

ISSUE 01 | QUARTER 01

# URBAN

# DIGEST

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2020 ROUNDUP WHILE  
LOOKING AHEAD



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Sodeco, Beirut ©UN-Habitat



## INTRODUCTION

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Over the past 18 months, Lebanon has faced and continues to face multiple crises. While turmoil and unrest is not new to the country, the deepening financial and economic crisis, the 2019 Civil Uprising and ensuing social and political unrest, coupled with the implications of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the Beirut Port explosion of 4 August 2020, is causing unprecedented difficulty on multiple human development fronts.

The consequences of these events have pushed more than one third of Lebanese (1.7 million) into poverty, including 9 out of 10 Syrian refugees into extreme poverty (World Bank & UNHCR, 2020). Similarly, more than 50 per cent of Palestinian refugees living in Lebanon were already unemployed before the explosion and it is expected that their living conditions have deteriorated further (Government of Lebanon & United Nations, 2021). Social tensions are increasing, and the plight of the most vulnerable, including refugees hosted in Lebanon, continues to worsen.

In this edition, UN-Habitat Lebanon's newsletter highlights the programme's efforts to play an active role in the overall international community's response to these multiple crises – in targeting and responding to the needs of those most affected, regardless of their nationality – **while maintaining a longer vision of how good urbanization can play a key role in supporting Lebanon steer towards sustainable, inclusive and just development** – in line with the UN Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development.



### MULTIPLE CRISES IMPLICATIONS IN LEBANON

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**1.7 million Lebanese**  
living in poverty

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**50% Palestinian refugees**  
unemployed

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**9/10 Syrian refugees**  
living in extreme poverty

