bank, Lebanon Economic Monitor - Fall 2023 : In the Grip of a New Crisis, December 21, 2023

⁵⁸ Ibid

Real time high-frequency data suggest that Lebanon is the hardest hit among neighboring countries by the current conflict.

Lebanon's Eurobonds suffered from a selloff starting October 9, suggesting worsening market-implied sentiment of economic and debt restructuring prospects.

The Lebanese authorities have, on October 31, put in place a national emergency plan to cope in the event of a significant escalation of the conflict.

Lebanon's reliance on tourism receipts makes growth and current account dynamics very susceptible to a continuation or escalation of the current conflict.

The strong upward trajectory in tourism activity and tourism receipts will be dented by the current conflict, pulling Lebanon's fragile economy back into a recession.

The social impact of the crisis is likely to be significant.

The escalation of the conflict could lead to a severe and long-lasting impact on Lebanon's already weak infrastructure in the electricity, water, and transportation sectors.

A significant escalation of the conflict would also permanently scar Lebanon's growth potential and carry grave economic implications.

Lebanon is ill-equipped to manage the sectoral effects of any escalation in the conflict.

The 2006 conflict in Lebanon is estimated to have led to 10.5 percent of GDP in lost economic output and damages of US\$ 3.1 billion (direct and indirect).

The economic impact of an escalation of the conflict, is estimated to materially exceed that of the 2006 conflict given Lebanon's current vulnerabilities.

Imports are expected to be severely affected, with risks of shortages of food, fuel, and essential goods, and possible total blackouts.

The exchange rate is expected in the short to medium term to come under significant pressure.

A significant escalation of the conflict is estimated to halt and, ultimately, reverse the meager investment and capital inflows into the country.⁵⁹

Lebanon is at risk of being dragged into another conflict with neighboring Israel, a situation condemned by many Lebanese politicians, as the country faces one of the worst economic crises in modern history.

The possibility of a new front against Israel to the north is increasingly imminent. An Israeli ground intervention in the blockaded Gaza Strip is indeed on the table. However, this intervention is fraught with the potential to plunge the region into a devastating war and further instability. As we observe mounting demonstrations in the occupied West Bank and

⁵⁹ Ibid

clashes involving the Hezbollah movement in Lebanon, it becomes evident that a ground invasion would incite trouble in these areas first.⁶⁰

While exchanges of attacks continue between Israel and Hezbollah, a full-scale war remains a distinct possibility if Israel launches a ground invasion of Gaza. Hezbollah, with the backing of Iran, is poised to react as the primary actor. Iran has made it clear through its statements that de-escalation is not on the agenda, which means that attacks in areas near American bases and within the range of Iranian proxies are to be expected.⁶¹

An Israeli-Hezbollah war on the border, possibly with a ground operation, followed by a protracted conflict involving Syria, Jordan, Iraq and the Gulf states, with the West taking sides, is the worst-case scenario. The effects of a second protracted conflict, similar to the Ukraine-Russia war, would be catastrophic for the region. In addition to the devastating effects on the peoples of the Middle East, a regional war would have a direct negative impact on the fragile economies in the region, and would likely increase the volatility of energy prices affecting the economies of many other countries.⁶²

China's and Russia's support for Palestine in the UN Security Council, and the Western bloc's support to Israel, shows that UN efforts to de-escalate the conflict will be stillborn. Also, Türkiye's vocal support for Palestine and its decision to cancel potential energy cooperation with Israel signal a polarization among states on the conflict.

As the Palestinian-Israeli conflict takes on a global dimension, the Israeli government faces a dwindling window of opportunity. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, confronted with mounting criticism, sees a ground operation as a potential solution to regain credibility. Although his government considers a ground operation the only way to save its damaged image, Western pressure may force Israel to carry out a short-term, localized ground operation to avoid further escalation in the region. But even this may not be enough to avert war.⁶³

The Lebanese cabinet met to discuss the escalation.

"The Council of Ministers strongly condemns the criminal acts committed by the Zionist enemy in Gaza and we affirm solidarity with the Palestinian people in their struggle," caretaker Lebanese Prime Minister Najib Mikati said after the meeting.

He said that what happened on the Lebanese-Israeli border was "of deep concern" and blamed Israel's "provocations" and "violations" for the situation.

⁶⁰ Opinion – The looming storm: Israel, Hezbollah, and the risk of regional war, 3/11/2023

⁶¹ Ibid

⁶² Lebanon to submit urgent complaint against Israel to UN Security Council, 6/11/2023

⁶³ Ibid

United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres urged restraint as Israel gets ready for a ground invasion of Gaza, amid increasing concerns the Israel-Hamas conflict will turn into a regional war.

As of 14 December 2023, the Lebanese Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) has reported a total of 471 people wounded and 99 killed due to cross-border armed clashes, the number of wounded has increased by 13% and the number of deaths by 4%.⁶⁴

International Organization for Migration estimates that there are cumulatively around 64,053 internally displaced people in the country as of 12 December. Of these, 991 (1.55%) are staying in 14 temporary collective shelters and others have made their own accommodation arrangements. 305 cadasters are reportedly hosting internally displaced persons, most of whom are using shelters for a short while before relocating to their self-arranged accommodations.⁶⁵

Two Primary Health Care centers in Marjayoun and Bint Jbeil remain closed due to insecurity and armed clashes.

The broader impacts of the clashes on livelihoods and the economy are expected to increase pressure on public health services.

The Public Health Emergency Operation Center (PHEOC), set up by the MoPH with WHO's support, remains fully staffed and operational. Advanced training on data management is ongoing to build on the capacity of the PHEOC team.

With the possibility of increased escalation, hospital readiness for mass casualty management remains a key concern that WHO and MoPH are addressing through different initiatives.⁶⁶

The Situation in Gaza Strip

After hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were forced out of their homes in the 1948 war surrounding Israel's creation, Palestinians have sought an independent state in the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza.

That prospect seems as far away as ever amid expanding Israeli settlements on Palestinian land, cutting communities from each other, and a freeze in US-sponsored negotiations.

⁶⁴ WHO, Situation update no. 10, 15 December 2023

⁶⁵ Ibid

⁶⁶ Ibid

Human rights groups have said Israeli authorities have systematically repressed Palestinians for decades in policies that amount to apartheid and since 2007 have imposed a crushing land, air and sea closure on Gaza's population (16 years of closure).

The Palestinian Foreign Ministry, which has repeatedly raised the danger of increased assaults on Palestinians waged by armed Jewish settlers, warned against supplying settlers in the West Bank with more arms amid surging violence, describing it as a provocation that would "blow things up in the West Bank".

On Saturday October 7, 2023, the Israeli occupation announced a state of war against Gaza, right after Hamas launched an unprecedented offensive at Israel, launching thousands of rockets from Gaza at Israel while hundreds of its militants infiltrated the Israeli cities adjacent to Gaza.

Over 200 Israelis, including soldiers and other foreigners, were captured by Hamas and held in Gaza.

Since the Palestinian resistance movement launched the deadliest Palestinian militant attack on Israel in the country's 75-year history, it has repeatedly called on Palestinians in Jerusalem and the West Bank to join the fight and resist occupation.

Israel refused to negotiate on the release of the hostages, and says it will continue the war until the captives are released unconditionally and without price.

In return, Hamas Palestinian resistance movement said it will not free the hostages until the release of all Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails – about 5,500 detainees.

As of December 2023, and as a result of the Israeli genocide on Gaza strip, WHO reported 21,110 fatalities (70% are said to be women and children), 55,243 injuries, 7000 reported missing or under the rubble and 1.93 million people displaced (85% of population).

UN experts expressed outrage against the deadly strike at Al Ahli Arab Hospital in Gaza City, which killed more than 470 civilians and trapped hundreds under the rubble.

The experts raised serious humanitarian and legal concerns over Israel tightening its 16-year siege of Gaza and its population and long-standing occupation, depriving 2.2 million people of essential food, fuel, water, electricity and medicine.

The UN experts called for the protection of all humanitarian workers, after the World Health Organization (WHO) documented more than 59 attacks on the Health care services in Gaza Strip, which resulted in the death of at least 16 health workers ,15 staff of the United Nations Refugee Works Agency (UNRWA) and four Palestine Red Crescent paramedics in an ambulance.

They recalled that the willful and systematic destruction of civilian homes and infrastructure, known as 'domicide', and cutting off drinking water, medicine, and essential food is clearly prohibited under international criminal law.

Considering statements made by Israeli political leaders and their allies, accompanied by military action in Gaza and escalation of arrests and killing in the West Bank, there is also a risk of genocide against the Palestine people,” the experts said.

The UK-based Medical Aid for Palestinians (MAP) has joined the chorus of calls for more sustained humanitarian assistance for people in the Gaza Strip, while also warning of the potential catastrophic effects of the forced transfer of millions of people.⁶⁷

Many international organizations have pointed out that the amount of aid crossing into Gaza from the Rafah crossing with Egypt does not meet the needs of the 2.3 million Palestinians living in Gaza, who are facing dire circumstances because of relentless Israeli attacks that have claimed thousands of lives and displaced millions.⁶⁸

Rohan Talbot, MAP’s director of advocacy and campaigns said Gazans are already facing disastrous conditions and now there is growing fear that they will be forcibly and permanently moved from their homes.

“A second Nakba can’t be allowed to happen,” Talbot stressed.

Making sure there is no forcible displacement in Gaza is just as important as ensuring cease-fire and access to required aid, Talbot said.

“We’re very worried about the potential for millions of people to be permanently displaced from their homes, Palestinian people, including our colleagues,” Talbot added.⁶⁹

The official Palestinian news agency WAFA reported: “The Israeli occupation forces committed a new massacre by bombing the Osama Bin Zaid School affiliated with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA), which shelters thousands of displaced people in the Al-Saftawi area in the northern Gaza Strip, resulting in dozens killed and wounded.”⁷⁰

“Now, for nearly one month, civilians in Gaza, including children and women, have been besieged, denied aid, killed, and bombed out of their homes”, the UN chief Guterres noted, adding simply: “This must stop”.⁷¹

Pregnant Palestinian women are facing miscarriages and premature births in the Gaza Strip, where hospitals have not been spared from Israeli bombings since a new conflict began October 7.⁷²

⁶⁷ Second Nakba can’t be allowed to happen in Gaza: British aid group, 3/11/2023

⁶⁸ Ibid

⁶⁹ Ibid

⁷⁰ Dozens killed, wounded as Israel bombs school housing displaced people in northern Gaza, 4/11/2023

⁷¹ UN chief says he is ‘horrified’ by reported attack outside Al-Shifa hospital, 5/11/2023

⁷² Palestinian women in Gaza face premature birth, miscarriages amid Israeli escalation, 5/11/2023- Anadolu

There are many cases of miscarriage and premature childbirth among women who are unable to reach hospitals due to the bombing.

Underlining that the humanitarian situation in Gaza is “horrific”, Guterres reiterated his call for a humanitarian cease-fire.⁷³

“International humanitarian law must be respected. Civilians and civilian infrastructure, including humanitarian and medical workers and assets must be protected. Civilians must also not be used as human shields”, he said.

Arab foreign ministers have called for urgent international action to stop the war on the Gaza Strip.

At the conclusion of an emergency meeting of the Arab League in Cairo on Wednesday 18 October, the ministers condemned the targeting of civilians on both sides and warned against attempts to displace the Palestinian people.

Assistant Secretary-General of the Arab League Hossam Zaki announced at the end of the extraordinary session the adoption of a resolution, which calls for the immediate cessation of the war on Gaza, and urges everyone to exercise self-restraint.

The ministers emphasized the need to lift the Israeli siege on the Gaza Strip and immediately provide Gazans with humanitarian aid, food, and fuel.

"The way to guarantee security and stability in the region is to achieve just, permanent, and comprehensive peace that meets all the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people," the Arab foreign ministers underlined.

Warning Iran to stay out of the war, the United States voiced concern over an escalation in the conflict sparked by the surprise Hamas attacks on Israel on October 7.

"There is a real risk of an escalation of this conflict -- the opening of a second front in the north (South of Lebanon) and, of course, of Iran's involvement," National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan told CBS.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken has categorically rejected the idea floated of expelling Palestinians from the Gaza Strip, saying they should be able to stay as Israel battles Hamas.

Pope Francis on Sunday renewed his call for a cease-fire in Gaza and the release of hostages, according to the Vatican News.⁷⁴

⁷³ UN chief says he is ‘horrified’ by reported attack outside Al-Shifa hospital, 5/11/2023 - Anadolu

⁷⁴ Anadolu, Pope Francis reiterates call for cease-fire in Gaza

Addressing the Security Council on Tuesday, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said Hamas' attacks in Israel cannot "justify collective punishment" of the Palestinian people.⁷⁵

He cautioned that the situation in the Middle East is growing more dire by the hour and that the Gaza conflict risks spiraling throughout the region.

"But the grievances of the Palestinian people cannot justify the appalling attacks by Hamas. And those appalling attacks cannot justify the collective punishment of the Palestinian people," said Guterres.

He stressed that it is important to also recognize the attacks by Hamas did not happen in a vacuum.

Guterres also said he is "deeply concerned about the clear violations of international humanitarian law that we are witnessing in Gaza."⁷⁶

"Let me be clear: No party to an armed conflict is above international humanitarian law," he added.

Russia has so far taken a careful approach to the latest escalation in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that erupted on October 7⁷⁷.

Russia, which supports an independent Palestinian state with occupied East Jerusalem as its capital, has not labelled Hamas a "terrorist" group like many Western states⁷⁸.

UNICEF spokesperson James Elder expressed concern about child deaths in Gaza under Israel's heavy attacks.⁷⁹

He emphasized that children have been adversely affected by the conflict.

"We are concerned about the increasing child deaths in Gaza. Gaza is turning into a graveyard for children," he said.

Elder reiterated UNICEF's demand for an urgent cease-fire and the uninterrupted delivery of humanitarian aid to Gaza.

"Children in Gaza are not only dying because of the bombings, but they are also dying due to the lack of the medical care they need," he added.⁸⁰

An UNRWA representative said, an immediate humanitarian cease-fire in the Gaza Strip is "a matter of life and death."

⁷⁵ Anadolu, Hamas attacks cannot 'justify collective punishment' of Palestinians: UN Chief, 25/10/2023

⁷⁶ Ibid

⁷⁷ Al Jazeera News Agency, Russia's Lavrov warns Israel-Gaza war could spark regional crisis, 19 October 2023.

⁷⁸ Ibid

⁷⁹ Anadolu, Gaza Strip: World's deadliest place for children, 4/11/2023

⁸⁰ Ibid

In a statement, UNRWA termed the relentless Israeli bombardment of the blockaded enclave as “shocking.”⁸¹

“The level of destruction is unprecedented,” UNRWA said. “The human tragedy unfolding before us is unbearable.”

“An immediate humanitarian ceasefire is a matter of life and death for millions of people,” it added.

The UN agency termed the ongoing Israeli offensive that forced thousands to flee their homes in Gaza as “forced displacement.”

“More than 670,000 people are sheltering in nearly 150 overcrowded UNRWA installations,” it said. “These people face deteriorating humanitarian conditions and severe health and protection risks”.⁸²

In the wake of the ongoing Hamas-Israel conflict that erupted, some Latin American countries have taken a strong stance in support of Palestine, severing diplomatic ties with Israel and strongly condemning the relentless bombing on the Gaza Strip.⁸³

Colombia, Chile, and Bolivia have emerged as the most vocal critics of Israel on the South American continent.

One of Latin American's largest economies, Colombia was one of the first countries to denounce the Israeli attack on Gaza, recently recalling its ambassador for consultations as it threatens to suspend diplomatic ties with Tel Aviv.

Bolivia has also been critical of Israel, becoming the first country to cut off diplomatic ties with Tel Aviv.

Its foreign minister accused Israel of committing crimes against humanity and "demanded" an end to its attacks on the Gaza Strip.

Another country to condemn Israel was Venezuela, whose government called recent Israeli strikes on the al-Shifa Hospital in the Gaza Strip a "massacre."

Elizabeth Dickinson, the crisis group's senior analyst for Colombia (Elcano Royal Institute in Spain), thinks that Chile, Bolivia, and Colombia probably coordinated among themselves in their stance towards Israel to send a strong message.⁸⁴

⁸¹ Anadolu, Humanitarian cease-fire in Gaza ‘matter of life and death’: UN, 2/11/2023

⁸² Ibid

⁸³ Why are Latin American nations’ ties with Israel straining? 5/11/2023

⁸⁴ Ibid

Core Strategies

To accomplish its mission, PARD has chosen to take up the following five core strategies. While the first four strategies are programmatic and operational, the fifth strategy addresses PARD's organizational development directly and supports the achievement of the first four. The focus areas below represent the areas and themes of interest that will be addressed by PARD's programs when using proper identification, formulation and implementation approaches.

Strategy One: Gender Justice and Women and Youth Empowerment

Gender justice implies a society in which women and men enjoy the same opportunities, outcomes, rights and obligations in all spheres of life. **The overall and main goal of this strategy is to promote gender justice between men and women and empower Palestinian women, youth, and children to participate and have access to, control over and benefit from different resources.** Its main objectives are to:

- Improve youth and women access to political, cultural, social and economic resources. •
- Educate women and increase literacy rates among women. •
- Increase youth and women's labor force participation. •
- Increase Palestinian youth and women's access to political rights and participation in decision-making positions within the Palestinian communities. •
- Provide information, services and conditions to help women protect their reproductive health. •
- Promote vocational and other capabilities of youth. •

This strategy emerges from PARD's beliefs that long-term, sustainable development will only be possible when women and men enjoy equal opportunity to rise to their potential.

