



Social Cohesion

An overview of
host community-refugee dynamics
in the 3RP context

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Introduction

Since the arrival of large numbers of Syrian refugees to neighboring countries, social cohesion has been a key issue in many countries given that 95 percent of Syrian refugees across the region are living alongside host communities in urban areas.¹ With several compounding crises in the region, social cohesion and social stability between refugees and host community members have been threatened by rising costs of living, and pressure on resources and basic services. These tensions are further exacerbated by misperceptions, frustrations, and higher levels of stress across refugee and host communities during the COVID-19 pandemic. Against this backdrop, social cohesion has become an increasingly important priority for the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) – a combined humanitarian and development plan active in Türkiye, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and Egypt to help countries deal with the large influx of refugee populations because of the Syria crisis.²

Considering its increasing importance, the 3RP Joint Secretariat commissioned policy research into the social cohesion across the 3RP countries, comprising both a stock-taking paper and a Social Cohesion Guidance Note. The purpose of this stocktaking paper is to: 1) provide 3RP partners with an analysis of the current social cohesion environment in 3RP countries related to host community-refugee relations and efforts by 3RP partners to address or mitigate related needs; 2) formulate recommendations on how to strengthen social cohesion efforts; and 3) provide a basis for knowledge sharing between the 3RP countries to facilitate dissemination of lessons learnt and good practices. The Social Cohesion Guidance Note provides insights to 3RP coordination staff and partners on how to include do-no-harm and mainstreaming considerations in the 3RP response from a social cohesion perspective.

The first section of the paper provides the foundation for understanding social cohesion in the 3RP context; the second section surveys social cohesion considerations and responses in each of the 3RP countries; and the third section provides recommendations on how social cohesion approaches can be strengthened in some countries. The paper is based on a select literature review of recent reports and documents addressing social cohesion in the 3RP, as well as interviews and group discussions with 50 Key Informants (KIs)³ from 3RP countries.



Photo: UNHCR Jordan / Mohammad Hawari

¹ *Regional Strategic Overview 2021 RNO_3RP.pdf(3rpsyriacrisis.org)*

² See the 3RP website for more background information:

<http://www.3rpsyriacrisis.org/>

³ See Appendix for a list of interview participants



I. Understanding social cohesion in the 3RP

A. Definition

There is no universally agreed upon definition of social cohesion. In the context of the 3RP work on the Syria crisis, this paper proposes a practical definition of social cohesion as “the management of social tensions within a community so as to prevent conflict and foster opportunities for collaboration between groups”, including at both the horizontal (between groups) and vertical (between groups and the state) levels.

Tensions between social groups (horizontal), or between groups and the state (vertical) constitute a potential threat to peace, and an obstacle to just and inclusive communities. These social tensions can be observed objectively and subjectively as they often involve mistrust, negative attitudes, prejudice, discrimination, perceptions of threats and violence, which can in turn undermine the ability of stakeholders to provide support to refugees, host communities and the institutions that support them. On the other hand, positive social cohesion and constructive relations between individuals and groups can be a strong enabling factor to address the humanitarian and development needs of refugees and host communities. The [guidance note](#) accompanying this stocktaking paper provides more details on these dimensions and definitions.⁴

B. Social Cohesion and the 3RP Response

Social cohesion efforts have been pursued in 3RP countries since the start of the crisis. This has often involved building or strengthening relationships between parties to develop peaceful coexistence to promote dialogue and solidarity, and to foster healthy and peaceful relations between different members of society. However, such efforts have not been without contention. Discussions of social cohesion efforts can trigger cautionary responses in some 3RP countries, reflecting the sensitive socio-political context. For example, efforts around social cohesion have sometimes created the misperception of eventual assimilation and naturalization, particularly in countries where the ratio of refugees to host communities is high. This has led proponents

to suggest the use of alternative terms such as ‘social stability,’ ‘social inclusion,’ or ‘harmonization’ as more palatable options in 3RP countries.⁵

