

Response 1.2.2

Our experience in working with refugee groups in Lebanon, as well as in implementing projects in the country, allows us to have an in-depth understanding of social and communications context in the country. We have witnessed first-hand that Lebanon's resilience to the Syrian refugee crisis is notable – currently sustaining a 25% demographic increase over the past eight years. However, **multiple sources of tension** have indeed recently begun to drive negative perceptions of refugees in Lebanon, and to increase the risk of violence between refugee and host communities across the country. Significant grievances – whether real or perceived – such as competition over low skilled work, scarcity, strained resources and services (e.g. water supply, health care, electricity etc.), and conflict over humanitarian aid's preferential treatment of Syrians over Lebanese, have started to put a strain on the relations between stated communities. This follows on from decades of tensions with Palestinian refugees, who number half a million and are often still segregated from the mainstream Lebanese population. Tensions with Syrian refugees are aggravated by fears of a prolonged stay in the country (and the Palestinian experience bears this out) and that like the Palestinians, Syrians, who are majority Sunni – will threaten the delicate sectarian balance, and cause political instability within Lebanon's confessional system.

These negative narratives are also propagated by the media, and have most recently been ignited by political discourse during the election campaigns in 2018, as well as a number of constraining measures imposed on displaced persons (e.g. curfews, eviction notices). Overall, this has resulted in decreased contact between the communities, who co-exist in the same localities but live in parallel, leading to growing frustration. Out of all the actors providing support in the country, **civil society organisations, local municipalities and local governments** are playing a key role in bridging barriers between Lebanese citizens and refugees (Syrian and/or Palestinians) – offering services, solidarity and humanitarian support. The target communities trust these actors and, therefore, their interventions are needed to mitigate tensions and contribute to positive social stability, as well as long-term development. In this context, **strategic communications** can play a key role in mitigating intercommunal tension; in preventing conflict; and in promoting peaceful mechanisms of co-existence, by empowering and supporting these actors in changing perceptions, countering negative narratives with positive stories (that highlight commonalities between the two communities) and building opportunities for dialogue and understanding.

In line with the Statement of Requirements (SoR), our approach and activities will work towards the **overarching objective** of the contract: *“To contribute to reducing tensions at a local level amongst and between host communities and refugees in Lebanon, through working with communities, civil society, local government and independent media actors, to deploy strategic communications as a means to promote community cohesion.”*

Our strategic communication campaign will support local, sub-national and national actors to join forces, cooperate more and achieve common goals in moments of tension. This campaign will serve the purpose of empowering these voices, giving them a platform to interact, providing content to share, and enabling them to plan and sustain long-term positive communication strategies that will eventually lead to social change (community), and/or behavioural change (individual). To this end, we plan to undertake a **communication for development approach (C4D)**. Our approach will involve closely engaging communities and listening to the problems identified, allowing them to interact with each other and propose concrete solutions to bring positive social change to their communities. This approach will be a two-way process for sharing ideas and knowledge: using a wide range of communication tools, techniques and approaches that will directly empower individuals and communities to improve their lives.

