Unveiled in 2012 at the ‘Engaging Youth: Palestine Refugee Youth in a Changing Middle East’ conference, funded by the European Union and hosted in Brussels by the Government of Belgium, the ‘UNRWA Ten Youth Commitments’ boosted the establishment of mechanisms to ensure that the views of young people play a real role in the Agency’s programming. The commitments encompass skills development, vocational training, education, scholarships, microfinance, health, communication, participation, partnerships and rights, and readily link to existing strengths and assets within the Agency (http://bit.ly/1LHtqMS).

Within this youth-inclusive approach, various ongoing cross-cutting and Agency-wide interventions provide the potential for vulnerable groups to gain access to better life conditions and sustainable self-reliance. This first issue of the LMRD Quarterly Update aims at providing a glimpse on the complementary schemes to addressing the country-related challenges facing Palestine refugee youth in accessing the Lebanese labour market.

**Milestone**

**Factors impacting, directly and/or indirectly, Palestine refugee employment rights in Lebanon**

**2015**

**Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review (UPR)**

- **2 November:** Review of Lebanon during the meeting of the UPR Working Group.
- **20 July:** Deadline for submission of the National Report by the Lebanese Authorities.


Of significant importance is the consensus on five recommendations regulating the issuance of work permits for Palestine refugees in compliance with the amendment to the Labour Law waiving the reciprocity principle (2010) and the approval to limit the contribution to the subscriptions of the National Social Security Fund to 8.5 per cent (end of service indemnities) instead of the 23.5 per cent. 3

**2013**

**22 January:** Issuance of Memorandum No. 7/1 by the Ministry of Labour.

The concerned departments are requested to receive work permit applications submitted by Palestine refugee workers who are registered in the records of the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities, while waiving the requirement to undergo laboratory tests and provide an insurance policy in their applications. http://bit.ly/1xpZsGw

**2010**

**10 November:** Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of Lebanon.


**2005**

Issuance of Ministerial Decision No. 179/1, by the Minister of Labour Trad Hamadeh, which lifted all restrictions on Palestine refugee access to predefined occupations (with the exception of the professions regulated by law and/or by specific legal texts). Subsequent Ministers of Labour sign the decision on annual basis. http://bit.ly/1Gdz7hj (PDF of the English version of the decision is available at LMRD)
Annual statistics on work permits issued to foreigners

Table 1.1
Work permits granted for the first time to Palestine refugees for the year 2014 – by nationality, occupation and category. [http://bit.ly/1GidKph]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Cat. 1</th>
<th>Cat. 2</th>
<th>Cat. 3</th>
<th>Cat. 4</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Porter</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleaner (male)</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleaner (female)</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worker</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other occupations</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total work permits granted for the first time to Palestine refugees</strong></td>
<td><strong>53</strong></td>
<td><strong>46</strong></td>
<td><strong>107</strong></td>
<td>–</td>
<td><strong>206</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 1.2
Renewed work permits to Palestine refugees for the year 2014 – by nationality, occupation and category. [http://bit.ly/1JtMwRW]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Cat. 1</th>
<th>Cat. 2</th>
<th>Cat. 3</th>
<th>Cat. 4</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Porter</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleaner (male)</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleaner (female)</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worker</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employer</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bakery worker</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>308</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petrol station worker</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cook</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other occupations</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>3,017</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>3,338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total renewed work permits granted to Palestine refugees</strong></td>
<td><strong>233</strong></td>
<td><strong>106</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,470</strong></td>
<td>–</td>
<td><strong>3,810</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Distribution of employed Palestinian and Lebanese by employment status (%)

The Career Guidance Unit (CGU) works in support of Palestine refugees in Lebanon on a three-fold level:

- sustaining the transition from education to the labour market, thereby improving the efficiency of the education system in fitting with market needs;
- widening access to information, learning, and work opportunities, and encouraging up-skilling, thereby leading to greater efficiency in the allocation of human resources;
- supporting vulnerable groups (dropouts, out-of-school, unemployed, persons with disabilities) and tackling female labour force participation, thereby contributing to equity and inclusion.