While social cohesion is a feature of response efforts across the 3RP countries, there are a wide range of approaches. On the one hand, different definitions for social cohesion are used. For example, 3RP Türkiye defines social cohesion as “a society that works towards the wellbeing of all members of a society/community, addresses exclusion and marginalisation, creates a sense of belonging, promotes trust and offers its members the opportunity of upward mobility.”⁶ 3RP Lebanon’s definition takes on a more social stability form through the support of positive behaviours and change agents within all communities to prevent social tensions from resulting in conflict. Furthermore, 3RP social cohesion initiatives vary in methodology, scope and intervention and overall goal. For example, key informant interviews (KIIs) indicated social cohesion efforts range from conflict avoidance and stabilization at one end (e.g., Lebanon), to stabilization and harmonization (e.g., Türkiye, Jordan) or community growth and development (e.g., Egypt, Iraq), depending on the context.

Though the diversity of approaches is natural given the differing contexts across the region, the increasing number of social cohesion initiatives, and its importance as a thematic area of work to the 3RP, places increased emphasis on the need to ensure high standards in approach and generating a culture of mainstreaming social cohesion across all response efforts. Key informant interviews also stressed the opportunities of learning from approaches, tools, and lessons learned from other countries.

⁴ See [Guidance Note on Social Cohesion in the 3RP](#) for more details on the definition and different elements of the 3RP.

⁵ *Key Informant Interviews & STRENGTHENING SOCIAL COHESION:*

⁶ *CONCEPTUAL FRAMING AND PROGRAMMING IMPLICATIONS 2020*
3RP Turkey, 3RP Inter-Sector M&E Framework.



II. Syrian Refugees & social cohesion in 3RP countries

This section provides an overview of social cohesion efforts in each of the 3RP countries. The section does not aim to provide an exhaustive and systematic review of social cohesion initiatives implemented in the 3RP countries, but it does report on key elements and observations highlighted in the interviews and group discussions that were carried out in January 2022.

A. Türkiye

Türkiye hosts the largest number of persons under temporary and international protection in the world with 3.7 million Syrians under temporary protection in addition to approximately 320,000 international protection applicants and status holders from other nationalities.⁷ Currently, over 98 percent of Syrians under temporary protection live in urban and rural areas, with less than two percent residing in Temporary Accommodation Centers.

The Government of Türkiye leads the response and has shouldered the bulk of the financial burden of hosting Syrians Refugees. According to the 2013 Türkiye's Law on Foreigners and International Protection (LFIP), the leading public institution responsible for promoting social cohesion under the preferred umbrella concept of "harmonization" was designated as the Directorate General of Harmonization and Communication (DGHC) under the Ministry of Interior's Presidency of Migration Management (PMM). The DGHC led the drafting of the Harmonization Strategy and National Action Plan (HSNAP 2018-2023) in 2018, coordinating all key government institutions and various additional stakeholders, including some 3RP partners. The HSNAP provided all stakeholders with an overarching reference policy instrument to align their work. The strategy covers not only direct efforts to improve social cohesion, but also social cohesion issues in education, health, social services, access to information, and the labour market.⁸ The government indicated that they plan to make localization of social cohesion efforts one of their main priorities for 2022 in preparation of the next harmonization action plan.⁹

At the horizontal level, intercommunity dynamics in Türkiye are strained and have further worsened in recent years due to the pressures of a weakened economy, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.¹⁰ Multiple reports indicate

that the Syrian refugee population is generally not well included within Turkish society and have in some instances concentrated in specific neighborhood and developed parallel autonomous networks and separate informal economic and support systems.¹¹ A series of nationwide surveys conducted between May 2019 and July 2021¹² showed that half the Turkish population perceived "strong tensions" with Syrian refugee communities, though some positive findings and a recent stabilization of trends were recorded. Language also proves to be a substantial barrier between refugee and host communities, with most adult refugees unable to communicate well in Turkish despite being in the country for many years and the government making Turkish language learning support available.

The relative social segregation between refugee and host communities also contributes to on-going misperceptions. About 70 percent of Turks falsely believe that Syrian refugees receive a salary from the state. Furthermore, many Turks erroneously believe that Syrian refugees are becoming Turkish citizens, do not pay taxes, enter university programmes without examination, and more than a third of Turkish citizens believe refugees do not pay

⁷ <https://www.3rpsyriacrisis.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/RSO2022.pdf>

⁸ Presidency of Migration Management, (2018), *Harmonization Strategy and National Action Plan (Uyum Strateji Belgesi ve Ulusal Eylem Planı)*, available at <https://www.goc.gov.tr/uyum-strateji-belgesi-ve-ulusal-eylem-planı>

⁹ PMM Presentation at the 3RP Syria Task Force Workshop on Social Cohesion, 1st April 2022.

