



Office of Transition Initiatives

LEBANON

August 2013

Office of Transition Initiatives/ Lebanon

FACT SHEET

In January 2013, USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI), Lebanon Civic Support Initiative (LCSI) reconfigured its program to address the increasing community-level volatility as a result of the spillover of the Syrian crisis. Working through its extensive network of local partners, LCSI seeks to increase social cohesion in vulnerable communities by mitigating tensions in areas most affected by the crisis. LCSI focuses on reducing resource and economic strains in affected communities, facilitating community engagement through positive cooperation and inclusive participation, and promoting positive alternative messaging through traditional and social media outlets.

Steadily escalating violence in Syria has undermined stability in Lebanon by exacerbating sectarian tensions and heavily burdening previously vulnerable communities with hundreds of thousands of needy and disaffected Syrians. Refugee numbers continue to rise, with current unofficial estimates suggesting that Lebanon is hosting over 1.2 million refugees, one third of the Lebanese population, with an average of 15,000-20,000 Syrians arriving daily. As a result, communities are experiencing continuing economic decline, increased health and hygiene issues due to a shortage of water and electricity; exacerbated sectarian and Lebanese-Syrian tensions, and decreased security.

USAID/OTI's LCSI program strives to address the tensions through the implementation of catalytic activities designed to bring together different community stakeholders through initiatives that respond to community-specific tensions and provide tangible impacts. LCSI activities to date include repair of damaged Lebanese homes and unfinished shelters housing Syrian refugees, initiatives to rehabilitate community common spaces, and the creation of joint Syrian, Lebanese and municipal committees to address urgent needs. Using its in-kind mechanism LCSI is procuring goods and services directly from local communities thereby increasing income generation for local vendors and craftsmen. LCSI is examining initiatives to further our positive impact on local economies.



As many of the northern Lebanon communities have reached absorptive capacity or are increasingly hostile environments due to sectarian dynamics, the Syrian refugees are moving into southern and western Lebanon and LCSI has adjusted accordingly. In addition to USAID/OTI's current focus on key communities in Tripoli, Akkar and northern Bekaa, LCSI will begin programming in select communities in south and west. LCSI will continue to prioritize interventions in areas that have recently experienced violence, areas of increasing tension between displaced Syrians and host communities, areas of increased sectarian tensions, and symbolic communities in which interventions will have a multiplier effect.

FAST FACTS:

Start Date: September 2007
FY13 Budget: \$11.4 million
End Date: July 2014
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