

“Keeping them alive” - Humanitarian Assistance to Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon, and the Role of NGOs.

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Master's thesis in History

**University of Bergen
Spring 2009**



Preface

During the work on this thesis I have received valuable assistance and support from several people. Firstly, I would like to thank my supervisor, Anders Bjørkelo. I also wish to thank my fellow students at the University of Bergen for their comments on early drafts as well as interesting discussions over coffee. Thank you especially to Maria, Simon, Elisabeth, Jostein, Marit Elisabeth and not least Jonathan and Lisa for their much appreciated assistance. Warm thoughts are also sent to my family for always being supportive and to Bassel and Jakob for being my life.

Secondly, I would like to thank the staff of Norwegian People's Aid in Oslo and in Beirut, for their willingness and interest in providing input to this thesis. Special thanks to David Bergan, Siri Kvenild and Haifa Jammal.

Thirdly, I wish to thank all my informants in Lebanon and elsewhere who provided me with insight into their thoughts and ideas.

Finally, I wish to thank all my friends in Rashidieh who have taught me so much. Special thanks to sitti Sria and mormor Amira who have opened their homes and hearts for me.

Summary in Norwegian

I over 60 år har palestinske flyktingar budd i Libanon, og dei utgjer i dag omlag 10 prosent av folketalet i landet. Dei har ikkje vore mogeleg for dei å vende heim. Av ulike grunnar som vil bli diskutert i denne oppgåva, har dei heller ikkje fått sivile rettar i vertslandet Libanon. Dette har ført til at det har vore svært vanskeleg for flyktingane å verta sjølvhjelpne, noko som har betydd at i heile perioden har dei vore avhengige av internasjonal bistand. Denne oppgåva gir ei historisk analyse av denne bistanden med fokus på den rolla som frivillige organisasjonar har spelt. Det palestinske flyktingesamfunnet i Libanon representerer eit utypisk eksempel når det gjeld bistand fordi det har vore avhengig av bistand så lenge og situasjonen ser ikkje ut til å endre seg med det fyrste. Det er difor eit noko spesielt samfunn dei frivillige organisasjonane og andre bistandsaktørar arbeider i.

Største delen av bistanden har blitt kanalisert gjennom FN og det organet dei oppretta i 1949 for å ha ansvar for humanitær hjelp til dei palestinske flyktingane, nemleg United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). Det er samstundes over 150 frivillige organisasjonar, såkalla NGOar, som har vore involvert i ulikt arbeid i det palestinske flyktingesamfunnet i denne perioden. Oppgåva vil sjå på utviklinga av NGO sektoren og analysere dei sterke og svake sidene til dei frivillige organisasjonane i dette samfunnet. Oppgåva tar nærare for seg som ein case study, ein internasjonal organisasjon som har vore aktiv i det palestinske flyktingesamfunnet i Libanon i nær 28 år, nemleg Norsk Folkehjelp.

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List of Abbreviations

UNITED NATIONS AGENCIES

UN:	The United Nations
UNCCP:	United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine
UNDRP:	United Nations Disaster Relief Project
UNHCR:	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNIFIL:	United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon
UNRPR:	United Nations Relief for Palestine Refugees
UNRWA:	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

PALESTINIAN AGENCIES AND OTHERS

GUPW:	General Union of Palestinian Women
LPDC:	Lebanese Palestinian Dialogue Committee
oPt:	Occupied Palestine Territory
PA:	The Palestinian Authorities
PLO:	The Palestine Liberation Organisation
PRCS:	The Palestine Red Crescent Society

NORWEGIAN INSTITUTIONS

Fafo:	The Norwegian Institute of the Applied Social Sciences
LO:	Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (Landsorganisasjonen)
MFA:	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Norad:	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS AND OTHERS