¹⁰ <https://www.3rpsyriacrisis.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/RSO2022.pdf>

¹¹ TEPAV (2019), *Syrians in Istanbul and Post-War Syrian Ghettos*, <https://www.tepav.org.tr/en/haberler/s/4465>

¹² https://ingev.org/reports/STC_INGEV_Ima_Report.pdf



water, electricity, or gas bills.¹³ Importantly, while Syrian refugees report integrating and adapting well to their Turkish environment, Turkish residents do not share that perception.¹⁴

The Syrian Barometer¹⁴ (a periodic nationally representative population survey, which seeks to understand social encounters, opinions, attitudes, anxieties, expectations, and perceptions in Türkiye) highlights that 90 percent of Turkish nationals believe Syrian refugees are here to stay, and an increasing number of refugees do not intend to return to Syria in any circumstances (from 52 percent in 2017 to 87 percent in 2020). This ambiguity between a “temporary” refugee status and long-term migration and settlement is a driver of sensitivities and adds stress to both horizontal and vertical social cohesion efforts. With Türkiye dealing with significant pressures on the economy, health, education, and employment services, and inter-community violent incidents occurring sporadically,¹⁵ some KIs warned about an increase in the politicization of the Syrian refugees’ issue ahead of the 2023 elections and beyond.¹⁶

3RP efforts in Türkiye engage more than 70 partners. While the 3RP Türkiye Chapter does not have a dedicated social cohesion sector, social cohesion and harmonization is one of the three overall strategic objectives of the response. Social cohesion is strongly integrated as a priority across the response and a 3RP Social Cohesion Framework document outlining the common approach of partners was developed following extensive consultation in 2018 and updated regularly since then.¹⁷ The framework covers both dedicated social cohesion interventions, mainstreaming, and do-no-harm, while the 3RP mechanism helps ensure that its work is aligned to the HSNAP.¹⁸

The most significant efforts on social cohesion are particularly implemented by protection, livelihoods, and education partners at both the horizontal and vertical levels. This includes language training, facilitating refugee engagement with decision making authorities at the local level (municipalities, councils), and working with state agencies (law enforcement, judicial sector, employment etc.).¹⁹ A recent mapping of social cohesion interventions²⁰ demonstrates a strong alignment of 3RP efforts in support of the Government Harmonization Strategy, particularly to support localization of social cohesion and the overall role of municipalities to foster inclusion of refugees in services, as well as in local consultative and participatory structures. For instance, some municipalities have opened

specific refugee departments in their administration or included refugees in other consultative bodies such as youth assemblies. 3RP partners’ efforts to mainstream social cohesion also focus on fostering social cohesion in the workplace through inclusion of Syrian businesses in local networks and refugee workers in Turkish companies.

However, these efforts are largely concentrated in specific areas and are not at a sufficient scale to help address some of the wider challenges to social cohesion across the Turkish territory. A recent analysis has shown that clear gaps have been identified in supporting the government’s efforts at “harmonizing” relations in Türkiye. Recommendations from the analysis include, for example, establishing an Inter-Agency Social Cohesion and Tension Monitoring System²¹, akin to what has been developed in Lebanon to identify and monitor community level incidents and track drivers of conflict over time and space. Other recommendations include improved data generation, a renewed strategy on language skills, awareness and information campaigns and more focused attention on youth and women. It was recognized that such efforts have to be underpinned by improved vertical coordination & localization of social cohesion efforts, including greater engagement with the HSNAP’s efforts in that direction.²²

¹³ https://ingev.org/reports/STC_INGEV_Ima_Report.pdf, see also: <https://en.teyit.org/13-false-information-about-syrians-living-in-turkey-on-social-media>