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# RESPONDING TO THE BEIRUT PORT EXPLOSION: **WHY URBAN MATTERS**

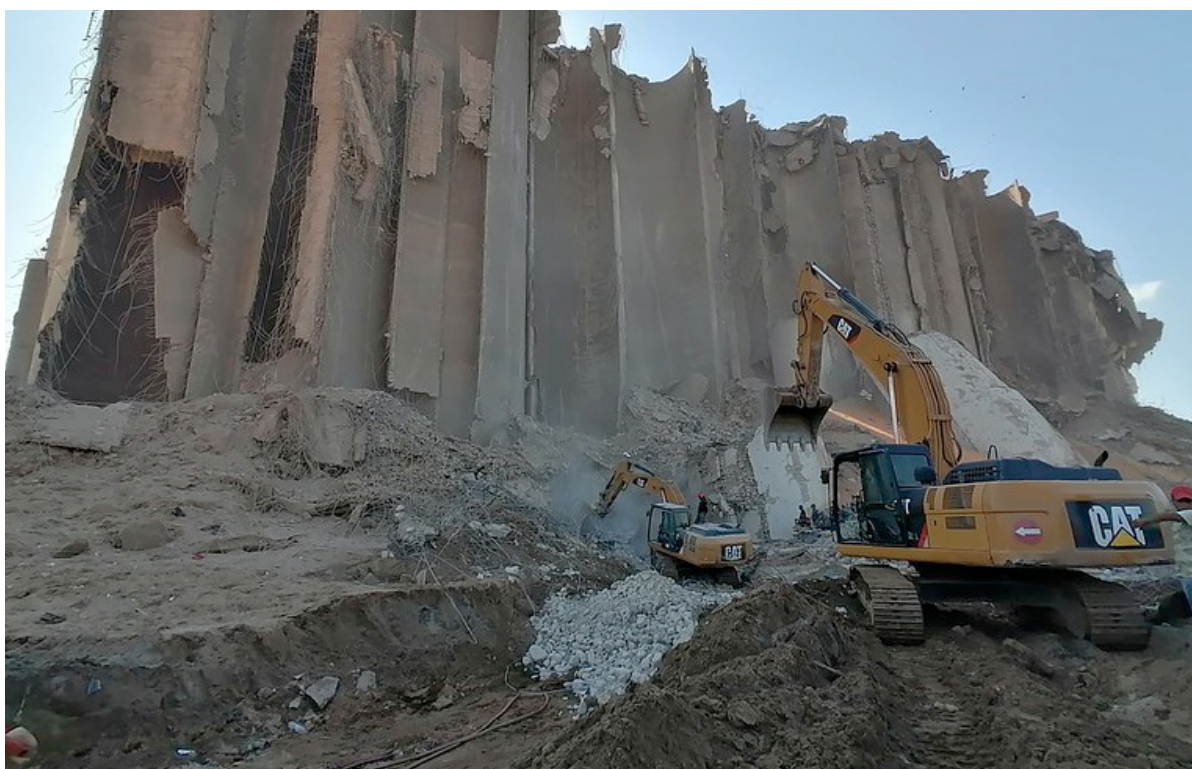


In what manifested itself as an urban crisis, the response to the devastating Beirut Port explosion beckoned a multi-sectoral and faceted area-based approach. With this in mind, UN-Habitat embarked upon identifying key entry points in complementarity to the wider immediate humanitarian response, while keeping in mind the nexus of a transition to longer-term recovery and reconstruction.

In order to establish baselines to identify immediate assistance, UN-Habitat either led or actively engaged in multiple assessment exercises. These included undertaking two Rapid Building-level Damage Assessments (**Beirut** and **Bourj Hammoud**), a **Private School Damage Assessment**, a more detailed Structurally Damaged Building-level Assessment and as a co-lead and partner of the **Shelter Sector** – contributed to field work of the Multi-Sector Needs Assessment. Underpinning these assessments, included the rapid deployment of UN-Habitat teams to the municipalities of Beirut and Bourj Hammoud,

who assisted in providing technical expertise to undertake assessments, mapping and provided an electronic database to capture the needs of the city. Seconded by NORCAP, UN-Habitat was also able to avail timely critical surge capacity, through co-leadership of the Shelter Sector and expertise on housing, land and property rights.

In parallel, UN-Habitat embarked upon immediate and medium-term humanitarian assistance through funding from the UN's Central Emergency Response Fund, the International Islamic Charity Organization, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency and in partnership with UNESCO and UNICEF. In line with UN-Habitat's approach to green urban recovery and reconstruction, together with a number of partners, we launched an initiative – Rubble to Mountains – aimed at contributing to the collection and management of debris resulting from the explosion in an environmentally sustainable way.



Leaving at least 200 dead, the aftermath of the Beirut Port explosion is still felt in the city, and in Lebanon more than 8 months later. ©UN-Habitat





"Thanks to critical and timely **cash-for-rent** support from the UN, I have been able to offset my monthly expenses, ensuring my family and I can continue to **live in dignity**"

**Etaferahu**

Resident of Rmeil neighbourhood, Beirut, Lebanon

### Providing shelter assistance to the most vulnerable through cash-for-rent and minor repairs and partnering with the private sector

In two of the neighbourhoods most affected by the explosion, Karantina and Mar Mikhael, a total of 80 to 100 buildings were reportedly evacuated, leaving hundreds of households temporarily displaced. To support these families, including those unable to temporarily relocate, UN-Habitat provided cash-for-rent to tenants. The funds – provided by the United Nations Central Emergency Relief Fund (UN CERF) – will cover a rental period of four months for a total of 810 eligible households – or 4,000 individuals.

Read more about the project [here](#).

Complementing the wider Shelter Sector strategy and partner efforts, UN-Habitat, through funding provided by the International Islamic Charity Organization (IICO) is undertaking repairs in **at least 100 households** in Bourj Hammoud. Priority was given to vulnerable groups including women, children, the elderly and disabled and chronically ill. In Rmeil, Mdawar and Achrafieh areas, other rehabilitation work is being done with the support of the Real Estate Syndicate of Lebanon.

### Rehabilitating Lebanon's only HIV and Tuberculosis medical centre

One of the many healthcare facilities severely impacted by the explosion, includes the National HIV and Tuberculosis Centre located in Karantina, Beirut. It is the only centre of its kind in Lebanon, which provides lifesaving medicines, and supplies for testing and treatment of HIV and TB. UN-Habitat through funding from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) is rehabilitating the Centre, allowing for continuity of care and providing existing patients the treatment they require and those seeking testing opportunity to access it. The rehabilitation of the Centre comes at a pressing time when COVID-19 cases have soared and people with underlying health conditions and auto-immune disorders such as HIV/AIDS are more susceptible to the disease. UN-Habitat is applying a build back better approach, by mainstreaming eco-friendly building technology as an entry point for urban regeneration in the neighbourhood. Complementing the rehabilitation of the Centre, will include targeted interventions in the adjacent community, through urban gardening for the elderly, public space regeneration and COVID-19 hygiene kit distribution.

