



NORWEGIAN  
REFUGEE COUNCIL



Photo: Sam Tarling/NRC



Photo: Joshua Berson, 2018



Photo: Joshua Berson, 2018



Photo: Christian Jepsen/NRC



Photo: Joshua Berson, 2018



Photo: Christian Jepsen/NRC

# Evaluation of NRC ICLA Lebanon Programme

Charmain Mohamad and Chris Morris

MARCH 2020 | EVALUATION REPORT

---

## Acknowledgements

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to all those who took part in the evaluation. We fully appreciate the time all evaluation participants took to share their thoughts and insights into the project. We particularly appreciate the Syrian refugees who attended focus group discussions and story of change selection workshops, and openly shared their experiences with us.

We would also like to express our thanks for the support given by NRC for the evaluation and the welcome we received in the national office and each area and project office we visited. We particularly appreciate the incredible effort two members of the Monitoring and Evaluation Unit, Sanaa Mugharbil and Stephanie Bassil, put into sending documents, reviewing our reports and tools, and organizing the logistics of the data collection missions. Sanaa also took on the role of one of the interpreters throughout the field visits, which was highly appreciated. The support of Nicole Azzi, an independent external consultant, for interpretation and translation of the stories of change was also invaluable for the data collection mission. Finally, the willingness of all the ICLA team to participate in the evaluation workshops and help arrange interviews and focus group discussions was critical for the evaluation and we thank them all for their participation.

Charmain Mohamed and Chris Morris

March 2020

The evaluation is funded by DfID:



Independent Evaluation: NRC ICLA Lebanon Programme | March 2020

© Norwegian Refugee Council

Contact: Martje an Minnen, Head of Programme Support Unit  
martje.vanminnen@nrc.no , + 961 76000493

Acknowledgements	2
1 Executive Summary	7
2 List of abbreviations and acronyms	11
3 Introduction	12
4 Methodology	14
5 Findings	16
Relevance	16
5.1 How relevant and appropriate is the current programme design and implementation to the protection and legal aid needs of Syrian refugees in Lebanon?	16
5.1.1 Legal needs have remained constant	16
5.1.2 Legal Residency is a priority	16
5.1.3 Lack of legal residency inhibits civil documentation processes	17
5.1.4 Deteriorating environment indicates legal assistance may be more needed than counselling.	17
5.2 Are the services and thematic areas perceived as relevant by the targeted population? If so, how? If not, why?	18
5.2.1 Assistance on civil documentation and legal residency seen as relevant priority	18
5.2.2 Relevance of civil documentation assistance caveated by limitations in services	18
5.2.3 Legal Residency assistance seen as less relevant due to ICLA limitations	19
5.2.4 Other legal needs seen as less of a priority than legal residency	19
5.3 How do key stakeholders (Mukhtars, courts, UN agencies, GBV partners ...) perceive the relevance of the services?	19
5.3.1 ICLA programme highly appreciated amongst local authorities	19
5.3.2 ICLA's legal expertise valued within humanitarian community	20
5.4 What should be done to improve the relevance and appropriateness of the programme? What programmatic areas should be scaled up or adapted in future?	20
5.5 To what extent are the different needs of the various groups (children, women, men, adolescents, and people with disabilities, elderly) and minorities taken into account?	21
5.5.1 Limited targeting and adaptation of services for different groups	21
5.5.2 Limited female empowerment through programme design	21
5.5.3 Some benefits for adolescents	22
5.6 How can the programme better target and respond to the needs of these groups to become more inclusive?	22
5.6.1 Structural programme re-design needed to ensure inclusive services	22
Effectiveness	24
5.7 To what extent were the objectives achieved / are likely to be achieved?	24
5.7.1 Civil documentation assistance enables access to education in some cases	24
5.7.2 Civil documentation as an enabler for healthcare is less clear	25
5.7.3 Civil documentation is a weak pathway to freedom of movement, security and due process within Lebanon	25
5.7.4 Civil documentation is a strong facilitator for international travel	25
5.7.5 Civil documentation in Lebanon can ensure future protection in Syria	25
5.7.6 Low success rates for legal residency preventing long term outcomes	26

5.8	What were the major internal and external factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the objectives?	26
5.8.1	External legal and policy environment main challenge to achievement of ICLA objectives	26
5.8.2	Local flexibility is increasing achievement of ICLA objectives	26
5.8.3	ICLA IFPs, staff and lawyers are its strongest assets	27
5.8.4	NRC reputation, capacity and expertise significant factor in achievement of objectives	27
5.9	How effective is the project in meeting the intended outcomes of NRC Lebanon's ICLA ToC? Is the programme able to collect, analyse and use relevant and appropriate data to measure this?	27
5.9.1	General increase in awareness of importance of documentation and the procedures to acquire them	27
5.9.2	Acquisition of documents challenged by financial and freedom of movement limitations	28
5.9.3	Inconsistent classification of recipients undermines data analysis	28
5.9.4	ICLA's ToC assumptions need updating	28
5.9.5	Limited monitoring of medium-term outcomes	28
5.10	What can be changed to improve the effectiveness of the programme?	29
	Efficiency	30
5.11	Is NRC ICLA able to use well the resources available for provision of legal services? Are there potential efficiencies that present themselves?	30
5.11.1	The ICLA programme is at full capacity.	30
5.11.2	The programme operating at full capacity may be contributing to inefficiencies in communication and follow-up.	30
5.11.3	ICLA should consider if there are more creative ways of conveying information to refugees, particularly those who struggle with literacy.	30
5.12	How do beneficiaries and key stakeholders perceive the quality of the information, counselling and legal assistance services?	31
5.12.1	There was a mixed level of satisfaction with the quality of ICLA services from ICLA recipients, with dissatisfaction mainly related to levels of follow-up communication from ICLA staff and lawyers, and the inability of NRC to achieve the final steps in the process.	31
5.12.2	Perception of the quality of ICLA services among other key stakeholders was very high	32
5.13	Is the programme implemented in the most efficient way (modalities) compared to alternatives?	33
5.13.1	The human resource structuring (IFPs, ICLA staff, lawyers) is an effective use of resources, and creates an efficient approach to outreach, but NRC should review whether responsibilities could be realigned further to create more efficiencies	33
5.13.2	NRC is currently not coordinating with the NRC Syria programme to identify if there are potential synergies, which could be addressed through joint programming.	33
	Impact	34
5.14	How have ICLA's activities contributed to increased protection and enjoyment of Syrian refugees' rights? In the two different thematic areas of ICLA intervention, what are the positive and negative (if any) changes NRC ICLA programme contributed both at individual level, at household and at community level?	34
5.14.1	Civil documentation enables access to, and protection of, other rights	34
5.14.2	Civil documentation provides protection for refugees outside of Lebanon	35

5.14.3	Civil documentation gives a sense of security and is appreciated for long term benefits, not just immediate results	35
5.14.4	Marriage certificates deprioritised by refugees as protection of women's rights	36
5.14.5	Legal residency is biggest impact for recipients	36
5.14.6	Service delays are undermining ICLA's outcomes	37
5.14.7	Delays in ICLA services impacting recipient finances	37
5.14.8	Improvements to outcome monitoring framework would give more accurate impact analysis	38
5.14.9	Refugees are informing others in the communities of NRC's services, but not passing on, or using for themselves, specific information/knowledge on how to obtain documentation.	38
5.15	How has ICLA advocacy component shaped Government policies towards the protection of Syrian refugees in Lebanon?	39
5.15.1	Advocacy has resulted in some small changes	39
5.15.2	Advocacy has had little impact on legal residency requirements	39
5.15.3	Systematic analysis and utilisation of ICLA's data would strengthen advocacy	39
5.16	Were there any unintended positive or negative consequences of ICLA interventions? How does this inform the revision of the theory of change of the programme?	40
5.16.1	ICLA has increased national legal expertise	40
5.16.2	Civil documentation increases Syrian refugees' sense of well-being and security	40
	Learning and Sustainability	41
5.17	What mechanisms have been built by the programme to ensure sustainability of the intervention?	41
5.17.1	Documentation obtained through ICLA will remain valid in Lebanon, Syria, and other countries well beyond the lifecycle of this crisis.	41
5.17.2	Lack of freedom of movement is a major impediment to achieving sustainability in the intervention	41
5.17.3	The work NRC has done to build knowledge and capacity among the IFPs can provide a level of sustainability within the refugee community	42
5.17.4	The use of a stable cadre of lawyers by the ICLA programme has helped strengthen knowledge within the legal community which can be leveraged beyond NRC's interventions	42
5.17.5	Increased knowledge and interaction among Mukhtars and officials of the Nofous offices and Sharia Courts should help improve consistency of application of new regulations	42
5.18	How can ICLA contribute to a sustainable legal aid and protection strategy at a national level?	42
	Global Learning Priorities	43
5.19	Are ICLA programmes adequately addressing protection risks linked to their programming?	43
5.19.1	Refugees are informed of protection risks and do not believe NRC's advice has put them at risk	43
5.19.2	There is evidence to suggest ICLA interventions reduces risky behaviour, thus reducing protection risks.	43
5.19.3	The accountability mechanisms for ICLA recipients are still at a nascent stage	45
5.19.4	ICLA is ensuring privacy and confidentiality concerns of clients	45
6	Recommendations	46



7	Lessons	50
8	Annexes	51
	Annex 1: TOR	51
	Evaluation Terms of Reference	51
	NRC LEBANON	51
	Evaluation of ICLA (LEGAL ASSISTANCE) PROGRAMME	51
1.1	Background on the conflict/context	51
1.2	Legal status of Syrian refugees in Lebanon and protection/legal aid challenges	51
	Annex 2: Detailed Methodology	59
	Annex 3: List of Observation Sessions, KIIs, FGDs, and Data Validation Workshops	65
	Annex 4: MSC Brochure	68
	Annex 5: Bibliography	78
	Annex 6: Evaluation Team Bios	81
	Annex 7: Data Collection Tools	82

---

---

# 1 Executive Summary

This independent evaluation report assesses the Norwegian Refugee Council's (NRC) Information, Counselling and Legal Assistance (ICLA) programme in Lebanon since 2017. The scope of this evaluation covered two of the three main thematic areas of legal support NRC is currently providing to Syrian refugees, namely civil documentation and legal residency in three of the four area offices: the North, the Bekaa, and Beirut / Mount Lebanon (BML). The main purpose of the evaluation was to support learning about the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact of the NRC ICLA Lebanon programme and to provide guidance for future programme direction and improvement.

## Methodology

The evaluation used qualitative methods including a desk review, focus group discussions (FGDs), and key informant interviews (KIIs). A main approach of the evaluation was to gather most significant change (MSC) stories from refugees, and invite refugee committees to short-list from each area office the stories, which they believed best represented the programme. The evaluators facilitated 24 FGDs with 172 refugees, 1 FGD with 6 lawyers, 25 key informant interviews (KIIs) with key stakeholders, and 3 group interviews with NRC staff. Two data validation and MSC story selection workshops were held with 11 refugees and a results validation workshop held with 24 NRC staff.

## Findings on the impact, efficiency, effectiveness and relevance of the ICLA programme

### *Relevance and effectiveness*

The evaluation found ICLA's priorities of civil documentation and legal residency remain extremely relevant and needed for its target population, and are the areas of highest need for legal support to Syrian refugees in Lebanon. Legal residency is important in and of itself, but also enables access to civil documentation procedures and other rights. However, the majority of ICLA's support to legal residency is legal counselling, which FGD recipients reported was of less relevance to them due to barriers to their ability to complete the necessary procedures advised by ICLA. Overall satisfaction with ICLA's civil documentation services is good, but there is a perception that ICLA is inconsistent with their approach to supporting completion of birth certificates, with some regional variations. The main inconsistency reported by FGD participants was to what extent ICLA were helping recipients complete all steps needed for finalisation of the birth certificate. Whether or not recipients had the necessary paperwork needed to complete all steps, refugees reported they did not understand why ICLA helped some clients' progress further than others did. It is clear there is a communication deficit in this regard. The evaluation found that ICLA is not adequately differentiating service delivery for the needs of different groups, for example, the elderly, people living with a mental or physical disability or other special needs, but a new partnership with Humanity and Inclusion (HI) may help to address some of the gaps in more targeted and inclusive outreach and service delivery.

Overall, ICLA is highly regarded by local authorities and other international humanitarian legal actors. The evaluation reviewed the ICLA theories of change (ToC); concluding ICLA is achieving objectives where civil documentation facilitates immediate access to education and healthcare in Lebanon, although requirements from local authorities for the level of completion of documents needed vary. Long term outcomes supported include civil documentation enabling travel outside of Lebanon and protections against child trafficking.

The successes of the programme are driven by the capacities of ICLA's volunteer Information Focal Points (IFPs), staff and lawyers. The IFPs have developed a strong knowledge of the programme and provide a vital link to the Syrian refugee community to support identification of potential recipients, and raise awareness of ICLA's programming. NRC also has strong staffing capacity, with staff and lawyers having considerable knowledge of the legal challenges faced by refugees and, in many cases, having worked with NRC for a considerable period. However, limited options in policy and practice for Syrian refugees' legal residency in Lebanon are inhibiting achievement of ICLA objectives around freedom of movement, security and due process, while ICLA recipient financial and freedom of movement challenges are proving more of an obstacle than lack of knowledge. As a modality, more

legal assistance and advocacy may be needed to address Lebanese policy and practice challenges to mitigate some of the financial and freedom of movement restrictions. The evaluation found data management and monitoring of outcomes could be improved; reviewing the criteria for measuring 'success' for birth and marriage certificate cases, to reflect the perspective of the refugees on whether their case has a successful outcome, rather than NRC's measure of success of just moving the process forward one step would be more accurate. Improving standardization of data entry for the type of service received would also improve outcome monitoring.

### ***Efficiency***

The evaluation found that the ICLA programme is performing efficiently but concerns exist over whether the stretched capacity of the team is leading to inefficiencies, particularly in communication and timeliness of services, which is potentially eroding NRC's reputation amongst recipients. Approximately 20% of FGD participants said they had not been called back as expected.

NRC should consider if there are ways to redistribute the responsibilities of the IFPs, ICLA staff and NRC lawyers to ensure better streamlining and efficiency of services. NRC is currently not focusing on cross-border synergies with NRC Syria, which could support some current gaps in information.

### ***Impact***

The evaluation identified the biggest change felt by ICLA recipients is a sense of emotional well-being and security both for their immediate future in Lebanon and their long-term future, by having their documents in order. ICLA recipients who successfully acquire civil documentation or legal residency through programme assistance see an immediate positive impact in their access to other rights, services and protection in Lebanon, while there is also a long-term impact for rights and protection in the future. ICLA's biggest immediate individual impact is likely for recipients able to acquire legal residency, but as numbers achieving this are low, the impact on the community at large is limited.

NRC advocacy has had limited impact on changing overarching policy and law, but has contributed to small wins to mitigate the worst effects of the prevailing environment. Better use of ICLA data and analysis would strengthen evidence-based advocacy for the humanitarian community and across core competencies within NRC. However, ICLA has increased legal expertise and knowledge within the Lebanese administration systems, laying the foundation for the transfer of skills to national legal providers potentially creating a domestic constituency ably positioned to advocate for refugee rights.

Benefits to the recipients of ICLA services should continue in the future for those who have been successful in obtaining partial or fully completed civil documentation or who have obtained legal residency. Systemic sustainability to ensure the continued access to legal rights by refugees beyond ICLA's interventions is more debatable. The evaluation did identify an improvement in awareness among refugees of the need to obtain documentation, and the training of IFPs has built a group within refugee communities who have considerable knowledge of how to obtain civil documentation and legal residency. The knowledge of the NRC lawyers about the challenges refugees face in obtaining documentation and the means to support them in this process should also be retained in the future. However, this type of sustainability faces severe challenges because of the financial and accessibility barriers the refugee community face in finalising their documents. This is only likely to be resolved if the domestic legal framework evolves to allow Syrian refugees to more easily obtain legal residency, and thus both work and greater unfettered freedom of movement.

The programme is addressing protection risks: NRC's IFPs, staff and lawyers take steps to ensure ICLA recipients are educated on protection risks. However, there is little evidence NRC is targeting or providing tailored programming to increase the access of potentially more marginalised groups.

## **Recommendations**

1. Improve inclusion in the programme by increasing outreach to persons with disabilities:
  - ✓ Ensure the Washington Group Questions are being used in all field offices and IFPs are fully trained on inclusion;
  - ✓ Conduct regular follow up to ensure the approaches are being used accurately and appropriately. This outreach should ensure more data on the needs of persons with



- disabilities, which can be supplemented by FGDs with persons with disabilities to understand if they have different legal aid needs and if they are able to complete the different steps required in the civil documentation or legal stay process;
- ✓ Ensure data is analysed and adjustments to programming approaches made accordingly;
  - ✓ Not limited to persons with disabilities, NRC should conduct needs assessment focused explicitly on marginalised and vulnerable groups. A needs assessment was conducted in December 2018 but this covered refugee needs in general, not marginalised groups.
2. Improve gender sensitivity by ensuring women are able to choose which gender lawyer they wish to meet with if capacity allows.
  3. Improve the accessibility of the clinics and/or expand mobile services to increase access to services by less mobile populations. Options include:
    - ✓ The evaluation team saw one good practice at NRC's education centre in Bheddine where a wheelchair ramp had been installed, but many clinics required the negotiation of steep steps for access;
    - ✓ NRC has successfully introduced mobile clinics and sharia courts in certain areas but should consider if these could be expanded.
  4. Improve the set-up of counselling sessions by providing toys/books for children in clinics.
  5. Pilot different approaches to information dissemination:
    - ✓ Post cartoon posters explaining legal processes in various locations where refugees need to wait for periods, such as health clinics;
    - ✓ Review previously developed posters for accuracy and relevance now and re-print where relevant;
    - ✓ Record WhatsApp messages of instructions after counselling in order to reduce the risk of information loss or misunderstanding. This may also help disseminate information to other members of the family or community interested in these processes.
  6. Ensure information on the expected length and progress of cases is provided to ICLA recipients on a regular basis. NRC should:
    - ✓ Ensure as much as possible recipients are given an expected timeline for their cases when they come in for legal assistance sessions;
    - ✓ Try to establish a call system for recipients of support to ensure they are kept informed of their case, even if this is just a call to say there has been no progress.
  7. Introduce NRC's work on legal residency earlier and more frequently in recipient contact with ICLA. It may be that for cases where it is identified by the lawyer that NRC cannot support on legal stay, this part of NRC's work is not, as practiced, mentioned to the recipient. However, to ensure transparency and awareness of services within the broader community, it would be advisable to be clearer with all recipients on what NRC can and cannot support on with legal residency.
  8. Improve transparency on criteria for support:
    - ✓ ICLA should publish and be more transparent with recipients on their criteria for counselling vs legal assistance.
    - ✓ ICLA should publish and be more transparent with recipients when they are able to assist at each stage, and when they are not.
  9. Improve the effectiveness and analysis of outcome monitoring: Outcome monitoring for legal assistance services focuses on immediate outcomes, not long-term outcomes, so the longer-term impacts on the lives of refugees are not identified, and for counselling services focuses on short term outcomes (up to 4 months after the first counselling session for civil documents), with no monitoring of the final step achieved in the civil documentation registration process. In NRC's presentation of outcome monitoring results for counselling services<sup>1</sup> the findings presented as 'were you successful', are actually a response as to whether or not the recipient was able to move forward at least one step, not whether or not they were able to complete the certificate process or use it to access services. Analysis of results tends to be limited to donor reporting and not programme improvement. As such, NRC should:

---

<sup>1</sup> "ICLA Lebanon Outcome Monitoring 2019", results presentation

- ✓ Expand outcome monitoring to legal assistance recipients to improve understanding of satisfaction of services and recipients' perception of whether cases have been successful or not. Re-emphasis to field staff the importance of timely and accurate data entry so information management and sampling can correctly identify the service an individual (and their spouse) received;
  - ✓ Ensure outcome monitoring for counselling services captures the end results of the refugees' attempts to complete the civil documentation registration steps or the legal residency steps;
  - ✓ Re-define what 'success' means for outcome monitoring from a recipient perspective, rather than an NRC metric;
  - ✓ Ensure outcome monitoring results are used for programme improvement and not just donor reporting.
10. Review the responsibilities of different team members: NRC will need to review the roles and responsibilities of different team members to see if services can be delivered using fewer resources. In this regard:
- ✓ NRC should review if there are ways to increase the responsibilities of IFPs. These could include providing greater support on in-take and follow-up of cases, and the identification of more vulnerable and hidden populations;
  - ✓ NRC should also review whether ICLA staff could take on some of the work of lawyers on the more straightforward cases; particularly staff who have been with the project for 3-4 years should have a strong knowledge of case needs.
11. Explore partnerships and/or public interest litigation on legal residency with domestic legal providers to increase capacity and entrench expertise within the Lebanese legal community. To entrench sustainability and address the problems of reduced funding, NRC should also focus on increasing domestic capacity to provide support to refugees and other vulnerable groups.
12. Continue to scale up work on legal residency with a particular focus on legal assistance. Although it is acknowledged the political environment for increasing legal residency is difficult, it is recommended that NRC focus more of its resources on supporting legal residency cases where possible. It would be anticipated the level of support needed by refugees is likely to be legal assistance because of the barriers placed on refugees and the inconsistent application of agreed procedures by different General Security Offices (GSO) and individual officers.
13. Conduct an assessment on financial costs to recipients because of ICLA services, including costs related to unreasonable delays. To address this, NRC should:
- ✓ Conduct an assessment on causes of internal and external delays to ICLA services;
  - ✓ Identify ways to reduce delays in areas within NRC's control;
  - ✓ Conduct an assessment on the various costs borne by ICLA recipients;
  - ✓ Identify ways to reduce or eliminate such costs through initiatives such as expanded mobile clinics, more systematic call backs or WhatsApp messaging;
  - ✓ Consider reimbursement of expenses where unreasonable delays have led to additional costs for the recipient.
14. NRC should explore programmatic and/or advocacy cooperation and coordination between the Lebanon and Syria ICLA programmes. Information on what refugees in Lebanon will need in order to complete paperwork in Syria should be included in verbal and written advice and leaflets to refugees in Lebanon.
15. Strengthen coordination both internally with other core competences and externally with the humanitarian community working on legal issues, UN agencies, and donors by ensuring the sharing of data for common advocacy goals. In particular ICLA should:
- ✓ Provide regular analysis and dissemination of (anonymised) ICLA data to external stakeholders to strengthen case specific and policy advocacy. For example, ICLA could compile an evidence base of non-implementation of government policies at specific GSO offices and share with donors/humanitarian actors/UNHCR to support advocacy on these issues;
  - ✓ ICLA should undertake a power mapping and stakeholder analysis to identify regional and local advocacy targets where NRC could intervene directly or through interlocutors, particularly on non-implementation of official government policies.

---

## 2 List of abbreviations and acronyms

BML	Beirut/Mount Lebanon
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GIS	General Information Session
GSO	General Security Office
HI	Humanity and Inclusion
HLP	Housing, Land, and Property
ICLA	Information, Counselling, and Legal Assistance
IFP	Informational Focal Point
IRC	International Rescue Committee
KII	Key Informant Interview
LA	Legal Assistance
MoFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MSC	Most Significant Change
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
ToR	Terms of Reference
ToC	Theory of Change
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

---

## 3 Introduction

NRC has been providing information, counselling and legal assistance (ICLA) to Syrian refugees since the start of the Syrian refugee influx into Lebanon in 2012. NRC was already present in country, due to an older programme providing assistance to Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, and was able to start up a range of services for Syrians quickly. After seven years of implementation, this evaluation gives NRC an opportunity to reflect on the objectives, modalities and implementation of the ICLA programme: to ascertain if the programme is achieving the goals NRC set for itself; if it is providing Syrian refugees with services that are both relevant and well-executed; and whether these services are responding to changes in needs and context.

The ICLA programme in Lebanon is based around the standardised ICLA package, which NRC has developed globally and, since the influx of Syrian refugees, has focused on service delivery in the three main thematic areas of civil documentation, legal residency, and housing, land and property rights (HLP). NRC ICLA in Lebanon are implementing their programming in four geographic areas of Lebanon: Beirut/Mount Lebanon (BML), Bekaa, North and South.

The programming on civil documentation and legal residency follows a cascading chain of logic. Refugees, who are generally identified by ICLA Information Focal Points (IFPs) (Syrian and Palestinian refugees and Lebanese volunteers), attend information sessions on one (or more) of the three thematic areas. NRC has trained IFPs to deliver basic awareness raising information sessions to refugees, largely on civil documentation rights, and what NRC can do to support their access to them. At the end of the session, refugees who want more information or assistance on a particular issue can report their needs to IFPs or staff. These will be recorded and, either immediately afterwards, or at a pre-arranged future appointment, the refugee will receive legal counselling from either an NRC staff member or a contracted lawyer. During the counselling session, the lawyer or staff member will aim to complete a full assessment of the legal needs of the refugee. This will cover all of the areas NRC can offer support, not just the reason the counselling was requested, in order to build a full picture of the challenges and barriers the refugee faces. Ideally, following the counselling session the refugee(s) will be able to follow the tailored advice laid out for them by NRC, related to their specific needs, and obtain the expected result. However, in many cases, NRC will determine the refugee(s) will be unable to follow these steps without further assistance. Reasons for this could include the need to cross a checkpoint, a block on a particular procedure, which requires NRC's intervention, a need to go to court and/or high levels of vulnerability. In these cases, legal representation support is then given. In Lebanon, most of ICLA's legal representation focuses on administrative work to support refugees who cannot afford the cost of the process, cannot physically reach a place they are supposed to access, or a combination of the two. 78% of refugees in Lebanon do not have legal residency,<sup>2</sup> making their ability to move around very risky.

From January 2017 until August 2019, ICLA delivered information services to more than 300,000 refugees and counselling and legal assistance services to 56,388 refugees (37% in Bekaa, 31% in the North, 23% in the South, and 9.27% in BML). 56,388 received counselling (66% were counselled on civil documentation, 19% on legal residency, 14% on HLP, and 1% on other legal topics) of which 19,882 received legal assistance. ICLA records that 90% percent of refugees who received legal assistance had their case successfully closed with the majority (94%) receiving legal assistance on civil documentation.

NRC conducts outcome monitoring of its counselling services. It selects a sample of individuals who have received ICLA services and conducts follow up interviews with them to understand if they have acted on the counselling advice given to them (if yes, what they did, and if no why not). For marriage and birth registration an additional question asks whether, if they had acted on NRC's advice, they were successful in achieving at least one additional step thanks to NRC's assistance, and for legal residency asks 'did you succeed'. Outcome monitoring data<sup>3</sup> shows that for birth registration, 44% in the Bekaa, 60% in the North, and 61% in BML acted on NRC's advice. Of those, 85% succeeded in

---

<sup>2</sup> "Vulnerability assessment of Syrian refugees in Lebanon 2019," UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, December 2019.