¹⁴ Murat Erdogan, Syrian Barometer 2020, a framework for achieving social cohesion with Syrians in Turkey, March 2022, <https://www.unhcr.org/tr/wp-content/uploads/sites/14/2022/03/SB-2020-Ingilizce-son.pdf>

¹⁵ International Crisis Group: Turkey’s Syrian Refugees: Defusing Metropolitan Tensions - January 2018, available at: <https://www.crisisgroup.org/europe-central-asia/western-europemediterranean/turkey/248-turkeys-syrian-refugees-defusing-metropolitan-tensions>

¹⁶ Key Informant Interviews

¹⁷ 3RP Turkey, 3RP Social Cohesion Framework Document, 2020 update.

¹⁸ https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Contextualizing%20Social%20Cohesion_GIZ_PEP.pdf

¹⁹ Ibid

²⁰ 3RP Turkey, Inter-Sectoral Social Cohesion Mapping Exercise, https://www.refugeeinfoturkey.org/repo/interagency/social_cohesion_mapping.html

²¹ See *Guidance Note* for more details on what such a system would entail.

²² GIZ (2022), Social Cohesion Roundtables: Contextualizing Social Cohesion for Different Sectors and Actors in the Refugee Response in Turkey, <https://reliefweb.int/report/turkey/social-cohesion-roundtables-contextualizing-social-cohesion-different-sectors-and>



Some reports have already provided guidance on how to better develop this engagement at the local level by bringing together all relevant stakeholders on harmonization at the provincial or district level under the leadership of the local branches of PMM.²³ The 3RP as a coordination structure should make sure it is supporting such efforts, including through a dedicated mechanism to coordinate and align its

efforts to the harmonization strategy. This should build on the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for Türkiye, which already made social cohesion and support to the HSNAP its main specific priority in relations to refugees and migrants in Türkiye, indicating a strong link with other development efforts.



Photo: UNHCR / Diego Iberra

²³ <https://www.3rpsyriacrisis.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/RSQ2022.pdf>



B. Lebanon

Lebanon continues to host the highest number of displaced people per capita in the world, showing strong commitment to displaced Syrians and vulnerable populations within its borders. As of November 2021, the Government of Lebanon estimates that the country hosts 1.5 million Syrians who have fled the conflict in Syria, including 844,056 registered as refugees with UNHCR, along with 257,000 Palestinian refugees.²⁴

Since 2019, Lebanon has faced multifaceted economic, financial, social and health crises, affecting host communities and refugees alike. Vulnerability assessments have shown sharp increases in socio-economic needs, gaps in critical supply chains, and limitations on access to food, healthcare, education, employment and other basic services. In 2021, almost nine in ten displaced Syrian households were living in extreme poverty, with poverty levels also rising dramatically among Lebanese and Palestine refugee population.

The Lebanon chapter of the 3RP – the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP) – hosts one of the most advanced conflict sensitivity and do no harm strategies (i.e., social cohesion adapted to the Lebanese context) among 3RP countries and likely globally. For example, the LCRP has developed the most sophisticated tension monitoring system in the region, enabling elaborate and highly sensitized conflict analysis and conflict sensitive overviews. The Tension Monitoring System²⁵ (TMS) led by UNDP, in collaboration with UNHCR and relevant government ministries,²⁶ is a key tool to monitor and analyze tensions and provide recommendations on actions to address community relations. Data on tensions is collected through eight different channels, including quarterly representative Perception Monitoring Surveys (reaching out to 5,000 people across Lebanon each quarter), systematized incident monitoring and conflict mapping and monthly inputs from UN and NGO partners, feeding into a wider analysis. The findings are disseminated to LCRP and government partners to better inform individual and collective programmes and policies. Findings are also used to serve as an early warning system for potential conflicts and help partners to engage in more conflict sensitivity programming.

More broadly, all LCRP sector strategies include a conflict sensitive review, undertaken by sector working groups to ensure sectors can best incorporate do-no-harm and mainstreaming approaches.²⁷ In addition, the LCRP is the only 3RP country chapter with a standalone sector on social stability, complementing and supporting the work of other sectors.²⁸ Meanwhile, a large network of over 200 partners is involved in regular conflict sensitive trainings to ensure that these strategic considerations also reach front line and operational staff, with specific conflict sensitive guidance material developed for specific issues.²⁹ One asset of the LCRP is that many highly experienced coordination staff hold a significant institutional memory and knowhow.