### Rehabilitating vulnerable private schools

According to an initial assessment by Lebanon's Ministry of Education and Higher Education, at least 163 public and private schools were damaged by the explosion – affecting more than 85,000 students and 7,600 teachers. Such extensive damages have not only impacted the commencement of the new academic year, in addition to COVID-19, but will further exacerbate the pre-existing socio-economic crisis in the country, including depriving students enrolled in these schools of their right to education. To complement the initial assessment and following the Ministry's tasking of UNESCO in coordinating the assessment and rehabilitation of schools with education partners, UN-Habitat was requested by UNESCO to complete a detailed physical damage and cost estimate assessment of 113 private schools affected by the explosion. The assessment's findings have informed the UN-Habitat led rehabilitation works, funded through UNESCO, of 16 schools in Beirut and Mount Lebanon.

Explore the findings of the UN-Habitat Physical Damage Assessment of Private Schools [here](#).

Rubble left by the  
Beirut Port explosion  
©UN-Habitat



### Redirecting rubble from landfills to mountains in an eco-friendly way

The Beirut Port explosion damaged thousands of buildings and vast amounts of housing and public infrastructure, leaving behind an enormous amount of rubble and debris. For weeks following the explosion, people came out in droves to sweep the city's rubble-littered streets, leaving piles of waste that were likely destined for Beirut's nearly saturated landfills. To prevent the filling of rubble into landfills, UN-Habitat in coordination with several partners established the Rubble to Mountains initiative.

Through its three-pronged approach, the initiative will transform rubble and glass into a biodegradable, sand-like material that will be used to fill holes left by mining in Lebanon's mountains, build furniture for Beirut's public spaces and establish a permanent site for processing waste left by construction and demolition. Through partnering with UNICEF, the initiative will be able to accelerate site operations in a safe and well protected environment. It will also initiate the environmental assessments and studies needed for the final quarry disposal site and will produce cityscape furniture to be installed in public spaces affected by the explosion.

Watch **this video** to find out more about the initiative.

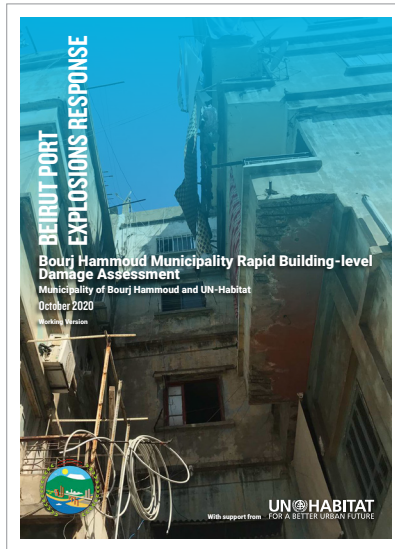
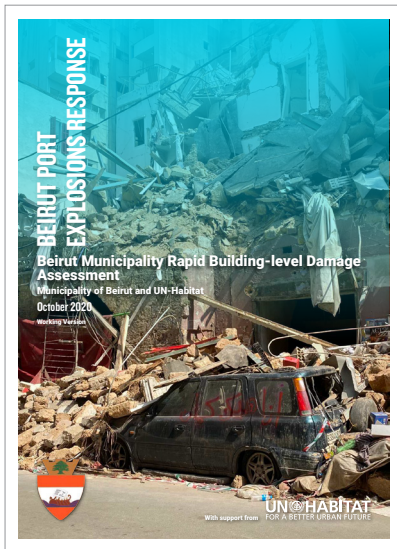
### Development of an Urban Recovery Framework

UN-Habitat's long-term vision of multi-sector engagement within the recovery efforts following the Beirut explosion is holistic, evidence-based, multisectoral and city-wide. The approach UN-Habitat envisions recognizes the need for both immediate response and longer-term adaptive and transformative measures for a crisis, considering pre-existing vulnerabilities, current needs, gaps, and priorities. Building on regional experiences in developing Urban Recovery Frameworks in Syria, Iraq, and Yemen, this participatory approach to crises response and planning efforts by national and decentralized governments, can help localize and operationalize existing relevant frameworks. In the case of Lebanon, the soon to be launched Beirut City Profile will act as a diagnostic tool and common foundation for longer-term recovery for Beirut at scale.

### Engagement under the Reform, Recovery and Reconstruction Framework

As projects under the Flash Appeal are being wrapped up, they have set the stage for longer-term recovery and reconstruction – principally captured under a **Lebanon Reform, Recovery and Reconstruction Framework**





Read the reports for **Beirut** and **Bourj Hammoud**.