<sup>3</sup> "Outcome monitoring analysis, Aug 2017-Aug 2019", NRC excel monitoring file

moving one step forward in the Bekaa, 80% in the North and 65% in BML. For those that received marriage registration advice, 30% in the Bekaa, 43% in the North and 38% in BML acted on the advice, and in the Bekaa 75%, in the North 56%, and in BML 62% succeeded in moving one step forward. For legal residency, 41% in the Bekaa, 44% in the North and 50% in BML acted on the advice. Positive responses to the question “Did you succeed” were 37% in the Bekaa, 19% in the North, and 21 % in BML, with outcomes still pending for 11% in the Bekaa, 6% in the North, and 24% in BML.

This evaluation looked in more detail at the barriers refugees face in acting on NRC’s advice; if there were differences in approach between area offices; and if different contexts meant the different approaches strengthened the efficiency and effectiveness of NRC’s service provision.

NRC’s 2019 ICLA strategy set a target of 226,000 unique beneficiaries for 2019. The strategy reaffirmed the focus of NRC’s ICLA work to be HLP, civil documentation and legal residency support, but also listed employment rights, child marriage and return-related issues as being areas for consideration in 2019. Two new operational approaches were also included in the strategy, namely working in consortia and partnerships with local NGOs. NRC ICLA is currently in two consortia, one funded by DfID and another by ECHO, but programming with partners has only just begun and was not examined in any detail by the evaluation team.

NRC has also developed theories of change (ToCs) for each of the thematic areas of its ICLA programme based on NRC’s global ToCs. These were developed in 2017. Each lists a series of pathways: activities such as training and general information sessions; short-term outcomes, such as increased knowledge of rights and procedures; long-term outcomes, such as obtaining necessary documentation leading to the realization of rights; and long-term impact, which is the ability for refugees to exercise and enjoy rights. A series of assumptions are attached to many of the stages and pathways included in the ToCs. This evaluation also assessed whether the short- and long-term outcomes are being achieved and if the assumptions are still valid.

As a result of discussions with the NRC Lebanon ICLA and M&E teams, this evaluation focused only on ICLA activities in BML, Bekaa, and North Lebanon. The thematic parameters were reduced to focus on ICLA’s programming on civil documentation and legal residency only. HLP was taken out of the scope of the evaluation due to limited time to cover all aspects of the ICLA programme under this evaluation. The evaluation also did not look at the capacity building work with local organizations and local authorities, which the ICLA team has conducted. While the evaluation did look at the cost implications inherent in the programme approach, a more detailed cost analysis and evaluation of ‘value for money’ was excluded from the evaluation due to the limited time of the consultancy. The primary users of the evaluation are intended to be ICLA and M&E programme staff in Lebanon and NRC’s country team in general, as well as NRC ICLA regional and global advisors.

The evaluation team felt it important to also use the evaluation as an opportunity to provide accountability to NRC’s service recipients. In this regard, the methodology of the evaluation was designed in particular to support accountability to target communities. The use of the most significant change technique gave refugees the opportunity to discuss and analyse the findings of the evaluation and participate in framing the recommendations, as well as ensuring strong input from other stakeholders such as Mukhtars, lawyers and other members of the legal and humanitarian community.

The evaluation was conducted using the five standard OECD/DAC criteria of relevance/appropriateness, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. To strengthen the relevance/appropriateness criterion, inclusivity was added to address how well the ICLA programme was doing to ensure the inclusion of marginalised groups. NRC evaluations are required to consider one or more global learning priorities. In this regard, the question ‘Are ICLA programmes adequately addressing protection risks linked to their programming?’ was included in the evaluation.

After a number of years of implementing NRC’s ICLA programme, the evaluation will also give NRC an opportunity to understand if changes in their approach are needed, and what the deeper impact is, beyond the achievement of outcome indicators.



---

## 4 Methodology

The evaluation used a mixed-methods approach relying mainly on qualitative approaches to gather data from a variety of sources over the course of a desk review period and two evaluation missions. The methodology was designed to give refugees a significant opportunity to analyse and influence the findings and recommendations. A detailed methodical description can be found in annex 2.

### Methods

- ✓ Secondary data: The evaluators conducted an on-going review of secondary data to support the design of the evaluation and analysis of the findings.
- ✓ Key Informant Interviews (KIs): A series of initial KIs were held via skype with NRC staff. Further face to face KIs and group interviews were organised with government duty bearers, members of the humanitarian community, and NRC staff. Three scheduled KIs in the Bekaa were cancelled because of security concerns related to the ongoing protests in Lebanon.
- ✓ Focus Group Discussions (FGDs): FGDs were organised with a sample of ICLA recipients, IFPs and NRC lawyers, where key evaluation questions were discussed. The FGDs were also used to support the gathering of stories of change by posing a series of questions related to the impact ICLA had had on the lives of the FGD participants. Three scheduled FGDs in Bekaa were cancelled because of security concerns related to the ongoing protests in Lebanon.
- ✓ Observation: Two ICLA sessions were observed during the evaluation, a general information session (GIS) given by NRC staff and a lawyer's counselling session.
- ✓ Collection of most significant change (MSC) stories: MSC is a qualitative participatory approach used as an alternative to traditional evaluative approaches.<sup>4</sup> ICLA recipients and IFPs were asked questions related to changes to them, their family or their community because of the ICLA programme, and those who were willing narrated a story or example to describe this. As many refugees in this evaluation were describing situations of frustration with the lack of progress, stories demonstrating people's perception that there had been no change in their situation were also collected.
- ✓ Area office validation workshops: In BML and the North, at the end of the data collection, a selection of IFPs and recipients of ICLA services were presented with the stories in Arabic and asked to discuss them and short-list which they believed best represented the ICLA programme, and a statement explaining the selection developed. They were also presented with emerging findings, which were discussed, and recommendations gathered. The Bekaa workshop was cancelled because of security concerns related to the ongoing protests in Lebanon.
- ✓ Final validation workshop: Findings were presented to the ICLA team for discussion. The MSC stories were shared discussed, and a short-list from each area office agreed, leading to the choosing of one story. ICLA's ToCs were reviewed in light of the evaluation findings.

### Ethics

Interview guides included an introductory paragraph on informed consent, explaining the purpose of the evaluation, the approach to be used during the interview/FGD, details of confidentiality and anonymisation of data. FGD participants were told they could leave whenever they desired, refuse to answer any question if they wished, and to request for information they have given to be withdrawn later. Identifying details were removed from MSC stories to ensure narrators could not be identified.

### Timing

The initial desk review and inception report development was conducted from November 11 to December 5, 2019. The data collection phase for the evaluation was split into two visits. The first visit

---

<sup>4</sup> Davies, R. & Dart, J. 2005. "The 'Most Significant Change' (MSC) Technique, A Guide to Its Use", retrieved from : <https://www.mande.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2005/MSCGuide.pdf>

was conducted December 9 to 13, 2019 by one of the evaluators. The second mission was conducted January 20 to 31, 2020 by both evaluators.

### **Sampling and Participants**

During the evaluation 25 FGDs were conducted with recipients of ICLA services (54 women, 67 men, 7 girls & 4 boys), IFPs (17 women & 23 men), and NRC lawyers (3 women & 3 men). This included 8 FGDs in the Bekaa, 8 in the North and 9 in BML. The evaluation team observed one lawyer's counselling session (3 male/female couples & 1 single man) and one GIS session (8 women & 2 men).

The evaluation team conducted 25 KIs with Mukhtars and representatives of the Personal Status Department and Sharia Courts (1 woman & 9 men), humanitarian legal actors (2 women & 1 man), and NRC staff (11 women & 3 men). 3 group interviews with NRC staff (18 women & 12 men) were also held.

Data validation workshops were held in BML and North Lebanon. Due to the security situation in the Bekaa the data validation workshop was unable to go ahead, but the Bekaa stories were discussed in the workshop in BML. All stories were also discussed in the country office workshop on the last day of the data collection mission. Attendees at the area office were recipients of services (5 women & 2 men) and IFPs (2 women & 2 men). 24 NRC staff (19 women & 5 men) attended the final workshop in Beirut.

A priority focus was placed on ensuring participants in FGDs were separated by the type of service provided, by gender, and with coverage from all three area offices under review. NRC's M&E team using the database of ICLA recipients conducted selection for participation in the FGDs randomly. From the locations of the FGDs, random selection was used to produce a list of ICLA recipients for that area. These recipients were called the day before until approximately 12 to 14 agreed to attend. Between 2 and 10 people actually attended the FGDs.

Sampling for KIs was purposive. Following the desk review of documents, the evaluation team suggested categories of individuals relevant to the evaluation. NRC contacted a selection of individuals who would be willing to make the time to speak to the evaluation team.

### **Limitations**

The evaluation team and NRC identified a number of limitations of the evaluation during both the inception period and the data collection missions, with steps taken to mitigate the impact of these limitations on the process of the evaluation. The original scope of the evaluation was extremely ambitious, covering the three main thematic areas of ICLA programming and three of the four area offices. During the inception period, HLP was removed from evaluation to help mitigate this problem. However, even with this removal the scope remained broad. The evaluators have tried to answer the questions requested by NRC but gaps in the data mean not all questions have been covered in depth, particularly those related to advocacy and sustainability through developing a national legal aid approach. Some activities were cancelled during the evaluation due to the ongoing protests in Lebanon. This particularly affected data collection in the Bekaa, where one day of FGDs and KIs and the MSC workshop were cancelled. This was mitigated as much as possible through presenting MSC stories, which had been collected in the Bekaa to the selection committee in BML.

During the first week of the second data collection mission, the evaluation team felt the scheduling was quite light and more FGDs or KIs could be arranged. This was discussed with NRC and addressed for the second week of the mission. Additionally, the evaluation relied on interpretation as neither evaluator speaks Arabic. Although the quality of interpretation was high, there is naturally a loss of nuance and meaning when interpretation is required. This concern was mitigated as much as possible by sharing the interview guides ahead of the FGDs and KIs, and working closely with the interpreters to ensure questions were clear and understood. Finally, the elderly and persons with disability were under-represented in the sample due to a focus on other vulnerable groups. Many FGD participants had relatives with a disability so were able to discuss to an extent particular issues faced by those with mobility issues. Limitations are discussed more thoroughly in annex 2.

---

## 5 Findings

### Relevance

5.1 How relevant and appropriate is the current programme design and implementation to the protection and legal aid needs of Syrian refugees in Lebanon?

#### 5.1.1 Legal needs have remained constant

The NRC ICLA programme has been operating in a static legal environment in Lebanon for the past few years. While new Lebanese policies and circulars have occasionally introduced new flexibilities or restrictions, no major amendments to the foundational legal framework governing civil documentation and legal residency for Syrian refugees in the country has occurred. Furthermore, the main regulatory framework, accompanied by arbitrary and inconsistent enforcement practices, has only served to entrench obstacles and challenges for Syrian refugees in acquiring legal residency or civil documentation. This has meant that ICLA's primary services to assist Syrian refugees to access and acquire civil documentation and legal residency remains needed. As one national level, international legal actor told the evaluation team, **"The legal needs have not changed. They have just gotten worse; the issues have just compounded."**

While ICLA's programme design has not significantly changed over time in terms of methodology of service delivery (information, counselling, legal assistance), there is evidence that NRC staff and lawyers have kept abreast of legal developments in the country and have regularly updated their advice to refugees to reflect this. This demonstrates a flexibility to ensure the programme remains legally accurate and relevant. Furthermore, the evaluation team found that other legal actors at national and local levels also benefit from NRC's expertise in this area, through both humanitarian coordination mechanisms and direct NRC trainings. Although not universally felt, Mukhtars interviewed by the evaluation team also felt NRC's expertise was a value add for them, although the benefit of NRC trainings more keenly felt by Mukhtars was to be able to compare best practices and policy with each other at NRC organized events, rather than any substantive benefit from NRC.

#### 5.1.2 Legal Residency is a priority

Since January 2015, Lebanon has introduced new procedures for Syrians in the country to obtain or renew residency permits. The procedures require refugees to produce a variety of documentation, which Amnesty International has described as "so onerous and expensive that many people are unable to renew their permits, leaving them in a precarious legal position." For youth, the procedures and the required supporting documents to apply for legal stay is particularly problematic. Children over the age of 15 years can apply for a temporary residency permit and, technically, not be dependent on their parent or caregiver's status. However, one of the documents required to obtain legal residency is proof of identity, typically in this case a Syrian passport or civil extract, which are only issued in Syria or by the Syrian embassy in Lebanon. Syrian children who reach the age of 15 years are unlikely to have obtained a civil extract or passport either in Syria or through the Syrian embassy.

A second challenge is the annual renewal fee of US\$200 for the residency permit, unaffordable for most, even if they are working. In early 2017, the Lebanese General Security Office (GSO) issued a waiver that exempted Syrian refugees who had registered with UNHCR prior to 1 January 2015, and who had not renewed their residency under tourism, sponsorship, property ownership, or tenancy categories in 2015 and 2016, from the fee. This policy however was rarely enforced, and still only applies to a certain segment of the refugee population; an estimated half a million Syrian refugees not registered with UNHCR are thought to be in Lebanon and are not eligible for this waiver. Those not registered with UNHCR must find a Lebanese sponsor to stay in the country legally, which can also be prohibitively expensive and prone to corrupt and exploitative practices.

Without a valid permit, refugees are unable to access public services and are at increased risk of arrest and detention by security forces, subject to fines, and potential deportation to Syria. The 2019 UN vulnerability assessment found that 78% of interviewed refugees aged 15 and older reported not having legal residency. Legal residency therefore remains a vast and critical need for much of the Syrian refugee population in Lebanon. However, NRC's ability to provide solutions to legal residency is constrained by the current legal and policy environment, so ICLA's assistance is largely limited to

counselling for steps most of their clients are unable to fulfil due to prohibitively restrictive requirements from Lebanese authorities. The efficacy of this approach is questionable, although, in the absence of alternative legal remedies, an argument could be made as to the protective element of counselling in and of itself to raise awareness of the procedures and the risks inherent in following or not following them to Syrian refugees. However, FGD participants interviewed by the evaluation team were already largely aware of the risks of not having legal residency and were, overall disappointed at the limitations of ICLA's services on this issue.

The exception on this is for the category of Syrian youth aged 15-18 years old. Once an adolescent turns 15 years of age, he/she can apply for a temporary residency permit. NRC has been able to helpfully assist in these types of cases due to the more permissive policy framework for youth. However, this does not translate to renewals for these adolescents once they turn 18. Whether this is clear to adolescent recipients of ICLA services is uncertain, as the evaluation team were only able to speak to 11 people who had received services when they were under 18, and not all for legal residency.

#### **5.1.3 Lack of legal residency inhibits civil documentation processes**

Legal residency is a need in and of itself, but can also be an enabler for accessing and acquiring civil documentation due to the freedom of movement it results in. Legal residency of one of the spouses is also required to register a marriage at the Foreigners' registry level. Although not technically needed for birth registration, in practice there are also risks involved in approaching the Foreigners' registry without it. However, despite the link between legal residency and freedom of movement, there seems to have been little programme re-design beyond the increase in mobile legal clinics and mobile sharia courts (in some areas), and the increase of the IFP network, to accommodate the challenges that lack of legal residency poses to Syrians' ability to acquire civil documentation. The evaluation team found refugees in the North were more likely to raise lack of freedom of movement as being an issue in obtaining civil documentation, but it is a challenge present across the country and could present a demographic profile for future targeted assistance through expanded mobile legal services for Syrian refugees unable to travel freely or without risk. This evaluation finding slightly diverges from NRC's outcome monitoring findings, which finds that some refugees in the North and the Bekaa cited fear of movement as the main reason they were unable to follow NRC's advice on birth registration (14.14% and 14.10% respectively). However, in BML only 8.33% cited it as the main reason they were not able to follow NRC's advice. The evaluation did not receive this feedback in the Bekaa.

Furthermore, the evaluation team found a lack of awareness amongst FGD participants that NRC even worked on legal residency; this was particularly true in the Beirut/Mount Lebanon area. This was also reflected in the demographic of FGD representation with a high number of participants stating they had received ICLA services on legal residency in the North, but almost none in Bekaa or Beirut/Mount Lebanon. This may be an issue of sampling for the FGDs, but the perception noted by the evaluation team was a low awareness of this strand of ICLA services in some parts of the country.

#### **5.1.4 Deteriorating environment indicates legal assistance may be more needed than counselling.**

While the legal needs and procedures for civil documentation and legal residency have remained constant over the last few years, the political and security context for Syrian refugees in Lebanon has not. It is clear that the overall environment is more hostile and restrictive now than when ICLA first started its assistance programme. This should be considered in light of programme prioritisation. People may be more aware of procedures now, but actually less able to access them, meaning there may be decreased relevance for only counselling now compared to previously; a renewed focus on increasing eligibility to move more people onto legal assistance may be warranted.

---

“When we come to NRC we are asking for assistance not advice. We already know the steps to take. We are asking for support. We know what to do; we just need someone to support us to do these steps.” FGD, Man, Bekaa

“Even if you get all the paperwork done, there is always a point where you need valid legal paperwork to get something done and you can’t get past that point. NRC does help but they reach a point where they can’t because of the problems of legal stay...What is the point of giving us all the steps to do if we can’t actually do them?” FGD, Man, North

---

## 5.2 Are the services and thematic areas perceived as relevant by the targeted population? If so, how? If not, why?

### 5.2.1 Assistance on civil documentation and legal residency seen as relevant priority

Across the board, focus group participants told the evaluation team that civil documentation and legal residency remain their primary legal need. This qualitative finding may be biased by the sample group being all ICLA service recipients who had received assistance in these two areas; the evaluation team did not speak to Syrians who had not received any ICLA service, nor did they speak to legal actors working on other legal issues. Within this limitation, overall, FGD participants responded that NRC was offering services in areas most relevant for their legal needs: civil documentation and legal residency. This finding aligns with the needs assessment commissioned by NRC in late 2018, held with a sample of refugees who had received legal counselling and assistance from NRC, a sample who had just attended ICLA’s information sessions, and a series of FGDs held with refugees by the ICLA team with the purpose of assessing the challenges that refugees face as well as to see what their relationship with the host community is like. These identified the main needs to be those, which ICLA covers, in particular legal residency.

### 5.2.2 Relevance of civil documentation assistance caveated by limitations in services

The perception of relevance of the civil documentation programme to some of the refugee population is questioned by the difficulties faced by refugees in completing all the stages of the process. This was most clearly identified concerning the columns 15 and 16 of the birth certificate, which are completed at the Personal Status Department, and are a stamp from the Noufous and a stamp from the Foreigners’ Registry, and are completed in the governorate, as well as the requirement for the later stamps from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) and the Syrian Embassy, which are in Beirut. NRC is able to assist with obtaining the stamp from the Foreigners’ Registry (but is only able to do so if the applicant has a Syrian-issued family booklet) and MoFA cannot obtain the stamp from the Syrian Embassy; a refugee has to do this him/herself, in person, if they are willing to approach the Embassy. NRC is not promoting refugees to go to the Syrian Embassy based on the protection risks they may face, and refugees without legal residency are generally not willing to visit Beirut to obtain the stamps from MoFA and the Embassy due to security risks inherent in their status restricting their freedom of movement. For those in this situation, the relevance of the support ICLA provides differed amongst FGD participants and was dependent on their feelings of the usefulness of the documents they had managed to obtain, which was often linked to local approaches to documentation requirements.

For example, FGD participants in the North told the evaluation team that schools would not accept birth certificates for school registration unless columns 15 and 16 had been filled in. This did not appear to be the case for Bekaa and Beirut/Mount Lebanon. There were complaints from some FGD participants that NRC did not help them with columns 15 and 16 and NRC generally do not directly help recipients complete the stages in Beirut, and this was viewed as a major deficiency by some recipients (particularly in the North). Furthermore, NRC is unable to help recipients get documents from Syria needed for the Foreigners’ Registry stage, and some recipients, decreasing their perception of the relevance of ICLA’s services, as they are then unable to complete the document process beyond this stage, viewed this as a major deficiency.



---

“They [NRC] are only helping with things I could have done myself. Things I cannot do they are not helping with. I could have done it myself without all the hassle. I was expecting they would take it to the MoFA and Syrian embassy.” FGD Men, Legal Assistance, North

“I think NRC should do everything, including the part at the ministries and the embassy. It is as if they are leaving us halfway through. They should complete the process to the end.” FGD Women, Legal Assistance, B/ML

---

### 5.2.3 Legal Residency assistance seen as less relevant due to ICLA limitations

FGD participants’ general acceptance of ICLA’s relevance was also caveated heavily across the board, in relation to the perceived limitations of ICLA’s assistance on legal residency. Most FGD participants reported understanding of the process to get legal residency but were unable to do so due to prohibitive financial or documentation requirements, neither of which ICLA currently assists with. Of note, the women spoke much less about legal residency, and only two of the women interviewed by the evaluators in the FGDs said their ICLA service was in relation to legal residency; in both cases it was for a family member and not for them.

### 5.2.4 Other legal needs seen as less of a priority than legal residency

While FGD participants mentioned labour rights, HLP rights and assistance with arrest and detention as other priority legal needs, these were not generally seen to be more of a priority than civil documentation and legal residency. However, it should be noted that many felt there was a direct correlation between legal residency, freedom of movement, reduced risk of arrest and detention and labour rights protection. Even if this is not the case for labour protection in practice, (having legal residency does not necessarily equate with getting a work permit or safe and decent work), for many, assistance on legal residency is perceived to increase their protection and resilience against these issues. Related to the consequences of not having legal residency, many FGD participants also raised the issue of confiscation of documents by the GSO as a challenge. Legal assistance to retrieve seized documents was articulated as a priority by many.

The NRC 2018 needs analysis did identify employment rights as being a critical area, which needs support, and beginning work on this was included in the 2018-2020 ICLA strategy, but has not been initiated yet. However, the evaluation team found the main request in this area was for NRC to support in finding jobs, rather than labour rights protections for those already in work. This may be a reflection that the sample for the FGDs for the evaluation was drawn from those who had received support on legal residency or civil documentation and thus had a specific employment need, but could also reflect a continued decline in economic opportunity for refugees since the needs assessment was conducted.

In connection with civil documentation, FGD participants also requested assistance on obtaining documents from Syria that are needed to complete procedures in Lebanon. This was seen as a clear need and gap in NRC’s range of ICLA services.

In every single female FGD, there was also at least one request for help with resettlement. Although, this request was generally to the evaluator and not necessarily an expectation of NRC. It does however illustrate participants’ perspective on what they see as important.

## 5.3 How do key stakeholders (Mukhtars, courts, UN agencies, GBV partners ...) perceive the relevance of the services?

### 5.3.1 ICLA programme highly appreciated amongst local authorities

External stakeholders reported to the evaluation team a high degree of respect and appreciation for NRC staff and lawyers, particularly about their legal expertise and regularly updated knowledge of procedures. Within the humanitarian community, other international NGOs providing similar legal services reported ICLA’s services remained thematically relevant and very much still in need.

Amongst Lebanese authorities, the evaluation team interviewed only 1 Nofous employee, but 8 Mukhtars in all three regions. Mukhtars were generally very positive about NRC's services but could not identify which of their clients had received NRC assistance.

One Mukhtar in Beirut told the evaluation team he had heard refugees had to wait a long time to get their documents from NRC but, overall, Mukhtars did report a noticeable increase over the last few years in general awareness amongst Syrian refugees of the importance of civil documentation and the procedures of how to get them. However, across the board, Mukhtars did believe there was still a widespread use of irregular practices to get documents, including paying for forgeries and using family or middlemen to acquire or falsify documents in Syria. This could be due to lack of knowledge of procedures in Lebanon, a consequence of the difficulties of following Lebanese procedures, or a combination of both. Whatever the cause, it does demonstrate the importance Syrians place on having civil documentation and the lengths people will go to acquire them. Within this context, key Lebanese stakeholders were generally grateful that NRC staff and lawyers were professional and made sure proper procedures were followed to ensure authentic documentation for the protection of the Syrian holder.

### 5.3.2 ICLA's legal expertise valued within humanitarian community

Within the humanitarian community, the evaluation team found NRC was held in high regard for expertise on relevant legal issues affecting Syrian refugees in Lebanon and substantiated and clear advocacy. Humanitarian actors were largely unwilling to comment on the quality or reach of NRC's programme interventions, understandably due to lack of involvement in day to day modalities.

---

*"Concerning the services for Syrians they are excellent. They [NRC] have reduced for us the problem of going back and forward to the Nofous" KII, Mukhtar, North*

*"I think they are fantastic. I hope they continue to be well funded for NRC ICLA. I don't know how you could criticise the NRC ICLA program." KII, International Legal Actor, Country Office.*

---

## 5.4 What should be done to improve the relevance and appropriateness of the programme? What programmatic areas should be scaled up or adapted in future?

The evaluation team found that most recipients said they knew the steps of how to acquire civil documentation or legal residency. This does contradict some of NRC's monitoring data, where assessments conducted prior to receiving services found lack of information as one of the main reasons for seeking NRC's services. However, there was some evidence that some people who ICLA had previously assisted with birth certificates, returned for assistance on other birth certificates not through lack of knowledge but because of other issues. What they needed assistance from NRC on was help with associated costs, facilitation of movement to access relevant offices or assistance getting required documentation from Syria. With legal residency, the main additional request was for NRC to pay the annual renewal fee or to help identify a sponsor.

While the evaluation team does not think it would be appropriate for NRC to start significantly increasing financial assistance, there are perhaps pathways for assistance on documentation from Syria. Many FGD participants noted they needed assistance acquiring replacement or new documents from Syria in order to complete civil documentation procedures in Lebanon. Cooperation with the NRC Syria programme to facilitate this would significantly increase the ICLA Lebanon programme's impact and relevance to recipients. If programmatic cooperation is not possible with NRC Syria (due to government of Syria restrictions on legal aid programming), then ICLA Lebanon could explore information sharing about procedures and requirements in Syria should refugees return and the need to update family booklets or obtain individual extracts.

Without a doubt, legal residency remains the most important legal need and, in many ways, if resolved would enable access to civil documentation and other rights and services, potentially reducing the need for ICLA programming in these areas. ICLA should explore significant expansion of its work in this area, potentially increasing legal assistance, rather than just counselling in this regard.

Public interest litigation (PIL) is mentioned in the ToCs, but the evaluation team saw no evidence this was being pursued with any major capacity. Partnership with domestic or other international legal organisations for PIL or legal assistance on legal residency is one potential avenue for more focused work on legal residency that would potentially yield greater impact than ICLA's current counselling strategy. The evaluation team does concede that, in the absence of major legal or policy change in Lebanon, legal residency will remain a challenging area to work in. However, ICLA's success rates are moderately successful when it does take cases, 52% in the Bekaa, 57% in BML, and 91% in the North between 2017 and 2019, so a scale up of this work will likely still yield some benefit.