Another element compounding social cohesion efforts in Lebanon is that refugee-host community tensions are increasingly overshadowed by tensions within the host community. With difficult socio-economic conditions, tensions among Lebanese between “the haves and have nots” are the fastest growing and constitute a significant threat to social stability in Lebanon.³⁰ The two-year long socio-political implosion is depleting social capital and resilience factors, and the threat of violence (interpersonal and intergroup) is significant.³¹ This is especially concerning when considering that a subsequent portion of the Lebanese population display some propensity to resort to violence to defend their interests.³²

²⁴ <https://www.3rpsyriacrisis.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/RSO2022.pdf>

²⁵ UNDP Lebanon Tension Monitoring System

²⁶ Namely the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities (MOIM) and the Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA)

²⁷ Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2022

²⁸ Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2022, *The Social Stability sector focuses on three main outcomes: 1) strengthen municipalities, national and local institutions' ability to alleviate resource pressure, reduce resentment and build peace, 2) strengthen municipal and local community capacity to foster dialogue and address sources of tensions and conflicts, and 3) enhance LCRP's capacities on tensions monitoring and conflict sensitivity.*

²⁹ UNDP and House of Peace (2022), *Guidance Note #1: Getting Started With Conflict Sensitivity in Lebanon*, <https://www.lb.undp.org/content/lebanon/en/home/library/guidance-note--1--getting-started-with-conflict-sensitivity-in-l.html>

³⁰ *Ibid*

³¹ *Key Informant Interviews*

³² 56 percent of the Lebanese agree with the statement that “violence is sometimes necessary when your interests are being threatened. UNDP-ARK Perception survey, wave XI 2021 – as cited in LCRP 2022.



C. Jordan

Jordan hosts 1.3 million Syrians, of which 674,228 are registered with UNHCR,³³ making it the second largest per capita refugee hosting country in the world in 2021. The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on Jordan, with heavy increases in unemployment, food insecurity, gender-based violence, and reduced access to education and health services. Three quarters of the general population reported difficulties in meeting even their basic needs like food and rent, while this exceeded 85 percent for the most vulnerable. Only two percent of refugee households can meet their essential food needs without any harmful coping strategies.³⁴ The pandemic has undone the progress made over previous years, with some vulnerability indicators regressing to levels first recorded in 2014. Furthermore, social cohesion challenges in Jordan are not restricted to refugee populations, but also extend to the instability and precarity of conditions for Jordanians themselves.

The approach to social cohesion in Jordan is less structured than in other 3RP countries. Specific social cohesion initiatives in Jordan are linked to intercommunity contact projects (shared spaces, cultural events, community initiatives) and establishing community committees, both in specific urban neighborhood and in rural communities.³⁵ Some pioneering projects involve dialogue sessions between Iraqi and host communities on one side and relevant local stakeholders, including authorities on the other, but appear to have limited reach and support.³⁵ Despite these promising initiatives, there does not appear to be a common and coordinated approach to social cohesion in Jordan, one that would be able to bring 3RP and government actors together to address the social cohesion challenges. This could be partly a result of social cohesion remaining a sensitive topic in Jordan with formal stakeholders often not receptive to such efforts.

Interviews with KIs pointed to opportunities to improve social cohesion efforts notwithstanding the reticence of some stakeholders. This included, for example, establishing a social cohesion and tension monitoring system³⁶ to identify and monitor community level incidents and track drivers of conflict over time and space; as well as developing and mainstreaming a more ambitious social cohesion programme in Jordan, built on robust analysis and dissemination of data generated on social cohesion. This would allow for the deployment of targeted service provisions and the development of country and location specific efforts to mainstream social cohesion in the Jordan Response Plan (JRP) and 3RP interventions. This would also be particularly necessary to ensure conflict-sensitive approaches and do-no-harm, at a phase where the JRP and 3RP efforts are increasingly focused on inclusion of refugees in national systems and the Humanitarian Development Nexus.³⁷

