

**Forced Displacement and Development in Host Countries –
Resilience as New Concept for Dealing with Situations of Forced
Displacement?**

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Amrei Meier (M.A.)

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Zusammensetzung der Prüfungskommission:

Prof. Dr. Grit Straßenberger
(Vorsitzende)

Prof. Dr. Wolfram Hilz
(Betreuer und Erstgutachter)

Prof. Dr. Conrad Schetter
(Zweitgutachter)

PD Dr. Elke Grawert
(weiteres prüfungsberechtigtes Mitglied)

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Overview

- Overview 1
- Tables and figures 2
- Abbreviations 3
- Table of Contents 6
- 1 Introduction..... 12
- 2 Global Displacement and the Refugee Regime..... 22
- 3 Forced Displacement and Development..... 28
- 4 The Concept of Resilience 56
- 5 Resilience and Forced Displacement: The Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) in Response to the Syria Crisis..... 85
- 6 The 3RP in Practice..... 109
- 7 A Resilience-based Response to Forced Displacement: The Next Big Thing or Much Ado about Nothing?..... 241
- 8 Resilience as New Concept for Dealing with Situations of Forced Displacement? – Summary and Conclusion 266
- 9 Annex..... 275
- 10 Bibliography..... 280

Tables and figures

Table 1: Key characteristics of IZD, RAD and TDA	53
Table 2: Factors contributing to a positive or negative outcome of IZD, RAD and TDA	54
Table 3: Common elements in definitions of 'resilience'	64
Table 4: Key principles and challenges of resilience-programming	83
Table 5: The 3RP as a resilience-based response: conceptual framework	94
Table 6: Principles of resilience-programming in general and in the 3RP	102
Table 7: Resilience in the 3RP.....	107
Table 8: Dead Sea Resilience Agenda - Core Principles.....	130
Table 9: Dead Sea Resilience Agenda - Core Principles.....	183
Table 10: Resilience in the 3RP and in national response plans	228
Table 11: Key characteristics of 3RP and previous approaches - similarities and differences.....	242
Figure 1: Conceptual framework of resilience	66
Figure 2: From a humanitarian to a resilience-based response.....	88
Figure 3: Map of Jordan	114
Figure 4: Map of Lebanon	166

Abbreviations

1951 Convention	1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees
1967 Protocol	1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees
3RP	Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan in Response to the Syria Crisis
4Rs	Repatriation, Reintegration, Rehabilitation, Reconstruction
BBB	Building Back Better
BMZ	Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (Germany)
CAT	Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (United Nations Convention against Torture)
CBO	Community-based organization
CEDRE	Conférence Economique pour le Développement par les Reformes et avec les Entreprises
CFF	Concessional Financing Facility
CIP	Capital Investment Program
CIREFCA	Conferencia Internacional Sobre Refugiados Centroamericanos, International Conference on Central American Refugees
CPA	Comprehensive Plans of Action
CPI	Consumer Price Index
CRRF	Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework
CRSF	Comprehensive Regional Strategic Framework
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
CVA	Comprehensive Vulnerability Assessment
DAR	Development Assistance for Refugees
DFID	Department for International Development (UK government department responsible for administering overseas aid)
DLI	Development through Local Integration
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
ECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
ECHO	Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GCR	Global Compact on Refugees
GDP	Gross domestic product
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GoJ	Government of Jordan
GoL	Government of Lebanon
GS	General Security Office
HCSP	Host Community Support Platform
HDI	Human Development Index
HPF	Humanitarian Partners Forum
HRCU	Humanitarian Relief Coordination Unit
IATF	Inter-Agency Task Force
ICARA	International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
ID	Identity Document
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IFI	International Financing Institution
ILO	International Labor Organization
IMAS	Information Management and Analysis Support
IMCC	Inter-Ministerial Coordination Committee
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IS / ISIS	Islamic State / Islamic State of Iraq and Syria

ISM	Irregular Secondary Movements
ISWG	Inter-Sector Working Group
IZD	Integrated Zonal Development
JHCO	Jordan Hashemite Charity Organization
JIF	Jordan INGO Forum
JOD	Jordanian Dinar
JORISS	Jordan Response Information Management System for the Syria Crisis
JRF	Jordan Resilience Fund
JRP	Jordan Response Plan
JRPSC	Jordan Response Platform for the Syria Crisis
JSU	Joint Support Unit
JTF	Joint Technical Task Force
LCRP	Lebanon Crisis Response Plan
LED	Local Economic Development
LEEP	Lebanon Enterprise and Employment Programme
LHIF	Lebanon Humanitarian International NGO Forum
LHSP	Lebanon Host Communities Support Programme
LRRD	Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDGs	United Nations Millennium Development Goals
MEHE	Ministry of Education and Higher Education
MOPIC	Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation
MoSA	Ministry of Social Affairs
MoSDA	Ministry of State for Displaced Affairs
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MRR	Mapping of Risks and Resources
MSME	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
MSR	Mechanism of Social Stability and Resilience
MSS	Mechanisms for Social Stability
NAR	Needs Assessment Review
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NLG	No Lost Generation Initiative
NPTP	National Poverty Targeting Program
NRP	National Resilience Plan
OAU	Organization of African Unity
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
QIP	Quick Impact Project
PEC	Special Program of Economic Cooperation for Central America
PPP	Public-Private Partnership
PRODERE	Development Programme for Displaced Persons, Refugees and Returnees in Central America
RACE	Reaching All Children with Education Program
RAD	Refugee Aid and Development
RAIS	Refugee Assistance Information System
RCM	Refugee Coordination Model
RRP	Refugee Response Plan
R-UNDG	Regional UN Development Group
SDGs	United Nations Sustainable Development Goals
SEZ	Special Economic Zone
SHARP	Syrian Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan
SMEs	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
STEP	Subsidized Temporary Employment Programme
SVA	Sector Vulnerability Assessment
SWG	Sectoral Working Group
TDA	Targeted Development Assistance
TF	Task Force

UAE	United Arab Emirates
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UN CT	United Nations Country Team (led by UN RC)
UN Habitat	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UN HC	United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator
UN HCT	United Nations Humanitarian Country Team (led by UN HC)
UN OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UN RC	United Nations Resident Coordinator
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Populations Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
USA	United States of America
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USD	US Dollar
VAF	Vulnerability Assessment Framework
VaSyr	Vulnerability Assessment for Syrian Refugees
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
WHS	World Humanitarian Summit

Table of Contents

Overview	1
Tables and figures	2
Abbreviations	3
Table of Contents	6
1 Introduction.....	12
1.1 Problem statement.....	12
1.2 Research questions	13
1.3 Current state of research and key contributions	14
1.4 Research design and methodology	17
1.5 Approach	20
2 Global Displacement and the Refugee Regime.....	22
2.1 The Refugee Regime.....	22
2.2 Refugee protection in practice.....	26
3 Forced Displacement and Development.....	28
3.1 1960s: Integrated Zonal Development.....	29
3.1.1 Context	29
3.1.2 Conceptual framework.....	31
3.1.3 Outcome – factors leading to failure.....	33
3.2 1980s: Refugee Aid and Development (RAD).....	34
3.2.1 International Conferences on Assistance to Refugees in Africa (ICARA I and II)	34
3.2.1.1 Context	35
3.2.1.2 Conceptual framework.....	36
3.2.1.3 Outcome – factors leading to failure	37
3.2.2 International Conference on Central American Refugees (CIREFCA).....	40
3.2.2.1 Context	40
3.2.2.2 Conceptual framework.....	41
3.2.2.3 Outcome – factors leading to success.....	44
3.3 Early 2000s: Targeted Development Assistance (TDA)	45
3.3.1 Context	45
3.3.2 Conceptual framework.....	48
3.3.3 Outcome – factors leading to failure.....	51
3.4 Conclusion: Approaches linking situations of forced displacement and development – similarities and factors of success	53
4 The Concept of Resilience	56
4.1 Development of the concept of resilience	56

4.1.1	Perspectives on resilience	56
4.1.2	Resilience-thinking in international relations and world politics.....	58
4.1.3	Resilience in the context of forced displacement	59
4.2	Criticism of resilience	61
4.3	Resilience in humanitarian and development assistance	62
4.3.1	Resilience in humanitarian and development assistance: rationale.....	62
4.3.2	Resilience in humanitarian and development assistance: definition and objectives ...	63
4.3.3	Resilience in humanitarian and development assistance: conceptual framework.....	64
4.3.4	Putting resilience into practice.....	69
4.3.5	Challenges inherent in resilience-programming	73
4.4	Resilience in complex crises – links to other concepts.....	78
4.4.1	Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD)	78
4.4.2	Early Recovery	80
4.4.3	Disaster Risk Reduction, Recovery, and Build Back Better.....	81
4.5	Conclusion: Resilience in International Cooperation and Development	82
5	Resilience and Forced Displacement: The Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) in Response to the Syria Crisis.....	85
5.1	Development.....	85
5.1.1	Context	85
5.1.2	Initial response to the situation	86
5.1.3	From a humanitarian to a development-oriented approach based on resilience	87
5.1.3.1	Comprehensive Regional Strategic Framework	88
5.1.3.2	The Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP)	89
5.2	Conceptual framework.....	91
5.2.1	Foundation and assumptions	91
5.2.2	Structure and overall objectives.....	92
5.2.3	The resilience component	93
5.2.3.1	Incorporation of the resilience concept in the response to the Syria crisis.....	94
5.2.3.2	The 3RP's application of resilience.....	95
5.2.3.2.1	Five core principles of a resilience-based response.....	95
5.2.3.2.2	Strategic directions.....	97
5.2.3.2.3	Resilience Tools	100
5.3	Analysis of the 3RP from a resilience perspective	101
5.3.1	How much resilience-thinking is in the 3RP?	102
5.3.2	Classification of the 3RP in resilience theory	106
5.4	Conclusion: The 3RP as a resilience-based response framework to a situation of forced displacement.....	108

6	The 3RP in Practice.....	109
6.1	Jordan.....	110
6.1.1	Context.....	110
6.1.1.1	Legal context.....	110
6.1.1.2	Socio-economic context.....	111
6.1.2	Syrian refugee crisis in Jordan.....	112
6.1.2.1	Initial response to the crisis (2011-2013).....	113
6.1.2.2	Impacts of refugees and the refugee response on Jordan.....	116
6.1.2.3	National Resilience Plan.....	118
6.1.2.4	The Jordan Response Plan.....	119
6.1.2.5	Developments outside the Response Plans.....	121
6.1.2.5.1	The Jordan Compact.....	121
6.1.2.5.2	Concessional Financing Facility.....	123
6.1.2.5.3	The London Initiative.....	124
6.1.3	Response framework.....	124
6.1.3.1	Rationale.....	124
6.1.3.2	Objectives.....	125
6.1.3.3	Structure.....	126
6.1.3.4	Actors and coordination.....	127
6.1.3.5	Funding.....	128
6.1.4	The JRP as resilience-based response.....	129
6.1.4.1	The concept of resilience.....	129
6.1.4.2	Strategic direction.....	133
6.1.5	Analysis of Jordan’s response from a resilience perspective.....	148
6.1.5.1	Understanding of resilience and reasons thereof.....	149
6.1.5.2	Implications of Jordan’s understanding of resilience.....	150
6.1.5.3	Understanding and implementation of a ‘resilience-based response’.....	151
6.1.5.3.1	Characteristics in line with a resilience-based approach.....	151
6.1.5.3.2	Characteristics differing from a resilience-based response.....	152
6.1.5.4	Functions of ‘resilience’.....	155
6.1.5.5	Challenges.....	158
6.1.5.6	Resilience and new developments.....	160
6.1.5.7	Conclusion: Resilience-based response in Jordan.....	161
6.2	Lebanon.....	162
6.2.1	Context.....	162
6.2.1.1	Legal context.....	163

6.2.1.2	Socio-economic context	164
6.2.2	Syrian refugee crisis in Lebanon	165
6.2.2.1	Initial response to the crisis (2011-2013)	167
6.2.2.2	Changes in Lebanon’s refugee policy (2014)	169
6.2.2.3	Impacts of refugees and the refugee response on Lebanon	170
6.2.2.4	Stabilization Measures	172
6.2.2.5	The Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP)	174
6.2.2.6	Developments outside the Response Plans	176
6.2.2.6.1	The EU-Lebanon Partnership	176
6.2.2.6.2	Concessional Financing Facility	177
6.2.2.6.3	CEDRE Conference	177
6.2.3	Response framework	178
6.2.3.1	Rationale	178
6.2.3.2	Objectives	179
6.2.3.3	Structure	179
6.2.3.4	Actors and coordination	180
6.2.3.5	Funding	181
6.2.4	The LCRP as resilience-based response	181
6.2.4.1	The concept of resilience	181
6.2.4.2	Strategic direction	184
6.2.5	Analysis of Lebanon’s response from a resilience perspective	209
6.2.5.1	Understanding of resilience and the reasons thereof	210
6.2.5.2	Implications of Lebanon’s understanding of resilience and stabilization	212
6.2.5.3	Understanding and implementation of a ‘resilience- / stabilization-based’ response 213	
6.2.5.3.1	Characteristics in line with a resilience-based response	213
6.2.5.3.2	Characteristics differing from a resilience-based response	216
6.2.5.4	Functions of ‘stabilization’	217
6.2.5.5	Challenges	220
6.2.5.6	Stabilization and new developments	222
6.2.5.7	Conclusion: Resilience-based response in Lebanon	224
6.3	Resilience in practice – comparison of Jordan’s and Lebanon’s approach as two manifestations of a resilience-based response	225
6.3.1	Context	225
6.3.2	Syrian refugee crisis	226
6.3.3	Transition to a new response framework	226
6.3.4	Resilience in national response plans – similarities and differences	228

6.3.5	Manifestation of resilience in practice – similarities and differences	230
6.3.6	The narrative of resilience – similarities and differences	235
6.4	Different versions of resilience – comparison of resilience in theory and resilience in practice 236	
6.5	Resilience in practice – general points for consideration	237
6.6	Conclusion: The 3RP as a resilience-based response in practice	239
7	A Resilience-based Response to Forced Displacement: The Next Big Thing or Much Ado about Nothing?.....	241
7.1	What is new about the 3RP – is it really a ‘global first’?.....	241
7.1.1	Similarities with previous approaches	242
7.1.2	Differences to previous approaches.....	245
7.2	Strengths and weaknesses of the 3RP as a resilience-based response	250
7.2.1	Strengths of the response	250
7.2.2	Weaknesses of the response.....	254
7.3	What contribution can a resilience-based response make in dealing with situations of forced displacement?	259
7.3.1	Conceptual strengths of resilience-thinking in situations of forced displacement.....	259
7.3.2	Conceptual ambiguities of resilience-thinking in situations of forced displacement .	261
7.4	Conclusion: The concept of resilience as approach to situations of forced displacement .	264
8	Resilience as New Concept for Dealing with Situations of Forced Displacement? – Summary and Conclusion	266
8.1	Empirical findings	266
8.1.1	Linking resilience-thinking and forced displacement: The Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) in Response to the Syria Crisis	266
8.1.2	Resilience in situations of forced displacement in practice: The cases of Jordan and Lebanon	268
8.1.3	Novelties, strengths and weaknesses of a resilience-based response.....	269
8.2	Inferences.....	271
8.3	Implications for theory and practice and avenues for further research.....	272
8.4	Conclusion	273
9	Annex.....	275
9.1	Annex I: List of interviews	275
9.2	Annex II: Abbreviations of interview sources (alphabetical order).....	279
10	Bibliography.....	280
10.1	Primary Sources.....	280
10.2	Secondary Sources	290
10.3	Press statements / News articles / Broadcasts	308
10.4	Online Sources.....	313

10.5	Speeches / Presentations	317
10.6	Interviews	318

1 Introduction

Refugees are mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, children, with the same hopes and ambitions as us – except that a twist of fate has bound their lives to a global refugee crisis on an unprecedented scale.
- Khaled Hosseini

1.1 Problem statement

The number of the forcibly displaced worldwide is increasing. At the end of 2018, UNHCR, the UN refugee agency, reported 70.8 million forcibly displaced persons due to persecution, conflict, violence, or human rights violations. Standing at 43.3 million in 2009, this number has risen substantially in the last ten years, reaching a record high. (UNHCR 2019a:4) While the majority of the forcibly displaced search for refuge in their own country, resulting in 41.3 million internally displaced people (IDPs) at the end of 2018, 25.9 million refugees and 3.5 million asylum seekers have crossed international borders during their flight. Contrary to common perceptions in Europe and the Western world, the vast majority of these people – nearly four out of every five refugees in 2018 – stay in their region of origin and are hosted by neighboring countries. As more than two thirds (67 percent) of all refugees worldwide come from just five countries that are located in developing regions (Syrian Arab Republic, Afghanistan, South Sudan, Myanmar, Somalia), most host countries are in developing regions as well: In 2018, this held true for nine of the top ten refugee-hosting countries, with Germany forming the only exception. (UNHCR 2019a:2–3, 17–20)

Many refugee situations last for several years, and often they develop into prolonged or so-called protracted refugee situations. UNHCR defines a protracted situation as “one in which 25,000 or more refugees from the same nationality have been in exile for five consecutive years or more in a given host country” (UNHCR 2019a:22). While this definition has its limitations as it does not capture changes in the refugee population due to new arrivals and departures as well as births and deaths, it still provides an indication of a growing global challenge: In the course of 2018, nine refugee situations became newly protracted, so that at the end of the year, 15.9 million, or 78 percent of all refugees, were in protracted situations. (UNHCR 2019a:22)

Refugees in these situations often face serious economic and social hardships, ranging from the lack of basic needs including adequate housing, food and health care to longer-term issues of wellbeing including the absence of opportunities to legally earn an income and send children to school. At the same time, protracted refugee situations pose challenges to host countries: The increase in population affects the social, economic and demographic balance of a country and has an impact on existing capacities and resources which are often overstrained even before the influx of refugees. In particular for low- and middle-income countries, hosting large numbers of refugees for a prolonged time thus can pose development challenges, jeopardize development gains made, and hamper economic growth.

The most prominent recent example illustrating these challenges is the Syria crisis: From the outbreak of violence in 2011 until the end of 2018, 13.0 million Syrians have been forcibly displaced, including 6,654,000 refugees and 140,000 asylum-seekers. (UNHCR 2019a:6) According to UNHCR, they have been hosted by 127 countries on six continents. The vast majority of them, however – 85 percent – , remained in the region. With approximately 3,622,400 refugees, Turkey at end-2018 was hosting the largest number of Syrian refugees in absolute figures. In relation to the local population, however, this number was surpassed by Jordan and Lebanon: At the end of 2018, Jordan was host to approximately 676,300 Syrian refugees, making up around nine percent of the total population in Jordan prior to the Syria crisis. Lebanon hosted an even greater number of refugees in relation to its local population,

approximately 944,200, making up around 20 percent of the pre-crisis Lebanese population¹. (UNHCR 2019a:14)

Following the initial influx of Syrian refugees, UNHCR, according to its mandate, started to implement a refugee response in all countries in the region. Supported by numerous local and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations (CBOs) and national and local actors, it led and coordinated a humanitarian response that tried to meet the immediate needs of Syrian refugees in relation to health, food security, protection, water and sanitation, shelter and settlement, non-food items, cash, and education. Despite these efforts, however, it soon became increasingly clear that the influx of refugees had not only affected Syrians fleeing their country. Hosting such large numbers of refugees had also had severe impacts on host countries, and had changed not only the demographic balance, but was also placing critical pressure on social, economic, institutional and natural resources. Additional competition for jobs, resulting in decreasing wages; shortages in human resources and equipment and a resulting decrease in quality in the education and health sector; competition for scarce resources such as water and energy; rising rents due to increased demand; and shortages in municipal and social services were only some of the most visible impacts of the influx of refugees.

Despite these developments, the international community – assuming that the crisis in Syria would be over soon – kept dealing with the situation as if it were a larger version of a typical humanitarian emergency for a long time. Only after three years into the crisis, it increasingly recognized that the impacts of hosting refugees had pervasive long-term implications for host countries' development prospects and could no longer be ignored. To this end, in November 2013, the United Nations (UN) agreed to make a shift from a purely humanitarian-focused approach and to launch a collective 'resilience-based development response' to the Syria crisis, complementing humanitarian efforts and focusing on refugees *and* host countries.

After over a year of planning and discussions between UN agencies, NGOs and host governments across the region, this new response was put into a concrete plan. In December 2014, the UN finally launched the so-called 'Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) in Response to the Syria Crisis', described as "a strategic shift in the approach to delivering aid for the region" (UNHCR 2014c). The plan endeavored to bring together emergency humanitarian aid for refugees and support for host communities with longer-term programs, and aimed at "building the resilience of individuals, families, communities and institutions in the most impacted countries" (UNDP and UNHCR 2014a:7), referring to Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey. In order to achieve this, the plan drew together different country chapters, developed by the respective governments with support from the UN and NGOs, in the attempt to create a coherent regional strategy.

Overall, the new response framework was not only introduced as a "UN first" in responding to a refugee situation (Clark, Helen and Guterres, António in UNDP and UNHCR 2014a:6), but was also regarded as a model that might "be applicable in other complex and protracted crises" (UNDP Arab States 2020).

In light of the growing challenges related to protracted refugee situations worldwide, these are promising declarations that raise hopes for finding improved ways for dealing with these kinds of situations. However, they also raise a number of questions and require deeper investigation.

1.2 Research questions

The declarations of the UN regarding the 3RP framework in response to the Syria crisis give rise to two sets of questions: The first one relates to the novelty of the response framework and the claim for it to be a 'UN first'. Dealing with (protracted) refugee crises has been a challenge for the international community and UNHCR over the past decades. Over time, it has become increasingly obvious that

¹ Calculations based on population data edited by the World Bank and referring to the year 2010 (World Bank Group 2020a; World Bank Group 2020b).

traditional approaches focusing solely on humanitarian assistance for refugees have been neither adequate nor sufficient, let alone sustainable. Therefore, researchers, policy makers and actors from the fields of humanitarian assistance and development cooperation have tried to come up with new approaches revolving around the nexus of refugee aid and development assistance. Prominent examples include the Integrated Zonal Development approach in the 1960s, the Refugee Aid and Development approach in the 1980s, and the Targeted Development Assistance approach in the 2000s. However, most of these approaches have been declared a failure or have disappeared from the agenda.

The 3RP thus represents one of the most recent frameworks in this series of approaches. Having been introduced as a ‘UN first’, the question remains if it really is a ‘first’, what the characteristics are that make the response framework new and unique, to what extent it differs from previous approaches, and what constitutes its core.

Assuming from its title that the novel aspects incorporated in the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan lie in ‘resilience’ as the new underlying concept for a refugee response, the question remains what this conceptual underpinning entails and what potential added value its application in a situation of forced displacement might have. While the concept of resilience per se is not new and has increasingly found its way into the fields of humanitarian aid and development, it has never been explicitly applied in a specific refugee situation before. This leads to a second set of questions related to the ‘transferability’ of this approach to other situations of forced displacement. Following the claim that the 3RP might provide a model for other ‘complex and protracted crises’, the characteristics as well as the potential programmatic and conceptual strengths and weaknesses of a resilience-based response need to be investigated in order to clarify what contributions a resilience-based response can make in dealing with situations of forced displacement, and what conclusions can be drawn for global processes and other refugee situations.

Overall, this thesis therefore aims at answering the following central research questions:

- 1) What makes the 3RP new and unique in comparison with previous approaches in the context of forced displacement and development in host countries? What constitutes its core?
- 2) What does a ‘resilience-based response’ in a context of forced displacement entail – in theory and in practice? What contribution can resilience-thinking make in the search for solutions to prolonged refugee situations?

Drawing on the findings of both sets of research questions, the thesis aims at providing an answer to the overarching question: Is resilience a new and adequate concept for dealing with situations of forced displacement?

1.3 Current state of research and key contributions

Overall, the thesis is driven by a two-fold interest: On the one hand, it seeks to investigate the theoretical concepts that underlie approaches to refugee situations; on the other hand, it aspires to make a contribution to finding improved ways of dealing with (ongoing or future) situations of forced displacement in host countries. With this research focus, the thesis is situated in the field of forced migration, or refugee, studies. In parallel with rising numbers of refugees and the growing visibility of forced displacement, the field has grown significantly in the latter part of the 20th century. (Black 2001:57) In particular in the past 30 years, it has established itself as a distinct and complex research field. (Kleist 2015:151) According to *Black*, what sets the field apart from other academic fields is the way it has developed – that is, in relation to a policy area that directly affects the lives of millions of people rather than in an inward-looking academic environment. (Black 2001:71) The policy-orientation within forced migration studies thereby has implied a constant controversy on the relation between academia and practice: On the one hand, sound research on forced displacement within university settings needs to maintain academic independence and intellectual rigor; on the other hand, the field’s policy-oriented research interests aim to produce research of relevance to practical policy concerns. This

dilemma has been addressed by various scholars who have pointed to the dangers this relationship entails. These range from the potential marginalization of forced migration studies from mainstream social science as it is seen as lacking theoretical perspective or grounding, to the risk of co-optation by organizations with particular political or bureaucratic interests, to its unsuitability of influencing the policy world in which it is situated due to a too narrow geographic, temporal and organizational focus and a lacking consideration of the wider relevance of the research object. (Black 2001:67; Jacobsen and Landau 2003; Kleist 2015:161–162)

Overall, the research focus in forced migration studies has shifted over the years: From applying an initial bottom-up perspective that placed displaced people at the center of analysis, since the early 2000s there has been a growing trend to a more top-down level of analysis, with an increased focus on policy-oriented and applied studies. (Betts 2009a:2; Kleist 2015:157–158) This shift has contributed to the transformation of forced migration studies from an academic field that received only little attention to a more comprehensive and influential field with a bearing on other areas, and revealed the field's enormous relevance for the field of International Relations that scholars such as *Alexander Betts* have outlined (Betts 2009a).

One of these areas is the field of development policy. While the nexus of forced migration, refugee assistance and development, according to *Ulrike Krause*, for a long time “has hardly been the center of research” (Krause 2013:18), it still has been addressed by single authors. As *Agnès Callamard* stated already in 1993, the concept of linking the two issues itself thereby was “neither recent nor free of ambiguities and problems” (Callamard 1993:145). In line with this statement, different scholars from the 1960s to date have focused on different aspects of the connection between the two fields. Several of them are of particular relevance for the research questions addressed in this thesis.

In particular, several works have focused on the potential of refugees as contributors to host countries' development. Accompanying the emergence of the so-called Integrated Zonal Development approach applied to refugee situations in Africa in the 1960s, *T. F. Betts* stressed that the new strategy could “provide an exciting new weapon in rural development in Africa, and [...] [could] convert the refugee problem from a running sore and a social bad debt into a positive instrument for progress” (Betts 1967:563). The notion of transforming refugees from liability to an asset by “enabl[ing] them to become an important factor in the process of national development” (Kibreab 1987) has been adopted by other authors as well (Gorman 1987; Kibreab 1983; Kibreab 1987; Stein 1987). *Alexander Betts* has taken up yet another perspective related to the perception of hosting refugees as a burden, analyzing different approaches within the nexus under the specific perspective of burden- and responsibility-sharing. Focusing on North-South relations, he emphasized in particular the need for international cooperation in approaches to refugee situations, and identified several factors that contribute positively or negatively to the outcome of approaches linking refugees and development. (Betts 2004; Betts 2008; Betts 2009b)

Other authors have examined the nexus of refugee protection and development from the perspective of specific characteristics found in the wider development discourse. *Sarah Meyer*, for instance, has investigated the notion of shifting refugees from being a burden to a benefit under the aspects of refugee empowerment and self-reliance (Meyer 2006). *Ulrike Krause*, in turn, has focused in particular on sustainability, efficiency and gender aspects (Krause 2013). Both authors thereby focused on Uganda as a case study.

The aspects of self-reliance and sustainability have been taken up further in a more recent publication by *Marcia Oliver* and *Philip Boyle*. However, they have added a new dimension to the issue, investigating how the concept of self-reliance in approaches to refugee situations is increasingly being linked to a new idea, that is, resilience. Arguing that “[r]esilience emerges in this context as a policy ideal” (Oliver and Boyle 2019:4), both authors again rely on Uganda as site of analysis.

The concept of resilience that *Oliver* and *Boyle* are referring to thereby is not a new concept in itself, but has long been applied in various disciplines and has been studied by several authors from different

perspectives². Different authors have focused also on the specific link between resilience and development. While *Christophe Béné et al.* have outlined both advantages and limitations of the concept with regard to development (Béné et al. 2012; Béné et al. 2014), *Simon Levine* and others have questioned the relevance of resilience in that context altogether (Levine et al. 2012; Levine and Mosel 2014). In later publications, *Levine* has made the case for resilience as promoting a change within political decisions “about what development policy and aid in general is used for” (Levine 2014a:1), rather than focusing on technical and theoretical discussions about the concept (Levine 2014b; Levine 2014a). Again others have focused on the practical implementation of resilience, arguing that “resilience has sufficient technical added-value (distinct from resilience as a political agenda)” (Mitchell 2013:1), and analyzing different contexts in which resilience-programming has been applied (Folkema, Ibrahim, and Wilkinson 2013; Frankenberger et al. 2014).

Despite the widely studied link between development and forced displacement on the one hand, and between resilience and development on the other hand, the connection between all three issues has not been made on a theoretical level. Apart from the publication by *Oliver* and *Boyle* mentioned above that, however, remains focused on the context of Uganda, thus resilience has not been investigated thoroughly as a new concept for dealing with situations of forced displacement in the context of development in host countries in general. This is where this thesis sets in. Linking refugee studies with two other fields within international relations, it addresses the extended nexus of forced displacement, development, and resilience. Given the high political relevance of finding sustainable solutions to refugee situations as outlined above, and paying regard to the mentioned concerns regarding the dilemma of refugee studies lacking sound theoretical rigor as well as academic independence, the thesis therefore provides the theoretical basis for further debates that has been lacking so far.

At the same time, as common within forced migration studies where research objects are often selected based on their relevance for current refugee policy (Kleist 2015:157), the thesis aims to make a practical contribution. The ever-growing number of refugees and protracted refugee situations demonstrates the pressing need to find more adequate and sustainable ways to deal with these situations. In order to avoid repeating mistakes made in the past, this should be done by incorporating lessons and experiences from previous situations. However, organizations or other actors within international cooperation often have only a weak institutional memory, related to a common high staff turnover (Larrabure 2007; Petilä and Vickers 1998:275). Taking up this issue, the thesis aims to record experiences, provide insights to learn from, and thus contribute to finding improved ways of dealing with (ongoing or future) situations of forced displacement in host countries that take into account both the protection of refugees and their self-sufficiency for a life in dignity, and the development of host countries and communities. In this attempt, the thesis also links to current developments and debates at the global level, where with the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) a new framework has been adopted by the UN General Assembly that comprises measures and principles to “facilitate the application of a comprehensive response in support of refugees and countries particularly affected by a large refugee movement, or a protracted refugee situation” (UN General Assembly 2018a, III, 11).

Overall, therefore, this thesis makes a two-fold contribution, comprising both a theoretical and a policy-related dimension. First, it offers a comprehensive, multidimensional analysis of a resilience-based refugee response, thus linking resilience-thinking to forced displacement and development on a theoretical level. Second, by deducing conceptual strengths and weaknesses of resilience-thinking in that specific field, it offers concrete points of reference for policy decisions regarding refugee responses, with the aim of contributing to finding improved solutions for dealing with current or future situations of forced displacement.

² These disciplines range from ecology (e.g. Holling 1973), physics and engineering infrastructure (e.g. Tierney and Bruneau 2007), or economics (e.g. Briguglio et al. 2009) to psychology (e.g. Lee, Shen, and Tran 2009), behavioral sciences (e.g. Norris 2011) and sports (e.g. Fletcher and Sarkar 2012). For a more detailed overview of the study of resilience see also Chapter 4.

1.4 Research design and methodology

The thesis includes two parts of analysis that each addresses one set of research questions outlined above and that together allow to draw inferences about the added value of resilience-thinking in the context of forced displacement in general.

The first part of analysis is concerned with the 3RP as a ‘new’ response plan, investigating what distinguishes the framework from other approaches linking refugee aid and development. In a structured qualitative comparison, the 3RP framework is compared with several approaches to refugee situations in the past, assessing similarities and differences with the aim of deducing novel aspects. In order to be able to draw comparisons, comparative analyses require a careful and informed selection of cases that avoids selection bias (George and Bennett 2004:22–25). On the one hand, selected cases must share certain characteristics that allow for the gathering of evidence needed to investigate the research question. On the other hand, they must show variation regarding both their geographic and socio-economic context in order to avert accusations of local and contextual bias, and their outcome, with outcome, in this context, being understood as the *ex post* general perception of the approach studied as ‘success’ or ‘failure’. Taking these aspects into account, three approaches have been chosen for the comparison with the 3RP: the Integrated Zonal Development approach (IZD), implemented in the 1960s in Africa, the Refugee Aid and Development approach (RAD), developed in the 1980s and implemented in Africa and Central America, and the Targeted Development Assistance approach (TDA), developed in the late 1990s / early 2000s in the context of more general debates on refugee protection.

The second part of analysis addresses the question what resilience-thinking entails when applied in a situation of forced displacement, and how a resilience-based response unfolds in practice. For that, both the theoretical framework of the 3RP as the first example of an explicit application of resilience-thinking in a refugee situation, and its implementation in practice, are investigated. The first aspect will focus on the conceptualization of resilience on a theoretical level as outlined within the 3RP framework. The second aspect, analyzing how a resilience-based response manifests in practice, is addressed through the conduct of two case studies, examining two countries in which the 3RP has been implemented, that is, Jordan and Lebanon.

In order to be able to make generalizations, their within-case analysis is coupled with a systematic cross-case analysis. Contrasting the findings of both case studies, this approach pays regard to “a growing consensus that the strongest means of drawing inferences from case studies is the use of a combination of within-case analysis and cross-case comparisons within a single study or research program” (George and Bennett 2004:18). Even though comparative studies that comprise only few cases have been criticized in terms of the “impossibility of testing hypotheses when variables outnumber cases” (Geddes 2005:133–134), they allow for a detailed and in-depth analysis that studies comprising a larger number of cases typically do not provide, therefore constituting “a bargain in which significant advantages are gained” (Mahoney and Rueschemeyer 2003:13).

Lastly, in order to draw conclusions about the overall added value of resilience-thinking in refugee situations, a final cross-case analysis of all cases investigated is conducted which contrasts the findings with regards to the outcome of previous approaches in the realms of refugee responses and development with findings regarding the manifestation of a resilience-based response in Jordan and Lebanon. Juxtaposing factors that led to a positive or negative outcome of previous approaches with developments in Jordan and Lebanon thereby allows to establish strengths and weaknesses of the two countries’ approaches, and finally allow to draw inferences about the strengths and weaknesses of a resilience-based response in more general terms.

Overall, the thesis is based on an analysis of available primary and secondary sources. In particular for the evaluation of previous approaches that have linked forced displacement and development in refugee hosting countries, as well as for the investigation of the concept of resilience, both studies by academics and papers and reports by international humanitarian and development organizations as well as UN

agencies are analyzed. With regards to the 3RP as a new approach, and its implementation in Jordan and Lebanon, the thesis relies on both primary and secondary sources: Primary sources include first and foremost the response plans themselves, but also further policy papers and other documents by the respective national governments and the UN. Secondary sources include a growing body of literature dealing with different aspects of the implementation of the response in practice. As academic research is still just emerging, these studies are complemented by a large amount of gray literature, consisting of evaluations, assessments and monitoring reports by different NGOs and UN agencies. In order to pay regard to the timeliness of the matter, reports in local newspapers as well as in international news services, and daily updates on UN websites have been taken into account for additional information.

These sources are complemented with information gained through fieldwork and qualitative semi-structured interviews. In different research stays between 2017 and 2019 in both Jordan and Lebanon, overall 43 interviews have been conducted with key actors in the respective country responses.³ On the one hand, this included officials of the national government in the form of representatives of the responsible line ministries, the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MOPIC) in Jordan and the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) in Lebanon. On the other hand, interviewees included representatives of the responsible UN agencies, in particular UNHCR as the UN refugee agency and UNDP as the UN development agency, as well as representatives of international and local NGOs. Since this thesis analyzes the response frameworks from a policy perspective, interviewees did not include members of the host communities or refugees. Overall, 20 interviews were conducted with Jordanian actors, 19 with Lebanese actors, and 4 with regional actors (for a full list of interview partners and interview abbreviations as used in the thesis see [Annex I](#) and [II](#)).

Starting from the UN representatives indicated as persons responsible for the 3RP, interview partners were selected based on snowball sampling. In order to avoid bias by relying on this information only, several other actors were contacted based on their organization's mentioned key role on UNHCR's operational portal (UNHCR n.d.) that lists all partners active within the response sorted by location and sector. Last, staff from the German embassy in both Jordan and Lebanon and from German political foundations active in the region, including Konrad Adenauer Foundation, Friedrich Ebert Foundation and Heinrich Böll Foundation, as well as from the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development and the German Federal Foreign Office were asked for recommendations who might be suitable for participation.

Potential interview partners were then first contacted via email. Most of them were very responsive and willing to partake in an interview, even though several of them mentioned the large number of interview requests they received due to the increasing amount of research being conducted in both Jordan and Lebanon. Overall, interview inquiries at short notice (interviews on the same day / in the same week) seemed to increase the likelihood of a positive answer. In particular in Lebanon, telephone numbers and personal contact information even of ministerial staff were shared quite freely, and contacting and communication often took place informally via WhatsApp or SMS. Most interviews were conducted in person in Amman, Jordan, and Beirut, Lebanon. Due to some interviewees' duty trips or time constraints, some interviews were conducted by telephone or Skype. All interviews were held in English.

For the first round of interviews in 2017 (10 in Jordan, 12 in Lebanon, 1 with regional actor), a semi-structured interview guide was developed, covering different aspects of the response. These included changes in the national and international response over the years, innovative approaches or characteristics of the response, issues of coordination and cooperation as well as challenges, lessons

³ First information on the situation and response in Jordan could already be gained during a four-month stay in Jordan from September to December 2013. As part of an internship with Konrad Adenauer Foundation, different background talks and interviews with responsible persons from the Jordanian government, UNHCR officials based in Amman and Zaatari Refugee Camp, and staff of different local and international NGOs active in Jordan were conducted. While the gained information provided background information mostly for the author's master thesis on Jordan's National Resilience Plan, a predecessor of the Jordan Response Plan investigated in this thesis, some of it is relied upon in this thesis as well.

learned and strengths of the response. Particular focus was put on the concept of resilience, actors' understanding of it, its influence on their work, and the novel aspects of a resilience-based response.

In a second round of interviews in 2018 in Jordan (9 interviews, plus 3 with regional actors based in Amman) and 2019 in Lebanon (7 interviews), the same interview partners were contacted with the aim of validating findings and learn about new developments. The high staff turnover common in international organizations, however, had resulted in the fact that most interview partners had moved on to new postings in different countries and crises. Therefore, with few exceptions, interviews with the new persons in office were conducted. While the mentioned exceptions were asked about developments in the past one or two years and new challenges and developments, new interview partners were questioned according to the same semi-structured interview guideline as in 2017. In many instances, this approach revealed the lack of an institutional memory: Many aspects and developments in the response, and the reasons thereof, were unknown to new interview partners.

Overall, several aspects with regards to information gained from interviews need to be kept in mind. First, while almost all persons showed large willingness to meet and discuss the response, many of them did not want to be audio-recorded and quoted by name. For that reason, notes were taken during and immediately after the interview for detailed memory minutes. While this approach holds the challenge that information cannot be transcribed verbatim which is commonly depicted as desirable step in the qualitative research process by many research methods guides (Kaiser 2014:93–94; Loubere 2017:5; Meuser and Nagel 2009:50; Meuser and Nagel 2013:466), several authors have pointed to the approach's advantages as well: The absence of audio-recording can help to create an atmosphere in which interviewees are willing to talk more openly about sensitive or difficult aspects that would otherwise be left unsaid. The same holds true for positions or views of interviewees that are not aligned with the interests or provisions of their employing entity. While these aspects can provide valuable insights and illustrations for the research object, they might not be communicated due to fear of being quoted which might lead to repercussions for the interviewee. (Flick 1991:161; Gläser and Laudel 2009:157; Rubin and Rubin 2005:100; Vogel and Funck 2018:9–10)

Second, interview partners always also represent their organization. While the absence of recording can help to create an atmosphere in which interviewees feel they can speak more freely, it cannot be ruled out that they refrain from expressing their personal views and align their statements with their organizations' (perceived) interests and priorities. Third, interviews were held only with a selected group of experts based on their key positions in the development and / or the implementation of the response that constitutes the research object, and thus are not representative. Therefore, the information gained can provide only single opinions and views but can neither be understood as representing the general view of the interviewee's institution or organization, nor as portraying and assessing the situation in its entirety and providing a comprehensive analysis of all aspects and perspectives.

Despite these aspects, the information gained from interviews is imperative for this thesis: On the one hand, interviews provided important background knowledge and insights into debates not captured in official sources such as policy papers or reports. On the other hand, their added value lies in the provision of examples and individual aspects that help to illustrate and support the line of argument of the thesis.

Responding to the outlined challenges, triangulation of data has been used where possible to verify and substantiate assessments and counteract bias that can result from the use of single sources or types of information, for example relying on findings from interviews with just single representatives or one group of stakeholders (e.g. UN agencies or the national government). Data sources used for triangulation thereby included both information gained from interviews with other groups of stakeholders and data gained from the analysis of both academic and gray literature and reports.

1.5 Approach

The thesis is structured as follows: [Chapter 2](#) sets the scene, outlining the context in which the thesis is situated. It first gives an overview of the current situation and trends in global displacement, before it describes the existing global refugee regime, including key international regulations, frameworks and actors, and refugee protection in practice.

[Chapter 3](#) is concerned with concrete forms of dealing with situations of forced displacement in the past, looking at three different approaches that were implemented in similar contexts and with similar objectives as the 3RP. These approaches include the Integrated Zonal Development approach ([3.1](#)), the Refugee Aid and Development approach ([3.2](#)), and the Targeted Development Assistance approach ([3.3](#)). For each concept, the context, conceptual framework and implementation are delineated, followed by an investigation of why they succeeded or failed. [Chapter 3.4](#) summarizes these findings, outlining similarities between the different approaches and deriving general factors of success.

[Chapter 4](#) addresses the last theoretical field of the thesis, dealing with the concept of resilience. In order to be able to assess the concept's application in a concrete situation of forced displacement, the chapter focuses on different aspects. First, it outlines the origins and development of the concept ([4.1](#)). It starts by tracing the different existing versions of resilience before turning to the concept's meaning in the field of international relations and world politics. Finally, it looks at the emergence of resilience-thinking in the context of forced displacement. Despite some general points of criticism of resilience that are outlined in [Chapter 4.2](#), resilience-thinking has found its way into humanitarian and development programming, the two relevant subfields in approaches to refugee situations. Thus, [Chapter 4.3](#) first analyzes the concept's theoretical underpinnings in these fields, including its rationale, definition and objectives, and conceptual framework. This is followed by an analysis of the different characteristics of, and challenges inherent in, resilience-programming in practice. Finally, in order to delineate resilience from other, seemingly similar, concepts in the realms of humanitarian and development assistance, including Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD), Early Recovery, and Disaster Risk Reduction, Recovery, and Build Back Better, their similarities and differences are outlined in [Chapter 4.4](#). [Chapter 4.5](#) finally sums up the conceptualization of resilience in international cooperation and development.

After laying this theoretical foundation for each field dealt with in this thesis, they are brought together in the empirical analysis in Chapters 5, 6 and 7. The resilience-based response outlined in the 'Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) in Response to the Syria Crisis' and its implementation in two selected countries constitute the basis for this investigation.

[Chapter 5](#) first investigates how the concept of resilience is integrated in the 3RP on a theoretical level. After outlining the 3RP's development process ([5.1](#)), it focuses in particular on its conceptual framework ([5.2](#)). This includes the analysis of underlying assumptions, its structure and overall objectives, and, most importantly, the resilience component of the framework. In different subchapters, the integration of the concept in the response, its definition, core principles and strategic directions as well as tools for implementation are discussed. After this overall establishment of the theoretical framework of a resilience-based response to the refugee situation resulting from the Syria crisis, the chapter concludes with an analysis of the 3RP from a resilience perspective ([5.3](#)). In two subchapters, it investigates both the scope of resilience-thinking immanent in the 3RP and its classification within resilience theory. [Chapter 5.4](#) finally summarizes the findings regarding the 3RP as the theoretical concept of a resilience-based response framework to a situation of forced displacement.

[Chapter 6](#) subsequently analyzes the framework's implementation in practice, investigating Jordan ([6.1](#)) and Lebanon ([6.2](#)) as two separate case studies. Several aspects are examined: First, the context in which the response has been implemented is outlined. This includes the general legal (with regards to refugee law) and socio-economic context, as well as an overview of the consequences of the Syria crisis on the two countries. Next, the shift to, and development process of, a resilience-based response in the

respective national context is being traced. In order to complete the picture, developments taking place outside the formal response frameworks but important in relation to dealing with the displacement situation, are included.

In a second step, the resilience-based response frameworks themselves in both Jordan and Lebanon are investigated. First, their rationale, objectives, structure, and key actors and coordination structures are examined. The next subchapter focuses explicitly on the conceptualization and implementation of resilience, outlining how the concept has been incorporated in the framework, what strategic direction has been set, and how this framework has been translated into practice.

The findings from these subchapters provide the basis for the subsequent analysis of each case study from a resilience perspective. First, the understanding of resilience in the respective context, and the reasons thereof, are examined, including the perspectives of the national government, the UN, and implementing agencies. Second, the implications of this understanding of resilience are addressed. Third, it is analyzed which characteristics of a resilience-based response are really implemented in practice, and in which aspects the response in practice differs from a resilience-based response. This leads, fourth, to an investigation of the different functions that the concept of resilience fulfills and, fifth, to challenges that the approach entails. Last, new developments following the implementation of resilience, resulting from it, or standing in contrast to it, are analyzed. Findings from both countries are subsequently compared in [Chapter 6.3](#), tracing the different manifestations of a resilience-based response and its accompanying narratives.

[Chapter 6.4](#) subsequently addresses evident differences between the theoretical conceptualization of resilience and the implementation of resilience in practice, offering an explanation for this phenomenon. Finally, the chapter concludes with several general points derived from the two case studies that are to be considered when pondering the application of resilience-thinking to refugee situations in different country contexts ([6.5](#)). All findings regarding the 3RP as a resilience-based response in practice are summarized in [Chapter 6.6](#).

[Chapter 7](#) brings the information and findings from all previous chapters together, addressing the overall question regarding the added value of a resilience-based response to a context of forced displacement: Is it the next big thing or much ado about nothing? In three subchapters, it provides answers to the research questions outlined above: [Chapter 7.1](#) addresses the question of the novelty of the 3RP, and whether it can really be considered a ‘UN first’. Taking into account the conceptual framework of the 3RP as determined in Chapter 5, it investigates the concept’s similarities and differences to the three previous approaches investigated in Chapter 3.

[Chapter 7.2](#) then discusses the strengths and weaknesses of the 3RP as a resilience-based response, comparing findings from Jordan and Lebanon (Chapter 6) with findings from Chapter 3 regarding the reasons for success and failure of previous approaches.

Taking all these findings into consideration, [Chapter 7.3](#) concludes with a broader investigation of conceptual strengths and ambiguities of resilience-thinking in the context of forced displacement. This leads to the final assessment whether a resilience-based response can make a contribution to dealing with (prolonged or protracted) refugee situations, and whether there is any added value to the concept. [Chapter 7.4](#) summarizes the findings regarding these three aspects.

All research findings are finally summarized in [Chapter 8](#), the conclusion of the thesis.

2 Global Displacement and the Refugee Regime

At the end of 2018, the total number of forcibly displaced worldwide due to persecution, conflict, violence, or human rights violations stood at 70.8 million, reaching a new record high. Besides 25.9 million refugees, this number also included 41.3 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) and 3.5 million asylum-seekers. In the past decade, this number has grown substantially: In 2018 alone, an estimated 13.6 million people were newly displaced, equaling an average of 37,000 new displacements every day. Over the same timeframe, only 2.9 million displaced people returned to their areas or countries of origin, meaning that returns have not kept pace with the rate of new displacements by far. (UNHCR 2019a:2–4)

Since 1951, the total number of refugees, that is, persons who crossed international borders during their flight, has shown wide variations, overall displaying a substantial increase in the past three decades. In the first half of the 1990s, their number reached a first peak at around 17 million, concomitant with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Rwanda genocide. While this number decreased in the following years, it started to increase significantly again around 2011. Since then, the number has continued to rise. (UNHCR 2019b)

In 2018, more than two thirds (67 percent) of all refugees came from just five countries: the Syrian Arab Republic (6.7 million), Afghanistan (2.7 million), South Sudan (2.3 million), Myanmar (1.1 million) and Somalia (0.9 million). Other significant countries of origin in terms of refugee figures included various African countries, including Sudan, Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic, Eritrea and Burundi. (UNHCR 2018a:14–15) The vast majority of refugees, almost four out of five persons, fled to a country neighboring their country of origin. As a result, the main countries of asylum for refugees in 2018 were Turkey, Pakistan, Uganda, Sudan, and – as the only country further afield – Germany, followed by Iran, Lebanon, Bangladesh, Ethiopia, and Jordan. With the exception of Germany, all of these countries were in developing regions as classified by the United Nations Statistics Division. Hosting 84 percent of global refugees, as in previous years developing regions therefore carried a disproportionately large responsibility for hosting refugees. (UNHCR 2019a:17–18)

In light of these realities, over the years comprehensive governance structures have been set up by the international community to deal with situations of forced displacement. The following two subchapters will focus on these structures, outlining the fundamental frameworks and arrangements that have been developed with respect to both refugee protection and international cooperation. Outlining developments from the 1950s to date, the subchapters focus first on the international refugee regime and second on refugee protection in practice.

2.1 The Refugee Regime

In order to deal with contexts of forced displacement and provide protection to those displaced, different international legal instruments have been developed. The foundation of the refugee regime as it exists today was laid in the aftermath of the Second World War and is based on two main elements: the Office of the United Nations High commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), established in 1950, and the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. (Betts 2010:12–13)

The 1951 Convention provides a definition of who qualifies for refugee status, stating that the term “refugee” shall apply to any person who

“[a]s a result of events occurring before 1 January 1951 and owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of

his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.” (UN General Assembly 1951, Art. 1, A2)

Referring only to refugee movements caused by events before 1 January 1951, and giving signatory nations the option to limit these events to events occurring in Europe (UN General Assembly 1951, Art. 1, B1), this definition contained both temporal and geographic limitations.

The Convention further established baseline principles on which the international protection of refugees was to be built. These included, among others, the principle of non-refoulement (Art. 33), that is, the prohibition of the expulsion or return of a refugee “in any manner whatsoever to the frontiers of territories where his life or freedom would be threatened” (UN General Assembly 1951, Art. 33, 1). The Convention further recognized that the grant of asylum might place “unduly heavy burdens on certain countries”, and that “a satisfactory solution” could not be achieved without international cooperation (UN General Assembly 1951, Preamble). Nevertheless, it did not lay down a binding obligation for signatory states to cooperate or share that burden.

Besides establishing rights and duties for states and refugees, the Convention also established UNHCR’s responsibility to oversee states’ implementation of the Convention. (UN General Assembly 1951, Preamble) The agency’s mandate was further defined in its statute, outlining UNHCR’s core task that was to focus on two principal areas: to ensure the protection of refugees and to find sustainable solutions through either the reintegration of refugees within their country of origin or through their permanent integration within a new country in the form of local integration or resettlement. These three options are commonly referred to as the three Durable Solutions. Overall, the organization was to remain non-operational and play a legal advisory role only, rather than engaging in the provision of material assistance. (Barnett 2002:244; Loescher 2014:215–216)

Dependent entirely on contributions by states, the agency initially remained weak with only little staff and scope of action. Over the following decades, however, its scope of work increased with regards to both its mandate and its target group as well as its working methods, adapting to new contexts in which it was operating: While UNHCR’s initial work focused on finding solutions for refugees remaining in Europe after the Second World War, it soon became involved in Cold War issues that confronted the international system, with refugees mainly from the communist bloc fleeing to Europe and North America⁴. (Barnett 2002:247) Generally, the agency focused on the resettlement of these refugees, mostly to countries overseas. At the same time, the first High Commissioner also enlarged the scope of its office for the first time by obtaining the capacity to independently raise funds to provide material assistance. UNHCR’s operational space was further expanded, when the UN General assembly authorized UNHCR to raise funds or initiate assistance programs for refugees outside its usual mandate through the so-called ‘good offices’ formula.⁵ (Harrell-Bond 1985:8–9; Loescher 2001:36)

This was in line with new developments: While during the late 1950s the number of refugees from Europe decreased, other world regions called for more and more attention of the refugee regime. In particular in Africa, rapid decolonization, anticolonial insurgency as well as post-independence civil strife and warfare generated large numbers of refugees. (Loescher 1994:359–360) At the same time, the Cold War extended into parts of the developing world, with both the East and the West competing for power and influence in Africa and Asia. Assistance to refugees increasingly became a central part of foreign policy towards newly independent states. With UNHCR as a donor-dependent organization possessing no communist member states, Western governments were willing to politically and financially support the organization’s expansion into the developing world in their struggle for influence. At the same time, more and more newly independent African and Asian states became

⁴ These included a mass influx of Hungarian refugees in 1956 and of Czech refugees in 1968. (Barnett 2002:247)

⁵ The ‘good offices’ formula was applied for the first time in the mid-1950s to raise funds for the provision of assistance to Chinese refugees in Hong Kong. Another instance where the formula was applied was the Algerian refugee crisis in 1957, when UNHCR emergency assistance was requested in the developing world for the first time. (Loescher 2001:36–37)

members of the UN, enabling the passing of ‘good offices’ resolutions that authorized UNHCR to assist displaced people outside of Europe. (Loescher 2001:39)

In this context, it became clear that the existing refugee concept and legal definitions as established in the 1951 Convention were insufficient, and that changes needed to be made to expand UNHCR’s reach. This led to the adoption of the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees, which omitted the previous geographic and temporal limitations and provided UNHCR with today’s universal mandate⁶. The Protocol thereby provides an independent legal instrument, revising certain aspects of the 1951 Convention. A state can therefore become signatory of the Protocol without having signed the Convention, and vice versa. (Krause 2013:48)

In the 1970s, UNHCR’s operational space continued to increase. On the one hand, the organization continued to use the ‘good office’ formula to expand its mandate to refugees and victims of man-made disasters, opening up new assistance channels for people that had not crossed international borders in their flight but were displaced within their own country of origin (internally displaced persons, IDPs). On the other hand, for the first time UNHCR was called upon by the Secretary-General to take up the role of a focal point in a major humanitarian emergency⁷, responsible for leading and coordinating international humanitarian assistance. (Loescher 2001:40)

In the late 1970s and the 1980s, the Cold War intensified. Violent proxy conflicts in Asia, Africa and Central America generated large numbers of refugees. The increasingly protracted nature of conflicts usually made timely return impossible, and while some refugees could be resettled in other regions, most of them remained in neighboring countries. There, UNHCR became more and more operational, running long-term care and maintenance programs that caused the organization’s annual expenditures to increase from approximately USD 76 million in 1975 to more than USD 500 million in 1980. (Loescher 2001:41) At the same time, more and more displaced persons made their way to Western countries to claim asylum there which further raised the overall financial costs of dealing with the “global refugee problem” (Loescher 2001:41).

The 1990s were marked both by the end of the Cold War and a series of civil wars and communal conflicts which increasingly used mass population displacements as a tactic of war. (UNHCR 1997a) Western European states in particular were put under new pressure, as people from the former communist bloc began to flee after the collapse of the Soviet Union. In 1992, asylum applicants in Western Europe peaked at nearly 700.000. These growing numbers led to a new defensiveness in the asylum policies of Western countries which were generally unprepared to deal with such large numbers of people seeking refuge. Refugees were more and more perceived as a threat to international peace and security. On the one hand, this resulted in humanitarian interventions in various crises in Asia, Africa, Central America and Europe under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. On the other hand, Western countries introduced a complex range of restrictive measures to deter refugees from applying for asylum on their territory. At the same time, their commitment to burden-sharing with Southern states was declining. In the context of increasingly protracted refugee situations around the world, as a result, Southern states, who had formerly often shown exceptional hospitality towards refugees, also began to impose restrictions on the numbers of people seeking asylum on their territory, sometimes adopting measures such as forced repatriation or expulsion. These developments led to the growing acknowledgement of a “global crisis of asylum” (Betts 2009b:143) in the mid-1990s. (Barnett 2002:252–253; Betts 2009b:143; UNHCR 2000:158)

⁶ Despite UNHCR’s universal mandate, Palestinian refugees to date continue to be supported through UNRWA, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East established in 1949. The agency constitutes one of several special UN agencies that were created to handle refugee populations in specific conflict areas. Another example not operational any more is the United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency, running from 1950 to 1958. (Loescher 1994:358)

⁷ The major humanitarian emergency referred to here was the situation evolving from the Bangladesh Liberation War in 1971. Other situations in which UNHCR assumed the role of focal point and coordinated UN activities followed, including in South Sudan and Cyprus. (Loescher 2001:40)

In that context, UNHCR, too, took on a new role, focusing more on preventive and homeland-oriented action aimed at tackling refugee situations at or near their source. In that regard, UNHCR extended its services to a much wider range of people in need of assistance, including war-affected populations, the victims of mass expulsions, unsuccessful asylum seekers, returnees, IDPs and refugees. (UNHCR 1997a) Altogether, UNHCR shifted from a refugee protection regime to a more broadly focused humanitarian agency, taking on a more operational approach. (Barnett 2002:251) Therefore, while the number of *refugees* assisted by UNHCR in the course of the 1990s decreased, the number of *people of concern* to UNHCR in total increased from 17.5 million in 1990 (of which 17.4 million were refugees) to 24.1 million in 1994 (of which 15.7 million were refugees). (UNHCR 2018b)

At the same time, UNHCR put new focus on repatriation and reintegration⁸, which was increasingly perceived as the only effective solution to situations of forced displacement. In contrast to its previous position that repatriation had to be a strictly voluntary decision by refugees themselves, it was now UNHCR within its new ‘safe return’ approach that made the assessment whether conditions were safe enough for refugees to return.⁹ (Loescher 2001:47) Other possible solutions such as local integration, including educational and income-generating programs were more and more ignored. Rather, in preparation for repatriation, UNHCR basically ran “long-term programs in an emergency mode” for refugees “stuck in protracted camp situations” (Loescher 2001:48), often described as ‘warehousing’, with refugees being kept in protracted situations of restricted mobility, enforced idleness and dependency from external aid. (Smith 2004:38)

In this context, politicians and the media globally began to increasingly question the ongoing relevance of the 1951 Convention. Coinciding with the upcoming 50th anniversary of the Convention, in December 2000 UNHCR initiated the ‘Global Consultations on International Protection’ (2000-2002) to discuss the issue with states, NGOs, academics, and refugee law experts. Despite prevailing claims that the Convention was outdated and ill-adapted to a changed global environment, the consultations led to its universal reaffirmation as the basis for refugee protection. Another outcome of the consultations was the so-called ‘Agenda for Protection’, emphasizing the continued commitment of states to the principles of the Convention, but also outlining gaps in the existing refugee protection regime. (Betts 2009b:143–146; UN General Assembly 2002; Wilkinson 2001)

Despite the Agenda’s comprehensive scope, its impact remained limited: On the one hand, it was not a binding agreement, and UNHCR had only limited influence over states, lacking the authority to influence state behavior. On the other hand, the Agenda was not universally supported by UNHCR itself, and was largely perceived as an initiative led by the protection sections of the organization. (Betts, Loescher, and Milner 2008:62–63)

In an ad hoc response to the Agenda, then High Commissioner Ruud Lubbers initiated a new process, collectively referred to as ‘Convention Plus’, that was formally launched in 2003. The objective of the process was to develop a normative framework resulting in special international agreements that would supplement the 1951 Convention and its 1967 Protocol, overall focusing on improving access to sustainable and durable solutions for protracted refugee situations through improved North-South responsibility-sharing. However, the initiative largely failed to meet its objectives by the time it ended in November 2005, with the intended new agreements never reached. (Betts 2009b:146–147)

⁸ While repatriation is “the physical return of refugees to their country of origin in which UNHCR and others might assist”, reintegration is “the achievement of a sustainable return – [...] the ability of returning refugees to secure the political, economic and social conditions needed to maintain life, livelihood and dignity” (Macrae 1999:3).

⁹ The return of the Rohingya, a Burmese Muslim minority, in the mid-1990s constitutes one example of this new approach. Due to repeated human rights abuses and forced labor the Rohingya had fled to Bangladesh in large numbers in 1978 and again in 1991/92. The circumstances in which their return took place were highly controversial. Both UNHCR and Bangladesh have been severely criticized for the lack of mechanisms to ensure the voluntariness of the return and the safety of returnees as well as for not providing accurate information about the human rights situation in refugees’ places of origin and about their right to refuse repatriation. (Loescher 2001:47–48)

Meanwhile, the number of people forcibly displaced kept rising. While UNHCR counted 21.9 million persons of concern globally at the end of 2000, by 2010 this number had increased to 33.9 million, mostly due to a rising number of IDPs in various African countries. After 2011, with the unfolding Syria crisis as a new source of forcibly displaced, this number further increased drastically, reaching a staggering and unprecedented 70.8 million at the end of 2018 as outlined above. (UNHCR 2018b; UNHCR 2019a:2) While the majority of the displaced still remained in their region of origin, hundreds of thousands people also made their way to the Global North and in particular to Europe in order to claim asylum, resulting in what was widely perceived and framed as a “refugee crisis” in Europe (Clayton 2015; EC 2016; Spiegel Online 2018).

Against this background, in 2016 a UN Summit for Refugees and Migrants was held at the heads of state and government level with the aim of “bringing countries together behind a more humane and coordinated approach to large movements of refugees and migrants” (UN 2018). The outcome of the summit was the so-called ‘New York Declaration’, signed by all 193 Member States of the UN and regarded as “a milestone for global solidarity and refugee protection at a time of unprecedented displacement across the world” (UNHCR 2018c). In the Declaration, signatories reaffirmed the 1951 Convention and its 1967 Protocol as the foundation of the international refugee protection regime, and committed to “a more equitable sharing of the burden and responsibility for hosting and supporting the world’s refugees” (UN General Assembly 2016:13). Furthermore, the Declaration laid out a so-called ‘Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework’ (CRRF), which specified key elements for a comprehensive response to any large movement of refugees. (UN General Assembly 2016:16–21)

Building on the CRRF, the Declaration assigned UNHCR the task to develop a ‘Global Compact on Refugees’ (GCR) with the overall objective of “strengthen[ing] the international response to large movements of refugees and protracted refugee situations” (UNHCR 2020). The Compact, presented by UNHCR as part of its 2018 annual report to the General Assembly and affirmed by the General Assembly’s member states in December 2018, focused on four key aspects, revolving around easing the pressure on host countries, enhancing refugees’ self-reliance, expanding access to third-country solutions, and supporting conditions in countries of origin for return in safety and dignity. (UN General Assembly 2018b:2) While UNHCR itself regarded the process as “a game-changer”, “a paradigm shift” and even “a minor miracle”, others criticized that the Compact still remained a non-binding document with no quantifiable commitments, and overall did not include many new aspects (Crisp 2017).

2.2 Refugee protection in practice

Besides this framework that outlines fundamental principles and basic considerations regarding approaches to situations of forced displacement on a theoretical level, the international community has established an elaborate system for the implementation of an international response to concrete refugee situations in practice, outlined in the following subchapter.

The so-called Refugee Coordination Model (RCM), issued in December 2013, thereby provides the overall framework for situations that require UNHCR’s and other (humanitarian and development) actors’ support. It is applicable in all refugee situations and throughout a refugee response, that is, both in new and protracted situations. According to the RCM, the refugee response is led by a UNHCR Representative who is responsible for the strategic planning of all phases of the response, together with operational partners that include both humanitarian and development actors. At the national level, a Refugee Consultation Forum is put in place, co-chaired by the government of the hosting country (where possible) and the UNHCR Representative and overseeing the overall refugee response.

The programmatic response is led and coordinated by a UNHCR Refugee Coordinator, supported by a Multi-sector Operations Team with expertise in facilitating needs assessment, planning, monitoring, reporting and information management across all sectors. A UNHCR-led Refugee Protection Working Group is responsible for the coordination of protection services and for mainstreaming protection throughout other operational sectors. Service-delivery sectors, led by government line ministries and/or

(co)chaired by partners and/or UNHCR, are responsible for service delivery. Where feasible, sectors are intended to connect to government-led development mechanisms. Additionally, multiple potential partners are included in the response to support sector coordination and delivery. (UNHCR 2013a:1–2)

The overall response is summarized in comprehensive inter-agency Refugee Response Plans (RRPs), outlining the needs of refugees, host communities and other persons of concerns as well as protection and solution priorities and financial requirements of all humanitarian actors involved. In situations in which refugees flee to more than one country of asylum, a Regional RRP is developed, consisting of inter-agency response plans of all refugee receiving countries in separate sections and a regional overview. (UNHCR n.d.)

The Refugee Coordination Model, therefore, is different from the UN Cluster Approach that is applied in non-refugee humanitarian emergencies and is led by the UN Humanitarian Coordinator (HC). A HC is designated in countries where there are complex emergencies or where an already existing humanitarian situation deteriorates, and is tasked with the coordination of humanitarian action in the country. The HC is supported by the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) that acts as a strategic and operational decision-making and oversight forum and includes representatives from the UN, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and NGOs. OCHA, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, further supports the HC and HCT, facilitating the coordination of the response. (UNHCR n.d.) As it is often difficult to distinguish between humanitarian, rehabilitation and developmental activities implemented in a given country, often the Resident Coordinator (RC) that might already be in the country as part of the UN's Resident Coordinator system is assigned the functions of the Humanitarian Coordinator. (Reindorp and Wiles 2001:19–20)

The Resident Coordinator system, in turn, was created to bring together all UN agencies at the country level to ensure a more effective and efficient functioning of the UN system in general. The system thereby aims at coordinating all UN operational activities in the country, thereby making operations more efficient and reducing transaction costs for governments. While Resident Coordinators operate under the leadership of UNDP, they draw on the support and expertise of the entire UN family. At the same time, they work closely together with national governments and ensure more strategic support for national plans and priorities. (UNDG 2016)

Lastly, 'mixed' settings, where the population of humanitarian concern include refugees, IDPs and other groups can result in a situation in which both a UNHCR-led refugee operation is applied *and* a Humanitarian Coordinator is appointed at the same time. In order to address ambiguity regarding overlaps between the two approaches, in 2014 a Joint UNHCR-OCHA Note on Mixed Situations was issued with the aim of outlining roles and responsibilities of the Humanitarian Coordinator and the Humanitarian Country Team as well as the UNHCR Representative and UNHCR structures. (UNHCR and OCHA 2014)

Overall, thus, a comprehensive framework exists how to deal with situations of forced displacement. As the previous two subchapters have outlined, this concerns both legal and operational aspects: Regarding the former, the 1951 Geneva Convention and its 1967 Protocol, the establishment and development of UNHCR as the UN refugee agency and, since more recently, the adoption of the Global Compact for Refugees constitute key pillars of the overall refugee regime. Regarding the latter, and in order to put the refugee regime into practice, complex guidelines have been developed for different actors within the UN system and for different possible contexts in the sphere of refugee issues that outline how to proceed in concrete refugee situations.

3 Forced Displacement and Development

Despite the existing legal framework for refugee protection and considerable efforts to find durable solutions for the displaced in practice, many situations of forced displacement of both the past and the present have persisted for many years. Many of them have resulted in so-called protracted refugee situations, defined by UNHCR as situations “in which 25,000 or more refugees from the same nationality have been in exile for five consecutive years or more in a given asylum country” (UNHCR 2018a:22). In these situations, refugees “have moved beyond the emergency phase – where the focus is on life-saving protection and assistance – but have not yet achieved durable solutions and, based on current trends, are unlikely to do so in the foreseeable future” (UNHCR 2018a:22).

As the majority of people fleeing their homeland is and has been hosted by developing regions, developing countries are disproportionately affected by this situation: In 2018, developing regions provided asylum to 84 percent of the world’s refugees. (UNHCR 2019a:17–18) In the 1990s, this number was even higher: In 1991, for instance, almost 90 percent of the then 16.7 million global refugees were hosted by developing countries (Gorman 1993a:4). These countries often face structural challenges even before the influx of refugees, and are not prepared to deal adequately with the situation. It is widely acknowledged that the presence of large numbers of refugees thereby exacerbates these already existing challenges, ranging from economic and social to environmental and political issues: The influx of refugees not only changes the demographic balance, but also places critical pressure on social, economic, institutional and natural resources, often overstraining the capacities of host countries and affecting their development. (UNHCR 1997b)

However, despite a long “general awareness among refugee and development experts in academia, governments, and international agencies that refugee populations could have significant development implications on host societies” (Gorman 1993a:7), in the years after World War II the international community dealt with both aspects separately. With UNHCR on the one side, and the Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance and the UN Special Fund, merging to UNDP in 1966, on the other side, different institutions were established within the UN system in order to address the two issues. Equipped with different mandates, they developed different operational structures and institutional cultures: As a humanitarian actor, UNHCR based measures on needs, independent from interests and priorities of governments. Development agencies, on the other hand, worked together with governments, and implemented measures only in accordance with their priorities and policies. With the two sets of institutions having only occasional contact with each other, refugee assistance and development-programming were treated as two largely distinct areas of action. While development-programming focused on prevailing structural challenges in ‘Third World countries’ such as poverty, disease, starvation and illiteracy, the international response to situations of forced displacement focused solely on the provision of humanitarian aid to refugees which was usually implemented through newly-established structures, often running parallel to national systems. The local host population generally remained excluded from this response, even when people had similar needs or were just as vulnerable. This approach was reinforced by the common local separation of refugees and locals, with refugees largely being accommodated in camps rather than settling among the host community. (Chambers 1993:29; Gorman 1993a:2–3)

In the 1960s, however, this approach slowly started to change: A growing realization emerged that forced displacement was linked to development, and that the two areas of action could not be dealt with in isolation from each other if sustainable results in both fields were to be achieved. (Gorman 1993a:1–3) This recognition marked the starting point for a number of approaches to situations of forced displacement that tried to link both issues. Generally, all of these approaches assumed that in so doing the situation for both refugees and host countries could be improved: For refugees, this concerned improved protection, but also more livelihood opportunities, increased self-reliance and less dependency on external aid, altogether enhancing the prospects for durable solutions. For host countries, this concerned their overall development, including, for instance, improved infrastructure, improved

education and health services, or economic growth. Despite these promising prospects, however, not all of these approaches were successful. Rather, most of them were perceived as a failure, and disappeared from the agenda.

The following chapter will investigate several of these approaches in more detail. Thereby, it will focus in particular on two aspects: First, it seeks to investigate what constituted the core of these approaches with regards to their new conceptual underpinnings. Second, it seeks to analyze what factors influenced their course of action and ultimately contributed to their successful or unsuccessful outcome.¹⁰

Three approaches, developed between the 1960s and the early 2000s, have been selected for this investigation: the Integrated Zonal Development approach (IZD), Refugee Aid and Development (RAD), and Targeted Development Assistance (TDA). These approaches were chosen for different reasons. First, they all share the key contextual characteristic under investigation: All focus explicitly on the nexus of forced displacement and development, looking in particular at the development of countries of first asylum rather than countries of origin, transit or resettlement. Second, case studies include different geographic areas: IZD was implemented in Burundi, Tanzania and Uganda; RAD addressed refugee situations first in Lesotho, Mozambique, Somalia, Sudan, Tanzania and Zambia, and later in Mexico, Costa Rica, Honduras and Belize; and TDA was implemented in Zambia, Tanzania, Somalia and Sri Lanka. With this geographic range, entailing different socio-economic, historical, political and cultural contexts as well as levels of development in countries of asylum, the different case studies counteract potential bias regarding factors that led to the course and outcome of the different approaches. Third, even though all approaches date back several years or even decades, all of them are well documented, allowing for an in-depth analysis and comparison.

The chapter is structured as follows: For each approach, first the context in which it was developed will be outlined. Second, focus is put on its core principles, before, third, factors leading to its success or failure are outlined. Taking findings from all three approaches together finally allows to deduce the factors that constitute the core of approaches linking forced displacement and development as well as the factors that are critical for a successful outcome.

3.1 1960s: Integrated Zonal Development

The origins of linking forced displacement and development can be traced back to the 1960s, when the concept of Integrated Zonal Development was established and applied in African host countries. The concept thereby marked the first time that a new thinking in dealing with situations of forced displacement was put into practice, focusing not only on the needs and protection of refugees, but also explicitly taking into account the development of host countries.

3.1.1 Context

In the 1960s, resulting from anti-colonial struggles, wars of national liberation and post-independence civil wars, refugee numbers in Africa were rising. (Betts 1967:561; Loescher 1994:359–360) Usually, refugees were welcomed by neighboring and nearby states that had made similar experiences. However, with host countries themselves suffering from poor social services and resources, the presence of the growing number of refugees was increasingly perceived as unmanageable and as “one of their gravest problems” (Betts 1967:561). At the same time, Western governments were willing to provide international aid relatively generously, related to their struggle for influence in the context of the Cold War that was extending into parts of the developing world. UNHCR’s ‘good offices’ approach thereby allowed the agency to get involved in these refugee situations, even though the prevailing refugee

¹⁰ As all approaches under investigation in this chapter lie in the past and have been concluded, they have generally been assessed as either ‘success’ or ‘failure’ by scholars and practitioners. Even though this clear-cut assessment bears the risk of neglecting aspects, as a ‘successful’ outcome does not necessarily mean that the approach did not entail challenges, and, vice versa, an ‘unsuccessful’ approach might still have included positive aspects, the thesis will still use this rough classification in order to identify factors that positively or negatively influenced the overall outcome of an approach.

definition at the time did not include forcibly displaced outside Europe. Nevertheless, in 1965, 94 percent of all refugees assisted by UNHCR worldwide were in Africa. (Loescher 2001:39; Krause 2013:87)

Here, UNHCR was faced with new challenges. While in the European context, the solution to refugee situations was seen essentially in refugees' resettlement to countries overseas, then-High Commissioner Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan noted that, in Africa, refugees had to be settled locally. (Prince Ada Khan 1966) In order to convince African regimes to accept refugees, the provision of material assistance was seen as instrumental, essentially linking 'protection' to 'material assistance'. Seizing the opportunity, African states quickly made their willingness to host refugees dependent on aid from the international community. (Glasman 2017:345–346)

At the same time, UNHCR argued that material assistance was meaningful only “when the recipients feel they are working hard and trying to establish themselves” (Sadruddin Aga Khan, as cited in Goetz 2003:11). This notion of work was found also in prevailing concepts of development actors and other UN agencies such as the FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization), the World Bank and the ILO (International Labor Organization), who regarded labor stabilization as a precondition for improved social security of beneficiaries. Within that context, in 1962, UNHCR resurrected the notion of ‘refugee settlements’ that had been used in the 1920s and 1940s¹¹, and linked it to the World Bank’s concept of ‘integrated rural development land settlement schemes’ and the ‘new land settlement’ ideas of USAID, opening its first African rural settlement for Rwandese refugees in the Kivu province of the Democratic Republic of the Congo¹². As part of a joint initiative, UNHCR and the ILO developed a ‘Rural Integration and Zonal Plan’ that outlined agricultural activities the settlement was based on. Thus, while UNHCR used to provide refugees with legal advice and travel documents, its new tasks involved the provision of tools and seeds, aiming at developing refugees’ self-sufficiency. By 1966, positive economic progress in the zones was evident, and refugees were paying taxes to the government, thus contributing to the country’s development. In return, the settlements benefited from government assistance in the form of infrastructure and education. (Betts 1993:16; Glasman 2017:346–347)

At the same time, a second refugee settlement for Rwandese refugees was established in an underdeveloped area of northeastern Burundi. While immediate relief activities for refugees were carried out successfully, the operational agency in charge, the League of Red Cross Societies, had little agricultural expertise. As a result, it settled refugees haphazardly among local Burundi without investigating the conditions of the area further, thereby choosing an environment in which the local people themselves lived at only a low level of subsistence. In 1964, the Burundi government signed an agreement with the ILO for a zonal development plan aiming at improving the living conditions of both refugees and the local population. However, despite prior field investigations and the provision of ample infrastructure including schools, health facilities, and agricultural and artisan training centers, the program proved unsuccessful, as it failed to take into account the real needs and actual living conditions of the people. (Betts 1993:16–17)

The outcomes of these early refugee settlements found their way into discussions held at the ‘Conference on the Legal, Economic, and Social Aspects of African Refugee Problems’ in Addis Ababa in 1967. The objective of the Conference was, *inter alia*, “to find ways and means to alleviate the plight of the refugees and to ease the burden imposed on the host country caused by a massive refugee influx” (Kibreab 1983:130). The Conference was attended by representatives from 22 African countries and ten international and intergovernmental organizations as well as observers from 27 voluntary agencies and three non-African countries, and was perceived as an “important landmark in African co-operation”

¹¹ The concept was used for Asia minor refugees in Greece in 1922, and in India and Pakistan in 1948. (Glasman 2017:347)

¹² At the time, the Democratic Republic of the Congo was officially named Republic of the Congo and often called Congo-Léopoldville in order to distinguish it from its north-western neighbor also called the Republic of the Congo. In 1964, it was officially renamed into Democratic Republic of the Congo before the state’s name changed again in 1971, being renamed into Zaire. In 1997, it became the Democratic Republic of the Congo again.

(Betts 1967:561). In its recommendations, the Conference emphasized the need to link refugees to the general problem of rural development in Africa: While it reaffirmed land settlement of refugees as a solution to the refugee situation, it particularly promoted the introduction of zonal integration and development schemes in cases with no immediate prospect of voluntary repatriation “both to consolidate the refugee settlements and to integrate them into the local economic and social system” (Betts 1993:17). Material support was to be provided to enable refugees to become self-sufficient not only at subsistence level, but to create structures and opportunities for them to earn an income, improve their living conditions, pay taxes and share the same obligations as the local population. For the same reasons, education and training measures were to be incorporated, in order to prevent dependencies from external aid on the one side, and refugees from becoming a burden to their host country on the other side. At the same time, refugees were not to outpace the local population in their development by receiving privileged treatment. Altogether, the development of such zones was to benefit both refugees and the local population, thereby contributing to the overall social and economic development of the country of asylum. While UNHCR was to be authorized to promote and finance comprehensive planning at an early stage of a refugee situation, host governments were encouraged to make any requests necessary to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other competent agencies. (Betts 1967:562; Betts 1993:17; Gorman 1993b:174–175; Kibreab 1983:130)

The first integrated project of that kind was established in Burundi as a result of a further influx of Rwandese refugees. Due to the political situation, refugees were settled in an environmentally not particularly hospitable area. Nevertheless, due to their previous experiences, UNHCR and its operating partner were able to create the basis for a viable settlement with overall initially positive achievements, including subsistence self-sufficiency and a modest social infrastructure. (Betts 1993:17) As a result, in 1968, UNHCR drew a rather positive interim conclusion on the approach, noting “considerable improvements” in the respective areas (Krause 2013:88).

Nevertheless, two problems remained unaddressed: On the one hand, the project remained largely focused on refugees, not including the local population as beneficiaries. On the other hand, a clear strategy how to move beyond subsistence self-sufficiency and generate alternative revenues was missing. In order to overcome these challenges, UNDP was brought in to incorporate the project into an integrated rural development program. At the request of the government of Burundi, a second, major underdeveloped area of the country, well distanced from the refugee settlement, was also included in the plan. However, as this area appeared to offer more promising agricultural potential, the refugee settlement was quickly neglected. As a result, a considerable number of refugees from the settlement moved on to Tanzania, while the ones that stayed continued to live at subsistence level and were increasingly faced with the hostility of the local Burundi population jealous of their perceived privileges. Finally, due to major political disruptions in Burundi in 1972, the project disintegrated completely. (Betts 1993:17–18)

In addition to Burundi, the zonal development approach was also adopted in Tanzania and Uganda. However, here, too, the attempts ended in failure, mostly due to policy changes within the host governments who rejected the approach. (Kibreab 1983:133–134) As a result, after high enthusiasm for the approach in the first years after the Conference, in particular in the development community, the unsuccessful outcomes of the first attempts to achieve Integrated Zonal Development led to some disenchantment with the concept within the UN system, and few further efforts were made to implement the approach in other contexts. As a result, in subsequent years the concept mostly disappeared from policy discussions. (Crisp 2001:2; Kibreab 1983:134)

3.1.2 Conceptual framework

With the concept of Integrated Zonal Development, for the first time an approach to a situation of forced displacement was put in place that did not focus solely on the needs of refugees, but explicitly attempted to simultaneously address needs in host countries as well and contribute to their long-term development.

Overall, the approach followed the assumption that hosting large numbers of refugees imposed a large burden on African host countries. These countries usually were suffering from a lack of resources and poor social services and were struggling for a decent standard of living for their own population. (Betts 1967:561) Adopting an Integrated Zonal Development approach was regarded as a way for Western countries to share that burden and to alleviate some of the negative developmental consequences of refugee movements on host countries. Through the approach, refugees were to be converted from “a liability into assets of the economic and social balance of the countries’ development” (Kibreab 1983:131). Accordingly, the aim of the approach was twofold: First, socially and economically viable structures were to be established within refugee settlements, enabling refugees not only to become self-sufficient but allowing them to earn an income from social and economic activities. Second, these structures were to be expanded on a more permanent basis in order to both benefit the local population, and integrate refugees into the host society. That way, overall, the quality of life of both refugees and the local population was to be improved. (Feldman 2007:54; Kibreab 1983:131)

Overall, the concept emphasized different key principles:

Bridging the gap – focus on development

Perceiving the “refugee problem [...] as an African problem that ought to be solved within the context of African development process” (Kibreab 1983:130), the concept directly linked support and material assistance for refugees with the development of host regions and communities. For that, the approach promoted three phases of refugee assistance activities: In a first phase, immediate needs were to be addressed by countries of asylum, UNHCR and the World Food Programme (WFP). The second, more long-term phase included the concentrated settlement of refugees on land provided by the host country and the provision of tools, seeds and primary education which was to enable refugees to grow their own food, with food rationing gradually decreasing. The third phase, finally, was to integrate refugees in regional or zonal development plans. Measures in this phase were to focus on the establishment of long-term structures that ultimately were to benefit both the refugees and the local population and that were to lead to a general upsurge in development of the host country. That way, the provision of assistance to refugees was essentially seen as the basis for development activities and economic planning, bringing long-term benefits to the host country and converting “the refugee problem from a running sore and a social bad debt into a positive instrument for progress” (Betts 1967:563). (Betts 1967:562; Crisp 2001:2; Harrell-Bond 1986:10; Kibreab 1983:130–131) Overall, thus, focus was put on moving from humanitarian assistance for refugees to longer-term and development-oriented measures for refugees and locals.

Establishment of new structures

As functioning structures and systems often did not exist in rural regions of host countries to such an extent as to have the capacity to provide services for refugees in addition to the local population, the approach emphasized the need to create new socially and economically viable infrastructural and agricultural facilities in the refugee settlements. These structures were then to be developed on a more permanent basis and extended to cater for the local population as well. (Kibreab 1983:131) Overall, therefore, the aim of the approach was to establish new and strengthen existing rural services for the development of the region. (Gorman 1993b:175)

Additionality

The approach as outlined in the recommendations from the ‘Conference on the Legal, Economic, and Social Aspects of African Refugee Problems’ further stressed that countries hosting refugees could not be expected to neglect existing development requirements to the benefit of new projects primarily targeting refugees, and to contribute financially to the planned zonal integration and development schemes on the usual share. Rather, schemes involving refugees were understood as being additional to

other development programs which was to be considered also in the financing of the plans. (Gorman 1993b:175)

Durable solutions and self-sufficiency

While voluntary repatriation was still perceived as “one of the best, if not the best, solution” (Prince Ada Khan 1969), in cases of no immediate prospect of return the Conference promoted the local settlement of refugees in countries of first asylum as a long-term solution. The “final solution” to refugees’ “problems” was thereby perceived as depending “to a large extent on their own initiative, efforts and cooperation” (Gorman 1993b:73). In practice, this meant that emergency relief was to be gradually decreased and refugees to become self-reliant. The approach emphasized that this was understood not only in terms of reaching mere subsistence self-sufficiency, but also in terms of earning an income to afford at least elementary everyday expenses. (Gorman 1993b:73–74) This was to be followed by the “consolidation of the refugees’ integration” into the host communities (Prince Ada Khan 1966).

Inter-agency cooperation

While UNHCR was to take the lead in the first phases of the approach as well as in promoting and financing the zonal development schemes at an early stage, the Conference also promoted the participation of various other UN agencies, including UNDP, WFP, FAO, ILO, WHO (World Health Organization), UNESCO, UNICEF and ECA (United Nations Economic Commission for Africa). With regard to the planned future economic and social development of the settlements, this was to take place as early as possible in the process in order to “establish and strengthen all aspects of rural services required for the total advancement of the human ecology of the region” and to take use of the resources of the zone (Gorman 1993b:175). (Gorman 1993b:174–175)

Funding

The inclusion of other UN agencies in the approach at a stage as early as possible was emphasized due to other reasons as well: With international expenditures on refugees steadily growing, further actors beside UNHCR were needed to secure funding for the approach. (Kibreab 1983:131) Accordingly, host countries were encouraged to make “the necessary requests to the UNDP and other competent agencies and organizations” (Gorman 1993b:175). In the approach, refugee hosting areas of a country were to be funded directly over existing multilateral channels, rather than channeling money through the central government. (Feldman 2007:54–55)

3.1.3 Outcome – factors leading to failure

Ultimately, the approach of Integrated Zonal Development quickly disappeared from UNHCR’s and other international agencies’ agenda. In the existing literature, no complete explanation of the reason thereof can be found. Nevertheless, the non-continuation of the approach, and its overall unsuccessful outcome, can be traced back to a combination of different factors.

Lack of clear objectives and coordination between refugee and development organizations

Overall, the approach suffered from a poor definition of objectives and a general lack of coordination between refugee and development organizations, in particular between UNHCR and UNDP. Even though their cooperation from the outset was encouraged in the Conference’s recommendations, efforts of both organizations were not integrated and took place largely in different phases of the approach: Under the existent ruling, UNHCR had to withdraw after the second phase of settlement programs, which was when UNDP came in to take over responsibilities. (Betts 1967:561–562; Feldman 2007:56) Furthermore, with refugees not constituting development agencies’ traditional constituency, refugee settlements were quickly neglected to the benefit of other underdeveloped regions in the host country with more agricultural potential. (Betts 1993:18) This was accompanied by a general mismanagement

of projects, including a high staff turnover in the various involved agencies, resulting in a lack of consistency of activities. (Betts 1993:18; Krause 2013:88)

Lack of inclusion of local population

Another factor contributing to the negative outcome of the approach was the fact that projects in the first phases remained largely focused on refugees, and did not benefit the local population enough to win their support. Rather, refugees were perceived as being privileged by receiving material assistance and support. As a result, tensions between the two groups emerged and ultimately hindered the sustainable integration of refugees into their host communities. (Betts 1993:18; Feldman 2007:55)

Rushed implementation and lack of long-term planning

A further challenge lay in the rushed implementation of the approach, leading to flaws in its application. On the one hand, this was due to how UNHCR and other involved NGOs perceived their roles. As they regarded their engagement as only temporary, they quickly transferred full responsibility for the zones to host governments, who were not ready to take on this new task. On the other hand, agencies failed to map out a long-term plan for the economic development of the zones that addressed issues such as how to integrate cash crop from the projects into the local economy or how to generate alternative sources of income in case that agriculture was not viable during certain periods of time, which overall made the model unsustainable. (Betts 1993:18; Feldman 2007:55–56)

Political conflicts in host countries

Lastly, the emergence of political conflicts in host countries contributed to the failure of the approach. In the midst of serious upheaval, assisted integration and development projects in the zones were not viable and could not be sustained. (Feldman 2007:56)

Overall, the Integrated Zonal Development approach did not have a lasting legacy, but disappeared from the agenda. As it did not lead to the endeavored results regarding the protection of refugees and the development of host countries, its outcome has generally been regarded as not successful.

3.2 1980s: Refugee Aid and Development (RAD)

Despite the quick disintegration of the Integrated Zonal Development approach, thinking around how to link forced displacement and development in host countries was taken up again some years later. In the 1970s and 1980s, new refugee movements both in Africa and in Central America resulted in increasingly prolonged displacement situations. At the same time, the recognition emerged that two decades of development assistance had not succeeded in improving the overall economic condition of most host countries (in particular in Africa). The confluence of both aspects led to a rethinking of the connections between refugee aid and development. In contrast to the Integrated Zonal Development approach which had originated in the development community and was then taken up by UNHCR, the reappraisal of the idea was largely undertaken by the refugee assistance community. Even though, over time, the approach also won the attention of development specialists, they remained largely skeptical about the importance and relevance of linking refugee and development aid. Nevertheless, the reappraisal of the idea finally resulted in the development of a new concept that came to be known as Refugee Aid and Development (RAD). (Gorman 1993c:62)

3.2.1 International Conferences on Assistance to Refugees in Africa (ICARA I and II)

Refugee Aid and Development first gained momentum in two African conferences in the early 1980s known as ICARA I and II. Like the concept of Integrated Zonal Development, the concept initially focused on refugee situations in Africa.

3.2.1.1 Context

During the 1970s, African countries, in particular Lesotho, Mozambique, Somalia, Sudan, Tanzania and Zambia, continued to host large numbers of refugees who had fled violence in neighboring countries (Burundi, Chad, Ethiopia, Angola, Uganda, and Zaire). Host countries' general hospitality was based on the assumption that refugees would return home as soon as independence was achieved in their countries of origin. In the late 1970s, however, it became clear that the refugee situation was unlikely to be resolved in the near future. On the contrary, as conflicts in the region were ongoing, turning into Cold War proxy conflicts, the number of refugees was even increasing. The recognition that a speedy return of the large refugee populations was becoming increasingly unlikely led to a change in the attitude of many host countries: The presence of refugees was perceived more and more as an "open-ended burden" (Stein 1987:50), placing unreasonable strains on countries' resources and capacities. (Betts 2009b:53–54; Gorman 1986:284)

In response to these concerns, in May 1979 the Organization of African Unity (OAU) convened the 'Pan-African Arusha Conference on the Situation of Refugees in Africa'. At the conference, African host countries acknowledged and reasserted their responsibilities as countries of first asylum. At the same time, however, they also called upon the international community – who had so far shown only limited support – to share with them the social, economic and infrastructural costs of hosting refugees. Concretely, this was to be achieved through so-called targeted development assistance: development projects that would target both refugees and host communities. Projects were not only to provide relief for refugees, but also to help mitigate the negative impacts of hosting refugees and contribute to the sustainable development of host countries. (Betts 2004:6; Betts 2009b:54, 70; Crisp 2001:2; Gorman 1987:14)

In response to these discussions, in April 1981 the 'First International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa' (ICARA I) was convened in Geneva. The objectives of the conference were three-fold: to "increase international attention to the refugee situation in Africa", to "mobilize resources for refugee relief and assistance", and to "consider assistance to asylum countries to help them cope with the additional burdens placed by the refugees on their economic and social infrastructure" (Gorman 1987:15). The conference was conceived mainly as a pledging conference, spelling out only few new ideas or ways forward. Nevertheless, USD 560 million were pledged by donor countries. Despite this large amount, requests by host countries for projects focusing on the conference's third goal and addressing long-term, refugee related development needs were largely ignored. Instead, donor countries earmarked funds almost exclusively for projects dealing with immediate needs of refugees, such as the provision of shelter, food and clothing. On the one hand, this was due to the fact that they did not consider it UNHCR's responsibility or mandate to deal with longer-term aspects of a refugee situation or to strengthen infrastructure and foster development in host countries. On the other hand, they considered the development projects that had been submitted by host countries as ill-conceived and poorly prepared, or as marginal projects that had failed to attract previous support. By September 1981, it became clear that of the USD 560 million pledged only USD 144 million had not been earmarked for certain projects in favored nations. This left UNHCR with only an estimated USD 40 million to use for high-priority projects that did not fall under its regular programs. (Betts 2004:10; Betts 2009b:56–57; Gorman 1987:15–15; Gorman 1993c:63)

Despite this unsatisfactory outcome for host countries, discussions on ways to link refugee and development assistance were continued by international agencies, NGOs, host countries and donor countries, and finally resulted in a 'Second International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa' (ICARA II), held in Geneva in July 1984. To give the conference new impetus and mark its new focus, it was put under the slogan 'Time for Solutions'. In contrast to ICARA I, the conference was seen not as a single pledging conference, but more as a think tank or process, focusing on three objectives: "to review thoroughly the results of ICARA I", "to consider providing additional international assistance to refugees and returnees in Africa for relief, rehabilitation and resettlement", and "to consider the

impact imposed on the national economies of the concerned countries and to provide assistance to strengthen their social and economic infrastructure to cope with the burden of refugees and returnees” (Gorman 1986:284). (Betts 2009b:59–60; Gorman 1987:23; Gorman 1993c:63–64)

The third goal was regarded the centerpiece of the conference, marking its new focus on longer-term assistance for affected host countries and on durable solutions through refugee-related development. The attempt to link refugee aid with development assistance was also reflected in a closer cooperation between UNHCR and UNDP, bringing in the development expertise and mandate. Together, the UN agencies conducted assessments of the impacts of refugees on each host country, reviewed country project proposals and prioritized needs. Project proposals shared various common features: They all focused on infrastructural development such as access to education, health services, water and roads, that would benefit both refugees and the local population; they were to be implemented under the leadership of host governments; and they promoted the local integration and self-sufficiency of refugees in the long term. Of the USD 392 million appealed for these projects, however, only USD 81 million were pledged at ICARA II. When in the course of the same year of ICARA II a severe drought and famine emerged in several African countries, ICARA finally lost international attention completely. (Betts 2004:10; Betts 2008:163; Betts 2009b:61–63, 65; Gorman 1987:122–123)

3.2.1.2 Conceptual framework

The basic idea behind RAD was that international assistance in situations of forced displacement was not only to focus on refugees, but to include the local population and promote the development of the host country. This was based on the recognition that large numbers of refugees placed a substantial economic, social, infrastructural and environmental burden on the countries hosting them, often overstraining their development capacities. The RAD approach stipulated that these costs were not to be carried by the host countries alone, but that the international community had a responsibility to share the burden. At the same time, RAD assumed a gap between the fields of relief and development assistance. This gap was to be bridged by addressing refugee issues through a development-oriented approach. Lastly, RAD assumed that refugees were invariably dependent on external support. However, it was understood that this dependency could be mitigated through the implementation of an approach that would promote their self-reliance and self-sufficiency. (Gorman 1987:111; Meyer 2006:11–14)

Generally, RAD as laid out in the two conferences promoted several principles:

Bridging the gap – focus on development

In order to bridge the assumed gap between relief and development, in RAD, refugee-related aid and development assistance were to complement each other in overlapping phases. This meant that all humanitarian assistance by the international community carried out in response to a situation of forced displacement was to be oriented towards long-term development from the outset. At the same time, ‘normal’ development interventions were to always take into account the effects of the presence of refugees in host countries, and address in particular the challenges that originated from, or were exacerbated by, hosting them. In further emphasizing the focus on development, all measures were to be aligned with the host countries’ existing national development plans. (Betts 2004:10; Betts 2009b:70; Gorman 1986:291; Gorman 1993c:62, 65)

Use of existing systems

In order to assure an effective and efficient mode of operation and complementary of refugee-related and development aid, RAD promoted the use of existing mechanisms and structures for development planning and coordination. Instead of establishing a whole new system or creating parallel structures in a new international machinery, existing structures were to be improved and aligned to the new approach. (Gorman 1993c:65)

Additionality

A principle especially important for African host countries was the idea of additionality. Host countries were concerned that regular development resources intended for the local population and the development of the host countries might simply be diverted into refugee protection within the new approach. The idea of additionality, therefore, comprised that assistance for refugee-related development projects was to be additional to the funds provided to the countries within the scope of regular development programming. (Betts 2009b:58; Gorman 1993c:65)

Durable solutions and self-sufficiency

RAD also included the search for durable solutions for refugees. The preferred options of both the international community and host countries were voluntary repatriation and, to a much lesser extent, local integration. In order to prepare refugees for either option and enable them to establish sustainable livelihoods without being dependent on ongoing external aid, RAD promoted programs with the aim of self-reliance and self-sufficiency. That way, external support was to be gradually reduced and a smooth transition from crisis situation to (local or re-)integration was to be achieved. (Krause 2013:95–96)

Inter-agency cooperation

In order to bridge the gap between humanitarian aid for refugees and development, RAD strongly promoted the cooperation of different actors from both fields. Naturally, this concerned in particular the different specialized UN agencies: UNHCR was to take the lead for projects concerning refugees and the search for durable solutions, while UNDP was seen as responsible for implementing and monitoring refugee-related development assistance. Both agencies were urged to closely work together and coordinate their efforts at all levels. Additionally, cooperation and coordination with other national and international agencies of both fields was promoted, including the World Bank and the World Food Programme (WFP), as well as local and international NGOs. (Gorman 1986:284–291; Gorman 1993c:65)

Funding

As traditional refugee relief and development programming, projects under the RAD framework were heavily dependent on funding from the international community and donor countries. Different new multilateral funding mechanisms were laid out, including cost sharing, trust funds and joint financing arrangements. Cost sharing comprised the use of both UN resources and donor funds for projects prepared by the UN in consultation with involved governments. Trust funds were a possibility for donors to fully bear the costs of particular projects. Money would be channeled through a UN agency, which would also both carry out feasibility studies and design and implement the project in consultation with the governments. Joint financing comprised that different donor countries and UN agencies would design and implement projects together, with resources channeled by each individual donor. Additionally, several ways to bilaterally fund projects were laid out. For instance, donors could interact with local or international NGOs, contractors or ministries of host countries directly and use them as implementing agencies. (Gorman 1986:286–289)

3.2.1.3 Outcome – factors leading to failure

Ultimately, the objectives as laid out at ICARA I and II could not be reached. The conferences neither led to durable solutions for refugees on a large scale, nor to significant new sources of development assistance for African host countries. This unsuccessful outcome can be traced back to several factors:

Lack of clear definitions

Even though the conceptual framework and the principles of RAD seem quite extensive and well-elaborated, the strategy remained extremely vague during the early 1980s. Hindering the most was the

lack of clear definitions of central key aspects of the approach, such as of seemingly simple concepts including ‘development’ or ‘self-reliance’ (Betts 2009b:70; Gorman 1993d:159–160)

Polarization in expectations and interests of host and donor states

Despite joint discussions during the conferences on new ways to deal with the displacement situation in African countries, host and donor states had vastly different expectations and interests in the concrete implementation of measures: For African host states, the aspect of burden sharing and the compensation of the costs of hosting large numbers of refugees clearly took center stage. They were much less interested in attributing the full range of legal, social and economic rights to refugees. However, in the absence of the possibilities of return or resettlement, this would have been necessary to reach real local integration as the only remaining durable solution. Donor states, on the other hand, wished to focus on exactly this: durable solutions in the countries of first asylum which would ease the costs of open-ended care and maintenance assistance for refugees. The failure of linking these differing interests resulted in only limited financial support by donor countries on the one side, and lack of commitment to ICARA projects by host countries on the other, mutually reinforcing each other in a perpetual circle. (Betts 2004:11–12; Crisp 2001:4; Stein 1987:49)

Lack of political dialogue

This failure to link interests was at least partly due to the lack of a continued political dialogue between host states and prospective donors during which the different interests, expectations and conditionalities could have been discussed, and agreements could have been negotiated. Rather than constituting a political process, ICARA I and II were largely conceived as a technocratic process, resulting in two one-off pledging conferences and failing to spark discussions how to address differing priorities. Due to the absence of credible links between interests, however, donor countries were not convinced of why they should commit to ICARA projects and additional development assistance. (Betts 2008:163; Betts 2009b:72–73)

Lack of commitment

As a result of the two aspects above, ultimately, both host countries and donor countries showed a lack of commitment to ICARA and RAD thinking. In host countries, refugee commissions and development ministries often lacked a common vision on the necessity of linking and coordinating refugee aid with national development planning. Consequently, actions were not coordinated and the two ministries did not speak with one voice, giving ICARA projects only low priority. This low enthusiasm for ICARA by governments of host countries was reflected in donor countries’ lack of commitment of funding RAD projects. In turn, their limited additional funds led to even less commitment by host countries and less harmonization of projects linking refugee and development aid. (Gorman 1987:118–122; Gorman 1993c:77)

Lack of absorptive capacity

Even if host countries were willing to commit to RAD, they faced numerous obstacles: Often, they lacked qualified personnel, for instance to conduct feasibility studies on refugee-related development projects. Overall, their absorptive capacity was often too low, that is, the ability to effectively implement such projects, for instance due to insufficient and inadequate human resources, or the ability to meet recurrent costs incurred by new projects, for instance salaries for medical personnel in newly constructed hospitals. (Gorman 1987:24; 118–122; Gorman 1993c:77)

Categories of assistance and lack of additionality

Other weaknesses were related to funding issues. One specific challenge lay in the different understandings of assistance categories. While host countries understood refugee-related development programs to constitute a third, additional category of assistance alongside the traditional refugee and development assistance categories, donor countries viewed them as overlapping with the existing

categories. They therefore preferred an integrated approach in which contributions for all ICARA projects were included in the respective traditional categories, rather than a new system in which refugee-related development assistance existed as yet another, additional track of aid flow. This lack of commitment to additionality by donor states made it difficult to dispel host countries' concerns regarding the simple diversion of development funds into refugee protection. (Gorman 1987:68–70; 100–104)

Possibility of earmarking funds

At the same time, the possibility of earmarking funds meant that often funds were not allocated on the basis of needs but on the basis of specific interests of donor countries. In the 1980s, this meant that the most significant contributions went to supporting refugees who were strategically positioned in the proxy conflicts of the Cold War. For instance, the US as the capitalist superpower and other aligned donor countries used their contributions as a strategic tool to support anticommunist guerilla movements in exile. Refugees in other countries, in contrast, received only little assistance because of the host country's regime's links to the Soviet Union. (Betts 2009b:74)

Structural relationship between UNHCR and UNDP

Other challenges were related to the UN's engagement in the approach. Even though new forms of cooperation between UNHCR and UNDP attempted to create the intended link between refugee protection and development, ultimately, their structural relationship further separated both issues. This was due to their formalized separation: Based on their official mandates, UNHCR took responsibility for relief and durable solutions for refugees, while UNDP focused solely on development projects. Adhering strictly to these respective mandates, the two agencies addressed the two areas in complete isolation from each other, rather than pursuing an integrated approach in which both sides would complement each other. (Betts 2008:163; Betts 2009b:72–73)

Lack of commitment by UNDP

At the same time, even though UNDP cooperated with UNHCR in ICARA II and took on a large technical role, altogether the agency “was a hesitant, reluctant and uninterested participant” (Stein 1987:58). Its general attitude towards ICARA remained reserved, especially in the light of an emerging funding crisis the agency was facing in the early 1980s. Refugees were not conceived as a priority, and UNDP showed only limited enthusiasm to change donor or host country practices, to create a credible link between the interests of both sides, or to promote the RAD approach to encourage greater commitment. (Betts 2009b:69; Gorman 1993c:66–68; Stein 1987:52)

Lack of visibility

In general, host countries' lack of commitment, the lack of a common vision among refugee and development ministries, ICARA's decentralized nature and UNDP's lack of proactive stewardship gave ICARA and RAD a very low profile, to the point of virtual invisibility. This was reinforced by its specific nature, falling between traditional emergency assistance and development aid: While emergencies attract media attention, forcing governments to act and attracting both public and private funds, development cooperation can usually rely on constituency interests to keep resources coming in. Refugee-related development assistance, falling between the categories, lacked both of these features, staying almost invisible both to the public and to many NGOs and even governmental assistance agency circles. When a new emergency, a widespread drought and famine affecting several African countries from 1983 to 1985 emerged, donor attention shifted altogether. ICARA and RAD faded more and more into the background and eventually vanished into oblivion, at least in the African context. (Betts 2009b:65; Gorman 1993c:67–68)

3.2.2 International Conference on Central American Refugees (CIREFCA)

Despite the overall failure of ICARA and the implementation of RAD in Africa, the concept itself did not disappear completely. Rather, it was taken up again only a few years later, albeit in a different regional context.