## 5.5 To what extent are the different needs of the various groups (children, women, men, adolescents, and people with disabilities, elderly) and minorities taken into account?

### 5.5.1 Limited targeting and adaptation of services for different groups

ICLA's services are primarily targeting Syrian refugees in need of civil documentation. At first point of direct contact, IFPs or NRC staff convey information within Syrian communities, or at places, they attend, about the importance of civil documentation. This outreach methodology allows people to self-identify whether or not they are interested in getting their documents in order, and whether or not they would like NRC to assist them.

This community-based approach could potentially increase NRC's outreach to populations who are traditionally more hidden or home-based, such as the elderly or persons with disabilities, but the evaluation team found no evidence of specific targeting of these populations by the ICLA team. NRC is, however, specifically targeting new mothers (and consequently children for birth registration), and women through information sessions at primary health care clinics or home-based women-only information sessions. However, it is not clear how these populations are then supported to attend counselling services or specifically benefit from legal assistance. NRC's monitoring numbers show 10,153 out of 50,411 recipients were over the age of 60 at the time of receiving services from NRC. However, sampling for FGDs for the evaluation did not explicitly target this group, with a greater emphasis being placed on other vulnerabilities such as 15-17 year olds and female headed households, and as such, the evaluation team did not meet many elderly people in the FGDs.

Some meetings with lawyers take place in NRC legal clinics, which are in fixed locations, and some clinics are mobile. However, where clinics are not mobile, physical accessibility comes into question for potential recipients who may have security, physical, or social norms restricting their ability to travel to and from the clinics.

Under the "Improving protection and access to legal and specialised services for refugees from Syria and vulnerable populations in Lebanon," funded by DfID, Humanity and Inclusion (HI) provided training on the Washington Group Questions to NRC's ICLA staff in the last quarter of 2019. The Bekaa area office began piloting inclusion of the questions with a small number of staff for use on in-take forms for counselling in December 2019, before scaling up to all the ICLA Assistants in January 2020. HI provided similar training to the North area office in January 2020. The Washington Group Questions help identify persons with disabilities but it is too early yet to know whether this will have an impact on NRC's outreach to this particular group of refugees. HI has also trained IFPs on disability and inclusion, with the goal of increasing their focus on the identification of persons with special needs, but it is again too early to see the results of this training.

### 5.5.2 Limited female empowerment through programme design

Furthermore, monitoring data and FGDs give a mixed picture as to gender dynamics around civil documentation recipients. FGDs illustrated a bias towards male beneficiaries for actual implementation of counselling advice or filling of forms etc. While this may reflect gender dynamics within Syrian communities, the evaluation team found no evidence that ICLA was proactively taking measures to increase female empowerment through its services, beyond targeting of general

information sessions. Notable is that most Mukhtars reported to the evaluation team that Syrian clients who came to their offices for documents were roughly 50/50 male/female, indicating that this responsibility is not necessarily seen as a gendered task within the Syrian population. This is compounded by risks Syrian refugees may face for travelling around without legal residency which, historically have been worse for men than women. ICLA's data records a 88/12 male/female gender split ratio for counselling recipients, and 93/7 split for legal assistance, which is supported by the qualitative picture found by the evaluation team. This indicates that men (husband or male relative) are learning more from counselling and legal assistance and are more likely to be implementing steps from it or engaged with the lawyer for legal assistance cases.

Additionally, the fact the refugees do not, as far as the evaluation team understand, have the option to request a woman lawyer may be off-putting for potential female clients. In one instance, a young woman living in Bekaa who had received counselling from ICLA as a teenager told the evaluation team, "I wasn't happy I had to deal with a male lawyer." Although there is a 50-50 gender split on NRC's contracted lawyers, they operate per area, and thus the gender of the lawyer a refugee sees would be dependent on where they live.

### 5.5.3 Some benefits for adolescents

As noted above, one area where the evaluation team identified particular relevance for adolescents was support in obtaining temporary legal residency. This MSC story demonstrates both the very limited numbers of legal residency temper the impact it can have on the lives of adolescents.

---

My father was in jail in a town 4-5 hours from where we live. I benefited from support on legal stay from NRC. I came to them six months ago and they helped me get a temporary legal stay document, which lasted for 3 and a half months and allows me to travel. It is now out of date but I am going to UNHCR to update my file and then I will return to NRC for their support so they can get me an appointment at GSO. When we came, the lawyer gave me and my mother very clear instructions on how to get the document and my mother was able to follow them easily. It was very beneficial for me because I was able to visit my father and there are many checkpoints on the way. I visited him 10 times during the 3 and a half months. The legal stay allows me more freedom to move and if I get it renewed, I would be able to go around on my motorbike without worrying about detention. MSC Story, Boy, Legal Assistance, North

---

However, the relevance of this support for adolescents, which NRC was able to support with, and by the difficulties in obtaining legal residency once an individual turns 18. In this example, the ICLA recipient had turned 18, but seemed unaware NRC may not be able to help him with legal residency again as a result.

## 5.6 How can the programme better target and respond to the needs of these groups to become more inclusive?

### 5.6.1 Structural programme re-design needed to ensure inclusive services

NRC's partnership with HI is just beginning, so it is unclear how transformative this will be to ensure inclusion and access to ICLA services to all populations in need. However, NRC should ensure the use of the Washington Group Questions are rolled out to all area offices. Regular review of the implementation of the partnership with HI should also be held to identify if NRC is managing to more effectively reach this population as a result.

From the evaluation team's perspective, a few additional steps could be taken to increase reach as broadly as possible. On gender dynamics, the evaluation team found mobile clinics and group information sessions targeting in health clinics and within communities to be an excellent initiative to include women in service delivery. Giving women the option over which gender lawyer they see for counselling and legal assistance may increase take up of these services by women, and this may serve to mitigate some social and cultural barriers for women travelling alone to access this type of assistance. Provision of counselling and legal assistance on site in communities by women only staff and lawyers would consolidate this approach, but may not be feasible in all cases.

Provision of information, counselling and legal assistance advice in formats for populations with low or no literacy would also help reduce exclusion of populations with little or no formal schooling or education. It would also help these individuals better understand advice or information they are given if they are able to access services in the first place. This is particularly relevant if ICLA is targeting adolescents, who may have missed most or all of their schooling post-primary in forced displacement in Lebanon and therefore may have reduced literacy capacity.

There was limited or no accessibility in several of the places visited by the evaluation team where ICLA was conducting information, counselling or legal assistance services. This will prevent people with physical disabilities from accessing services. Of note, the rooms the evaluation team visited were also largely cold and uninviting. Better heating, decoration and activities for children will help make visitors more comfortable, facilitating better intake of information and advice being given. One example of a positive approach to accessibility was at a NRC education centre in Bhanine in the North, which had built a ramp for wheelchair users. This was a FGD location but not an ICLA clinic. ICLA could consider proactively copying this approach where feasible.

Given the general economic environment in Lebanon and the restricted work opportunities for Syrian refugees, a general increase in mobile clinics may also increase uptake of services. Several FGD participants arrived expecting some sort of assistance and other refugees seeking assistance on days the clinic was clearly closed regularly disrupted FGDs. Aside from the communication issue, people complained about the cost of travel to the clinics or of phone calls to the lawyers. NRC should look at reducing recipient costs to access ICLA services and being much clearer about clinic opening times and days. One male participant of an FGD in the North for legal assistance recipients had expected the service to be cheaper for him if he came to NRC. However, he told the evaluation team, “For birth certificates I know the steps and I can go but it is taking a lot of money...It is more expensive for me to pay for transportation and with phone calls [to the lawyer] than if I go to the Mukhtar myself and get it done in one go.”

#### Relevance Conclusions

- ✓ ICLA's thematic priorities remain extremely relevant and needed for its target population.
- ✓ Legal residency is a priority need that is important in and of itself, but can also enable access to civil documentation procedures and other rights.
- ✓ ICLA's support to legal residency is limited, lessening its relevance to current and future service recipients.
- ✓ ICLA's apparent inconsistent approach to supporting completion of for birth certificates weakens its relevance to some service recipients, with regional variations.
- ✓ ICLA is not adequately differentiating service delivery methodology to adjust to the needs of different groups.
- ✓ ICLA is highly regarded by local authorities and other international humanitarian legal actors.



## Effectiveness

### 5.7 To what extent were the objectives achieved / are likely to be achieved?

#### 5.7.1 Civil documentation assistance enables access to education in some cases

In the Lebanon ICLA strategy 2018 the ICLA objective is defined as, “Increased legal protection for refugees from Syria and Palestinian refugees in Lebanon with regards to their access to legal residency, civil documentation, employment and HLP rights.” The assumption behind this is that legal residency and acquisition of civil documentation increases legal protection for Syrian and Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, although it is not specified against which threat the legal protection is for.

ICLA has similar objectives in individual project proposals. For example, the objective for ICLA under the DfID consortium project is “to responsibly address a changing protection environment,” with two related outcomes: “1. Contribute to ensuring Syrian refugees have their basic rights protected and protection needs addressed; 2. Ensure community members are engaged in creating a safe protection environment.” The main objective of the SDC funded project titled “Ensuring Legal Protection for Refugees from Syria” was “Increased legal protection for refugees from Syria through provision of legal services, advocacy initiatives and engagement with national legal service providers.” The objectives of ICLA’s individual projects are thus aligned with ICLA’s overall objective as per the strategy.

In the ToC for civil documentation and legal identity, ICLA hopes the services will increase access and enjoyment of services for Syrian refugees, specifically in the areas of health, education and basic assistance. These long-term outcomes are not explicitly targeted as expected outcomes in individual project logic models, although they are, in some cases, referred to in the narrative description of the project. In the ToC, there is also a link between civil documentation and legal identity to freedom of movement, security and due process.

The evaluation team found strong evidence of a direct link between possession of civil documentation and access to services, particularly education and healthcare for recipients of ICLA services. Participants in FGDs told the evaluation team that birth certificates were a requirement for school enrolment, and was a motivation for acquiring them, although there were regional variations on how complete the document needed to be to be accepted by school registrars. Of note, this link was not readily identified everywhere, and was felt more strongly by women and in the North. This is within a context where official Lebanese policy requires an ID document, not necessarily a birth certificate, for each child as part of enrolment requirements.<sup>5</sup>

The criteria for ICLA measuring an outcome achieved is based on the lawyer or staff member’s decision on how far they can support the case and what is offered to the recipient. For example, if an individual is told they will be given help getting a stamp from the Nofous office and this is obtained, then the case is registered in the monitoring system as being completed successfully, even if the birth certificate remains incomplete. If the individual is told they will be given support throughout the entire process, then the case is only considered a success once all the steps are complete. This is relevant as incomplete documents could potentially be recorded as ‘successes’ in ICLA’s database, but they will not necessarily facilitate cross border travel or updates to a Syrian family booklet if the holder decides to return to Syria, in which case the assumption behind civil documentation enabling freedom of movement is not validated by practice.

Furthermore, the evaluation team found that due to inconsistent and different requirements by educational institutions at the local level, ‘incomplete’ documentation was also not facilitating school registration in all cases, particularly in the North. In which case ICLA’s intended outcome in this regard is also not being achieved. One male FGD participant in the North, who had received legal assistance, told the evaluation team, “With the current paperwork which we have, we still aren’t official. We know what we need to do and what the steps are. We wanted NRC’s help to make it official but this was not given. To register my children in school I need all the columns finished. The schools are requesting for all the paperwork to be finalized in order to enrol my children.”

---

<sup>5</sup> “Q&A for the ‘Back to School’ Program 2017/2018,” UNHCR, UNICEF, UNESCO, August, 2017.

### 5.7.2 Civil documentation as an enabler for healthcare is less clear

There was much less discussion amongst FGD participants of civil documentation as an enabler for access to healthcare but, when mentioned, it was seen by some as a pre-requisite, and by others as allowing for choice; some health providers ask for documentation, others do not. As one woman refugee from BML mentioned in her MSC story, “Before I went to NRC, there are some doctors who don’t ask for papers, but mostly I just avoided going to the doctor. Once my son got sick and the hospital refused to treat him because he did not have his papers. But now I don’t have to worry about whether or not they will accept us for the service.”

Participants also spoke about needing the birth certificate in order to update their family registration at UNHCR. In this regard, there is a direct perceived link between birth certificates and humanitarian assistance from the UN.

### 5.7.3 Civil documentation is a weak pathway to freedom of movement, security and due process within Lebanon

The evaluation team found less evidence that civil documentation and legal identity led to an outcome of freedom of movement, security and due process within Lebanon. These outcomes are much more related to legal residency for Syrian refugees in both perception and practice. However, focus group participants did regularly articulate their sense of emotional security or peace of mind at completion of documents. They felt more secure in travelling around Lebanon as a family with documentation proving their legal relationships to each other, although this was caveated by the fact they would only do so if risk of arrest was not an issue due to lack of legal residency. This underscores the point that, although civil documentation and legal identity may give theoretical security in Lebanon, in practice it does not take effect unless twinned with legal residency.

### 5.7.4 Civil documentation is a strong facilitator for international travel

There was a significant link to legal identity and civil documentation to the ability to freely travel internationally. Participants in FGDs told the evaluation team it was important to them to have their documents complete and in order in case they were to return to Syria or travel elsewhere. There was no sense that FGD participants had actual plans to travel, but Syrian refugees articulated a sense of vulnerability within the current context in Lebanon and were starting to get their affairs in order in case a decision for them to return to Syria was taken out of their hands. This context was consolidated by several testimony from participants that they, or people they knew, had tried to return to Syria with a child born in Lebanon, but were prevented from crossing the border as they did not have a birth certificate for the child proving the parent/child relationship. There were inconsistent accounts as to how ‘complete’ the birth certificate needed to be in order to cross, but there was fairly universal agreement some form of a Lebanese birth certificate was a requirement to cross with a child at designated border points.

FGD participants also spoke of people they knew who were unable to take resettlement offers due to incomplete documentation. Whether or not this is true, the perception from ICLA recipients that complete documentation enabled freedom of movement outside of Lebanon was strong.

NRC’s legal residency ToC includes ability to exit Lebanon as medium-long term outcome, but the civil documentation ToC does not, which would appear to be an omission given the number of evaluation participants who linked birth and marriage certificates to the ability to travel.

### 5.7.5 Civil documentation in Lebanon can ensure future protection in Syria

Official procedures in both Syria and Lebanon state the birth certificate needs to be registered with the Foreigners’ Registry in Lebanon before it can be registered with the civil registry in Syria and added to the Syrian family booklet.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, official documentation procedures need to be followed in Lebanon, for children born in Lebanon, in order to be of future benefit in Syria. Anecdotally, Mukhtar and FGD participants spoke of people crossing into Syria irregularly to falsify documents in Syria to add children born in Lebanon to the family booklet in Syria, or people in Lebanon paying someone in

---

<sup>6</sup> “Q&A on birth registration for Syrian refugees in Lebanon,” UNHCR, May 2018.

Syria to do this in their absence. It is unclear whether this is the result of difficulties getting birth registration done in Lebanon, a lack of awareness of procedures or the risks inherent in not following them, or a combination of both. It is also unclear how widespread these kinds of practices are, but it is important for ICLA to increase awareness of the risks to ensure legal protection for Syrians not just in Lebanon but also for future safeguarding in Syria.

#### **5.7.6 Low success rates for legal residency preventing long term outcomes**

In ICLA's ToC for legal residency, it similarly states intended long term outcomes to be increased access and enjoyment of services for Syrian refugees, specifically in the areas of health, education and basic assistance, as well as a link to freedom of movement, security and due process. In addition, ICLA hopes assistance with legal residency will protect recipients from arrest and detention.

While it is certain that legal residency increases Syrian refugees' ability to move around and therefore access a wider range of services and assistance, it is unclear to what extent ICLA is achieving this objective for recipients. Monitoring data shows legal residency to have the lowest success rate in achieving a positive result from legal assistance. In 2017 the success rate was 51%, in 2018, 71%, and in 2019, 65%. While these statistics can be viewed as moderately successful, the volume of legal assistance cases on residency overall is very small, and they represent only 1%, 2% and 1% of all legal assistance cases respectively. With legal assistance, the success rate is also tempered by the fact most cases receive counselling rather than legal assistance. Between 2017 and 2019, only 4% of legal residency cases were given legal assistance compared to 96% who received just counselling. For marriage certificates, 74% received legal assistance, and for birth certificates, it was 65%. Outcome monitoring shows that refugees given counselling on legal residency only act on NRC's advice in 39% of cases and of those only 29% answered yes to the question, 'did you succeed'.

### **5.8 What were the major internal and external factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the objectives?**

#### **5.8.1 External legal and policy environment main challenge to achievement of ICLA objectives**

Without a doubt, the overarching legal and policy environment dictating requirements and procedures for Syrians in Lebanon to acquire civil documentation and legal residency have been the main obstacle preventing ICLA from fully achieving its stated objectives.

Further challenges have arisen due to arbitrary and inconsistent implementation of official policies at all levels of decision making within Lebanese judicial and security services. Education and health authorities also disregarding stated policy and implementing arbitrary requirements for access to essential services have exacerbated this.

#### **5.8.2 Local flexibility is increasing achievement of ICLA objectives**

Within this context, there is evidence that ICLA staff have accommodated regional variations in implementing official policy to tailor their approach. By all accounts, staff and lawyers give ICLA recipients correct and accurate advice and assistance based on official law and policy, but there is a flexibility to the approach to allow for nuances in the local system. For example, the evaluation team found a more restrictive environment in the North with regards to requirements for school enrolment. Commensurate with this, it appeared ICLA was providing more assistance to some recipients there to fill in columns 15 and 16 for birth certificates, as this was more of a requirement in the North for school enrolment, but this was inconsistent from case to case. This practice was not evident in the Bekaa or Beirut/Mount Lebanon offices, but neither did FGD participants indicate this was a need for school enrolment in these localities, although men in BML did raise the issue of the certificate being incomplete without these stamps.

ICLA has also conducted mobile clinics in some areas, which has helped overcome local challenges around freedom of movement restrictions. These flexibilities allow ICLA to mitigate somewhat against national context challenges by taking advantage or introducing flexibility in service delivery at the local level.

### 5.8.3 ICLA IFPs, staff and lawyers are its strongest assets

By all accounts ICLA IFPs, staff and lawyers are strong, knowledgeable and professional. They are ICLA's strongest asset and were identified as such through S.W.O.T analysis with ICLA staff in all three-area offices. This is a major internal factor helping ICLA achieve its objectives. The use of IFPs for identification of people in need, community engagement and awareness raising is a particularly effective outreach methodology. IFPs also have strong historical and institutional knowledge as both recipients of ICLA services (in many cases), but also as some of the longest serving personnel in the programme.

### 5.8.4 NRC reputation, capacity and expertise significant factor in achievement of objectives

Partnership with UNHCR and coordination with other legal actors has also contributed to NRC's achievement of outcomes, as well as funding to do so. NRC is seen as legitimate, strong and with capacity. NRC's leadership and expertise, particularly on civil documentation, has leveraged influence with UNHCR and other legal actors creating space for advocacy and authority on legal issues with donors and other stakeholders. The size of the programme and the strength and expertise of staff are significant contributory factors that have put issues such as late birth registration on the agenda for discussion with the Lebanese authorities.

---

"NRC has ways to identify, provide the service, and follow up on the impact of the service. The lawyers are very qualified. The ICLA staff are also qualified and effectively supervised by management," KII, International Legal Actor, Country Office.

"I know that NRC is very vocal on stating what the protection needs are in coordination meetings. Always voiced concerns and risks to UNHCR," KII, International Legal Actor, Bekaa.

---

## 5.9 How effective is the project in meeting the intended outcomes of NRC Lebanon's ICLA ToC? Is the programme able to collect, analyse and use relevant and appropriate data to measure this?

### 5.9.1 General increase in awareness of importance of documentation and the procedures to acquire them

Discussion of achievement of long-term outcomes is outlined in findings under 5.7. With regards to short and mid-term outcomes, the ICLA ToC concentrates on activities to increase knowledge and understanding of the procedures and value of civil documentation amongst Syrian refugees in Lebanon. The assumption being this would lead to a mid-term outcome of an increase in attempts by Syrian refugees to get civil documentation.

The evaluation team has found no baseline data against which to measure 'increase' in any substantive manner. The most comprehensive protection analysis, the 2019 Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian refugees in Lebanon, shows almost 97% of people interviewed had a doctor's or midwife certificate for a birth, with 30% of respondents stating they had completed the process up to at least the Foreigner's Registry; a significant increase from the 21% recorded in 2018.<sup>7</sup> Mukhtars interviewed by the evaluation team did also affirm levels of awareness amongst Syrian refugees of the importance of documentation, and the procedures of how to acquire them in Lebanon, had increased over the last few years.

How much of this is directly attributable to NRC is unclear, particularly given that a number of other organisations provide civil documentation services and both UNHCR and UNICEF have had long running information campaigns and services on these issues as well. Furthermore, Syrians knowledge of the importance of documentation did not start at a zero baseline; families were accustomed to documentation practices in Syria before they fled to Lebanon. What is new are the procedures in

---

<sup>7</sup> "Vulnerability assessment of Syrian refugees in Lebanon 2019," UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, December 2019.

Lebanon and the importance of getting official documents in Lebanon for use in other countries, including Syria.

### 5.9.2 Acquisition of documents challenged by financial and freedom of movement limitations

NRC's assumption that knowledge of the importance of documentation and the process to get them would lead to actual acquisition of documents was not fully found by the evaluation team. There was some evidence that Syrians wanted the documents and knew how to get them, but were impeded by two other factors. Firstly, costs associated with documentation were seen by some people as prohibitive. Aside from official stamp costs, travel costs to various offices and potential extortion from officials are a deterrent for some ICLA recipients to implement counselling advice. Secondly, for Syrians without legal residency in Lebanon, travelling to the various offices to complete documents was seen as too risky in case of arrest, detention, fines or confiscation of ID documents by security officials.

While it is clear that some ICLA counselling recipients did not understand the counselling advice given, the evaluation team found that the two reasons outlined above were more likely to be a factor in non-implementation of counselling advice, rather than lack of understanding.

---

"I have to do three birth certificates and I am not able to do it. I have to pay for it. I cannot afford this. I know the process, they [NRC] told us the different steps, but I am not able to do it because of the fee."

FGD Women, Legal Assistance, BML

"I was told first I needed to pay money to get the marriage certificate and my brother did his own marriage certificate and had to pay US\$200 for it. So this is why I did not do it when I first got married...I did not change my mind. I always wanted to do it but did not have the money to do it. So, when the [NRC] lawyer told us it was free of charge I did it. I want my children to be legal too." FGD,

Girls, Counselling, Bekaa

---

### 5.9.3 Inconsistent classification of recipients undermines data analysis

The evaluation team did find significant confusion amongst FGD participants as to what kind of ICLA assistance they had received. Sampling selections for FGD participation also highlighted this as a problem with incomplete and incorrect data entry of recipients in the database. Most common was a selection of counselling recipients from the database who believed they had only received counselling but, on closer discussion, almost certainly had been legal assistance recipients.

### 5.9.4 ICLA's ToC assumptions need updating

The ToCs have a series of assumptions considered necessary for the logical pathways to be achieved. Most of these seem to be valid, but some need review as the prevailing on the ground realities in Lebanon challenges them, and NRC should review the ToCs to identify if there are possible alternative pathways when these blockages occur. The assumptions are similar in each ToC. The main assumptions, which need review, are those, which assume the refugees have safe and timely access to various administrative offices and that the language and means of communication are appropriate, and refugees understand the information shared with them. Although for many recipients of ICLA's services these assumptions do hold true, the evaluation team found for many others they are unable to access the administrative offices they need to, and a smaller number do not understand the instructions they are given.

### 5.9.5 Limited monitoring of medium-term outcomes

The programme is currently only collecting data on the success of achieving the medium-term outcomes of obtaining civil documentation and legal residency, but is not able to measure the longer-term impacts described in ToCs, as it does not gather data on issues such as increased access to services, freedom of movement and due process.

NRC conducts outcome monitoring with a sample of ICLA recipients each month but this is only done for those who have received counselling, and is focused on the immediate actions taken as a result of the actions, and whether they had success (defined as achieving one additional step in the process). Outcome monitoring for legal assistance is tracked immediately at the end of the case but only focuses

on whether the case was successfully closed or not and does not involve contacting the refugees for their opinion of the process.

### 5.10 What can be changed to improve the effectiveness of the programme?

The evaluation team believes outcome monitoring could be improved through a critical review of the types of questions being asked, a broadening of the range of people being contacted to include legal assistance recipients and better use and analysis of the data collected. Currently, outcome monitoring involving contacting refugees is only conducted with counselling recipients. The design of the questionnaire is framed to identify if recipients of counselling have attempted to move their case forward and if they have been successful in moving forward at least one step. If they have not tried to follow NRC's instructions, or have done so but not been successful, they are asked why not. The questionnaire defines success for civil documentation as moving forward at least one step, but does not ask if they have tried to go a further step and then been stopped. The questionnaire also includes an assessment question for the interviewer on whether the recipient is able to explain correctly how to access their rights, and questions for the interviewee as to whether they were happy with NRC's services and which steps they had achieved with NRC's assistance. The presentation of the outcome monitoring data shared with the evaluation team does not include an analysis of these questions.

The current monitoring system does not include follow up with recipients of legal assistance. As noted in this report, two main concerns raised by refugees were not being contacted after they had given their papers to a lawyer, and a feeling that NRC has not managed to support them to the end of the process for civil documentation. Expanding outcome monitoring to include legal assistance recipients, analysing, and presenting more of the data collected would ensure NRC could pick up these issues in a timelier fashion, and adjust their programming accordingly. Measuring 'successes beyond movement of one step in the process would also give a fairer picture as to the impact of ICLA's programme commensurate with the intended ToC outcomes.

#### Effectiveness Conclusions

- ✓ ICLA is achieving objectives where civil documentation facilitates immediate access to education and healthcare in Lebanon.
- ✓ ICLA is enabling longer term outcomes, whereby civil documentation is enabling travel outside of Lebanon and protections against child trafficking.
- ✓ Limited legal options for legal residency is inhibiting achievement of objectives around freedom of movement, security and due process.
- ✓ ICLA IFPs, staff and lawyers are its strongest asset, with their expertise and capacity wielding influence with external stakeholders and some decision makers.
- ✓ ICLA recipients are more challenged by financial and freedom of movement restrictions than lack of knowledge. An increase in eligibility for legal assistance may be needed to address these restrictions.
- ✓ There is currently not a system to identify if the process is stopped further down the line, nor quality checks to ensure ICLA staff are entering data consistently for whether a recipient received counselling or legal assistance. This would improve outcome monitoring and give a more accurate picture of success.



## Efficiency

### 5.11 Is NRC ICLA able to use well the resources available for provision of legal services? Are there potential efficiencies that present themselves?