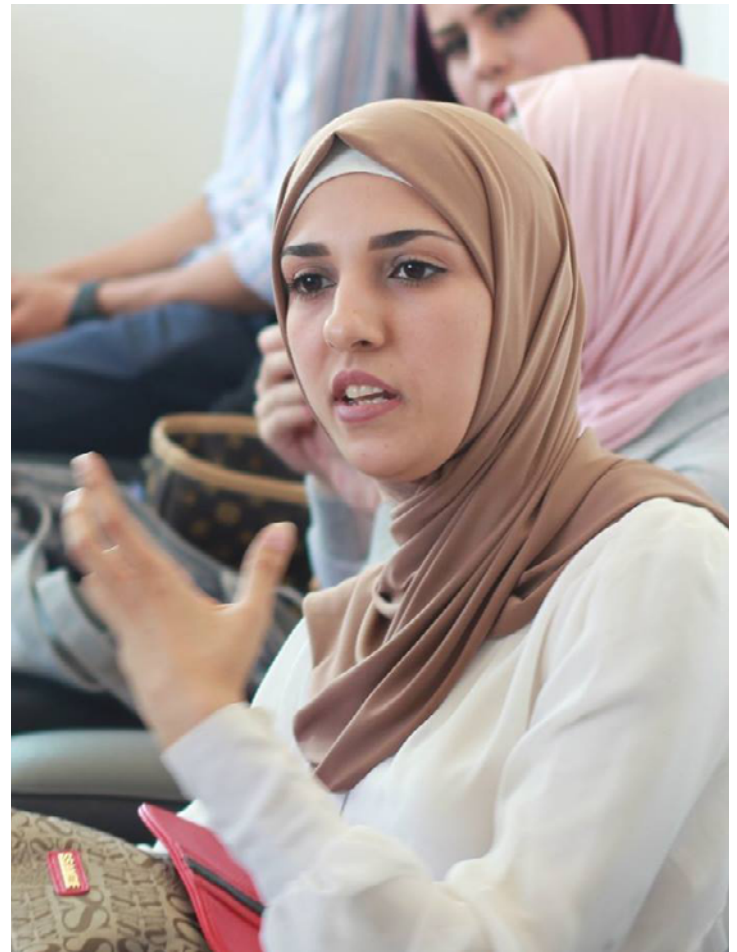


Photo: UNDP Jordan

³³ Jordan Inter-Agency Portal, Figures as of 31 March 2022.
<https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria/location/36>

³⁴ Ibid

³⁵ Key Informant Interviews

³⁶ See *Guidance Note*

³⁷ Jordan Humanitarian Development Partners Group, December 2021
Workshop on the future of the Refugee Response summary note.



D. Egypt

As of November 2021, 258,862 refugees and asylum seekers from 58 different nationalities were registered in Egypt, including 130,085 Syrian refugees.³⁸ These numbers constitute a small fraction of the estimated 100 million strong Egyptian population. The environment for refugees and asylum seekers in Egypt remains conducive. Syrians are welcomed in the country and there is favorable treatment by society and authorities alike. While visa requirements introduced in July 2013 for Syrians entering Egypt are maintained, some Syrians continue to enter Egypt, including based on family reunification. The Government of Egypt (GoE) continues to allow refugees and asylum-seekers registered with UNHCR to regularize their residency and grants six-month renewable residence permits following a lengthy process. (This remains a major challenge for many refugees.)

Syrian refugees mostly reside in urban areas alongside Egyptian communities across the country, mainly concentrated in Greater Cairo, Alexandria and Damietta. They continue to have access to public education and health services on equal footing to Egyptians. Such sharing of public services and subsidies represents an added challenge for the Egyptian economy, which has already been facing difficulties in recent years. Structural economic changes in Egypt significantly affect all aspects of the lives of refugees and asylum-seekers. As a result, many families are not able to meet their basic needs and are increasingly dependent on humanitarian assistance. As such, many of the stressors faced by Syrian refugees are like those facing local populations, with difficulties accessing basic services and formal employment (as opposed to informal labor market).