3.2.2.1 *Context*

In the 1970s and 1980s, several countries in Central America were facing war, internal conflicts, brutal violence, widespread human rights abuses and structural poverty. Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua and, to a lesser extent, Honduras, were hit especially hard. Military governments and well-organized revolutionary groups were fighting fierce combats against each other, resulting in the killing of around 160,000 people and forcing nearly 2 million people across the region to flee. While 900,000 of those fleeing remained as internally displaced persons (IDPs) in their countries of origin, 1.1 million people fled to neighboring countries, especially to Mexico, Costa Rica, Honduras and Belize. Of these forcibly displaced, however, only about 150,000 were recognized as refugees and qualified for assistance from UNHCR which had been active in Central America since the late 1970s. The remaining 900,000 people were undocumented ‘externally displaced persons’, receiving support only selectively and being vilified depending on whether they were perceived as sources of instability for governments of the left or right. Regardless of their official status, the influx of over 1 million people put severe strains on already weak economies and poor infrastructure in host countries. (Betts 2009b:80; Mihalkanin 1993:86–87; Redmond 1995)

With the rapprochement at the end of the Cold War in the late 1980s, the prospects for regional peace in Central America improved as well. In August 1987, the Esquipulas II Peace Accords were concluded, constituting an enduring peace deal for the region and creating new opportunities and incentives for addressing displacement. Regional leaders agreed “to attend, as a matter of urgency, to the flows of refugees and displaced persons caused by the crisis in the region, providing them with protection and assistance” (UN 1987:7). With the support of UNHCR, in September 1988 the governments of Mexico, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua agreed to convene a meeting to find solutions to the issue of uprooted people in the region, resulting in the ‘International Conference on Central American Refugees’ (‘Conferencia Internacional Sobre Refugiados Centroamericanos’, CIREFCA) in Guatemala City in May 1989. (Betts 2009b:80–81; Mihalkanin 1993:92; Redmond 1995)

Rather than being a single event, CIREFCA developed into a process that ran until 1994. During this time frame, states submitted a wide-ranging array of project proposals to deal with the displacement situation. Their focus varied widely from country to country, depending on whether countries were refugee receiving or sending countries, and on existing policies and attitudes towards socio-economic integration of refugees. Needs ranged from immediate assistance, general infrastructure development and reconstruction, to labor market integration, capacity and institution-building and the strengthening of self-reliance, thus including both humanitarian and development-oriented aspects. All projects had in common that they focused largely on self-sufficiency and (local) integration. In order to address these different needs and concerns, close cooperation between different UN agencies, in particular between UNHCR and UNDP, was regarded as crucial to bridge the gap between refugee protection and development assistance. Although not all CIREFCA projects were successful, in general they had positive impacts on the (re)integration of displaced persons, the promotion of participation and consultation, the strengthening of institutional capacity and the improvement of living conditions for vulnerable groups such as women and children, therefore having positive developmental effects. (Betts 2006:10, 12; Betts 2009b:88; Redmond 1995; UNHCR 1994)

Besides their traditional programming, both UNHCR and UNDP developed new initiatives that linked humanitarian assistance with more development-oriented principles: For instance, UNHCR’s so-called small-scale Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) focused on supporting basic needs and short-term infrastructure, while at the same time they promoted participation, involvement of local government and

reconciliation among communities. The approximately 320 conducted projects proved to be so successful that they became “a mainstay in UNHCR programmes around the world” (Redmond 1995). (Betts 2006:12; UNHCR 1994) UNDP, on the other hand, oversaw local development projects under the ‘Development Programme for Displaced Persons, Refugees and Returnees in Central America’ (PRODERE). Projects ranged from the provision of basic needs to socio-economic integration, mainly focusing on IDPs. Even though the program began operating already before the 1989 CIREFCA conference, and projects received different treatment in the consultation process and were put in a special category by regional governments and donors, it was received as UNDP’s major contribution to CIREFCA, and “the cornerstone of interagency collaboration between UNHCR and UNDP” (Betts 2009b:96). (Betts 2009b:96; Mihalkanin 1993:99; UNHCR 1994)

Altogether, until mid-1994, the international community funded USD 420 million for CIREFCA projects, covering approximately 86 percent of the total project requirements. Only 19 percent of the funds were channeled through UNHCR, despite the agency’s leading role especially in the first years of the CIREFCA process. Most money, however, was funded through UNDP (32 percent). Four donors alone contributed 80 percent of all funding for CIREFCA: Italy, the European Union, the WFP and Sweden. Italy in particular played an important role, as it solely funded PRODERE, contributing USD 115 million for the program. Altogether, international funds were conceived as “the glue that held much of CIREFCA together” (UNHCR 1994). (Betts 2006:11; Betts 2009b:96; Redmond 1995; UNHCR 1994)

The complexity of the process made evaluations of the approach difficult: CIREFCA operated at different levels and among numerous actors in different countries, each with their own political, economic, humanitarian, and institutional background and agenda. Thus, over the years, CIREFCA and its underlying principles “became many things to many people” (UNHCR 1994): Some people regarded the approach as a panacea for resolving protracted refugee crises worldwide, others discarded it completely. Altogether, however, CIREFCA was widely regarded as a success, achieving its goals of finding durable solutions for refugees, linking refugee protection and development in Central America, and contributing to peace in the region. (UNHCR 1994)

3.2.2.2 *Conceptual framework*

Like ICARA, CIREFCA was based on the concept of RAD. Therefore, the discussions at the conference followed similar assumptions: CIREFCA was held in the first place because of the acknowledgement that hosting large numbers of refugees had negative effects on the countries of asylum. Refugees were not only living in precarious conditions themselves, but also affected the living conditions of their hosts, impacted the employment sector, social services, and economic and ecological sectors in the countries of asylum, and in general hampered development. All measures were therefore not only to focus on refugees and displaced persons, but were to benefit the local population as well and contribute to the economic development of the region. At the same time, CIREFCA assumed a gap between the traditional categories of emergency interventions and longer-term development assistance. Therefore, the goal of the CIREFCA debates was to develop an integrated, development-oriented approach to all aspects of forced displacement that would close this gap. The underlying logic was the belief that development assistance could enhance refugee protection, while refugee protection was seen as a way to promote economic development for the host country. (Betts 2009b:87; Gorman 1993e:202–203)

In contrast to ICARA, CIREFCA did not only assume a link between solutions to forced displacement and development, but also a relationship between the two issues and general peace in the region. The CIREFCA Juridical Committee noted:

Massive flows of refugees might not only affect the domestic order and stability of receiving states, but may also jeopardize the political and social stability and economic development of entire regions, and thus endanger international peace and security. The solution to the problems of displacement is therefore a necessary part

of the peace process in the region and it is not conceivable to achieve peace while ignoring the problems of refugees and other displaced persons. (CIREFCA Juridical Committee, as cited in Betts 2009:105)

Addressing the challenges related to the existing refugee movements was therefore seen as a necessary condition for regional stability. The 1987 Esquipulas II Peace Accords Declaration thereby served as the philosophical underpinning of CIREFCA. (Betts 2009b:94–95; Gorman 1993e:203)

Many of the principles underlying the CIREFCA debates corresponded to the principles of ICARA:

Bridging the gap – focus on development

Like in ICARA, the core principle of CIREFCA was the attempt to create a link between refugee aid and development assistance to bridge an assumed gap between the two issues. This was to be achieved through an integrated approach, consisting of a continuum of overlapping phases, that was development-oriented from the outset. On the governmental level, governments of affected countries were to consider assistance to refugees as part of their national development planning. Refugees were regarded as potential ‘agents of development’, and focus was to be put on giving them the chance to be actively involved in host countries’ development process, for instance through local integration and self-sufficiency. (Betts 2009b:95; Redmond 1995; UNHCR 1994)

Use of existing systems

Even though CIREFCA did not specifically refer to the need to use existing systems and avoid creating parallel structures, this principle was borne from within the approach itself: As affected countries took the lead in the process, with the UN agencies acting only as supporters, countries naturally drew on existing structures. Thereby, they also resorted to programs that already existed prior to CIREFCA, and were only later integrated in the approach and taken under the CIREFCA framework. (Torres-Romero 1998:155)

Additionality

Like ICARA, CIREFCA stressed the principle of additionality: Measures were to be carried out *in addition to* regular humanitarian or development-oriented programs. The principle also underlined once more that the financial burden of providing asylum to displaced persons was expected to be shared by the international community. (Betts 2009b:107; Callamard 1993:137)

Durable solutions and self-sufficiency

The search for durable solutions formed another important feature of CIREFCA. Voluntary repatriation was regarded as the best solution, followed by local integration if repatriation proved not feasible. In exceptional cases, and contrary to ICARA, resettlement was considered. Especially with regards to local integration, all projects were to facilitate self-sufficiency and promote interaction of displaced persons with local communities to strengthen social cohesion and decrease tensions. (Betts 2006:13; Betts 2009b:87–88; Gorman 1993e:202)

Inter-agency cooperation

Close inter-agency cooperation was regarded as crucial to link refugee protection and development assistance and to achieve an institutional connection between the two issues. This concerned in particular UNHCR and UNDP which were endeavored to complemented each other in addressing the inter-related issues of displacement, peace and development. UNHCR was to take the lead agency role for CIREFCA, while UNDP was to incrementally take over this role with a gradual shift of focus towards more long-term development. In the long run, displaced persons were to be progressively incorporated into national development efforts of countries hosting them. (Betts 2006:10; Redmond 1995; UNHCR 1994)

So far, CIREFCA's conceptual framework did not differ much from the framework under ICARA. However, various debates had developed the concept of RAD in the aftermath of ICARA further, which led to additional principles that were included in CIREFCA:

Linkages to other issues

Rather than addressing the finding of solutions to displacement in the region in isolation, CIREFCA was perceived as part of the wider post-conflict reconstruction and development initiative for the region, with linkages being created to other processes and programs: On the one hand, it was linked to the wider regional peace process and the Esquipulas II peace agreement, which made, among other issues, an unprecedented official call for attention to the needs of displaced persons in the region. On the other hand, it was also affiliated with the 'Special Program of Economic Cooperation for Central America' (PEC), a development initiative led by UNDP with the aim of supporting peace and reconstruction in the region. One part of the program focused specifically on displacement. CIREFCA formed the basis for this part of the program, linking refugee protection with the peace and development process. The architecture of both programs, one led by UNHCR and the other by UNDP, at the same time enhanced the cooperation between the two agencies. (Betts 2009b:94–95)

Ownership

In contrast to ICARA, CIREFCA was perceived to be “the decision of” and “the initiative of” affected states (Betts 2006:23). National ownership throughout the process was emphasized through different measures: In each country, national committees were to be constituted, composed of the appropriate governmental authorities, which would prepare analyses of the impact of refugees, conduct priority assessments, elaborate specific aligned strategies, and propose concrete projects. The role of UN agencies was to be limited to support and consultation. Additionally, so-called support groups, consisting of donor representatives, international agencies and NGOs were to be established to facilitate the planning and implementation of projects and the mobilization of resources. Governments of host countries, however, were to always take the lead throughout the whole process. This strong notion of host country leadership and ownership had different consequences: On the one hand, it gave host countries the opportunity to prioritize and align projects according to their needs and preferences. On the other hand, it also entailed the obligation to take responsibility for actions, and to commit to the CIREFCA process. (Betts 2006:23; Betts 2009b:107–108; Gorman 1993e:207–208; UNHCR 1994)

Follow-up mechanism

As part of the wider political process, CIREFCA established a strong follow-up mechanism in its approach. A Follow-up Committee under the rotating chairmanship of all Central American governments, with the support of UNHCR and UNDP, was to monitor and evaluate the implementation of CIREFCA projects, mobilize resources, and finalize commitments for financing and cooperation. At the same time, the Committee was to coordinate support activities, in particular with the 'Special Program for Economic Cooperation for Central America' (PEC). (Gorman 1993e:208; Mihalkanin 1993:94)

Funding

With regards to funding, CIREFCA followed a different path than ICARA. Rather than framing CIREFCA as a single pledging conference, it was embedded in a wider political process, consisting of different phases. The first phase, prior to the actual conference, focused on obtaining political and diplomatic support and high-level participation of potential donor countries. The notion of pledging money was strictly avoided, as first and foremost the level and quality of policy support for CIREFCA was to be assured. In a second phase, UNHCR informally met with donor delegations at the actual conference to discuss possible financial support, emphasizing flexibility and informality to encourage donor frankness. Tentative indications of contributions were then entered into a master chart and shared

with all donor representatives, “allowing the political momentum to snowball” (Betts 2009b:84). (Betts 2006:21–22; Betts 2009b:82–84)

3.2.2.3 Outcome – factors leading to success

Overall, CIREFCA was widely regarded as a success, not only effectively linking refugee protection and development in Central America, but also leading to durable solutions for refugees and contributing to peace in the region. This positive outcome can be traced back to several factors:

High level of commitment and ownership by Central American states

CIREFCA and the wider political context was characterized by a high level of commitment by Central American states. Starting from the outset, the conference was initiated and convened by the affected countries themselves. Subsequently, Central American states conducted needs assessments, elaborated strategies and project proposals, and oversaw their practical implementation, taking the lead and showing a great sense of ownership in all phases of project design and implementation. The prospect of additional development resources that would benefit the local population reinforced this commitment further. On the other side, potential donor countries, especially European states, were impressed by the commitment and efforts of asylum countries, and offered large amounts of financial and other support. (Betts 2006:23–24; Betts 2008:167; Betts 2009b:86; Redmond 1995)

High level of commitment by UN system

Not only Central American states, but also the UN system, in particular UNHCR and UNDP as the two leading agencies showed high commitment to the process. Even though their relationship at field level was partly shaped by mutual suspicion and mistrust, their cooperation was widely recognized as “the most successful historical example of meaningful UNHCR-UNDP collaboration” (Betts 2009b:98). Two factors were critical for this outcome: First, the two directors of the relevant regional bureaus, Leonardo Franco (UNDP) and Sergio Veira de Mello (UNHCR), showed a high, personal commitment to the process. Their dedication, common vision and good personal relationship helped to create trust in the process among donors, governments and NGOs alike. Second, the good relationship at headquarters level resulted in the formation of a Joint Support Unit (JSU), consisting of two staff members from each organization. It was perceived as a bridge not only between UNHCR and UNDP, but also between the UN agencies, governments in the region and possible donors, and played an important role in coordinating the national and international mechanisms. Working somewhat independently from both agencies’ headquarters, allowing a high level of flexibility to act quickly on arising problems, the JSU took on an active role as trouble-shooter for different CIREFCA actors, liaison to funding partners, provider of technical support and promoter of CIREFCA projects, altogether making it a crucial actor in “setting strategy and maintaining [...] momentum” (UNHCR 1994). (Betts 2009b:96–96; UNHCR 1994)

Embedding in wider political context

Moreover, rather than constituting a single one-off pledging conference, addressing the issue of forced displacement in isolation, CIREFCA was embedded within a wider political process, both regionally and internationally. In the regional context, Central American states regarded the protection of refugees as prerequisite for peace, connecting CIREFCA directly to the Esquipulas II Accords. At the same time, refugee protection was regarded as crucial for the commitment of the international community to development and reconstruction efforts of the region. On the international level, CIREFCA was linked to the wider interests of states in relation to peace, security, development, and, ultimately, power. European states, for instance, saw in a secure and peaceful Central America the possibility for inter-regional trade, and the opportunity to offset the influence of the USA in the region while simultaneously asserting their own growing global influence. Refugee protection was seen as an essential component of these concerns as it was perceived to contribute to peace and development. CIREFCA succeeded in

pairing these different interests and creating credible linkages between the issues of refugee protection, development and peace-building. (Betts 2006:21; Betts 2009b:110–111)

High degree of flexibility

Despite the general positive outcome of CIREFCA, UNHCR and affected countries faced several challenges and obstacles throughout the process to which they had to respond and adapt. These included, for example, a financial crisis UNHCR was facing in 1989, necessitating the prioritization of funds and leading to cut-backs in programming. At the same time, not all donor states were entirely convinced of the approach, criticizing, among other issues, its general vagueness and the failure to clearly identify the responsibilities of Central American states. Moreover, the process was characterized by a political impasse among Central American states themselves, concerning the inclusion of Belize within CIREFCA. While this was favored by Costa Rica, it was opposed by Guatemala due to the country's poor diplomatic relations with the country. Overall, the impasse resulted in the postponement of the conference. All challenges and set-backs, however, could be overcome due to a high degree of flexibility in CIREFCA's approach which enabled UNHCR and the participating states to adapt to changes quickly and keep the general process on track. (Betts 2006:24–26)

Scope of displacement situation

A last factor possibly contributing to CIREFCA's success was not related to the conference itself or the conceptual framework behind it, but to the mere scope of the displacement situation in Central America. Compared to situations of forced displacement in Africa or Asia, the situation in Central America with as few as two million refugees seemed almost insignificant. Furthermore, refugees and the local population shared not only the language, but also common traditions, culture and a historic background. Together with the small geographic area to which CIREFCA was applied, these factors might have helped to ease the handling of the crisis. (UNHCR 1994)

Due to its successful outcome, in its aftermath CIREFCA was increasingly regarded as an inspiration for dealing with forced displacement issues around the world. It was seen not only as an example of successful international cooperation between host states, countries of origin, and donor states, but also as a potential model for improving access to durable solutions, enhancing refugee protection, and addressing the root causes of displacement through peace-building. The UN General Assembly in 1993 was convinced that CIREFCA “could serve as *a valuable lesson to be applied to other regions of the world*” (UN General Assembly Resolution, as cited in Betts 2009b:86). (Betts 2009b:86; UNHCR 1994) Despite this positive evaluation, the success of CIREFCA did not lead to the elaboration of a comprehensive framework or compendium on how to deal with (protracted) refugee situations and their effects on development in host countries in general, nor is CIREFCA as a successful example in this regard present in newer debates focusing on the issue. Rather, the underlying concept of RAD mostly faded into obscurity again.

3.3 Early 2000s: Targeted Development Assistance (TDA)

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, new debates on the nexus of forced displacement and development emerged. In contrast to the concepts of Integrated Zonal Development and Refugee Aid and Development, this time discussions did not focus on a situation of forced displacement or a geographic region in particular, but were framed within a wider and more general debate on refugee protection. Referring to the 1951 Geneva Convention, discussions came to be known as ‘Convention Plus’, during which the concept of Targeted Development Assistance (TDA) was developed.

3.3.1 Context

Within the context of the end of the Cold War and a series of new political and ethnic conflicts in developing countries, in the 1990s refugee numbers around the world were rising. At the same time, restrictions on asylum seekers increased, accompanied by an overall increasingly hostile reception of

refugees both in developing and in Western countries, where more and more people searched for refuge as a consequence of cheaper transportation possibilities and the disintegration of many of the rigid boundaries that had been upheld by the Cold War. All in all, this situation led to the growing acknowledgement of a “global crisis of asylum” in the mid-1990s (Betts 2009b:143). (Benz and Hasenclever 2010:189)

In this context, in 2000 UNHCR initiated ‘Global Consultations on International Protection’ in order to discuss whether the 1951 Convention was still the suitable instrument to deal with this changed global environment. Even though the relevance of the Convention as the basis for refugee protection was reaffirmed by the participants in the consultations, gaps in the existing refugee protection regime were outlined in the so-called ‘Agenda for Protection’. In an ad hoc reaction, then High Commissioner Ruud Lubbers in 2002 developed the notion of ‘Convention Plus’. At that stage, however, the new initiative was merely an idea, pondering on the creation of new arrangements and tools in areas not adequately addressed by the Convention, but lacking any real substance. (Betts 2009b:143–146; UN General Assembly 2002; Wilkinson 2001)

Nevertheless, the label was seized on by European states which used it to legitimize their strategies in handling the ongoing influx of refugees into their territory, claiming that their practice of extraterritorial processing of asylum claims could form part of Convention Plus. These attempts by European states to coin the notion of Convention Plus forced UNHCR to react and define the focus, objectives and normative framework of the initiative. It was not until June 2003, however, that the initiative was formally launched with the overall objective of establishing a normative framework that would complement the 1951 Convention and its 1967 Protocol. (Betts 2009b:146)

The initiative focused on two related issues: On the one hand, it aimed to raise the level of North-South responsibility sharing; on the other hand, this increased multilateral commitment was to be channeled into finding sustainable and durable solutions for dealing with protracted refugee situations. These objectives were to be achieved through the development of general and abstract normative agreements in sectors not sufficiently addressed by the existing refugee regime which were then to be applied to pilot countries through Comprehensive Plans of Action (CPAs). The special agreements were to be legally binding, or at least reflect a significant degree of political commitment and constitute so-called soft law. (Betts 2009b:146–147)

Debates focused on three priority areas or ‘strands’: the strategic use of resettlement, Targeted Development Assistance (TDA), and Irregular Secondary Movements (ISM). All three strands were discussed separately in core groups of interested states, led by a facilitating state or group of states, comprising mainly European states including Denmark, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom. The main intergovernmental discussions on the special agreements took place at five biannual High Commissioner’s Forums between June 2003 and November 2005 in Geneva. (Betts and Durieux 2007:509–510, 513–514; UNHCR 2005a)

It is beyond the scope of the dissertation to analyze in depth all three strands of Convention Plus. Instead, analytical focus will be put on the strand of TDA as it is the one strand that deals specifically with the issue of refugees in relation to development. However, it is important to keep in mind the other two strands to understand the strategy of the overall approach.

The overall objective of the TDA debate was to develop common principles on the role of development assistance in the context of refugee protection and the search for durable solutions. In this regard, discussions focused on three related concepts that were outlined in UNHCR’s ‘Framework for Durable Solutions for Refugees and Persons of Concern’: the ‘4Rs’, Development Assistance for Refugees (DAR) and Development through Local Integration (DLI). (Betts 2009b:147–148; UNHCR 2003a:4)

The concept of the ‘4Rs’, standing for ‘Repatriation, Reintegration, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction’, focused on countries of origin. By engaging in post-conflict reconstruction and creating a conducive

environment in countries refugees were fleeing from, UNHCR intended to both prevent new outflux of refugees and facilitate sustainable repatriation. As this dissertation is concerned with development in host countries rather than in countries of origin, the concept of 4Rs is not outlined further.¹³ (UNHCR 2003a:5)

Development Assistance for Refugees (DAR) and Development through Local Integration (DLI) were understood as two consecutive strategies, focusing on countries of asylum. Both concepts promoted self-sufficiency of refugees, pending durable solutions and local integration, respectively. Besides self-reliance and better quality of life for refugees, DAR's objectives included creating better living conditions for host communities as well as greater burden-sharing between host and donor states. The concept called upon host governments to consider refugees as "catalysts for and contributors to local development", and to be willing to give refugees access to socio-economic activities to enable them to become independent from humanitarian assistance. Altogether, DAR was promoted as a win-win situation for all parties involved: refugees, host countries, donors, and UNHCR. (Jallow and Malik 2005:VI–VII; UNHCR 2003a:8–15)

In cases where local integration of refugees was considered a viable option by a country of asylum, the strategy of DLI was promoted. Building on DAR, it aimed at further integrating those refugees who were unable or unwilling to repatriate or be resettled. Besides focusing on self-reliance and increased interaction between refugees and local communities like DAR, DLI also included farther-reaching economic, social, cultural, and, most importantly, legal components. For refugees to become an active part of their host community, host governments were expected to grant them a progressing range of rights, including access to the labor market, education, health facilities and other services or the possibility to acquire property. However, as these concessions of rights necessitated the active commitment of host governments, DLI was, in contrast to other aspects of TDA, regarded an option rather than an obligation of asylum countries. (UNHCR 2003a:24–26)

To a large part, negotiations in all three areas of TDA drew upon already ongoing work. The concept of 4Rs (Repatriation, Reintegration, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction), for instance, had become largely uncontroversial by the time TDA was discussed in the context of Convention Plus, while discussions on Development Assistance for Refugees (DAR) and Development through Local Integration (DLI) built upon existing strategies in Uganda, and in Zambia, Serbia and Montenegro, respectively. At the second Convention Plus Forum in February 2004, the two facilitating states of the TDA strand, Denmark and Japan, presented a discussion paper outlining the foundation of the TDA approach and their own bilateral experiences. Japan, for instance, was providing assistance for 4Rs programs in Afghanistan and Angola. Denmark had established a new multi-annual budget line in addition to its continuing humanitarian budget lines to support TDA activities, focusing on Zambia, Tanzania, Somalia and Sri Lanka. Both countries also encouraged interested states and other key partners such as UN and partner organizations, including NGOs, to join the process. Furthermore, UNHCR produced an Issues Paper on TDA which was discussed at an informal meeting of donors and development agencies in September 2004, identifying opportunities to apply a more development-oriented approach in situations of displacement. (Betts 2005a:17; UNHCR 2004a:2–4)

While consensus on the concept of 4Rs was reached quickly, discussions on DAR and DLI proved difficult. Apart from Japan's and Denmark's initiatives, few new projects emerged. This was due to a lack of commitment from both donor and host countries: While donor countries were reluctant to provide additional resources besides their regular budget lines and funding, host countries were suspicious of the motives behind DAR and DLI, and were reluctant to countenance any form of self-sufficiency or local integration. This skeptical attitude from both sides was made clear upon the closure of the Convention Plus discussions in November 2005: Outputs in the TDA strand remained limited to joint statements by the co-chairs of the core group, outlining points of convergence and divergence. Concrete

¹³ For further information on the 4Rs concept see for example UNHCR 2003a.

additional commitments, however, were negligible. (Betts 2005a:17–18; Betts and Durieux 2007:514; UNHCR 2006)

The same applied for the other two strands of Convention Plus concerning Irregular Secondary Movements (ISM) and resettlement: In both cases, no new agreements could be reached. The only output that came close to meeting the initiative’s aim of creating soft law was the ‘Multilateral Framework of Understandings on Resettlement’. However, even this framework was an uncontroversial statement which entailed no new legally binding commitments. Furthermore, it was only intended to apply in conjunction with the agreements of the two other strands. As no other agreements were produced in either TDA or ISM discussions, the framework’s use in practice remained extremely limited. (Betts and Durieux 2007:514; UNHCR 2004b)

3.3.2 Conceptual framework

Unlike ICARA and CIREFCA, the debates on Convention Plus were not solely based on RAD thinking, but incorporated several new characteristics and principles. This was due to the fact that Convention Plus did not focus on a specific regional context or displacement situation, but more generally on the refugee regime in its entirety, facilitating a wider and more comprehensive approach.

Overall, the Convention Plus initiative was based on the impression that the 1951 Convention and its 1967 protocol were no longer adequate for a changed displacement situation around the world. Ultimately, the initiative aimed at international burden-sharing. This focus was based on the recognition that, due to long-term economic and social impacts, hosting refugees for protracted periods of time constituted a burden that for the most part had to be shouldered by countries in the South alone: While the concept of asylum has a relatively strong legal basis, the principle of burden-sharing is not based on legally binding norms of obligations. This dichotomy almost always worked to the detriment of Southern host countries which were only inadequately and selectively supported by the North due to the lack of binding legislation. Convention Plus sought to address this gap by creating new norms for global burden-sharing. (Betts and Durieux 2007:510)

With its three strands focusing on different issues of the refugee regime, Convention Plus had a strong North-South dimension. It was assumed that both Northern (industrialized) states and Southern (developing) countries had concerns and interests relating to asylum and refugees. While Northern states were concerned about an increased influx of asylum seekers into their territories, Southern states increasingly showed reservations about the negative effects of hosting refugees for prolonged periods of time and the lack of international responsibility-sharing. Convention Plus inferred that these concerns could be linked: The premise was that Northern states’ concerns over onward secondary movements were directly related to the absence of adequate protection and solutions for refugees in Southern host states which forced the displaced to leave their first countries of asylum and move on to industrialized states. (Betts 2005b:4–5; Betts and Durieux 2007:513)

Deducing from these assumptions, Convention Plus was based on several principles:

Durable Solutions

The overall objective of Convention Plus was to find durable solutions for situations of forced displacement in a changed global environment. This was to be achieved by placing the search for solutions within the context of a multilateral dialogue, in the attempt to reconcile the concerns and interests of Northern, typically donor states, and Southern, typically refugee hosting states. While the strategic use of resettlement was discussed in its own ‘strand’, local integration and repatriation were debated under the framework of TDA (in the form of DAR, DLI and 4Rs). While the different concepts with regards to durable solutions were discussed in different strands, it is important to see them as partial aspects of one comprehensive approach which were to be applied in interaction. (Betts 2005a:7–8; UNHCR 2005a:1)

Linkages

One central feature of Convention Plus was the attempt to link the different concerns of donor and host states relating to asylum and refugees which had usually been dealt with in different departments, and establish one comprehensive approach. While they were still debated in different strands, the concepts of resettlement, ISM and TDA were understood as complementing each other rather than being treated in isolation. This ideational relation was to find its expression in a contractual linkage: Donor states' interest in 'managed migration' was to be connected and lead to their commitment to TDA and resettlement, while in return the prospect of additional development assistance and resettlement was to encourage host countries to commit to concepts that would reduce irregular secondary movements. (Betts 2005b:8; Betts 2008:162, 171; Betts 2009b:156)

Additionally, Convention Plus was linked to the wider framework of the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the achievement of which donor states had already largely committed to. Convention Plus was regarded as contributing in particular to Goal number 8, which called for a global partnership for development. Especially TDA was promoted as a strategy to foster new and improved multilateral partnerships with a view to facilitating the resolution of displacement situations. (Betts 2009b:160–161; UNHCR 2005b:4–5)

In relation to refugees and development in host countries, discussions were led in the TDA strand of the initiative. Conceptually, TDA built on the legacy of the RAD strategy that underlay ICARA and CIREFCA. Like RAD, it was based on three assumptions: First, TDA assumed that hosting refugees over a protracted period of time had negative economic, social and environmental effects on the host country, and that this burden was not adequately shared by the international community; second, TDA assumed a transition gap between humanitarian relief and development assistance; and third, refugees were perceived as passive recipients of, and dependent on, humanitarian aid, even though it was presumed that they were capable of eventually contributing economically to their host countries, if they were locally integrated and their capacities not suppressed. (Koppenberg 2012:84; Meyer 2006:18–19; UNHCR 2005c:1)

In its approach, TDA drew on two already existing UNHCR strategies: the 'Agenda for Protection' which called on states "to consider allocating development funds [...] to programmes simultaneously benefiting refugees and the local population in host countries" and "to consider including refugee-hosting areas in their national development plans", and on "UNHCR to encourage multilateral and bilateral development partners to extend tangible support for such initiatives [...]" (UNHCR 2003b:60–61), and the 'Framework for Durable Solutions' which provided concrete strategies with regards to burden-sharing, capacity-development and achieving durable solutions. (UNHCR 2004a:1)

All in all, TDA promoted several principles which were largely similar to those underlying Integrated Zonal Development and RAD:

Bridging the gap – focus on development

Like both other concepts, TDA assumed a gap between relief and development programs. To bridge this gap, TDA promoted the comprehensive and integrated planning of humanitarian and development operations from the outset, rather than dealing with the two issues separately. Furthermore, host countries were to incorporate refugee issues in their national development plans and Poverty Reduction Strategies, thereby linking the issue of refugee protection with their own development. (UNHCR 2003a:4; UNHCR 2004a:1; UNHCR 2005c:3)

Use of existing systems

In line with this, TDA stressed that already existing development cooperation modalities (such as national development plans or Poverty Reduction Strategies) were to be used for TDA programs as they constituted a "viable framework for programming operational activities at the country level" (UNHCR

2005c:2). Accordingly, rather than developing new structures or parallel support systems for refugees, they were to be included in existing central and local development initiatives. (UNHCR 2005c:2)

Additionality

Furthermore, TDA advocated the principle of additionality: Especially the concept of DAR within the TDA debates presupposed that assistance given to promote self-reliance of refugees and to improve living conditions for both refugees and their host communities was to be additional to existing, regular humanitarian assistance and development aid. Otherwise, it was argued, host countries might see ‘their’ aid lost to refugees which might lead to social tensions between the local population and refugees. (UNHCR 2003a:12)

Ownership

Moreover, like CIREFCA, TDA promoted the leadership and ownership of host countries. While UNHCR’s role still remained substantial in bringing the different partners together, facilitating the process and monitoring and supervising the planning and implementation of programs, host states were to take the overall lead in all stages and own the process. (UNHCR 2003a:12–13)

Inter-agency cooperation

Further in line with previous approaches, TDA held that for the successful bridging of the gap between relief and development, and in light of new emerging challenges in the refugee regime within a globalized world, wider institutional collaboration was needed. It was understood that UNHCR could not effectively address all issues of a new Convention alone, but, instead, should focus on its advocacy and coordination role. Consequently, collaboration and partnerships with development actors, in particular UNDP but also with other UN-agencies, regional organizations, and a range of local and international NGOs was promoted. In recognition of the growing nexus between asylum and migration, TDA additionally promoted partnerships with migration agencies to cover migration governance issues. (Betts 2009b:157–158)

At the same time, overall UNHCR’s role was still seen as crucial in facilitating inter-state coordination and North-South cooperation. While throughout UNHCR’s history leadership and political engagement had emerged from individuals’ initiatives and in relation to specific refugee situations, UNHCR under Convention Plus was to take on a new institutional role, with the explicit purpose of identifying compatibility between interests of donor and host states and of generating concrete state commitments. (Betts and Durieux 2007:518–519)

Whole-of-government approach

In contrast to IZD and RAD, TDA promoted an additional principle: Rather than calling only on host governments to incorporate the issue of refugees in their development planning, TDA encouraged donor states, too, to de-compartmentalize humanitarian and development aid and integrate refugee issues into development aid policies. Altogether, a ‘whole-of-government’ approach was promoted that would comprise a joint strategic vision with regard to forced displacement and development and that was shared by different government departments, such as foreign affairs, defense, and development cooperation. (UNHCR 2004c:7, 9)

Funding

This aspect also stretched into funding issues. Here, Convention Plus emphasized the need for new and flexible strategies, especially with regard to bridging the gap between humanitarian aid and development assistance. In order to increase aid effectiveness and create room for mechanisms that would be effective in transition situations, it was encouraged to rethink traditional understanding and criteria for aid, so that, for instance, development aid could also cover durable solutions for refugees, or humanitarian assistance could gradually be replaced by development aid. (UNHCR 2004c:7–8)

This thinking found its expression in the idea of plurilateralism: Rather than aiming at an entirely inclusive, multilateral approach, this was to allow smaller subgroups of states to get involved and make progress on issues of mutual concern according to their national interests and priorities. A range of bilateral partnerships were to be incorporated within this plurilateral approach, giving states the chance to progress with the implementation of proposals in accordance with their own methods. The approach built on the logic that most states contributed to refugee issues selectively and in fields in which they could derive benefits of some kind for themselves, and therefore aimed at maximizing donor contributions. (Betts 2004:16; Betts 2009b:155)

3.3.3 Outcome – factors leading to failure

The outcome of the Convention Plus discussions fell far short of expectations: Neither did the debates lead to legally binding or even soft law agreements within the realm of refugee protection, nor did they result in a significant new and generalizable framework for global burden-sharing. Convention Plus, including its concepts attempting to link forced displacement and development in host countries in its TDA strand, is therefore widely regarded as a failure. (Betts and Durieux 2007:510)

This unsuccessful outcome can be traced back to several factors:

Flawed dynamic between refugee hosting countries and the international community

Several aspects contributing to the failure of the Convention Plus debates derived from the dynamic between refugee hosting countries and the international community. First, the discussions took place in an environment that was, based on past experience, characterized by general low trust and mutual suspicion between refugee hosting countries and donor countries. African host countries, for instance, still remembered the unsuccessful outcome of ICARA I and II. The impression that Convention Plus debates were focusing on similar arrangements but did not take into account lessons learned from these two previous conferences – or any other previous concepts like CIREFCA and other successful initiatives for that matter – led to a general skepticism towards the approach. (Betts and Durieux 2007:530; Betts 2009b:152)

Second, this dynamic was exacerbated by host states' feeling of being marginalized within the Convention Plus debates. For instance, until September 2005, two months before the end of the initiative, host states were excluded from the interstate dialogue on TDA. African host states were “disappointed that discussions relating to this strand seem[ed] to be *about* assistance to major refugee-hosting countries or countries of origin and not discussion *with* such countries” (as cited in Betts 2009b:153) and raised concerns about the general openness and accountability of the approach. At the same time, host states were further disillusioned about possible outcomes of the discussions as, according to the African Group, several delegations of host countries had been informed that it was “not realistic’ to expect financial or other commitment or assistance in this regard” (as cited in Betts 2009b:153) which decreased their motivation to commit to the approach further. (Betts and Durieux 2007:527; Betts 2009b:153)

Third, and in accordance with the above, the Convention Plus process was characterized by a high degree of eurocentrism: After initially being set out at an EU Justice and Home Affairs meeting, the initiative was developed mainly in consultation with Denmark, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom. Accordingly, the discussions reflected donor interests, while host states' concerns and requests, for instance for a framework of basic principles of burden-sharing, were largely ignored. Many of the resulting initiatives were presented to refugee hosting states as a *fait accompli*. As a consequence, host states perceived Convention Plus as a “vehicle of Northern hegemony” (Betts 2009b:153), leading to further mistrust and disengagement from the approach. (Betts and Durieux 2007:527; Betts 2009b:153–154)

Design of approach – lack of credible linkages

The institutional design of Convention Plus constituted another weak point of the approach: Debates were clustered around three separated strands in which different topics were discussed. Based on the distinct interests of states in different strands, resulting agreements were then to be linked and applied together. However, the assumption that each element could be discussed in isolation and still lead to new commitments was flawed. Intended as a grand bargain across the strands, Convention Plus failed to create a contingent relationship between the different issues and measures, as their linkage lacked credibility. For instance, the promoted link between durable solutions such as local integration, as discussed within the DLI approach in the TDA strand, and irregular secondary movements (ISM), was perceived as tenuous by many states: They did not believe that improved protection and the prospect of durable solutions in refugee hosting states (achieved through additional development assistance) could be directly linked to Europe's concerns about increased irregular secondary migration to their territory. (Betts and Durieux 2007:526; Betts 2008:174; Betts 2009b:157)

Furthermore, the attempt to link Convention Plus to the wider framework of the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) proved problematic. Even though the MDGs carried normative authority, they did not refer to refugees or forced migration at any point, making a structural relationship to Convention Plus extremely weak. Additionally, even though donor states had largely committed to the achievements of the MDGs, by the time Convention Plus tried to use them as a means to promote TDA, from the point of view of refugee hosting states the MDGs had already ceased to have credibility, thereby making the intended linkage between the issues obsolete. (Betts and Durieux 2007:526; Betts 2009b:160–161)

Difficult cooperation between UNHCR and other institutions

Another challenge lay in the difficult cooperation between UNHCR and other institutions. At the start of Convention Plus, UNHCR explicitly emphasized the importance of wider institutional collaboration with both development and migration organizations. Despite the establishment of new partnerships, however, cooperation proved difficult due to different reasons: According to their mandate, development actors, on the one side, were willing to incorporate refugees in their programs only if they were being premised upon host countries' ownership and backed by donor support. Convincing host governments to incorporate refugees in development planning, however, proved difficult in most cases, limiting the extent of possible collaboration with UNHCR. Collaboration with migration agencies, on the other side, was limited due to a largely competitive relationship between the institutions. In debates on transit migration and irregular movements from Africa to Europe, for instance, IOM refused to cooperate with UNHCR as the organization had already set up various memoranda of understandings with governments of transit states over which UNHCR had only little authority. (Betts 2004:5; Betts 2009b:159–162)

'Wait and see' attitude

Lastly, many states took on a pervasive 'wait and see' attitude towards the Convention Plus process. Donor states in particular wanted to await progress in terms of practical work before they committed to the approach. Partly, this can be attributed to the lack of joined-up governance on the national level. Due to the separation of development issues from refugee issues, and the absence of coordination between different departments including development, home affairs and foreign affairs departments, many Geneva diplomats neither had a clear mandate nor a coherent stance from their government on the debated issues. The disparity in the limited time frame of the Convention Plus discussions and the speed at which governments were willing to commit to processes, finally did not allow sufficient time for states to get truly engaged with the concept's complex issues. Discussions, therefore, overall did not move beyond a Geneva-level debate. (Betts 2004:18–19; Betts 2005a:19, 21, 37)

Overall, Convention Plus in general, and TDA more specifically, did not lead to lasting and far-reaching changes in dealing with (prolonged) refugee situations, but disappeared from the agenda. Accordingly, the process has widely been regarded as unsuccessful in its attempt to find new and durable solutions for refugee protection and development in host countries.

3.4 Conclusion: Approaches linking situations of forced displacement and development – similarities and factors of success

Overall, as the preceding chapters have demonstrated, since the 1960s periodically occurring attempts have been made to link responses to situations of forced displacement with development interventions in host countries. While these approaches have taken place in different geographic and contextual settings, they share various similarities that are summarized in Table 1: Proceeding from the recognition that hosting refugees constituted a burden that affected the development of host countries and should not be shouldered by host countries alone, all of them were based on the same rationale, followed the same assumptions, and had similar objectives, overall revolving around the notion of turning refugees from a burden into some kind of benefit for the development of host countries. In order to achieve this goal, all approaches promoted and emphasized many of the same core principles. These ranged from a focus on ‘bridging the gap’ between humanitarian and development assistance, national ownership and the use of existing systems, to an emphasis on finding durable solutions, including through self-sufficiency, and inter-agency cooperation. Moreover, approaches advocated a new funding architecture and the aspect of additionality. Some of the approaches further made the link between the response and other issues in the wider political context as well as a strong follow-up mechanism part of their strategic approach. Overall, with these aspects recurring as central themes in all different approaches, they can be regarded as constituting the key characteristics of approaches trying to link refugee protection with development-oriented measures.

Table 1: Key characteristics of IZD, RAD and TDA

Key characteristics	Integrated Zonal Development	Refugee Aid and Development (ICARA)	Refugee Aid and Development (CIREFCA)	Targeted Development Assistance
Target group: refugees and locals	X	X	X	X
Burden-sharing	X	X	X	X
From burden to benefit	X	X	X	X
‘Bridging the gap’	X	X	X	X
Use of existing systems		X	X	X
Additionality	X	X	X	X
National ownership			X	X
Inter-agency cooperation	X	X	X	X
Whole-of-government approach				X
Innovative funding mechanisms		X	X	X
Follow-up mechanism			X	
Linkages to other issues			X	X
Durable solutions and self-sufficiency	X	X	X	X

Table by the author

As outlined in the previous chapters, despite these conceptual similarities, the outcome of the different approaches has not always been perceived as successful. Several aspects have been identified that positively or negatively affected the course and outcome of each approach, listed in Table 2. Factors associated with having contributed to the failure of one or more approaches included a certain vagueness and lack of clarity regarding the respective concept, the failure to sufficiently include the local population and long-term planning, the lack of absorptive capacities and political conflicts in host countries as well as a general lack of visibility and funding constraints. A flawed relationship between refugee hosting countries and the international community, related to diverging expectations and interests and the lack of political dialogue, as well as difficulties in the cooperation between UNHCR, UNDP and other organizations further resulted in a lacking commitment by different actors and contributed to a negative outcome of an approach.

Other factors, in contrast, were perceived as having contributed to a positive outcome of the respective approach. These included a high level of national ownership and commitment by host countries, donors, and the UN system, the embedding of the approach into a wider political context, a high degree of flexibility, and contextual factors such as the scope of the situation.

Table 2: Factors contributing to a positive or negative outcome of IZD, RAD and TDA

	Contributing Factors	As found in
Factors contributing to a positive outcome	High level of commitment and ownership by host states	RAD (CIREFCA)
	High level of commitment by UN system, in particular UNHCR and UNDP	RAD (CIREFCA)
	Embedding in wider regional and international political context	RAD (CIREFCA)
	High level of flexibility	RAD (CIREFCA)
	Scope and specific characteristics of refugee crisis	RAD (CIREFCA)
Factors contributing to a negative outcome	Lack of clear objectives and coordination between refugee and development organizations	IZD
	Lack of inclusion of local population	IZD
	Rushed implementation and lack of long-term planning	IZD
	Political conflicts in host countries	IZD
	Lack of clear definition of central aspects of approach	RAD (ICARA)
	Polarization in expectations and interests of host and donor states	RAD (ICARA)
	Lack of political dialogue between host countries and potential donors	RAD (ICARA)
	Structural relationship between UNHCR and UNDP	RAD (ICARA)
	Categories of assistance and lack of additionality	RAD (ICARA)
	Possibility of earmarking funds	RAD (ICARA)
	Lack of commitment by host and donor countries	RAD (ICARA)
	Lack of absorptive capacity in host countries	RAD (ICARA)
	Lack of commitment by UNDP	RAD (ICARA)

	Lack of visibility	RAD (ICARA)
	Flawed dynamic between refugee hosting countries and the international community	TDA
	Lack of credible linkages	TDA
	Difficult cooperation between UNHCR and other institutions	TDA
	'Wait and see' attitude of donors	TDA

Table by the author

Based on these findings, several central themes emerge that seem to be crucial for a successful course and outcome of an approach linking refugee protection and development of host countries. A first aspect revolves around the importance of a clear definition of central aspects of the response, including the underlying concept, key principles and objectives. A second critical aspect is a high level of commitment by all stakeholders involved, that is, host countries, donor countries, and UN agencies, in particular UNHCR and UNDP. For that, third, expectations and interests of all stakeholders, and ways how to deal with them in case they diverge, need to be identified in order to avoid flawed dynamics. For instance, this could be achieved through the establishment of credible linkages of different issues. Fourth, another crucial aspect is concerned with the establishment of a functioning relationship between refugee and development organizations, especially UNHCR and UNDP, that overcomes structural differences, thus affecting cooperation and coordination and ensuring the incorporation of central (refugee and development-related) aspects in the response. A fifth central issue-area revolves around the availability of sufficient and adequate funding, often related to aspects of visibility and additionality. A last critical aspect is related to a high level of flexibility to deal with emerging challenges and changes.

Besides these general factors of success, there are other aspects that, while potentially affecting the outcome of an approach, cannot be controlled. These include the scope and specific characteristics of a refugee situation as well as the overall political situation and resulting political conflicts in host countries.

4 The Concept of Resilience

In the last ten years, discussions to link refugee responses to development in host countries have once again re-emerged. Within that context, a new concept has increasingly found its way into the forced displacement-development debate, related to its emergence in humanitarian aid and development cooperation in general: With the beginning of the 2010s, the concept of ‘resilience’ arose as “the new big thing” in the field (Mitchell 2013:3). “Everybody [...] [was] talking about [it]” (Mitchell 2013:3); in 2013, it was declared the “probably sexiest new buzzword in international development” (Hussain 2013).

This rise of resilience was reflected in developments in the field of forced displacement as well: The concept was not only taken up by UNHCR that established a new ‘Division of Resilience and Solutions’ at its Headquarters in Geneva, but also found entry in discussions on the new Global Compact on Refugees. Moreover, several country strategies in response to concrete situations of forced displacement started to be based on the concept, first and foremost the ‘Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan in Response to the Syria Crisis’ (3RP).

In light of these developments, fundamental questions remain: What does ‘resilience’ really mean? What does it imply? And what distinguishes the concept from other strategies in the realms of international cooperation in general, and forced displacement and development in particular?

Deriving from the Latin verb *resilire*, meaning to ‘jump back, recoil’, ‘resilience’ has a simple meaning: According to the Oxford Dictionary, resilience is “the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties; toughness” or “the ability of a substance or object to spring back into shape; elasticity” (Oxford English Dictionary n.d.). Despite this seemingly pellucid definition, the concept of ‘building resilience’ remains unclear in many parts. The following subchapters try to shed some light on the issue, investigating the concept’s development in general and within the specific field of international development, its conceptual underpinnings and challenges, and its links to other concepts dealing with complex crises.

The chapter is structured as follows: First, the development of the concept of resilience is outlined, focusing on different perspectives on resilience in general, resilience-thinking in international relations and world politics, and resilience in the context of forced displacement. Then, general points of criticism regarding the application of resilience in the social world are examined, before turning to an investigation of resilience in humanitarian and development assistance. Here, focus is put on the concept’s rationale, its definition and objectives, and its conceptual framework, as well as on core principles when putting resilience into practice and challenges lying therein. Lastly, the chapter explores links to other concepts that follow similar approaches, have similar goals or have been used to address similar challenges.

4.1 Development of the concept of resilience

Despite its somewhat recent emergence in the field of international development, the concept of resilience is not new: It has long been applied in various disciplines, such as ecology (e.g. Holling 1973), physics and engineering infrastructure (e.g. Tierney and Bruneau 2007), psychology (e.g. Lee, Shen, and Tran 2009), behavioral sciences (e.g. Norris 2011), sports (e.g. Fletcher and Sarkar 2012), or economics (e.g. Briguglio et al. 2009). It has been applied to study many entities such as livelihoods, ecosystems, health services, or banking systems, and in relation to many different stresses and shocks. (Barrett and Constanas 2014:14625; Levine and Mosel 2014:3; Mitchell and Harris 2012:1)

4.1.1 Perspectives on resilience

When tracing the origin of resilience and its path of development into world politics, according to *Philippe Bourbeau* (Bourbeau 2018), most critical scholarship on resilience refers to a seminal article by *Jeremy Walker* and *Melissa Cooper* (Walker and Cooper 2011). In their article, *Walker* and *Cooper* argue that resilience came into life in “system ecology in the 1970s”, originating in the work of the

ecologist *Crawford S. Holling*, and has since “infiltrated” and “colonized” other disciplines and fields of study (Walker and Cooper 2011:144). As *Bourbeau* states, this analysis has been taken up by many authors who state as a fact that the concept was developed within the realms of ecology and that other disciplines have only recently “jumped on the resilience bandwagon” (Bourbeau 2018:22).

In contrast to this view, *Bourbeau* proposes a different genealogy of resilience. Rather than holding on to the idea of one development path of the concept, his proposal allows for the possibility of multiple and multidisciplinary origins of resilience and paths through which the concept has developed and found its way into world politics and international relations. (Bourbeau 2018:20, 24) Overall, he outlines four different pathways of resilience that have influenced resilience-thinking in these fields of study:

In 1807, *Thomas Young* referred to the resilience of material, proposing, arguably for the first time, that “the capacity of solid material to resist impulse ‘may properly be termed resilience’” (Young 1807:110, as cited in Bourbeau 2018:27). The idea of resilience as ‘bending but not breaking’ was picked up by another scientist, *Thomas Tredgold*, a few years later. Over the years, the notion of resilience as persistence, endurance, and robustness was adopted in several disciplines, in particular mechanical engineering, where it led to the development of the Charpy impact test, a standardized high-strain-rate test that provided a measure of a material’s notch robustness and that became particularly important in World War II when it contributed to the development of fabrication standards for welding steel structures in the construction of ships. (Bourbeau 2018:27)

In the 20th century, psychological literature coupled the ‘resiliency of the mind’ with the notion of individuals’ capacities to cope in the face of difficult circumstances. “Ego-resilience” was theorized as the “capacity to bounce back or to recoil” (Bourbeau 2018:25), with different authors linking resilience with different conceptions, such as ‘invulnerability’, ‘invincibility’, ‘protective factors’, ‘successful adaptation’, ‘positive adaptation’ and ‘pathways’ to resilience. According to *Bourbeau*, despite these different notions, resilience in this strand of literature was generally understood in individualistic terms: In that sense, resilience was seen as a characteristic that some individuals possess, allowing them to bounce back in face of trauma, while others do not. (Bourbeau 2018:25–26)

This understanding of resilience changed in the past two decades, regarded by *Bourbeau* as a third strand of the pathway of resilience, in which psychologists and social workers started to detach the concept from the notion of being a personal trait, and instead focused on a definition of resilience that stressed the notion of process and diversity. In this understanding, resilience was regarded as a dynamic process during which individuals adapted well in the face of adversity, trauma or other significant sources of stress. (Bourbeau 2018:30)

Lastly, *Bourbeau* concurs with *Walker / Cooper* in viewing ecology as another field that formulated its own comprehension of resilience, addressing the question under which conditions “an ecological system can be displaced from a fixed point of equilibrium and then return to that equilibrium once the shock has passed” (Bourbeau 2018:28). Like *Walker / Cooper*, *Bourbeau* refers to *C. S. Holling* who describes resilience as a “measure of the ability of [...] systems to absorb changes of state variables, driving variables, and parameters, and still persist” (Holling 1973:14).

Bourbeau’s analysis demonstrates the existence of various perspectives on resilience. Despite the lack of a consensus on how to overall theorize the concept, three main currents are widely recognized that categorize resilience: engineering resilience, ecological resilience and socio-ecological resilience.

Engineering resilience focuses on the conditions specifying how far a system can be displaced from a fixed point of equilibrium and still return to that equilibrium once the disturbance has passed. In this understanding, both the resistance to disturbance and the speed by which the system can absorb a shock and returns to equilibrium is the measure of resilience: The faster a system returns, the more resilient it is. (Bourbeau 2016:27; Davoudi 2012:300; Holling 1996:31)

Ecological resilience focuses on the capacity of a system to experience a disturbance but still be able to persist and function. Rather than focusing solely on the speed by which a system bounces back after a shock, ecological resilience focuses on the magnitude of the disturbance that can be absorbed. In contrast to engineering resilience that assumes only one equilibrium to which a system bounces back, ecological resilience assumes the existence of multiple equilibria, and the possibility of a system to adapt and bounce forward. (Bourbeau 2016:27; Davoudi 2012:301; Holling 1996:33)

Socio-ecological resilience, or evolutionary resilience, finally, regards the delineation between social and ecological systems as “artificial and arbitrary” (Bourbeau 2016:27). This entails a change of perception of the system: Instead of seeing it as orderly and predictable, it is regarded as complex, non-linear, and characterized by discontinuities. Therefore, it assumes that subjects, being faced with complex adversities, hardly ever return to where they were. (Davoudi 2012:302) As such, it challenges the idea of equilibrium existent in the other two versions of resilience. Rather, it focuses on resilience as a system’s ability not only to cope with a disturbance and return to normality, but to adapt, change, and, crucially, transform in response to shocks or stresses. In that sense, socio-ecological resilience focuses on the opportunities that arise in terms of the emergence of new trajectories. (Bourbeau 2016:27; Davoudi 2012:302; Folke et al. 2010)

Overall, thus, different currents or versions of resilience exist. While all three currents outlined above refer to resilient systems as the pursued outcome of a reaction of a system to a shock, the understanding of what exactly that means differs: For engineering resilience, comprising the notion of bouncing back to a fixed state, the pursued resilient outcome is persistence. Ecological resilience, in turn, goes one step further. Incorporating the idea of bouncing forward to an improved, yet fixed, state, the resilient outcome here is adjustment. Lastly, socio-ecological resilience rejects the idea of equilibrium altogether, instead focusing on progress and change. Accordingly, it refers to transformation as resilient outcome. Overall, thus, the sought for outcome in all versions ultimately is resilience – which, however, means something different and takes on different forms, depending on the respective version of resilience-thinking.

4.1.2 Resilience-thinking in international relations and world politics

Even though the field of international relations and world politics has been “a latecomer to this field of research” (Bourbeau 2015:377), resilience-thinking has still found its way into the discipline. Again, the engagement with the concept has followed different paths.

Various scholars have linked resilience with global governance issues. Here, in particular the notion of resilience as persistence, endurance and robustness as applied in engineering resilience can be found, with resilience being used to explain the persistence or endurance of an institution, a social norm, or other phenomena. For instance, resilience has been used in investigations on the persistence and endurance of institutions in the face of exogenous challenges (Hasenclever, Mayer, and Rittberger 1997), of authoritarian regimes in spite of democratic pressures (Case 2004; Byman and Lind 2010; Gilley 2003; Kamrava 1998; Nathan 2003; Shambagh 2008; Slater 2003), of nationalism in the face of regionalism (Dieckhoff and Jaffrelot 2004), or of national sovereignty against global dynamics (Ansell and Weber 1999).

Other scholars have investigated resilience through its relationship with neoliberalism. *Hall and Lamont*, for instance, apply the concept of resilience to investigate how communities and nations sustain their well-being in the face of challenges provoked by neoliberalism. (Hall and Lamont 2013) *Evans and Reid*, on the other hand, focus on resilience as a form of reasoning fully compatible with the neoliberal model of economy: They argue that, by focusing on risk to and care for the self, the concept distinguishes between those who have the means to secure themselves from risk and those who have not, creating and reinforcing regimes of power based on and marking vast inequalities. (Evans and Reid 2013) The notion of resilience as a by-product of neoliberal mode of governance is picked up by various other critical theorists, viewing resilience as “representative of the continuity of a state’s rationality, interest, and dominance” (Bourbeau 2015:379). *Jonathan Joseph*, for instance, argues that resilience is best

understood in the context of “neoliberal governmentality”, in that it encourages active citizenship and puts citizens in charge of their own social and economic well-being, rather than for them to rely on the state (Joseph 2013:51). *David Chandler*, on the other hand, contends that the emergence of resilience is a “radically distinctive approach to governing complexity” in response to the limitations of neoliberal frameworks (Chandler 2014:56). Referring to neoliberal rationalities that aim to direct market and state levers instrumentally, he argues that resilience-thinking suggests that neoliberalism “still bears the traits of liberal ‘hubris’ in its contradictory or paradoxical assertions that complex life can be simplified and potentially known by governing power”, as opposed to resilience-thinking which “claims to have the solution to the apparent conundrum of governing” (Chandler 2014:63).

Resilience has also found its way into concrete policies and government initiatives. One area in this regard constitutes the field of terrorism and counterterrorism, in which efforts to improve preparedness as well as the development of emergency management infrastructure have intensified in the past decade. Efforts are often framed around the promotion of ‘domestic resilience’ in the face of terrorism and violent extremism. In various countries, resilience has found entry into key security statements, including in policy papers in the UK (2010), Canada (2011), the United States (2010), France (2008, 2013), the Netherlands (2010) and Australia (2011). (Bourbeau 2015:378)

Lastly, resilience has gained traction within other subfields of International Relations, including international development, humanitarian assistance, and disaster risk reduction. Several scholars have investigated resilience of individuals and societies in the face of wars, conflicts or other sources of uncertainty, focusing for instance on specific geographic areas (Sendzimir, Reij, and Magnuszewski 2011) or urban violence (Davies 2012; Muggah and Savage 2012). Others have focused on the question how collaboration between different actors could promote resilience to crisis (Goldstein 2011). Besides these investigations, in the early 2010s, several major humanitarian and development actors in the broadest sense increasingly started to talk about resilience, including different UN agencies such as UN-Habitat, FAO and UNDP or the World Bank as well as other international organizations. At the same time, various state actors such as the EU or governments of single countries, including Germany and the United Kingdom, incorporated the concept in policy papers and strategies on international development. This way, the concept found entrance into a wide range of topics, related to the respective mandates and focus areas of the different organizations or actors: from the resilience of cities to the resilience for climate change adaptation, resilience in crisis prone countries or resilience in order to protect development progress. (Bourbeau 2015:377)

The British government’s ‘Humanitarian Emergency Response Review’ (DFID 2011a) is widely seen as the trigger that brought resilience into prominence in the specific field of humanitarian aid and development cooperation. (Fan 2013:2; Folkema, Ibrahim, and Wilkinson 2013:6; Hussain 2013) The review placed resilience “at the heart of [...]its approach both to longer-term development and to emergency response” (DFID 2011a:4). Only one month after the publication of the report, resilience became a core theme in the research program of the Humanitarian Policy Group (HPG) at the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), the self-proclaimed “leading independent think tank on international development and humanitarian issues” of the UK (ODI 2019a). (Levine et al. 2012:1) The research program focused specifically on the framework and the conceptual analysis of resilience, taking into account the thinking on resilience of several agencies and research institutions. (ODI 2019b) In the following years, resilience not only featured prominently in various strategies, initiatives and programs of different organizations in the context of humanitarian aid and development cooperation, but also arrived at discussions at the global level, being included in several of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. (UN 2015)

4.1.3 Resilience in the context of forced displacement

Following this development, the concept of resilience also found entrance into the context of dealing with situations of forced displacement. The encounter of resilience with the field thereby began in 2012, when the EU picked up on the concept in its ‘Approach to Resilience – Learning from Food Security

Crises' (EC 2012). Expressing the commitment to "build[...] resilience of vulnerable countries and populations" (EC 2012:2), the follow-up 'Action Plan for Resilience in Crisis Prone Countries 2013-2020' (EC 2013) emphasized the need for a new approach to emergency and development support. Resilience in the context of forced migration ranked prominently as one aspect in a list of priority interventions focusing on "innovation, learning and advocacy" (EC 2013:12). Overall, the aspect comprised four goals: building a body of evidence on the effectiveness of resilience approaches; reach a common understanding and application of the resilience approach with other donors; incorporate the concept of resilience in key documents at the international level; and test and evaluate new approaches and techniques for resilience. (EC 2013:12)

In the following months and years, the concept found its way into an increasing number of strategy papers of various governments' development departments. While these strategy papers did not focus specifically on forced displacement, they still often included the sub-field. Germany's Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), for instance, defined increased resilience of people and institutions as the overarching aim of its 'Strategy on Transitional Development Assistance' (BMZ 2013:6), which was seen as an instrument to bridge immediate, medium-term and long-term measures in emergency and development responses. In that context, BMZ's strategy also promoted resilience in the context of forced displacement, for instance in the context of (re-)integrating refugees and internally displaced persons, supporting host populations, and capacity-development for conflict transformation. (BMZ 2013:13)

Besides the inclusion of the concept in relation to forced displacement in these strategy papers of governments, up until that point the concept of resilience had not been applied as a specific approach in response to a concrete situation of forced displacement. This changed over the course of 2013 and 2014, when a plan emerged that for the first time explicitly linked the two issues: In November 2013, the UN agreed to a shift in its on-going, primarily humanitarian response to the Syrian refugee crisis, and to launch a collective 'resilience-based development response'. This intention was put into a concrete plan after over a year of planning: In December 2014, UNDP and UNHCR launched the 'Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan in Response to the Syria Crisis' (3RP) (UNDP and UNHCR 2014a), putting resilience right at the center of a new approach on how to deal with a refugee situation.¹⁴

Two years later, the concept found entry also into the 'New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants' which put resilience in the context of improving self-reliance of refugees and affected populations (UN General Assembly 2016:8, 15). While the Declaration did not expand on the concept of resilience further, UNHCR picked up on it in an Executive Committee's Report that outlined not only the linkages between resilience and self-reliance, but also UNHCR's role in supporting both. In that context, UNHCR understood resilience as a "'linked concept' that presupposes and extends self-reliance" (Oliver and Boyle 2019:12), stating that "[s]elf-reliance can lead to resilience, while resilience is necessary to ensure that progress towards self-reliance is not eroded or reversed in the face of sudden-onset shocks and longer-term trends, such as climate change" (UNHCR 2017c:3). In that notion, according to *Oliver / Boyle*, UNHCR thus linked the resilience of individuals and communities as "idealized neoliberal subjects", that is, resilience based on their adaption in the face of shocks, for instance supported through livelihood initiatives, with "a more aggressive agenda for developmental interventions at the local, urban, and national scale" in order to prepare host countries to better "absorb and adapt to sudden influxes of displaced persons" (Oliver and Boyle 2019:13). As such, *Oliver / Boyle* argue, UNHCR did not apply the "'classical' articulation of resilience in which individualized subjects 'bounce back' to a pre-existing or bettered state in uncertain circumstances due to their inner capacities but a post-classical version in which the subject and the environment are linked in an 'interactive process of relational adaptation' (Chandler 2014:7) that is envisioned to be a mutually-conditioning and upward-spiraling process of individual and local improvement" (Oliver and Boyle 2019:13).

¹⁴ For a detailed overview of the development process of the 3RP and its incorporation of resilience see Chapter 5.

Following that pathway, resilience has found its way not only into further concrete UNHCR strategies in different country contexts, for instance in Malaysia (UNHCR 2019c) or Uganda (Schiltz et al. 2019:39), but was also picked up through the establishment of a new ‘Division of Resilience and Solutions’ at UNHCR Headquarters in Geneva in February 2018. Lastly, the concept found entry in the Global Compact on Refugees adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in December 2018, referring to the resilience of host communities as well as refugees, albeit not elaborating on the concept further. (UN General Assembly 2018a:12–13)

4.2 Criticism of resilience

Despite the traction of resilience in several fields, various scholars have pointed out a number of critical aspects regarding the transfer of resilience to politics or the social world.

First, resilience approaches often assume that the shock or disturbance affecting a system or individual is inherently negative, and that resilience is about positive adaptation. In that sense, resilience is understood as always good and to be promoted. However, in social, political, or economic terms, resilience is not necessarily always a desirable feature, but can in contrast even constitute an obstacle to positive change. (Bourbeau 2013:8–9) *Davoudi* links this issue to the purpose of resilience, raising the question of resilience-building to what ends. What is desirable, in the social context, is always tied to normative judgements. (Davoudi 2012:305) In that context, displaying an a priori normative bias of resilience thus seems to be counterproductive.

Second, resilience is often regarded as an ‘all or nothing’ concept: Either there is resilience or there is not. This understanding lacks not only the possibility of the existence of different scales, but also of different types of resilience. (Bourbeau 2013:9–10) This oversimplification of issues leads to further challenges related to a system’s boundary: On the one hand, the analysis of resilience ‘of something to something’ inevitably leads to exclusionary practices in the social context, when the boundaries of a system are defined. (Davoudi 2012:305) At the same time, conceptualizing a bounded system leads to the artificial separation of a system from wider scales and processes. In both cases, the complexities of societies are ignored. (MacKinnon and Derickson 2013:261) This applies also when a linear conception of causality is assumed, failing to take into account the complexities of structures and agents in the social world. (Bourbeau 2013:10)

Another point of criticism refers to the general lack of clarity what resilience really means. Due to its “relatively indistinct and all-embracing sense” (Béné et al. 2014:605), authors argue that the concept itself might become meaningless and an “empty signifier that can easily be filled with any meaning to justify any specific goal” (Weichselgartner and Kelman 2014:1). The sometimes even contradictory meanings of resilience can lead not only to confusion about intentions and expected outcomes (Harris, Chu, and Ziervogel 2018:199), but also relates to normative aspects of power and politics and to the question who decides for whom resilience is to be achieved and what a desired outcome is. In the process of resilience-building, some people gain while others lose, the latter often affecting the most vulnerable segments of society. In that context, scholars criticize that the concept fails to pay enough attention to issues of justice and fairness both in decision-making and in the distribution of benefits and burdens. (Davoudi 2012:306) In the same manner, the terminology of resilience is perceived as potentially favoring those who already have advantages and as contributing to maintaining existing power balances and supporting an unjust status quo. (Fainstein 2015; Harris, Chu, and Ziervogel 2018:200)

In that same line of argument, academics criticize the depoliticization of resilience that exists when the key to resilience is seen in the “self-actualising individual or community with access to market opportunities” (Walsh-Dilley and Wolford 2015:175). Regarding resilience as the attempt to resolve vulnerability through market mechanisms, following neoliberal assumptions, the concept is criticized for failing to address structural conditions of vulnerability and insecurity, and instead putting individuals in charge of achieving ‘resilience’. (Walsh-Dilley and Wolford 2015:175, 177) As *Chandler* notes, the resilience paradigm puts “the agency of those most in need of assistance at the center, stressing a

program of empowerment and capacity-building” (Chandler 2012:216). In this conception, resilience is being criticized for serving specific ideological ends, in particular giving scientific legitimacy to neoliberalism. (Joseph 2013; Olsson et al. 2015; Walker and Cooper 2011)

Taking this aspect one step further, *Haldrup and Rosén* see in resilience and its central notion of capacity a new pragmatism that offers “a convenient exit from [...] responsibility”: In terms of international development, it “recasts the role of the Western state from builder to facilitator, and hands over the ultimate responsibility to those who are facilitated for” (Haldrup and Rosén 2017:359). In the name of ownership and bottom-up approaches, responsibility for dealing with hardships as well as the success of strategies is thus put on local partners and the recipient state.

Overall, thus, resilience is far from being a concept without complications. On the contrary, its application in politics and the social world is rather ambiguous, entailing several potential pitfalls. This is especially true for fields that are directly concerned with vulnerable people. Even though not necessarily on purpose, the concept here involves the danger of doing more harm than good if its application is not thoroughly thought through, and is not including and balancing the voices and interests of all.

4.3 Resilience in humanitarian and development assistance

Despite these potential pitfalls and points of criticism, resilience has found its way into the field of humanitarian aid and development cooperation. Various scholars have attempted to accompany the practical implementation of the concept and provide a scientific basis for its programming. Among them are *Andrew Mitchell* and *Timothy Frankenberger*, who, with others, have both provided several comprehensive studies on the conceptual framework of resilience and resilience-programming (Frankenberger et al. 2012; Frankenberger et al. 2013; Frankenberger et al. 2014; Mitchell and Harris 2012; Mitchell 2013). Research conducted in the context of ODI’s Humanitarian Policy Group research program, in particular by *Simon Levine* and *Irina Mosel*, further add to the picture (Levine et al. 2012; Levine 2014b; Levine 2014a; Levine and Mosel 2014; Mosel and Levine 2014). Based on their and others’ findings, the following subchapters investigate the rationale, definition and objectives, and conceptual underpinnings of resilience in international development, as well as its principles and challenges in programming.

4.3.1 Resilience in humanitarian and development assistance: rationale

What are the reasons that resilience has become such a prominent and wide-spread concept in the field of development cooperation and humanitarian aid? The answer to this question can be found in the strategy papers, reviews, and reports themselves and is two-fold: First, in all of them resilience is regarded as a way to deal more effectively with crises, prevent unacceptable levels of human suffering and increase the capacity of vulnerable people to deal better with (recurrent) shocks and risks. Second, the focus on resilience has been fueled by funding scarcity and the pursuit to reduce the costs of ongoing emergency assistance. (Frankenberger et al. 2014:1)

Both aspects go hand in hand: In recent years, both the frequency and intensity of natural and man-made disasters have increased, posing major threats to long-term development, growth and poverty reduction, and affecting especially the poor and most vulnerable. In 2013, the Council of the EU assumed that this trend was “likely to continue given the impacts of climate change and other factors that exacerbate poverty, fragility and vulnerability” (Council of EU 2013:1). Accordingly, the number of people affected by these disasters was considered likely to increase, if no measures were taken to interrupt these developments. In order to diminish these numbers and save people from suffering, it was considered the international community’s responsibility to find new approaches to deal with these crises that went beyond meeting immediate needs, acknowledging that previous humanitarian assistance efforts and development initiatives had not succeeded in enabling vulnerable people to adapt to changes due to shocks and stresses in a way that “substantially reduce[d] the risks associated with future shocks and

stresses” (Frankenberger et al. 2014:1). Resilience was seen as a new way to address this challenge, ensuring that disturbances would not lead to a “long-term downturn in development progress” (Mitchell and Harris 2012:1). Overall, a resilience-based approach was perceived as being able to constitute a “more coordinated and effective response to large-scale events” that, in the long term, would prepare people (and systems) to deal better with future crises (Frankenberger et al. 2014:1). (Barrett and Conostas 2014:14625; Council of EU 2013:1; EC 2013:1; Levine et al. 2012:1)

This leads to the second aspect why the concept of resilience emerged in humanitarian aid and development cooperation besides this somewhat altruistic reason: In view of the increasing number of recurrent crises and disasters and the coherently growing number of people in need, the costs of emergency responses were “rising and [had] become increasingly unaffordable” (EC 2013:1). While humanitarian assistance was and is undoubtedly necessary to save lives and contain a disaster, it does not prevent recurrent or future crises that trigger the need for new emergency responses or long-lasting development aid. The frustration over the repeated need for humanitarian and development assistance, often in the same place and for the same people, invoked discussions within the international community to rethink existing approaches to complex crises and to find new ways of dealing with them, in a manner that would go beyond meeting immediate needs. This was prompted by studies that found that “the cost of immediate damage to life and property, coupled with the resources spent on emergency response, [...] [could] be several times greater than effective [...] development programming” (Frankenberger et al. 2014:1). The solution to these deliberations was seen in the concept of resilience with its focus on building the ability of individuals, communities, or regions to prepare for and to manage crises better, thus significantly reducing the costs of recurrent emergency and development aid in the long term. (Barrett and Conostas 2014:14625; EC 2013:1; Council of EU 2013:1; HLEF 2012:1; Levine et al. 2012:1; Levine and Mosel 2014:1)

4.3.2 Resilience in humanitarian and development assistance: definition and objectives

Despite the common agreement not only by the UN and governments, but also by donors and NGOs that the concept of resilience should be a central feature in the endeavor to find new ways of dealing with complex crises, a common understanding of what ‘resilience’ really meant, including a shared definition of the term and the concept, remained lacking. (Levine et al. 2012:2)

Different existing definitions of resilience, albeit used in the same context, refer to or focus on different aspects of the concept, address different entities – from individuals to countries –, and look at different socio-economic levels. According to the Humanitarian Emergency Response Review, resilience “is about being prepared for disasters, and having good systems for responding to them” (DFID 2011a:7). The EU defines resilience as “the ability of an individual, a household, a community, a country or a region to withstand, to adapt, and to quickly recover from stresses and shocks” (EC 2013:3), while *Barrett and Conostas*, who advance a theory of resilience as it applies to the challenges of international development, regard resilience as “the capacity over time of a person, household or other aggregate unit to avoid poverty in the face of various stressors and in the wake of myriad shocks” (Barrett and Conostas 2014:14262).

The lack of a common definition makes it difficult to grasp the concept and allows people or organizations to decide for themselves what falls under the headline of ‘resilience’ and where to focus on. (Levine and Mosel 2014:3) However, despite these differences, most definitions of the concept of resilience in the context of humanitarian assistance and development cooperation include considerations on several common elements (summarized in Table 3). One of them is the exposure to a shock or disturbance as a starting point, and the likelihood or risk that people, communities, or countries will be hit by them. The second common element is vulnerability, referring to how badly people or systems will suffer if affected by a shock. The third aspect relates to the capacity of the affected individuals or systems to cope with, and adapt to, a changed environment, and the ability to maintain an acceptable level of

welfare (people), or effective functioning (systems) during and after the shock. The last aspect refers to recovery and the capacity of people and other entities to bounce back after a shock and return to their previous, or an even better, level of well-being or functioning. (HLEF 2012:1; Levine and Mosel 2014:3)

Table 3: Common elements in definitions of 'resilience'

Common elements in definitions of 'resilience'
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exposure to shock / disturbance and likelihood that people, communities, countries, or systems are hit by them
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aspect of vulnerability and how badly people / systems will suffer if affected by a shock
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity of affected individuals / systems to cope / adapt to changed environment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aspect of recovery and capacity of individuals / systems to return to their previous or a better level of well-being / functioning

Table by the author

These common aspects help to at least make the general meaning and direction of the concept more tangible. They also help to sift out the overall objectives behind the concept: Simply put, building or strengthening resilience aims at enabling people, systems, or institutions to deal with the impacts and consequences of (ongoing and future) shocks more effectively, in order to uphold the same, or even increase, the standard of well-being even in times of crises. More concretely, building resilience aims at strengthening people's or system's potential and capacities to absorb shocks, adapt to new situations (due to shocks or stresses), or transform, so that the shock no longer has an impact. Altogether, this leads to the overall objective of building resilience, namely, to improve the prospects for sustainable development in the medium and long-term. (BMZ 2013:6–7; OECD 2014:iii)

As such, resilience is often understood as opposed to vulnerability, with resilience being the outcome of measures to decrease vulnerability. Overall, resilience-thinking tries to understand the processes behind vulnerabilities, looking at disturbances not in isolation, but putting them in the wider context of both their causes and consequences. This focus on both immediate and long-term vulnerabilities and capacities appeals to both humanitarian and development actors: Strengthening resilience is a “conceivable goal for actors on both sides. Humanitarian assistance deals with shocks, development cooperation tackles underlying causes of shocks” (Kocks et al. 2018:41). As such, resilience is often regarded as a way to link the two issues, with the potential of reforming both types of assistance in a way that they can work more closely together, thus changing the way how aid is delivered. (Levine 2014a:2; Mosel and Levine 2014:4–5)

4.3.3 Resilience in humanitarian and development assistance: conceptual framework

In light of, or despite, the lack of a common definition and common objectives of resilience and resilience-building as outlined above, some scholars argue that developing frameworks for resilience is not necessary, or even detrimental, to the discussion on resilience. Most organizations and researchers, however, still find them useful to get a comprehensive picture of the elements contributing to and impeding resilience.

Opponents of conceptual frameworks argue that frameworks on resilience generally have not helped to introduce clarity on the concept, as frameworks by different actors have combined different, and sometimes even mutually exclusive, characteristics. Furthermore, they claim that frameworks try to pin down a concept that is highly impalpable and can be applied in so many different contexts that they might not necessarily contain an unchanging quintessence of meaning that is worth putting into a generalizing framework. Lastly, opponents to frameworks criticize that frameworks obscure or leave out issues that would need more theoretical attention. (Levine and Mosel 2014:5–6)

Supporters of conceptual frameworks on resilience, in contrast, argue that a framework helps to understand how well-being and livelihoods are affected by shocks and stresses, which key leverage

points can be used in developing a theory of change, and which processes need to be passed through on the trajectory from shocks to greater resilience. (Frankenberger et al. 2014:2)

Following the argumentation of the latter group, this chapter outlines a conceptual framework on resilience to create a better understanding of the concept in the context of humanitarian and development assistance.

When analyzing different scholars' and actors' understandings, resilience frameworks always contain several sequential steps of a process: the normal day-to-day situation in a given geographical entity as a starting point, disturbances that interrupt the normal progress of the situation and lead to exposure, the capacity of the state, nation, community or individual to handle these disturbances and the resulting reaction to the disturbances, and the overall outcome of the previous phases. (DFID 2011b:7; Frankenberger et al. 2014:2–3) Drawing mostly on the remarks of *Frankenberger et al.* (Frankenberger et al. 2012; Frankenberger et al. 2013), *Béné et al.* (Béné et al. 2012), and *DFID* (DFID 2011b), these different stages can be defined as follows (depicted in Figure 1):

Starting point / baseline

The baseline or starting point of a resilience framework marks the 'normal' day-to-day situation of a given subject in a given geographical entity. It encompasses the political, social, economic, environmental, historical, demographic, religious, conflictual and policy context of a situation that can be affected by disturbances, and that can themselves affect the ability of the subject to deal with such disturbances. (Frankenberger et al. 2012:3)

Disturbances

In the next stage of a resilience framework, this 'normal' situation is disturbed. Disturbances can be defined as either shocks or stresses. Shocks are defined as "sudden events that impact on the vulnerability of the system and its components" (DFID 2011b:8), for example outbreaks of fighting or violence, earthquakes, or shocks related to economic volatility. Stresses, on the other hand, are defined as "long-term trends that undermine the potential of a given system or process and increase the vulnerability of actors within it" (DFID 2011b:8). Stresses therefore include demographic changes, political instability, loss of agricultural production, or economic decline. Multiple stresses can be cumulative and result in shocks, and often countries, communities or individuals face several interconnected shocks and stresses at the same time.

Furthermore, disturbances can be idiosyncratic or covariate. Idiosyncratic shocks and stresses affect only certain individuals or households, and one subject's experience is not related to that of other subjects. Idiosyncratic shocks therefore include individual events, such as property loss, illness of a family member, job loss, crop failure etc. Covariate shocks on the other hand affect many households, whole communities, regions or even entire countries. These large-scale disturbances include armed conflicts, natural disasters, financial crises, epidemic diseases, social unrest etc., to which almost everyone in a community or region is vulnerable. (DFID 2011b:7–8; PEP-CBMS 2011; World Bank Group 2016)

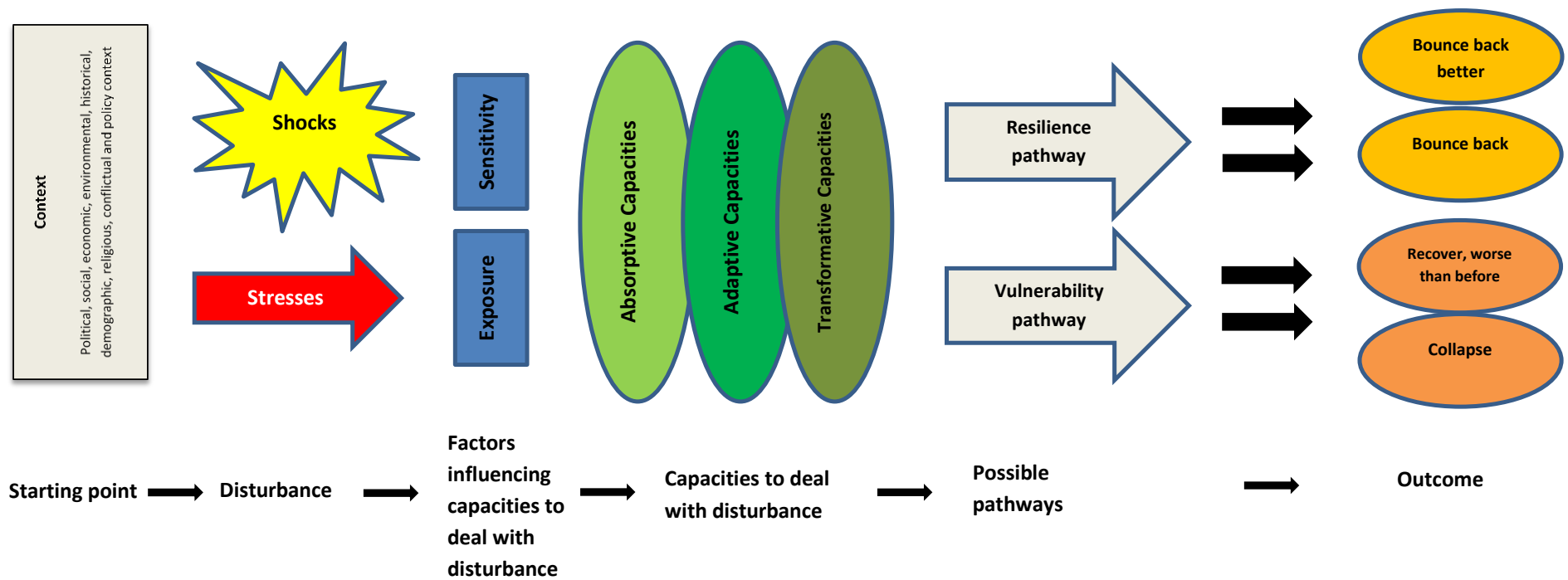


Figure 1: Conceptual framework of resilience¹⁵

¹⁵ Figure by the author, adapted from Béné et al. 2012:21; DFID 2011b:7; Frankenberger et al. 2012:2.

Capacities to deal with disturbances

The third stage in a resilience framework addresses the way how a given subject that has been affected by one or several shocks or stresses deals with this new situation. The ability of countries, communities or individuals to cope with occurring disturbances depends on different aspects: the level of exposure, the level of sensitivity, and the level of existing absorptive, adaptive, and transformative capacities.

Exposure to risk is defined as “the magnitude or frequency of shocks or the degree of stress” (DFID 2011b:8) disturbing the normal progress of a situation. In other words, the more frequent shocks occur, or the more severe stresses are, the greater is the exposure to risk. Exposure to conflict, for example, could be measured by the size and frequency of violent events. (DFID 2011b:8)

Sensitivity “is the degree to which an individual, household or community will be affected by a given shock or stress” (Frankenberger et al. 2012:3). Sensitivity depends on different factors; in the case of individuals these include for instance social status, skills sets, or political influence. For example, women or other vulnerable groups such as children are often more sensitive to risks. Greater sensitivity therefore implies a lower degree of resilience and vice versa. (DFID 2011b:8; Frankenberger et al. 2012:3)

Absorptive, adaptive, and transformative capacities of communities, households and individuals are three distinct, but interrelated capacities that mutually reinforce each other. All three capacities exist at different levels (individual, household, community, state etc.) and describe different ways of coping with disturbances.

Absorptive capacity is regarded as the ability of an entity “to minimize exposure to shocks and stresses through preventative measures and appropriate coping strategies to avoid permanent negative impacts” (Frankenberger et al. 2013:7). Therefore, absorptive capacity includes both strategies to prevent exposure to shocks and stresses (ex ante) and strategies applied when already exposed (ex post) in order to moderate the impacts of shocks. Examples of absorptive capacity include early harvest or delaying debt repayments. (Béné et al. 2012:21; Frankenberger et al. 2013:10; OECD 2014:6)

Adaptive capacity is defined as “the ability of a system to adjust, modify or change its characteristics and actions to moderate potential future damage and to take advantage of opportunities, so that it can continue to function without major qualitative changes in function or structural identity” (OECD 2014:6). In other words, adaptive capacity means making “proactive and informed choices” about alternative strategies that are adapted to changing conditions (Frankenberger et al. 2013:10). Examples include the diversification of livelihoods or including the private sector in delivering basic services. (OECD 2014:6)

Finally, *transformative capacity* is “the ability to create a fundamentally new system so that the shock will no longer have any impact” (OECD 2014:7). This becomes necessary if economic, social or ecological structures make the existing system untenable, and includes changes in governance mechanisms, policies and regulations, infrastructure, community networks, and formal and informal social protection mechanisms. Concrete examples are the introduction of conflict resolution measures, new directions of households in making a living, or the change of a region from an agrarian to a resource extraction economy. (Béné et al. 2012:22; Frankenberger et al. 2013:7; OECD 2014:7)

Together, the different capacities can be seen as “the three structuring elements” when talking about “strengthening resilience” (Béné et al. 2012:21). However, it is important to stress that resilience is not the result of only one of the capacities, but of all three of them, with each capacity leading to a different, albeit resilient, outcome: persistence, gradual adjustment, or transformational change. (Béné et al. 2012:21)

The different capacities or responses to shocks can thereby be linked to the intensity of the shock: The lower the intensity of a shock, the more likely the subject (at the individual, household, community,

state etc. level) will be able “to resist it effectively” and “to absorb its impacts without consequences for its function, status, or state” (Béné et al. 2012:21). Persistence, as the outcome of absorptive capacity, can therefore be seen as “the ideal outcome” after a crisis, as the existing capacities and resources have effectively countered negative implications of shocks (Norris et al. 2008:132).

When absorptive capacities are exceeded, or the intensity of a shock is or gets higher, the subject will resort to adaptive capacities. Thereby, as outlined above, the subject makes incremental adjustments to a new situation in order to continue to function without major qualitative changes in status, state, or structural identity. These adjustments often do not happen as a response to one specific shock or stress, but rather to a broad combination of factors, making it mostly impossible to disentangle the aspects the subject responds to. The fact that adaptation is a continuous, incremental process makes it even more difficult to track or measure adjustments. Furthermore, adaptations can be individual or collective, and can take place at multiple levels. This means that adjustments at one level can affect adaptation at another level, and that the response to a shock might be understood as an adaptation for one subject, but as part of an absorptive response for another. (Béné et al. 2012:22)

If the intensity of a shock is even greater, and adaptive capacity measures do not suffice any more to deal with the disturbance, the subject will have to resort to transformative capacities. This process of adjustment and change is not incremental any longer, but involves major alterations and transformations of the subject’s primary structure, function and nature. These shifts can be so fundamental that they involve the challenging of prevailing assumptions, beliefs, identities and stereotypes and the questioning of existing values – altogether challenging the status quo of a situation. This process can be deliberate and instigated by the actors involved, or can be forced upon them by significant changes in environmental or socioeconomic conditions. Either way, to be successful, the process needs to overcome enormous barriers, as change often concerns entrenched and persistent systems that are based on culture, self-perception and the cognition of others, expressed through economic, social and environmental policies, legislation and practices, and maintained and protected by powerful interests. (Béné et al. 2012:22–23)

Finally, *Béné et al.* (2012: 23) establish the assumption that the costs of transaction and the risks associated to changes increase moving from absorptive, to adaptive and finally to transformative measures. Thus, the more the system changes, the higher the transactional costs.

As a last aspect with regards to capacities, *Frankenberger et al.* (2012) stress that building resilience through absorptive, adaptive and transformative capacities must not be equated with coping capacity. While coping capacity refers to “the ability of households [or other subjects] to return to their previous state in the wake of disaster”, resilience-programming in international development goes beyond that and specifically aims to induce steps to reduce the exposure of subjects to shocks in the future “so that they can [...] continually improve their wellbeing [or functioning]” and are better prepared to handle future crises (Frankenberger et al. 2012:2).

Reaction to disturbance / outcome

The last stage of a resilience framework deals with the final outcome of a situation that has been affected by shocks and / or stresses. Generally, there are two possible pathways: The first one is the desired resilience pathway, meaning that a subject is able to use its different capacities effectively and to manage the disturbance it has been exposed to. The second pathway is the vulnerability pathway, meaning that a subject is not able to use its capacities to manage shocks or stresses, overall leading to greater vulnerability. In both cases, the term ‘pathway’ emphasizes the idea that any outcome must be viewed as a process rather than a static state. (Frankenberger et al. 2012:3)

Following the argumentation of these two possible pathways, the overall outcome of a situation can be roughly divided into four possible scenarios: In the best case, the subject ‘bounces back better’ after dealing with a shock or stress. In this case, capacities are strengthened, and sensitivity and exposure to

disturbances are reduced. All in all, the subject comes out of a crisis stronger than before and is better equipped to deal with future disturbances. Accordingly, this scenario is the desired outcome of all resilience-programming. Another outcome could be for the subject to ‘bounce back’ to the conditions that existed before the situation was disturbed. In that case, the system has dealt with the crisis successfully, and is as well-equipped to deal with future crises as before. In both ways, resilience is strengthened; therefore, it is referred to as the ‘resilience pathway’. Alternatively, the outcome might be for the subject to ‘recover, but worse than before’, meaning that capacities to deal with disturbances are reduced, weakening the system to deal with future crises. In the worst case, the subject bounces not back at all, but ‘collapses’, equating a dramatic reduction of capacities to cope in the future. The latter two courses of action can be viewed as embarking on the ‘vulnerability pathway’. (DFID 2011b:9)

Finally, and irrespective of the outcome, the new situation will influence and change the overall context and risk landscape – concluding the framework and leading back to its beginning. (OECD 2014:4)

4.3.4 Putting resilience into practice

Since the emergence of the concept in humanitarian aid and development assistance, resilience has often been communicated as a political agenda by donors and other key actors. Due to the multiple interpretations of what resilience is, and the resulting lack of a coherent understanding, however, it is not surprising that there is a lack of agreement on how to put the concept into practice. (Mitchell 2013:1) Nevertheless, more and more humanitarian and development organizations have started to include resilience in their programming. *Frankenberger et al.* have analyzed various of these strategies applied by NGOs in order to derive common ideas and principles (Frankenberger et al. 2014). Complemented with the findings of other authors who have investigated programs and strategy papers of international organizations and agencies, among them *Barret and Conostas, Levine and Mosel* and *Mitchell* (Barrett and Conostas 2014; Levine and Mosel 2014; Mitchell 2013), some common overarching characteristics and principles of resilience-programming can be distilled even if a universal understanding of the concept remains missing.

Keeping the framework of resilience in mind, it is important to locate resilience-programming at the right point in this framework. Resilience-programming cannot, per se, prevent shocks or stresses to occur. However, it can intervene at another stage: It addresses the different capacities of a system to deal with disturbances. In order to do so it is necessary to develop a theory of change that determines leverage points needed to achieve the desired effect. For that reason, resilience-programming calls for a comprehensive situation analysis.

Being termed differently by different actors – for example, “participatory assessment of complexity and root causes” (Folkema, Ibrahim, and Wilkinson 2013:10), “resilience system analysis” (OECD 2014), “strategic resilience assessment” (Mercy Corps 2015:4), or “joint problem analysis” (USAID 2012:19), these analyses present the “cornerstone for determining how to integrate resilience” (Mitchell 2013:13) as they investigate the situation in which the program is to be implemented in all its complexity, considering the total risk landscape at each layer of society. In order to facilitate good resilience-programming, they focus on several questions:

The first one asks about the *resilience of what*. This refers to the system that is to be targeted in the resilience program, both referring to the geographic scope of a measure and encompassing the political, social, economic, ecological, historical, demographic, religious, conflict, and policy contexts in that geographic entity. All these aspects are connected and interact with each other. Therefore, not only the systems themselves, but also the dynamics within and how they influence each other need to be investigated.

The second question focuses on *resilience for whom*, referring to the target group whose resilience is to be strengthened. This could be individuals, communities or specific groups of people, but also a state

and its institutions. To answer this question, a thorough analysis of different stakeholders and the power dynamics between them is necessary, identifying vulnerabilities and risks.

The last question asks about *resilience to what*, referring to the shocks, stresses and risks that threaten one, or parts of, a system. As outlined above these can both be covariate (wide-ranging) or idiosyncratic (specific to individuals) and can range from geo-political to economic and natural and environmental risks. An analysis of these existing and possible risks, their root causes, how they influence each other and their consequences is needed. (OECD 2014:11–12; Mercy Corps 2015:3)

The analysis of these different dimensions helps to put resilience into the unique context of a specific situation in a certain geographic location at a certain time with its unique characteristics, dynamics, capacities and vulnerabilities. Adopting a systems perspective that pays attention to these interconnected and interdependent processes is regarded as “one of the most useful characteristics of resilience” as it allows to think holistically and provide a comprehensive view of this complex situation (Constas et al. 2014:22). According to *Constas et al.*, this is important in two ways: First, shocks and stresses affecting individuals, households, communities, or states tend to become increasingly covariate, affecting groups of individuals or even entire communities. Dependencies among these different stakeholders, all affected by the same shock or stress, can lead to an intensification of (existing) vulnerabilities and influence the progress of a given situation. Furthermore, the relationship between interactions of stakeholders can influence vulnerabilities and resilience, or lead to thresholds or tipping points that, when crossed, can lead to changes in the existing system. Second, many processes and dynamics affecting stakeholders occur across scales, from the local to the global level, and are characterized by feedbacks. This means that different systems are linked to each other. These connections and their effects need to be viewed holistically by adopting a multi-scalar view. (Constas et al. 2014:22–23)

Generally, programming resilience comprises several characteristics or principles that in their entirety can be regarded as making up a ‘resilience-based approach’:

Focus on capacities

Overall, resilience-programming is guided by “principles of well-being and agency” or “the choice of people” (Mitchell 2013:7). In line with that, it focuses on strengthening the capacities of systems, states or people in order for them to be able to cope with existing and potential future crises more effectively, to reduce their exposure and sensitivity, and to ‘bounce back (better)’. In order to do so, resilience-programming addresses the three distinct but interrelated types of capacities outlined above, consisting of absorptive, adaptive, and transformative capacities. The findings of the comprehensive analysis thereby allow to establish hypotheses about what constrains the different capacities of people, governments and states. Ideally, scenario planning exercises are used to investigate possible activities and outcomes and to develop theories of change that identify key leverage points or “domains of change” (Frankenberger et al. 2014:7) where to step in with resilience-programming. In theory, this means that, through a causal mechanism, each project activity will lead to the achievement of strategic objectives, which in sum lead to the desired change and increased resilience, which in turn could mean improved and safe lives, the reduction of potential economic losses, and the empowerment of people to take better decisions about the risks they face. (Frankenberger et al. 2014:7–9; Mitchell 2013:i; USAID 2012:7–9)

Flexibility, adaptation and context-specific strategies

Recognizing that communities and states do not operate within a linear framework, and that contexts and dynamics can change, resilience-programming emphasizes the importance of “an iterative and dynamic process of successive programme or project cycles” (Mitchell 2013:5) or “an iterative, adaptive, and nonlinear approach” (Frankenberger et al. 2014:9). In other words, resilience-programming calls for a high degree of flexibility to readjust approaches according to changed circumstances or new information or stakeholders. (Folkema, Ibrahim, and Wilkinson 2013:21–22)

This requires the continued analysis of risks and dynamics, rapid feedback loops and constant monitoring, evaluation, and learning in order to acknowledge uncertainties and unpredictabilities and to adapt, refine and iterate approaches in a timely manner if needed. (Folkema, Ibrahim, and Wilkinson 2013:22; Mercy Corps 2015:4) This also acknowledges that there is no ‘resilience intervention’ per se. In contrast, strategies to build resilience need to be as diverse as the local, regional and national contexts in which they are implemented: The both context-specific and dynamic nature of a situation demands a context-specific and dynamic array of strategies, activities, and interventions. (Frankenberger et al. 2014:11)

Integrated approaches

Another characteristic of resilience-programming is the adoption of an integrated approach. As such, the approach includes both different sectors (multi-sectoral), and works across and integrates various sectors (trans-sectoral). Furthermore, it is characterized by a clear long-term orientation and commitment from the outset. Overall, integrated approaches are understood as ensuring that partners, policy areas and sectors work together with the aim of addressing key leverage points and adopting complementary and synergistic strategies, focusing both on immediate and on longer-term needs, vulnerabilities and capacities. (Folkema, Ibrahim, and Wilkinson 2013:22; Frankenberger et al. 2014:9)

An integrated approach therefore is based on the recognition that different sectors and fields are connected to each other. As such, resilience in one sector or for one group of people could be undermined by a lack of similar investment in another sector or for another group of people. Therefore, a harmonized engagement, including various sectors and working across them rather than in silos is necessary to achieve the desired result of resilience. (Frankenberger et al. 2014:9; Mitchell 2013:11)

At the same time, the focus on integrated approaches concerns the linkage of short-term, humanitarian and longer-term, development-oriented approaches: In order to enable subjects to deal with crises better, resilience-thinking holds that emergency support must include longer-term development thinking from the outset. Similarly, development strategies must be shaped by thinking about vulnerabilities to crises. This requires close cooperation and joint planning between humanitarian and development actors, overall contributing to closing the gap between the two issues. (Levine and Mosel 2014:5–6; Mosel and Levine 2014:4–5)

Partnerships

Acknowledging the need for integrated, multi-sectoral and trans-sectoral approaches entails the recognition that no single actor is able to facilitate such comprehensive action at each layer of society alone. As a consequence, one characteristic of resilient programming is the reliance on strategic partnerships. These partnerships can include a broad range of stakeholders, including the international community, consisting of NGOs, UN agencies, policy organizations, research institutions and donors, all from different fields and with different mandates, roles and responsibilities, for instance including actors from both the development (long-term) and humanitarian (crisis-focused) fields. Further possible partners include technical, political and economic experts as well as experts in process and content, as well as local stakeholders, including the government (at the local, sub-national and national level) and local institutions as well as the civil society, communities and people affected or at risk. The private sector constitutes another group of stakeholders to be involved. (EC 2013:3; Folkema, Ibrahim, and Wilkinson 2013:22; Frankenberger et al. 2014:10; HLEF 2012:2; Levine 2014a:3)

Partnerships between these different stakeholders are understood as fulfilling different functions: First, they ensure more holistic situation analyses, ideally leading to coherent plans. Different actors have different fields of expertise. Bringing them together allows them to share information about risks, trends and opportunities. In particular, the inclusion of a broad range of local stakeholders ensures a profound understanding of the needs as well as the formal and informal local institutional arrangements in the region. Their active participation in turn facilitates greater ownership and buy-in of the approach.

Ideally, including these various actors overall leads to a more complete understanding of the context, decreasing the risk of unintended consequences. (Folkema, Ibrahim, and Wilkinson 2013:22; OECD 2014:13)

Second, including a broad range of stakeholders helps to create new, and build on existing, relationships. Different actors from different fields perceive and handle situations differently, and address challenges with different strategies. Bringing these actors together can uncover new ways of working together, increases access to potential solutions and creates greater synergies. All in all, these factors contribute to knowledge-sharing and promote a learning process on best practices and lessons learned, focusing specifically on complementary sectoral interventions, context-specific research, policies, and funding, rather than solely focusing on specific indicators of project performance as in more traditional development programming. (Frankenberger et al. 2014:10–11; OECD 2014:13)

Third, including donors and the private sector is an important aspect for the successful funding of resilience-programming. Being included from the beginning of a project cycle helps them to gain a coherent understanding of the context and the planned interventions, opening up opportunities for donors to seek additional funds. Furthermore, it brings local governments at regional and national level and private parties together, promoting the creation of new public-private partnerships that can help maximizing and protecting investments in communities and businesses now and in the future. These partnerships can furthermore release potential synergies between the private sector's professionalism and capacity for economic modelling and management, research and resources on the one side, and the operational capacity of local government and demonstrated impact in practice on the other side. (Mitchell 2013:41; OECD 2014:13–14)

National ownership

Another characteristic of resilience-programming is the emphasis on national ownership. This entails a country-owned and country-led planning, designing, and implementing process of projects, in order to ensure that interventions are rooted in the society in which they are conducted and are in line with existing policies and strategies. (EC 2013:3; USAID 2012:16)

This focus on national ownership includes two aspects. First, it is critical that ideas, resources, and needs of local communities, countries and regions, including the most vulnerable and marginalized groups, are heard and included in interventions, in particular since local people and development or humanitarian workers may not always have the same understanding or awareness of existing challenges or potential solutions, and experience and assess situations and solutions differently. Second, building resilience is a long-term process. Therefore, it needs to be aligned with existing national policies, frameworks and development plans to ensure sustainable results. Only in so doing, governments can take the lead in their own development, cooperating closely with the international community that helps to develop the capacity of governments, local authorities, and regional organizations to build resilience. All in all, “country-owned and -led strategies can help create a “double compact” between the international community and host country governments and between those governments and their citizens” (USAID 2012:16). (Council of EU 2013:3; EC 2013:3; Grünwald and Warner 2012:2; USAID 2012:16)

Long-term focus

Crises, especially in developing countries and especially if they are recurrent or protracted, are not likely to be solved within a few months or even years. Equally, resilience cannot be built in the short term, and is rarely visible within the cycle of one individual project. Therefore, resilient programming needs a much more long-term perspective, going beyond the usual four-year horizon that is common in ‘traditional’ development programming. Accordingly, focus is put on continued progress and longer-term planning horizons, considering predicted future trends as well as potential breaks in existing trends, achieving short-term milestones along the way, and at the same time leaving enough flexibility to adapt

to new and changed circumstances. (Levine and Mosel 2014:14–15; Mercy Corps 2015:6; USAID 2012:16)

Regional strategies

An aspect that has not been widely adopted by humanitarian and development organizations in resilience-programming yet is the approach to develop regional strategies. However, as different existing regional resilience strategies show, they have the potential to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of resilience-programming in different ways: First, regional strategies enable organizations to “align resources, build staff capacity, and address cross-country themes that require systems thinking and approaches” (Frankenberger et al. 2014:10). This aspect is especially important if crises affect regions beyond borders, for example in situations of trans-boundary migration or cross-border conflicts. In cases like this, regional strategies allow for a better contextualization of a defined area – as outlined above, this is a crucial aspect in the comprehensive situation analysis and a prerequisite for resilient planning. Lastly, regional strategies involve and bring together many different actors who deal with the same challenges in similar contexts, offering ample opportunities for cross-learning. (Frankenberger et al. 2014:10)

4.3.5 Challenges inherent in resilience-programming

Despite its potential as constituting a new solution for dealing with crises, various scholars have outlined several challenges that have exacerbated translating the concept of resilience “from good idea to good practice” (Mitchell 2013).¹⁶

Lack of clear definition

As with the general concept of resilience in all disciplines, the first challenge in resilience-programming, too, is the lack of a clear definition and common understanding of what resilience is. This concerns not only implementing organizations that develop resilience-programming, but also field staff and the donor community. Often, actors and stakeholders do not understand what ‘building resilience’ really means, leading to different interpretations and measures of resilience-programming to fit the respective mandate, interests, and priorities. As a result, some actors doubt the added value of resilience altogether and feel that ‘resilience’ is just another buzzword in dealing with crises, simply using new language to address old problems with old measures. (Mitchell 2013:28; OECD 2014:Foreword)

Lessons from the past vs. generic interventions – the importance of context

When analyzing past initiatives in the field of humanitarian assistance and development cooperation, it becomes obvious that several of them have tried to solve the same problems as the concept of resilience, although under different names, fueling the perception of resilience as ‘new wine in old bottles’. Even though these approaches could be an important source of relevant learning, they are often not being paid much attention to. As a result, technical lessons and political experiences often are not incorporated in resilience-programming, carrying the risk of resulting in the same mistakes which could have easily been avoided. (Levine and Mosel 2014:17–18)

At the same time, broad lessons from previous approaches must not be blindly incorporated in all resilience-building interventions and become standardized or generic programming: Even though crises might seem similar, each situation is different. Accordingly, the resulting needs of countries, communities and households differ. Therefore, even though resilience-programming should draw upon lessons learned from previous experiences, “all aid should be tailored to the specific needs and the cultural, political and economic context of a country or region” (Levine and Mosel 2014:17). This

¹⁶ It is beyond the scope of this thesis to analyze the overall challenges of implementing humanitarian or development assistance measures. Thus, only challenges directly concerning resilience-programming are investigated. For a short summary of the overall challenges in aid programming, see for example Mitchell 2013:23ff.

polarity between lessons learning and avoiding generic interventions is often challenging to recognize and to act on accordingly. (Levine and Mosel 2014:17–18)

Lack of integrated approach

As outlined above, resilience-programming puts strong focus on integrated approaches that connect different sectors and fields, particularly concerning humanitarian and development measures. However, even though many organizations claim their programs are integrated, ‘integrated’ does not always mean the same thing. Some organizations, when speaking of ‘integrated programming’, only mean the layering or sequencing of interventions, or implementing various activities in the same geographic location. While both aspects might make certain sense, it is not enough to combine cross-sectoral interventions in either time or space, as this strategy is no indicator for different interventions operating in concert with each other. ‘Real integrated programming’ in contrast expects interventions to actually interact with interventions in other sectors in order to create synergistic effects that lead to one single, overarching goal. (Frankenberger et al. 2014:9) With regard to linking humanitarian aid and development assistance this is particularly challenging as both types of aid have different mandates and fulfill different roles: While humanitarian relief is based on humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence, development assistance focuses on country ownership and partnerships, and can thus never be that apolitical. (Levine and Mosel 2014:11; OECD 2012; UN OCHA 2012)

Limited ability to facilitate transformational change

Resilience-building’s key principle lies in strengthening the adaptive, absorptive and transformative capacities of an individual or a system. However, while the strengthening of absorptive and adaptive capacities is generally included in programming, it is often more difficult to improve transformative capacities. Their incorporation in programming, endeavored to lead to transformational change, often faces strong barriers as it requires an alteration of the nature of the system which is often protected by powerful and influential stakeholders who have no interest in change. Additionally, traditional beliefs and cultural aspects are often deeply embedded in a society. While smaller and in particular local organizations are often limited in their attempt to achieve transformational change at the national level, bigger players such as governments, UN actors and donors often are not able to implement changes at the local level. Accordingly, best results can be achieved when both actors from local organizations, and government officials, UN actors and donors are included in the planning and implementation process of respective programs. (Béné et al. 2012:22–23; Frankenberger et al. 2012:9; Frankenberger et al. 2014:20–21; Mitchell 2013:32)

Funding

While obtaining adequate and predictable funding always constitutes a challenge in the field of humanitarian assistance and development cooperation, it proves even more difficult in resilience-programming. Besides mentioned unclarities regarding the concept among donors, carrying the risk of complicating a strong commitment to respective programming, one particular problem concerns short funding-cycles. Financing of humanitarian assistance, and even of development programs, often still focuses on yielding quick results. As a consequence, donors and implementing agencies often put focus on short-term and stand-alone projects rather than on longer-term programs “that compromise multiple, integrated, complementary, and [...] sequential projects, all working toward a cohesive goal” (Frankenberger et al. 2014:21). Only such projects, however, allow the time needed to effectively improve capacities, especially when aiming at transformative capacities. Consequently, they also necessitate long-term funding: Referring to experiences made in Somalia, *Frankenberger et al.* suggest that long-term, flexible and timely funding commitments in the range of six to ten years are necessary to effectively address the root causes of vulnerability. (Frankenberger et al. 2012:10–11)

Furthermore, resilience-programming requires the implementation of both humanitarian and development programs at the same time. Different procurement processes, funding cycles and

programming timelines in both fields, however, often make the simultaneous implementation of these programs extremely difficult. The lack of geographic overlap between emergency and development operations, potential tensions over resource allocation and different levels of cooperation with, and support from, governments further contribute to this challenge. As such, resilience-programming requires a combination of short-, medium- and long-term programming and funding in order to both produce short-term impacts and focus on longer-term changes. A combination of funding mechanisms, including new and innovative ones such as donor sequencing, crisis modifiers or risk pooling, is needed to allow programming to remain flexible and to adapt to changing contexts, vulnerabilities and risk landscapes. (Frankenberger et al. 2012:10–11; Frankenberger et al. 2014:21)

Competition among implementing organizations

Linked to the challenges of funding is the risk of competition between implementing organizations over limited financial resources. Given its current political traction, some organizations regard ‘resilience’ solely as a term to insert in project proposals to attract new or more funding. However, by using the term or concept of ‘resilience’ only as a competitive advantage in project proposals, trying to outplay other actors, organizations ultimately undermine resilience-programming itself. In order to address this challenge, more, and more predictable and reliable, funding would be required. Additionally, coordinated donor action in program analysis, planning and implementation could help to eliminate programs that use ‘resilience’ only as a catchword in project proposals without intention to really incorporate the concept with all its consequences. (Frankenberger et al. 2014:22; OECD 2014:Foreword)

Lack of donor coordination

Another aspect related to funding are aspects concerning the coordination between donors. Solutions to complex crises naturally require funding from various donors. However, insufficient active partnerships between these donors, or insufficient coherence between donor country strategies, can lead to dispersed and / or duplicated efforts on the one hand, and multiplies the need for all stakeholders to negotiate with different parties on the other hand. Several factors contribute to this situation: Different types of donors (including traditional DAC donors¹⁷, multilateral financial institutions, such as the World Bank, and other state donors) have different and sometimes even conflicting modes of operating and mandates. These differences bear the risk of resulting in donors’ competition for the ‘best program’ for the country. At the same time, large donors and multilateral financial institutions often do not see the need to engage with donors with smaller budgets, equating their bigger funds with more importance and a larger say in the matter of programming. Based on their feeling of having everything under control, larger donors thus do not see the need for partnerships and coordination. The lack of partnerships can be the result of misperceptions, too: While one donor might feel excluded, another donor might reproach their non-attendance of joint donor meetings. As a result, donors might retract to mere information-sharing with other donors, avoiding further interaction. This behavior, in turn, challenges the sheer nature of resilience-programming that calls for measures, albeit implemented by different organizations and funded by different donors, to complement each other in the common pursuit of integrated approaches and strengthening resilience. (Mitchell 2013:32)

Donor-government relationships

As governments of affected countries are expected to take the lead in resilience-programming, but at the same time are reliant on donor support, programs are always shaped by the relationship between the two stakeholders. Naturally, this relationship is not without challenges: On the one hand, governments of

¹⁷ The OECD DAC, or Development Assistance Committee, is a forum of “many of the largest providers of aid”, currently comprising 30 members. For the period 2018-2022, the DAC has the mandate to “promote development co-operation and other relevant policies so as to contribute to implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, poverty eradication, improvement of living standards in developing countries, and to a future in which no country will depend on aid” (OECD 2019).

affected countries want to attract as much funding as possible to deal with an existing crisis. Therefore, they try to please donors by telling them what (they think) they want to hear. With regard to resilience-programming, this is often perceived problematic as governments, similar to implementing organizations, might use the term ‘resilience’ only to attract new funding instead of proposing initiatives based on comprehensive situation analyses and in line with donors’ understanding of resilience-programming. Donors, on the other hand, often perceive that they have only limited influence on government decisions on measures, perceiving it as difficult to convince them of adopting measures that go beyond emergency responses and really lead to resilience. This risk is exacerbated when government officials do not look beyond an election cycle and therefore only focus on quick and visible impacts. (Frankenberger et al. 2014:22; Mitchell 2013:31) In order to address these challenges, close cooperation between donors and the government is needed right from the start of the planning process, and should include all stakeholders such as the local population, implementing organizations, and experts of various sectors.

Lack of absorbance capacity

Another challenge in resilience-programming lies in the lack of sufficient absorbance capacity of affected countries and governments. As outlined above, a large part of resilience-programming is about national ownership. However, often ministries and agencies lack both the technical and the administrative capacities to “develop, implement, coordinate, and monitor resilience-programming, as well as manage it financially” (Frankenberger et al. 2014:23). Moreover, governments in affected regions often fail to keep track of who is doing what, and where or what funding has been allocated, and to correctly assess response capacities at lower levels of government which are often particularly low.

This combination of lack of vision and oversight on the one hand, and of absorbance capacity on the other hand, leads to difficulties in streamlining existing initiatives, projects and resources and in organizing joint and coordinated humanitarian and development efforts. At the same time, lower levels of government (local and district levels) cannot be held accountable for implementing national-level strategies promoting resilience. On the one hand, this leads to a gap between national and local government policies. On the other hand, it results in the lag of program implementation which often prompts donors to give their financial support to interventions that are easier to implement, such as basic humanitarian activities. The different levels of absorbance capacities of local governments also bear the risk that neighboring regions or communities do not support and implement the same strategies in response to a shock or stress that affects multiple local governments. In turn, this can disadvantage single regions or communities and lead to further difficulties in coordinating efforts. (Frankenberger et al. 2014:23; Mitchell 2013:31)

Gap between national and local level

When talking about the gap between planning at the national level and implementing at the local level, however, not all difficulties can be pinned on the lack of absorbance capacity. In contrast, much depends on the mere willingness of local governments to implement policies, laws and regulations developed at the national level. This willingness of local decision-makers, or the lack of it, is often connected with local political and business interests that are prioritized over the interests of the general population. This is specifically problematic in view of the pursuit of transformational change as part of resilience-building, as measures in this regard often challenge existing structures and power relations. If not addressed, this issue leads to the risk that allocated funds for implementing measures developed at the national level might be used as slush funds for local government staff or to cover other gaps in the overall budget according to own interests. (Mitchell 2013:32)

Unrealistic expectations and romanticizing of resilience

Another challenge in resilience-programming is to avoid unrealistic expectations. As outlined above, resilience is often seen as a way to reduce the future costs of emergency responses, as it is assumed that

future crises will be dealt with more effectively once resilience in affected countries is ‘achieved’. This expectation inevitably leads to the failure of the concept: “[R]esilience is not a panacea” (Béné et al. 2012:45), and if the expected success comes to nothing, there is a risk that political support will quickly erode.

Expecting too much of the concept, and assuming that resilience is the cure for all kinds of problems, can lead to insufficient analyses of what, and how much, can actually be achieved. For instance, several resilience experts have argued that resilience does not address many of the concerns of social development (see, for instance, Armitage et al. 2012). In order to prevent disappointment over expectations that cannot be met in reality and might lead to the complete abandonment of the concept of resilience, clear objectives based on realistic analyses and road maps are needed. (Béné et al. 2012:46; Levine and Mosel 2014:19)

Another aspect related to unrealistic expectations is the ‘romanticizing’ of the concept. The concept of resilience is often said to be built on ‘positivity’ (in contrast to the ‘negativity’ of concepts focusing, for instance, on vulnerability). (Levine and Mosel 2014:19) This positivism can be problematic, as it is not always possible to determine whether resilience in general is ‘good’ or ‘bad’. For instance, a long-standing and authoritarian regime which manages to maintain its authority despite many internal and external attempts to bring more democracy is by definition ‘resilient’. While this ‘resilience’ might be good for high officials who benefit from the system, it might be bad for the suppressed population. Furthermore, the romanticizing of resilience might lead to the ignorance of possible negative resilience: Increasing the resilience of one group might be at the expense of another, and inevitably creates winners and losers. Last, the romanticizing of the concept bears the risk of a manipulation and misuse of the term, for instance if the concept distracts attention from the root causes underlying the problem: This is the case, if, for example, programming focuses on strengthening the resilience of a community to human-caused climate change instead of addressing the root causes of climate change themselves. (Béné et al. 2012:46–47; Levine and Mosel 2014:19) In order to address this problem, a realistic assessment of resilience-programming and what results can be achieved is crucial, incorporating possible ‘negative resilience’, the potential creation of winners and losers, root causes and vulnerabilities, and, most importantly, ways how to deal with these aspects.

Accountability and measuring resilience

Interventions in the aid sector always require accountability, both for activities implemented and for impacts achieved, to measure the success of a program and justify its funding and implementation. This concerns both donors who call for information on where their money has gone, and affected populations who are targeted with programs. This applies to resilience-programming as well, where “there is a strong imperative [...] towards accountability based on assessing impact and value for money by establishing indicators of progress towards resilience” (Levine and Mosel 2014:18). Developing generic indicators of resilience, however, leads to the question of how resilience can effectively be measured, constituting one of the main challenges in resilience-programming. If not addressed, the lack of empirical evidence showing that building resilience works can result in the rejection and replacement of the concept, both from donors and from implementing organizations. (Levine and Mosel 2014:18)

Despite increased efforts to develop ways to measure resilience, it proves to be a difficult task to undertake – so far, there is no common understanding or generally accepted way of doing so. Part of the challenge lies in the way of building resilience, which is understood as a “continuous, complex and dynamic process”, making it “inherently difficult to measure” (Frankenberger et al. 2012:26). Therefore, despite the desire to find one model or tool to measure resilience, this attempt has remained “not so much a difficult quest as a search for a holy grail – an impossible, or even an imaginary, task” (Levine 2014b:2). Nevertheless, the challenge has been accepted by numerous academics, NGOs, UN organizations, donors and national and international actors who have developed different approaches of measuring, including econometric equations, participatory approaches and complex statistical calculations. (Frankenberger et al. 2014:18; Constan et al. 2014:8; Levine 2014b:1)

These attempts to develop a methodology for measuring resilience can roughly be divided into four different approaches, basing the measurement of resilience on functionality, access to food and wellbeing, quantification of activities, and indicators and characteristics.¹⁸ The last approach has gained the most popularity in the development sector. In general, it bases the measurement of resilience on indicators or sets of characteristics that, in their entirety, are regarded as determining resilience. Various approaches use various sets of indicators or characteristics, and weigh and combine them in different ways. So far, there is no empirical evidence of what components determine resilience; as a consequence, all models use judgement to choose the characteristics of resilience they use in their approach. Overall, the model assumes that the sum of the scores of all different indicators is what constitutes resilience. (Levine 2014b:6–8)

There are several aspects that need to be taken into account when relying on this model of measuring resilience: First, as resilience is not composed of the same characteristics in all situations, resilience-building activities differ. Accordingly, indicators need to be adapted to that specific context. At the same time, it cannot be assumed that the existence of one ‘resilience characteristic’ can substitute for deficiencies in another. Similarly, it cannot be assumed that improvements in different ‘resilience characteristics’ are of equal importance, and that improvements always have the same weight: An improvement in a component may not yield any benefit unless it reaches a certain threshold. Another challenge lies in the need to consider how scores in specific indicators are shaped by interactions with other components, recognizing that improvement in one component can become a liability for another. (Levine 2014b:6–8) Even when these factors are taken into account, limitations in measuring resilience remain: Due to the unclear definition and the complexity of resilience, no set of indicators can provide scientific proof or detailed explanation of change, but can merely provide insights or informed assumptions about the resilience pathway and resilience itself. (Schipper and Langston 2015:19)

All in all, it is important that, just like with the concept of resilience itself, measuring resilience is not just a simple relabeling of existing measures. If the concept of resilience is seen as a new and unique concept, measuring resilience needs to be treated the same way, and new approaches need to be developed that take into account the multi-dimensional nature of the concept. (Frankenberger et al. 2014:20)

4.4 Resilience in complex crises – links to other concepts

The considerations behind the concept of resilience itself and its use in complex crises and development cooperation are not completely new. They are linked to several other concepts and approaches that have been (and still are) used and promoted in similar contexts. Often, they feature the same or similar aspects, follow similar lines of reasoning, or have the same objectives. These strategies include concepts such as LRRD (Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development), Early Recovery, Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) or BBB (Building Back Better), and are framed by keywords such as ‘sustainability’, ‘risk’, and ‘vulnerability’. Overall, all of them focus on situations of complex crises and aim at enabling countries and populations to deal with them better.

In order to get a clearer idea and understanding of ‘resilience’, to be able to locate the concept in the wider context of approaches to complex crises, and to identify the novelties of resilience-programming, the following three subchapters take a closer look at these related concepts and strategies. After a short description of their development and their key characteristics, focus will be put in particular on aspects that are similar to, as well as on aspects that distinguish them, from resilience-programming.