(3RF) – jointly prepared by the World Bank, the European Union and the United Nations. The 3RF is part of a comprehensive response to the explosion. It is a people-centred recovery and reconstruction framework aimed at bridging the immediate humanitarian response and the medium-term recovery and reconstruction efforts. UN-Habitat is leading and co-leading the housing, culture, and municipal services sectors, providing tangible guidance and inputs to the framework based on the agency's first-hand experience.

## Rapid Building-Level Damage Assessments: Beirut and Bourj Hammoud

Immediately after the explosion, UN-Habitat together with respective municipalities in Beirut and Bourj Hammoud, and local partners, undertook two rapid building-level damage assessments – assessments at the level of the buildings' exterior, providing a basis on which to formulate recovery and reconstruction measures, with regards to building damage rehabilitation.

## Community-Driven Water Sensitive Urban Design Guidelines for Gemmayzeh, Rmeil and Mar Mikhael

Through joint collaboration between the Shelter Programme at Arcadis Global and UN-Habitat, Water Sensitive Urban Design Guidelines are under development to provide guidance on how to create climate resilient, safe, and inclusive communal spaces for Beirut's most affected neighbourhoods following the explosion.

The Guidelines contain seven idea sparks that envision the revitalization of public spaces and water infrastructure impacted by the explosion, by incorporating innovative ways to mitigating stormwater run off and flooding while creating a water cycle that not only improves drainage and waste and stormwater management, but also improves living conditions of residents and well-being through public spaces.



# Shifting from Reactive to Proactive: A Glimpse of UN-Habitat's Urban Crisis Response Interventions

Starting in 2007 in response to the War of July 2006, and in direct response to the Syrian refugee crisis and its impact on Lebanese host communities and services, UN-Habitat developed an urban crisis response to address urban vulnerabilities.

This has included interventions addressing a variety of needs including urban basic services, shelter rehabilitation and city and neighbourhood profiling to provide an evidence-base for projects by urban development stakeholders. While activities under the urban crisis response umbrella respond to humanitarian needs, UN-Habitat through its multi-sectoral and area-based approach, is laying the ground for longer-term and sustainable urban development that is people-centred, holistic and tangible.

## Revitalization without gentrification – preserving cultural heritage in the old cities of Saida and Tripoli

Historic cities across Lebanon are blessed with irreplaceable heritage, providing both an important identity to the communities and a source of income through tourism. Unfortunately, due to economic hardship, neglect and multiple wars, significant parts of the heritage fabric that exists across Lebanon is in danger of disappearing. Heritage buildings are often also occupied by vulnerable populations, Lebanese and non-Lebanese, who do not have the means to ensure their upkeep.

In an effort to revive the importance of heritage among two vulnerable communities, UN-Habitat through support from the British Council's Cultural Protection Fund, rehabilitated almost 40 heritage buildings inside and out in Saida and Haddadine. This restored severely damaged homes of 400 direct beneficiaries and enhanced the environmental living conditions of 25,000 indirectly.



*"Before, my family's house was really run-down. Now I have a place where I can read and study comfortably!"*

**Fatima**  
Resident of Haddadine



Before



After





The buildings restored in Saida and Haddadine are hundreds of years old and lived through the Mamluk Islamic Dynasty and the Ottoman Empire. This project did more than improve housing conditions, it also enhanced livelihoods, engaged youth, promoted the importance of preserving cultural heritage and revived the touristic opportunity of the cities.

Take a look at the before and after **pictures**.

Read more about **the project** and watch a short **project documentary**.

### Peacebuilding and social cohesion in Tripoli through applying human security principles

In Tripoli's Jabal Mohsen and Tabbaneh neighbourhoods – communities who have experienced recurring sectarian conflict until recently – have come together through the establishment of the Abjad Centre. The Abjad Centre is a safe space for refugee and host populations, to access critical services, including protection, legal advice, livelihoods and employment services as well as a space for youth, children and women to nurture their hobbies, express themselves through art and intercultural dialogue.

UN-Habitat, together with UN Women and UNICEF, through funding from the UN Trust Fund for Human Security, rehabilitated an old cinema – previously used by warring factions and snipers during the many conflicts – into a multi-purpose and functional community centre – accessible by these same conflicting communities. It also provides marriage certification and birth registration to Syrian refugees and helps prevent statelessness and other legal issues, including addressing and preventing evictions.

Watch **this video** to learn more about the Abjad Centre.