#### 5.11.1 The ICLA programme is at full capacity.

A protracted displacement context amid falling levels of donor support, has led to a decrease in funding for ICLA leading to a reduction in staff levels and a restructure of the BML and South offices into one. However, the levels of need amongst Syrian refugees in Lebanon for civil documentation (including child marriage), legal residency and HLP assistance have remained constant, while other legal needs such as employment rights remain present. At the start of 2018, the North had 31 staff members and the Bekaa 32, at the start of 2019, this was 32 and 25, and at the start of 2020, this was 23 and 23 respectively. In 2018, BML had 14 staff members, which was reduced to 11 by August 2019. At the beginning of 2020, the BML and South offices had merged covering two area offices. Because of these cuts, the number of services ICLA provides has reduced. Overall, counselling numbers fell from 44,434 in 2017 to 22,708 in 2019 (as of August 1<sup>st</sup>), and from 11,935 legal assistance cases in 2017 to 9,373 cases in 2019 (as of August 1<sup>st</sup>). This includes ICLA South and the main areas of ICLA focus (civil documentation, legal residency and HLP), but the fall is consistent across area offices and types of service. The fall in services provided is particularly noticeable in 2019, whereas numbers for 2018 were consistent with 2017.

The evaluation team heard from a variety of ICLA staff at different levels how this combination of needs vs capacity has increased pressure and workload on the teams. The evaluation team facilitated SWOT analyses with each of the area office's ICLA teams; every team identified the lack of human resource capacity as being a weakness of the ICLA programme, and lack of funding as being a long-term threat.

#### 5.11.2 The programme operating at full capacity may be contributing to inefficiencies in communication and follow-up.

The risk of increased workload on staff is that it creates inefficiencies in programme delivery; there is some evidence this is already an issue with communication with beneficiaries. A significant number of ICLA recipients complained during FGDs they had been told to wait for a phone call, either to receive more detail on the next steps, or after they had submitted documents to a lawyer and were awaiting an update. FGD participants told the evaluation team they had not heard back, in some cases for over a year. Others mentioned not being able to contact an ICLA staff member when they tried. There were also complaints from some refugees about how long the process was taking amid a belief they could have done it more quickly themselves. The link between these concerns and the lack of human resource capacity cannot be explicitly connected, as other issues such as misunderstanding by the ICLA recipients over whether to expect a phone call, poor communication approaches by NRC, and unrealistic expectations from refugees on how quickly these processes take, could all be contributing factors. However, even those who complained about the process did acknowledge how hard working the ICLA team is, and it seems likely capacity is at least a contributing factor. There is considerable risk to NRC's reputation moving forward as a spiral of reduced staffing levels, steady or increasing needs, and a backlog of cases further compounds these problems and increases dissatisfaction among the refugee community.

#### 5.11.3 ICLA should consider if there are more creative ways of conveying information to refugees, particularly those who struggle with literacy.

During the field visits, the evaluation team saw a number of posters about NRC's services and complaints options but did not see any related to ICLA. The lack of visual aids was confirmed through discussions with ICLA staff. NRC has informed the evaluation team that brochures on birth and marriage certificates are available, but the evaluation team saw none at any of the locations they visited, and are given to understand by NRC that they need reviewing. The locations where NRC has other activities such as its education centres or where refugees are likely to gather, such as UNHCR centres, MSF clinics etc., are ideal places to help increase awareness of both NRC's services, and the importance of and processes for obtaining legal residency and civil documentation. The development

of posters and leaflets using both pictures and written information would help reach individuals with literacy issues.

Similarly, a small number of refugees indicated they could not understand the instructions given to them in counselling sessions. This is supported by NRC's outcome monitoring data where approximately 4-10% of refugees' state they did not follow up on NRC's advice because they forgot the information or did not understand it.<sup>8</sup> A suggestion made during the results validation workshop by one ICLA team member was for lawyers or staff to record the instructions in a WhatsApp message, which the recipient could easily then refer back to. NRC could pilot test whether ideas such as these increase the numbers of recipients who follow NRC's advice.

## 5.12 How do beneficiaries and key stakeholders perceive the quality of the information, counselling and legal assistance services?

### 5.12.1 There was a mixed level of satisfaction with the quality of ICLA services from ICLA recipients, with dissatisfaction mainly related to levels of follow-up communication from ICLA staff and lawyers, and the inability of NRC to achieve the final steps in the process.

The majority of evaluation participants expressed satisfaction with NRC's services, but there was notable frustration in the levels of communication on the progress of cases and, particularly in the North and BML, about NRC not being able to complete the full process of registration of documents. It also became clear during the FGDs that refugees identify inconsistencies in the services offered by NRC, and are not clear on why some recipients are given more assistance or progress further than others.

---

"I did marriage proof and the service was good. It could not improve more than that and it simplified the process." FGD, Man, Legal Assistance, Bekaa

"Yes, people are happy with the services. The most important thing is they are able to move around without fear and have freedom of movement, and this makes them feel more at ease. NRC in this area has helped everyone. Even with the issues of legal stay. It takes them about 2 weeks to finalize things. A lot of things get delayed at the GSO, but this is from the GSO not NRC." KIL, Shawish, North

"If I did it myself it would be much slower. I do not understand the process still because NRC did it all for me. I am happy they did it for me. I know it is difficult so I don't mind that it is all done for me."  
FGD, Women, Legal Assistance, Bekaa

---

The levels of satisfaction with the services NRC provide could be split into three categories: satisfied with the quality and the outcome, satisfied with the quality but frustrated about the outcome, and dissatisfied. Unsurprisingly refugees expressing the highest level of satisfaction were those who felt they had achieved an end result from the assistance. Refugees who had either received civil documentation or obtained legal residency were happy with the quality of NRC's legal assistance.

There was near universal appreciation for the sensitivity of staff and lawyers in face to face meetings, with evaluation participants feeling they are treated well when they come to clinics or meet at government offices with staff and lawyers. In BML, there were some comments from refugees that when they speak on the phone to ICLA staff they are treated with more impatience.

Dissatisfaction with the quality of services stemmed from four main concerns: communication, how far along the process NRC could support the refugees, being asked to get documents, which were impossible to obtain, and a perception of different levels of support for different cases without any clear criteria. Evaluation participants felt communication from NRC at the start of the case concerning

---

<sup>8</sup> "Outcome Monitoring Analysis", excel file, Aug 2017-Aug 2019

how long it would take and subsequent follow up communication was weak. Many refugees commented on the fact they had a session with a lawyer and then not heard back from NRC, some for over two years. For example, one man who participated in a FGD in the Bekaa stated, “The main issue is the time. I went and did the marriage registration in Nov 2017. But until now, I have not received back my documents. I called NRC, the lawyer, he said he would check and call back, but he didn’t call.”

In some cases, this could be a breakdown in communication as to whether or not NRC could support them in their case and so whether they could expect a call back, but in others, people mentioned they had left their papers with the lawyer so presumably this meant NRC had started legal assistance for them. A number of FGD participants mentioned they had called NRC several times and each time been told they needed to wait for someone to call them back and received no other information. In some of these instances, it is possible that recipients are unreachable due to a change in number, or their phone being out of service, but it is not likely to be the case in all instances.

Overall, approximately 20% of the participants in the FGDs said they had been expecting a call back from NRC, which they never received. As noted in the relevance section, there was also dissatisfaction concerning how far along the process NRC could take the civil documentation or legal residency process. With civil documentation, most ICLA recipients had not been able to register their documents at the Syrian Embassy and a considerable number had also not managed to register at the Foreigners’ Registry and were frustrated that NRC would not do this for them. This leads to a questioning of the quality of ICLA services pertaining to communication between staff/lawyers and recipients as to what NRC will and will not be able to support them with. As one refugee woman in BML stated, “The interaction is good though, they are very kind. We should get the paper completed not with three bits missing. I came here for assistance, so it should be completed.”

There were regional differences in what refugees considered a finished case for civil documentation. Although most were aware, they needed to have their birth certificates registered at the Foreigners’ Registry. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Syrian Embassy, refugees in the Bekaa, and to a lesser extent in BML, considered their case closed from NRC’s point of view without these stamps, whereas some in BML and most in the North felt NRC should be responsible for obtaining these stamps for them. This discrepancy is probably linked to a perception of the utility of the document without these stamps. In the North, evaluation participants reported being unable to register their children in school without these endorsements, whereas this was not mentioned as the case in the Bekaa or BML.

There are likely valid reasons with each case, depending on the level of supporting documentation recipients have, but this was not clear to the evaluation participants, and it was a cause of considerable disquiet. One individual went as far as to suggest he felt something underhand was going on. Although this was without any evidence, it does demonstrate the potential risks to NRC’s reputation if it is not clear why some people are receiving some services and others are not.

A final concern raised about the quality of services was that several people said NRC, which the recipient perceived as impossible to follow, had given them instructions. This included being asked to get documents from Syria, which the recipient could not obtain, or being told they needed to obtain a stamp or document from an office they could not reach. As one evaluation participant in the North stated: “after they told me I needed to get the civil extracts from Syria I gave up because it is not possible. Overall, I do not understand why they lawyer is asking me to get this, and it is just impossible for me to do it. I can’t go back to Syria because I would be drafted if I did.” What is not possible for the evaluation team to assess is if this is actually, what the refugees are being asked to do, or if the lawyers are merely informing them the process cannot move forward due to this constraint. Either way it seems the communication is being understood as an instruction.

#### **5.12.2 Perception of the quality of ICLA services among other key stakeholders was very high**

The evaluation team spoke with key stakeholders from the international humanitarian community focused on legal assistance issues and with key duty-bearers of the Lebanese state, including Mukhtars and officials from Nofous offices and Sharia Courts. Universally these stakeholders praised NRC’s work. Duty-bearers highlighted how awareness among the refugee community of the need to obtain documents had improved, although could not conclusively attribute this to NRC, and that the quality of documents prepared by lawyers had strengthened in recent years.

Partners in the humanitarian community were similarly praiseworthy of NRC's ICLA interventions believing the quality of support given and satisfaction among refugees to be high. One humanitarian community legal actor informed the evaluation team, "From our perspective we have not received any negative feedback from refugees about NRC's services."

### 5.13 Is the programme implemented in the most efficient way (modalities) compared to alternatives?

#### 5.13.1 The human resource structuring (IFPs, ICLA staff, sawyers) is an effective use of resources, and creates an efficient approach to outreach, but NRC should review whether responsibilities could be realigned further to create more efficiencies

The timescale and scope of the evaluation meant a full observation and a review of the different responsibilities of the ICLA team was not possible. The evaluation TOR also excluded the capacity building of local organizations as a focus. However, based on observing some activities and the findings of KIs and FGDs with NRC staff and IFPs, it is possible to make certain observations. It is clear the IFPs are a considerable asset to the programme through providing a direct connection to the refugee community, identifying potential ICLA recipients, and increasing awareness of the importance of legal residency and civil documentation. There is some evidence that the IFP methodology of door to door outreach within Syrian refugee communities helps ICLA expand their capacity and, importantly, reach traditionally more hidden populations, such as the disabled and the elderly. However, the IFP's job is labour and time intensive and their role is limited. NRC staff stated during the evaluation they believe there are ways to expand the role of the volunteers. The work of the IFPs focuses mainly on distribution of generic information and as an outreach service to identify potential ICLA service recipients. During the past year, ICLA has experimented with the IFPs giving sessions that are more detailed on civil documentation, and consideration is being given to involving them more in HLP and legal residency cases as well.

NRC staff also raised the issue of whether the distribution of work between lawyers and ICLA staff is as efficient as it could be. Much of the legal assistance work is administrative support, such as filing papers in offices when it is not safe or possible for the refugees to do so themselves. Both NRC staff and some of the lawyers believed NRC might be able to reallocate responsibilities to allow staff, particularly those with a number of years' experience, to take over some of the responsibilities of the lawyers. The opinion of the lawyers in the FGD was quite split as to whether they believed this was possible. A further potential constraint raised in this FGD was refugee perception of the quality of NRC's services could reduce, as examples were given of some refugees refusing to listen to a staff member and insisting on seeing a lawyer instead. NRC would need to manage expectations in this regard.

#### 5.13.2 NRC is currently not coordinating with the NRC Syria programme to identify if there are potential synergies, which could be addressed through joint programming.

The 2018-2020 ICLA strategy for Lebanon states in 2019 "ICLA Lebanon will operationalise the information exchange and coordination on the issue of returns to Syria with ICLA programmes in Syria and Jordan."<sup>9</sup> The evaluation team understands this has not yet happened. One ICLA team member indicated there were plans to develop an information package on documentation a refugee would need when returning to Syria, which is something identified in the strategy, but this had not been done yet. Substantial evidence was collected during the evaluation that many refugees struggle to obtain necessary documentation from Syria, such as individual extracts, while others see obtaining documents in Syria as a potential alternative when they cannot finalise their documents in Lebanon. The evaluation did not find evidence these issues were being addressed by the ICLA programme, which at times was causing frustration among ICLA recipients. It may be possible to improve the relevance of the services to the refugee community if additional information can be added to ICLA's work, although it is noted restrictions imposed by the Syrian Government limit the work legal actors can do in Syria itself.

---

<sup>9</sup> ICLA Strategy Lebanon, 2018-2020, (Oct 2018 Revision), p5

#### Efficiency Conclusions

- ✓ The ICLA team are currently operating at full capacity. This has the potential to impact NRC's strong reputation among refugees if quality deteriorates as a result.
- ✓ The work of NRC is appreciated among the refugee community but satisfaction of the quality of services among the refugee community is mixed, often dependent on the outcome of the services provided.
- ✓ Concerns over communication were raised with approximately 20% of FGD participants indicating they had not been called back as expected with progress on their case.
- ✓ Key stakeholders including government and duty-bearers and members of the humanitarian legal assistance community praised NRC's work universally.
- ✓ NRC may be able to reallocate responsibilities to improve efficiency by giving the IFPs and ICLA staff more responsibilities.
- ✓ NRC is currently not focusing on cross-border synergies with the Syria programme.

## Impact

5.14 How have ICLA's activities contributed to increased protection and enjoyment of Syrian refugees' rights? In the two different thematic areas of ICLA intervention, what are the positive and negative (if any) changes NRC ICLA programme contributed both at individual level, at household and at community level?

#### 5.14.1 Civil documentation enables access to, and protection of, other rights

If refugees are able to acquire relevant and appropriate civil documentation it increases their access to, and enjoyment of, different rights in several ways. As discussed earlier, birth certificates enable enrolment in schools and access to education. There is some evidence to show that birth certificates can also ease access to healthcare for children. In a protracted and forced displacement context, the acquisition of birth certificates can also help prevent statelessness securing long term ID documents for children born outside their country of origin. All of these rights protections are evident in outcomes for the ICLA programme in Lebanon.

This is demonstrated in the MSC story (MSC brochure is found at Annex 4) which was shortlisted by the ICLA staff in the data validation workshop at the end of the data collection mission:

---

I was at the clinic, NRC came, and they were talking about birth and marriage registration and legal stay. This was about three years ago. I went to talk to them afterwards because I was interested in registering my three children. I gave them my husband's number. They called him later and made an appointment with the lawyer. They did the registration for all three of my children, but my husband has some papers missing so they cannot complete the process. However, with what we have I was able to enrol my son at school. They asked for his birth certificate, and took what we had even though it is not complete. But more importantly is the hospital. My daughter is frequently sick, lung infection, and now I have the paper I do not have problems going to the hospital or the clinic. For sure, they ask for the papers and the UNHCR paper. Before I went to NRC, there are some doctors who do not ask for papers, but mostly I just avoided going to the doctor. Once my son got sick and the hospital refused to treat him because he did not have his papers. Now I do not have to worry about whether or not they will accept us for the service. MSC Story 2, Woman, Legal Assistance Recipient, BML

Reason for selection from ICLA staff: "This was a typical case. We gave an information session, and then a refugee came to explain their case. We took the number and then got back to them with an appointment. We were able to assess the urgency and try to respond accordingly. In this case, the child needed urgent attention, so we responded immediately. The final outcome shows that we were able to help with the document but that it also acted as an enabler for other rights and services, and that the refugee also understood this. This is what we are trying to do as ICLA, and access other rights and services."

---

#### **5.14.2 Civil documentation provides protection for refugees outside of Lebanon**

As discussed above, birth certificates can also enable international travel for Syrian refugee children born in Lebanon, providing recognised documentation proving legal family relationships. Although not fool proof, birth certificates provide additional protection against the risk of trafficking across borders. This outcome was also evident in ICLA's programming, with many focus group participants detailing the importance of birth certificates for the purpose of international travel and to protect and preserve family unity.

#### **5.14.3 Civil documentation gives a sense of security and is appreciated for long term benefits, not just immediate results**

The most common response from evaluation participants of the change ICLA had brought about from them was a sense of well-being or security for the future from holding the documents. This was particularly the case with men who were less likely, particularly in the Bekaa and BML, to relate the purpose of obtaining documentation to the immediate opportunities for accessing school or health-care for their children. For families, civil documentation provides a sense of security through a documented family record. ICLA is assisting people to achieve this and, although most FGD respondents saw the benefits as a long-term outcome, the day to day benefits in Lebanon were also appreciated.



---

I attended a NRC counselling session in 2018 where they talked about marriage registration in the ITS. After the info session I came to the office, the lawyer accompanied my daughter and me to the Sharia court, and they were officially registered. The marriage registration took 2 months and the marriage was registered. This gives a nice sense of security for future in case of travel to Syria or my daughter needs to get divorced. Extract from MSC Story 13, Man, Legal Assistance, Bekaa

I wanted to seek the assistance of a lawyer in Syria to sort out this issue, but we did not have enough money to do it so we did not resort to a lawyer. One of my husband's friends told him about NRC, and NRC helped us to have the marriage certificate and to register our children. I already had my children but did not have the marriage certificate. Therefore, I did the marriage certificate and birth registration for my daughter together. I did my son's birth certificate later. I feel happy. What is good about it is I can send this marriage certificate to Syria, to my father or father in law. By having this document he can get for us a family booklet in Syria. It is important for my children to have this. Here or in Syria. You never know where you will end up. It is just an important document. MSC Story 6 Woman, Counselling, BML

I followed the instructions of the lawyer. I presented a request to legalise the stay of my son, I got an approval, and thanks to that, I was able to renew my son's papers. I was always scared whenever he left the house that he would be arrested or be subject to violence. I was very happy after he got legal stay. Extract from MSC Story 12, Woman IFP & Counselling recipient, Bekaa

"I'm happy now I have a proof for my son. It is like peace of mind. If I want to register him at school I have a proof," Woman, Legal Assistance, North

"There are no negative consequences, but the positive consequences are all long term," Man, Legal Assistance, Bekaa

---

#### **5.14.4 Marriage certificates deprioritised by refugees as protection of women's rights**

Some women in the focus groups spoke of the importance of marriage certificates to protect their rights in case of divorce or potential future custody disputes. However, although this was articulated, further discussion in FGDs showed that most women did not seek to acquire marriage certificates until it was needed to fulfil birth certificate procedures. Where men raised the importance of marriage certificates and women's rights it was generally the security they felt for their daughters being able to divorce if necessary, and not for any rights their wives could access.

#### **5.14.5 Legal residency is biggest impact for recipients**

The strongest benefits were probably felt by those who were able to obtain legal residency, although this was a very small sample size compared to the numbers of refugees who had received support on civil documentation or had been unsuccessful in obtaining legal residency.

---

NRC helped with my legal residency. They came and gave an info session. I had been registered with UNHCR but this had expired. I explained my case to NRC and they said they could help me and they went with me to the GSO and resolved the case and now I have legal stay. When I went to renew I had to leave at 5am in order to avoid the checkpoints because my residency had already expired and when we finished we had to wait until 7pm at night for the checkpoints to be clear. ICLA really followed up with me step by step. The difference for me is between living and dead. I used to see checkpoints and the people at them as something to fear. When I wanted to visit my friends and family, I could not and I was detained three times. Now I am able to move around freely in Lebanon. Now I feel safer. Before even if someone had given me \$20,000 to cross a checkpoint I would not have done it because I was afraid of the consequences. Now I am able to move without fear. MSC Story 18, Man, Legal Assistance, North

---

#### **5.14.6 Service delays are undermining ICLA's outcomes**

One negative impact the evaluation team found from the ICLA programme was the sense of frustration many of the recipients feel from the inability of NRC to finalize their paperwork or obtain legal residency for them. In general, men were more negative about ICLA reporting, in many cases, that ICLA services had made no difference in their current lives. It is notable that the selection committees for the MSC stories shortlisted stories, which demonstrated frustration or 'no-change' from the support of NRC. The stories represent the frustration many ICLA recipients feel when told they need to obtain

---

"We picked this story because we feel it represents the experience for us and the community. All of our experiences are that NRC start with the paperwork, they reach a certain point and then they are unable to pass it. Whatever NRC can do they continue, but anything NRC cannot do they ask the refugee to do it. However, we cannot do it; it is the most difficult steps. For example, going to the Syrian embassy to get the final stamp is not possible for us. NRC won't go, but we can't either." Explanation for shortlisting of story 8 from the BML & Bekaa selection committee

"I feel this story is the reality. People face this they cannot go back to Syria to get the documents they need. I personally experienced this with my daughter." Explanation for shortlisting of story 16 from women refugees in the North selection committee

---

documents from Syria, which they see as impossible, and when NRC is not able to finalise civil documentation or legal residency for them, both of which are highlighted in the efficiency criterion. It is significant the refugee selection committees identified these stories, and demonstrates how expectations individuals may have from ICLA do not always match by the final outcome.

#### **5.14.7 Delays in ICLA services impacting recipient finances**

Financial constraints, particularly in the last year where rising costs in Lebanon have affected all communities, are exacerbating legislative and policy barriers. While NRC can do little to mitigate these external factors, there is evidence that the programme itself is creating financial costs to recipients, mostly in the form of transport and phone calls following up on cases for those not receiving assistance from mobile clinics. This is more acute for people whose cases develop over a long period of time or where recipients are not hearing back from ICLA in what they perceive to be a timely manner. In these instances, recipients are spending money on multiple phone calls or visits to pursue updates on their case. While NRC does cover the administrative costs incurred with civil documentation procedures, the follow up process can still be costly for Syrian refugees.

Furthermore, delays (explained or otherwise) to service delivery can create unnecessary additional costs, for example for replacement expired documents, producing an unintended but negative outcome for ICLA recipients. These time and financial costs might erode away NRC's reputation and Syrian refugees trust in the service.

---

I got married about 2 months before the start of the war in Syria. I did not do a proof of marriage and then it was too later after the war started. I came to Lebanon and went to NRC. They asked me to bring my individual extract, but it is difficult to get from Syria if you do not have anyone there who can do it for you or you do not have enough money to pay someone to do it. However, I managed to get it. I called them [NRC] and told them I had all the papers ready. They said they would call me to make an appointment. However, that was 3 years ago and they never called. And the individual extract expires after 3 months. You have to renew it. Therefore, I would have to now get another one if NRC were to help. And this is not an easy thing. I did not call them, because they told me they would call me back. But they did not. Woman, Counselling, North.

---

#### **5.14.8 Improvements to outcome monitoring framework would give more accurate impact analysis**

Many of NRC staff who were interviewed by the evaluation team indicated they believed the level of success from counselling and legal assistance cases to be very high, which is supported by monitoring data for birth and marriage registration. The difference in perception between staff and the refugee evaluation participants may be linked to an understanding of what success in a case is. The outcome monitoring questionnaire asks recipients, "Did you succeed in achieving at least one additional step thanks to NRC's assistance?" This is presented in the outcome review document as simply "did you succeed?" These are quite different metrics. Most of the refugees the evaluation team spoke to had managed to get their process moved on at least one step, unless they had only come to NRC for the Foreigners' Registry, Ministry of Foreign Affairs or Syrian Embassy stamps, but, particularly in the North and BML, recipients did not consider they had been successful until they had completed the whole process. This methodology for measuring outcomes is misleading and measures an NRC success metric, rather than a recipient success metric. This skews the overall impact picture given by the data. A better metric to use would be to ask recipients if they got the outcome they wanted/intended, and also if it was feasible for NRC to achieve or them help achieve the level the recipient wanted.

#### **5.14.9 Refugees are informing others in the communities of NRC's services, but not passing on, or using for themselves, specific information/knowledge on how to obtain documentation.**

FGD participants were asked if they shared the knowledge they gained from NRC on various procedures with others in their community. Most participants informed the evaluation team they had shared information on NRC's services, and recommended individuals to visit NRC for support but did not share information on the procedures. Similarly, a number of individuals who had received support on birth certificates for one child indicated they came back, or would come back to NRC for support for other birth certificates in the future. This suggests many refugees appreciate the services NRC provide but are either not learning from the process, not retaining knowledge shared, or not able to use knowledge learned for unknown reasons. This is limiting the extent to which recipients are being empowered through counselling.

There was some indication from participants that they knew the steps needed to take but came to NRC because movement restrictions prevented them from following these steps. Other refugees indicated that, because NRC would pay the administrative fees for documents, they would come to NRC rather than follow the process themselves. Women FGD participants were more likely to report they had learned little about the process through counselling and would feel unsure of the steps if they had to repeat them themselves. Women legal assistance recipients were even more likely to report they knew nothing about the processes as the lawyer had taken care of everything, and would definitely have to come back to NRC if they needed help again, even if it was for the same issue e.g. birth certificate. Overall, the evaluation team did not find NRC is significantly empowering refugees to obtain and diffuse knowledge within their communities, or take initiative to obtain their documents themselves. FGD participants indicated a range of factors contributing to this (as detailed above), but

the net effect was the same. Without an improvement in refugees' financial or legal status, it is unlikely NRC will be able to make improvements in this area.

## 5.15 How has ICLA advocacy component shaped Government policies towards the protection of Syrian refugees in Lebanon?

### 5.15.1 Advocacy has resulted in some small changes

The overall legal framework for acquiring civil documentation in Lebanon is largely the same for Syrians and other foreign nationals in the country as it is for Lebanese. The significant exception being the requirement for documentation to also be stamped by the Foreigner's Registry, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Syrian embassy in Beirut. In this regard, the international community's advocacy to waive some of these requirements for Syrian refugees can be seen as progress. For example, the 2018 decision to allow for registration of children born in Lebanon over the age of 1 (with certain limitations) through the regular process is a positive development.<sup>10</sup> The evaluation team interview with one Nofous employee in Beirut indicated a perception that the Lebanese authorities' feel they have made several concessions to establish procedures to more easily facilitate access to civil documentation procedures for Syrian refugees. These developments are likely as a result of advocacy by external actors. Whether or not these can be directly attributable to ICLA or NRC's advocacy is unclear.

### 5.15.2 Advocacy has had little impact on legal residency requirements

However, the main barriers to legal residency have remained entrenched and, in many ways, the situation for Syrians has actually deteriorated over time, despite some progressive amendments on paper. This has largely been due to a lack of enforcement of policy and inconsistent and arbitrary practices at all levels. For example, in early 2017, the Lebanese General Security Office (GSO) issued a waiver that exempted Syrian refugees registered with UNHCR prior to 1 January 2015, and who had not renewed their residency under tourism, sponsorship, property ownership, or tenancy categories in 2015 and 2016, from the US\$200 annual renewal fee.<sup>11</sup> This policy however was rarely enforced, and, in any case, only applied to a certain segment of the refugee population; an estimated half a million Syrian refugees not registered with UNHCR are thought to be in Lebanon and are not eligible for this waiver.