ECHO:	The Humanitarian Aid Department of the European Commission
ENGO:	The Coordination Group of European NGOs Working with Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon
HCS:	Health Care Society
INGO:	International Non-Governmental Organisation
ICRC:	International Committee of the Red Cross
IMF:	International Monetary Fund
NAMSCVT:	The National Association for Social Medical Care and Vocational Training
NAVTSS:	National Association for Vocational Training and Social Service
NISCVT:	The National Institution for Social Care and Vocational Training – also known as Beit Atfal Al-Somud
NGO:	Non-Governmental Organisation
NORWAC:	Norwegian Aid Committee
NPA:	Norwegian People's Aid
NRC:	Norwegian Refugee Council
OECD:	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PARD:	Popular Aid for Relief and Development
WA:	Welfare Association
WB:	World Bank

Map

Official UNRWA map of Palestinian Refugee camps in Lebanon (2009)¹



¹ UNRWA Online (a). The front cover picture of this thesis shows Ein el-Hilweh camp in the forefront, the largest refugee camp in Lebanon with a population of more than 50,000; and the city of Sidon behind it.

Chapter 1

Introduction

For more than 60 years Palestinian refugees have lived in Lebanon. They have not been able to return to their homes. As of 2009, they number between 300,000 and 400,000 people.² For several reasons, which will be outlined in this thesis, they have not been granted any civil or social rights from the host country, Lebanon, and as a result face difficulties in becoming self-supporting. The overall political situation for the Palestinians has resulted in the Palestinian actors themselves being incapable of or unwilling to provide assistance for the refugees for most of the 60 years. As a result, Palestinian refugees have depended on international humanitarian assistance for all this time. This thesis gives a historical analysis of the development of this assistance and what it has meant for the current situation of the Palestinians in Lebanon.

Most of the assistance has been channelled through the United Nations (UN) and the agency they established in 1949 to care for the humanitarian needs of the refugees, namely the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). This agency has, however, operated under certain restrictions, both financial and operational, deciding what kind of assistance they provide to whom. As a result of these limitations, part of the assistance has been channelled through non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and increasingly so the last three decades.³ The NGOs do provide services for the Palestinian refugees to a certain extent, which are provided by the public sector to Lebanese nationals. This thesis will go beyond

² There is no accurate number of the Palestinian refugees present in Lebanon available. The most cited number is that of the UN agency the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). They state the number of refugees to be 422,188 as of 31 December, 2008. (UNRWA Online (b).) Firstly, however, the number excludes those who are not included in UNRWA's definition of *Palestine* refugees, as will be explained below. Secondly, the number includes refugees that have emigrated from Lebanon, but maintained their registration at UNRWA's Lebanon Office. This latter is believed to be quite a sustainable number, thus making the actual number lower than the UNRWA statistics.

³ This thesis will use the term non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in its broadest sense: "To [sic] over the full range of formal and informal organisations and groups engaged in development, human rights and social justice and social welfare work in both rich and poor countries." (Opoku-Mensah [et al] 2007, 11.)

statements such as, “NGOs are important, and play a vital role in the refugee community.” The thesis looks into the development of the NGO sector in the Palestinian community, and analyses its strengths and weaknesses. It will place NGOs in relation to the other actors who are involved with humanitarian assistance, and discuss their position in the Palestinian community. The thesis provides as a case study the development of one international NGO (INGO) which has been working in the Palestinian community since 1982, namely the Norwegian People’s Aid (NPA), and discuss what role they have in this community.

On NGOs and doing research on NGOs

The term NGO was first coined in the 1945 UN Charter.⁴ NGOs constitute a wide range of organisations; some are huge international organisations with thousands of paid staff, while others are limited to one place and one project. They consist of relief organisations that move with every emergency situation, and development NGOs who stay in one place for years. They may function as service providers as well as advocacy organisations working for human rights and social justice or environmental issues. They are represented at international conferences and in negotiations with governments and they receive an increasingly greater portion of development funding and are intensifying cooperation with the World Bank, UN and other international agencies.