4.4.1 Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD)

The first concept resilience is similar to is the concept of ‘Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development’ (LRRD). The beginnings of the concept can be traced back to as early as the 1980s, a

¹⁸ For an overview of these different approaches see for example Levine 2014b.

decade in which several parts of Africa suffered from recurrent and severe food security crises. In this context, the concept of LRRD emerged, based on the assumption that these humanitarian emergencies needed to be dealt with more efficiently. As the wording suggests, LRRD aimed at linking short-term humanitarian assistance and longer-term development measures. Both types of aid were to be connected in a linear one-way process from a phase of emergency relief, to rehabilitation, to development – often described as a ‘linear continuum’. ‘Linking’ here basically meant applying exit strategies in one phase to prepare the ground for the next. (Levine and Mosel 2014:3; Van Cooten et al. 2014:7)

The rationale behind the development of the concept was based on a (perceived) increase of the frequency and intensity of disasters. These emergencies were primarily viewed as disturbing the normal development path, requiring long periods of emergency relief and rehabilitation. At the same time, emergency aid was recognized to be short-term in nature and insensitive to the development-oriented interventions that followed it. Altogether, recurrent and increasingly severe crises therefore were seen as hindering development progress and putting strain both on emergency aid and development budgets. LRRD was seen as a possible solution: Better development would reduce the need for emergency relief, better emergency relief would contribute to long-term development, and rehabilitation was seen as a means to facilitate the transition between the two. Linking the two types of aid was regarded as a way to deal with crises more effectively, saving money and thereby decreasing the existing strain on aid budgets. (Fan 2013:1; Mosel and Levine 2014:3)

In the 1990s, the ‘linear continuum model’ was slowly replaced by the ‘contiguuum model’, paying regard to the realization that measures of relief, rehabilitation and development might be needed at the same time and should be implemented simultaneously. Irrespective of this change, the approach still stressed the importance of smooth transitions between different forms of assistance in order to fill the “gaps” and avoid “grey zones” in international assistance (Fan 2013:3), referring to the presumed funding gap and disconnection between humanitarian aid and development assistance. By focusing on filling the gap by merely linking both phases of aid, however, the concept failed to address the way in which either humanitarian or development aid really worked and to find ways to reform assistance in order to close this gap. Furthermore, the concept did not pay regard to another question, namely, what relief should actually be linked to if development assistance was absent. (Fan 2013:1; Mosel and Levine 2014:3–4, 6)

Altogether, the concept of LRRD bears some striking similarities with the concept of resilience: First of all, both concepts emerged from the desire to deal with crises more efficiently – both in terms of saving lives and protecting people, and in terms of reducing costs for both humanitarian aid and development assistance. Both concepts also assume that, by ‘better development’ and by building the resilience of households, communities or regions, the need for emergency relief will decrease in the long term, as better developed or more resilient systems or entities are better prepared for, and can deal better with, future crises. (Mosel and Levine 2014:3–5; Van Cooten et al. 2014:13) Second, both concepts assume a gap or disconnection between humanitarian and development assistance and aim at linking both types of aid, albeit the approach in doing so differs: While LRRD focuses on smooth transitions and avoiding gray zones between the two phases in a linear model, an approach the concept often has been criticized for, resilience follows a broader approach, trying to “break[...] down the barriers between humanitarian and development approaches more fundamentally than ever before” (Hillier 2013:5). Rather than just focusing on linking both types of aid, the concept of resilience aims at reforming them for them to be able to work more closely together. These reforms include the recognition that longer-term development strategies need to be incorporated in humanitarian interventions right from the start, and that, in turn, humanitarian aid needs to put emphasis on longer-term and joint planning strategies with the development side (for instance through multi-year humanitarian funding). Furthermore, it encourages integrated and multi-sectoral programming in both types of aid. Therefore, the concept of resilience offers a different way of thinking about humanitarian and development aid: It does not view both types of aid as two distinct and successive phases of assistance that follow each other in a linear way like the

concept of LRRD, but focuses on how both types of assistance intertwine and are connected to each other in both directions and within different sectors.¹⁹ (Mosel and Levine 2014:4, 8)

There is another point in which the concept of LRRD and the concept of resilience differ: While LRRD refers specifically to the link between different types of aid, resilience focuses more on capacities of people or systems, shifting the focus from categories of aid to the affected people or systems themselves. All in all, however, the concept of LRRD and resilience share many of the same challenges, overall aims and practices. (Mosel and Levine 2014:5; Van Cooten et al. 2014:14)

4.4.2 Early Recovery

A second approach the concept of resilience is similar to is the concept of ‘Early Recovery’. Early Recovery is a “multidimensional process of recovery that begins in a humanitarian setting. It is guided by development principles that seek to build on humanitarian programmes and catalyze sustainable development opportunities” (CWGER 2008:6). The concept emerged in the early 2000s when a UN review of the global humanitarian system pointed out several gaps in the humanitarian response to conflict and crises. As a consequence, the so-called cluster approach was established, aiming at strengthening coordination and cooperation in key sectors, formalizing responsibilities of UN agencies and other organizations, and dealing with crises more efficiently. Nine clusters were built to re-organize the humanitarian response to crises. As one of these clusters, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Cluster Working Group on Early Recovery was established, led by UNDP and consisting of 24 UN and non-UN organizations from the humanitarian and development field.²⁰ (Bailey and Pavanello 2009:2; CWGER 2008:7)

The concept of Early Recovery that emerged was built on the recognition that, while quick action was required during and immediately after a crisis, measures that went beyond life-saving interventions were needed from the beginning as well in order to create the foundation for sustainable recovery and return to longer-term development. In other words, the concept recognized a gap between immediate life-saving measures and more development- and longer-term oriented assistance needed for recovery. As a solution, the concept emphasized the necessity to start longer-term measures that were guided by development principles directly in the emergency phase immediately after a disaster strikes, and to integrate them within humanitarian mechanisms. Besides aiming at restoring basic services, transitional shelter and livelihoods, the approach put a specific focus on fostering self-reliance and strengthening capacities of affected populations, authorities and the state. The concept, therefore, explicitly linked the restoration of capacities to sustainable recovery and development. Going even further, another objective of Early Recovery was to build resilience. (UNDP 2016c; CWGER 2008:6, 8–11; Fan 2013:2)

Similar to the concept of resilience, there has long been confusion about what Early Recovery really is, how it is different from other approaches, and whether it brings anything new or any added value to existing efforts in dealing with conflicts. A range of definitions and interpretations have been developed, yet a common understanding of the concept could not be achieved. (Bailey and Pavanello 2009:1–2) This is not the only similarity between Early Recovery and resilience. Like the concept of resilience, Early Recovery recognizes a gap between humanitarian aid and development assistance and the importance of bringing together actors both from fields to work together during and after crises. Linked to that, both concepts emphasize the need to integrate development with humanitarian measures right from the onset of a crisis. However, while the concept of resilience tries to reform the way humanitarian

¹⁹ This kind of thinking found its way into considerations on LRRD only in a relatively new paper by *Mosel / Levine* (2014) who suggest a reinterpretation of the concept and introduce the model of a “two-way LRRD” where “overlaps, links or transitions at both ‘ends’ (the ‘relief’ and the ‘development’ side) go in both directions; and more crucially, a new holistic approach is taken to giving support across the entire spectrum from short term to long-term (or ‘relief to development’)” (Mosel and Levine 2014:8). The authors themselves describe this kind of thinking as closely linked to the discourse of resilience. (Mosel and Levine 2014:8)

²⁰ Interestingly, dealing with refugees was not regarded as an area that needed to be re-structured, as the UN review did not find any gaps in the response in this particular field. Therefore, no cluster was built concerning approaches to situations of forced displacement. (CWGER 2008: 7)

and development approaches work together and are implemented, the concept of Early Recovery is to be understood as part of the humanitarian response, albeit laying the ground work for recovery and longer-term development-oriented measures. (CWGER 2008:6)

Another similarity between the two concepts is the focus on strengthening capacities of affected populations, but also of governments and states. In both cases, this aspect is regarded as crucial for sustainable development. While the concept of Early Recovery does not go into detail but just refers to capacities and coping mechanisms in general, the concept of resilience is going one step further, distinguishing between different levels of capacities (absorptive, adaptive, and transformative). This leads to another similarity: Both concepts share the same overall goal, namely, to build resilience. Furthermore, both concepts assume that strengthening resilience, thereby preparing populations or states to deal better with future disasters, not only saves lives but also money, as the need for future humanitarian interventions will be reduced and development achievements will be protected. (UNDP 2016c; CWGER 2008:6)

When looking at the different guiding principles for Early Recovery as outlined by the Cluster Working Group on Early Recovery (CWGER 2008:11–12), the similarities between both concepts become even more striking: Just like the concept of resilience, Early Recovery emphasizes national ownership, the promotion of local and national capacities, participatory practices and the incorporation and coordination of all stakeholders, comprehensive context analyses and appropriate monitoring and evaluation measures to ensure learning and allow for corrective measures. All in all, despite some minor differences in the overall understanding of the concept and how humanitarian and development assistance are linked, both approaches share many common characteristics.

4.4.3 Disaster Risk Reduction, Recovery, and Build Back Better

Yet another concept that shares similarities with the concept of resilience is the concept of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and, linked to that, the concept of Recovery and Build Back Better (BBB).

The concept of Disaster Risk Reduction, emerging in the beginning of the 1990s, “aims to reduce the damage caused by natural hazards like earthquakes, floods, droughts and cyclones, through an ethic of prevention” (UNISDR 2018). With this focus on natural hazards only, the concept of DRR does not at first sight seem to be linked to the concept of resilience with its broader focus on disturbances in general that incorporates, for instance, political conflicts or complex and protracted crises as well. However, both concepts share a similar rationale: They are based on the recognition that disasters and conflicts, respectively, are becoming more common and frequent. This not only puts lives of people at risk, especially in developing countries that are the most vulnerable to and least prepared for crises, and jeopardizes hard achieved development gains, but also costs a lot of money in terms of humanitarian and emergency aid and development assistance that become necessary after disaster strikes. As a response to this, both concepts aim at empowering communities and nations to be better prepared for crises. In this sense, the concept of resilience can be seen as an expansion of the concept of DRR, broadening its focus on natural disasters to include man-made hazards. (Mercy Corps 2013a:2; UNDP 2014a:1; The World Bank Group 2015)

Moreover, if crises have struck, both concepts aim at ‘building back better’ (BBB) rather than simply rebuilding communities to pre-disaster standards. This approach is based on the assumption that simple rebuilding will recreate pre-crisis vulnerabilities and will not prepare individuals or communities to deal with future crises. At its core, the concept of DRR therefore “advocates for the restoration of communities and assets in a manner that makes them less vulnerable to disasters and strengthens their resilience” (UN WCDRR 2015:1). This not only emphasizes the same goal of both concepts, namely, to strengthen resilience, it also shows similarities in the desired outcome in which capacities are strengthened, exposure to disturbances are reduced, and systems are equipped to deal with future disturbances better. Both concepts are therefore not only concerned with the prevalent crisis, but also

with future threats that may or may not be linked to the current disturbance. (DFID 2011b:9; UN WCDRR 2015:2)

Beside these many similarities, the concepts differ in some ways. While building resilience aims at strengthening structures and preparing countries or communities better for future disturbances in a more general way by trying to boost the overall development of a country or region, DRR has a different focus as it prepares specifically for concrete disasters. Even though exact planning is difficult since exact places, scales and impacts of future disasters can never be predicted 100 percent accurately, DRR tries to strengthen systems through the implementation or preparation of concrete measures such as the development of contingency plans or the establishment of resource allocation systems that fall into place when disaster strikes. The concept of resilience, however, works in a context of broader systems. It therefore aims not only at achieving outcomes that are resistant to concrete hazards, but at outcomes that are “durable, transformative and adaptable in the context of the dynamic systems that influence and enable” them (Mercy Corps 2013a:2). In other words, it is not only concerned with specific outcomes of DRR or other development measures, like increased disaster-related capacity or food security, but with the ability of populations or countries to preserve and even augment these outcomes, even if contexts and circumstances change. (Mercy Corps 2013a:2–3; UN WCDRR 2015:2)

Another difference between both concepts is the influence practitioners or implementing organizations have over program design and implementation. In DRR, practitioners can make sure that concrete potential hazards of a region are understood, accounted for and incorporated into national development or emergency plans. Resilience, however, is less projectable and tangible than dealing with a concrete threat like a natural hazard, and involves broader systems, actors and institutions, acting at multiple levels and scales. Practitioners and implementing organizations therefore have less influence on outcomes regarding these various elements. (Mercy Corps 2013a:2–3)

4.5 Conclusion: Resilience in International Cooperation and Development

In conclusion, from its longstanding application in various disciplines such as engineering, psychology or ecology, different currents or versions of resilience have emerged. While all of them regard resilience as the pursued outcome, the notion of what that means and how to achieve that differs, ranging from persistence and the idea of ‘bouncing back’ in engineering resilience, to adjustment and ‘bouncing forward’ in ecological resilience, and, finally, to transformation and change in socio-ecological resilience.

Comparatively late, the concept of resilience in general has found its way also into international relations and world politics. While here usually a socio-ecological version of resilience-thinking has been applied, the engagement with the concept has taken place in different fields, focusing on global governance issues, its relationship with neoliberalism, aspects of security affairs, and international cooperation, development, and humanitarian assistance. As one sub-field of the last-mentioned, resilience emerged also in the field of forced displacement, where it has increasingly been picked up by UNHCR and other actors.

Despite the current traction of resilience, its transfer to politics or the social world entails several critical aspects that need to be kept in mind. First, resilience is not necessarily always a desirable feature, and can even be an obstacle to positive change. Second, resilience is often regarded as a binary concept, disregarding the real-life existence of different scales and types of resilience as well as of complex structures and causalities. Third, the general lack of clarity of what resilience really means leaves wide room for interpretation, carrying the risk of misuse. Last, resilience is being criticized for putting the agency of those most in need at the center under the guise of empowerment and capacity-strengthening, providing a convenient exit from responsibility for those who should be the ones offering support.

Notwithstanding these points of criticism, resilience has emerged in humanitarian and development assistance, where it has commonly been understood as the ability of people or systems to withstand,

adapt, and recover from crises. The rise of the concept can thereby be ascribed both to the endeavor to deal more effectively with crises, prevent human suffering and increase the capacities of vulnerable people and systems, and to the pursuit to reduce the costs of ongoing emergency assistance by decreasing the need for external assistance. Commonly, resilience-programming comprises several key characteristics or principles, summarized in Table 4. These include a strong focus on three distinct but interrelated types of capacities (absorptive, adaptive, and transformative) that all lead to different, albeit resilient, outcomes (persistence, gradual adjustment, and transformational change), an emphasis on flexible and context-specific strategies, the pursuit of integrated approaches, as well as a focus on partnerships between different actors, national ownership, and a focus on long-term and regional strategies.

Despite its ascribed potential as constituting a new solution for dealing with crises, resilience-programming faces a set of challenges (see also Table 4). These include the lack of a clear definition of the concept, difficulties to find a balance between lessons from the past and generic and context-specific interventions, as well as limited abilities to put into practice integrated approaches and facilitate transformational change. Furthermore, resilience-programming experiences difficulties with regards to funding, including the obtainment of enough funding in general, competition among implementing organizations, a lack of donor coordination and a difficult relationship between donors and receiving governments, and can be complicated by a general lack of absorbance capacities or a gap between national and local levels and accountability issues including difficulties to effectively measure resilience. Lastly, resilience-programming has to cope with often unrealistic expectations that cannot be met in practice and thus lead to frustration and disappointment.

Table 4: Key principles and challenges of resilience-programming

Key principles of resilience-programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on capacities of affected populations, structures and institutions • Flexibility and ability to adjust programming • Context-specific approaches • Integrated approaches • Partnerships • National ownership • Long-term focus • Regional strategies
Challenges of resilience-programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of clear definition • Lessons from the past vs. generic interventions • Limited ability to implement integrated approaches • Limited ability to facilitate transformational change • Funding issues • Competition among implementing organizations • Lack of donor coordination • Difficult relationship between donors and affected governments • Lack of absorbance capacity • Gap between national and local level • Unrealistic expectations and romanticizing of resilience • Accountability issues • Measuring resilience

Table by the author

Taking all these aspects into account, resilience-programming in the field of humanitarian assistance and development cooperation is not completely new, but shares various features with other concepts and

strategies in humanitarian assistance and development cooperation, including Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD), Early Recovery, Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) or Building Back Better (BBB). Nevertheless, the concept differs from each of them, and sets new priorities. These are related in particular to its strong focus on different capacities of people or systems, its claim to reform the way humanitarian and development approaches work together, and its broader systems approach that focuses in particular on transformational change.

5 Resilience and Forced Displacement: The Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) in Response to the Syria Crisis

Following the emergence of the concept of resilience in the context of humanitarian assistance and development cooperation in general, the concept also found its way into one specific application area of both types of assistance: the context of forced displacement.

By the time resilience had gained some popularity in humanitarian and development assistance at the global level, the Syria crisis was well underway, forcing thousands of people to flee and quickly becoming the most visible refugee situation of that time: Three years after the outbreak of protests in March 2011, more than eleven million Syrians had been displaced. While at the end of 2014 an estimated 7.6 million of the forcibly displaced remained within Syria's borders as Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), close to 3.9 million people had left the country in search of refuge, making Syria the leading country of origin of refugees worldwide²¹. While according to UNHCR Syrians searched for refuge in 107 different countries, 95 percent of them were hosted by neighboring countries, among them Jordan and Lebanon that hosted the most Syrian refugees in relation to their own population. (UNHCR 2015a:3, 13–14, 23)

In all countries in the region, the international community had initiated a humanitarian response in order to support Syrian refugees, providing protection, basic assistance, and shelter, altogether focusing on their most immediate needs. After a couple of years, however, when there still was no prospect of an end to the violence in Syria, the international community agreed to shift the response to a 'resilience-based response'. For the first time, thus, a response to a refugee situation explicitly incorporated the concept of resilience.

The following chapter will analyze how the concept of resilience was applied in this specific context. It is structured as follows: First, it will outline the development of the resilience-based response, tracing the context in which it was developed, the initial response to the situation, and the shift to resilience-thinking. Then, focus will be put on the conceptual framework, analyzing its underlying foundation and assumptions, its theoretical underpinnings, and, in particular, the new resilience component, including the applied definition of resilience, aspects understood as key principles in the operational response, strategic directions, and resilience tools. The chapter will conclude with an analysis of this framework from the perspective of resilience theory. First, it will investigate how much resilience-thinking has really been incorporated in the response framework; second, it will examine whether and how the response can be classified in resilience theory.

5.1 Development

Since 2011, countries neighboring or close to Syria have become host to hundreds of thousands Syrian refugees. The international community has supported these countries with a comprehensive humanitarian response led and coordinated by UNHCR. Several years into the crisis, this response was finally replaced by a new response paradigm, marking a shift from a purely humanitarian to a more development-oriented response based on the concept of resilience.

5.1.1 Context

In March 2011, after the detention of teenagers who had written anti-government graffiti on a wall in Dara'a, a city in southwestern Syria, "unarmed but destructive" (Holliday 2011:13) protesters started to take to the streets in the city. Over the next weeks and months, demonstrations started to increase in size and to spread across the country. The Syrian regime under Assad responded with violence, killing several protesters. In early June 2011, the situation escalated into the outbreak of armed rebellion, leading to a significant increase in violence from both governmental and opposition forces. (Holliday

²¹ In that regard, Syria was followed by Afghanistan (2.59 million refugees) and Somalia (1.11 million refugees).

2011:7, 13–15, 21) By early 2012, the Assad regime had not only initiated large-scale artillery operations, but also began to employ helicopter gunships and jet aircraft in strafing and bombing campaigns across Syria, leading to the killing of scores of civilians and the destruction of their homes. (Holliday and Harmer 2012:2, 9) As a result of this unfolding situation, one year after protests had started, thousands of people had been forced to flee the violence and had become internally displaced. Additionally, around 40,000 people had left the country, searching for refuge in the neighboring countries of Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey and Iraq. (UN 2012a:4)

An attempt by the UN and the Arab League under the leadership of Kofi Annan to restore peace in Syria through a six-point peace plan in March 2012 failed as neither government nor opposition abode by the plan's provisions. (Gladstone 2012) In June 2012, the UN finally officially referred to the crisis as a 'civil war' for the first time. (BBC News 2012) This ongoing unrest was reflected in rapidly growing refugee numbers: From March through June 2012, an average of more than 500 Syrians crossed international borders each day, bringing the number of Syrian refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq and Turkey to over 90,000 people. (UN 2012b:4) By September, this number had more than tripled, standing at 280,000. (UN 2012c:5)

Over the next months and years, the situation in Syria escalated further, characterized by intense clashes between the government and the opposition. The increasing fragmentation of the opposition led to further confrontations between the different divisions. This was reinforced by the joining of several new rebel groups, among them Hezbollah, fighting alongside the Syrian government forces, and ISIS that reached northern and eastern Syria after overrunning large parts of Iraq. The attempts of radical groups to impose their strict conception of Islamic law in relatively moderate areas also resulted in increased fighting with civilians. (Barnard and Mourtada 2013; BBC News 2013a) A new level of violence was reached when, repeatedly, chemical weapons were deployed, leading to the death of thousands of civilians. While government and opposition forces mutually accused each other of carrying out the attacks, a UN mission tasked with their investigating did not lay the blame on either side, even though there was strong evidence pointing to government forces. (BBC News 2013c; BBC News 2013b; UN News Centre 2013)

This situation of ongoing conflict and insecurity, characterized by both generalized violence and specific persecution, in combination with a rapidly deteriorating humanitarian situation and the loss of economic opportunities, forced more and more Syrians to flee. Each day, several thousand people crossed into Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq and Turkey, and, increasingly, into Egypt. At end-November 2013, UNHCR had registered nearly 2.2 million refugees in the five countries, not including the hundreds of thousands who were assumed to have not yet been registered. (UN 2013a:6)

As fighting and violence between all major parties intensified, reinforced by a new direct engagement of foreign powers in the conflict (including the US, Russia, Turkey and Iran) (DW 2019), in the next months and years this number once again more than doubled: As various attempts at peace talks and ceasefires failed, refugee numbers across the region increased to 3.7 million in January 2015, 4.6 million in January 2016, and 5.5 million in January 2018. (UNHCR n.d.)

5.1.2 Initial response to the situation

Starting with the influx of refugees in countries neighboring Syria, UNHCR – according to its mandate – started to coordinate and implement a humanitarian response aimed at ensuring the protection of refugees and at meeting their most basic needs, focusing in particular on shelter, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), non-food items, financial assistance, health, food, and education. Starting from March 2012, humanitarian needs and requirements were consolidated in Regional Response Plans (RRPs) that gave an overview of the situation and outlined the international response in the different country contexts. Due to the highly dynamic situation in which refugee numbers grew so rapidly that they repeatedly surpassed planning assumptions, RRP covered only time frames of a few months and were adapted and re-launched in short intervals: While the first RRP was published in March 2012 and

initially aimed at covering a period of six months it had to be replaced by a new response plan already in June 2012, followed by a new one in September 2012 and three further plans until the end of 2013. With each RRP, the number of actors involved increased: While the first RRP in March 2012 listed seven UN agencies and 28 NGO partners (UN 2012a:4), this number increased to 52 organizations in the RRP3 in September 2012 (UN 2012c:5) and to over 100 in the RRP6 in December 2013. (UN 2013a:4)

In the meantime, host countries generally maintained an open border policy and continued to give Syrians access to their territory. Already in December 2012, the UN noted that “this generosity ha[d] undeniably come at a heavy price for the many communities welcoming the refugees, as well as for the infrastructure and resources of the countries concerned” (UN 2012d:4), with resources becoming increasingly depleted and capacities overstrained. In order to ensure that the costs of hosting refugees did not have to be borne by the countries of asylum alone, the international response soon aimed at taking into consideration all those affected by the refugee influx, including vulnerable members of host communities and third country nationals, and called upon donors to demonstrate solidarity to share the burden of hosting and protecting refugees. (UN 2012d:4) Despite these attempts, the response remained primarily focused on refugees and their humanitarian needs.

Meanwhile, the effects of hosting refugees became increasingly palpable in the every-day life of host populations, including impacts on prices, wages, the provision of services and the availability of scarce resources such as water and energy. Overall, these developments increasingly started to lead to social tensions between refugees and locals. In this context, both host countries’ willingness and their capacities to deal with the situation as they did in the beginning eroded. As growth trends started to decline and the overall stability of the countries in the region seemed threatened, the international community as well as host country governments became more and more concerned that the crisis would turn into a development crisis that would compromise development gains in the respective countries. (UNDG 2014)

5.1.3 From a humanitarian to a development-oriented approach based on resilience

In this recognition, UNHCR first reiterated its call for more support for host countries. This was emphasized in the RRP6 that specifically aimed at “strengthening local service delivery and resilience, thereby promoting social cohesion and enhancing refugee and host community protection” (UN 2013a:7) and included several measures aiming explicitly at providing support for host countries. (UN 2013a)

More importantly, in November 2013, at a meeting in Amman, Jordan, 22 UN agencies under the leadership of the Regional United Nations Development Group (UNDG)²² and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) agreed to shift their response towards “a collective 'development response'” (UNDP 2013c) in all impacted countries in the region that was to complement ongoing humanitarian efforts with measures focusing on developmental needs in host countries. The following two subchapters outline the development of the new response framework. Key steps of the process are depicted in Figure 2.

²² The UNDG, created in 1997 by the Secretary-General of the UN, is a consortium of different UN funds, programs, specialized agencies, departments and offices that play a role in development. In 2018, it was renamed as the United Nations Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG). More information is available at <https://unsdg.un.org/>.

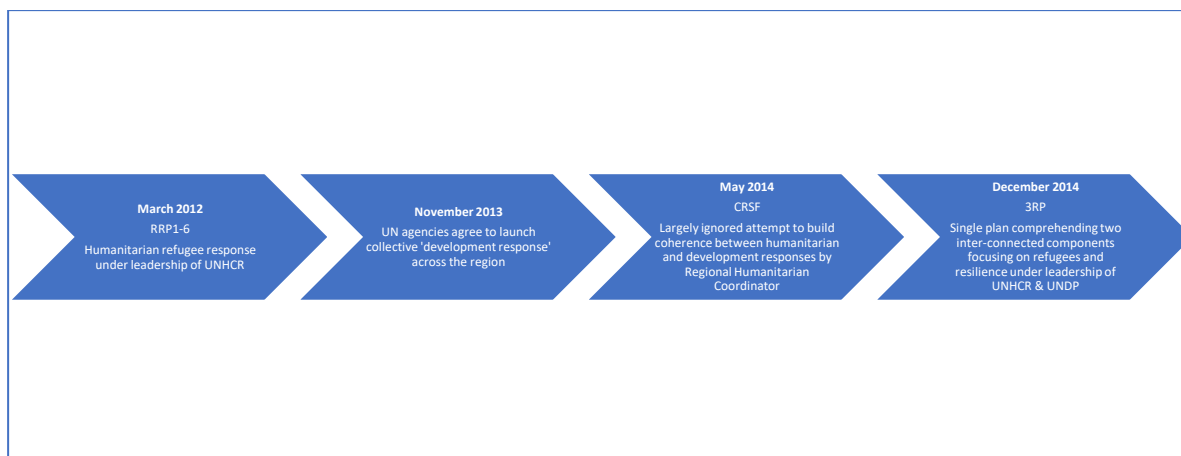


Figure 2: From a humanitarian to a resilience-based response²³

5.1.3.1 Comprehensive Regional Strategic Framework

The call for a new approach in response to the situation in host countries was first taken up by the new Regional Humanitarian Coordinator (RHC), Nigel Fisher, who had been put in office in September 2013 and who took the lead in elaborating a so-called ‘Comprehensive Regional Strategic Framework’ (CRSF). Up until that point, and in line with its mandate, the coordination of the refugee response had almost exclusively been handled by UNHCR. The CRSF process now started to incorporate other actors, including host governments, UNDP and the World Bank. (Sida, Trombetta, and Panero 2016:22)

The context in which the CRSF was developed was characterized by several aspects: First, national and international aid efforts had brought emergency assistance to millions of people affected by the crisis, both in Syria and in host countries, but continued to be faced with major practical, financial and political obstacles. Second, even though host governments and other actors across the region held significant capacities in dealing with the crisis and hosting thousands of refugees, the sheer scope of needs of affected people had stretched these capacities to the limit. Third, even though aid efforts in refugee hosting countries had started to shift towards a more sustainable approach within the RRP, the focus of the response still remained largely short-term. Last, even though multiple planning and response frameworks had been developed in response to the Syria crisis, gaps remained in the information and analysis of needs and vulnerabilities of affected communities. (UN OCHA 2014:6)

In order to address these issues, the CRSF aimed to harmonize the various existing response frameworks, including both humanitarian and more development-focused plans, and to incorporate both response plans focusing on host countries and on Syria itself. The strategic goal of the process was to create a multi-year, regional framework to build coherence between traditional humanitarian and development responses, and to support a more effective, sustainable and cost-efficient response strategy to the Syria crisis, all in one plan. (UN OCHA 2014:3) All in all, the CRSF sought “to enable humanitarian, resilience/development and macro-fiscal interventions to collectively and simultaneously contribute to the shared goals of meeting immediate protection and assistance needs; building the resilience of households, communities and systems; strengthening national leadership and ownership; and supporting regional stability” (UN OCHA 2014:3).

Besides outlining a strategic way forward focusing on three key components (“The protection of and assistance to refugees and affected populations in Syria”, “Enabling equitable access to basic services”, and “Supporting household and individual resilience”), the CRSF listed several gaps and challenges that needed to be addressed to develop a coherent and comprehensive response. These challenges included the lack of consistent and comparable humanitarian and development data; insufficient capacity of host governments and communities, the private sector, and international agencies to respond to the crisis;

²³ Figure by the author.

and, lastly, the lack of predictable, sustained and equitable funding that was distributed fairly among affected countries and regions. (UN OCHA 2014:5–9; 24–26)

Altogether, the CRSF proved controversial. Generally, its purpose remained unclear. For donors, especially the EU (DG ECHO) and the UK (DFID), it constituted a mere overview of the various response elements. UNHCR saw in it the attempt to place OCHA and the RHC at the center of a response that hitherto UNHCR had dominated, as the framework foresaw a new role for OCHA in the coordination of the response. The situation came to a head when a first draft of the CRSF was rejected by the regional heads of UN agencies in Amman in December 2013. Even though a compromise could be reached, the revised version was in turn rejected by OCHA Headquarters in New York, leading to an erosion of trust between the RHC in charge of the CRSF and the leadership within OCHA. Eventually, the CRSF was produced and launched in May 2014 but was largely ignored by the operational agencies. As a result, the envisaged new role for OCHA and the RHC did not come to pass. At the same time, UNHCR and UNDP formed a new partnership with the aim of developing their own regional response. (Sida, Trombetta, and Panero 2016:22)

5.1.3.2 The Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP)

In parallel to developments regarding the CRSF, in a round of consultations, UNHCR and UNDP together with host governments and donors started to discuss the conditions and opportunities to operationalize a country-led, regionally coordinated plan that would take into account the increasingly protracted nature of the crisis and pay regard to the current preparation of national plans in different countries. The outcome of the consultations was the idea of a so-called ‘Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan’ (3RP), effectively taking on many of the elements envisaged by the CRSF. On September 1, 2014, a roadmap was published, outlining the rough structure of the prospective plan, key characteristics and the timeframe in which the plan was to be developed. (UNHCR 2014a; Sida, Trombetta, and Panero 2016:22)

The actual novelty of the plan compared to the preceding RRP lay in its planned structure. For the first time, a single plan was to comprehend two inter-connected components: one component focusing on refugee protection and humanitarian assistance, led and coordinated by UNHCR, and one component focusing on building resilience and on stabilization-based development of host countries, facilitated by UNDP. (UNHCR 2014a:1–3) While for OCHA no particular role was envisaged, this co-leadership was formalized through the conclusion of a Memorandum of Understanding in which UNHCR and UNDP confirmed their commitment “to work[...] cooperatively together throughout the displacement cycle from emergency to stabilization/ resilience and development” and to “[e]xercise joint leadership for, and provide through, the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) initiative” (UNDP and UNHCR 2014b:1–2). Following these commitments, a UNHCR-UNDP Joint Secretariat was set up to consolidate cooperation between the two agencies and draw on their respective comparative advantages. (UNDP Arab States 2014)

The new response plan was to be effective both at the regional and at the national level. At the regional level, the plan was envisioned “as a broad regional partnership strategy, based on national plans or processes, and a platform for advocacy, fundraising, information management and monitoring” (UNHCR 2014a:1). At the national level, the plan was both to address refugee protection and humanitarian needs, and to build resilience of communities and to strengthen the capacity of national services. All in all, the plan was regarded as a strategy to address the “adverse social, humanitarian and economic impact” resulting from the Syria crisis and the large influx of refugees (UNHCR 2014a:1).

At the regional level, a 3RP Regional Steering Committee, jointly chaired by UNHCR and UNDP, and composed of different UN agencies, IOM, and the Syria International NGO Regional Forum, guided the overall development of the plan. At the national level, the planning process and development of country responses was to be completely country-owned and -led, supported by the Committee that was to provide expertise and quality assurance in the drafting process. (UNHCR 2014a:3–4)

Shortly after the publishing of the roadmap, on September 4, 2014, a ‘3RP technical workshop’ was held in Amman to further the development of the framework. Participants included representatives of different sectoral working groups (SWGs) coordinators, representatives of regional agencies as well as UN agencies at the country level. During the workshop, several key aspects were discussed, among others the envisioned overall tone of the plan as well as definitions and the conceptual framework that was to underlie the plan. In order to ensure a consistent regional approach, regional sector objectives with refugee and resilience outputs were discussed, as well as methods of monitoring, evaluation and reporting and the general format and outline of the plan. (UNHCR 2014b)

Other considerations focused on one of the core characteristics of the new plan, referring to the building and / or strengthening of national systems and local capacities. Participants stressed the importance of aligning the 3RP with existing national plans and of the lead role of governments during the whole process of planning and implementation. Altogether, the discussions focused on finding new and innovative ways to respond to the crisis that would reach beyond traditional strategies, both in planning and funding, and to develop a response that would be coherent, credible, and affordable. (UNHCR 2014b)

In the weeks following the workshop, planning continued at the country level, including the development of results and resources frameworks, declarations of needs as well as strategic objectives, outputs and appropriate indicators. Country chapters were eventually finalized with the support of the respective Resident / Humanitarian Coordinators (RC/HCs) in the first week of November 2014. After that, a first draft of the complete 3RP was prepared and reviewed by the Regional Steering Committee in consultation with the RC/HCs. (UNHCR 2014a:4)

In the meantime, in October 2014, a ‘Conference on the Syrian Refugee Situation – Supporting Stability in the Region’ took place in Berlin, Germany. The conference was co-chaired by the German government and UNHCR. High-level representatives of around 40 states and international organizations attended the event to send “a signal of solidarity” to the region (Federal Foreign Office 2014a). During the event, the German Federal Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Steinmeier, emphasized that the conference was specifically not only about humanitarian assistance for Syrian refugees, but also about ensuring the stability of host countries in the region. This focus found its expression also in the final declaration of the conference, the so-called ‘Berlin Communiqué’. While the declaration was not legally binding, it still encompassed several key commitments: Among others, participants committed to adjusting humanitarian and development responses (for instance through longer-term and more predictable funding) to overcome institutional barriers to work together, and to enhanced coordination under the lead of host countries. Furthermore, participants committed to addressing the economic and structural impacts of the Syria crisis on host countries, and to align development support to the priorities outlined in the national and regional response plans. While participants recognized that any form of integration of refugees remained a sovereign decision of host countries, they encouraged receiving countries to enact temporary protection status for Syrian refugees. At the same time, participants committed to supporting efforts leading towards repatriation if conditions for return in safety preceded such a solution, and of resettlement or other forms of admission for refugees from Syria. Lastly, participants committed to supporting host countries in addressing security concerns related to the influx of refugees, while at the same time promoting a culture of tolerance and peace. (Federal Foreign Office 2014b)

Following the Berlin Communiqué, on December 18, 2014, the 3RP was officially launched in Berlin. Among the audience of about 200 participants were several high-level UN representatives of OCHA, UNDP and UNHCR as well as representatives of all governments of affected countries in the region (Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, Iraq, and Egypt). Additionally, representatives of more than 30 countries, national and international NGOs and the media as well as donors attended the event. As part of the official launch, government representatives of the five affected host countries presented their national

response plans, constituting the national chapters of the 3RP. (UNDP 2014e; UNHCR and UNDP 2015a:1)

Altogether, the 3RP appealed for USD 5.5 billion, targeted to help up to an estimated 4.27 million refugees in neighboring countries (by the end of 2015) as well as over one million vulnerable people in host communities. Additionally, more than 20 million people in Jordan, Lebanon and Egypt were targeted as benefiting indirectly from improvements in the local infrastructure and service delivery as well as from capacity-development and policy and administrative support to authorities. (UNHCR 2014c) In her speech, UN Under-Secretary-General and UNDP Associate Administrator Gina Casar stressed that the 3RP was “a first for the UN”, in that it constituted “the first time that we [the UN] have put forward in a single, coherent framework at a regional level, a response plan that so clearly and fully integrates humanitarian and development responses”, altogether marking a “transformational shift” within the UN’s approach to crises (Casar, Gina 2014). With that said, the approach was understood as a model that might “be applicable in other complex and protracted crises, similar to the Syria crisis” (UNDP Arab States 2020).

5.2 Conceptual framework

As the name suggests, the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) was understood as a regional plan, composed of five country chapters outlining the respective national response in the five affected countries in the region (Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey). The specific aim of the 3RP was to provide a consistent regional strategy, while at the same time reflecting the realities and strategies of each national context. In practice, this meant that a theoretical framework and strategic directions of the response were developed at the regional level, mostly by UNHCR and UNDP. Through various meetings and workshops with representatives from UN agencies at the regional and country level, host governments representatives, and international and local NGOs, these foundations were to be disseminated to the country level, where national responses were developed under the leadership of national authorities with the support of UN agencies and NGOs. That way, needs, priorities and approaches were to be identified at country level, ensuring alignment with national planning processes and frameworks, while at the same time a consistent regional strategy could be pursued. (UNDP and UNHCR 2014a:41)

In terms of its overall framework, the 3RP therefore can be regarded as consisting of a), a regional strategic overview, developed and compiled by the UN (in cooperation with host states), that was outlining the theoretical framework and strategic direction of the overall response to the Syria crisis in the region; and b), the five country chapters, to be developed under national ownership and leadership, presenting the respective national responses, including their objectives, priorities, course of action, and outcomes.

The following subchapters will outline the theoretical framework and strategic direction of the response as developed by the UN at the regional level, examining the foundation and assumptions it was based on as well as its structure and overall objectives. This will be followed by a closer investigation of the actual new part of the response framework, focusing on the resilience component incorporated in the response.

5.2.1 Foundation and assumptions

All in all, the 3RP and its conceptual background were understood as representing a paradigm shift in the response to the Syria crisis. This shift was the result of several factors and assumptions that triggered a change of thinking.

As a starting point, it was recognized that even after three years of humanitarian aid within the regional response plans, millions of refugees remained dependent on external humanitarian assistance and international protection, debunking the current way of programming as being neither sufficient nor sustainable. At the same time, the unprecedented social and economic impacts of the crisis on host

countries in the region, jeopardizing their development and stability by overstraining capacities and placing burdens on communities, could no longer be ignored. A development-oriented approach, coupled with ongoing essential humanitarian aid, was seen as the solution. That way, consisting humanitarian needs of refugees could be addressed, while at the same time host countries could be supported in dealing with the negative effects of the refugee crisis. Accordingly, both refugees and local host communities were to benefit from measures of the plan. All in all, this response was expected to lead to a decrease in the longer-term need for humanitarian aid. (UNDG 2014:6)

In order to bridge assumed gaps between the two traditional categories of humanitarian and development assistance, the 3RP incorporated the concept of resilience. ‘Resilience-building’ thereby was understood as an approach focusing on strengthening the capacities of both refugees and host countries – their populations, governments and national systems – to deal not only with the current situation, but also to be better prepared for possible future shocks. (UNDG 2014:15)

In this respect, the approach followed several assumptions with regards to Syrian refugees and the countries hosting them: First, countries neighboring Syria were middle-income countries. This meant that, in contrast to least developed countries or developing countries, government capabilities as well as local and national resources to address human development needs existed that could be built upon in dealing with the crisis. This also included growing civil societies, including women’s organizations and local associations. Second, all affected countries had shown an overall upward trend in their development before the crisis, and national development plans and policies existed that could be used as points of reference. At the same time, in contrast to advanced economies with well-developed economies and capacities that could overcome the crisis without external assistance, countries in the region were assumed to still be vulnerable to significant setbacks from demographic, economic and social shocks associated with large crises, making assistance necessary. Third, the approach assumed that Syrian refugees brought skills and financial resources, making them potential assets for the countries hosting them. (UNDG 2014:15, 19, 33)

Based on these assumptions, the 3RP focused on investing in the capacities, capabilities and resources of both people and institutions affected by the crisis, for them to be able to deal with their intermediate and long-term needs independently from external help. Especially people in need were regarded as active and creative agents that were to be empowered towards greater ownership of their own lives, self-sufficiency and sustainable human development. (UNDP and UNHCR 2014a:17)

5.2.2 Structure and overall objectives

As mentioned above, the 3RP was introduced as a “UN first”, representing “a paradigm shift in the response to the crisis” (Clark, Helen and Guterres, António in UNDP and UNHCR 2014:6). Entitled as a ‘resilience-based development response’ to the Syria crisis, the plan constituted “a consolidated framework to address refugee protection needs, the humanitarian needs of the most vulnerable, and the longer-term socio-economic impacts of the Syria crisis on neighbouring countries” (UNDP and UNHCR 2014a:8). Even though agencies had begun to address developmental issues already before the official launch of the plan, the 3RP thus formalized the integration of humanitarian and development efforts by bringing them together in a single framework. (UNDP and UNHCR 2016a:10)

The plan comprised two interconnected components: the ‘refugee protection and humanitarian component’ (the ‘refugee component’), and the ‘resilience/stabilization-based development component’ (the ‘resilience component’). The refugee component was to address “the protection and assistance needs of refugees living in urban, peri-urban and rural areas, as well as in camps and settlements, in all sectors, as well as the most vulnerable members of impacted communities”. Furthermore, it was to “strengthen community-based protection through identifying and responding to immediate support needs of communal services in affected communities” (UNDP and UNHCR 2016a:10).

The resilience component on the other hand was to address “the resilience and stabilization needs of impacted and vulnerable communities in all sectors”, to build “the capacities of national and sub-national service delivery systems”, to strengthen “the ability of governments to lead the crisis response”, and to provide “the strategic, technical and policy support to advance national responses” (UNDP and UNHCR 2016a:10).

In other words, the overall goals of the 3RP were two-fold: to ensure protection and humanitarian assistance for Syrian refugees and other vulnerable groups; and to stabilize and build resilience of the most vulnerable individuals, communities, systems and institutions in impacted countries. (UNDP and UNHCR 2014a:18)

In the refugee component, cornerstones of the protection response as outlined in previous RRP were to be continued. This included, among others, access and admission to safety, protection from refoulement, legal aid and counselling with regard to protection challenges as well as humanitarian assistance and emergency relief in sectors such as housing, food, WASH, and health. The actual new part of the 3RP, however, lay in its complementation with the resilience component.

In line with this new design of the approach, linking a refugee and a resilience component in a single plan, the 3RP stressed the need for a new aid architecture. Donors were encouraged to expand and harmonize funding allocations from their different funding streams to accommodate to the new structure. Additionally, the plan called upon donors to disburse funds earlier in the year and to provide multi-year funding to facilitate better planning and predictability. In order to increase effectiveness, especially of longer-term, resilience-based programming, the plan emphasized the need for robust financing mechanisms and ‘hybrid’ assistance, for instance through pooled funding that combined humanitarian and recovery funding. (UNDP and UNHCR 2014a:6; UNDP and UNHCR 2015:6–7, 18, 25). Additionally, each year an international pledging conference was to take place in order to ensure sufficient funding of the response.

Overall, the UN stressed the importance of fully funding both efforts to assist refugees *and* longer-term development efforts. As Helen Clark, UNDG Chairperson and UNDP Administrator, put it, it was “not a question of either/or”, but both types of assistance were needed (Clark, Helen in UNDP and UNHCR 2015:4). Similarly, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon stressed that “[r]esources for one area should not come at the expense of another” (Ki-moon, Ban in UNDP and UNHCR 2015:4), further elaborating that reducing development assistance in order to finance refugee aid would be counter-productive, causing a vicious circle that would do harm to millions of vulnerable people. (UN 2015)

5.2.3 The resilience component

As mentioned above, the actual new part of the 3RP lay in the incorporation of a resilience component. The concept of resilience thereby was introduced to the context of the Syria crisis by the UNDP Sub-Regional Response Facility and the UNDG in late 2013. In a Position Paper, agencies outlined the theoretical framework of a resilience-based development response and the principles and preconditions for its implementation. (UNDG 2014) Based on this framework, the concept of resilience was incorporated in the response and developed further over the following years.

The following subchapters will outline the key features of the response with regard to resilience. First, it will trace the incorporation process of the concept; second, it will investigate its application, focusing on the applied definition, core principles, strategic directions, and tools for implementation. Table 5 provides an overview of these key features.

Table 5: The 3RP as a resilience-based response: conceptual framework

Definition of resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “the ability of individuals, households, communities and institutions to anticipate, withstand, recover and transform from shocks and crises”
Core principles of a resilience-based response (Dead Sea Resilience Agenda)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration of humanitarian and development planning • Promotion of self-sufficiency • Focus on capacity-development and use of existing systems • Partnerships • Social cohesion
Further strategic directions of a resilience-based response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong national leadership • Regional protection framework • Enhancing economic opportunities (livelihoods, engagement of private sector) • No Lost Generation • Outreach and partnerships (Inter-agency cooperation, partnerships, knowledge-sharing and innovation) • Accountability (monitoring and evaluation, participatory approach)
Resilience tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resilience Marker / Resilience Lens • Stress Index • Vulnerability Analysis Framework for Syrian Refugees

Table by the author

5.2.3.1 Incorporation of the resilience concept in the response to the Syria crisis

The UNDG Position Paper was published with the aim of providing national and international partners with the theoretical underpinnings and a set of principles of a resilience-based development response in a context of forced displacement. The Paper defined resilience as “the ability of households, communities and societies to cope with shocks and stresses, to recover from those stresses, and to work with households, communities and national and local government institutions to achieve sustained, positive and transformative change” (UNDG 2014:13). Accordingly, a resilience-based development response to the Syria crisis was expected to work towards three inter-related strategic objectives: coping, recovering and transforming. Through these different goals, ultimately, the resilience of individuals, communities, authorities, institutions and systems was to be strengthened. (UNDG 2014:15)

The Paper further outlined various principles and aspects to take into account in developing a resilience-based approach, including first and foremost the encouragement of local and national ownership, the incorporation of both longer-term and short-term perspectives on needs, the financial sustainability of assistance, and the monitoring of programs and projects. Furthermore, interventions were to embed human rights and gender equality and to be sensitive to conflict and conflict risks. Above all, interventions were to be context-specific. To implement such an approach, the Paper encouraged actors to build partnerships between various stakeholders and to collaborate and coordinate in order to reduce duplications and create synergistic linkages between different sectors of work. Furthermore, stakeholders were encouraged to use and build on existing capacities, to think in terms of the whole system (economic, political and social), and to monitor trends in order to revise and adjust responses in a timely manner. (UNDG 2014:13–14)

Altogether, the Paper stressed that a resilience-based approach was not to be understood as a replacement of, or alternative to, humanitarian assistance. Rather, it was to build on it and to be used when and where emergency situations had stabilized, with the overall aim of enhancing the capacities of beneficiaries and gradually reducing their need for long-term emergency assistance. Accordingly, the continuity between humanitarian and development assistance across all sectors was stressed: The eight conventional sectors addressed in the humanitarian response in the RRP (Shelter, WASH, Food Security, Non-Food Items, Financial Assistance, Education, Health, Protection) were understood as being interrelated to and transitioning into five areas in a resilience-based response (Sustainable Habitat, Economic Recovery, Sustainable Education Services, Sustainable Health Services, Social Cohesion and the Rule of Law), complemented by two new response areas (Local Governance, Natural Resources Management). (UNDG 2014:17)

Several of the remarks made in the Position Paper were incorporated in the first 3RP, including the overall definition of resilience as well as the objectives of a resilience-based response. Based on these initial considerations, over the next years the conceptual framework around resilience was developed further, including numerous stakeholders active in the response. In November 2015, a so-called ‘Resilience Development Forum’ took place at the Dead Sea in Jordan. The Forum brought together 500 key humanitarian and development stakeholders that were active in the region, including representatives of UN agencies and international and national NGOs, government representatives of affected countries, donors as well as representatives of international financial institutions and the private sector in order for them to exchange experiences and discuss ideas. The concrete objectives of the Forum were to “ensure that the long-term development needs and priorities of countries impacted by the Syria crisis [...] [were] accounted for” and to “establish a lasting and strong partnership between all stakeholders including the private and public sectors, international organizations, civil society, think tanks and donor countries” (UNDP and UNHCR 2015:18). Discussions at the Forum resulted in the adoption of the ‘Dead Sea Resilience Agenda’, a joint “breakthrough document” that outlined five core principles of a resilience-based response (see also [Chapter 5.2.3.2.1](#)) (UNDP and UNHCR 2015:18).

Almost one year later, in October 2016, the Agenda and its implementation were taken stock of at a so-called ‘Resilience-building Week’ in Amman, Jordan. Under the slogan “A Bridge from Concepts to Evidence”, more than 200 participants including high level officials from governments in the region, regional experts and practitioners in resilience, UN partners, international financial institutions, NGOs, and the private sector came together to stimulate regional knowledge-sharing on resilience and identify good practices and lessons learned to be incorporated in the planning for the next generations of the 3RP. (UNDP Arab States 2016)

5.2.3.2 The 3RP’s application of resilience

Based on these considerations and developments, the 3RP overall defined resilience as “the ability of individuals, households, communities and institutions to anticipate, withstand, recover and transform from shocks and crises” (UNDP and UNHCR 2014a:17). In order to achieve this, the approach’s aim was to “support communities and institutions to respond to increased demand and pressure (characterized as “coping”), promote household recovery from the negative impacts of the crisis (“recovering”), and strengthen local and national economic, social and political systems to protect development gains from current and future shocks (“transforming”).” (3RP Regional Drafting Committee 2015:11) Besides these overall parameters, several ‘core principles’, ‘strategic directions’, and ‘resilience tools’ were developed that altogether made up the conceptual framework of the response. The different aspects are outlined in the following three subchapters.

5.2.3.2.1 Five core principles of a resilience-based response

In order to establish a common understanding of resilience and resilience-based programming across the region, the Dead Sea Resilience Agenda from 2015 identified five core principles of putting resilience into practice:

Integration of humanitarian and development planning

The first principle related to the integration of humanitarian and development planning. Rather than focusing solely on emergency relief any longer, the response was to be complemented with development assistance. This was based on the emerging recognition that in host countries of Syrian refugees a development crisis was unfolding alongside the humanitarian crisis, making development assistance necessary. To this effect, more development stakeholders were to be included in the response. The Resilience Development Forum was regarded as a first step of putting the new focus on development into practice by bringing together actors of both response areas and expanding the scope of partnerships. In order to bridge the assumed gap between the two response areas, synergies between humanitarian and development investment and approaches were to be strengthened, including through new and robust financing mechanisms for seamless assistance. (UNDP and UNHCR 2015:18)

Promotion of self-sufficiency

Promoting the dignity and self-sufficiency of affected populations constituted the second core principle of the Dead Sea Resilience Agenda. This comprised two areas: On the one hand, education was regarded as an essential pillar of building the resilience of populations. In particular, the Agenda stressed the importance of the so-called ‘No Lost Generation initiative’ established by UNICEF together with host governments, donors, UN and international agencies and NGOs. On the other hand, the Agenda strongly promoted programming aimed at livelihoods, strengthening economic opportunities, income-generating activities and creating an enabling environment for businesses and entrepreneurs. (UNDP and UNHCR 2015:18; UNDP and UNHCR 2016a:16)

Focus on capacity-development and use of existing systems

Besides its focus on self-sufficiency of affected populations, the Resilience Agenda put focus on the use and development of national capacities and systems. In recognizing that communities, municipal and local authorities were at the forefront of responding to the crisis, existing local systems, institutions and structures were to be used in the response, rather than creating parallel structures through which assistance was channeled. At the same time, the approach recognized that gaps in national capacity and systems existed, constraining the delivery of services and the effectiveness of assistance. Accordingly, national capacities were to be reinforced both to make the response more cost-effective and sustainable, and to help communities and municipalities to adapt to new and changing needs. (UNDP and UNHCR 2014a:8, 19; UNDP and UNHCR 2016a:16)

Capacity-development in this regard comprehended structures in all sectors and policy areas, including education, health, justice and the rule of law, operating and delivery systems in municipalities, as well as conflict-mitigation mechanisms at the local and national levels. (UNDP and UNHCR 2014a:29, 32; UNDP and UNHCR 2015:18)

Partnerships

Generating new and inclusive partnerships constituted another core principle of the Resilience Agenda. Special focus was put on partnerships with the private sector. Besides its beneficial role in more traditional focus areas such as creating jobs and providing skills training or expanding financial resources for business development, the Resilience Agenda saw its competitive advantage in its ability to develop new and innovative approaches that would foster resilience. All in all, through inclusive partnerships the response was to be made more relevant, effective and efficient. (UNDP and UNHCR 2015:18; UNDP and UNHCR 2016a:16)

Social Cohesion

“Safeguard[ing] social cohesion to foster resilience and cooperation” constituted the last of the five core principles of the Dead Sea Resilience Agenda (UNDP and UNHCR 2015:18). In order to strengthen social cohesion and mitigate inter- and intra-community tensions, the Agenda stressed the importance

of targeting both refugees and vulnerable host populations in the response. In addition, an explicit focus was to be put on conflict prevention and peace-building initiatives in order to reduce tensions and the risk of local violence. In this regard, it first and foremost emphasized the need to change the perception of refugees as assets for host communities rather than considering them as burdens. Altogether, social cohesion was seen as a way of contributing to local peace, stability, and resilient households and communities that were better able to deal with shocks and stresses. (UNDP and UNHCR 2014a:20; UNDP and UNHCR 2015:18; UNDP and UNHCR 2016a:17)

5.2.3.2.2 Strategic directions

In addition to these five core principles, the 3RP incorporated several so-called ‘strategic directions’ that outlined further principles and overall offered a comprehensive policy framework.

Strong national leadership

First of all, national ownership and leadership were regarded central features both in securing a more effective response to the crisis and in yielding sustainable results. Therefore, while the overall 3RP was considered a regional plan, needs and priorities, and appropriate ways and resources to address them, were to be identified and implemented at the country level. That way, decision-making, coordination and planning was to remain a nationally-owned process in order to ensure the alignment of the crisis response with national planning processes and frameworks. (UNDP and UNHCR 2014a:7; UNDP and UNHCR 2015:12)

Four aspects were considered crucial for national ownership and leadership: “a clear national institutional framework; a single nationally led planning and programming process; accessing diverse sources of funding; and the alignment of the international crisis response with the national agenda” (UNDP and UNHCR 2016a:11). In order to ensure a nationally-led response in this sense, the international community was to support countries both in developing capacity at the national, sub-national and local level, and by promoting the role of government authorities and local society actors in the response. (UNDP and UNHCR 2016a:11)

Regional protection framework

While national leadership was seen as crucial in the response, the 3RP also stressed the importance of a regionally coherent strategy. Part of this concept was the aim of providing a consistent regional protection framework, to be achieved through the close collaboration between 3RP partners and host governments aimed at maintaining and strengthening protection standards across the region in accordance with international laws and norms. (UNDP and UNHCR 2015:16; UNDP and UNHCR 2016a:13)

The regional character of the response was further emphasized in the 3RP’s governance structure, consisting of two regional committees: The 3RP Regional Steering Committee (RSC), on the one hand, co-chaired by the UNHCR and UNDP Regional Coordinators was to provide strategic guidance on key issues related to the overall regional response. The 3RP Regional Technical Committee (RTC), on the other hand, was to oversee the technical planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting of the regional response. In order to make monitoring across the region more comparable the 3RP stressed in particular the importance of establishing indicators at the regional level. (UNDP and UNHCR 2015:15; UNDP and UNHCR 2016a:24)

Enhancing economic opportunities

Enhancing economic opportunities for both refugees and vulnerable host communities was regarded as “the single most positive and pressing way in which the response to the Syria crisis could be moved towards a more sustainable footing” (UNDP and UNHCR 2016a:18). The focus of the approach in that regard was twofold:

a) Livelihoods

First, the 3RP put increased focus on livelihoods, reflected in increased financial requirements for the sector that went up from around 7 percent in the RRP6 to around 10 percent in the 3RP 2015/16. (UNDP and UNHCR 2014a:40) In the subsequent years, the strategic focus on the sector grew even bigger: “Investing in livelihoods and employment opportunities to better equip refugees and host community members to provide for themselves and their families” and “Enhancing economic opportunities” were made key strategic directions of the approach (UNDP and UNHCR 2015:7; UNDP and UNHCR 2016a:10). The plan promoted a concrete strategy, consisting of five aspects: the stabilization of livelihood and employment through income generation and emergency job creation for host community members and refugees; local economic revitalization in order to achieve maximum absorption capacity of host communities; development and scale-up of sustainable employment and inclusive economic growth; implementation of private sector partnerships on livelihoods and employment, in particular exploring linkages to green jobs, information technology, and services; and the development of knowledge products and tools that would reinforce a resilience response through sustainable livelihood strategies and stabilization. (UNDP and UNHCR 2015:21)

For this strategy to work, in a first step the approach promoted a change of perception of refugees: Rather than regarding them as a burden, taking away jobs from the local population, refugees were to be seen as an asset, representing a significant workforce with useful skills that could stimulate economic growth in host countries. Concomitant with this recognition, the 3RP promoted policy changes that would allow Syrian refugees to work and use their potential. At the same time, at the programmatic level, the approach promoted a coherent, systematic, and large-scale effort to livelihood development, making use of synergies and of various key actors taking on specialized roles within a ‘collaborative whole’. (UNDP and UNHCR 2015:20–21; UNDP and UNHCR 2016a:18)

b) Engagement of the private sector

Second, major importance was attached to partnerships and collaboration with the private sector. The engagement of multinational companies and, in particular, regional and national enterprises, in the response was considered as an “indispensable part of the [Resilience] Agenda” and as crucial in developing new approaches, finding innovative solutions, and fostering a more holistic approach (UNDP and UNHCR 2015:24). The potential of expanding partnerships was regarded as “tremendous” due to the private sector’s “phenomenal capacities” and its ability “to work efficiently, creatively and profitably in the crisis response” (UNDP and UNHCR 2015:24).

Businesses were considered as playing a beneficial role in different areas: from expanding financial resources for business development; creating jobs and providing education and skills training for locals and refugees; identifying demand for locally-produced products; to encouraging international businesses to look at value-added platforms for investment. Public-private partnerships were promoted as providing a structure for governments and companies to collaborate on expanding basic services and improving key infrastructure. (UNDP and UNHCR 2015:18, 24)

No Lost Generation

With regards to education, the response – similar to previous RRP6s – integrated the No Lost Generation (NLG) initiative by UNICEF. The objective of the strategy was to provide Syrian children access to education and a protective environment, and comprehended both immediate emergency support and resilience-based interventions. This also included a focus on increased capacity-development of national services and systems for communities to be able to expand services for refugee and other vulnerable children. While the NLG initiative was a programmatic response plan in itself, the strategy was aligned with the 3RP and other existing processes and mechanisms, including national plans and strategies, to

ensure a coherent and effective response and avoid a possible ‘loss’ of a whole generation of children and youth.²⁴ (UNDP and UNHCR 2014a:30; UNDP and UNHCR 2015:22)

Outreach and partnerships

Part of the 3RP’s self-understanding as a regional platform was to establish new and build on existing partnerships with various stakeholders in order to increase coordination and ensure a more effective response. Partnerships were pursued with different stakeholders and at all levels:

a) Inter-agency cooperation

First of all, up until the launch of the 3RP, UNHCR had been leading and coordinating the overall response to the Syria crisis. With the 3RP and its new focus on development, UNHCR formalized a new partnership with UNDP, allotting UNDP a much larger role in the response than it had before. While UNHCR continued to be in the lead of the refugee response, UNDP was to be responsible for the resilience component of the plan, with both agencies making sure that the two components were integrated and mutually reinforcing. Both organizations were equally involved in the governance structure of the response, co-chairing both the 3RP Regional Steering Committee and the 3RP Regional Technical Committee. (UNDP and UNHCR 2015:15; UNDP and UNHCR 2016a:24)

b) Partnerships

Besides this partnership between the two UN agencies in the lead, the overall 3RP was ultimately understood as “a partnership among more than 200 humanitarian and development actors”, including other regional UN agencies and donors as well as international and local NGOs, charities and foundations (UNDP and UNHCR 2015:15). Above all stood the partnership and close collaboration with host governments who remained the key partners of the response in line with the principle of national ownership and leadership. At the country level, this did not only mean involving national governments and ministries, but also municipalities and authorities at the local level.

Additionally, in view of enhancing economic opportunities and livelihoods as mentioned above, particular focus was put on establishing new partnerships with the private sector. Furthermore, with regard to prevailing challenges in terms of funding, additional partnerships with international financing institutions and development funds were promoted and advanced. (UNDP and UNHCR 2015:16, 24; UNDP and UNHCR 2016a:7, 22)

c) Knowledge-sharing and innovation

Overall, the 3RP envisioned itself as a platform for knowledge-exchange. Thus, strong focus was put on outreach and information- and knowledge-sharing at the sub-regional level. By sharing knowledge about particular ways in which host communities had responded to the refugee influx, positive practices were to be identified and encouraged or replicated elsewhere. (UNDP and UNHCR 2014a:43) Special focus was put on innovative approaches. Innovation was regarded as the “core feature” of the 3RP, laying “at the heart of the humanitarian and resilience-based response” (UNDP and UNHCR 2015:24), as innovative approaches were assumed to result in improvements in efficiency, quality, or social outcomes and impacts.

Accountability

Related to the size of the appeal, the high public interest in the response, and the protracted nature of the crisis, strong focus was put on accountability, both to donors and to affected populations: On the one hand, the 3RP stressed the need to provide donors and other stakeholders with reliable and accurate information. This implied collecting concrete evidence of impact and lessons learned through ongoing monitoring and evaluation in order to create transparency and credibility. On the other hand, with regard

²⁴ For more information on the No Lost Generation initiative see for example www.nolostgeneration.org.

to accountability to affected populations, the 3RP promoted a participatory approach that put beneficiary communities and people affected by the crisis at the center of the response. (UNDP and UNHCR 2015:15; UNDP and UNHCR 2016a:24)

a) Monitoring and Evaluation

Part of the emphasis on accountability was a strong focus on a robust follow-up mechanism, including monitoring, evaluation and reporting, with the aim of collecting evidence to measure the impact of the response and adjust it accordingly. By the time the 3RP was developed, a variety of information management and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) tools had been developed in the course of the RRP, including regional and national dashboards, M&E reports, information portals and reporting systems. Therefore, the 3RP could build on existing tools that had proved effective, and extend them to track progress on the resilience component of the plan as well. The 3RP Regional Technical Committee undertook ongoing research into how M&E of progress could be enhanced, and introduced new online tools to improve targeting, decision-making and program design.

In line with being a country-led plan, M&E and reporting was to be aligned with each country's national M&E framework and systems as far as possible. At the same time, a minimum common set of indicators was identified for the 3RP sectors to use in all countries to compare progress, outputs and outcomes. Altogether, strong M&E mechanisms were regarded as crucial for the 3RP to remain both relevant and transparent, support sector and inter-sectoral coordination, and inform better programming. (UNDP and UNHCR 2014a:42–43; UNDP and UNHCR 2016a:24)

b) Participatory approach

Following a participatory approach to the extent possible constituted a second principle with regard to accountability. Through ongoing dialogue, two-way communication and consultations as well as feedback and complaints mechanisms throughout the project cycle, refugees and affected populations were to be engaged and empowered to actively participate in the response. 3RP partners were encouraged to communicate all intervention approaches to beneficiaries, stand accountable, and adjust their programming according to the received feedback. Through these measures, the quality and effectiveness of assistance was to be increased, while at the same time the integrity and transparency of programs was to be ensured. (UNDP and UNHCR 2016a:24)

5.2.3.2.3 Resilience Tools

In order to support country offices and host governments in drafting, measuring, and mapping resilience-related measures within the context of the 3RP, the Regional UN Development Group (R-UNDG)²⁵ developed several “innovative tools” (UNDP and UNHCR 2014a:17). These tools included a Resilience Marker for guiding the design of interventions, later replaced by the Stabilization and Resilience Lens, a Stress Index for measuring the existing resilience of host communities, and Vulnerability Mapping and Analyses to be used by the different organizational partners in the response. (UNDP and UNHCR 2014a:17)

The so-called *Resilience Marker* was developed to guide the design of interventions. It consisted of several guiding yes-or-no-questions that needed to be answered in a two-stage approach to determine whether a planned intervention was to be allotted to the resilience component, and if so, whether it was likely to contribute to resilience-building on a sustainable basis. Questions comprised, inter alia, the outreach of the intervention (balance between needs of refugee and host population), the linkages with national priorities and systems (alignment with existing national / sectoral plans, role of and capacity-development of national / local institutions), and the sustainability of impacts (lasting benefits, responses to root causes, spillover effects, responsiveness to social cohesion issues). Deducing from the number

²⁵ In Regional UN Development Groups, several development agencies, funds and programs are consolidated at the regional level to work together on challenges that transcend country borders. (UNSDG 2020)

of questions answered with ‘yes’, a simple score was calculated that showed whether the planned intervention was (most) likely to contribute to resilience-building, or whether it needed to be revised and adjusted in its design, scope or implementation process. (UNDP Sub-Regional Response Facility 2014:6)

Due to some resistance, in particular from host countries, the Resilience Marker went through several iterations and was finally replaced with the so-called *Resilience Lens*. (UNDP Sub-Regional Response Facility 2016:12) The Resilience Lens had three objectives: to “identify and assess resilience activities across both components of the 3RP”, to “advance resilience across all population groups, sectors and countries, through adequate planning, monitoring, reporting including the development of a resilience narrative”, and to “create a baseline to measure how all 3RP partners [...] [were] strengthening resilience in support of increasingly integrated national plans” (3RP Regional Drafting Committee 2015:6). Despite the last objective, the UNDP Sub-Regional Response Facility emphasized that the Lens could not be used as a measure of progress, but rather as a guidance tool and resilience narrative framework. (UNDP Sub-Regional Response Facility 2016:13)

For the application of the Lens in practice, sector teams were to answer three questions, focusing on national ownership and leadership of the response, on its contribution to sustainable benefits, and on sensitivity to social cohesion and stability issues, and rate their responses on a scale of 1 to 5 to calculate a score. If the score was low, adjustment of the activities was encouraged to increase their “resilience potential” (UNDP Sub-Regional Response Facility 2016:12). While it was considered “normal” for purely humanitarian interventions to have a lower score than interventions falling under the resilience component, they still were expected to “progress along a continuum of good resilience-based programming” in the course of their implementation (UNDP Sub-Regional Response Facility 2016:12).

Despite changes made in comparison with the previous Resilience Marker, the Resilience Lens still faced resistance. Host countries perceived it as a tool of evaluation, and were reluctant to introduce a measure that they were sensitive to. Other points of criticism included the subjective nature of the rating, the lack of any kind of weighting if scores were to be added up across the questions, the lack of precision in what the ratings meant in practice and the fact that the rating was too simple and not granular enough to allow for progress within a level. Even though the tool was adopted as a collective tool and included in the 2016 3RP planning guidelines, its application therefore was left optional. (UNDP Sub-Regional Response Facility 2016:12–13)

Furthermore, the UNDP Sub-Regional Response Facility developed a *Stress Index* to systematically measure the vulnerability – often understood as the opposite of resilience – of communities and existing systems according to a standardized norm. The index comprised two indicators: the poverty rate, approximating existing vulnerabilities, and the number of registered refugees at the local level as a share of the total population, capturing the degree of stress the crisis was placing on communities. Based on the index’ results, the most vulnerable communities affected by the Syria crisis were to be identified for the purpose of targeting and prioritizing. (UNDG 2014:28–30; UNDP and UNHCR 2014a:17, 46)

Lastly, a *Vulnerability Analysis Framework for Syrian Refugees* (VASyR) was developed to gain a nuanced picture about refugees’ living conditions and to inform decision-making on program activities. While the specific application of the framework differed in the different 3RP countries, the VASyR in general aimed at comprising accurate, multi-sectoral vulnerability criteria on the basis of which programs could be adjusted and implemented. (UNDP and UNHCR 2014a:46)

5.3 Analysis of the 3RP from a resilience perspective

Overall, a comprehensive framework of a ‘resilience-based response’ to the Syrian refugee crisis was developed by the UN in cooperation with other actors. This framework not only provided a definition of resilience, but also established several core principles, strategic directions and tools for

implementation. In their sum, these aspects provided the overall conceptual basis for the programmatic, resilience-based response that was to be implemented in the different countries in the region.

With resilience as its new theoretical underpinning, the 3RP marked the first time that the concept was linked to and applied explicitly in a concrete situation of forced displacement. Taking the findings of the preceding subchapters into account, the following two subchapters will analyze the response from the perspective of resilience theory and will investigate whether the 3RP with its conceptual framework qualifies as a resilience-based response. Therefore, first, it will be examined how and to what extent resilience-thinking and resilience principles have been integrated in the 3RP, comparing the response framework with general resilience-programming. Second, it will be analyzed how the 3RP can be classified in resilience theory and what version of resilience-thinking has been applied.

5.3.1 How much resilience-thinking is in the 3RP?

As evident from its title, the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) incorporated the concept of resilience. In order to analyze the extent to which the framework integrated theoretical underpinnings of resilience-thinking besides its prominent title it makes sense to look at both the framework’s definition of resilience and at the principles the response was based on, and juxtapose them with characteristics and principles found in general resilience-thinking (see also Table 6).

Table 6: Principles of resilience-programming in general and in the 3RP

Key principles of general resilience-programming in humanitarian / development assistance		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on absorptive, adaptive and transformative capacities • Flexibility and ability to adjust programming • Context-specific approaches • Integrated approaches • Partnerships • National ownership • Long-term focus • Regional strategies
Principles incorporated in 3RP	Core principles of the Dead Sea Resilience Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of self-sufficiency • Focus on capacity-building and use of existing systems • Integration of humanitarian and development planning • Partnerships • Social cohesion
	Strategic directions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong national leadership • Regional protection framework • Enhancing economic opportunities (livelihoods, engagement of private sector) • No Lost Generation • Outreach and partnerships (Inter-agency cooperation, partnerships, knowledge-sharing and innovation) • Accountability (monitoring and evaluation, participatory approach)
	Further characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Country chapters adapted to national context

Table by the author

As outlined above, in the 3RP, resilience was defined as “the ability of individuals, households, communities and institutions to anticipate, withstand, recover and transform from shocks and crises” (UNDP and UNHCR 2014a:17). Even though a common and unified definition of the concept in the field of humanitarian aid and development cooperation remains lacking, the 3RP’s definition thereby

included the same key terms as definitions used by other international organizations and institutions applying resilience in the context of humanitarian assistance and development cooperation: It referred to a *disturbance* (here: *shocks* and *crises*) as well as to different abilities or *capacities* of subjects to deal with this disturbance (here: *anticipate*, *withstand*, *recover*, *transform*). These capacities were further elaborated within the 3RP's overall objective to "support communities and institutions to respond to increased demand and pressure (characterized as "coping"), promote household recovery from the negative impacts of the crisis ("recovering"), and strengthen local and national economic, social and political systems to protect development gains from current and future shocks ("transforming")" (3RP Regional Drafting Committee 2015:11).

With these central objectives and terms, the 3RP in general applied the same definition and understanding of resilience in a context of forced displacement as found in resilience-programming in humanitarian and development cooperation in general, pivoting on enabling people, systems or institutions to deal with the effects and consequences of current and future shocks more effectively and on improving the prospects for sustainable development. (HLEF 2012:1; Levine and Mosel 2014:3)

Moreover, as outlined in [Chapter 4.3](#), resilience-programming in humanitarian and development assistance generally follows a set of different key principles and characteristics in order to achieve these goals. They include a focus on capacity-strengthening, partnerships and national ownership as well as on integrated approaches and long-term, regional and context-specific strategies. Most of these principles could be found in the 3RP as well, summarized in the so-called Dead Sea Resilience Agenda that described the five core principles of the resilience-based response.

The core of general resilience-programming lies within its focus on capacity-strengthening. Differentiating between three types of capacities (absorptive, adaptive, and transformative), capacity-strengthening in general thereby aims at enabling subjects to deal better with the current and with potential future crises. (Frankenberger et al. 2014:7–9; Mitchell 2013:i; USAID 2012:7–9) The 3RP, too, incorporated a strong focus on this aspect. While not referring explicitly to the different types of capacities, this included different levels. On the one hand, it focused on the self-sufficiency of affected populations, including both refugees and vulnerable members of host communities. Through education and livelihoods measures, individuals' capacities to deal with the situation were to be increased. At the same time, this focus on capacity-strengthening was to decrease individuals' dependency on external aid, making the response more cost-effective and sustainable by reducing the costs of ongoing emergency assistance. (UNDP and UNHCR 2014a:17)

On the other hand, capacity-strengthening in the 3RP focused on national and local systems, institutions and structures. Rather than setting up parallel structures through which aid was channeled, existing structures were to be used and reinforced. That way, again the response was to be made more cost-effective and sustainable. At the same time, it was hoped to create a larger sense of ownership of host governments and institutions, therefore including another key characteristic of general resilience-programming which stresses the importance of national ownership for two reasons: to ensure that national needs and resources are adequately included and, recognizing the long-term nature of resilience-building, to ensure the alignment with existing long-term national development plans. (Council of EU 2013:3; EC 2013:3; Grünewald and Warner 2012:2; USAID 2012:16) Following this argumentation, the 3RP stressed the notion of ownership throughout the response framework, with the response being understood as being developed and implemented under the overall leadership of the respective governments in alignment with national development plans. (UNDP and UNHCR 2016a:11)

Another key characteristic of general resilience-programming lies in its focus on integrated approaches. Assuming that different sectors and fields are connected to each other, partners, policy areas and sectors are expected to work together, adopt complementary and synergistic strategies, and focus both on immediate and on longer-term needs, vulnerabilities and capacities. (Folkema, Ibrahim, and Wilkinson 2013:22; Frankenberger et al. 2014:9) In line with this thinking, the 3RP focused explicitly on the integration of humanitarian and development measures. Rather than focusing solely on emergency relief

for refugees any longer as with previous response plans, it started to explicitly incorporate development assistance in order to support the countries hosting them. This was to be achieved through a new coordination framework, in which UNDP, besides UNHCR, was foreseen a new leadership role, with UNHCR leading the refugee component and UNDP leading the resilience component. Moreover, more development actors were to be included in the response. All in all, the approach was regarded as a way to close the gap between the two response areas. (UNDP and UNHCR 2015:18)

This was to be supported through the development of new partnerships between these actors. Further partnerships were promoted with other actors, too, for instance with national and local governments and authorities, local and international NGOs from various fields, the private sector, but also with international financial institutions, research institutions and academics. (UNDP and UNHCR 2015:15, 18; UNDP and UNHCR 2016a:7, 16, 22, 24) With this focus on an integrative approach, including various actors from different fields working jointly towards one common goal, the 3RP followed another key principle of general resilience-programming which promotes partnerships out of different reasons: Bringing partners with different fields of expertise together is seen as facilitating more holistic situation analyses and coherent planning. Similarly, learning from partners how they handle situations is seen as opening up new perspectives, overcoming thinking in silos, and creating greater synergies and new ways of working together. As the 3RP, general resilience-programming in particular stresses the importance of partnerships with local actors to ensure greater ownership and buy-in of the approach, while partnership with donors and the private sector are seen as vital for the successful funding of programming. (Folkema, Ibrahim, and Wilkinson 2013:22; Frankenberger et al. 2014:10–11; Levine 2014a:3; Mitchell 2013:41; OECD 2014:13–14)

Other key principles of general resilience-programming were not included in the Dead Sea Resilience Agenda as explicit core principles. Nevertheless, the 3RP incorporated at least some of these characteristics: Like previous, humanitarian response plans to the Syria crisis (RRP1-RRP6) already, and as the title suggests, the framework was understood as a regional response plan, outlining the strategic direction of the response in five countries across the region and offering a general strategic direction in which the response in all these countries was moving. With this understanding, the 3RP comprised a relatively new aspect in resilience-programming that assumes that regional strategies enable organizations to align resources and share knowledge, and allow for an overall better contextualization of the situation. (Frankenberger et al. 2014:10) The aspect of knowledge-sharing was picked up in the 3RP as well in its self-understanding as a platform for knowledge-exchange across the sub-region, aiming at the identification of positive practices in host countries, potentially leading to their replication. (UNDP and UNHCR 2014a:43)

At the same time, the 3RP recognized the importance of context-specific strategies. While setting the general strategic agenda, the 3RP therefore comprised specific response plans for each country which were to be developed and led by the respective national government and tailored to the country's specific needs and priorities. (UNDP and UNHCR 2014a:41) As such, the 3RP was in line with general resilience-programming that stresses that there is no resilience intervention per se, but that strategies need to be adapted to the local, regional and national contexts in which they are implemented. (Frankenberger et al. 2014:11) In the same line of reasoning, each year a new version of the 3RP was launched, adapted to changed circumstances. That way, it paid regard both to changes in needs and vulnerabilities of affected populations, but also to shifts in policies and regulatory frameworks of host countries that allowed for (or necessitated) changes in the response. In so doing, the 3RP followed another key principle of general resilience-programming that recognizes that communities and states do not operate within a linear framework and that circumstances can change, therefore promoting a large degree of flexibility to readjust approaches accordingly. (Folkema, Ibrahim, and Wilkinson 2013:21–22; Frankenberger et al. 2014:11; Mitchell 2013:5)

With these characteristics and principles, the 3RP followed most principles of general resilience-programming in humanitarian and development assistance. In some aspects, however, the 3RP differed from genuine resilience-programming.

On the one side, this concerned the omission of a central characteristic of resilience-programming, that is, the long-term focus of resilience-building strategies. Widely, it is understood that a time frame of more than the four years commonly applied in traditional development planning is needed to truly overcome vulnerabilities and lead to resilience. (Levine and Mosel 2014:14–15; Mercy Corps 2015:6; USAID 2012:16) While the 3RP did comprise a longer time frame than previous response plans (RRP1-RRP6) which had only provided a strategy for a couple of months, its duration of two years could not be regarded as long-term in the sense of resilience-building with the aim of achieving transformational change.

On the other side, the 3RP incorporated two specific additional key principles that were not immanent in resilience frameworks in general international development. This concerned a strong focus on social cohesion, constituting one of the core principles outlined in the Dead Sea Resilience Agenda (UNDP and UNHCR 2015:18), and on accountability both to donors, through a robust monitoring and evaluation system, and to the affected population, through a participatory approach that was to include all relevant stakeholders and the affected population. (UNDP and UNHCR 2015:15; UNDP and UNHCR 2016a:24)

All three differing aspects can be seen as paying regard to the specific context of a refugee situation, and in particular to the context of the Syria crisis in which the response was implemented. First, the high volatility of the situation meant that contexts could change quickly, even after several years into the crisis, for instance with large numbers of new refugees arriving due to outbreaks of new violence in Syria and needing immediate assistance, or with significant numbers of refugees returning or moving on to other countries or regions. Either way, their stay was perceived as only temporary. As Syrian refugees had acted as a trigger for a resilience-based response that otherwise would not have been implemented and that focused on capacity-strengthening and development of the countries hosting them meant that, if refugees were to return, the basis on which the response had been developed and implemented would vanish, too. This aspect was reinforced with regard to the socio-economic state of the host countries: All of them were middle-income countries which, without the presence of Syrian refugees, would not have received the same amount of support as implemented through the 3RP. At the same time, if refugees were to return, large amounts of assistance would be needed for their reintegration and reconstruction in Syria, potentially including the need to shift aid to this new context. As such, these factors conflicted with longer-term planning in the sense of resilience-programming.

With regard to the second difference, the specific context of a response to a refugee situation meant that a large part of the response implemented in the different host countries and under the leadership of national governments was aimed at beneficiaries other than the national population. This fact, together with accusations of the local population who often blamed refugees for (new or existing) structural deficiencies, worsening socio-economic conditions and a decreasing quality in services, held the potential of fueling tensions between the two groups. Implementing measures focusing on social cohesion therefore must be seen as the attempt to strengthen local peace and stability, which was hoped to ultimately lead to more resilient households and communities.

The strong focus on accountability, finally, can be seen as paying regard to the novelty of the approach, with resilience for the first time being applied specifically to a refugee context, combined with the high visibility of the Syria crisis, the resulting high public interest in the response, and the size of the appeal. At the same time, it can be seen as the attempt to obviate a challenge common in resilience-programming: As the concept itself lacks a common definition, it is even more difficult to measure both resilience itself and the success or impact of resilience-programming. (Frankenberger et al. 2012:26; Levine 2014b:20142)

Despite these differences, the 3RP on a theoretical level was thus not only semantically framed around resilience, but altogether followed genuine resilience-thinking and incorporated principles widely understood as being part of resilience-programming in humanitarian and development assistance. At the same time, it adapted the response to the specific context of a refugee situation and the context of the Syria crisis, characterized by high volatility, visibility, and public interest.

5.3.2 Classification of the 3RP in resilience theory

As outlined in [Chapter 4.1.1](#), overall different currents or versions of resilience exist that can be used to classify resilience approaches. While all of them refer to resilience as the ultimate objective, they differ in their understanding of what that entails and how that can be achieved: Engineering resilience focuses on bouncing back, regarding persistence as the pursued resilient outcome. Ecological resilience, in turn, focuses on bouncing forward, regarding adjustment as pursued resilient outcome; and socio-ecological resilience, lastly, focuses on progress and change, regarding transformation as pursued resilient outcome.

Based on findings from the preceding subchapters that have outlined the understanding and application of resilience-thinking within the 3RP framework, the theoretical framework of the 3RP can overall be classified as a clear example of a socio-ecological version of resilience, applied in a new context within the field of international development. The following subchapter will investigate this observation in more detail.

One of the key aspects of a socio-ecological application of the concept, differentiating it from other versions of resilience, concerns the linkage of the subject to its environment. (Bourbeau 2016:27) In the 3RP, this materialized with a focus on both the affected populations (including both refugees and the local population), and on the legal, political, and socio-economic context in which these affected individuals found themselves. This context was in turn influenced by the presence, needs, and resources of the affected individuals. The 3RP thus linked both issues, regarding both aspects as going hand in hand and addressing them simultaneously. This was conducted through the concept's distinct focus on capacities: Affected individuals (refugees and the local population), on the one hand, were regarded as "active and creative agents" that were to be "empower[ed] [...] towards greater ownership of their own lives through rapid employment generation, life skills training and inclusive governance" (UNDP and UNHCR 2014a:17). In that sense, the response carried the notion of regarding affected populations as neo-liberal subjects that were to be enabled to deal with the situation by increasing their self-sufficiency and making them independent from external aid. On the other hand, governments, institutions, and service providers were to be supported through a strong focus on development and capacity-strengthening at the local and national level in order to prepare host countries to deal better with the situation and, again, make them independent from outside assistance. (UNDP and UNHCR 2014a:17) Both aspects thus aimed at creating an environment in which the whole system, consisting of individuals and institutions, was capable of dealing with the situation independently and in a sustainable manner that did not lead to regressions in development and imply worsening conditions.

Another key aspect of socio-ecological resilience lies in its focus on progress and transformation. Both aspects are absent in both engineering and ecological resilience. (Bourbeau 2016:27; Davoudi 2012:302; Folke et al. 2010) Following the notion of the former, resilience in the 3RP was introduced not only as the ability to cope, but also to "anticipate, withstand, recover and *transform*" (UNDP and UNHCR 2014a:17, emphasis added). For instance, resilience was to be built to enable households and communities to withstand shocks and stresses, recover from them, and "work with administrative institutions to achieve lasting transformational change" (UNDP and UNHCR 2014a:20). Overall, rather than focusing only on absorptive and adaptive capacities, it therefore also emphasized the need for transformative capacities in order to reach progress and change.

This understanding simultaneously rejected the underpinnings of the other two articulations of resilience: Both comprise the idea of equilibrium and define the resilience of subjects as bouncing back

to a pre-existing state (in the case of engineering resilience), or as bouncing forward to an improved, yet fixed, state (in the case of ecological resilience), but do not include the notion of transformational change or the creation of a fundamentally new system. (Bourbeau 2016:27; Davoudi 2012:300–301; Holling 1996:31, 33) In the 3RP, in contrast, resilience-building was understood as a process in which subjects interacted and changed over time in order to improve and achieve transformational change. (UNDG 2014:13, 15)

Further following socio-ecological resilience-thinking, the 3RP also included an emphasis on new opportunities that was absent in other versions of resilience. Within the 3RP, this was incorporated for instance in terms of empowerment of affected people and sustainable human development. (UNDP and UNHCR 2014a:17, 20) In the same notion, it promoted the perception of refugees as an asset for host countries rather than viewing them as a burden. In so doing, it focused on potential opportunities and benefits that could be gained out of the situation, rather than aiming at simple persistence or adaptation to a new situation as sought for in engineering and ecological resilience. (UNDP and UNHCR 2015:18)

Overall, in its theoretical framework and framing, the 3RP therefore followed the notion of socio-ecological resilience-thinking, understanding the system to which it was applied as a complex interconnection of subjects interacting with each other, rejecting the idea of equilibrium and instead focusing on transformation, and concentrating on the opportunities that emerged out of a disturbance with regards to new development trajectories. With these characteristics, the 3RP constitutes an example of the application of socio-ecological resilience-thinking to a new and very specific context in the realms of international development.

Summarizing the overall understanding of resilience within the 3RP as outlined in the previous two subchapters, Table 7 provides an overview and lists its key characteristics, categorizing them in core principles in line with general resilience-programming, implications of the 3RP’s socio-ecological application of resilience, and principles incorporated in the 3RP that are not found in general resilience-programming. For a complete understanding, aspects not included in the 3RP, albeit being part of general resilience-programming, are listed as well.

Table 7: Resilience in the 3RP

Core principles in line with general resilience-programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of self-sufficiency (enhancing economic opportunities, focus on livelihoods, focus on education) • Focus on capacity-building and use of existing systems • Integrated approach (bridging the gap between humanitarian and development assistance) • Partnerships • Social cohesion (addressing refugees and locals) • National leadership and ownership • Regional protection framework • Context-specific and flexible
Implications of socio-ecological resilience-thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on progress and transformation • Focus on opportunities
Additional core principles (not found in general resilience-programming)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific partnership between UNHCR and UNDP • Innovation • Accountability • Participatory approach
<u>Not</u> included in 3RP, but part of general resilience-programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long-term focus

Table by the author

5.4 Conclusion: The 3RP as a resilience-based response framework to a situation of forced displacement

With its conceptual framework based on resilience, the 3RP constituted the first time that the concept was applied to a specific situation of forced displacement. Overall, the new strategic direction marked a clear shift in the response to the refugee situation that had emerged due to the Syria crisis: While the response framework, developed largely at the regional level by the UN and to be applied in five countries across the region, continued to focus on the protection of refugees and on humanitarian needs as previous response plans, it complemented these measures with longer-term and development-oriented issues.

Over the years, the 3RP developed and outlined a comprehensive conceptualization of resilience. This included not only a general definition of the concept, but also core principles of a resilience-based response as well as additional aspects understood as providing the strategic direction. In order to facilitate the implementation of resilience in practice, furthermore several resilience tools were developed.

Largely, these key characteristics of the 3RP were in line with principles of general resilience-programming in humanitarian and development assistance. Conformities included the promotion of national ownership and leadership, a strong focus on capacity-building and self-sufficiency, the integration of humanitarian and development planning, and an emphasis on partnerships and cooperation. In other aspects, the response plan differed from genuine resilience-programming: The 3RP's omission of resilience-building's long-term focus, adopting a medium-term approach instead, as well as its strong focus on accountability and social cohesion can thereby be regarded as an adjustment of resilience-thinking to the distinct situation of forced displacement in which the response was applied. Despite these deviations, overall, the 3RP did not only include the buzzword of resilience as a catchy title, but also promoted general resilience-thinking as applied in the field of humanitarian and development assistance.

Classifying the 3RP within resilience theory further, the response framework altogether constitutes an example of socio-ecological resilience-thinking. The incorporation of different key aspects thereby sets it apart from engineering and ecological resilience-thinking as two other existing versions of resilience. In particular, these aspects include the 3RP's understanding of the context in which it was applied as a complex interconnection of subjects interacting with each other, the rejection of the idea of equilibrium, instead focusing on transformational change and development, and an emphasis on opportunities that emerged from the crisis.

6 The 3RP in Practice

The framework of the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan in Response to the Syria Crisis (3RP) was developed to be implemented in five countries neighboring or close to Syria: Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey. In order to investigate how resilience-thinking was applied at the national level and translated into practice, the following chapter will analyze two of them, Jordan and Lebanon, in more detail.

Jordan and Lebanon have been chosen as case studies for different reasons: First, both countries host considerable numbers of Syrian refugees, exceeding numbers in other countries in the region such as Egypt and Iraq by far. While Turkey is host to an even larger number of refugees in total, both Jordan and Lebanon host larger numbers in relation to their local population. This allows the assumption that, in both cases, hosting Syrians has an impact on the respective country in many regards. Second, Jordan and Lebanon share various socio-economic characteristics and a similar level of development, thus providing similar basic conditions for hosting refugees. As middle-income countries, none of them is a traditional partner country of development cooperation. Even though neither of them has ratified the 1951 Geneva Convention and its 1967 Protocol, both countries have hosted large groups of refugees in the past, including Palestinian refugees, which continues to influence refugee policies to date. Third, both countries share historical, economic and cultural ties with Syria, and speak the same language, affecting the possible level of communication between refugees and locals and having an impact on their theoretically possible socio-economic integration. Last, both countries have served as research objects in a growing number of academic studies as well as evaluations and assessments by NGOs and other organizations which has resulted in a significant body of literature to draw upon in the analysis.²⁶

Taken together, these aspects create the preconditions to investigate how the common conceptual framework of a resilience-based response as outlined in the 3RP was transferred to and manifested in two different cases. The existence of similar contextual conditions in both cases thereby allows to draw comparisons between the two cases, analyzing different interpretations of resilience as well as variations in courses and outcomes of a resilience-based response.

The chapter is structured as follows: The first two subchapters deal with the response in Jordan and Lebanon, respectively. For each case, a first subchapter will set the scene, outlining the respective legal and socio-economic context. Afterwards, the evolvement of the refugee situation will be traced, focusing on the initial response to the situation, the impacts of refugees on the host country, and the shift to a resilience-based approach. In order to complete the picture, several developments taking place outside the response framework will be outlined as well. The next subchapters will focus on the new response framework based on resilience itself, and will in particular analyze its conceptual underpinnings and implementation in practice. In the subsequent analysis, the response framework will be investigated from the specific perspective of resilience. First, the understanding of the concept and the reasons thereof, will be outlined, before analyzing the characteristics that are in line with, and that are differing from, resilience-thinking as outlined within the 3RP as the overall strategic direction of the response. This will be followed by an investigation of the different functions that resilience fulfilled for different actors. Lastly, the analysis will focus on challenges emerging within the response as well as on newer developments in the aftermath of the introduction of resilience-thinking.

In the next step, this will be followed by a structured comparison between the two case studies, outlining similarities and differences in the approaches and illustrating two different manifestations of a resilience-based response. Finally, pointing to general variations between resilience in theory as outlined in response frameworks and resilience in practice, the chapter will offer an explanation for this phenomenon. Identifying distinct characteristics of the situation in Jordan and Lebanon, the chapter will

²⁶ Largely, this can be traced back to a high interest of the public and the media in the Syria crisis and the refugee situation in neighboring countries in general, combined with Jordan's and Lebanon's easy accessibility and the presence of all large international organizations usually active in a refugee response.

conclude with some general points to consider when pondering the application of a resilience-based response in other contexts of forced displacement.

6.1 Jordan

The first case under investigation is the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. After outlining the legal and socio-economic context in the country and tracing the evolution of the refugee response to a resilience-based approach, Jordan's new response framework, the Jordan Response Plan, included in the 3RP as national chapter will be examined, including its rationale, aims, structure, key actors and strategic direction, both in theory and in practice. Taking these findings into account, this will be followed by an analysis of the response plan from the perspective of resilience.

6.1.1 Context

Long before the conflict in Syria started, Jordan had gained the reputation of being a 'refugee haven' for forced migrants from different parts of the Arab world, mostly due to its geographic location at the center of an area of instability and prolonged conflict. The vast majority of the refugee population in the country has been Palestinian. In two phases, in the years around 1948 in the course of the Arab-Israeli war and the so-called 'Nakba Day', and around 1967 during and in the aftermath of the Six-Day War, approximately 480,000 Palestinians have fled to Jordan.²⁷ In the following years this number multiplied. According to UNRWA, the UN agency responsible for Palestinian refugees, by the end of 2016 more than 2.1 million Palestinian refugees were registered in Jordan, whereby most of them now have full Jordanian citizenship. (Stevens 2013:3; UNRWA 2016) In addition, Jordan has hosted large groups of forced migrants from Lebanon who fled during the civil war of 1975-1991, and from Iraq who fled during the 1991 Gulf War and in the course of the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003. In both cases, it is difficult to find exact numbers on how many people crossed into Jordan and on how many stayed. (Stevens 2013:4–6) Lastly, since the beginning of the uprisings in Syria in spring 2011, another large number of people has sought refuge in Jordan. At end-2018, Jordan was host to approximately 676,300 registered Syrian refugees, making up around nine percent of the total Jordanian population prior to the Syria crisis²⁸. (Ghazal 2016; UNHCR 2019a:14; World Bank Group 2020a)

6.1.1.1 *Legal context*

Despite Jordan's longstanding experience in accommodating refugees, the legal situation for non-Palestinian refugees in the country remains difficult.²⁹ Even though Jordan has committed to the (non-binding) 'UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights', part of which states that "everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution" (UN General Assembly 1948), it has not signed the 'Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees' (Geneva Convention) from 1951 or its 'Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees' from 1967. The reasons for Jordan's unreadiness to sign are widely believed to lie in political sensitivities such as the unsolved 'Palestinian issue'. Other assumed reasons include the "potential political problem" that might arise if one Arab state grants refugee status to the citizens of another (Stevens 2013:10), and the fact that Jordan does not see any benefits in a system that would grant greater rights to new (non-Palestinian) refugees. (Stevens 2013:2–10)

Even though Jordan is signatory to two other conventions entailing the principle of non-refoulement ('International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights' and 'Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment'), a fundamental problem has arisen out of Jordan's unwillingness to sign the Geneva Convention: With the rejection of the Convention Jordan also has not accepted the UN's definition of 'refugee' and has for a long time refused to regard any group

²⁷ 240,000 Palestinians (out of the total 480,000) who fled to Jordan from the West Bank were considered 'internally displaced persons' rather than refugees as the West Bank was administered by Jordan between 1948 and 1967. Palestinians from the West Bank therefore technically fled from one part of the country to another. (Stevens 2013:3)

²⁸ Calculation based on population data edited by the World Bank and referring to the year 2010. (World Bank Group 2020a)

²⁹ The legal framework for Palestinian and non-Palestinian refugees is entirely different both on the national and on the international level. The remarks in this thesis solely refer to non-Palestinian refugees (unless specified otherwise).

other than Palestinians as refugees. Instead, Jordan has insisted on considering forced migrants as 'guests' or 'visitors' throughout its history. (Di Bartolomeo, Fakhoury, and Perrin 2010:9; Stevens 2013:2, 13, 23)

At the national level, refugee legislation remains virtually non-existent. The Jordanian Constitution of 1952 declares that “political refugees shall not be extradited [...]” (House of Representatives 2011:4). Apart from that, in the absence of a distinct asylum law, Law No. 24 on Residence and Foreigners' Affairs from 1973 regulates the entry and registration of foreigners, including refugees. Nonetheless, refugees are only casually mentioned; not only does the law lack a comprehensive definition of 'refugee', it also contains next to no rules and regulations on their status and treatment. (Olwan 2007:4; Stevens 2013:6)

In 1998, the Jordanian government signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with UNHCR who had been operating in Jordan since October 1991.³⁰ The signing finally, at least rhetorically, put an end to the practice of only regarding Palestinians as 'refugees': The MoU clearly adopted the Refugee Convention's definition of a 'refugee' without the geographic and temporal limits (Art. 1). Furthermore, it reinforced the principle of non-refoulement (Art. 2,1), permitted UNHCR to determine refugee statuses (Art. 3), set out the duties and obligations on the part of the state, UNHCR and refugees, and declared that refugees should be treated in accordance with internationally accepted standards (Art. 5). Additionally, the MoU required UNHCR to find durable solutions for recognized refugees within six months, either through resettlement or voluntary repatriation (Art. 5)³¹; this provision, however, has not been enforced in practice, thereby acting only to establish the temporariness of refugees' residence. Lastly, the MoU provided that the Jordanian government would consider establishing a national mechanism for refugee status determination (Art. 14). (Al Wazani 2014:28–29; Bidinger et al. 2015:59; Hilal and Samy 2008a:5; Olwan 2009:5; Stevens 2013:8; UNHCR 1998:1)

6.1.1.2 Socio-economic context

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is a constitutional monarchy. The country's constitution nominally separates the powers of the executive, legislature and the judiciary, but in practice the executive, that is, the king and the prime minister he appoints, holds wide powers: The legislature can only approve, reject or modify bills, which are always initiated and drafted by the executive, while the justice system consists of royal appointees. At the same time, political parties are weak. Since they have been banned in the country from 1957 until 1989, the concept of political affiliation is still novel, and many Jordanians still cast their votes according to tribal and kinship affiliations. Senior political positions are often awarded on the basis of loyalty to the monarchy. Altogether, this has created a patronage-based system with no viable opposition or participation or input from the public, in which personal influence and connections can override the rule of law and in which the monarchy holds the reins of government and society, resulting in widespread clientelism and nepotism. (Al Nasser 2016:4, 11; Jarrah 2009:11)

Even though King Abdullah II, who has been reigning Jordan since 1999, has continuously and publicly emphasized his commitment to political reforms, democratic transformation and empowerment of the Jordanian population, in particular in the course of the Arab Spring when some protests had started in Jordan, changes so far have been modest and superficial, mostly existing only on paper but lacking corresponding measures to turn theory into policy. This can be traced back to the king's and the government's deep-seated fear both of loss of power and of potential security consequences putting the overall stability of the country at risk. The argument of the importance of stability and internal security, especially in times of conflicts and sectarian tensions in neighboring countries, has resonated well with a majority of the population and has weakened their call for reforms. (Al Nasser 2016:6–7; Barari

³⁰ Even though UNHCR had been providing international aid and protection to Iraqi refugees in the aftermath of the second Gulf War since 1991, it was only with the MoU that UNHCR was finally officially allowed to operate in the country.

³¹ In 2014, due to the high influx of Syrian refugees, the MoU was amended, extending the validity of a refugee identification card to one year in the course of which UNHCR was to officially find a durable solution. (Malkawi 2014)

2013:2–3) Nevertheless, protests and calls for reform have increased in 2017 and 2018 mostly by the middle classes, sparked by the introduction of austerity measures backed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) including tax increases and price hikes as well as a growing anger at corruption, cronyism, a lack of budgetary transparency and fiscal mismanagement, ultimately forcing the ruling government to resign. (Cochrane 2018)

Despite these newer developments with a growing role of the civil society and professional syndicates, Jordan does not have a history of strong civil society traditions. Even though the number of NGOs has been increasing since 1989, in line with a process of neoliberal and, to a limited extent, political reform, organizations have generally been heavily controlled by the state both through heavy regulation and complicated bureaucracy. For instance, the state's security apparatus must approve all NGO registrations, elections, leaders, and members; NGOs must receive the government's approval to receive foreign funding; and the government can appoint a government official as an NGO's temporary chief executive. Generally, the regulation of NGOs has been used as an important tool of state control over society. Royal NGOs, that is, NGOs established under the patronage of a member of the royal family, are not subject to the same restrictive laws on associations and enjoy preferential access to funding and decision-makers; however, even these organizations are subject to politics within the royal family that dictate which foundations receive most funds and media coverage. Donors, too, are often perceived to be favoring pro-government organizations to avoid upsetting the authorities. (Al Nasser 2016:8–10, 14; Jarrah 2009:10–11)

In terms of development, Jordan as a middle-income country (World Bank Group 2019) is featuring a mixture of local and national institutional, private sector and human resources. Over the past ten to 15 years, the government has pursued structural reforms in the education and health sector as well as in privatization and liberalization. Moreover, the government has established social protection systems and reformed subsidies, creating the conditions for public-private partnerships in infrastructure and for tax reforms. (UNDP Jordan 2015:13) Nevertheless, challenges remain: In 2018, unemployment hit a 25-year high at 18.4 percent, rising to 24.1 percent among university graduates. At the same time, inflation has doubled since 2006, resulting in increasing prices for everyday goods. Around 12 percent of the formal workforce earns close to the minimum wage of JOD 220 per month (around USD 310³²), which, according to trade unions, is a third less than what is needed to eke out a living. (Cochrane 2018; IMF 2017:58) At the macro level, Jordan's dependency on remittances from Gulf economies as well as its dependency on energy imports and the disruption of gas supplies from Egypt pose a threat to economic stability. (UNDP Jordan 2015:13) Moreover, the situation in Syria and Iraq not only puts Jordan at risk of spill-over effects, but has also led to a widening trade deficit and a weaker confidence of investors to invest in the country. (IMF 2017:3, 7)

Despite these factors, Jordan has been showing a general upward trend in its national development in the last years. This positive development has been reflected in its Human Development Index (HDI) value of 0.737 in 2010, up from 0.706 in 2000, placing it in the upper part of the middle third in comparison with all other countries listed in the HDI. In 2016, five years after the beginning of the influx of Syrian refugees, Jordan's HDI value has increased even further up to 0.741, placing it on rank 86 out of 188 countries recorded and in the segment of countries with 'high human development'. (UNDP 2016a; UNDP 2016b:199)

6.1.2 Syrian refugee crisis in Jordan

Since the beginning of the uprisings in Syria in March 2011, Jordan has witnessed a continuous influx of Syrians into the country. While slow in the beginning, with the deteriorating situation in Syria over 2012 characterized by an increasing level of violence, the number of Syrians searching for refuge in Jordan increased significantly. A first milestone in the Syrian refugee crisis in Jordan was reached in July 2012, when over 31,000 Syrian individuals had registered with UNHCR – surpassing the number

³² As of March 2020.

of Iraqi refugees registered in the country. (UN 2012e:1) This number, however, was dwarfed by the developments in the following months: After battles for Damascus and Aleppo in summer 2012, and attacks specifically targeting civilians rather than specific military sites, the number of refugees in the country increased to over 160,000 by the end of the year. (UN 2012f:2)

In 2013, intensified clashes between the government and an increasingly fragmented opposition as well as the deployment of chemical weapons led to another drastic increase in refugee numbers in Jordan, with an average of around 1,200-1,300 new arrivals per day and overall reaching almost 580,000 registered refugees at the end of 2013. (UN 2013b:1–2; UN 2013c:1)

Even though new arrivals slowed down over the subsequent months, and numerous Syrians even opted to return voluntarily to Syria, overall, the number of refugees kept growing. At the end of 2015, numbers of registered individuals stood at over 630,000. (UN 2013d:5; UN 2013c:3; UNHCR 2018g) In the course of the next two years, over 15,000 further refugees returned to Syria (UNHCR 2019d), mostly due to economic hardship, discrimination and homesickness or in order to reunite with family members (Baas 2018). Nevertheless, the number of refugees in Jordan increased, resulting in more than 655,000 individuals registered with UNHCR in January 2018.³³ (UNHCR 2018g)

The following subchapters will outline how Jordan responded to this situation and the challenges that emerged from the influx of Syrian refugees and the resulting growth in population.

6.1.2.1 Initial response to the crisis (2011-2013)

When Syrians started to search for refuge in Jordan in 2011, Jordan generally applied an open-border policy and allowed Syrians to come and stay in the country, regardless of whether or not they had entered the country legally. (Davis and Taylor 2013:6) Despite this, until mid-2012 Syrians were referred to as '(irregular) guests' or 'visitors' rather than 'refugees'. (ILO 2015:12) Most Syrians found shelter within communities close to the border or were accommodated in several makeshift and newly built housing complexes. (Luck 2012; Martin 2012)

As the influx of refugees increased dramatically, Jordan in mid-2012 decided to open Zaatari refugee camp to ease pressures on existing housing complexes and host families. From that moment on, the Jordanian government also started to refer to Syrians as 'refugees', marking a clear change in the country's policies. In only nine days, Zaatari camp was set up, providing housing for up to 130,000 refugees. At peak times, however, up to 150,000 refugees were living in the camp, far surpassing planning estimates and making Zaatari the second largest refugee camp in the world and the fourth largest 'city' in Jordan. (Francis 2015:20; I OA Jordan 1 2013; Lee 2018) In addition to Zaatari camp, further camps were built, including Azraq camp, suitable to host up to 130,000 refugees, and several smaller camps, including a UAE-funded camp hosting some 5,000 refugees. (Beaumont 2014; Rasmi 2013) Even though in theory only persons who had entered the country legally, that is, through the usual visa process for foreigners, or had been bailed out of the camps by a Jordanian sponsor were allowed to live outside the camps, in practice close to 85 percent of refugees lived in Jordanian host communities, mainly in the cities of Mafraq, Irbid, and Zarqa in the North of Jordan, and in Jordan's capital city Amman (for ease of reference see also Figure 3). (CARE 2013:7; Francis 2015:6)

³³ All numbers cited here refer to refugees registered with UNHCR. Government figures differ considerably; in January 2018, for instance, according to official figures stated by the Jordanian government, the number of registered and unregistered Syrian refugees in Jordan stood at about 1.3 million. (Ghazal 2018)

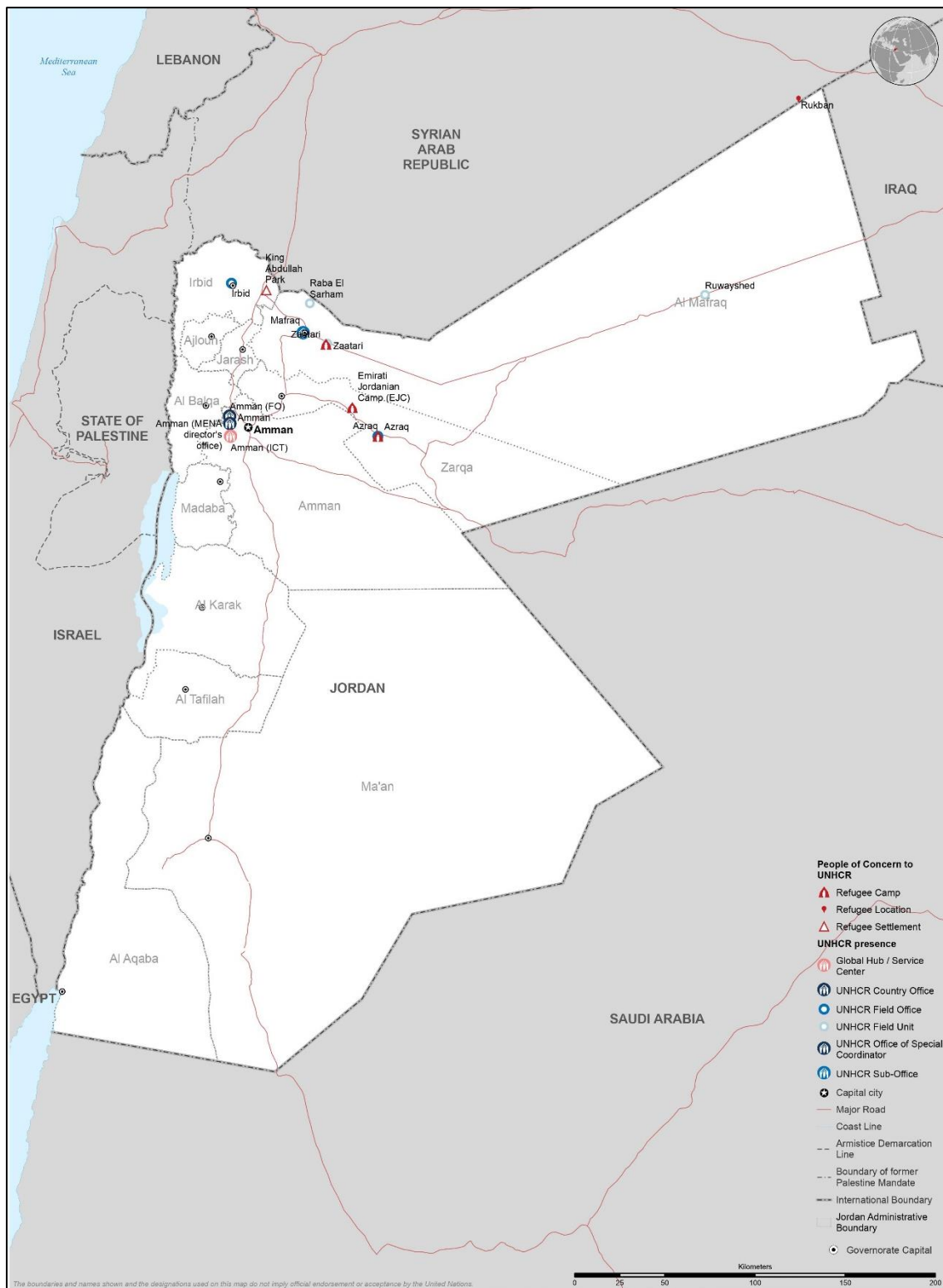


Figure 3: Map of Jordan³⁴

³⁴ UNHCR Jordan (2020): Jordan Situation Map, March 2020, <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/74475.pdf>.

From the beginning of the influx of refugees into Jordan, UNHCR and other humanitarian actors supported Jordan in responding to the protection and humanitarian needs of those seeking refuge in the country. In doing so, humanitarian actors worked “in close collaboration” (UN 2012c:26) with various Jordanian line ministries, including the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, the Ministry of Social Development, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Education.

Overall, the response was led and coordinated by UNHCR according to the Refugee Coordination Model (see also [Chapter 2.2](#)). In doing so, UNHCR could largely rely on pre-existing mechanisms that had been established in the course of the response to Iraqi refugees in the 1990s and early 2000s. An inter-agency task force (IATF) was set up, consisting primarily of UN partners (UNICEF, WFP, WHO, UNFPA, UNESCO, UNRWA) as well as IOM and the Jordan Hashemite Charity Organization (JHCO), the umbrella organization coordinating local and community-based organizations. Altogether, seven working groups were established, co-chaired by UNHCR or other UN agencies and NGO partners, which met regularly to ensure a coordinated response. NGOs were included in the process as both implementing and operational partners. (UN 2012a:15)

The programmatic response was summarized in the Jordan chapters of the Regional Response Plans (RRPs) that were developed by UNHCR, mainly as an overview of the response for donors and the public.