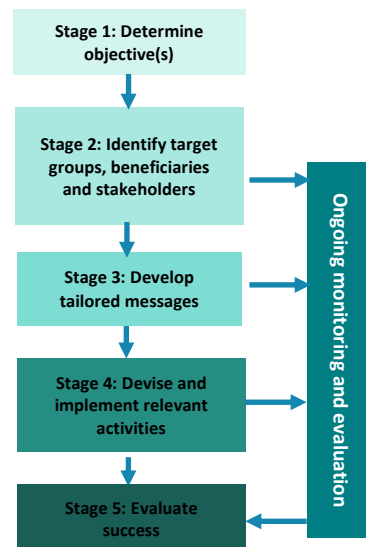
Approach and methodology

During the inception phase, we will develop a **strategic communications campaign**, drawing upon our expertise and experience working in Lebanon, targeting these groups. Extensive research and analysis, conducted by our local experts and supported by our Policy & Research unit, will build upon existing knowledge regarding the **political and social context** the campaign will take place within; **target audience analysis and mapping; conflict and gender sensitivities; and media landscape and consumption habits**. This will allow us to develop an **evidence-based campaign strategy; concept and messaging** that will be thoroughly tested via **Focus Groups**, initially with CSSF representatives and partners, then local stakeholders, and refugees and host communities across the targeted regions. As recommended in our evaluation reports, on previous CSSF communications campaigns such as in Pakistan 2016 – 2019 (Project Murree), we will allocate ample time and resources to this process of testing and campaign adaptation in order to ensure we have a strong, conflict and gender sensitive campaign that will achieve intended outcomes. All interventions will be guided by an in depth understanding of the context and conflict dynamics, and an analysis of the two-way interactions between the context and our interventions. In doing so, we will maximise the potential of our actions in this Fragile and Conflict Affected State (FCAS), minimising the likelihood of distortion, or of causing harm or undermining peace between the Lebanese host

community and the refugees communities (Syrian/Palestinians). We will ensure that all our efforts (whether through our own activities, or support to other relevant stakeholders) will explicitly, or implicitly, contribute to the establishment, and exchange, of a robust flow of information and expertise.

Adaptive programming will be built into the campaign, allowing us to have an overarching approach that can react and adapt quickly, while still ensuring accountability. On-going **monitoring and evaluation** of the campaign and the landscape it operates within (via horizon scanning, conflict analysis, risk register, media and social media monitoring and analysis, and stakeholder feedback mechanisms), will allow us to regularly review activities, processes and key campaign points. This in turn will enable us to achieve set objectives, reflect changes that occur in the context and avoid any unintended consequences. Monthly briefings, quarterly narrative and financial reports will allow us to operate an **agile approach** to campaign management, discussing and agreeing priorities as well as campaign adaptations with the CSSF, for the coming period.

The project will be carried out – closely working with the FCO – as well as ensuring **collaborative learning structures** with stakeholders, local actors (e.g. municipalities), relevant information providers and multipliers, local, national and regional media, NGOs and IGOs in order to attain the highest possible impact.



Target audiences, beneficiaries and stakeholders

A stakeholder approach will be developed where **'local voices' act as multipliers**, adding credibility to the campaign and spreading its messaging through their existing channels and networks, thereby reaching our intended audience.

Multipliers:

- Municipalities and local governments
- Central government departments active in this area, such as the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) and related programmes
- IGOs & international institutions (e.g. UNHCR, Red Cross, EU, Care International)
- Local, sub-national and national activists, CSOs/NGOs (e.g. the Lebanese Relief Council; Network for Refugee Voices)
- Syrian-led organisations and initiatives, to promote civic engagement, social cohesion and 'one' community (e.g. Basmeh and Zeitooneh)
- Media outlets (local, national, independent)
- Religious leaders and community figures.

Ultimate target audience:

- Lebanese host communities
- Syrian and/or Palestinian refugees

We will also ensure that sub-sets of our audiences, such as women and youth most at risk of violence, abuse or marginalisation will be properly targeted via the appropriate means and channels. In our project delivery plan, we will therefore include an audience segmentation, with related channel breakdown, for sub-sets of stated audiences.

In order to deepen our understanding of the target audience, **target analysis and mapping** will be conducted in the inception phase, identifying and ranking potential multipliers according to their level of influence, and reach, in each key region and target group. We will engage multipliers that are **most likely to engage in political behaviour leading to positive social change**. As identified in the Target Audience Analysis (March 2019) provided, the segment that is most able, and likely, to take action includes 12% of the adult population. Even if a minority of the overall target group, we will identify individuals from this 'movable middle' group who see the potential for change, who demonstrate the willingness and capacity to participate in this change process and who are committed to peaceful means of achieving political goals, or social change¹.