### 5.15.3 Systematic analysis and utilisation of ICLA's data would strengthen advocacy

A detailed assessment of ICLA's advocacy is beyond the scope of this evaluation, but the evaluation team did find some potential areas for greater coordination and potential impact. There is clearly a wealth of information, data and analysis within the ICLA team. Both in individual offices, but across the programme and embedded in some of the monitoring data. This information could be better utilised to provide an evidence base in support of advocacy with specific objectives. For example, the non-implementation of government of policy could be evidence based through ICLA casework. Concrete examples would help support advocacy by UN agencies and donors even if NRC were not to take the lead themselves. As one international legal actor told the evaluation team, "Maybe they could share their data more. I know they have a lot of it and they do anecdotally, but more sharing of reports/analysis would be good."

What information is held by ICLA could also be more readily shared with other core competencies within NRC Lebanon and among the humanitarian community as a whole. By all accounts, ICLA staff lead the advocacy on ICLA related issues, which means there is reduced information sharing of how the evidence within the ICLA programme, nor the analysis, impacts or could support advocacy by other core competencies.

Furthermore, with ICLA's case specific information, this evidence base could strengthen policy positions across the humanitarian community on a broad range of issues, beyond annual briefs for donor conferences. As an example, there are 42 GSO centres in Lebanon and inconsistent

---

<sup>10</sup> This waiver applies to Syrian/PRS children born in Lebanon between January 2011 and February 2018, later extended to February 2019.

<sup>11</sup> "Q&A for Syrian refugees on new requirements for residency renewal in Lebanon," UNHCR, March 7, 2017.

implementation of policies between the offices and even individual officers. Given the fairly low numbers of centres, NRC is in a position to share information of where particular bottlenecks occur when they identify them, with the legal actors group and donors. This would support donors in particular in advocating with GSO to address these issues. The evaluation team were informed that ICLA used to issue regular legal advocacy briefs, but these were no longer being compiled. Key Informants noted that it would be useful for ICLA to restart this type of regular legal analysis. Tailoring this analysis to advocacy objectives with specific evidence from ICLA programming would strengthen NRC's advocacy, but also that of other humanitarian actors.

The evaluation team found that ICLA has a reliance on donors or UNHCR for direct engagement with government authorities on policy discussion. While there may be good strategic reasons for this at the national level, ICLA has good opportunity and access for engagement with key stakeholders at the local level. This has been done to some extent in an ad hoc manner in some locations, but a more strategic and consistent engagement with the Personal Status Department or specific GSO offices might have some influence on some of the more arbitrary implementation practices that are proving challenging for Syrian refugees' access to civil documentation and legal residency.

#### 5.16 Were there any unintended positive or negative consequences of ICLA interventions? How does this inform the revision of the theory of change of the programme?

##### 5.16.1 ICLA has increased national legal expertise

The evaluation team found a high degree of appreciation for ICLA's services amongst interviewed Mukhtars in Lebanon. There was specific acknowledgement that NRC hired lawyers were more aware of procedures for civil documentation as a result of the partnership with NRC. Mukhtars believed files prepared by these lawyers were more complete and in line with procedures, increasing capacity and awareness within Lebanon's legal community.

NRC trainings for Mukhtars and other legal actors have a similar outcome. This net benefit is not reflected in the theory of change, but is a positive outcome from the ICLA programme.

##### 5.16.2 Civil documentation increases Syrian refugees' sense of well-being and security

The ToCs do not articulate the outcome of a greater sense of well-being, which refugees related to the evaluation team as a result of having their paperwork in order. Whether this is an unintended outcome, or just missing from the ToCs is not clear but it should be added to the ToCs.

### Impact Conclusions

- ✓ ICLA recipients who successfully acquire civil documentation or legal residency through programme assistance see immediate positive impact in their access to other rights and protections in Lebanon.
- ✓ Assistance on civil documentation can also have long term positive impact for rights and protections overseas in the future.
- ✓ ICLA's biggest immediate impact is likely for recipients able to acquire legal residency through assistance from the programme.
- ✓ NRC advocacy has had limited impact on changing overarching policy and law but has contributed to small wins to mitigate the worst effects of the prevailing environment.
- ✓ Better use of ICLA data and analysis would strengthen advocacy for the broader humanitarian community and across core competencies within NRC.
- ✓ ICLA has increased legal expertise and knowledge within the Lebanese legal and civil administration systems.
- ✓ ICLA is contributing to Syrian refugees' overall sense of emotional well-being and security.
- ✓ A more nuanced outcome monitoring framework would give a more accurate picture of impact.

## Learning and Sustainability

### 5.17 What mechanisms have been built by the programme to ensure sustainability of the intervention?

In the context of this evaluation, sustainability has two separate dimensions: first, will the benefits of the support given to ICLA recipients continue in the future; second, has NRC developed systems and supported capacity development to allow continued access to, and enjoyment of, legal rights by refugees beyond the period of NRC's intervention?

#### 5.17.1 Documentation obtained through ICLA will remain valid in Lebanon, Syria, and other countries well beyond the lifecycle of this crisis.

The long-term benefits of ICLA's civil documentation work will outlast NRC's intervention in Lebanon. Adults who obtain marriage certificates and children who obtain birth certificates have a lasting document, which grants benefits both now in Lebanon through access to services and rights protection, and should do the same in the future either in Lebanon, Syria or a third country. Testimony from ICLA recipients on changes which have already occurred in their lives, and on the reasons why obtaining these documents are important for the future, are included in the impact section, and highlight how NRC has had success on the first question of sustainability, in which the effects outlast NRC's intervention.

#### 5.17.2 Lack of freedom of movement is a major impediment to achieving sustainability in the intervention

Various evaluation participants shared that knowledge among refugees both of the need to obtain documentation and the processes for doing this had increased in the last 2-3 years. While it is not possible to measure NRC's contribution to this, there was a widespread belief among key stakeholders that NRC had contributed significantly to this. As one Mukhtar in the North stated: "Yes, there is a big



change I have noticed. I think refugees have spread the information amongst them and they are more aware about the processes. When they come they are better prepared.”

However, there are currently two fundamental barriers to moving from this increased knowledge to an eventuality where refugees are largely able to obtain these documents without the support of NRC or a similar organisation; namely lack of freedom of movement and cost. Many refugees, particularly in the North, stated they were aware of all the steps they needed to follow to obtain civil documentation and would do it themselves if they could, but a lack of legal residency meant they could not visit the necessary offices. In addition, many also shared they found the costs to be prohibitive, something compounded by a lack of legal residency which prevents opportunities for obtaining decent work. Overall, this suggests the way sustainability would be strengthened the most, would be to focus on obtaining more legal residency for refugees and thus enhancing freedom of movement. Whether this is possible under the current regulatory situation is not fully clear.

#### **5.17.3 The work NRC has done to build knowledge and capacity among the IFPs can provide a level of sustainability within the refugee community**

One of the strengths of NRC's ICLA programme are the IFPs. Providing a direct link to the refugee community, the IFPs are able to identify potential ICLA clients, and provide information on ICLA services and the basic steps a refugee must follow. Through training, NRC has been able to increase the knowledge of the IFPs and expand their duties and, as noted above, there is potential to expand these further. This should ensure knowledge on processes are maintained within the refugee community.

#### **5.17.4 The use of a stable cadre of lawyers by the ICLA programme has helped strengthen knowledge within the legal community which can be leveraged beyond NRC's interventions**

NRC has worked successfully with a group of lawyers over a number of years, during which time the quality of submissions and knowledge of processes have, according to officials the evaluation team spoke to, increased. This work helps ensure the legal profession has the capacities to support the refugee community and is aware of the challenges they face. This knowledge should be retained with the legal community beyond the period of NRC's ICLA interventions. As one local official stated: “Working with the lawyers is great because the lawyers now understand the steps. I like working with the lawyers, they are very respectful. I have seen a great improvement in the lawyers who have gained a lot of experience and their work is better and their cooperation has improved a lot.”

#### **5.17.5 Increased knowledge and interaction among Mukhtars and officials of the Nofous offices and Sharia Courts should help improve consistency of application of new regulations**

Many of the Mukhtars who were interviewed for the evaluation stated they appreciated the opportunities NRC had provided in the past to meet and discuss key concerns and the application of new regulations; they would welcome the opportunity to do this in the future. Few of the interview participants requested formal training. Instead, they suggested meetings to exchange views and share challenges, including the opportunity for them to brief NRC on the situation.

### **5.18 How can ICLA contribute to a sustainable legal aid and protection strategy at a national level?**

This was raised as a recommendation in the needs assessment conducted in December 2018.

1. Build the capacity of national legal service providers (including paralegals);
2. Widen the scope and nature of free and quality legal aid service provisions, going beyond the narrow definition of judicial assistance;
3. Reinforce referral mechanisms established under the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP) and enlarge their mandate to include all relevant actors, i.e. not being limited to humanitarian assistance to refugee actors only.
4. Assist in establishing a complaint mechanism to ensure accountability and quality legal aid;
5. Assist in developing criteria to oversee and monitor the quality of legal aid services;

6. Advocate and actively participate in drafting legal documents, policies and draft bills aiming to reform and develop the legal aid sector in general.

Given the broad scope of the evaluation and the focus on listening to the experiences of the refugee population and local government stakeholders such as Mukhtars and officials from Nofous offices, the evaluation team are unable to take a judgement on this question or these recommendations. NRC has submitted a proposal to work with national NGOs to transfer NRC's knowledge, experience and tools in order to provide more sustainable legal aid to refugees and other vulnerable groups in Lebanon but this have not yet been approved. Given the likely overall decrease in donor funding of legal activities and international humanitarian programming in Lebanon over the next five years, NRC should look more closely at a sustainability and exit strategy, particularly if large scale Syrian refugee returns (voluntary or otherwise), start happening in the short to medium term. ICLA can still also play a key role before and during returns processes, ensuring legal preparedness, case follow up and information coordination between the NRC Lebanon and Syria offices.

## Global Learning Priorities

### 5.19 Are ICLA programmes adequately addressing protection risks linked to their programming?

#### 5.19.1 Refugees are informed of protection risks and do not believe NRC's advice has put them at risk

The evaluation found a strong awareness of potential protection concerns linked to the programme among lawyers, staff and IFPs. Lawyers and ICLA staff reported considering protection risks when reviewing files and giving counselling. NRC also uses a mobile approach where relevant to provide counselling or legal assistance in the location the refugees are based, such as in ITSs. The evaluation team was not able to travel to Wadi Khaled because permission was not given, but it is reported the mobile sharia court approach has also helped reduce protection risks by bringing the services to the refugees.

Similarly, ICLA recipients did not believe they had been given advice or asked to do anything, which created risks for them. The evaluation found only one case of a man who had been given advice to travel to Zahle through checkpoints, which led to his detention and subsequent problems with GSO, but this occurred in 2014, outside of the scope of this evaluation. No-one else reported they felt they had been asked to do something, which put them at risk.

#### 5.19.2 There is evidence to suggest ICLA interventions reduces risky behaviour, thus reducing protection risks.

The evaluation is not able to quantify this effect, but some evaluation participants reported they had not undertaken risky behaviour as a result of NRC's advice. The MSC story below provides an example of this. Without NRC's support, this individual may have made a risky journey to Aleppo, putting both her physical safety and her return to Lebanon at risk.

---

My husband initially wanted to send me to Aleppo to get a proof of marriage. But we received a visit from NRC at home and they evaluated our situation. I was then sick. After two weeks, they called me back and said they would help me with the paper. Before, my husband thought the only way to do it was if I went back to Aleppo. But, NRC helped us to do it here. I was happy. Because we are living here, and we did not have to pay for anything and we did not have to go back to Syria so I am very happy. MSC Story 5, Woman, Counselling, BML

The man wanted to add his child to the family booklet in Syria and he could not do that without registering his daughter's birth. She was a year and a half old already and NRC was able to register her correct birthday and now the family live in Syria. This allows them to live in Syria without concerns over registration or status. Without ICLA, this would not have been possible. Without NRC, the person would have done it illegally through forgery and they would have registered her the day she arrived in Syria, not her birthday. Extract from MSC Story 9, IFP, Man, Bekaa

---

Harder to quantify is how many refugees are acting on advice to do nothing because the protection risks are too high. It is impossible to gauge whether without this advice, some ICLA recipients would have taken certain risks to obtain their documents. NRC's lawyers and staff did report they often counsel individuals they are better off not trying to move their cases forward. However, testimony from refugees suggest there is considerable awareness of the risks they may face particularly from movement without legal documents.

There is also some evidence to suggest some refugees are responding to blockages in the process of obtaining documents by pursuing avenues, which can cause problems for them in future. This is mainly through irregularly registering children born or marriages enacted in Lebanon, as having taken place in Syria, often with forged documents or paid corruption. One man in a FGD in the North shared how after being told by the NRC lawyer he could not register his marriage without obtaining a document from Tripoli, which he was not able to do, he registered it in Syria. Either others shared how they or people they knew who had received counselling from NRC, paid to have their child registered as being born in Syria to be able to add them to their family booklet. This has the potential to cause problems for the child in future both in Lebanon and Syria as the information on their documents is wrong. Although NRC is not advising refugees to do this, and there are many examples of their advice to stop refugees from taking this route, it is possible in cases where NRC cannot move the file forward without certain documents. The recipient is taking their own initiative to obtain these in a manner, which can cause protection risks for them or their family members either now or in the future.

**5.19.3 There is no clear evidence NRC is identifying particularly vulnerable groups such as persons with disabilities and tailoring their support accordingly. While this may not be creating protection risks, it means NRC is also not working to reduce the risks of these particular groups**

Although there is specific targeting of women through GISs at health clinics and directly in ITSs and other shelters, there was no evidence given that IFPs have other criteria to reach more hidden populations. This may improve in 2020 because of the partnership with HI but currently this does mean NRC is not working to reduce the specific risks of the most vulnerable groups. It is also acknowledged that NRC is working on child marriage. ICLA is referring child spouses to specialised actors to conduct a risk assessment before proceeding with proof of marriage where the child is 15 or below. NRC also contracted two international human rights lawyers to give opinions on NRC's position vis-à-vis international law and the best interests of the child in late 2019. As per the ICLA strategy, "In 2018, ICLA started to examine its programmatic response to child marriages within the context of marriage registration work. This will continue into 2019, along with a targeted initiative within the national PWG to assess the status of implementation and resulting protection concerns of the Inter-Agency Guidelines on Early Marriage, adopted in 2016, with a view to revise the Note, as necessary." As with the work with HI, this is fairly new to ICLA and difficult for the evaluation to take an assessment of at this point.

### 5.19.3 The accountability mechanisms for ICLA recipients are still at a nascent stage

NRC only set up an accountability department in the Lebanon Country Office in 2019, and as such, the mechanisms are still being pilot tested and rolled out. ICLA does have a series of helplines, which refugees can call. These tend to be used for enquires about services, follow-up calls, and booking appointments rather than for complaints. Staff are trained though to forward complaints on issues such as fraud, sexual exploitation and abuse, staff misbehaviour and the quality of programming to the accountability department. NRC is piloting a dedicated accountability hotline in the South but this has not yet been introduced to the areas within the scope of this evaluation.

One of main complaints during the evaluation was the communication over the phone between ICLA recipients and ICLA staff. As such, accountability would be strengthened if the reporting hotline was dedicated for complaints issues and not held by ICLA staff. This would require a system for day to day enquires which were not complaints to be passed on to the relevant team member for follow-up. IFPs shared with the evaluation team that at times they felt there were not listened to by NRC and would like to give more input into the work of ICLA. The ICLA team should also consider if there is a better process for ensuring IFPs are able to have their voices heard and have some input into decision making.

### 5.19.4 ICLA is ensuring privacy and confidentiality concerns of clients

FGD participants were generally comfortable with the set up for counselling and legal assistance provision. With the exception of one woman in the North, FGD recipients believed their confidentiality and privacy were respected and protected. Of note, as mentioned earlier in the report, the fact the gender of the lawyer is random dependent on the area the refugee lives in, may be a deterrent for prospective female clients in some cases. ICLA should assess whether gender dynamics are preventing access to services.

#### Global Learning Priorities and Sustainability Conclusions

- ✓ Civil documents obtained through NRC's support will remain valid and useful to ICLA recipients well beyond the lifespan of the ICLA intervention in Lebanon.
- ✓ Lack of legal residency and thus freedom of movement creates a major obstacle/limitation to sustainability as a significant proportion of the refugee population is reliant on NRC, another organization or a private actor to complete certain elements of the process, and the last stage, registering at the Syrian Embassy cannot be safely achieved.
- ✓ The increased capacity of IFPs should ensure a retention of knowledge within the refugee community.
- ✓ The increased experience of NRC's lawyers in supporting refugees should ensure the legal profession is in a stronger position to respond to the refugee communities needs.
- ✓ NRC's IFPs, staff and lawyers are aware of and take steps to ensure ICLA recipients are educated on protection risks related to their cases.
- ✓ There is no evidence NRC is specifically targeting vulnerable groups and thus not producing tailored programming, which would help reduce the protection risks of these groups.
- ✓ NRC's accountability mechanisms are still be piloted and so there is limited options

---

## 6 Recommendations

### Main Recommendations to NRC

1. **Improve inclusion by increasing outreach to persons with disabilities:** The evaluation found NRC has begun to focus on people with special needs through its partnership with HI. This is still at an early stage, and NRC should prioritise ensuring new approaches are taken up throughout the ICLA programming. To ensure a greater focus on the needs of persons with disabilities, NRC should
  - ✓ Ensure the Washington Group Questions are being used in all field offices and IFPs are fully trained on inclusion.
  - ✓ Conduct regular follow up to ensure the approaches are being used accurately and appropriately. This outreach should ensure more data on the needs of persons with disabilities, which can be supplemented by conducting FGDs with persons with disabilities to understand if they have different legal aid needs and understand if they are able to complete the different steps required in the civil documentation or legal stay process.
  - ✓ Ensure data is analysed and adjustments to programming approaches made accordingly.
  - ✓ Not limited to persons with disabilities, NRC should conduct needs assessment focused explicitly on marginalised and vulnerable groups. A needs assessment was conducted in December 2018 but this covered refugee needs in general, not marginalised groups.
2. **Improve gender sensitivity by ensuring women are able to choose which gender lawyer they wish to meet with if capacity allows:** Some women in the FGDs indicated they were uncomfortable to speak to a male lawyer because a female lawyer was not present in that location. Although this was a limited complaint, it is possible this is affecting the willingness of women to access NRC's services. If capacity is limited, NRC should pilot with women lawyers and expand if it demonstrably increases women's access to ICLA services.
3. **Improve the accessibility of the clinics and/or expand mobile services to increase access to services by less mobile populations.** A number of concerns about accessibility were identified during the evaluation. Many of the clinics are not physically accessible for individuals with mobility issues such as persons with disabilities and the elderly. The evaluation team saw one good practice at NRC's education centre in Bheddine where a wheelchair ramp had been installed, but many clinics required negotiating steep steps. Movement concerns for those who need to cross checkpoints may also be reducing access for more vulnerable populations. NRC has successfully introduced mobile clinics and sharia courts in certain areas but should consider if these could be expanded. This would also reduce travel costs for recipients, which was a complaint of some refugees during the FGDs.
4. **Improve the set-up of the counselling session by providing toys/books for children in clinics.** The evaluation team was able to observe many parents bring their young children to the clinics. NRC could consider providing stimulating toys and games to occupy children both during any waiting period and during the consultation. Particularly during the consultation, this would allow parents to focus on the information being provided, and thus may help improve the numbers of recipients who are able to follow NRC's advice after counselling sessions. This may particularly benefit women, who are often the primary child caretaker during ICLA sessions.
5. **Pilot different approaches to information dissemination:** Most of the information given by ICLA staff to refugees is done through verbal information sessions, written lists of documents

needed, and face to face consultations. There are ways in which NRC could experiment with disseminating information through other mediums. ICLA could consider:

- ✓ Posting cartoon posters explaining legal processes in various locations where refugees need to wait for periods, such as health clinics.
- ✓ Reviewing previously developed posters for accuracy and relevance now and re-printing where relevant.
- ✓ Recording WhatsApp messages of instructions after counselling in order to reduce the risk of information loss or misunderstanding. This may also help disseminate information to other members of the family or community interested in these processes.

6. **Ensure information on the expected length and progress of cases is provided to ICLA recipients on a regular basis (even if this is just to inform them there has been no progress on the case).** A substantial number of FGD participants indicated they were not aware of how long their cases would take nor had received follow up calls about their cases. This included individuals who had called asking for counselling, those who had received counselling or legal assistance, and those who had given documents to NRC lawyers or staff. The evaluation was not able to ascertain if this was due to misunderstandings about whether to expect a call back on behalf of the refugee, a failure of NRC to conduct necessary follow-up, or the refugee missing the call. Many mentioned when they called NRC, they were told that they simply had to wait for the lawyer to call them without a timeframe being given to them. NRC should:

- ✓ Ensure as much as possible recipients are given an expected timeline for their cases when they come in for legal assistance sessions.
- ✓ Try to establish a call system for recipients of support to ensure they are kept informed of their case, even if this is just a call to say there has been no progress.

7. **Introduce NRC's work on legal residency earlier and more frequently in recipient contact with ICLA.** A number of FGD participants who had received support on civil documentation, suggested they were not aware that NRC supported legal stay. This was surprising, as the evaluation team had been informed that during in-take the lawyer or staff member conduct a holistic review of all legal needs of the client and their family. It may be that for cases where it is identified by the lawyer that NRC could not support on legal stay, this part of NRC's work is therefore not mentioned to the recipient. However, to ensure transparency and awareness of services within the broader community, it would be advisable to be clearer with all recipients on what NRC can and cannot support on with legal residency.

8. **Improve transparency on criteria for support.** The evaluation team found frustration among refugees concerning why some people are supported for one type of service and others are not. This included whether a refugee received counselling or legal assistance, and why some refugees appeared to be supported to different stages of the birth certificate. While the evaluation team accepts there may be reasons behind each case, this was not apparent to refugees. As such;

- ✓ ICLA should publish and be more transparent with recipients on their criteria for counselling vs legal assistance.
- ✓ ICLA should publish and be more transparent with recipients when they are able to assist at each stage, and when they are not.

9. **Improve the effectiveness and analysis of outcome monitoring:** The evaluation found certain limitations to outcome monitoring. These included the definition of success on civil document to differ between what is asked of the recipient and what is presented in the findings, that outcome monitoring does not include legal assistance recipients, and that analysis of results tends to be limited to donor reporting and not programme improvement. As such, NRC should:



- ✓ Expand outcome monitoring to legal assistance recipients to improve understanding of satisfaction of services and recipients' perception of whether cases have been successful or not. Retrain field staff on the classification of cases, particularly to ensure differences between counselling and legal assistance are accurately recorded.
  - ✓ Ensure outcome monitoring captures how far along in a process counselling recipients have progressed and if they have been blocked at a certain stage, not just if they have managed to move their case one step forward.
  - ✓ Re-define what 'success' means for outcome monitoring from a recipient perspective, rather than a NRC metric.
  - ✓ Ensure outcome monitoring results are used for programme improvement and not just donor reporting.
10. **Review the responsibilities of different team members:** The ICLA team is stretched to full capacity and the current funding outlook suggests NRC will have to work with resources that are more limited in future despite needs remaining high. NRC will need to review the roles and responsibilities of different team members to see if services can be delivered using fewer resources. In this regard:
- ✓ NRC should review if there are ways to increase the responsibilities of IFPs. These could include providing greater support on in-take and follow-up of cases, and the identification of more vulnerable and hidden populations.
  - ✓ NRC should also review whether ICLA staff could take on some of the work of lawyers on the more straightforward cases. Particularly staff who have been with the project for 3-4 years should have a strong knowledge of case needs.
11. **Explore partnerships and/or public interest litigation on legal residency with domestic legal aid providers to increase capacity and entrench expertise within the Lebanese legal community.** To entrench sustainability and address the problems of reduced funding, NRC should also focus on increasing domestic capacity to provide support to refugees and other vulnerable groups.
12. **Continue to scale up work on legal residency with a particular focus on legal assistance.** During the evaluation, FGD participants frequently expressed their highest need for support to be on legal residency. This aligns with previous reports and consultations NRC has undertaken. Although it is acknowledged the political environment for increasing legal residency is difficult, it is recommended that NRC focus more of its resources on supporting legal residency cases where possible. Increasing legal residency would have the additional benefit of removing some of the barriers refugees face in obtaining civil documentation. It would be anticipated the level of support needed by refugees is likely to be legal assistance because of the barriers placed on refugees and the inconsistent application of agreed procedures by different GSO offices and individual officers.
13. **Conduct an assessment on financial costs to recipients caused by ICLA services, including costs related to unreasonable delays.** Refugees complained they had high costs from using NRC services particularly when it involved a number of journeys to the clinic for various different reasons, or when a delay in service meant paperwork they had obtained to support their applications expired and needed to be replaced. To address this, NRC should
- ✓ Conduct an assessment on major causes of delays to ICLA services, both internal and external.
  - ✓ Identify ways to reduce delays in areas within NRC's control.
  - ✓ Conduct an assessment on the various costs borne by ICLA recipients.
  - ✓ Identify ways to reduce or eliminate such costs through initiatives such as expanded mobile clinics, more systematic call backs or WhatsApp messaging.
  - ✓ Consider reimbursement of expenses where unreasonable delays have led to additional costs for the recipient.

14. **NRC should explore programmatic and/or advocacy cooperation and coordination between the Lebanon and Syria ICLA programmes.** Information on what refugees in Lebanon will need to complete paperwork in Syria should be included in verbal and written advice and leaflets to refugees in Lebanon. ICLA Lebanon is planning to develop in the coming months a legal preparedness package for returns, including information and procedures in Syria, in the framework of a regional project that started in 2020 and this should be prioritised, particularly if returns (voluntary or otherwise) start to accelerate.
15. **Strengthen coordination both internally with other CCs and externally with the humanitarian community working on legal issues, UN agencies, and donors by ensuring the sharing of data for common advocacy goals.** In particular ICLA should:
- ✓ Provide regular analysis and dissemination of (anonymised) ICLA data to external stakeholders to strengthen case specific and policy advocacy. For example, ICLA could compile an evidence base of non-implementation of government policies at specific GSO offices and share with donors/humanitarian actors/UNHCR to support advocacy on these issues. ICLA should share information and coordinate advocacy priorities with other core competencies within NRC Lebanon and/or MERO where relevant.
  - ✓ ICLA should undertake a power mapping and stakeholder analysis to identify regional and local advocacy targets where NRC could intervene directly or through other interlocutors, particularly on non-implementation of official government policies.