In line with this strategy, PARD will adopt an operational framework for addressing gender equality and women empowerment that has four main dimensions:

Capacities and education that refer to basic human abilities as measured by education, health, and nutrition. These capabilities are fundamental to individual well-being and are the means through which women would access other forms of well-being. •

Access to resources and opportunities which refers primarily to equality in the opportunity to use or apply basic capabilities through access to economic assets and resources, as well as political opportunity. Without access to resources and opportunities, both political and economic, women will be unable to employ their capabilities for their well-being and that of their families, communities, and societies. •

Security which refers to reduced vulnerability to violence and conflict. Violence and conflict result in physical and psychological harm and lessen the ability of individuals, households, and communities to fulfill their potential. Violence directed specifically at women and girls often aims at keeping them in “their place” through fear.

Maternal and child health which refers to the equitable provision of affordable and accessible primary healthcare is central to human development, critical to meeting the health-related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and a basic human right.

Strategy Two: Child Protection

The general objective of the second strategy

Child protection is a set of measures that include response and prevention of violence and exploitation, and frameworks that prevent child abuse and neglect

Specific objectives of the second strategy

- Creating opportunities to educate children in different age groups through the establishment of kindergartens and school support.
- Improving the health, psychological and social situation of children of different age groups targeted through psychosocial support activities and applying the early childhood curriculum.
- Providing child protection services through activities, hotlines and referrals.
- Preparing safe centers to receive children.
- Participation of parents in following up the educational and psychological development of children through holding periodic meetings.
- Provide job opportunities for women and youth from the target group community in the child protection program.

The competitive advantages of the strategy:

- Rights-based and people-centered projects.
 - Responds to community needs that are not adequately covered by other interventions or NGOs.
- Linking education with health and psychology.
- Depends on educating parents about proper nurturing.
- Focuses on changing behavior to a better healthy lifestyle for children.

Strategy Three: Environmental Health Services

The main goal of this strategy is to ensure that the targeted groups have the right to access environmental health services. Its main objectives are to:

Improve the informed choices of the Palestinian communities and individuals towards health issues. •

Enhance life quality, reduce disease and promote better health conditions and practices among Palestinian refugees. •

Increase the life expectancy, reduce infant and child mortality and decrease communicable diseases within the Palestinian refugee gatherings. •

Reduce the environmental health hazards in the Palestinian refugee gatherings. •

To achieve those objectives, PARD wishes to focus, through its programs, on two main core areas:

Environmental Health: The rights to life and to health are included in several covenants. The ‘International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights’ guarantees the right to safe and healthy working conditions and the right of children and young persons to be free from work harmful to their health. The Covenant expressly calls on state parties to take steps for the improvement of all aspects of environmental and industrial hygiene and the prevention, treatment and control of epidemic, endemic, occupational, and other diseases. Through **improving and monitoring the water quality and supply, solid waste management and vector control**, PARD aims at improving the right of the Palestinian refugees and their access to healthier environments that have reduced risk factors that might negatively influence the wellbeing of the Palestinian communities in the gatherings. •

Strategy Four: Relief for People in Distress

The Humanitarian Charter of the Sphere Project expresses the conviction of humanitarian agencies that all people affected by disaster or conflict have a right to receive protection and assistance to ensure the basic conditions for life with dignity. The principles described in the Sphere Humanitarian Charter are not only universal, but apply to all those affected by disaster or conflict wherever they may be, and to all those who seek to assist them or provide for their security. These principles are reflected in international law, but derive their force ultimately from the fundamental moral principle of humanity: that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. Based on this principle, there is an affirmation on the primacy of the humanitarian imperative: that action should be taken to prevent or alleviate human suffering arising out of disaster or conflict, and that nothing should override this principle. **Based on that, the main goal of this strategy is to ensure that affected population during disasters have the right to live with dignity while alleviating their suffering.** The relevant objectives are therefore to:

Provide relief and restore a self-supporting livelihood to people who have been stricken with hardship due to conflicts and natural disasters. •

- Mobilize all of PARD’s local human and material resources in collaboration with its local and international partners in the service of the affected population and communities. •
- Ensure protection and assistance as necessary. •
- Maintain a healthy environment and alleviate the spread of diseases. •
- Maximize the possibility of affected population speedily returning to their normal lifestyles. •

At times of disasters, PARD intends to implement its Emergency Plan, provide humanitarian aid to affected population and ensure that the rights of people affected by conflicts and disasters are upheld. To do so, PARD intervenes in the following five areas when possible:

- Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) •
- Food Security and Livelihoods •
- Public health •
- Protection •
- Disaster Risk Reduction •

Strategy Five: Organizational Development for PARD

Nowadays nonprofit organizations working amidst the Palestinian communities are involved in providing relief, fundamental services, advocating for rights and policies, empowering local communities and encouraging participation. But as a result of the continuously growing needs of the targeted communities, these organizations are faced with significant emerging challenges. Among these are: the ability to respond to the dynamic changes; how to make better use of the limited resources they have access to; how to increase the capacity and accountability of their organizations; how to preserve the mission course and how to ultimately achieve the organization’s goals and objectives. **Therefore, the main goal of this strategy is to increase PARD’s organizational effectiveness, performance and service quality.** Its relevant objectives are to:

- Improve administrative management and internal delegation. •
- Implement the developed statutes, bylaws and policies. •
- Improve the organizational structures and procedures. •
- Increase the organizational performance and effectiveness. •
- Empower, delegate and motivate staff members. •
- Improve emergency response effectiveness. •

PARD embraces three specific values when choosing to develop its human resources and helping them achieve satisfaction. These are:

- Humanistic values that relate to openness, honesty and integrity •

- Democratic values that relate to social justice, freedom of choice, and involvement
- Developmental values that relate to authenticity, growth and self-realization

Strategy One: Gender Justice and Women and Youth Empowerment



Empowerment of Women Trainings

Women Committees

PARD has provided health education groups in the Palestinian gatherings for years. In 2001, PARD began training on empowerment for the benefit of women graduates from the health education sessions. Since then, PARD has trained every year on empowerment in the targeted gatherings, 10 in the south and 3 in Beirut.

PARD places a special emphasis on empowering and supporting local women and working to redress power imbalances by providing women with more autonomy; accordingly, an integral component of PARD's work in addressing gender inequality is our work with Women's Committees (WCs). From among these women, PARD staff assesses which women are already active participants and well-respected in their communities and suggest that they join the committee in their community.

In that light, PARD offers multiple trainings for the WCs in order to be able to actively participate in their communities and have an efficient and tangible effect. The training curriculum included sessions on gender equality and respectful relationships, gender-based violence, conflict resolution, communication types and styles, strengthening women's role in the community, developing self-confidence and self-image, effective decision making, and women and human rights.

For the year 2023, PARD supported 25 committees in 13 different gatherings or surrounding areas that are: Shabriha, Jal El Bahr, Maashouk, Qasmiyeh, Kfar Badda, Jim Jeem, Wasta, Aitaniyeh, Sikkeh, Burguliyeh, Wadi El Zeineh and Said Ghawash and Daouk (Beirut). These committees actively involved 429 women of different national backgrounds, but mainly PRL, in active participation in their communities.

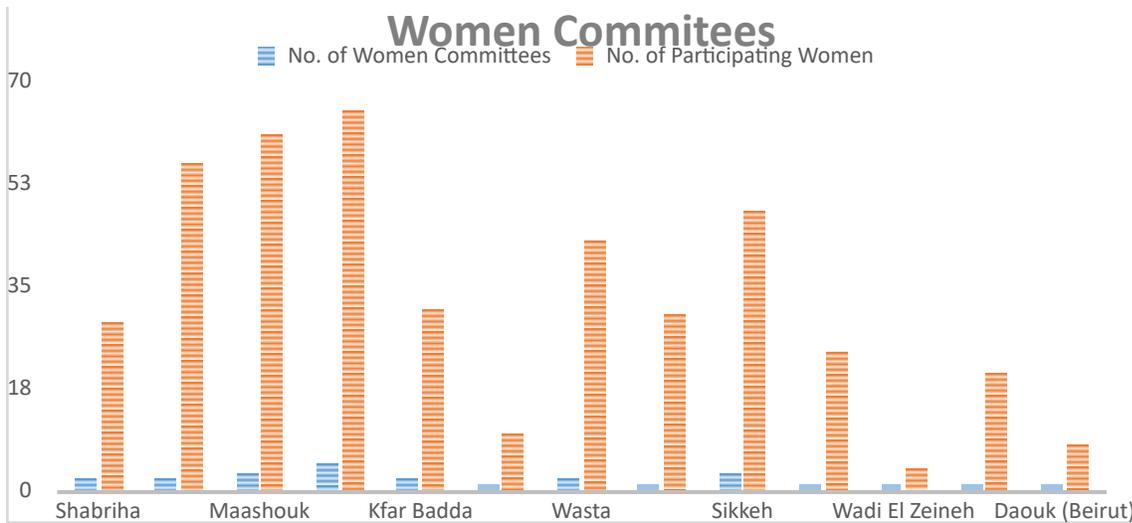
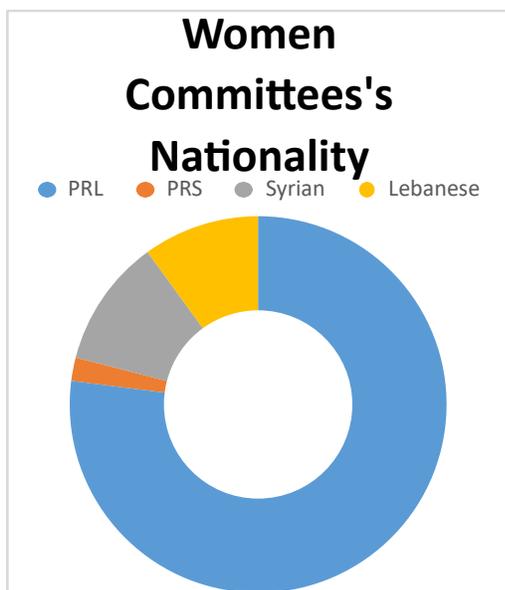


Figure: Location and number of women committees and participating women in the women committees established by PARD in 2023

Most women’s committees formed their own action plans, code of conduct, and division of responsibilities. The division of work includes tasks related to: public relations, health education, social issues, and note taking. Each committee also has an elected “head of committee”. The set plans of action were revised to monitor progress, together between the women committees and PARD’s community health workers (CHW). Also, for proper internal communication and coordination, each women committee met monthly to follow up on their plans of action and their external relationships and coordination with the popular committees, NGOs, UN agencies, and other committees in their community.



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Figure: Nationality distribution of the women participating in women committees

Activities and Achievements

After the basic training on empowerment, the women committees developed their own project ideas for community development – based on community mapping and starting from the concrete situation in each community. They discussed them with the relevant stakeholders (PARD, the Popular Committees, and Municipalities and others) and implemented them through community mobilization, local existing resources and fundraising resources of contacted organizations.

Each women committee had its own agenda, interests, needs and projects. One common characteristic among them in the past and the present is the willingness to participate in PARD's activities.

The women tried to fulfill their own local agendas, such as caring for the elderly, organizing dinners for the needy during the fasting month of Ramadan, supporting hardship cases, supporting people with chronic diseases, and supporting people with special needs.

Common Activities of Women Committees

- The women committees in the South and Beirut worked with PARD to deliver health education sessions. •
- Participating in campaigns (promoting health issues in the community, cleaning whole areas in the gatherings, organizing spraying of insecticides, raising awareness on social and health issues such as drug addiction or AIDS and others). •
- Alerting PARD if a certain contagious disease shows up (chicken pox, Hepatitis A, diarrhea, scabies, head lice and others). •
- Data collection •
- Celebrating International Mothers' Day, Women's Day and Mother Earth Day with members of their communities. •
- Supporting first aid teams in their gatherings. •
- Coordinating with PARD in water caretaking. •
- Supporting and implementing health education for the community and teaching literacy groups. •
- Distributing support materials, including bread to needy families. •
- Supporting the refugees from Syria (data collection, relief services). •
- All the women and youth committees participated with many people from their communities in sit-ins to lobby for better services offered by UNRWA •
- Conducting social visits to patients, newly married couples, families bereaved through death, etc. •
- Coordination meetings among the women's committees, in addition to individual visits and joint actions. •

Achievements of women committees

Women committees in different areas have multiple achievements, among which are:

- Members of the women committees work as animators for children's activities with PARD and other organizations and as local health educators, in addition to local literacy teachers.

- Some members work with PARD in the implementation of its relief projects. One works as the local water caretaker (Wasta), another collects local subscriptions from the beneficiary families for garbage collection.

- Some women joined membership in local governance (popular committees) in their gatherings.

- Some women joined PARD trainings for income generating projects (food preservation, upcycling of used clothes, and began implementation what they learned in their daily lives.

- Member of WC in Sikkeh gathering volunteers to recruit women as beneficiaries in PARD's Early Detection Campaign of Breast and Uterus cancer.

She organizes groups, coordinates with PARD and follows-up on each visit in the campaign. She later distributes the results of the tests through visiting the women in their homes.

- Women committees act as resources for information on different PARD projects in their communities such as Cash for work, Cash for food, schedule of mobile clinic, campaigns and so on...

- The network of NGOs in Tyre Palestinian camps organized a contest among women for the "Best Traditional Palestinian Food". The first prize was won by a WC member in Wasta, the second prize by a WC member in Shabriha.

- The WC in Wasta organized raising awareness sessions for women ages 18-24 years conducted by Abaad on subjects such as GBV, early marriage and Gender Justice.

- The WC in Jal al Bahar organized the distribution of food parcels among needy families in the gathering, donated by a local philanthropist.

- The WCs in Said Ghawash and Daouk Beirut gatherings participated in sit-ins for supporting UNRWA and Gaza.

- One WC member in Wasta who attended first aid training with PARD combated wrong believes in first aid applied by mothers of a burned cases, and provided advice on proper treatment instead.

Coordination with Popular Committees

The WCs in these gatherings differ from the Popular Committees (PCs) for several reasons. Firstly, the PCs are composed of almost entirely men, with very few exceptions, and even when there are women on the PCs they are not incorporated or integrated successfully, nor taken seriously. Moreover, the members of the PCs are appointed by political parties. These

communities, and the PCs themselves, were not originally very open to the idea of the creation WC's, and the relationships between the PCs and the WCs vary (levels of coordination and cooperation) depending on the gathering. In fact, in some gatherings there is heavy competition over governing authority; because while the PCs are the technical governing body in these communities, practically the WCs have more influence in some places. Nevertheless, whether or not the PCs accept the WCs and are willing to work together, the WCs tend to be the operating group that works most closely with PARD and other organizations to deliver services and provide resources for the communities. Previously PARD used the number of women joining the PCs as an indicator of success for gender justice, but they realized that this was not actually a measurement of equality or success. "We are not helping to build them up to be decorative flowers, we are empowering them to have a voice". This situation led PARD to measure and indicate success of gender equality in other ways. For instance, one of the largest indicators is the fact that when most NGOs enter the Palestinian gatherings they work with the WCs and only coordinate with the PCs.

While PARD encourages the WCs to act independently and to partner with other NGOs working in their communities as well, PARD maintains a close partnership with them. PARD staff meet with each WC at least once a month, and are available to meet more frequently should the need arise. As the women serving on the committees are themselves members of these communities they already have the knowledge and insight into the issues and needs present.

An identification process was conducted with the participation of 22 women (two from each gathering) representing 11 Palestinian gatherings. The process included problem analysis, ranking of priorities, objectives and strategy analysis, assumptions and constrains.

The identification process (needs assessment) was implemented because the WCs significantly influence and shape the projects and work that PARD undertakes. Another way that PARD partners and empowers the women in these communities is by providing Training of Trainers programs to help the women become community workers undertaking fieldwork themselves regarding needs assessments, community mapping, action plans, advocacy, etc. Thus the WCs play a significant role in the development and design of projects as well as the follow up and monitoring of projects.

Upcycling Clothes trainings for livelihood

As part of PARD's belief in the necessity to give women the opportunity to livelihood in order to achieve gender justice, and as part of its women empowerment program, PARD conducted a training that would benefit women in that sense.

Upcycling, known as creative reuse, is the process of transforming by-products, waste materials, useless, or unwanted products into new materials or products perceived to be of greater quality, such as artistic value or environmental value. On the other hand, Recycling is the process of converting waste materials into new materials and objects. This concept often includes the recovery of energy from waste materials.

Therefore, to highlight the difference between both concepts, we can summarize by saying that recycling involves the destruction of waste in order to create something new, whereas upcycling takes waste and creates something new from it in its current state. When upcycling, the original form is retained and the object is recognizable, which gives it a story — you can see what it has been and also what it has become. In this sense, the upcycled object is a kind of tribute to the object it used to be. While recycling is practical, upcycling is highly creative and can involve a wide variety of techniques and materials to create the finished product.

In summary, reuse and upcycling reduce the need for recycling and are therefore great options for the environment. Once a material can no longer serve any purpose, then it is eco-friendlier to recycle it than it is to send it to landfill.

To implement the concept of ecological and environmental sustainability for the benefit of 50 women, training courses on upcycling of used clothing were conducted over a period of 3 days, lasting for a total for 12 teaching hours:

At Shabriha community center: a total of 18 women of different nationalities: PRL, PRS -
and Syrian

At Wasta: a total of 12 women from Wasta, Kfarbadda and Aitanieh of different -
nationalities: PRL, PRS and Syrian

At Sikki: a total of 20 women of different nationalities: PRL and Lebanese. -



The workshop program included:

PowerPoint presentation about environmental sustainability; with special focus on upcycling and recycling in addition to their benefits at the economic and ecological levels. -

Awareness-raising video about the topic -

Introduction of Sewing trainer (women committee member from Sikki); currently working in this field -

Distribution of sewing kits and materials to each participant -

Explanation on purpose and manner of use of the materials in the kit -

Demonstration of some examples -

Practical training on hand-sewing -

Participants brought samples from home to work and practice -

Practical implementation of several types of sewing, embroidery and stitches -

Practical implementation using a sewing machine -

Making hair ties, pot holders, sheets, curtains, accessories as practice -

This training was part of the cash for work project where by households were rehabilitated. The trainees on upcycling clothes were the women beneficiaries in this project.