CGU provides a wide range of services in various youth and community settings, including orientation and individual services to school students (grades 9–12) assisting them to explore their personal interests and preferences, relate these to educational and occupational information in order to take informed decisions on their education and career pathways. And in collaboration with TVET and employment service centres (ESCs), CGU conducts awareness-raising sessions on the Palestine refugee status vis-à-vis employment in Lebanon; organizes outreach campaigns targeting school principals, parents and community-based organizations; and provides support to students in the application for scholarships and TVET courses. Innovative print and electronic materials, as well as a user-friendly portal, are CGU strategic tools.

The following indicators drawn from the scholastic year 2014/15 are noteworthy:

- 4,356 students out of a total of 7,179 students, which corresponds to 61 per cent, benefited from regular individual career guidance sessions;
- Assisted by CGU services, 89 per cent of students enrolled in the ninth and tenth grades, and took informed decisions with regards to their future education direction, in comparison to 11 per cent who remained indecisive.

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At the Lebanon Field Office, TVET Programme, Career Guidance Unit and the Employment Service Centres, whose common goal is to improve employability, contribute to breaking the cycle of poverty, and achieve a decent standard of living, collaborate to achieve the TVET strategy objectives. The essential component which guides and consolidates the programme is its holistic approach, which goes from the creation of information and self-consciousness mechanisms among the youth, the acquisition of skills, and resources needed to foster job creation and social inclusion, up to the provision of employment services as a key component for the placement and referral of Palestine refugees to the local labour market.

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Microcredit Community Support Programme
Promoting self-employment opportunities to Palestine refugees

Providing Palestine refugees with means to sustainable self-reliance is a primary goal for the Microcredit Community Support Programme (MCSP). This is of particular relevance in Lebanon, where the highly restricted crediting policies implemented by the Lebanese formal banking system, coupled with the challenging employment legislations regulating the access of Palestine refugees to the Lebanese labour market, pose accrued obstacles to self-employment opportunities in the country.

MCSP adopts a twin-track approach which includes 1) supporting an enabling environment by improving the quality and diversity of products and services provided; and 2) providing non-financial services that encompass upgrading the knowledge of the loan beneficiaries on the market dynamics, networking and technical know-how to ensure sustainability of businesses.

Within this framework, and under the SPRING Fund instrument that aims at promoting partnerships, reforms, and inclusive growth, the European Union is funding the ‘Start…or expand your business’ initiative. This initiative provides two types of income-generating opportunities and draws special attention to vulnerable groups e.g. youth, women and persons with disabilities:

- ‘Youth Business Loans’ with a ceiling of US$ 2,000 per person.
- ‘Business Expansion Loans’ credited to any Palestine refugee who wishes to expand an existing business inside or outside the camps, with a ceiling of US$ 8,000, subject to the same requirements.

The EU-funded initiative has allowed a large number of beneficiaries from among Palestine refugees residing in Lebanon to start or expand their businesses in various fields, such as:

- aluminum workshop
- butcher shop
- fruits and vegetables shop
- internet services
- cellular phones and accessories
- pipes
- furniture and upholstery
- construction contractors
- interior design for restaurants
- agricultural works
- electrical contractors
- clothing and shoes
- scarves and accessories
- car mechanics
- electricity
- wedding dresses and bridal shop
- etc...

Link to brochure: http://bit.ly/1CIRiap

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Working towards strengthening linkages between women-owned home-based businesses (HBBs) and civil society initiatives, the MCSP team invested in the outreach of Women Programme Centres* (WPCs) on hosting women-targeting focus groups in Wavel Camp in Bekaa, Burj Barajneh camp in Beirut, Nahr el-Bared and Beddawi camps in the North, Ein El Hilweh camp in Saida, and the adjacent areas across Lebanon. More than 45 women, HBB owners participated in each session and shared their views and appreciation for the European Union-funded ‘Youth Business Loans’ and ‘Business Expansion Loans’, as an important source of income for female refugees and an opportunity to improve self-reliance prospects. Additionally, participants voiced their positive feedback on the holding of those regular briefing sessions as a catalyst for mitigating the obstacles faced by women entrepreneurs in accessing markets outside the camps.

In parallel, the employment services centres (ESCs) provided coaching services to a total of 83 young girls who are currently undertaking short-term training courses at the WPCs.

MCSP and ESCs teamed up on conducting regular briefing and coaching sessions in Palestine refugee camps and gatherings across Lebanon. The sessions drew special attention to the participation of youth, women and persons with disabilities. In May 2015, nine coaching sessions targeting 380 prospective graduates of the Siblin Training Centre enrolled in accounting, business administration, civil engineering, mechanical engineering, information technology, carpentry, general electrician and hairdressing courses. These sessions focused on information, tips and advice on job search techniques, job interviews and resumes and gave an overview of the Lebanese legislations governing the employment of Palestine refugees (labour and social security laws).