Yet, the historical presence of Syrian nationals in Egypt facilitated the absorption of the small influx of Syrian refugees, who seem to have been perceived as a welcome and enriching addition to the life of local communities (e.g., in the Food and Beverage sector).³⁹ Egypt presents a unique case where strengthening social cohesion falls more on the positive end of the continuum, with social cohesion efforts that could be deployed to maximize intercultural exchanges and peaceful synergies between the communities to increase community growth.

This is reflected in the 3RP Egypt country chapter related to social cohesion, which includes dedicated efforts to foster local integration of refugees. The 3RP Protection Sector Strategy includes a dedicated objective related to social cohesion.⁴⁰ This is complemented by dedicated efforts for inclusive access to services. The education sector strategy includes efforts to engage students, parents, teachers to reduce the potential tensions. Such a specific reference to integration in local communities remains a unique feature of Egypt compared to other 3RP countries. Further efforts could focus on more community development and growth (see also [guidance note](#)).

While there is no systematic assessment of social cohesion in Egypt, observers report no identifiable tensions between Syrian refugees and local populations, but do report on potential tensions between host communities and other communities, notably with those coming from Sub-Saharan Africa or neighboring countries (e.g., Sudan, Libya).⁴¹ Some observers noted that this will take on increased relevance as the 3RP adopts a one refugee approach.

³⁸ *In conversations with the IOM, the Egyptian Prime Minister stated that 5 million refugees reside in Egypt, and are provided with education and health services and employment opportunities similar to those received by Egyptian nationals (e.g. Al Ahrām, Dec 18, 2018).*

³⁹ *Ibid*

⁴⁰ *3RP Egypt Country Chapter 2020-2021, Protection Sector Objective 4: Community participation and outreach mechanisms are enhanced, aiming at strengthening peaceful coexistence among refugees and host communities, as well as at identifying and addressing the needs of the most vulnerable.*

⁴¹ *Key Informant Interviews*



E. Iraq

There are an estimated quarter million Syrian refugees in Iraq today, almost all of whom are of Syrian Kurdish origin and currently residing in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KR-I). Over two thirds reside within the local community, while others are distributed across ten camps. The overall environment in KR-I remains largely favorable. Local authorities and host communities remain welcoming and accommodating towards the refugee population.⁴² Lack of access to sustainable employment and livelihood opportunities remains the main vulnerability reported by Syrian refugees and the root cause of protection issues, such as child labor and child marriage.⁴³

As it relates to the 3RP and refugee-host community tensions, social cohesion efforts in KR-I are thus less about mitigating tensions between refugee and host communities, and more about development and growth between the two populations, as integration is perceived positively by both. Yearly, multi-sector needs assessments do not appear to report any significant social cohesion problems between refugee and host communities, as both share a common cultural and ingroup identity.

Conditions in KR-I at least do not seem to necessitate tension monitoring systems, or large-scale conflict sensitivity analyses, as conflict between refugee and host communities is rarely reported. The situation in KR-I does provide space however to explore how to maximize social cohesion between refugees and host communities to improve community growth and enhancement and to consider the long-term implications of the protracted conflict on the integration and development plans for refugee populations. Projects aimed at improving the quality of life and general community growth would thus be beneficial and would constitute the focus of social cohesion efforts in the region. There does of course remain large scale challenges related to social cohesion among Iraq's different groups and large-scale IDP population, which are beyond the purview of this report.



Photo: UNDP

⁴² Key Informant Interviews

⁴³ <https://www.3rpsyriacrisis.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/RSO2022.pdf>



III. Conclusions

The 3RP has undertaken significant efforts to address social cohesion; from efforts to avoid conflict and violence to efforts of stabilization and harmonization (e.g., Jordan, Türkiye). The nature of the 3RP response means that different approaches and strategies to address the unique challenges in each of the 3RP countries will be required. Some common conclusions and recommendations are as follows:

- **Social tensions between refugees and host communities are a source of concern**, particularly in Lebanon, Jordan, and Türkiye where the size of the refugee population and its concentration in particular areas have a direct effect on social cohesion dynamics. In other countries, some structural issues related to macro-economic challenges could further undermine inter-community relations. Moreover, the existence of tensions constitutes a barrier to achieving some of the 3RP objectives to protect and foster access to services and self-reliance to refugees and host communities.
- **The role played by central authorities will have a direct influence on social cohesion**, as it provides a frame and shapes how communities and individuals approach inter-community relations. In some countries, central authorities are deeply involved in the management of social affairs and are highly invested in overseeing social cohesion efforts pertaining to Syrian Refugees. In others, authorities are less involved. The national authority position will impact the vertical dimension of social cohesion and determine the activities that the 3RP should develop to strengthen social cohesion.
- **The size and scale of the 3RP response means that having structured and mainstreamed conflict-sensitivity and do-no-harm approaches are critical** so that the response does not create or fuel tensions but can reduce them in a coordinated way. In some countries, 3RP actors have already developed a dedicated approach to social cohesion issues. In others, good inter-community relations provide an opportunity to capitalize on positive factors to foster local development. In particular, there are opportunities to learn from and expand on the advanced work done in Lebanon. Across the board, coordination efforts and communications between UN agencies, local stakeholders, and government agencies on social cohesion can be strengthened.
- **The 3RP needs to take a medium to long-term view of the response and social cohesion efforts**, given that most of the 3RP countries are likely to maintain a large-scale refugee population for the coming years. This is particularly salient in the post pandemic era, with economic and political stability indicators adding further stress to already strained social relations and capital.
- **The role and influence of Donors** is often under-reported and insufficiently explored when it comes to social cohesion initiatives. The protracted nature of the refugee situation in 3RP countries requires reconsidering the nature of funding cycles that do not enable longer-term projects that strengthen or mainstream social cohesion (see [Guidance Note](#)).
- Finally, social cohesion efforts and planning need to be mindful of key principles and procedures necessary for a successful outcome to **ensure beneficence and non-maleficence**. The accompanying [Guidance Note](#) to mainstreaming social cohesion in the 3RP is an important reference document in that regard.



Appendix

Table1: List of individuals invited for interviews or group discussions

Name	Agency	Country	Position
Deena Refai	UNDP	Egypt	Social Inclusion and Local Development Programme Analyst
Hend El Taweel	UNHCR	Egypt	Senior IA Coordinator
Elena Ferrari	UNHCR	Egypt	Senior Livelihood and Economic Inclusion Officer
John Solecki	UNHCR	Egypt	Assistant Representative Operations
Dejan Kladarin	UNHCR	Egypt	Senior Protection Officer
Nermeen Abdelaziz	UNHCR	Egypt	Senior Livelihoods Associate
Mohamed El Shafei		Egypt	Education Sector
Doruk Ergun	UNDP	HQ/Crisis Bureau	Crisis Prevention and Peacebuilding Consultant
Laura Wenz	UNDP	HQ/Crisis Bureau	Programme Analyst
Ruben Nijs	UNHCR	Iraq	Durable Solutions Officer
Saudia Anwer	UNDP	Iraq	Project Manager National Adaptation Plan
Nadia Alawamleh	UNDP	Iraq	Team Leader- Social Cohesion Program
Elias Ghadban	UNDP	Iraq	Sr. Prog Manager -ICRRP
Ghimar Deeb	UNDP	Iraq	Deputy Resident Representative (Programs)
Abdulhameed Omar	UNDP	Iraq	Program Manager
Mohammad Alanakrih	UNDP	Iraq	Livelihoods & Employment Programme Officer
Dennis Schleppe	UNDP	Iraq	Programme Specialist-Social Cohesion
Silke Handley	UNDP	Jordan	Team Leader
Susanna Boudon	UNHCR	Jordan	Senior IA Coordinator
Chiara Lorenzini	UNDP	Jordan	Inclusive Growth and Resilience Team Consultant
Carolyn Ennis	UNHCR	Jordan	Deputy Representative
William Barakat	UNDP	Lebanon	Social Stability Sector Coordinator
Fadel Saleh	UNDP	Lebanon	Conflict Analyst & Conflict Sensitivity Mainstreaming Officer
Joanna Nassar	UNDP	Lebanon	Programme Manager - Peacebuilding Project
Irina Slavova	International Alert	Lebanon	Senior Adviser
Jack French	ACTED	Lebanon	Country Director
Ruth Simpson	International Alert	Lebanon	Country Director
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