After the trainings, the participant women were encouraged to practice what they had learned in the workshops, and implement the techniques and ideas on their own projects. They were given a period of time to prepare materials and products ready for sale and for marketing their own home-based businesses related to sewing, upcycling and recycling of old materials and clothes.

To ensure maximized visibility and success of the sales exhibit, it was arranged to be on the same day and same location as the graduation ceremony for Nursing Students as part of another project.

During the exhibit, many women showcased their products for sale, which were made using the same manufacturing process taught in the workshops.

The products included 5 main categories:

Baby products: cover- pillow cover- overalls- head cover- bib	.1
Kitchen products: covers for refrigerator, cooler, microwave, oven, gas bottle- window curtains- pot holder- yogurt sacks	.2
Bedroom products: bedsheets- pillow cover- cushion cover	.3
Clothing products: skirt- short- prayer outfit- dress- pajama	.4
Decoration and accessories: hairclip- purse- dolls...	.5

Finally, refreshments were distributed and a traditional folklore dance was performed in celebration.

During May-June 2023, PARD conducted **focus groups with all women committees to evaluate their situations**. A questionnaire was used to guide the evaluator, its questions forming some kind of a SWOT analysis (Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats). 25 women committees (429 women) participated in focus groups in 13 Palestinian gatherings in Beirut and the South of Lebanon.

Women's committee evaluation form

A group of women was formed as a women's committee

The group participated in empowerment sessions

The committee began holding meetings.

Members of the Women's Committee are now able to document the group's work (report, meeting minutes).

Committee members are able to identify problems related to their community.

Committee members are able to set priorities.

Committee members are able to suggest solutions to problems.

Committee members are able to know who the decision makers are, communicate with them and influence them

Committee members are able to agree on a person to represent them.

Committee members are able to know whom to turn to solve their problems.

Committee members are able to use a method to persuade decision-makers.

Committee members are able to continue following up on the issue.

Committee members are able to influence and involve the community around them.

Members of the committee are able to carry out activities to improve the conditions of society and bring about change in laws and policies (participation in mobilizing support for a cause - participation in advocacy campaigns).

Committee members are in contact with other associations

Are there associations or organizations that carry out activities in your gathering? If (yes), what is the name of these associations and what are the activities and target group?

Are there any relatives (sons or siblings who volunteer with the association) who have benefited from an educational scholarship?

<p>The group's strengths:</p> <p>Challenges facing the group:</p> <p>Suggestions to support the group:</p>
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Results of Focus Groups:

General strengths of the groups:

- 1 - The groups are old, founded years ago, and they still feel a sense of belonging to PARD and include active members, albeit to a varying extent, and these groups have participated in most of the empowerment and awareness sessions.
- 2 - Some groups include members who are socially active and influential in their society and are in contact with other committees and associations.
- 3- Some groups include members who own crafts or professions and it is possible for them to transfer those crafts to the rest of the group (seamstress - event decoration professional - salon upholstery - homemade skin care)
- 4- PARD's training activities (sewing – food preservation - health guidance) contributed to the desire of new participants to join the groups.

Common challenges facing groups:

- 1 - Within each group there are only two or three active women who can be developed, and sometimes in some groups the representative of the group is the only activist within the group and the rest of the members' abilities range between active listening and passive listening, that is, they participate by sitting within the group without any interaction with a slight change in their abilities.
- 2 - The strength and distinction of the group's representative changed from a point of strength to a challenge for the rest of the members in some groups, where the group's representative took control and the participants began to depend on their representative to participate in the tasks of a women's committee or make a decision within the group. That is, the group's representative communicates with the popular committee and Decision makers like the municipality and controls the decision to stand out personally, and sometimes contributes to passing proposals or messages from the popular committee of the community. That is, they work within the popular committee team, not as a woman participating in decision-making but rather as an executor of decisions.
- 3 - As a result of the focus groups implemented, it became clear that most of the old groups had the same feeling of sufficiency with the topics that were previously implemented, so they repeated them and proposed new topics and exercises (regardless of the extent of change or

empowerment that those sessions brought about in them, because the change occurred at a varying level).

4- The relationship between the Women's Committee and the Popular Committee in all the gatherings is similar (no communication - disharmony - deliberate marginalization of the women committee.)

The popular committees consider the projects that are implemented in the assemblies to be within their jurisdiction and within their legitimate powers, and authority. Therefore, they do not allow women's groups to participate.

(Some women join the Popular Committee group, but individually and not as a group).

5 - Most of the committees are made up of women who live in one neighborhood, that is, neighbors in the neighborhood or friends. This affects the ability of the women's committee to be effective and bring about change in its community, as their activity is limited to their neighborhood only, and sometimes they do not know what is happening in the other neighborhoods of the community.

6 - Most groups have the same challenge, which is the inability to understand their volunteer role as a women's committee and their relationship with PARD's projects and activities, so that they assume that women's groups must be included in all projects, activities, and distributions as beneficiaries.

7- The Corona pandemic and the general economic and social conditions had a negative impact on the participants and thus on their participation in the sessions, as most of them are concerned about the impact of these crises, and this resulted in:

- Family problems, domestic violence, abandonment, divorce, and the inability to deal with children, especially when they are teenagers

- Feeling the need for additional income, as some women who were not thinking about working are now looking for work, but most of them are cases of early marriage and do not have a craft, profession, or capital to implement a project. This effect extended to the level of their interest in participating in empowerment and awareness sessions.

8 - When materials are distributed or a project is implemented in one gathering but not another, the groups in the other gatherings know about this and consider this marginalization by PARD and are not convinced of the geographical restrictions of the project.

9 - Most of the groups, when asked about the date of the last empowerment session, do not remember clearly and do not remember all the topics, but some groups remember the topic of early marriage and gender-based violence because these topics sparked controversy among the members of the group and with the surrounding community.

10 - Conditional participation:

During the implementation of the focused sessions in the gatherings, a number of women attended and asked to join the group. The number of participants in some groups reached 30 for a number of reasons, including:

- They wanted to join the group with the aim of volunteering and working after implementing health guidance and literacy courses. They expressed their desire to become adult guides and teachers or to carry out any activity, but in exchange for a financial reward.

- Some came through their sisters and mothers, as there are members active in the groups and affiliated with PARD, so they encourage new members to join, but those members are committed to a work or activity and do not have time for effective participation, but they come to register in response to the wishes of their mothers or sisters.

- There is a great desire to join after empowerment sessions were conducted, where incentive materials were distributed and a trip and lunch were taken, which encouraged the women to join in the hope that they would participate in a trip that would include the distribution of materials (such as hair shampoo, sanitary napkins, tooth paste, towels and so on...).

11 - Although all the groups were formed a long time ago, participation in the sessions varies between one participant and another in the same group. There are those who participated in an empowerment session, for example, conflict resolution, and there are those who were absent, and this applies to a number of other session titles.

General recommendations for groups:

1 - Separation between the women’s committee and the women’s group attending and raising awareness sessions training because the women’s groups include elements with different levels of empowerment.

2 - Forming a general committee that includes effective members to represent different neighborhoods of the gatherings, and carrying out special empowerment activities with them, field visits, and communication with decision-makers in the region, such as the Popular Committee and others. Thus, a women’s group is formed under the name of a women’s committee representing all the gathering’s neighborhoods in each gathering, while the rest of the participants are part of the awareness, guidance and various activities groups.

3- Due to the popular committees’ marginalization of the role of the women’s committees, (communicate only occasionally with the group’s representative), to create a communication channel between the popular and women’s committees through empowerment sessions that include practical application. Example: effective communication and persuasion session - getting to know the decision makers - preparing a file... During these sessions, which include field implementation, the popular committees are visited by the women’s committee representing the neighborhoods

4 - Opening the door to volunteering for participants from all groups to carry out training sessions for crafts or professions in which they excel, after evaluating that skill, such as (preparing household food preservation or upcycling clothes - decorating - preparing cakes and Arabic sweets - preparing bread and other skills - housekeeping).

5 - Implementing therapeutic psychological support sessions within groups and individual sessions that include interactive activities. These sessions include women and teenage children as a result of the need request by all groups.

6 - Economic support for women through implementing short vocational training sessions for women with the aim of opening the field of work to women who need work but do not possess the craft and knowledge.

7 - Encourage more young women to join the WC through different activities.

Suggested training by participants in the groups:

(Sewing - hairdressing and decorating - creation of health educators - creating straw items - accompanying a sick or elderly person at home - eradicating computer literacy - first aid for women and youth and providing a first aid bag - preparing decorations for events - preparing household food preservation - prepare a project - marketing)

Suggested awareness sessions:

Modern education, especially dealing with adolescents - communication to resolve conflict - health and psychological self-care - psychological support activities especially for women - nutrition - healthy diet - exercise (aerobics) - skin and hair care.

Special topics for the prevention of chronic diseases that occur with age, especially the following:

Osteoporosis - Diabetes - High blood pressure - Menopause and nutrition for this stage - Intellectual exercises to stimulate the brain

7 - Trying to allocate a financial portion of each project with the aim of implementing interactive activities needed.

Training of Trainers ToT and Community Raising Awareness

As part of the women empowerment program, PARD provided **2 Training of Trainers (ToTs) in 2023.**

The first one aimed to train women to become local literacy educators. 10 local active women were chosen, from each of the gatherings of Maashouk, Jal Elbahr, Qasmieh, Shabriha. Wasta,

Aitanieh, Jim Jeem, Kfarbadda and Sikki. The duration of the TOT was 4 days in March 2023 at Maashouk Community Center. The training contents comprised of the following: introduction to popular education/ teaching adults and combating illiteracy, choice of training venue, characteristics of the education, group selection, education and language through basic life sciences and Mathematics. **It aimed at strengthening the role of women to reduce the gender gap in literacy in the targeted communities.** At the end of the workshop, certificates of participation and completion of TOT training were distributed to the 10 participants.



Out of the 10 trained women, 5 women were chosen who were evaluated to have the best communication skills, good teaching and reporting skills to form groups of 8 women at least in their respective local communities (Jal Elbahr, Wasta, Shabriha, Sikki and Qasmieh) to conduct **6-month courses with the aim of combating illiteracy.** During the 6-month period, each of the 5 literacy educators conducted around 3 sessions per week in designated locations, mostly houses or community centers if available. They taught the participants to develop their skills in order to assist their children in their schoolwork, read informational booklets, calculate basic mathematical processes, use texting and telephones, read street signs and other important knowledge. These sessions concluded in November 2023, and a graduation ceremony was done in December 2023 in Tyre to celebrate the **courses' participants (a total of 60 women)** and the educators (5 women) as well.

The second ToT was a tailored nutrition training program provided to 20 local women, 2 from each from the following gatherings: Maashouk, Jal El Bahr, Shabriha, Qasmieh, Kfarbadda, Wasta, Jim Jeem, Daouk, Sabra and Said Ghawwash. The duration of the ToT workshop was 4 days, and it took place in July 2023 at the Maashouk Community Center. The training aimed to **train local women to become health educators**, improving their knowledge on theoretical and practical topics in basic nutrition, food safety, and nutrition during the various life cycles, particularly pregnancy, infancy and childhood. It also aimed at accruing training and communication skills in providing awareness sessions on these topics. At the end of the workshop, certificates of participation and completion of TOT training were distributed to the 20 participants.

Following individual evaluations for each of these trained women in addition to analysis of the past-training assessment, **10 local nutrition educators were selected to conduct nutrition sessions in the gatherings**. One local educator was assigned for each of the 10 gatherings mentioned above in order to maximize reach of the awareness topics. These **10 local nutrition educators then went on to conduct awareness sessions to 800 women in the local communities** in which they resided, on the topics of nutrition, food safety and nutrition through the different life cycles.



International Women’s Day

To commemorate the occasion of International Women’s Day, at Maashouk community center, **111 women in total participated in 2 events** from the following informal settlements: Wasta,

Kfarbadda, Aitanieh, Shabriha and Sikki. Additionally, women committee members of Maashouk participated in the events. The participants were of different nationalities: PRL, PRS, S and Lebanese. Additionally, the events included:

Video showcasing street interviews with different people (men and women) about the definition of International Women’s Day and what it means to them. -

Video showcasing different women discussing their rights, freedom of choice and work -

Role-playing comedy sketch performed by local women: 4 women were depicted (food preservation trainee, illiteracy trainer, sewing trainee/seamstress, local water caretaker). This sketch aimed to illustrate how these women can be role models for economic and social empowerment. -

Group discussion about the videos and the sketch, focusing on similarities among refugees and women in particular. -

PowerPoint presentation on creation of a culture of peace and communication among different cultures residing in the informal settlements. -

Ceremony honoring our “Bright Stars”, i.e. women committee members who have worked with PARD for many years, volunteered their time and efforts, and had a remarkable role in their communities. 5 women from Jal El Bahar, Shabriha, Qasmiyeh, Maashouk and Beirut were honored. -

This honoring ceremony aimed to showcase the efforts of the women committees, as these women have been active for decades at the community level, as health educators, illiteracy trainers, data collection, distribution and relief. Some even offered their homes for different activities, and for women committee meetings. Additionally, it provided encouragement to the young women who are currently women committee members.



16 days of activism:

16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence is a key international moment to call for an end to violence against women and girls. It runs from 25th November (the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women) until 10th December, Human Rights Day.

Every year, during this campaign, a certain theme is selected. This year's theme was "Accelerating Actions to End Gender-Based Violence and Femicide, leaving no one behind".

The activities during the 16 days of activism against gender-based violence were as follows:

<p>November 25, 2023: The International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women</p>	<p>To shed light on the crimes of genocide in the Gaza Strip and the blatant violations of basic human rights against women and children there, a video highlighting these violations was prepared and shared on social media.</p>
<p>December 1, 2023: World Aids Day</p>	<p>The psychologist provided a psychological support session for 10 women in the Qasmieh gathering. The session began with a mindfulness activity to allow the women to relax and live in the moment. After that, the women began to vent about their difficult experiences during these difficult times. Finally, the unloading activity was carried out. In addition, a video was edited, inspired by the occasion.</p>

<p>December 10, 2023: International Human Rights Day</p>	<p>A training workshop on human rights principles conducted by the Relief Program Coordinator was conducted. The workshop included the main pillars of human rights that promote the principles of respect, inclusion, non-discrimination, participation, accountability, and equality. Also, a video was prepared as inspired by the occasion. 34 women benefited from this activity.</p>
<p>Women's rights in the Islamic religion</p>	<p>An educational workshop on women's rights and their place in the Islamic religion as well as Lebanese legislation was organized for the women's committees in the Maashouk gathering. This workshop was conducted by a female Lebanese lawyer who is also the women's affairs advisor at the Islamic Fatwa House in the Lebanese Republic. 38 women benefited from this activity.</p>
<p>Interactive Theater</p>	<p>The interactive theater aimed at social empowerment of women to motivate, discuss and manage tension. Such an activity aims at fostering positive community awareness, and behaviors that protect and endorse women's rights. The theater director used the interactive theater tool through the theatrical role-playing method, encouraging women to express their opinions, and making attendees participate in making changes in the scenario to reach a happy ending. This approach has enhanced understanding of how women can adapt their life stories by changing their behaviors and attitudes. Interactive theater sessions were organized over four days intensively for the ten target gatherings, with one intensive day per week for each gathering. 140 women benefited.</p>

<p>“Shababik” Awareness Campaign</p>	<p>Shababik (Windows) activity aimed to empower women in communities affected by wars, conflicts, displacement, asylum, and poverty. The goal was to motivate women to make a positive change in the face of crises and enable them to become active parties within their gatherings.</p> <p>The activity was carried out within the ten targeted communities during February 2023, in which the number of participants reached 57 participants from the women’s committees.</p> <p>During the activity, the interactive theater method was adopted as an art that reflects reality and raises several issues considered somewhat sensitive. This activity received positive feedback as the participants interacted with it greatly and played their roles in presenting problems and finding solutions to the fullest extent.</p>
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➤ Empowerment of Youth Trainings

Youth empowerment through livelihood

As part of the youth empowerment activities PARD carries, it **provides young skilled and unskilled youth in the Palestinian gatherings with opportunities to livelihood through rehabilitation.**

Sixty-eight refugees have been selected to carry out the rehabilitation work for 50 selected houses (see *Rehabilitation of Houses in Emergency Relief Strategy*) in 2023. Those 68 (87% PRL, 4% PRS, 7% S, 2% Lebanese) workers were chosen on the basis of accumulated experience and willingness to work with PARD. Moreover, the majority of the chosen workers were those who suffer from difficult living conditions in the current crisis in the country.

The workers, both skilled (21) and un-skilled (47), were of different professions and backgrounds, which include plumbing (10 workers), electricity (6 workers), blacksmithing (3 workers), carpentry (2 workers), plasterer (4 workers) and painting (41 workers) in addition to 1 aluminum worker and 1 general worker.

This activity was very impactful in terms of increasing the income of the youth. It secured a 50-75% increase in the income of around 73% of the 68 workers and a 75-100% increase for 22% of them. This activity created a significant opportunity to improve the income of skilled and un-skilled individuals in the gatherings as they are usually reimbursed less for the same work they did outside this project as reported by some of them. This activity will continue in 2024 to provide more livelihood support for the individuals in the rehabilitation project's targeting gatherings.

Youth empowerment through education:

16 young refugee women from the South Lebanon Palestinian gatherings, which include Shabriha, Sikkeh, Maashouk, Jal El Bahr, Wasta, Aiteneyye, Kfarbadda, Jim Jim, Qasmiyeh, and Burghlie **were registered for vocational training as nurses** in the Afak Vocational Center in Tyre. The selection of these students was based on application and interviews, where priority was given to females of refugee status as well as economic status of the family. The teaching methodology was based on an in-person, face-to-face modality, for 5 days a week, including practical experience.