---

## 7 Lessons

### ✓ IFPs help increase the programmes connection to the refugee community

The use of IFPs is an effective approach to identifying those in need of legal support in the refugee community, and maintaining regular awareness of emerging legal needs. To maximise this resource, NRC needs to consider the level of responsibility the IFPs can take on and ensure a strong feedback system to strengthen NRC's analysis of upcoming trends.

The IFPs also provide critical awareness raising about the services to refugees who live in locations where there is not a large concentration of other refugees, i.e. individual housing rather than ITs. In these areas, the evaluation team found that refugees were less likely to have heard about NRC's services from others in the community and thus the information the IFPs provided alerted them to the services on offer. The evaluation team was not able to make a judgement as to whether this is caused by there being fewer refugees in the community to share information, or fewer other organisations to suggest refugees access NRC's services, or possibly a combination of both.

### ✓ Advocacy needs to be supported by on-the-ground details

Effective advocacy will only work if on the ground field information is analysed and shared with partners and donors. NRC should have the information to identify particular blockages with GSO or other offices and present these to donors and UNHCR for further advocacy. This may in particular help improve some of the barriers to obtaining legal residency, which refugees face.

### ✓ Regional flexibility in approaches helps improve the relevance and effectiveness of NRC's service delivery

Although the regulatory regime on paper is the same throughout Lebanon, local interpretation of policies and the ease of movement varies throughout the country. Some of the notable successes of the ICLA project are where NRC has adapted its approaches, such as the use of the mobile sharia court, conducting counselling sessions in ITs, and acting as a courier of documents.

### ✓ Poor communication increases recipient dissatisfaction and undermining ICLA's reputation

Dissatisfaction occurs when refugees are expecting (rightly or wrongly) more follow-up or communication from NRC. The most common complaint from refugee FGD participants was the lack of follow-up communication after counselling and legal assistance sessions. The evaluation team was not able to assess whether this was due to misunderstanding about whether to expect follow-up or just the promised follow-up not being done. Regardless this has caused dissatisfaction among refugees. Ensuring timely communication follow-up with refugees improves satisfaction of services.

---

## 8 Annexes

### Annex 1: TOR

#### Evaluation Terms of Reference

#### NRC LEBANON

#### Evaluation of ICLA (LEGAL ASSISTANCE) PROGRAMME

**Country:** LEBANON

**Duration:** October 2019 – February 2020

**Reporting to:** Evaluation Steering Committee

#### 1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1.1 Background on the conflict/context
<p>With the protracted displacement of an estimated 1.5million Syrians in Lebanon, both the socio-economic conditions of refugee households and vulnerable Lebanese, and the protection environment in Lebanon continue to deteriorate. Lack of legal protection and access to justice is causing increased vulnerability in the Syrian refugee community. By end June 2019, 929,624 Syrians were registered with UNHCR, and around 29,000 Palestinians from Syria remained in Lebanon.</p> <p>The overall advocacy space has further tightened with the new Lebanese Government's clear focus on returns and the implementation of a variety of measures (both by central and local Government actors) that further restrict refugees' movement and access to livelihoods, such as evictions, curfews, arrests/detention, raids, demolition in informal tented settlements (ITSs) and crackdown on Syrian businesses and workers.</p>
1.2 Legal status of Syrian refugees in Lebanon and protection/legal aid challenges
<p>72.8% of Syrian refugees in Lebanon do not hold a valid legal residency; this has caused limitation in freedom of movement for most Syrian refugees, and exposes them to the risk of arrest/detention, or even deportation<sup>12</sup>. Obtaining civil documentation is a difficult and costly process for Syrian refugees in Lebanon; resulting in currently, up to 175,000 children aged 0-5 years not having their birth registration completed under Lebanese law. The high prevalence of child marriages within Syrian communities creates significant protection challenges, amongst other child protection concerns such as child labour. Access to housing rights is practically limited for Syrian refugees who are often at risk of eviction or subject to exploitative practices. Access to formal employment remains extremely limited for Syrians, thus making it challenging for refugees to secure their livelihoods.</p>

---

<sup>12</sup> VASyR 2018.

### 1.3 NRC's Presence and Activities in the Country

Established in Lebanon in 2006, NRC has nationwide coverage with offices in Beirut/Mount Lebanon, Bekaa, Akkar and Tyre. NRC provides humanitarian aid to refugees from Syria, Palestine, and vulnerable Lebanese communities. In addition to Shelter, WASH and Education programmes, NRC is the largest legal service provider for refugees in Lebanon, providing services in 21 of the country's 26 districts through the ICLA programme.

NRC also engages in advocacy with the Lebanese government and donors to expand and safeguard refugee rights and protection.

### 1.4 NRC's ICLA Intervention

In order to ensure legal protection for Syrian refugees in Lebanon, provision of legal services is crucial in addition to strong advocacy efforts and enhanced coordination with the different implementing agencies. ICLA Lebanon is contributing to enhancing legal protection through implementation of a legal assistance programme focused on three main thematic areas of speciality: Civil Documentation, Legal Residency and Housing, Land and Property rights (HLP). The ICLA programme provides free of charge information, counselling and legal assistance services to Syrian refugees on all three thematic areas.

Beneficiaries are provided with basic messaging on legal topics and an overview of available services by either ICLA field teams or ICLA Information Focal Points<sup>13</sup>. Group information sessions aim at raising awareness on legal protection issues affecting refugee and the importance of securing access to civil documentation, legal residency and housing, land and property rights. Counselling sessions are provided by NRC ICLA lawyers (consultants) or NRC ICLA staff, in an individual, confidential session, where tailored advice on available legal options and related protection risks is provided to beneficiaries; counselling aims at enabling and equipping beneficiaries with the required knowledge and information to act upon the advice provided, without additional external assistance.

In case counselling is not enough to solve a legal issue, NRC lawyers or qualified staff take on the legal assistance of a beneficiary's case on their behalf. Legal assistance is provided in court cases (e.g. obtaining proof of marriage at Sharia courts; late birth registration in civil courts), or when beneficiaries cannot reach an administrative body (mukhtar, Nofous, Foreign Registry, GSO) by themselves, due to movement restrictions or due to vulnerabilities in the household (female-headed households; single parents; illiteracy; medical conditions).

In terms of outreach, within the area of civil documentation, NRC ICLA field teams and the information focal points managed to deliver information sessions for 253,877 individuals<sup>14</sup> across Lebanon since the beginning of 2017. Subsequently, 47,603 individuals received counselling on civil documentation whereas 25,947 individuals received legal assistance services. Moreover, NRC ICLA field teams delivered information sessions on Legal residency for 63,615 individuals since the beginning of 2017; whereas 24,277 individuals benefitted from counselling services on Legal residency; out of those who received counselling services, 633 individual also benefitted from Legal assistance services on Legal residency.

---

<sup>13</sup> Refugee volunteers.

<sup>14</sup> Counting the recipient of services and not direct beneficiaries.

The NRC ICLA programme implements activities in all four areas in the country: North, Bekaa, South and Beirut/Mount Lebanon with around 100 staff in addition to engaging external contracted lawyers. A mobile approach is applied to service delivery, with legal clinics and mobile courts delivering services as close as possible to where refugees reside.

## 2. PURPOSE OF EVALUATION AND INTENDED USE

The main purpose of the evaluation is to support learning about the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact of the NRC ICLA Lebanon programme and provide guidance for future programme direction and improvement. In addition, the evaluation should be an opportunity for NRC to be accountable to beneficiaries, partners and donors.

The programme commissioned nationwide needs assessment in late 2018, which provides some findings, related to the relevance of the activities and thematic areas, but has not undertaken any recent evaluations.

NRC hopes that the many lessons learned captured in Lebanon will provide additional evidence to feed into country-level programming and I ICLA programme development in the region.

Primary users of the evaluation are NRC management team in Lebanon as well as NRC ICLA teams who will directly utilise the evaluation findings to adjust programme implementation, improve its quality and to guide the future direction of the programme. Primary users also include the ICLA Section in Head Office and the Regional ICLA Adviser, to inform and feed ongoing global and national program development within ICLA work.

Secondary users include the NRC regional office for the Middle East and NRC ICLA programmes in the region. Tertiary users include partners, donors, and other stakeholders. The findings and conclusions of the evaluation will be shared with these actors. The evaluation will support the transference of learning; what specific lessons learned and best practices should be highlighted and continued or disseminated either within the programme or more widely within NRC.

## 3. SCOPE OF WORK AND LINES OF INQUIRY

This evaluation will cover the NRC ICLA Lebanon programme targeting Syrian refugees from January 2017 to August 2019.

Geographical scope: Bekaa governorate, Akkar governorate and Mount Lebanon governorate.

### 3.1. Lines of inquiry

The evaluation will look to answer the following questions:

#### **Relevance/Appropriateness/Inclusivity**

- How relevant and appropriate is the current program design and implementation to the protection and legal aid needs of Syrian refugees in Lebanon? The focus is on information, counselling and legal assistance services; we will not be looking at the Collaborative dispute resolution response nor the trainings that ICLA provides to other stakeholders).
- Are the services and thematic areas perceived as relevant by beneficiaries? If so, how? If not, why?
- How do key stakeholders (Mukhtars, courts, UN agencies, GBV partners ...) perceive the relevance of the services?



- What should be done to improve the relevance and appropriateness of the program? What programmatic areas should be scaled up or adapted in future?
- To what extent are the different needs of the various groups (children, women, men, adolescents, and people with disabilities, elderly) and minorities taken into account?
- How can the programme better target and respond to the needs of these groups to become more inclusive?

### **Effectiveness**

- To what extent were the objectives achieved / are likely to be achieved?
- What were the major internal and external factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the objectives?
- How effective is the project in meeting the intended outcomes of NRC Lebanon's ICLA ToC? Is the programme able to collect, analyse and use relevant and appropriate data to measure this?
- What can be changed to improve the effectiveness of the program?

### **Efficiency**

- Is NRC ICLA able to use well the resources available for provision of legal services? Are there potential efficiencies that present themselves?
- How do beneficiaries and key stakeholders perceive the quality of the information, counselling and legal assistance services?
- Is the program implemented in the most efficient way (modalities) compared to alternatives?

### **Impact**

- How have ICLA's activities contributed to increased protection and enjoyment of Syrian refugees' rights? In the three different thematic areas of ICLA intervention, what are the positive and negative (if any) changes NRC ICLA programme contributed both at individual level, at household and at community level?
- How has ICLA advocacy component shaped Government policies towards the protection of Syrian refugees in Lebanon?
- Were there any unintended positive or negative consequences of ICLA interventions? How does this inform the revision of the theory of change of the programme?

### **Learning and sustainability**

- What mechanisms have been built by the programme to ensure sustainability of the intervention?
- How can ICLA contribute to a sustainable legal aid and protection strategy at a national level?

All NRC evaluations are required to consider one or more global learning priorities. ICLA Lebanon programme selected the following question: Are ICLA programmes adequately addressing protection risks linked to their programming? The evaluator will be requested to answer this question along with the others listed above.

## 4. METHODOLOGY

To answer evaluation questions, NRC would like the evaluator to submit a non-experimental study design and methodology, which focuses on participatory, qualitative methods, to complement the monitoring data about the programme already available. In particular, we are seeking an evaluator experienced in participatory evaluations and with demonstrable experience of qualitative evaluations, such as process tracing or most significant change, is desirable. We require an evaluator familiar with theories of change.

**At a minimum, the methodology should include but not be limited to the below as we encourage suggestions of methodologies:**

- a desk review of key documents, including analysis of existing qualitative and quantitative programme data;
- semi-structured interviews with beneficiaries and key informants, including key NRC ICLA staff;
- participatory methods to seek the views and perceptions of the targeted beneficiaries, their communities and key stakeholders (legal aid partners, government, community actors, protection international and national organizations, CBOs, etc.);
- Also, a field validation exercise, for confirming preliminary findings with beneficiaries should be envisioned in the field part of the exercise.

## 5. EVALUATION FOLLOW UP AND LEARNING

NRC follows up all evaluations with a management response, and its implementation is subsequently tracked. This will include the documentation of key learning, which will be shared with the relevant head office technical advisor for circulation to NRC country offices.

This evaluation will contribute to an annual learning review, which feeds into annual strategic planning processes. Key findings will be reported to NRC management teams in Lebanon and Oslo.

## 6. EVALUATION PRINCIPLES

The views expressed in the report shall be the independent and candid professional opinion of the evaluator. The evaluation will be guided by the following ethical considerations:

- Openness - of information given, to the highest possible degree to all involved parties
- Public access - to the results when there are not special considerations against this
- Broad participation - the interested parties should be involved where relevant and possible
- Reliability and independence - the evaluation should be conducted so that findings and conclusions are correct and trustworthy

## 7. COORDINATION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE EVALUATION

NRC established an Evaluation Steering Committee, with the following members: M&E Manager, ICLA Specialist, Head of Programmes, and Regional ICLA advisor.

The ICLA Specialist is responsible for facilitating access to information, data and documentation sources, via a shared online folder, including M&E data. The Evaluation Manager (NRC M&E Manager) is responsible for managing the evaluation process. In case of any changes in the positions in the Country Office, the Steering Committee will be adjusted accordingly.

The Steering Committee will oversee administration and overall coordination, including monitoring progress. The main functions of the Steering Committee will be:

- to establish the Terms of Reference of the evaluation;
- select external evaluator(s);
- review and comment on the inception report and approve the proposed evaluation strategy and methodology;
- review and comment on the draft evaluation report;
- establish a dissemination and utilization strategy.

In addition to the Steering Committee, there will be an Evaluation Reference group with the following members: ICLA Project Managers, the Regional M&E Manager and the Lebanon Protection Advisor.

The main functions of the Evaluation Reference Group will be:

- to give input on the TOR;
- to facilitate the gathering of data necessary for the evaluation;
- to participate in the validation of evaluation findings, and to ensure that they are factually accurate;
- to contribute to the management response;
- to act on the relevant recommendations.

## 8. DELIVERABLES AND REPORTING DEADLINES

The evaluator/ evaluation team will submit three reports and three presentations:

- **Inception report:** Following the desk review and prior to beginning fieldwork, the evaluation team will produce an inception report subject to approval by the NRC Evaluation Steering Committee. This report will detail a draft work plan with a summary of the primary information needs, the methodology to be used, and a work plan/schedule for field visits and major deadlines. With respect to methodology, the evaluation team will provide a description of how data will be collected and a sampling framework, data sources, and drafts of suggested data collection tools such as questionnaires and interview guides. Once the report is finalised and accepted, the evaluation team must submit a request for any change in strategy or approach to the NRC Evaluation Steering Committee. **Report will be submitted by 21 October 2019.**
- **Data collection:** At least 3 weeks of field work are required to collect adequate data. Field work commences upon approval of the Inception report. **Expected start date is: 18 November 2019.**
- **Validation workshop:** A validation workshop involving the key stakeholders should take place upon finalization of data collection and preliminary analysis. In addition, a presentation of preliminary findings and recommendations to the NRC management and Evaluation Steering Committee should be organized while in Lebanon.
- **Draft Report:** Draft evaluation report to be submitted by **10 January 2020** to the Evaluation Steering Committee, who will review the draft and provide feedback within 2 weeks from the receipt of the draft report. The draft report will be due three weeks after finalization of the field work.
- **Final report:** The Final Evaluation Report will follow NRC's standard template for evaluation reports. The final report should include a maximum two-page executive summary that summarizes the findings, conclusion and recommendations. The final report will be approved by steering committee. **Submission is by 31 January 2020.**

All material collected in the undertaking of the evaluation process is the property of NRC and shall be lodged with the Evaluation Manager prior to the termination of the contract.

## 9. TIMEFRAME

Proposals should present a budget for the number of expected working days over the entire period.

**The evaluation is scheduled to start on 1 October 2019, and is projected to end on 28 February 2019.**

The evaluator/ evaluation team is expected to provide a suggested timeline and work plan for the evaluation based on these scheduling parameters and in keeping with the scope of the evaluation questions and criteria.

In event of serious problems or delays, the (lead) evaluator should inform the Steering Committee immediately. Any significant changes to review timetables shall be approved by the Steering Committee in advance.

## 10. EVALUATION CONSULTANT TEAM

NRC seeks expressions of interest from individuals or joint applications, ideally with the following skills/qualifications and expertise:

- Sound and proven experience in conducting evaluations, particularly utilisation and learning focused evaluations
- Extensive experience of theories of change and how they can be used to carry out evaluations
- Expertise in participatory qualitative data collection techniques
- Background in delivery of legal aid/protection programmes
- Previous experience in conducting evaluation of human rights/legal aid programmes

Additional, desirable knowledge, includes:

- Understanding of refugee legal aid and human rights/protection programmes
- Demonstrated knowledge of Middle East and Lebanon political and legal context
- Understanding of global and regional trends and initiatives on protection/legal aid

Necessary Skills:

- Fluency in written and spoken English is required
- Fluency in written and spoken Arabic is highly desirable
- Prior experience in Middle East
- Proven experience of managing evaluations of humanitarian projects
- Experience of designing qualitative data collection methods and of managing participatory and learning focused evaluations
- Excellent team working and communication skills, flexibility and good organisation skills

## 11. APPLICATION PROCESS AND REQUIREMENTS

**Application Deadline: 16 September 2019, 12:00 (GMT+3)**

**Interview dates: Interviews should be completed by 19 September 2019.**

Bids must include the following:

- Proposal including, outline of evaluation framework and methods, including comments on the TOR, proposed timeframe and work plan.
- Proposed evaluation budget including an estimation of the expected working days over the entire period between starting the work and the approval of the final draft by the steering committee

- Cover letter; stating applicant's skills and experience relevant to the consultancy (max 1 page).
- Three professional references.
- CVs and evidence of past evaluations for each team member.
- At least one example of an evaluation report most similar to that described in this TOR. (Abridged versions are sufficient though we may ask for more text if what is submitted is not indicative of work performed).

---

## Annex 2: Detailed Methodology

The evaluation used a mixed-methods approach relying mainly on qualitative approaches to gather data from a variety of sources over the course of a desk review period and two data collection missions. The methodology was designed to ensure the opinions of Syrian refugees are centred throughout the evaluation, and they were given significant opportunity to analyse the findings and influence the recommendations.

The data collection techniques used were a desk review of key programme documents, skype briefings with NRC staff, key informant interviews, focus group discussions, gathering of MSC stories, observation of activities, target community feedback workshops, and a data validation workshop.

The approach selected was rooted in the ideas of democratic evaluation (MacDonald and Kusnar, 2005). This is a participatory approach that sees the evaluator in the role of facilitator rather than referee. The evaluator is tasked with ensuring all stakeholders, particularly those with diminished agency, have the opportunity to participate and meaningfully impact the evaluation. To ensure meaningful involvement of ICLA participants in the evaluation, the methodology included the use of gathering of stories of most significant change and the facilitation of workshops for a sample of ICLA participants in each area office to analyse the findings of the evaluation, select stories which they believed to be most representative of the ICLA programme, and to validate initial recommendations identified by the evaluators.

Interview guides included an introductory paragraph on informed consent, explaining the purpose of the evaluation, the approach to be used during the interview/FGD, details of confidentiality and anonymising of data, the opportunity to leave whenever desired and ability to refuse to answer any question and to ask for information given to be withdrawn later. Identifying details were removed from MSC stories to ensure narrators could not be identified.

### MSC

MSC is a qualitative participatory approach developed by Rick Davis and Jess Dart<sup>15</sup> that has been used as an alternative to traditional evaluative approaches. A key benefit of MSC is it can help identify unintended outcomes, both positive and negative, and trace why these have occurred. The MSC methodology allows evaluations to move away from just assessing pre-determined goals into measuring actual impact, and identifying best practices and lessons learned.

During the evaluation, the evaluators collected stories from IFPs and refugees who have received counselling and LA. These stories were collected at the end of FGDs which involved a series of questions leading up to asking participants what change they believed the ICLA programme had had on them or their community. Participants were asked if they had a particular story to share, and in some cases, individuals who had shared an example during the FGD were specifically asked if their story could be

---

<sup>15</sup> Davies, R. & Dart, J. 2005. "The 'Most Significant Change' (MSC) Technique, A Guide to Its Use", retrieved from : <https://www.mande.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2005/MSCGuide.pdf>



recorded, and all participants who were willing were asked to narrate their stories. An average of about 10-20% of participants expressed an interest in sharing a story after the FGD. The stories were written down by the evaluators and then read back to the storyteller for corrections and validation. The stories were translated to Arabic for the discussion workshop. In BML and the North, at the end of the data collection period, a selection of ICLA volunteers and recipients of ICLA services were presented with the stories and asked to discuss them and short-list two from each area office, which they believed, represented the ICLA programme the best. Each group was asked to develop a statement as to why they had selected each story. The workshop in the Bekaa was cancelled as a result of security restrictions caused by the ongoing protests in Lebanon.

The MSC approach focuses on answering questions of impact in particular, and certain effectiveness and relevance questions, but other approaches are needed to provide a broad range of evaluation data, which allows for answering other questions and triangulating findings. To address this, a series of FGDs and KIs were conducted with interview guides developed to allow for both gathering MSC stories, but also asking questions, which would not be answered through the MSC approach and gathering additional data to triangulate the findings of the MSC. In addition to selecting the most relevant MSC stories, the data validation workshops were used to discuss overall impressions of findings of change, feedback on ICLA services, and initial recommendations.

The use of the MSC methodology was proposed because the TOR and follow-up discussions with the ICLA team suggested identifying the positive and negative impacts beyond the main outputs of obtaining civil documentation, legal residency, or resolution to HLP issues was a key goal of the evaluation. The MSC methodology is most effective when project participants are able to identify key changes, which have occurred to them or their community as a result of a project. The TORs for the three thematic areas in ICLA suggest long-term outcomes should be for refugees to access to education, health, and basic services, and increased access and enjoyment of protection through freedom of movement, security and due process in the civil documentation and legal stage thematic areas, and increased security of tenure in HLP. HLP was removed from the scope of the evaluation and there was quite a limited number of recipients of ICLA services for legal residency in the participants of the FGDs.

During the evaluation, the number of refugees who identified a link between obtaining civil documentation and accessing services such as schools and healthcare was quite limited. A high value was placed on having security for the future, particularly a return to Syria, after securing marriage and birth certificates, and a feeling of relief and well-being from obtaining the documents. These impacts though are less tangible in producing stories of change, as they tend to look to the future rather than the present. This is a critical finding of the evaluation but did reduce the number of stories, which could be used for the MSC workshops.

As a result of the refugee selection committees including stories, which showed no change, the approach to the final selection workshop was adapted. The usual approach advocated by Davis and Dart is for only the short-listed stories to be

presented and a final selection of 1-2 stories picked by this committee. This approach was adapted and during the final workshop, the ICLA team was split into area offices, and then asked to short-list 2 stories from their areas. A final vote and discussion on the short-list, identified one story, which was clearly considered the most representative. The approach was adapted in order to identify if NRC's ICLA team had the same recognition of some of the concerns about the ICLA programme as the recipient population. The adapted approach is still considered valid by the evaluation team as it supported ensuring the approach remained relevant to the emerging findings.

Evaluations can support an organization's accountability processes to the communities it works with. With this evaluation, NRC is able to use the findings for this purpose if it organizes feedback of the results of the evaluation, the final selection of the MSC stories and the reasons they were chosen, and the recommendations to the IFPs, refugee community leaders, and other community members. It is recommended NRC undertake feedback of the evaluation results in the coming months.

### **Other Methods**

MSC alone cannot answer all the evaluation questions and the stories need to be triangulated with other data sources. Other methods included:

- ✓ Secondary data review: The evaluation team conducted a deep read of secondary data sources during the inception period, including, project proposals and reports, monitoring data, external research reports, ToCs, NRC strategy and quality assessment documents, legal opinions commissioned by NRC, and general ICLA guidelines, forms and checklists. This data was re-read during the report development phase of the evaluation to support analysis of the findings.
- ✓ KIs: A series of initial KIs were held via skype with NRC staff to gain an initial understanding of the ICLA programme. Further KIs were organized with key stakeholders including Mukhtars, officials from the Nofous offices and Sharia Courts, and humanitarian legal actors. Group interviews with NRC's staff were also conducted.
- ✓ FGDs: FGDs were organized with a sample of ICLA recipients, IFPs and NRC lawyers. The FGDs were semi-structured, allowing for a series of prepared questions to be asked and discussion among participants on subjects with arose. The FGDs were also used to support the gathering of stories of change by posing a series of questions related to the impact ICLA had had on the lives of the participants.
- ✓ Observation: Two ICLA sessions were observed during the evaluation; these were a GIS session given by an IFP in a MSF health clinic and a counselling session given by a lawyer in BML. These were conducted during the first evaluation mission, and allowed the evaluation team to gain an understanding of the approaches used by NRC.

## Timing

The data collection phase for the evaluation was split into two separate visits. The first visit was conducted between December 9<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> by one of the evaluators. This involved KIIs and FGDs with ICLA recipients in BML and the Bekaa, as well as meetings with ICLA staff and volunteers in both locations, and other key NRC staff in Beirut. The gap between the initial mission and second mission allowed time for the evaluators and the NRC team to reflect on the initial findings and adjust the interview guides and sampling accordingly. The second mission was conducted between January 20<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> by both evaluators, involving KIIs, FGDs, and data validation workshops in Bekaa, the North and BML.

## Participants

During the evaluation 25 FGDs were conducted with recipients of ICLA services (54 women, 67 men, 7 girls and 4 boys), IFPs (17 women and 23 men), and NRC Lawyers (3 women and 3 men). This included 8 FGDs in the Bekaa, 8 in the North and 9 in BML. The FGDs were split between people who had just attended information sessions (4 FGDs, 26 women and 14 men), people who had received counselling (8 FGDs, 18 women, 33 men, 2 girls and 4 boys), and people who had received legal assistance (8 FGDs 18 women, 22 men, and 5 girls)<sup>16</sup>. One observation of a lawyer's counselling session was conducting during the first evaluation mission. 7 refugees (3 women and 4 men) were given counselling during this session. One observation of a GIS was observed during the first evaluation mission (8 women and 2 men).

25 KIIs were conducted a series of key stakeholders including Mukhtars, representatives of Nofous offices and Sharia Courts (1 women, 9 men), humanitarian legal actors (2 women, 1 men), KIIs with NRC staff (11 women, 3 men), and group interviews with NRC staff (18 women and 12 men).

Data validation workshops were held in each area office and then in the country office on the last day of the data collection mission. Attendees at the area office were recipients of services (5 women and 2 men) and IFPs (2 women and 2 men). 24 NRC staff (19 women, 5 men) attended the final workshop in Beirut including a session reviewing for the theories of change and a data validation session.