### Neighbourhood upgrading improves the lives of vulnerable in Sabra, Beirut

Although a vibrant and bustling community, Sabra is marked by high levels of poverty and difficult living conditions. Using a multi-sectoral neighbourhood upgrading approach, UN-Habitat, through funding from Norway, has improved basic services that enable the El Jazzar street community to live in dignity and safety. Through a fully participatory approach, the project innovatively improved structural soundness of buildings and roof insulation, reinforced gates and balconies, and upgraded storm water pipe and electrical wiring systems. At the community level, a local committee was formed with representatives from all population groups living in the neighbourhood (Lebanese, Syrians and Palestinians) of different ages ensuring that the community's voice was heard in all phases of the project planning, implementation and sustainability.

### Improving the well-being of host and refugee populations living in Maraash, Bourj Hammoud

Through funding from Polish Aid, UN-Habitat is working through a multi-sectoral approach, to enhance the environmental conditions of host and refugee population living in Maraash. Specific focus is placed on improving the access to basic services, and enhancing social stability in the neighbourhood, one of the most vulnerable neighbourhoods of Bourj Hammoud and across Greater Beirut. In close coordination with the Municipality of Bourj Hammoud and local stakeholders, the project is working towards alleviating poverty and improving the urban conditions of the neighbourhood through using participatory planning and community-based decision-making to promote an integrated response that secures multi-sectoral benefits of interventions to targeted residents.

The project will rehabilitate buildings facades and communal spaces in an eco-friendly way, improve road safety and soft mobility, mitigate electrical and fire hazards, improve waste management and collection systems and rehabilitate waste and storm water networks.

Read more about the project **here**.

## Enhancing living conditions of host and refugee populations through social and basic services in Tripoli

The Greater City of Tripoli, defined by UN-Habitat as the municipalities of Tripoli, Mina and Beddawi, experience the highest poverty rates within the country. According to the **UN-Habitat City Profile**, the city has the highest percentage of internally displaced people, adding to it tens of thousands of Palestinian and Syrian refugees. UN-Habitat, through funding from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, is addressing the need for sufficient basic and social services in a comprehensive and integrated manner involving international, national, and local stakeholders at the level of the City of Tripoli.

With a total of nine projects under implementation in the municipalities of Beddawi and Mina, the project's activities range from the installation of solar lighting on a major highway and the areas of Jabal el Baddawi and Al Masaken, to the rehabilitation of building facades on historic Labban street and the establishment of **inclusive public spaces**

including football fields. All while introducing an incentive-based recycling model through reverse vending machines that can receive aluminium, glass and plastics and give store discounts and points in return.

## A targeted urban response to COVID-19 in Lebanon

Challenges related to rapid urbanization, including inadequate, overcrowded and inaccessible housing and public transportation, compounded by insufficient basic services – including the lack of access to clean water and sanitation, electricity and proper solid waste management and disposal have complicated the response to COVID-19 in Lebanon and enabled its transmission. The majority of vulnerable Lebanese and refugee communities live in poor dense urban neighbourhoods and experience similar challenges as repeatedly highlighted across the world for populations living in slum-like conditions – a severe challenge to observe universal precautionary measures, including physical distancing and extensive water, sanitation and hygiene (WaSH) measures.



COVID-19  
response  
hygiene  
kits and  
handwashing  
stations.  
©UN-Habitat





Resident of Bourj Hammoud uses first communal handwashing station in Lebanon.  
©UN-Habitat



## Data collection

In an effort to understand the specific COVID-19 challenges of local authority response to tackling the pandemic in Lebanon, UN-Habitat undertook an assessment and published a Unions of Municipalities' COVID-19 Rapid Assessment Report. **The report** helped outline the urban challenges facing local authorities in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic and identify the most critical support they require and recommend mitigating measures from the most urgent and immediate to the long term.

## Water and sanitation

To address water and sanitation in some of the most dense urban neighbourhoods in Beirut, UN-Habitat designed, produced and installed the first public **handwashing stations** in Lebanon. The stations, placed in some of the most densely populated and vulnerable urban communities in Beirut and Mount Lebanon governorates, provided additional sanitation facilities to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 – reaching approximately 30,000 people from host and refugee communities. In addition, the project promoted the significance of water use and proper sanitation in reducing COVID-19 risk and exposure by holding awareness sessions targeting vulnerable Lebanese, refugees and migrants, residing in specific urban areas in

Lebanon. In parallel, through funding from the UN Central Emergency Response Fund, about 4,500 residents of Beirut, who are Syrian and Palestinian refugees and vulnerable Lebanese, received hygiene protection kits inclusive of instructions on how to properly use the kits' supplies to maximize protection against COVID-19. The kits were distributed with priority given to the additionally vulnerable, including female-headed households, women, girls, the elderly and people with disabilities. Similar targeted urban hygiene-kit distribution campaigns have also taken place in Baddawi, Tripoli.