These 16 young refugee women were provided with full scholarships, also covering 100% of the cost of transportation. A ceremony was done at the end of the academic year to celebrate the graduation of the students at Saida Municipality Building.



Youth empowerment through training on First Aid:

In June 2023, 20 female refugee volunteers received a 4-day training workshop on first aid at the Maashouk Community Center. This training was conducted by a skilled nurse/experienced first aider. The trainees were of different educational levels, and of the age group 16-28 years. The training included: CPR, recovery position, injuries, bleeding, poisoning, burns, fractures, choking in addition to safety and behaviors of the first aider.

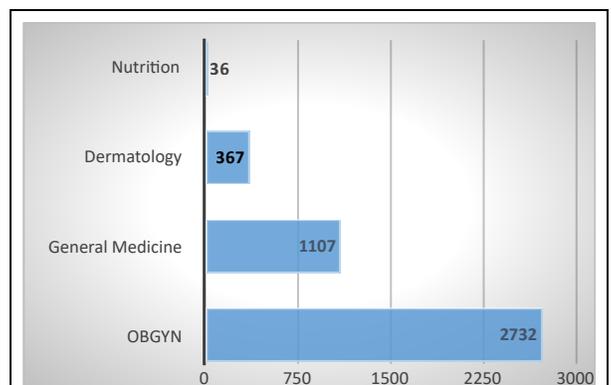


➤ Health Services

In compliance with its strategy for woman empowerment, PARD provides various health services, mainly female reproductive health services. These services are given primarily through PARD’s mobile and fixed clinics in the gatherings in South Lebanon and the clinic located in Sabra, Beirut. That is in addition to other health services that occur in laboratories contracted by PARD.

Beirut Clinic

PARD’s clinic in Sabra, Beirut has been active for over 10 years. In 2023, it provided multiple affordable medical services to 4253 refugees and impoverished Lebanese residing in this area with an emphasis on women health services. The services included affordable consultations in multiple medical professionals in the areas of general health, pediatrics, nutrition, dermatology, ear-nose-throat



(ENT), obstetrics and gynecology. A big emphasis was placed on the provision of medical services for women, as evidenced by the fact that over 64% of all medical services provided were obstetrics and gynecology. These services benefited 2732 women (43% PRL, 28% S, 29% L) residing in Sabra itself or the nearby areas.

Clinics in South Lebanon

The mobile clinic in South Lebanon and the two fixed clinics located in Shabriha and Kfarbadda provided 4585 reproductive health medical services for the year 2023 in 10 Palestinian gatherings, which are Shabriha, Sikkeh, Maashouk, Jal El Bahr, Wasta, Aiteneyye, Kfarbadda, Jim Jim, Qasmiyeh, and Burghlieh. These services were provided for 1844 women residing in the gatherings and from various nationalities including Lebanese, Syrian, PRL, and PRS. Of these women, 654 were PRL, 118 were PRS, 985 were Syrian, and 87 were Lebanese. It is important to note that, despite the current situation in Lebanon, the medicine storage of the clinics was constantly maintained, in order to cover the needs of the beneficiaries.

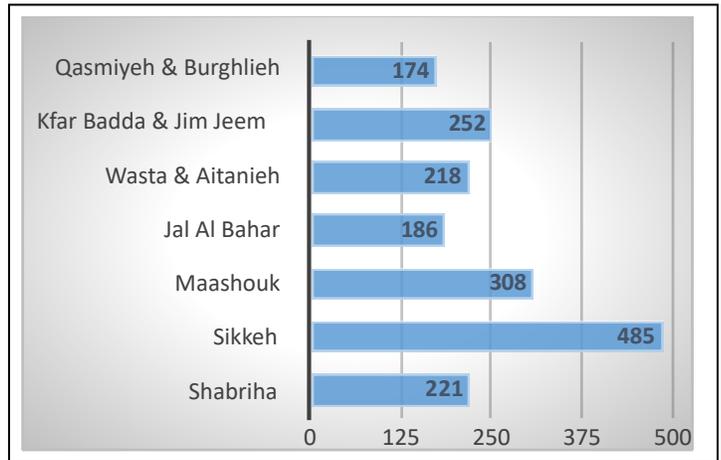


Figure 13: Number of medical services provided in each of the 10 targeted gatherings

Additionally, 862 baby kits (including diapers) were distributed to refugee families.

Reproductive Health



Pap smear and mammography campaigns are one of PARD’s major activities in reproductive health for prevention and awareness on breast and cervical cancers. PARD provides these services, in collaboration with a medical center, for refugee women residing in the 10 Palestinian gatherings in South Lebanon; Wasta, Shabriha, Sikkeh, Kfarbadda, Jal El Baher, Aitaniyeh, Qasmiyeh, Maashouk, Jim Jim, and Burghuliyeh. These activities are **preceded by awareness sessions** on the matter in order to familiarize the women with both types of cancers, importance of early detection, and the processes done for detection and diagnosis. In total, 122 women (76 PRL, 34 S, 12 L) attended awareness sessions on these topics from Shabriha, Sikki, Kfarbadda, Maashouk and Jal el Bahr.

In 2023, a total of 555 (261 PRL, 31 PRS, 143 S, 120 L) women benefitted from 301 mammograms, 404 pap smear services, in addition to 162 ultrasound/echographies. The results of the tests were reviewed by specialized gynecologists at the follow-up case visits (867 follow-ups).

Women who needed additional gynecological services were seen at our clinics.

Additionally, awareness sessions were given on the following topics by the midwives based on demand from the refugee women themselves:

Family planning and contraception (11 women)	-
Neonatal care and breastfeeding (16 women)	-
Proper use of medications (28 women)	-

Psychological Support

PARD provides diverse forms of psychological support for refugee women victims of violence in the gatherings. These activities are performed by an experienced psychologist, highly trained and knowledgeable in handling gender-based violence (GBV) cases and recruited exclusively for this purpose.

Group Therapy Sessions .1

Throughout 2023, the psychologist conducted 40 group sessions (including the follow ups) with a total of 366 women. She was able to identify 63 GBV cases in those group sessions (which is equal to 17% of all women participated).

The group session was between 45 min and 1 hour. The women themselves agreed on a convenient time and place for the group to meet. In the beginning of each first session, the psychologist included the following:

Ice-breaker activity	.1
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Introduction about the free psychological services	.2
Introduction about GBV and its types	.3
Introduction about the subject of the group therapy	.4
Discussion	.5
Venting	.6
Relaxation technique (Depends on each group)	.7
Distribution of a list of references to be contacted in case of GBV and their locations to help these victims find solutions ending their sufferings including our hotline.	.8

The objective of these group therapy sessions was to:

Provide awareness and support to women	.1
Provide them with a safe space for self-expression	.2
Target GBV cases and provide them with individual psychological support if needed	.3
Help them deal with daily stressors and develop self – help capacities	.4
Build supportive social network	.5
Develop communication and socialization skills.	.6

Moreover, the sessions helped the participants understand GBV and different psychosocial and contextual considerations in humanitarian and refugee settings; the survivor-centered approach; the process of support group planning, implementation, and documentation; and the necessity of personal “safety”.

Furthermore, it was important to explain the ethics of the psychology (Protection from Harm, right to Withdraw, Confidentiality, informed consent, debriefing) so the women would feel safe during the sessions. Also, the group sessions respected the GBV Guiding principles: ensuring the safety of GBV victims, ensuring confidentiality, respecting the GBV survivor, and practicing non-discrimination.

The group sessions were flexible and fitted the needs of the women participating in the group. No topic was off-limits in these sessions, including: sex; emotional maturity and expression; human trafficking; violence against women, children, and families; stereotypes; human rights;

shock; and self-care. However, the background and the culture of the women was taken into consideration during the discussions.

These sessions took place in the same 10 gatherings where PARD operates in South Lebanon, which are Kfarbadda, Maashouk, Jal El Bahr, Shabriha, Sikkeh, Burghlieh, Qasmiyeh, Jim Jim, Aitanieh, and Wasta. These sessions were attended by women from different nationalities and different age groups.

Methodical Group Therapy

.2

In 2023, 6 group therapy sessions were conducted for the benefit of 66 refugee women from the Southern gatherings. In this method, women attended group therapy sessions, focusing on 3 topics, as per the women's requests. Even though those topics seemed a little bit off of the GBV topic but the psychologist made sure to integrate GBV in each of the 3 topics. The topics were:

Parents-Child Relationship: discussion of the relationship between parents and children and how it should be, and how the problems between the father and the mother would affect the psychological state of the child especially if the mother is a GBV victim. ✓

Marriage Problems: discussion of the most common problems that would face married couples and what are the best ways to deal with those problems, including Intimate Partner Violence (IPV). ✓

Stress Management: helping women relax through stress management techniques including meditation and YOGA. ✓



Group therapy for Literacy training women

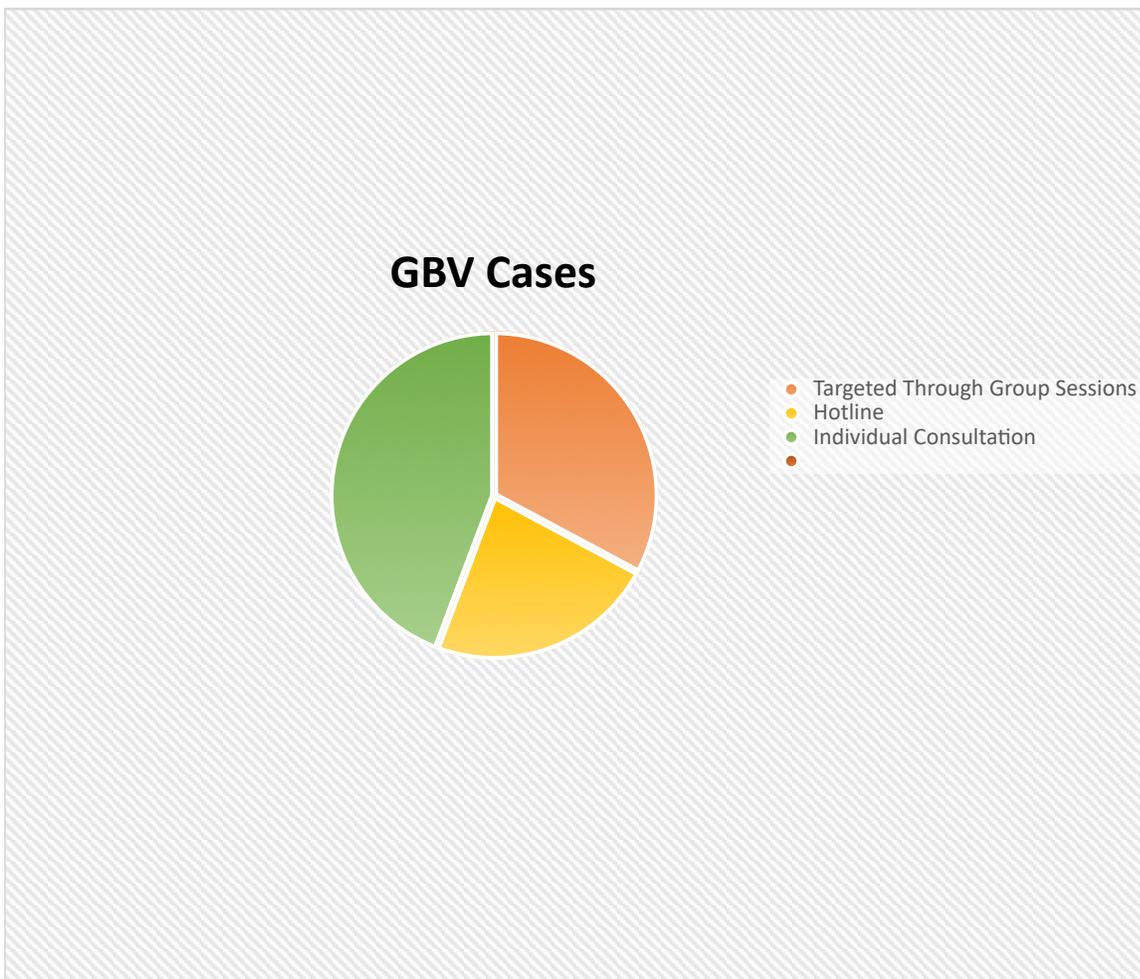
.3

The Literacy trainers (mentioned above) reported to PARD’s social workers and psychologist that the refugee women participating in the illiteracy 6-month workshop were being subjected to bullying and emotional abuse, in addition to low self-esteem. Therefore, the psychologist provided 5 group therapy sessions for the benefit of 55 refugee women participating in the literacy courses. The sessions aimed to Improve self-esteem through sharing relevant success stories of women from the settlements in addition to venting and training on social skills to overcome challenges through role plays and psychoeducation.

Individual Psychological Support Sessions

.4

In 2023, the psychologist also offered more in-depth psychological counselling to individual women in need, especially to women who are victims of gender-based violence. To that end, 109 GBV cases (96 new cases, 13 Follow up cases from 2022); 79 through in-person sessions (individual sessions or Group sessions) and 30 via the hotline. Additionally, psychological support was provided to 4 non-GBV cases in an effort to approach another family member who was a GBV case. Worthy of mentioning, that many of the women who received psychological



support had other psychological disturbances, that were recorded in their case files, such as: anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), eating disorder, etc... But the GBV-related prognosis over-ruled the other disturbances, as it was most frequently the cause of these other disturbances, which then appeared as symptoms, or co-existing conditions exacerbated by the abuse. All cases were systematized and classified as low, moderate or high risk.

According to the systematized data, psychological/emotional abuse was the most reported type of GBV, accounting for 68% of all reported incidents, followed by IPV and physical assault accounted for 29% and 21 % respectively. Incidents of sexual assault that includes hitting, slapping and kicking and incidents of denial of resources, opportunities or services present the fourth most reported type of GBV incident with 12% each of all reported GBV incidents followed by economic abuse which is 6% of all incidents reported followed with forced marriage accounted by 2% of all incidents reported which is the lowest percent of all cases reported and it is a lower percent than that accounted in 2022 (18%).

Of the GBV cases reported, it is important to note that 48% of cases were of PRL nationality, followed by Syrians (29%) then L (20%) and finally PRS (3%). Additionally, the majority of the beneficiaries were adults, aged 25-65 years, followed by young adults 18-25 and adolescents 14-18. Most adults and young adults were asking for psychological support as a main request since they cannot afford it in private clinics despite being familiar with the importance of venting to lower the effect of the stressful events on them and to organize and understand their thoughts and their feelings. However, children under the age of 14 were mostly reported by their escorts. Also, seniors 65+ were unfamiliar with the psychological services and how the psychologist can help them but they wanted to talk with anyone to relief their stress.

As for the **follow-ups**, in 2023, 185 follow up sessions were conducted in total. In fact, 86 beneficiaries out of 113 got at least one follow up.

Referrals .5

In group and individual therapy sessions, the psychologist distributed a list of references to be contacted in case of GBV and their locations to help these victims find solutions ending their sufferings, whether physical or psychological or other. This referral list is updated annually, it includes contact numbers for centers, doctors, lawyers (for legal assistance), and other NGOs that PARD contacted to ensure that they actually provide the services mentioned in the referral list. Also, PARD checked the eligible nationalities that can benefit from those services and if they provide those services to women living in the South. This information is kept updated through PARD's active participation in the UNHCR led, South GBV working group, and the ensuing referral pathways.

Therefore, in 2023, PARD referred 4 GBV cases for legal assistance and vocational training in other NGOs. In comparison, PARD received 3 referred cases from other NGOs for psychological support.

Vocational training for GBV survivors .6

In 2023, 10 GBV victims got vocational training at AL Afak center for 3 months, in the topic of their choice, mainly accounting and IT. It was challenging to choose 10 girls only out of all the

GBV cases. Therefore, the following criteria were implementing when choosing the beneficiaries of this particular activity:

- High risk victims and moderate risk victims have priority over low-risk victims .1
- The GBV victim should state that she needs this opportunity to improve her life .2
- The GBV victim should be in a psychological state where she can take decisions and commit to the 3 months training .3

Despite that, this activity still faced some challenges, mainly:

- The girls were facing psychological abuse from their families, and could not get the support they needed •
- Some girls were not able to attend the training regularly because of family problems •
- It was challenging for some girls to study again after years of dropping out from school •
- All the girls had self-doubt about their abilities to complete the training because of low self-esteem, partially resulting of being GBV victims •

The psychologist as well as the teachers at Al Afak Center supported the girls with those challenges. Also, the girls themselves supported each other because they share the same sufferings and they understood each other’s struggles.

Training on Empowerment

As part of its health activities, PARD provided awareness sessions on multiple topics, focusing on women empowerment. For 2023, during the period from January till the end of December, **40 workshops were held in the 10 gatherings** where PARD operates in South Lebanon benefiting an average of 150 women. The topics covered in these workshops included **building self-confidence, conflict resolution skills, communication skills, and women rights/empowerment/gender issues**. In addition, as part of the relief program, **900 women from 10 gatherings** in South Lebanon and Beirut mainly Maashouk, Jal El Bahr, Shabriha, Qasmieh, Kfarbadda, Wasta, Jim Jeem, Daouk, Sabra and Said Ghawwash, participated in **200 training sessions**, aiming at empowering women in general and women committees in those areas, specifically. The trainings focused on communication skills and methods, conflict resolution and peace-building, self-confidence, sexual exploitation, GBV, and early/child/forced marriage.

Workshop Topic	Participants	Course Objectives
Building self confidence	1039	To develop the women’s capacity on communication mechanisms, encouraging women to communicate between one another and with their local communities thus enhancing their role in the development of their community.