Social stability interventions have typically targeted **251 most vulnerable localities** in Lebanon. However, as recent developments have shown, social tensions are only weakly correlated with vulnerability and there **are many areas with**

¹ TAA, March 2019.

high tension outside of the selected 251. Therefore, in our targeting efforts we plan to take a **‘cluster approach’**, whereby geography of linked areas that share common problems (within or without the identified 251 areas) will be taken into account when planning communication activities or delivering specific outputs. The willingness to address such issues jointly, will achieve greater results and lead to sustainable solutions, therefore, maximising the impact of social stability programming and communications as a whole. We will conduct further research in this regards, as well as consult the UNHCR target audience analysis in the country – to be published in 2019.

Campaign messaging, visual identity and imagery

The **messaging and tone** of the campaign will be developed during the inception phase, in close collaboration with the CSSF, and tested extensively via focus groups. When developing targeted messages, we consider the **age, literacy, language, attitudes, awareness levels, cultural background** and **barrier to change**, as relevant elements to further cater our actions to our target audiences.

A **storytelling approach** will be used to develop a **positive narrative** about refugees and their host communities in Lebanon, countering the prevalent negative narrative in the media. Common themes and grievances such as **unemployment, crime, education** and **access to health services, water and sanitation** will be used to demonstrate the commonality between each group, encouraging an emotional connection and better understanding of each other. Equally, **campaign visual identity** and **imagery** will be developed that emphasis **humanity, shared values** and **dignity**. The campaign will also build on positive stories from refugee’s and host’ communities shared history, identity, family bonds or shared interests, thus solidifying a sense of ‘one community’.

Stories will be gathered **from the communities** themselves, via representatives, social media and direct contact.

Communication channels and activities

Friends, family and local figures are the most trusted source of information in Lebanon. This sharing of information is facilitated by **social media** platforms, particularly **Facebook and WhatsApp**, with 80% of households having a smartphone and 4 million active users on Facebook. **YouTube** also have significant reach being the second most visited website after Google. The most trusted media channels are **TV stations** (MTV, LBC, OTV, Al-Manar and Al-Mustaqbaland) and their corresponding online presence. Therefore, our campaign will focus on working with trusted stakeholders (as a proxy for friends and family), to amplify our messaging among their communities (using social media and TV channels), and include the following elements (to be refined during the inception phase):

- **Stakeholder dialogue and capacity building:** A series of events for community representatives, activists, local government and municipalities, to develop their skills in using communication to improve social cohesion among their communities. The events will be tailored for each group, and will introduce the campaign, along with best practice on how to disseminate it out to their networks. Additionally, the events will serve to create common ground and dialogue between representatives of target segments, and to gather information that can feed into further campaign development and optimisation. The events will be held in locations most convenient to attendees, but can also be repackaged as **webinars** to further increase accessibility.
- **Media relations (print, radio, online and TV):** We will work with media representatives, independent journalists and bloggers from across the target groups/clusters, to facilitate a more positive narrative about refugees in the local and national media. Press releases, interviews and testimonials depicting positive stories will be prepared and distributed. A **media workshop** will develop capacity to report sensitively, while providing engaging and pertinent stories and facts plus access to interesting interviewees.
- **Social media (Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube):** Social media **Champions** will be identified enlisted and supported throughout the campaign by our local experts and Digital Team. They will have an established online presence, proven to be trusted by the target segments and with objectives that correspond with the campaign. They will be provided with a handbook and a training session on how to promote the campaign online and content such as **videos, testimonials, podcasts, GIFS** and **infographics**, to share through their networks.
- **Television:** Journalists and editors from key channels and programmes will be included in the media relations, detailed above. In addition, we can prepare and distribute AV content such as a mini-documentary and interviews, to be included in news and opinion programmes. There is also scope for developing a TV commercial, to be placed between key programmes.
- **Posters, flyers and stickers** can be provided to community representatives to position the campaign within the heart of communities, and to instigate discussion such as in community centres, schools, local government offices and religious buildings.