The NGO label is a claim bearing label. In its most common use, it claims that the organisation is doing good for the development of others. Precisely because it is “doing good”, the organisation can make a bid to access funding and public representation.⁵ A form of “NGO speak” has developed which revolves around the ideas that NGOs have comparative advantage and are flexible, empowering, grassroots representatives of democracy and pluralism and a response to state and market failures.⁶

⁴ However, some organisations we today call NGOs were established in the mid-1800s such as the Red Cross in 1862. (UD Evaluation report 4.98, 18.)

⁵ Opoku-Mensah [et al] 2007, 306.

⁶ Opoku-Mensah [et al] 2007, 43, argues it can be called “system speak”, i.e. “A speak shared by all actors in the system, be they donors, researchers, consultants or NGO activists.”

As a result of the altruistic motives attributed to NGOs, they are often described in normative terms, instead of being analysed in terms of what they actually achieve. The literature tends to be divided into two oppositional views, either confirming that NGOs are good, progressive, autonomous and are engaged in the pursuit of development, rights or democratisation objectives, or on the other hand claiming that they are opportunistic, self-serving actors, the unwitting tools of donors and passive victims of global processes.⁷ Critics of NGOs argue that rather than alleviating poverty and promoting equity, NGOs perform a maintenance function. They reduce the pressure for more radical reforms, partly by harnessing the energy of radical middle-class activists.⁸ Both objectives speak some truth and the heterogeneity of the NGO scene makes it impossible to draw unanimous conclusions regarding them all. This is also the case with the NGOs that are working in the Palestinian community in Lebanon. As appendix I of this thesis illustrates, there are a wide range of NGOs involved in this community and it is beyond the scope of this thesis to analyse every single one of them. The analysis is therefore of the NGO sector in general and can not be said to be absolute conclusions that are valid for all. As will be discussed later in this thesis, the NGO sector in Lebanon, as with the NGO scene in every country, includes both some of the valuable and less valuable aspects of the NGO sector.

Research question and case study

From the outline above it seems clear that the term NGO is very wide and that NGOs can represent both positive and negative influences in a community. In research on Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, the importance of NGOs in the refugee community is often mentioned. NGOs are seen as “filling the gap” due to the difficult financial and political position of both UNRWA and Palestinian actors. However, very few studies take a closer look into the NGOs’ work and place them into the “broader picture”.⁹ While the

⁷ Opoku-Mensah [et al] 2007, 10-13.

⁸ Tvedt 1998, 6.

⁹ Statements like these are examples of the importance of NGOs manifested in the research: “This assistance is channeled through a number of non-governmental organizations that are **crucial** to the welfare of the refugees... The many NGOs working among the refugees today cater for a **major share** of available infrastructure.” (Fafu 2003 (409), 16, 255.) “Partnerships with international agencies and with NGOs were **invaluable** in order for UNRWA to carry out its tasks.” (UNRWA press release, Geneva 2004.) (my emphasis added)

literature describes the need for NGOs in the Palestinian community, no one has, to my knowledge, looked at the consequences of NGOs having this influential role. It is striking to me that NGOs are seen as fundamental in the community, while no one asks questions about what NGOs really represent and if they are capable of taking on the amount of responsibility they are assigned.

The upward transmission of needs through advocacy and lobbying is gradually becoming a more important legitimisation of NGOs. Spokesmen of this trend argue that any effect that NGOs can have on the broader political causes of suffering is more important than the impact of concrete, small-scale practical interventions.¹⁰ It continues however, to be a discussion in the NGO community whether NGOs should focus more on advocacy than on service provision or vice-versa, i.e. what kind of role NGOs should take on in the society. I will argue that in the Palestinian refugee community in particular, advocacy ought to be an important aspect of NGOs work. As will be discussed in chapters 2, 3 and 4, the socio-economic difficulties that this community endures will not improve unless there are profound changes in the national and international laws and mechanisms concerning the rights of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. NGOs have, through their ability to advocate and lobby towards governments both abroad and in Lebanon, an opportunity to influence this, and act as agents of change. This thesis will study whether the NGOs involved in the Palestinian community are capable of doing this.