Communication skills	1043	To enhance self-confidence capabilities on the personal and social levels.
Conflict resolution skills	1060	To enhance conflict resolution capabilities so women can participate in the resolution of local community and rights disputes.
Women empowerment and gender issues	154	To introduce women to the concept of the CEDAW agreement, how to conduct a community needs assessment, community mobilization and campaign planning as essential components of women empowerment initiatives
Sexual Exploitation	900	To define Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) and understand the consequences for people in need and the seriousness of the problem To develop action plans for what should be done to prevent and respond to it within respective capacities To understand the special measures for protection
Gender – Based Violence	900	To better identify and understand GBV & Discrimination related to customs and culture.
Early Marriage	900	To reduce early marriage incidence and raise awareness on consequences of early marriage



The projects/activities in this strategy were supported by:

Basque Agency for Development Cooperation	Ø
Bizkaia (The Provincial Council of Biscay)	Ø
MCC- CFGB	Ø
Solidaridad Internacional (NESI)	Ø

Strategy two: Child Protection



Educational Activities for Children

Introduction:

The persistent and compounding crises in Lebanon are exacting a steadily devastating toll on children nationwide, increasingly stripping them of their education and forcing many into child labour. Desperate parents, grappling with ever-dwindling resources, are forced into a heart-wrenching struggle to keep their families afloat amidst the unrelenting challenges.

The deprivations and uncertainty are leaving children hungry, anxious or depressed. The emotional burden is particularly alarming among children exposed to the recent military escalation on the country's southern borders, and among Palestinian refugees – many of whom have relatives in Gaza.

A UNICEF rapid assessment, conducted in November 2023, reveals further deterioration in almost every aspect of children's lives, as the four-year-long crisis shows no sign of abating.

More than a quarter of households (26 per cent) said they had school-aged children not attending school, up from 18 per cent when a similar assessment was conducted in April 2023. Among Syrian refugees, the number of households reporting they had school-aged children not attending school rose to a shocking 52 per cent. The cost of education materials was the most often cited reason for not sending children to school.

Making matters worse, several dozen schools in the southern part of Lebanon have been closed since October due to the intensification of hostilities, affecting more than 6,000 students. In the conflict zones, attendance is minimal at schools that still remain open. Thousands of children who have been displaced remain out of education.

Skyrocketing prices and widespread poverty are still forcing families to resort to desperate measures just to eat one meal per day and to provide basic shelter. The survey shows that:

- The number of families sending children (under age 18) out to work to supplement the household income, rose to 16 per cent, from 11 per cent in April. Among Syrian refugees, 1 in 3 families said they sent children to work in order to provide resources for the household, with parents reporting that the economic crisis means that frequently the entire family works in order to survive.
- More than 8 in 10 households (84 per cent) had to borrow money or buy on credit to purchase essential grocery items, a 16 percentage point increase over six months.
- Almost a quarter of respondents (24 per cent) said they had to stop their children's education, up from 15 per cent.
- More than 8 in 10 (81 per cent) reduced spending on health treatment, up from 75 per cent.

In southern Lebanon, vulnerabilities have been exacerbated by the hostilities, which led to the internal displacement of almost almost 60,000 people, including 37% of whom are children as of 07 December 2023.

In southern Lebanon in the South Governorate 46 per cent of households say their children are anxious and 29 per cent are depressed; (in Nabatieh) families reported that 46 per cent of children are anxious while and 33 per cent are feeling depressed.

Among Palestinian refugee children, almost half of children suffer from anxiety, while 30 per cent feel depressed. Palestinians have suffered generational trauma following recurrent displacement and high levels of violence in Lebanon. Poor living conditions, factional clashes in refugee camps and uncertainty about the future have cumulatively put the mental health of Palestinian children at risk. Added to that, children are severely affected by the constant images and news of violence and bombardment they see every day of the war in Gaza and the West Bank, where many of their loved ones have been displaced, injured or killed.

The survey also shows that 34 per cent of children in Lebanon believe their lives will be worse one year from now, as compared with 27 per cent in April 2023.

Early Childhood Education- Kindergartens:

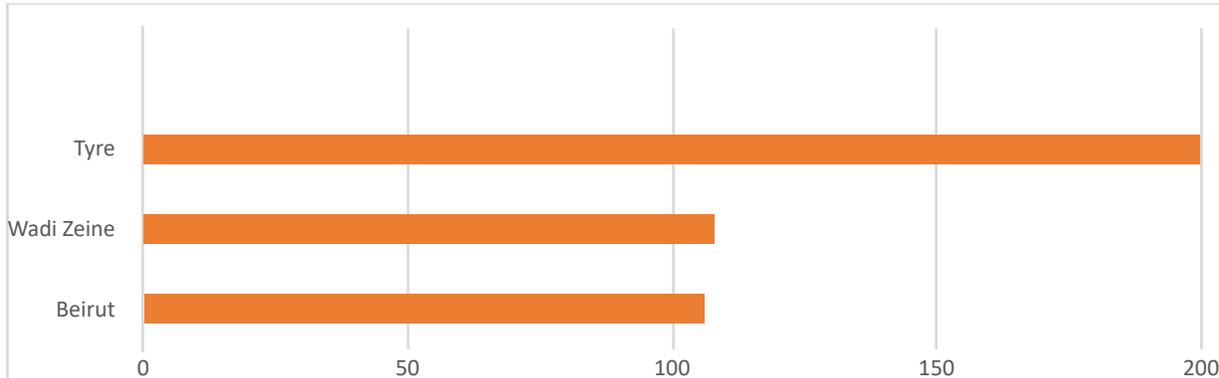
For over 12 years, PARD has been providing kindergarten (KG) education services to refugee children in three locations across Lebanon: Beirut, Wadi Zaine (Sibline), and Borj El Shemali (Tyre). Two of these locations, Daouk/Sabra and Wadi Zaine, are Palestinian gatherings where the KG centers serve as vital educational hubs. The third location, Borj El Chemali, is situated near multiple gatherings, including Shabriha, Maashouk, and Borj El Shemali camp, benefiting children from these areas as well.

All three KGs are officially certified by the Lebanese Ministry of Education & Higher Education (MEHE) and deliver the Community Based-Early Childhood Education (CB-ECE) curriculum, catering exclusively to refugee children of Palestinian, Syrian, and other nationalities aged between 3 and 5 years. This curriculum not only provides age-appropriate education but also prepares children for enrollment in the Lebanese educational system and progression into elementary level education.

PARD ensures uniformity and high quality across all its centers by implementing standardized core plans, aims, and methods. Each class is assigned a teacher and an assistant to monitor student progress effectively. Teachers are allocated to levels based on their competencies, previous education, work experience, and ability to engage with children. Additionally, each

center has a designated head teacher who acts as a coordinator, ensuring smooth coordination of activities.

Curriculum-wise, a consistent annual implementation plan has been designed for all three KGs, albeit with different initiation dates. This plan outlines how educational materials will be delivered to the children, ensuring consistency and quality education across all centers.



Number of enrolled children in PARD's three KG centers for scholastic year 2023-2024

As for the scholastic year 2023-2024 which encompasses the months of October of 2023 till June of 2024, **the number of enrolled children in the three KGs is 414**. These children were distributed along the three KGs for **200** in Tyre, **108** in Wadi Zaine, and **106** in Sabra, Beirut.

Beirut Kindergarten



PARD has been operating the KG in Beirut since 2012. Since its official registration in 2019, PARD's KGs operate according to the scholastic year determined by MEHE. In the scholastic year 2023-2024, **Daouk's Kindergarten center provided education for 106 children of different backgrounds** residing in the nearby area. The KG had 5 operating classes for these **106** children where each class had an assigned teacher and assistant. Therefore, the **KG also provided a labor opportunity for 12 women in the gatherings**: 10 teachers, 1 head teacher and 1 cleaning lady for the center. The students in this center were **58** males and **48** females from diverse nationalities distributed over the three levels with **22** in level 1 (i.e. KG1), **34** in level 2 (i.e. KG2), and **50** in level 3 (i.e. KG3).

Of these **50** children who were in level 3, all will be certified by PARD that they have completed the CB-ECE curriculum and are qualified for entrance of the elementary level. The majority of the children enrolled are of Syrian nationality, totaling 91 students, while there are 12 Palestinian-Lebanese and 3 Lebanese students.

Disaggregation of the children who attended PARD's KG in Beirut-Daouk for scholastic year 2023-2024 by nationality, level and gender.

Wadi Zaine Kindergarten



Similar to the KG in Beirut, PARD's kindergarten has been active in Wadi Zaine for several years. Since its establishment in 2016, the kindergarten has been delivering Early Childhood Education (ECE) services to children aged between 3 and 5 years old. Following its official registration and certification in 2019, it adopted the CB-ECE curriculum endorsed by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE). Mirroring the educational calendar in Beirut kindergarten, it adheres to the official scholastic year schedule.

In the scholastic year 2023-2024, which encompasses the months October of 2023 and continues till 2024, **the KG center in Wadi Zaine serves 108 children, 47 males and 61 females, of different nationalities** distributed over the three levels with 25 in level 1, 37 in level 2, and 46 in level 3.

For this scholastic year, the children were distributed over 5 classes where each was assigned a teacher and an assistant. Therefore, like in Sabra kindergarten, **the KG was able to provide job opportunities for 12 females from the community of Wadi Zaine-** 10 teachers and assistants, 1 head teacher and 1 cleaning lady for the center.

Disaggregation of the children who attended PARD's KG in Wadi Zaine in 2023-2024 by nationality, level, and gender

Tyre Kindergarten:



PARD's kindergarten in Tyre has been operating since 2016, and like its counterparts, it received accreditation from the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) in 2019, adopting the CB-ECE curriculum thereafter. During the academic year 2023-2024, **the kindergarten facilitated Early Childhood Education (ECE) for a total of 200 children**, 105 males and 95 females, spanning across three distinct levels. This distribution included 53 children in level 1, 80 in level 2, and 67 in level 3. Notably, level 3 students are slated to receive certificates from both PARD and MEHE, enabling them to transition to Grade One in the subsequent academic year.

The students are organized into 10 classes, with each class overseen by a teacher and an assistant. This organizational structure also **generated employment opportunities for 22 females within the community**. Among these positions were 18 teaching and assistant roles, one head teacher, and one cleaning staff member responsible for maintaining the center's cleanliness and hygiene standards. Thus, the kindergarten not only serves as a hub for early education but also contributes to the socio-economic empowerment of women in the local community.

Disaggregation of the children who attended PARD's KG in Tyre in 2023-2024 by nationality, level, and gender

The Welfare Association has distributed stationary school kits to all the education centers of PARD's CP (Child Protection) programs. A total of 20 classroom kits were provided to all the teachers. Each classroom took one school box including all the needed material for the whole year (charts, stationary, guides etc.).

Moreover, preschool teacher evaluation was conducted for all teachers and assistant teachers. The evaluation includes classroom management, instructional skills, communication and interaction, professional development and punctuality and commitment. Remedial actions were taken including a capacity building plan for some or all teachers and their assistants.

In partnership with Save the Children International and with the support of UNICEF Lebanon, the Lebanese Red Cross (LRC), International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC), and Mouvement Social and due to the increase of contagious diseases, PARD has organized a health and awareness day for children and families at PARD's community center at Al Daouk gathering, which has included a safe and free vaccination campaign for children with all basic mandatory vaccinations.



Parent Community Meetings:

PARD understands that the development of children involves effective communication with their parents. As part of this commitment, monthly meetings are organized across all three kindergartens and community centers to engage parents, seeking their feedback on the program's effectiveness and its relevance to their needs. These meetings serve as a platform to discuss various topics, ranging from social issues to the children's advancement and their consistent attendance at the center.

Beyond the immediate objectives of monitoring progress and ensuring parental satisfaction, these gatherings hold a deeper significance. By fostering regular interaction among parents from diverse backgrounds, including different nationalities, these meetings contribute to community integration and cohesion. They provide an invaluable opportunity for parents to connect, share experiences, and build relationships, enriching the social fabric of the community. Thus, these monthly meetings serve not only as a means to enhance the educational experience of the children but also as a catalyst for fostering a sense of unity and understanding among families of varied backgrounds.

Subjects discussed include: Resilience, Health habits, creativity, culture inclusion, healthy relationships, school rules and regulations, positive learning environment, importance of education, positive parenting impact.

Child Protection Component:

Child protection program aims to ensure that every child is protected from violence and exploitation. This means protecting their physical, mental and psychological needs to safeguard their futures. All the teachers and center staff are trained on the child protection minimum standards and safe identification and referrals. Both children and caregivers at PARD's centers receive psychosocial and social behavioral awareness sessions on different related topics.

Referrals are diligently managed by PARD's psychologist, who initiates with an in-depth assessment to pinpoint the unique requirements of each child. This assessment serves as a crucial starting point, enabling the psychologist to craft tailored support strategies not only for the child but also for their family.

After the assessment, a comprehensive plan is devised in close collaboration with the family to address the identified needs effectively. This plan may encompass various forms of support,

ranging from individual therapy sessions to educational interventions or social support programs.

Regular evaluations are conducted to monitor progress, allowing for adjustments to be made to the intervention plan as needed to ensure continued effectiveness. Additionally, the psychologist acts as a central liaison, facilitating communication and coordination among all involved parties, including the child's family, educators, and any external service providers.

Through this approach, PARD aims to provide comprehensive and personalized support that empowers both the child and their family, fostering optimal development and well-being.

Psycho-social support activities

PARD provides psychosocial support activities for children aged between 7 and 12 years since 1995. As the children residing in the gatherings bear the social pressure of the country's multiple crises both directly and indirectly, there is an obligation to support them through this circumstance. This support is necessary specially to help them get through economic constrains that obliged the children to spend some important developmental stages at their houses with few opportunities for interaction. In response to that, the psychosocial activities given by PARD provide the children with space and time dedicated for their psychological and social well-being allowing their interaction with one another. In addition, the activities aim at not only enhancing their relationships with one another; but also their relationship with their families and their environment.

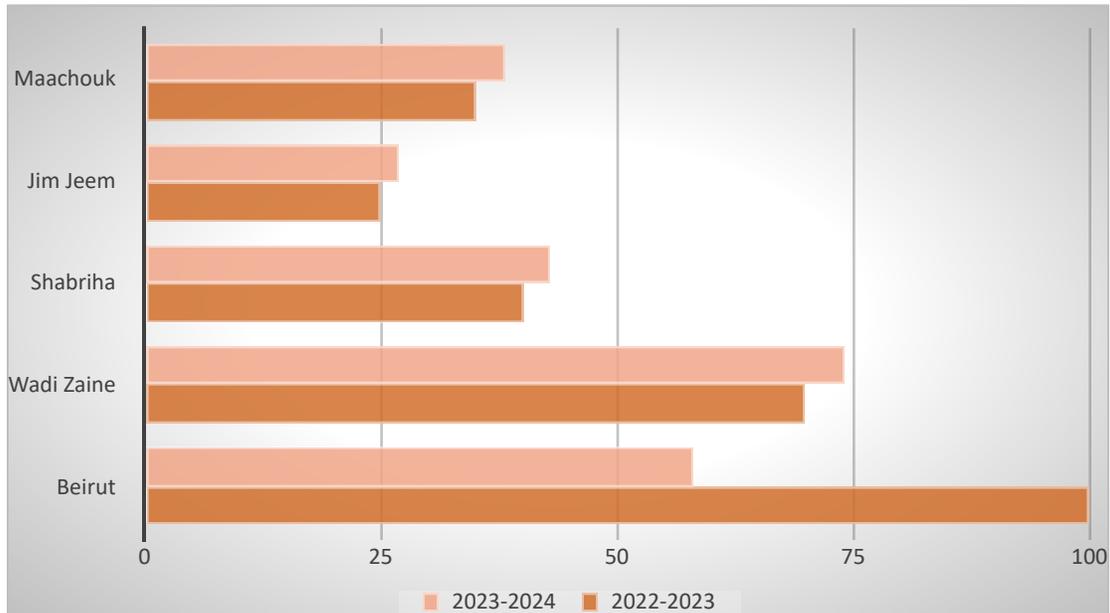
The psychosocial team was selected for recruitment based on their experience and relevant education. Specifically, 3 animators were appointed in Beirut, another 3 in Wadi Zayni, and a total of 6 animators were hired across the other four South gathering centers.

The Psychosocial Support (PSS) plan underwent a renewal and update by the project coordinator, involving changes to existing activities and the introduction of new themes and inputs. This adaptation aimed to address the evolving needs of the community, encompassing a total of 12 themes with engaging and insightful activities. **Themes included:** Positive communication, Emotional expression and regulation, Friendship and social skills, Self-confidence and positive self-image, Resilience and coping strategies, Creativity and imagination, Team work and collaborations, Family connections, Bullying and Healthy relationships – Cyber bullying, Cultural Diversity and inclusion, Problem solving and critical thinking, Physical wellbeing and healthy habits.

These activities are provided for children coming from four geographical areas, particularly in South Lebanon in the gatherings of Maashouk, Jim Jim, Kfarbadda, Shabriha and Wadi Zaine

(North of Saida). The activities happen in three community centers based in Maashouk, Shabriha, and Jim Jim as well as PARD's KG centers in Wadi Zaine and Beirut.

New registrations for **240** children were completed for the new cycle of activities, as the enrollment of children for these activities happens in July, for the year 2023 with 58 children enrolled in the Beirut, 74 in Wadi Zayni , 38 in Maashouk, 43 in Shabriha, and 27 in JimJim gatherings.



Comparison of registered children in PSS activities in PARD's community centers in the past 2 years



The folkloric Dabke classes were held on a bi-weekly basis during three months. The sessions were attended by 12 participants (females). By the end of the sessions, the participants were a fully equipped Dabke team.

The football trainings resumed on a bi-weekly basis. In February, recruitment of the members of the team occurred. A total of 41 children aged between 7 and 15 participated; 28 of those were males and 13 were females. From March through June, the trainings of the participating individuals continued to be held by a coach. They were provided with material and equipment to help them with the training like shoes, clothes, balls, and bags. By the end of the sessions, they had the potential to be a football team that represents its area.