Overall, the response focused primarily on meeting the most urgent needs of refugees, with assistance being provided to both refugees in camps and in host communities. In order to get access to services, Syrians needed to be registered with UNHCR. (ACAPS 2013:7; Amnesty International 2013:15) Assistance included typical multi-sectoral humanitarian aid in the areas of protection, shelter, cash assistance and non-food items distribution, food assistance, WASH, education, and health, provided by numerous different local and international humanitarian actors. (UN 2012c:16) Besides this programmatic response, the government of Jordan provided various services and assistance: On the one hand, it granted all refugees access to subsidized goods such as bread, household gas, energy, and water. (Francis 2015:13) On the other hand, it opened both its health care and its education system for refugees. (UN 2013e:5) Thus, all Syrians registered with UNHCR were allowed to access primary healthcare services in public health care facilities free of charge, while refugees with secondary, tertiary or emergency health needs could receive subsidized treatment in public facilities. Various NGOs and UN institutions supported Jordan in this regard, providing further healthcare consultations and medical treatment. (UN 2012c:23–24)

Additionally, Jordan granted Syrian children free access to public schools. Refugee children were either integrated into Jordanian classrooms or were taught in a second shift in the afternoons or evenings. Furthermore, remedial and catch up classes were launched to help Syrian children overcome learning difficulties resulting from weeks or months without schooling. Accompanying these measures, the government together with UNICEF and other NGOs provided teacher training for additional teachers and counselors, additional prefabricated classrooms to relieve overcrowding, financial support for schools, and informal and non-formal education services. (Davis and Taylor 2013:8–9; UN 2012c:21–23)

The ability for refugees to legally work in the country, however, remained limited. In the absence of clear legislation on refugees’ or asylum seekers’ rights to work, the process of obtaining a work permit remained, “at best, a convoluted process” (ILO 2015:15). Administrative hurdles, for instance the need to be in possession of a valid residence permit which on principle was not granted to refugees³⁵, high costs that in theory had to be borne by employers but in practice usually had to be paid by refugees themselves, and the need to pass a security check by the Jordanian Ministry of Interior, often complicated by the loss of identity documents, made it difficult for refugees to work in the country.

³⁵ Exceptions included Palestinian refugees and Iraqi refugees between 1998 and 2003.

Additionally, a list of at least 16 professions closed to all non-Jordanians existed, including for instance medical and engineering, teaching, most service sector jobs, and industrial-related jobs. (ILO 2015:13–15)

Despite this difficult situation regarding work, all in all, Jordan's initial response to the refugee crisis can be regarded as rather favorable and generous, in particular in view of its lack of clear refugee legislation. In the spirit of humanitarianism, the government opened its borders and extended public services, facilities and resources in the attempt to meet the most urgent needs of Syrians. In this respect, it was widely supported by humanitarian actors. Altogether, the needs and the protection of refugees clearly constituted the focus of Jordan's approach. For this generosity, despite growing problems and tensions in the country, Jordan has been praised by the international community, which encouraged the country to maintain its liberal course of action.

6.1.2.2 Impacts of refugees and the refugee response on Jordan

The influx of thousands of Syrian refugees occurred at a time when Jordan was already facing significant challenges due to the global financial crisis in 2008 and the Arab Spring that unfolded in the region in 2010. The growth in population added additional costs and strains on Jordan's capacities and resources that often had experienced difficulties in meeting demands already before the crisis. The following chapter will explore these impacts that affected the overall development trajectory of the country, focusing on security issues as well as on economic, social, and environmental aspects.

First, over the years, growing concerns about security issues and the risk of conflict spillover emerged. From 2013 on, this resulted in the rejection of specific groups of refugees at the border³⁶ and the unannounced closure of some borders in general, forcing Syrians to travel to informal crossings in order to avoid checkpoints. (Amnesty International 2013:11; Betts, Ali, and Memişoğlu 2017:9) With the emergence of IS-related violence in Syria in 2014 these developments intensified, leading to the implementation of ever-greater restrictions, including cases of refoulement and the suspension of registrations for new arrivals. As a result, thousands of Syrians were left stranded along the border within a demilitarized area known as 'the Berms'. (Betts, Ali, and Memişoğlu 2017:10)

In terms of economic impacts, the influx of refugees first of all led to increased government spending. Through the provision of subsidized items, services and basic needs for Syrians, total expenditures increased by 20 percent (or JOD 1.36 billion) between 2010 and 2013. This contributed to a budget deficit upsurge of around JOD 882 million between 2010 and 2013, and led to an increase in external public debt by JOD 2.62 billion from 2010 to 2013, equaling an increase in debt over GDP from 67.11 percent in 2010 to 86.68 percent in 2013. (HCSP 2013:14; Trading Economics 2018a; Trading Economics 2018b)

At the same time, Jordan's trade balance deteriorated. Due to the conflict in Syria, Jordan had lost its major trade route to Turkey, Lebanon, and Europe, forcing it to resort to more expensive alternative routes. Additionally, due to the risen demand of certain items in Jordan, and to reduced demand in Syria itself, Jordan's imports from Syria increased by 24 percent in the first ten months of 2013 compared to the same time span in 2012, while at the same time exports to Syria decreased by 43 percent, exacerbating Jordan's trade deficit which almost doubled between 2010 and 2013. (HCSP 2013:22–23)

Besides, prices for goods and services increased drastically, which was felt directly by the Jordanian population. In the housing market, for instance, in some areas rental prices increased by 200–300 percent to pre-crisis values due to rising demand. With regards to consumer products, the Consumer Price Index showed a drastic increase in particular for dairy products and eggs, but also for clothing and footwear.

³⁶ According to various sources, an unofficial 11-point plan was put in place, outlining several categories of individuals that were to be rejected. Categories included Palestinian and Iraqi nationals, unaccompanied men who could not prove family ties in Jordan, people lacking identity documents as well as Druzes and Alevi. This policy was at least partially recognized by the Jordanian authorities. (Amnesty International 2013:10; I OA Jordan 1 2013)

(HCSP 2013:11, 19) At the same time, downward pressure was put on already low wages in particular in the informal economy, where Jordanians, other foreign workers (mostly from Egypt) and Syrian refugees were competing for jobs. Competition was exacerbated especially since Syrians were willing to work for significantly less than Jordanians and others, in particular due to the significant legal and institutional obstacles for them to find employment in the formal economy. This put pressure especially on the most vulnerable segments of the Jordanian employed population, and opened the way to labor exploitation and deteriorating work standards. (HCSP 2013:34–35)

Altogether, higher expenditures and lower incomes resulted in worsening situations for numerous Jordanian families. At the same time, funds from local charities which had been focused on vulnerable Jordanians before the crisis were shifted to Syrian refugees, resulting in less assistance for Jordanians and competition over informal charitable and relief services. Hence, an estimated 20,000 additional poor and vulnerable Jordanian families qualified for the National Aid Fund, resulting in an extra spending of an annual JOD 3 million by the Jordanian government. Additionally, increased demand for family protection and juvenile services, again, led to additional government spending of an estimated extra JOD 8 million a year, stretching in particular resources for vulnerable groups such as the elderly, disabled, children, and women. (Al Wazani 2014:112; HCSP 2013:41, 52–53)

Further impacts at the social level were felt in the education and health sector. While overcrowding of schools had been a threat to education quality already prior to the crisis, Jordan's policy of granting refugee children free access to primary and secondary public schools aggravated this situation further. Indicators also suggested a deteriorating quality of education, mostly due to teacher fatigue, especially in double-shift schools, and rising class sizes. Newly trained and contracted teachers could not absorb these developments, as they generally had lower levels of pedagogical knowledge and were less experienced at managing classrooms. Other concerns within the education sector included the over-use of school infrastructure and supplies such as sanitation facilities, computers, furniture and premises. (Al Wazani 2014:113; HCSP 2013:59–61)

In the health sector, demand for services increased dramatically: On average, 9 percent of all people accessing health facilities in the northern governorates in 2013 were Syrian refugees, putting additional pressure on an already strained system. Pressures on delivery capacities were reinforced by deficiencies in the supply and availability of health equipment, medication and specialized health workers, deteriorating the quality of health care and increasing the risk of major infectious disease epidemics. (HCSP 2013:69–72; Murshidi et al. 2013:206–207)

Besides these economic and social impacts, the refugee crisis also affected the availability of natural resources. First and foremost, this applied to water. As the fourth most water scarce country in the world, equipped with a damaged and highly inefficient water network where water losses nationwide stood at 50 percent, Jordan had faced difficulties meeting demands for fresh water in its territory already before the crisis. The unexpected population growth due to the influx of refugees expanded this gap between supply and demand significantly, making the frequency and availability of water supply insufficient in areas most affected by the crisis. As a result, 44 percent of households in rural areas and 33 percent in urban centers ran out of water more than twice per month in 2013. More and more, Jordanians accused Syrians of being responsible for the lack of water, which increasingly led to tensions between refugees and locals. (HCSP 2013:109–112; Mercy Corps 2014:17–18, 24)

Concerns also increased with regards to energy. Importing about 97 percent of its energy needs, Jordan is one of the world's most energy insecure countries. While, again, the energy sector had been faced with severe structural challenges already before the Syria crisis, in particular after the disruption of cheap natural gas from Egypt, the increase in population exacerbated these problems by heightening residential energy demand. (HCSP 2013:119–121) Considering the centrality of energy to the public budget, Jordan feared that these heightened demands for energy “could come at the cost of other developmental needs in Jordan, and [...] could derail the overall development trajectory of the country” (HCSP 2013:119).

The overload and depletion of infrastructure constituted another area of concern, for instance in waste water collection and management. On the one hand, municipal sewage networks were overwhelmed, resulting in overflows and clogged wastewater pipes; on the other hand, waste water treatment plants not only had to treat a rising water quantity, but also a more concentrated waste water quality. As a consequence, water quality deteriorated and the supply of fresh water was threatened further. (Al Wazani 2014:109; HCSP 2013:109–112; Mercy Corps 2014:21)

Another challenge lay in the provision of essential municipal services, for instance in solid waste management. While municipalities had been struggling to provide services already before the crisis, the population growth had meant an increase of 340 tons of waste to dispose of daily which exceeded collection capacity in several governorates, due to both a shortage of equipment and of labor. Especially in Mafraq, the municipality's inability to cope with the increased waste led to illegal dumping, inappropriate disposal and burning of waste which contributed to water, soil and air pollution and led to the risk of spreading diseases. (HCSP 2013:92–93)

All in all, the unfolding situation, including competition for jobs resulting in lower wages, rising rents and prices for food and goods, shortages in services and strained resources in health and education led to increasing tensions between Jordanians and Syrian refugees. The perception that refugees were doing better than locals, and that international aid was distributed unfairly to Syrians, exacerbated these feelings. (Mercy Corps 2013b:7–8; Mercy Corps 2014:24) In the course of 2013, in some areas tensions erupted in organized riots and open hostility and violence, including street battles between Jordanians and refugees, open calls for refugees' deportation, and raids on organizations providing relief to Syrians. (Luck 2013; Mercy Corps 2013b:15–16; Mercy Corps 2014:23) In April 2013, over 70 percent of respondents of a national poll held that the government should stop the influx of Syrian refugees into Jordan, and over 50 percent believed that the country was moving in the wrong direction as a result of the increasing influx of refugees. (Neimat 2013)

In sum, negative effects of the influx of Syrian refugees into Jordan were felt in almost every sector of life in Jordan. Despite large efforts, these developments could not be absorbed by the humanitarian response applied in the country. As social tensions increased, growth trends declined and the overall stability of Jordan was threatened, the Jordanian government as well as the international community became more and more concerned that the crisis would compromise development in Jordan. In the course of 2013, it became increasingly obvious that the humanitarian emergency response to the influx of Syrian refugees was inadequate to address the situation, and that a new approach was needed that would start to take into account the needs of Jordanian host communities as well. (I MOPIC 1 2017; I UN Jordan 2 2017)

6.1.2.3 National Resilience Plan

The recognition that a new approach was needed, focusing also on the needs of Jordanian host communities and the long-term development of Jordan was taken up in the Jordan chapter of the Regional Response Plan that was prepared for 2014 (RRP6). Besides traditional measures aimed at refugee protection, several interventions were included that targeted both refugees and Jordanians living in the same area. Additionally, the plan included humanitarian projects primarily targeting Jordanians. (UN 2013e:2)

At the same time, and in addition to the ongoing international response, Jordan set up a so-called Host Community Support Platform (HCSP) in September 2013, a strategic consultative body led by the Ministry of Planning and Cooperation (MOPIC) and consisting of other government line ministries, UN agencies, INGOs and donors. The objective of the platform was to support the Jordanian government in its response to the crisis, especially with regards to the impacts of the situation on Jordan, and to ensure better coordination between the various stakeholders. Five task forces and three reference groups in the highest priority sectors were created, each led by a government line ministry. (MOPIC 2014:6)

In a first step towards a response plan that was to be implemented alongside the RRP and that would focus on the impacts of the crisis on Jordan, the HCSP decided to undertake a comprehensive ‘Needs Assessment Review’ (NAR), to be carried out in October and November 2013. The result was a detailed report, validated by around 80 representatives of line ministries, UN agencies, national and international NGOs, and donors. For the first time since the beginning of the crisis, extensive data on the most critical effects of the crisis on Jordanian host communities, basic services and infrastructure was pooled in one place, generating an overall picture of the situation in Jordan. (MOPIC 2014:16)

Based on this information, in the following months from November 2013 to April 2014, members of the HCSP started to prepare a response plan that would address the needs and vulnerabilities revealed in the NAR. The task forces and reference groups developed strategies for each sector, to be combined in a new plan, the so-called ‘National Resilience Plan’ (NRP). The findings of the NAR thereby formed the baseline for the plan. Deliberately, focus was put both on a geographic area (host governorates in the North of Jordan that were affected by the crisis the most), and on high priority sectors in which additional funds could be channeled quickly and effectively, based on existing institutional arrangements. In contrast to the RRP that still focused primarily on emergency assistance for Syrian refugees, the NRP’s goal was to bridge the gap between immediate and more sustained support to both refugees and host communities. During the process, different consultation points were included during which the consistency of the approach, the overall aims, sector strategies, response options and prioritization criteria were discussed with all participants. Through this participatory process and the close collaboration with UN agencies, it was to be ensured that overlap and duplication with the RRP was minimized. (MOPIC 2014:6, 18–19)

On January 15, 2014, a draft of the NRP was presented at the ‘Second International Humanitarian Pledging Conference for Syria’ in Kuwait, at a special side event entitled ‘How neighboring countries are responding to the Syria crisis: resilience, stabilization, and solidarity’. Two months later, the plan was finalized at the ‘NRP Finalization Dead Sea Retreat’, organized by MOPIC, on March 9-10, 2014. Its overall goal was “to successfully mitigate the impact of the Syrian crisis on Jordan and Jordanian host communities” (MOPIC 2014:11, 18). Even though the plan was formally developed independently from the parallel development process of the 3RP at the regional level, the language in Jordan’s NRP strongly resembled the language in the UNDG’s Position Paper on a resilience-based development response to the Syria crisis, for instance focusing on projects “designed to enable households, communities services [sic] and institutions initially to ‘cope’, gradually to ‘recover’, and, ultimately to strengthen and ‘sustain’ their capacities, thereby deepening their resilience to future shocks” (MOPIC 2014:13). The NRP, thus, was the first response plan in Jordan that explicitly not only incorporated, but was in its entirety based on the concept of resilience. Even though it also included refugees, its main focus clearly lay on host communities and the improvement of public services. In that regard, the NRP was understood as a complementary plan to be implemented alongside the ongoing humanitarian support efforts of the Regional Response Plan (RRP6). (MOPIC 2014:12)

6.1.2.4 The Jordan Response Plan

The NRP, however, was quickly replaced with new structures, and vanished from the institutional memory of various Jordanian and international organizations.³⁷ This development can be ascribed to changes in the leadership of the UN response: Up until that point, in Jordan there had been two separate individuals acting as Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator, dealing with developmental and humanitarian issues, respectively. In February 2014, however, UN Headquarters in New York decided to join these functions in one individual and to appoint a RC/HC, conveying a strong message:

³⁷ None of the respondents interviewed for this thesis, including representatives from UN agencies, international or local NGOs, different ministries or other actors, mentioned the NRP. When asked directly, many had not heard about the plan. One respondent working for the JRPSC described the plan as an “ugly first attempt”, an “ugly baby nobody wants to talk about” that was developed behind closed doors and had more of a symbolic value than constituting an actual response plan. (I MOPIC 1 2017)

The crisis in Jordan was no longer viewed to be only humanitarian, but also as developmental, making the joint coordination of both aspects necessary. (I MOPIC 1 2017) The appointment also meant that, from now on, a person formally seated in UNDP was taking formal authority of the response in Jordan.³⁸ At the same time, the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) was elevated to a strategic decision-making forum besides the existing IATF, constituting a further step in the direction of transitioning to a coherent UN leadership structure for the coordination of humanitarian and development assistance. (UN Jordan 2014)

Following his inauguration, the new RC/HC strongly promoted a new vision in Jordan's response to the crisis, which stressed the need "to work towards the inclusion of the Regional Response Plan 6 (RRP 6) and the National Resilience Plan (NRP) within the medium and long term sustainable development framework of [...] Jordan" (UN Jordan 2014). Part of this vision formed the establishment of "one coordinated platform for humanitarian and development assistance in Jordan" (UN Jordan 2014). Through the development of "one national framework for humanitarian and development interventions" the platform was to contribute "to improved efficiency, cost-effectiveness and accountability in the humanitarian and development response" (UN Jordan 2014). Resilience was regarded "as the glue for bringing humanitarian and development assistance under one coherent framework" (UN Jordan 2014). In this regard, the RC/HC strongly pushed for the integration of the refugee response in the RRP6 and the resilience-based development response in the NRP.

Following this vision, in September 2014 the HCSP was transitioned into the newly established 'Jordan Response Platform for the Syria Crisis' (JRPSC), functioning as "the strategic partnership mechanism between the Government of Jordan, donors, UN agencies and NGOs for the development of an integrated refugee, resilience-strengthening and development response to the impact of the Syria crisis on Jordan" (JRPSC 2017). In the same month, the JRPSC carried out a follow-up needs assessment review to update the findings of the NAR from 2013. The results provided the analytical foundation for yet another new response plan: the first so-called Jordan Response Plan (JRP) (JRP 2015), that was to incorporate both a refugee and a resilience response. Only three months later, on December 4, 2014, the plan was officially launched by the Jordanian government. In his remarks, the UN RC/HC emphasized the novelty of the plan:

"Bringing the priorities and needs for refugees, resilience and development interventions into one coherent plan, under one national leadership structure is at the cutting edge. From my more than 25 years of experience this innovative approach is something which has not been attempted in the past. The Government of Jordan is therefore by endorsing the Jordan Response Plan today defining a new business model which will be closely studied for years to come." (Kallon 2014)

During the following months, a follow-up plan of the JRP 2015 was developed. In contrast to the first JRP, the JRP 2016-2018 plan was constituted as a three-year rolling plan, emphasizing a changed perception of the crisis in the country: It was not considered to be short term any longer. Rather, it was felt that the "protracted nature of the crisis and [...] its impact on Jordan's development trajectory [...] [were] likely to be felt well into the next generation" (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2015:21). Accordingly, a three-year time frame was regarded as a measure to simplify the planning cycle for dealing with vulnerabilities and needs of both refugees and host communities, and to contribute to breaking down humanitarian and development silos. (The Jordan Times 2015a)

In preparation for the new plan, between April and July 2015, again a new 'Comprehensive Vulnerability Assessment' (CVA) was conducted to clarify vulnerabilities among refugees and host

³⁸ In the UN system, the appointed RC/HC usually simultaneously fills the position as UNDP Resident Representative. This was also the case in Jordan.

communities and to inform the further response to the impact of the Syria crisis.³⁹ Based on the results of the assessment, task forces developed sector response plans for the JRP. These were put up for discussion at a three-day planning workshop in August 2015 outside Amman with more than 250 professionals from more than 60 institutions and organizations, including government and UN officials as well as representatives of the donor community and national and international NGOs. The workshop served a dual purpose: On the one hand, participants discussed the overall foundations of the next JRP, including planning assumptions and the general direction of the approach. On the other hand, specific sector strategies were reviewed and further elaborated.⁴⁰ All in all, focus was put on the harmonization of strategies within and among sectors. Based on the workshop's result, in the following weeks, drafts of each sector response were reviewed and revised. Finally, at the end of 2015, the new plan was launched, officially replacing the JRP 2015. (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2015:20)

According to the JRP's characteristic as a rolling plan its multi-year horizon was actualized each year with the addition of another planning year as the preceding one was coming to an end. In doing so, the provision of multi-year financing and the supervision of multi-year interventions was to be facilitated. (Husseini 2017; Husseini 2018) For the preparation of the new plans, task forces reviewed and updated information, based on any new relevant primary and secondary data and assessments within their sectors. Furthermore, each year a three-day planning workshop was held in order to develop sector responses, with a continuously increasing number of participants: While there were some 300 representatives from more than 87 institutions and organizations participating in the 2016 workshop, this number had increased by some additional 100 stakeholders in the year after. In the aftermath of the workshops, sector responses were reviewed by MOPIC and the JRPSC Secretariat, discussed with the relevant line ministries, and finally brought together in the new plan. (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2016:12)

6.1.2.5 *Developments outside the Response Plans*

In the years after the development of the JRP as the main response plan to the refugee crisis in Jordan, several other developments took place that aimed at contributing to finding solutions to the situation. While not formally forming part of the JRP, they still had an impact on the framework and influenced measures and programming. The following three subchapters will outline the most relevant ones.

6.1.2.5.1 The Jordan Compact

While the first Jordan Response Plan (JRP 2015) was being implemented, several developments within, but in particular outside Jordan, triggered a new process: In late 2015, the WANA Institute, a Jordanian think tank, submitted a White Paper to the Jordanian government, outlining the potential positive contributions of Syrian refugees to the Jordanian economy. Around the same time, a seminal article by *Paul Collier*, influential development economist, and *Alexander Betts*, then head of the Refugee Studies Centre at Oxford, promoted the inclusion of Syrian refugees in the Jordanian labor market (Betts and Collier 2015). Both articles, promoting new ways of thinking coincided with a sharp increase in the number of Syrians making their way to Europe in order to claim asylum there. Thousands of them lost their lives on the journey over the Mediterranean, which ultimately forced European policy makers to think about new ways of dealing with migration from the region. In order to avoid further onward secondary movements to Europe, they reckoned that Syrian refugees needed to be given better

³⁹ The assessment was based on several different studies and assessments, including a Sector Vulnerability Assessment (SVA) and the Vulnerability Assessment Framework (VAF). For the SVA, MOPIC, the UN and the JRPSC Secretariat together with the respective line ministries used administrative data and information to measure, at regional and district level, the impact of the crisis on the delivery of four key public services (education, health, municipal services, and water), and the extent to which the respective sectors were able to cope with the additional demand due to the influx of Syrian refugees. The VAF, in contrast, constituted an inter-agency process. Led by UNHCR, it supported the humanitarian community to establish a profile of vulnerability across Syrian refugee households and to monitor changes in vulnerability over time. (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2015:19–20)

⁴⁰ This included the development of the sector narrative, the review of sector and specific objectives, the identification, review, and prioritization of concrete projects, the development of project summary sheets, and the formulation of baseline and target information for indicators.

livelihoods opportunities in host countries in the region, including access to education and employment. (Gaunt 2018; I UN Jordan 2 2017) This new situation opened up an opportunity for the Jordanian government to negotiate a deal with the EU: In turn for more favorable trade arrangements with the EU, an aid package, and loans at a concessional rate, Jordan committed to opening up job opportunities for refugees. (Barbelet, Hagen-Zanker, and Mansour-Ille 2018:2–3; I UN Jordan 2 2017)

At the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in 2015, main principles of the deal were agreed between King Abdullah of Jordan, World Bank President Jim Kim and then UK Prime Minister David Cameron. In the following months, three representatives (Imad Fakhoury, the Jordanian Minister of Planning; Shanta Devarajan, chief economist for the Middle East and North Africa at the World Bank; and Stefan Dercon, chief economist at the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and representing the British government and the EU) were responsible to take the negotiations on the specific details of the agreement further. This particular set-up of persons, their personal relationship, friendship and mutual trust have widely been regarded as the key for the successful outcome of the negotiations that would otherwise not have been possible. Humanitarian and development actors, including the UN, as well as refugee representatives, civil society, the private sector and trade unions, on the other hand, were not included in the negotiation process, which was ascribed to the need of making pragmatic and political choices to make the process work. (Barbelet, Hagen-Zanker, and Mansour-Ille 2018:3)

The agreement was officially announced as the ‘Jordan Compact’ just six months after negotiations had started, at the ‘Supporting Syria and the Region Conference’ in London in February 2016 which was co-hosted by the UK, Germany, Kuwait, Norway and the UN. A statement by the Jordanian government introduced the Jordan Compact as a new paradigm and a ‘New Holistic Approach between the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the International Community to deal with the Syrian Refugee Crisis’. The approach was anchored on three interlinked pillars, overall aimed at “support[ing] Jordan’s growth agenda whilst maintaining its resilience and economic stability” (Government of Jordan 2016): First, the Compact aimed at turning the Syrian refugee crisis into a development opportunity, to be achieved through new trade agreements with the EU, new investments and new job opportunities for Jordanians and Syrian refugees; second, focus was put on rebuilding Jordanian host communities and strengthening their resilience, to be achieved through adequate funding of the JRP; and third, Jordan’s financing needs were to be addressed through the mobilization of sufficient grants and concessionary financing and a new ‘Extended Fund Facility’ program with the IMF. (Government of Jordan 2016)

At the center of the Compact stood a new trade agreement between Jordan and the EU. Through a temporary relaxation of the rules of origin regime for a period of ten years, the export of certain Jordanian products into the EU was to be facilitated. It was assumed that this would lead to an increase in sales and in turn generate more local employment opportunities, from which both Jordanians and Syrian refugees were to benefit. Several conditions needed to be fulfilled: First, the rule of origin derogations comprehended only certain products, including minerals, wood, metals, ceramic, glass, electronics, motors, furniture and toys. Second, exported products had to be produced in one of 18 designated special economic zones (SEZs). Third, companies producing in the SEZs needed to employ at least 15 percent Syrian refugees (with this number being increased to 25 percent in 2019). Once 200,000 Syrians had been employed through this mechanisms, a further extension of the rule of origin derogations was to be considered. (EU-Jordan Association Council 2016:43; Schubert and Haase 2017:105–106)

In line with these conditions, the Jordanian government committed to allocating residence and work permits to Syrian refugees and to facilitating the administrative status of Syrian refugees to enable their access to employment. Furthermore, it committed to establishing an attractive system for investment in SEZs, for instance through tax reliefs, to scaling up labor-intensive approaches that would employ both Syrians and Jordanians, and to allowing Syrians to set up new, or to formalize their existing, businesses. (EU-Jordan Association Council 2016:43; Government of Jordan 2016)

Even though the Jordan Compact was not formally linked to the JRP, there were clear overlaps between the Compact's focus on job opportunities for refugees and locals, and the objectives of the JRP regarding livelihoods opportunities for both groups. As a result, the JRP increasingly started to refer to the Jordan Compact and the new opportunities it opened up, as will be outlined further below.

6.1.2.5.2 Concessional Financing Facility

Another development taking place in parallel to the implementation of the JRP was the establishment of a 'Concessional Financing Facility': At the sidelines of the IMF-World Bank Group Annual Meetings in Lima, Peru, in October 2015, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon, Islamic Development Bank Group President Ahmad Mohamed Ali, and World Bank Group President Jim Kim discussed with representatives from more than 20 countries and international partners how Jordan and Lebanon could be supported in dealing with the displacement situation. After six months of further consultations, a new financing facility was launched in April 2016. Through the so-called 'Concessional Financing Facility' (CFF), predictable medium- to long-term financing to support refugees and host communities in the two countries was to be ensured, while at the same time the platform aimed at strengthening coordination between humanitarian and development assistance, thereby bridging the gap between the two sectors. (World Bank Group 2017:4)

The underlying idea of the Facility was to provide concessional loans for development projects in Jordan and Lebanon. As middle-income countries, both countries up until that point had not been eligible for borrowing from multilateral development banks at the concessional rates typically reserved for the world's poorest nations. However, the new Facility recognized two interlinked aspects: First, it acknowledged that both countries were performing a global public good by hosting large numbers of refugees. Second, it recognized that this had created an enormous strain on the countries' infrastructure, public services and budgets due to which they were to be supported with favorable conditions. Therefore, under the CFF, donor contributions were to be used to reduce the interest rate to concessional levels on loans for development projects in Jordan and Lebanon that benefitted both refugees and host communities. Through this mechanism, each dollar of donor grants could leverage about four dollars of concessional lending. The endeavored amount of grants of more than USD 1 billion over five years could therefore leverage roughly USD 4 billion in concessional financing, to be used to address the refugee situation in Jordan and Lebanon and its long-term impacts. (World Bank Group 2017:vii, 4)

In its first year, the Facility approved USD 116.4 million in funding for Jordan, thereby leveraging around USD 670 million of concessional financing for development projects across a range of sectors, including infrastructure, jobs, health, and education. The first approved projects in Jordan included the so-called 'Economic Opportunities for Jordanians and Syrian Refugees Program-for-Results', which was implemented by the World Bank and aimed to provide 130,000 work permits to Syrian refugees in the country. Further projects focused on the water sector, aiming at improving the resilience of wastewater infrastructure in host communities, and on the health sector, aiming at maintaining the delivery of essential primary and secondary health services to poor, uninsured Jordanians and Syrian refugees, and at strengthening the capacities of local health systems. (World Bank Group 2017:iii-iv, 4)

The Jordanian government welcomed the CFF as bringing "a new spirit and new tools to the broader architecture of foreign aid" and as serving as "an essential development companion" to preserve Jordan's development gains by turning the challenges the country was facing into opportunities. Altogether, the CFF was perceived as setting "the right precedent to fairly incentivize proper response to refugee crises globally without penalizing countries hosting refugees or taking them for granted" (World Bank Group 2017:vi).

6.1.2.5.3 The London Initiative

Few years later, new developments took place. In February 2019, the UK and Jordan hosted a conference under the slogan ‘Jordan Growth and Opportunity: The London Initiative 2019’. The conference, bringing together government officials, multilateral development and financial organizations, civil society and international organizations as well as investors and business people, launched “a new initiative designed to lay the foundations to unlock growth, jobs and investment for Jordan”, regarded as marking “the start of a new partnership approach between Jordan and the international community in pursuit of Jordan’s sustainable growth and self-reliance” (The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and HM Government 2019:1). Pointing to various challenges as well as the role Jordan had been playing by providing a global public good by hosting significant numbers of Syrian refugees, the five-year initiative had a strong focus on growth and economic transformation, focusing on macroeconomic reforms to stimulate growth, on debt sustainability and on private sector investment. (The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and HM Government 2019) Key reforms to achieve these objectives were outlined in a ‘Five-Year Reform Matrix’ that had been developed by the Government of Jordan together with the World Bank. The Matrix thereby was based on Jordan’s request for “revamped financial assistance from the international community to build on the 2016 Jordan Compact and its multi-year Jordan Response Plan to tackle the Syrian refugee crisis in a way that turns the refugee challenge into an economic opportunity” (The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan 2018:2).

Apart from that, refugees and how to address the situation they were in, did not form part of the Initiative. This was pointed out by (international) NGOs active in Jordan that called for a stronger link between the London Initiative and the SDGs, focusing in particular on the goal of ‘leaving no one behind’, including refugees. Arguing that incorporating refugees in the growth narrative “would allow Jordan to tap into Syrians’ recognized entrepreneurship and skill base, while benefiting from an economic multiplier effect, such as the spending of wages, potential job creation, and tax revenue generation”, they in particular called for a stronger focus on labor market participation of refugees within the Initiative (JIF 2019:2).

Overall, all three developments taking place outside the JRP had in common that they had a clear focus on (economic) development. To varying extents, they were all linked to new and improved employment opportunities, to economic stability, growth and transformation, and to an improved business and investment climate. While the JRP remained the programmatic response to the refugee situation, these new developments thus aimed at creating more favorable conditions for (economic) development in the country in general, taking up a broader perspective than the JRP and incorporating further-reaching aspects and interests.

6.1.3 Response framework

As the focus of this thesis is the resilience-based response framework outlined in the JRP, the following subchapters will analyze the response plan in more detail, focusing on its rationale, objectives, structure, key actors and funding.

6.1.3.1 *Rationale*

Upon its introduction, the first JRP (JRP 2015) was framed as a “major paradigm shift on the way to respond to protracted humanitarian and development challenges” (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2015:20–21). The plan argued that, nearly five years into the crisis, refugees in Jordan “remain[ed] in limbo”, while at the same time Jordanian resources and capacities became more and more overstretched (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2014:25), altogether leading to a situation that was characterized by a humanitarian emergency on the one side, and longer-term structural vulnerabilities on the other side. The plan further argued that, traditionally, these two issues had so far been addressed through different programming approaches and funding mechanisms: the humanitarian system, focusing on crisis response and short-term life-saving measures on the one side, and the development system, addressing chronic vulnerabilities and capacity-developing interventions on the other side. The scope and duration

of the ongoing crisis, however, had challenged this standard aid response and coordination mechanisms, “exposing the divergence between the two systems and the gaps in policy, response capacity, and funding” (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2014:25).

At the same time, with the RRP6 only 56 percent funded as of November 2014, the plan recognized that the prevailing funding and programming modalities with their focus on emergency and life-saving interventions had been “neither sufficient nor sustainable” and that a more development-oriented approach was needed that would, by leading to resilience, gradually reduce the need for humanitarian assistance (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2014:25).

The JRP was seen as a solution to both challenges: on the one hand, its specific aim was “to bridge [...] [the] divide [between short-term emergency interventions and longer-term capacity strengthening measures] and reconcile the programming objectives, funding mechanisms and operating systems that often [ran] [...] parallel to each other in addressing short-term people-centred needs and medium to longer term systemic and institutional considerations” (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2014:25). On the other hand, the plan specifically adopted a “resilience-based approach to respond to and mitigate the effects of the Syria crisis on Jordan and Jordanian host communities” (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2014:25).

6.1.3.2 Objectives

Overall, the JRP 2015 set up eight objectives:

- (1) “Meet the immediate needs of:
 - Syrian refugees in and out camps
 - Vulnerable Jordanians affected by the Syria crisis”
- (2) “Support the government budget to cope with the additional financial obligations and income losses resulting from the Syria crisis.”
- (3) “Rapidly scale-up critical government capacities to plan, program, coordinate and implement a more resilience-oriented response, which both manages and mitigates the impact of the Syria crisis in a timely, efficient and effective manner.”
- (4) “Strengthen the capacities and resilience of the health, education, justice, protection, water and sanitation service delivery systems at local and national levels, while mitigating the negative impact of high concentrations of refugees on service delivery sectors.”
- (5) “Restore and reinforce municipal services and infrastructure that have been degraded as a result of the sharp demand increases in critically affected areas, particularly in solid waste management, housing, and energy.”
- (6) “Rapidly expand employment and livelihood opportunities, while strengthening the coping capacities of vulnerable Jordanians impacted by the crisis.”
- (7) “Address social imbalances, including gender inequalities, and strengthen social cohesion in Jordanian communities hosting large numbers of refugees.”
- (8) “Ensure the environmental sustainability of all interventions to the greatest extent possible.” (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2014:26)

Except for some slight changes in wording, these objectives remained the same in subsequent JRPs. (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2015:21; MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2016:13)

However, two important additions were made in the JRP 2017-2019: First, a new objective was added, namely to “ensure that all Syrian children [were] in education”. Second, an existing objective was changed in that Syrian refugees were added as beneficiaries: Objective (6) now stipulated to “create new employment and livelihood opportunities for vulnerable Jordanians *and Syrian refugees*, and strengthen the coping mechanism of the most vulnerable segments affected by the crisis” (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2016:14, emphasis added). Even though these changes might seem slim and could easily be overlooked, in particular the latter one reflected an important and far-reaching shift in policies as will be outlined further below.

6.1.3.3 Structure

In the first two JRPs, the response was divided into 11 sectors: Education, Energy, Environment, Health, Livelihoods & Food Security, Justice, Local Governance & Municipal services, Shelter, Social Protection, Transport, and WASH. Starting with the JRP 2017-2019, Livelihoods and Food Security were split up, each issue now constituting its own sector. For each sector, a Task Force was set up. Chaired by the line ministry responsible for the respective sector and comprised of both humanitarian and development partners from the government, UN agencies, donors and NGOs, each Task Force was responsible to develop and implement a coherent sector-wide response. (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2014:23; MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2015:19; MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2016:10; MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2017:9–10)

The first JRP was divided into a refugee response and a resilience response, each dealt with separately. Each response area was then split up in the above-mentioned sectors. Accordingly, each sector was dealt with twice: one time in the refugee response, and one time in the resilience response. (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2014)

Starting with the JRP 2016, this structure was changed. From now on, the refugee and the resilience response were integrated into one single plan for each sector, which was regarded as “a further step towards a comprehensive response that effectively links short-term coping solutions with longer-term initiatives aimed at strengthening local and national resilience capacities” (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2015:21). The new structure paid regard to the fact that interventions from both components often targeted the same services in the same communities, and recognized the centrality of public authorities in the delivery of services and the provision of assistance. In practice, this meant that for each sector there was now only one response plan, in which both refugee- and resilience-focused needs and objectives were included. Specific sub-goals, however, were still strictly divided and allocated to either the refugee or the resilience component. (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2015; MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2016; MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2017)

In addition to the various sectors, several cross-cutting issues were incorporated in the response. In the first JRP these included Capacity Development, Environmental Sustainability, Gender, Youth, and Social Cohesion. (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2014:34) Later added were Protection, Private Sector, and Information and Technology Development. As cross-cutting issues, these issues were to be kept in mind in all sectors and components, but no specific objectives and concrete response strategies were formulated. Accordingly, no budget was allocated to the respective topics. (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2015:23–25; MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2016:15–16)

Besides the two components, including the different sectors and cross-cutting issues, the plan included two additional parts, accompanied with further financial requirements. On the one hand, the plan called for direct budget support. This was reasoned with the overall impact of the Syria crisis on Jordan and budgetary costs and income losses which could not be mitigated through the implementation of interventions in the refugee and resilience response. In order to compensate for the additional costs and losses, these requirements included a budget for subsidies for food (wheat, barley and yeast), liquid gas, petroleum, energy and water as well as for security costs (including military, civil defense, gendarmerie and police) and for income loss (including labor permits fees, land transport and aviation). Furthermore, the plan included financial requirements for the accelerated depreciation of infrastructure. (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2014:145; MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2015:157; MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2016:136; MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2017:3)

On the other hand, the plan called for financial support for the management of the response. Budget was planned to strengthen the capacities of MOPIC and other line ministries in order for the government of Jordan to coordinate, implement and monitor the overall response to the Syria crisis. (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2014:148; MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2015:163; MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2016:141; MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2017:102)

6.1.3.4 Actors and coordination

Various actors were involved in the development and the implementation of the JRP. Formally, the plan stood under the overall leadership of the government of Jordan, with the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MOPIC) and its Humanitarian Relief Coordination Unit (HRCU) as the line ministry. MOPIC also chaired the Jordan Response Platform for the Syria Crisis (JRPSC).

As outlined above, the JRPSC had evolved from the former Host Community Support Platform (HCSP), established already in September 2013 as the main coordination mechanism to address the increasing needs of host communities in Jordan. With this focus, the HCSP's aims had been to “mitigate the impact of the Syria crisis on host communities”, “sustain socio-economic stability”, and to “safeguard development gains made in recent years” (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2014:23). With the transition to the JRPSC, these objectives were expanded to comprehend a wider spectrum. Its overall aim was to facilitate, guide, and provide oversight to the preparation, implementation and monitoring of the JRP, thereby including the response focusing on Jordanian host communities *and* on refugees. The platform brought together government representatives from various line ministries on the one side, and UN agencies and donors on the other side, in order to ensure a response to the crisis as effective and coherent as possible and its alignment and harmonization with national priorities and systems for implementation. (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2014:23)

The platform worked through different Task Forces (TF), each responsible for one sector of the response. Each TF was led by a line ministry and brought together donors, UN agencies and NGOs representatives with the aim of providing “a forum for sectorial strategic decision-making to develop and implement, under the leadership and guidance of the Government of Jordan, a coherent and sector-specific refugee and resilience-strengthening response to the impacts of the Syria crisis on the country” (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2015:11).

The JRPSC and its TFs were further supported by a Secretariat that performed various tasks: On the one hand, it was to support MOPIC and its HRCU through capacity-development on crisis management and strategic planning. On the other hand, it was to support MOPIC through policy advice and technical assistance, both in its general function as the chair of the JRPSC and in more concrete aspects, such as the set up and operationalization of an information management system and a monitoring and reporting mechanism for the JRP, and the development of a communication and advocacy strategy to raise public awareness on the achievements and challenges of Jordan's response to the crisis. (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2015:19)

Through this arrangement, in March 2015 the so-called ‘Jordan Response Information Management System for the Syria Crisis’ (JORISS) was established for the monitoring and evaluation of the plan and the tracking of projects. The system was used both for the approval of projects and for reporting: Each project under the JRP needed to be submitted through JORISS, where it was reviewed and approved by the government. After approval, implementing agencies had to report biannually on expenditures and activities through the system. Furthermore, JORISS was used to track and account for all funding going into the response. (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2015:10–11)

Parallel to these new structures envisaged in the JRP, the structures and mechanisms the UN had set up in the first years of the response to the crisis remained in place, consisting of a complex network of actors.⁴¹ In the attempt to streamline these UN coordination structures and avoid duplications (I UN

⁴¹ These structures included eight sector working groups, each co-chaired by UNHCR and an international organization and responsible for the development and implementation of sector strategies; an Inter-Sector Working Group (ISWG), functioning as the main bridge between the different sector working groups, with the aim of encouraging synergies between sectors, avoiding duplication, working on common processes, and facilitating the flow of information; and the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF), which was chaired by the UNHCR representative and composed of heads of humanitarian UN agencies and NGOs contributing to the response. Overall, the IATF acted as a steering committee that oversaw the work of sector working groups and related strategic, advocacy and funding processes. At the same time, it ensured communication and consultation with the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) and the UN Country Team (UNCT). (UNHCR 2017a:2–4)

Jordan 4 2017), in April 2017 two of these mechanisms, the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) and the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF), both responsible for humanitarian issues, were merged to only one strategic level humanitarian forum called the Humanitarian Partners Forum (HPF), which was co-chaired by UNHCR and the RC/HC. (UNHCR 2017a:2)

Further structures were set up by international NGOs working in the country: In 2014, 58 international NGOs implementing humanitarian and development programs in Jordan established a network called the Jordan INGO Forum (JIF). The overall aim of the Forum was to facilitate coordination among members “by identifying strategic issues of concern, advocating for common positions with a unified and consistent voice, engaging and representing members with external stakeholders and sharing information” (JIF 2017). For this purpose, members met monthly to discuss priorities. Additionally, working groups were established on different over-arching and response-related aspects such as Government Liaison, Human Resources or Advocacy. A representative of the Forum also participated in the various UN fora, including the HPF. (UNHCR 2017a:3)

Lastly, national NGOs and CBOs participated in the response. In contrast to international NGOs, they were not organized in a forum or other official coordination structures. Accordingly, there was no joint strategy and no delegate who could represent the joint voice of local organizations in discussions with the government or the UN. As a result, they were not included in the outlined coordination structures, but cooperated with international NGOs and the UN on a bilateral basis and to a differing extent.

6.1.3.5 Funding

With the first JRP, the Jordanian government clearly outlined its preferred ways of funding: Besides direct budget support, financing could be made through the provision of budget support for specific projects. That way, donors could earmark financing to particular government projects in any of the investment areas contained in the JRP, with funds flowing to the treasury account through the Ministry of Finance or a special account held in the name of MOPIC. In this case, financing was used for specific activities with a limited objective, budget and timeframe to achieve specific results. The third option lay in channeling funds through UN agencies, which were regarded as “important policy, technical, financing and implementing partners to the government” (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2014:147). In areas in which they possessed a distinct comparative advantage, their engagement in the provision of technical assistance, coordination of support, policy advice, technical support for service delivery and implementation therefore was to be maintained. As a fourth option, the government encouraged donors to make use of trust funds such as the World Bank Trust Fund and multilateral financing. In this regard, in 2015, MOPIC and the UN established the Jordan Resilience Fund (JRF) with the purpose of mobilizing, pooling and coordinating contributions for JRP activities, thereby reducing both transaction costs of aid and fragmentation and duplication. (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2014:147; UN Jordan, MOPIC, and UNDP 2015:2) Another option was the channeling of funds directly to international and national NGOs, as they were regarded as “important implementation partners, often possessing trusted linkages to donors and local communities permitting them to reach vulnerable population segments with their highly targeted programmes of assistance” (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2014:147). Last, “other development partners” such as foundations, academic institutions or private sector organizations were listed as possible receivers of funds, provided that they had been selected on the basis of their clear comparative advantage and in accordance with government operating principles and policies. (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2014:147; MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2015:159; MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2016:139)

Ultimately, it was left to donors to decide which entity was regarded as most suitable for developing project proposals to be submitted to the government, and which entity would conduct which particular activity in the implementation process, provided the institution or agency was duly registered in the country. In case the donor made no indication, it lay in the responsibility of MOPIC to whom and on what basis the funding was to be allocated. Altogether, aid modalities were to be “tailored closely to the context and situation in order to match aid resources with [the] country’s needs and ownership”

(MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2016:139). (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2014:147; MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2015:159)

Overall, each JRP contained a detailed list of financial requirements for each sector, listed by sector specific objective (further subdivided into refugee and resilience component objectives), and year. Additionally, as outlined above, the plan listed various items and sectors that required direct budget support “to compensate for the additional costs and losses resulting from the Syria crisis” that could not be mitigated through the implementation of interventions in the different sectors (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2015:157).

6.1.4 The JRP as resilience-based response

As part of the 3RP, the JRP formally formed part of a resilience-based response. As outlined above, the overall strategic direction of this resilience-based response thereby was elaborated at the regional level, largely by the UN. Country chapters, however, were developed at the national level under the leadership of the respective government. As a result, while falling under the general heading of a regional, resilience-based response, the actual conceptual framework of the response in Jordan did not necessarily have to look exactly the same as the one outlined in the 3RP. Rather, it could set its own priorities, adapting the response to the prevailing national context and interests of stakeholders.

The following two subchapters will investigate how the notion of a resilience-based response was transferred to Jordan’s national context and how it manifested in practice. The first subchapter will examine the incorporation of the concept of resilience itself; the second one will analyze the further strategic direction of the response, outlining several key principles and commitments of the response.

6.1.4.1 *The concept of resilience*

In line with the developments at the regional level and building on its National Resilience Plan, Jordan formally announced to adopt a resilience-based approach with the JRP. (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2014:10, 77) Overall, the plan regarded a resilience-based framework as a means to “bridge[...] the divide between short-term refugee and longer-term developmental responses” (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2015:9). Thus, the aim of resilience-based programming was understood as two-fold, “first to ensure that shocks and stresses [...] [would] not lead to a long-term deterioration in the wellbeing of a particular individual, household, system or institution, and secondly to build capacity to absorb future shocks and deal appropriately with related stresses” (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2014:25).

Altogether, a ‘resilience-based approach’ was understood as enabling “households, communities, services and institutions to initially ‘cope’, gradually ‘recover’, and ultimately to strengthen and ‘sustain’ their capacities, thereby deepening their resilience to future shocks” (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2015:21). A more detailed definition or clarification of the JRP’s understanding of resilience in general or resilience-based programming, however, was not provided in the response plan.

Similarly, the plan did not refer to the Dead Sea Resilience Agenda and its core principles, developed at the regional level. In slightly different wording, however, the JRP still incorporated the Agenda’s conceptual framework (see also Table 8). In the JRP’s outlined key strategic directions, for instance, it committed to addressing the immediate needs of both refugees and vulnerable Jordanians. At the same time, it also focused on the scale-up of capacities of authorities to plan and implement a development response. In this regard, it emphasized in particular the need to foster the resilience of service delivery systems as well as municipal services and infrastructure in a sustainable manner. Focus was also put on the promotion of self-sufficiency through the creation of new employment and livelihood opportunities, and the overall strengthening of coping capacities of the most vulnerable – first referring only to vulnerable Jordanians, but from 2017 on also including Syrian refugees. In line with the Agenda’s core principles, the plan also committed to addressing social imbalances and to improving social cohesion. (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2016:14) While not included in its overall objectives, the JRP also regarded partnerships as highly important, both with UN institutions and NGOs, and with the private sector and

other national and international institutions, which was outlined in detail in the various sector response strategies (see, for example MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2016:42–44, 53, 60, 85 etc).

Table 8: Dead Sea Resilience Agenda - Core Principles

Dead Sea Resilience Agenda – Core Principles
• Integration of humanitarian and development planning
• Promotion of self-sufficiency
• Focus on capacity-development and use of existing systems
• Partnerships
• Social Cohesion

(UNDP and UNHCR 2015:18)

As mentioned above, to achieve these goals, the JRP was divided into two components: the refugee response component and the resilience response component. While the two components were dealt with in separate chapters in the first JRP, addressing each sector separately, from the JRP 2016 on both components were integrated into one single response plan for each sector, placing “the resilience of national systems and institutions”, and, from 2017 on, “the resilience of the people in need”, “at the core of the response” (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2015:9; MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2016:13).

While every sector had one overall objective, this was to be achieved “through the realisation of specific refugee assistance and resilience-building objectives” (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2014:11). Accordingly, each overall objective contained several sub-goals, divided into refugee response objectives and resilience response objectives. (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2014; MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2015; MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2016; MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2017)

In line with this, funding requirements were listed separately for both components. In the first JRP, the budget requirements for the resilience component amounted to just over half of the total programmatic response (51.8 percent or USD 956.6 million).⁴² After a decrease in the resilience component’s share in 2016, now making up less than half of the programmatic response (48.1 percent), it increased again in 2017 and 2018, to 53.4 percent and 53.3 percent, respectively. In all but three sectors the resilience component’s share was constantly larger than that of the refugee response component. The three exceptions to this were food security, shelter, and social protection. (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2014:14; MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2015:13; MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2016:5; MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2017:3)

Overall, while the concept of ‘resilience’ took up a large part in the theoretical framework of the JRP, its understanding and implementation in practice proved ambiguous.

This started with different actors’ different interpretations of ‘resilience’. While resilience in the JRP on a theoretical level was framed as an outcome, enabling populations, communities and institutions to deal better with the impacts of the crisis, the Jordanian government in practice used resilience to define a type of beneficiary: Programming targeting Jordanians and Jordanian institutions was regarded as ‘resilience-programming’, while programming targeting refugees was not. (Bellamy et al. 2017:50) This understanding of a clear separation of programming was reflected in the government’s division of the response into a refugee and a resilience component that clearly categorized types of programming: short-term emergency and humanitarian programming for refugees; longer-term ‘resilience-programming’ for Jordanians. This was in stark contrast to the interpretation of the UN and other actors from the international community who understood ‘resilience-programming’ as longer-term programming for both refugees and locals, and ‘resilience’ as an outcome, rather than a target group. (I UN Jordan 2 2017; Sigmond 2016:37) Thus, overall, even though the JRP was rhetorically framed as an “integrated refugee,

⁴² All numbers refer to the resilience component’s share of budget requirements only of the programmatic response. Not included in the calculation are requirements for direct budget support. When incorporated, the resilience component’s share of the total JRP budget requirements amounted to 32 percent in 2015, 28.9 percent in 2016, 32.7 percent in 2017, and 33.2 percent in 2018.

resilience-strengthening and development response” (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2015:11), in reality this was not the case, in particular in the first years after its introduction.

In line with the separation of the two components, each project to be implemented through the JRP needed to be allocated to either the refugee or the resilience component, and to refer to a specific refugee or resilience sub-goal. While all projects needed to get approved by the government in order to be implemented, the project approval process differed depending on the allocation to a component. In both cases, projects needed to be uploaded to JORISS, where they were reviewed and cleared electronically by MOPIC. Afterwards, however, resilience projects, which needed to be accompanied by a letter of endorsement from the relevant line ministry, were sent directly to Cabinet for approval, while refugee projects needed to be approved by the Inter-Ministerial Coordination Committee (IMCC) first before being sent to Cabinet. (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2015:159–160) In practice, that meant that organizations often chose a component relatively arbitrarily, labelling the intervention as the kind of programming that would make the approval process easier. Especially in the first years, in many cases, this led to a labelling of measures as resilience-programming, as the approval process was regarded not only as being faster than for refugee programming, but was also considered to be more likely to lead to approval in general. (I UN Jordan 1 2017; I UN Jordan 5 2017; Sigmond 2016:38)

Even though in 2016 guidelines and a decision tree were introduced to address this approach and to assist response partners with the categorization of projects, the allocation of a planned intervention to either component continued to strongly depend on how the project was framed: For instance, a project with the overall objective to increase shelters in urban environments for refugees by financially supporting Jordanian home owners to restructure and renovate buildings could be framed either as refugee programming (refugees as target group in the shelter sector), or as resilience-programming (increasing the housing stock and alleviating pressure in the Jordanian housing sector). Accordingly, drafting project proposals often became “an exercise in semantics” (Sigmond 2016:38). (Bellamy et al. 2017:53; I UN Jordan 1 2017; I UN Jordan 5 2017) In a similar manner, playing around with the number and breakdown of beneficiaries gave some leeway in the allocation of projects to a component. (I UN Jordan 5 2017) As a result, many projects that were framed as ‘resilience-building’ in reality remained short-term and refugee-focused humanitarian projects ‘with a sprinkle of resilience’ that were not very sustainable and did not include local communities or their priorities and needs. (I MOPIC 1 2017; I UN Jordan 6 2018; I UN Regional 2 2018) This became visible in another aspect as well: Funding for the resilience component remained generally low, despite the fact that the international community had widely expressed their support for a resilience-based support. (I UN Jordan 2 2017; Sigmond 2016:61) Generally, no common conception of resilience existed, leading to confusion as to what the concept really meant and how it was to be implemented in practice. (I MOPIC 1 2017; I UN Jordan 7 2018)

These aspects concerning the understanding of resilience and funding had different implications on the international response: On the one hand, even though the resilience-based response aimed specifically at responding to the impacts of the crisis, especially in the first years of the JRP, the Jordanian government attempted to use the new narrative of ‘resilience’ as a way to realize interventions that were in fact long-term development projects that the government had wanted to implement for years, but had not been able to due to lack of funding. The introduction of the resilience component therefore served as a way to attract funding for these projects, even though the link between the interventions and the impacts of the Syria crisis often were not clear. (Culbertson et al. 2016:43; I UN Jordan 2 2017; I UN Jordan 4 2017; Sigmond 2016:61) For instance, the government requested large sums of money for university education, while there were only very few Syrian refugees enrolled in Jordanian universities. (Culbertson et al. 2016:43) Another example constituted the building of a water pipeline the government had wanted to build for years – even though it was unclear how the project was related to the effects of the Syria crisis, and how it would support vulnerable Syrians and Jordanians. (I UN Jordan 2 2017)

On the other hand, the response in general remained mostly refugee-focused, despite the introduction of the notion of resilience. This was reflected in short-term funding and planning cycles and a continued

focus on humanitarian assistance, including the continuation and repetition of programs and the creation of parallel structures. (I INGO Jordan 6 2018; I MOPIC 1 2017; I UN Jordan 2 2017) For instance, even seven years after the beginning of the crisis, winterization measures remained unchanged, focusing on short-term measures instead of creating more sustainable structures and systems. (I UN Jordan 6 2018)

This adherence of organizations to short-term measures and the reluctance to push for changes in the system itself was further advanced by donor specifications who were eager to see quick results of funded measures. These could be reflected more easily in a high number of beneficiaries reached with short-term measures than in longer-term systemic changes that aimed at more resilient structures. As a result, funds were often provided and used for short-term relief rather than as an investment for more fundamental systemic changes. (I INGO Jordan 6 2018; I MOPIC 1 2017; I UN Jordan 2 2017)

Altogether, the funding of the resilience component remained a sensitive and highly politicized issue. Due to internal pressure to demonstrate that ‘something was being done for Jordanians’, the government allegedly even shifted numbers to show that the resilience component, meaning programs targeting Jordanians, was better funded than the refugee component. (I UN Jordan 2 2017; I UN Jordan 5 2017)

At the same time, and despite the challenges with the labelling of programming, for actors on the ground the incorporation of the concept in the response plan did not play a significant role. For most of them, the concept and its underlying principles were not new; many had applied them already before their formal introduction in the response plan. In practice, that meant that even though projects now were put under a new terminology and used a different tone and emphasis to fit the wording of the Jordanian government in order to get approval, goals, activities and beneficiaries often stayed the same. Often the same projects that had been implemented through previous response plans (RRPs) appeared again in the JRP, now under the new terming of resilience-building. (I INGO Jordan 1 2017; I UN Jordan 2 2017; Sigmond 2016:39, 62) Notwithstanding the wording and framing, response partners thus continued to implement measures in line with what was now understood as building resilience.

Besides these (non-)implications of resilience-thinking on the international and programmatic response, a last aspect concerned the actions of the Jordanian government. Despite its rhetorical commitment to a resilience-based response on paper, in practice, national policies towards refugees in many cases were far from building resilience, but instead grew more ‘anti-resilient’. In the health sector, for instance, Jordan in November 2014 changed its policies from free health services for refugees to giving refugees access to health care only at the same rate as uninsured Jordanians. The resulting high costs made Syrians turn to NGOs for health care. Rather than using existing systems to channel aid as promoted in a resilience-based approach, thus, parallel structures were created and strengthened. At the same time, refugees were made even more dependent on humanitarian assistance, rather than becoming more resilient. (Amnesty International 2016:18–19; I UN Jordan 2 2017)

Altogether, a strong actor championing the concept of resilience as understood by the international community with enough power to influence the government in its policies was missing at the country level. At the regional level, this role was taken up by UNDP who took the lead in promoting the concept of resilience. (I UN Lebanon 4 2017; I UN Regional 1 2017) In Jordan, however, the UNDP country office did not follow suit, despite its engagement in resilience-programming even before the JRP: Already in 2013 UNDP had started a so-called Host Community Support Programme, at a time, when most other actors and UN agencies had focused solely on humanitarian issues. This support for host communities had been framed as resilience-building. (UNDP 2013a:1–2) After the introduction of the JRP and the transition of the Host Community Support Platform (HCSP) to the Jordan Response Platform for the Syria Crisis (JRPSC), however, UNDP did not expand its role within the overall

response and take the lead in the resilience component or champion a general resilience-based approach.⁴³

6.1.4.2 Strategic direction

Besides this overall understanding and interpretation of ‘resilience’, the JRP revolved around different aspects that were continuously stressed throughout the response. These referred both to strategic aspects, including a focus on linking humanitarian with development assistance, on national leadership, partnerships, and accountability issues, and to the new programmatic focus of the response, lying on enhancing economic opportunities. Overall, these aspects can be regarded as making up the overall strategic direction of the response. The following subchapter will examine these principles and commitments, outlining their depiction in the JRP and their actual manifestation in practice.

Bridging the gap – focus on development

First of all, the JRP stressed its focus on bridging the divide between humanitarian and development systems. It outlined that, up until that point, there had been no system for dealing with the type of protracted crisis that had developed as a result of the Syria conflict, namely, a “situation[...] characterized by the interplay of humanitarian emergency and long term structural vulnerabilities” that “challenge[d] standard aid responses and coordination mechanisms, exposing the divergence between the two systems and the gaps in policy, response capacity, and funding” (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2014:23).

At the same time, the JRP argued that the response so far, focusing on live-saving and humanitarian action, had been neither sufficient nor sustainable and that a more development-oriented approach was required in order to build resilience and reduce the need for humanitarian assistance over time. Paying regard to this recognition, the JRP was regarded as constituting a paradigm shift in the response to the crisis: from a mainly refugee-focused humanitarian approach to a more development-oriented response, based on a resilience-based framework. Accordingly, the JRP endeavored to bring together programming objectives, funding mechanisms and operating systems of humanitarian and development systems. It stipulated that, “[r]ather than creating [only] rhetorical linkages between short-term humanitarian interventions and development goals”, the JRP for the first time since the outbreak of the Syria crisis “[embedded] the refugee response into national development plans” (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2014:10). Accordingly, the plan did not only target Syrian refugees as beneficiaries, but also put a strong focus on supporting vulnerable Jordanians and on the overall development of Jordan, including the strengthening of capacities and service delivery systems. (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2014:10; MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2015:9)

The link to existing national development plans was further emphasized: It was stressed that the JRP was “not conceived in an institutional vacuum”, but was “part of a wider national planning process that reflect[ed] the country’s longer-term development vision” (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2016:13). Thus, the JRP was “designed in alignment and complementarity” with Jordan’s main national plans and strategies (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2016:13), Jordan’s ‘Vision 2025’, its three-year ‘Executive Development Programme’ and the ‘Governorates Development Programme’. All of these plans set out the prevailing development situation in the country as well as development objectives and priorities at the national and governorate level. (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2014:24; MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2016:13) To ensure complementarity between the various plans, response partners were encouraged to

⁴³ In none of the interviews conducted in Jordan, UNDP was mentioned as a particularly important actor within the response. On the contrary, often UNDP was not mentioned at all. This could be traced back partly to a lack of staff and capacities, forcing UNDP to over-stretch its existing program in the attempt to cover the new task of coordination of the resilience-component. Even though the office grew bigger over the course of the response, it was only three years after the introduction of the JRP, in 2017, that UNDP finally decided to invest more in sector coordination and to institute a full-time resilience focal point and inter-sector coordinator that was to enable UNDP to take on more responsibility within the resilience component. (I MOPIC 1 2017; I UN Jordan 5 2017)

review national plans and adjust sector response strategies accordingly. (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2016:13)

Despite this rhetorical emphasis on ‘bridging the gap’, however, in practice a distinct divide between humanitarian and longer-term development-oriented programming remained. This was related to the clear separation of the response into a refugee and resilience component as outlined above, implying different objectives, budget requirements and approval processes that often impeded real integration of measures. (I MOPIC 1 2017; Kocks et al. 2018:64–65)

In some instances, the response still made some progress in linking both types of assistance. First, it brought both programmatic areas together in a single plan. With this broader focus, new possibilities for the participation of different organizations with different mandates in the response were opened up, accompanied by the establishment of new coordination and leadership structures compared to previous response plans. With the new plan, only one authority – the Jordanian government – was formally responsible for both components and fields of action. (Kocks et al. 2018:70) Likewise, project submission and approval processes, reporting and funding mechanisms were reconciled in a joint information management system (JORISS). (I MOPIC 1 2017) Second, progress was made with respect to more comprehensive planning. Through the joint Task Forces, sector-working groups and planning workshops, both humanitarian and development actors were involved in the development of sector strategies, allowing both perspectives and work procedures to be heard and included in the response. This found its expression also in the incorporation of short-term and long-term objectives, and ultimately in the change of the response into three year rolling plans, compared to RRP which had been developed for much shorter time frames. This facilitated not only longer-term planning, but also opened up new possibilities for multi-year and more flexible funding, which was promptly used by several donors, for instance Australia, Sweden or Norway. (Kocks et al. 2018:78–79, 84, 118–119) In general, however, it took some time for donors to adapt to these changes and new possibilities: In particular in the first years of the JRP, funding for longer-term resilience-programming as well as funding for newly introduced sectors in the response focusing on Jordan’s development remained generally low, with donors continuing to give priority to emergency and short-term assistance for refugees as outlined above. (Bellamy et al. 2017:52; Kocks et al. 2018:76)

Nevertheless, in the course of the response the focus on development increased. Most notably, however, this materialized not as part of the JRP, but due to the signing of the Jordan Compact in 2016 and its new focus on livelihoods and self-sufficiency for both Jordanians and Syrian refugees, which was subsequently also included in the JRP. While development actors had been operationally present and included in the response before, within this new framework they could take on a much larger role within the JRP and became more influential in shaping the design of the approach. At the same time, major donors increased their contributions, putting specific focus on budget support tied to development-oriented measures such as livelihoods and education programming. (Bellamy et al. 2017:52) In this regard, the Jordan Compact was widely regarded as a ‘game changer’ or ‘turning point’ in the response, marking a much more pronounced shift to a development approach than the JRP with its incorporation of the concept of resilience. (I INGO Jordan 2 2017; I LNGO Jordan 1 2017; I UN Jordan 4 2017)

The establishment of the Concessional Financing Facility (CFF) in 2016 further advanced this growing focus on development and the growing role of development actors in Jordan’s response. By giving Jordan access to concessional funding for mid- and longer-term development objectives, the Facility specifically focused on addressing the challenges in Jordan from a development perspective. In the first year alone, the Facility approved USD 116.4 million in funding for Jordan, thereby leveraging some USD 670 million of concessional financing for development projects. (World Bank Group 2017:iii) By mid-2018, five projects were being implemented through the mechanism, focusing on economic opportunities, infrastructure, and health, each incorporating a long-term development-oriented perspective. (World Bank Group 2017:16–24)

Besides these developments that lay, however, largely outside the scope of the JRP, the response *within* the JRP overall still remained largely short-term and refugee-centered, focusing on alleviating the situation of individuals rather than on supporting systems to strengthen structures and institutions in general. On the one hand, this was reflected in the continued presence and an even growing number of international NGOs with a strong humanitarian background. On the other hand, the large overall number of mostly international agencies appealing through the JRP, each pursuing their own priorities, led to a highly ‘projectized’ approach which aimed at delivering various multi-sectoral programs rather than focusing on strengthening the development goals of the Jordanian government as outlined in national development plans. Thus, even though on paper the JRP was aligned with existing and longer-term national development plans such as Jordan’s Vision 2025, in practice national development objectives and priorities were not only insufficiently reflected in the response and day-to-day coordination, but were potentially even at odds with the JRP’s continued short-term focused programming even years after the beginning of the crisis. (I UN Jordan 3 2018; Office of the RC/HC Jordan 2017:2, 6, 8)

National leadership and ownership

In the beginning of the crisis in 2011, the government of Jordan expected the crisis to be short and the stay of Syrians only temporary. As the country was not prepared to assist such large numbers of refugees, the government mainly left it to UNHCR to handle the response. In line with its mandate, UNCHR thus established the usual humanitarian architecture for a crisis of that scale and started to coordinate and mobilize resources for immediate needs, sidestepping national and local responders. After a couple of years, however, the return of Syrian refugees continued to seem unlikely. Realizing that the impacts of the crisis increasingly affected host communities as well, and that UNHCR had neither the mandate nor the capacities to support host communities and national institutions in mitigating these negative effects, the Jordanian government slowly started to recognize that it had to step up its efforts and take on a larger and more active role in the response, as only on this basis it would be able to align it more to national priorities and interests including the support of host communities. (I MOPIC 1 2017; I UN Jordan 4 2017; Office of the RC/HC Jordan 2017:1, 8; Sida, Trombetta, and Panero 2016:22)

This recognition was reflected in the JRP, which from the very beginning was understood as a nationally owned and led plan. According to the Jordanian government, Jordan had already in 2013 taken on a “proactive role in seeking to respond to the impact of the Syrian crisis within a resilience framework by preparing the National Resilience plan (NRP) 2014-2016” (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2016:10). Eventually, as of 2015, Jordan had “taken the leadership in the set-up of the response plan to the impact of the Syria crisis on the country” (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2016:11). Accordingly, the JRP, was understood as “the product of a national planning process” (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2015:21), “prepared under the overall supervision of the Government of Jordan represented by MOPIC” (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2016:138).

From that moment on, the overall leadership and ownership of the Government of Jordan was continuously emphasized. For instance, the Jordan Response Platform for the Syria Crisis (JRPSC) was “chaired by the Minister of Planning and International Cooperation” and acted “under the overall leadership of the Government of Jordan” (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2016:10). Line ministries were in charge for Task Forces for each sector, where, together with donors, UN agencies and NGOs representatives, respective sector responses were to be developed “under the leadership and guidance of the Government of Jordan” (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2015:11). The implementation of the plan, finally, was to be “guided by the JRPSC, under the leadership of the Government of Jordan” (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2016:3).

Furthermore, the plan referenced and explicitly committed to the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and its principle of recipient-country ownership. At the same time, it called upon the international community to recognize country ownership in the response. (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2016:14, 138)

This firm notion of government leadership and ownership complied with Jordan's status as a middle-income country. Its overall strong political system and institutional environment, characterized by a high degree of government control, centralization and functioning structures (Bellamy et al. 2017:49), bolstered a larger engagement of the government in the response. At the same time, this larger engagement also started to restrict the role and range of responsibilities of the UN system and international organizations: As they were no longer operating solely on their own or in a political vacuum where they had to substitute missing state authorities and take over responsibilities of governments as in failed states or developing countries, they increasingly had to respect and work with local authorities and go through existing structures. (I MOPIC 1 2017; I UN Jordan 4 2017)

The increased engagement and new role of the government outlined in the JRP also found its expression in the introduction of new policies and regulations within the response: For instance, with Energy, Transport, Justice, and Environment, the Jordanian government incorporated four new sectors in the response (compared to previous response plans under UN leadership (RRP1-RRP6)), on the grounds that these sectors had been impacted negatively by the crisis. (I UN Jordan 4 2017; MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2014:19–21) Additionally, the Jordanian government introduced quotas for all projects implemented in host communities: Even if a project was formally a refugee project, at least 30 percent of beneficiaries had to be Jordanians⁴⁴. (I INGO Jordan 2 2017; I INGO Jordan 3 2017; JRPSC 2014) Overall, everything that went into the plan, including sector strategies, budgets, objectives, and projects, had to be approved by the government at cabinet level. In practice, this meant that even before a project proposal was submitted to JORISS for official approval, organizations usually got in contact with the responsible line ministry to check if content and wording in the proposal were feasible, often resulting in rephrasing and wishes for adjustments from the side of the government. (I INGO Jordan 3 2017; MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2015:158–160)

At the same time, this increased leadership role of the Jordanian government also entailed a stronger sense of ownership. This found its expression for instance in the strong international presence and stewardship of the Minister of Planning and International Cooperation, Imad Fakhoury (in office 03/2015-06/2018), who was formally responsible for the response. At various international conferences he promoted the response plan, calling on the international community to support Jordan with funding through the JRP. His appearance and advertisement of Jordan's approach exceeded the regular pledging conferences for the response in Kuwait, London and Brussels by far. In contrast, Fakhoury spoke regularly at various occasions and with diverse institutions and actors, such as the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the Center for Global Development, the International Monetary Fund, the European Commission, the World Bank as well as international organizations and international commissions, both outlining the effects of the Syrian crisis on Jordan and advertising Jordan's response. His continuous presence thereby helped to put the international community in constant mind of Jordan's situation, while simultaneously emphasizing the leading role of the Jordanian government in the response to it. (See, for example CGD 2017; Zgheib 2016; International Monetary Fund 2016; Jordan News Agency (Petra) 2018; The Jordan Times 2015b; World Bank Group 2017.)

However, even though the government showed both willingness and commitment to lead the response and represent it to the outside world, it still struggled to take full leadership at the coordination and implementation level. Instead, even four years after the introduction of the JRP it relied heavily on the international community. (Baur 2018) For instance, even though formally national Task Forces were set up as the new coordination structure under the leadership of the government, in practice, they did not work as intended: After their introduction in 2015, most of them were never properly activated and neither met regularly nor engaged in the monitoring or review process of the response. (I UN Jordan 4 2017; Sigmond 2016:34) To a large part, this could be traced back to a lack of capacities among ministries. Even though the public sector was generally over-staffed, only few ministries had staff both specifically dedicated and personally committed to get engaged and to work on the coordination of the

⁴⁴ Not included in this rule were projects implemented in refugee camps.

response. As a result, the capacity of chairing Task Force meetings at a frequency required for operations on the ground to work properly was lacking. At the same time, ministries often did not have enough experience and knowledge in coordinating the response to a crisis of that scale. Knowledge and technical know-how were often concentrated in single staff members who consequently were constantly overburdened. Lastly, clear Terms of Reference for the Task Forces remained missing, resulting in unclear roles and responsibilities which hindered institutional cooperation and made it difficult for actors to fully support and rely on their work. As a result, the inter-agency coordination system established by UNHCR before the introduction of the JRP remained the main coordination mechanism of the response. (I INGO Jordan 1 2017; I MOPIC 1 2017; Sigmond 2016:34)

Generally, the JRP often was not regarded as a priority of different line ministries. This was accompanied by a general lack of knowledge about the JRP process. As a result, strategy papers, budget sheets or even speeches for the minister were often prepared by the UN and later passed off as the government's work. (I INGO Jordan 7 2018; I OA Jordan 2 2018; I UN Jordan 7 2018) Furthermore, commonly seconded international staff were employed in ministries, for instance in the JRPSC. While these structures were aimed at strengthening capacities in order to gradually transition responsibilities into the ministries, several years into the crisis, with the exception of some sectors, this generally still was not the case, meaning that often international organizations were in actual lead of the operational response. (I UN Jordan 6 2018; I UN Regional 2 2018) This was reflected in the continuously high number of organizations and response partners present and active in the country: In 2018, the Jordan INGO Forum alone comprised 61 international organizations, not including further national organizations active in the response. (JIF 2018)

Overall, however, notwithstanding this need for external support in the day-to-day coordination and implementation of the response and the lack of ownership in some ministries, the government still had both a clear vision of the direction of the response and a clear conception of policy making which it voiced clearly and continuously, in particular through the Minister of Planning and International Cooperation, and generally showed a high degree of involvement in the response that was perceived as unusual by various response partners.⁴⁵ (Howden, Patchett, and Alfred 2017:13; I INGO Jordan 5 2018; I UN Jordan 3 2018; Zgheib 2016)

Partnerships

Another core principle emphasized in the JRP was a strong focus on partnerships. Even though the plan was understood as being nationally owned and led, it continuously stressed the need for cooperation with different actors and stakeholders. This referred to government representatives, representatives from the UN and other international and national response partners, from both the humanitarian and the development side, as well as to the private sector. In that regard, in particular the importance of the JRPSC was emphasized as bringing the various actors together “under one planning and coordination framework to ensure an effective, nationally owned and coordinated response” (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2015:19). Furthermore, national Task Forces for each sector, chaired by the respective line ministry,

⁴⁵ The government's strong engagement with the response could also be observed in its critical stance towards the 3RP process at the regional level and the inclusion of the JRP in a regional response framework. Every year, discussions between the government and the UN revolved around the question whether the JRP was to be included in the 3RP as one of its chapters, or whether it was to be left as a stand-alone plan. For the Jordanian government, the added value of being part of the 3RP was not clear. For them, the 3RP did not present the full picture of the response in Jordan. Rather, the government perceived the 3RP as a UN strategy that did not sufficiently emphasize what Jordan itself was contributing to the response (for instance through the provision of subsidies or education and health services), and instead focused only on needs and vulnerabilities the UN could address. With the Jordanian government wanting to be in the driver's seat of the response, this perspective was strongly rejected. (I INGO Jordan 3 2017; I MOPIC 1 2017) In this point of view, the government was supported by the national UNDP office that spoke up for the support of the JRP, but did not see a link to the 3RP. Single international officials working together with the government at the JRPSC, however, ultimately convinced the Jordanian government to include the JRP in the regional framework of the 3RP, albeit under the condition that the JRP in its entirety was included to ensure funding for both components as well as for budgetary support for Jordan. (I UN Jordan 2 2017; I UN Jordan 4 2017; I UN Jordan 5 2017)

aimed at bringing together humanitarian and development partners from the government, the UN system, the donor community, and NGOs with significant involvement in the respective sector. In 2017, for the first time, Task Force participants also included representatives from chambers of commerce, universities, hospitals and the Greater Amman Municipality, further expanding the range of participants and possible cooperation. (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2014:23; MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2015:19–20; MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2017:10)

Despite this emphasis on partnerships and cooperation, however, in practice real partnerships with government officials remained limited. On the one side, this was due to the fact that Task Forces were not functioning properly, and that coordination continued to be done through structures built by the international community. (Sigmond 2016:34) Even though government officials were invited to take part in all their meetings, participation in general remained low. (I UN Jordan 2 2017) On the other side, and related to this aspect, even though in particular MOPIC showed great willingness to lead the response and was generally very cooperative in the collaboration with actors, in practice only few government officials were really engaged with the response as outlined above, reflecting a lack of capacities in ministries. Partnerships therefore were confined to only a few government officials who accordingly often were over-burdened. (Baur 2018; Gaunt 2018)

On other levels, stronger partnerships were built or strengthened. In particular partnerships between the UN and other international organizations were both formally and practically strengthened through the continued adherence to the UN coordination structure and its Sector Working Groups. As each Group was co-chaired by a UN agency and an international organization this automatically entailed their collaboration. (UNHCR 2017a:4–5) With the launch of the JRP, as development actors were given a larger role in the response, these ways of cooperation were extended and new partnerships with development actors were built. Cooperation in general was further strengthened through regular inter-sector group meetings, roundtables and annual planning workshops, overall leading to more harmonized efforts of different organizations. (Gaunt 2018; I LNGO Jordan 1 2017)

Cooperation among international NGOs was further increased through the establishment of the ‘Jordan INGO Forum’ (JIF) in 2014, forming a network of 58 international NGOs implementing both humanitarian and development programs. Members of the Forum met monthly at the Country Directors level to exchange information and discuss priorities. In addition, the Forum hosted several working groups that were concerned with cross-sectoral issues that affected all members, such as Government Liaison, Human Resources or Advocacy. (UNHCR 2017a:3) In the course of the response, in the regular group meetings an atmosphere of trust could be established among members in which they could discuss issues more openly than in more formal UN coordination structures. For instance, the livelihoods group organized a ‘failure fair’ in one of their meetings, where all participants talked about their biggest failures (and lessons learnt) in livelihoods programming. While in UN working groups participants generally did not want to talk about programs not running as expected or hoped for, the JIF groups provided a safe environment for open discussions without having to fear consequences, for instance with regard to cuts in funding or the commissioning of further projects. (I INGO Jordan 2 2017) Besides this internal aspect, the Forum worked closely with the Jordanian government, UN agencies, national NGOs and donors, and altogether constituted a well-respected and trusted platform by all stakeholders. (I INGO Jordan 1 2017; JIF 2017)

Despite these ways of cooperation and collaboration, there also was a sense of competition between different organizations, in particular with regard to the ubiquitous fear of decreasing funds. (I INGO Jordan 1 2017; I INGO Jordan 2 2017; I LNGO Jordan 1 2017) On the one hand, various NGOs perceived the relationship between them and UN agencies as not very balanced and as not constituting real partnerships. For many, the UN remained their main donor, making them somewhat dependent from them. (I INGO Jordan 3 2017; I INGO Jordan 4 2017; I LNGO Jordan 1 2017) On the other hand, the perception of competition applied to the relationship between international and national NGOs. National NGOs were not included in the JIF, leading to a feeling of marginalization. This was exacerbated by the

fact that often donors requested international NGOs to take the lead in interventions, related to their (and international NGOs') perception of local NGOs not having enough absorptive capacities. National NGOs on the other hand often perceived international NGOs as taking up too much of the available resources that otherwise they could receive. Overall, they wanted to be perceived more as real partners with more influence to shape the response, for instance in the development of sector strategies. (INGO Jordan 1 2017; INGO Jordan 4 2017; INGO Jordan 1 2017)

Altogether, therefore, the pledge for increased partnerships was put into practice to a varying extent: On the one side, the JRP opened up new and more pronounced opportunities for more involvement of development actors. As a result, new partnerships were built on the programmatic level between humanitarian and development actors. On the other side, partnerships with the Jordanian government on the one hand (despite good relationships, in particular with the UN), and between international and local NGOs on the other side (due to a prevailing sense of competition), manifested to a significantly smaller extent. Nevertheless, cooperation and coordination between all actors was generally perceived as highly developed in particular in light of the scores of actors involved. (Baur 2018; Gaunt 2018; Kocks et al. 2018:84)

Accountability

Another key principle of the JRP lay in accountability, referring both to donors and the international community, and to affected populations. As a result, focus was put on both monitoring and evaluation and on participatory approaches.

a) Monitoring and Evaluation

From the beginning, the JRP stressed the importance of a strong monitoring and evaluation system. In the first year, implementing organizations were obligated to provide quarterly progress reports following a JRP reporting template. (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2014:151) From 2016 on, monitoring was done through JORISS, a new system that was specifically developed for the JRP. All implementing organizations had to report regularly through the system, usually biannually, on all their projects and activities. Reporting not only included updates on general information (such as number and type of beneficiaries), funding and expenditures, and activities, but also remarks on challenges that had been encountered, and recommendations on how to address them. Further included were a Gender and an Environment Marker. (MOPIC 2016:4–7) Not included, in contrast, was a Resilience Marker as proposed at the regional level.

Based on this information, line ministries and Task Force Chairs of each sector provided half-year and annual reports back to MOPIC, including information on main achievements and challenges in each sector. With strengthened capacities of Task Forces, reports were planned to evolve towards a results-oriented format in order to help identify bottlenecks and priorities. (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2015:160–161; MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2016:140)

Based on this regular reporting, and in line with the plan's characteristic as a rolling plan, the JRP was to be revised at the end of each year, taking into account changed circumstances. During the last quarter of each year, line ministries and Task Forces were responsible for reassessing needs in each sector and for re-prioritizing projects in line with previous achievements, changes in context and planning assumptions (such as a changed number of beneficiaries), and available funds. Previously only partly funded or unfunded interventions were to be revised, too, checked for their ongoing relevance, and readjusted and reprogrammed accordingly. (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2015:161)

In practice, JORISS often proved cumbersome and impractical, as the system was not very flexible. This started with the approval process of projects: In JORISS, each project had to be linked to an objective formulated in the JRP. However, projects usually included more than just one objective, meaning that there had to be several project applications registered in JORISS, referring to the respective objective. When the various project parts were approved, reporting followed the same pattern: All information

needed to be collected against single JRP targets, making the entering of information labor-intensive and arduous. (Sigmond 2016:36)

Besides monitoring through JORISS, parallel reporting structures set up by the UN continued to be in place. Thus, both UN agencies and NGOs had to report monthly through ActivityInfo, a web-based platform allowing humanitarian actors to “store data on defined indicators” and to “access, manage, map and analyze indicators, and thus to monitor humanitarian projects” (IATF 2016:1). The platform was managed by UNHCR and comprehended only humanitarian activities within the refugee response. Resilience activities, in contrast, were not included, as they were “under the responsibility of UNDP” (IATF 2016:1). In ActivityInfo, too, activities, beneficiaries and type of funding were mapped. Through the use of pre-set indicators and references to the JRP, performance and impact within the targets of the JRP could be monitored. (I INGO Jordan 4 2017; UNHCR n.d.) Besides ActivityInfo, constant monitoring in the refugee sector also took place through at least monthly meetings of working groups and inter-sector working groups. (I UN Jordan 1 2017) While reporting on all refugee activities therefore happened quite regularly, this was not the case for resilience measures, formally under UNDP’s responsibility. In contrast, actors perceived it as difficult to know what was going on with regard to resilience-programming. Possible reasons thereof lay in a lack of resources, different project cycles, the neglect of actors to see the necessity of monthly reporting and monitoring, or simply the prioritization of other issues. (I INGO Jordan 3 2017; I UN Jordan 1 2017; I UN Jordan 4 2017)

Lastly, implementing organizations had to comply with further requirements on monitoring and reporting laid down by their donors, adding further constraints and fragmentation to M&E efforts. (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2015:160)

b) Participatory approach

Besides monitoring and evaluation, a second aspect stressed in the JRP to increase accountability towards both donors and the affected population was related to the application of a participatory approach. In order to include all relevant stakeholders in the development of the response, the JRP promoted a participatory approach on various levels. On the one hand, the plan in its entirety was perceived as “the result of a participatory planning process involving a wide range of national and international stakeholders” (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2015:18), including the Jordanian government, the UN, national and international NGOs, and donors. The participation of the various stakeholders in the design of the plan was to be ensured both through their participation in the Task Forces, and in overall working sessions and planning workshops where they could table proposals, priorities and ways forward. (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2016:12; MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2016:138)

On the other hand, the JRP also encouraged the participation of beneficiaries themselves in the planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of the response, overall promoting a community-based approach: Individuals, families and communities were to be empowered to actively participate in the response and contribute to their own solutions, in particular in the face of reduced aid. (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2015:23, 32, 86–86, 115) This strategy was continuously promoted in various sectors, including social protection, livelihoods and food security, or health. For instance, refugees were encouraged to participate in the response as community health volunteers and to engage in the provision of informational and selected health activities. In other cases, refugees were to be included in the design development of villages inside refugee camps; while local communities and municipalities were to be involved in the planning and budgeting for improved municipal services and local government responses. (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2014:59; MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2015:23, 32, 98, 117) Furthermore, the JRP called for civic participation in governance systems at the local and national level. Special focus was put on adolescents and youth, who were encouraged to participate, lead, and actively engage through adolescent and youth-led initiatives and committees. (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2015:116; MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2016:47) Lastly, participatory local economic development was increasingly promoted, for instance through facilitated dialogue amongst municipalities, community-based organizations and the private sector. Again, the plan put specific focus on the economic

participation of women and youth. (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2016:43; MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2016:95)

In practice, the participatory approach manifested in new planning and coordination structures. First, each year a multi-day workshop was held during which the objectives and sector responses for the next years were developed. Participants included a growing number of representatives from a wide range of fields: While in 2016 300 representatives from more than 87 institutions participated, this number increased to some 400 in 2017. Participants ranged from government officials to UN and (international and local) NGO representatives, from both humanitarian and developmental agencies, to representatives from chambers of commerce, universities, hospitals and municipalities. (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2017:10) Through this approach, various local and international actors and stakeholders could voice and discuss their perspectives, priorities and concerns on the way forward, thereby directly feeding into the response. (Gaunt 2018; I INGO Jordan 1 2017; I MOPIC 1 2017; I UN Jordan 4 2017) Vulnerable populations, too, were given the possibility to voice needs and priorities through large-scale feedback-mechanisms. (UNHCR-UNDP Joint Secretariat 2015:22–23, 54–55)

Second, different coordination structures further enabled the participation of various stakeholders in the development of the approach. These included, at the inter-agency level, the Inter-Sector Working Group (overseeing the system of Sector Working Groups, each co-chaired by a UN agency and an international NGO), the Humanitarian Partners Forum (HPF) (established in 2017 and co-chaired by UNHCR and the RC/HC), and the Jordan INGO Forum (JIF) (including its monthly Country Director meetings and its thematic Working Groups). As the number of participants was limited in some of the fora, in particular the Jordan INGO Forum (JIF) proved to be an important facility for NGOs, providing them with the opportunity to participate through a representative in meetings otherwise closed for NGOs. (I INGO Jordan 1 2017; JIF 2017; UNHCR 2017a:4) At the governmental level, further fora included the JRPSC and its twelve Task Forces, set up by MOPIC and chaired by different line ministries. (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2017:9)

Overall, these structures not only allowed for a highly participatory and inclusive approach, but increasingly also opened up both new ways of cooperating with the government and space for negotiation. (I MOPIC 1 2017; I INGO Jordan 2 2017) For instance, when in December 2016 the government decided to reduce the refugee budget by a significant amount, through collaborative advocacy and a joint effort from UNHCR, other NGOs and donors it could be convinced to change its decision and restore the budget. (I UN Jordan 1 2017) The negotiation aspect also became apparent in the overall planning process of the response, described by several organizations as a lot of back and forth between the government and the various stakeholders, entailing a lot of discussions and renegotiating, at the end of which the government decided about the contents of the plan. As this also meant that suggested programs could be cut out of the response again by the government, some actors felt that they did not really have a say in the decision-making process. Overall, however, the approach with its inclusive coordination structure and yearly planning workshop still gave a wide range of actors the possibility of being included in the planning process of the response and of negotiating its strategic direction with the government, at a scale that was widely regarded as unique. (I INGO Jordan 3 2017; I INGO Jordan 4 2017; Kocks et al. 2018:71)

Enhancing economic opportunities

Besides these operational aspects, the response had a strong programmatic focus, emphasizing the need to enhance economic opportunities. This comprised different aspects, including livelihoods and the engagement of the private sector.

a) Livelihoods

From the first JRP in 2015 on, the plan set the expansion of employment and livelihood opportunities as one of its main objectives. (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2014:26) In the first two plans, however,

livelihoods did not constitute its own sector, but formed part of the Food Security sector. Thus, a large part of the sector's response strategy was related to food assistance measures, in particular in the refugee component which consisted of food assistance measures in its entirety. In the resilience component, in 2015 some livelihoods-related objectives were included, such as the creation of "more and better job opportunities", the revitalization of local economies of the most affected areas "for sustainable employment and income generation", and the restoring and preservation of pastoral livelihoods, rangeland and natural resources (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2014:107–108).

All of these measures, however, targeted vulnerable Jordanians only and did not include Syrian refugees as beneficiaries. (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2014:107–111) This approach was related to the government's apprehension that livelihoods programming aimed at refugees would both facilitate local integration (which was strongly rejected⁴⁶) and have negative effects on Jordan's labor market, where the unemployment rate in 2014 stood at 22 percent in the northern governorates most affected by the crisis. For response partners, this meant that livelihoods programming targeting refugees could not be done – at least not openly, as projects would not get approved by the Jordanian government. According to international NGOs and donors, livelihoods work thereby was a "taboo" or a "closed conversation" (Bellamy et al. 2017:51), and could not be discussed with the government. As a result, actors started to relabel their programming, for instance referring to 'welfare' instead of livelihoods, and to limit activities to certain types of modalities in order to get approval. For instance, refugees were provided with materials and tools rather than with grants or loans which would have enabled them to deploy them self-sufficiently. Even so, this kind of programming was not possible on a meaningful or large-scale basis, and was generally marked by uncertainty and discontinuity. (Bellamy et al. 2017:50–53, 56; I INGO Jordan 2 2017; I UN Jordan 2 2017)

As a result, refugees continued to demonstrate high levels of dependency on aid rather than becoming more resilient. While humanitarian and development actors continuously advocated for changes and more sustainable livelihoods programming, focusing in particular on securing refugees the legal right to work, they "lacked the authority and leverage to engineer change" and to "engender a shift in Jordan's labour policy or development strategy", notwithstanding the framing of a 'resilience-based' approach. (Bellamy et al. 2017:52).

This approach generally stayed the same in 2016, even though the new JRP included some new objectives in the resilience component, putting new focus on the establishment and growth of sustainable micro, small and medium enterprises, the improvement of labor market governance, and the facilitation of participatory Local Economic Development (LED) and public-private partnerships (PPP). While the beneficiaries for all measures in the resilience component still comprised only vulnerable Jordanians, the response plan for the first time stated that there was "a need to look into possible options for employing Syrians in sectors where there [was] a shortage of Jordanian labour in a manner that [did] not affect or disadvantage Jordanian workers and households" (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2015:85).

In the course of 2016, the government finally changed its stance on livelihoods programming considerably. At the London Conference in February 2016, it "took another ambitious and forward-looking step ahead in dealing with the impact of the Syria crisis by signing the Jordan Compact" (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2016:11). As outlined above, in the Compact, Jordan called for "a new paradigm [...] promoting economic development and opportunities in Jordan to the benefit of Jordanians and Syrian refugees" (Government of Jordan 2016). Among other things, the Jordanian government committed to a shift in policy, attached to the delivery of concessional loans and donor funding, and to increase work opportunities for Syrian refugees. Concretely, the government committed to creating

⁴⁶ The Jordanian government's rejection of the idea of local integration went so far that it rejected other forms of programming, too: For instance, when UNHCR tried to move concrete to Zaatarai camp, this measure was blocked by the government as it was perceived as constituting a physical sign of the prolonged stay and integration of refugees. (I UN Jordan 2 2017)

200,000 employment opportunities for refugees, primarily by issuing work permits, but also by creating jobs and reducing restrictions on new business registrations. (CGD and IRC 2017:19)

In the JRP, this commitment was reflected in the change of an existing objective that had previously focused only on Jordanians: Objective (6) now added Syrian refugees as beneficiaries, aiming to “create new employment and livelihood opportunities for vulnerable Jordanians *and Syrian refugees*, and strengthen the coping mechanism of the most vulnerable segments affected by the crisis” (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2016:14, emphasis added). Additionally, food security and livelihoods were separated, each now constituting its own sector. (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2016:10)

Overall, the plan now focused on three aspects with regards to livelihoods: First, both Jordanians and Syrians were to be supported through immediate livelihoods stabilization measures, focusing on short-term self-reliance. Measures were to be aimed at the expansion of short-term income opportunities around camps and local infrastructure, for instance through the involvement of refugees in service provision through ‘cash-for-work’ programs. Furthermore, self-employment was to be supported, in order for local entrepreneurs to establish micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs). Second, focus was put on the recovery of the local economy, aiming at creating sustainable livelihoods for Jordanians and Syrians. In this regard, the new trade agreement with the EU was to be facilitated and implemented.⁴⁷ Third, focus was put on long-term employment generation and inclusive economic growth. Measures in this regard were to be aimed at creating an environment conducive to investments, for instance through improving policies on wage, labor migration management and decent work standards, and at strengthening stakeholder capacities to shape the strategy for local economic development. (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2016:42–43)

With these new possibilities on paper, favorable preconditions for livelihoods opportunities for refugees seemed to prevail. In practice, however, this materialized only to a limited extent. First, the government of Jordan to a large extent focused solely on the provision of work permits rather than on the creation of new job opportunities. While Syrians had always been eligible for work permits, the process of obtaining them was characterized by several administrative hurdles as outlined above. After the conclusion of the Jordan Compact, in several steps the Jordanian government made concessions paying regard to these challenges: It allowed Syrians to use their Ministry of Interior (MOI) Service Card⁴⁸ as documentation, dropping the requirement for applicants to produce a passport and proof of legal entry into the country; recurrently temporarily waived work permit fees; exempted employers from submitting proof of social security for their workers at the time of submitting work permit applications, and waived medical examination requirements, instead allowing Syrians to use their MOI Service Card also as certified proof of good health. (Bellamy et al. 2017:54; ILO 2017a:9) Each measure led to an increase in the issuance of work permits. Altogether, the number of Syrian refugees with work permits grew from 4,000 in December 2015 to around 40,000 in December 2016, according to government figures. (ILO 2017b)

Nevertheless, challenges remained: Certain professions remained closed to non-Jordanian workers, including skilled professions like medical work, accounting, teaching or engineering, as well as blue-collar jobs including most technical professions such as electrical work and car repairs, guards and hairdressing. (Bellamy et al. 2017:54; ILO 2017a:20) The majority of professions open to foreign laborers thus were unskilled, semi-skilled or technical, and did not match the typical skills profile of Syrian refugees. Additionally, available jobs were concentrated in sectors that were inherently informal, such as agriculture, construction, manufacturing and service, leading to sector-specific challenges:

⁴⁷ Further key aspects included the provision of skills recognition, equivalency and vocation certification for refugees, the expansion of access to formal employment opportunities for Syrians, the development of financial product and equity funds facilitating access to credit for previously excluded Syrian refugees and vulnerable Jordanians, and the acceleration of business environment reforms.

⁴⁸ In December 2014, MOI service cards had been issued to all Syrians, whether they were registered as refugees or not, in order to identify and keep records of Syrians in Jordan. (ILO 2017a:9)

Wages in formal jobs were generally lower than in the informal economy, working conditions were poor, and the predominantly seasonal work that was available was at odds with the requirement of being tied to one particular employer. Despite finding ways to solve some of these challenges, for instance through the establishment of cooperatives in the agricultural and the construction sector which enabled refugees to move between different employers, it proved difficult to bring refugees into formal jobs. (Barbelet, Hagen-Zanker, and Mansour-Ille 2018:5; I INGO Jordan 2 2017) Often, refugees themselves remained reluctant to try to obtain work permits as they feared to lose access to assistance from UNHCR and other organizations while at the same time earning less, or losing their eligibility for resettlement. (I INGO Jordan 1 2017; I UN Jordan 4 2017)

Altogether, the focus on issuing of work permits per se “did not bring significant advantages” (ILO 2017a:55). Job opportunities remained insufficient, and refugees still to a large extent relied on external assistance. Similarly, work permits did not lead to an improvement of work conditions: Many Syrians had to work excessive hours, with only few being paid for overtime, most were not covered by social security, and occupational safety and health was commonly not enforced at workplaces. (ILO 2017a:55)

At the same time, challenges remained regarding the JRP’s commitment to job creation. While self-employment was widely regarded as a possibility to create formal jobs, clear regulations and support in that regard remained lacking. While on paper there were certain steps to be followed in order for locals and refugees to register or formalize small and home-based businesses, in practice the principal body responsible for the licensing and regulation of staff lacked practical insight into the procedures and regulatory framework, and many businesses non-Jordanians tried to register were ultimately refused by the Foreign Investors Affairs Department in the Ministry of Interior. This had an effect in particular on the labor market participation of women, who, based on societal attitudes, had a strong preference to work in or close to their homes in sectors such as sewing, cleaning or catering. (Barbelet, Hagen-Zanker, and Mansour-Ille 2018:5; Bellamy et al. 2017:54–55; Huang, Charles, et al. 2018:14)

Likewise, the expansion of SEZs as promoted in the Jordan Compact did not produce tangible results with regards to expanding access to work. In the beginning of 2018, still only six companies had been approved by the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Supply to export to Europe under the new EU-Jordan Association Agreement, with only two exporting under these regulations, in negligible quantities. Generally, incentives seemed not strong enough to drive demand in either importing countries or in exporting companies. At the same time, requirements to qualify for the new agreement seemed too high. On the one hand, this resulted in a low supply of job opportunities in the SEZs; on the other hand, Syrian refugees generally were not attracted to jobs in SEZs, as production sites were mostly located far away from cities where they lived, with poor transport links and prohibitive commuting times or on-site accommodation in dorms, altogether deterring refugees from taking on jobs. (Barbelet, Hagen-Zanker, and Mansour-Ille 2018:5; Huang, Charles, et al. 2018:15; I INGO Jordan 2 2017)

Besides these remaining policy constraints, livelihoods programming by development actors started only slowly, too. While clearly a shift had occurred, uncertainty about the approval of programs and changes in policies remained. At the same time, funding circles did not react immediately to the changes, with some donors being more flexible than others. (I INGO Jordan 2 2017; Kocks et al. 2018:75–76) Another challenge lay in the diverging interests of the international community and Jordan that became increasingly obvious: While international actors stressed in particular the need to change legal regulations and structural issues in the Jordanian economy to create more job opportunities and improve livelihoods of both Syrians and Jordanians, the Jordanian government emphasized the need to change trade arrangements and tax incentives to attract investment, rather than reforming policies and ministries. (Bellamy et al. 2017:58) As a result in practice, livelihoods programming often remained focused on vocational training or cash-for-work activities. Without labor market reforms that would open up new employment possibilities, however, measures remained detached from actual job opportunities, thereby still providing only short-term solutions. (I UN Jordan 6 2018; I UN Regional 3 2018)

Altogether, thus, even though livelihoods constituted one of the JRP's key focus areas, challenges remained, largely related to prevailing government policies and diverging interest of the government and the international community. While the introduction of a resilience-based response had generally not been able to effect significant changes, the Jordan Compact was more successful: Even though expectations still could not be met, it still facilitated changes in the government's overall stance that enabled refugees' access to the formal labor market to a much larger extent than before, revealing some degree of political willingness to try out new and unprecedented pathways in the sector. Altogether, the Jordan Compact and the accruing changes from it in policy and programs thus were widely regarded as a 'game changer' (Barbelet, Hagen-Zanker, and Mansour-Ille 2018:5; Huang, Ash, et al. 2018:54) or 'turning point' (I LINGO Jordan 1 2017; I UN Jordan 4 2017) in Jordan's response.

b) *Engagement of the private sector*

A second aspect related to enhancing economic opportunities was seen in an increased engagement of the private sector. While the sector had been engaged in the response from the beginning, mostly as supplier and service provider to aid agencies and affected populations, as well as, to a lesser extent, as donors to humanitarian operations and technical advisors, several barriers had impeded more extensive forms of engagement, including a lack of awareness of potential private sector contributions and of business opportunities. A lack of incentives and enabling procedures and structures as well as institutional barriers had further undermined larger engagement. (Zyck and Armstrong 2014:9–15)

The JRP tried to address this issue and engage the private sector more. From the first JRP on, the sector was regarded as a way through which resources for the response could be channeled⁴⁹. Accordingly, its engagement was encouraged in different sectors such as shelter, transportation and livelihoods. In 2016, private sector engagement was introduced as a 'crosscutting issue', putting it "at the core of a number of [sector] responses, including shelter, food security and livelihoods, local governance and municipal services, [...] health, energy and [...] WASH" (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2015:25). For instance, in line with its overall emphasis on partnerships, the plan promoted the establishment of Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) between municipalities and the private sector, aimed at business and job creation and knowledge-sharing between sectors, and encouraged private sector investment, for instance for the rehabilitation or construction of infrastructure. (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2014:10, 29, 104, 117, 128; MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2015:25, 98, 105, 129–130)

As a consequence of the Jordan Compact, the role of the private sector was emphasized even more in the JRP 2017. This applied in particular to the livelihoods sector, where the private sector was to be engaged in various ways: One the one hand, it was to take on a role in creating sustainable livelihoods for Jordanians and Syrians, for instance through partnerships aimed at the provision of short-term employment opportunities, in the implementation of demand-driven technical and vocational training, and in the recognition and matching of available skills and education to existing job openings. On the other hand, private sector and business development was regarded as crucial for inclusive economic growth that would lead to more access to markets and financial services. Lastly, dialogue between municipalities, CBOs and the private sector was promoted in order to foster participatory economic development and PPPs. It was understood that the ecosystem of private sector development needed to be strengthened, for instance through establishing a cohesive legal framework for investment, policy enhancement and network building. (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2016:42–43, 95–96)

In practice, progress started only slowly as concrete mechanisms for an effective integration of private sector partners into the response remained missing both on the national and on the international level. In particular external investment in the Jordanian industry remained generally low. Even though the government worked on policy reforms, making some progress in improving the business environment which resulted in Jordan's jumping of 15 positions in the World Bank's 'Doing Business' rankings in

⁴⁹ As outlined above, other channels through which funding could be directed included foundations, NGOs, UN organizations, and bilateral and multilateral agencies.

2018, Jordan's business climate stayed less conducive to entrepreneurship and private sector investment than other countries in the region. (World Bank Group 2018a:4) High business tax rates and a cumbersome regulatory environment further reduced the attractiveness of opening a business or investing in Jordan, undermining the chance of job creation and economic growth. (Baur 2018; DAI 2018:7; Huang, Ash, et al. 2018:53; UNDP, ILO, and WFP 2017:16)

Nevertheless, on the national level, the situation slowly improved: Starting with single cases, the private sector started to take on a larger role in the response, both in establishing new partnerships and in job creation as well as through social enterprises. An often-cited example constitutes IKEA that had been engaged in the response from the outset through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) donations. In 2017, it increased its engagement and introduced a new partnership with the Jordan River Foundation, a Jordanian nonprofit organization related to the royal family. Within this partnership, 200 Syrian refugees and Jordanians were employed to produce a product-line for IKEA that was sold in stores worldwide. (Huang 2017:16; I LINGO Jordan 1 2017) Another example of employment generation constituted Safeway, an American supermarket chain. Opening a new branch in Zaatari camp provided employment opportunities for both Syrian refugees and Jordanians, who also received training to acquire new skills as needed. Furthermore, Safeway integrated a local Syrian-owned business into its supply chain. (Huang 2017:18) In other cases, job openings within the private sector were sent out via SMS by UNHCR to individuals with a matching profile, simultaneously supporting businesses to fill positions quickly and refugees to find jobs. (Gaunt 2018)

Other emerging partnerships, for instance between the International Rescue Committee and Western Union, focused on finding new models for livelihoods generation for refugees and vulnerable Jordanians through business process outsourcing, while yet others linked refugees to information and communications technology (ICT) and ICT-enabled work, for instance through accelerator programs that trained refugee and local software engineers and supported them with finding local and remote jobs, including at multinational enterprises.⁵⁰ (Huang 2017:19)

Besides focusing on job creation and employability, another part of the refugee response in which the private sector took on a larger role was education. Here, several private sector initiatives supported the JRP's commitment to bring all children into education, either through funding to the education sector, the development and distribution of technological education innovations, or the provision of professional development to education sector workers. Many of these initiatives were based on partnerships with governmental entities, NGOs, UN agencies or foundations. (Menashy and Zakharia 2017:8) Pearson, for instance, a global learning company, created a math learning app to be used with the support of Save the Children in schools; Microsoft cooperated with the Norwegian Refugee Council to support vocational education; and SAP held coding workshops for children and young adults and so-called coding boot camps, providing participants with the necessary skills to be hired as computer engineers. (Global Policy Initiative, Columbia University 2016:40; Huang 2017:28; Menashy and Zakharia 2017:9)

Overall, while much remained to be done in terms of changing national policies and creating a more enabling policy environment for private sector engagement, Jordan was regarded as "a relative leader in taking steps to engage global businesses as partners in addressing the refugee crisis" (Dupire 2017). Cooperation between the Jordanian government, the humanitarian and development sector, and the private sector, became "a regular *modus operandi*" (Kocks et al. 2018:93).

Innovation and knowledge-sharing

A last core principle of the JRP lay on innovative approaches, to be shared with others in order to be replicated. While the JRP itself was introduced as an "innovative decision by the government to bring

⁵⁰ With regards to the latter, it has to be noted, however, that engineering constituted a closed profession for Syrian refugees in Jordan. The scope, sustainability and scalability of approaches like these therefore remained only limited.

together humanitarian and development programming under a common nationally-led and resilience-based framework” (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2015:3), the need for innovation and innovative approaches was emphasized continuously throughout the plans and in various sectors. In the livelihoods sector, for instance “innovative products that capitalize[d] on the cultural and natural assets of the country” were to be developed; in the energy sector, the response promoted the introduction of “[i]nnovative renewable energy and energy efficient [...] technologies” (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2015:54, 85). In particular the private sector was increasingly understood as a stakeholder group that could contribute to the response through incorporating new and innovative approaches. (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2017:iv, 21) Apart from these general calls for innovation, however, the plan did not spell out further details.

Nevertheless, several ‘innovative projects’ were developed and implemented: For instance, an iris-scan system was introduced, both to streamline the refugee registration process and to implement cash support mechanisms piloting block chain schemes. Renewable energy projects were another example: In Zaatari camp, for instance, solar plants were set up that gave refugees access to clean energy. In the shelter sector, too, new approaches were applied: In order to create interim shelter solutions, Jordanian landlords were provided with financial incentives and technical support to renovate their housing, if in return they would provide rent-free accommodation to Syrian refugee families for up to 24 months. Education constituted another sector where new approaches were pursued, for instance by creating solutions for learning through Information and Communications Technology (ICT). (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2017:iv, 44; UNHCR-UNDP Joint Secretariat 2015:44–45, 58–59)

As envisaged, in particular the private sector took on an active role in the pursuit of innovative approaches, both in employment and in revenue generation. For instance, it supported the establishment of new micro-businesses through entrepreneurial skills training, the provision of grants and loans, and mentor programs providing guidance on legal administration, financial management, marketing and other key aspects of entrepreneurship. (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2017:iv, 79, 84; UNHCR-UNDP Joint Secretariat 2015:33–34) Furthermore, as outlined above, businesses engaged in the response by providing trainings to link refugees and the local population to ICT and ICT-enabled work; others tested new livelihoods generation models based on business process outsourcing. (Huang 2017:19)

Other approaches depicted as ‘innovative’ lay in process innovations. For instance, various organizations followed a consultative and participatory approach in the design and implementation of programs. While this strategy cannot per se be regarded as a new methodology, innovation was seen in the sheer scale and comprehensiveness of the approaches.

One strategy in this regard was the conduction of large-scale assessments, including mappings, key informant interviews, questionnaires and focus group discussions, workshops and consultations with steering committees, on the basis of which response strategies were developed. In this manner, for instance a ‘Mapping of Risks and Resources’ was conducted in several municipalities, collecting beneficiaries’ views on problems, related risks and possible responses. Based on the results, a response framework was developed that took into account priorities and realities of beneficiaries, and supported coordinated interventions at municipal level. (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2015:97; MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2016:46)

Other programs conducted large-scale assessments, questionnaires and focus group discussions with regard to social cohesion in communities. Based on the results, tailored community-level response strategies were developed that were adapted to each assessed area. (UNHCR-UNDP Joint Secretariat 2015:22–23) Yet another strategy was the continuous process of large-scale engagement with stakeholders during the implementation of projects. In regular evaluations, feedback of beneficiaries was collected, on the basis of which projects were continuously adjusted. (UNHCR-UNDP Joint Secretariat 2015:54–55) In particular, organizations learned to include Syrians in outreach activities aimed at Syrian beneficiaries, with much better results than when conducted only by Jordanians. (I LINGO Jordan 1 2017)

Knowledge-sharing regarding these ‘innovative’ approaches took place mostly on the initiative of international organizations rather than of the government of Jordan, in particular in the different inter-agency working groups and structures, where actors met regularly and exchanged experiences, ideas and lessons learned. (Gaunt 2018; I INGO Jordan 2 2017) Further knowledge-sharing took place at the regional level: For instance, in November 2015, Jordan hosted the so-called ‘Resilience Development Forum’ under the theme ‘Integrating Responses, Expanding Partnerships’, where partners from across the region could exchange ideas and promising approaches to the crisis and discuss specific policy and strategic actions to address current challenges. Additionally, fifty projects from different countries in the region that were both considered innovative and contributed positively to building resilience were showcased during an ‘Innovation Marketplace’. (Gonzalez 2015)

Overall, Jordan was perceived as taking on a pioneer role in applying numerous ‘innovative practices’ that had never been used in other country contexts before, in particular with regards to advanced technologies and private sector engagement at a new scale, bringing in new approaches to solutions. (Huang 2017:10, 18–19, 28; I UN Jordan 1 2017)

The innovations with the largest impacts not only on the programmatic response but in terms of a more strategic level, however, concerned developments that took place outside the JRP: Both the Jordan Compact and the new financing mechanism through the CFF constituted approaches that had never been applied before. Both were far-reaching and introduced new elements to the response: With the Jordan Compact, Jordan basically was to be compensated for hosting refugees and for introducing measures for refugees to become more self-reliant, as it was directly linked to access to concessional financing and new trading conditions with the EU. (I MOPIC 2 2018; Office of the RC/HC Jordan 2017:5) As such, it was based on new forms of cooperation between donors and Jordan, creating linkages between the interests of both sides. The CFF, on the other hand, opened up new funding possibilities that had not been available to middle-income countries like Jordan before. Additionally, both processes included the notion of policy changes and reform, stipulating labor market, investment climate, or energy and water sector reforms. (Government of Jordan 2016; World Bank Group 2017:16–17, 20)

6.1.5 Analysis of Jordan’s response from a resilience perspective

Constituting Jordan’s country chapter of the 3RP, the JRP overall provided a comprehensive framework of a ‘resilience-based response’ that was implemented in practice by various actors and stakeholders. The preceding chapters have outlined how resilience in general was incorporated in this response, what constituted its central aspects and strategic direction, and how the response manifested in practice.

As mentioned above, the fact that the JRP formally formed part of a regional, resilience-based response framework developed by the UN thereby did not mean that resilience in Jordan was understood and implemented exactly the way it was envisaged by the UN and outlined in the 3RP. Even though the 3RP was understood as providing the conceptual framework that set the general direction of the response in all countries across the region, each country developed and implemented its own national response. The response in Jordan therefore assumed *one* possible manifestation of a resilience-based response, related to its specific national context as well as to the distinct interests and priorities of key stakeholders, most notably the Jordanian government.

The following subchapters will analyze Jordan’s response from the specific perspective of resilience, examining the distinctive manifestation of resilience-thinking within its response in contrast to the conceptual framework outlined by the UN, as well as the reasons and consequences thereof. The goal thereby is to gain a thorough understanding of the way the concept was interpreted in the national context, why this specific pathway was taken and used by different actors, and what the results of this course of action were. For that, the subchapter will first focus on the understanding of resilience as applied in Jordan as well as on the reasons and implications thereof. This will be followed by an examination of characteristics of the response in line with, and differing from, a resilience-based response as outlined by the UN at the regional level. In the next step, the subchapter will investigate the

different functions the concept of resilience fulfilled in Jordan's response beside programmatic aspects, and how different actors used the concept for their own purposes. Lastly, the subchapter will identify challenges arising from this specific manifestation of the response, before turning to new developments regarding resilience-thinking in Jordan's approach to the refugee situation.

6.1.5.1 Understanding of resilience and reasons thereof

When looking at the JRP as a resilience-based response plan, the language of the response provides first insights into the general understanding and direction of the response. Overall, the language of the JRP strongly resembled the one applied in the regional strategic papers prepared by the UN, including the UNDG's Position Paper on a resilience-based development response and the 3RP. In the exact same terms and wording, the JRP established the rationale for the changed response (in comparison with previous, purely humanitarian RRP), acknowledging that the ongoing response had been "neither sufficient nor sustainable" (UNDG 2014:6; MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2014:25). It further emphasized the need for a "more comprehensive" understanding and approach (UNDG 2014:1; MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2014:25) aimed at "bridging the gap between humanitarian and development assistance" by adopting a resilience-based approach (UNDG 2014:12, and, in almost similar wording, MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2014:10).

