



Beirut office


2024-2027 Call for Expression of Interest

EOI Reference #: EOI.2024.1.32101

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Basic Data

Project Location:	
<p>Beirut: Centralized Project Covering all of Lebanon</p>	

IMPACT 3 – ENHANCE SOCIAL COHESION

Impact Statement: Affected populations are meaningfully involved in decisions that affect their lives, and engaged in finding local solutions and reducing social tensions

Projects included under this Impact Area				
Prioritized Outcome Areas (OA):	Project No.	Reference	Project Title	
OA 7: Community	EOI.2024.1.32101.1		Strengthening Community-based	Psychosocial Support

Project title	
Strengthening Community-based Psychosocial Support	
Sector	Project Reference No
Protection and Public Health	EOI.2024.1.32101.1

Outcome Statement
Persons of concern are actively engaged in identifying, preventing, mitigating and addressing protection issues and have access to positive community practices, well-being and dignity.
UNHCR Sector Guidance
<p>The deteriorating socio-economic situation is adversely affecting both refugees and host community members. There has been an incremental increase since 2018 in protection issues especially those affecting women and children. This, in turn, continues to place a strain on the already stretched specialized services available in Lebanon. As such, there is a need to strengthen community resilience and reduce tensions, by building the capacity of the community to prevent, identify, mitigate and address priority issues.</p> <p>UNHCR continues to meaningfully engage refugees, stateless persons and other affected persons of different ages, gender and backgrounds in decisions that affect their lives. This is carried out through community structures and interventions through which affected persons can receive information (e.g. Outreach Volunteers (OVs), WhatsApp Communication Trees, OV-led Facebook pages, CDCs) are able to share their concerns and priorities to inform UNHCR and partner programming (e.g. participatory assessments, satisfaction surveys) and are supported to implement solutions (e.g. Outreach Volunteers and community groups). UNHCR will also continue to enhance access to knowledge, information and skills of persons of concerns including through Community Development Centers. At the same time, UNHCR will also strengthen feedback and complaints mechanisms across all its interventions. This all comes as part of its overall multiyear strategic direction of enhancing community-based protection and accountability to affected people.</p>

Output Statement
Communities have improved skills, information, awareness of rights and community self-management that reduce exposure to protection risks.
Brief Description of the Project
<p><u>Context, protection situation and priority problems</u></p> <p>Lebanon currently hosts 1.5 million refugees, who live across over 1,700 localities, predominantly in urban areas. More than 50% of the refugee population is children and 18% is between 13-17 years old. Most refugees living in Lebanon are originally from Syria, with significantly smaller populations from Iraq and Sudan. They face many challenges such as curfews, restricted movement, lack of legal residency, fear of detention and deportations, social tensions, isolation, and inability to earn a decent living. Over 90% of refugees live under extreme poverty resulting in protection issues such as child labor, child marriage, evictions from homes due to limited means to pay rent, and an inability to meet basic needs such as food and health care, as well as risks of exploitation and fraud.</p> <p>Refugee children are among the most affected by weakened protective legal frameworks and the deteriorating socio-economic situation of their families. Around 50% of refugee children are out of school and/or are working which exposes them to several risks that affect their well-being and development. During the 2022-2023 UNHCR-led Participatory Assessment (PA) - <i>structured dialogue sessions intended to inform programmes and activities</i> – working boys and girls (13-17 years old) and their families reported that children in the workplace faced harm such as mistreatment, physical abuse, long working hours, exploitation, sexual harassment, low pay, hazards, bullying and fatigue. Parents expressed concern about the impact of this on children’s mental and physical health such as depression, low self-esteem, isolation and psychological distress.</p> <p>According to the 2022-2023 PA, children staying at home also face issues that affect their development. Some girls out of school reportedly spent their day supporting their mothers in household chores such as cooking, cleaning the house and/or working in the fields. Parents were concerned that their children spent most of their time at home on the phone watching inappropriate content. Some parents reported violence against children in the home due to parental frustration of their inability to meet their families’ basic needs, as well as child marriage.</p> <p>In the 2021-2022 PA, refugee children (13-17 years old) attending schools also reported facing issues that impacted their well-being, including discrimination and bullying at schools, and school closures, as well as low quality of education and safety issues associated with walking to and from afternoon school shifts.</p> <p>In addition, Lebanon has been going through ongoing and compounding crises since 2019 that have resulted in increased mental health needs for both Lebanese and refugee communities.</p> <p>Despite efforts to expand access to mental health and psychosocial support services (MHPSS), several barriers exist that prevent refugees from accessing them. During PAs, refugee parents, children and youth, reported barriers such as the inability to cover the costs of transportation to reach the services, stigma, and lack of knowledge of available services. Refugee boys and girls were among the highest group in the PAs to report coping mechanisms such as living in isolation to avoid conflict and, more</p>

constructively, engaging in learning activities at community centers, exercising, engaging with friends, connecting with long-distance friends and families through social media and reading books. Such constructive coping mechanisms can be further capitalized and expanded on such as through the creation of community-based peer support networks and structures that can reach wider groups of adolescents in Lebanon.