Shabriha Community Center



The center was established in 2017 with support from **UNDP**. It covers many activities as follows:

For children over 12 years of age who are not included in psychosocial activities, PARD .1 provides:

One dabkeh (folklore) team ages 16-18 years (12 F) who are trained on 2 folklore (a) songs. They practice every Sunday and have performed in many events like the graduation party of the Youth vocational training in Saida, and women empowerment end of project celebration.

Football teams: Two football teams were formed: (b)

Ages 7-11 years: 25 players (7 F, 18 M) -

Ages 12 – 15 years: 16 players (6 F, 10 M) -

Proper uniforms, balls, training spaces and a volunteer trainer were provided for them. They train once a week after school. They also joined many friendly games with other football teams

in other areas in the South. When they practice, boys and girls play together, and the girls proved to be very competent. Playing football promotes team work, physical wellbeing and self-confidence.

Children Psychosocial Activities for 43 children (26 M, 17 F), (Syrian: 21, PRL: 20, PRS:2). .2

The activities serve the following objectives:

- Expressing emotions -
- Anti - Bullying -
- Friendship and trust -
- Positive communication -
- Effective group work -
- Protection from abuse and exploitation (personal space) -
- Nationality, belonging and accepting others -
- Violence and conflict resolution -
- Personal Hygiene and self-care -

Meetings with mothers (20 women) of children participating in the activities took place .3 for 12 months. Themes discussed included introduction to psychosocial activities, challenges in coping with children and positive parenting.

Puppet Theater: One puppet theater performance was implemented for the benefit of 43 .4 children (26 Males and 17 Females) on the theme of Environment protection (The Immigrant Fly).

Support of women groups: As part of a women's empowerment project, 30 women from .5 the community were provided with literacy classes to assist them in learning to read and write.

Cash for work team held meetings at the center with the employees from the community .6 to specify the needs.

Coordination Role of the Center: .7

2 Awareness sessions were held by the Red Crescent Organization about first aid and - how to deal with emergencies for 35 children.

PARD's humanitarian aid team had a meeting with 22 women from the community to .8 specify the main economic and social needs of the community.

PARD conducted **health awareness sessions** for 15 women, focusing on genital .9 inflammations and pregnancy health.

The psychological care project supported 41 women in Shabriha through group therapy (3 .10 sessions), 18 women through methodical group therapy (introducing GBV in topics such as parents-child relationship, marriage problems and stress management- 3 sessions) and individual psychological support for 10 women.

Moreover, the psychologist provided one group therapy session for the benefit of 10 women who participated in a 6-month literacy course.

23 women benefited from **training** on building of self-confidence, conflict resolution skills, .11 communication skills and women rights, gender equality, as part of the women empowerment program.

181 women benefited from **training** on women empowerment and gender issues, sexual .12 exploitation, GBV, early marriage, participatory leadership and planning.

A total of 18 women of different nationalities benefited from **training on upcycling and .13 reuse of clothes.**

Winter kits (Jackets, boots and pajamas) and toys were distributed for 60 children from .14 the community with the support of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC).

Maashouk Community Center



The center was established at the end of 2018 with support from **UN-HABITAT and UNDP**. It covers many activities as follows:

Children Psychosocial Activities: For 38 children (14 M, 24 F), (PRL:24, PRS:4, Syrian:7, L:3). .1

The activities serve the following objectives:

- Creativity: Crafts, Art and Role playing. .15
- Active listening and Positive communication .16
- Friendship and Trust .17
- Emotion Expression .18
- Self confidence .19
- Protection from exploitation and abuse .20
- Physical Activities and Health maintenance .21
- Nationality and Acceptance .22

Meetings with mothers (34 women) of children participating in the activities took place for 12 months. Themes discussed included conflict resolution, prevention of home accidents, safe use of internet, and family violence.

Support of Women Groups: The women committees (25 members) meet regularly in .2 the center. They meet to discuss women issues, or issues related to their community.

Hosting of Different Meetings: The center hosts regular meetings of the animators of children activities, parent’s meetings (of children activities), women committees and others. .3

PARD’s team in the program “Relief for People in Distress” conducted **Focus Group Discussions** with 35 women from the gathering on Food Safety principles. .4

Puppet Theater: One puppet theater performance was implemented for the benefit of 40 children (15 Males and 25 Females) on the theme of Environment protection (The Immigrant Fly). .5

PSEA (Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse) training for the Child protection team was held in Al Maashouk center for 50 participants by PARD’s psychologist. .6

The difference between **A Teacher and an Animator training** to the PSS team consisting of 12 animators was given by PARD’s social worker. .7

Coordination Role of the Center: .8

A **training by AMEL** international organization was done for 14 youth female (17 to 25 years) about Advocacy and community campaigns. ❖

Awareness session by **UNRWA** was held at the center for 13 women discussing breastfeeding, infant care and mental health. ❖

Training by the **Red Crescent** for the CP team about first aid principles and how to act through crisis and emergencies. ❖

The center hosted **TOT training for literacy educators** for the benefit of 10 young girls. .9

The center hosted a **TOT training on nutrition** for the benefit of 20 local women (health educators). .10

The center hosted the **commemoration of the International Women’s Day** with the participation of 111 women from several Palestinian gatherings. .11

The Center hosted the **commemoration of the International Human Rights Day** where by 35 women were trained on human rights principles. .12

The women committees in Maashouk (38 women) benefited from an **educational workshop on women’s rights** and their place in the Islamic religion. .13

25 local women benefited from one **intensive interactive theater** which aimed to foster positive community awareness behaviors that protect and endorse women rights through role-playing and making changes in the scenarios. .14

40 women benefited from “Shababik” **awareness campaign which aimed to empower women** affected by wars, conflicts, displacement, asylum and poverty. .15

The psychological care project supported 54 women in Maashouk through **group therapy** (3 sessions), 20 women through methodical group therapy (introducing GBV in topics such as parents-child relationship, marriage problems and stress management) – 3 sessions and individual psychological support for 9 women. .16

23 women benefited from training on building of self-confidence, conflict resolution skills, communication skills and women rights, gender equality, as part of women empowerment. .17

181 women benefited from training on women empowerment and gender issues, .18 sexual exploitation, GBV, early marriage, participatory leadership and planning.

183 **Hygiene kits** were distributed through the center to vulnerable families and 49 **Baby kits** for families with babies from 0 to 24 months.

The center hosted 2 health workshops on Early screening for cervical and breast .20 cancers benefited 25 women.

Winter Kits were distributed for 50 children from the psychosocial activities .21 participants at the center.

Jim Jeem Community Center



Children psychosocial activities: For 27 children (7 Male, 20 Female), (PRL:12, L:11, .1 Syrian:4).

The activities serve the following objective:

- Personal Hygiene
- Emotions expression
- Environment importance
- Anti- Bullying
- Friendship and Trust
- Protection and personal safe space

Meetings with mothers 11 parents meeting were conducted for 14 mothers of children participating in the psychosocial activities took place in the center. Themes discussed included introduction to psychosocial activities, challenges in coping with children and series of positive parenting.

Support of Women Groups: The women committee (10 members) meets regularly in .2 the center. They meet to discuss women issues, or issues related to their community.

Hosting of Different Meetings: The center hosts the meetings of the animators of .3 children activities, parent’s meetings (of children activities), women committees and others.

The center hosted the celebration of **World Earth Day** (environmental event) that was .4 held by the health and environment team in PARD with the participation of 40 women from the community. The participants had awareness on environment importance and Recycling.

112 **Hygiene kits** were distributed for vulnerable families and 11 **Baby kits** for families .5 with babies from 0 to 24 months.

The psychological care project supported 34 women in Jim Jeem through group therapy .6 (3 sessions), individual psychological support for 5 women.

Wadi Al Zeineh Community Center



The center was established in 2016 together with its Kindergarten. It covers many activities as follows:

Psychosocial activities for 74 children (25 males, 49 females), (PRL:51, Syrian:12, L:10, .1 PRS:1). The activities serve the following objectives:

- Culture Diversity
- Healthy Habits
- Healthy relationships
- Family Bonds
- Creativity (Arts, crafts and talents)
- Group work
- Friendship and trust
- Emotions Expression

Meetings with mothers (45 women) were conducted for mothers of children .2 participating in the psychosocial activities in the center. Themes discussed included introduction to psychosocial activities, challenges in coping with children and series of positive parenting.

Support of Women Groups: The two women committee (25 members) meet regularly in .3 the center. They meet to discuss women issues, or issues related to their community.

One puppet theater performance was conducted in the center for the benefit of 75 .4 children ages 7-12 years. The trained animators moved the puppets, in addition to the dialogue and songs, relaying the message to enhance public hygiene and protection of the environment.

The center celebrated **the international mother's day** with the participation of the 10 .5 K.G. teachers and 100 children.

700 **Hygiene kits** and 140 baby kits were distributed for vulnerable families from Wedi .6 Zyni gathering.

Coordination role of the center: .7

Premiere Urgence organization has conducted a training for the CP team in Wadi Al Zeineh (12 females) on the Safe identification and referral mechanism.

Al Daouk Community Center

The center was established in 2012 along with its Kindergarten in Daouk Beirut Area.



It covers many activities as follows:

Psychosocial activities for 58 children (28 males, 30 females), (Syrian:52, PRL:6). The .1 activities serve the following objectives:

- Culture Diversity
- Healthy Habits
- Healthy relationships
- Family Bonds
- Creativity (Arts, crafts and talents)
- Group work
- Friendship and trust
- Emotions Expression

Women Groups: It hosts meetings and focus groups of the **women committee** in the .2 area with 16 participants who meet regularly in the center to discuss women issues, or other related issues to their community.

Meetings with mothers (35 women) were conducted for mothers of children .3 participating in the psychosocial activities in the center. Themes discussed included

introduction to psychosocial activities, challenges in coping with children and series of positive parenting.

The children and their mothers celebrated **the international mother's day** with the participation of the 10 K.G. teachers and 100 children. .4

Awareness sessions: Three community educators, trained by the PARD team, conducted **nutrition awareness** sessions for 240 women. .5

The women committee members actively participated in an **interactive theater activity** led by an external trainer. This activity was particularly important as it provided an engaging platform for the members to explore and address social issues, enhance their communication skills, and foster a sense of community and empowerment. .6

Coordination role of the center: The center hosted 72 awareness sessions **conducted by Abaad** for the benefit of 720 mothers, on the subjects of reproductive health, family planning, personal hygiene and sexual education. .7

The projects/activities in this strategy were supported by:

Basque Agency for Development Cooperation	Ø
Mennonite Central Committee (MCC)	Ø
Solidaridad Internacional (NESI)	Ø
UNDP - Lebanon	Ø
The Provincial Council of Gipuzkoa	Ø
REI - Refugee Empowerment International - Japan	Ø
Human Serve International - Canada	Ø
Welfare Association	Ø

Strategy Three: Environmental and Health Services Program



➤ Solid Waste Collection and Disposal

The Objective of the activity is to decrease the hazards of accumulated household garbage through regular collection of garbage in six Palestinian gatherings in the South of Lebanon. It includes regular solid waste collection at the household level, in addition to cleaning public zones in the southern gatherings. PARD has been operating this project since 1994.

Garbage, in most gatherings, is disposed in open containers located in central areas of the gathering. The open containers are an insect breeding ground, and hence a potential source of health risks. If the containers are not emptied frequently enough, garbage is thrown next to them, potentially attracting animals.



Solid waste management activities

Regular solid waste collection at the household level in 6 gatherings, which entails maintenance, provision of salaries of workers and fuel for the garbage collection truck. •

Collect sorted garbage in 6 of the gatherings and deliver to local municipalities through a special truck or to dumping sites •

Spraying of insecticides and provision of rodenticides to combat harmful insects and rodent infestations. •

Distribution of anti-lice shampoos and anti-scabies lotion when needed. •

Conduct annual general cleaning campaigns of the public zones in the 6 gatherings in Southern Lebanon •

Coordination with the Lebanese municipalities of Tyre, Abbasiyi, Burj Rahhal, and Kharayeb on solid waste management •

Two thousand four hundred eighty (2640) tons of solid wastes were collected through 1320 shifts (2 tons/shift) in 6 locations in Tyre gatherings in the South to the main dumping place.

Since 2019 PARD has been working closely with partner NGOs and local Lebanese municipalities to reduce the garbage collected through sorting. So far together with UNDP, ICRC and others, PARD has implemented successful garbage sorting projects.

The sorting of solid waste continued throughout the year 2023:

Jim Jeem, Kfar Badda, Aitaniyeh and Wasta in coordination with Kharayeb municipality •

Baisariyeh in coordination with Baisariyeh municipality •

Qasmiyeh in coordination with Burj Rahal municipality •

Jal al Bahar in coordination with Abbasiyeh municipality •

Hay al Zaitoun near Miyeh Miyeh camp in Saida in coordination with Miyeh Miyeh Municipality •

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA) mandate to provide basic urban services, mainly WASH, is defined within the boundaries of twelve Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon only.

So, solid waste is collected regularly by PARD from six informal settlements in the South, on a door-to-door basis. Those are Shabriha - Qasmiyeh - Wasta - Aitaniyeh - Jim Jeem and Kfar Badda. About 4878 people benefit from this project. Previously, PARD conducted a door-to-door training on the importance of sorting materials. Special barrels were distributed to sort the garbage, cartons, tins and plastic in one barrel, organic materials in another. After the previous raising awareness activities were completed, the municipalities of Kharayeb and Abbasiyeh, started collecting the sorted materials.

The municipality of Kharayeb for the informal settlements of Wasta, Aitaniyeh, Kfar Badda and Jim Jeem. Abbasiyeh municipality for the informal settlements of Shabriha and Qasmiyeh.

The economic and financial situation in Lebanon has deteriorated dramatically since the year 2019. As the consequences of the financial crisis were evident and of great impact on people lives, since then the situation continued to worsen even more. Given that no reformatory actions were taken by the successive governments to efficiently decrease the intensity of the crisis, and given that no reformatory policies are in sight in order to uproot the problem and

handle it in a solution-based approach on the long run, all residents in Lebanon continue to suffer dire consequences.

Recently, and as one of the **coping mechanisms** of the refugees and poor Lebanese living in the informal settlements, **people started selling their sorted materials to private companies** in Tyre. The companies send special trucks to collect glass, plastic, cartons, tins, electrical devices and metallic materials, from the families weekly, and pay those families money in return. In this way, the families earn some income. Prices for the materials range from 0.3\$ to 1\$ per kilo. This new system is very efficient and sustainable since different garbage materials are always available in homes.

As a result, this system has reduced the quantity of garbage collected which leads to less trips to the dumping place for inorganic materials. The dumping place charges per visit, so the general costs of the activity decreases.

Through garbage collection the streets and common areas in the informal settlements are clean from garbage which attracts rodents and insects harmful to the physical and psychological wellbeing of the people living there.

The popular committees (local governance) and the women committees helped in organizing, monitoring and evaluating the garbage collection activity to ensure its success and make sure that the beneficiaries are satisfied.

In addition, this activity provided jobs for two garbage truck drivers and two workers who are local people living in two of the informal settlements.



➤ **Spraying of insecticides**

Rodents and insects constituted a major source of nuisance to the residents of the gatherings, especially during summer when the number of insects increases tremendously. To control the problem, PARD used to implement spraying campaigns in the gatherings in the South and Beirut.

Unfortunately, due to budget constraints, PARD could not purchase insecticides.

➤ **Cleaning Septic Tanks**

PARD operates a special truck for suctioning septic tanks in the Southern gatherings. Some gatherings are not linked to major wastewater pipelines and therefore discharge their household wastewater into primitive ground septic tanks. These usually overflow and contaminate the land and water sources around them.

A new truck for suction of waste water was purchased and 195 cesspits were emptied through 249 transport trips from the Southern gatherings and camps.

The beneficiaries usually call the driver of the truck to empty their septic tanks in exchange for a certain amount in Lebanese pounds which should cover the costs of the activity for sustainability purposes.

Schedule for Suction of Percolating Pits – South

	Location	No. of Pits	No. of Transport Trips
	Kharayeb	24	30
	Maashouk	22	26
	Kfar Badda	62	88
	Wasta	26	34
	Qasmiyeh	21	30
	Rachidiyeh	36	47
	Burghuliyeh	34	65
	Aitaniyeh	1	3
	Shabriha	4	6

	Jal Al Bahar	2	2
	Jim Jeem	1	1
Totals		233	332

➤ Cleaning Campaigns of General Premises



At least once a year, each gathering organizes a cleaning campaign whereby a team of workers and volunteers clean up their gatherings.

In 2023, 20 campaigns took place in the gatherings in the South, and the collected wastes were removed by PARD's 2 garbage trucks and deposited at designated places.

Distribution of Anti-Lice Shampoos

35 anti-lice shampoo bottles were distributed to families in the South gatherings.

Raising Awareness Sessions on Waste Management and Hygiene

The community awareness campaign was carried out through 32 workshops, four for each of the gatherings of Maashouk, Qasmiyeh, Wasta, Burghuliyeh, Kfar Badda, Jim Jeem, Shabriha and Aitaniyeh.

#	Location	Venue	No. of Workshops	No. of Women Participants	Subjects of Sessions
	Maashouk	Community center	4	18	- Waste Management and Classification and Public Hygiene
	Qasmiyeh	Center of Local NGO "Al Ghad"	4	21	
	Wasta	Hall in local mosque	4	26	
	Burghuliyeh	Hall in local mosque	4	15	
	Kfar Badda	Hall in local mosque	4	20	
	Jim Jeem	Community center	4	17	
	Shabriha	Community center	4	27	
	Aitaniyeh	Home of member of women committee	4	16	

Total	8 informal settlements		32	So the total number of beneficiaries from health education reached 685	
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The workshops were held in large rooms within the community centers of Maashouk, Jim Jeem, and Shabriha, in the halls of local mosques in Wasta, Burghuliyeh and Kfar Badda, the center of a local NGO in Qasmiyeh in addition to a home of a member of women committee in Aitaniyeh. Measures were taken to reduce the risk of Covid-19 pandemic such as: separated chairs, masks, and the provision of antiseptic gels for hand use. PowerPoint presentations and group discussions were implemented in each workshop ending with questions for evaluation.