Similarly, the JRP referred to the three stages of 'coping', gradually 'recovering', and ultimately 'sustaining' and 'transforming', to all of which the projects within the response were to contribute. In that regard, too, the plan was following the conceptual framework as promoted by the UN at the regional level. (UNDG 2014:15; MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2015:21) However, while the UNDG at the regional level laid out the concept of resilience in more detail, including a definition of resilience and various tools to differentiate between resilience-based and traditional humanitarian-focused programming, such as a Resilience Marker or a Resilience Lens (UNDG 2014), this was not included in the Jordanian plan: It defined neither the concept of resilience itself nor implications for its implementation further, leaving a wide array of questions unaddressed, for instance what 'resilience' really meant, whose resilience was to be strengthened, and how.

At first glance, the similarities in the wording of the approach seem to demonstrate a strong alignment of Jordan's response with the UN's apprehension of resilience.⁵¹ The omission of a further detailed definition of the concept, however, left wide room for interpretation of the approach in practice. The implications thereof manifested with the implementation of the plan, during which it became increasingly obvious that in fact the government of Jordan interpreted resilience very differently than the UN, despite the rhetoric similarities: The UN regarded resilience as an outcome, and resilience-based programming as activities targeting both refugees and Jordanians and Jordanian institutions, with the overall aim of building or strengthening capacities to deal with the crisis better and leading to a more developmental approach. The Jordanian government, on the other hand, used the term for the categorization of programs solely based on the type of a specific target group, with the resilience component targeting Jordanians only. (Bellamy et al. 2017:50; I UN Jordan 2 2017)

Partly, this understanding can be traced back to the point of time, and the way how, resilience was first introduced in Jordan as a way to deal with the Syria crisis. This happened relatively early on in the crisis: Only two years after the beginning of the influx of refugees into Jordan, in 2013, the concept of resilience was explicitly referred to both by the UNDP country office in its host community support project ('Mitigating the Impact of the Syrian Refugee Crisis on Jordanian Vulnerable Host Communities') and by the Jordanian government in the establishment of its host community support platform. In both cases, as the titles suggested, measures were aimed at Jordanian host communities rather than at refugees. (I UN Jordan 5 2017; UNDP 2013a:1; UNDP 2013b) The National Resilience Plan (NRP) finally,

⁵¹ The linguistic similarities further indicate that the document might have been prepared not by the Jordanian government as repeatedly claimed, but by UN staff well acquainted with the UN language. Nevertheless, the JRP was officially treated as a government document, and had to at least be approved by the government. Hence, it has to be assumed that the government's official understanding corresponded with the UN's conception.

launched by the Jordanian government in early 2014, was based on the concept in its entirety. However, again, the response plan was explicitly geared to strengthen the resilience of Jordanians and Jordanian institutions: Within the NRP's overall objective "to successfully mitigate the effects of the Syria Crisis on Jordan and Jordanian Host Communities" (MOPIC 2014:7), refugees were only included as indirect side-beneficiaries of measures that really aimed at enhancing capacities and resources of Jordan and Jordanians. Refugees did not constitute a target group, and were in particular not to be included in measures aiming at capacity-development or the strengthening of self-sufficiency, which was most obvious in the NRP's sector on 'Livelihoods and Employment' which did not mention refugees as beneficiaries in any of the planned measures. (MOPIC 2014:38–41) Rather, the needs of refugees were continued to be addressed through the humanitarian track in the ongoing RRP. (MOPIC 2014:12–13)

Accordingly, in the early notion of a resilience-based response applied in Jordan, the concept was understood to refer explicitly to Jordanians and Jordanian institutions only.

When the NRP was subsumed with the humanitarian response and transitioned into the JRP after only a few months of its existence, this stance did not change. Even though the overall response plan now formally included also refugees, its strict division into two separate components retained the same structure as before: a refugee component consisting of humanitarian assistance directed at refugees, and a resilience component consisting of longer-term measures directed at Jordanians and Jordanian institutions. Ultimately, the government thus continued to hold on to its understanding of resilience as outlined in the NRP.

6.1.5.2 Implications of Jordan's understanding of resilience

The Jordanian government's understanding of resilience and the strict division of the JRP into a refugee and a resilience component had wide implications in practice.

First of all, projects aimed at refugees and thus falling under the refugee component had to remain focused on humanitarian assistance, and could not contain 'resilience-measures' aimed at strengthening capacities and resources. As all projects implemented under the JRP had to be approved by the government, this provision could not be circumvented by implementing organizations. Despite their continued efforts to advocate for more sustainable and development-oriented programming for refugees, too, the government maintained its stance on the issue, and in particular did not allow any programming containing livelihoods elements (which might have strengthened refugees' resilience). As a result, programs remained generally short-term and refugees stayed dependent on ongoing humanitarian assistance, with vulnerability levels generally increasing rather than decreasing. (Bellamy et al. 2017:52; I INGO Jordan 3 2017; I UN Jordan 2 2017; MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2015:14–15, 159–160)

Secondly, the Jordanian government regarded the resilience-based approach as an opportunity to attract funding for long-term development projects. Even though the JRP was formally aimed at mitigating the effects of the Syria crisis on Jordan and at building capacity to deal with (future) shocks (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2014:10), often the link between these development projects and the crisis was not clear. In contrast, in some cases projects had been planned long before the influx of refugees, but had not received funding within the regular development cooperation track so far. (I UN Jordan 2 2017)

Thirdly, as a result of the above, funding for the resilience component of the response remained generally low. While donors had widely endorsed the general concept of a resilience-based response to the Syria crisis (UNHCR and UNDP 2015b:1), they remained reluctant to fund resilience projects in Jordan. On the one hand, this could be regarded as being related to general donor fatigue, necessitating decreasing funds to be concentrated on the most urgent needs of the most vulnerable, which commonly were refugees. On the other hand, however, the reluctance of donors to fund resilience projects approved by the Jordanian government could also be interpreted as the result of a lacking congruence in donors' and the government's understanding of resilience. While donors had widely supported the shift in the response towards more resilience and development in general, in that line of argument the government's

resilience-building projects seemed not to comply with their expectations of resilience-based programming. (Sigmond 2016:61)

Lastly, Jordan's interpretation of resilience led to a relabeling of projects on the part of implementing organizations. For many actors, nothing changed with regards to their actual programming: To many of them, the concept of resilience itself and its associated principles were not new. (ILNGO Jordan 1 2017; I UN Jordan 4 2017; I UN Jordan 5 2017) What did change, however, was the way projects were framed. In order to match the government's rhetoric of resilience, measures often were simply semantically adjusted. As a result, projects that had up until that point been implemented as refugee projects within the RRP framework could now be approved and implemented as resilience projects. Overall, the requirement to allocate each project to either the refugee or the resilience component reinforced this development and was met with the often relatively arbitrary relabeling of projects to fit the component with the better prospects of approval. (I UN Jordan 2 2017; Sigmond 2016:39, 62)

6.1.5.3 Understanding and implementation of a 'resilience-based response'

Besides the explicit incorporation of a resilience component, the resilience-based response in Jordan was based on several key principles and commitments as outlined above. The following two subchapters will assess to what extent these principles and their manifestation were in line with the conceptualization of a resilience-based response as promoted by the UN, and where they differed.

6.1.5.3.1 Characteristics in line with a resilience-based approach

Overall, many of the principles underlying Jordan's response plan were congruent with the ones promoted by the UN as part of a resilience-based response. In contrast to the contested concept of resilience itself, the understanding of these principles and how they were to be implemented in practice, were similar, too.

First and foremost, this applied to the principle of national leadership and ownership. On its own initiative, the Jordanian government started to engage more in the response when it realized that Jordanian host communities were negatively impacted by the ongoing crisis and that the humanitarian actors present in the country neither had the mandate nor the capacity to address their growing needs. (I MOPIC 1 2017) From first taking on new responsibility only for Jordanian host communities within the NRP, the government with the JRP extended its engagement and formally took the lead also in the refugee response. Even though the Jordanian government continued to struggle to fully undertake the management of the overall coordination and implementation of the plan and heavily relied on the support of the international community, altogether it showed great willingness to lead and advocate for the response. (Baur 2018; I INGO Jordan 1 2017) On the national level, this found its expression in the introduction of new policies and sectors in the response. Furthermore, all programs implemented under the JRP had to be approved by the government, enabling the government to set its own priorities. (I INGO Jordan 4 2017; I UN Jordan 4 2017; JRPSC 2014; MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2015:158–160) On the international level, the government's ownership manifested in a strong presence and stewardship of the response at various occasions, actively advocating for the response (see, for example CGD 2017; Zgheib 2016; International Monetary Fund 2016; Jordan News Agency (Petra) 2018; The Jordan Times 2015b; World Bank Group 2017).

Further in line with a resilience-based response, strong focus was put on capacity-strengthening of national actors and institutions in order to prepare them to absorb future shocks and stresses. In all sectors, capacity-development indicators were developed to ensure that the issue was made an integral part of programs and of the monitoring and evaluation framework. (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2015:24) Specific measures included various trainings, for instance of ministerial staff, teachers, health service providers, and legal service providers to deal with the situation. (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2015) Furthermore, seconded UN staff were employed in different line ministries as well as in the JRPSC in

order to provide support that would lead to the gradual transition of responsibilities into ministries and authorities. (I UN Jordan 7 2018; I UN Regional 2 2018)

At the same time, as promoted by the UN as constituting part of a resilience-based approach, the government allowed for a highly participatory approach, in which a wide range of actors and stakeholders could actively take part in the development of the response. While – in line with its overall leadership role – ultimately it was the Jordanian government who took the final decision of what was included in the response, it still allowed and actively promoted the participation of actors with different backgrounds in the development of the response. In practice, this manifested in yearly planning workshops and the set-up of new structures for coordination and cooperation including the JRPSC and government-led Task Forces. (Gaunt 2018; I MOPIC 1 2017; MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2016:10–12, 138) Even though not all of these structures worked smoothly (Sigmond 2016:34), and in particular local NGOs partly felt marginalized by larger international actors (I INGO Jordan 1 2017; I INGO Jordan 4 2017), they still demonstrated the government’s strong commitment to a participatory approach.

As called for by the UN, Jordan also put a strong focus on accountability in its response. With JORISS, it established a robust monitoring and evaluation system that was developed explicitly for the JRP and was aligned with its objectives and indicators. (MOPIC 2016:4–7) While the use of the system was perceived cumbersome and impractical by many actors (I INGO Jordan 3 2017; Sigmond 2016:36), it still allowed the government to collect detailed information against JRP targets as well as existing challenges. It remains unclear, however, whether the government also had the capacities to systematically analyze the provided information, and to what extent lessons learned were included in subsequent programs, in particular in view of a lack of personnel engaged with the response in general and ministries not used to the scope of the process. (I INGO Jordan 3 2017; I INGO Jordan 6 2018) With regard to financial tracking, too, the Jordanian government published regular updates on all funding received, broken down by donor, sector and component in order to increase transparency. (Human Rights Watch 2017:25–26) The commitment to accountability was continued with regards to beneficiaries. Through large-scale participatory planning processes and feedback-mechanisms, vulnerable populations were given the possibility to voice needs and priorities. (UNHCR-UNDP Joint Secretariat 2015:22–23, 54–55) Overall, the government as well as implementing agencies thus put a lot of effort into applying accountability principles in practice, both with regards to donors and to beneficiaries.

Lastly, Jordan can be regarded a pioneer in probing new and innovative ways to deal with the refugee situation, in line with the UN’s call for innovation as part of a resilience-based response. Rather than just committing to an innovative approach on paper, it allowed new approaches to be applied that had never been implemented in other crisis contexts before. New approaches were not only linked to programmatic novelties, including advanced technologies like the blockchain or iris scan, but also to processual innovations and new forms of partnerships with and engagement of the private sector. The most significant innovations, however, took place outside the JRP framework, comprising new financing mechanisms based on concessional financing, and a new strategic approach in the format of a compact which linked Jordan’s interests with those of other actors. (I MOPIC 2 2018; I UN Jordan 1 2017; I UN Jordan 2 2017)

6.1.5.3.2 Characteristics differing from a resilience-based response

Besides these principles of a ‘resilience-based response’ that Jordan adhered to (in both theory and practice) in line with the UN’s understanding, there were other areas in which the response in Jordan differed from the conception of the UN. These included a programmatic and a stakeholder-related aspect, as well as a further-reaching policy-related issue that went beyond the actual response plan and that changed in the course of the response.

First, the JRP continuously stressed its focus on ‘bridging the gap’ between humanitarian and development systems, speaking of a paradigm shift in so far as it did not create only rhetorical links

between the two areas, but for the first time took the interplay of humanitarian emergency and longer-term structural vulnerabilities into account in one single response plan. (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2014:10, 23) While some of this rhetoric held true in practice, in other aspects the response did not stand to the commitments made on paper: On the one hand, the plan for the first time brought both programmatic areas (and thus actors from both fields) together under one single framework, facilitating joint planning and fostering new partnerships. Additionally, starting with the JRP, only one authority – the Jordanian government – was formally responsible both for the strategic direction of the response and the approval of single projects, as well as for coordination and implementation, facilitating a more consistent and coherent approach. This was enhanced further by the introduction of one information management system tracking activities and progress in both fields of assistance. On the other hand, however, with the division into two clear-cut components, focusing respectively on short-term activities for refugees and longer-term resilience measures, both response areas remained strictly separated, with different objectives, approval processes, monitoring and reporting obligations, and budget requirements. As a result, the two response areas were never fully linked or integrated. While many response partners perceived this division as artificial, regarding the requested allocation to one of the two components as relatively arbitrary and based on semantics only (I UN Jordan 2 2017; Sigmond 2016:39, 62), the Jordanian government stuck to the separation, despite its rhetoric of ‘bridging the gap’. For the government, this approach thereby effected an important purpose: Linking each component to a specific target group made it easier to draw attention to the needs of Jordan and Jordanians, to keep track of support given to both groups, and in so doing to ensure that adequate support was given to Jordanians as well. This was especially important in a context in which the assistance given to Syrians was increasingly being perceived as unfair, resulting in increasing tensions between locals and refugees (Mercy Corps 2013b:7–8; Mercy Corps 2014:24; Neimat 2013).

However, other actors, too, saw advantages in the government’s approach, even though it was not in line with the claim of being a really integrated approach: In particular humanitarian actors argued that through the rigid division of the components a clear protection space for refugees could be maintained that paid regard to their ongoing, and often even growing, humanitarian needs and vulnerabilities. By maintaining the refugee component as its own, specific action field, activities aiming at the protection of refugees could not be diluted or mixed with activities really aiming at Jordanians and neglecting refugees’ needs. This aspect was emphasized and pushed in particular by UNHCR and other humanitarian organizations who were worried that without the division there would be no clear operational space for humanitarian action in place any longer. (I MOPIC 1 2017; I UN Jordan 2 2017; I UN Jordan 5 2017) Besides these alleged concerns for refugees, however, the division can be regarded as being in the interest of organizations themselves as well: Through the clear separation of components, both humanitarian and developmental actors could keep a clearly defined operational field according to their mandates. In particular humanitarian organizations thereby can be assumed to have had an interest to keep their action field clearly defined in order not to lose authority or funding in a response that was increasingly moving towards more development.

A second aspect in which Jordan’s response differed from the strategic framework outlined in the 3RP concerned a stakeholder-related issue. Overall, as envisaged by the UN, Jordan promoted strategic partnerships and cooperation between the different actors, including the government and donors, UN agencies and NGOs, and humanitarian and development response partners. These were to be ensured for instance through the JRPSC and the newly established Task Force structure. (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2015:10–11) In reality, however, partnerships with the government remained limited and were confined to a small number of single ministerial staff members. This was due mostly to a lack of resources and capacities in ministries, due to which only very few officials were factually engaged with the response. As a result, the Task Force structure, too, did not function properly, and government participation in inter-agency working structures remained generally low. (Baur 2018; Gaunt 2018; I UN Jordan 2 2017) Partnerships between implementing organizations, including UN agencies and NGOs, focusing both on humanitarian aid and on development assistance proved more successful: Building on

existing partnerships between humanitarian actors that had been strengthened in the course of the response, new partnerships with development actors were established. While this happened at the initiative of organizations themselves rather than on behalf of the government, the new comprehensive approach with its focus on both humanitarian and developmental aspects still played a crucial role in involving new actors from the development field and in bringing humanitarian and development actors together on a much larger scale than before. (Bellamy et al. 2017:51; I MOPIC 1 2017)

The aspect in which the response in Jordan regarding partnerships really differed from the UN's approach, however, related to the specific partnership between UNHCR and UNDP that the UN at the regional level called for. As outlined above, at the regional level this new partnership was formalized in an MoU in September 2014, in which both organizations committed to work together, to design complementary humanitarian and resilience-based development approaches and to exercise joint leadership for the 3RP, with UNHCR leading the refugee, and UNDP leading the resilience component of the response. (UNDP and UNHCR 2014b:2) With regard to the two agencies on the country level in Jordan, however, a formalized inter-agency partnership did not materialize, and even cooperation proved difficult to some extent.

This was largely due to UNDP's self-understanding of its role: After the introduction of the JRP, UNHCR remained in charge of coordinating the refugee response. UNDP, however, in contrast to its envisaged new leading role in the resilience component, stayed in the background of the response, following its understanding of its mandate of bolstering the leadership of the Jordanian government and implementing projects for Jordanians, rather than taking the lead in promoting or imposing a new concept in response to the refugee situation. Therefore, even though at the regional level the concept of building resilience as part of dealing with the refugee crisis was strongly promoted and led by UNDP and in particular by the UNDP Sub-Regional Facility, the UNDP country office did not follow suit. (I MOPIC 1 2017; I UN Jordan 2 2017; I UN Jordan 4 2017)

Rather, the UNDP office in Jordan maintained its reserved role throughout the response: It did not chair any of the Inter-Sector Working Groups, did not attend the Humanitarian Partners Forum, and stayed in the background of the response. The situation stayed the same even when the importance of the livelihoods sector, a sector predestinated for UNDP's leadership, increased.⁵² (I INGO Jordan 4 2017; I MOPIC 1 2017; I UN Jordan 2 2017; I UN Jordan 4 2017; UNHCR 2017a:4)

As a result of this reserved role and lack of stewardship, no formalized partnership on eye level to coordinate and implement the response was established between the two agencies. Rather, UNHCR alone stayed in the lead of the programmatic response, coordinating the work of humanitarian, development and government stakeholders, while UNDP's role remained only marginal. (I MOPIC 1 2017; I UN Jordan 2 2017; Kocks et al. 2018:96) Overall, the relationship between the two agencies was characterized not so much by competition, but by a clash of cultures. In line with their mandates, the two agencies followed inherently different ways of working: On a programmatic level, for instance, UNDP gained legitimacy through government endorsement, thereby following a top-down approach. UNHCR, in contrast, pursued more of a bottom-up approach, gaining legitimacy through inclusive discussions with stakeholders. On the working level, too, modalities differed, starting with different project cycles through to different standards and deadlines in reporting and monitoring. (I UN Jordan 2 2017; I UN Jordan 5 2017) While not perceived as a specific challenge by response partners (I UN Regional 2 2018; I UN Regional 4 2018), this still meant that, on the one hand, a strong partner advocating the concept of resilience and a resilience-based response according to the UN's understanding remained absent and, on the other hand, the real integration of humanitarian and development-oriented programming was further exacerbated.

⁵² Instead, tensions developed between UNHCR and ILO with regard to the ownership of the new focus. While UNHCR, due to its focus on refugees, was inexperienced in livelihoods programming, ILO was inexperienced with the setting in a refugee context and did traditionally not take up a coordinating role. After all, ILO took the lead in the sector.

The last aspect in which Jordan's response differed from the UN's conception was concerned with its approach to livelihoods and self-sufficiency. In line with the strategic directions set out in the 3RP and the Dead Sea Resilience Agenda, Jordan formally committed to enhancing economic opportunities and creating livelihoods opportunities from the first JRP on. Especially in the first two years of the JRP, however, this was implemented in practice only selectively: As outlined above, until 2016 this commitment only referred to Jordanians for whom employment opportunities and income generation were to be increased, while livelihoods programming for refugees remained a taboo. (Bellamy et al. 2017:50–53; Gaunt 2018; I INGO Jordan 2 2017; I INGO Jordan 3 2017) This practice clearly contradicted the understanding of the UN that included refugees in their quest for livelihoods programming and promoted to invest “in livelihoods and employment opportunities to better equip refugees and host community members to provide for themselves and their families” (UNDP and UNHCR 2015:7). In line with this understanding, the UN also promoted policy changes that would increase Syrian refugees' access to work. (UNDP and UNHCR 2015:20–21) Jordan, however, stuck to its prevailing regulations regarding work permits for refugees, which included high fees and administrative hurdles, all in all rendering the process of obtaining access to legal employment difficult if not impossible for many refugees. (ILO 2015:15–16) Thus, altogether Jordan's response stood in stark contrast to the principles promoted by the UN at the regional level.

This stance changed only in the course of 2016, when the government slowly started to allow refugees to be included in livelihoods measures and revised existing labor policies. (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2016:10, 40–43) However, this was not related to a changed understanding of a resilience-based response, but due to a development that took place outside the scope of the response plan: the signing of the Jordan Compact at the London Conference in February 2016. Within the Jordan Compact, the framing of, and the dealing with, refugees changed. Up until that point, refugees had been the passive beneficiaries of humanitarian assistance. With the Jordan Compact, the crisis was re-framed as a “development opportunity” (Government of Jordan 2016) and refugees were to be included in the response as active contributors to the Jordanian economy.

Implications of this change of narrative were far-reaching, ranging from the introduction of new policies with regard to legal employment to broadened possibilities in livelihoods programming for refugees. (Bellamy et al. 2017:54; I INGO Jordan 2 2017) While progress was slow, challenges remained and many observers regarded the Compact as ill-conceived and its objectives as too ambitious (Barbelet, Hagen-Zanker, and Mansour-Ille 2018:4–5; Gaunt 2018; Huang, Ash, et al. 2018:52–53; I INGO Jordan 2 2017), the Jordan Compact still marked a turning point in Jordan's response. Demonstrating the existence of some degree of political willingness to take unprecedented pathways in the refugee response, implying far-reaching changes, this also meant a significant convergence towards the UN's promoted approach and understanding of livelihoods in the response to the crisis. The resulting increased funding for the resilience component (Bellamy et al. 2017:52; I UN Jordan 4 2017) demonstrated that Jordan's new compliance with the UN's understanding also was more in line with donors' ideas of a resilience-based approach. Hence, while Jordan had rhetorically committed to resilience-programming with regards to livelihoods with the introduction of the JRP in 2014, in effect it only really started after the signing of the Jordan Compact in 2016. (I INGO Jordan 2 2017; I MOPIC 2 2018; Office of the RC/HC Jordan 2017:2, 5) In this view, the Jordan Compact – at least to some extent – rendered a new way of dealing with the situation possible, thus accomplishing a goal that the introduction of a resilience-based response had not been able to achieve: Rather than being related to the ideas within resilience-thinking, willingness to change here could be facilitated through the compact's characteristic as a package deal that linked different interests of Jordan with those of the EU, providing tangible incentives that outweighed previous concerns on the matter.

6.1.5.4 Functions of 'resilience'

On a theoretical level, the incorporation of resilience and resilience principles in the JRP aimed at changes in the overall coordination structure and programming of the response as outlined above.

However, in practice, this was not the only function the concept fulfilled. Rather, different actors quickly started to use the concept and its framing more strategically for their own purposes. Resilience can therefore be regarded as fulfilling different functions for different actors in the response.

For the Jordanian government, the concept served first and foremost as a way both to attract funding and to expand the previously refugee-focused response in that it incorporated Jordanians as beneficiaries as well. (I MOPIC 2 2018; I UN Jordan 6 2018) Rhetorically, the framing was used to raise funds for projects aiming at mitigating the effects of the Syria crisis on the country. (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2014:25) In practice, however, it was used also to appeal funding for projects exceeding this scope and aiming at the overall development of Jordan. (I MOPIC 1 2017; I UN Jordan 2 2017) Seizing on the new buzzword of resilience, at a time when the concept just started to be pushed at the global level and was taken up quickly by various humanitarian and development stakeholders, created the right basis for Jordan to frame a request to be compensated for the burden it had shouldered by hosting large numbers of Syrian refugees. At the same time, the adoption of the term early into the crisis and parallel, or even prior, to developments at the regional level gave the Jordanian government the possibility to take the lead in the response and to frame the concept according to its own understanding and priorities. Correspondingly, the extension of the concept of a resilience-based response to the overall response, including both host communities and refugees, gave Jordan the power to set the overall operational space and the authority to decide which projects were allowed to be implemented and for whom. In this respect, thus, Jordan used Syrian refugees and their impacts on the country to request and legitimize increased development assistance and support for vulnerable Jordanians, all under the heading of creating resilient structures and systems. In that line of reasoning, refugees can be understood as playing the role of a trigger for a response that was ultimately aimed at Jordan's development and would not have been implemented without refugees' influx, rather than being included as more than beneficiaries of humanitarian assistance provided by the international community. In that regard, Jordan therefore utilized the concept to attract the attention of the international community regarding the situation in Jordan and for Jordanians, financial resources to deal with that situation, and increased development assistance that would not have been implemented otherwise.

In turn, the newly-appointed RC/HC to Jordan, as the highest UN official in the country, came to Jordan with a vision to bridge humanitarian and development aspects. Within that vision, he saw in resilience "the glue for bringing humanitarian and development assistance under one coherent framework" (UN Jordan 2014). Within that notion, resilience served to impel a change in the language of the response to the crisis and a changed tone of operation, at a time when the crisis was still ongoing. The new narrative acknowledged that the crisis was not only humanitarian any more, but also involved developmental aspects. Accordingly, it could no longer be dealt with through a purely humanitarian approach financed and implemented by the international community. In that regard, the objective of the RC/HC's promotion of resilience can be regarded as twofold and geared towards both the international community and the Jordanian government: On the one side, with a changed perception of the crisis, new actors from the field of development cooperation could be engaged in the crisis. On the other side, more responsibility and a new leadership role could be passed on to the Jordanian government, which was more in line with Jordan's status as a middle-income country in which the UN could not continue to assume full responsibility for dealing with a crisis. (I UN Jordan 2 2017; Office of the RC/HC Jordan 2017:4) In both aspects, both UNHCR and the wider aid sector as well as donors needed to be convinced of a change in the response. Actors had become used to the existing structures and modus operandi, and had their own interests in the response. In particular UNHCR and other large humanitarian actors were afraid that they would lose authority and the capacity to mobilize resources for their programs if the crisis was not seen as purely humanitarian any longer. (I UN Jordan 4 2017; I UN Jordan 7 2018; I UN Regional 3 2018) Most (international) NGOs as well as donors, too, were not ready to start seeing the crisis as developmental and not just humanitarian and refugee-focused any more. In their view, more authority for the government in line with both a more developmental approach and Jordan's status as a middle-income country, and accordingly more funds being channeled directly through Jordan rather

than via the UN or international organizations would mean a loss of transparency, visibility and control and would ultimately lead to a decreasing quality in support programs. (I INGO Jordan 7 2018; I MOPIC 1 2017) Introducing resilience as the ‘glue’ between the two fields therefore offered a way both to initiate a change of thinking and to bring all actors together to negotiate and agree on a joint response. (I LINGO Jordan 1 2017; I MOPIC 1 2017; I UN Jordan 4 2017)

Overall, the approach as promoted by the RC/HC has to be viewed also with regard to funding: By bringing in new actors from a different field, funds from other sources could be mobilized, leading to a larger amount of available funds in general. This aspect was regarded as crucial at a time when gaps in funding started to show, necessitating severe cuts in assistance. (I UN Jordan 2 2017; Office of the RC/HC Jordan 2017:8) At the same time, strengthening and relying more on existing governmental structures and services along the lines of more government leadership was to reduce the needs for ongoing and costly external humanitarian aid, thereby reducing the costs of assistance and of maintaining parallel structures through which assistance was channeled. (I MOPIC 1 2017; Office of the RC/HC Jordan 2017:1)

Lastly, for implementing organizations resilience served as a catch phrase to achieve government approval for programming. For most of them, the principles of resilience-programming were not new, even though not all of them had specifically referred to the concept in their activities before the introduction of the JRP. (I LINGO Jordan 1 2017; I UN Jordan 4 2017; I UN Jordan 5 2017) The explicit focus on the concept in the response plan, however, led to a reframing of activities according to the new terminology in order to get approval from the government. (I UN Jordan 2 2017; Sigmond 2016:39, 62) Thus, while measures often stayed the same, resilience was utilized as a means to get the possibility to implement them.

Besides these different usages of resilience, there were two functions that the concept of resilience did not fulfill in Jordan: First, it did not serve as a means to achieve a change in livelihoods programming. Even though international organizations used the framing of a resilience-based response and the changed tone of operation with an increased focus on development-oriented measures to push for activities aiming at more self-sufficiency of refugees, they did not succeed in achieving changes in practice. Rather, this was achieved, at least partly, with the signing of the Jordan Compact two years later. Nevertheless, the mainstreaming of a resilience agenda through continued dialogue still was widely regarded as laying the foundation for these later developments and highlighted the importance of the response as a negotiation space, in which both the Jordanian government and the international community discussed and pushed for their interests. (Bellamy et al. 2017:50, 52; I UN Jordan 2 2017) The actor that could have utilized the concept more in that regard was the UNDP country office. In so doing, it would have followed the UNDP’s approach and stewardship at the regional level. Due to a different understanding of its mandate as outlined above as well as a general lack of capacities and resources, however, the country office did not take on this role. Thus, while Jordan’s response with regards to livelihoods started to make slight changes two years after the introduction of the JRP, this cannot be ascribed to the introduction of a resilience-based response, but to other forms of cooperation based on economic incentives.

Second, and resulting from the above, even though the introduction of a resilience-based approach was continuously and by various actors framed as a “paradigm shift” (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2015:20–21; MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2016:11), no actor with enough influence took up the task of fully translating the concept as endeavored by the UN into practice. While clearly a shift had occurred, this concerned mostly the complementation of the humanitarian response for refugees with a development-oriented response for Jordanians. The plan was not used, however, as a means to achieve structural and transformational change in the overall approach to the situation as continuously stressed by the UN at the regional level. On the one side, through this approach a clear protection space for refugees could be maintained, in particular in line with UNHCR’s humanitarian interests and mandate. On the other side, however, it also barred the way for finding more sustainable solutions for refugees. At the same time,

with donors keeping their focus generally on the refugee component and the response remaining mostly short-term and humanitarian-focused, it also failed to build more resilient and sustainable systems and structures. (I MOPIC 1 2017; I UN Jordan 2 2017; I UN Jordan 5 2017; Office of the RC/HC Jordan 2017:2)

Overall, thus, various actors had different interests in the plan, and used the concept and terminology of resilience accordingly. Despite these mixed interests, and even though the concept did not fulfil two central functions of the UN's understanding at the regional level, the introduction of the resilience-based response still constituted an important step in the overall response to the crisis related to four aspects: First, the introduction of a new concept served as a way to keep up donor interest and ensure continued funding for the response. Second, it contributed to changing the tone of operation and introduced a new focus on longer-term investments and measures, thereby contributing to making first steps to bridge the gap between humanitarian and development systems. By including a resilience-based perspective including multi-year programming, slowly more focus was put on the sustainability of the response compared to previous short-term response plans focused solely on humanitarian assistance. Third, it served as a way to empower the government to take over responsibility from the UN system in order to set their own priorities. Last, despite the disadvantages associated with the strict division of the response into a refugee and a resilience component with all its implications as outlined above, the clear separation also had some benefits: Through the clear segregation of the two components, also a clearly defined protection space for refugees could be maintained. All in all, the JRP and its resilience-based approach can therefore be regarded as a space for negotiation, ensuring that the interests of both the Jordanian government and the international community were taken into account.

6.1.5.5 Challenges

The introduction of the JRP as a resilience-based response did not proceed without challenges. While some of them were related to responses to situations of forced displacement in general, others were related directly to the new focus on resilience.

First of all, general confusion about the concept of resilience persisted among many stakeholders. Resulting from the lack of a clear definition, as outlined above different actors had a different understanding of the concept and its principles, which led to ambiguities in practice. This was paired with differing interests of humanitarian, developmental, and governmental actors, who all tried to use the concept to their advantage. Mostly, these interests revolved around keeping power structures and access to funding in place rather than around strengthening national systems. Overall, this institutionally competitive approach around an unclear concept made it challenging to work together towards a common goal exceeding purely humanitarian assistance. (I UN Jordan 7 2018; Office of the RC/HC Jordan 2017:10)

Secondly, despite the official leadership of the Jordanian government in the response, capacities in ministries to really lead and coordinate the response remained limited, forcing UN agencies and international organizations to keep up this role in contrary to the principles of a resilience-based response. Structures that had been set up to support ministries, intended as temporary before being transitioned into real government structures, such as the JRPSC in which seconded international staff were seated, ended up doing most of the coordination, strategic planning and managing of the JRP. The growing number of implementing agencies and actors engaged in the response, partly due to the expansion of the JRP to include organizations with mandates focusing on development, further increased this challenge. This was exacerbated by unclear roles and responsibilities, a high staff turnover and limited resources, often rendering it unclear what the operational priorities of the government were and how needs were assessed, in turn making it difficult for implementing agencies to plan their programs. (I INGO Jordan 2 2017; Office of the RC/HC Jordan 2017:5)

Thirdly, and especially in the first year after its introduction, funding of the JRP proved challenging: In 2015, according to government figures, only 36 percent of funding requirements could be met. (Malkawi

2017) Shortfalls affected in particular new sectors that had not been included in previous UN-led response plans (RRPs) and had been added to the response by the Jordanian government as part of the resilience component, such as Justice (19 percent funded), Energy (14 percent funded) or Transport and Environment, both of which received no funding at all. But also more traditional sectors such as WASH (19 percent funded), Health (26 percent funded) or Education (31 percent funded) remained severely underfinanced. (JRPSC Secretariat 2016:3) As a consequence, implementing organizations were forced to make drastic cuts in their programming. A prominent example constituted the WFP, which had to cut food aid for refugees in 2015 by half. (Reuters 2015)

Even though overall funding increased considerably in 2016 and 2017, meeting 62 percent and 65 percent of funding requirements, respectively, still over one third of the response remained unfunded. (Malkawi 2017; The Jordan Times 2018) In particular the livelihoods sector remained “minimally funded” in 2016 (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2016:42), with only 32 percent of funding requirements being met.⁵³

Besides general shortfalls in funding, other challenges lay in substantial lags in translating donor commitments into real disbursements, which made the longer-term planning of the response difficult (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2015:18). Planning cycles of donors remained short which limited the possibilities of investing in more long-term programs addressing structural deficiencies and negatively affected the efficiency and sustainability of the assistance provided. (Kocks et al. 2018:73) Insufficient and unreliable funding also led to an atmosphere of increased competition for scarce financial resources among different implementing organizations. (I INGO Jordan 1 2017; I INGO Jordan 2 2017; I INGO Jordan 4 2017) At the same time, many UN agencies were not directly operational but worked through a network of international and national NGOs, which further increased the costs of delivery due to overhead costs. (Office of the RC/HC Jordan 2017:2)

Overall, while funding in general remained unusually high compared to other protracted crises, budgets remained under pressure from new and competing crises and a general donor fatigue. (Office of the RC/HC Jordan 2017:8–9)

Fourthly, another challenge was related to finding durable solutions for refugees. Overall, the search for durable solutions did not constitute a specific section in the JRP or take up a large part of the plan. The first JRP only referred to “care and maintenance” and the “pursuit of resettlement” as the way forward (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2014:34). While resettlement constitutes one of the three recognized durable solutions, albeit being a possibility only for a very small part of the refugee population, ‘care and maintenance’ cannot be understood as a ‘durable’ solution as it keeps refugees in limbo and dependent on ongoing external aid. In the following plans, the term was dropped. Instead, in 2016 and 2017, the search for durable solutions was included as one sub-goal in the social protection sector, outlining that “durable solutions for Syrian refugees, including third country resettlement for the most vulnerable” were to be explored (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2015:117). In 2018, the objective referred only to “Access to Resettlement and Other Durable Solutions Outside of Jordan”(MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2017:89).

Return was not explicitly mentioned as a sought after durable solution, recognizing that the prospects for a prompt return of most refugees remained remote. (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2015:9; MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2017:iii) Nevertheless, the plan included the counselling to Syrians who wished to return in its social protection response. (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2015:116; MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2016:111)

Altogether, chances for both resettlement and return remained slim, and constituted an option only for a very limited number of refugees. The local integration of refugees as the third possible durable

⁵³ Figures published by the Jordanian government in this regard differ from, and cannot be compared to, figures published by the UN in their different 3RP annual reports. Even though they also refer to the funding of the JRP, UN figures reflect only contributions made to the UN and NGO partners, but do not include bilateral funding, loans or other funds falling outside the 3RP tracking system. (UNDP and UNHCR 2016b:6)

solution, however, was strongly rejected by the Jordanian government from the beginning of the influx of Syrians. The shift to a resilience-based response did not mean a change in that matter: Local integration was not mentioned in the response strategy at any point. The strict division of refugee and resilience-programming, the initial clear rejection of livelihoods programming for refugees altogether, and the slow progress on giving refugees access to income-generating activities, emphasized the government's stance further, as giving refugees the opportunity to work was perceived as laying the groundwork not only for their self-sufficiency and self-reliance, but also for their (socio-economic) integration and prolonged stay. (I MOPIC 1 2017; I UN Jordan 2 2017) As a result, many refugees remained dependent from external assistance, and were faced with a lack of prospects in the country.

Lastly, the approach to the crisis within the JRP remained highly 'projectized', focusing on delivering services and programs rather than on capacity-development and structural change. Donor requirements calling for programs that were strengthening structures, but at the same time also yielding quick results, most visible in high numbers of beneficiaries, further exacerbated this approach. As a result, collective operational engagement remained weighted towards humanitarian and short- or medium-term activities, which led to the perception among the Jordanian government and public that the response continued to emphasize the needs of refugees above longer-term developmental needs of Jordan. Similarly, no resilient structures could be established in the sense of transformational change that would lead to systems that were better equipped to deal with future crises. Rather, existing systems were enabled to persist or adjust to the prevailing situation, at best. (Office of the RC/HC Jordan 2017:10)

6.1.5.6 Resilience and new developments

Five years after the introduction of a resilience-based response in Jordan, it became increasingly obvious that the overall operating environment in the country was shifting. More and more, the Jordanian government put strategic priorities on economic growth and the creation of jobs. While the programmatic response within the JRP remained largely the same, this new focus was reflected in developments outside the scope of the response plan, including new cooperation agreements, financing mechanisms, economic reform plans and UN development plans.

The first novelty constituted the Jordan Compact. While the displacement situation in Jordan had not changed, the 'refugee crisis' had reached Europe, enforcing increased political engagement from EU countries. The onward secondary movement of an increasing number of refugees to Europe changed the power dynamics between Jordan and the EU, putting Jordan in a much better bargaining position. (Howden, Patchett, and Alfred 2017:1–2; I INGO Jordan 2 2017) In the agreed deal, the EU was willing to make several concessions, contingent upon policy changes in Jordan that would facilitate the integration of Syrian refugees into the labor market. The Compact thus marked the starting point of, and set the framework for, a series of far-reaching policy changes. Even though challenges remained (Barbelet, Hagen-Zanker, and Mansour-Ille 2018:4–5; I INGO Jordan 2 2017; Lenner and Turner 2018:48; Schubert and Haase 2017:107–111), these changes nevertheless meant a step forward in supporting refugees' livelihoods and ensuring a path to their self-reliance. (Gaunt 2018; IRC 2018:5; I UN Jordan 2 2017) This changed stance on livelihoods programming which could now address refugees, too, also led to unprecedented funding for the resilience component of the JRP and in particular the livelihoods sector: Compared to 2016, when the livelihoods sector was only 32 percent funded, in 2017 this number increased to 71 percent.⁵⁴ (MOPIC 2017:1; MOPIC 2018:1)

With the establishment of the CFF and the introduction of concessional loans, further new financing mechanisms were introduced that gave Jordan access to large amounts of affordable and more sustainable financing. Tied to large-scale development projects benefitting Jordanians and Syrian refugees, they were regarded as having the potential of unleashing unprecedented amounts of money to

⁵⁴ Nevertheless, the sector remained one of the least funded sectors percentage-wise compared to other sectors. In particular Local Governance / Municipal Services received much higher levels of funding in both 2016 and 2017, with 173 percent and 163 percent of funding requirements met. (MOPIC 2017:1; MOPIC 2018:1)

deal with the situation. In the first two years after the introduction of the Facility, loans in the amount of 735.4 million USD were granted and deployed for five projects. (GCFE 2018) The scale of each project thus exceeded the scope of regular single projects within the JRP by far, rendering the JRP and its resilience component less and less important.

Besides new funding mechanisms for development, newer developments in the country displayed a growing economic focus. This became visible for instance within the London Initiative and Jordan's Reform Matrix from 2018/2019 which emphasized the importance of economic transformation and focused on how to progress "From Resilience to Growth" (The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and HM Government 2019:1) and how to achieve "economic resilience" (The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan 2018:10). Apart from that, neither the concept of resilience nor refugees featured prominently in the concepts any longer.

The replacement of the resilience narrative with other concepts held true for strategic documents by other actors in the country as well. For instance, the new UN Sustainable Development Framework 2018-2022 for Jordan, launched in 2017 by the UN and the Jordanian government, for the first time paid regard to the Syria crisis and how to deal with its consequences. While resilience was still mentioned in the plan as one outcome, the strategy noted that a new perspective was needed "that prioritize[d] not only resilience, but also a broader approach to vulnerability" that would "reach[...] the furthest behind first, and that [would be] more responsive to the people being served" (Government of Jordan and UN 2017:8).

Overall, while resilience still continued to be used linguistically within the JRP, the theoretical concept altogether was superseded by new strategies and ideas that gained more importance on the ground. While in particular the Jordan Compact and CFF programs aimed at the same objectives as the JRP, including bridging the gap between humanitarian and development assistance (World Bank Group 2017:1), mitigating the impacts of the crisis on the country (World Bank Group 2017:11; Government of Jordan 2016), and creating livelihood opportunities for vulnerable populations (EU-Jordan Association Council 2016:37–38; World Bank Group 2017:1), altogether once again promoting a "new paradigm" (Government of Jordan 2016), with these and newer developments a noticeable shift took place towards a stronger focus on Jordan's economic growth, reforms, and development.

6.1.5.7 Conclusion: Resilience-based response in Jordan

All in all, Jordan's resilience-based response can widely be regarded as successful in terms of providing protection to refugees and keeping the country stable. In the course of the response, the Jordanian government skillfully used the narrative of resilience to include Jordan and Jordanians in the response and to attract funding for development-oriented measures that would not have been implemented at that scale without the presence of refugees in the country.

However, despite claims to move from a purely humanitarian to a more development-oriented and longer-term approach under the framing of resilience, the response remained largely projectized and short-term focused. Focus from both the donor and the government side continued to be put on service delivery and programs yielding quick results and targeting high numbers of beneficiaries. While this approach brought short-term relief to mitigate the direct effects of the crisis, it failed to address longer-term structural challenges hindering Jordan to deal with the crisis more effectively by itself. Despite positive developments in some sectors, in line with the government's longer-term development goals, the JRP ultimately did not overcome dependencies and lead to new and improved systems that were better equipped to deal with the current (and future) crises. Rather, it enabled the existing system solely to persist and adapt to the situation. Overall, while the concept of resilience therefore helped to widen the scope of the programmatic response, it largely did not lead to transformation and structural change, resulting in systems that continued to be dependent on external support.

At the same time, other developments taking place in the country had a larger influence on systemic change, including the Jordan Compact, the introduction of concessional financing and the increasing

involvement of large development actors including International Financing Institutions (IFIs) such as the World Bank. While these developments to a large extent addressed the same issues as mentioned in the JRP's resilience-based approach, resilience was no longer explicitly mentioned as their conceptual underpinnings. Rather, they put new focus on economic growth and the provision of job opportunities and livelihoods. Widely, they were regarded as leading to further-reaching change than the introduction of the JRP and the concept of resilience.

All in all, the JRP and the concept of resilience thus fulfilled important functions at a certain time in Jordan's response: It widened the focus of the response after the purely humanitarian RRP's were perceived as being too narrow in focus, and contributed to the inclusion of Jordanians and more development-oriented issues in the response. Thereby, it opened up new possibilities for development actors to get involved in the crisis, which ultimately at least partly laid the groundwork for the inclusion of refugees in longer-term programming. The JRP with its focus on resilience further contributed to the attraction of more funding to the response, both by including actors from a new field in the response and by creating awareness for the challenges Jordan and Jordanians were facing. Taking these aspects into account, the response can be regarded as successful in keeping the country stable in spite of new challenges. At the same time, however, it did not succeed in achieving structural change with the potential of leading to sustainable solutions, including refugees' self-sufficiency, the economic development of Jordan and an improved preparedness for potential future crises.

6.2 Lebanon

Besides the Jordan Response Plan, the 3RP also included Lebanon's response plan as one of its national chapters. Accordingly, the response in Lebanon, too, formally formed part of a resilience-based response. The following subchapters will investigate how a resilience-based response was understood and implemented in this national context, and will analyze Lebanon's response in more detail in both theory and practice. Following the same outline as the previous chapters on Jordan, first the legal and socio-economic context in the country will be outlined. This will be followed by an examination of the development process of the refugee response that resulted in the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan. Again, focus will be put on the framework's rationale, aims, structure, key actors and strategic direction. Finally, as in the chapter on Jordan, the subsequent analysis will focus on the prevailing understanding of resilience and the reasons thereof, the implications of this understanding, characteristics in line with, and differing from, resilience-thinking as outlined by the UN at the regional level, functions and challenges of the application of resilience, as well as new developments in the aftermath of resilience.

6.2.1 Context

For a long time in its history, and in particular since its political independence in 1943, Lebanon has been considered a country of emigration, rather than immigration. Thousands of (forced) migrants have left the country, in particular in the course of the Six Day War in June 1967, the Lebanese Civil War between 1975 and 1989, and during the political and economic crises in the 1990s. During the Lebanese Civil War alone, for instance, an estimated 990,000 individuals emigrated, accounting for 40 percent of the total population at that time. (Tabar 2011:4–6)

At the same time, however, Lebanon has long been host to hundreds of thousands Palestinian refugees who fled to the country since the Israeli war of independence and the so-called Nakba Day in 1948. As of 2016, over 504,000 Palestinian refugees have been registered with UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East). (UNHCR 2016:2)

Additionally, in the last 15 years, Lebanon has progressively become host to an increasing number of refugees from other countries in the region: Between 2003 and 2008, approximately 50,000 Iraqi refugees have fled to Lebanon in the course of the Iraq War. (ICG 2008:26) This number has been

exceeded by far by approximately one million Syrian refugees who have sought refuge in the country since the outbreak of violence in Syria in 2011⁵⁵. (UNHCR 2018d)

6.2.1.1 *Legal context*

With regards to the legal context, as is the case in Jordan, Palestinian and non-Palestinian refugees must be clearly distinguished. While there is clear legislation regarding Palestinians, adjudicating their legal status, including civil documentation, legal residency and travel documents, this is not the case for non-Palestinian refugees.⁵⁶ (Frontiers Ruwad Association 2008:9; UNHCR 2016:4) The following explanations always refer to non-Palestinian refugees, unless otherwise specified.

On the international level, even though Lebanon has committed to the ‘Universal Declaration of Human Rights’ and its Article 14, granting everybody the right to search for asylum from persecution in other countries (UN General Assembly 1948), it is not signatory to the 1951 Geneva Convention and its 1967 Protocol. This is often traced back to the unsolved issue of finding a durable solution for Palestinian refugees in the country and a general opposition to integrate refugees, as well as to security concerns and reservations regarding the existence of sufficient resources and capacities to provide for persons in addition to the national population. (Hilal and Samy 2008b:3)

Through its signing of other international conventions, such as the ‘International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights’ (ICCPR) and the ‘Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment’ (CAT), Lebanon still abides by the principle of non-refoulement. Furthermore, the principle has been re-affirmed by the Ministry of Justice Advisory in 2006, stating that the Lebanese government should not return refugees recognized by UNHCR on the basis of Article 3 CAT. (Frontiers Ruwad Association 2008:10) Just like Jordan, however, with the rejection of the Geneva Convention, Lebanon does not accept the convention’s definition of ‘refugees’. Only Palestinians are recognized as refugees; all other displaced persons, often crossing borders into Lebanon without valid visas, are officially recognized as illegal immigrants by the authorities. (Tabar 2011:11)

On the national level, the ‘Law Regulating the Entry and Stay of Foreigners in Lebanon and their Exit from the Country’ (Law of Entry and Exit) from 1962 stipulates that “[a]ny person persecuted, already condemned by non-Lebanese authorities as a result of a political activity or whose life or liberty are threatened for political reasons can ask for political asylum” (Law of Entry and Exit, Art. 26, as cited in Hilal and Samy 2008b:4). Furthermore, “[i]n case of expulsion of the political refugee, the person will not be deported to a country where his liberty is threatened” (Law of Entry and Exit, Art. 31, as cited in Hilal and Samy 2008b:4). The law does not, however, include a comprehensive definition of ‘refugee’, nor does it comprehend many concrete regulations for dealing with persons falling under the law. Thus, in the absence of a national refugee law, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between UNHCR, active in Lebanon since 1963, and the Lebanese government in 2003. While the preamble of the MoU emphasizes that Lebanon does not consider itself a country of asylum and sees the only durable solution for refugees in resettlement in a third country, the document provides at least temporary solutions for un-registered asylum seekers: Under the terms of the MoU, UNHCR is to continue adjudicating claims for asylum, but is to share applications with the General Security Office (GS), which then issues a temporary residence permit (usually for three months, but extendable by a further six or nine months period), during which UNHCR is to find a durable solution for the refugee in question. (Saliba 2016; UNHCR 2004d:2)

Altogether, Lebanon’s refugee legislation reflects the country’s rejectionist attitude towards refugees. Again, this opposition can be traced back to the unresolved Palestinian issue in the country: The naturalization of hundreds of thousands Palestinian refugees, the majority of whom are Sunni Muslims, would threaten the fragile, sectarian balance underlying the political system and the division of power

⁵⁵ Registered refugees as of January 31, 2018.

⁵⁶ The situation for Palestinian refugees from Syria in Lebanon is more complex. For an overview of Palestinian refugees’ and Palestinian refugees from Syria’s situation in Lebanon, see for example UNHCR 2016.

in the country (see also [Chapter 6.2.1.2](#)). This situation is transferred to non-Palestinian migrants, whose local integration and permanent settlement in the country is strongly rejected as well. (Doraï and Clochard 2006:5, 13–14)

6.2.1.2 *Socio-economic context*

Lebanon is a parliamentary democratic republic, whose political framework is set in confessionalism, that is, the practice of allocating political and administrative posts according to religious sects. Under this system, spelled out in the Taif Agreement from 1989, seats in parliament are split evenly between Christians and Muslims, and the main offices of President, Prime Minister and Speaker of Parliament are reserved for a Maronite Christian, a Sunni, and a Shiite, respectively. Other ministerial posts and political offices, too, are allocated according to religious confessions. All in all, 18 confessional groups are officially recognized, reflecting a religiously extremely heterogeneous society that is basically made up entirely of minorities who are all represented in the political system and whose interests need to be balanced. The underlying confessional formula is based on the census of 1932, since which no other official census has been conducted. (Krayem 1997; Nelson 2013:341; Vaughan 2018:1; World Population Review 2019)

For a long time in Lebanon's history, the confessional nature of politics has rendered political parties mostly irrelevant, with leaders relying on familial and sectarian loyalties rather than on a comprehensive ideological manifesto or policy platform. Starting with the assassination of Sunni Prime Minister Rafik Hariri in February 2005 and the following 'Cedar Revolution' of spring 2005, the party system in Lebanon has begun to evolve. Out of this party landscape, two alliances have formed which basically split Lebanon in two: On the one side lies the March 8 Alliance, predominantly Shia and pro-Syria/Iran; on the other side lies the March 14 Alliance, encompassing various Sunni and Christian parties, emphasizing Lebanon's sovereignty and pursuing democratic reform. While the existence of the two alliances demonstrates a general willingness of confessional elites to work with other sectarian groups, confessional interests still play a large role in daily politics, with profound resentments and hostilities between the groups. (Nelson 2013:351–352)

All in all, the political system in Lebanon is characterized by elitism and clientelism. The focus on family and confessional affiliation means that candidates inherit positions from their forefathers and that kinship issues outweigh national ones. Elite networks remain in place, as incumbent leaders bargain between themselves, trade votes across sectarian lines, and focus more on maintaining and expanding their personal influence than on dealing with pressing national issues such as economic reform, accountability and the rule of law. At the same time, ex-militias who took over the role of the state during the Civil War still maintain privileged positions in the political leadership, in return for ensuring stability within their sects. As a result, the state's power to act autonomously is limited, resulting in a lack of accountability of the government to its citizenry and a general political alienation among the Lebanese people. All in all, the relationship between the state and its citizens is extremely weak. (Nelson 2013:354–356)

Another challenge lies in the high level of corruption, which is present across all branches of government and all sectors of society. In 2017, the 'Transparency International Corruption Perception Index' ranked the country 143 out of 180 countries, with a score that has shown no measurable progress in the preceding five years and that indicates high levels of corruption. (Transparency International 2018)

With regards to economic and social conditions, Lebanon's development trajectory has been strongly influenced by the Civil War between 1975 and 1990. In particular the economic recovery of the country has been a challenge, with large recurring budget deficits (averaging more than 18 percent of estimated GDP over 1997-2006). As a consequence, the state has mainly focused on monetary stabilization policies rather than adopting more growth-oriented measures. Instead, this role has been taken up by the private sector which has since been acting as the dominant growth engine, being heavily relied upon in terms of employment generation and improving standards of living. (Jamali and Keshishian 2009:282)

The informal economy takes up a large role in the country: In 2011, the size of the informal economy was estimated to be equivalent to 30 percent of GDP, which can be attributed to rigid labor market regulations, a low quality of institutions and governance, and excessive tax burdens. (Byblos Bank 2011:3) Altogether, Lebanon's economy is highly dependent on imports and services (including banking and tourism), making the country vulnerable to regional and international shocks. This has been visible in a reduction in economic growth since 2009 due to political and security uncertainties, which has been accelerated further by the Syria crisis and refugee influx. (SNAP 2013:5)

Yet another result from the Civil War is Lebanon's strong and vibrant civil society, which is regarded as one of the largest, most active and least restrained civil societies in the Middle East. In 2015, official records from the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities showed a staggering 8,311 officially registered civil society organizations in the country, working on a wide range of political and developmental issues. (Beyond Reform & Development 2015:7) This large role of NGOs traces back to times during the Civil War when organizations had to undertake typical state responsibilities such as education, health care, and emergency relief. Even though numerous NGOs are still organized along religious lines, many of them provide services to beneficiaries outside their confessional communities. (Jamali and Keshishian 2009:282–283) The volatile political and security environment in the country, however, often makes operating and the mobilization of actors and resources challenging. (Beyond Reform & Development 2015:9)

When looking at Lebanon's overall development as represented in the Human Development Index (HDI), in 2015 Lebanon's HDI value stood at 0.763, ranking the country 76 out of 188 countries and putting in the high human development category. This value has stagnated since 2013, when the value dropped from its highest value of 0.766 in 2012. Altogether, however, the country's HDI value has shown a constant upward trend from 2005 on, marking a total increase of 4.1 percent between 2005 and 2015. (UNDP 2016b:199, 203) Overall, Lebanon's economic indicators show that the country is highly developed in many aspects, for instance in the education and health sector. Nevertheless, this does not hold true for all of Lebanon: The disparity between the wealthy and the poor is vast, many communities across the country live in poverty, and entire regions are under-served by government infrastructure. (SNAP 2013:1)

6.2.2 Syrian refugee crisis in Lebanon

Like Jordan, Lebanon has been directly affected by the conflict in neighboring Syria by a continuous influx of Syrians into the country. In April 2011, the first approximately 2,000-5,000 Syrians from the area of Talkalakh, just north of the border with Lebanon, crossed into Lebanon to temporarily settle in an area just across the border where some of them had family or trade connections. (Dionigi 2016:9; Janmyr 2018:395)

While initially modest, over the course of 2011 and 2012 the number of Syrians crossing into Lebanon steadily increased. In October 2012, a milestone was reached when the number of registered Syrian refugees and people waiting for registration passed the 100,000 mark. The vast majority of them, nearly 70 percent, were from the city of Homs, and most of them settled in the north of Lebanon and in the Bekaa Valley (for ease of reference see also Figure 4). (Redmond 2012)

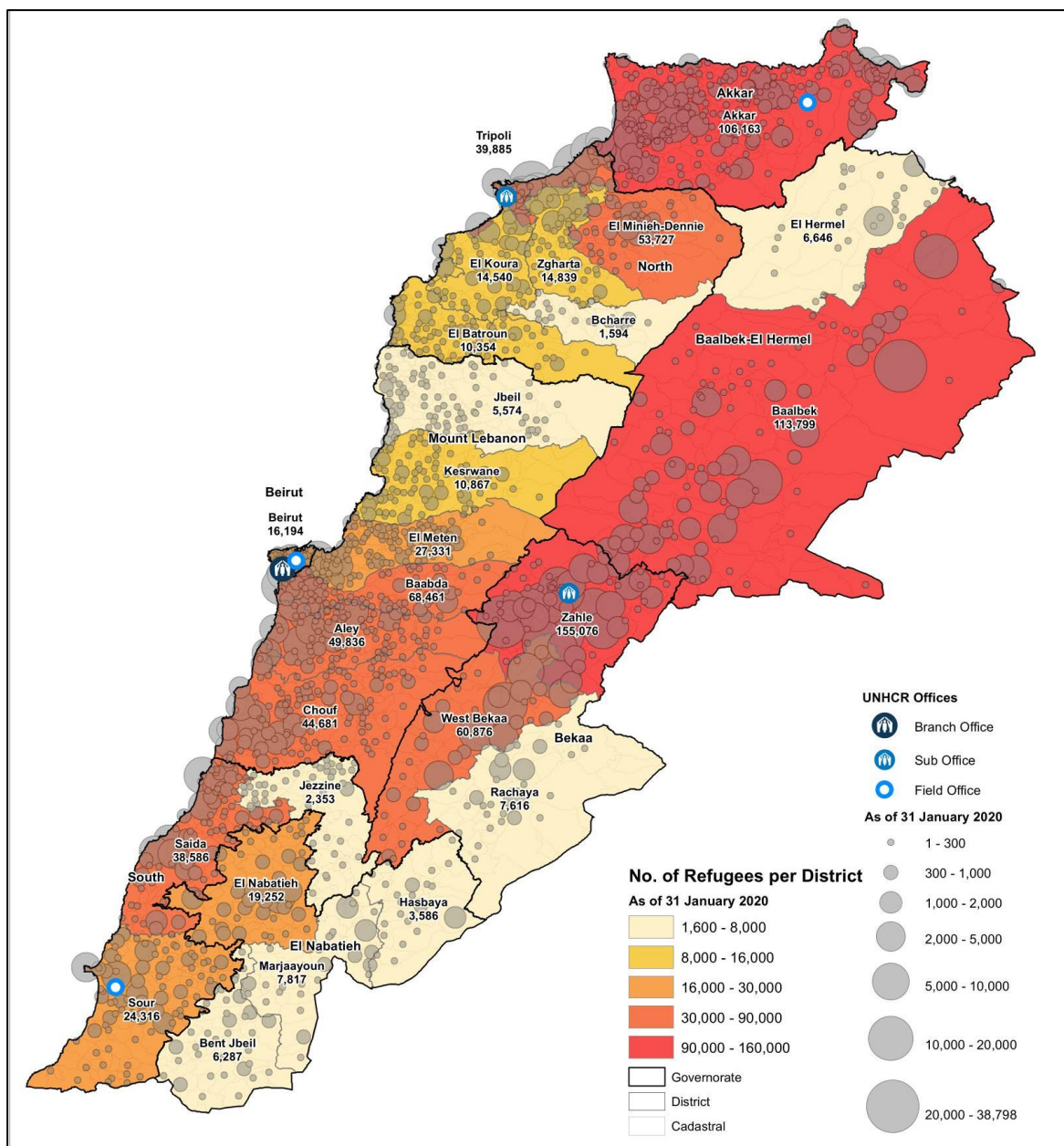


Figure 4: Map of Lebanon⁵⁷

Over the course of 2013, in parallel to new extents of violence in Syria including intensified clashes and the deployment of chemical weapons, numbers increased significantly. Although there are no official figures on daily arrivals, it is estimated that between 60,000 and 75,000 Syrians entered Lebanon each month, leading to a more than five-fold increase of registrations with UNHCR. In December 2013, the number of refugees exceeded 800,000, approximating a 21 percent increase in Lebanon's pre-conflict population according to UNDP. (UNDP 2014b:30) Only four months later, in April 2014, the number of Syrian refugees passed the one million mark, with UNHCR registering 2,500 new refugees each day. Three years after the outbreak of violence in Syria, Lebanon had become not only the country with the fastest growing Syrian population, but also the country with the highest per capita concentration of refugees worldwide, with refugees equaling almost a quarter of the local population. (Dionigi 2016:11; Dobbs 2014; UNDP and Mercy Corps 2015:6)

⁵⁷ UNHCR (2020): Syria Refugee Response. Lebanon. Syrian Refugees Registered, 31 January 2020, <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/74600>.

By March 2015, the number of refugees registered with UNHCR reached almost 1.2 million. While the violence in Syria continued, fueled by the emergence of new rebel forces including ISIS and the increased engagement of foreign powers in the conflict, Lebanon adopted a new policy regarding Syrian refugees. Based on the explicit goal of decreasing the number of Syrians in Lebanon by reducing access to territory and encouraging return, it de facto closed its borders. In May 2015, the Lebanese government further suspended UNHCR's registration of refugees. As a result, the number of registered refugees remained stable at around 1.1 million until mid-2015, when it slowly started to decrease, standing at 995,000 at the beginning of 2018. (Janmyr 2018:396; UNHCR 2018d) This does not mean, however, that no new arrivals took place. In line with government policy, however, UNHCR resorted to 'recording' rather than 'registering' refugees in order for individuals to obtain assistance. For instance, between May 2015 and June 2016, an estimated 40,000 Syrians were recorded by UNHCR. (Janmyr 2018:410–411)

The following subchapters will outline how Lebanon responded to this influx of refugees and the concomitant challenges.

6.2.2.1 Initial response to the crisis (2011-2013)

When Syrians started to search for refuge in Lebanon in 2011, Lebanon generally applied an open-border policy, with Syrians being subject to the same provisions in domestic law as other foreigners. In that regard, Syrians benefited from a 1993 'Bilateral Agreement for Economic and Social Cooperation and Coordination' between Lebanon and Syria, stipulating principles of free movement of goods and people, including freedom of work, residence, and economic activity, for nationals of both countries. This meant that, at official border crossings, Syrians could cross the border simply by presenting a valid ID. Upon their entry they received an 'entry coupon' granting legal residency for an initial period of six months for free with the possibility of renewal for an additional six months free of charge. After one year, they had to renew their residency at a cost of USD 200 per person / year for everyone age 15 and above. Syrians who crossed into Lebanon irregularly, too, could regularize their presence, albeit through the payment of a high fee. (Janmyr 2018:65–66)

While this policy of keeping the borders open was praised by human rights groups and the international community, it was effectively the result of the lack of a commonly agreed policy regarding the increasing influx of migrants, rather than a concerted or determined action across the government. (Rocha Menocal, Perera, and Mcloughlin 2016:7) On the contrary, political stalemate and impasse within constitutional institutions resulted in what was commonly termed a 'policy of no-policy', with the government having no strategy at all how to deal with the emerging refugee situation. (El Mufti 2014; Mansour 2017:5; Oxfam 2015:11).

Widely, this was traced back to many people's expectation of the imminent fall of Assad's regime in Syria and the speedy return of Syrians. Thus, at the beginning of the influx of Syrians, the situation was perceived as "short-term and contained" (Dionigi 2016:9). The government under Prime Minister Saad Hariri tasked the High Relief Committee as well as the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) with ensuring the provision of humanitarian assistance to Syrian refugees. In practice, UNHCR quickly became the main coordinator of the response, setting up a presence in the northern border area. This situation stayed the same also in June 2011, when Najib Mikati, more closely connected with the Syrian establishment, replaced Hariri as Prime Minister. (Dionigi 2016:9)

Increasingly, however, with the conflict in Syria beginning to look more long-term, meaning unforeseeable consequences for Lebanon, the presence of Syrians became the source of political dispute within the divided political system of the country. (Dionigi 2016:10) With one political block openly supporting the Syrian regime and the other one rejecting it, the Lebanese state officially agreed to remain neutral regarding the Syrian conflict. This stance was stipulated in the so-called 'Baabda Declaration' from June 2012, which formally outlined Lebanon's 'disassociation policy' from regional and

international conflict as part of its ‘National Dialogue’ framework⁵⁸. While the Declaration did not address the refugee issue itself, it did refer to the “right to humanitarian solidarity” as “guaranteed under the constitution and the law” (UN General Assembly Security Council 2012). As part of the disassociation policy, the government also enforced the linguistic use of ‘displaced persons’ (‘nazihoun’ in Arabic) rather than ‘refugees’ (‘lajjoun’) when referring to Syrians fleeing from the conflict.⁵⁹ Generally, the disassociation policy also included the increased transfer of responsibility for refugees to UNHCR and other organizations, as the dealing with the influx of Syrians under their auspices was regarded as “discrete” and “more effective” (Janmyr 2018:396).

The removal of the High Relief Committee from the crisis management task in summer 2012 due to internal quarrels left MoSA as the main government entity in charge of collaborating with UNHCR. Even though a ‘Syria Crisis Response Unit’ was set up within the ministry, relying mostly on external staff seconded and paid by UN agencies, the ministry lacked capacities both in terms of infrastructure and know-how. This left UNHCR with large autonomy over the programmatic response, factually making the organization the main provider for the country’s refugees: Even though the Lebanese government formally held the “primary responsibility to protect persons on its territory and for the humanitarian response” (UNHCR 2013b:35), when the number of Syrians in Lebanon exceeded 100,000 in October 2012, UNHCR effectively “assumed the role of the state to take care of the Syrian refugees” (government official, as cited in Janmyr 2018:396). The Lebanese government, in contrast, remained more or less in the back seat of the response. (Dionigi 2016:10; I MoSA 2 2017; Janmyr 2018:394) Acting in a political vacuum, UNHCR started to implement and coordinate a growing humanitarian response. Between 2012 and 2015, UNHCR’s budget decupled. In its efforts, UNHCR could benefit from the presence of numerous UN agencies in the country prior to the conflict which eased setting up the humanitarian coordination structure. (Boustani et al. 2016:14; Dionigi 2016:10, 27; Janmyr 2018:394)

As outlined above, starting in 2012, the overall international response in the region was summarized in six consecutive Regional Response Plans (RRPs), including a chapter on Lebanon that focused on the humanitarian needs of persons displaced from Syria or affected by displacement in the country, including returning Lebanese and Lebanese host communities. (UNHCR 2013b:26) Altogether, the strategic objectives of the humanitarian response were to “ensure the protection of refugees, displaced persons and affected communities”, to “deliver emergency relief and essential services to those most in need”, and to “support the resilience of displaced and host communities” (UNHCR 2013b:31). As part of its response, UNHCR set up eight sectoral working groups, chaired by different UN agencies and focusing on Protection, Food Security, Non-food items, Shelter, Water and Sanitation, Public Health, Education, and Social Cohesion. (Idris 2017:6; UN 2013f:10)

In contrast to its otherwise ‘policy of no-policy’, the government of Lebanon pursued a strict non-camp policy, despite the growing number of refugees.⁶⁰ As a result, Syrians were widely dispersed across the country, living in over 1,200 municipalities (see also Figure 4). On the one hand, this posed major challenges to municipalities, in particular with regard to health, education and basic service delivery, including water, waste management and community services. Extending public services to refugees, they were put at the forefront of responding both to an increased demand and to growing immediate

⁵⁸ The Declaration was adopted by the ‘Lebanese National Dialogue Committee’, an institution that has been established during the Lebanese civil war and that brings together political and sectarian leaders to discuss key issues of dispute in order to overcome political gridlock on issues related to national stability. (Mourad 2017:252)

⁵⁹ Different explanations of this semantic aspect exist. On the one hand, this policy is traced back to the strong association of ‘refugee’ with Palestinians and their long-term stay, with ‘displaced’ suggesting a less permanent status. On the other hand, the change in semantics might be seen as the attempt of the government to circumvent any obligations and privileges attached to Syrians’ refugeehood. (Janmyr 2016:61)

⁶⁰ Again, this policy has widely been explained with Lebanon’s fear of a repetition of the ‘Palestinian experience’, but also with the securitized perception of refugees and the perceived risk of having large numbers of refugees in the same location. Others have argued that the policy was driven by macroeconomic interests to bolster the economy through an increase in labor supply. (Crisp et al. 2013:13; Mourad 2017:260–261)

humanitarian needs, with their capacities – often overstressed even before the influx of refugees – being increasingly stretched. Nevertheless, they generally welcomed Syrians and provided them with services and support. On the other hand, the dispersal of Syrians meant that UNHCR and its implementing partners faced challenges with regards to outreach, registration and protection. One of the biggest challenges lay in the provision of housing, with many refugees living in makeshift shelters in informal settlements with access to only very rudimentary water and sanitation services. In the programmatic response, therefore life-saving interventions were given priority, including food assistance, the provision of core relief items and emergency health care. (Cherri, Arcos González, and Castro Delgado 2016:168; Crisp et al. 2013:12–13; UNHCR 2013b:26)

At the same time, Lebanon's status as a middle-income country with a particularly strong private sector and high costs of living made the humanitarian response very expensive. (Grunewald, Brangeon, and Karroum 2017:12) Limited funding despite a simultaneous increase in refugee numbers further exacerbated the situation, so that, despite the joint efforts of local actors, including public institutions and local civil society organizations, and the UN and INGOs, challenges remained in all sectors, resulting in growing vulnerabilities and negative coping mechanisms. (Crisp et al. 2013:13–14)

All in all, Lebanon's early response to the refugee crisis was characterized by a large degree of non-involvement on the part of the Lebanese government. This 'policy of no-policy' resulted in the adoption of a seemingly generous open-border policy, praised by the international community, as well as in the extension of services to, and the treatment of, refugees like any other foreigner in the country. At the same time, it made municipalities the de facto first responders to the influx of Syrians, straining their capacities and resources. Simultaneously, it gave UNHCR large autonomy and responsibility in developing and coordinating a response to the humanitarian needs of refugees. In this, the agency was supported by various international organizations as well as local actors and the existing strong civil society landscape in Lebanon.

6.2.2.2 Changes in Lebanon's refugee policy (2014)

Over the course of 2014, the government's approach to the situation changed considerably, resulting in a shift of policy to one of "Total Control" (Mansour 2017:5).

In March 2013, Prime Minister Mikati resigned after a cabinet dispute with Hezbollah. While the group in 2011 had brought Mikati to power, tensions over the conflict in Syria had put the two at odds. (Bassam 2013) After his resignation, it took until February 2014 until a new government, with Tammam Salam as Prime Minister, became operative. During that long phase of transition, the number of Syrians in the country increased significantly, exceeding 800,000 registrations in December 2013, despite the implementation of stricter border controls by the General Security Office (GS) in response to growing security concerns and the fear of an incipient expansion of the Syrian conflict into Lebanon. (Naharnet Newsdesk 2013)

In March 2014, in his 'Policy Statement on National Interests' to the Lebanese parliament, Salam for the first time made the growing presence of Syrian refugees part of official governmental policy, stating that the government would "work on taking the necessary measures to address the issue of Syrian refugees whose numbers exceed the country's capacity to deal with, in order to contain the security, political, social and economic repercussion of their temporary presence in Lebanon" (Presidency of the Council of Ministers 2014).

Following this statement, the government set up a new structure to deal with refugee issues: An inter-ministerial Crisis Cell was established, led by the Prime Minister and comprising the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Migration (responsible for exploring the possibility of safe zones inside Syria in order to relocate refugees), the Ministry of Interior (responsible for managing the situation of refugees in Lebanon in line with international standards), the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) (responsible for coordinating relations with international organizations and local administrations) and, at a later stage, the GS (responsible for border controls). (Dionigi 2016:13)

Over the next months, the authorities and the GS imposed increasing restrictions on Syrians, closing 18 unofficial border crossings that had previously been tolerated, announcing that only Syrians from areas bordering Lebanon where there was fighting were allowed to enter, and carrying out raids in informal settlements in order to arrest Syrians on the suspicion of being Islamist militants. (Amnesty International 2015:8–9; Nayel 2014)

In October 2014, the Council of Ministers approved a ‘Policy Paper on Syrian Refugee Displacement’, outlining official new measures to be implemented. The document set out three explicit goals: “reducing the numbers of Syrian refugees in the country by reducing access to territory and encouraging Syrian nationals to return to Syria”, “ensuring security by inter alia increasing regulation of the Syrian population in Lebanon, providing additional support for municipality police and requiring municipalities to undertake regular statistical surveys”, and “easing the burdens on the infrastructure” (Janmyr 2016:62). Furthermore, the Policy Paper called for “strictly enforcing laws governing displaced persons and foreigners to protect Lebanese employment and employment generally” (Janmyr 2016:62).

As part of this new policy, new regulations regarding entry, residency renewal and regularization were issued and implemented. Syrians now had to fit into one of seven categories to be allowed to enter the country. While one category included ‘those displaced’, this referred only to exceptional circumstances when individuals complied with specific ‘humanitarian exceptions criteria’ outlined by the government, including, for instance, unaccompanied and / or separated children with a parent already registered in Lebanon or persons with urgent medical needs for whom treatment in Syria was not available. (Janmyr 2016:67–68; Saliba 2016)

At the same time, authorities introduced new criteria for the renewal of residency permits, dividing Syrians into two categories: those registered with UNHCR and those who were not. Both categories were required to provide several documents, including valid ID and a housing commitment, and a fee of USD 200. Syrians registered with UNHCR additionally had to sign a pledge not to work in Lebanon and had to provide a UNHCR registration certificate as well as proof of their financial means. Syrians not registered with UNHCR on the other hand had to provide a pledge of responsibility by a Lebanese sponsor assuming full responsibility for the individual. (Janmyr 2016:68–70; Saliba 2016)

Altogether, these new policies, curfews and restrictions on obtaining legal status often put Syrians at risk of arrest, detention, and ill-treatment by the GS, and made them highly susceptible to work and sexual exploitation. At the same time, they resulted in increasing vulnerabilities and a growing reliance on humanitarian assistance. (Mansour 2017:5–6)

6.2.2.3 Impacts of refugees and the refugee response on Lebanon

While many Lebanese had initially welcomed Syrians in their communities, providing shelter, services and support, over the years of the crisis many communities stood at a critical point. Lebanon’s non-camp policy and the long phase of central government inaction had put municipalities at the forefront of managing the increasing influx of refugees and responding to emerging needs. (Janmyr 2016:61) Even before the arrival of refugees, municipalities had faced both political as well as financial and administrative challenges, resulting in their continued dependency on the central government despite recurring efforts for decentralization. (Democracy Reporting International 2017:4–7) The population increase by approximately 30 percent between 2011 and 2015, reaching 100 percent in some municipalities, thus placed enormous burdens on host communities, stretching already scarce resources and capacities and exacerbating many of the problems that had existed already prior to the crisis. (Cherri, Arcos González, and Castro Delgado 2016:169; Oxfam 2015:5; UNDP and Mercy Corps 2015:6)

In particular the provision of basic services posed a growing challenge for cash-strapped and understaffed local and municipal governments. Demand for water, for example, increased by 28 percent between 2011 and 2015. At the same time, water network coverage reduced from 80 percent pre-crisis to 48 percent in 2015, resulting in severe water shortages. In the same period, waste water increased by 8 to 14 percent, challenging a system in which 92 percent of sewage was not being treated. As a result,

waste water pollution increased significantly. (Cherri, Arcos González, and Castro Delgado 2016:169; Government of Lebanon and UN 2015:15–16)

Furthermore, the level and quality of solid waste management declined visibly. In some areas, solid waste generation doubled, contributing to groundwater contamination, pollution of water resources and spread of water-borne disease, and leading to an increased municipal spending on waste disposal by 40 percent between 2012 and 2013 alone. Increased demand for electricity, too, not only resulted in additional costs estimated at USD 500-580 million between 2012 and 2014, but also exacerbated the sector's structural deficiencies, including high losses and low efficiency which overall resulted in poor reliability and inadequate levels of supply. (Cherri, Arcos González, and Castro Delgado 2016:169; Government of Lebanon and UN 2015:15–16; Le Borgne and Jacobs 2016:22)

Both the health care and the education system were affected by the influx of Syrians, too. Health clinics reported increased caseloads of at least 50 percent over the course of 2012 and 2013. Even though the government and UNHCR provided additional medical and financial support, this did not match the new situation: Shortages of both qualified health workers, and equipment and medication resulted in overcrowding, long waiting times and a reduced quality of care. As a result, cases of communicable diseases rose sharply, new diseases emerged, and the risk of epidemics increased. Further exacerbating the situation was the widespread perception that Syrians got preferential access to, and treatment in, Lebanese healthcare centers and hospitals, and that resources traditionally used to support health needs of poor Lebanese communities got diverted towards supporting refugees, which contributed to tensions between locals and Syrians. (Cherri, Arcos González, and Castro Delgado 2016:169; Le Borgne and Jacobs 2016:21; World Vision 2013:14–15)

Free access for refugees to public education services (in a sector that has traditionally been largely privatized with only 30 percent of total Lebanese students being accommodated in public schools) led to significant increases in numbers of students, many of whom required additional support. As a result, fiscal costs increased, while the quality of education for all children decreased. Many Lebanese also perceived Syrian children to receive more support for education than equally poor Lebanese families, even though evidence on this was missing. (Le Borgne and Jacobs 2016:21; World Bank Group et al. 2013:3; World Vision 2013:15)

Besides a decrease in quality and access to public and social services, living costs and rental prices were rising. Rental prices, for instance, in some areas increased by as much as 200 percent over a six-month period. Increased demand without any additional supply entering the market further resulted in significant food price increases. (World Vision 2013:13–14)

At the same time, unemployment, already high prior to the crisis, kept rising. Lebanese youth were particularly affected, one-third of whom were unemployed. An increase in labor force by an estimated 50 percent between 2011 and 2014 meant increased competition over jobs, with Syrians willing to work for much lower wages than the Lebanese population. The fact that most Syrians were employed informally and did not have to pay taxes, as well as the international response that provided Syrians with food vouchers and accommodation support, was perceived as exacerbating this situation. (Government of Lebanon and UN 2015:9; World Vision 2013:13)

While some host community members benefited economically from the influx of refugees, for instance from the availability of cheap labor or through renting out land or living space, this was limited to a small number of middle class and wealthy individuals. In general, the poorest communities which, due to a generally lower cost of living, also hosted the most refugees, were feeling the greatest strain. (World Vision 2013:13) Altogether, poverty levels increased: Between 2011 and 2014, some 170,000 Lebanese were pushed into poverty, in addition to the 28 percent of Lebanese citizens that had been living under the poverty line of USD 3.84 per day already prior to the crisis, exacerbating economic inequalities between different communities and between rich and poor. Besides an increase of negative coping mechanisms such as child labor and child trafficking, the utilization of health and social programs within

Lebanon's social safety nets system rose by 40 percent. (Le Borgne and Jacobs 2016:21; Government of Lebanon and UN 2015:15; World Bank Group et al. 2013:3)

These developments became visible on a macro-economic level as well. Insecurity and the perception of possible conflict spillovers profoundly affected investor and consumer confidence, resulting in lower economic activity which in turn put downward pressure on government revenues and damaged Lebanon's structurally weak public finances. (Le Borgne and Jacobs 2016:20) Between 2010 and 2014, GDP growth decreased from 10 percent to 1 percent. At the same time, total budgetary spending by the government increased by an estimated USD 1.1 billion through end-2014, mostly due to the sharp increase in demand for public services. (Le Borgne and Jacobs 2016:20–21) From 2012 on, Lebanon's debt-to-GDP ratio started to rise, halting the country's previous remarkable progress in reducing its debt ratio since 2006 and augmenting to 141 percent of GDP in 2013. (Cherri, Arcos González, and Castro Delgado 2016:168–169; Le Borgne and Jacobs 2016:20–21)

Altogether, with conditions in the country and in host communities worsening, locals increasingly perceived the humanitarian response as being carried out to the detriment of poor Lebanese citizens who felt excluded from the response. (UNDP and Mercy Corps 2015:17) In a 2013 national poll, approximately 50 percent of interviewees believed that Syrians were benefiting from financial aid in an unfair manner. (Cherri, Arcos González, and Castro Delgado 2016:169) There was widespread perception that Syrians were "given everything for free" while "no one [was] helping" Lebanese, even though many of them were "poorer than the refugees" (World Vision 2013:16). Altogether, the humanitarian response was perceived as attracting even more refugees and as encouraging reproduction in order to take advantage of targeted benefits. (UNDP and Mercy Corps 2015:18) Additionally, many of those receiving support were perceived as having lived and worked in Lebanon for many years already, now claiming benefits even though they were 'economic migrants' rather than 'real refugees'. (World Vision 2013:16)

Altogether, in the public discourse, previously prevalent references to hospitality were replaced with the notion of displacement as a burden. (Fakhoury 2017:686) In particular in less affluent host communities, resentment and tensions between the local population and Syrians began to rise. This increasingly negative stance on refugees was accompanied by a growing perception of Syrians as a security threat: In the mentioned 2013 national poll, 52 percent of interviewees regarded Syrians as threatening national stability and security. A series of 29 suicide bombings and assassinations taking place between October 2012 and November 2015 further reinforced this perception. (Cherri, Arcos González, and Castro Delgado 2016:169) As a way to manage fears and social tensions, at least 45 municipalities across Lebanon imposed curfews for Syrians, effectively limiting their freedom of movement. Furthermore, informal security networks and vigilante groups formed, in which young Lebanese males conducted patrols to identify 'suspicious' security threats and to regulate disputes between refugees and locals. (Fakhoury 2017:687; Mourad 2017:262–263; Oxfam 2015:13)

Thus, altogether, the general attitude towards refugees increasingly hardened, both on the political level with the policy changes starting in October 2014 as well as within the Lebanese population. The influx of over one million refugees into a country of roughly four million had put enormous pressure on the country and exacerbated structural challenges that often predated the crisis. Four years after the influx of Syrians had started, negative effects could be felt in almost every sector of daily life. The perception that international aid was channeled exclusively to Syrians who supposedly lived in better conditions than many Lebanese themselves led to a growing frustration and discontent among many host communities, increasing the risk of tensions and violence.

6.2.2.4 Stabilization Measures

In order to address the challenges that host communities and Lebanon as a whole were facing, several developments took place during that phase. First of all, UNDP in mid-2013 started to implement its so-called 'Lebanon Stabilization and Recovery Program', a comprehensive program with the explicit aim

of supporting communities hosting Syrian refugees. Acknowledging Lebanon's open border policy and solidarity, and recognizing the enormous burden this had placed on municipalities, UNDP stipulated that "no country should ever be asked to carry such a burden alone" and that international support was needed to "boost the resilience of these communities" and to "strengthen their capacity to manage the crisis" (UNDP 2014c:1). Under this framework, the so-called 'Lebanon Host Communities Support Programme' (LHSP) became UNDP's "flagship program" (UNDP 2017:11). Focusing on municipalities with the highest ratio of refugees to host community members, the program aimed to build resilience by increasing livelihoods and economic opportunities, strengthening capacities of local and national actors to deliver basic services, and improving community stability through community-based programming. During 2013 alone, approximately 100 projects were implemented across the country in cooperation with MoSA, encompassing different sectors including public health, infrastructure, waste and water management, and livelihoods, and targeting 1.2 million Lebanese as well as 500,000 Syrian refugees. (UNDP 2014c:5)

Around the same time, in July 2013, the World Bank conducted a rapid 'Economic and Social Impact Assessment' of the Syrian conflict on Lebanon in order for the country to be able to define both its needs and priorities with regard to international assistance and its own national policy response. The report that was drafted by the World Bank in cooperation with the UN, the EU and the IMF provided a detailed assessment of selected, highly impacted sectors, estimating that an additional spending of USD 2.5 billion would be necessary for stabilization, defined as reinstating the access to, and quality of, public services to their pre-crisis level. (World Bank Group et al. 2013:1) Two months later, in September 2013, an 'International Support Group for Lebanon' was set up, comprising, besides the government of Lebanon, governments of various other countries as well as representatives from UNHCR, UNDG and the World Bank. Aside from assistance for the Lebanese Army, the Group was to help mobilize support for Lebanon's stability, including support for Syrian refugees, host communities, and government programs and public services affected by the Syria crisis. (UN Secretary-General 2013)

Following the first meeting of the International Support Group, and based on the findings of the Economic and Social Impact Assessment, in November 2013 the Lebanese government with the support of the World Bank and the UN published the so-called 'Lebanon Roadmap of Priority Interventions for Stabilization from the Syrian Conflict' as a reference point for the international community in its support for the country. The Roadmap outlined a preliminary set of prioritized recommendations for Lebanon "to stabilize and consolidate from the adverse impact of the Syrian conflict on Lebanon and its population" (Government of Lebanon 2013:3) and focused on three strategic objectives: creating economic and livelihood opportunities and an enabling environment for private sector engagement; expanding access to and quality of sustainable basic public services; and strengthening social cohesion. For the first time, the Roadmap thus allowed development priorities to be viewed in parallel with humanitarian needs, as both were perceived to be directly linked to access to basic services, to economic opportunities, and to the ability of vulnerable communities to cope with the crisis. Altogether, the Roadmap was regarded as building on the UN's RRP "as a simultaneous priority to strengthen Lebanon's resilience with immediate results, while accelerating development investments" (Government of Lebanon 2013:3). Therefore, both frameworks were to be closely coordinated to ensure complementarity and avoid duplication and gaps. (Government of Lebanon 2013:3)

Taking into account the unknown duration of the conflict in Syria, the Roadmap's recommendations included different 'tracks', referring to rapid delivery programs with an immediate impact, short- to medium-term programs requiring longer preparation or implementation time, and longer-term programs with the potential of leading to sectoral policy reforms. The last track was perceived as the most promising one with regard to large financial contributions to support Lebanon both in overcoming the current crisis and building a "multidimensional resilience and development program" (Government of Lebanon 2013:5). All three tracks aimed at directly alleviating the impact on the government's budget, while a parallel forth track focused on increased private sector engagement in order to address labor market needs and strengthen service delivery. (Government of Lebanon 2013:4-5)

All measures were to be implemented in parallel, aiming to strengthen the link between humanitarian needs of Syrian refugees and host communities and the longer-term development objectives of the country. Altogether, the Roadmap aimed “to strengthen Lebanon’s resilience” by “coping with the increased demand on basic services”, “recovering from downward economic trends”, and “sustaining institutions and capacities to anticipate, prevent and effectively manage future shocks, that is reducing vulnerability to future crises” (Government of Lebanon 2013:5). With this terminology, the Roadmap strongly resembled the wording of the UNDG’s Position Paper on a resilience-based development response to the Syria crisis which was developed at the regional level at the same time, even though no direct reference to the plan or to developments taking place at the regional level was made.

In parallel, the RRP6 was developed under the leadership of UNHCR. The Lebanon chapter of the plan that was launched in December 2013, besides traditional measures aimed at refugees also put new focus on strengthening capacities in government institutions impacted the most by the influx of refugees as well as supporting host communities, prioritizing areas with both high concentrations of poor Lebanese and high numbers of Syrian refugees. Implementing partners were to include host communities across all programs and in particular through community support projects implemented in close coordination with the Lebanese government at the national and the local level. Thus, in addition to humanitarian appeals, the plan comprised several stabilization priorities, including inter alia the strengthening of the public health and national education system, support for the ‘National Poverty Targeting Program’ and support for municipal waste management. The plan also specifically referred to UNDP’s Host Community Support Programme and to the Stabilization Roadmap, to which all institutional and community support interventions were to correspond. (UN 2013f:8–9)

6.2.2.5 The Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP)

Despite these measures explicitly aimed at Lebanese host communities and at strengthening national and local capacities, concerns that host communities had reached a critical point, jeopardizing Lebanon’s stability, increased. Within that context, and parallel to discussions at the regional level to develop a new response plan that would be based on the concept of resilience and focus more on development, the formulation process for a so-called ‘Lebanon Crisis Response Plan’ (LCRP) started, guided by a multi-partner Core Group that included the Lebanese government, UN agencies, national and international NGOs and the civil society. Over the planning process, consultations with further stakeholders and actors, including beneficiaries and community-based organizations were held to discuss planning assumptions, sectoral activities and priorities. In a series of consultative workshops, concepts around dimensions of vulnerability in Lebanon were developed and refined. (Government of Lebanon and UN 2014:92) Overall, the new plan was to address vulnerabilities of both Syrian refugees and poor Lebanese, and to increase “attention and investments for Lebanon’s needs – strengthening the link between international humanitarian aid for those displaced by Syria’s conflict and Lebanon’s national stability” (Government of Lebanon and UN 2014:1).

In September 2014, a workshop was held by the UN Resident Coordinator in Lebanon, supported by the UNDP Sub-Regional Facility, Mercy Corps and the OECD, bringing together 60 representatives from line ministries, international and national NGOs, donors, and the UN, and comprising both humanitarian and development actors. The workshop’s overall objective was to explore how to support stabilization in Lebanon. In order to create a common understanding and vision of stabilization, the workshop introduced and defined key terminology, such as ‘shocks’ and ‘capacities’, focusing in particular on the differences between ‘absorptive’, ‘adaptive’ and ‘transformative’ capacities. Based on this framework, participants developed a list of suggested action to support stabilization and reinforce the resilience of key resources and capacities needed to “absorb, adapt and transform in the face of risks related to the crisis in Syria” (OECD, UN, and UNDP 2014:1), that fed into the planning for the new response plan.

A few months later, on December 15, 2014, the LCRP was officially launched by the Lebanese government and the UN. Outlining the planned response for a time period of two years (2015-2016), the plan appealed for USD 2.14 billion. This amount was calculated based on inputs from different agencies

for measures focusing on the provision of urgent humanitarian aid to both refugees and poor Lebanese communities, investments in the quality of basic services, and addressing pressures facing Lebanon's economy and communities. With these three dimensions, the plan reflected a shift from an emergency and purely humanitarian response (as outlined in the RRP) to a longer-term development approach which gave national and local authorities a new and more prominent role. (Boustani et al. 2016:15; Mountain 2014) In his remarks, the UN RC/HC to Lebanon stressed the importance of all three dimensions for preserving the stability of Lebanon, stating that "integrated humanitarian and stabilization programs that reinforce and build on each other create more value for everyone" (Mountain 2014). In that sense, he regarded the LCRP as a "comprehensive plan" and as "an important milestone" (Mountain 2014). This sentiment was reinforced by the Lebanese Prime Minister, Tamam Salam, who described the LCRP as a "wake-up call" for donors (Salam 2014). Stressing that "it took [...] time to get across the message that humanitarian assistance for Syrians was not the only answer", he emphasized that, by reflecting a holistic view on dealing with the situation in the country, complementing humanitarian assistance for Syrians with support for host communities and development assistance, the LCRP finally was "an adequate vehicle to address Lebanon's plight" (Salam 2014). In particular, he emphasized the role of UNDP and the World Bank as "instrumental in helping us [the government of Lebanon] drive home this paradigm change" (Salam 2014).

Partly, the LCRP was included in the 3RP as the Lebanon country chapter. Contrary to Jordan, however, where the government's Jordan Response Plan in its entirety comprised the 3RP country chapter for Jordan, the LCRP was slightly changed and included in an adapted and shortened version. (Government of Lebanon and UN 2014; UNHCR and UNDP 2014)

In mid-2015, a Joint Technical Task Force (JTF) was created, consisting of representatives of the Lebanese government, the UN, the donor community, and national and international NGOs, responsible, inter alia, for overseeing the planning process for a follow-up plan for 2016. While the Crisis Cell ministries and the UN Humanitarian Country Team provided strategic guidance on overarching policy issues, a Core Planning Team (comprised of representatives from the government, UN and NGOs) was responsible for drafting the narrative section of the plan and for coordinating with sectoral steering committees in developing the sector response plans. (Government of Lebanon and UN 2015:136) In December 2015, the second LCRP was launched, referring to the same time period as the first one (2015-2016). Contrary to the first LCRP, appeals were now calculated based on needs and targets specified in each sector, altogether appealing for USD 2.48 billion. (Boustani et al. 2016:15; Government of Lebanon and UN 2015:3) Not included in these requirements was direct budget support for the Lebanese government. According to donors, this was due to "the political vacuum created by the inability of parliament to elect a president of the republic and ratify resolutions in addition to widespread and flagrant charges of corruption" (Boustani et al. 2016:15). The plan now comprised in its entirety the Lebanon country chapter of the 3RP and was understood as serving "as a transitional phase into a longer term strategic framework for 2017-2020" (Government of Lebanon and UN 2015:4).

Planning for this new framework officially started in August 2016. Over the next months, four multi-stakeholder workshops were held to "ensure ownership of the plan by the different constituencies" (Government of Lebanon and UN 2017:172), review progress made through the implementation of the two preceding plans, and provide feedback for the planning process. At the sector level, response strategies were developed by Sector Steering Committees convened by the relevant line ministries. (Government of Lebanon and UN 2017:172)

In January 2017, the new LCRP was formally launched as a multi-year plan, now covering a period of four years (2017-2020). Appeals were to be developed yearly, based on an annual review of needs and planning figures. For 2017, for instance, the plan appealed for USD 2.75 billion. (Government of Lebanon and UN 2017:9-10) While for 2018 the overall strategy, sector plans and objectives of the plan stayed the same, the updated plan called for USD 2.68 billion in funding. (Government of Lebanon and UN 2018:10)

6.2.2.6 *Developments outside the Response Plans*

While the LCRP constituted the main framework for the international response to the situation in Lebanon, it was not the only modality through which assistance for refugees or locals could be channeled. Rather, both humanitarian and development-oriented measures continued to be implemented outside the response framework, too, with the LCRP representing only one way of appealing for funds.

Moreover, in the years after launching the LCRP, several other national and international initiatives were developed with regard to responding to the effects of the Syria crisis in Lebanon. While they were not directly linked to the LCRP, they still affected the overall framework within which the response took place. The following three subchapters will outline the most relevant ones.

6.2.2.6.1 The EU-Lebanon Partnership

In late 2015 and early 2016, as DFID and the World Bank negotiated the details of an agreement with Jordan, later to become known as the Jordan Compact (see also [Chapter 6.1.2.5.1](#)), delegations from both agencies visited Lebanon as well. However, they quickly came to the conclusion that a similar agreement with Lebanon would not be possible in the prevailing political situation: Not only had there been no president in office for almost two years and no parliamentary election been held for seven years, politicians were also only united in their efforts to push for Syrians to leave the country. As a result, it was decided “to keep Lebanon in the conversation but to focus the international effort on Jordan” (Howden, Patchett, and Alfred 2017:2).

Thus, while at the London Conference in February 2016 the Jordan Compact was signed, including concrete commitments from both Jordan and the EU, Lebanon only published a Statement of Intent, making some broad commitments to review existing regulatory frameworks regarding residency conditions and work authorizations for refugees. For instance, funding was requested for a ‘Subsidized Temporary Employment Programme’ (STEP), promoted as creating new permanent jobs for Lebanese as well as temporary jobs for Syrians, providing financial and non-financial services for businesses to carry out necessary investments, and stimulating overall economic growth. (Government of Lebanon 2016:1–2; Howden, Patchett, and Alfred 2017:13, 15) Generally, however, Lebanon’s rhetoric at the conference revolved around the description of a disaster and about managing internal conflicts, but contained no vision of how to deal with the situation. (Howden, Patchett, and Alfred 2017:13)

Nevertheless, in November 2016 the EU and Lebanon adopted Partnership Priorities for the coming four years as well as an EU-Lebanon Compact worth about USD 470 million in aid. While migration and mobility constituted one focus area of the Partnership Priorities⁶¹, the Compact included commitments through which both parties were to fulfil the pledges made at the London Conference, overall focusing on improving the living conditions of both refugees and vulnerable host communities. (Council of EU 2016; Howden, Patchett, and Alfred 2017:13) This was to be achieved by addressing humanitarian needs, within a broader context of strengthening the resilience of Lebanon’s economy and infrastructures and generating jobs. Overall, however, commitments remained vague: While the EU committed “to be particularly mindful to the development needs of Lebanon”, Lebanon pledged “to continue seeking [...] ways to facilitate the streamlining of regulations governing [displaced persons]’ stay, [...] with a view to easing their controlled access to the job market in sectors where they [were] not in direct competition with Lebanese” (Official Journal of the EU 2016:121). Apart from that, no concrete commitments regarding specific measures or the number of jobs to be created were made. (Official Journal of the EU 2016)

⁶¹ Other focus areas included in the Partnership Priorities referred to security and countering terrorism, governance and the rule of law, and fostering growth and job opportunities. (Official Journal of the EU 2016)

6.2.2.6.2 Concessional Financing Facility

Another development taking place in parallel was the establishment of the Concessional Financing Facility (CFF) in April 2016 by the World Bank, the Islamic Development Bank, the UN and several other organizations (see also [Chapter 6.1.2.5.2](#)). Overall, the Facility aimed at ensuring predictable medium- to long-term financing to support development projects that would benefit refugees and host communities in Jordan and Lebanon. In Lebanon, projects were to focus in particular on economic development and large infrastructure projects. Paying regard to the high levels of unemployment, insufficient employment opportunities and a largely informal economy, the Facility was regarded as a means to “pioneer an integrated approach to private sector job creation, improve access to jobs by vulnerable groups, and strengthen resilience in response to the Syrian refugee crisis” (World Bank Group 2018b:27). Out of the seven first projects supported by the Facility overall, two were proposed for Lebanon and approved by the CFF Steering Committee in 2016 and 2017, among them the ‘Lebanon Roads and Employment Project’ that focused on transport infrastructure and was envisaged to create 1.5 million work days for Lebanese and Syrian workers in the construction industry as well as additional jobs in supply chain industries, engineering and consultancies. Additionally, a ‘Health Resilience Project’ was approved, aiming at increasing access to quality health care for over 700,000 poor Lebanese and Syrians. (World Bank Group 2017:5)

Overall, the launch of the Facility was welcomed by the Lebanese government who regarded it as “a validation from [...] international partners that [...] Lebanon has provided a global public good deserving of exceptional and unprecedented support” and as “an important step in the right direction” (World Bank Group 2017:v).

6.2.2.6.3 CEDRE Conference

Finally, in the aftermath of Prime Minister Saad Hariri’s resignation announced from Saudi Arabia on 4 November 2017, the International Support Group for Lebanon scheduled a conference to be hosted by France in April 2018. The so-called ‘CEDRE Conference’ (Conférence Economique pour le Développement par les Reformes et avec les Entreprises) brought together the Lebanese Prime Minister (who had rescinded his resignation on December 5, 2017) with donor countries and the private sector. While the Conference, as a successor of three previous economic support conferences held for Lebanon in Paris in 2001, 2002 and 2007, explicitly focused on Lebanon’s plans for economic development and reform, this was understood in the wider context of Lebanon providing a global public good on behalf of the international community in hosting Syrian refugees. (Ouazzani 2019; World Bank Group 2018b:28)

Overall, the conference aimed at securing funding for the Lebanese government’s new ‘Capital Investment Program’ (CIP). The CIP was understood as “a key pillar of the Government’s vision for stabilization and development against the background of the Syrian crisis and the effects this has had on Lebanon” (Government of Lebanon 2018a:i). Overall, it comprised 271 projects, mainly focusing on infrastructure development and rehabilitation in the energy, water, waste management, and transport sectors. Their implementation was perceived as crucial for economic growth, private sector productivity, and the creation of employment opportunities “for a large and growing youth population and for displaced persons” (Government of Lebanon 2018a:1). In particular in light of the program’s focus on infrastructure, several economists argued that projects would by nature attract Syrian refugees. (Salman 2019) Overall, the costs of the first four year-cycle of the CIP were estimated at USD 10.8 billion, to be funded by external lenders and donors or private investors. (Government of Lebanon 2018a:i, 130)

In order to convince the international community of the CIP and secure funding, Lebanon at CEDRE presented a reform program, the so-called ‘Vision for Stabilization, Growth and Employment’. The Vision was based on four pillars: increasing public investment, ensuring economic and financial stability through fiscal adjustment, undertaking sectoral and structural reforms to ensure sustainability and good

governance, and developing a strategy for the diversification of Lebanon's productive and services sectors. (Government of Lebanon 2018b:3)

Overall, Lebanon was able to secure pledges exceeding USD 11 billion at CEDRE, including USD 10.2 billion in loans and USD 860 million in grants. (Irish and Pennetier 2018) However, in contrast to previous conferences, funding packages were made conditional on the implementation of the budgetary and sectoral reforms outlined in the Vision for Stabilization, Growth and Employment, and were limited to financing projects rather than including budgetary aid. (Ouazzani 2019)

By Hariri's advisor, the CIP was portrayed as "a win-win solution" to "turn the crisis to an opportunity" (Howden, Patchett, and Alfred 2017:18). This notion was dismissed by others, including Yasser Akkaoui, business publisher and chairman of the Lebanese Center for Policy Studies⁶², who pointed to corruption, regarding the Lebanese government as being "more busy seeing how they can steal the money than seeing how they can create jobs for Lebanese or Syrians" (Howden, Patchett, and Alfred 2017:18).

Overall, all of these developments lying outside the LCRP as the UN-led response framework had in common that they focused more and more on the overall economic situation in Lebanon, prioritizing the creation of employment opportunities and economic growth, rather than focusing on humanitarian and development assistance for refugees and locals or on capacity-development of Lebanese authorities and institutions.

6.2.3 Response framework

As the focus of this thesis lies on the resilience-based approach to the situation introduced with the LCRP as the 3RP country chapter, the following subchapters will analyze the LCRP in more detail. Different subchapters will focus on its rationale, objectives and structure as well as on key actors and funding.

6.2.3.1 *Rationale*

The LCRP in its entirety was framed around the recognition that, four years into the conflict in Syria, communities in Lebanon had reached a critical point by hosting large numbers of Syrians. It argued that the provision of services and support to hundreds of thousands of refugees had exacerbated needs that often had been high already before the crisis. It further argued that Lebanese communities had been "among the biggest donors to the relief effort for Syria's displaced", and that vulnerable Lebanese felt they were "paying a disproportionate price for another country's conflict" (Government of Lebanon and UN 2014:1). According to the plan's line of argument, it was thus "only fair" that their needs for work and services were addressed in turn (Government of Lebanon and UN 2014:1).

Pointing to overwhelmed public services, faltering economic growth, rising unemployment and increasing social tensions, it was further argued that even though Lebanon had remained resilient so far, its fragile stability was at risk and that a "reinforced, consolidated and tailored effort to tackle long-term inequities and development gaps in the context of an ongoing humanitarian crisis [...] [was] essential to Lebanon's ongoing peace, stability, and potential" (Government of Lebanon and UN 2014:10).

At the same time, the plan also acknowledged that, despite the ongoing international assistance, many needs of Syrian refugees still remained unmet and vulnerabilities were growing. (Government of Lebanon and UN 2014:1, 10)

Therefore, existing efforts to integrate humanitarian measures within a broader program of support to Lebanon itself as outlined already in the RRP6 were to be replicated and scaled up in the new plan. Thus, the LCRP was explicitly understood as serving the "collective aims for Lebanon's poor and

⁶² The Lebanese Center for Policy Studies has been founded in 1989 as "an independently managed, non-partisan, non-profit, non-governmental think tank whose mission is to produce and advocate policies that improve governance in Lebanon and the Arab region" (LCPS 2020).

Syria's displaced families" and as "strengthening the link between international humanitarian aid for those displaced by Syria's conflict and Lebanon's national stability" (Government of Lebanon and UN 2014:1). Consequently, on the one hand relief and protection programs were to be continued, targeting both the displaced from Syria and the poorest Lebanese. On the other hand, these measures were to be complemented with increased attention for Lebanon's needs, focusing on investments in service and social welfare systems, job creation and conflict mitigation. (Government of Lebanon and UN 2014:1)

In particular, the plan recognized that sustained international assistance to Lebanon had to "generate meaningful gains for national stability and governance" (Government of Lebanon and UN 2014:11). With this focus, the plan for the first time included an explicit focus on stabilization, with the approach being understood as an "integrated humanitarian and stabilization strategy" (Government of Lebanon and UN 2014:19) that linked a humanitarian response (targeted at both displaced and locals) with a broader response strategy to support Lebanon's own wellbeing and stability by addressing the coping capacity of communities as well as deeper-rooted development gaps. Interventions from both response areas were not only to be integrated, but mutually reinforcing each other. (Government of Lebanon and UN 2014:19–21)

6.2.3.2 Objectives

Overall, the first LCRP (2015) set up three strategic objectives:

- (1) "Ensure humanitarian assistance and protection for the most vulnerable among the displaced from Syria and the poorest Lebanese", addressing the capacity "to cope with the worst effects of poverty and displacement",
- (2) "Strengthen the capacity of national and local delivery systems to expand access to and quality of, basic public services", addressing the capacity of national and local governments and authorities "to close long-standing gaps in quality public services for Lebanese poor while also expanding access for the de facto refugees from Syria",
- (3) "Reinforce Lebanon's economic, social, institutional and environmental stability" by "expand[ing] economic and livelihood opportunities benefiting local economies and vulnerable communities" and "promot[ing] confidence-building measures within and across institutions and communities to strengthen Lebanon's capacities", therefore addressing "the capacity of Lebanon's institutions, local economies, environment and communities to protect Lebanon's stability during and after the crisis" (Government of Lebanon and UN 2014:20).

These objectives stayed the same for the updated LCRP for 2016. In 2017, they were rephrased and restructured, now being subdivided into four objectives that split up the first objective into two separate aims, focusing on the protection of vulnerable populations and on the provision of immediate assistance, respectively. (Government of Lebanon and UN 2017:16)

6.2.3.3 Structure

The response was divided into nine sectors: Basic Assistance, Education, Food Security, Health, Protection, Shelter, WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene), Livelihoods, and Social Stability. Thus, while the strategy covered the same sectors as the previous RRP6, now Livelihoods and Social Stability (in the RRP6 termed 'Social Cohesion') composed two separate sectors. (Government of Lebanon and UN 2014:32; UN 2013f:1) In 2016, Energy was added as a new component to the Water sector (Government of Lebanon and UN 2015:25) and made a separate sector in 2017 (Government of Lebanon and UN 2017:10). For each sector, an overall sector strategy as well as outcomes, outputs and indicators were outlined. Altogether, the LCRP was understood as an integrated plan, meaning that each sector included both humanitarian and stabilization measures, without categorizing them as falling under one specific category. Targeted populations in both types of measures included both displaced Syrians and vulnerable Lebanese as well as Palestinian refugees in Lebanon and from Syria. While the number of displaced Syrians targeted for protection and direct assistance was higher compared to vulnerable

Lebanese, this ratio changed in activities related to service delivery, economic recovery and social stability (see, for instance, Government of Lebanon and UN 2018:15).

Each sector response further outlined linkages to other sectors, including fields and forms of collaboration and coordination. Furthermore, starting in 2016, different ‘cross-cutting issues’ that had been identified as key priorities by all partners were to be mainstreamed across all sectors. In 2016, these included ‘Conflict Sensitivity’, ‘Gender, Youth, People with Specific Needs’, and ‘Environment’. From 2017 on, they were further specified, making ‘Gender’ and ‘Youth’ two separate categories and complementing them with ‘Urban Areas’ and ‘Accountability to Affected Populations’. However, while the latter two were formulated as new cross-cutting issues in the strategic outline of the response, they were not referred to further in the individual sector response plans. (Government of Lebanon and UN 2015; Government of Lebanon and UN 2017:24–25)

6.2.3.4 Actors and coordination

Over the course of the RRP in Lebanon, a complex coordination structure had been established in the country. Overall, the response with regard to refugees had been led by UNHCR on the one hand according to the Refugee Coordination Model (see also [Chapter 2.2](#)), and a newly established Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) on the other hand, responsible for humanitarian concerns which, in fact, were dominated by the refugee influx. At the same time, a UN Country Team (UNCT) that had been active in Lebanon already before the crisis, continued its programming which was based on desired development outcomes approved by the Lebanese government. (Kelley 2017:92–93)

For the first phase of the LCRP, the plan was to adopt these coordination structures, with the aim of “aligning them to a more stabilization-orientated response under the Government’s lead” (Government of Lebanon and UN 2014:28).

Apart from that, the overall leadership and oversight of the response formally rested with the Lebanese government through the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) and the UN RC/HC. The two entities co-chaired a LCRP Steering Committee that brought together further line ministries and other public institutions as well as humanitarian and stabilization response partners across the UN, international and national NGOs, and donors. Additionally, in 2016 a new ministry, the Ministry of State for Displaced Affairs (MoSDA), was established in order to corral different line ministries’ agendas, even though the overall leadership of the response remained with MoSA.

The individual sector responses were developed by Sector Steering Committees that were led by line ministries and composed of UN agencies, NGOs, donors, and other concerned ministries and public institutions as well as the civil society and private sector where necessary. They also provided relevant information to partners and facilitated the implementation of projects. In this they were supported by sector working groups that contributed to and reported on the technical and operational coordination of sector-specific issues including monitoring of progress and sharing of information, experiences and challenges.

Finally, an Inter-Sector Working Group under the leadership of MoSA and co-chaired by UNHCR and UNDP coordinated the different sectors and reported to the LCRP Steering Committee. (Government of Lebanon and UN 2015:24–26; Government of Lebanon and UN 2018:21–22)

The response was implemented by a growing number of partners, increasing from 77 in 2015 to 123 in 2018, including UN agencies, national and international NGOs, public institutions, civil society and the private sector, with the vast majority of them being active in the Protection, Social Stability and Livelihood sectors. (Government of Lebanon and UN 2014:19; Government of Lebanon and UN 2018:15) Numerous international actors thereby also joined-up in the so-called ‘Lebanon Humanitarian International NGO Forum’ (LHIF), established already in 2012 in order to increase coordination, representation and advocacy of humanitarian actors. The Forum facilitated the representation of international NGOs in response leadership fora, contributed to the development of common member

positions, and mobilized different international NGOs to participate in joint initiatives. National NGOs, in turn, could not become members of the Forum. (LHIF 2019; I INGO Lebanon 1 2017)

Overall, the growing number of actors within the response created complex coordination structures, making it increasingly difficult to keep track of who was doing what as well as of possible ways to collaborate and form partnerships.

6.2.3.5 Funding

With regards to the funding of the response, the LCRP included only inter-agency appeals referring to the programmatic response implemented by response partners, but no appeals for direct budget support for the Lebanese government. While funding could still be slated for government entities, it thus had to be channeled through other funding streams. Generally, the majority of funding was channeled through international organizations which then dispensed the money further to implementing entities. At the same time, funding could be provided directly to response partners, including international and national NGOs, CBOs or private sub-contractors. (Culbertson et al. 2016:44, 46–47; Fakhoury 2017:691–692; Grunewald, Brangeon, and Karroum 2017:21–22)

The first two LCRP response plans outlined the overall funding requirements for humanitarian and stabilization measures separately. For the year 2016, for instance, from the total of USD 2.48 billion that were required for the response, 35 percent were called for stabilization measures, while 65 percent were required for humanitarian measures. (Government of Lebanon and UN 2015:4) This disaggregation of funding information was not continued from 2017 on, when funding requirements were generally presented as only one sum for all interventions covering both humanitarian and stabilization measures. Despite this missing information, it was widely acknowledged that funding for humanitarian programming remained much higher. (Culbertson et al. 2016:100; Grunewald, Brangeon, and Karroum 2017:16; I INGO Lebanon 1 2017; I UN Lebanon 3 2017; I UN Lebanon 4 2017) From the first LCRP on, in each sector response additionally funding requirements were listed according to specific sector outcomes. (Government of Lebanon and UN 2014:4; Government of Lebanon and UN 2015:4; Government of Lebanon and UN 2017:10; Government of Lebanon and UN 2018:10)

6.2.4 The LCRP as resilience-based response

As part of the 3RP, like the JRP in Jordan the response in Lebanon formally formed part of a resilience-based response framework which set the overall strategic direction of the response. This embedding within the same conceptual framework, however, did not mean that the response in Lebanon looked the same and unfolded the same way as in Jordan. Rather, the distinct national context and realities in Lebanon implied that the resilience-based response here, too, took up a specific form that was adjusted to, and affected by, these conditions.