Additionally, the sessions provided the opportunity to screen the ‘Start... or expand your business’ film while showcasing loan beneficiaries and the impact of this income-generating initiative on the Palestine refugee community as a whole. The participating youth were thus familiarized with the EU-funded loan products, the eligibility criteria, types of required guarantees, loan repayment period, the interest rebate reward and supportive non-financial services.

*There are nine Women Programme Centres (WPCs) offering a wide range of integrated services that enhance the knowledge and capabilities of Palestine refugee women through the provision of a wide range of social, cultural and recreational activities, as well as skills trainings and rehabilitation services in Palestine refugee camps across Lebanon. Around 26 per cent of the operational costs of WPCs are covered through UNRWA subsidies and projects, and 74 per cent are covered through their own income-generating activities, with variations among the centres.
Protection Unit

The UNRWA Protection Unit is working to strengthen the rights of Palestine refugees in Lebanon through direct support to refugees, referral to specialized service providers and through advocacy toward duty-bearers, such as the Lebanese authorities. In 2015, a Protection and Advocacy Officer was recruited with the task of coordinating internally and externally UNRWA rights-based advocacy efforts.

One of the key sectors to be covered concerns the right to work of Palestine refugees and in particular furthering the progress of the past 10 years concerning access to employment, social security and work permits.

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Legal Aid Project

Your voice, your case, your rights, can make a difference

In April 2010, the Protection Unit at UNRWA Lebanon Field Office teamed up with the Public Interest and Advocacy Centre, Lebanon (PINACLE) on the Legal Aid project, initially funded by the Government of the Netherlands.

The Legal Aid Programme provides Palestine refugees residing in Lebanon with 1) free advice on civil legal problems; 2) free legal representation in collaboration with PINACLE; 3) capacity-building to lawyers on the provision of assistance to Palestine refugees in securing their rights in Lebanon; and 4) awareness-raising outreach sessions targeting the Palestine refugee community to be better acquainted with their legal entitlements and to dispel related misconceptions, particularly with regard to updates pertaining to the Lebanese labour and social security legislations.

Submission of applications can be placed by beneficiaries, UNRWA staff members or referral partners like non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

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Examples

Two examples of employment law cases filed and won at the Labour Arbitration Council (Baabda, Lebanon) thanks to the Legal Aid Programme:

- Termination of contract without just cause and without severance pay
  (Beneficiary: Hasan A. G.).
- Entitlement to end-of-service indemnities
  (Beneficiary: Ali A. S.)
Within the ‘Democratic Governance’ component of the European Union-funded project titled “SPRING-Improving the living conditions of Palestine refugees in Lebanon”, and based on the ‘UNRWA Ten Youth Commitments’, extensive efforts are underway to equip young Palestine refugees with self-development tools to enhance their mediation skills in inter-communal settings. In this regard, a three-day training workshop on negotiation skills was held during 18-20 May 2015 at the Siblin Training Centre-STC (South Campus). Certificates of appreciation were awarded to the participants at the UNRWA Lebanon Field Office, on Monday, 22 June 2015.

Legal Consultant Dr. Iman Khazaal delivered the two-fold training sessions encompassing an overview of basic negotiation skills and axis of basic rights and related debate mechanisms. Additionally, this opportunity enabled the participating 35 Palestine refugee students drawn from the southern and northern campuses, along with a delegation of STC teachers, to engage in practical applications through role play.

It is envisaged that similar capacity-building exercises will facilitate well-informed peer-to-peer debate sessions hosted by Lebanese and Palestinian Youth Initiatives across Lebanon.

Dr. Khazaal explained: “The training highlighted the commitment of participating Palestine refugee youth to serving their communities as agents for change and their eagerness to engage proactively in intercommunal Lebanese-Palestinian discussions away from the ‘discouraged Palestine youth’ perceived rhetoric.”