The themes of the workshops were as follows:

1- Waste management and classification:

Objective:

Improving rubbish sorting practices in informal settlements in South Lebanon.

Outline:

- Definition of household waste:
 - Organics
 - Inorganic, recyclable
 - Inorganic, non-recyclable
- Waste management methods at household level
 - Reduction
 - Recycling
 - Composting
 - Energy production
- Importance of waste sorting in households
- Colour coding system for waste sorting
- Tips for home composting of organic waste

2- Public hygiene:

Objective:

Improving public hygiene in informal settlements in southern Lebanon through awareness-raising sessions.

Outline:

- Definition of public hygiene
- Importance and benefits of public hygiene
- Role of timely and adequate waste collection
- Good public hygiene practices in households
- Good public hygiene practices at community level
- Importance of regular public hygiene campaigns in each settlement

The purpose of the community awareness campaigns was so that the women comprehend the following:

- 1- Understand the types of garbage women collect in their homes, organic and non-organic that can be sorted
- 2- Understand the hazards of garbage if not properly disposed such as the spread of rodents and harmful insects causing diseases.
- 3- Proper garbage disposal by using tightly sealed bags and putting them either in front of their houses in the narrow streets, or in large garbage containers in the main streets.
- 4- Sorting out the cartons, tins, plastic and metallic materials to be sold incurring incomes.

During the workshops two brochures were distributed to each woman to illustrate the subjects.

At the end of each workshop questions were asked to deduce the level of understanding of the women for the subject discussed.

The same questions were asked before and after the workshops.

For the subject “**Waste Management and Classification**”, the after results showed the 91% of the women have a very good level of understanding of types of garbage, waste management methods and the importance of sorting.

For the subject “**Public Hygiene**” the after results showed that 92% of the women have a very good understanding of the importance and benefits of public hygiene, good public hygiene practices at home and at community levels, and the importance of regular public hygiene campaigns to protect the environment.

International Mother Earth Day

On April 22, people unite to celebrate International Mother Earth Day. The day is to focus on the responsibility to rebuild our troubled relationship with nature. It recognizes that “the Earth and



its ecosystems are our home” and that “it is necessary to promote harmony with nature and the Earth.”

International Mother Earth Day was established in 2009, This Day also recognizes a collective responsibility, as called for in the 1992 Rio Declaration, to promote harmony with nature and the Earth to achieve a just balance among the economic, social and environmental needs of present and future generations of humanity.

International Mother Earth Day is annually celebrated for the following purposes:

1. To raise global public awareness of the challenges to the well-being of the planet and all the life it supports,
2. To recognize a collective responsibility to promote harmony with nature and the Earth, and
3. To achieve a just balance among the economic, social and environmental needs of the present and future generations of humanity.

The theme of this year is “Invest in our Planet”. It's a call for governments, businesses and individuals to invest in a better future for the planet. “Governments can pass regulations; they can promote [a] green economy.

At the community level, however, many actions can be done in order to understand and implement the main concepts of environmental sustainability and sustainable environmental

education. In the daily lives of refugees in the informal settlements in which PARD operates, these concepts are continuously passed on to the community, by education and daily implementation.

To commemorate the occasion of International Mother Earth Day, 2 events were hosted at Jim Jeem Community Center, in which a total of 100 women coming from the following informal settlements: Wasta, Kfarbadda, Aitanieh, Shabriha and Sikki. Additionally, women committee members of Jim Jeem and Maashouk participated in the event. The participants were of different nationalities: PRL, PRS, Syrian and Lebanese.

The event program included:

PowerPoint presentation about environmental sustainability practices, such as waste segregation, recycling and composting -

Video about International Mother Earth Day -

Group discussion about the video and the audience's opinions and knowledge -

Planting small flower pots and hanging on the trees in re-purposed plastic bottles -

Planting small trees as a symbol of the event -

Small exhibit showcasing methods of upcycling and recycling materials in the purpose of implementing environmental sustainability, for economic purposes. The stands included one stand by a woman from Jal El Bahr who upcycles everyday items into decorations and useful objects/accessories. Another stand showcased re-using wooden pellets to create furniture. -

Used tires were collected and painted, and were utilized as flower pots at the base of trees. Also, they were used to create large color-coded waste bins to encourage waste segregation. -



Finally, refreshments were distributed to all participants. A folklore dance was presented by a group of young women trained by PARD on folklore dancing. This presentation encouraged the woman to participate in the folklore dancing as well in celebration.

This program had limited support for the year 2023. Accordingly, the popular committees are being prepared to take financial responsibilities for covering the costs of solid waste collection and disposal, for the coming years.

This program was supported by:

Solidaridad Internacional (SI) Ø

The City Council of Donostia - SanSebastian - In partnership with SI Ø

Strategy Four: Relief for People in Distress



PARD's main work and mission are directed towards the Palestinian refugees – and other refugees- residing in the gatherings. Gatherings in the South Lebanon and Beirut, like other gatherings in Lebanon, suffer a devastating state of lack of infrastructure, very limited employment opportunities, competition over available resources, and a crowded residential situation due to the overpopulation present there. Co-occurring with the economic crisis that has dire consequences on the financial situation of refugee families in the gatherings, these factors exacerbate the situation and make basic pillars of living inaccessible for many therefore leading to a state of food insecurity for many.

In response to the basic needs of the people in the gatherings given the state of food insecurity they are in and given the need for basic hygiene resources, and as part of its relief response, PAR D provides Food Security (FS) and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WATSAN) services in these areas. PAR D makes sure that individuals benefiting from those activities are those most in need

according to need and vulnerability assessments performed prior to every phase of initiation of activities in addition to validity assessments to existing data bases. The validation assessment used are those endorsed by the food security sector in order to select and enroll beneficiaries. Beneficiary households will be selected based on the following criteria with priority given to those households that meet more than one criteria:

- Families with children (children at risk of child labor, children with disabilities, children at risk of malnutrition under 59 months, children with protection risk)
- Single Female Headed households and caregivers for children under 24 months and elderly dependents
- Pregnant and Lactating women
- Household headed by a single elderly with one or more children
- Household with only elderly members
- Household where head/more than one member suffers from a severe chronic illness, or immunodeficiency, or is disabled, and with dependents (elderly and/or children)
- Household with four or more dependents (elderly and/or children)

Each of those activities, food security and WATSAN, has a modality that PARD has been utilizing since years. For FS activities, there are mainly two modalities usually adopted by PARD, cash for food and food parcels. For the year 2023, only cash for food were utilized in FS activities where beneficiaries would receive cash from OMT centers (100\$ per family).

As for WATSAN activities, those are usually performed as provision of different types of kits for different purposes or age groups. The ones mainly provided by PARD are hygiene kits, also referred to as relief kits, personal hygiene kits, baby kits- for ages 0 to 24 months. Each of the kits has a particular composition that is usually based on universal standards.

Good hygiene is crucial to preventing the spread of infectious diseases and to help children live long, healthy lives.

For families, good hygiene means avoiding diseases and reducing spending on health care. In some contexts, good hygiene can ensure a good social status for the family and help individuals maintain self-confidence.

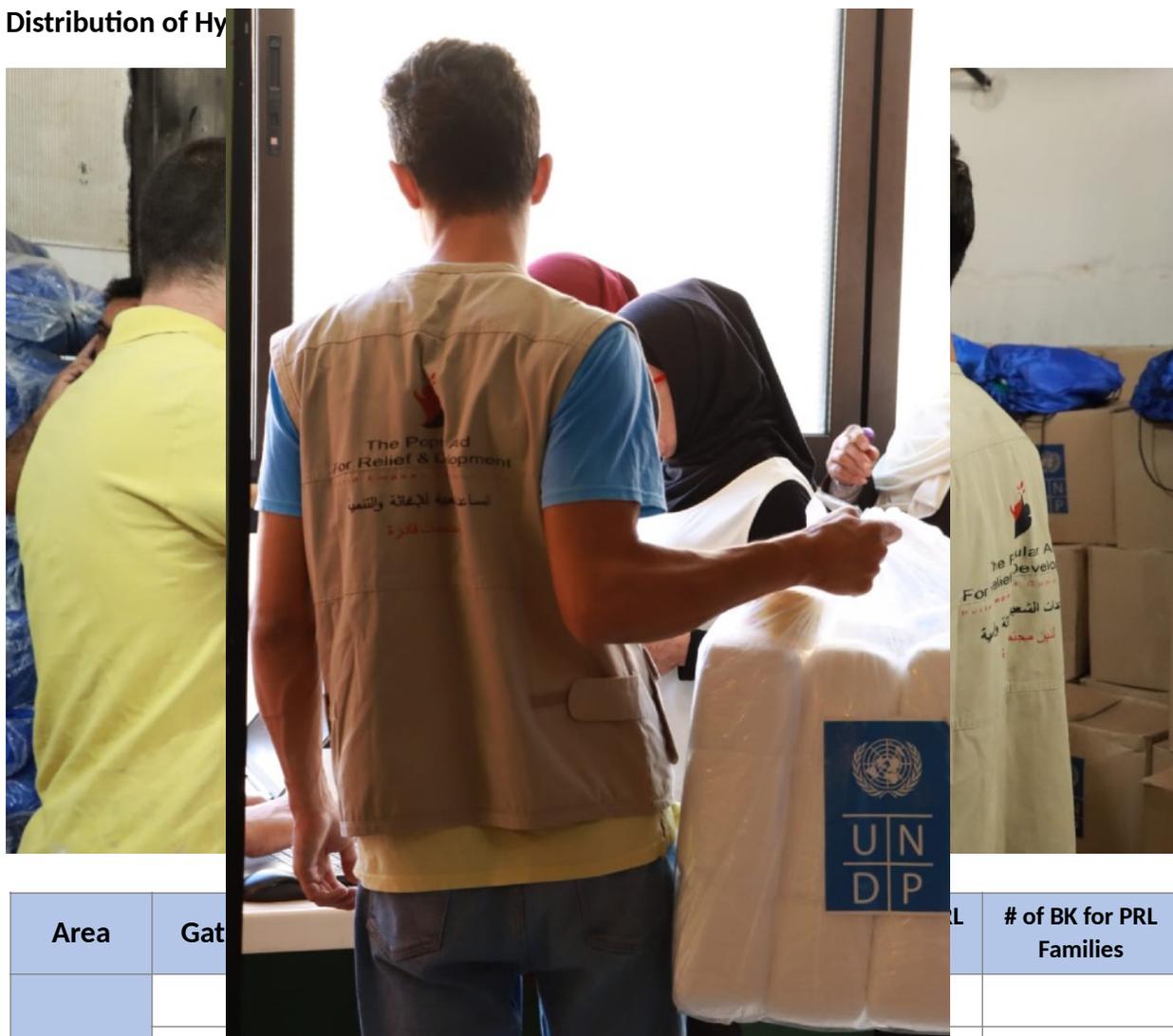
PARD distributed hygiene and baby kits in Tyre, Saida, Beirut and Mount Lebanon through support from UNDP. Both Palestinian refugees in Lebanon (PRL) and Palestinian refugees from Syria (PRS) benefited from this distribution **with the total of 4215 families.**

Hygiene Kits/ Relief Kits are composed of:

- Soap Bar •
- Laundry Washing Powder •
- Cleaning Liquid •
- Shampoo •
- Toothpaste adult •
- Toothbrush Adult •
- Cotton Towel •
- Garbage Bag 20L •
- Sanitary Pad (3 Packs of 10 Pads) •
-
- Carton Box •
- Toilet Tissues •
- Hand soft tissues •
- Baby kits are composed of:
- Diapers (ea) •
- Baby Bathing Soap •
- Baby Underwear •
- Baby rash cream •

The diapers in this kit are modified in size from one kit to another according to the age of the baby.

Distribution of Hy



Area	Gate				# of BK for PRL Families	
Tyre		Shabriha	74	11	11	3
		Jeem Jeem			11	1
		Aitaniyeh	1		15	
		Burghuliyeh			9	2
		Qasmiyeh	70	24	25	4
		Maashouk	137	30		
		Wasta	15		47	5
		Jal Al Bahar	60	24	72	7
		Kfar Badda	20	5	25	3
	Sikkeh	77	22	30	5	
	Tawaree'	118	30	4	1	

Saida + Beirut	Al Moujamaa Al Sakani	23	4	34	13
	Jabal Al Halib	29	1	68	12
	Kenayat	8	1	39	6
	Hay Al Sohoun	44	5	52	5
	Katee' Al Jeser	47	5	19	2
	Bustan Al Quds	57	16	63	31
	Bustan Abou Jamil	61	12	17	3
	Arab Ghweir	22		37	6
	South Sikkeh	6		20	
	Baraksat	79	11	101	42
	Nabaa	16	3	34	6
	Fadlo Wakim	25	8	48	9
	Taamir	116	46	31	5
	Nemrin	40	2	2	
	Taytaba	90	11	7	1
	Abou Jihad Al Wazir	29	4		
	Hay Al Nidaa	17	4	41	6
	Saida al Balad	57	12	96	6
	Mieh w Mieh	66	9	26	3
	Fawar	15	5	5	
	Safouri	45	11	21	2
	Hay Al Quds	18	4	12	3
	Samireyaa	11	1	2	
	Arab Zbeid	18	4	1	
	Al Zeeb	19	3	6	1
	Ras Al Ahmar	29	7	17	6
	Al Katee' Al Gharbi	18	5	7	1
	Hettin	34	6	6	
Safsaf	46	14			

	Amka	3	1	4	3
	Mansheye	24	6	14	
	Tiri	15	4	3	1
	Villat	8	1	9	
	Akbara	5	2	1	
	Hay Al Zaytoun			3	
	Daouk	5			
Mount Lebanon	Wadi Zayne, Chhim, Other Iqlim & Naameh	631	118	769	162
Total		2351	493	1864	366

Supporting displaced refugees from Ein El Hilwe Camp:

Starting from the 29th of July 2023, violent armed fights broke out in Ein El Hilwe camp in Saida-Lebanon, between “Fateh” and the “Islamic Youth”, two Palestinian factions. The armed fights lasted for 52 days resulting in 14 dead, 60 injured and damages in house, shops and infrastructure estimated to cost about 30 million dollars in rehabilitation.

As a result of the armed clashes, thousands of Palestinian refugees fled the camp to safer areas in the city of Saida.

PARD supported 76 refugee families residing in Nablis schools as such:

#	Item	Quantity Distributed
	Towels	76
	Soap bars	152
	Shampoo	76
	Floor Detergent	5 gallons
	Hair comb	76
	Finger plaster	76
	Laundry liquid detergent	76

Food Security:

Providing cash assistance to the most vulnerable people is an effective, successful, and transparent way to provide humanitarian assistance to the most vulnerable groups. It guarantees people the freedom, dignity, and autonomy to decide their own recovery. Cash assistance can support people's basic needs until livelihood activities are restored, and also help ensure that these vulnerable people do not resort to negative coping mechanisms due to poverty. For example, when women and girls have equal access to control resources, they will become less vulnerable to sexual exploitation and negative coping strategies such as early marriage or forced labor.

The total number of participants that were benefited from the cash for food project were 4,100 individuals (1015 families).

Distribution of Cash Assistance for Food Security

(a)

Gathering	No. of Individual Beneficiaries	No. of Families Beneficiaries	Total No. of Distributions
Aitaniyeh	90	23	
Jal Al Bahar	472	122	
Jim Jeem	46	11	
Kfar Badda	177	43	
Maashouk	344	86	
Qasmiyeh	633	159	
Wasta	287	68	
Daouk	1199	288	
Said Ghawash	852	215	
Total	4100	1015	11

In addition to distributing “Cash for Food”, the same project included empowerment training for women, TOT training on nutrition, community nutrition awareness, UN-Women 16 days of activism, interactive theater, “Shababik” awareness campaign and monthly meetings with women committees.

Trainings:

(b)

As part of our unlimited support for women to be effective workers and decision-makers in society, we held a large number of training sessions, about 200 training sessions attended by about 900 women beneficiaries in the targeted gatherings. These trainings focused on communication methods, conflict resolution, self-confidence, sexual exploitation, GBV, and early marriage.

Training attended by women’s committees:

Communication and Listening	.1
Dispute Resolution	.2
Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse	.3
Enhancing Self-Confidence	.4
Gender Justice	.5
Women’s Rights	.6
Gender Based Violence	.7

TOT Nutrition: (c)

A tailored nutrition training program was provided to local health teachers from all the targeted gatherings (7 in South and Beirut). The duration of the course was 4 days, 5 hours per day, and 20 teaching hours. This training took place from July 20, 2023, until July 24, 2023, at the Maashouk Community Center. This training aims to train local women to become health trainers’ educators, to provide theoretical and practical knowledge about food safety to the participants, and to introduce the concepts of basic nutrition and health during life cycles. Obtaining adequate quantities of safe food is essential for sustaining life and promoting good health, so this training aimed to raise the level of awareness among beneficiaries about food safety.

Upon Following the evaluation and the analysis of the post-training assessment, ten educators were selected to conduct the nutrition awareness sessions in the gatherings. One educator was assigned for each gathering to reach out to the households. A meeting with the selected trainers was held. They received the necessary training tools and materials and will begin training on September 20, 2023, in the ten targeted gatherings.

The evaluation process came after the training sessions organized by PARD and managed by a nutrition specialist for about 20 trainees from all the gatherings targeted in this project. The selection process came after testing the skills and abilities of the trainees and the information gained from the training they had undergone earlier, and the best 10 trainees were selected out of 20 trainees who obtained scores that qualified them to be trainers in their gatherings.

Community Nutrition Awareness: (d)

Due to the multiple sources of food contamination and their negative impact on human health, during this project, we launched training on food safety policy to promote this concept in the communities targeted through this project.