## Sampling

During the inception period and first evaluation mission, discussions with NRC on sampling identified the key range of coverage important for the evaluation. A priority focus was placed on ensuring participants in FGDs were separated by the type of service provided and by gender. A schedule was developed to ensure FGDs were relatively evenly distributed across the three area offices covered by the evaluation, with a slightly stronger weighting given to the Bekaa followed by the North, based on the number of ICLA recipients in each area office. The three field offices covered in the evaluation all have broad geographical coverage, and due to protection concerns,

---

<sup>16</sup> During the FGDs it became apparent that many of the refugees who were listed as having received counselling but not legal assistance, had in fact received legal assistance. This is discussed in the results. This table gives the numbers of those present for the topic arranged as it was not possible to fully separate during the FGDs with counselling beneficiaries, who had also received legal assistance.

NRC only asked refugees living near the FGD location to attend. As a result, although the evaluation team spoke with refugees from a variety of areas, not all of the areas ICLA conducts services in were represented.

NRC's M&E team using the database of ICLA recipients conducted selection for the FGDs randomly. Narrowing down recipients to those who could safely attend, the M&E team used random selection to produce a list of recipients. These were called in order the day before until approximately 12 to 14 agreed to attend. Between 2 and 10 people actually attended the FGDs.

Sampling for KIIs was purposive. Following the desk review of documents, the evaluation team suggested categories of individuals relevant to the evaluation. NRC contacted a selection of individuals who would be willing to make the time to speak to the evaluation team. As a result of cancellations due to security issues, and the difficulty in obtaining permission for an interview, officials from the Noufous offices and Sharia Courts are under-represented in the sample compared to the Mukhtars. The evaluation team does not believe this had a material effect on the findings though.

## **Limitations**

A number of limitations of the evaluation were identified during both the inception period and the data collection missions, with steps taken to mitigate the impact of these limitations on process of the evaluation. None of the limitations was considered different from usual constraints on evaluations or sufficient to challenge the overall validity of the findings. However, they should be considered when reviewing the overall results.

The main limitations of the evaluation were:

- **Scope of the evaluation:** The evaluation scope proposed in the original TOR was extremely ambitious given the amount of time available for the data collection mission. 25 consultant days were allocated for data collection in three area offices, covering a broad range of ICLA recipients, as well as KIIs and feedback workshops. Initially the evaluation was planned to cover HLP as well as civil documentation and legal residency. Following discussion with the ICLA team during the first data collection mission, HLP was removed from the scope to ensure more detailed analysis of the other two thematic areas could be undertaken. Even with this removal, the range of proposed evaluation questions, additional questions, which were requested into the interviews guide, and the geographical scope, remained broad. The evaluators have tried to answer the questions requested by NRC but gaps in the data mean not all questions have been covered in depth, particularly those related to advocacy and sustainability through developing a national legal aid approach.
- **Cancellation of some activities:** The protests, which started in Lebanon in October 2019, continued throughout the period of the evaluation. During the second data collection mission, a new government was announced by President Aoun, which led to renewed road blockages. As a result, planned

KIIs, FGDs, and area office data validation workshop on January 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> could not take place in the Bekaa. The main loss was a reduction in the number of evaluation participants in the Bekaa and the opportunity for ICLA recipients from the Bekaa to be involved in the discussion of the findings and selection of MSC stories. The planned FGD with boys in the Bekaa was one of the FGDs cancelled. Overall, this meant only one FGD with 4 boys was conducted during the evaluation which limited the opportunity to ensure their views on relevance and impact were included in the findings.

- **Scheduling of FGDs and KIIs:** During the visit to Bekaa in the first week of the second evaluation mission, the evaluators felt the scheduling was quite light and more activities could have been undertaken in one day. Particularly for days when an evaluator was based in Central Bekaa, one more FGD or two more KIIs could have been fitted into the schedule. This was discussed with the ICLA team and addressed for the visits to BML and the North.
- **Language:** Neither of the evaluators speaks Arabic, meaning most KIIs and FGDs needed an interpreter. A professional interpreter was identified to accompany one of the evaluators, and a NRC staff accompanied the other. Although the quality of interpretation was high, there is naturally a loss of nuance and meaning when interpretation is required. This concern was mitigated as much as possible by sharing the interview guides ahead of the FGDs and KIIs, and working closely with the interpreters to ensure questions were clear and understood.
- **Inclusion of elderly in the sample:** Sampling focused on ensuring the inclusion of vulnerable groups such as children aged 15-17 and women headed households. There was not a specific focus on ensuring a large sample of over 60s in the FGDs, which according to NRC's monitoring data make up about 20% of NRC's ICLA recipients. Additionally, the partnership with HI focused on supporting persons with disabilities is very early and the sample did not include people from this group. As such, the evaluation team were unable to speak with individuals who were likely to have mobility issues. This is mitigated to an extent by the fact many of the FGD participants had persons with disabilities in their families and were able to refer to issues facing them, and those of their elderly relatives.

## Annex 3: List of Observation Sessions, KIIs, FGDs, and Data Validation Workshops

### KIIs

Date	Name	Position	Organization
25/11/19	Stephanie Bassil	Monitoring and Evaluation Manager	NRC
	Sanaa Mugharbil	Evaluation, Analysis, and Learning Coordinator	
26/11/19	Lianna Badamo	ICLA Project Manager	NRC
26/11/19	Sanaa Mugharbil	Evaluation, Analysis, and Learning Coordinator	NRC
27/11/19	Josephine el Khawand	ICLA Project Manager	NRC
27/11/19	Mohammad Abdoh	ICLA Project Manager	NRC
	Hania Grim	ICLA Coordinator	
	Maurice Kodeih	ICLA SSU Coordinator	
	Layal Yacoub	ICLA Legal Coordinator	
27/11/19	Tina Gewis	ICLA Specialist	NRC
09/12/19	Mike Bruce	Advocacy and Information Advisor	NRC
09/12/19	Zeina El Khoury	Protection Advisor	NRC
10/12/19	BML Mukhtar <sup>17</sup>	Man	BML
11/12/19		Senior Integrated Protection Coordinator	IRC
12/12/19	Bekaa Mukhtar	Man	Bekaa
21/01/20	Zeinab El Hajj	ICLA Officer	NRC
21/01/20	Mohamed Ghabris	Accountability Coordinator	NRC
22/01/20		Senior Protection Manager	IRC
23/01/20		Assistant Protection Officer	UNHCR
27/01/20	BML Mukhtar	Man	BML
27/01/20	BML Noufous	Woman	BML
27/01/20	Elena Dikomitis	Advocacy and Information Advisor	NRC
27/01/20	BML Sharia Court	Man	BML
28/01/20	North Mukhtar	Man	North
28/01/20	North Mukhtar	Man	North
29/01/20	North Shawish	Man	North
29/01/20	North Mukhtar	Man	North
30/01/20	North Mukhtar	Man	North
30/01/20	North Mukhtar	Man	North
<b>Total women</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>Total men</b>	<b>25</b>

<sup>17</sup> The names of the UN, INGO partners, Mukhtars, and officials from the NefousNoufous Offices and Sharia Courts are withheld to protect confidentiality



## Group Interviews with ICLA Staff

Date	Location	Description	Women	Men
09/12/19	BML	ICLA Staff	3	4
12/12/19	NRC Office, Bekaa	ICLA Staff	9	6
28/01/20	NRC Office, Akkar	ICLA Staff	6	2
Total			18	12

## FGDs and Workshops

Date	Location	Description	Women	Men
09/12/19	BML	Women who have attended a GIS	7	0
10/12/19	BML	BML IFPs	3	2
10/12/19	MSF Clinic, Beirut	Observation of a GIS	8	2
11/12/19	BML	Observation of lawyer's counselling	3	4
12/12/19	Bekaa	Refugees have received counselling and LA	0	10
13/12/19	NRC Office, Zahle	Bekaa IFPs	3	10
20/01/20	NRC Baalbek Office	Bekaa IFPs	4	6
20/01/20	Saadnayel Legal Clinic	Women who have received counselling <sup>18</sup>	5	0
21/01/20	NRC Office Aarsal	Men who have received counselling	0	9
21/01/20	NRC Office Aarsal	Men who have received LA	0	8
21/01/20	Saadnayel Legal Clinic	Girls who have received counselling	2	0
21/01/20	Saadnayel Legal Clinic	Girls who have received LA	5	0
23/01/20	Furn elChebek legal clinic	Women who have received LA	2	0
24/01/20	Jbeil Legal Clinic	Men who have received counselling	0	5
24/01/20	Jbeil Legal Clinic	Men who have received LA	0	4
24/01/20	Jbeil Legal Clinic	Women who have received counselling	4	0

<sup>18</sup> During the FGDs it became apparent that many of the refugees who were listed as having received counselling but not legal assistance, had in fact received legal assistance. This is discussed in the results. This table gives the numbers of those present for the topic arranged as it was not possible to fully separate during the FGDs with counselling beneficiaries, who had also received legal assistance.

24/01/20	Jbeil Clinic	Legal	Women who have received LA	7	0
24/01/20	NRC Beirut	Office	Follow up with BML IFPs for discussing impact	3	2
27/01/20	NRC Beirut	Office	NRC lawyers (BML and Bekaa)	3	3
27/01/20	Furn elChebek legal clinic		Results validation workshop with ICLA LA recipients	3	4
28/01/20	Bhanine Education Centre		Men who have attended a GIS	0	12
28/01/20	Bebnine		Women who have attended a GIS	11	0
28/01/20	NRC Office, Akkar		North IFPs	4	3
29/01/20	Bebine MoSA room		Men who have received counselling	0	9
29/01/20	Bhanine Education Centre		Men who have received LA	0	10
29/01/20	Bire Akkar		Women who have received counselling	9	0
29/01/20	Bire Akkar		Women who have received LA	9	0
30/01/20	Bhanine Education Centre		Boys who received counselling	0	4
30/01/20	NRC Office Akkar		Results validation with IFPs and ICLA recipients	4	2
Total (women and men)				92	105
Total (girls and boys)				7	4

---

## Annex 4: MSC Brochure

### Selection Committee Decisions

#### Beirut and Bekaa, 27/01/20

##### 3 women and 4 men, all ICLA Legal Assistance Recipients

As a result of political protests, the workshop with the Bekaa committee was cancelled. The committee for BML was presented with stories from both the Bekaa and BML. The group was split into men and women and each group asked to shortlist a story from BML and a story from the Bekaa.

Both groups chose story 8 from BML:

“We picked this story because we feel it represents the experience for us and the community. All of our experiences are that NRC start with the paperwork, they reach a certain point and then they are unable to pass it. Whatever NRC can do they continue, but anything NRC cannot do they ask the refugee to do it. However, we cannot do it; it is the most difficult steps. For example, going to the Syrian embassy to get the final stamp is not possible for us. NRC won’t go, but we can’t either.”

The women also picked story 1 from BML:

“The ability to travel is important. Because of that, if you have success, it is what it allows. So you should get marriage and birth registration sorted out when you can.”

The men picked story 10 from the Bekaa:

“We see that things have to get really bad to get assistance. This should happen earlier on in the process, shouldn’t need to wait for an emergency.”

The women picked story 9 from the Bekaa:

Due to time constraints on the participants, a statement was not obtained, but the women stated they selected this story because it showed the value of the documentation for future travel.

#### North, 30/01/20

4 women and 2 men

2 women were legal assistance recipients (1 was a family member who had been sent by the person who would actually received the assistance)

4 were IFPs

The participants were only presented with the stories gathered from the North, stories 15-24

About 10 ICLA recipients were invited to participate, with the expectation the IFPs would support in facilitation of the groups. As so few recipients turned up, the selection groups were split into three, the IFP men, the IFP women, and the ICLA recipients. The understanding of the exercise was more limited here than in BML. Initially both the recipients and some of the IFPs selected the story they thought was most unusual rather than the most representative.

The ICLA recipients picked story 16 and 18

Story 16: “I feel this story is the reality. People face this they cannot go back to Syria to get the documents they need. I personally experienced this with my daughter.”

Story 18: “We relate to this in terms of the fear of the checkpoints and not being able to move around. We wish for this story to happen.”

The women IFPs each picked different stories, story 22 and 24

Story 22: “I picked number 8 because with legal residency we often get all the paperwork ready and even if the lawyer goes with the refugee to GSO, if the GSO doesn’t agree to renew the residency for this person there is nothing you can do. They do not care if you are NRC or a lawyer. Therefore, there is nothing NRC can do. Through my work, I was able to refer about 10 men to lawyers for legal residency. After a while, I checked on these cases and they told me this is exactly what happened to them. The lawyer went with them to GSO and GSO told them they could not renew. It’s not NRC’s fault. Some people accept the lawyer can’t do anything and some people don’t accept it and say they are lying to them.”

Story 24: “I picked story number 10 – Lots of children were able to renew with GSO. Those between 15 and 18. There’s a big impact on this age group for legal stay.”

The men IFPs jointly picked story 20

“We think this is happening a lot. These children, their wish is being fulfilled because once they have the birth certificate they are able to access education and this is having a huge impact on society through the legal assistance from NRC.”

It was not possible to get an agreement from the group on which 2 to shortlist overall.

### **National Workshop, 31/01/20**

**NRC Staff, 19 women, 5 men**

Groups were segregated by area office, with national ICLA team members dividing among the three groups. Staff from the South office joined the BML team. Each area office only looked at the stories from their area originally and short-listed 2 stories. These were read out to the entire group and one representative explained the reason for the selection. A final vote on the shortlisted 6 stories revealed one clear winner.

### **Short-listed stories:**

#### **North:**

Story 19, Follows ICLA’s ToC. Info, counselling, legal representation at GSO. Beneficiary got outcome and sense of security. Shows practical steps people take to cope with restrictions.

Story 24, Counselling, shows clear instructions.

#### **Bekaa:**

Story 10, “Documentation and birth certificate is our thematic area. No trust with other organisations. Urgency, many people say it is urgent in order to return to Syria. Encourage repeat visit and other refugees to visit.”

Story 14, “Birth certificate and marriage certificate combination. Referral from Mukhtar. Shows counselling and LA options. Shows empowerment. Created sense of security.”

#### **BML:**

Story 2, “We encounter this kind of case a lot. Lots of people call us for papers to access education and health.”

Story 7, “Two to three months call back. Therefore, not quick feedback, even though beneficiary thinks it is urgent. We do our triage differently and we have a lot of work to do. NRC do not do the embassy stage. We provided protection advice and then up to them.”

#### **Final selection:**

**Story 2:** “This was a typical case. We gave an information session, and then a refugee came to explain their case. We took the number and then got back to them with an appointment. We were able to assess the urgency and try to respond accordingly. In this case, the child needed urgent attention, so we responded immediately. The final outcome shows that we were able to help with the document but that it also acted as an enabler for other rights and services, and that the refugee also understood this. This is what we are trying to do as ICLA, and access other rights and services.”

#### **Stories presented to selection committee workshop for Beirut and Bekaa**

##### **1. Woman, Legal Assistance, BML**

I came to NRC about a year and a half ago; my son was close to 3 years old. I was renewing my papers with UNHCR and I told them my son was not registered, so they gave me NRC’s number. I called NRC; they made an appointment for me with the lawyer. I came, handed in all my paperwork and NRC proceeded with the registration. At the beginning of 2019, I applied for resettlement. About 5 months ago, I had an interview for the resettlement process and about a month later, I got the final approval from UNHCR to go to Sweden, and to wait for the dates of travel. I have the birth registration. NRC have told me there is one more step but they have not continued. However, I went with UNHCR to the GSO and they confirmed I have enough of the paperwork done to take my son out of the country. Because of my son’s registration, I have the security to be able to travel and take him with me, and we can go to Sweden. We leave in 6 days.

##### **2. Woman, Legal Assistance, BML**

I was at the clinic, NRC came, and they were talking about birth and marriage registration and legal stay. This was about three years ago. I went to talk to them afterwards because I was interested in registering my three children. I gave them my husband’s number. They called him later and made an appointment with the lawyer. They did the registration for all three of my children, but my husband has some papers missing so they cannot complete the process. But, with what we have, I was able to enrol my son at school. They asked for his birth certificate, and took what we had even though it is not complete. But more importantly is the hospital. My daughter is frequently sick, lung infection, and now I have the paper I do not have problems going to the hospital or the clinic. For sure, they ask for the papers and the UNHCR paper. Before I went to NRC, there are some doctors who do not ask for papers, but mostly I just avoided going to the doctor. Once my son got sick and the hospital refused to treat him because he did not have his papers. But now I do not have to worry about whether or not they will accept us for the service.

### 3. Woman, Counselling, BML

I was able to register my daughter. I have the birth certificate and I got my daughter registered in the family booklet in Syria now. I did not have to go to the MoFA, MoJ or embassy. There was an NRC centre and everything was done there. I was told this is a legal document and I will be able to register my daughter in the family booklet with it in Syria. NRC initially called us after I registered my daughter at the UN. My father in Syria is the one who added my daughter to the family booklet. I sent the birth certificate to him so he could do this. He returned it to me afterwards, so I have it now. I feel very comfortable now; I can easily register her in school now. And it will be very easy now if I want to cross the border to go back to Syria.

### 4. Woman, Counselling, BML

I got a call from the lawyers and they told me I needed to register my children. They said I needed to first go to the court to register the marriage at the court, but my husband was angry, as he did not want to go to the court. The lawyer told us everything will be confidential, it will not cause us problems, but my husband still did not want to do it. But now my son has to go to school and the school told my husband my son needs a birth certificate in order to register for school. So my husband went to Zahle and did it on his own. It was not easy for him to do the paperwork, so he called me to call NRC to get some assistance. But then the following day he changed his mind, said it would take too long and the school registration period would finish soon. Therefore, he worked out how to do it himself. He took the document to the school, but was told there is a missing signature, but it was enough for my son to register in school.

### 5. Woman, Counselling, BML

My husband initially wanted to send me to Aleppo to get a proof of marriage. But we received a visit from NRC at home and they evaluated our situation. I was then sick. After two weeks, they called me back and said they would help me with the paper. Before, my husband thought the only way to do it was if I went back to Aleppo. But, NRC helped us to do it here. I was happy. Because we are living here, and we did not have to pay for anything and we did not have to go back to Syria so I am very happy.

### 6. Woman, Counselling, BML

I wanted to seek the assistance of a lawyer in Syria to sort out this issue, but we did not have enough money to do it so we did not resort to a lawyer. One of my husband's friends told him about NRC, and NRC helped us to have the marriage certificate and to register our children. I already had my children but did not have the marriage certificate. So, I did the marriage certificate and birth registration for my daughter together. I did my son's birth certificate later. I feel happy. What's good about it is I can send this marriage certificate to Syria, to my father or father in law. By having this document he can get for us a family booklet in Syria. It is important for my children to have this. Here or in Syria. You never know where you will end up. It is just an important document.

### 7. Woman, Legal Assistance, BML

It was the fiancé of my sister's daughter who told me about NRC. I called the lawyer and told her I urgently needed my marriage certificate. She said she would call me with an appointment. After two or three months, I received a phone call. She gave me information and told me she had booked an appointment for me at the office to help me get my marriage and birth certificates. I came to the office and they gave me all



the information and what they would do. I gave them all my documents. After two months, they called me, told me to come and take my papers. They told me everything had been done, but I needed to get it signed by MoFA and MoJ and then go to the Syrian embassy in Lebanon. I did all of this. I did it myself, with my brother. NRC have done their part. I just needed to get it signed and stamped by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Justice and the embassy. But my marriage certificate I still need the signatures from the Ministries.

There was no risk to go to the embassy, but I do think NRC should do it. I should not have to do it myself. I had to pay US\$25 to get it stamped in the embassy. Not far from the embassy, there is a Lebanese checkpoint and you have to show papers. So it was not my husband who went with me, but my brother, as he has legal stay in Lebanon. For the MoFA and MoJ, my brother was able to do it without me, but for the Syrian embassy, I had to go with him. Because I am a woman, the checkpoint told me I had to renew my legal stay. Had I been a man I would have been arrested. My life is much better now because I have the birth and marriage certificate now. My sister's son got married recently and he wanted to do his marriage certificate. So, I told him NRC could help with this and how kind they are.

#### 8. Man, Legal Assistance, BML

I came a year and a half ago for birth registration for my first son. NRC staff took all the papers from me and I now have the documents back from them. However, there are 2 columns, 15 and 16, which are not complete. I now have a second son who is 10 months old. Both children are at the same stage of the paperwork. For both of them the columns 15 and 16 are missing. Row 16 requires a number from the Noufous so they can go to register at the Syrian embassy and Ministry of Foreign Affairs. I got my paperwork back from NRC and they did not say anything. I went to the lawyer at the UN, he noticed this and they told him he needs to go back to NRC to get these completed. NRC missed this issue on both my children's paperwork. I discovered this issue 2-3 days ago so I have not done anything about it yet. But in principle when people call NRC, they always say they will get back to them in 2-3 days but they may not get a response for a few months. I cannot do it myself; I cannot go because I do not have legal stay so am worried about detention if I go to Beirut. Overall, my interaction with NRC has not produced a change in my life because I am still waiting for the situation to be resolved.

#### 9. IFP, Man, Bekaa

I've been working with ICLA for 5 years. 3 months ago, someone came to do birth registration, started the process, but then had a death in the family. So he was forced to go back to Syria. He took his daughter back with him to Syria unofficially because he did not have her papers finished for her. After the man reached Syria with his daughter, he contacted me to ask to send the birth registration for his child. I finished the registration for the child and then delivered it for his daughter in Syria. So I was able to ensure NRC finished the process for him. The man wanted to add his child to the family booklet in Syria and he could not do that without registering his daughter's birth. She was a year and a half old already and NRC was able to register her correct birthday and now the family live in Syria. This allows them to live in Syria without concerns over registration or status. Without ICLA, this would not have been possible. Without NRC, the person would have done it illegally through forgery and they would have registered her the day she arrived in Syria, not her birthday. Getting it registered for him was like a miracle to me.

#### 10. IFP, Man, Bekaa

It was in 2016. We were just having a normal information session and at the end, we asked if anyone needed help with anything. One man said he had a daughter, but did not want to register her. He said it was because he did not trust any organisation. After five months, he came back and said he wanted to register his daughter. I said why now? His daughter had cancer and needed to go back to Syria for treatment. He was informed at the border he should do a birth certificate and follow the Lebanese procedures to get the certificate. I told NRC we have an emergency and the lawyer was very responsive. It was a very quick response from NRC and within 3 days, he had the papers. The man was very grateful. He thanked me a lot, even though initially he did not want to do the papers. In 2017, he had a second daughter and straight away, he came to get help to get the papers. He even started telling other people about how important it was to get the papers and telling people about his story to encourage them to do the registration. It made a difference to this man. His daughter was able to get treatment. She lost one of her eyes, but she is a cancer survivor. It encouraged other people.

#### 11. IFP, Man, Bekaa

The Palestinians here do not need a sponsor and they do not have to pay. For the Palestinians they only get assistance from UNRWA. Even at checkpoints, they can say they have UNRWA papers and can go through. Now, all people are informed and aware they can do the renewal free of charge, so it is easier for PRS even for those who did not enter Lebanon legally. PRS used to go to two persons who were doing all the paperwork for them in exchange for money. It is important for PRS to be registered with UNRWA in order to get assistance and help. If someone gets married, they need a family card. But, my brother was able to get his marriage papers through NRC. Then his friends and all their family members. For Syrians the problems are different. I was able to help my family, relatives and neighbours, throughout the Balbek region. Before, people had to go to agents and pay a lot of money. The agent was charging US\$250 per person and sometimes he might ask for more.

#### 12. IFP, Woman, Bekaa

Before volunteering, it was well known that NRC were providing counselling services. It was difficult for us to get assistance from NRC because we did not know if it was free of charge. The office was not here so, about 5 years ago, as a refugee I went to see them and told them my son was 15 and needed to renew his papers because he was arrested several times at checkpoints. He used to travel a lot because he was studying at a vocational school. Therefore, I said to myself I should go and ask them for assistance. I got counselling and they made it clear that the services were free of charge and told me what to do with my son. I followed the instructions of the lawyer. I presented a request to legalise the stay of my son, I got an approval, and thanks to that, I was able to renew my son's papers. I was always scared whenever he left the house that he would be arrested or be subject to violence. I was very happy after he got legal stay. So, I put my name on a list, did an interview, and was able to volunteer. I am divorced, but did not have a paper proving the divorce and I am frequently subject to violence from my ex-husband. Therefore, the lawyer advised me to do this divorce paper, so this man would know that he is not entitled to talk to me or be violent. This lawyer helped me a lot, I was able to get divorce papers from the court, and I was not subject to any violence from my ex-husband. I have the divorce paper now. So, it is very important for women to know this information and counselling. By getting this assistance all women can defend themselves and protect themselves.

That is why I love my work and the job we are doing. I would like to spread this message to all the members of the communities to know how important it is to have the legal culture to protect themselves.

#### 13. Man, Legal Assistance, Bekaa

I came to Lebanon in 2013 and registered with UNHCR, and it expired after one year (2014). Someone from NRC came to the ITS and advised us about renewing the registration in 2014. I was not able to move to Beirut because I had heard that people were asking for IDs on the way. NRC advised me to go and renew the registration and told me that if anyone at the checkpoint stopped him then to call the number they gave me. When we were coming back from Zahle, we were stopped at a checkpoint. They asked for my papers. I showed them papers from the UN. They wanted an official document that he came in legally. They took his Syrian ID. They detained him for 10 days. When I first came, I came in the wave of people who came in unofficially. When I was released, I was sent to the GSO and the GSO told me he had to pay a large fine 950,000 LBP because I came unofficially. I gave them my Syrian ID. This is still with the GSO and I have not paid them yet.

Then in 2018, NRC came to the camps and were talking about marriage registration and at the time, I brought up the issue of the fine and ID and asked for support on resolving the issue of the penalty I had to pay. I took the counselling for the situation. A few days later, they called me back and told me I had to pay \$200 per year for 6 years plus the fine I already have. They have not given me any other option. I think this is bad advice, as he had no way to get the money.

I think NRC are very good people and I like the interaction with them but there are many things which are out of their hands, which are not their fault. However, in this case, NRC had originally told me to go to UNHCR and told me to call if I was stopped. I would not have gone without this advice so this is where NRC has been at fault. The lawyer should not have given me this advice.

A more positive interaction with NRC was that my daughter got married in 2017 to a Syrian. I attended a NRC counselling session in 2018 where they talked about marriage registration in the ITS. After the info session I came to the office, the lawyer accompanied my daughter and me to the Sharia court, and they were officially registered. The marriage registration took 2 months and the marriage was registered. This gives a nice sense of security for future in case of travel to Syria and or my daughter needs to get divorced.