Read more about the initiative [here](#).

The **Abjad Centre**, a sociocultural community centre established by UN-Habitat, UN Women and UNICEF in Tabbaneh and Jabal Mohsen neighbourhoods of Tripoli, Lebanon – has contributed to enhancing safety and security in vulnerable communities through a multitude of skills, livelihoods, protection, legal and health services. Since 2020 and in light of COVID-19 socio-economic impacts, the Centre has also been instrumental in supporting families at risk of eviction through legal protection, by negotiating flexible rental agreements, provision of rental subsidies and referral in extreme cases.



Neighbourhood profiling maps ©UN-Habitat

## Laying the foundation for sustainable and well-managed urbanization in Lebanon: **A focus on normative work and capacity-building for evidence-based programming and policymaking**

### National Urban Policy (NUP)

Lebanon is one of four countries targeted under UN-Habitat's NUP Programme in the Arab region – along with Jordan, Sudan and Tunisia. The NUP Programme seeks to address weak areas of policymaking for governments to manage urban challenges, including urban sprawl, informal settlements, inefficient infrastructure, vulnerability to climate change and natural disasters, and others. In 2018, UN-Habitat Lebanon published an **NUP Diagnosis Report**, detailing the country's urban social, economic and political circumstances and planning challenges. This diagnosis study was

conducted in close coordination with the former Minister of State for Planning and two committees – each composed of urban planners and experts from various developmental fields. The rich and cross-sectoral participation in these committees was key to the overall process of developing the report.

Following the diagnosis phase of the NUP process, two sectors in need of policy reform were highlighted as priority areas in Lebanon: housing and transport. These two priorities are critical in Lebanon's current and future urban context, and UN-Habitat has developed two guides – to be published soon – aimed to mainstream each of these sectors into an NUP, along with a synthesis report highlighting the interlinkages of the two sectors.





In addition, UN-Habitat organized two orientation sessions addressed to representatives of the academia, private sector and civil society organizations, on the one hand, and local and national government representatives, on the other. The sessions aimed to equip various stakeholders with the necessary understanding of the NUP principles and phases, in order to achieve their active participation in that process.

### City and neighbourhood profiling across Lebanon

In a long-standing national context of scarce data in Lebanon, combined with ever-growing pressure to maximize efficiencies in intervention funding, there is an urgent need for reliable multisectoral and spatialized information. Such holistic data can support municipalities and other state and non-state entities to mitigate vulnerabilities for all residents living together in an area and for promoting social cohesion, while offering a springboard for moving towards sustainable urban development. UN-Habitat in coordination with several actors, including other United Nations agencies and local authorities has developed a range of area-based, multisectoral profiles that support evidence-based policymaking, programming and coordination for neighbourhoods and cities across Lebanon.

### City profiling

City Profiles are an integral part of UN-Habitat's evidence-based approach to addressing key urban challenges and how they affect humanitarian and development crises and response. In previous years, UN-Habitat published city profiles for **Tripoli** and **Tyre** to offer a cross-sectoral perspective on urban vulnerabilities that can inform holistic and inclusive interventions by local authorities, humanitarian partners and others to respond to needs and alleviate poverty among host and displaced populations.

City profiles may also present an important opportunity to guide urban recovery following a particular shock, and in this case, can be applicable to the recovery and reconstruction of Beirut City following the 4 August 2020 explosion. The soon-to-be-published Beirut City Profile provides a cross-sectoral and spatial analysis to help inform a common understanding of how recent shocks and long-standing vulnerabilities manifest across the city. It helps understand which systems and governance structures exist and their respective capacities to absorb shocks, and how they could be further strengthened to help the city bounce back and transform from a current fragile state towards a resilient and inclusive city. The Beirut City Profile provides the evidence base for the development of the Urban Recovery Framework.