The following two subchapters will focus on this specific manifestation of a resilience-based response. The first subchapter will examine how the concept of resilience was incorporated in the response in Lebanon; the second one will outline several key characteristics that ran through the response and further defined its strategic direction.

6.2.4.1 The concept of resilience

Initially, the new focus on resilience in the response was perceived as trickling down to the country level from the regional level, where, as part of the 3RP development process, in particular UNDP pushed for the concept and its wording in line with the organization's increased engagement in the response and its global tagline that referred to "Empowered lives. Resilient nations." (UNDP 2014d:2). (I UN Lebanon 3 2017; I UN Lebanon 4 2017) Following this pathway, in September 2014 the UN and OECD hosted a planning workshop in Lebanon that "fed the process of integrating resilience strategies into the LCRP framework" (Government of Lebanon and UN 2014:92). On the one hand, the workshop introduced and clarified key terminology related to resilience-programming. On the other hand, participants, including representatives of the Lebanese government, NGOs, civil society, donors and the UN used a system-

based methodology to conduct a risk and resilience analysis in order to identify priorities for action. (Government of Lebanon and UN 2014:14)

Parallel to these initial efforts to include ‘resilience’ in the response in Lebanon, however, a change of language appeared. Pushed for by the Lebanese government, over the following months the overall response was re-framed: Rather than focusing on ‘resilience’, the term ‘stabilization’ was introduced and put at the heart of the response. Overall, the strategy was subsumed under the heading “from vulnerability to stabilization” (Government of Lebanon and UN 2014:19). ‘Stabilization’ thereby was defined as “strengthening national capacities to address long-term poverty and social tensions while also meeting humanitarian needs” (Government of Lebanon and UN 2014:4).

Despite this reframing, references to ‘resilience’ remained. While the framework in general revolved around ‘vulnerability’ and ‘stability’, promoting the prioritization of factors that were most likely to affect the two aspects, it did so with the objective to “help communities and systems *cope* with current shocks, *recover* in the medium term, and *sustain* the value of investments in change” (Government of Lebanon and UN 2014:13, emphasis partly added). With this terminology, the strategy thus used the same wording as the resilience-based response developed at the regional level, however without actually referring to ‘resilience’.

This was taken up further in the division of the LCRP into three response areas, focusing on addressing “fundamental coping mechanisms”, building “capacity to recover”, and helping to “sustain investments in national capacities and service delivery” and tackling economic capacities (Government of Lebanon and UN 2014:21). In other words, the strategy focused on “promoting the ability of individuals, households, communities, and institutions to withstand and recover from shocks and stresses while achieving transformational change” (Government of Lebanon and UN 2015:137). Again, the strategy used terminology the same way as the regional framework on resilience, without explicitly referring to it.

At the same time, resilience was referred to in various sector responses as the endeavored outcome, for instance in Food Security (“improved resilience of the agriculture sector against food shocks” (Government of Lebanon and UN 2015:35)), Energy and Water (proposing “solutions that build resilience and return services to acceptable levels” (Government of Lebanon and UN 2015:50)), Health (“enhance[ed] [...] resilience of the health system” (Government of Lebanon and UN 2015:83)), Protection (measures aiming “to reduce vulnerabilities and enhance resilience” of children (Government of Lebanon and UN 2015:95)), and Shelter (activities to “strengthen the resilience of Lebanon, especially of the poor urban neighbourhoods” (Government of Lebanon and UN 2015:119)).

Moreover, the LCRP referred to the incorporation of priority measures articulated in the government’s ‘Roadmap of Priority Interventions for Stabilization from the Syrian Conflict’, one explicit objective of which was to “restore and build resilience in equitable access to and quality of sustainable public services” (Government of Lebanon and UN 2014:24). Furthermore, the plan stressed its coherence with the 2015 Dead Sea Resilience Agenda. (Government of Lebanon and UN 2015:21) The commitment to the Agenda’s core principles (see also Table 9) was emphasized further throughout the response: For instance, the plan in its entirety was understood as an “Integrated Humanitarian & Stabilization Strategy” (Government of Lebanon and UN 2014:4). Two of its strategic priorities focused on expanding economic and livelihood opportunities for vulnerable communities on the one hand, and on strengthening national and local capacities in order to improve service delivery and reduce dependence on international assistance, on the other hand. (Government of Lebanon and UN 2014:20, 27) Moreover, partnerships between different actors, including the private sector, were regarded as crucial to harmonize aid, develop more cost-efficient delivery systems and improve the quality of implementation. (Government of Lebanon and UN 2014:19) Lastly, albeit referring to ‘Social Stability’ rather than

‘Social Cohesion’⁶³, the aspect made up its own sector within the response framework, focusing on mitigating tensions and preventing conflict. (Government of Lebanon and UN 2014:74) Overall, thus, the LCRP incorporated all principles also outlined in the Agenda.

Table 9: Dead Sea Resilience Agenda - Core Principles

Dead Sea Resilience Agenda – Core Principles
• Integration of humanitarian and development planning
• Promotion of self-sufficiency
• Focus on capacity-development and use of existing systems
• Partnerships
• Social Cohesion

(UNDP and UNHCR 2015:18)

Altogether, the largely synonymous use of definitions as well as the promotion of the same key principles therefore revealed that the replacement of resilience terminology with stabilization was mostly about semantics. (I UN Lebanon 3 2017; I UN Lebanon 4 2017; I UN Lebanon 5 2019; I UN Lebanon 7 2019; I UN Regional 2 2018)

Different explanations exist for the changed wording: Some actors trace it back to the fact that the government did not want for Lebanon to be framed within a ‘resilience framework’ that referred to the country’s ability to absorb shocks any longer. In its history, Lebanon has been praised as resilient again and again in spite of civil wars, attacks from the outside, institutional deadlocks and periods of presidential void. (I LNGO Lebanon 2 2017; I UN Lebanon 3 2017; Mouawad 2017:2; UNDP and Mercy Corps 2015:17) In the context of the influx of Syrian refugees into the country, again Lebanon had continuously been praised for its resilience, including within the LCRP and at its launch in 2015. (Fakhoury 2017:682; UN 2014:10) For instance, the response framework in 2014 and 2015 noted that Lebanon had remained resilient despite the many challenges it was facing (Government of Lebanon and UN 2014:10; Government of Lebanon and UN 2015:3), and that local communities and displaced showed “remarkable resilience” (Government of Lebanon and UN 2015:125). This view was criticized not only by the government but also by various other actors including the civil society, response partners and academics who stressed that Lebanon, in fact, was not resilient but rather overwhelmed with the effects of the crisis and that the continued narrative of Lebanon’s resilience not only reinforced negative societal coping mechanisms that kept the system going, but also delayed much needed structural and political reforms. (I LNGO Lebanon 1 2017; I LNGO Lebanon 2 2017; I UN Lebanon 3 2017; Geha 2016; Mouawad 2017:9–10; UNDP and Mercy Corps 2015:17) In line with this argumentation, the government did not want to endorse a plan that put ‘resilience’ at center stage, fearing that it would further reinforce the outlined connotation and give the impression that Lebanon would be able to persevere as before. (I LNGO Lebanon 2 2017; I UN Lebanon 3 2017)

Others explained the rejection of the term with the Lebanese government’s fear that ‘resilience’ would imply a long-term crisis. According to them, for the government it was not clear, how, and for whom, resilience was to be achieved, giving rise to concerns that ‘resilience measures’ would be aimed at the economic and social integration of non-Lebanese, a notion that was strictly rejected. (Culbertson et al. 2016:19; I MoSA 2 2017; I MoSA 4 2019) Furthermore, the framing around stability and stabilization was perceived as being less confusing than ‘resilience’, a term that many individuals in ministries and authorities had heard for the first time in conferences held by the UN, leading to uncertainties what the term really meant and what the difference between stability, resilience and development was. (I MoSA 1 2017; I MoSA 3 2019) Again others referred to a directive from the government that rejected the term

⁶³ According to government officials, the Lebanese government referred to ‘social stability’ rather than ‘social cohesion’ as the latter would carry the notion of helping displaced Syrians build lives and stay in the country for the long-term. ‘Social stability’ on the other hand was perceived as focusing only on stabilization of the current situation, without implying support for Syrians to stay. (I MoSA 4 2019)

due to its translation into Arabic: When ‘resilience’ got translated, the same term as for ‘resistance’ was used – a term commonly associated with Hezbollah. As the government wanted to avoid this connotation, it pushed for a different term within the response. (I UN Lebanon 4 2017; I UN Lebanon 7 2019)

Overall confusion about resilience, however, was not limited to the Lebanese government. Other actors, too, had differing understandings of the aims and desired outcome of resilience-building. Perceptions differed so far as regarding resilience as an element of stability or of change. (Grunewald, Brangeon, and Karroum 2017:17; I MoSA 1 2017; I UN Lebanon 3 2017; I UN Lebanon 4 2017; UNDP and Mercy Corps 2015:10) Even UNDP representatives at the country level, albeit regarding resilience in general as a good initiative of the UNDP Sub-Regional Facility overall were not sure if the reliance on the concept would bring about the changes in the response it was hoping for. (I UN Lebanon 3 2017; I UN Lebanon 4 2017)

Regardless of which of the varied explanations was the decisive factor, as a result in practice the resilience terminology was largely replaced with ‘stabilization’. In particular UNDP which took up a new role in the response as the “lead UN agenc[y] for [...] stabilization responses” (Government of Lebanon and UN 2014:28) thereby emphasized that both terms, independent from their linguistic use, described concepts rather than categories referring to a cohort of people to target. Nevertheless, to a certain extent this is how it was interpreted within the LCRP, as the focus on stabilization explicitly included vulnerable Lebanese in the response to a much larger extent than previous response plans, with ‘stabilization’ measures generally understood as targeting more host communities. Overall, the framing around vulnerabilities and stabilization made it easier to call attention to the needs of host communities, too, and to include them more in the response, which was welcomed both by the government and response partners. (I LNGO Lebanon 2 2017; I MoSA 2 2017; I UN Lebanon 4 2017:4) At the same time, the new framing – regardless of exact terminology – was hoped to prove beneficial with regard to funding: Stabilization efforts within the response clearly referred to more development-oriented programming, which was to facilitate the appeal of funding from new and additional actors from the field of development cooperation. (I INGO Lebanon 2 2017; I LNGO Lebanon 2 2017; I UN Lebanon 3 2017; I UN Lebanon 4 2017)

At the same time, the new framing was regarded as sending a message to host communities and municipalities, showing them that their needs were acknowledged and that they were receiving assistance as well. In order to further stress this aspect, according to UN officials the UN even massaged figures to make it look like there was more stabilization-programming. (I UN Lebanon 3 2017; I UN Lebanon 4 2017)

For response partners, the introduction of the specific focus on stabilization in the response framework did not result in significant changes in field operations. However, they could now argue differently in project proposals, for instance urging on including vulnerable Lebanese as beneficiaries in programs by using the catchword of ‘resilience’ or ‘stabilization’ as a selling point to attract funding from donors. (Boustani et al. 2016:22; I INGO Lebanon 2 2017; I LNGO Lebanon 1 2017; I LNGO Lebanon 2 2017) Nevertheless, neither the concept of resilience nor of stabilization fully gained traction with response partners in Lebanon in the sense that they were making large-scale active use of it. Similarly, no resilience tools developed at the regional level such as the resilience marker or the resilience lens were referred to or used in the response. (I LNGO Lebanon 1 2017; I UN Lebanon 3 2017; I UN Lebanon 4 2017)

6.2.4.2 Strategic direction

Besides these references to ‘resilience’ and ‘stabilization’, the LCRP involved several aspects and recurrent themes that ran through the response. As in Jordan, on the one side, these aspects referred to more general principles in programming, including the promotion of an integrated approach with an increasing focus on development, a focus on national leadership and ownership, as well as on

partnerships and accountability issues. On the other hand, they referred to the response's new programmatic direction which focused in particular on capacity-development and economic opportunities, to be implemented through 'innovative' approaches. The extent to which these aspects manifested in practice, differed. The following subchapter will examine the different aspects, outlining their exposition in theory and investigating their translation into practice.

Bridging the gap – focus on development

First and foremost, the LCRP recognized that the scale of the challenges Lebanon was facing required “more than a traditional humanitarian intervention” (Government of Lebanon and UN 2015:1). Instead, the strategy promoted the inclusion of “a multifaceted range of interventions, from emergency aid to development assistance” (Government of Lebanon and UN 2017:8).

More precisely, besides a continued focus on humanitarian assistance, the plan emphasized the importance of interventions addressing the coping capacity of affected communities as well as deeper-rooted development gaps in the country. With this strategy, the plan was understood as “strengthening the link between humanitarian action and Lebanon’s own growth and development” (Government of Lebanon and UN 2015:19), with measures aiming at stabilization as the “transition towards longer-term development strategies” (Government of Lebanon and UN 2017:16). In that regard, the strategy also referred to the ‘Principles of Partnership’ as adopted by the ‘Global Humanitarian Platform’ in 2007, committing to “deliver collective outcomes that transcend the humanitarian – development divide” (Government of Lebanon and UN 2017:173).

The distinctive shift was welcomed by many response partners: On the one hand, the framework opened up new possibilities to include vulnerable Lebanese more in the response. While many response partners had started to do so already before the clear conception within the LCRP, the new framework made it easier to convince donors of that kind of programming, too. On the other hand, response partners endorsed the integrated character of the response, especially since a clear labelling of measures as either humanitarian or development-oriented was not perceived realistic anyway. In their view, the vast majority of activities included both humanitarian and development aspects already, reinforced by the non-camp policy of the Lebanese government: With refugees living among the local population, projects commonly benefitted both refugees and Lebanese, and simultaneously contributed to Lebanon’s overall stabilization, thus blurring the lines between what was considered traditional humanitarian assistance and more development-oriented measures. In line with this, the division between the two issues was perceived as tenuous, and as being made largely for and by donors. (Grunewald, Brangeon, and Karroum 2017:15, 17; I INGO Lebanon 2 2017; I LNGO Lebanon 2 2017; I LNGO Lebanon 3 2019; I UN Lebanon 3 2017)

Despite this general understanding among response partners, up until that point humanitarian measures, mostly within the refugee response, and larger-scale development measures had been dealt with mostly separately. Part of this was due to the complex coordination structure that had been established in the country, factually separating both issue areas and failing to bring actors from both sides together. (Kelley 2017:92–93) This was addressed by the LCRP’s new coordination structure that for the first time explicitly brought actors from both fields together in a single planning process.

In particular, a new co-leadership role was appointed to UNDP as a clear development actor. Even though the organization had a long-standing and well-respected presence in the country (Bonard, Sida, and Tjoflaat 2015:13; I LNGO Lebanon 2 2017), the office had remained small in the first years of the crisis, with only limited funding at its disposal. (I UN Lebanon 3 2017; Kelley 2017:93) With the LCRP, however, this changed, and the organization assumed a much bigger role: Besides taking the lead in several individual sectors⁶⁴, UNDP most importantly took up an inter-agency coordination role. Through that, the organization was to ensure that all activities under the LCRP supported the stabilization and

⁶⁴ These included the Social Stability sector, the Livelihoods sector, and the Energy sector.

recovery of Lebanon, aiming at an integrated approach within all measures. (I UN Lebanon 3 2017; UNDP 2017:9) In line with this new role, the organization started to work closely together with UNHCR on all aspects of the response. For instance, both agencies employed inter-sector coordinators who, on a daily basis, exchanged views and cooperated in both refugee and stabilization-focused issues, giving both agencies a good overview of what was going on in both response areas and enabling a better linkage of the two. (I UN Lebanon 7 2019)

At the same time, UNDP was regarded as an important actor to support authorities and municipalities to gradually take over from emergency arrangements and to return to ‘normal’ structures and mechanisms. (Bonard, Sida, and Tjoflaat 2015:13; I UN Lebanon 3 2017) This was especially important with regard to the LCRP’s objective not only to link humanitarian and development-oriented measures, but also to move towards more stabilization in general, entailing a shift away from an internationally-led response. This new focus was welcomed by many actors. At the same time, however, concerns were raised that the emphasis on stabilization might lead to a diversion of humanitarian funds to stabilization and development purposes and to a scaling down of emergency measures that were still urgently needed. Accordingly, the new focus was perceived as too early, with actors arguing that vulnerabilities were increasing, emergency needs such as lack of food persisted, and that a shift to more ‘stabilization’ would lead to negative coping mechanisms of vulnerable populations. (I INGO Lebanon 2 2017; I LNGO Lebanon 1 2017; I LNGO Lebanon 1 2017; I LNGO Lebanon 2 2017; I UN Lebanon 2 2017) This view was supported by different incidents: For instance, when an international organization abruptly had to halt a project for Syrian refugee children to attend school in 2015, as funds were to be relocated to assist Lebanese communities instead due to the new focus on stabilization, these children resorted to playing on the streets. (Mansour 2017:17) Another NGO was requested to stop operating its mobile medical unit which had been initiated as part of the humanitarian response to the refugee influx, due to concerns about creating parallel structures and dependencies. An emerging public health concern, however, finally demonstrated the pressing and continued need for the measure, resulting in the NGO taking up its work again. (Clough 2018:70)

On top of that, it was feared that, in the shift to more stabilization measures, humanitarian funds might go to public institutions that had their own political agenda, which could, in the worst case, result in a growing number of restrictive measures towards refugees. Concerns were raised that the focus on stabilization thus could unintentionally result not only in financially supporting measures to the detriment of refugees, but also in an approach not in line with humanitarian principles any more. (Grunewald, Brangeon, and Karroum 2017:17, 23–24; I LNGO Lebanon 1 2017)

Others, in turn, in particular local actors, perceived the focus on stabilization as not going far enough. While in their view the LCRP provided an adequate strategy for immediate needs, overall it was regarded as too small-scale and short-term focused, lacking a focus on sustainability and larger investments in the country. (Boustani et al. 2016:21–22; I MoSDA 1 2017)

Besides these different theoretical perspectives on the situation, the envisaged shift to more development was facing concrete practical constraints: Most response partners acting within the response had an emergency background, struggling to move to more stabilization interventions. Development partners already active in Lebanon on the other hand were in general slow to join the refugee response, often continuing their work just like before the crisis, rather than adjusting it to the new situation. (I LNGO Lebanon 2 2017; I MoSA 2 2017; Kelley 2017:91–93) This was due to several reasons: On the one hand, most existing programs were the result of long negotiations with the Lebanese government and could not easily be reoriented and adapted to the new realities in the country. On the other hand, development actors were facing political and structural obstacles hindering the mobilization of new funding, resulting in extremely limited budgets. (Darcy 2016:26; I LNGO Lebanon 2 2017; Kelley 2017:91–93) Partly, this was related to their funding cycles that differed from humanitarian appeals. More importantly, however, for many donors the general longer-term national strategy and operationalization of the response framework remained unclear, even after the introduction of the LCRP.

The plan was perceived as lacking both a clear vision of the challenges in the country and a clear strategy on how to address them, overall containing contradictions and remaining too theoretical and vague. This was combined with most donors' inherent wish to produce quick and tangible results, more easily achieved with short-term and humanitarian-focused programs. (I INGO Lebanon 1 2017; I LNGO Lebanon 2 2017; I UN Lebanon 6 2019; I UN Lebanon 7 2019)

As a result, even though disaggregated data on the amounts of funding going into humanitarian and stabilization measures was not publicly available, it was widely acknowledged that funding for humanitarian interventions remained much higher. Generally, donors demonstrated a lack of commitment to provide long-term funding for sectors that went beyond mostly humanitarian measures, such as the livelihoods, social stability, or shelter sectors, in which there was generally also more disagreement with the Lebanese government about specific interventions. Thus, while these sectors in general were growing, this was not happening as fast as anticipated by response partners. (Chemaly 2018; Grunewald, Brangeon, and Karroum 2017:16; I INGO Lebanon 1 2017; I LNGO Lebanon 2 2017; I UN Lebanon 6 2019; I UN Lebanon 7 2019)

This was reinforced by the fact that immediate needs were escalating. In light of general funding shortfalls, available resources were thus spent on the most vulnerable people and most immediate needs, leaving little room for measures that were more development-oriented. (Culbertson et al. 2016:100; Grunewald, Brangeon, and Karroum 2017:16; I INGO Lebanon 1 2017; I UN Lebanon 3 2017; I UN Lebanon 4 2017) On the contrary, this situation even resulted in the redistribution of funds that had originally been envisaged for development projects to emergency programs, causing discontent among the original beneficiaries, Lebanese host communities and local authorities. (I INGO Lebanon 2 2017; I UN Lebanon 6 2019; Kocks et al. 2018:114)

Besides these practical and situational aspects, however, the course of the response also revealed fundamental differences in the general interpretation of, and priority-setting within, the approach: In the government's understanding, stabilization measures referred to a focus on Lebanon. Priorities therefore included large-scale infrastructure projects or programs improving the overall economic situation of the country. (I MoSDA 1 2017; I UN Lebanon 4 2017; I UN Lebanon 3 2017) While these aspects were generally supported by the international community as well, actors here pushed for the inclusion of refugees in these measures, too. More long-term and sustainable programs for refugees, however, were generally rejected by the Lebanese government, related to concerns that they would encourage Syrians to stay in the country which was strongly rejected as outlined above. (Grunewald, Brangeon, and Karroum 2017:16; I UN Lebanon 6 2019) For instance, even after years into the crisis, water to refugees living in informal and semi-permanent settlements had to be delivered via water trucks, as no permanent infrastructure was to be established to serve refugees. (I LNGO Lebanon 3 2019; I UN Lebanon 5 2019; Walnycki 2017) The same held true for livelihoods activities for refugees, which the government only approved of to an extremely limited extent, as, again, they were perceived as contributing to refugees' longer-term stay. (Grunewald, Brangeon, and Karroum 2017:16; I LNGO Lebanon 3 2019; I UN Lebanon 5 2019; I UN Lebanon 6 2019) Overall, thus, the Lebanese government and the international community had different ideas regarding the notion of a more stabilization- and development-focused response.

As a result, even though the response became more integrated on the operational level, measures in general remained short-term to a large extent, with the majority of funding still supporting humanitarian issues. Thus, despite the rhetoric commitments to stabilization within the response framework, the response in practice did not follow through, lacking full commitment both from the Lebanese government and from donors, and overall failing to move to more resilient systems and structures.⁶⁵

⁶⁵ One sector constituted an exception: The approach within the education sector was widely regarded as a success in terms of linking humanitarian and development planning and moving towards stabilization and development. This was related to the two-fold objective of the approach, simultaneously benefiting refugees and the local population: to improve the quality of

Several developments from 2016 on gave rise to new hopes on the matter. The first one related to the London Conference in 2016, which many actors perceived to be a trigger for a broader and more nuanced shift to a more development-oriented approach. (Grunewald, Brangeon, and Karroum 2017:16; I INGO Lebanon 1 2017; I MoSA 2 2017; I LNGO Lebanon 2 2017; I UN Lebanon 4 2017; Uzelac and Meester 2018:51) At the conference, the Lebanese government outlined its priorities for the subsequent five years, relating to investments in municipalities and infrastructure, but also to education and economic opportunities and jobs for Lebanese *and* refugees. (Government of Lebanon 2016) At least rhetorically, this was perceived as opening up new opportunities and larger operational space for response partners with regards to longer-term interventions, including livelihoods and employment opportunities for refugees. (I INGO Lebanon 1 2017; I MoSA 2 2017; I LNGO Lebanon 2 2017; I UN Lebanon 4 2017)

This was reinforced by the redrafting of the LCRP as a multi-year plan from 2017 on, in contrast to the two-year plan that had existed before. With budget requirements now being outlined for four years, measures could start to focus more on real longer-term programming (besides a continued focus on humanitarian needs). (Chemaly 2018; I INGO Lebanon 1 2017; I MoSDA 1 2017; I UN Lebanon 3 2017; Uzelac and Meester 2018:51–52) With this approach, the framework was understood as responding to the challenges Lebanon was facing in a “holistic, comprehensive manner”⁶⁶ (Government of Lebanon and UN 2017:8), holding the implicit acknowledgement that the crisis had become protracted, and that refugees would stay in Lebanon for the foreseeable future. (Uzelac and Meester 2018:52)

However, progress in practice remained limited: One year after the London Conference, the government of Lebanon noted that the majority of funding remained focused on the emergency response, calling for “additional efforts [...] to provide flexible, multi-year funding geared towards supporting resilience and development efforts in line with London commitments” (Government of Lebanon 2017:1). These pleas were repeated during the preparation for the Brussels II conference in April 2018, when both the government of Lebanon, and the EU and the UN acknowledged that “the assistance in Lebanon remain[ed] largely focused on the short-term emergency response” and that “there remain[ed] room for improvement in terms of refocusing international support on longer-term projects and durable support to host communities while maintaining assistance for urgent humanitarian needs” (Government of Lebanon, EU, and UN 2018:1). For instance, this was visible in the continued lack of predictable multi-year funding. (Government of Lebanon, EU, and UN 2018:2)

Overall, thus, many donors and response partners continued to prioritize humanitarian and short-term activities. At the same time however, and despite its rhetoric, the government, too, maintained its hesitant stance on longer-term and development-programming for refugees which became visible in different sectors: For instance, despite attempts of response partners to push for a graduation from short-term livelihood activities (such as trainings or cash-for-work schemes) to longer-term income-generating activities for refugees (for instance through value chain development), this was not approved by the Lebanese government. In the same line, the government rejected the proposition to include refugees in its national social safety net, the ‘National Poverty Targeting Program’ (NPTP). Within the

public education, and to ensure the inclusion of refugee children. For this purpose, from late 2014 onwards, several donors, UNHCR, UNICEF, the World Bank and other specialized agencies together with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) jointly started an effort to strengthen the capacity of the public-school system through a new three-year program, called ‘Reaching all Children with Education’ (RACE). This broad-based partnership not only brought together humanitarian and development actors, but also strengthened the role of Lebanese authorities within the sector. (I UN Lebanon 3 2017; Kelley 2017:95) Even though this approach was widely regarded as a useful example of the advantages of joined-up humanitarian and development programming, it was not transferred to other sectors on a large scale. (Kelley 2017:95) Only few other individual government ministries, including the Ministry of Public Health and the Ministry of Environment, slowly started to recognize the potential of the approach, in particular with regards to new opportunities to attract development funding from donors. (Uzelac and Meester 2018:48)

⁶⁶ At the same time, the response framework noted that, on the one hand, an increasing level of development support was provided outside the LCRP, and that the response needed to be reviewed continuously for it to match these developments; on the other hand, it stressed that development assistance outside the LCRP remained necessary as the level of funding to the LCRP might not be sustained throughout the duration of the plan. (Government of Lebanon and UN 2017:8, 19, 26)

WASH sector, still informal settlements could not be connected to official water systems. (I LNGO Lebanon 3 2019; I UN Lebanon 5 2019; I UN Lebanon 6 2019; I UN Lebanon 7 2019)

In some cases, the government's stance even promoted reverse developments in the programmatic response: For instance, over the course of the years, many refugees living in informal settlements had built more durable homes with breeze-block walls, often with the agreement of their landlords. However, in April 2019, a military decree was issued, requiring all refugees to demolish any concrete walls in their homes over one meter high. As most of the affected people did not have any alternative place for shelter, aid agencies were left with the procurement of tents, thereby returning to a clearly and purely humanitarian approach. (Al-Arian and Sherlock 2019; I LNGO Lebanon 3 2019; I UN Lebanon 5 2019; I UN Lebanon 7 2019)

Thus, overall, the situation remained the same as before: While the Lebanese government wanted a shift to more stabilization, this referred only to stabilization for Lebanon. Donors, in turn, did not commit to multi-year funding, and response partners, out of sheer necessity, continued to focus on humanitarian needs.

National leadership and ownership

Another core principle of the LCRP lay in its new focus on national leadership and ownership. The “overarching leadership of and accountability for the LCRP” thereby was seen as lying with the government of Lebanon, in particular with MoSA and the Crisis Cell Ministries, who were to steer progress and strategies of the response (Government of Lebanon and UN 2014:28). MoSA, in turn, was to oversee the overall coordination of the plan, co-chairing the LCRP Steering Committee as well as a Joint Task Force responsible for developing the response. Further line ministries were in lead of the Sector Steering Committees and responsible for coordinating sectoral activities at the national and local levels. In order to strengthen the role of line ministries in leadership and coordination and ensure their ownership, the response stressed the importance of ensuring synergies between national planning and the international response by aligning LCRP efforts with national strategies. (Government of Lebanon and UN 2015:23) As no overall national development plan existed, this applied first and foremost to the alignment with the government's ‘Roadmap of Priority Interventions for Stabilization from the Syrian Conflict’ from 2013 (Government of Lebanon and UN 2017:9, 19–20), as well as with other individual national strategies and programs, such as the ‘National Social Development Strategy’, the ‘National Ten Year Strategy for Women’, and the ‘National Poverty Targeting Programme’. (Government of Lebanon and UN 2017:39, 121) Altogether, the LCRP stipulated to promote “the strategic priorities identified by GoL and partners [...], emphasizing the role of GoL in leading the response” (Government of Lebanon and UN 2015:4).

Furthermore, one of the plan's central objectives lay in “strengthen[ing] government ownership of investments made” in the country, for instance “by supporting national planning and implementing, monitoring, and aid management processes” (Government of Lebanon and UN 2014:20) and by working increasingly through national and local institutions, systems, organizations and communities. (Government of Lebanon and UN 2014:19–20) This was reinforced by the plan's commitment to reinforce rather than replace national and local systems. (Government of Lebanon and UN 2017:173)

In this leadership role, the government was to be supported by the UN that kept a leading role in the response as well, co-chairing the LCRP steering body and the Inter-Sectoral Working Group, and supporting line ministries in coordinating sector responses. (Government of Lebanon and UN 2014:28)

While stressed on paper, more government leadership and ownership in practice proved difficult. This started with the development process of the LCRP itself. Mostly through the efforts of the office of the UN RC/HC, who provided “a strong interface with [the] government” (Bonard, Sida, and Tjoflaat 2015:11), for the first time the Lebanese government got actively engaged in the international response and worked with UNHCR on a joint document. (Bonard, Sida, and Tjoflaat 2015:10; I LNGO Lebanon

1 2017; I MoSDA 1 2017; Janmyr 2018:397) The process, however, was characterized by misunderstandings and frustration. Government officials, on the one hand, were frustrated that the LCRP was largely drafted by the UN, who, according to the Lebanese government, did not take the specific Lebanese context into account but tried to apply experiences from other refugee situations such as in Sudan or Kenya to Lebanon. UNHCR, on the other hand, perceived the negotiations as “protracted and quite bitter”, accusing the government of being “far more concerned with terminology and window-dressing than [...] with the plan’s activities and actual substance” (Janmyr 2018:397). Besides the replacement of the term ‘resilience’ with ‘stabilization’ as outlined above, the most prominent example of this lay in the use of the term ‘refugee’, which constituted “a main point of contention in the drafting process” (Janmyr 2018:399).⁶⁷ Negotiations about specific terminology and wording stretched to other aspects of the response as well, resulting in the fact that sometimes it took weeks to formulate a single sentence in the plan. Overall this not only led to frustration on both sides, but also resulted in a high degree of generality and vagueness in the response. (I UN Lebanon 1 2017; I UN Lebanon 3 2017; I UN Lebanon 5 2019) Nevertheless, the government’s final sign-off of the plan was regarded as giving the LCRP much more legitimacy, and was widely perceived as an important step in increasing national leadership and ownership of the response. (Bonard, Sida, and Tjoflaat 2015:10; I INGO Lebanon 2 2017; I UN Lebanon 4 2017; Janmyr 2016:62; Janmyr 2018:396–397)

Despite this new engagement in the development process of the LCRP, this was not necessarily *because* of it. Rather, the government’s new engagement was seen as tracing back to its realization that there was no other appeal process than the LCRP, and that acting within the framework would give it much more influence on the response. This was based on the feeling that, so far, somebody else, namely the UN and the international community, had decided which and whose needs were to be addressed and how, perceived to have played out to the detriment of Lebanese host communities. (I MoSA 2 2017; I UN Lebanon 1 2017)

With its new engagement in the response, the government aimed to address this issue. While generally supported by the international community, this also led to new challenges, as the government quickly started to introduce restrictions on certain issues regarding refugees, often running contrary to the objectives of the international community. (I MoSA 2 2017; I UN Lebanon 1 2017; I UN Lebanon 3 2017; Uzelac and Meester 2018:82)

As a result, even though in general there was wide consensus that the government was to take on a larger leadership role in the response, both UN agencies and the civil society were reluctant to surrender all authority, in particular in respect of issues where they did not agree with government policy. (Bonard, Sida, and Tjoflaat 2015:12; I MoSDA 1 2017) For instance, aid agencies became more and more constrained in the implementation of activities aiming at refugees’ self-reliance, but also in setting up more permanent structures for service delivery. Overall, this situation led to frustration on both sides: For the international community, this state of affairs contradicted the very purpose of the response. The Lebanese government, on the other hand, felt that response partners, in particular international NGOs, did not respect the specific Lebanese context and were trying to work around existing restrictions and guidelines. This led to the government’s perception that international response partners were trying to operate in Lebanon the same way they would in countries with no functioning government, failing to take the presence and authority of the Lebanese government into consideration.⁶⁸ (I INGO Lebanon 2 2017; I MoSA 2 2017; I MoSA 4 2019; I UN Lebanon 6 2019; Uzelac and Meester 2018:48)

⁶⁷ Even though UNHCR argued that the usage of the term ‘refugee’ was in Lebanon’s own interest as it would attract more donor funding, Lebanese authorities strongly rejected the wording. Long negotiations finally resulted in the addition of a preambular text box in the LCRP that outlined the different understandings of ‘persons displaced from Syria’, ‘persons registered with UNHCR as refugees’, and ‘de facto refugees’. (Janmyr 2018:397–399)

⁶⁸ Some response areas managed to form an exception to this situation, first and foremost the education sector, where it was possible to find concrete overlaps of interests between the responsible ministry and response partners. (Uzelac and Meester 2018:48)

At the same time, however, a detailed refugee policy guidance issued at the central level as well as a comprehensive, unified and nationally owned development plan that could have been used as points of reference remained missing, impeding trust in Lebanon's leadership. This was further exacerbated by the fact that no national budget, estimating anticipated government revenues and expenditures, had been passed since 2005⁶⁹, and that no single government interlocutor was appointed to represent the Lebanese government in the response. Largely, these issues were traced back to the fluid political system in the country, characterized by internal fights within and between political parties and stakeholders and resulting in political deadlock. (Chemaly 2018; I MoSDA 1 2017; I UN Lebanon 2 2017; I UN Lebanon 4 2017)

These aspects related to a lack of government leadership had several implications for the implementation of the LCRP: First, the absence of a single government interlocutor made it difficult to get a coherent message from the government about the general direction of the response. (Bonard, Sida, and Tjoflaat 2015:11; Culbertson et al. 2016:53; I INGO Lebanon 3 2017; I MoSA 1 2017; I MoSDA 1 2017; I UN Lebanon 4 2017; I UN Lebanon 6 2019) Donor negotiations had to take place with several ministries and relevant government agencies in parallel, depending on the respective intervention. Often different actors pursued different priorities, did not speak with one voice and even provided contradictory information, leading not only to a duplication and delay of negotiations, but also to general confusion on the part of donors and implementing partners. In general, the government was perceived as not being particularly good at communicating. This scared off donors, who often decided to give their money to other countries in the region. (Culbertson et al. 2016:53; I INGO Lebanon 2 2017; I UN Lebanon 3 2017; I UN Lebanon 4 2017; Kelley 2017:91; Ayoub and Mahdi 2018:9) Neither the establishment of the new Ministry of State for Displaced Affairs (MoSDA), set up with the aim of clarifying roles and responsibilities, nor the new government-led steering committee set up with the LCRP helped to address these issues: While the creation of the former led to further confusion about leadership and about who was doing what (Howden, Patchett, and Alfred 2017:16; I INGO Lebanon 1 2017; I INGO Lebanon 2 2017; I MoSA 2 2017), the latter existed only on paper to a large extent, with meetings taking place only infrequently and failing to become "a centre of gravity for policy making" as envisaged (Bonard, Sida, and Tjoflaat 2015:11).

In the absence of an overall national vision regarding the direction of the response, the engagement of different ministries in the response varied. Attempts to change this were made through the allocation of new co-leadership roles to ministries for each sector, giving some ministries, in particular MoSA, a central role in the response. (Boustani et al. 2016:16–18; I UN Lebanon 2 2017) While some ministries, including the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health, took the chance and started to engage in the response early on, other ministries did not regard the LCRP as important, resulting in a general lack of engagement. (I MoSDA 1 2017) The Ministry of Labor, the Ministry of Interior, or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, for instance, despite being part of the Crisis Cell, kept a marginal role in the process. (I UN Lebanon 3 2017) This led to new challenges as individual ministries prepared sectoral strategies of their own, based on their respective priorities. Often, their mere existence provided these individual ministries with access to more funding, resulting in the expansion of some sector programs at the expense of others. Moreover, as often donors were involved in the development of ministerial strategies, the approach held the risk of allocating aid according to donors' priorities. (Ayoub and Mahdi 2018:8–9; Chemaly 2018; I MoSA 2 2017; Kelley 2017:91; Saieh, Abi Khalil, and Gorevan 2017:7)

Recognizing that more engagement in the response would lead to more funding and to more influence regarding what needs were being prioritized, over the course of the first years of the LCRP more individual ministries started to become engaged in the response. (I INGO Lebanon 1 2017; I MoSA 2 2017; I MoSDA 1 2017; I UN Lebanon 1 2017; Uzelac and Meester 2018:48) Effective coordination between ministries in order to work together towards common objectives, however, remained difficult,

⁶⁹ It took until October 2017 that Lebanon's parliament finally passed the first state budget in twelve years, widely perceived as a crucial step for reform in the country. (Barrington 2017)

largely related to Lebanon's confessional system that meant that different ministries were aligned with different political parties, often resulting in bureaucratic rivalries and tensions between (and within) individual ministries. This improved only slowly, as line ministries gradually started to accept MoSA's coordination role in the response. (Bonard, Sida, and Tjoflaat 2015:11, 16; I MoSA 1 2017; I MoSA 2 2017; I MoSDA 1 2017; I UN Lebanon 3 2017; I UN Lebanon 6 2019)

Altogether, despite remaining challenges mostly related to the overall political situation in the country, government leadership and ownership increased compared to the years preceding the introduction of the LCRP. While generally this was welcomed by response partners and donors, this led to new challenges: Besides more restrictions on certain measures as outlined above, response partners increasingly felt that ministries wanted to control every aspect of the response, resulting in requests for more information as well as the requirement to get approval for minor details in the response. This was perceived as problematic as it created a more complicated process for implementation. (I INGO Lebanon 1 2017; I LINGO Lebanon 2 2017) For instance, MoSA in 2019 started to put more and more focus on follow-up processes, requested more information and disaggregated data, and began to implement rules and regulations more strictly. (I MoSA 4 2019; I UN Lebanon 5 2019; I UN Lebanon 6 2019; I UN Lebanon 7 2019)

Partnerships

Besides overall government leadership of the response, as another key principle the LCRP stressed the importance of strong partnerships in the planning and implementation of the response. This included partnerships between the Lebanese authorities and international and national partners as well as partnerships with civil organizations and academic, training and financial institutions. Expanded partnerships thereby were expected to "improve the quality of implementation" (Government of Lebanon and UN 2014:19) and "to develop more cost-efficient delivery systems" (Government of Lebanon and UN 2014:27). Dialogue and cooperation between the different response partners and authorities were to be strengthened to maximize the use of collective assets and program delivery. Moreover, the LCRP promoted the exploration of both new public-private partnerships to support economic growth and sustain the value in particular of stabilization investments, and partnerships with civil institutions, in order to build capacities of the civil society and community-based organizations that were supporting service delivery. Lastly, partnerships with academic and training institutions as well as human rights organizations and international financial institutions were to be established. (Government of Lebanon and UN 2014:27, 33; Government of Lebanon and UN 2015:20; Government of Lebanon and UN 2018:5)

Overall, the LCRP argued that "partnerships increase[d] the effectiveness of humanitarian response", and committed to the Principles of Partnership as adopted by the Global Humanitarian Platform in 2007, referring to the principles of equality, transparency, a results-oriented approach, responsibility, and complementarity.⁷⁰ (Government of Lebanon and UN 2014:96)

With this explicit focus, the LCRP tried to address issues resulting from the complex aid delivery structure that had emerged in the preceding years: While the RRP6 in 2014 already had identified over 50 national and international NGOs as partners in the response, this number had greatly underestimated the number of local NGOs and actors who chose to remain outside the response plan. (Mourad 2017:261; UN 2013f:10) Some of them had already been active in Lebanon at the time of the refugee influx and simply shifted their activities; others had joined the response in the free-for-all for obtaining funding

⁷⁰ The Principles of Partnership as adopted by the Global Humanitarian Platform include: "Equality: mutual respect between partners irrespective of size and power; Transparency: dialogue (on equal footing), with an emphasis on early consultations and early sharing of information; Results-oriented approach: keep the response reality-based and action-oriented, based on effective capabilities and concrete operational capacities; Responsibility: ethical obligation of partners to accomplish tasks responsibly, with integrity and in a relevant and appropriate way, and to prevent abuses; Complementarity: build on our comparative advantages and complement each other's contributions; build on local capacity and seek to overcome language and cultural barriers". (Government of Lebanon and UN 2014:96)

that followed the onset of the crisis. (Boustani et al. 2016:16; Fakhoury 2017:691; I INGO Lebanon 1 2017; Little 2014) With the envisaged shift of the response, the number of actors increased further as now more development actors joined the response, too, raising the number of response partners to 77 in 2015. (Government of Lebanon and UN 2014:19)

The coexistence of this plethora of actors proved challenging. Often, mandates, roles and responsibilities were not clear. At the same time, different actors displayed different political agendas, often further complicated by religious motivations and confessional solidarity. This extended to donor agencies, too, who struggled to bridge the divides and who showed differences in their value systems and frameworks of operation themselves. Overall, divergent interests and approaches towards addressing the crisis made cooperation between the various stakeholders difficult, and often even led to competition and the politicization of aid. (Boustani et al. 2016:14; Fakhoury 2017:691–692; I INGO Lebanon 1 2017; I UN Lebanon 1 2017; I UN Lebanon 4 2017)

Additionally, limited inter-sector coordination within the RRP as well as disconnected coordination structures between the government and response partners had resulted in the duplication of efforts, high costs and a general confusion about who was doing what. (Bonard, Sida, and Tjoflaat 2015:10; I INGO Lebanon 1 2017; I UN Lebanon 3 2017)

The LCRP's efforts to address these issues through new partnerships played out to a variable extent. First, partnerships between response partners generally increased. For instance, prior to the development of the LCRP, the relationship between different UN agencies had become increasingly characterized by power struggles regarding roles and mandates, hampering fruitful cooperation. In particular UNHCR's assumption and adhesion of leadership positions in all nine sectors of the response led to tensions in particular with OCHA which called for a larger role in the response in line with its mandate for humanitarian protection and coordination. This was clearly rejected by UNHCR: While it was clear to the agency that it had to find a partner in the response due to its limited mandate focusing on refugees, it was not willing to surrender power to OCHA, fearing the loss of operational space, responsibility and funding. (I UN Lebanon 4 2017; I INGO Lebanon 1 2017; I INGO Lebanon 2 2017; Kelley 2017:92; Mansour 2017:12; Sida, Trombetta, and Panero 2016:33) With the LCRP, a new partnership between UNHCR and UNDP was formalized, with UNDP stepping in as co-chair of the overall response.

This new partnership had several consequences: First, it pushed out OCHA further, accommodating UNHCR's interests in the struggle for power and leadership. At the same time, the transition to this new alliance did not run entirely smoothly either, and was characterized by turf wars and competition. (I UN Lebanon 3 2017; I UN Lebanon 4 2017; Mansour 2017:12) For instance, when in 2015 UNHCR published a 'semi-appeal' besides the LCRP in order to attract funding for the refugee response without coordinating the course of action with UNDP, UNDP perceived this as an attempt to create more visibility for UNHCR and its priorities, leading to tensions and mistrust. (I UN Lebanon 3 2017) Moreover, UNDP's new role resulted in competition with other actors, too, in particular with the World Bank, with whom UNDP competed for the leadership role in the evolving development response. (Mansour 2017:12) WFP and FAO, too, were "extremely unhappy" about UNDP's new leadership of the livelihoods sector, as in particular FAO felt that this would intersect with the organization's area of responsibility (Bonard, Sida, and Tjoflaat 2015:15).

After initial disputes, however, cooperation between the different UN agencies improved significantly with the LCRP: In order to reduce tensions among UN agency leadership, a so-called 'quartet' of leaders of UNHCR, UNDP, OCHA and the UN Regional Coordinator's Office was created. (Culbertson et al. 2016:41–42, 52; I UN Lebanon 1 2017) Additionally, the allocation of co-leadership roles in sectors clarified responsibilities and settled differences. (I UN Lebanon 3 2017; I UN Lebanon 4 2017) As a result of this new structure, in particular UNHCR and UNDP developed a new partnership on eye level, beginning to work together on all aspects of the response. (I UN Lebanon 1 2017; I UN Lebanon 7 2019)

A second aspect concerned partnerships with and between other response partners. Already before the development of the LCRP, strong inter-agency coordination mechanisms at sector level had been set up to facilitate cooperation. Despite these structures, cooperation and partnerships were often impeded by hierarchical structures between response partners, in particular between UN agencies and other (international and national) actors. Many organizations felt powerless against the UN's comprehensive leadership role in the response that determined the way of action. At the same time, they perceived UN agencies to be the preferred partners of the Lebanese government, regarded as limiting their own operational space and leading to competitiveness and even aggression between different actors. These tensions were further exacerbated by existing funding mechanisms: As outlined above, the majority of funding was channeled to the UN which then distributed it to implementing agencies. (Boustani et al. 2016:19; Fakhoury 2017:692; I INGO Lebanon 1 2017; I INGO Lebanon 2 2017; I INGO Lebanon 3 2017) This resulted in competition for funding, in which visibility often seemed to be more important than creating synergies between the different actors. (I INGO Lebanon 3 2017; I UN Lebanon 7 2019; Mansour 2017:17) Furthermore, as funding continued to be ad hoc and short-term, organizations claimed that this impeded joint planning and implementation with other organizations. (Mansour 2017:16)

On yet another level, national and local NGOs often felt marginalized by international actors in general, accusing them of not sufficiently collaborating with community-based organizations and the civil society, despite their key role on the ground. This was fueled by the lack of possibility for them to become members of the 'Lebanon Humanitarian International NGO Forum'. National actors further felt that international NGOs were applying their typical crisis response, without taking the specific Lebanese context into consideration, and of obtaining a disproportionate amount of funding. (Boustani et al. 2016:19; Culbertson et al. 2016:55; Grunewald, Brangeon, and Karroum 2017:15; I INGO Lebanon 2 2017; I LINGO Lebanon 1 2017; I UN Lebanon 5 2019) While this sentiment of marginalization was acknowledged by international actors, they regarded local organizations' lack of capacities, knowledge and skills as hindering factors for collaboration. (Culbertson et al. 2016:55; I INGO Lebanon 1 2017; I INGO Lebanon 2 2017; I LINGO Lebanon 1 2017)

The LCRP tried to address this issue by supporting local NGOs through various capacity-developing measures. Additionally, local organizations increasingly referred to peer-to-peer learning mechanisms, and established partnerships or consortiums with each other, including new cross-religious initiatives. (Chemaly 2018; I LINGO Lebanon 3 2019) Most prominently, organizations consolidated in two main networks: the 'Local NGOs Forum' and the regional coordination networks of local NGOs ('Réseaux régionaux de coordination d'ONG locales'). Both networks gave organizations the possibility to discuss issues that affected local actors in particular, and had the objective of giving their common positions a louder voice and enabling local organizations' access to higher level fora and decision-making structures. For instance, the Local NGOs Forum also became a member of the HCT, meaning that a representative was invited to inter-sector meetings as observers. (Grunewald, Brangeon, and Karroum 2017:15; I LINGO Lebanon 1 2017; I LINGO Lebanon 2 2017)

Further partnerships between local and international actors were established through a mentoring system introduced by UNHCR, in which experienced international partners cooperated with local NGOs and community-based organizations. (Kelley 2017:102) Increasingly, they were cited as a key factor for the success of projects: Their knowledge of and access to communities were more and more perceived as valuable assets to ensure that activities were aligned with needs and priorities on the ground. (Boustani et al. 2016:19; I INGO Lebanon 2 2017; I MoSA 1 2017)

Besides these new forms of inter-agency cooperation, in particular between UNHCR and UNDP, and between international organizations and national response partners, the LCRP also called for more partnerships between response partners and the Lebanese government. For instance, the LCRP required each sector to be co-led by a ministry and a sector-specific agency. The outcomes of this approach however varied, largely depending on the actual level of participation of the ministries, and on single

persons holding key positions and getting engaged within the response. (Boustani et al. 2016:16–18; I UN Lebanon 3 2017) Additionally, cooperation was hindered by international staff’s continued preference to work with other international personnel, failing to welcome and include government bodies effectively in working groups, while the government staff often felt that Lebanon’s national sovereignty was not being respected and that response partners disregarded existing regulations as outlined above. (Culbertson et al. 2016:53; I MoSA 4 2019) Further impeding cooperation was the existence of different views in central aspects of the response, for instance regarding livelihoods opportunities for refugees or protection issues. In this sensitive context, while not necessarily leading to new partnerships, the LCRP was increasingly perceived as a negotiation space between response partners and the government that had not existed before. (I INGO Lebanon 2 2017; I MoSA 1 2017; I MoSA 4 2019; I MoSDA 1 2017; I UN Lebanon 3 2017; I UN Lebanon 5 2019; I UN Lebanon 6 2019; I UN Lebanon 7 2019)

A last area of partnerships called for in the LCRP referred to collaboration between response partners and local authorities. Despite this call, however, and the acknowledgement of the critical role of municipalities as first responders within the response, local authorities remained largely excluded from any formal policy-making role within the development of the LCRP. Instead, they were perceived to be represented by the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities. (Mourad 2017:262) This general non-involvement carried on further, with municipalities not being invited to participate in sector meetings of response partners, even when areas were discussed that directly affected them. Furthermore, while single NGOs cooperated with local authorities in their projects from the beginning, for instance seeking their political endorsement and including them in the organization and supervision of activities, this was not the case for many other response partners, who implemented projects without consulting with or involving municipalities in critical decisions in project planning. Instead, forms of collaboration often remained limited to data collection or facilitating the implementation of activities. (Boustani et al. 2016:18–19; Ciacci 2014:28–29)

This non-involvement traced back to several reasons, including a lack of understanding of the governance structure in Lebanon on the part of the UN and other aid agencies, combined with a lack of existing connections to local authorities. Local authorities, on the other hand, often prioritized political or sectarian interests over cooperation with agencies. (Boustani et al. 2016:18–19; Kelley 2017:91) Overall, frustration was high on both sides: Mayors and local authorities felt bypassed and dissatisfied with the roles they were ascribed to by international agencies. International agencies, in turn, deplored weak human capacities, poor financial resources, and bureaucratic and time-consuming administrative procedures that often required the support of central levels and slowed down implementation mechanisms in municipalities. The possibility of mayors to simply put activities on hold if they did not comply with their political parties’ interests, led to further disenchantment. (Boustani et al. 2016:18–19; Chemaly 2018) With single municipalities implementing increasingly restrictive measures targeting Syrian refugees, including curfews or other ‘security measures’, overall the role of municipalities and local authorities was often perceived as not constructive but as running contrary to the objectives of the refugee response. (Dionigi 2016:29)

Facilitated by UNDP’s new role in the response, collaboration nevertheless improved over the course of the LCRP. Through the agency’s long-standing presence in the country it had established itself as a well-trusted partner of both the Lebanese government and municipalities. (Bonard, Sida, and Tjoflaat 2015:13) Its early engagement within the Lebanon Host Community Support Project (LHSP), in which it cooperated closely both with MoSA and with municipalities, further contributed to creating a sense of trust, facilitating a link between response partners and local authorities. (I MoSA 1 2017) As a result, it became widely known that NGOs had to approach municipalities first if they wanted to work within their boundaries, irrespective of whether planned activities were focusing on host communities or refugees. (Mourad 2017:262)

Overall, on the one hand, with the LCRP an already complex coordination structure that had made it difficult to keep track of possible partnerships and ways to cooperate was made even more complex by the inclusion of new (development and governmental) actors. On the other hand, even though this led to the emergence of multiple and sometimes mutually conflicting agendas, interests and decision-making centers (Uzelac and Meester 2018:44), the LCRP and its new coordination structures nevertheless succeeded in establishing a much more coordinated response than previous response plans, fostering new partnerships and serving as negotiation space for different actors.

Accountability

Another central commitment of the LCRP lay in the improvement of accountability. This comprised two aspects: Monitoring and Evaluation, and a participatory approach.

a) Monitoring and Evaluation

First, the LCRP emphasized the importance of strong tracking and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. They were regarded as critical to measure progress in implementation, increase transparency on how resources were being allocated and used, and to facilitate strategic and programmatic adjustments. (Government of Lebanon and UN 2015:23, 27; Government of Lebanon and UN 2018:4)

Within that context, firstly, the LCRP stressed the importance of information-sharing and tracking as one of its key functions, stipulating that appealing partners were to report “fully and in a timely manner on funding and other resources received through agreed coordination and reporting mechanisms” (Government of Lebanon and UN 2015:23). Furthermore, implementing partners had to report on the progress and achievements of the activities they were implementing on a monthly basis. (Government of Lebanon and UN 2018:24)

Secondly, the plan put focus on a strong monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system. Besides tools that had been used to monitor the humanitarian response, the first LCRP committed to “establish a joint information and analysis platform in support of Government” (Government of Lebanon and UN 2014:33). Over the course of 2015, “a more comprehensive, integrated strategy to capture progress of longer-term stabilization-related projects as well as short-term activities [...] [was to] be elaborated” together with government institutions (Government of Lebanon and UN 2014:32), paying regard to the findings of an ‘Inter-Agency Multi-Sector Needs Assessment Report’ from May 2014 that stressed the importance of a common platform for monitoring, analyzing, targeting, and coordinating assistance. This new platform was not only seen as necessary for improved cross-sectoral planning, but in particular for promoting government capacity to set their own priorities. (Government of Lebanon and UN 2014:33)

Lastly, focus was put on review: Every year, mid-year and final reports were to be presented by MoSA to the LCRP Steering Committee in order to review the scope of the LCRP and ensure that the response continued to match needs and priorities, in particular with regard to other forms of assistance that were provided outside the LCRP response framework. Mid-year consultations were to be held both to set the direction for the second half of the year as well as to inform the next appeal. (Government of Lebanon and UN 2017:26)

In practice, many of these rhetorical commitments proved difficult. One challenge lay in the enforcement of more transparency. Transparency of funding was perceived as especially important as public administration in Lebanon was generally characterized by competition for resources, weak control mechanisms and a high level of cronyism. This often rendered it difficult to trace where and how funds were invested, and made it impossible to hold the government accountable. (Ayoub and Mahdi 2018:10; Grunewald, Brangeon, and Karroum 2017:10; I INGO Lebanon 1 2017) This situation had stretched into the response to the refugee situation, too: In 2013, for instance, the head of the High Relief Committee who had been working closely with different humanitarian organizations involved in the

refugee response including UNHCR, was arrested due to embezzlement charges for the misappropriation of USD 10 million. (Reuters 2013)

However, despite the LCRP's new commitment to more accountability, financial tracking remained an unsolved issue. While some public institutions reported independently on international projects, no comprehensive report of all funding channeled through public sector institutions was published, limiting the accessibility of information and transparency, setting a weak foundation for accountability, and giving rise to concerns and suspicions regarding the integrity of public institutions among response partners. (I INGO Lebanon 1 2017; I MoSA 2 2017; Saieh, Abi Khalil, and Gorevan 2017:6)

As a result, the majority of funding within the response continued to be channeled through international organizations. (Culbertson et al. 2016:44; Fakhoury 2017:691–692; Grunewald, Brangeon, and Karroum 2017:21–22) For instance, from the USD 2.1 billion requested for Lebanon within the 2015 LCRP, only USD 169 million was slated for the government, while the rest was routed through UN agencies and NGOs. (Culbertson et al. 2016:43) In the government's large-scale education program, RACE (Reaching All Children with Education), for example, which was officially led by the MEHE, UNICEF was responsible for the implementation and monitoring of cash transfers, the audit of funds channeled through the ministry, and reporting to donors. (Grunewald, Brangeon, and Karroum 2017:21, 24) Besides the general low trust in public institutions, this was also due to many bilateral donors' requirements to abide by internal regulations that did not allow them to directly fund public institutions in Lebanon. (Grunewald, Brangeon, and Karroum 2017:21) Congress in the United States, for instance, forbade direct bilateral funding to the Lebanese government as long as Hezbollah formed part of it. (Culbertson et al. 2016:32) While this approach therefore needed to be taken by some donors, it also dispensed the government from its obligation to provide a transparent and accountable checks and balance system, and on that basis to develop a unified strategy for sustainable growth. (Saieh, Abi Khalil, and Gorevan 2017:7) In that context, the general questions remained whether the pursued strategy was in fact increasing Lebanon's dependency on international agencies and hindering both state authority and local capacity-development, and whether donors could have seized the opportunity to link the prospect of direct funding to the government to requirements for more accountability. (Culbertson et al. 2016:24–25; Fakhoury 2017:691–692; I MoSA 3 2019)

Overall, the general complexity of the response, including various types of funding streams from numerous entities (donors from different countries, private donors, UN agencies) to multiple other entities (UN agencies, international and national NGOs, government, private sub-contractors) made accounting complicated, resulting in a lack of transparency regarding the sources, destinations and amounts of funding. (Culbertson et al. 2016:44, 46–47; I MoSA 2 2017) This resulted in different corruption scandals that involved various relief partners. Even though the incidents generally did not result in convictions or official indictments, they tarnished the image and credibility of local and international NGOs. (Culbertson et al. 2016:44, 46–47) The LCRP committed to address the issue through the establishment of an overall 'Lebanon Financial Aid Tracking System' that aimed at improving the managing of funding received or committed. However, even though the new system was continuously being referred to as "currently being developed" by the Lebanese government (Government of Lebanon and UN 2018:27; Government of Lebanon and UN 2019:29), its realization in practice remained missing.

Transparency issues stretched further from financial to programmatic and material aspects, becoming visible for instance in collaborations with the private sector. In the health sector, for example, UNHCR mainly worked with public hospitals. In order to reduce costs, UNHCR commissioned private medical companies to both undertake administrative tasks and fulfill a control role. Nevertheless, several cases of abuse and corruption were reported, including inflated lengths of stay in hospitals, inflated bills as well as unnecessary medication and treatments. (Grunewald, Brangeon, and Karroum 2017:26–27) In the WASH sector, too, UN agencies increasingly sub-contracted activities to private companies, in particular the provision of water to informal settlements and unfinished buildings. Even though UN

agencies increased their monitoring and quality control activities, companies were perceived as not being transparent, for instance not delivering the full quantity of water or demanding refugees to pay even though the service had already been paid for by response partners. (Grunewald, Brangeon, and Karroum 2017:27–28)

In line with the LCRP's commitments, implementing organizations tried to address these issues by introducing increasingly sophisticated measures to improve transparency and accountability. These included capacity assessments of sub-contractors in order to determine their financial management capacity, new technologies, for instance the use of GPS on water trucks to monitor the quantity of water provided, as well as the deployment of additional volunteer staff for monitoring. (Grunewald, Brangeon, and Karroum 2017:41–42) In other sectors, response partners increasingly relied on cash-based assistance, that is, assistance directly delivered to beneficiaries by e-vouchers or e-cards. That way, intermediaries could be avoided, significantly limiting the possibilities of fraud, aid diversion and corruption and increasing both efficiency and transparency of aid flows. (Grunewald, Brangeon, and Karroum 2017:30–31)

Besides transparency issues, other challenges the LCRP tried to address with regards to accountability lay in operational monitoring, knowledge-sharing and reporting. However, progress remained limited. Even though by mid-2015 several individually well-functioning tools to gather information had been set up, their “sum [was] [...] less than their parts” (Bonard, Sida, and Tjoflaat 2015:17). For instance, an in-depth and reliable overview of needs, gaps and priorities, still remained missing. Insufficient integration of technical staff with program staff led to poor information products. At the same time, it remained difficult to obtain consolidated data and statistics from the government. A newly set up data-sharing portal was generally perceived as not intuitive enough, making it difficult to find the information searched for. (IMWG 2018) This situation was often reinforced by donors' and international organizations' overall unwillingness to share information: Information was perceived as knowledge, and knowledge as power. Thus, actors did not always want to share results and findings from assessments they had conducted. (IMWG 2018; Mansour 2017:16, 18).

While the reliance on national actors was encouraged in the LCRP, the multi-layered sub-contracting system (from donors to UN agencies or international organizations to national civil society organizations or the private sector) further exacerbated the risk of losing information, in particular due to actors' differing capacities for monitoring activities and different reporting and monitoring requirements of donors. (Culbertson et al. 2016:46–47; Grunewald, Brangeon, and Karroum 2017:25; I LNGO Lebanon 2 2017; I MoSA 4 2019) In particular when organizations were funded by multiple donors, monitoring activities were perceived as a burden, absorbing a lot of time and human resources. The lack of capacities, combined with a reluctance to apply limited resources to reporting, resulted in the lack of an accurate picture of what was being done and achieved. (I INGO Lebanon 2 2017; I LNGO Lebanon 2 2017; I MoSA 2 2017; I UN Lebanon 7 2019)

While the coordination of information management was overseen by a working group open to all LCRP and other humanitarian operational partners in the country, the group met only irregularly and its links to the LCRP, the HCT and the RC/HC remained weak. A further Joint Analysis Unit, set up in 2015 as envisaged in the LCRP and largely run by OCHA, produced further analytical information products. Again, however, its links to the working group, the LCRP and the HCT remained unclear. (Culbertson et al. 2016:42–43; Mansour 2017:10) Thus, while a lot of individual data was collected, gaps in knowledge remained. The collected data was neither used as the basis for an evidence-based response nor for information-sharing among actors. As a result, often the same projects were implemented in the same areas and sometimes even targeting the same beneficiaries. (Mansour 2017:16, 18) In other cases, the lack of information-sharing among actors led to various international NGOs cooperating with the same corrupt actors, even though their behavior had already gotten them blacklisted with other NGOs. (Grunewald, Brangeon, and Karroum 2017:28)

Finally, in 2017, monitoring and evaluation was pursued in a more structured way. Mostly, this was related to the fact that both MoSA and, in particular, donors, were increasingly interested in assessing the impact of the response. (Grunewald, Brangeon, and Karroum 2017:39) As a result, in early 2017 a new M&E framework was developed in order to strengthen analysis on an outcome or impact level. Besides a guide how to design ‘SMART’ indicators (‘specific’, ‘measurable’, ‘achievable’, ‘relevant’, and ‘time-bound’) for programs, a theory of change was developed for the overall response, comprising six impact indicators and strategies how to achieve them. The new approach also included a results chain to ensure that sector outcomes were better linked to the endeavored impacts of the response, a connection which had been missing so far. Additionally, each sector developed a log frame, listing activities, outputs and outcomes as well as budgetary requirements disaggregated into humanitarian and stabilization measures. (Clough 2018:54–56, 58, 63–64; I INGO Lebanon 3 2017)

In line with this, a new results-based monitoring approach was adopted. In turn, this resulted in multiple reporting requirements that were perceived as cumbersome by various actors: Response partners now had to report not only on ActivityInfo (which had already been introduced in 2014), but also on LCRP log frames, with both systems using various disaggregations of data. Often, data required by UNHCR and at the inter-agency level differed, including differing indicators, frequency of reporting, and structure and format of information. For instance, even quantitative data needed to be provided in different formats. Moreover, tracking and reporting requirements often were not agreed upon ahead of implementation, and indicators were poorly defined, resulting in inadequate monitoring tools and missing information. (IMWG 2018) Additionally, for many actors, this approach to M&E which did not focus on the completion of activities any longer but on outcome and impact levels was something completely new, leading to difficulties in understanding the new system. This was reinforced by a lack of resources and dedicated staff. (Clough 2018:62–64, 68, 71–72; I LINGO Lebanon 2 2017) Overall, many response partners perceived the amount of reporting required as burdensome and as having little added value. (Grunewald, Brangeon, and Karroum 2017:45; I INGO Lebanon 2 2017; I LINGO Lebanon 2 2017; I MoSA 4 2019; I UN Lebanon 7 2019; IMWG 2018)

Nevertheless, practices as well as capacities and resources devoted to M&E increased. Additionally, UN agencies offered training sessions on results-based monitoring within the LCRP framework, and provided clearer guidelines on indicators and required information. (Clough 2018:62–64, 68, 71–72; IMWG 2018) Overall, however, the monitoring system kept being perceived as unsatisfactory both by the UN, response partners, and the Lebanese government, with crucial data and information still missing and realities from the field not being depicted. (I MoSA 2 2017; I UN Lebanon 7 2019) In particular the government, with its increasing leadership in the response became more and more dissatisfied with the prevailing approach to monitoring, criticizing that all reporting was being done to UN agencies rather than to the government directly. (I MoSA 3 2019; I MoSA 4 2019)

Similarly, the overall evaluation of programs remained problematic. Third party monitoring was used only exceptionally, and did not always provide adequate results. For instance, in several cases, the evaluator’s professional background was not considered a good match for the subject of evaluation, or the approach taken did not lead to new information. As a result, evaluations often were not very meaningful and did not contribute to organizational learning or inform future decision-making. (Clough 2018:67–69; Grunewald, Brangeon, and Karroum 2017:38–39; I LINGO Lebanon 2 2017; I MoSA 4 2019; I UN Lebanon 3 2017) Additionally, rather than carrying out large-scale real time evaluations, the UN system often relied on so-called peer reviews, a much simpler evaluative approach. (Grunewald, Brangeon, and Karroum 2017:38–39) Generally, evaluation was being conducted on an ad hoc basis, and often focused only on the quality of implementation or on single projects or sectors, but not on the overall strategy. (Culbertson et al. 2016:51; I INGO Lebanon 1 2017; I INGO Lebanon 2 2017; I LINGO Lebanon 2 2017; I UN Lebanon 3 2017)

Altogether, efforts to improve transparency and accountability increased significantly over the course of the response as envisaged in the LCRP. Nevertheless, challenges remained, making it difficult to

measure overall progress and assess whether the new response framework led to the changes it wanted to achieve.

b) *Participatory approach*

Besides its focus on transparency, M&E and reporting to ensure accountability of partners, the LCRP strongly committed to accountability to affected populations, making the aspect one of its cross-cutting issues that were to be mainstreamed across sectors. As part of that, affected populations were to be involved both in program design and implementation in a participatory approach. (Government of Lebanon and UN 2018:25) For instance, LCRP partners were to “continuously seek feedback from the populations that they serve[d] and address concerns about the response raised by the affected populations” (Government of Lebanon and UN 2018:19). In that regard, the LCRP encouraged regular visits to affected populations and facilitating their access to communication processes with authorities and implementing partners in order for them to ask questions and provide feedback on needs, targets, and the effectiveness of interventions. (Government of Lebanon and UN 2018:25) In line with this, one objective of the LCRP was to “build the capacity of [...] communities to identify protection concerns [and] provide feedback on programmatic interventions” (Government of Lebanon and UN 2018:16).

Besides feedback-mechanisms for single interventions and programs, at different milestones feedback and review also were to be included in the overall planning process of the LCRP in order to increase the different constituencies’ ownership of the response. Furthermore, participatory consultations with various stakeholders were to be held to guide the allocation of un-earmarked funding and other resources among the sectors. (Government of Lebanon and UN 2017:23; Government of Lebanon and UN 2015:136) Moreover, this approach was emphasized for local planning and community development initiatives as well as for producing national and local policies. (Government of Lebanon and UN 2014:5, 23, 74)

Despite efforts to put these commitments into practice, challenges remained. For instance, while feedback and complaints mechanisms were set up, many were operated via phone and were both not free of charge and often only open during working hours. Moreover, those in charge of the mechanisms often were not those who could provide useful information. An additional lack of human resources left many complaints unanswered. Overall, it often remained unclear how the different types of feedback were treated and whether they informed future decision-making or led to changes. (Grunewald, Brangeon, and Karroum 2017:38) As a way to deal with these challenges, increasingly new technologies including social media and applications such as WhatsApp were used, for instance to share information on assistance provided. Furthermore, an inter-agency call center was set up with the aim of providing more rapid and comprehensive answers to refugees’ various issues, as well as local committees with direct links to municipalities. However, despite these steps and new tools, response partners perceived efforts still as insufficient, in particular since endeavors to include beneficiaries’ feedback remained limited to the outreach activities response partners decided to undertake. (Grunewald, Brangeon, and Karroum 2017:41; I LNGO Lebanon 3 2019) Apart from that, refugees remained excluded from coordination structures, and, as a result, did not have the opportunity to actively participate in the response. (Culbertson et al. 2016:35) This was reinforced by the non-camp policy applied in Lebanon, opposing UNHCR’s traditional approach of organizing camp committees to incorporate beneficiaries in coordination structures. (Bonard, Sida, and Tjoflaat 2015:13)

However, the same applied to other population groups. For instance, local authorities such as municipalities were not involved in the development process of the LCRPs. Furthermore, they were neither invited to participate in sector working group meetings, nor involved in decision-making about project selection and design. (Boustani et al. 2016:18–19, 23; Mourad 2017:262) As outlined above, at least on the individual level collaboration in that regard improved, and response partners started to approach municipalities if they wanted to work within their boundaries. (Mourad 2017:262)

Community-based organizations and local NGOs felt excluded from the response, too, doubting a really participatory approach. In some cases, concerning in particular smaller NGOs, this was due to a lack of capacity to attend all meetings, or the lack of language skills to follow strategic discussions held in English. The exclusion of local NGOs from the Lebanon Humanitarian International NGO Forum increased the feeling of marginalization. (Boustani et al. 2016:19; Culbertson et al. 2016:55; Grunewald, Brangeon, and Karroum 2017:15; I LNGO Lebanon 2 2017) As outlined above, the establishment of the ‘Local NGOs Forum’ finally created new opportunities for local organizations to be more included in the response: For instance, the Forum became a member of the HCT, meaning that a representative was invited to inter-sector meetings as observer. (Grunewald, Brangeon, and Karroum 2017:15; I LNGO Lebanon 1 2017) In other aid-related mechanisms, however, civil society organizations remained excluded: For instance, priorities for Lebanon were determined solely by the Council of Ministers through strategies prepared by ministries, without the consultation of local actors. This exclusion of civil society organizations not only led to a lack of transparency, but also limited organizations’ ability to hold the government accountable. (I LNGO Lebanon 3 2019; Saieh, Abi Khalil, and Gorevan 2017:8)

A group of stakeholders that remained excluded from the response completely were Syrian organizations. While “Syrian actors could have proved indispensable for the humanitarian response in Lebanon, where they [were] better placed than other actors to assess the situation, understand the context and come up with long-term solutions” (Mansour 2017:15), the Lebanese government’s policies and donors’ requirements made it difficult to include them in the response: On the one hand, Syrian organizations were not allowed to register in Lebanon. On the other hand, donors and international organizations were reluctant to provide Syrian organizations with funding, both due to their own counterterrorism legislation and to concerns about the possible political affiliation of Syrian actors or about their abidance by humanitarian principles. (Mansour 2017:13–16; Saieh, Abi Khalil, and Gorevan 2017:8)

Overall, the response strategy of the LCRP continued to be drafted by the UN and the government. Even though different multi-stakeholder workshops were held, as a general rule national and international NGOs were not involved in the drafting process, and could only provide feedback to the draft chapters, granting them only a reactive role. (Uzelac and Meester 2018:47) Therefore, while some improvements were made over the course of the LCRP, it was generally perceived that more needed to be done to ensure a more bottom-up approach and the active participation of key stakeholders in the response, including not only NGOs but also sectoral experts, the private sectors, beneficiaries and marginalized groups, including refugees and women, in order to ensure both the inclusion of local priorities and a better sense of accountability. (Boustani et al. 2016:19; Grunewald, Brangeon, and Karroum 2017:4; Ayoub and Mahdi 2018:10–11)

Strengthening of capacities

Besides these strategic aspects, the LCRP (besides its continuation of humanitarian measures) put focus on two new programmatic response areas. The first one lay in the development of national capacities. First, this referred to enhancing the capacities of national and local delivery systems with the overall aim of expanding access to, and quality of, basic services, paying regard to “increasingly overwhelming service-related needs” (Government of Lebanon and UN 2018:17). Focus was to be put on measures such as infrastructure improvement, training of staff, the provision of materials, and the subsidization of costs linked to the crisis. Social Development Centers under the leadership of MoSA were seen as a key gateway, for instance to ensure access to affordable healthcare, WASH services and quality learning environments. For the same purpose, capacities of both local organizations and the civil society, and the private sector and in particular of micro and small to medium enterprises (MSME) were to be strengthened. (Government of Lebanon and UN 2014:5; Government of Lebanon and UN 2015:19–20; Government of Lebanon and UN 2018:17)

Furthermore, the LCRP referred to enhancing the capacities of the government and of public institutions. On the one hand, this included supporting national systems to register and profile Syrian nationals, and

channeling support through public institutions wherever possible. On the other hand, it also included strengthening capacities across public institutions and communities to develop national and local policies in a participatory manner. Lastly, specific focus was put on strengthening local conflict mitigation capacities to prevent social tensions and strengthen social stability. Naturally, this response area was to include various government partners, including the Prime Minister's Office, MoSA, the 'Council for Development and Reconstruction', and various line ministries as well as municipalities and local authorities. (Government of Lebanon and UN 2014:5, 16; Government of Lebanon and UN 2015:5, 19–21, 126–130)

Overall, this paid regard to Lebanon's status as a middle-income country, where institutional structures and systems were in place, albeit not always functioning properly. Rather than supporting these systems, in the first years of the refugee response a parallel system had been set up, which was not only very costly but was also not accountable to the government and the local population, thus both undermining existing capacities and leading to dependencies. While this approach had been deemed necessary early on in the crisis, especially as Lebanese politics made rapid decision-making difficult, international actors still acknowledged their failure to include the Lebanese government from the beginning in order to build their capacity to take over. (Culbertson et al. 2016:21–24) The LCRP thus tried to address this issue. Compared with the preceding RRP6, the share of institutional and community support projects increased from 19.6 percent in the RRP6 to 37 percent in the first LCRP. (UNHCR 2015b:7) This trend steadily increased: Between 2015 and 2017, for instance, the amount of funding used to strengthen service delivery, policy development, capacity-development and institutional stability in the public sector grew by more than 20 percent. (UNHCR 2018e:2)

The challenges to be addressed with these measures, however, were vast: On the national level, most ministries did not have the capacities to take over a larger role within, or even lead, the response. In particular MoSA, whose traditional mandate focused on social welfare and which was now entrusted with managing the international response, lacked knowledge and experience. (Bonard, Sida, and Tjoflaat 2015:14–15, 20; I MoSA 1 2017; I MoSA 4 2019; Kocks et al. 2018:29; UNHCR 2015b:2) This general lack of capacities involved various issues, including the lack of enough experienced human and organizational resources to take up new tasks regarding coordination with other ministries, language barriers that hindered cooperation with international partners, as well as a lack of data systems, access to computers, and financial accountability and monitoring systems. (Culbertson et al. 2016:29; I MoSA 1 2017; I MoSA 2 2017; I UN Lebanon 6 2019) The transition to an approach that was not only humanitarian any more, but focused on stabilization and development as well, therefore including new actors and making coordination even more complex, exacerbated these challenges. (Mansour 2017:11)

This lack of capacities was even more distinct in institutions at the sub-national level. (Bonard, Sida, and Tjoflaat 2015:15) In particular local authorities and municipalities, whose capacities had already been stretched before the crisis, were put under pressure. (Dionigi 2016:27) Even though they were still widely perceived as one of the main sources for Lebanon's continued 'resilience', their capacity to cope was largely dependent on the support from donors (Dionigi 2016:30): Due to deficiency of, or delays in, financial transfers from the central government, authorities were often lacking financial resources as well as skilled personnel. This was reinforced by the failure to modify municipal budgets according to the increasing refugee numbers within their territories. (Boustani et al. 2016:19; Ciacci 2014:24) Additionally, competencies between local authorities and the central government often were not clearly divided, leading to confusion about roles and responsibilities. Lastly, here, too, sectarian interests hindered the functioning of local authorities and unions of municipalities. (Ciacci 2014:24)

Even prior to the launch of the LCRP, the UN had tried to address this issue by seconding large numbers of personnel to ministries and authorities. For instance, the majority of staff members within the Syria Crisis Response Unit at MoSA were sent and paid by UN agencies in order to support the ministry to respond to the crisis and coordinate the response. (I LNGO Lebanon 2 2017; I MoSA 2 2017; I MoSA 4 2019) This approach was reinforced over the years: Staff working at the new Ministry of State for

Displaced Affairs, for example, was funded by UNHCR and UNDP as well, as the ministry lacked a government budget. (Howden, Patchett, and Alfred 2017:16) Overall, in 2016, 601 staff members of different public institutions, including ministries, municipalities and unions, were funded via the LCRP, amounting to 781 in 2017. (UNHCR 2018e:2)

However, this strategy led to new challenges: It usually took time and effort to build trust between seconded staff and permanent staff, and to ensure permanent staff that seconded staff was not employed to compete with or replace existing structures. The fact that seconded staff members were paid by the UN and often received higher salaries than public servants fueled tensions further and called seconded staff's loyalty to the government into question. Permanent staff, in contrast, generally had no incentive to work extra hours and get involved in new and complex issues within the refugee response in addition to their usual workload. (I INGO Lebanon 1 2017; I INGO Lebanon 2 2017; I MoSA 2 2017; I UN Lebanon 3 2017; I UN Lebanon 5 2019; Kocks et al. 2018:99) As a result, the system created somewhat parallel structures within ministries. At the same time, seconded staff stayed in their position only for a limited time, commonly resulting in loss of knowledge when people left, in particular as often no adequate handover process took place. Overall, the approach thus did not actually build capacity, but rather added capacity that was later removed again. (I INGO Lebanon 2 2017; I MoSA 2 2017; I MoSA 3 2019; I UN Lebanon 7 2019:2019; Kocks et al. 2018:99)

Besides increasing staffing capacities, various capacity-development measures were implemented from the central to the local level. In particular UNDP put large focus on the issue (Kelley 2017:91), developing several methodologies that aimed to put national and local governments in the lead, increase existing capacities and skills, and empower national actors to develop and implement responses without external assistance.⁷¹ Besides these large-scale initiatives, implemented in over hundred municipalities across the country, a plethora of trainings for individual public sector staff were offered and conducted by various response partner. Topics ranged from aspects such as crisis management skills to dealing with sexual and gender-based violence or conflict resolution. Often, however, stakeholders were not consulted in the selection of offered trainings. As a result, trainings were perceived as being not in line with what actors really needed. (I INGO Lebanon 3 2019; I MoSA 2 2017; I MoSA 3 2019; I UN Lebanon 6 2019; Kocks et al. 2018:120)

Local civil society organizations faced similar challenges. In particular (new) requirements of donors and international actors revealed a lack of capacities, for instance regarding language or proposal-writing skills, which in turn rendered it difficult for them to receive direct funding and take up a larger role in the response. (Culbertson et al. 2016:34; I INGO Lebanon 1 2017; I INGO Lebanon 2 2017; I INGO Lebanon 2 2017; I MoSA 2 2017) As local NGOs were increasingly being perceived as indispensable as they knew the local context, spoke Arabic, and had a greater outreach to beneficiaries (I INGO

⁷¹ Two concrete examples include UNDP's 'Mapping of Risks and Resources' (MRR) methodology as well as its 'Mechanisms for Social Stability' (MSS) project. MRR was applied in over 150 municipalities. Within the approach, municipal working groups were established, comprising representatives from communities, local authorities, civil society and the private sector, in order to develop a map of local risks and resources and a related Municipal Action Plan, outlining priorities and related costs, available resources and resources that needed to be mobilized. The approach was perceived as contributing to capacity-development on various levels: First, MoSA took up a leadership role within the process, resulting in the set-up of a sustainable model for local development planning. Second, local governments were in the lead of the process at the local level, reinforcing their legitimacy and increasing their capacities and skills to lead local level planning processes. The collaboration between the two levels of government as well as the engagement of other line ministries ensured the allocation of sufficient national resources to enhance the delivery capacity of local authorities. Lastly, solutions were often based on existing capacities and resources and relied on local NGOs and local social development centers to implement activities, strengthening them further. (I MoSA 1 2017; UNHCR-UNDP Joint Secretariat 2015:71–72)

MSS, in contrast, aimed at strengthening the role of municipalities in mitigating conflicts and dealing with the crisis through capacity-development and at building trust between municipalities, the local population, refugees, donors and civil society. In participatory workshops organized by UNDP, local governments and civil society were brought together in order to identify potential causes of instability and develop and implement strategies to address them. This approach not only ensured the ownership of local actors, but also focused on strengthening their capacities to continue the implementation of the mechanisms after the project ended. (UNHCR-UNDP Joint Secretariat 2017:31–33) In 2019, MRR and MSS were merged to one methodology, called MSR ('Mechanism of Social Stability and Resilience').

Lebanon 3 2019; I MoSA 2 2017; I UN Lebanon 7 2019), large efforts were made to increase these capacities: For instance, as outlined above, UNHCR introduced a mentoring system, in which experienced international organizations worked together with national partners as part of their agreements with UNHCR. (Kelley 2017:102) At the same time, international NGOs provided an increasing number of trainings for local NGOs⁷². However, again, often they were not aligned with organizations' needs and were perceived as measures that were implemented simply to tick an item off a list. (I LNGO Lebanon 3 2019)

Overall, even though through all these measures capacities of national governments and authorities, as well as of local NGOs generally increased, both international and local response partners even years into the crisis widely agreed that they were still not sufficient for the country to deal with the situation autonomously, let alone to lead and coordinate the response without the support of the UN system and international NGOs. (Culbertson et al. 2016:53; I INGO Lebanon 1 2017; I INGO Lebanon 2 2017; I LNGO Lebanon 1 2017; I LNGO Lebanon 3 2019; I MoSA 3 2019; I MoSA 4 2019; I UN Lebanon 6 2019; I UN Lebanon 7 2019)

Enhancing economic and livelihood opportunities

Besides capacity-development, a second new focus area of the LCRP lay in enhancing economic and livelihood opportunities. Even before the introduction of the LCRP, response partners had tried to diminish the need for continued assistance and increase vulnerable populations' self-reliance through trainings and cash-for-work schemes. While these programs had provided value and utility for some, they had been nowhere near sufficient for the magnitude of the situation, which would have required more work days and in particular more long-term employment opportunities. (Little 2014) For instance, until 2014, only around 4,000 individuals could access some sort of income-generating opportunity provided through the international response, and just over 6,000 individuals benefitted from some sort of training. (Government of Lebanon and UN 2014:80)

The LCRP aimed at increasing these measures, while simultaneously expanding its scope, aiming at benefiting the most vulnerable communities in particular as well as enhancing local development in general. This included the creation of jobs and income generation opportunities, improving local economic infrastructure and implementing necessary economic and labor reforms. (Government of Lebanon and UN 2014:20) While livelihoods activities were to be mainstreamed into various other sectors such as education, food security, and protection, it also from the beginning constituted its own sector, co-led by MoSA and the Ministry of Economy and Trade and coordinated by UNDP, focusing on the promotion of employment and training opportunities, providing (start-up) grants, expanding markets, and setting up the necessary framework and conditions for economic recovery. From the beginning, the response was based on the assumption that at least a proportion of displaced Syrians would remain in Lebanon for some time. As a result, they were to be included in the response, too. Thus, the response was to focus on the creation of temporary rapid income generating activities for refugees and permanent jobs for Lebanese. The private sector was to be included in many interventions of the response as a direct partner. (Government of Lebanon and UN 2014:34–90; Government of Lebanon and UN 2015:25, 104–105) Overall, bolstering livelihoods was regarded as an important aspect to strengthen the capacity of communities to cope with the crisis and to strengthen peace and stability. (Government of Lebanon and UN 2014:96)

From 2016 on, the livelihoods sector strategy started to shift its focus more towards local economic development in general. This included a shift towards creating more long-term employment opportunities through a more indirect approach: Rather than engaging beneficiaries directly in rapid income-generating activities, the strategy was to focus on investments in institutions and private sector entities that was hoped to lead to job creation. This included support for Lebanese micro, small and

⁷² For instance, the number of local civil society organizations supported with trainings in dialogue and conflict prevention mechanisms increased from only 12 in 2016 to 109 in 2017. (UNHCR 2018e:27)

medium enterprises (MSMEs) and cooperatives as well as the development of value chains in sectors with the most potential in terms of job creation⁷³. (Government of Lebanon and UN 2015:107, 109) With the four-year time frame of the new phase of the LCRP starting in 2017, this focus on longer-term and more complex measures was stressed further. This included the identification and selection of businesses for support that would be able to sustain the effect of the provided support beyond the timeline of partners' programs, and a focus on high potential sectors whose complex nature required more time to achieve substantial impact. At the same time, the provision of short-term temporary opportunities, in particular through labor-intensive public work programs, channeling investments through local third parties such as municipalities and private sector contractors, continued to be regarded as crucial. Lastly, focus was put on matching educational programs to the needs of the labor market to close the existing skills gap and increase employability. Altogether, the sector's theory of change stipulated that, through the provision of jobs, vulnerable individuals were to achieve self-reliance which in turn was expected to increase Lebanon's stability and resilience to social and economic shocks. (Government of Lebanon and UN 2018:116–117)

Even though the response area constituted one of the two programmatic focus areas of the response, the projected target population in the livelihoods sector in 2015 and 2016 made up the smallest number of persons targeted across all sectors. Additionally, in 2015 the sector was the most underfunded sector, with only 13 percent of funding secured. (Government of Lebanon and UN 2014:6; Government of Lebanon and UN 2015:6, 106) While this number increased over the years, amounting to 23 percent in 2016 and roughly 33 percent in 2017 and 2018, the sector remained severely underfunded throughout the response. (UNHCR 2017b; UNHCR 2018f; UNHCR 2019e)

Besides funding, however, the response area faced profound other challenges, too. While in general within the LCRP both response partners and the Lebanese government agreed that a long-term solution had to be about making vulnerable populations self-reliant by investing in local economic development and income-generating activities, in the view of the Lebanese government this applied first and foremost to Lebanese. As a result in practice, the government imposed more and more restrictions when it came to livelihood interventions: Many activities could only be provided to the local population, but not to refugees. (I MoSA 2 2017; I MoSDA 1 2017; I UN Lebanon 3 2017; Uzelac and Meester 2018:48) While response partners had long been able to operate in a somewhat 'gray space' that allowed them to bypass these demands due to the general absence of government engagement, the increasing government leadership in the response, combined with its increasing capacities to introduce and enforce new regulations, led to a decrease of these possibilities. (Culbertson et al. 2016:97–98; I INGO Lebanon 1 2017; I LNGO Lebanon 2 2017; I LNGO Lebanon 3 2019; I UN Lebanon 5 2019; I UN Lebanon 6 2019; I UN Lebanon 7 2019; Uzelac and Meester 2018:48)

The increasingly restrictive policy environment had further implications. For instance, from January 2015 on, the government obliged Syrian refugees registered with UNHCR to sign a pledge not to work, legally prohibiting them to work in the country. By design, this policy made Syrian refugees dependent on aid. At the same time, it resulted in many Syrians turning to informal labor, putting refugees in a precarious situation with often exploitative conditions, and running contrary to the LCRP's commitment to enhancing economic and livelihood opportunities. (I LNGO Lebanon 1 2017; Janmyr 2016:75–76)

In order to be employed formally, Syrians thus could not be registered with UNHCR. As a result, however, they were regarded as economic migrants rather than refugees. Through a sponsorship system, in which a Lebanese sponsor had to apply for a work permit from the Ministry of Labor, they were permitted to work in three sectors: agriculture, construction, and 'environment', entailing mostly cleaning services and garbage collection.⁷⁴ Nevertheless, and despite Lebanon's long reliance on Syrian

⁷³ These included, for instance, agro-food, goods manufacturing, technology provision, creative sectors and tourism. (Government of Lebanon and UN 2015:107, 109)

⁷⁴ According to a government official, these sectors were chosen "because Lebanon sees the necessity of these fields and because Syrians are experts in these fields" (as cited in Janmyr 2016:69).

work force⁷⁵, a general reluctance to grant Syrians work permits prevailed even in these sectors. For instance, at the end of 2014 (thus even before the introduction of the regulation to sign a pledge not to work), the total number of Syrians formally working in Lebanon was estimated at 1,568. (Janmyr 2016:69, 75) The sponsorship system furthermore made Syrians dependent on sponsors, and highly vulnerable to exploitation. (Janmyr 2016:75–76; Zucconi 2017:21) Generally, the issue of allowing Syrians to work in other fields than the three sectors, or to allow registered Syrian refugees to work at all, remained “a nonstarter” with the government (Culbertson et al. 2016:43), hindering the pursuit of an approach in line with the objectives outlined in the LCRP.

The London Conference in 2016 finally seemed to be able to foster change. Discussions within Lebanon’s political sphere revolving around the possibilities of allowing *all* Syrians to work in labor intensive sectors resulted in the Lebanese government’s commitment to a “new approach and vision on how to manage the temporary and ongoing stay of the Syrians” (Government of Lebanon 2016:1). (Dionigi 2016:26) This new approach included a five-year program on economic opportunity and jobs which was to give all Syrians access to the job market in certain sectors. (Government of Lebanon 2016) The so-called ‘Subsidized Temporary Employment Programme’ (STEP) was promoted as Lebanon’s new flagship job-creation project. (Howden, Patchett, and Alfred 2017:15)

Some of these commitments were translated into more concrete regulations. For instance, in summer 2016, the obligation for refugees registered with UNHCR to sign a pledge not to work was officially removed. (Janmyr 2016:69) However, even though registered refugees could now apply for work permits in the three categories of work outlined above, this policy was not implemented structurally across the country. Additionally, conditions for employment remained exploitative: For instance, applying for a work permit remained complex and costly, hindering the majority of Syrians to apply or rendering them dependent on Lebanese sponsors. (Howden, Patchett, and Alfred 2017:17; Uzelac and Meester 2018:19–20) As a result, in 2018 only around 1,500 Syrians in the country held work permits. (Uzelac and Meester 2018:57) At the same time, Syrians were not legally allowed to be self-employed and open their own businesses. In order to do so, they had to find a Lebanese business partner who was registered as the legal owner on paper, opening up further possibilities of exploitation and dependence. (Care 2018:18)

STEP, Lebanon’s flagship job-creation project, proved controversial, too: Even though the program was to offer temporary work for Syrians, they would obtain part of their wages only upon leaving Lebanon. Nevertheless, DFID announced to invest USD 21 million in the program. The endorsement of any form of employment for refugees by the Lebanese government “seemed like a minor miracle”, and was perceived as “too good an opportunity to influence the political conversation in Lebanon” (Howden, Patchett, and Alfred 2017:15–16). DFID’s announcement was heavily criticized by various humanitarian agencies, who raised concerns that refugees might risk their lives in order to access the money, and who agreed that none of them would apply to implement the program. (Howden, Patchett, and Alfred 2017:16) As a result of the ongoing criticism, the project in the planned form was finally called off.⁷⁶

Overall, despite the rhetoric of the Lebanese government in favor of interventions aiming at self-reliance of refugees, it did not follow through with concrete actions. (Ayoub and Mahdi 2018:5–6; I INGO

⁷⁵ Even though figures oscillate, estimates for the early 2000s put Syrians’ share of Lebanon’s labor force at 20 to 40 percent. (Janmyr 2016:69) Traditionally, Syrians have constituted an important economic resource for the Lebanese economy for decades, with specifically Lebanon’s agriculture and construction industry relying heavily on cheap Syrian seasonal labor. (Dionigi 2016:31; Uzelac and Meester 2018:11)

⁷⁶ Over the next months, the program was redesigned and renamed into ‘Lebanon Enterprise and Employment Programme’ (LEEP). The new program, starting in 2018, still focused on the creation of job opportunities and supported small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) technically and financially, but did not include the criticized aspect regarding the need for refugees to return to obtain parts of their wages any longer. Nevertheless, the number of jobs to be created and SMEs to be supported remained low and did not have a large impact on the overall situation regarding refugees’ employment opportunities. (I OA Lebanon 1 2019; LEEP Lebanon 2019)

Lebanon 1 2017; I INGO Lebanon 2 2017; I UN Lebanon 3 2017; I UN Lebanon 6 2019; Uzelac and Meester 2018:53) Rather, the situation developed in the opposite direction. Voicing concerns about the high degree of unemployment in Lebanon in general, Syrians working informally and a high degree of competition between Syrians and Lebanese, and referring to the overall deterioration of the economy, the government regarded itself as not being able to create jobs for its own citizens, let alone for Syrians. (I MoSDA 1 2017) The situation came to a further head in January 2017, when Lebanon's minister of labor declared a crackdown on Syrian workers and businesses as well as on businesses employing Syrians without the necessary paperwork. With only few labor inspectors employed by the ministry itself, municipalities took over the task, which resulted in campaigns to close Syrian businesses and mass evictions of Syrians across various municipalities. (Howden, Patchett, and Alfred 2017:17–18; Human Rights Watch 2018:1–3; Vohra 2019)

In order to be able to at least implement some livelihood interventions for refugees in this context, including job and vocational skills training, response partners argued that these programs would focus on transferrable skills that Syrians could use in case of return, and would remain limited to internships or cash-for-work schemes, without allowing refugees to enter the regular job market upon the completion of the programs. While this provided a short-term remedy for organizations to offer livelihood activities to refugees, it ignored long-term challenges and realities, for instance how to deal with this emerging new work force. With far too few jobs available, refugees were left with completing one training after another without being able to use their acquired skills. (Care 2018:17; Chemaly 2018; I LINGO Lebanon 1 2017; I MoSDA 1 2017; I UN Lebanon 6 2019)

The LCRP tried to address this situation by promoting a more active role of the private sector in the response. In line with Lebanon's highly privatized economy, the private sector had been involved significantly in the response from the beginning. For example, assistance had relied on, and had been provided through, private hospitals and health centers, private water and energy companies, and private banking companies. (Grunewald, Brangeon, and Karroum 2017:26) With the LCRP, the private sector was increasingly also regarded as crucial to generate employment opportunities for both refugees and Lebanese.

While the LCRP framework itself, however, had only limited influence on the matter, the establishment of the CFF in 2016 seemed to open up new opportunities. Explicitly, the Facility promoted public-private partnership (PPP) investments in large infrastructure projects expected to create temporary employment opportunities. As they fell within the construction sector, they were to be open for refugees as well. (World Bank Group 2018b:32) However, even though the Lebanese government had welcomed the establishment of the CFF and in particular its focus on infrastructure, approval for the first two projects proposed by the CFF Steering Committee remained lacking. As a result, no new jobs could be created for either Lebanese or Syrians. (I UN Lebanon 3 2017; World Bank Group 2018b:27)

Further developments from 2017 on finally seemed to build momentum to pave the way for more private sector engagement, thus leading to increased job opportunities: In early 2017, the Lebanese parliament not only passed the first budget in twelve years, but also adopted several laws aiming at creating a more favorable environment for private sector and foreign investments. For instance, a new PPP law was enacted, introducing a legal basis for more transparent and accountable tendering procedures and public-private partnerships. (Salman 2019) Lebanon's 'Capital Investment Program' (CIP), presented in early 2018 at CEDRE, comprised further large development projects, understood as contributing to Lebanon's overall economic development and creating 900,000 jobs over a time span of ten years. They were complemented by reform plans in various sectors that were to contribute further to a more favorable investment climate and economic growth. (Government of Lebanon 2018b) Additionally, in September 2018 the first two CFF-projects were approved by the parliament.⁷⁷ (World Bank Group 2018b:27)

⁷⁷ Two further projects that had already been approved by the Steering Committee at the time, expected to create thousands of further job opportunities, however, remained pending. This included the so-called 'Greater Beirut Public Transport Project' that aimed at improving the quality and accessibility of public transport and was expected to create about two million labor

Overall, it seemed like the economic reform agenda was widely supported by different political and sectarian groups and parties, with several reform-minded groups leveraging their influence to push for the necessary legislation. (Uzelac and Meester 2018:23–24, 57)

Despite these seemingly positive developments, progress in reality proved difficult, related to the specific set-up of the situation: First, infrastructure projects planned within the CIP were dependent on external funding. The funding pledges made at CEDRE, however, had been made conditional on economic and structural reforms. Apart from a new electricity plan to reform Lebanon's electricity sector (which had taken one year to be developed, left many issues unaddressed and provided only an interim solution), Lebanon however failed to implement any of the other reforms. (Atallah, Dagher, and Mahmalat 2019:11–12; Ouazzani 2019) As a result, funding could not be unlocked, infrastructure projects could not be started, and no new jobs for Lebanese and Syrians could be created. (Ouazzani 2019) Similarly, progress regarding new PPPs remained difficult: In April 2019, the head of the newly created 'High Council for Privatization and PPP', responsible for assessing and evaluating potential PPP projects, resigned, stating that there was "no political will to implement PPPs in Lebanon" (Ouazzani 2019).

Within that context of lacking job opportunities, the situation for Syrian refugees with regard to livelihoods and employment opportunities remained unchanged and precarious, and a highly sensitive topic between international organizations and the Lebanese government. Even though response partners tried to push for improvements, for instance focusing on value chain development or trying to find additional sectors in which refugees would be allowed to work, this proved unsuccessful. Generally, response partners felt they were hitting a 'policy wall' with the government when bringing up the issue, with no opportunity to re-open the discussion. (Care 2018:17; Chemaly 2018; I UN Lebanon 5 2019; I UN Lebanon 6 2019) As a result, livelihood interventions, too, remained limited to trainings and cash-for-work schemes, failing to provide sustainable solutions leading to refugees' self-sufficiency. (I LNGO Lebanon 3 2019; I UN Lebanon 6 2019; I UN Lebanon 7 2019)

Innovation and knowledge-sharing

A last aspect stressed within the LCRP was a commitment to "identify options for innovative implementation models" (Government of Lebanon and UN 2014:33), referring in particular to finding ways to improve targeting and make the delivery of the response more cost-efficient. The need for "innovative responses that target[ed] Lebanese and persons displaced from Syria alike to address the protracted nature of the crisis" was further stressed in 2017. Accordingly, in all LCRPs, reference to 'innovative approaches' was made in several sector responses, including Food Security (Government of Lebanon and UN 2015:36; Government of Lebanon and UN 2017:77; Government of Lebanon and UN 2018:83), Shelter (Government of Lebanon and UN 2014:88; Government of Lebanon and UN 2018:153), Energy and Water (Government of Lebanon and UN 2015:49; Government of Lebanon and UN 2018:187), and Education (Government of Lebanon and UN 2018:54). From 2018 on, in particular the Livelihoods sector started to refer to the importance of 'innovation' for economic growth more and more (Government of Lebanon and UN 2018:114–115).

Lessons learned in that regard were to be shared with other sectors, with the LCRP being understood as a knowledge management tool. Besides experiences made in programming, this included also key findings from surveys and policy recommendations. (Government of Lebanon and UN 2018:26)

In practice, several new technologies were applied in the response. The framework of the LCRP helped in that regard as it brought together a wide and diverse array of actors with different backgrounds. Among them were "a core of extremely savvy and technologically adept national and international

days of short-term jobs in the construction industry, and the 'Lebanon National Jobs Program (PforR)' which was intended to create 100,000 jobs over the medium-term, in particular for Lebanese women and youth as well as for refugees, mainly through reforms creating a more feasible environment for private investment, an increased focus on trade and exports, and active labor market programs. (GCFF 2019:12)

colleagues who, faced with constraints in program design and delivery, set about creatively to overcome them” (Kelley 2017:97). In different cases, Lebanon in particular benefitted from knowledge-sharing across the region: For instance, biometric registration and cash-based programming through multi-purpose cash cards were introduced, both of which had already been successfully implemented in Jordan and contributed to the improvement of both service delivery and accountability. (Kelley 2017:97–99) Other approaches and programs were developed specifically for the Lebanese context. This included, for instance, a data management tool that automatically pulled together information from different data sources and linked them to geographic areas on a web-based map, providing response partners with a consolidated overview of information. (Kelley 2017:99) Another initiative regarded as a paradigm innovation included the so-called ‘Information Management and Analysis Support’ initiative (IMAS). Within the system, data related to stabilization and resilience efforts from different actors was compiled and integrated into a so-called ‘Lebanon Digital Atlas’, giving an overview of key social risks and vulnerabilities as well as resources and efforts across the country. The system also incorporated the national ‘Aid Coordination Portal and Dashboard’ (‘Lebanon Aid’), run and hosted by the Lebanese government and linked to OCHA’s Financial Tracking Service, overall allowing for online, real-time project and activity tracking. While the system’s initial development and roll-out focused on Lebanon, it was intended to later serve as a regional initiative for countries affected by the Syria crisis. (UNHCR-UNDP Joint Secretariat 2015:101–104)

Besides these new approaches within their own programs, the UN also actively tried to include ‘innovative ideas’ from other actors in the response, in particular from the private sector. For instance, UNHCR and UNICEF in 2016 established a so-called ‘Humanitarian Innovation Lab’, where, during a three-day hackathon, 70 UN representatives, students and professionals explored new technical solutions to improve central aspects of the refugee response. Selected initiatives received funding for further development, among them a technology to deploy and measure living conditions in homes or communities and to connect vulnerable communities with centrally managed information and response systems (KwikSense), a mobile application helping Syrian refugees access banking services and cash assistance (Moeeny), and a digital health diary to help keep track of immunizations and other health-related conditions and alerts (Vaxy-Nations). (Clarke 2016; Radcliffe 2016)

Other innovative approaches were tested outside the LCRP framework, comprising a new form of cooperation between Lebanon and the EU and new funding mechanisms through concessional and conditional financing structures. Despite their potential, however, these processes fell short of expectations: Due to the lack of concrete commitments in the Lebanon-EU Compact, tangible results in practice remained lacking. The same held true for new financing mechanisms. While the introduction of the CFF was rhetorically welcomed, it took over two years until the first projects were approved. The introduction of conditional funding did not bring the desired results either, as no reforms, on which funding had been made conditional, were carried out. (Howden, Patchett, and Alfred 2017:17–18; I INGO Lebanon 1 2017; I UN Lebanon 3 2017; I UN Lebanon 6 2019; Ouazzani 2019; Uzelac and Meester 2018:53) Overall, what set these approaches apart from the former, programmatic ‘innovations’ was that they required the active political will and engagement of the Lebanese government. As these two aspects remained lacking, however, the approaches ultimately did not succeed in reaching the pursued results.

6.2.5 Analysis of Lebanon’s response from a resilience perspective

Just like the JRP in Jordan, the LCRP as the Lebanon country chapter of the 3RP formed part of a resilience-based response framework. The preceding chapters have outlined what Lebanon’s version of a resilience-based response looked like and how it manifested in the prevailing context, focusing both on the general incorporation of resilience and on its strategic direction.

The following subchapters will the LCRP from the perspective of resilience, examining the specific manifestation of a resilience-based response in contrast to resilience-thinking as understood by the UN, as well as the reasons and consequences thereof. Following the same structure as the analysis of Jordan,

the first subchapter will focus on the reasons of the specific understanding of resilience applied in Lebanon and the implications thereof. Afterwards, the subchapter will examine to what extent the response incorporated resilience-thinking, and which characteristics of the response were in line with, and differing from, a resilience-based response as outlined by the UN at the regional level. Lastly, the subchapter will investigate the different functions ‘resilience’ fulfilled for different actors, before turning to challenges emerging in the response as well as to new developments regarding resilience-thinking in Lebanon’s response to the situation.

6.2.5.1 Understanding of resilience and the reasons thereof

When looking at the LCRP as part of a regional, resilience-based response framework, the first thing to notice is the near-complete absence of the term ‘resilience’ as an overall conceptual underpinning within the plan. Rather, it is framed around ‘stabilization’.

Conceptually, ‘resilience’ and ‘stabilization’ are based on different theoretical underpinnings: ‘Stabilization’, a concept originating in peace and conflict studies, in a narrow sense refers to “a peacebuilding approach that is applied in situations of imminent violent conflict” (Wittowsky 2017:4). Stabilization measures are widely understood to aim at “promot[ing] a political process that puts an end to the escalation of violent conflicts” (Wittowsky 2017:3). In a broader sense, stabilization measures also include support projects, usually so-called quick impact projects meant to have a stabilizing effect in the short term, such as emergency assistance, provision of basic services and income generation. However, activities are understood as ‘stabilization measures’ only if they generate ‘stabilization dividends’ that support the political process. (Wittowsky 2017:3) As such, it is often promoted in the context of reconstruction, and refers to coping with a shock in order to return to ‘normal’. ‘Normal’, in that case, does not necessarily equal a desirable state. ‘Resilience’ on the other hand, despite the lack of a common definition, generally refers to different capacities to be strengthened in order to deal with shocks and stresses as outlined above. Usually, it includes not only the notion of coping with a shock, but also of transforming in order for systems, communities or individuals to be prepared better for a shock in the future. Within that notion, ‘stabilization’ can be seen as one step on the way of reaching ‘resilience’. (Frankenberger et al. 2012:2; UNDP and Mercy Corps 2015:14)

In the Lebanese context, however, no distinction between the two concepts was made: While the response was framed around ‘stabilization’, apart from that it still contained the language of resilience-thinking. This became most obvious in its reference to the three response areas of ‘coping’, ‘recovering’ and ‘sustaining’ (Government of Lebanon and UN 2014:13), and its focus on “promoting the ability of individuals, households, communities, and institutions to withstand and recover from shocks and stresses while achieving transformational change” (Government of Lebanon and UN 2015:137). Overall, with this wording, it used the same language as the UNDG Position Paper on a resilience-based development response to the Syria crisis. (UNDG 2014:7) Thus, in Lebanon’s response framework only ‘resilience’ as the ultimate outcome was linguistically replaced with ‘stabilization’, thereby following a different interpretation than scholars and international actors who conceptually distinguished between the two approaches.

These linguistic alterations were related to the development process of the response. Until the development of the LCRP, the Lebanese government had not been involved in the refugee response to a large extent. Instead, the response had been led by UNHCR (supported by various other UN agencies). (Bonard, Sida, and Tjoflaat 2015:10; Dionigi 2016:10; Janmyr 2018:396–397) This was still the case when in 2014 the 3RP was developed at the regional level and introduced the new conceptual basis of resilience to complement humanitarian measures. This took place mostly in the context of a new envisaged engagement of UNDP. Through the promotion of ‘resilience’ at the regional level, in particular through the Sub-Regional Response Facility for the Syria Crisis, ‘resilience’ as the new overarching concept trickled down to the country level in Lebanon as well. (I UN Lebanon 3 2017) For many response partners, and UNDP in particular, thereby ‘resilience’ was not a new term or concept. For instance, it had already been used in UNDP’s Lebanon Stabilization and Recovery Program, one component of which focused explicitly on “Fostering the Resilience of the most Vulnerable Lebanese

Host Communities” (UNDP 2014c:4). As the new response plan was still developed by the UN, the framing around resilience coming from the regional level was easily adopted for the framework.

However, with the LCRP, finally the Lebanese government got more involved in the response. With this new engagement, it also wanted to have more of a say in the response. Rather than relating to the programmatic response, this initially seemed to pertain mostly to semantics. After long discussions between the UN and the government several terms in the response framework had to be replaced. This referred not only to ‘resilience’ which was to be replaced with ‘stabilization’, but also to other terms such as ‘refugee’ or ‘social cohesion’, which were replaced with ‘displaced’ and ‘social stability’, respectively. (Government of Lebanon and UN 2014:6, 32; I MoSA 4 2019; I UN Lebanon 1 2017; I UN Lebanon 3 2017; I UN Lebanon 5 2019; Janmyr 2018:397–399)

With the new wording of ‘stabilization’, the framework also followed more closely the phrasing of Lebanon’s ‘Roadmap of Priority Interventions for Stabilization from the Syrian Conflict’, which had officially been prepared by the Lebanese government in 2013, albeit “with the support of the World Bank and the United Nations” (Government of Lebanon 2013:3).⁷⁸

Overall, however, as only the term itself, but not its conceptual underpinnings referring to the different capacities to deal with the crisis were replaced, the change in language was generally not regarded a big issue by the different stakeholders. Rather, the rejection of the term was perceived as being about semantics only, which did not have implications on the deeper meaning of the concept itself. (I UN Lebanon 3 2017; I UN Lebanon 4 2017; I UN Lebanon 5 2019; I UN Lebanon 7 2019; I UN Regional 2 2018)

Nevertheless, it became increasingly obvious that different actors still had a different understanding of the approach.

For the UN as well as most response partners active in Lebanon, the new focus on ‘stabilization’ meant a continuation of the ongoing response, pursuing and expanding many initiatives that had been started within the framework of previous response plans already. In their view, Lebanon’s non-camp policy and the resulting dispersal of refugees across host communities had meant that, from the beginning, many interventions had included resilience or stabilization aspects. For instance, measures aimed at improving service delivery for refugees had included vulnerable Lebanese living in the same location as well. (I INGO Lebanon 2 2017; I LNGO Lebanon 2 2017; I LNGO Lebanon 3 2019; I UN Lebanon 3 2017; UN 2012a:42–43) Similarly, the response had included capacity-developing measures for ministries as well as support for municipalities to improve the quality and quantity of basic services provided. (UN 2012b:48) With the increasing recognition of Lebanon’s needs, already in 2014 this focus had broadened further: Overall, the RRP6 had included 1.5 million ‘affected Lebanese’ in its response. (UN 2013f:2) UNDP’s Host Community Support Programme had expanded, being rolled out in 50 communities. Other initiatives focused on the restoration of local economies, public-private partnerships or on policy reforms, resulting for instance in the government’s RACE strategy. Additionally, with ActivityInfo and other methodologies introduced by UNDP⁷⁹ new tools had been established that allowed more efficient tracking of assistance and a more participatory approach, including municipalities more in the response. (Government of Lebanon and UN 2014:10–11)

Response partners took the view that these efforts were to be replicated and scaled up in the LCRP. Thus, many response partners did not regard the new focus on stabilization as very novel, but rather as reinforcing certain aspects of the existing response, besides continuing humanitarian efforts moving to more long-term and sustainable interventions that focused more on economic and livelihood

⁷⁸ The still relatively frequent use of ‘resilience’ within the Roadmap, for instance within its different tracks and as the overall goal of the different strategic objectives (Government of Lebanon 2013:4–5) thereby suggests that the document was presented as the government’s doing, but might in fact have been prepared by the international community.