“The UNRWA vocational training programme aims to equip Palestine youth with useful life skills to help them shape a better future for themselves,” explained Matthias Schmale, Director of UNRWA Affairs in Lebanon. “At this age and time, negotiation skills are a life necessity, and I thank the EU for supporting UNRWA in giving the opportunity to these young women and men to complement their personal development with skills that enable them to deal positively with the demands and challenges in their daily lives as Palestine refugees.” And representing the Delegation of the European Union to Lebanon, Abel Piqueras Candela addressed the trainees by saying that “EU supports education as the basis for development and empowerment of individuals and communities.” He added, “The world needs active young people able to be empathic, find shared interests and reach common objectives. The negotiation skills that you acquired through this training workshop are therefore very important and will hopefully serve you and others for life.”
Survey on the socioeconomic status of Palestine refugees in Lebanon (2015)

Following the launch of the first report on the socioeconomic status of Palestine refugees in Lebanon in 2010, which was considered one of the main references and sources of information on the economic status of Palestine refugees in Lebanon, this year UNRWA and the American University of Beirut (AUB) undertook a second survey to update the 2010 study, and reflect changes in poverty and vulnerability levels experienced by Palestine refugees in Lebanon.

In April 2015 teams of data surveyors initiated field visits to 4,000 households in Palestinian camps and gatherings, interviewing both Palestine refugees living in Lebanon, as well as Palestine refugees who have fled the crisis in Syria.

The survey will include the following topics: household members, education, employment, protection, health, nutrition and food situation, income, assets, and expenditure.

Households will be randomly selected to participate in the survey and participation in the survey is voluntary and confidential. Importantly, the survey will not impact eligibility criteria for assistance or access to UNRWA services and programs. The questionnaire is not an assessment of eligibility to receive services and will not be used to determine who will benefit from UNRWA assistance.

The purpose of the household survey is to update the data of the 2010 report in order to accurately reflect the socioeconomic status of Palestine refugees in Lebanon.

This will ensure the availability of objective and accurate information for UNRWA and other stakeholders in the community in their advocacy efforts for the human development and humanitarian needs of Palestine refugees. The final report will serve as an important evidence base on which the donor community, UN agencies, international NGOs, host countries’ researcher, and media can refer to when mobilizing future funds.

The final report will be launched by the end of 2015 and translated into both English and Arabic to ensure broad access and use of the findings by the community.

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Resources from LMRD Library

Survey
Survey on the socioeconomic status of Palestine refugees in Lebanon (2015)

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Resources from LMRD Library

Employment of Foreigners in Lebanon: Texts and Problematic
Author: Iman Khazaal; Head of Mount-Lebanon Office at the Ministry of Labour and holder of a PhD in Public Law.
Publisher: Sader Legal Publishers, 2015.

Inequality of Opportunity in Education and Youth Employment in MENA
Working Paper 15–1
Author: Djavad Salehi-Isfahani (29 March 2015)
http://bit.ly/1FdiQ82

UNRWA TVET Strategy
Published by: Education Department Headquarters, Amman (June 2014)
PDF available

Apprenticeships: Changing the ‘not my child’ attitudes
Featured in the Telegraph on 11 November 2014
Author: Jan Hodges
http://bit.ly/1JJuHyY

The Long Run Infographics: Youth Unemployment and Delayed Independence in MENA
Authors: Silatech/Visualizing Impact
(November 2014)
http://bit.ly/1GhLoAr

Mapping of Businesses inside Palestine Refugee Camps in Lebanon
UNRWA, Lebanon Field Office (2013)
PDF available

Social Inclusion of Young Persons with Disabilities (PWD) in Lebanon: Where do we stand and what should be done to promote their rights?
UNESCO – Beirut, 2013
http://bit.ly/1RTozXv

Youth Employment in Lebanon: Skilled and Jobless
Policy Paper released by the Lebanese Center for Policy Studies (LCPS)
Authors: Mary Kawar and Zafiris Tzannatos (October 2012)
http://bit.ly/1JZmiEG

Report on the Market Study on Jobs for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) in Lebanon
Authors: Lebanese Physical Handicapped Union (LPHU)/Development Management International DMI s.a.r.l. (September 2011)
PDF available

Labour force survey among Palestinian refugees living in camps and gatherings in Lebanon
Executive Summary
Author: International Labour Organization, ILO and the Committee for Employment of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon, CEP (2011)
PDF available

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Highlights in Upcoming Issue:
- Siblin Training Centre, STC (South & North Campuses)
- Scholarships
- The Learning Support Programme and Advisory Committee (LSAC)

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