Every person needs healthy food every day. Therefore, based on this principle and to reinforce it, we trained ten local trainers to educate the largest possible number of women in the ten targeted gatherings within this project. Each trainee trained about 80 women throughout 4 sessions, with an average of 20 women in one session.

16 days of activism:

(e)

16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence is a key international moment to call for an end to violence against women and girls. It runs from 25th November (the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women) until 10th December, Human Rights Day.

Every year, during this campaign, we focus on a specific topic. This year's theme is "Accelerating Actions to End Gender-Based Violence and Femicide, leaving no one behind".

Our activities during the 16 days of activism against gender-based violence were as follows:

***November 25, 2023 "The international day for the elimination of violence against Women"**

On this day, we had to shed light on the crimes of genocide in the Gaza Strip and the blatant violations of basic human rights against women and children there. That is why we prepared a video that mainly highlighted these violations.

***December 1, 2023 World Aids Day**

During World Aids Day, PARD's psychologist provided a psychological support session for 10 women in the Al Qasimiya community. The session began with a mindfulness activity to allow the women to relax and live in the moment. After that, the women began to vent about their difficult experiences during these difficult times. Finally, the unloading activity was carried out. Such sessions are essential to reassure women that they can get the support they need anytime they want.

- We also prepared a video inspired by the occasion.

***December 10, 2023 International Human Rights Day**

Among our activities during the 16 days of activism, we had to have a station for human rights awareness, as human rights awareness is the first step to combating and preventing human rights violations.

Coinciding with International Human Rights Day, we organized a training workshop on human rights principles, in which the relief program coordinator lectured. The workshop included the main pillars of human rights that promote the principles of respect, inclusion, non-discrimination, participation, accountability, and equality.

- We also prepared a video inspired by the occasion.

***Women's rights in the Islamic religion**

Among the activities of the 16 days of activism, an educational workshop on women's rights and their place in the Islamic religion was organized for the women's committees in the Al Mashouk gathering.

The women's affairs advisor at the Islamic Fatwa House in the Lebanese Republic lectured at the workshop.

-We also published several awareness posts on social media during this campaign.

Interactive Theatre:

(f)

The interactive theater organized during this project for the sake of empowering women socially was a clear force in motivating women to discuss and manage tension, and their roles were designed to encourage positive change, community awareness, and behaviors that protect women's rights.

The theater director used the interactive theater tool through the theatrical role-playing method, encouraging women to express their opinions, and making attendees participate in making changes in the scenario to reach a happy ending. This approach has enhanced our understanding of how women can adapt their life stories by changing their behaviors and attitudes.

Interactive theater sessions were organized over four days intensively for the ten target gatherings, with one intensive day per week for each gathering.

"Shababik" Awareness Campaign:

(g)

Shababik activity aimed to empower women in communities affected by wars, conflicts, displacement, asylum, and poverty. The goal was to motivate women to make a positive change in the face of crises and enable them to become active parties within their gatherings.

The activity was carried out within the ten targeted communities during February 2023, in which the number of participants reached 57 participants from the women's committees.

During the activity, the interactive theater method was adopted as it is an art of society that reflects reality and raises several issues that are considered somewhat sensitive. This activity received positive feedback as the participants interacted with it greatly and played their roles in presenting problems and finding solutions to the fullest extent.

Woman's Committees:

(h)

14 committees

140 meetings were held from June 2023 to March 2024

The 140 meetings of the women's committees were held every month in each gathering:

1 committee/14 members in Said Ghawash	.1
1 committee/6 members in Daouk	.2
3 committees/45 members in Qasmiyeh	.3
2 committees/40 members in Wasta	.4
1 committee/20 members in Aaitaniyeh	.5
1 committee/15 members in Kfar bada	.6
2 committees/40 members in Maashouk	.7
2 committees/45 members in Jal AL Baher	.8
1 committee/10 members in Jim Jim	.9

The most **prominent topics** raised and discussed in **the meetings of the women's committees:**

- 1- School support
- 2-The mobile clinic and its importance
- 3- Requirements for home renovation
- 4-Supporting the first aid center and its importance within the gatherings
- 5- The danger of waste and its accumulation and the lack of sufficient containers for waste within the gatherings
- 6-Vocational education for children and language teaching for women and children
- 7- Discussing the issue of high rents within the gatherings
- 8- Activities for children
- 9- Learning difficulties among some children
- 10- The danger of sea flooding in the Jal AL Bahr gathering
- 11- School dropout
- 12-Breast cancer early detection campaign
- 13- A sit-in in support of UNRWA
- 14-Distribution of hygiene kits and how to use them
- 15- Women's Ultrasound Campaign
- 16-How to manage the session

Nonfood Items

Distribution of Clothes

PARD has implemented this distribution funded by MCC in order to distribute clothes and toys to the participants of the Child protection program (KGs and psychosocial activities).

These contributions took place in the **two kindergartens** in Beirut (Sabra center) and north Saida (Wadi El Zayne center). Regarding the psycho-social activities' participants, they took **place in four Palestinian gatherings in South Lebanon** (Shabriha, Maachouk, Jimjim, and Wadi Zayne) and in **Beirut**.

Each child has received a winter set that includes a jacket, a sweat suit, a pair of boots, and a toy.

In terms of numbers, a total of 563 sets were distributed as follows: 110 kids in Wadi El Zayne kindergarten, 111 in Sabra Kindergarten, 240 children in PSS south, and 102 in PSS Beirut.

Minor Rehabilitation of Houses



BEFORE



AFTER

Reconstruction, Livelihood and Gender Equity in Informal Settlements of South Lebanon "PHASE 4"

As part of the relief activities held by PARD, there are minor rehabilitation activities for houses in the gatherings in South Lebanon. These activities are performed by the skilled and unskilled youth workers from the community who work in specific professions (see youth empowerment section). **The houses rehabilitated** for the year 2022-2023 **were 50 in 5 gatherings**: Sikkeh (16 houses), Kfarbadda (2 houses), Aitaniyeh (3 houses), Wasta (12 houses), and Shabriha (17 houses). The rehabilitation activities covered multiple areas of specialty such as plumbing, carpentry, painting, electricity, tiling, and blacksmithing. The selection of the houses happens according to a set criterion for the family residing in it that includes:

- women heads of household •
- disabilities •
- situations of poverty and extreme poverty •
- number of family members (5 or more children) •
- chronic diseases •

During the evaluation visits, the following was taken into account

Health. As a basic necessity for normal life, the house must be in good condition in terms of water and sewage networks so that there are no wastewater leaks or waste in the network. .1

One of the **safety** requirements of any home is that the electrical mains must be properly extended (either concealed in walls or partitions or externally in conduits). The extensions must be properly insulated and kept away from direct contact, either with people or with the contents of the house, so as to avoid electric shocks or contact that could lead to a risk of fire or death. .2

Privacy. The right to privacy has been taken into account in identifying the costs of maintaining all windows and doors, or installing new ones when maintenance is not possible or damage is severe. .3

People with special needs, have the right to lead a normal life just like anyone else which requires some adjustments done for their convenience. .4



The projects/activities in this strategy were supported by:

Bizkaia (The Provincial Council of Biscay)	Ø
Canadian Foodgrains Bank (CFGB)	Ø
City Council of Donostia San Sebastian	Ø
Mennonite Central Committee (MCC)	Ø
Solidaridad Internacional (NESI)	Ø
UNDP - Lebanon	Ø

Strategy Five: Organizational Development of PARD



 **Trainings**

As part of **the capacity building** plan of its team and responding to their needs, PARD conducted a series of trainings in multiple aspects of work. These trainings were costumed to the needs of our programs.

Training for the Child Protection Program

(a)

Title of Training	Trainer	Attendees
School Improvement Plan and Psychological Counselling and Guidance	Save the Children	8 KG teachers and CP officer
Child Protection Counsel Training	Save the Children	9 KG teachers and CP coordinator and officer
Aser (Annual Status of Education Report)	Save the Children	8 KG teachers
Safe Recruitment training	Save the Children	Human resources officer
Safe Identity on the Referral of child Protection Case with Suicidal Inclinations	Save the Children	Child Protection Program coordinator (CP)
Inclusion: for all teachers	Save the Children	4 KG teachers + CP coordinator
Social Emotional Learning (SEL) for Basic Literacy and Numeracy (BLN) and Remedial Support teachers	Save the Children	4 teachers of Beirut Kindergarten, CP program coordinator
Gender Equality	Save the Children	3 teachers of Beirut KG + Child Protection program coordinator
Cholera Induction	Save the Children	Two KG teachers
Child Safeguarding Refresher	Save the Children	2 teachers of Beirut KG + CP officer
Gender Equality Training	Save the Children	Case Worker + CP coordinator + CP officer
Learning Behavior for Remedial Support Arabic Teachers	Save the Children	3 teachers of Beirut KG + CP officer
Teacher in crisis context	Save the Children	Case worker + MEAL officer + accountant
Ready to learn for early child education teachers	Save the Children	4 KG teachers
Teacher leadership and compensation	Save the Children	2 KG teachers + CP officer
Report writing, monitoring and evaluation	MCC	Program coordinator

KG yearly plan, revision of child protection policy	PARD with support from NESI and MCC	40 KG teachers and assistant teachers (Beirut,WZ,Tyre)
Types of abuse, social-emotional learning	PARD with support from NESI	20 KG teachers and assistant teachers (Tyre)
Learning difficulties, recognizing students who need special help	PARD with support from NESI	20 KG teachers and assistant teachers (Tyre)
PSEA Policy and referral mechanism	PARD with support of MCC	40 KG teachers and assistant (Beirut,WZ,Tyre)
Introduction to Artificial intelligence in Education	PARD	20 KG teachers (Beirut and WZ)
Bloom's Taxonomy (Student's needs and development)	PARD	20 KG teachers (Beirut and WZ)
Artificial Intelligence challenges	Al Jana	Daouk center coordinator
Digital Marketing	Al Jana	Sabra center coordinator
Monitoring and Evaluation basics	Al Jana	Program coordinator
Cases detection and referrals	P r e m i e r e Urgence	10 KG teachers (WZ)

Training for the Empowerment of Women and Youth program: (b)

Title of Training	Trainer	Attendees
Standards of procedures and inclusion training	Save the Children	Psychologist
Using NEAT (software tool) for environmental assessment in humanitarian project	Norwegian Refugee Council NRC	Coordinator of empowerment of women and youth program
Mental health in the workplace	IDRAAC, NGO for mental health	Coordinator of empowerment of women and youth program
Healthy aging	Help Age International	Psychologist

Referral Information Management System (RIMS)	NRC	Psychologist
GBV safe disclosure and referral	Amel Association	Project officer in child protection program
CMR (clinical management of rape) TOT	UNFPA + MOPH	Psychologist
Meal in emergencies	Save the Children	Coordinator of Empowerment of Women and Youth program

Training for the “Relief for People in Distress” program:

(c)

Title of Training	Trainer	Attendees
Referral information management system	NRC	Relief program coordinator + relief program field officer
Excel program	MCC	Relief program field officer + 3 field assistants
Statistical and analytical programs	MCC	Relief program field officer + 3 field assistants
Report writing, monitoring and evaluation	MCC	Relief program coordinator

Project Evaluations

At the end of two of its projects, PARD contracted evaluators to assess the success of the implementation of the projects and their effects on the benefiting communities in addition to financial audits supported by the donors. The evaluations were carried out to obtain information on the achievements of the project results in their different dimensions, progress, weaknesses and strengths in the different stages of the project’s design, implementation and monitoring.

The projects targeted in these evaluations were “Medical and Psychological Assistance to the Refugee women in ten informal settlements in South Lebanon” and “Reconstruction, Livelihoods and Gender Equity in Informal Settlements in Southern Lebanon”. These projects were implemented in partnership with NESI and supported by the Basque Agency for Development Cooperation and the Provincial Council of Bizkaia.

Production of a study:

In the project “Medical and Psychological Assistance to the Refugee women in ten informal settlements in South Lebanon”, an expert researcher was contracted to prepare a study on **“Family Planning Knowledge and Practices Among Refugees in Informal Settlements in South Lebanon”**.

Sexual Reproductive Health (SRH) is a challenging issue in the Middle East in general. Of particular interest, in conflict and refugee contexts, adverse health outcomes can be safely predicted. Specifically, in Lebanon, with the pre-existing PRL population and influx of displaced Syrians post Syrian conflict in 2011, the existing health.

Structures were “Stretched Thin”, in a country known for a highly fragmented and privatized health sector.

Despite the existence of numerous studies on SRH in general, including use and knowledge of FP among Syrian refugees in Lebanon, there is little research exploring the PRL perspective, particularly in the past 20 years. To address the evidence-based gap in the literature, this study was conducted to critically explore the topic of FP among refugee women in the informal settlements, with a high PRL population representation.

Aims of the Study:

Given the recent political and financial crises currently posing immense challenges in Lebanon, this study seeks to understand:

The current FP practices of married refugees regarding provision of FP services and .1 modern contraception methods in informal settlements in South Lebanon.

The knowledge and perceptions of refugees in these communities regarding FP, .2 reflecting the perceived potential barriers or facilitators.

Training on Protection Policies:

PARD organized training sessions over two days outside the corridors of its offices. The sessions were held at the Jrady Resort in Southern Lebanon on September 5 and 6,2023.

The topics revolved around:

- First Day: .1
- Introduction orientation on protection policies. .a
- Protection from sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (PSEAH) .b
- Introduction to gender .c
- Gender based violence (GBV) .d

Second Day:	.2
Early identification and safe referral pathways.	.a
Psychological first aid (PFA)	.b
Wellbeing and Self-care	.c

The number of attendees was 12 (relief program coordinator – relief field coordinators – 3 relief field assistants – 3 social workers – finance manager – communication officer – 1 volunteer – child protection officer).

Organizational Assessment: Motivation and Capacity:

PARD contracted an external evaluator to conduct an organizational assessment to assess the effectiveness of PARD’s organizational development strategy and the extent to which it has achieved its overall goal “to increase PARD’s organizational effectiveness, performance and service quality”.

The assessment focused on the following:

Organizational Motivation: Understanding and interpreting the extent to which PARD’s (1 mission drives the behavior of its members and staff and what aspects of the PARD’s internal culture move it towards fulfilling its mission (values, morale incentives)

Organizational Capacity: assessing the strengths and weaknesses of a) strategic (2 leadership in setting the direction within the organization, b) its financial viability and management, and c) its organizational structure including governance systems and the decision making process.

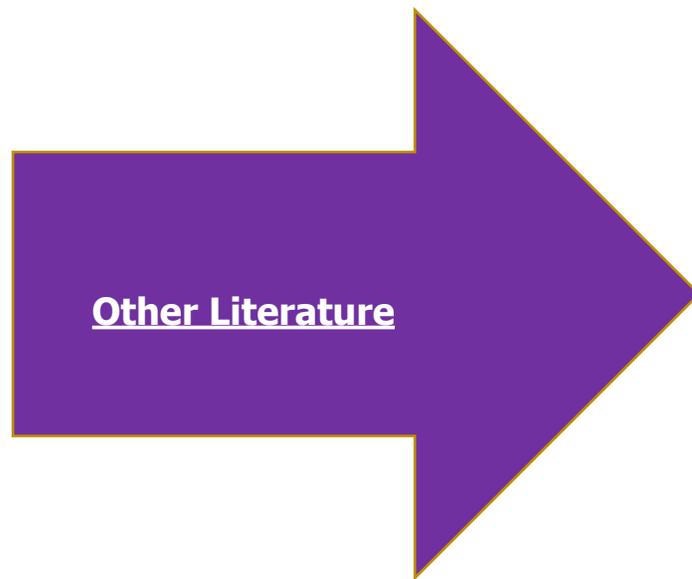
Final recommendations covered:

Strategic leadership and staff motivation	-
Financial viability and management	-
Organizational structure	-

Most of the recommendations were implemented since they were not affected by budget constraints.

The projects/activities in this strategy were supported by:

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC)	Ø
Canadian Food Grains Bank (CFGB)	Ø
Save the Children / BMZ	Ø
UNHCR	Ø
ABAAD	Ø
UN Women	Ø
UNDP	Ø
UNICEF	Ø



Other Literature

PARD is part of a number of coordination forums, and national and international coalitions that focus on Palestinian Rights and issues.

Coordination Forums

The coordination forum of the NGOs working among the Palestinian Community has .1 been operating since the beginning of 1995. Its aim is to alleviate the sufferings of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon in all aspects of their lives, including the political (through lobbying), social, and health, educational and economic. PARAD has been a founder of this forum of 16 NGO members. As long as this forum helps its NGO members to reach a better understanding about the problems facing them and facing the communities they work with, and succeeds in complying with its aims, namely to alleviate the sufferings of the Palestinian refugees, PARAD will remain an active member within it. This forum has implemented many joint projects, participated in joint training programs and participated in national and international workshops and conferences.

The Platform of Social and Health NGOs in Saida Area was established as a result of the .2 Israeli aggression on the South of Lebanon July 1993. PARAD is one of its founders, and it has played an active role in it from the start as a member of its administrative board. There are approximately 100 NGOs who are members of this forum Which has implemented many joint projects both for the Lebanese and Palestinians in the areas of health, social issues, education, and relief in the city of Saida and the surrounding area. It gained official recognition from the Lebanese Ministry of the Interior in 2015.

Coordination

With the following organizations and entities: Popular committees – Jana Association – Initiate – ULYP – UNDP.

Networking

South Health Working Group, established and led by UNHCR, is the coordination group - for all agencies providing assistance to refugees in the field of Health. The group meets to discuss ongoing and planned projects and share key information on implementation and operational developments.

- **South GBV and Protection Working Group, led by UNHCR's** Gender-based Violence section and holds a monthly meeting for all stakeholders, with the aim of disseminating relevant information and data, constantly updating referral pathways and discussing an arising problems or issues.

- **Gathering Working Group led by UNDP** for regular meetings with UNRWA, UNDP and all NGOs working in the gatherings, to share management criteria, and to implement an effective division of labour in the humanitarian field.

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