⁷⁹ These included, for instance UNDP’s Mapping of Risks and Resources’ (MRR) methodology as well as its ‘Mechanisms for Social Stability’ (MSS) project. See also Footnote⁷¹.

opportunities and capacity-development. (I INGO Lebanon 2 2017; I UN Lebanon 3 2017) Nevertheless, even among response partners, understandings about the desired outcome of stabilization measures as well as assessments of its justification at that specific time of the response differed: For instance, while for some the objective lay in stability, for others it lay in change; while some regarded the timing of introducing stabilization as too early, some argued they had been implementing stabilization measures for years. (Grunewald, Brangeon, and Karroum 2017:17; I INGO Lebanon 2 2017; I MoSA 1 2017; I UN Lebanon 2 2017; I UN Lebanon 3 2017; I UN Lebanon 4 2017; UNDP and Mercy Corps 2015:10)

For the Lebanese government, on the other hand, ‘stabilization’ meant first and foremost a new focus on Lebanon and Lebanese host communities, thereby offering the prospect of a development dividend. (Grunewald, Brangeon, and Karroum 2017:16; I UN Lebanon 6 2019) In particular, it increasingly pushed for large-scale infrastructure projects, job opportunities for Lebanese, and measures aiming at Lebanon’s economic development. (I MoSDA 1 2017; I UN Lebanon 4 2017; I UN Lebanon 3 2017) While these aspects per se were pursued by the international community as well, the government’s understanding often excluded refugees from these measures. This became increasingly obvious in particular in the livelihoods sector, where all activities aiming at creating long-term income-generating activities were to be aimed at Lebanese only. In the same manner, all measures involving anything that could be interpreted as contributing to facilitating Syrians’ longer-term stay, such as the establishment of permanent structures in the shelter or WASH sector which, by the international community, were understood as part of a stabilization-based response and which would have led to more sustainable solutions, were rejected by the government. (Grunewald, Brangeon, and Karroum 2017:16; I INGO Lebanon 3 2019:3; I UN Lebanon 3 2017:3; I UN Lebanon 6 2019; Walnycki 2017)

Thus, overall, the new focus of the response led to a certain level of confusion, with differing understandings of the objective and approach of ‘stabilization’, both among the Lebanese government and the international community, and among different response partners themselves.

6.2.5.2 Implications of Lebanon’s understanding of resilience and stabilization

Overall, more important than the semantics around ‘resilience’ and ‘stabilization’ were the implications of the concepts’ understanding in practice.

Firstly, the confusion around the new focus of stabilization led to unclarity related to funding. In some cases, due to limited funding in general, humanitarian funds were diverted to stabilization and development efforts. This was perceived as problematic: First, many actors perceived this shift as too early, with immediate needs escalating and vulnerabilities among refugees increasing. (I INGO Lebanon 2 2017; I INGO Lebanon 1 2017; I INGO Lebanon 1 2017; I INGO Lebanon 2 2017; I UN Lebanon 2 2017; Mansour 2017:10–11, 17) Second, actors raised concerns that ‘stabilization funding’ would, in line with a larger government leadership role and capacity-developing measures, be directed to entities that were introducing increasingly restrictive measures aimed at refugees, running contrary to the objectives of the refugee response aiming at providing protection and access to livelihoods. (Grunewald, Brangeon, and Karroum 2017:17, 23–24; I INGO Lebanon 1 2017; Uzelac and Meester 2018:48) As such, it was feared that one part of the response (stabilization through, for instance, capacity-development) would factually counteract efforts within the other (protection of, and livelihood opportunities for, refugees). In other cases, funding first envisaged for development projects were redirected to emergency projects – causing discontent among the original beneficiaries, that is, Lebanese host communities and local authorities, and fueling tensions. (I INGO Lebanon 2 2017; I UN Lebanon 6 2019; Kocks et al. 2018:114)

Secondly, the new involvement of the government and its understanding of stabilization to some extent made the implementation of the response more complicated for response partners. While the increased engagement, in line with the principles of the new response framework, was generally welcomed, it also meant not only more negotiations with the government, described as frustrating and time-consuming, but also a decrease in operational space and flexibility. (I INGO Lebanon 1 2017; I INGO Lebanon 2

2017; I LNGO Lebanon 3 2019; I UN Lebanon 1 2017; I UN Lebanon 3 2017; I UN Lebanon 5 2019; I UN Lebanon 6 2019; I UN Lebanon 7 2019; Janmyr 2018:397–399) As a result, the larger ownership of the government, in line with the response framework’s new focus on stabilization, did not necessarily mean more stabilization or sustainable solutions for refugees: Rather, it became more difficult to implement certain activities, and partly even led to a continuation of, or even regression to, a more humanitarian approach. For instance, restrictions within the livelihoods sector kept refugees dependent on international assistance, and the rejection of permanent structures meant that the response had to rely on parallel humanitarian systems, making it unsustainable and costly. (Al-Arian and Sherlock 2019; Grunewald, Brangeon, and Karroum 2017:16; I LNGO Lebanon 3 2019; I UN Lebanon 5 2019; I UN Lebanon 7 2019; Uzelac and Meester 2018:48)

Thirdly, many donors were perceived as referencing the notion of stabilization mainly to their own strategic interests that lay in keeping Lebanon stable in order to prevent onward movements of refugees, in particular to Europe. This perception was reinforced both by Europe’s external migration policy, focusing increasingly on border protection and giving rise to doubts about the credibility of donors’ concerns about refugees’ living conditions in Lebanon, and by the high level of funding the response generally achieved, despite Lebanon’s status as a middle-income country with existing capacities and resources. (Grunewald, Brangeon, and Karroum 2017:17–18; I UN Lebanon 1 2017; I UN Lebanon 3 2017; Uzelac and Meester 2018:50) At the same time, sectors such as livelihoods, shelter, and water remained underfunded, demonstrating donors’ priorities: Generally, they were more interested in creating quick and tangible results, which were more easily achieved with uncontroversial short-term measures paying regard to humanitarian needs and not breaching demands made by the government, rather than getting engaged in more complicated ‘stabilization measures’ which might mean more government involvement and long discussions about what could and could not be done, further complicated by the lack of a coherent government vision and differing sectarian and political interests. (I UN Lebanon 7 2019; Uzelac and Meester 2018:42) Generally, donors were perceived as not having much leverage with the Lebanese government in pushing for more ‘stabilization measures’ for refugees: As they were not fulfilling their resettlement obligations and focused increasingly on restrictions in their migration and asylum policies themselves, their normative and political credibility of the protection agenda in the region was undermined, putting donors in a position where they could not make demands on Lebanon. (I UN Lebanon 7 2019; Uzelac and Meester 2018:5)

As a result of the above, despite the increased rhetoric of ‘stabilization’ on the sides of both the Lebanese government and the international community, the response to a large extent continued as before, remaining largely short-term and humanitarian. Thus, the response did not meet the interests of either stakeholder: It could neither include longer-term ‘stabilization programs’ for refugees such as economic integration, self-reliance or more permanent structures (pushed for by the international community but rejected by the government), nor did it focus on large-scale infrastructure programs or comprehensive measures to improve the overall economic situation of Lebanon to achieve ‘stabilization’ (sought for by the government, but foundering on a lack of funding by donors).

6.2.5.3 Understanding and implementation of a ‘resilience- / stabilization-based’ response

Besides the LCRP’s general framing around ‘stabilization’, the approach included several key principles and commitments as outlined above, that overall made up the strategic direction of the response. The following two subchapters will investigate to what extent these aspects and their realization in practice were in line with the conceptualization of a resilience-based response as outlined by the UN, and where they differed.

6.2.5.3.1 Characteristics in line with a resilience-based response

Notwithstanding the use of different wording regarding ‘stabilization’ and ‘resilience’, many principles underlying the response framework in Lebanon were in accord with the principles of a resilience-based

response outlined by the UN at the regional level. Even though some of them were realized only to a limited extent, efforts to move in that direction were clearly visible.

First, this applied to the aspect of national leadership and ownership. While the government had taken a back seat within the humanitarian response in the first years after the influx of Syrian refugees, outsourcing the provision of refugees to UNHCR and its partners (Dionigi 2016:10; I MoSA 2 2017; Janmyr 2018:394), this changed significantly with the LCRP and its focus on stabilization. For the first time, the response plan was negotiated with, and signed off by, the government, even though its contribution to the debate initially referred mostly to semantics rather than to the actual strategic or programmatic direction of the response. (Bonard, Sida, and Tjoflaat 2015:10; I LNGO Lebanon 1 2017; I MoSDA 1 2017; Janmyr 2018:397) Furthermore, while single projects did not formally have to be approved by the government to be implemented like in Jordan, from now on it was expected that response partners would get in touch with respective line ministries to discuss their plans. (I LNGO Lebanon 2 2017; I MoSA 4 2019; I UN Lebanon 7 2019) In particular MoSA, a previously relatively small ministry with not much political significance, took on a much larger role in the response. (Boustani et al. 2016:16–18; I UN Lebanon 2 2017; I UN Lebanon 7 2019) After their initial lack of interest, other line ministries such as the Ministry for Education followed, often ascribed to their realization of the potential development dividend lying within the stabilization-focus of the response. (I INGO Lebanon 1 2017; I MoSA 2 2017; I MoSDA 1 2017; I UN Lebanon 1 2017; Uzelac and Meester 2018:48)

Generally, the level of government engagement thus showed an upward trend over the years of the response, even though it often depended on single individuals how far this engagement went, and could change from year to year, related to the fluid political system and associated interests and alliances. (Culbertson et al. 2016:53; I UN Lebanon 7 2019; Kelley 2017:91) Overall, while the political will to have a say in the response and be more in control about what was being implemented, and how, clearly increased, capacities to take over full leadership from the UN remained lacking. As a result, the majority of the actual work continued to be prepared by international actors. (Culbertson et al. 2016:53, 94; I INGO Lebanon 1 2017; I LNGO Lebanon 2 2017; I MoSA 2 2017; I UN Lebanon 3 2017; I UN Lebanon 5 2019)

In response to this, and, again, in line with the principles of a resilience-based response as outlined by the UN at the regional level, the response upheld a strong focus on capacity-strengthening and using existing systems and structures for the implementation of the response. While these efforts had been started already before the introduction of the LCRP, the focus on stabilization emphasized this aspect even more, recognizing that within previous response plans and their focus on humanitarian and emergency measures a parallel system had been set up, even though the response was taking place in a middle-income country with existing systems, structures, resources and capacities. (Culbertson et al. 2016:21–24) Through the secondment of UN staff to ministries and authorities and a plethora of trainings, large efforts were made to strengthen these existing capacities and to enable local actors, including the government, municipalities and local NGOs, to lead, coordinate and implement the response and eventually take over from international partners. (I LNGO Lebanon 2 2017; I LNGO Lebanon 3 2019; I MoSA 2 2017; I MoSA 3 2019; I MoSA 4 2019; Kocks et al. 2018:120; UNHCR 2018e:2) However, even though these efforts led to marked improvements, in particular with regard to MoSA and some local NGOs that benefited significantly from capacity-strengthening measures and evolved into important partners within the response, even years into the crisis national and local actors still relied heavily on UN agencies and other international actors to lead, coordinate and implement the response. (Culbertson et al. 2016:53; I LNGO Lebanon 3 2019; I MoSA 3 2019; I MoSA 4 2019; I UN Lebanon 6 2019; I UN Lebanon 7 2019)

Another aspect in line with a resilience-based approach that the response clearly incorporated was the integration of a humanitarian with a stabilization-focused strategy, creating a link both between short-term and more longer-term and development-oriented measures, and between refugee aid and development. While some argued that this had been the case already before the LCRP, as a division

between humanitarian and development assistance as well as between aid for refugees and aid for locals was nearly impossible in practice, in particular in a context like Lebanon where refugees lived among the local, often vulnerable, population and national infrastructure for the delivery of services existed, the LCRP put new emphasis on the approach. (Grunewald, Brangeon, and Karroum 2017:15, 17; I INGO Lebanon 2 2017; I LNGO Lebanon 2 2017; I LNGO Lebanon 3 2019; I UN Lebanon 3 2017) It thereby even went further than the response plan at the regional level: Unlike the 3RP, the LCRP from the beginning was not divided into two components, but comprised both humanitarian and stabilization aspects in each sector response. (Government of Lebanon and UN 2014) Funding requirements, too, were not split up between the two response areas from 2017 on.⁸⁰ (Government of Lebanon and UN 2015; Government of Lebanon and UN 2017; Government of Lebanon and UN 2018) Similarly, measures usually targeted both refugees and vulnerable Lebanese, and no quotas existed that specified the ratio of both groups of beneficiaries. (Government of Lebanon and UN 2014:4–5; I UN Lebanon 6 2019; I UN Lebanon 7 2019) The level of integration of both aspects within the approach was stressed as unique by many actors, setting it apart from other contexts within the region or elsewhere. (I MoSA 2 2017; I INGO Jordan 1 2017; I UN Lebanon 3 2017; I UN Lebanon 7 2019)

Another aspect in line with the UN's understanding of a resilience-based response was the pursuit of increased inter-agency cooperation and partnerships. This materialized first and foremost in an increased cooperation between UNHCR and UNDP, with UNDP taking over a new co-leadership role. While the transition to this arrangement was not perceived as smooth and included power struggles in particular in the beginning, the two agencies managed to become partners on a par within the response. (Culbertson et al. 2016:41, 54; I UN Lebanon 3 2017; I UN Lebanon 4 2017; I UN Lebanon 7 2019; Mansour 2017:12) Their close cooperation, for instance through inter-agency coordinators, also further contributed to a better linkage between humanitarian and stabilization measures. (I UN Lebanon 1 2017; I UN Lebanon 7 2019) Partnerships and ways of cooperation increased on other levels, too, for instance between international and local NGOs (Kelley 2017:102), or NGOs and municipalities (Chemaly 2018; Mourad 2017:262). Overall, many actors stressed that, through the LCRP, a new level of cooperation and coordination could be achieved within the response, as the framework for the first time brought actors from different backgrounds together. (Grunewald, Brangeon, and Karroum 2017:14; I INGO Lebanon 2 2017; I MoSA 1 2017; I MoSA 4 2019; I MoSDA 1 2017; I UN Lebanon 3 2017; I UN Lebanon 5 2019; I UN Lebanon 6 2019; I UN Lebanon 7 2019)

On other levels, partnerships remained difficult despite efforts to move in that direction. On the one hand, this referred to partnerships between response partners and the government. While both sides described the overall cooperation as generally well-functioning, it was also characterized by tensions and misunderstandings, including long and frustrating negotiations, heated discussions about the strategic direction of the response, and contrary views on various issues. (Culbertson et al. 2016:53; I MoSA 2 2017; I UN Lebanon 5 2019; I UN Lebanon 7 2019) Contradictory action and information given out by ministries, as well as uncertainties about the consistency of a given strategic direction further complicated cooperation. (Culbertson et al. 2016:53; I LNGO Lebanon 3 2019; I UN Lebanon 6 2019; I UN Lebanon 7 2019; Kelley 2017:84–85) Another area in which the commitment to partnerships was not fulfilled were public-private partnerships (PPP), commonly ascribed to a lack of political will to create a more favorable environment for investment. (Ouazzani 2019; Young 2019)

Lastly, like promoted by the UN in their resilience-based response framework, 'innovative approaches' across different sectors were implemented within the framework of the LCRP, albeit with differing success. On the one side, new programmatic approaches were applied, including the use of advanced technologies or the use of apps and social media. (Kelley 2017:97–99; Clarke 2016; Radcliffe 2016) Additionally, the LCRP incorporated process innovations in its programmatic response, for instance relying on newly developed methodologies to assess vulnerabilities and resources. (See, for instance, UNHCR-UNDP Joint Secretariat 2015:71–73, 101–2014) Both aspects were generally regarded as

⁸⁰ While funding requirements had to be divided for reporting to the 3RP, this information was not published.

contributing positively to the response, improving service delivery, participation and accountability, and making the response more sustainable. Other innovative approaches with similar objectives as the LCRP were tested somewhat outside the response framework, thus going beyond the programmatic level. Focusing more strategically on new forms of cooperation and funding, they held the potential for further-reaching changes not only related to the response to the refugee situation, but to the overall development of the country. Altogether, however, these processes fell short of expectations, foundering on the lack of political will and government engagement. (Howden, Patchett, and Alfred 2017:17–18; I INGO Lebanon 1 2017; I UN Lebanon 3 2017; I UN Lebanon 6 2019; Ouazzani 2019; Uzelac and Meester 2018:53)

6.2.5.3.2 Characteristics differing from a resilience-based response

Besides these aspects in which the response followed the conceptualization of a resilience-based response (albeit with varying success), there were other aspects that did not meet the principles laid out by the UN as a resilience-based response.

First of all, despite commitments to a participatory approach in line with the UN's principles, several actors and stakeholders remained excluded from the response. This concerned both the overall development of the strategy and its implementation. Generally, the response framework was drafted by the UN and the government. While other international and national NGOs could at least provide feedback (Uzelac and Meester 2018:47), other actors remained excluded from the process entirely. This included both Syrian actors and organizations (related to registration restrictions by the Lebanese government as well as to donors' legislation and policies) (Mansour 2017:13–16) and municipalities which, despite their key role at the forefront of the emerging situation, were perceived to be represented by the Ministry of Interior. (Mourad 2017:262) Similarly, they were not included in sector working group meetings. Community-based organizations, civil society organizations and local NGOs, too, remained excluded from many aspects, ascribed to both a lack of capacities and institutional barriers. (Boustani et al. 2016:19; Saieh, Abi Khalil, and Gorevan 2017:8) All in all, even several years after the introduction of the LCRP and its commitment to participation, it was widely agreed that a more participatory and inclusive approach was still needed, which would also be more in line both with the UN's understanding of a resilience-based response. (I INGO Lebanon 2 2017; I INGO Lebanon 3 2019; I MoSA 3 2019; I UN Lebanon 3 2017)

A second aspect in which the response fell short of its commitments (which were congruent with key principles in the UN's resilience-based response) was increased accountability. While response partners put growing focus on corresponding measures in their programming, a large part of accountability issues remained unaddressed even long after the introduction of the LCRP. Besides a lack of coherent monitoring and information-sharing among actors that impeded transparency and an overall assessment of the impact of the response in general, this concerned in particular accountability of the government to affected populations. This was related to the government's lacking willingness and capacities to take over responsibility and control of the response, and reinforced by the continued practice to channel funds not directly to the Lebanese government and Lebanese institutions but to the UN and international NGOs. In so doing, the government was discharged even more from assuming responsibility and becoming accountable to their citizens and affected population. This, in turn, also hindered complete ownership of the response. (Culbertson et al. 2016:44; Fakhoury 2017:691–692; Grunewald, Brangeon, and Karroum 2017:21–22)

A last area which differed significantly from the UN's understanding of a resilience-based response and which was further-reaching than the two aforementioned aspects was the overall field of enhancing economic opportunities, livelihoods and self-reliance. Even though the LCRP rhetorically committed to the issue, clearly in line with the principles outlined at the regional level as part of a resilience-based response (Government of Lebanon and UN 2014:5), this commitment was not met in practice. While in the years prior to the LCRP a lack of funding had proven to be a key impediment within the sector

(Government of Lebanon and UN 2014:80), this was now exacerbated by the increasing engagement of the government in refugee issues: On the one hand, new government policies, requiring Syrian refugees registered with UNHCR to sign a pledge not to work, made refugees more dependent on assistance and ran contrary to their self-reliance (I LNGO Lebanon 1 2017; Janmyr 2016:75–76); on the other hand, response partners became more and more restricted with regard to livelihood interventions targeting refugees, being encouraged to focus on Lebanese instead. (I MoSA 2 2017; I MoSDA 1 2017; I UN Lebanon 3 2017; Uzelac and Meester 2018:48) These developments thus stood in clear contrast to the understanding of the UN and the international community, who advocated for the inclusion of refugees in activities aiming at improving livelihoods and self-sufficiency.

While several developments from 2016/2017 on seemed to create momentum for a change in this course of action, including the London Conference, the establishment of the CFF and the signing of the EU-Lebanon Compact in 2016, holding out the prospect of large amounts of funding and raising expectations of thousands of new job opportunities, and the development of the CIP and its presentation at CEDRE in 2018/2019, again linked to the prospect of new funding and jobs, changes in practice remained limited: Even though some improvements were realized, including the removal of the requirement for refugees to sign a pledge not to work, many regulations remained in place and impeded refugees' self-sufficiency, including complex and costly application procedures for work permits and the prohibition for refugees to be self-employed. (Care 2018:18; Howden, Patchett, and Alfred 2017:17; Uzelac and Meester 2018:19–20) The situation was exacerbated as the government, who had previously often turned a blind eye to these practices (I LNGO Lebanon 1 2017; Janmyr 2016:75–76), increasingly controlled and enforced the abidance by these regulations, including response partners' restrictions on livelihood interventions. (Howden, Patchett, and Alfred 2017:17–18; I LNGO Lebanon 1 2017; I MoSA 4 2019; I UN Lebanon 5 2019; I UN Lebanon 6 2019) Moreover, CFF and CIP projects were implemented only with considerable delay or foundered on the lack of political unity and will for reform, thus not leading to desired new job opportunities. (Atallah, Dagher, and Mahmalat 2019:11–12; Ouazzani 2019; World Bank Group 2018b:27) As such, despite continued rhetorical commitments by the government, the response continued to follow a completely different direction than the strategy promoted by the UN as part of a resilience-based response.

Overall, the increasing engagement of the government in the response, regarded as a success in terms of national leadership, ownership and capacity-development, thus resulted in a regression with regard to other aspects forming part of a resilience-based response, leading to more restrictions and a decrease in operational space which in turn led to less livelihood opportunities and self-sufficiency for refugees.

6.2.5.4 Functions of 'stabilization'

The introduction of the concept and wording around 'stabilization' had various implications on the response as outlined above. The shift to a more explicit focus on stabilization thereby was generally welcomed by different actors, as it often helped to fulfill specific interests.

For the UN, having led the refugee response in Lebanon for the first couple of years, the new focus provided the possibility to bring in new actors from the development field. Three years into the crisis, it became increasingly difficult to justify an ongoing purely humanitarian response based on parallel coordination and implementation structures, which was neither efficient nor sustainable. The new explicit focus on stabilization and longer-term measures laid down in the official response framework called development actors, who, up until that point, had largely been absent from the response (with few exceptions, most notably in the education sector), more to account. (Darcy 2016:26; I LNGO Lebanon 2 2017; I MoSA 2 2017; Kelley 2017:93–95)

In particular for UNHCR, this provided an opportunity to pursue its own strategic interests: With tensions between Lebanese and refugees rising, it was increasingly recognized that host communities and the burden they were carrying were not acknowledged enough. With its mandate directed at refugees, UNHCR acknowledged it needed a partner to respond to these needs, albeit ideally one that

would not interfere with its own authority in leading the humanitarian response. The focus on stabilization opened up the possibility to bring in UNDP as the “lead UN agenc[y] for [...] stabilization responses” (Government of Lebanon and UN 2014:28). (I UN Lebanon 2 2017; I UN Lebanon 3 2017; I UN Lebanon 4 2017) With the agency’s completely different focus and mandate, it constituted a tenable partner for UNHCR to co-lead the response that would not interfere with its mandate – in contrast to, for instance, OCHA, with whom UNHCR had been wrangling for authority. (I UN Lebanon 4 2017; Mansour 2017:12)

The involvement of UNDP as stabilization partner had other advantages, too. In a context like Lebanon, being a middle-income country with significant capacity and a legitimate government, three years into the crisis UNHCR as the lead agency in the refugee response was increasingly perceived as a threat to the country’s sovereignty. According to one government official, the agency had become a major decision-maker in the country, “more important than the President of the Republic” (as cited in Janmyr 2018:396). (I UN Lebanon 4 2017; Janmyr 2018:396) This notion was increasingly rejected by the government, who wanted to get more in charge of the response. At the same time, capacities clearly were not sufficient for the government to take over the full leadership of the response. (Bonard, Sida, and Tjoflaat 2015:14–15; Culbertson et al. 2016:42; I MoSA 1 2017) Therefore, in order to be able to keep up protection for refugees, without damaging the relationship with the government further, UNHCR was in need for a new partner. UNDP, having deep roots in the government and with municipalities, was well-respected and trusted, and thus was perceived as a suitable actor that would promote UN principles, but also help the government take over from emergency structures and obtain more leadership. (Bonard, Sida, and Tjoflaat 2015:13; I LINGO Lebanon 2 2017; I UN Lebanon 3 2017; Uzelac and Meester 2018:46)

At the same time, the new focus on stabilization allowed to address emerging tensions among response partners who, like the government, increasingly questioned UNHCR’s exclusive leadership role of the response. The new coordination and leadership structure set up with the LCRP for the first time brought all actors and activities within the response together in one single plan, and shifted power structures: UNHCR had to give up some of its authority, in particular to UNDP and the government, but also to other UN agencies and international organizations with a comparative advantage in the different sectors. (Culbertson et al. 2016:41–42) While the new structure led to new tensions and was perceived far from ideal by many organizations (Bonard, Sida, and Tjoflaat 2015:14–15; I INGO Lebanon 1 2017), it still was regarded as contributing to a better coordinated response by both donors and response partners. (Culbertson et al. 2016:42; Grunewald, Brangeon, and Karroum 2017:14; I UN Lebanon 4 2017)

Coupled with its increased leadership role, over the course of the response the government increasingly tried to employ the concept of stabilization to push for a stronger focus on Lebanon and Lebanese host communities: Starting in 2013, it continuously referred to its ‘Roadmap of Priority Interventions for Stabilization from the Syrian Conflict’ (Government of Lebanon 2013) which emphasized the importance of ‘stabilization’ measures for Lebanon’s overall stability. After its usage in the LCRP, the notion was further emphasized in 2017, when the government presented its ‘Vision for Stabilization and Development’ in light of the Syria crisis. Gathering up pace, an enhanced version of the document, the so-called ‘Vision for Stabilization, Growth and Employment’ (Government of Lebanon 2018b), was prepared and presented at the CEDRE conference in 2018 and continuously referred to with the aim of securing funding for the government’s ‘Capital Investment Program’ (CIP). (Atallah, Dagher, and Mahmalat 2019:2; I UN Lebanon 3 2017; I UN Lebanon 7 2019)

However, even though the government increasingly picked up on the term, it ultimately did not succeed in fully owning it and following through with using it to its benefit. This was due to different reasons: On the one hand, a lack of unity and clear vision within the government resulted in the lack of a coherent and centrally led response. For the LCRP, this meant that, while the response was officially led by the government, it still did not exercise full control over the programmatic details. For instance, measures did not have to be approved by the government, humanitarian and stabilization measures were not

divided into two clear-cut components, and there were no quotas introduced that outlined the ratio of Syrians and Lebanese to be targeted with interventions. Altogether, this made it more difficult for the government to track to what extent its stabilization focus was met, and to enforce its interpretation of stabilization. (I LNGO Lebanon 2 2017; I UN Lebanon 6 2019; I UN Lebanon 7 2019)

On the other hand, the government failed to make concrete links between its own interests and understanding of stabilization (large infra-structure projects and economic development for Lebanon) and the interests of the international community (pushing for refugees' inclusion in stabilization measures), for instance in the form of functioning compacts. While the government repeatedly made rhetoric commitments, in particular with regards to creating economic opportunities for refugees, the willingness to turn rhetoric into action and make concrete concessions remained lacking. (Ayoub and Mahdi 2018:5–6; I INGO Lebanon 1 2017; I INGO Lebanon 2 2017; I UN Lebanon 3 2017; I UN Lebanon 7 2019; Uzelac and Meester 2018:53) That way, the government missed the opportunity to use their actions as leverage to enforce their interests, failing to use the diverging interests of their own and the international community to their advantage.⁸¹ Thus, even though the government tried to use the crisis and the resulting emergence of a stabilization-rhetoric to its benefit, it did not succeed in doing so.

Overall, even though the launch of a response explicitly based on stabilization addressed emerging challenges, the concept itself did not have a large impact on the general strategic direction of the response, with many programmatic aspects continuing as before. Similarly, no actor succeeded in actively deploying the narrative of the concept to enforce its own interests.

Nevertheless, even though not directly linked to 'stabilization' per se, the new framework that was developed around the concept still influenced the progress of the response significantly. Through the new involvement of the government and other actors, the new coordination structure, and the bringing together of different actors including from the development world, the response framework more and more fulfilled two functions:

First, it increasingly became a platform for communication and negotiation between different actors, in particular between the government on the one side and response partners on the other side. (I MoSA 2 2017; I UN Lebanon 3 2017; I UN Lebanon 5 2019) While this started with discussions about terminology and wording (I UN Lebanon 3 2017; I UN Lebanon 5 2019; Janmyr 2018:397), it increasingly also concerned the programmatic response and general issues related to the refugee situation. (I MoSA 2 2017; I UN Lebanon 1 2017; I UN Lebanon 3 2017; I UN Lebanon 5 2019; I UN Lebanon 6 2019; I UN Lebanon 7 2019)

Second, and resulting from that, the framework contributed to creating a sense of trust among different stakeholders, including response partners, the government, and donors. Through the agreement of all actors on a common approach – with all its vagueness and generality, and despite the divisiveness on certain issues – the framework still set a general agenda and strategic direction. For response partners, this created a 'safe space' to operate in, and added some more clarity on the government's stance towards different issues, even though a clear national vision regarding the overall development of the country remained lacking and different parties acted on their own political interests only. (I MoSA 4 2019; I UN Lebanon 1 2017; I UN Lebanon 4 2017; I UN Lebanon 5 2019) For the government, its increased leadership role, the focus on stabilization and the multi-year framework ensured both the incorporation of Lebanon's needs in the response and a longer-term engagement of response partners in the country. (I MoSA 2 2017; I UN Lebanon 1 2017) For donors, the framework provided some sense of trust that a strategy was in place that was endorsed both by the Lebanese government and the responsible UN agencies, and that actors were interacting and cooperating. (I LNGO Lebanon 2 2017; I MoSA 2 2017;

⁸¹ This became even more apparent with regards to aspects lying outside the LCRP: Within the government's 'Vision for Stabilization', funding for the government's priorities was directly linked to political and economic reform. However, even though the reform agenda seemed to be supported by a wide political spectrum, the government failed to turn rhetoric into action, effectively obstructing the unlocking of funding. (Ouazzani 2019; Uzelac and Meester 2018:57)

I UN Lebanon 1 2017; I UN Lebanon 4 2017) In all these aspects, however, it was not the concept of stabilization itself that fulfilled these functions, but rather the framework that was created around it and that replaced the previous purely humanitarian response.

Overall, the LCRP with its explicit focus on stabilization therefore was perceived as a way to create trust among actors and to keep up visibility and funding through its new optics, but as otherwise not changing the direction of the response in a significant manner. (ILNGO Lebanon 2 2017; I UN Lebanon 1 2017; I UN Lebanon 2 2017; I UN Lebanon 4 2017; I UN Lebanon 7 2019)

6.2.5.5 Challenges

The shift away from a purely humanitarian response led by UNHCR to a more stabilization-focused strategy did not proceed without challenges.

First, this concerned different understandings about the focus and direction of the response. While generally a more pronounced shift towards more development-oriented measures was welcomed by all actors, including the government, response partners, and donors, the actual realization of it revealed open questions. Starting with discussions about the ‘resilience’ term itself, the difference between ‘resilience’, ‘stabilization’ and ‘development’ remained unclear. (Grunewald, Brangeon, and Karroum 2017:17; I MoSA 1 2017; I UN Lebanon 1 2017; I UN Lebanon 3 2017; I UN Lebanon 4 2017; UNDP and Mercy Corps 2015:10) The same held true for the question of who was to be targeted with stabilization-measures. (Culbertson et al. 2016:19; I MoSA 2 2017; I MoSA 4 2019) At the same time, opinions diverged on whether it was in fact too early to focus more on stabilization. Many actors found it difficult to define the prevailing situation: While it was not an actual emergency situation any longer, the existing immediate needs and growing vulnerabilities gave a different picture. (Grunewald, Brangeon, and Karroum 2017:17; I LNGO Lebanon 1 2017; I UN Lebanon 2 2017) Others criticized the strategy as still too small-scale and short-term focused. (Boustani et al. 2016:21–22; I MoSDA 1 2017)

These ambiguities were reflected in aspects of funding. Even though the new focus aimed at opening up new funding sources and mechanisms, most funding remained short-term, making it difficult for response partners to plan for longer-term and more sustainable measures. (Government of Lebanon 2017:1; Government of Lebanon, EU, and UN 2018:1–2; Grunewald, Brangeon, and Karroum 2017:16) In general, even though the response in Lebanon received large amounts of funding and was one of the best funded refugee responses worldwide, still wide gaps remained: Funding received against requirements stood at around 50 percent each year, with 2015 marking a high with 54 percent, and 2017 marking a low with 43 percent of required funding received. (Government of Lebanon and UN 2018:10) Accordingly, insufficient funding in general, and in particular the lack of multi-year funding, as well as constant concerns that funds would further decrease was perceived as a main challenge by many actors that impeded long-term planning. (Grunewald, Brangeon, and Karroum 2017:16; I INGO Lebanon 1 2017; I LNGO Lebanon 3 2019; I UN Lebanon 3 2017; I UN Lebanon 4 2017)

Thirdly, despite the bigger engagement of the Lebanese government and a growing sense of ownership, a common national vision remained lacking, not only about the direction of the response, but also with regard to the overall development of the country. (I MoSA 2 2017; I MoSA 3 2019; I UN Lebanon 7 2019) This was the result of the largely divided and complex political system, differing sectarian and political interests and resulting tensions within the government. (I LNGO Lebanon 3 2019; I MoSA 2 2017; I MoSA 3 2019; I UN Lebanon 4 2017) While different ministries developed their own sectoral strategies according to their priorities and interests, there was no unified and comprehensive national plan and approach in place. (Ayoub and Mahdi 2018:8) Similarly, no central entity or single government interlocuter was in place coordinating the different strategies, overlooking the situation in its entirety, and actively advocating for a unified approach. (Kelley 2017:91; Ayoub and Mahdi 2018:9) This made it difficult for both donors and response partners to obtain a clear and coherent message from the government about what could and could not be done, leading to uncertainties and making planning difficult. This was exacerbated as commonly not only information from different ministries, but also

from different staff in the same ministry differed, sometimes even contradicting each other. (Culbertson et al. 2016:53; I INGO Lebanon 3 2017; I MoSA 1 2017; I MoSDA 1 2017; I UN Lebanon 4 2017; I UN Lebanon 6 2019) Contributing to this was the fact that many issues were discussed only verbally but not put down in writing. Often explicitly welcomed by response partners, as any written statement by the government was perceived as likely being more conservative than verbal agreements, this did not help to establish more clarity either. (I UN Lebanon 7 2019) At the same time, this meant that, when staff in key positions changed this could mean a shift in the response, creating a further sense of uncertainty. (I MoSA 3 2019; I UN Lebanon 2 2017; I UN Lebanon 3 2017; Uzelac and Meester 2018:48–49) Generally, authorities seemed to be united across political and sectarian affiliations with regards to the response only in two aspects, at least in theory: an endeavored focus on the overall economic development and reform (Uzelac and Meester 2018:57), and the clear rejection of local integration of refugees. (Grunewald, Brangeon, and Karroum 2017:16; Hall 2019; Howden, Patchett, and Alfred 2017:2; I LNGO Lebanon 3 2019; I UN Lebanon 5 2019; I UN Lebanon 6 2019; I UN Lebanon 7 2019; Kelley 2017:86)

This last aspect led to an increasingly restrictive policy environment which was perceived as another growing challenge by many response partners and the international community. (Amnesty International 2019; Grunewald, Brangeon, and Karroum 2017:17; I LNGO Lebanon 3 2019; I UN Lebanon 3 2017; I UN Lebanon 5 2019; I UN Lebanon 7 2019; Vohra 2019) Restrictions thereby concerned two aspects: On the one hand, they targeted refugees directly. This included measures such as (unlawful) mass evictions and curfews (Amnesty International 2019; Hall 2019; Human Rights Watch 2018:1), the crackdown of Syrian businesses or businesses employing Syrians without the necessary paperwork (Howden, Patchett, and Alfred 2017:17–18; Vohra 2019), and new decrees allowing deportations (Amnesty International 2019; Vohra 2019), making refugees generally more vulnerable and running contrary to the objectives of the international community’s refugee response. On the other hand, restrictions concerned response partners and their activities. Where previously the lack of clear written guidelines in many respects preserved response partners’ operational space, with increased government engagement and control this space got increasingly smaller, limiting not only response partners’ flexibility, but often also the protection space for refugees. (Culbertson et al. 2016:97–98; I INGO Lebanon 1 2017; I LNGO Lebanon 2 2017; I LNGO Lebanon 3 2019; I UN Lebanon 5 2019; I UN Lebanon 6 2019; I UN Lebanon 7 2019; Uzelac and Meester 2018:47–48)

At the same time, even though the government showed more engagement and wanted to get more in charge of the response, capacities in ministries and authorities to take over full leadership remained lacking. (Culbertson et al. 2016:42, 53; I INGO Lebanon 1 2017; I LNGO Lebanon 3 2019; I MoSA 2 2017; I MoSA 4 2019; I UN Lebanon 3 2017; I UN Lebanon 6 2019) As a result, work was often prepared by (international) response partners and later presented as the government’s doing. (I MoSA 2 2017; I UN Lebanon 5 2019) Despite significant efforts from response partners to strengthen capacities, for instance through secondments and trainings (I LNGO Lebanon 3 2019; I MoSA 2 2017; I MoSA 3 2019; I UN Lebanon 6 2019; Kocks et al. 2018:120; UNHCR 2018e), the aspect remained a challenge. (I MoSA 3 2019; I MoSA 4 2019; I MoSDA 1 2017; Uzelac and Meester 2018:48)

Lastly, the issue of finding durable solutions for Syrians continued to be a main point of contention between the international community and the Lebanese government. For the government, durable solutions had to be found outside of Lebanon. Return was considered “the only durable solution being pursued for Syrian displaced in Lebanon” (Government of Lebanon and UN 2018:16), with resettlement to third countries regarded as the only viable alternative. In contrast, “any form of local integration” was perceived as “unconstitutional and therefore not an option” (Government of Lebanon and UN 2018:16). While this was accepted by the international community, it simultaneously emphasized that “the dignity and well-being of displaced Syrians [...] [needed to] be preserved until they [...] [could] attain durable solutions outside of Lebanon” (Government of Lebanon and UN 2018:16). However, this was perceived as becoming more and more difficult in a progressively hostile environment (Amnesty International 2019; Human Rights Watch 2018:1), in which not only all measures understood as contributing to local

integration were rejected, making refugees vulnerable and dependent on aid (Grunewald, Brangeon, and Karroum 2017:16; I LINGO Lebanon 3 2019; I UN Lebanon 5 2019; I UN Lebanon 6 2019), but also open calls for returns grew louder (Hall 2019; Human Rights Watch 2018:1; Middle East Eye 2019), with the government intentionally making life more difficult for Syrians in Lebanon (Amnesty International 2019; Hall 2019). At the same time, chances for resettlement and return remained slim: Not only did the international community repeatedly fail to fulfill resettlement requirements (IOM 2019; UNHCR 2019f), the UN also continuously assessed the conditions in Syria as not conducive for safe return. (Middle East Eye 2019) In that context, refugees in Lebanon were faced with increased hardship, while both protection space and livelihoods opportunities grew smaller, raising concerns among response partners as well as the international community.

6.2.5.6 Stabilization and new developments

Overall, the general context in which the response was implemented changed over the years, affecting both the (possible) operationalization of stabilization and the focus of the response in general.

Despite the new wording in the LCRP, in particular the first two years after its introduction were largely perceived as a continuation of the previous response plans, continuing a mostly short-term approach, albeit putting new emphasis on certain aspects of the response. (Culbertson et al. 2016:100; Grunewald, Brangeon, and Karroum 2017:16; I UN Lebanon 3 2017) It was only with the LCRP framework for 2017-2020 that a clearer shift towards stabilization in the response took place. For the first time, the response framework comprised a time period of four years, facilitating more long-term planning, measures and objectives, thus enabling a shift away from humanitarian activities, at least in theory. (Chemaly 2018; I INGO Lebanon 1 2017; I MoSDA 1 2017; I UN Lebanon 3 2017; Uzelac and Meester 2018:51–52) The introduction of a results-based monitoring and accountability system further emphasized this development, focusing more on impact (rather than outcomes) and sustainability. (Clough 2018:54–56) For the next years, even though each year a new LCRP was published, the objectives and programmatic direction of the response changed only marginally. (Government of Lebanon and UN 2017; Government of Lebanon and UN 2018; Government of Lebanon and UN 2019)

At the same time, however, parallel developments took place outside the framework that influenced the response. On the one hand, this referred to political developments at the national level. Here, the general attitude and policy environment regarding refugees grew more and more hostile and restrictive as outlined above. (Amnesty International 2019; Hall 2019; Human Rights Watch 2018:1) Concomitantly, a narrow understanding of ‘stabilization’ was applied by the government, referring to only Lebanon and Lebanese. This also affected response partners’ operational space, limiting their ability to implement stabilization measures targeting refugees which were perceived as facilitating refugees’ long-term stay. (Grunewald, Brangeon, and Karroum 2017:16; I LINGO Lebanon 3 2019; I UN Lebanon 5 2019; I UN Lebanon 6 2019)

On the other hand, new concepts to deal with the situation were developed for host countries in the region, including the compact model and financing mechanisms based on concessional funding.

The EU-Lebanon Compact thereby followed a model already implemented in Jordan, revolving around recognizing the development needs of Lebanon on the part of the EU, and on easing refugees’ access to the job market on the part of Lebanon. However, commitments from both sides remained vague and did not include concrete measures or numbers. (Official Journal of the EU 2016) The CFF, on the other hand, promised unprecedented amounts of concessional funding which had not been accessible for middle-income countries so far. Funding was to be used for large development projects that would benefit both Lebanon and refugees. Altogether, the first four proposed projects amounted to USD 1.045 billion. (World Bank Group 2018b:30–44) However, even though the Lebanese government welcomed the establishment of the CFF, progress was slow. As it took two years to obtain parliamentary ratification only for the first two projects, until September 2018 none of the funding had been disbursed and no project had been started. (World Bank Group 2018b:27)

While both mechanisms still clearly carried the stabilization aspect in them, pursuing similar objectives, including the overall aim of strengthening resilience in host countries (Official Journal of the EU 2016:1; World Bank Group 2017), bridging the humanitarian and development divide (World Bank Group 2017:1), mitigating the impacts of the crisis on the country (Official Journal of the EU 2016:1; World Bank Group 2017:11), and creating livelihood opportunities for refugees and the local population (Official Journal of the EU 2016:10; World Bank Group 2017:19), they also carried two novel aspects: First, both mechanisms tried to link interests of Lebanon (funding for development projects, in particular focusing on infrastructure, and overall economic development (IMoSDA 1 2017; I UN Lebanon 3 2017; I UN Lebanon 4 2017)) with interests of the international community (stability in Lebanon and stabilization measures for refugees, including employment opportunities (Care 2018:17; I UN Lebanon 5 2019; I UN Lebanon 6 2019; Seeberg 2018:2, 8)). This applied in particular to European countries, where politicians, faced with the unfolding ‘refugee crisis’ and an increasing number of people searching asylum on their territories, feared onward movements of Syrians currently residing in Lebanon and seemed willing to take any action to prevent this scenario. (Howden, Patchett, and Alfred 2017:1–2; Seeberg 2018:2)

Second, both mechanisms put specific focus on overall economic development, including investments and the creation of jobs. While this was comprised within the LCRP’s stabilization-strategy to a smaller extent, too, its importance was rated much higher in the new mechanisms: Rather than focusing on relatively small-scale projects like the LCRP such as trainings or cash-for-work schemes, they directed more attention to large-scale infrastructure projects, for instance focusing on building new roads and transportation systems, envisaged to attract investments, create new jobs, and facilitate overall macro-economic growth that would benefit the whole country. (Official Journal of the EU 2016; World Bank Group 2018b)

Developments in 2018 and 2019 continued to push in that direction, moving even further away from the stabilization-framing. In contrast to other approaches, this time the new strategy, the ‘Capital Investment Program’ (CIP), was developed by the Lebanese government. While generally framed within the context of the Syria crisis and the related challenges Lebanon was facing, refugees played only a marginal role within the strategy. The same held true for stabilization: While the CIP was understood as “a key pillar of the Government’s vision for stabilization and development” (Government of Lebanon 2018a:i), stabilization was not further referred to. Rather, with its sole focus on investments in infrastructure, increased private sector productivity and creation of employment opportunities, the CIP took on an explicit economic orientation. Even though refugees were to benefit from this strategy, too, for instance through employment opportunities in infrastructure projects, the focus clearly lay on Lebanon’s overall development. (Government of Lebanon 2018a) The second novel aspect already comprised to some extent within the Compact format and the CFF, the linkage of interests, was made more explicit within the CIP, too: Donor funding for the CIP was made conditional on structural reforms. (Ouazzani 2019)

These new developments, focusing explicitly on economic reform and growth, exceeded the aims of the LCRP by far. Comprehending larger sums of funding, the Lebanese government regarded them not only as a better way to deal with the current situation, but also as an opportunity to get some benefits out of the crisis. Altogether, they perceived the new initiatives as providing a more suitable solution for the long term, as they were aiming at reforming the economy and benefiting the country as a whole, rather than being focused mostly on vulnerable populations like the LCRP. This was supported by the fact that they allowed to channel funds directly to the government, as opposed to the LCRP that channeled funds largely to the UN or other international organizations. (I LNGO Lebanon 3 2019; I MoSA 3 2019; I MoSDA 1 2017; I UN Lebanon 4 2017; I UN Lebanon 5 2019; I UN Lebanon 7 2019)

Overall, the Lebanese government, seemingly united on the matter, perceived the initiative with its broader focus, higher volume, specific focus on Lebanon’s development and direct funding as much more important than the LCRP with its smaller-scale focus on stabilization. (I MoSDA 1 2017; I MoSA 3 2019; I MoSA 4 2019; I UN Lebanon 5 2019; Uzelac and Meester 2018:57) Other actors, in contrast,

including representatives from the UN, NGOs and academics, regarded the shift to this new framing as questionable: On the one hand, they perceived the gap between the LCRP and its focus on stabilization and the measures proposed in the CIP as too big, with no strategy in place how to overcome this blank space. Besides the absence of medium-term measures, in particular the lack of social development aspects was perceived as problematic, especially in the light of no national development plan being in place. Lastly, the lack of sustainability impact assessments was criticized. (ANND 2019:2–3; ANND and AUB Policy Institute 2018:7–8; Fawaz 2018; I UN Lebanon 7 2019) On the other hand, concerns were raised about the conditionality of the approach that directly linked funding to structural reforms. As the CIP was prepared in the overall context of the impacts of the refugee situation, it was feared that, ultimately, the protection of refugees was becoming intertwined with a highly political reform agenda. (Uzelac and Meester 2018:55)

In 2019, the refugee response thus stood at a critical juncture: The LCRP 2017-2020 was expiring, the overall policy environment and attitude toward refugees were hardening, and strategies focusing on economic development were gaining center stage and seemed to unite politicians across political and religious affiliations. Overall, the focus on stabilization or resilience that had never really taken off in the first place, both conceptually and linguistically, and had not had a significant effect on the response, was superseded by a stronger macro-economic focus and stronger links and conditionalities between different interests.

6.2.5.7 Conclusion: Resilience-based response in Lebanon

Overall, the LCRP with its explicit focus on stabilization can be regarded as a success in terms of providing protection to refugees in an increasingly hostile environment, and in terms of contributing to Lebanon's stability in a politically fragile context. The response also succeeded in integrating, or at least starting to integrate, several of the features promoted as a resilience-building. First and foremost, this concerned the highly integrative nature of the response, integrating humanitarian with more development-oriented measures. The extent to which this core principle of a resilience-based strategy was implemented in Lebanon was continuously emphasized as unique and set the response apart from other contexts within and outside the region. Furthermore, several other characteristics of a resilience-based response were followed or pushed forward, including an emphasis on capacity-development, national leadership, accountability and the use of local structures.

The progress made in that regard can largely be ascribed to the continued factual UN leadership role of the operational response which facilitated the application of these principles: While the Lebanese government took on a larger role within the response, comprehensive control was impeded by the political context, characterized by a lack of national unity, a coherent vision and a central interlocuter regarding the overall strategic direction of the response.

However, despite the application of many characteristics of a resilience-based response, the strategy was still far from reaching stabilization-objectives as stipulated in the response framework: Capacities of the government and other local actors remained insufficient to take on the factual leadership role of the response, vulnerabilities of refugees persisted or even increased, and opportunities to implement measures carrying the slightest possibility of making refugees stay longer, referring first and foremost to livelihood issues, remained limited. Increasing government ownership, leading to an increasingly restrictive policy environment and a decreasing operational and protection space for response partners further exacerbated this trend. As a result, the response in many aspects remained short-term and humanitarian-focused, running contrary to the objectives of the framework and of a resilience-based response aiming at structural change.

Overall, thus, the response failed to meet the particular interests of both the international community and the Lebanese government: Neither better protection and livelihoods opportunities for refugees could be achieved, nor did the response lead to large-scale economic growth and development. Instead of achieving transformative change in either of the two aspects, the response thus solely enabled

beneficiaries (refugees and locals) as well as Lebanon as a whole to persist in spite of the challenges they were facing. The fact that the diverging interests of stakeholders could not be linked effectively thereby was mostly due to the government's ambiguous stance towards refugees and the crisis: While it clearly endorsed the stabilization approach, framing the need for support around the Syria crisis and the presence of large numbers of refugees, its fear, and rejection, of refugees' long-term stay and integration remained too pronounced as to strike a compromise with the international community that would link respective interests.

Thus, overall, the wording and concept of stabilization in Lebanon did not leave a significant legacy. Instead, a new explicit focus on macro-economic development seemed to unite the government more, leading to more willingness to reform and to link its interests with those of the international community. While different response partners perceived this complete aversion of the stabilization framing as problematic, the response in 2019 stood at a critical juncture in which it was unclear in which direction the response was headed, what role the aspect of stabilization would play and what consequences that would have for refugees in Lebanon.

6.3 Resilience in practice – comparison of Jordan's and Lebanon's approach as two manifestations of a resilience-based response

As a regional response framework, the 3RP constituted the conceptual framework for the refugee response in all countries in the region, including Jordan and Lebanon. The previous chapters have outlined how a resilience-based response manifested in each of these two countries, addressing their understanding of resilience, the strategic direction associated with this understanding, the response's implementation in practice and the reasons of these different aspects.

Overall, Jordan and Lebanon share various socio-economic, cultural and legal characteristics, implying a similar point of departure within the context of the Syrian refugee crisis. This makes them good case studies to examine how, despite these existing similarities, a resilience-based response was understood, framed and implemented differently in the two countries, and to investigate what the outcomes of the respective approaches were. The following chapter therefore will analyze Jordan's and Lebanon's different manifestations of a resilience-based response in comparison.

For that, the chapter will first outline similarities and differences in the prevailing national contexts, in the implications of the evolving refugee situation in the two countries, and in the transition to a new response framework. In a second step, the chapter will compare how resilience was incorporated in both response frameworks at the theoretical level, and how resilience manifested in practice.

6.3.1 Context

From the outset, Jordan and Lebanon share similar basic conditions: According to the World Bank classification, both are middle-income countries with existing government capacities, institutional structures and resources that have shown a general upward trend in their development in the years preceding the Syria crisis. (UNDP 2011:136–138; World Bank Group 2019)

Both countries have hosted significant numbers of refugees in the past, including Iraqis, Lebanese, and in particular Palestinians, which continues to influence national refugee policies to date. For instance, it is widely argued that due to the 'unsolved Palestinian issue', both countries to date have not signed the 1951 Geneva Convention or its Protocol, and strongly reject the idea of local integration and permanent settlement of refugees, viewing themselves explicitly not as countries of asylum. (Doraï and Clochard 2006:5, 13–14; Hilal and Samy 2008b:3; Stevens 2013:2–10) Only Palestinians have been recognized as 'refugees', while other forcibly displaced, including Syrians, have long been referred to as 'displaced', 'visitors' or 'guests'. (Di Bartolomeo, Fakhoury, and Perrin 2010:9; Stevens 2013:2, 13, 23; Tabar 2011:11) While Jordan changed this practice, on paper in 1998 with the signing of an MoU with UNHCR (UNHCR 1998), and in practice with the opening of Zaatari camp in 2012, Lebanon still

does not refer to Syrians as ‘refugees’ (see, for instance, Government of Lebanon and UN 2014, Foreword). Despite this stance, both countries have committed to adhere to the principle of non-refoulement through the signing of other international treaties such as the ‘International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights’ and the ‘Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment’.

On the national level, neither country has passed an explicit asylum or refugee law. Respective laws on foreigners’ entry and stay mention refugees only casually and provide no legal framework on their status, treatment and definition. (Hilal and Samy 2008b; Olwan 2007:4; Stevens 2013:6) In the absence of a clear national legislation, both countries have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with UNHCR (Jordan: 1998, Lebanon: 2003), which in both cases puts UNHCR in charge of finding durable solutions for refugees. In both cases, these solutions have to lie outside the respective host country, thereby establishing the temporariness of refugees’ stay in Jordan or Lebanon. (Saliba 2016; UNHCR 1998; UNHCR 2004d:2)

6.3.2 Syrian refugee crisis

Both Jordan and Lebanon share a direct border and the same language with Syria. In the beginning of the Syria crisis in 2011, the influx of Syrians into the two countries started only slowly. Many of them settled close to the border among the local population, with whom they often held family or trade connections. Even when numbers of new arrivals increased, both Jordan and Lebanon applied an open-border policy for which they were praised by the international community. (Dionigi 2016:9; Janmyr 2018:395; Martin 2012) While Jordan took a conscious decision to this action (Davis and Taylor 2013:6), in Lebanon the situation was based rather on a ‘policy of no-policy’, in which the government did not take active action in letting displaced Syrians enter the country but relied on existing laws that had been regulating the entry of Syrians in the past (Janmyr 2018:65–66; Mansour 2017:5; Oxfam 2015:11; Rocha Menocal, Perera, and Mcloughlin 2016:7). In the same manner, Lebanon applied a strict non-camp policy, treating Syrians as regular foreigners who could settle anywhere in the country. (Crisp et al. 2013:13; Mourad 2017:260–261) In Jordan, in contrast, in mid-2012 first policy changes appeared: With the growing influx of Syrians, the government decided to build Zaatari camp with a capacity to host up to 150,000 refugees, and started to refer to Syrians as ‘refugees’ rather than ‘guests’ or ‘visitors’. Even though the majority of refugees still settled among host communities, other camps followed, revealing the scope of the unfolding refugee crisis. With Zaatari becoming widely known as the world’s second largest refugee camp, international attention was called to the evolving situation in the country and the burden Jordan was shouldering. (Beaumont 2014; Francis 2015:6, 20; I OA Jordan 1 2013; Lee 2018; Rasmi 2013)

Regardless of the housing situation, in both countries UNHCR, according to its mandate, started to implement and coordinate a refugee response, focusing primarily on meeting refugees’ most urgent needs. (Janmyr 2018:396; UN 2012a:15; UN 2012c:16) From 2012 on, the response was summarized in Regional Refugee Plans (RRPs), outlining changes in the situation, activities implemented and funding requirements every few months. While UNHCR from the beginning worked “in close collaboration” with line ministries in Jordan (UN 2012c:26), the Lebanese government largely took a back seat in the response, outsourcing the dealing with refugees to the international community. (Boustani et al. 2016:14; Dionigi 2016:10, 27; Janmyr 2018:394–396)

6.3.3 Transition to a new response framework

Despite the efforts of UNHCR and a growing number of humanitarian partners in both countries, the effects of the influx of a large number of people were felt in almost every sector of life: Prices for rent and living expenses increased due to higher demand, while at the same time wages decreased due to competition for jobs, in particular in the informal market. (Government of Lebanon and UN 2015:9; HCSP 2013:11, 19, 34–35; World Vision 2013:13–14) Services, for instance in the health or education sector, were overwhelmed in both countries, leading to a decrease in quality. (Al Wazani 2014:113;

Cherri, Arcos González, and Castro Delgado 2016:169; HCSP 2013:59–61, 69–72; Le Borgne and Jacobs 2016:21; Murshidi et al. 2013:206–207; World Bank Group et al. 2013:3; World Vision 2013:14–15) In particular in Lebanon, where as a result of the government’s non-camp policy all refugees settled across the country and where the central government did not get involved in the refugee response to a large extent, municipalities – often cash-stripped and understaffed – stood at the forefront of dealing with the situation and a population increase that in some municipalities reached 100 percent. (Cherri, Arcos González, and Castro Delgado 2016:169; Janmyr 2016:61; Oxfam 2015:5; UNDP and Mercy Corps 2015:6)

Often, the sudden population growth exacerbated many of the structural challenges that had existed before the influx of refugees, for instance in Jordan’s water or Lebanon’s electricity sector. (Cherri, Arcos González, and Castro Delgado 2016:169; Government of Lebanon and UN 2015:15–16; HCSP 2013:109–112, 119–121; Le Borgne and Jacobs 2016:22; Mercy Corps 2014:17–18, 24) As a result, the previously welcoming and hospitable stance towards Syrians started to change in both countries. Increasingly, social tensions emerged, often related to the perception that Syrians received large amounts of international aid in an unfair manner and were doing better than the local population. (Cherri, Arcos González, and Castro Delgado 2016:169; Fakhoury 2017:686; Luck 2013; Mercy Corps 2013b:7–8, 15–16; Mercy Corps 2014:23–24; UNDP and Mercy Corps 2015:17–18; World Vision 2013:16)

This hardening attitude was reflected in various policies changes in both countries: From 2013 on, Jordan repeatedly closed its borders and started to reject specific groups of individuals, including Palestinian and Iraqi nationals fleeing from Syria, but also Druzes and Alevi or unaccompanied men with no family ties in Jordan, effectively leading to cases of refoulement. In 2014, the registration of new arrivals was suspended. (Amnesty International 2013:11; Betts, Ali, and Memişoğlu 2017:9–10) A similar development took place in Lebanon, where the government’s ‘policy of no-policy’ changed to a ‘policy of total control’ with the inauguration of a new government in 2014 after a long phase of political vacuum. For the first time, refugees were made part of an official government policy, leading to new regulations regarding the entry, residency and regularization of Syrians and increasing restrictions, including the closing of border crossings, raids in informal settlements and the arrest of Syrians on the suspicion of being Islamist militants. (Amnesty International 2015:8–9; Janmyr 2016:62, 67–70; Nayel 2014; Saliba 2016)

In this context, it became increasingly obvious that the prevailing international response that had focused largely on refugees was insufficient, and that the needs of Jordan and Lebanon and the respective local population needed to be taken more into consideration if host countries were to remain stable. This recognition was in particular taken up by UNDP, which in mid-2013 in both countries started to implement programs specifically targeting host communities, working together with the respective line ministries, the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MOPIC) in Jordan and the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) in Lebanon. Jordan additionally set up a so-called ‘Host Community Support Platform’ led by MOPIC (MOPIC 2014:6), while in Lebanon, the ‘Lebanon Host Communities Support Programme’ became UNDP’s flagship program in the country (UNDP 2014c:1, 5; UNDP 2017:11). For the first time, a comprehensive assessment review was conducted in both countries that focused on the economic and social impacts of the Syria crisis on the two countries as well as on resulting needs. (HCSP 2013; World Bank Group et al. 2013) Based on these findings, governments of Jordan and Lebanon developed new response plans that were to be implemented alongside the UN-led humanitarian response focusing on refugees: In Lebanon, in November 2013 the ‘Roadmap of Priority Interventions for Stabilization from the Syrian Conflict’ was published, officially developed by the government with the support of the World Bank and the UN (Government of Lebanon 2013). A few months later, in March 2014, Jordan finalized its ‘National Resilience Plan’ (MOPIC 2014). Both documents were understood as complementing the current RRP6 being implemented under the leadership of UNHCR. (Government of Lebanon 2013:3; MOPIC 2014:12)

In December 2014, finally, a regional UN-initiative brought the refugee response and the respective national plans together under a new overarching framework, resulting in the so-called ‘Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan’ (3RP). As the 3RP country chapters for Jordan and Lebanon, both the first ‘Jordan Response Plan’ (JRP) and the first ‘Lebanon Crisis Response Plan’ (LCRP) were launched, both comprehending refugee-focused, humanitarian and more development-oriented measures in a framework revolving around resilience and stabilization, respectively. (Government of Lebanon and UN 2014; MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2014; UNDP and UNHCR 2014a)

6.3.4 Resilience in national response plans – similarities and differences

As national chapters of the 3RP, both response plans formally formed part of the regional, resilience-based framework outlined by the UN at the regional level. Accordingly, they showed a number of similarities in their conceptual underpinnings, summarized in Table 10.

This started with the overall language of the response plans that strongly resembled that of the UN framework developed at the regional level. For instance, both country plans referred to the three stages of ‘coping’, ‘recovering’, and ‘sustaining’, with the overall aim of withstanding shocks and stresses and developing capacity in order to achieve transformational change. (Government of Lebanon and UN 2014:96; Government of Lebanon and UN 2015:137; MOPIC 2014:25; MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2015:24)

Even though both strategies were adapted to each country’s specific national context, they also committed to many of the same principles, in line with the resilience-based response framework outlined at the regional level. First, approaches in both Jordan and Lebanon put new emphasis on the expansion of employment and livelihood opportunities in order to increase self-sufficiency of affected populations. This also included a strong focus on education. Similarly, new focus was put on strengthening the capacities of national and local governments and institutions, which included the use of existing national systems rather than relying on parallel structures set up by the international community. Both frameworks and their measures aimed at bridging an assumed gap between humanitarian and development assistance, putting more and more focus on development. Furthermore, both frameworks promoted national leadership and ownership, while at the same time the importance of strong partnerships between a range of different stakeholders was stressed. In Lebanon, this included in particular a strong new partnership between UNHCR and UNDP that was not incorporated in Jordan. In terms of programmatic characteristics, both country plans promoted innovative approaches, strong accountability mechanisms based on robust monitoring and evaluation systems, as well as a participatory approach including a wide array of stakeholders, including beneficiaries. Lastly, in both cases beneficiaries were to include both refugees and locals, and overall social cohesion was to be strengthened.

Moreover, response frameworks in both cases took on a more long-term focus compared to previous RRP. At the same time, neither complied with the timeframe generally regarded as needed for resilience-programming, with planning horizons in both countries remaining mid-term at best and covering periods of one (Jordan) and two years (Lebanon) in the beginning, and three (Jordan) and four years (Lebanon) later on. (Government of Lebanon and UN 2014; Government of Lebanon and UN 2017; MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2014; MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2015)

Table 10: Resilience in the 3RP and in national response plans

	Resilience framework in 3RP	JRP	LCRP
Core principles in line with general resilience-programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotion of self-sufficiency (enhancing economic opportunities, focus on livelihoods, focus on education) 	X	X

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on capacity-building and use of existing systems 	X	X
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrated approach (bridging the gap between humanitarian and development assistance) 	X	X
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnerships 	X	X
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National leadership and ownership 	X	X
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional protection framework 	X	X
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Context-specific and flexible 	X	X
Implications of socio-ecological resilience-thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on progress, transformation and opportunities 	X	X
Additional core principles (not found in general resilience-programming)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific partnership between UNHCR and UNDP 	-	X
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovation 	X	X
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accountability 	X	X
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participatory approach 	X	X
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social cohesion (addressing refugees and locals) 	X	X
Not included in 3RP, but part of general resilience-programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long-term focus in sense of resilience-thinking 	-	-

Table by the author

Besides these similarities, the theoretical frameworks in Jordan and Lebanon still displayed some differences. As they were related to semantics, the plans' structure, and funding issues, at first glance they do not seem to be related to the conceptual underpinnings of the response. However, ultimately, all of these aspects impacted the implementation of the response and contributed to different forms of a resilience-based response in practice as will be outlined further below.

The most striking difference referred to the overall heading of the response plans. While the overall language within the response was similar to a large extent as outlined above, one central term differed: While Jordan, in line with the 3RP, framed the response plan around the term 'resilience', Lebanon's response revolved around 'stabilization'. In theory, the two terms describe different concepts, implying a different focus and different kind of programming of the respective national response frameworks. Further language in Lebanon's response framework, however, indicated that the plan applied a different understanding: Being framed around different vulnerabilities, and using the same wording as the concept of resilience in how to address them, including key terminology such as 'coping', 'recovering' and 'sustaining' in order to achieve 'transformational change', 'stabilization' was used largely synonymously with 'resilience'. (Government of Lebanon and UN 2014:19, 21; Government of Lebanon and UN 2015:137)

Another clear difference lay in the structure of the plan. While Jordan followed the outline of the 3RP, introducing two components dealing with refugees and resilience in two separate chapters, including different objectives, funding requirements, target groups and approval processes, Lebanon addressed refugee and stabilization aspects together, outlining one response strategy for each sector that comprised both issues. (Government of Lebanon and UN 2014; MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2014)

Lastly, Jordan's response plan included an additional section outlining the funding requirements for direct budget support, stating the direct costs and losses in different areas resulting from hosting Syrians, and for financial support for the management of the response. (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2014:145, 148)

This part remained missing from Lebanon's response plan completely. Here, listed funding requirements remained limited to inter-agency appeals with regard to response partners' programmatic response. (Government of Lebanon and UN 2014:6)

Overall, thus, response frameworks in Jordan and Lebanon closely resembled each other, generally following the 3RP's conceptualization of resilience, and only displayed minor differences in their structure and wording as well as regarding funding issues and calls for a specific partnership between UNHCR and UNDP.

6.3.5 Manifestation of resilience in practice – similarities and differences

Despite these largely similar response frameworks on paper, the response manifested differently in Jordan and Lebanon. The following subchapter will focus on these different applications of a resilience-based response and outline where the responses in the two countries proceeded similarly, and where they differed.

In some aspects, both countries took similar paths. On the one hand, this concerned operational aspects. For instance, in both countries partnerships between different actors, including humanitarian and development organizations, local and international NGOs, municipalities and authorities, the private sector and other stakeholders increased through new coordination structures that replaced UNHCR's initial exclusive leadership role. In both countries, local and international NGOs joined up in different fora and networks. Even though challenges remained and in particular local NGOs tended to feel excluded, overall cooperation and partnerships increased. (Grunewald, Brangeon, and Karroum 2017:15; I LNGO Lebanon 1 2017; I LNGO Lebanon 2 2017; JIF 2017; LHIF 2019) In both countries, efforts were also made at establishing new partnerships between the international community and the respective host government. While this was faced with challenges, overall, the new response frameworks contributed to improved cooperation in both cases: In Lebanon, challenges were mostly related to a general and ongoing lack of capacities within the government, and a mutual sense of frustration and mistrust, with the international community lamenting the absence of a common and coherent national vision, and the government feeling their national sovereignty being disrespected. While different views regarding central aspects of the response further hindered constructive partnerships, the LCRP was still perceived as a valuable negotiation space between response partners and the government that had not existed before. (Boustani et al. 2016:16–18; Culbertson et al. 2016:53; I INGO Lebanon 2 2017; I MoSA 1 2017; I MoSA 4 2019; I MoSDA 1 2017; I UN Lebanon 3 2017; I UN Lebanon 5 2019; I UN Lebanon 6 2019; I UN Lebanon 7 2019) In particular at the local level, partnerships between response partners and local authorities improved, facilitated by UNDP's new increased role in the response and the agency's long-standing presence in the country that had made it a well-trusted partner. (Bonard, Sida, and Tjoflaat 2015:13; Boustani et al. 2016:18–19; Chemaly 2018; I MoSA 1 2017) In Jordan, similarly, the establishment of partnerships between the government and the international community was faced with the challenge of a general lack of resources and capacities in ministries. This resulted in a small number of ministerial staff factually engaged with the response, and low government participation in inter-agency coordination structures. Nevertheless, cooperation between the two sides was generally perceived as working well. (Baur 2018; Gaunt 2018; I UN Jordan 2 2017)

Paying regard to the lack of capacities and resources, in both countries large efforts were made to strengthen them in order to enable national systems to deal with the prevailing situation better and create more resilient structures. While the aspect was particularly emphasized in Lebanon, both countries thereby relied on similar measures: Capacity-strengthening activities ranged from trainings for staff of national and local governments and institutions as well as local NGOs in diverse fields such as conflict prevention mechanisms, accounting, or monitoring, to the secondment of large numbers of international staff to ministries and authorities for their support. (Howden, Patchett, and Alfred 2017:16; I UN Jordan 7 2018; I LNGO Lebanon 2 2017; I MoSA 2 2017; I MoSA 4 2019; I UN Regional 2 2018; Kelley 2017:91; Kocks et al. 2018:120; UNHCR 2018e:2, 27) The mentioned new partnerships and forms of

cooperation between experienced international organizations and national partners, between NGOs and municipalities, between organizations or governments and the private sector as well as peer-to-peer learning mechanisms also increased existing capacities of local actors. (Chemaly 2018; Kelley 2017:102; I INGO Lebanon 3 2019)

Additionally, the response in both countries developed and relied on a number of new and ‘innovative’ approaches within the programmatic response. In both Jordan and Lebanon, these included different measures, including new forms of engagement of the private sector, new ways of targeting and delivering aid, the application of new technologies, as well as new data management and monitoring tools. (Clarke 2016; Kelley 2017:97–99; MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2017:iv, 44; UNHCR-UNDP Joint Secretariat 2015:44–45, 58–59, 71–73, 101–104; Radcliffe 2016)

Besides these similarities, in other aspects the response in the two countries evolved differently. These concerned in particular aspects which required the active commitment and participation as well as the political willingness of host governments.

In some of these issues, the respective responses differed only in the degree to which a certain aspect was implemented. First, this related to the aspect of national leadership and ownership. Even though the practical implementation and coordination of the response in both Jordan and Lebanon continued to rest with international organizations and in particular UN agencies to a large extent, the engagement, commitment and ownership of the respective governments increased significantly with the new response framework. However, this happened to a differing degree. Jordan, on the one hand, demonstrated a high level of active engagement from the beginning of the resilience-based response that was introduced with the JRP. For instance, it determined the conceptual design of the framework, insisting on two separate components focusing on refugees and resilience respectively, incorporated new sectors in the response that had not been addressed in previous RRP and introduced quotas for the different population groups (refugees and locals) to be targeted with programs. Above all, it made its approval for all projects to be implemented a necessary precondition, thus taking full control about what was being implemented, how, and who was being targeted. It also owned the response vis-a-vis donors and the international community, projecting and promoting the strategy to the outside world, and displaying both commitment and a clear vision regarding the general direction of the response, while also continuously reminding the international community of the burden Jordan was shouldering by hosting refugees. (CGD 2017; I INGO Jordan 4 2017; I UN Jordan 4 2017; JRPSC 2014; MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2015:158–160; World Bank Group 2017; Zgheib 2016).

In Lebanon, on the other hand, national leadership and ownership took place on a much lower level and increased more slowly. Nevertheless, a significant first step was made with the sign-off of the first LCRP, which represented the first time the government got involved in the international response at all. (Bonard, Sida, and Tjoflaat 2015:10; I INGO Lebanon 2 2017; I UN Lebanon 4 2017; Janmyr 2016:62; Janmyr 2018:396–397) Despite the prevailing difficult political context that was characterized by internal fights within and between political parties and administrative bodies, reflected not only in the lack of a national development plan and a national budget, but also in the lack of a common vision regarding the strategic direction of the response as well as of a single government interlocutor representing the Lebanese government, national leadership and ownership increased over the years. Ascribed to hopes of a potential development dividend, slowly more and more line ministries got involved in the response. Similarly, ministries increasingly requested more information from response partners, and started to exercise more control. For instance, while activities did not have to be approved by the government like in Jordan, it was increasingly expected that response partners would get in touch with respective line ministries before the implementation of programs. At the same time, more government engagement was reflected in the introduction and implementation of more rules and regulations within the response, which in turn led to a decrease in operational space and less flexibility for response partners. (Bonard, Sida, and Tjoflaat 2015:11; Chemaly 2018; Culbertson et al. 2016:6–7;

I MoSA 4 2019; I MoSDA 1 2017; I UN Lebanon 2 2017; I UN Lebanon 4 2017; I UN Lebanon 5 2019; I UN Lebanon 6 2019; I UN Lebanon 7 2019)

Another principle in which Jordan and Lebanon followed similar approaches, albeit to differing degrees and at a different pace, concerned the aspect of accountability. This comprised both strong monitoring mechanisms and participatory approaches. In Jordan, both aspects materialized from the beginning of the resilience-based response. First, the introduction of JORISS for the application and monitoring of projects provided the government with detailed information about both refugee and resilience measures. (MOPIC 2016:4–7) Being linked to the response framework’s specific objectives in each component, this system thereby gave the government the possibility to control what was being done (and for whom) and to hold response partners accountable. At the same time, a highly participatory approach was taken in the annual development or adjustment of the response, most notably through yearly planning workshops in which a large group of stakeholders could participate. (I INGO Jordan 3 2017; I INGO Jordan 4 2017; Kocks et al. 2018:71)

In Lebanon, in contrast, it took until 2017 until efforts were made to introduce a monitoring system that went beyond monitoring the completion of activities and focused more on outcome and impact levels, being linked to objectives outlined in the response framework. Even then, in contrast to Jordan, the new system was largely developed and maintained by the international community rather than by the government. (Clough 2018:54–56, 58, 63–64; I INGO Lebanon 3 2017) At the same time, many actors remained excluded from the development process of the response framework: While the framework was developed mostly by UNHCR and UNDP, other actors were given a reactive role only but could not actively contribute to the development of the overall framework. (Uzelac and Meester 2018:47)

In other aspects, the approaches in the two countries took different paths completely, despite their commitments to the same principles. First, this included the integration of humanitarian aid with longer-term and development-oriented measures. In both countries, addressing both issues in a single response plan for the first time, with only one authority – the respective host government – formally leading this single response framework, can be regarded as a first step towards bridging the divide between the two issues. Nevertheless, the way how their integration was understood, and the extent to which it took place, varied significantly: Jordan’s division of the response into a refugee and a resilience component on paper meant that both aspects had to be dealt with separately in practice as well. This implied not only different target groups for both components, but also meant that, in particular in the beginning of the JRP, measures targeting refugees remained largely short-term and humanitarian, while measures falling under the resilience component and targeting Jordanians were longer-term and more development-focused. Through this structure, real integration of humanitarian and development-oriented measures remained difficult. (I MOPIC 1 2017; I UN Jordan 2 2017; Kocks et al. 2018:64–65; MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2014:107–111; Sigmond 2016:37–38)

Lebanon, in contrast, followed a different approach. Here, humanitarian and more development-oriented programming was dealt with jointly in each sector, rather than categorizing measures as either refugee or resilience interventions, facilitating a much more integrated approach. No quotas regarding the number of beneficiaries of different target groups were introduced. In the same manner, from 2017 on, budget requirements, too, were not split up between the two fields any longer, but indicated as only one aggregate amount for each sector. The linkage of the two sectors was further impersonated by two inter-sector coordinators at UNHCR and UNDP who worked closely together on all aspects of the response. The UNDP inter-sector coordinator thereby was to ensure that all activities implemented under the LCRP in general would support the stabilization and recovery of the country. (Government of Lebanon and UN 2014:6; Government of Lebanon and UN 2017:10; Government of Lebanon and UN 2018:10; I UN Lebanon 1 2017; I UN Lebanon 3 2017; I UN Lebanon 7 2019; Kelley 2017:93; Mansour 2017:12; UNDP 2017:9)

Overall, the extent to which an integrated approach was pursued was strongly linked to another aspect, that is, inter-agency partnerships. In particular the partnership between UNHCR and UNDP strongly

impacted the integration of humanitarian and development-oriented measures: Starting with the LCRP, in Lebanon UNDP took on a much larger role in the response, co-chairing the overall response and taking the lead in various sectors. While the transition to this new form of cooperation did not run entirely smoothly but was characterized by initial turf battles, cooperation between UNHCR and UNDP quickly improved and resulted in a strong partnership. Due to continuous communication and close cooperation, both sides had a good overview about priorities, needs and challenges in the respective other field, facilitating the harmonization of interventions. (I UN Lebanon 1 2017; I UN Lebanon 3 2017; I UN Lebanon 7 2019; Kelley 2017:93; Mansour 2017:12; UNDP 2017:9)

In Jordan, no such strong cooperation between the two agencies materialized. Largely, this was related to UNDP's role in the response in general: On the one hand, a lack of staff, capacities and resources precluded UNDP to take up a larger role in the response and take the lead in resilience measures that might have facilitated a partnership with UNHCR on eye level. (I UN Jordan 5 2017) On the other hand, UNDP understood its mandate predominantly as bolstering the leadership of the Jordanian government who, as outlined above, took up this role from the beginning, rather than taking the lead in one area of the international response, and therefore maintained a reserved role throughout the response. (I INGO Jordan 4 2017; I MOPIC 1 2017; I UN Jordan 2 2017; I UN Jordan 4 2017; UNHCR 2017a:4)

Another aspect in which the approach in the two countries developed differently concerned the issue of self-sufficiency of affected populations. Even though both Jordan and Lebanon emphasized the importance of the issue, putting large focus on education, livelihoods measures and employment opportunities (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2016:14; Government of Lebanon and UN 2014:5), it soon became obvious that this referred not to the entire affected population. Rather, refugees often remained excluded from this part of the response. This concerned not so much access to education which was generally granted to refugees in both countries, at least at the primary and secondary level (Government of Lebanon and UN 2014:49; MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2016:19–22) as income-generating activities and legal ways to work: Due to the fear of refugees' socio-economic integration, perceived as leading to their longer-term stay, in both countries respective measures for refugees remained a sensitive issue.

Despite these general similarities, however, the approach in the two countries differed. In Jordan, the complete rejection of measures potentially leading to refugees' self-sufficiency concerned in particular the beginning of the resilience-based response, when livelihood measures, falling under the resilience component, were to target Jordanians only. Livelihood measures for refugees, in contrast, remained a taboo. (Bellamy et al. 2017:50–53; Gaunt 2018; I INGO Jordan 2 2017; I INGO Jordan 3 2017) At the same time, national legislation made it difficult, if not impossible, for the majority of refugees to work: High fees and administrative obstacles to obtain work permits starkly limited access to legal employment. (ILO 2015:15–16) As such, self-sufficiency for refugees was not only not incorporated in the response, but even actively impeded by national legislation and policies. (MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2015:30–32) The Jordan Compact in 2016, however, was regarded as a turning point in the matter, opening up new opportunities both for refugees to work and for response partners to implement livelihood programming. (Barbelet, Hagen-Zanker, and Mansour-Ille 2018:5; Bellamy et al. 2017:54; ILO 2017a:9) Even though many challenges remained, including continued restrictions for refugees to work in most skilled professions, a general lack of employment opportunities, and a mismatch between livelihoods measures and actual long-term job opportunities, this meant a positive first step and progress in some areas, for instance through the issuance of more work permits to refugees. Therefore, while in general the situation for refugees did not improve in a significant way, and many remained dependent on external assistance, Jordan's approach still demonstrated some political willingness to change the existing regulations. (Barbelet, Hagen-Zanker, and Mansour-Ille 2018:5; Bellamy et al. 2017:54–55; Huang, Charles, et al. 2018:14; ILO 2017a:55; I INGO Jordan 6 2018)

In Lebanon, the situation started out differently. Due to a lesser engagement of the government in the response for a long time compared to Jordan, initially a larger operational space remained for response partners. As a result, they also remained more flexible in terms of implementing livelihood measures

that targeted refugees. The fact that programs did not have to be approved by the government like in Jordan contributed to this aspect further. (I LNGO Lebanon 2 2017; I LNGO Lebanon 3 2019; I UN Lebanon 5 2019; I UN Lebanon 6 2019; I UN Lebanon 7 2019) With the growing engagement and leadership of the government, however, this operational space got smaller and smaller. The government increasingly requested to be more involved, demanding more information, following up with processes, and introducing and enforcing new regulations and restrictions. As a result, like in Jordan's initial approach, many livelihood activities could no longer be provided to refugees, but only to the local population. This was reflected within official government policy, too, for instance in the obligation for refugees to sign a pledge not to work, thereby running contrary to increased self-sufficiency. (I MoSA 2 2017; I MoSDA 1 2017; I UN Lebanon 3 2017; Janmyr 2018:75–76; Uzelac and Meester 2018:48) While response partners tried to implement at least some livelihood interventions, these had to remain limited to internship or cash-for-work schemes and did not contribute to longer-term self-reliance. (Care 2018:17; Chemaly 2018; I LNGO Lebanon 1 2017; I MoSDA 1 2017; I UN Lebanon 6 2019) While high hopes were attached to the London Conference and the resulting Lebanon-EU Compact that followed Jordan's example, commitments to concrete actions in Lebanon overall remained vague, demonstrating a lack of political willingness to real change. While some modifications were made, including the removal of the requirement to sign a pledge not to work, significant alterations in reality failed to materialize. As a result, conditions for refugees' employment remained difficult and exploitative. (Dionigi 2016:26; I MoSA 2 2017; I MoSDA 1 2017; I UN Lebanon 3 2017; Janmyr 2016:69; Uzelac and Meester 2018:48, 53)

Overall, the approach to self-sufficiency and livelihoods for refugees therefore was related to the general political (un-)willingness to challenge existing national policies. Ultimately, challenging the existing system in that regard would have held opportunities for both refugees and host countries: Introducing a new system giving all refugees access to legal employment, on the one hand would have meant more self-sufficiency for refugees, making them more resilient and less dependent on assistance. On the other hand, this approach would have held the potential of stimulating economic growth of host countries as refugees would have been able to actively contribute to their development.

Neither Jordan nor Lebanon, however, tapped the full potential of this aspect. While the two approaches resembled each other in that regard, they nevertheless displayed differences: With the Jordan Compact, Jordan made at least some efforts to move in that direction. Linking refugees' access to the labor market to Jordan's interests in economic facilities seemed to stimulate enough political will to challenge existing policies, thereby leading to first steps on the pathway to transformational change. Despite this promising starting situation, however, this political willingness had its limits: Efforts remained confined to the scope of the Compact, and did not lead to general long-term changes in national policies that would have benefitted the entire refugee population and transformed the entire existing system. Accordingly, the impact of changes remained limited as well, both in terms of refugees' self-reliance and of Jordan's development. Nevertheless, at least some political willingness to change existed. (Barbelet, Hagen-Zanker, and Mansour-Ille 2018:4–5; Gaunt 2018; Huang, Ash, et al. 2018:52–53; I INGO Jordan 2 2017)

In Lebanon, in contrast, an attempt in the same direction was made only half-heartedly from the beginning. While the Lebanese government at the London Conference in 2016 rhetorically committed to policy changes, reforms, and “a new approach and vision” on how to deal with the stay of Syrians (Government of Lebanon 2016:1), commitments in general remained broad and did not result in concrete actions and changes in practice. Overall, political willingness to push for and implement measures that would have led to structural and transformative change thus remained missing completely. (Ayoub and Mahdi 2018:5–6; I INGO Lebanon 1 2017; I INGO Lebanon 2 2017; I UN Lebanon 3 2017; I UN Lebanon 6 2019; Uzelac and Meester 2018:53)

In conclusion, both Jordan and Lebanon were part of a regional resilience-based response framework. Not surprisingly, this resulted in largely similar national response frameworks in the two countries on

paper, thinking along similar lines and incorporating the same key aspects regarding their strategic direction. Even though some differences remained, concerning the overall framing of the response, the plans' structure, and funding issues, both response frameworks thus closely resembled each other.

Despite these similarities within their conceptual frameworks, the response manifested differently in the two countries. This concerned not so much programmatic aspects falling under the responsibility of response partners: In these aspects, the response followed largely similar pathways. Rather, differences in the manifestation of the approaches concerned mostly aspects which involved the engagement and political willingness of host governments. On the one hand, this resulted in differences regarding the degree to which core principles unfolded in practice, including national ownership and leadership, the application of a strong accountability system, and the pursuit of a participatory approach. With regard to other aspects, the approaches took entirely different paths. These aspects included the integration of humanitarian with development measures as well as the establishment of a strong inter-agency partnership between UNHCR and UNDP, which both materialized to a much larger extent in Lebanon than in Jordan. This was related to the overall larger role of the UN in the response in Lebanon in contrast to Jordan where the government generally was more in control of the response. Another difference lay in the (non-)existence of political willingness for measures potentially leading to transformational change, including measures aiming at refugees' self-sufficiency as well as reforms or policy changes. While taking place mostly outside the response plan (and not leading to persuasive results), only Jordan made some attempts in that direction, while political willingness regarding these aspects remained lacking in Lebanon completely.

6.3.6 The narrative of resilience – similarities and differences

Apart from these different conceptual and operational manifestations of a resilience-based response, the approaches in Jordan and Lebanon displayed another difference, related to the overall narrative and framing of 'resilience' as the underlying concept.

This started with the simple usage of the term 'resilience' itself: As outlined above, while Jordan stuck to the UN's wording of 'resilience', Lebanon rejected the term, insisting on using 'stabilization' instead. This different wording did not mean actual differences in programming (I UN Lebanon 3 2017; I UN Lebanon 4 2017; I UN Lebanon 5 2019; I UN Lebanon 7 2019; I UN Regional 2 2018), in particular since Lebanon requested only the change of the term 'resilience' itself, but apart from that held on to the same theoretical underpinnings and language (see, for instance, Government of Lebanon and UN 2014:13; Government of Lebanon and UN 2015:137 and UNDG 2014:7). Nevertheless, this still helped to put a different complexion on Jordan: Following the UN's wording in promoting a shift of the response through the concept of resilience, the Jordanian government early on jumped on the 'resilience bandwagon', owning the narrative of the concept. At a time when 'resilience' just started to gain ground and grew more and more popular within the international community as a new approach to deal with crises, and was heavily promoted by the UNDP Sub-Regional Facility, its usage provided Jordan with the right conceptual framework to attract attention for the burden it was shouldering, but also to demonstrate a vision how to respond to this burden, incorporating Jordan's own interests. Using the international community's wording, and actively advocating for it at various occasions beyond regular pledging conferences (see, for instance, CGD 2017; Zgheib 2016; International Monetary Fund 2016; Jordan News Agency (Petra) 2018; The Jordan Times 2015b; World Bank Group 2017), thereby implied that a strategic response plan was in place that was led by Jordan and supported by the UN, contributing to gaining trust from donors and attracting funding to deal with the situation, including funding for development programs that were not necessarily related to the Syria crisis or the presence of large numbers of Syrians in the country (Culbertson et al. 2016:43; I UN Jordan 2 2017; I UN Jordan 4 2017; Sigmond 2016:61).

The same strategy of actively using the resilience terminology was applied by response partners in the country, who used the wording of resilience to categorize their measures as resilience-programming in order to obtain government approval more easily. (Bellamy et al. 2017:53; I UN Jordan 5 2017; Sigmond

2016:38) That way, both the government of Jordan and humanitarian and development organizations in the country, actively and consciously utilized the resilience language and narrative to their own benefit: Resilience in that sense was used as a marketing strategy that resonated well with the international community and as clever branding to facilitate administrative processes.

Lebanon, in contrast, did not own the resilience wording in the same manner. While the wording constituted a matter of dispute between the Lebanese government and the international community upon its introduction, in which the government enforced the change of the term into stabilization (I MoSA 4 2019; I UN Lebanon 1 2017; I UN Lebanon 3 2017; I UN Lebanon 5 2019), it did not further use either of the terms to enforce its own interests. In the absence of a unified approach that could have been framed around resilience or stabilization, and of a single government interlocuter who could have promoted this approach, the government thus missed the opportunity to actively draw the international community's attention to its situation and, by using the narrative to propose a solution, control a response that paid regard to its own interests. Even though the Lebanese government over the course of the response increasingly attempted to use the narrative of stabilization and reform the same manner Jordan used the paradigm of resilience, for instance in the context of its 'Vision for Stabilization, Growth and Employment' (Government of Lebanon 2018b), the continued lack of a common vision as well as the lack of willingness to make concessions in its refugee policy stood in the way of lending weight to this narrative and follow through with it.

The cases of Jordan and Lebanon therefore illustrate how the strategic linguistic use of resilience could open up new opportunities. While Lebanon benefitted from the overall appeal framework that the LCRP as part of the 3RP provided, it did not take on active ownership of the response and its narrative. Jordan, in contrast, by prominently framing its response around resilience, succeeded in controlling the international response implemented in the country and in attracting funding for long-standing development projects, using the crisis, and resilience as the vision to deal with it, as a trigger for assistance it would otherwise not have received. The case of Jordan, however, also illustrates how the value of the concept as a marketing strategy faded over time: Slowly, 'resilience' got superseded by new buzzwords and framings, first related to the Jordan Compact and later more generally to economic growth and development.

6.4 Different versions of resilience – comparison of resilience in theory and resilience in practice

The previous chapters have outlined how host country governments in both Jordan and Lebanon – to varying degrees – picked up on the notion of a resilience-based response as developed by the UN at the regional level. On paper, the theoretical frameworks of the 3RP, the JRP and the LCRP thereby largely used the same wording and included the same key characteristics. Overall, both sides, that is, the UN and host governments, referred to resilience (or stabilization) as the general direction of the response. While host governments thus followed the UN's overall conceptualization of resilience in their response plans, the implementation of the response revealed that they did not apply the same interpretation of resilience in practice.

As outlined in [Chapter 5.3.2](#), with the theoretical underpinnings outlined in the 3RP the UN generally followed a socio-ecological interpretation of resilience. Understanding resilience as the ability to anticipate, withstand, recover and transform (UNDP and UNHCR 2014a:17), it promoted all three types of capacities, that is, absorptive, adaptive, and, crucially, transformative capacities. Furthermore, it included the notion of change and opportunities. The outcome of this understanding of resilience that includes all types of capacities is commonly seen in transformational change as one version of resilience, in contrast to engineering and ecological engineering that regard persistence and adjustment as resilient outcomes (see also [Chapter 4.1.1](#) and [Chapter 4.3.3](#)). (Béné et al. 2012:21)

In contrast to this understanding, the practical application of resilience in Jordan and Lebanon made it increasingly obvious that the last set of capacities, referring to transformative capacities, did not constitute a focus area and was not translated into practice. This is best illustrated by the issue of refugees' self-sufficiency. In line with its distinctive, socio-ecological understanding of resilience, the 3RP – depicting the UN's interpretation of resilience-building – stressed the importance of rendering refugees self-reliant and decreasing their dependency on aid. In order to do so, it was regarded as crucial to create livelihoods opportunities, for instance through income-generating activities, and allowing refugees to work. (UNDP and UNHCR 2015:7, 20–21; UNDP and UNHCR 2016a:10, 18) These measures, however, required policy changes on the national level regarding the prevailing legislation in Jordan and Lebanon that prohibited, or made it very difficult, for refugees to legally work. (I LINGO Lebanon 1 2017; ILO 2015:15–16; Janmyr 2016:75–76) Therefore, the issue called for profound changes in the prevailing policy, thus carrying the notion of transformational change. However, both Jordan and Lebanon perceived allowing refugees to work as contributing to their longer-term stay and (socio-economic) integration which they were adamantly opposed to. (Government of Lebanon and UN 2018:16; I MOPIC 1 2017; I UN Jordan 2 2017) As a result, they generally rejected the necessary far-reaching changes in their policies. Even though some attempts were made for instance within the context of the Jordan Compact as outlined above, overall, the lack of political will to follow through with changes resulted in the absence of transformational change (as one version of resilience).

This does not mean that Jordan and Lebanon did not follow a resilience-based response and were genuinely aiming at building resilience. However, within that context, they can be regarded as pursuing a different version of resilience, achieved through the building of absorptive and adaptive, rather than of transformative, capacities. As mentioned, like the version of resilience focusing on transformational change, this notion is understood as leading to a resilient outcome, albeit in a different form, that is, persistence (through absorptive capacities) and adjustment (through adaptive capacities) (Béné et al. 2012:21).

Overall, this central variation in the understanding of resilience helps to explain various of the challenges experienced in Jordan and Lebanon, ranging from different understandings on who was to be targeted with certain types of programming, to the relationship between host countries and the international community, to the lack of engagement of certain actors. Altogether, it illustrates the need to exactly clarify what 'resilience' means for different actors. Notwithstanding these differences, the introduction of the concept still helped to create a common narrative for host countries (in particular for Jordan) and the international community that was in the interest of both sides. Against this background, one of the concept's most valuable contributions to dealing with the crisis can be regarded as lying in its function as branding and marketing strategy to keep up attention and attract funding.

6.5 Resilience in practice – general points for consideration

As outlined in the previous chapters, the cases of Jordan and Lebanon have exemplified how a resilience-based response can manifest differently in different national contexts, even when approaches are based on the same conceptual framework and are implemented under similar socio-economic conditions. At the same time, they have illustrated how the existence of different versions of resilience can lead to different interpretations of the concept that become visible in the practical implementation of the response, potentially leading to difficulties in finding common ground in programming.

However, these aspects are not the only ones that need to be considered when pondering the application of a resilience-based response to a situation of forced displacement. Rather, the analysis of the responses in Jordan and Lebanon, and of the specific context in which they were applied, indicates that there are further more general and contextual factors that affect the course and outcome of a resilience-based response. While difficult to control, these are nevertheless factors that need to be considered if a resilience-based response is to be applied.

Characteristics of refugees

First, the Syria crisis did not constitute a regional conflict, but was limited to Syria itself. As a result, the main target group of refugees to be addressed with the 3RP came from the same country of origin. As such, they had a similar cultural background, shared the same traditions and spoke the same language. This can be considered as making the situation less complex than refugee situations where the needs of a diverse group of people from different countries of origin need to be addressed, speaking different languages, having a different value system, and potentially bringing with them a wide range of different needs, capacities and resources. Second, in the case of Jordan and Lebanon, refugees spoke the same language as their hosts. Potentially, this can facilitate fitting in and communicating not only on a general level, but also with regard to the integration of refugee children into local schools as well as refugees' socio-economic integration. Last, many refugees had family ties or trade connections with the local host population. While this factor decreased in the course of their displacement, with the general attitude towards refugees hardening, this can be regarded as having alleviated the situation in particular in the beginning of refugees' displacement, providing them with a point of contact in the host country.

Characteristics of the crisis and of the refugee situation

The dispersal of Syrian refugees happened across several countries in the region. This facilitated referring to the 'Syria crisis' when talking about the crisis in Syria itself as well as the situation in the different host countries. This regional aspect could be used as a media-effective way to refer to the situation, keep up attention and attract funding.

At the same time, the situation in the different host countries was characterized by a largely urban dispersal of refugees rather than them being accommodated in camps. This put municipalities at the forefront of dealing with the situation, and entailed various challenges for response partners regarding outreach and the provision of the right kind of assistance without fueling tensions between refugees and the local population. However, this situation can also provide opportunities for increased resilience, for instance regarding the economic integration of refugees (if the right policies are implemented), and more national ownership which in turn can result in more sustainable local development.

Socio-economic characteristics of host countries

Besides characteristics related to refugees, conditions in host countries are relevant as well. Host countries in the context of the 3RP all were middle-income countries. Additionally, legitimate government structures existed at both the national and the local level. Rather than operating in a political vacuum with no or barely functioning government structures in place, or having to deal with different political groups claiming power, this meant that the international response had a point of contact in the countries. At the same time, despite some structural deficiencies, generally capacities and systems for service delivery existed which the response could use and which could be built upon. In less developed countries with less existing capacities of service providers, in contrast, it would take much longer to develop these structures first. Additionally, in both countries, the private sector was well developed. Potentially, this opens up opportunities for its engagement in the response both in terms of service delivery, the provision of aid and the creation of employment opportunities, crucial for the economic development of host countries in spite of the situation. Lastly, despite their geographic location at the cross-road of lasting conflicts and turmoil, both countries largely managed to stay out of violent conflicts and avoid spill-over conflicts.

Political context in host countries

Even more important in respect to the practical implementation of a resilience-based response is the political system in which it takes place as illustrated by the course of the response in Jordan and Lebanon. Generally, the more stable a government is and the more leadership it assumes in the response, the more in control it is about the manifestation of the response, in turn confining the role of the international community.

In Jordan, the government system can generally be regarded as more stable than in Lebanon. Even though there were three different Prime Ministers, even five different Ministers of Planning and International Cooperation in power during the unfolding of the refugee response, no political vacuum or long transition phase occurred. Roles and responsibilities were clearly marked, and power was organized centrally. This enabled the government to exercise larger control over the refugee response than the government in Lebanon. Here, the political context was characterized by general instability and long phases of political vacuum. Due to Lebanon's political system based on confessionalism, the interests of a large number of different actors needed to be taken into account and often competed with each other. Resulting tensions between ministries, led by members of different parties, but also within ministries, due to religious or personal disputes, resulted in a lack of national unity, the lack of a consistent response, and generally less control for the Lebanese government within the response.

These variations in the political system of host countries can have various impacts on the response: First of all, the role of the government affects the role of other stakeholders in the response, in particular with regards to the UN system. When a government cannot fulfill certain responsibilities of the state or the response itself, the UN has to take over or keep a larger role. In Lebanon, for instance, UNDP took over responsibilities that in Jordan the government fulfilled itself. This difference in leadership in turn can affect the degree to which humanitarian and development-oriented measures can be effectively integrated. Being an approach largely promoted by the UN, more integration can mean less control for the government about who is being targeted, which might result in a government's preference of keeping both types of assistance separate from each other. Similarly, a larger role for the government can affect the level of flexibility within the operational space of response partners which generally decreases with more government control. Lastly, the level of government engagement can affect the possibilities of linking the interests of host countries and the international community. As linkages commonly presuppose changes in national policies or regulations, they necessitate the active engagement (and political will) of the government. Less government engagement thus can imply a smaller chance of achieving interest-linking deals.

Context in donor countries

Similarly, the political environment in donor countries plays a role, as it can affect funding as well as the openness to new deals or agreements with refugee-hosting countries. In the context of the Syria crisis, this concerned in particular European donor countries, where, from 2015 on, thousands of refugees and migrants not only from Syria but also from other countries claimed asylum. Many European countries were not prepared for this situation, feeling overwhelmed and fearing a loss of control. This created a context in which policy and decision makers across many European countries felt forced to act. Discussions emerged in particular around the issue of 'tackling the root causes of forced displacement' in order to reduce the number of new arrivals in Europe. In the case of the Syria crisis, this meant a growing willingness and growing financial budgets to finance measures in countries hosting large numbers of Syrian refugees. Even though not actually tackling the 'root causes' of Syrians' displacement, this was perceived as preventing onward migration, simultaneously benefitting Jordan and Lebanon as countries of first asylum. At the same time, it also meant that European countries were generally open to deals or 'compacts' with both countries that would link their respective interests.

Overall, the importance of context thus cannot be emphasized enough. As these different characteristics revolving around the Syria crisis demonstrate, there cannot be a resilience-based response framework that can be applied to any refugee situation. Rather, the different characteristics of a situation need to be analyzed and a resilience-based response adjusted accordingly.

6.6 Conclusion: The 3RP as a resilience-based response in practice

Altogether, the cases of Jordan and Lebanon as two examples where a resilience-based response framework has been applied in practice illustrate several aspects regarding resilience-thinking in situations of forced displacement.

First, they exemplify how a resilience-based response can manifest differently in seemingly similar national contexts: Despite a similar starting point in Jordan and Lebanon with regards to previous experiences with situations of forced displacement, the socio-economic and legal context regarding refugees, the unfolding of the Syrian refugee crisis and the international response to it, and the same basis on a resilience-based response framework as developed by the UN at the regional level, the response in both countries differed. Even though both countries mostly committed to the same (resilience) principles on a theoretical level in line with the UN's framework, their application in practice varied. While programmatic principles falling under the responsibility of response partners followed a similar pathway in both countries, different manifestations referred mostly to aspects that required the active engagement of host governments. Depending on the respective political context and national realities, the approaches in Jordan and Lebanon unfolded differently in particular with regard to leadership and ownership, the level of engagement of different actors, the degree of integration of humanitarian and development interventions, and the openness for measures potentially leading to transformational change.

Another difference displayed in the two countries referred to the framing of the response. The example of Jordan thereby has illustrated how the strategic linguistic use of resilience could open up new opportunities by using its wording to create a certain narrative, and how this narrative could be used as a marketing strategy to create visibility and maintain donor attention.

At the same time, the application of a resilience-based response in Jordan and Lebanon illustrates the implications of the existence of different versions of resilience. While all actors referred to the concept, the UN on the one hand, and host governments in Jordan and Lebanon on the other hand, had a fundamentally different understanding of it. Pursuing different versions of the overall concept, the former referred to transformational change, while the latter were focused on persistence and adjustment. Thus, while all actors followed and promoted a resilience-based response, ultimately different objectives were pursued. Nevertheless, the introduction of resilience contributed to the creation of a common narrative that was in the interest of both sides, serving as valuable branding and marketing strategy to keep up international attention and funding.

Lastly, the 3RP and its implementation in Jordan and Lebanon imply that there are several factors that influence the course and outcome of a resilience-based response and that need to be taken into account when considering the application of resilience to a context of forced displacement. These include the characteristics of refugees, of the crisis, and of host countries, including the prevailing socio-economic and political context as well as the context in donor countries.

Overall, the analysis of the 3RP and its implementation in two countries demonstrate that the importance of context cannot be emphasized enough: As the responses in Jordan and Lebanon as well as the mentioned characteristics illustrate, there is not one resilience-based response framework that can be applied to any situation of displacement. Rather, the different characteristics of the refugee situation as well as of the national context mean that a resilience-based response needs to be adjusted accordingly and will manifest differently in each case.

7 A Resilience-based Response to Forced Displacement: The Next Big Thing or Much Ado about Nothing?

The previous chapters have outlined how, with the 3RP, the concept of resilience has for the first time formed the explicit theoretical underpinning of a response to a refugee situation. Different chapters have investigated how the concept has been applied to this specific context in theory, referring to the framework developed by the UN at the regional level, and how this approach has been translated into practice at the country level by analyzing the responses in Jordan and Lebanon.

The UN's framing of the resilience-based response as a "UN first" in responding to a refugee situation (Clark, Helen and Guterres, António in UNDP and UNHCR 2014a:6), describing it as a model that might "be applicable in other complex and protracted crises, similar to the Syria crisis" (UNDP Arab States 2020), raises two sets of questions: First, what are the novel aspects the 3RP is based on that justify its introduction as a 'UN first'? Second, what does the application of resilience in a context of forced displacement really mean, what challenges and strengths does it entail, and does it provide new solutions to dealing with situations of (prolonged) displacement?

The following chapter will focus on these different aspects. It is structured as follows: First, the assumed novelty of the 3RP will be examined, comparing the framework with previous approaches in response to refugee situations in similar contexts. Next, the strengths and weaknesses of the 3RP as a resilience-based response will be analyzed. Based on these findings, lastly the potential contributions and pitfalls of resilience-thinking in dealing with situations of forced displacement in general will be identified and discussed.

7.1 What is new about the 3RP – is it really a 'global first'?

In 2014, Helen Clark, then Administrator of UNDP, and António Guterres, then United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, introduced the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan in response to the Syria Crisis (3RP) as a "UN first" in responding to a refugee situation (Clark, Helen and Guterres, António in UNDP and UNHCR 2014a:6). When analyzing the framework, one thing that strikes as new from the outset is the prominent incorporation of the concept of 'resilience'. While at the time of the launch of the 3RP in 2014 the concept had slowly found its way into the global development agenda (Haldrup and Rosén 2017:360), it had never been used as the explicit theoretical underpinning of a refugee response before. As such, at first glance, the 3RP can indeed be regarded as a 'first', linking the concept of resilience to a refugee response for the first time.

When analyzing the 3RP in more detail, however, it becomes obvious that the response with its overall objective to link a refugee response to development in host countries not only followed the same assumptions as previous approaches to protracted refugee situations, but also tried to address many of the same aspects. [Chapter 3](#) has analyzed several of these previous approaches, including the Integrated Zonal Development approach (IZD) in the 1960s (see [Chapter 3.1](#)), the Refugee Aid and Development approach (RAD) within the context of ICARA (see [Chapter 3.2.1](#)) and CIREFCA (see [Chapter 3.2.2](#)) in the 1980s, and the Targeted Development Assistance approach (TDA) within the Convention Plus Debate in the early 2000s (see [Chapter 3.3](#)). As outlined above, all of these approaches attempted to address either a specific protracted refugee situation in a specific geographic region (IZD, ICARA, CIREFCA) or attempted to find a solution how to deal with prolonged refugee situations in general (TDA), while at the same time taking into account in particular the aspect of development of host countries.

[Chapter 3.4](#) has identified several common and recurrent characteristics within these different approaches, ranging from a focus on 'bridging the gap', national ownership and the use of existing systems, to an emphasis on finding durable solutions, including through self-sufficiency, and inter-agency cooperation, to a new funding architecture and the aspect of additionality. As outlined above,

some of the approaches further made the link between the response and other issues in the wider political context as well as a strong follow-up mechanism part of their strategic approach.

In order to investigate the novelty of the 3RP, the following two subchapters will draw on these findings and analyze in which aspects the 3RP framework resembled these approaches, and in which aspects it differed and provided novel elements. Expanding Table 1 (introduced in [Chapter 3.4](#)) which outlined the key characteristics of previous approaches, Table 11 provides an overview of these similarities and differences that will be outlined in more detail in the following two subchapters.

Table 11: Key characteristics of 3RP and previous approaches - similarities and differences

Key characteristics	IZD	RAD (ICARA)	RAD (CIREFCA)	TDA	3RP
Target group: refugees and locals	X	X	X	X	X
Burden-sharing	X	X	X	X	X
From burden to benefit	X	X	X	X	X
'Bridging the gap'	X	X	X	X	X
Use of existing systems		X	X	X	X
Additionality	X	X	X	X	
National ownership			X	X	X
Inter-agency cooperation	X	X	X	X	X
Whole-of-government approach				X	
Innovative funding		X	X	X	X
Follow-up mechanism			X		X
Linkages			X	X	
Durable solutions	X	X	X	X	
Self-sufficiency	X	X	X	X	X
Application in middle-income countries			X		X
Dispersal of refugees in non-camp settings					X
Focus on transformational change					X
Narrative and marketing strategy					X

Table by the author

7.1.1 Similarities with previous approaches

First of all, the 3RP was born out of a similar starting situation as previous approaches. With the exception of Convention Plus that, in contrast to the other initiatives, did not focus on one specific refugee situation or geographic region but tried to address the issue in a more general way, all approaches tried to find solutions to specific prolonged refugee situations. All initiatives acknowledged that countries of asylum were disproportionately strained with the task of hosting refugees, and that they could and should not have to shoulder the costs of hosting refugees alone. All concepts therefore called for international burden- or responsibility-sharing to mitigate the effects of granting refugees asylum. (Betts 1967:561; Betts 2009b:54; Callamard 1993:137; Kibreab 1983:125–126; UNHCR 2004c:2) Drawing upon the same reasoning, the 3RP was based on the notion that countries neighboring or close to Syria

had been “the largest providers of human and financial resources for the response” and were not to be left alone to bear the responsibility of dealing with the situation (UNDP and UNHCR 2014a:5).

In the same line of argument, both previous initiatives and the 3RP started to take up a development-oriented perspective, acknowledging that a purely humanitarian approach solely focusing on refugees was not enough to deal with the respective refugee situation. Taking into account the impacts of hosting refugees, broader frameworks were perceived necessary that would link short-term relief programs to meet the immediate needs of refugees with more long-term strategies contributing to the long-term and sustainable development in and of host countries. Overall, all approaches concluded that humanitarian and developmental strategies were to complement each other, and that measures implemented should be development-oriented from the outset, thereby emphasizing a shift from a purely humanitarian response to an integrated and development-focused approach. While not explicitly mentioned in the Integrated Zonal Development approach, that way, an assumed gap between traditional forms of humanitarian aid and development assistance was to be bridged. (Betts 1967:562; Betts 2009b:69–70; 100; 167–168; Callamard 1993:138; UNHCR 1994; Kibreab 1983:130–131; Koppenberg 2012:85; UNDG 2014:12; UNDP and UNHCR 2014a:7–8, 17, 44) Labeled differently in the different approaches, within the 3RP, ‘resilience’ was regarded as the bridging concept between the two fields. (UNDP and UNHCR 2015:18)

Generally, all previous approaches regarded hosting refugees as a burden that put strains on often already weak economies, resources and capacities in host countries and negatively impacted their development and stability. However, all approaches argued that, through the implementation of the right policies, refugees could be transformed from a burden into some kind of asset that host countries could benefit from, thus promoting a change in the perception of refugees. That notion was strongly linked to the connection between refugees’ self-sufficiency and development in host countries: Understanding refugees as potential ‘agents of development’, previous initiatives emphasized the importance of giving refugees access to socio-economic activities and programs. That way, refugees were not only to become self-reliant and self-sufficient, but were also to actively contribute to the development of the countries hosting them. (Betts 1967:563; Betts 2004:6, 13; Betts 2009b:69–70; 100; 106; Kibreab 1983:130; Koppenberg 2012:85; UNHCR 1994)

This notion was found in the theoretical concept of the 3RP as well: Rather than viewing refugees as a burden, host countries were called upon to view them as assets as they possessed skills not traditionally found in host countries and represented a significant workforce, and could thus potentially contribute to host countries’ economic growth. (UNDP and UNHCR 2015:20) Therefore, the 3RP like previous approaches strongly promoted the self-sufficiency of affected populations. Besides livelihoods activities like in previous approaches, including the creation and strengthening of income-generating activities and economic opportunities, this aspect also included a strong focus on education. (UNDP and UNHCR 2014a:17; UNDP and UNHCR 2015:18) Overall, the 3RP stressed viewing refugees as assets rather than burdens for another reason as well: The change of perception was seen as a prerequisite for social cohesion. (UNDP and UNHCR 2015:18)

Following this logic, and recognizing that hosting refugees had effects on the development of host countries as well as on the local host population, all approaches, including the 3RP, emphasized the need for programs to focus not only on refugees, but to also consider locals’ needs and to focus on mitigating the negative effects of hosting refugees. Therefore, not only refugees, but also the local population were to be included as direct beneficiaries of programs. Furthermore, programs were to include measures focusing on the development of host countries, for instance through establishing structures or building or strengthening capacities, from the results of which both refugees and the local population were to benefit. (Callamard 1993:137–138; Gorman 1993b:175; Kibreab 1983:131; UNHCR 2003b:60–61; UNDP and UNHCR 2014a:12)

Besides these theoretical assumptions and postulations, all approaches advocated a range of similar core principles. First, this concerned the role of host country governments, which, in all mentioned

approaches, was to increase. Just like CIREFCA, Convention Plus and, to a lesser extent, ICARA II, the 3RP stressed the importance of national leadership and ownership of the response, emphasizing that host countries were to take responsibility for all phases of the concept, which would allow them to align the response with their own goals and priorities. (Betts 2006:23; Betts 2009b:63; UNHCR 2004c:8; UNDP and UNHCR 2014a:7) In the same context, all approaches (with the exception of the Integrated Zonal Development approach), stressed the importance of aligning the response with national development planning. (Betts 2009b:70; UNDP and UNHCR 2014a:41; UNHCR 1994; UNHCR 2005c:3) While in the Integrated Zonal Development approach, due to a lack of functioning structures, the establishment of new structures was explicitly promoted with the aim of benefitting refugees and the local population, all later concepts, including the 3RP, encouraged the use of existing systems and modalities rather than establishing new or parallel ones. (Betts 2009b:107; Gorman 1993b:175; Gorman 1993c:62, 65; Torres-Romero 1998:155; UNHCR 2003a:12; UNHCR 2005c:2; UNDP and UNHCR 2014a:8)

In all cases, measures and funding for both humanitarian and refugee-focused aid and development assistance were understood as being additional to one another, in order to avoid the notion that aid was simply being diverted from one to the other. (Callamard 1993:137; Gorman 1993b:175; Gorman 1993c:65; UNDP and UNHCR 2015:4; UNHCR 2003a:12) While the principle of additionality was not specifically mentioned in the 3RP, the 2016/17 plan was opened with two quotes from statements by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and UNDG Chairperson and UNDP Administrator Helen Clark, who both referred to the importance of fully funding both efforts to assist refugees and longer-term development efforts. As Helen Clark put it, it was “not a question of either/or”; rather, both types of assistance were needed (Clark, Helen in UNDP and UNHCR 2015:4). Similarly, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon stressed that “[r]esources for one area should not come at the expense of another” (Ki-moon, Ban in UNDP and UNHCR 2015:4). In the statement referred to he elaborated further that reducing development assistance in order to finance refugee aid would be counter-productive, causing a vicious circle that would do harm to millions of vulnerable people. (UN 2015) In line with these inaugural quotes it can be understood that the 3RP pursued the principle of additionality, without specifically referring to it.

