

Lebanon, 2022

Evaluation of sclr in Nahr al-Bared Palestinian Refugee Camp

Summary of evaluation conducted by Christian Aid

Project Outline

Location: Nahr al-Bared Palestinian Refugee Camp, Northern Lebanon

Dates: 1st Nov 2021 – 31st Jan 2022

Participants: 37 Community and self-help groups, 323 members (216m/107f)

Organisations: Christian Aid (Ireland and UK), Association Najdeh (Lebanon)

Budget: \$73,995 USD

Project types:

- 15** Solar panels and street lighting
- 11** Public Infrastructure
- 5** Public Health
- 3** Support for children
- 3** Support for elderly people and people with disabilities

Nahr al-Bared Refugee camp in northern Lebanon hosts around 30,000 Palestinian refugees, both born in Lebanon and recently displaced from Syria. Palestinians face significant marginalisation in Lebanese society, including denial of access to basic economic, social and political rights. They cannot attend state education, own property or access free state healthcare and are forbidden from many professional jobs. This leads to high levels of impoverishment within the community and in the camp. This project from [Christian Aid](#) and [Association Najdeh](#) began [survivor and community-led crisis response \(sclr\)](#) in the camp with the aim of supporting people to meet their urgent needs.



Photo: Association Najdeh, 2022

These initiatives have awakened a dead people. They have reminded us that we are a people endowed with intelligence if not with money.

Gardening initiator, Housewife.

Key Findings:

Timeliness: in three months the project was able to oversee the implementation of 37 community initiatives, which were implemented over a period of between 2 and 25 days. Handing over decision-making power to groups, the collective effort of each group involved, and the division of responsibilities helped decisions be made quickly and effectively.

Efficiency and effective use of funds: in stark contrast to traditional humanitarian programming, 83% of project costs went directly to local communities, with each initiative costing an average of \$2,000 (less than the budgeted ceiling of \$2,500)

Community priorities differ from traditional humanitarian priorities: based on needs assessments this project assumed that most initiatives would be for in-kind relief, but only three projects provided in-kind assistance, with the majority focusing on safety and security.

Change and Achievements:

Increased community activity and engagement in initiatives: through the project the community were motivated to work collectively to solve problems they face. Community groups made 120 applications for microgrants, of which 37 were selected.¹ While the work was in progress many people turned up to help, and since the project over 300 applications have been submitted for further projects.

Improving public safety and security: most projects focused on improving safety and security for people living in the camp through improved street lighting to deter thefts, improved sanitation to deal with rat infestations and wild dogs, and street maintenance to reduce electrocution from exposed wiring.

Creating child and environmentally friendly public spaces: improvements to street maintenance, as well as projects such as community gardens, awnings, and public rest spaces create safe environments for children to play and help communities grow their own food, particularly helpful for addressing the economic crisis.

Growth of community self-reliance and individual and community wellbeing: participants in initiatives spoke of feelings of satisfaction and happiness, as a result of safer and healthier living conditions, the community recognition and respect they received due to their involvement, and the decision-making power they had over their initiatives. The project also saw a revival of community self-confidence with the idea that positive change was now possible. Some initiatives, such as the roof-garden, have continued since the end of the project.

Building bridges of trust: the project brought communities together, with many initiatives establishing their own networks of communication outside of Najdeh's groups, as well as intergenerational collaboration, improved connections between the community and the camp's popular committee, and between the community and Association Najdeh.



Photo: Association Najdeh, 2022

We are used to having others do things for us. We are not used to doing the work ourselves in this special and pleasant way. I got physically tired, but I was happy to have done this work because it had benefits for everyone.

[Solar power initiator, restaurant owner](#)

The first night when the lights were turned on, the children came out and blessed us. Happiness on the face of a child, that was a huge event in the camp.

[Solar lighting initiator, restaurant owner](#)

¹ Projects were selected by an evaluation committee formed of Najdeh staff and community mobilisers, based on a range of criteria, including that the project was developed in line with community involvement and priorities.

This project has demonstrated that organisations/NGOs working in NBC should become mediators between donors and the community. It strengthens the ties of trust between us and it is better than coming and imposing projects on us.

Rehabilitation of Public Rest Space Initiator

Recommendations & improvements:

- 1. Continue to provide microgrants:** there is considerable appetite and community capacity for more initiatives, more grants should be provided to maintain momentum and allow communities to continue to address challenges and problems in the camp.
- 2. Improve diversity of membership of community groups:** only 33% of the total group members were women, this should have been addressed during project implementation, and must be improved in the future.
- 3. Provide further guidance on budgeting:** ensure that groups include miscellaneous costs such as transportation and communication in budgets. Only 12 groups included costs of transportation and one group costs of communication.
- 4. Strengthen community ownership of monitoring and evaluation:** during the project all monitoring and evaluation was carried out by Association Najdeh and community mobilisers, in the future communities should be supported to monitor and evaluate their own projects.
- 5. Ensure that capacity strengthening is demand-led:** it is unclear from the evaluation if capacity strengthening workshops were based on community demands, ensure that these meet community-identified needs in the future.



Photo: Association Najdeh, 2022

Our initiative had a cascading effect and motivated people to work collectively even without grants. Neighbourhoods who did not participate have learned that next time they should initiate their own projects. In fact, a block of buildings near our neighbourhood got together after we completed our project, purchased the paint and undertook the work.

Focus Group participant

Evaluation methodology:

This project was evaluated through discussions with members of project staff from Najdeh Association and representatives of community initiatives. An outcome harvesting workshop was conducted with members of project staff from Najdeh including: the Executive Director, Project Manager, Project Coordinator, Project Field Officer and two volunteer mobilisers. In addition four experiential learning focus group discussions were carried out with representatives of 17 community initiatives. The initiatives were selected randomly while also ensuring a diverse range of initiative types were represented, and were attended by 12 men and 5 women.