#### 14. Man, Counselling, Bekaa

From my perspective, NRC helped me a lot. I have more information on if I want to register my marriage, children's birth etc. I first heard of NRC in February 2019. I came originally for birth registration. I was in the process of registering the baby who at the time was 7 months old. At the Mukhtar I met a friend who told me NRC could register my baby for me. I was told that either NRC can do it and it would take 3 months, or NRC can tell me the steps and I can do it for myself. NRC told me the steps and within 2 months, my baby was registered. My wife is Lebanese, so I think this does give me more protection than other refugees. Since getting the registration, I feel a sense of security because my wife got sick and I had to send her to Syria to get treatment, and she had to take the baby with her. Particularly because she is Lebanese traveling in Syria, I feel more secure knowing she has the paperwork.

## Stories presented to selection committee workshop for the North, 30/01/20

### 15. Woman, Counselling, North

I was pregnant back then with my eldest son. I was 5 months pregnant. I wanted to get proof of marriage. I did all the steps NRC advised me to do, but then still needed to provide them with the individual extract in Syria to make sure I was not married in Syria. I brought them the individual extract and all the papers, they told me wait for a phone call. I waited for about 2 months. I went back and was told the lawyer has changed and it is a new lawyer. I have been to see them about 55 times and still I did not get my marriage certificate. Even I was trying to call them. I paid lots of money for transportation going to their office, but nothing. In addition, I called many times on the number I had, but nothing. They told me all the steps, I did them myself. I got the individual extract. I brought all the papers as they told me, but until now, I do not have it and they have not told me why. And even I had to renew the papers several times, because they cannot be too old when you do the marriage certificate. And still NRC did not do it. They said the lawyer has changed, the judge has changed, so many excuses. And even the lawyer get bored of me. He told me do not come, I will call you. But my son will need the birth certificate soon so he can go to school. He is 2.5 years old, and I first started this when I was 5 months pregnant with him.

### 16. Woman, Counselling, North

I got married about 2 months before the start of the war in Syria. I did not do a proof of marriage and then it was too late after the war started. I came to Lebanon and went to NRC. They asked me to bring my individual extract, but it is difficult to get it from Syria if you do not have anyone there who can do it for you, or do not have enough money to pay someone to do it. But, I managed to get it. I called them and told them I had all the papers ready. They said they would call me to make an appointment. But that was 3 years ago and they never called. And the individual extract expires after 3 months. You have to renew it. So, I would have to now get another one if NRC were to help. And this is not an easy thing. I called them once, but not again, because they told me they would call me back. But they did not.

### 17. Woman, Legal Assistance, North

I called the lawyer after my son was born. My son was 28 days old. The lawyer told me the steps for a BC, including that I had to go to Tripoli to see the Noufous. So, I went to the Noufous and I did everything the lawyer told me. The Noufous told me to come back for the document after a month. I went back after a month and got the document. I then took this document to NRC to send to the MOFA and MoJ for stamping. I had to do all the steps myself with a newborn baby. The lawyers should have it done it for me. My husband is not legal, so he could not do all the steps. Still, the final stamp from the Syrian embassy is not done. I cannot go to the Syrian embassy, why did NRC not do it? I am not legal, I cannot dare to go. They did not tell me that I had a year to do it. Otherwise, I would have waited.

### 18. Male, Legal Assistance, North

NRC helped with my legal residency. They came and gave an info session. I had been registered with UNHCR but this had expired. I explained my case to NRC and they said they could help me and they went with me to the GSO and resolved the case and now I have legal stay. When I went to renew I had to leave at 5am in order to avoid the checkpoints because my residency had already expired and when we finished we had to wait until 7pm at night for the checkpoints to be clear. ICLA really followed up with

me step by step. The difference for me is between living and dead. I used to see checkpoints and the people at them as something to fear. When I wanted to visit my friends and family, I could not and I was detained three times. Now I am able to move around freely in Lebanon. Now I feel safer. Before even if someone had given me \$20,000 to cross a checkpoint I would not have done it because I was afraid of the consequences. Now I am able to move without fear.

19. Male, Legal Assistance, North

I think the important things NRC should be helping with, they are not helping with. It is the things we cannot do on our own that we really need help for. I came in 2014 for marriage registration and NRC helped me up until the Sharia Court. The lawyer went with me and when they asked for things like the individual extract, the lawyer helped me with all of this, and they were able to get the certificate from the Sharia Court. But they told me I had to go to the Noufous by myself. It would cost me \$100 so I have not done it. NRC also did legal assistance for birth certificates for two of my kids. The steps that NRC helped me with were very simple, I could have done this myself, and the cost of transportation of coming to NRC is the equivalent costs if I had just it done myself. The birth certificates are finished up to the stage before MoFA and the Syrian Embassy. So I think NRC is only helping with things I could have done myself. Things I cannot do they are not helping with. At the start of the process, I was expecting they would take it to the MoFA and Syrian Embassy, and the lawyer did not explain that at the start of the process.

20. IFP, Woman, North

I know a girl who is 9 or 10 years old now and her father died in the war in Syria. Her and her mother came to Lebanon in 2013 and they are living with the grandparents. The mother remarried. The daughter is living with her grandfather. The girl does not have any documents because the house was bombed in Syria, so there is nothing to prove who she is and who her mother and father are. The grandfather was trying to enrol the girl in school but the schools were not agreeing because she did not have any documents. So, I was giving an information session, I heard the case and I referred this case to the lawyer. The NRC lawyer helped the grandfather get all the necessary paperwork to get a birth certificate. NRC was able to help her get all the documents sorted out for registration, and now she has enrolled in a school this year for the first time after missing five years of schooling.

21. IFP, Woman, North

A man and woman were married and were living in Syria. When the wife was in her 9<sup>th</sup> month of pregnancy, they had to flee and she gave birth in a house in Lebanon without a doctor or a mid-wife. Five years later, they were residing in the location where I was conducting information sessions. Last year the husband told me they did not have marriage or birth documentation and he did not know whether he should register it in Syria or in Lebanon. I took it as an emergency case and I told them that NRC could help them with this. I was able to refer them to a lawyer, and NRC supported them to get birth and marriage registration. The child is now able to go to school. The man was overwhelmed with happiness after not knowing what to do for so many years.

22. Man, Counselling, North

I first came to Lebanon in 2016. I tried by myself to get legal stay in 2019 as I could not move around and was staying in the same area. My neighbour has a place where



they sell desserts so I helped there. The GSO came to me and told me I cannot work. I told them I need to make money and I was only making 10,000 LBPs per day. I decided I would apply for legal stay but 2-3 days later the GSO came and detained me. They told me I had to stay in the house, not work, and not move around until I had legal stay or move back to Syria. My neighbour is also the landlord of where I am residing and told me he would sponsor me. My landlord asked around to understand the papers we needed. Once we had collected them, we went to the GSO. The GSO told me I had all the paperwork but needed the UNHCR registration, which I did not have. I have the UNHCR barcode but GSO does not recognise this. They told me I needed to renew with UNHCR and they could sponsor me and then the sponsorship could be transferred to my landlord. UNHCR did not agree to this because I need to be officially registered with them. When the GSO first came to me, I went to NRC. I explained the whole story to the NRC lawyer and the NRC lawyer told me that they do not interfere with anything GSO related because they do not have the contacts. So I cannot move or do anything including being resettled. I was expecting more help from NRC because they have influence in these Government entities. NRC is here legally and is registered with the Government and they are here to help people, so they should be helping more.

#### 23. Man, Counselling, North

I came for marriage and birth certificates for 2 kids 2 years ago. My children were 2 years and my wife was pregnant with my other child. The NRC lawyer told me to go to a town 30 minutes away for the Sharia Court. He did not give me the exact address and the town is very big. They told me I had to go to the Noufous in another town 30 minutes another way. When I was there, the lawyer requested my individual civil extract for my wife and children from Syria but my children were born here so I cannot get an individual extract. The lawyer did not explain how to do this. I think the NRC lawyer is asking me to do things, which are impossible. The lawyer did not come with me, they just explained the steps. They did not move from behind their table. Both areas are big and it would be confusing to find the locations. There are checkpoints there and I do not have legal stay. However after they told me I needed to get the civil extracts from Syria I gave up because it is not possible. Overall, I do not understand why the lawyer is asking me to get this, and it is just impossible for me to do it. I cannot go back to Syria because I would be drafted if I did.

#### 24. Boy, Legal Assistance, North

My father was in jail in a town 4-5 hours from where we live. I benefited from support on legal stay from NRC. I came to them six months ago and they helped me get a temporary legal stay document, which lasted for 3 and a half months and allows me to travel. It is now out of date but I am going to UNHCR to update my file and then I will return to NRC for their support so they can get me an appointment at GSO. When we came, the lawyer gave me and my mother very clear instructions on how to get the document and my mother was able to follow them easily. It was very beneficial for me because he was able to visit my father and there are many checkpoints on the way. I visited him 10 times during the 3 and a half months. The legal stay allows me more freedom to move and if I get it renewed, I would be able to go around on my motorbike without worrying about detention.



---

## Annex 5: Bibliography

### External Documents

“Vulnerability assessment of Syrian refugees in Lebanon 2019,” UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, December 2019.

“Vulnerability assessment of Syrian refugees in Lebanon 2018,” UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, December 2019.

Davies, R. & Dart, J. 2005. “The ‘Most Significant Change’ (MSC) Technique, A Guide to Its Use”, retrieved from: <https://www.mande.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2005/MSCGuide.pdf>

“Q&A for the ‘Back to School’ Program 2017/2018,” UNHCR, UNICEF, UNESCO, August 2017.

“Q&A on birth registration for Syrian refugees in Lebanon,” UNHCR, May 2018.

“Q&A for Syrian refugees on new requirements for residency renewal in Lebanon,” UNHCR, March 7, 2017.

“A Future in the balance: Lebanon,” Norwegian Refugee Council, April 2016.

“Education for Syrian refugees at risk,” Norwegian Refugee Council, May 3, 2019.

### NRC Documents

#### Advocacy Reports

“A Future in the balance: Lebanon,” Norwegian Refugee Council, April 2016.

“Education for Syrian refugees at risk,” Norwegian Refugee Council, May 3, 2019.

#### Proposals/Funding Agreements & Narrative Reports

“Supporting Non-Formal Education Opportunities for Syrian and vulnerable Lebanese children”, KFW, Proposal & Ninth Quarterly Progress Report.

“Strengthening Adequate Shelter, Housing, Land & Property Rights for Vulnerable Households Affected by Displacement in Lebanon”, KFW, Final Report

“Integrated response transition program: coordinated reduction of protection concerns for vulnerable refugees in Lebanon’s protracted displacement crisis”, ECHO, Proposal & Final Report.

“Shelter Phase II - Refugee Resilience and Social Stability Programme: Building Resilience, Strengthening Protection, Promoting Social Cohesion, and Addressing the Root Causes of Secondary Displacement for Severely Vulnerable Households in Lebanon”, KFW, Proposal & Sixth Quarterly Progress Report.

“Ensuring Legal Protection for Refugees from Syria”, SDC. Proposal, Logframe, & Final Operational Report.

“Improving protection and access to legal and specialised services for refugees from Syria and vulnerable populations in Lebanon”, DfID, Proposal & Third Quarter Report.

“Improving the Overall Aid Effectiveness and Accountability: Provision of an Integrated Protection Response to Better Address the Protection Needs of the most vulnerable People Affected by Displacement in Lebanon” ECHO, Proposal & Final Report.

### **Planning and Strategy Documents**

ICLA Strategy Lebanon, 2018-2020 (Oct 2018 Revision)

Country Strategy Lebanon, 2018-2020 (Oct 2018 Revision)

ToC Legal Status 2020 Syrian Response

ToC Civil Documentation and Legal Identity 2020 Syrian Response

ICLA Quality Assessment Summary Findings for Lebanon

ICLA Quality Assessment Lebanon Final Dashboard

Srour, I. Talhouk, J. Geagea, N. & Turkmani, N. “ICLA Needs Assessment Report”, Economic Development Solutions, 2019

### **Monitoring**

“Outcome Monitoring Analysis”, excel file, Aug 2017-Aug 2019

Outcome Monitoring Questions

“ICLA Lebanon Outcome Monitoring 2019”, results presentation

### **ICLA Guidelines and Forms**

ICLA Intake Form, 2016

ICLA Lebanon Intake Form Counselling, 2018

GIS script, Syrian refugees, 2019

GIS script, marriage registration, 2018

GIS script, birth registration, 2018

### **Internal Legal Updates**

“Civil documentation of Refugees from Syria – Overview of the recent changes on birth and marriage registration”, 2018

“ICLA monthly update on legal status”, March 2019

## Protection Documents

“Protection and ICLA”, PowerPoint presentation, 2018

“Checklist for Protection Monitoring, ICLA”, Bekaa

“Checklist for Protection Monitoring, ICLA”, North

“Checklist for Protection Monitoring, ICLA”, BML

“FGD consultation report- Bekaa”, 2017

“FGD consultation report- North”, 2017

“FGD consultations overview report”, 2017

---

## Annex 6: Evaluation Team Bios

Charmain Mohamed has worked on refugee protection, legal aid, humanitarian and human rights issues for over 20 years. Charmain has experience of both NRC's working practices and the Syrian refugee response. She has worked as the whole of Syria advocacy manager for NRC, focusing on the Syria response and as the Advocacy, Information and Protection Manager for NRC in Palestine and Sri Lanka. She also has considerable research and report writing experience, most recently completing research reports for DRC on Syrian refugee youth coping mechanisms in Lebanon, Iraq and Jordan, and developing an advocacy strategy and position papers for NRC on durable solutions for Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh and refugee and IDP return conditions in Myanmar. She holds an LLM in International Human Rights Law.

Chris Morris is an experienced evaluator and program manager. He has experience of the refugee response in the Bekaa in Lebanon through working as the Area Programme Manager for DRC. He is trained in measurement and evaluation, having completed a research MA at the University of British Columbia focusing on the use of evaluation as an accountability mechanism in humanitarian operations. Chris has completed a number of evaluations for various clients including the International Commission of Jurists and the International Labour Organization. He is experienced in using participatory techniques and has employed the most significant change technique for a number of evaluation consultancies, as well leading on large qualitative and quantitative evaluations and studies for many organisations.

---

## Annex 7: Data Collection Tools

### Focus Group Discussion Guide

#### Refugees who have received ICLA counselling and Legal Assistance

**Time:** Approximately 2 hours

**Participants:**

- 8-12 refugees who attended the session (if there are 7)
- Evaluator
- Interpreter (either external or NRC staff member)

The groups will be split between refugees who have received ICLA counselling and those who have also received legal assistance. Questions below will be adjusted slightly accordingly.

**Informed Consent:**

I am conducting an evaluation of NRC's ICLA work. The purpose of the evaluation is to learn lessons about how successful the project has been, what its benefit has been for you, your community and the situation of refugees in Lebanon in general, what challenges have occurred and how NRC can improve in future.

The purpose of the meeting today is to talk with you about the support you received from NRC in the last 2 years and how well the it meets your and your community's needs.

Everything you say is treated as confidential and will not be attributed directly to you. I will use the evidence and stories you share with me to help write the evaluation report and illustrate particular points but I will ensure that this cannot be traced back to you, so particular details like names, places etc. will be omitted. Nothing you say will affect any type of assistance you receive from NRC. Please respect the confidentiality of the other participants in the room and do not share any details of what people say outside of this room.

Your participation is voluntary. You can refuse to answer any question and can leave at any time if you choose to. At the end of the FGD if you decide that you do not want something you have said to be used for the evaluation, you can speak to me and request that it is removed from my notes.

Do I have your consent to continue?

- It would be good to have some common rules for the discussion. I suggest the following:
  1. Listen to others
  2. Respect others opinions
  3. Confidentiality. Please remember not to share any of today's discussion with anyone outside of this room.
  4. No suggestion is a 'bad' suggestion. Everything contributes to the discussion
  5. Be aware of allowing all to speak
  6. If you need to take a phone call please do it outside
  7. When telling a story that involves other people, please do not mention any names

**Guiding questions:**

1. Can you tell me what counselling you received from NRC? (On what issue. What advice were you given? Was it useful?).
2. What did you do after you received the counselling? (prompt for challenges they might have faced, and whether they received assistance from another organisation or individual, or whether they helped other refugees in their legal

needs, if they have had more children since, did they follow the process on their own or come back to NRC?)

3. What were the results? How many of you have received documentation/legal status as a result of NRC's advice? **(only for the LC group)**
4. Did you share the information you received to others in the community? Potentially probe: Do you tell your husband/wife/other family members?
5. Why did you ask for legal assistance from NRC? **(only for LA group)**
6. Did you know how to obtain civil documentation, legal stay before the counselling session? If yes, how and from whom did you learn about the steps/process?
7. Particularly if a lot of people reply yes to question 5, why did you need the counselling or the legal assistance?
8. Were you happy with the support of NRC? What could be improved? (Prompt – timeline, communication, protection concerns, privacy, confidentiality, clarity of lawyer's and/or NRC staffs' explanation of the legal steps etc.)
9. Are there other issues you would like NRC's support on? (Prompt – labour, detention, contract). Are these issues more important to you than birth/marriage certificates, legal stay, housing etc?
10. Have any of you received counselling/legal assistance from NRC before? (On what issue. Was this a different issue to your second counselling, or the same- if the same, why did you come back?).
11. What is the purpose for you to obtain marriage/birth certificates? Why did you want to do this?
12. What positive changes has NRC's counselling brought about? For those who have obtained a resolution to their case, what has this allowed you to do which you could not do before?
13. Are there any negative experiences/changes from the counselling or legal assistance or the process you followed afterwards? Did NRC inform you about these risks during the counselling and did you inform NRC afterwards about the problem?
14. What do you think is the most significant of these changes to you?

## Focus Group Discussion Guide

### ICLA Volunteers

**Time:** Approximately 2 hours

#### Participants:

- 8-12 ICLA Volunteers
- Evaluator
- Interpreter (either external or NRC staff member)

#### Informed Consent:

I am conducting an evaluation of NRC's ICLA work. The purpose of the evaluation is to learn lessons about how successful the project has been, what its impact has been for you, your community and the situation of refugees in Lebanon in general, what challenges have occurred and how NRC can improve in future.

The purpose of the meeting today is to talk with you about the project and identify some of the areas where change has occurred to you or to your community, and how well the programme meets, your and your community has needs, as well as whether you think you have the necessary support from NRC to carry out your duties.

Everything you say is treated as confidential and will not be attributed directly to you. I will use the evidence and stories you share with me to help write the evaluation report and illustrate particular points but I will ensure that this cannot be traced back to you, so particular details like names, places etc. will be omitted. Nothing you say will affect your position with NRC. Please respect the



confidentiality of the other participants in the room and do not share any details of what people say outside of this room.

Your participation is voluntary. You can refuse to answer any question and can leave at any time if you choose to. At the end of the FGD if you decide that you do not want something you have said to be used for the evaluation, you can speak to me and request that it is removed from my notes.

Do I have your consent to continue?

- If would be good to have some common rules for the discussion. I suggest the following:
  1. Listen to others
  2. Respect others opinions
  3. Confidentiality. Please remember not to share any of today's discussion with anyone outside of this room.
  4. No suggestion is a 'bad' suggestion. Everything contributes to the discussion
  5. Be aware of allowing all to speak
  6. If you need to take a phone call please do it outside
  7. When telling a story that involves other people, please do not mention any names

#### **Guiding questions:**

1. Can 2 or 3 of you share why you wanted to become ICLA volunteers in the first place?
2. What is your role and how do you work? (If not given in response, follow up with: what is NRC's selection criteria?)
3. Why do you think refugees come to the information sessions? Are there people who say they are not interested? Why?
4. What are the main concerns refugees have?
5. Do you think the ICLA sessions cover these concerns? What is missing from the ICLA sessions, that is important for refugees? Is the information you have received from NRC appropriate for these sessions? Have you had NRC staff attend your sessions and give you feedback/advice on your work? What is your overall feedback on the training and coaching you have received from NRC staff?
6. What are the main challenges, which stop refugees from obtaining legal stay, civil documentation?
7. Can ICLA help overcome these challenges? Do they?
8. What are the main risks refugees face in attending these sessions? What are the main risks refugees might face when following the instructions given to them at these sessions? What can you do to help reduce the risks?
9. As a result of ICLA in the last 2 years, what are the main changes you have seen in individuals? (This question may get responses on an output level-i.e. people got their birth certificates. If so, follow up with "does obtaining the documentation/resolving the housing dispute etc., lead to any other changes for individuals?")
10. Have you seen any changes to your community as a result of the ICLA program over the last 2 years? (probe if they see refugees share the learning with others)
11. Of these changes, what do you think is the most significant change you have seen in the last 2 years?
12. Can you give an example or story to demonstrate this?

Question 6 could take quite a long time to answer. We will try to facilitate it just to complement the outcome monitoring and needs assessment data we already have in order to support time management.

#### **Focus Group Discussion Guide**

##### **Refugees at the ICLA information session**

**Time:** Approximately 1 hour

**Participants:**

- 7 refugees who attended the session (if there are 7)
- Evaluator
- Interpreter (either external or NRC staff member)

**Informed Consent:**

I am conducting an evaluation of NRC's ICLA work. The purpose of the evaluation is to learn lessons about how successful the project has been, what its benefit has been for you, your community and the situation of refugees in Lebanon in general, what challenges have occurred and how NRC can improve in future.

The purpose of the meeting today is to talk with you about the information you received today and how well the it meets your and your community's needs.

Everything you say is treated as confidential and will not be attributed directly to you. I will use the evidence and stories you share with me to help write the evaluation report and illustrate particular points but I will ensure that this cannot be traced back to you, so particular details like names, places etc. will be omitted. Nothing you say will affect any type of assistance you receive from NRC. Please respect the confidentiality of the other participants in the room and do not share any details of what people say outside of this room.

Your participation is voluntary. You can refuse to answer any question and can leave at any time if you choose to. At the end of the FGD if you decide that you do not want something you have said to be used for the evaluation, you can speak to me and request that it is removed from my notes.

Do I have your consent to continue?

- If would be good to have some common rules for the discussion. I suggest the following:
  1. Listen to others
  2. Respect others opinions
  3. Confidentiality. Please remember not to share any of today's discussion with anyone outside of this room.
  4. No suggestion is a 'bad' suggestion. Everything contributes to the discussion
  5. Be aware of allowing all to speak
  6. If you need to take a phone call please do it outside
  7. When telling a story that involves other people, please do not mention any names

**Guiding questions:**

1. Why are you here at the clinic/location today?
2. Have you been here before and seen an NRC information session/attended one before?
3. Do you know anyone who has been to an NRC information session?
4. Can 2 or 3 of you share why you came to the information session today?
5. Were the objectives of the session clear to you? Please explain what they were/Did you understand what the session was about/Was the information material user-friendly?
6. Did you get the information you needed from it? Was it helpful? Was there any new information to you in the NRC session today? Can you give examples of the new information?
7. If the information you received today is relevant to you, what will you do with it?
8. Do you think it could be improved/be better? How?
- 9.
10. What are the main legal issues you need information on?

11. Did you know how to obtain this information (civil documentation, legal stay) before the information session? (tailor according to answer to previous questions) If yes, what was your source?
12. What stops you obtaining the documents/legal stay?
13. What other issues would you like NRC's support on?
14. Have any of you got counselling/assistance from NRC before?

### **Interview Guide for Legal Actors**

Format: Semi-Structured Interviews to allow for additional questions or discussion based on the responses.

We are conducting an evaluation of NRC's ICLA work since 2017. The purpose of the evaluation is understand how relevant ICLA assistance is for Syrian refugees and the host community, how effectively and efficiency NRC has implemented the work, and what impact or change it has brought about for individual refugees, their families, and communities. We are also trying to analyze what recommendations are needed for moving forward and how NRC can ensure the gains made are sustainable in the long run.

1. Could you explain your role on the Legal Actors Group?
2. What do you see as the main legal needs for Syrian refugees in Lebanon?
3. Do you think the current services provide a quality response to these needs, and do they cover the areas and people who most need them?
4. Do you think there are gender and age differentials in people's legal needs? Can you give examples?
5. What gaps exist in services to meet these needs?
6. Why do you think these gaps exist? (capacity/policy environment/funding)
7. How do you interact with NRC?
8. Do you believe NRC's services are relevant to these needs?
9. What other approaches would you suggest to NRC?
10. As the crisis has evolved, have you seen a change in the needs that exist?
11. Have NRC adapted to meet these needs?
12. Are you involved in any advocacy related to legal needs in Lebanon? On what issues?
13. How successful do think your advocacy has been?
14. Are you aware of NRC's advocacy on legal issues?
15. If yes, do you think it has been effective? (Strengths/weaknesses)

### **Interview Guide for NRC Lawyers**

Format: Semi-Structured Interviews to allow for additional questions or discussion based on the responses.

We are conducting an evaluation of NRC's ICLA work since 2017. The purpose of the evaluation is understand how relevant ICLA assistance is for Syrian refugees and the host community, how effectively and efficiency NRC has implemented the work, and what impact or change it has brought about for individual refugees, their families, and communities. We are also trying to analyze what recommendations are needed for moving forward and how NRC can ensure the gains made are sustainable in the long run.

1. Could you explain what your role as a NRC lawyer involves?
2. What do you see as the main legal needs for Syrian refugees in Lebanon?
3. Do you think the current services provided by NRC meets those needs?
4. Do you think there are gender and age differentials in people's legal needs? Can you give examples?
5. As the crisis has evolved, have you seen a change in the needs that exist?
6. Have NRC adapted to meet these needs?

7. What gaps exist in services to meet these needs?
8. Do you think the distribution of roles within NRC-e.g. volunteer/staff/lawyers is effective?
9. What are the main risks refugees face after receiving counselling/support from NRC? What advice do you give to mitigate this?
10. How well do you think refugees are able to follow the advice you give them?
11. Do you have suggestions on ways in which NRC could improve its programming?

### **Interview Guide for Mukhtars/Nofous/Sharia Court**

Format: Semi-Structured Interviews to allow for additional questions or discussion based on the responses.

1. Could you explain your responsibilities with regards to refugee documentation please?
2. What are the main challenges refugees face in obtaining their documents? If necessary, prompt about steps after they have come to the Mukhtar/Noufous/Sharia Court.
3. When they come to you, do they generally have the necessary paperwork for you to be able to help them?
4. Are you aware of which refugees have received support from NRC?
5. Is the answer to this question is yes; follow up with whether they notice any difference in the preparation for those who come from NRC and those who do not?
6. Have you noticed any difference in the last 2-3 years in the refugees approach to obtaining documentation?
7. If so what differences?
8. Are you happy with the information NRC provides to the refugees?
9. Are there any other subjects you think NRC should be providing refugees information on?
10. Do you think the refugees are aware of the importance of having birth and marriage certificates?
11. Have you attended any event or training organized by NRC? If so was it useful?
12. Is there any events or training which you think would be useful for NRC to do?
13. Do you think the current ease or difficulty (depends on their previous response) in obtaining civil documents makes a difference to the refugee community at large? Does it make a difference to the host community?



NORWEGIAN  
REFUGEE COUNCIL

[www.nrc.no](http://www.nrc.no)

Norwegian Refugee Council  
Post-box 148 Sentrum  
102 Oslo, Norway