## Profiling the most disadvantaged urban neighborhoods across Lebanon

Neighbourhood profiles are assessments of the living conditions of Lebanese and non-Lebanese residents of selected neighbourhoods. They contain original multisectoral, spatialized data and analysis, generated within an area-based framework, covering various sectors and issues, including governance, population, safety and security, health, education, child protection, youth, local economy and livelihoods, buildings and housing, basic urban services, and access and open spaces. The data on 28 disadvantaged neighbourhoods profiled by UN-Habitat and UNICEF across Lebanon are publicly available on an **online portal**. The portal includes an overview of the profiling project and methodology, individual profiles for each neighbourhood, an interactive geoportal presenting the mapped data of all neighbourhoods, and a database of comparable indicators for all neighbourhoods.

The findings of the UN-Habitat and UNICEF neighbourhood profiles have informed many projects implemented by UN-Habitat and its partners in the most disadvantaged

communities within the main cities. Some of these projects are highlighted in this edition of our newsletter, namely in the neighbourhoods of Sabra, Old Saida, Haddadine and Maraash.

To **promote uptake** of the neighbourhood profile data and portal by local authorities, non-governmental organizations, and civil society groups, UN-Habitat and UNICEF held nine interactive workshops in 2020 for different profiled neighbourhoods. The workshops aimed to take actors through the many functionalities of the portal and build their capacities on using the data for multisectoral programming and coordination.

The **Hamra Neighbourhood Profile**, undertaken by UN-Habitat and **RELIEF Centre** and published in October 2020, builds on the series of UN-Habitat and UNICEF neighbourhood profiles of 28 disadvantaged areas. The neighbourhood has a reputation of affluence with high-end residential towers, upscale hotels, and prestigious universities, but it is also home to residents who live in conditions of social and economic vulnerability.





## SNAPSHOT OF PROGRAMME FOCUS IN 2021 AND BEYOND



### Beirut Port explosion – recovery and reconstruction

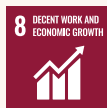
Scaled-up focus on the recovery and reconstruction of Beirut will be aligned to the Reform, Recovery and Reconstruction Framework (3RF), particularly on housing, culture, municipal services and environment. Medium to longer-term response interventions are being funded by Japan and other partners, and will address the rehabilitation of structurally unsound and heritage buildings, rehabilitation of municipal services and public spaces and more.



### A participatory approach to addressing social issues in Beirut

A high percentage of Lebanon's 1.5 million+ refugees are concentrated in Beirut. Settling in already vulnerable host communities, with limited service provision, livelihood opportunities and social services, social tensions between refugee and host populations continue to escalate. In order to support the Municipality of Beirut in this regard, UN-Habitat has established a Municipal Social Cell within the municipality which will work closely with local civil society organizations active within the city's poorest neighbourhoods to identify key issues, gather needed data, and propose solutions to be adopted by the Municipal Council. The establishment of the Municipal Social Cell is one of the Targeted City Actions under the umbrella of the Mediterranean City-to-City Project (MC2CM) which is funded by the European Union and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. Complementing this project from a COVID-19 perspective is the establishment of a Municipal Mobile Health Clinic, through funding from the Mayors Migration Council's Global Cities Fund that will provide free and non-discriminatory COVID-19 testing to individuals who are unable to access basic medical services due to lack of transportation, lack of finances, or other barriers to care.

Read the full brochure to [learn more](#).



### Addressing housing, land and property rights of Syrian refugees in Lebanon

The Syrian refugee crisis remains one of the largest protracted displacement situations today and among the most complex humanitarian emergencies. Lebanon hosts about 1.5 million Syrian refugees, according to estimates by the Lebanese Government and the United Nations, making it the country hosting the largest number of refugees per capita in the world. Housing, land and property (HLP) issues such as challenges in reclaiming property or having access to civil and property documentation are increasingly prominent in the humanitarian response in Syria, although effective and durable solutions at scale are yet to be developed. With funding from the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), UN-Habitat is researching the key trends of HLP issues of Syrian refugees in Lebanon, with analysis in light of the existing institutional and legal framework. The research is planned for publishing during the second quarter of 2021.



### Capacity building of Unions of Municipalities

To improve the socio-economic conditions of people across Lebanon, UN-Habitat, through funding from the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation, is working to strengthen social planning capacities at the level of the Unions of Municipalities. This will be done through enhanced collaboration between the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) and its Social Development Centres, the Unions of Municipalities, and civil society organizations. Following the capacity building component of the project, and the development of projects corresponding to jointly identified needs, financing will be administered towards the implementation of projects targeting key social issues.