In order to secure funding for the response, all strategies (except for the Integrated Zonal Development approach) called for innovative funding mechanisms and a new aid architecture. While all concepts followed different strategies in this regard, they all had in common that they aimed at creating as much flexibility as possible on the one hand, and at increasing aid effectiveness on the other hand: ICARA, for instance, focused in particular on presenting different new multilateral funding mechanisms including cost sharing, trust funds and joint financing arrangements, from which donor states could pick their preferred method of channeling funds. (Gorman 1986:286–289) CIREFCA’s strategy, in contrast, instead of focusing on new funding mechanisms, comprised winning the political and diplomatic support of potential donor countries first, before discussing possible financial support in a purposely informal manner. Subsequently sharing a master chart with all tentative indications of contributions then allowed other states to follow suit. (Betts 2009b:82–84) Convention Plus on the other hand encouraged states to reconsider traditional criteria for aid and to rethink traditional understanding of development aid on a more general level, and further promoted a plurilateral approach in which subgroups of states could make progress on issues of mutual concern and contribute to refugee issues selectively. (Betts 2004:16; Betts 2009b:155; UNHCR 2004c:7–8) The first notion was picked up in the 3RP as well, which called upon donors to break down financing silos and expand and harmonize funding allocations from their different funding streams. This was supported by a yearly international pledging conference. In contrast to initial pledging conferences in the context of the Syria crisis that had focused on the humanitarian needs of refugees, the ‘Third International Pledging Conference for Syria’ (Kuwait III) in March 2015 for the first time provided a forum for both humanitarian and development actors, calling on donors to provide combined pledges. As such, the conference was seen as “a global first for the UN” with the

“UN’s largest ever single appeal” including humanitarian and development needs (UNDP Arab States 2015).

All concepts also promoted strong cooperation both between different UN agencies and with other development organizations and national and international NGOs. In all approaches, particular focus was put on a strong inter-agency partnership between UNHCR and UNDP, with slight differences in the respective design: In the Integrated Zonal Development approach, UNHCR was seen in the lead for the first phases of the response, before it handed over all responsibility to UNDP which was to be included as early as possible. In ICARA, each of the two agencies had clear responsibilities according to their respective mandate, while in CIREFCA, UNHCR took the lead role first, gradually handing it over to UNDP the more development-focused the approach became. Additionally, both agencies worked closely together in a newly-established Joint Support Unit. In Convention Plus, UNHCR acted as the clear lead agency of the entire approach, but tried to formalize its relationship with UNDP at headquarters level. (Betts 2009b:145–155; 157–162; Gorman 1993b:174–175; Gorman 1993c:65; UNHCR 1994) In the 3RP, while coordination at the country level was to be determined by each country context and under the leadership of the respective national government, the 3RP Regional Committees were co-chaired by UNHCR and UNDP. Thus, both UNHCR and UNDP were to lead the response together, with UNHCR guiding the refugee component and UNDP facilitating the coordination of the resilience component of the response. (UNDP and UNHCR 2014a:41; UNDP and UNHCR 2015:15)

Overall, the 3RP framework was thus based on the same rationale, used the same line of argument and promoted many of the same principles as previous approaches to protracted refugee situations. The overall thinking behind the approach, thus, cannot be considered new or ‘a first’ in the response to a crisis.

7.1.2 Differences to previous approaches

Despite these similarities, some aspects of the 3RP still differed from previous approaches, bringing with it new challenges, but also new opportunities as the cases of Jordan and Lebanon illustrate. These differences related to different aspects, including specificities in the context in which the response was implemented, further conceptual underpinnings of the response, and communicational aspects that all had implications on the implementation of the response.

First of all, different aspects related to the respective national and regional context in which the response was implemented. In contrast to countries addressed with the Integrated Zonal Development approach, ICARA, or Convention Plus, both Jordan and Lebanon as host countries were middle-income countries (World Bank Group 2019). Despite challenges after the global financial crisis and the Arab Spring, both countries had shown a general upward trend in their national development, reflected in their Human Development Index (HDI) values of 0.698 (Jordan) and 0.739 (Lebanon) in 2011. Ranking 71 (Lebanon) and 95 (Jordan) out of 187 countries listed, Lebanon was categorized as a country with “high human development”, with Jordan just missing the category and being ranked as a country with “medium human development” (UNDP 2011:136–138). African countries hosting large refugee populations in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s and addressed within the IZD approach or ICARA, like Burundi, Chad, Ethiopia and Angola, in contrast, were (and still are) ranked among the least developed countries worldwide, with HDI values that, where available, fell into the lowest category of development in the 1980s. (Roser 2019) The same applies to the pilot countries of Convention Plus, Afghanistan and Somalia, as well as TDA examples Uganda and Zambia. All four countries were ranked among the states with the lowest HDI values in the 1990s and early 2000s when the respective approach was developed and applied. (UNDP 2019) Even though it is difficult to compare the exact rankings and values since underlying methods and data have changed and more countries have been included in the HDI over the

years, the index still clearly shows a better economic and developmental situation for pre-crisis Jordan and Lebanon compared to Integrated Zonal Development, ICARA or Convention Plus countries.⁸²

In turn, this meant that more capacities and resources as well as functioning governmental and institutional structures existed in Jordan and Lebanon, compared with host countries in IZD, ICARA or Convention Plus. On the one hand, this supposedly created more favorable preconditions, as these existing structures could be used and built upon to provide services to refugees and deliver the response. On the other hand, this also meant that host governments needed to be included more in the response. In contrast to operations in developing or least developed countries without functioning government structures, international actors did not act in a political vacuum in Jordan and Lebanon. Thus, the response needed to be negotiated, developed and coordinated with host countries and take into account host countries' priorities and interests as well as existing policies, regulations and political realities to a much larger extent. This not always took place without challenges as will be outlined further below.

Another contextual difference between the situation in which the 3RP and previous approaches were applied lay in the wide dispersal of Syrian refugees who for the most part settled freely in cities and communities across Jordan and Lebanon, as opposed to previous situations where the majority of refugees had been hosted in camps or settled in rural areas. The latter applied in particular to the Integrated Zonal Development approach, where the approach specifically focused on the settlement of refugees in rural and underdeveloped areas (Betts 1993:17–18; Gorman 1993c:175), while in the 1980s and 1990s, out of various reasons including growing numbers of refugees, easier provision of international aid, security concerns, and visibility aspects, encampment of refugees became more common. (Deardorff 2009:10; Maple 2016:2) While Jordan built various camps in response to the influx of Syrian refugees as well, and in theory allowed only persons who had entered the country legally or had been bailed out of the camps by a Jordanian sponsor to live outside the camps, in practice with over 80 percent the vast majority of refugees lived in non-camp settings. (CARE 2013:7; Francis 2015:6) Lebanon even applied a strict non-camp policy altogether and from the beginning, resulting in the self-settlement of Syrians across the country. This entailed various challenges: On the one hand, it made outreach activities of response partners, the distribution of aid and the provision of protection more difficult. For instance, it presented a challenge to simply know where most vulnerable people lived and what kind of assistance they needed. At the same time, the provision of assistance to refugees held the risk of fueling tensions between refugees and locals who felt neglected or perceived Syrians to be receiving aid in an unfair manner. On the other hand, it posed major challenges to municipalities and host communities that were put at the forefront of responding to an increased demand of basic services. Resulting in a decreasing quality of services that in turn led to further tensions between refugees and locals, these were additional aspects that needed to be dealt with in the response as compared to responses in camp contexts. (Cherri, Arcos González, and Castro Delgado 2016:168; Crisp et al. 2013:12–13; Ruaudel and Morrison-Métois 2017:36–37; UNHCR 2013b:26)

Rather than implementing a top-down approach led by international agencies alone, this in particular meant that local actors such as municipalities, mayors, and local administrations that were directly affected by the settlement of refugees on their territories needed to be involved in the response from the beginning. While participatory approaches in general often require more time and resources, and, taking local actors' interests and priorities into account instead of simply implementing pre-determined measures, also require more flexibility from donors, they also open up new opportunities: Increased cooperation with local actors and more collaboration in the implementation of measures can not only strengthen local capacities, but can also improve local ownership and thus contribute to more sustainable local development. (IASC Working Group 2010:2; Urban Settlements Working Group 2019:12–13) For instance, in particular in Lebanon, frustration among municipalities that had felt bypassed and excluded

⁸² In that matter, the situation resembled only the one in which CIREFCA was applied: Here, refugee hosting countries, with the exception of Honduras, had a similar HDI value as Jordan and Lebanon in 2011 and were placed in the upper part of the middle third of all listed countries in the 1980s. (UNDP 2019)

from the response despite being at the forefront of the situation could be dissolved when they were included in response measures more, largely through the new engagement of UNDP and its engagement within the Lebanon Host Community Support Project, but also through the bottom-up approach pursued especially by local organizations. This increased cooperation not only improved collaboration on a practical level and strengthened local capacities, but also increased the level of ownership of the response, potentially more difficult to achieve in camp settings.⁸³ (Chemaly 2018; Mourad 2017:262)

Besides these contextual differences that affected the implementation of the response, the 3RP and previous approaches also differed with regards to conceptual aspects underlying the response frameworks.

First and foremost, this concerned the concept of resilience itself, constituting a new theoretical framework that had not been included in previous approaches. As part of this resilience-framing, a large part of the 3RP focused not only on strengthening capacities of affected populations in order for them to reach self-sufficiency like previous approaches, but also on capacity-strengthening of national and local institutions and systems. On the one hand, they were to be enabled to cope better with increased demands and recover from the crisis. On the other hand, the abilities of governments were to be strengthened to lead the response and ultimately take over from the international community. (UNDP and UNHCR 2014a:8) While in particular ICARA and CIREFCA had included the notion of institution-building and enhancing capacities of host governments as well, the 3RP went one step further. It not only aimed at enhancing capacities to mitigate the impacts of the *current* situation for systems to persist in spite of the prevailing challenges, but also sought for policy reforms in order to attain transformational change with the specific aim of preparing host countries better for *future* shocks and crises. (UNDG 2014:31) Thus, while both previous approaches and the 3RP incorporated the goal of development and sustainability in host countries, this notion of transformational change to prepare host countries better for future shocks remained missing in previous approaches. (Gorman 1987:111–112; UNHCR 1994:28–31)

Another conceptual difference of the response concerned the issue of finding durable solutions for refugees. IZD, ICARA, CIREFCA and Convention Plus had all made the issue one of their key objectives, clearly established as forming part of the respective approach. While all of them regarded voluntary repatriation as the preferred solution, local integration was seen as a viable alternative if return was not feasible. The approaches' strong focus on self-reliance has to be viewed in that light: Self-sufficiency was to lead to the integration of refugees into host communities, or, in the case of DAR, at least bridge the time pending a different durable solution. (Betts 2009b:88, 148; Gorman 1993c:65; Prince Ada Khan 1966) The 3RP, in contrast, almost completely omitted the issue of finding durable solutions for Syrian refugees, and in particular solutions that included host countries' direct involvement and cooperation. While this did not mean that no durable solutions were pursued and actively sought for by the UN, the issue was not established as an integral part of the resilience-based response. This started with the complete absence of the wording of finding 'durable solutions' in the response framework, in contrast to previous approaches where the issue had constituted a clearly laid out objective or focus area of the response. While the 3RP briefly referred to resettlement (to be handled by UNHCR) (UNDP and UNHCR 2014a:13), it only mentioned the "eventual return" of refugees as an alternative pathway (UNDP and UNHCR 2014a:18). The option of local integration, in contrast, remained unmentioned, even though livelihoods initiatives were strongly promoted (including giving refugees access to

⁸³ Besides these programmatic implications, the settlement of refugees among host communities can open up chances for host countries as well. At least in theory, the spatial integration of refugees provides economic opportunities: On the one hand, especially urban contexts potentially provide more employment opportunities for refugees; if given the opportunity, refugees can thus potentially contribute to economic growth. (Huang and Graham 2018) As outlined above, however, this potential was not used in either Jordan or Lebanon. On the other hand, an increase in population can lead to increased demand for goods and services, from which not only individuals can benefit but which affects markets as well. In Jordan, for instance, the influx of refugees led to an increased demand in rental housing stock, benefiting landlords in host communities. Moreover, the market responded with new housing construction, upgrading and expanding properties, which in turn created jobs and increased demand for materials and services. (The World Bank Group and GFDRR 2017:9)

employment opportunities), and focus was put on measures to strengthen social cohesion in order to create the conditions for a peaceful communal life. These measures, however, were framed in reference to a potential return and justified as giving refugees “the means to cope with hardship, to increase their skills and abilities, and to prosper, improving their prospects too in a future return to Syria” (UNDP and UNHCR 2014a:39).

On the one hand, the omission of focus on durable solutions in the framework in general and on local integration in particular reflected the difficult overall context, in which a timely return of Syrians seemed unlikely due to ongoing conflict, and resettlement represented an option only for a small number of refugees. On the other hand, it in particular paid regard to the high sensitivity of the issue of local integration in host countries: Taking Jordan and Lebanon as examples, both countries clearly rejected the idea of refugees’ local integration and long-term stay, often explained with their experience with Palestinian refugees. This rejection was evident in the complete absence of refugee legislation on the domestic level, the approach to refugee crises in the past, and the difficult situation in terms of livelihoods and self-sufficiency opportunities for refugees. Even though both Jordan and Lebanon committed to changes in their policies and made small concessions on the issue – Jordan by making concrete commitments within the Jordan Compact (Government of Jordan 2016), Lebanon by at least revoking the requirement for refugees to sign a pledge not to work (Janmyr 2016:69) – these changes did not result in significant changes in practice and were far from providing a durable solution for refugees. (Barbelet, Hagen-Zanker, and Mansour-Ille 2018:5; Bellamy et al. 2017:54–55; Care 2018:17; Chemaly 2018; Huang, Ash, et al. 2018:14–15; Howden, Patchett, and Alfred 2017:15–17; Uzelac and Meester 2018:19–20; Uzelac and Meester 2018:19–20)

Another difference between previous approaches and the 3RP concerned the attempt to create linkages between the hosting of refugees and other issues. While not present in IZD and ICARA, in CIREFCA’s case, the protection of refugees and the development of host countries were being linked to reconstruction, security and stability in Central American countries as well as European states’ quest for influence and power in the region. In Convention Plus, the whole concept was built on the linkage of its three strands of resettlement, the control of irregular secondary movements and targeted development assistance for hosts, trying to link host countries’ interest in burden-sharing and additional development assistance with European states’ concerns about onward movements and growing numbers of asylum seekers on their territories. Therefore, both concepts incorporated further-reaching interests of hosts as well as donor states in order to provide an incentive for both sides to commit to the approach: In order to achieve their wider interests, both sides were supposed to adhere to all other aspects of the approach as well. (Betts 2005b:4–5; Betts 2009b:91–94)

This notion was not taken up within the 3RP, even though priorities and interests of host and donor countries diverged here as well. However, the framework neither created systematic linkages to other policy areas or interests, nor was the plan explicitly embedded in a wider political process. Nevertheless, some connections to other issues were mentioned, albeit parenthetically: On the one hand, the framework at one point established a link between the lack of an adequate response in host countries and onward secondary movements of refugees. Concretely, the plan argued that a shortfall in funding for humanitarian and resilience-building activities had contributed to exacerbating vulnerabilities, deteriorating living conditions and worsening the overall economic and social situation in host countries, thereby being among the triggers for large numbers of refugees to move further afield, including to Europe. The plan did not, however, elaborate on this perceived connection further. (UNDP and UNHCR 2015:6) On the other hand, the plan briefly made reference to global discussions and processes in terms of dealing with refugee crises. Both the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) in Istanbul in May 2016 and the UN Migration Summit in New York in September 2016 were mentioned as “far-reaching events” that had accelerated calls for profound changes in the way crises were responded to, with both events promoting similar principles and approaches as the 3RP such as using and strengthening national systems, a new aid architecture, the importance of the private sector and creating economic opportunities for affected populations. However, a concrete connection between the response to the Syria crisis and

global developments in finding approaches for crises, generating synergies for both sides, were not made, with the global events being mentioned only in a single footnote. (UNDP and UNHCR 2016a:6)

Nevertheless, new forms of cooperation based on the linkage of interests took place. In contrast to previous approaches, however, they developed *outside* the formal response framework and the UN's sphere of influence. Rather, they were established bilaterally between the respective host country and the EU. For many actors, these new ways of cooperation in the form of Compacts that had not been applied in similar contexts before were perceived as much further-reaching than the UN-led response as they held the potential of national policy changes and reforms that exceeded measures implemented by the international community by far: Putting both partners on eye level, the Compacts aimed at linking the interests of both sides through the incorporation of concrete commitments and incentives that required the active engagement and political will of governments. On the one hand, they revolved around policy changes and reforms that were to lead to self-sufficiency of refugees. By granting them access to employment opportunities, living conditions of refugees in host countries were hoped to improve. This was in the interest of the EU, as it was perceived to decrease the chance of onward migration towards Europe. On the other hand, commitments included economic and trade benefits on the part of the EU for host countries, linked to host countries' hope to stimulate economic growth. (EU-Jordan Association Council 2016:43; Government of Jordan 2016)

Besides these contextual and conceptual differences, the 3RP differed from previous approaches with regards to its narrative, and in particular with regards to its marketing. Building the framework around the concept of resilience, a concept that had just found its way into the field of international assistance, created the prerequisites to present the strategy as something novel, allowing to keep up international attention and funding. Facilitated by the prevailing prominence of the concept in international cooperation in general, putting the response under a new heading that included the buzzword of resilience resonated well with donors and the international community. This was supported through large efforts to promote the concept in particular by the UNDP Sub-Regional Facility which was understood as the "resilience hub" (UNDP Sub-Regional Response Facility 2017:15): It not only developed various 'resilience tools', but also co-hosted various events revolving around the concept, such as the 'Resilience Development Forum' in 2015 (resulting in the 'Dead Sea Resilience Agenda') and the 'Resilience-building Week' in 2016, aimed at exchanging good practices and lessons learned regarding resilience-building. Additionally, several glossy brochures were published, including two 'Compendia on Good and Innovative Practices' as well as more general ones focusing on the state of resilience-programming in response to the Syria crisis, in order to promote the concept further. (UNDP Sub-Regional Response Facility 2016; UNDP Sub-Regional Response Facility 2017; UNHCR-UNDP Joint Secretariat 2015; UNHCR-UNDP Joint Secretariat 2017) The launch of an updated 3RP each year, yearly pledging conferences including side events and joint declarations revolving around resilience (see, for instance, European Council 2017; European Council 2018; European Council 2019; Mahecic 2016), as well as the creation of a website solely devoted to the 3RP (3RP 2020), all formed part of a large-scale marketing strategy that revolved around the narrative of resilience. This was something completely novel: A strategy of that kind, actively using a buzzword of prevailing debates in international assistance and building an entire branding and marketing strategy around it, had not been set up in either of the previous approaches.

Taking all these aspects into account, the question whether the 3RP constitutes a 'new' approach in response to a refugee situation cannot be unequivocally answered with a simple 'yes' or 'no': On the one hand, the response in general, including its rationale, line of argument and principles, cannot per se be considered 'a first' – too many and too striking are the similarities with previous approaches and strategies. Against this background, the application of the 3RP as a resilience-based response to a refugee situation can be understood rather as forming part of a periodically recurring focus on approaches that explicitly attempt to link refugee protection to development in host countries.

On the other hand, the approach nevertheless included various novel aspects that distinguished it from previous ones. Besides the implementation of a UN-led response to a refugee crisis of that scale in middle-income countries and in largely non-camp settings, this concerned various conceptual aspects. These ranged from a strong focus on capacity-strengthening of national and local institutions in order to achieve transformational change, to the omission of the search for durable solutions in general and in particular of local integration, and to different developments with regards to the linkage of interests that was not pursued as part of the multilateral response framework. Above all, what can be considered a global first is the prominent and explicit linking of a response applied in a context of forced displacement with the concept of resilience, and, associated with that, the creation of a comprehensive resilience narrative and its extensive usage as a branding and marketing tool.

7.2 Strengths and weaknesses of the 3RP as a resilience-based response

As the previous subchapters have outlined, the 3RP comprised both similarities and differences to previous approaches, including IZD, RAD and TDA. When analyzing these similarities and differences, and taking into account the factors that contributed to previous approaches' success or failure (identified in [Chapter 3.4](#)), several strengths and weaknesses of the 3RP as a resilience-based response can be established. These can be illustrated by a comparison of previous approaches with experiences made in Jordan and Lebanon as two examples where the 3RP has been implemented in practice.

7.2.1 Strengths of the response

One of the clear strengths of the resilience-based response can be seen in the strong commitment of different actors to the approach. On the one hand, this referred to UN agencies, in particular UNHCR and UNDP. Especially at the regional level, both agencies were highly engaged in the response, with particularly UNDP strongly advocating for the new resilience-based framework as outlined above. This was in sharp contrast to ICARA where the lack of active stewardship by UNDP contributed to the failure of the approach: Not perceiving refugees as a priority, the agency took on a rather reserved and hesitant role in the overall process. Generally, it showed only limited interest in participating in the concept of linking refugees with development, or in convincing host or donor countries to change existing perceptions or policies in favor of the new approach, which is regarded as one factor that ultimately contributed to its abandonment.⁸⁴ (Betts 1993:18; Betts 2009b:69; Stein 1987:52, 58) CIREFCA, in contrast, illustrates the reverse side, demonstrating how a high level of commitment of both UNHCR and UNDP can contribute to a positive outcome of an approach. Here, both agencies showed high levels of commitment to the process. In particular the personal dedication, common vision and good personal relationship between the two directors of the relevant bureaus thereby are widely regarded as having contributed to the success of the response. (Betts 2009b:96–96; UNHCR 1994)

On the other hand, in both Jordan and Lebanon host governments demonstrated increasing commitment to the approach. In both cases, they took on a much larger role in the response than before, displaying a growing sense of ownership of the overall response, thus taking over responsibility for the refugee situation in the country instead of leaving the field to the international community. This not only paid regard to their status as middle-income countries with functioning government structures in place, but was also seen as crucial to strengthen existing capacities, gradually decrease the need for humanitarian aid, and find more sustainable solutions in which national capacities, structures and resources would fully take over from the international community eventually. (I MOPIC 1 2017; I UN Jordan 2 2017; Office of the RC/HC Jordan 2017:1, 4) The importance of host government engagement is illustrated by experiences made in previous approaches. In CIREFCA, for instance, the high level of commitment

⁸⁴ Even though Jordan made similar experiences with regards to the last aspect, with UNDP staying in the background of the response and not regarding it as the agency's responsibility to promote its understanding of the response, this was not perceived as a challenge by response partners in the country. (I UN Regional 2 2018; I UN Regional 4 2018) Largely, this can be seen as being related to the large sense of ownership and leadership the Jordanian government itself demonstrated, cooperating with UNHCR and others and advocating for its priorities on its own, constituting a strength of the approach in itself as will be outlined further below.

and ownership of affected countries in the whole process, for instance conducting needs assessments, developing strategies and project proposals and overseeing their practical implementation, impressed donors and resulted in large amounts of financial and technical support, which overall contributed to the approach's successful outcome. (Betts 2006:23–24; Betts 2008:167; Betts 2009b:86; Redmond 1995) ICARA and Convention Plus, in turn, provide counter-examples: In both approaches, African host countries displayed a lack of commitment and willingness to get involved in the responses which is widely seen as a prime factor leading to their failure. (Betts 2009b:153–154; Gorman 1993c:77)

The increased engagement of both UNDP and host governments in Jordan and Lebanon had other advantages, too, as it allowed to set up new leadership and coordination structures. On the one hand, this improved cooperation between humanitarian and development actors. In particular in Lebanon, UNDP's new active role in the response led to a partnership on eye-level between UNHCR and UNDP in which both agencies worked together on all aspects of the approach, facilitating an integrated response. (Culbertson et al. 2016:41, 54; I UN Lebanon 3 2017; I UN Lebanon 4 2017; I UN Lebanon 7 2019; Mansour 2017:12) In that, Lebanon's approach resembled CIREFCA, where collaboration between the two agencies proved so successful that it is widely regarded as “the most successful historical example of meaningful UNHCR-UNDP collaboration” (Betts 2009b:98). This helped to create trust in the process among donors, governments and NGOs alike, resulting in high commitment and funding – prerequisites for a successful outcome of an approach.⁸⁵ (Betts 2009b:96–96; Gorman 1993c:69; UNHCR 1994)

Experiences in other approaches demonstrate the challenges that can emerge from a lack of cooperation between the two organizations. In IZD, for instance, the relationship between UNHCR and UNDP was characterized by severe mandate competition. This was largely driven by some donor countries including, for instance, Canada, who severely criticized UNHCR's new involvement in infrastructural services and development assistance provided to refugees which they perceived as an overstepping of its mandate and as lying outside their terms of reference. (Kibreab 1983:111) In ICARA, in turn, UNDP developed a tendency to “excessive confidentiality” (Gorman 1993c:69), only reluctantly sharing information with UNHCR that could have promoted refugee-related development activity. With both UNHCR and UNDP acting strictly according to their respective mandate, refugee issues and development, often understood as infrastructural projects, were addressed in complete isolation from each other, rather than through an integrated approach where measures would have been linked and complemented each other. At the same time, projects that *did* fall between the traditional mandates often led to confusion of roles and responsibilities, hampering effective management of measures and sometimes even preventing their implementation completely. (Betts 2008:163; Betts 2009b:72–73; Gorman 1993c:66–67; Stein 1987:52)

On the other hand, new leadership and coordination structures following the introduction of a resilience-based response in Jordan and Lebanon allowed for an intensified political dialogue, which can be seen as constituting another strength of the response. In both countries, new working structures not only replaced UNHCR's sole leadership role, putting both host governments and UNDP more in charge, but also brought the ever-growing number of actors with different interests and mandates within the response together, including donors, humanitarian and developmental implementing agencies, UN organizations, and host governments. This not only increased coordination. More importantly, it also facilitated new forms of dialogue and negotiations, ensuring that everybody's interests and priorities could be voiced. (Baur 2018; Bonard, Sida, and Tjoflaat 2015:10; Chemaly 2018; Gaunt 2018; Grunewald, Brangeon, and Karroum 2017:14; Kocks et al. 2018:84; Uzelac and Meester 2018:44)

⁸⁵ However, it has been noted that this successful cooperation between the two agencies was limited to the headquarters level as outlined above. Cooperation at the field level proved more problematic. Here, both agencies levelled severe criticism at each other. While UNDP criticized UNHCR staff as well-meaning but unenlightened “do-gooders”, and UNHCR's dealing with refugee situations as “too quick and without thought”, UNDP staff were criticized for their “lack of field knowledge”, and UNDP's way of working as “too slow and bureaucratic” in the context of fast-changing emergencies (UNHCR 1994).

In particular in Lebanon, the response framework served more and more as a negotiation space between the Lebanese government and the UN, creating a space for communication. This not only ensured that interests of both sides were heard and included in the response, but also provided response partners with a clearer framework to operate in. Both aspects have to be viewed with regards to the difficult political context in Lebanon where cooperation between the two sides was impeded by a lack of coherent government information and of a national development plan. (Bonard, Sida, and Tjoflaat 2015:10; I INGO Lebanon 1 2017; I INGO Lebanon 2 2017; I MoSA 2 2017; I UN Lebanon 3 2017; I UN Lebanon 4 2017; I UN Lebanon 5 2019; I UN Lebanon 7 2019; Janmyr 2018:396–399) In Jordan, too, participatory planning workshops allowed the participation of all stakeholders in the planning process of the response to an extent that was perceived as unique by various actors. Additionally, with the JRPSC a specific platform was set up to promote strategic partnerships and cooperation between the government, donors, UN agencies as well as other response partners and to support a jointly developed response. (I INGO Jordan 3 2017; I INGO Jordan 4 2017; Kocks et al. 2018:71)

Overall, improved coordination, cooperation and dialogue in both countries helped to create a common basis regarding the response. The importance of these aspects is illustrated by experiences made in previous approaches, where the lack thereof contributed to an unsuccessful outcome: In IZD, for instance, the lack of coordination between refugee and development organizations, in particular between UNHCR and UNDP, is seen as a factor that contributed to the failure of the approach. (Betts 1967:561–562; Feldman 2007:56) In ICARA, in turn, no political dialogue between host and donor countries took place in the development of the approach. Rather, the process was perceived as technocratic, consisting of two one-off pledging conferences that did not allow for negotiations of interests and expectations. (Betts 2008:163; Betts 2009b:72–73) While in Convention Plus political dialogue *did* take place, host countries remained largely excluded from the discussions. As result, they felt marginalized which in turn led to a general lack of commitment to the approach. (Betts and Durieux 2007:527; Betts 2009b:153) In contrast to these negative outcomes related to a lack of dialogue, in CIREFCA, resembling Jordan’s approach with the JRPSC, a Joint Support Unit was established to act as a bridge between governments, donors and UN agencies, which is widely regarded as having contributed to the successful outcome of the process. (UNHCR 1994) In this light, the continued political dialogue in both Jordan and Lebanon indicates a strong point of the response.

This aspect was further related to the understanding of the response as an ongoing process in both countries, emphasized by the fact that response plans were rolling plans that were renewed every year based on discussions between all actors. In turn, this approach allowed for a high degree of flexibility to include changed interests, needs and priorities and to adapt budgetary requirements and programs accordingly. Both aspects had contributed to the positive outcome of CIREFCA: Here, rather than focusing on single one-off pledging conferences like in ICARA, the response had been understood as part of a wider and ongoing political process. A high degree of flexibility had moreover enabled UNHCR and the participating states to adapt to changes and emerging challenges quickly, and keep the general response process on track. (Betts 2006:21, 24–26; Betts 2009b:110–111)

In Jordan and Lebanon, all of these points contributed to another aspect that can be regarded as a strength of their response: a general sense of trust in the approach that could be created among different stakeholders, including host governments, response partners, and donors, and that had commonly been missing in previous approaches. Convention Plus, for instance, had been characterized by a low-trust environment and mutual suspicion between refugee hosting and potential donor countries from the outset, stemming from experiences made in Africa in the 1980s in relation to ICARA. (Betts 2009b:152) In the absence of a common process and political dialogue involving all actors, in both cases the course of action had been non-transparent, resulting in mistrust and skepticism. (Betts 2004:11–12; Betts 2009b:71–72; 152–154; Betts and Durieux 2007:527–530; Crisp 2001:20014; Stein 1987:49) Additionally, in both cases, discussions and conferences had been held in Europe rather than in affected countries themselves, conveying the impression that the approaches were resolved upon by the international community alone, without taking into account the concerns of affected countries, resulting

in a further lack of trust. (Betts 2009b:153) As a result, host countries had remained generally hesitant towards the overall approach, resulting in a lack of commitment which in turn affected donor commitment and led to a pervasive ‘wait and see’ attitude that ultimately contributed to the unsuccessful outcome of the approaches. (Betts 2004:18–19; Betts 2005a:19, 21, 37; Gorman 1987:118–122; Gorman 1993c:77; Kibreab 1983:134)

As outlined above, the 3RP followed a different approach, avoiding these pitfalls: While the general strategic direction of the new response framework regarding its focus on resilience was developed largely by the UN at the regional level (UNHCR 2014b; Sida, Trombetta, and Panero 2016:22), efforts were made not only to include host governments in the development and negotiations of national response plans from the beginning, but to put them in the lead and increase their ownership. In particular in Lebanon, the common development process and resulting agreement of all actors on a common approach ensured that a strategy was in place that was endorsed by all stakeholders, including host governments and responsible UN agencies. While the sign-off of the former provided response partners with a clear framework to operate in, the endorsement of the latter helped to establish confidence among donors regarding the integrity and feasibility of the response. (I LNGO Lebanon 2 2017; I MoSA 2 2017; I MoSA 4 2019; I UN Lebanon 1 2017; I UN Lebanon 4 2017) In Jordan, this was further supported by the pronounced use of the same wording as the UN, revolving around ‘resilience’, overall implying that a strategic national strategy was in place that was led by Jordan but also supported by the UN. (Culbertson et al. 2016:43; I UN Jordan 2 2017; I UN Jordan 4 2017; Sigmond 2016:61) In both cases, the creation of trust was further supported by the establishment of comprehensive monitoring and evaluation systems that, while often perceived as cumbersome and impractical, helped to provide a clear picture of what was being done, where and how money was spent, and who was being targeted. (Clough 2018:54–56, 58; MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2015:10–11; MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2016:4–7) For host governments, this provided an opportunity to hold the international community accountable to provide assistance to all beneficiaries (refugees and locals); for response partners and donors, they meant increased transparency on how money was spent and whether measures achieved desired results, overall facilitating more confidence in the response.

A last strong point can be seen in the basis of the 3RP on resilience – not necessarily because of the concept itself, but because of its potential as framing the response framework as ‘new’. As outlined above, the principles behind the framework largely equaled those of previous approaches in similar contexts of prolonged displacement. The framing around a new concept, however, created the opportunity to attract the lasting attention of donors and to keep up a high level of visibility. The importance of this aspect is illustrated by experiences made in ICARA and CIREFCA: In ICARA, the overall lack of visibility of the approach, fostered by the lack of a proactive stewardship by UN agencies and host countries, the lack of a common vision among refugee and development ministries giving the approach low attention, and a new emergency in form of a widespread famine that took up more visibility contributed to the abandonment of the concept and the ultimate failure of the approach. (Betts 2009b:65; Gorman 1993c:67–88) In CIREFCA, in contrast, donors’ and host countries’ strong engagement in the response led to its long-term visibility. In turn, this contributed to a successful outcome despite a financial crisis that hit UNHCR and made the prioritization of programs and cut-backs necessary. (Betts 2006:25; Betts 2009b:82–84)

The same held true for Jordan and Lebanon: Even though the response was never fully financed, the high visibility of the response still resulted in continued high funding. (Grunewald, Brangeon, and Karroum 2017:16; I INGO Lebanon 1 2017; I LNGO Lebanon 3 2019; I UN Lebanon 3 2017; I UN Lebanon 4 2017; Office of the RC/HC Jordan 2017:8–9) The framing of resilience and of a resilience-based response as ‘new’ thereby was not only used by UNHCR and UNDP that set up a large-scale marketing strategy revolving around the concept as outlined above, but also by host countries themselves. In particular Jordan owned the narrative of resilience from the beginning, applying its own understanding of the concept and proving to be skillful in using resilience to attract funding in line with its priorities and interests. (I UN Jordan 2 2017; MOPIC, JRPSC, and UN 2014:25)

Overall, thus, the response in Jordan and Lebanon can be regarded as displaying various strengths, holding the potential of contributing to a successful course of action in light of the approach's aims with respect to the protection of refugees and the overall development of host countries. These aspects included a high commitment to the approach by both UN agencies and host governments as well as new forms of coordination and cooperation, in particular between UNHCR and UNDP. At the same time, the understanding of the response as a process that emphasized continued political dialogue and negotiation between all stakeholders and allowed for flexibility to adjust the response if needed contributed to the creation of a sense of confidence and trust in the response, supported by the endorsement of the response by all stakeholders as well as strong accountability mechanisms. Lastly, in particular the high level of visibility of the response due to its framing as 'new' and the usage of resilience as branding and as a marketing strategy can be regarded as a strong point as it helped to keep up donor attention and maintain high levels of funding – ultimately determining whether an international response can be implemented successfully or not.

In conclusion, even though not each of these individual aspects is distinct to resilience-programming as the comparison with previous approaches has demonstrated, the concept's specific focus on several issues that create the preconditions for the development or implementation of these strong points, such as the concept's focus on ownership and capacities, on process and transformation, and on flexibility and context-specificity, therefore seems to make 'resilience' a promising new underpinning for approaches to situations of forced displacement.

7.2.2 Weaknesses of the response

When comparing the features of the response in Jordan and Lebanon with previous approaches and the factors that led to their positive or negative outcome further, however, it becomes obvious that the response in Jordan and Lebanon entailed various weaknesses as well, challenging the idea of resilience as providing a new solution to refugee situations without fault or pitfalls.

One of these weaknesses clearly relates to the vagueness of key aspects, terms and objectives within the resilience-based response framework. In all previous approaches (with the exception of TDA), this aspect of unclarity had led to confusion on the part of actors involved in the response and is regarded as one factor that contributed to their unsuccessful outcome. In the Integrated Zonal Development approach, for instance, objectives in general were poorly defined. The lack of clarity of what was to be achieved and how ultimately contributed to the failure of the entire approach. (Kibreab 1983:133) In RAD, the vagueness of the concept stretched even further: In ICARA, central themes of the approach, such as 'development' or 'self-reliance', lacked a clear and common definition. Terms such as 'self-reliance', 'self-help', and 'self-sufficiency' and the concepts behind were used synonymously, without clarifying their relationship to permanent local integration or voluntary return. Furthermore, the approach was built on only vague notions of transforming refugees from being a 'burden' to 'benefits', without clarifying conditions and outlining concrete ways how that transformation could actually be achieved. Altogether, many questions remained unaddressed, resulting in a lack of common understanding and in various different interpretations of the approach. (Betts 2006:25; Betts 2009b:70–71; Gorman 1993d:159–160; Meyer 2006:12–13)

Within the 3RP and its focus on resilience, this vagueness was even more profound, as it concerned the central concept underlying the framework. The lack of a clear and common definition of resilience-programming led to different understandings and interpretations of the concept: As outlined above, in Jordan, the UN and the international community generally regarded resilience as an outcome, to be achieved for both refugees by making them more self-sufficient and for Jordanians and Jordanian institutions, while the Jordanian government regarded resilience as a means to categorize target groups and measures, which in turn commonly meant the exclusion of refugees from longer-term interventions. With the clear separation of humanitarian, refugee-focused measures, and longer-term resilience-focused measures, Jordan also applied a different understanding of an 'integrated approach'. (Bellamy et al. 2017:50; I UN Jordan 2 2017; Sigmond 2016:37) In Lebanon, a general lack of conceptual clarity,

and in particular confusion about the difference between ‘resilience’, ‘development’ and ‘stabilization’, persisted, too. The Lebanese government even rejected the framing around ‘resilience’ altogether. (Grunewald, Brangeon, and Karroum 2017:17; I MoSA 1 2017; I UN Lebanon 1 2017; I UN Lebanon 3 2017; I UN Lebanon 4 2017; UNDP and Mercy Corps 2015:10) Overall, resembling IZD, ICARA and CIREFCA, in both countries the lack of a common and clear-cut understanding of a ‘resilience-based approach’ led to different interpretations and expectations. The failure to reconcile them ultimately resulted in donors’ continued focus on the refugee component and on humanitarian activities rather than on ‘resilience’ – thus fulfilling neither their expectations of a resilience-based response nor that of host countries. (Bellamy et al. 2017:52; Kocks et al. 2018:76)

In particular in the beginning of the resilience-based response, the common rhetoric use of ‘resilience’ and the language associated with the concept thereby helped to obscure the fact that stakeholders had different understandings and pursued diverging interests. In the course of the response, however, these differences became increasingly obvious. The mere existence of different interests and priorities thereby does not necessarily mean the failure of a response. Rather, if a credible linkage between them can be created this can contribute to a successful outcome, as the case of CIREFCA illustrates: Here, the protection of refugees was effectively linked to other issues within the wider interests of states in relation to peace-building, security, development and power. European states, for instance, regarded peace in Central America as a precondition for inter-regional trade and for the assertion of their own growing global influence by counterbalancing the influence of the USA in the region. Refugee protection was seen as an essential component of these concerns as it was perceived to contribute to peace and development. Central American states on the other hand understood refugee protection as an important factor for the regional peace process, as well as for the commitment of the international community to the development and reconstruction of the region. CIREFCA, therefore, was embedded in a wider political process that facilitated the creation of credible links between diverging priorities and interests. (Betts 2006:21, 28; Betts 2009b:110–111)

In Jordan and Lebanon, diverging priorities revolved around the issues of refugee protection, long-term solutions and economic development. The international community, on the one hand, emphasized the need of both protecting refugees and granting them access to livelihoods measures. (UNDP and UNHCR 2016b:8) This notion was based on the assumption that a lack of perspectives in host countries would push refugees to move on to other destinations. In particular European countries, afraid of onward movements in light of the ‘refugee crisis’ that had arrived at their shores, generally seemed to be most interested in measures that would tackle migration and “address the root causes of irregular migration” (European Council, European Commission, and EU Parliament 2017:17–18).⁸⁶ Generally, Western donors were interested in measures that would support host countries, improve refugees’ living conditions and contribute to solutions in the region. (Bellamy et al. 2017:50) Host countries, on the other hand, were most interested in mitigating the negative effects of the crisis and in their own development, including improved infrastructure and services as well as general economic growth. (Culbertson et al. 2016:43; I MoSDA 1 2017; I UN Jordan 2 2017; I UN Jordan 4 2017; I UN Lebanon 3 2017; I UN Lebanon 4 2017; Sigmond 2016:61) Even though this situation in theory provided the conditions to create linkages between these issues, the response frameworks did not provide adequate mechanisms, incentives or leverages to do so and were not embedded into a wider (political) process based on mutual conditionalities.⁸⁷ Largely, this was related to the strong rejection of local integration in host countries that overshadowed any opportunities for credible linkages. Additionally, in particular in Lebanon, assistance was being perceived as hypocritical and being based on Europe’s self-interests, impeding the

⁸⁶ Germany, for instance, set up a ‘special initiative’ to address the root causes of displacement. While not actually tackling ‘root causes’ of displacement, one component of the initiative focused on ‘stabilising the host regions’, putting a strong focus on Lebanon and Jordan. (BMZ 2019) The platform www.si-fluechtlinge.de provides an overview of all projects financed through Germany’s ‘special initiative’ for registered users.

⁸⁷ Later developments lying outside the resilience-based response framework, including the Jordan Compact, the Lebanon-EU Compact, and new forms of conditional funding seemed to provide more promising prospects. However, as outlined above, none of them were integrated in the multilateral response, and none of them brought the desired results either.

willingness to cooperate on the matter. (Grunewald, Brangeon, and Karroum 2017:17–18; I UN Lebanon 1 2017; I UN Lebanon 3 2017; I UN Lebanon 7 2019; Uzelac and Meester 2018:5, 50)

Overall, both countries therefore seemed to be following experiences made in the Integrated Zonal Development approach, ICARA and Convention Plus, where the lack of credible linkages between differing interests and priorities have been identified as factors that contributed to the failure of the approaches. Even though both Convention Plus and the Integrated Zonal Development approach explicitly tried to conceptually link the respective strategy to other issues, both attempts failed to do so in practice: While the Zonal Development approach on paper connected refugees to the wider development process in all of Africa, in practice it remained focused solely on refugees, failing to include the local population sufficiently in programs and lacking strategic long-term planning. (Betts 1967:562; Betts 1993:17–18; Kibreab 1983:130–131) In Convention Plus, the entire design of the approach was geared to creating a grand bargain across different interests. However, no contractual linkages could be established in practice, as many states perceived the relationship between the different issues and measures as tenuous and artificial. This held also true for the promoted connection of the overall approach to wider discussions around the UN framework on sustainable development, which was perceived as lacking substance and credibility. (Betts and Durieux 2007:526; Betts 2008:174; Betts 2009b:157; 160–161) In ICARA, too, no linkages could be created between the differing interests of host and donor countries. While the former focused on the aspect of burden sharing, the latter was more interested in promoting local integration as a durable solution. As the conferences took place as two one-off pledging conferences with no follow-up process and did not provide opportunities to discuss differing interests and expectations and negotiate conditionalities as outlined above, these diverging interests could not be effectively connected, ultimately resulting in a lack of commitment to the approach from both sides. (Betts 2004:11–12; Betts 2008:163; Betts 2009b:72–73; Crisp 2001:4; Stein 1987:49) In light of the negative outcome of these approaches, the absence of strategies to effectively link diverging interests between Jordan and Lebanon and the international community thus can be regarded as a difficulty of the approach.

Another weakness of the response in Jordan and Lebanon can be seen in the general lack of absorptive capacities. Even though their status as middle-income countries with existing governmental and institutional structures as well as experiences with refugee situations in the past seemed to suggest otherwise, both countries lacked the capacities and resources to fully implement, coordinate and monitor the response and to take over from the international community, even after years of capacity-strengthening measures. (Baur 2018; Culbertson et al. 2016:42, 53; I INGO Jordan 2 2017; I INGO Lebanon 1 2017; I INGO Lebanon 3 2019; I MoSA 2 2017; I MoSA 3 2019; I MoSA 4 2019; I UN Lebanon 3 2017; I UN Lebanon 5 2019; I UN Lebanon 6 2019; I UN Lebanon 7 2019; Office of the RC/HC Jordan 2017:5; Sigmond 2016:34) As long as UN structures and support (for instance through seconded staff) remain in place and assume the coordination, planning and managing of the response like in Jordan and Lebanon, this affects only the level of country ownership and control as well as the costs of the response. The case of ICARA, however, demonstrates further implications: Here, a lack of absorptive capacity, including insufficient and inadequate human resources and budget, constituted one of the factors that ultimately led to the abandonment of the overall approach. (Gorman 1987:120–122)

Another weakness at least partly related to a lack of capacities became apparent only in Lebanon: While the government of Jordan, despite lacking capacities, still not only took on an active role in the response but, even more importantly, also displayed a strong vision of its general direction, the situation in Lebanon differed. As a national development plan as well as a national budget was lacking, it was even more difficult to arrive at a common vision regarding the approach to the refugee situation. While some ministries developed their own sectoral strategies, a unified, coherent and comprehensive national plan backed by the whole government and advocated by a single interlocutor remained missing, resulting in a lack of coherent information which in turn led to frustration and uncertainty among response partners and donors. (Ayoub and Mahdi 2018:8–9; Barrington 2017; I MoSA 2 2017; I MoSA 3 2019; I UN Lebanon 7 2019; Kelley 2017:91)

The fact that a lack of national vision, often related to a lack of national ownership, can prove problematic is illustrated by previous approaches. In ICARA, for instance, like in Lebanon, a clear vision among refugee commissions and development ministries regarding the direction and outcome of the approach remained missing. In turn, this not only led to a lack of coordinated action and harmonized approaches, but also to a general lack of national ownership and commitment, which is perceived as having contributed to the unsuccessful outcome of the approach. (Betts and Durieux 2007:530; Betts 2009b:152–153; Gorman 1987:24; 118–122; Gorman 1993c:77)

Besides these aspects, other challenges in Jordan and Lebanon were related to funding issues. While in international responses funding for humanitarian reasons and life-saving measures is generally unquestioned (albeit not always sufficient), funding for longer-term issues aiming at the development of a country – which is immanent in approaches trying to integrate refugee and development assistance – is often dependent on donors’ interests and confidence in the respective approach. If this is not given, approaches are bound to fail as experiences in previous approaches illustrate. In the Integrated Zonal Development approach, for instance, donors severely criticized UNHCR for overstepping its mandate by taking on development-oriented tasks, resulting in their lack of commitment to the approach. In ICARA and Convention Plus, donors’ lack of engagement was part of a vicious cycle, where their lack of commitment and confidence in the response reflected host countries’ reluctant attitude and vice versa. In all cases, a lack of donors’ commitment ultimately contributed to the failure of the approaches. (Betts 2004:18–19; Betts 2005a:19, 21, 37; Gorman 1987:118–122; Gorman 1993c:77)

As outlined above, the introduction of a resilience-based response seemed to provide a remedy to this issue: The concept of resilience seemed to be widely supported by donors, both in general, as resilience by the time it was introduced with the 3RP had gained popularity in international development cooperation (Bourbeau 2015:377) and with regards to the 3RP itself, with donors voicing their support for the new strategic direction of the plan. (Federal Foreign Office 2014b) Moreover, increased cooperation, negotiation and dialogue as well as accountability measures seemed to create a sense of trust and confidence in the response. Combined with the framing around resilience and a high level of visibility, this resulted in large sums of funding that could be attracted. However, in the practical implementation it soon became obvious that most donors generally started to commit to additional multi-year funding for more longer-term development projects only slowly, instead continuing to focus on immediate humanitarian needs to a large extent, combined with a focus on measures that provided a large number of beneficiaries with assistance and thus yielded quick and tangible results.⁸⁸ (Culbertson et al. 2016:100; Grunewald, Brangeon, and Karroum 2017:16; I INGO Lebanon 1 2017; I UN Lebanon 3 2017; I UN Lebanon 4 2017; Kocks et al. 2018:73) In turn, longer-term planning and programming in both Jordan and Lebanon remained difficult, resulting in a largely projectized approach that focused mostly on service delivery rather than on long-term programs aiming at structural change as stipulated in the respective response plans, questioning the sustainability of the approach. (Bellamy et al. 2017:52; Grunewald, Brangeon, and Karroum 2017:16; I UN Lebanon 3 2017; Kocks et al. 2018:73–79; Office of the RC/HC Jordan 2017:10)

This aspect is strongly related to the issue of ‘additionality’, meaning the provision of funds for measures in all response areas. If not given, this aspect constitutes a severe weakness of a response as previous approaches illustrate, related to host countries’ fear of a simple diversion of funds from one response area to the other, and of the favoring of refugee aid at the expense of measures aimed at the development of host countries. In RAD and TDA, for instance, host countries deemed an additional track of aid flow necessary to address the issue, which was neglected by donors. Under the existing system, however, it was difficult to communicate, track and enforce the concept of additionality of funds. This was the case in particular in ICARA, where resources simply did not allow for additionality, making concrete partnerships between host governments and in particular development agencies extremely difficult.

⁸⁸ Some donors formed an exception to this, picking up on the new direction quickly. These included, for instance, Australia, Sweden and Norway. (Kocks et al. 2018:78–79)

(Betts 2004:12; Gorman 1987:68–70; 100–104) In the Zonal Development approach, too, some host governments felt that programs were not additional but were implemented only in areas hosting refugees which was perceived as leading to uneven development in the country. As a result, some host governments rejected the approach altogether. (Kibreab 1983:134)

Lebanon faced similar challenges. In light of fears of insufficient funds, on the one hand, response partners raised concerns that under the new stabilization-focus urgently needed humanitarian funds might be diverted to fund stabilization and development interventions instead, and might even be used to finance institutions with their own political agenda, potentially resulting in restrictive measures to the detriment of refugees (Grunewald, Brangeon, and Karroum 2017:17, 23–24; I LNGO Lebanon 1 2017) Host communities, on the other hand, were under the impression that resources traditionally used to support vulnerable Lebanese had been diverted to refugees, leading to tensions between the two groups. (World Vision 2013:14–15) Overall, the fear of insufficient funds and a lack of additionality thus caused concerns on both sides, and from both a humanitarian and a development-oriented perspective.

Taking all these aspects into account, the comparison of the response in Jordan and Lebanon with experiences made in previous approaches thus reveals several weaknesses of both countries' approaches: First and foremost, these were related to a general vagueness of the approach and of key principles, resulting in different interpretations of the response. Additionally, diverging priorities and interests of different actors could not be linked, affecting in particular the search for durable solutions in the region. Moreover, capacities to fully lead and coordinate the response remained lacking. In Lebanon, this was exacerbated by a lack of an overall vision regarding the general direction of the response which impeded the relationship between the country and the international community. Lastly, weaknesses were related to funding issues, in particular to the lack of donor commitments to longer-term measures and open questions about additionality and the relation between resilience or stabilization measures and humanitarian assistance, overall complicating longer-term planning and programming which in turn hindered structural change.

At first glance, the strengths of the approach seem to outnumber these weaknesses, especially since several of them hold the possibility of being resolved, for instance through further targeted capacity-development or more multi-year funding. However, the crucial point underlying all issues – and thus ultimately determining whether the response could lead to a successful outcome in the sense of a sustainable solution from which all stakeholders could benefit – concerns an issue that remained unaddressed in the response completely: that is, durable solutions, and in particular local integration. As outlined above, host countries clearly rejected the idea of local integration. This stance was so distinct and comprehensive that it not only overshadowed possibilities to link it to other issues, but also enforced the continuation of a response that was both costly and unsustainable in the long term as it did not provide solutions to make refugees independent from assistance. While the application of a resilience-based response at least helped to address the first aspect, succeeding in keeping up high levels of funding for several years, it could not overcome this situation: With the aspect falling clearly into host states' area of authority and sovereignty, the resilience-based response did not possess the power of persuasion or offer adequate solutions to foster meaningful change in their stance that would have been necessary for a sustainable response and durable solutions for refugees.

Thus, overall, as the comparison with previous approaches demonstrates, a resilience-based response as applied in Jordan and Lebanon allowed to overcome several difficulties that had been experienced in previous approaches. This holds particularly true for issues such as the engagement of key actors in the response, improved cooperation and communication between them, and visibility and funding aspects to which the concept of resilience contributed positively. At the same time, however, a crucial point remained unsolved, with the response unable to provide satisfactory solutions or ways forward, which ultimately puts a question mark over its use as a sole model or its transferability from the context of the Syria crisis to other refugee situations.

7.3 What contribution can a resilience-based response make in dealing with situations of forced displacement?

The previous subchapters have addressed the ascribed novelty of a resilience-based response to situations of forced displacement as compared with previous approaches, and, taking the factors that led to their success or failure into account, have outlined the strengths and weaknesses of a resilience-based approach as applied in Jordan and Lebanon. With these findings in mind, the question remains what contribution the concept of resilience can *generally* make in dealing with situations of forced displacement, whether it should be applied in other (protracted) situations of displacement, and, if so, what aspects need to be considered and weighed against each other.

The following two subchapters will address these issues. First, focus will be put on conceptual strengths of resilience-thinking, before investigating conceptual ambiguities to be kept in mind when pondering the application of resilience to contexts of forced displacement.

7.3.1 Conceptual strengths of resilience-thinking in situations of forced displacement

Deducing from experiences made in the context of the Syria crisis and from the general theoretical conceptualization of resilience, on the one hand, resilience-thinking provides several advantageous aspects for an application in a refugee situation.

First, resilience strongly emphasizes the importance of integrated approaches. (Folkema, Ibrahim, and Wilkinson 2013:22; Frankenberger et al. 2014:9) Thus, it provides a solution to the humanitarian-development nexus debate which assumes that crisis situations are increasingly complex and transcend traditional lines between humanitarian aid and development cooperation, and thus challenge the traditional division between short-term humanitarian aid and longer-term development assistance. The need to “align [the two fields] more effectively around collective outcomes and work jointly on analysis and data collection, planning against multi-year planning frameworks and to collaborate at the country level and increase the coherence of aid deployment” emerged as a top priority at the ‘World Humanitarian Summit’ in 2016 (UNDP Geneva 2019), and resulted in the so-called ‘New Way of Working’ that focuses on achieving collective outcome, using the comparative advantage of individuals, groups or institutions to meet needs, and applying a multi-year timeframe. (OCHA PDSB 2017) The concept of resilience provides the necessary theoretical underpinnings to facilitate this linkage of a humanitarian with a more development-oriented approach. In a refugee context, this is particularly important: In the beginning of a new refugee situation in a host country that is not in crisis the majority of humanitarian assistance is usually targeted at refugees as the most vulnerable group with the most urgent needs, and is implemented by humanitarian actors. The concept of resilience with its longer-term orientation provides a plausible argumentation not only to involve more development actors in the response, but also to link the response for refugees with assistance for the local population in the sense of an area-based response. Both aspects do not necessarily come naturally, in particular in middle-income countries where often development actors are not present and development assistance is not provided on a large basis or only in specific fields but might become more necessary in the course of a refugee situation as prevailing structural challenges become more obvious. In that context, the longer-term orientation and inclusion of locals is particularly important as it can counteract tensions between refugees and the local population that feels neglected or treated in an unfair manner if assistance is only provided to refugees. At the same time, with insufficient funding commonly constituting a major challenge in refugee situations, the inclusion of development actors in the response can open up new opportunities to obtain both more funding, for instance from new sources, and in particular more long-term funding.

The longer-term perspective of resilience that aims at creating more resilient structures, and thus at more development, holds another strong point: A refugee response in developing countries, but also in middle-income countries, usually is coordinated and implemented by UNHCR and other international organizations according to the Refugee Coordination Model (see also [Chapter 2.2](#)). These international

organizations, however, cannot conduct these tasks forever, in particular in countries with existing government and service delivery structures. However, it can be difficult to engage the local government in dealing with the situation itself if it sees no added value in doing so. Rather, for the host country it can be more convenient and cost-efficient to outsource the dealing with the refugee issue to the international community. The focus on strengthening local structures and on development-oriented measures benefitting host countries immanent in resilience-thinking changes this: The prospect of a development dividend and the opportunity for the host government to spring something positive out of the crisis by enabling them to include their own interests and priorities with regards to their own communities can encourage more local ownership, providing the precondition for a transition to a locally-led and implemented response and facilitating the incremental withdrawal of international organizations, implying a sustainable approach.

This is important with regard to another aspect as well: While international organizations can engage in the protection of refugees and provide livelihood opportunities such as education and trainings, they can only do so up to a certain point. In view of guaranteeing refugees' lasting self-sufficiency, they are dependent on national policies that allow for this, for instance by giving refugees access to the labor market. Accordingly, the engagement of the local government in the response is paramount to explore options to decrease refugees' dependency on external aid that are in line with the host country's interests regarding its own development.

With its strong focus on capacity-strengthening (Béné et al. 2012:21–22; Frankenberger et al. 2014:7–9; Mitchell 2013:i; USAID 2012:7–9), resilience also carries a strong notion of empowerment. This comprises two aspects. On the one hand, it includes the empowerment of national governments to take control not only of the current situation, but also of potential future crises. This does not necessarily refer only to another refugee situation, but can include crises of a different nature as well and is thus particularly important in countries in unstable regions. More resilient structures can thus enable countries to deal with new challenges more effectively and to avoid negative impacts on their development trajectory. In that regard, resilience contributes to the sustainable development of these countries.

On the other hand, it includes the empowerment of the affected population. In the best case, the focus on self-sufficiency means a decrease in vulnerability and dependency on assistance. These, in turn, are preconditions for a self-determined life in dignity. While this holds true for populations affected by crises in general, in a refugee context this carries two additional aspects. The first concerns the relationship between locals and refugees: Only if refugees are empowered to live self-sufficiently, they can contribute to host countries' economic growth and (economic) development. In turn, this is a precondition to change the often-existing public discourse that regards refugees as burdens, to a perception of refugees as assets. The second aspect concerns a more psychological viewpoint: Creating the possibilities for self-sufficiency for refugees can empower them to emerge from victimhood to self-determination, and from being passive recipients of aid to becoming active contributors to society.

A last conceptual strength of resilience-thinking is its focus on long-term strategies. (Levine and Mosel 2014:14–15; Mercy Corps 2015:6; USAID 2012:16) With its focus on integration, capacity-strengthening, partnerships, local ownership and self-sufficiency, it provides the basis for sustainable solutions. In particular its understanding as a process allows the inclusion of all stakeholders, the voicing of their interests, needs and priorities, and the development of a response that is adapted accordingly and flexibly. In particular in a refugee context which is often highly sensitive and emotionalized, where circumstances can change quickly, and where priorities and interests of different stakeholders can diverge wildly, this processual character allows negotiations that, in turn, can enable policy changes in the interest of all. The framing around resilience and its key principles thereby sets the general agenda of the response, outlining an overall vision in which direction it is headed.

Overall, in all these aspects, resilience-thinking reflects principles that are increasingly and repeatedly being called for in current international processes in the context of forced displacement, including the

‘Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework’ (UN General Assembly 2016:16–21) and the ‘Global Compact for Refugees’ (UN General Assembly 2018a), thus providing valuable points of reference and impulses for the ongoing debate.

7.3.2 Conceptual ambiguities of resilience-thinking in situations of forced displacement

Nevertheless, the strict adherence to the concept of resilience in a refugee context holds several conceptual challenges as well. In general, these revolve not only around different individual key aspects of the concept, but also concern their relationship to each other.

The first conceptual challenge lies in the lack of a clear definition of resilience and resilience-programming. This proves challenging already in general resilience-programming, where different stakeholders hold different understandings of what ‘building resilience’ really means, and adapt it to their respective interests and priorities accordingly. (Mitchell 2013:28; OECD 2014:Foreword) The context of a refugee situation entails even more challenges as large parts of programming are not aimed at the national population of a given country, but at nationals of a different country. The vagueness of a ‘resilience-based response’ here leaves many questions unaddressed and creates wide room for interpretation. For instance, whose resilience is to be strengthened, and, related to that, resilience from what? The answer to the latter can differ significantly, depending on which target group or groups are being referred to. Resilience of the local population to economic vulnerabilities resulting from the influx of refugees requires different measures than the resilience of refugees to mere survival or hardship. Another question relates to the aspect whether resilience is regarded as an outcome, in turn providing room for different interpretations referring to persistence, adjustment, or transformational change, as a process, or as something completely different. Different understandings and interpretations can lead to tensions between refugees and locals, but also to misconceptions and frustration between host governments and donors, when expectations are not met.

Another conceptual challenge refers to resilience-thinking’s focus on national leadership and ownership (Council of EU 2013:3; EC 2013:3; Grünewald and Warner 2012:2; USAID 2012:16) combined with its strong emphasis on capacity-strengthening (Béné et al. 2012:21–22; Frankenberger et al. 2014:7–9; Mitchell 2013:i; USAID 2012:7–9). Generally, resilience-building implies that national and local governments are enabled to deal with the prevailing situation better, incrementally decreasing the need for assistance and support from the international community. This holds not only the advantage of decreasing the costs of an internationally led response, but also ensures that priorities and interests of affected countries are taken into account with regards to their own development. However, in a refugee context, this last aspect holds the possibility of becoming problematic. If a host government is adverse to refugees, the more leadership and ownership of refugee-programming it develops, and the more capacities it holds to determine and control the refugee response, the more restrictions for both refugees and implementing partners are likely to be enforced. In that case, two key principles of a resilience-based response – national ownership and capacity-strengthening of national institutions and authorities – run contrary to a key principle of a refugee response, that is, the protection of refugees. For refugees, that could mean anything from the restriction of movements, housing regulations or restraints to work to diminished access to education or health services, or even pressures to return even if international organizations do not deem conditions conducive for return in safety. For international and local partners active within a refugee response, it could mean restrictions in programming, and hence less flexibility and possibilities to implement measures to protect refugees.

In the same manner, increased government leadership and ownership can stand in contrast to another key principle of resilience-programming, that is, the concept’s focus on self-sufficiency of affected populations as part of its focus on capacity-strengthening. In a context of forced displacement, a resilience-based response targeting all members of an affected population implies the inclusion of both locals and refugees as beneficiaries of measures aiming at increasing self-sufficiency. However, this proves challenging in cases where a host government rejects the idea of socio-economic integration of

refugees, for instance for fear of their longer-term stay. Strong government ownership of and control over the response, thus, could mean restrictions on livelihood measures and income-generating activities for refugees, thus running contrary to attempts to increase refugees' self-sufficiency in line with resilience-building.

At the same time, resilience-programming's strong focus on capacity-development and self-sufficiency holds challenges in itself. If a resilience-based response fully includes refugees in this aspect, refugees are likely to be seen and treated as neo-liberal subjects that are responsible for their own fate. This entails the risk that protection issues are neglected: Putting refugees in charge of their wellbeing can easily be used as an excuse for both the international community and host states to be exempt from their responsibilities of caring for refugees. This is particularly challenging if refugees who not uncommonly have lost all their assets on their flight and are thus especially vulnerable, do not enjoy the same rights as nationals of the host country, including access to all forms of education and work.

Similar challenges relate to the principle of integrated approaches. Constituting one of its key principles (Folkema, Ibrahim, and Wilkinson 2013:22; Frankenberger et al. 2014:9; Levine and Mosel 2014:5–6; Mosel and Levine 2014:4–5), resilience-programming promotes the linkage of humanitarian and development programming. Both forms of programming, however, are based on different foundations and follow a different set of principles: Humanitarian aid is guided by humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence, meaning that humanitarian action is solely based on needs and is autonomous from political, economic, or other objectives. (UN OCHA 2012) Development assistance, in contrast, focuses on country ownership and partnerships and can therefore never be that apolitical. (OECD 2012) In a refugee context, the integration of the two issues can be particularly problematic. First, an 'integrated approach' can mean different things. It can mean the integration of short-term, humanitarian measures with longer-term, development-oriented measures, but it can also entail the integration of refugee-focused interventions with activities targeting the local population; or it can mean both. How the integration of these measures is translated into practice, can differ, too, leading to a differing degree of integration. If different actors pursue a different understanding of an 'integrated approach', this can lead to frustration and, in the case of donors, to a lack of funding commitments. Second, in the case of a fully integrated approach in which support for immediate needs through humanitarian measures are mixed up with more development-oriented measures it can prove more challenging to maintain a clear protection space for refugees. This is even more alarming if humanitarian or protection issues are completely neglected or reduced for the benefit of more development-oriented measures, and even more so if these must not include refugees as beneficiaries due to interests or requests of the host country. A clearer separation of the two response fields, albeit running contrary to resilience-programming, holds other advantages as well: Separating the two issues makes it easier for host governments to draw attention to its own country's needs and to hold the international community accountable that not only needs of refugees are addressed.

Another challenging aspect of the concept of resilience is the concept's claim for transformational change, immanent at least in socio-ecological resilience that focuses on progress, development and opportunities rather than on persistence or adjustment. As this requires profound changes of the system, often against the interests of powerful and influential stakeholders, this proves challenging already in regular resilience-programming. (Béné et al. 2012:22–23; Frankenberger et al. 2014:20–21) In a refugee context, this difficult situation is exacerbated by the often highly emotional context in which nationals of a country suddenly have to welcome a new group of non-citizens with whom they have to share services, capacities and resources which might have been overstrained even before the increase in population. Resulting from a (perceived or real) decrease in quality of services, competition for resources, the feeling of being neglected for the benefit of others, or the general feeling of alienation in their own country, tensions can emerge, creating a context in which the interests of the local population seem to stand in contrast with those of refugees. This makes it difficult to introduce policy changes that are perceived as leading to disadvantaging the local population or the host country further. This becomes more and more pressing the longer a refugee situation prevails, and the less easy it is to deal with the

situation as temporary and contained: Prolonged or protracted situations of forced displacement require long-term solutions that, in absence of opportunities for return or resettlement at a large scale, can often only be found within host countries. In order to avoid refugees' long-term dependencies on external assistance and lives in limbo, this, in turn, would mean their socio-economic integration and the admission of rights. This is challenging, however, if national integration policies are missing or long-term local integration is rejected in general, for instance related to concerns about changes in the demographic, religious or ethnic balance of the population, the overstrain of existing capacities, or development losses. Thus, while transformative change would be needed to establish a new system to deal with the situation, this is often difficult to implement and can lead to frustration on all sides when expectations are not met and fronts increasingly harden.

One last aspect to keep in mind when contemplating the application of a resilience-based response in a situation of forced displacement is the question of the aftermath of resilience. With the concept's strong focus on capacities, including its focus on livelihoods, employment and self-sufficiency, this can easily move in the direction of a broader focus on economic growth of affected countries. In situations of forced displacement, on the plus side, this could result in more job opportunities for the local population as well as for refugees, contributing to their self-sufficiency and resilience as well as to the country's overall development, thus being in line with the objectives of a resilience-based response framework and sustainable development goals. However, this shift can prove problematic, too: This is the case if quests for more development and growth incrementally fail to continue to include social aspects and refugees' rights as well as issues of institutional capacity-strengthening and improving structures for good governance. The question here thus remains if resilience, with its focus on self-sufficiency, inevitably paves the way for this development and how the continued inclusion of the mentioned aspects can be ensured.

Overall, these aspects not only illustrate how challenges of general resilience-programming can be reinforced when resilience-thinking is applied in situations of forced displacement, but also lend weight to broader criticism regarding the general transfer of resilience to politics or the social world. Illustrating several points of issue, these aspects include in particular the lack of clarity what resilience really means which can result in confusion about intentions and outcomes, the concept itself becoming meaningless, or the neglect of normative aspects of power and politics as has been commented by various authors (Davoudi 2012:306; Fainstein 2015; Harris, Chu, and Ziervogel 2018:199–200; Weichselgartner and Kelman 2014:1); the tendency to depoliticize resilience by focusing on neoliberal assumptions and attempting to resolve vulnerability through market mechanisms under the guise of empowerment and capacity-development (Chandler 2012:216; Joseph 2013; Olsson et al. 2015; Walker and Cooper 2011; Walsh-Dilley and Wolford 2015:175, 177); and the risk of using resilience and its focus on capacities as a convenient exit from responsibility (Haldrup and Rosén 2017:359).

Altogether, thus, the application of the concept of resilience in a context of forced displacement holds both conceptual strengths and weaknesses: Strengths include the concept's focus on integrated approaches through which it provides the theoretical underpinning for a solution to the humanitarian-development nexus debate, the potential development dividend that emerges in a resilience-based approach and that facilitates more local ownership, the concept's strong notion of empowerment, and the provision of sustainable solutions based on participatory processes. At the same time, however, the concept holds weaknesses as well. While the lack of a clear definition constitutes one aspect that could possibly be resolved, others are further-reaching. These include claims to transformational change that are difficult to meet, the concept's aftermath and different key aspects of resilience-programming itself and of a refugee response potentially running contrary to each other: Increased national capacities and ownership versus the protection of refugees, increased national ownership versus the self-sufficiency of refugees, and self-sufficiency of refugees versus protection issues.

When pondering the application of the concept to further displacement situations, both strengths and weaknesses need to be taken into consideration and carefully weighed against each other. Thereby, in

particular the respective national context needs to be taken into account. This includes its economic, political, social, historical, and environmental characteristics and their relationship to each other, as well as implications of resilience-building on each of them, and on both the development of a country and on refugees. Overall, while the concept's characteristics merit further debate and provide new impetus for the forced displacement-development debate, it cannot be romanticized as a new universal remedy for dealing with all situations of forced displacement.

7.4 Conclusion: The concept of resilience as approach to situations of forced displacement

Overall, the analysis of the 3RP and its implementation in Jordan and Lebanon as the first approach that explicitly linked the concept of resilience to a situation of forced displacement leads to different conclusions regarding the approach's novelty and its transferability to other situations of forced displacement, both on a programmatic and on a conceptual level.

First, the application of the 3RP as a resilience-based response framework to a refugee situation does not constitute a completely new approach based on new or unique principles, but bears many similarities with previous approaches under different headings, such as Integrated Zonal Development, Refugee Aid and Development, or Targeted Development Assistance. Similarities range from the rationale and assumptions underlying the approaches, such as the recognition of the need for a shift from a purely humanitarian to a more development-oriented response and the assumption that refugees can be transformed from a burden into some kind of asset, to underlying key principles such as national ownership, the integration of humanitarian and development planning, the promotion of self-sufficiency, the focus on the use of existing systems and modalities, the alignment with national development planning, and the focus on partnerships and cooperation between different actors.

Notwithstanding these similarities, the 3RP still differed from previous approaches: On the one hand, this included aspects related to the context in which it was implemented and that led to new challenges and opportunities, such as the socio-economic development status of both Jordan and Lebanon as host countries, as well as the non-camp setting regarding the accommodation of refugees. On the other hand, this included conceptual issues, including a new focus on transformational change in order to prepare subjects for future crises, the deliberate omission of the search for durable solutions, and the approach to creating linkages between differing interests of host countries and the international community. The most striking difference, however, lay in the use of resilience as a branding and marketing tool, enabled by a new framing and narrative of the response. Based on these findings, the question whether the 3RP constitutes a 'UN first' or not cannot unequivocally be answered. Rather, the answer depends on the perspective from which the question is addressed.

Second, the comparison of a resilience-based response as applied in Jordan and Lebanon with previous approaches to similar situations, taking into account the factors that contributed to these approaches' success or failure, revealed various strengths and weaknesses of the approaches taken in Jordan and Lebanon. Strengths, on the one hand, included a strong commitment to the response by different UN agencies including UNHCR and UNDP as well as increasing host country ownership, related to the successful shift to a more development-oriented response that included the local population as beneficiaries as well. Another strength lay in the realization of an ongoing political dialogue that allowed for negotiation and cooperation, as well as in the understanding of the response as an ongoing process that ensured flexibility to adjust measures if needed. Taken together, these aspects led to a sense of confidence and trust in the response, that, together with the continued visibility of the response, contributed to continued donor commitment. Weak points, on the other hand, included a general vagueness of the approach resulting in different interpretations, as well as diverging priorities and interests of different actors, in particular with regards to durable solutions, and the failure to link them. Another weakness lay in a persisting lack of absorptive capacities, combined with a lack of an overall vision on the side of the government in Lebanon which complicated the relationship with response

partners and donors. Lastly, challenges were related to funding issues, concerning in particular a lack of donor commitments to longer-term measures which impeded long-term planning aiming at structural change.

While neither strong nor weak points can be ascribed to a resilience-based response alone as, at least partly, they have been experienced in previous approaches as well, the response's focus on key aspects of resilience still helped to overcome several of the challenges experienced in the past. This can be traced back in particular to the concept's focus on ownership, capacities, participation and transformation. Therefore, the resilience-based response to the Syria crisis can generally be regarded as providing useful lessons for other refugee situations where actors can draw on experiences made in Jordan and Lebanon. At the same time, however, one important aspect remained unaddressed: The approach did not provide a sustainable and durable solution to the overall situation. Taking this aspect into account, the response as applied in Jordan and Lebanon can be regarded as a successful approach only for the first years after the beginning of the Syria crisis, as it helped to protect refugees and stabilize host countries. Ultimately, however, it did not provide a long-term solution for an increasingly protracted situation, with refugees remaining dependent on external assistance and facing an uncertain future.

Taken together, these findings allow to draw several conclusions regarding the conceptual strengths and weaknesses of resilience and its application to contexts of forced displacement in more general and theoretical terms. Conceptual strengths of resilience thereby relate in particular to positive effects of its focus on integrated approaches which contributes to finding a solution to the humanitarian-development nexus debate and can create a potential development dividend that, in turn, can facilitate more national leadership and ownership in a refugee response. With its emphasis on lasting self-sufficiency, empowerment and capacity-strengthening, the concept moreover promotes principles that are increasingly being called for in current international processes in the context of forced displacement that aim at finding sustainable solutions to the benefit of all. At the same time, however, resilience holds conceptual ambiguities as well. Besides the lack of a clear definition which could potentially be resolved through disambiguation, these range from the concept's claims to transformational change that are difficult to meet to concerns regarding the aftermath of resilience. Another ambiguity of resilience-thinking in situations of forced displacement refers to the possibility of two key aspects of the concept running contrary to each other in case of a refugee-adverse government, that is, increased national capacities and ownership versus increased capacities and self-sufficiency of refugees. Lastly, key aspects of resilience-programming can counteract key principles of a refugee response, including increased national capacities and ownership of a refugee-adverse government versus the protection of refugees, or the aspect of self-sufficiency of refugees versus protection issues. With these findings in mind it has to be concluded that the application of the concept, despite its positive aspects and contributions, holds a dark side as well that must not be neglected or ignored, in particular as the lives of a specifically vulnerable population group are at risk. Rather than constituting a universal remedy, or new solution, for how to deal with situations of prolonged displacement that can or should be transferred to other refugee situations, this also lends weight to broader criticism regarding the transfer of resilience to the social world in general.

Overall, this leads to the conclusion that a resilience-based response is neither 'new' nor a panacea for dealing with refugee situations. Thus, the concept should not be romanticized und linked to unrealistic expectations regarding the protection of refugees or the development of host countries which cannot be met and can rather lead to disappointment and frustration among stakeholders. Ultimately, resilience thus does not provide a new concept or paradigm for dealing with situations of forced displacement. Nevertheless, it holds some valuable characteristics that, if both the prevailing context and lessons from the past are taken into consideration, all actors share the same understanding of what is to be achieved, and the response is adapted accordingly, can provide new opportunities for both refugees and host countries.

8 Resilience as New Concept for Dealing with Situations of Forced Displacement? – Summary and Conclusion

“And so, it is absolutely essential that when we think about refugee protection we also think about the resilience of both the refugees and host communities living together [...].” (Guterres 2015)

This statement from the year 2015 by António Guterres, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, encapsulates the emergence of resilience-thinking in the field of forced displacement. The preceding chapters have traced this development and have outlined how, with the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan in Response to the Syria Crisis (3RP) for the first time the concept has explicitly been linked to a specific refugee situation, connecting assistance for refugees with the development of host countries, and how this response has manifested in practice in two countries. The following, final chapter will summarize the findings from this specific application of resilience, draw conclusions, and provide an outlook for developments and further research regarding the nexus of forced displacement, resilience, and development.

8.1 Empirical findings

From its long application in various disciplines from ecology to physics and psychology, and despite general criticism regarding its transfer to the social world, since the 2010s ‘resilience’ has emerged as a new buzzword in humanitarian and development assistance. While a common definition of the term remains lacking, in this context resilience generally refers to the capacity of people or systems to cope with, adapt to, and transform in spite of shocks or stresses. Notwithstanding several challenges that emerged in putting the concept into practice, in 2014, resilience was for the first time explicitly linked to a situation of forced displacement in the form of the ‘Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan’ (3RP), developed by the UN in response to the ongoing refugee situation due to the Syria crisis and promoted not only as ‘a first’, but also as a potential model for other complex and protracted crises. Since then, UNHCR has seized on the concept further, using it as the basis of various country strategies in response to refugee situations and setting up a new ‘Division of Resilience and Solutions’ at its Headquarters in Geneva, visibly completing the incorporation of the concept into the field of forced displacement.

Within this rise of resilience, fundamental questions have remained unaddressed, both on a theoretical and on a practical level. In order to determine whether resilience constitutes an adequate new concept for dealing with situations of forced displacement, the thesis, taking the 3RP as an example, has investigated what resilience means conceptually in this specific context, how resilience-thinking can be implemented and unfold in practice, and, deducing from that, what constitutes a resilience-based response’s novelties, strengths and weaknesses. The following three subchapters will summarize the findings of this analysis, focusing first on the concept’s theoretical application within the 3RP, second on its implementation in Jordan and Lebanon, and third on the novelties, strengths and weaknesses the response entailed.

8.1.1 Linking resilience-thinking and forced displacement: The Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) in Response to the Syria Crisis

In a first step, the thesis has analyzed how and to what extent resilience-thinking has been incorporated in the 3RP, and where the 3RP can be located within resilience theory.

Regarding the first aspect, the analysis has first identified the aspects in which the 3RP followed resilience theory. This started with the overall definition of resilience. Defined as “the ability of

individuals, households, communities and institutions to anticipate, withstand, recover and transform from shocks and crises” (UNDP and UNHCR 2014a:17), the 3RP shared key terminology and themes present in general resilience-programming. Resilience-programming per se is further characterized by several key principles, including a strong focus on capacities (including absorptive, adaptive and transformative capacities), national ownership, partnerships between different actors, integrated approaches, a long-term focus, a high degree of flexibility and context-specificity, and regional strategies. The 3RP incorporated several of these principles. Some of them were outlined explicitly in the so-called ‘Dead Sea Resilience Agenda’, a document prepared jointly by representatives of the UN, host governments, international and national NGOs, and humanitarian and development actors. These included a strong focus on capacity-strengthening and self-sufficiency of affected populations, referring to both refugees and vulnerable members of host communities, the importance of ownership of host governments and institutions and the strengthening of their capacities, the integration of humanitarian and development approaches, and new partnerships between different actors, including national and local governments and authorities, local and international NGOs from various fields, the private sector, international financial institutions, research institutions and academics. Other key principles of resilience-programming were not included in the Dead Sea Resilience Agenda, but were nevertheless addressed within the 3RP: On the one hand, the plan comprised a regional response framework in its entirety, while at the same time it consisted of different country response plan, thus recognizing the importance of context-specific strategies.

Proceeding further, the analysis has identified aspects in which the 3RP differed from genuine resilience-thinking. First, with the 3RP’s time frame of two years, it did not follow real long-term programming generally regarded as necessary to build resilience. Second, the 3RP incorporated two additional key principles not immanent in general resilience frameworks in international development, concerning a strong focus on social cohesion and on accountability both to donors and to affected populations. With these aspects, the 3RP paid regard to the specific context of a refugee situation and the particular context of the Syria crisis: First, the situation was characterized by a high volatility and uncertainties regarding the number of affected people, an understood temporariness of the situation, in particular as long-term integration of refugees did not constitute a feasible solution for host governments, and host countries’ status as middle-income countries that, without the presence of Syrian refugees, would not have received the same amount of support as implemented through the 3RP which raised questions about the future of the response if refugees returned in larger numbers. Overall, these factors conflicted with longer-term planning in the sense of resilience-programming. Second, the specific context of a response to a situation of forced displacement meant that, on the one hand, large parts of support were given to beneficiaries other than the national population who, on the other hand, at the same time often blamed refugees for (new, existing, or perceived) structural deficiencies and worsening socio-economic conditions. Within that context, measures focusing on social cohesion were understood as a key factor to counteract the risk of tensions between the two groups and establish more resilient communities. Third, the strong focus on accountability paid regard both to the novelty of the approach, with resilience for the first time being applied specifically to a refugee context, combined with the prominence and visibility of the Syria crisis, the high public interest in the response, and the scope of the appeal.

Based on these findings, the analysis concluded that the 3RP altogether followed genuine resilience-thinking and incorporated principles widely understood as being part of resilience-programming in humanitarian and development assistance. At the same time, it adapted the response to the specific context of a refugee situation and the context of the Syria crisis.

Regarding the second aspect under investigation, the analysis has established that, on a theoretical level, the framework of the 3RP can be classified as an example of socio-ecological resilience-thinking, applied in a new context: Following key characteristics of this version of resilience, first, the 3RP regarded the situation in which it was applied as a complex and interconnected system in which the affected population (refugees and locals), and the legal, political, and socio-economic context in which they found themselves, interacted with each other. Both levels were addressed simultaneously through

a two-fold focus on capacity-strengthening, with the overall aim of enabling both levels, or the whole system, to deal with the situation in an improved manner.

Second, socio-ecological resilience includes the notion of process, transformation and opportunities, rejecting the idea of equilibrium found within the two classical articulations of resilience (engineering and ecological resilience) which define resilience as bouncing back, or forward, to a fixed state. Following the notion of the former, the 3RP incorporated an emphasis on new opportunities, for instance in terms of empowerment of affected people, and on transformation, understanding resilience-building as a process in which subjects interacted, changed, and improved over time in order to be prepared for future shocks better.

8.1.2 Resilience in situations of forced displacement in practice: The cases of Jordan and Lebanon

In the next step, the thesis has analyzed how the resilience-based response outlined in the 3RP unfolded in practice. Focusing on Jordan and Lebanon as two case studies with a similar point of departure, it in particular investigated how ‘resilience’ was transferred to the national context, what role the concept played for different actors and what challenges emerged, comparing both manifestations of resilience.

First, the analysis investigated to what extent resilience-principles were incorporated in the respective national response plans that were developed within the framework and strategic direction of the 3RP: the Jordan Response Plan (JRP) in Jordan and the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP) in Lebanon. Despite some differences within their theoretical layout, concerning both semantic and financial aspects as well as the overall structure of the plans, on paper, they shared various characteristics. Besides the same rationale, objectives, and leadership structure these included several core principles, including national ownership, an integrated approach bridging the gap between humanitarian and development assistance, capacity-strengthening, partnerships, strong accountability mechanisms and a participatory approach. Overall, both national response frameworks also used the same terminology, strongly resembling UN language.

Investigating the implementation of the approaches in practice, however, revealed how these similar frameworks still manifested differently in the two countries. This concerned not so much programmatic aspects that fell under the responsibility of response partners: With regard to new partnerships, efforts to strengthen capacities, and a focus on medium-term and innovative interventions, both countries followed largely similar approaches. Rather, variations in the response emerged with respect to aspects that required the active engagement and political willingness of host governments. On the one hand, divergence in these conditions resulted in different degrees of implementation of certain aspects. These included issues such as national ownership and leadership, the application of a strong accountability system, and the pursuit of a participatory approach. While all of these aspects unfolded in both countries, this happened on different levels and at a different pace. Regarding other aspects, different conditions led to completely different pathways. These aspects included the integration of humanitarian with development measures as well as the establishment of a strong inter-agency partnership between UNHCR and UNDP. Related to the overall larger role of the UN in the response in the country, both characteristics were pursued to a much larger extent in Lebanon. Another issue concerned the (non-) existence of political willingness for measures potentially leading to transformational change, including measures aiming at refugees’ self-sufficiency as well as reforms or policy changes. As political willingness regarding these aspects remained lacking in Lebanon altogether, only Jordan made small attempts in that direction, albeit not leading to extensive results either.

Besides these programmatic aspects, the two country cases illustrated how different actors used the concept of resilience linguistically for their own purposes. This concerned mostly Jordan, where the narrative of resilience was used in a two-fold manner: While the Jordanian government relied on the concept’s narrative to create a certain image of the situation in the country and to obtain more funding also for programs that were not directly related to the situation that had emerged due to the influx of

refugees, response partners active in the country used the framing of resilience to get the government's approval for certain types of programming more easily. In both cases, it has been argued, resilience has been used as branding and marketing strategy to achieve certain goals.

Another aspect the application of a resilience-based response in Jordan and Lebanon illustrated is the existence of different versions of resilience and the implications and resulting challenges thereof. While both host governments, and the UN and other response partners referred to resilience, they applied different versions of the concept. While the UN regarded the intended outcome of resilience as lying in transformational change, and accordingly incorporated not only absorptive and adaptive, but also transformative capacities in its theoretical framework as outlined above, host governments in Jordan and Lebanon pursued a different version of resilience, regarding a resilient outcome as referring to persistence and adjustment, to be achieved through absorptive and adaptive capacities only which became most obvious in the lack of willingness to implement further-reaching policy changes or reforms. Notwithstanding these differences, it has been argued that variations in understanding have been outweighed by the concept's contribution to the creation of a common narrative that in turn served to keep up donor attention and funding.

Lastly, investigating the specific circumstances under which the 3RP has been applied, several factors have been identified that potentially influence the course and outcome of a resilience-based response and that should be kept in mind when pondering the application of a resilience-based approach. These comprise the characteristics of refugees, of the crisis, and of host countries, including the prevailing socio-economic and political context, as well as the context in donor countries. Overall, the analysis has concluded that there is not one resilience-based response framework per se that can be applied to any refugee situation. Rather, each application requires thorough analysis of the respective context with all its implications, implying a different manifestation of a resilience-based response in each case.

8.1.3 Novelties, strengths and weaknesses of a resilience-based response

In order to establish the novelties, weaknesses, and strengths of a resilience-based response, the thesis finally has compared the 3RP as a resilience-based response with approaches to refugee situations in the past, including the Integrated Zonal Development approach (IZD) in the 1960s, the Refugee Aid and Development approach (RAD) within the context of the International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa (ICARA) and the International Conference on Central American Refugees (CIREFCA) in the 1980s, and the Targeted Development Assistance approach (TDA) within the Convention Plus Debate in the early 2000s. All of these approaches attempted to address either a specific prolonged refugee situation in a specific geographic region (IZD, ICARA, CIREFCA) or to find a solution how to deal with prolonged refugee situations in general (TDA), while at the same time focusing on the development of host countries.

First, the analysis has revealed striking similarities regarding the contexts, rationales, underlying assumptions and key principles of the frameworks. Acknowledging that a humanitarian response focusing on refugees alone was neither sufficient nor sustainable in light of the respective situation and existing needs, all approaches took up a development-oriented perspective. Thus, all of them aimed at linking short-term relief programs with more long-term strategies that would contribute to the development of host countries, thereby closing an assumed gap between traditional forms of humanitarian aid and development assistance. In all approaches, this brought with it an expansion of the response regarding its target group and objectives, starting to explicitly incorporate the local population as direct beneficiaries and include measures focusing specifically on the development of host countries. All approaches promoted a shift in the perception of refugees, calling upon host countries and communities to view them as an asset rather than as a burden, and to focus on their potential contribution to host countries' economic growth. Additionally, all approaches generally advocated a number of core principles, including national ownership and leadership of the response, the alignment of the response with national development planning, and the use of existing systems and modalities rather than establishing new or parallel ones. Further, all approaches promoted strong cooperation both between

different UN agencies, in particular UNHCR and UNDP, and with other humanitarian and development actors, national and international NGOs, and the host government. Last, albeit following different strategies in this regard, all approaches called for innovative funding mechanisms and a new aid architecture that would overcome gaps between the humanitarian and development assistance, overall focusing on additionality.

Besides these similarities, the analysis has identified several aspects in which the 3RP differed from previous approaches. Not all of them were related to the concept of resilience itself. Rather, some of them referred to the context in which it was implemented: Compared to countries where IZD, RAD or TDA were implemented, Jordan and Lebanon as middle-income countries possessed better-functioning governmental and institutional systems and structures as well as more capacities and resources, overall displaying a higher socio-economic development status in general. Another contextual difference lay in the dispersal of refugees among host communities, with the majority of Syrian refugees living in non-camp settings in contrast to previous situations where refugees had been accommodated mostly in camps.

Besides these contextual differences, the 3RP and previous approaches also differed with regards to conceptual aspects: In contrast to previous approaches that focused on capacity-strengthening with the aim of enabling national and local institutions to cope better with the *ongoing* situation, the 3RP incorporated a strong theoretical focus on transformative capacities. The overall aim thereof lay in transformational change that would leave host countries better prepared to deal not only with the ongoing crisis, but also with *future* shocks. Another core focus of previous approaches, in turn, was omitted in the 3RP: While the search for durable solutions for refugees had been explicitly incorporated in previous approaches, the 3RP did not include or even mention the aspect, reflecting the difficult context in which the response was implemented, and specifically the high sensitivity that was ascribed to local integration in host countries. Moreover, even though – like in previous situations – priorities and interests of host and donor countries diverted within the context of the 3RP, the framework did not include the attempt to create linkages between these differing interests as did previous approaches as CIREFCA and Convention Plus. Lastly, the 3RP differed in the way how it developed and used the narrative revolving around a new concept, that is, the concept of resilience, as a successful branding and marketing strategy to keep up donor attention and funding.

Overall, the analysis has concluded that the resilience-based response as applied in the 3RP did not display fundamental differences in crucial aspects to previous approaches in similar situations, and can therefore not be regarded as completely new or ‘a first’ in responding to crises as claimed by the UN. Nevertheless, the response included some novel aspects, relating both to contextual and to conceptual aspects that provide useful impulses for future refugee responses.

In a second step, the analysis has identified several strengths and weaknesses of a resilience-based response. For that, it has compared the manifestations of a resilience-based response in Jordan and Lebanon with previous approaches, taking into account the factors that led to their successful or unsuccessful outcome. Strong points thereby included the high level of commitment to the approach by UNHCR and UNDP as the two lead agencies, as well as an increasing engagement in, and ownership of, the response by host governments. Moreover, continued political dialogue and the understanding of the response as an ongoing process created room for improved coordination, cooperation and negotiation, overall creating a sense of confidence and trust in the response among different stakeholders, while simultaneously allowing for flexibility. Last, the framing around a new concept and the use of ‘resilience’ as a branding and marketing tool, both at the regional and at the national level, in particular in Jordan, created a high level of visibility which helped to keep up donor attention and funding.

At the same time, the responses entailed several weaknesses. These included the lack of a common definition of resilience-programming, leaving ample room for interpretation which in turn resulted in frustration among both host governments and the international community as expectations of both sides

were not met. A second weak point lay in the lack of strategies to effectively link diverging priorities and interests of the international community and of host countries, in particular with regards to durable solutions for refugees, resulting in a lack thereof and ultimately rendering the response unsustainable. A general and continued lack of absorptive capacities of host governments constituted another challenge, combined with an additional lack of an overall vision regarding the response on the side of the government in Lebanon which complicated the relationship between the government and the international community. Lastly, weaknesses lay in funding issues, concerning in particular a lack of donor commitments to longer-term measures which impeded real long-term planning aiming at structural and sustainable change and development.

Overall, the analysis has concluded that a resilience-based response to a refugee situation as applied in the 3RP thus cannot be regarded as constituting a universal remedy for dealing with situations of forced displacement without weaknesses and pitfalls.

8.2 Inferences

Taking these findings from the analysis of the 3RP and its implementation into account, several inferences can be made regarding the general applicability of resilience and its potential as a new concept for dealing with situations of forced displacement.

On the one hand, in particular on a theoretical level, the concept's focus on certain aspects – even though not all of them are novel – provides strong arguments for its application in refugee responses that attempt to address development issues in host countries as well. These issues include its emphasis on integrated approaches which facilitates not only the involvement of more development actors in a response that is usually humanitarian from the outset, but also allows to link assistance for refugees with assistance for the local population and the host country, necessary both to counteract tensions between the two groups and to avert host countries' development losses. The aspect of a potential development dividend for host countries thereby can also encourage more national ownership, necessary for a transition to a locally-led and -implemented response and a decrease in dependence on international support. The active engagement of host governments is crucial, too, for the exploration of options to increase refugees' self-sufficiency and find more sustainable solutions than the continued provision of short-term external assistance: As these aspects often require changes in national policies, they necessitate government involvement.

Another aspect that supports the application of resilience-thinking is the concept's strong focus on capacity-strengthening and self-sufficiency that carries a strong notion of empowerment, both of national governments to take control of the current situation and of potential future (refugee) crises, and of affected populations that are not only enabled to live a self-determined life independent from external assistance, but also to contribute to (host) countries' economic growth and development. Combined with its long-term focus and the emphasis on integration, capacity-strengthening, partnerships, local ownership and self-sufficiency, resilience-thinking thus provides the basis for sustainable solutions. In particular the concept's understanding of the response as a process that allows various stakeholders to be included, voice their concerns, needs and priorities, is highly important in a situation of forced displacement where interests of stakeholders often differ widely.

However, as the cases of Jordan and Lebanon have demonstrated, that not all of these positive aspects necessarily materialize in practice. Rather, their experiences exemplify potential risks of the approach that militate against its application or that would need to be resolved first in order not to lead to negative or undesired outcomes. First of all, this concerns the lack of a clear definition of resilience and resilience-programming that can lead to different interpretations, expectations and, ultimately, tensions and frustration. While this issue could be resolved relatively easily through dialogue and disambiguation, other potential pitfalls are more difficult to address: For instance, this concerns challenges that emerge if a host government is or becomes adverse to refugees. When, supported by a resilience-based response, this government develops both more ownership and capacities to lead and control the response, this is

likely to result in an increasingly restrictive policy environment for both refugees and implementing partners. Particularly, this can affect another core principle of resilience-thinking, that is, its focus on self-sufficiency of affected populations: This is the case if a host government rejects the idea of refugees' socio-economic integration and, due to increased capacities and ownership, is increasingly able to enforce regulations, for instance restricting response partners in livelihoods or other long-term oriented measures, or refugees in their possibilities to access income-generating activities.

Resilience-thinking's focus on integrated approaches touches on another challenge that, while not being immanent in resilience-programming alone but concerning all attempts to link humanitarian and development programming, can hardly be solved: Both types of aid are based on different foundations and follow a different set of principles. While both have their own justification, they are often difficult to link. In a refugee context, their integration can be particularly problematic as it becomes more challenging to maintain a clear protection space for refugees. The protection of refugees can be put under pressure due to other aspects as well: If resilience-programming's focus on self-sufficiency of affected populations is fully translated into practice, refugees can easily be regarded as neo-liberal subjects that are responsible for their own fate – carrying the risk of being used as an excuse by both the international community and host states to be exempt from their responsibilities towards refugees which becomes particularly problematic if refugees do not enjoy the same rights as nationals of the host country, including full access to education and work. This holds even more true for the question of the aftermath of resilience. Given the concept's focus on capacities and self-sufficiency, thinking can quickly develop into a broader focus on economic growth aspects. While this, in the best case, can lead to more job opportunities for the local population *and* for refugees, it can prove problematic if new developments fail to continue to include social aspects, refugees' rights, institutional capacity-strengthening and improving structures for good governance.

This is related to a last challenge of resilience-thinking in refugee contexts that is likely to be the most difficult one to address and that concerns one of resilience-thinking's main claims, that is, its focus on transformational change. Often, this aspect requires changes in the entire system of dealing with a refugee situation. Therefore, changes require not only on the host government's political willingness to reform, but are also often difficult to communicate and enforce in a refugee context that is characterized by tensions between refugees and locals, competition for resources, and a general feeling of neglect. While constituting a legitimate claim, and often a precondition, for the pursuit of sustainable solutions, these aspects concern fundamental questions of government ownership and sovereignty. Their demand and pursuance thus hold significant difficulties and risks, ranging from increased tensions between refugees and locals and the destabilization of a country to tensions and mistrust between host countries and the international community, possibly even resulting in host countries' retreat from other, already achieved concessions regarding the protection of refugees.

Not all of these (positive and negative) aspects and deliberations are novel or unique to resilience-thinking. Rather, several of them constitute issues that need to be addressed in responses to situations of forced displacement in general, regardless of whether they are put under the heading of resilience-building or not. Independent from their framing, these different principles therefore need to be carefully weighed against each other when considering their application to a situation of forced displacement. Generally, as experiences with the 3RP have emphasized, it depends on the respective national context how certain aspects will unfold and affect the development and outcome of an approach. Therefore, the specific context in which principles are to be implemented, as well as possible (unintended) consequences and implications, in particular with regards to the protection of refugees, need to be taken into account and closely monitored.

8.3 Implications for theory and practice and avenues for further research

Altogether, the findings of this thesis have several implications for theory and practice, and provide ample avenues for further research.

On a theoretical level, the analysis has made a three-fold contribution. First, it has linked refugee studies with the research field of resilience: The classification of the 3RP as an example of socio-ecological resilience that is applied in a new context provides new impetus for resilience-thinking. On the one hand, the analysis of a new field of application has confirmed previous findings regarding critical aspects of transferring resilience to the social world in general as well as regarding aspects of resilience-programming in international development. At the same time, it has depicted new challenges that are specific to the context of forced displacement, and thus should be considered further in the realms of resilience-thinking. Second, the analysis has provided insights into the nexus of forced displacement and development. Constituting a field of research that has been studied by various scholars in the past, the analysis of the 3RP as an example that links the two issues complements these ranks with a new case study. Findings thereby not only support results from previous research, for instance concerning the challenges inherent in approaches trying to link both issues, but also add to the debate by investigating novel aspects that might have an influence on both the applicability of such approaches and the factors that lead to their outcome. The third contribution of the thesis lies in its linkage of all three fields of study, examining the interplay of forced displacement, development and resilience, and thereby opening up a new field of research that includes opportunities for further analysis and investigation.

Besides these theoretical contributions – as common in forced migration studies – the analysis is also highly relevant on a practical level. In light of the reality of the continuously growing number of refugees, and acknowledging that there will be further forced displacement in the future, there is pressing need to find adequate and sustainable ways to deal with these situations in the countries that host refugees. At the global level, the recognition of these facts has resulted in the ‘Global Compact on Refugees’, understood as providing “a blueprint for governments, international organizations, and other stakeholders to ensure that host communities get the support they need and that refugees can lead productive lives” (UNHCR 2020). Resilience-thinking thereby reflects many of the principles that are increasingly being called for. The analysis of the 3RP, including its strong and weak points, therefore provides important insights what the concept of resilience has to offer in this context. Linking it to experiences made in the past further contributes to decreasing the risk of repeating mistakes.

Due to this concrete policy relevance, the 3RP’s analysis inevitably leads to new questions that provide ample avenues for further research. As the analysis has shown, context is key: Even in countries with somewhat similar socio-economic and legal starting points where a response is developed based on the same theoretical framework, a resilience-based response can unfold differently. This gives some indication that these differences could be even larger in countries that display a different starting situation from the outset. In order to assess whether the conceptual implications of resilience-thinking applied in a refugee context that have been established hold true for other contexts as well, therefore, the analysis of other contexts in which a resilience-based response has been implemented is required. This could be cases both within the region (Egypt, Iraq and Turkey) and in other regions (for example Malaysia, Rwanda or Uganda), concerning different contextual, political and socio-economic settings. Another possible avenue for further research lies in a change of perspective: Rather than analyzing the response from a top-down policy-level, a bottom-up perspective could be applied to provide insights into the concrete implications of a resilience-based response for affected populations – both refugees and locals. This specific perspective, often neglected in the development of a response, could provide nuanced information on the effects of single aspects of a response on the micro-level and inform future programming. In both cases, findings would provide further insights what resilience-thinking means in a context of forced displacement, how different contextual factors influence the manifestation of a resilience-based response, and whether resilience-programming in situations of forced displacement should be pursued further.

8.4 Conclusion

The rise of resilience in the field of international cooperation and development in the last two decades has resulted in the emergence of the concept in the context of forced displacement as well. Here, the

concept seems to provide particularly valuable aspects for the search for solutions that address both the protection of refugees and the development of the countries hosting them. Emphasizing core principles such as national ownership, cooperation and partnerships, integrated approaches, participation and transformation, the concept also includes many of the aspects and principles that are increasingly being called for in recent discussions at the global level that generally revolve around refugee protection and responsibility-sharing. Against this background, resilience seems like a promising new concept that provides concrete ways forward to put these principles into practice and to find more effective and sustainable ways to deal with the increasing number of (protracted) displacement situations. It is thus not surprising that the concept has been taken up by UNHCR and other actors engaged in the field, and has been applied as the theoretical underpinning of a concrete refugee response dealing with the most prominent refugee situation at the time: the Syrian refugee crisis.

Taking this response as an example of resilience-thinking in practice leads to different conclusions regarding the concept itself: First, the application of the concept within the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan in response to the Syria Crisis (3RP) demonstrates that many of the principles introduced as part of the resilience-based response are actually not fundamentally new. Rather, they have been applied and implemented in recurrent approaches to situations of displacement – albeit often not leading to a successful outcome or the desired results in terms of protecting refugees and fostering the development of host countries. Despite its similarities to previous approaches, the resilience-based response, and how it has been applied in that specific context, seemed to provide novel aspects and perspectives that helped to avoid difficulties that have emerged in similar contexts and approaches in the past. In particular, these aspects related to questions such as how to increase the engagement and commitment of host governments, UN agencies, and development actors, how to facilitate these actors' cooperation and partnerships, and how to increase visibility and ensure sufficient funding – factors needed to implement a response that is beneficial to both refugees and host countries and thus providing important aspects for the forced displacement-development debate that merit further consideration. Taking stock of these findings, resilience-thinking generally delivers a positive summary, speaking in favor of its application in other situations of displacement.

At the same time, however, the 3RP and its implementation in countries hosting the majority of Syrian refugees such as Jordan and Lebanon have revealed that there are other areas for which resilience-thinking does not provide solutions, or in which resilience-thinking can even exacerbate existing, or lead to new, challenges. In particular, this concerns three aspects: how to handle stakeholders' diverging interests in a refugee response, how to deal with a restrictive policy environment, and, resulting from that, how to find both durable solutions for refugees and sustainable solutions for host countries in line with their own development goals. In particular the last two aspects concern issues that come within the sovereignty of states, making them sensitive issues that are difficult to address. In that matter, the concept of resilience so far has not been able to provide adequate solutions.

However, this fact does not mean that the concept has 'failed' or that it is not a suitable way to address refugee situations and should be discarded completely. Rather, it can be seen as providing a promising basis of principles that need to be advanced and complemented with further efforts and further-reaching ideas. Taking into account the numerous different factors that can affect the course of action and outcome of a response, these aspects (and their possible interpretations) need to be adapted to the respective context and carefully weighed against each other, with a particular focus on developing means to avoid unintended consequences that affect the lives of vulnerable people.

From this perspective, the question is not whether resilience provides a new concept for dealing with situations of forced displacement or not. Instead of trying to find a new paradigm in the form of a concept that can be transferred to each and every context, focus needs to be put on the principles that contribute to a successful response to a refugee situation in each specific context – regardless of whether these principles are eventually implemented under the heading of resilience or not.

9 Annex

9.1 Annex I: List of interviews

Jordan

No.	Organization / Institution	Position	Place	Date	Format	Interview code
1	Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, Jordan Response Platform for the Syria Crisis	Syria Crisis Response Specialist	Amman	21.05.2017	Face-to-face interview	I MOPIC 1
2	Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, Jordan Compact Project Management Unit	Director	Amman	13.09.2018	Face-to-face interview	I MOPIC 2
3	UNHCR	Senior Inter-Agency Coordination Officer	Amman	31.05.2017	Telephone interview	I UN Jordan 1
4	UNHCR	Senior Inter-Agency Coordination Officer	Amman	06.06.2017	Telephone interview	I UN Jordan 2
5	UNHCR	Senior Inter-Agency Coordination Officer	Amman	19.09.2018	Telephone interview	I UN Jordan 3
6	UN OCHA	Humanitarian Affairs Officer	Amman	19.05.2017	Face-to-face interview	I UN Jordan 4
7	UNDP	Livelihoods and Recovery Specialist	Amman	30.05.2017	Face-to-face interview	I UN Jordan 5
8	UNDP	Team Leader Inclusive Growth, Humanitarian-Development and Resilience Advisor	Amman	09.09.2018	Face-to-face interview	I UN Jordan 6

9	UN RC/HC	Senior Transition Advisor, Advisor to the RC/HC	Amman	11.09.2018	Face-to-face interview	I UN Jordan 7
10	Jordan INGO Forum	Country Coordinator	Amman	22.05.2017	Face-to-face interview	I INGO Jordan 1
11	Danish Refugee Council	Livelihoods Coordinator	Amman	23.05.2017	Face-to-face interview	I INGO Jordan 2
12	International Rescue Committee	Senior Grants Officer	Amman	24.05.2017	Face-to-face interview	I INGO Jordan 3
13	ACTED Jordan	Project Development Manager / Acting Country Director	Amman	24.05.2017	Face-to-face interview	I INGO Jordan 4
14	GIZ	Programme Director	Amman	03.09.2018	Face-to-face interview	I INGO Jordan 5
15	GIZ	Country Director	Amman	09.09.2018	Face-to-face interview	I INGO Jordan 6
16	Caritas Austria	Education Programme Coordinator	Amman	10.09.2018	Face-to-face interview	I INGO Jordan 7
17	Jordan River Foundation	Program Development Senior Manager	Amman	22.05.2017	Face-to-face interview	I LNGO Jordan 1
18	German Embassy Amman	Head of Development Cooperation	Amman	28.11.2013	Face-to-face interview	I OA Jordan 1
19	German Embassy Amman	Head of Development Cooperation	Amman	02.09.2018	Face-to-face interview	I OA Jordan 2
20	Embassy of Canada	Minister Counsellor and Executive Director, Middle East Development Programming	Amman	04.09.2018	Face-to-face interview	I OA Jordan 3

Lebanon

No.	Organization / Institution	Position	Place	Date	Format	Interview code
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1	Ministry of State for Displaced Affairs	Advisor to the Minister on Strategies and Planning	Beirut	17.05.2017	Face-to-face interview	I MoSDA 1
2	Ministry of Social Affairs	National Coordinator of Lebanon Host Community Support Project	Beirut	19.05.2017	Face-to-face interview	I MoSA 1
3	Ministry of Social Affairs	Livelihoods Coordinator / Syria Crisis Response Unit	Beirut	24.05.2017	Telephone interview	I MoSA 2
4	Ministry of Social Affairs	National Coordinator of Lebanon Host Community Support Project	Beirut	27.05.2019	Face-to-face interview	I MoSA 3
5	Ministry of Social Affairs	Livelihood National Coordinator	Beirut	27.05.2019	Face-to-face interview	I MoSA 4
6	UNHCR	Protection Sector Coordinator	Beirut	11.05.2017	Face-to-face interview	I UN Lebanon 1
7	UNHCR	Inter-Agency Coordination Officer	Beirut	11.05.2017	Face-to-face interview	I UN Lebanon 2
8	UNDP	Acting Inter-Sector Coordinator / Social Stability and Livelihoods Sector Coordinator	Beirut	11.05.2017	Face-to-face interview	I UN Lebanon 3
9	UNDP	Chief Technical Advisor Stabilization and Recovery Programme	Beirut	19.05.2017	Face-to-face interview	I UN Lebanon 4
10	UN OCHA	Deputy Head of Office	Beirut	27.05.2019	Face-to-face interview	I UN Lebanon 5
11	UNDP	Livelihoods Sector Coordinator	Beirut	28.05.2019	Face-to-face interview	I UN Lebanon 6

12	UNDP	Senior Inter-Agency Coordinator / Early Recovery Specialist	Beirut	28.05.2019	Face-to-face interview	I UN Lebanon 7
13	World Vision International	Program Development and Quality Assurance Manager	Beirut	18.05.2017	Face-to-face interview	I INGO Lebanon 1
14	ACTED Lebanon	Country Director	Beirut	18.05.2017	Face-to-face interview	I INGO Lebanon 2
15	International Rescue Committee	Senior Livelihoods Manager	Beirut	18.05.2017	Face-to-face interview	I INGO Lebanon 3
16	Makhzoumi Foundation	Relief and Humanitarian Services Unit Manager	Beirut	10.05.2017	Face-to-face interview	I LNGO Lebanon 1
17	Amel Association International	Program and Partnerships Coordinator	Beirut	15.05.2017	Face-to-face interview	I LNGO Lebanon 2
18	Amel Association International	Program and Partnerships Coordinator	Beirut	28.05.2019	Face-to-face interview	I LNGO Lebanon 3
18	The Palladium Group	Social Inclusion and Policy Lead	Beirut	04.09.2019	Telephone interview	I OA Lebanon 1

Regional

No.	Organization / Institution	Position	Place	Date	Format	Interview code
1	UNDP Sub-Regional Facility	Development Coordinator	Amman	21.05.2017	Face-to-face interview	I UN Regional 1
2	UNHCR-UNDP Joint Secretariat	Policy and Crisis Coordination Specialist	Amman	06.09.2018	Face-to-face interview	I UN Regional 2
3	UNHCR MENA Regional Office	Senior External Relations Officer	Amman	09.09.2018	Face-to-face interview	I UN Regional 3
4	UNHCR MENA Regional Office	Senior Livelihoods Officer	Amman	09.09.2018	Face-to-face interview	I UN Regional 4

9.2 Annex II: Abbreviations of interview sources (alphabetical order)

I INGO Jordan	Interview with international NGO, Jordan
I INGO Lebanon	Interview with international NGO, Lebanon
I LNGO Jordan	Interview with local NGO, Jordan
I LNGO Lebanon	Interview with local NGO, Lebanon
I MOPIC	Interview with Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, Jordan
I MOSDA	Interview with Ministry of State for Displaced Affairs, Lebanon
I MOSA	Interview with Ministry of Social Affairs, Lebanon
I UN Jordan	Interview with UN agency, Jordan (including UNHCR, UNDP, OCHA, UN RC/HC)
I UN Lebanon	Interview with UN agency, Lebanon (including UNHCR, UNDP, OCHA)
I UN Regional	Interview with UN agency acting at the regional level (including UNHCR Regional Office, UNDP Sub-Regional Facility, UNHCR-UNDP Joint Secretariat)
I OA Jordan	Interview with other actors, Jordan (embassies)
I OA Lebanon	Interview with other actors, Lebanon (advisory business)

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I UN Jordan 4 (2017): *Interview with Humanitarian Affairs Officer*, UN OCHA, Jordan. May 19, 2017.

I UN Jordan 5 (2017): *Interview with Livelihoods and Recovery Specialist*, UNDP, Jordan. May 30, 2017.

I UN Jordan 6 (2018): *Interview with Inclusive Growth, Humanitarian - Development & Resilience Advisor*, UNDP, Jordan. September 9, 2018.

I UN Jordan 7 (2018): *Interview with Senior Transition Advisor*, Office of the UN RC/HC, Jordan. September 11, 2018.

I UN Lebanon 1 (2017): *Interview with Protection Sector Coordinator*, UNHCR, Lebanon. May 11, 2017.

I UN Lebanon 2 (2017): *Interview with Inter-Agency Coordination Officer*, UNHCR, Lebanon. May 11, 2017.

I UN Lebanon 3 (2017): *Interview with Acting Inter-Sector Coordinator / Social Stability and Livelihoods Sector Coordinator*, UNDP, Lebanon. May 11, 2017.

I UN Lebanon 4 (2017): *Interview with Chief Technical Advisor*, Stabilization & Recovery Programme, UNDP, Lebanon. May 19, 2017.

I UN Lebanon 5 (2019): *Interview with Deputy Head of Office*, UN OCHA, Lebanon. May 27, 2019.

I UN Lebanon 6 (2019): *Interview with Livelihoods Sector Coordinator*, UNDP, Lebanon. May 28, 2019.

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I UN Regional 1 (2017): *Interview with Development Coordinator*, UNDP Sub-Regional Facility (Syria Related Crisis). May 21, 2017.

I UN Regional 2 (2018): *Interview with Policy & Crisis Coordination Specialist*, UNHCR-UNDP Joint Secretariat. September 6, 2018.

I UN Regional 3 (2018): *Interview with Senior External Relations Officer*, UNHCR MENA Regional Office. September 9, 2018.

I UN Regional 4 (2018): *Interview with Senior Livelihoods Officer*, UNHCR MENA Regional Office. September 9, 2018.