Response to the priority problems

To address the growing mental health needs and challenges in accessing support, UNHCR began further strengthening the capacity of community structures to deliver evidence-based structured non-specialized psychosocial support (PSS) at community level to persons living in adverse situations. This comes as part of UNHCR’s community-based protection efforts to promote meaningful engagement of refugees as implementers of more effective and sustainable protection. It is also in line with UNHCR Lebanon’s overall goal to improve the mental health and psychosocial wellbeing of refugee adolescents and adults, including through strengthening and integrating MHPSS in its community-based protection programming. In the development and implementation of its community-based PSS interventions, UNHCR works in close coordination with the National Mental Health Programme of the Ministry of Public Health, UNICEF and WHO, among others.

In line with this, UNHCR and Save the Children partnered from 2021-2023 on a pilot project that strengthened the capacity of refugee Outreach Volunteers (OVs) to deliver psychological first-aid, group Problem Management Plus (PM+), Peer Support sessions and the capacity of Community Development Centers (CDCs) to deliver life-skill sessions to youth.

Through this Call of Expression of Interest (2024-2027), **UNHCR is now seeking to empower OVs to build the capacity of older children and adolescents to act as peer supporters to other older children and adolescents.** It is expected that this form of community-based PSS delivery will widen access of older children and adolescents to the much-needed psychosocial support, thus reducing their exposure to risks. In the proposal, the Partner can also suggest **other evidence-based and community-based psychosocial support activities targeting both children and adults**, and that are inclusive of diversity.

Main Activities:

Based on the situational analysis, and building on an evidenced-based and community-based approach, UNHCR is seeking to partner with mental health expertise with community-based protection skills and experience, to:

- a. Further enhance the mental health situation of older children and adolescents by:
 - Training OVs—already mobilized as mentors and trusted adults and supported by UNHCR partners—to create **adolescent peer support networks** that can equip other older children and adolescents with the skills and knowledge to support their peers/friends in distress. This work is in recognition of the role adolescents naturally play in the protective networks of their peers, along the principles of UNICEF’s “I Support my Friend” - *the project will start in 2024 with 32 OVs across 4 field locations (North, South, Beirut/Mt. Lebanon and the Bekaa) and will then be scaled up and continue until 2027, based the*

results of an internal impact assessment or evaluation, the context and contingent on available resources.

- Building the capacity of select staff among UNHCR and its NGO project partners (around 30 staff) managing these OVs, especially CBP focal points, NGO Outreach Volunteer coordinators and psychologists, on how to manage the abovementioned activity, as well as how to sustain and scale it up.
- b. **Advise UNHCR in all field locations and build the capacity of the seven NGO partners** overseeing and managing this community-based PSS component of the OV programme across the country to be able to **independently deliver, sustain and scale up or expand** this and other new community-based PSS intervention beyond 2027, with minimal external support.
 - c. **Provide supervision to four psychologists** who are already recruited and working at other partners located in the North, South, Beirut/Mt. Lebanon and the Bekaa in their support of 93 OVs in 2024 who deliver psychosocial first-aid, group PM+ and peer support.

In addition, the partner can suggest **other evidence-based and community-based mental health interventions for children and adults** that can be implemented from 2024-2027 when submitting the proposal and within the available budget. This can include Integrative Adaptive Therapy and Self-Help Plus.

In general, the partner is required to propose interventions or activities that are **sustainable, scalable, community-driven and evidence-based – as well as age, gender and diversity sensitive - that can continue with minimal external support**. The partner is also expected to ensure robust **monitoring and evaluation** of the project interventions, including **impact assessments**.

Intended Population Coverage per year:

This project intends to cover Outreach Volunteers, refugee and Lebanese women, men, adolescents and NGOs supporting OVs. It also includes collaboration with the Ministry of Public Health (National Mental Health Programme), UNICEF, WHO and international and national organizations with MHPSS expertise in Lebanon.