The building facade of Abjad Centre, a community centre established by UNICEF, UN Women and UN-Habitat in Tripoli, Lebanon ©UN-Habitat



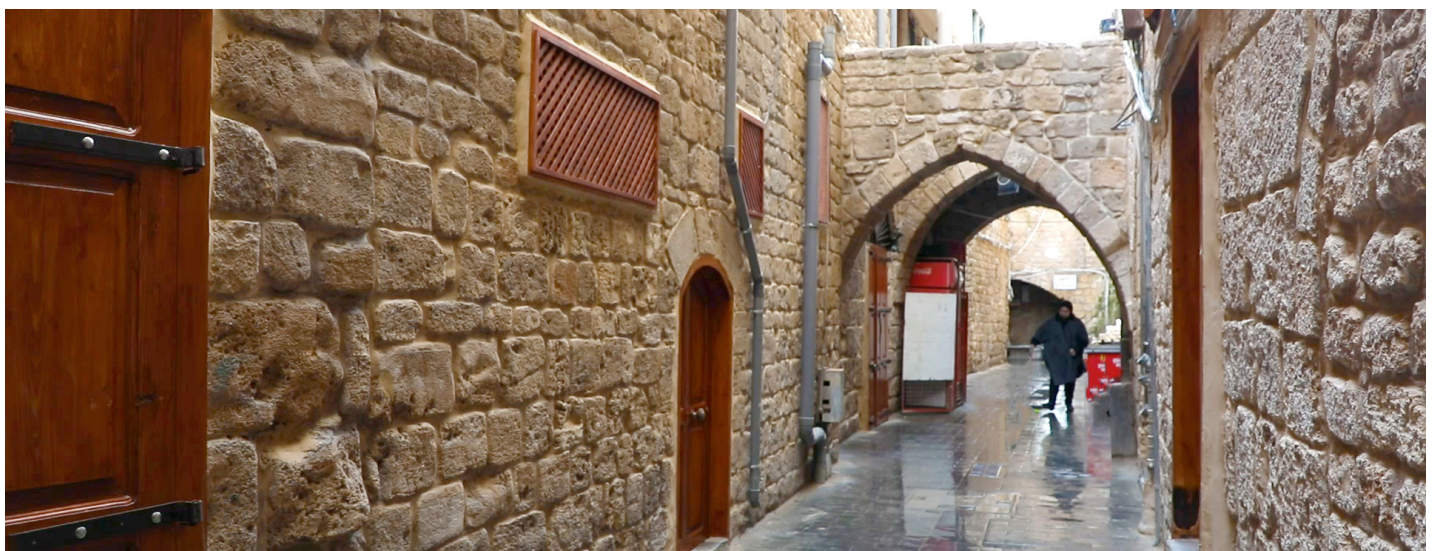
Children from Maraash neighbourhood participate in the community consultation session in 2019 as part of Polish-funded project ©UN-Habitat



Building on Labban street in Mina, Tripoli undergoing rehabilitation by UN-Habitat ©UN-Habitat



Buildings in Haddadine, Tripoli after renovation by UN-Habitat through funding by the British Council's Cultural Protection Fund ©UN-Habitat



Furn al Saha neighbourhood in Old Saidia after renovation by UN-Habitat through funding by British Council's Cultural Protection Fund ©UN-Habitat





Children participate in an obstacle course event organized by the Abjad Centre ©UN-Habitat



Aerial view of Mina football field in Tripoli that has been rehabilitated by UN-Habitat through funding by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation ©UN-Habitat



## STRATEGIC VISION FOR 2021-2023

Cognisant of the multiple ongoing crises in Lebanon, UN-Habitat is aligning its Habitat Country Programme Document (HCPD) to respond to emerging priorities. While the HCPD will be published early 2021, it's three focus areas rest around:

**Focus area 1:** Inclusive and sustainable urban development

**Focus area 2:** Participatory urban planning, management and governance

**Focus area 3:** Disaster risk mitigation and effective crisis response

These broad areas are aligned with UN-Habitat's Strategic Plan 2020-2023 and the UN Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development.

They are also aligned to country-level frameworks, including the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan and the United Nations Strategic Framework Lebanon and provide linkages to the 3RF and adaptation to the future of cities post COVID-19.

Through generous support from funding partners, and collaboration across a wide range of local and national authorities, civil society organizations, academia, the private sector and United Nations sister entities, UN-Habitat is able to implement its normative and operational mandate in Lebanon.



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FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