On the basis of this, my research question will be:

What is the role of international and local NGOs in the Palestinian community in Lebanon?

My first hypothesis is that, due to the fact that the Palestinian refugee community lacks a governmental structure and is governed by a complex web of different actors, there is more need and room for NGOs in this community than there would be with a distinct governing body in place, and an opportunity exists to take on an influential role and

¹⁰ Tvedt 1998, 83, 91-92.

become agents of change. By this I mean that NGOs can act as a driving force in the work to improve the refugees' socio-economic situation.

My second hypothesis is that, due to limitations within the NGO sector per se, the NGOs are not able to take on such an influential role.

NPA was originally chosen as a case study because it is a large INGO which has been present in the Palestinian community for a long time. It was also chosen for the simple reason that as a Norwegian organisation it was easily accessible for me as a Norwegian student. NPA therefore represents what is called a convenience sample. The sample is strategic, in that it represents some qualities that are relevant for the research question, and the process type which is used to choose the sample is based on availability to the researcher.¹¹ However, during the work on this thesis it has turned out that NPA represents rather what is called a particular sample.¹² As will be evident in chapter 8 of the thesis, NPA is an INGO which has “gone local”. As such it has provided an excellent case study as an NGO with both international and local characteristics.

Historical development and time period

Historically, I argue that the development of humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon can be divided into three phases. The initial phase started with emergency aid provided by UN through contracts with NGOs such as the League of Red Cross, and in coordination with the Lebanese government. With the establishment of UNRWA in 1949, this agency became the responsible actor for social services to the refugees.¹³ The second phase is characterised by the increased strength of the Palestinian resistance movement, and an establishment of Palestinian run social services, further explained in chapters 2 and 3. The third phase starts with the evacuation of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) in 1982 from Lebanon to Tunisia and is further influenced by the decrease in UNRWA funding in the 1990s, with the result that NGOs, international and local, have to take on a larger role as service providers. NPA

¹¹ Thagaard 2003, 54.

¹² Thagaard 2003, 56.

¹³ This will be further explored in chapter 3.

arrived in Lebanon in 1982 and is today one of the major INGOs working in the Palestinian community. This third phase will be the main focus of this thesis and further explored in chapters 6, 7 and 8. The time period which is covered in this thesis is then from the arrival of Palestinian refugees to Lebanon in 1948 until 2009. The main focus will, however, be from 1982 when PLO was evacuated and NPA arrived. Regarding the events taking place in Lebanon, the thesis ends in April 2009; however, for the work of NPA my thesis will end in 2008, due to my field work and lack of available sources after that period.

It should be noted that humanitarian assistance to Palestinian refugees has always had a political dimension. This has not always been acknowledged and one has at times tried to treat the Palestinian refugees as any other marginalised group, or as one Palestinian said, “They treat us like we were hit by a natural disaster.”¹⁴ If one looks closer at the implantation of assistance to the refugees, however, it becomes obvious that politics is part of the picture, and has played a role in the provision of assistance which is provided by NGOs, both local and international.

Some remarks about the term “Palestinian refugees”

There has never been an established, clear definition of what a Palestinian refugee is. A definition that is used today is “Those who define themselves to be one.” In a legal context, however, there is no one generally accepted definition of who can be considered a Palestinian refugee.¹⁵ The reason for this is briefly the political atmosphere surrounding the Palestinian refugees and for example the reference to the right of return and compensation. The number of refugees has been disputed ever since 1948, with the most cited numbers being those of UNRWA, although these numbers are not accurate for several reasons. Importantly, UNRWA use the term “*Palestine* refugees”.¹⁶ Under UNRWA's operational definition, they are persons whose normal place of residence was Palestine between June 1946 and May 1948, who lost both their homes and means of

¹⁴ Yossef Salah, Bergen, 05.03.09.

¹⁵ E-mail correspondence with Kjersti Gravelseter Berg 05.05.09.

¹⁶ Throughout the thesis I will emphasise by using *italics* when I am explaining something that is valid for *Palestine* refugees, but can not necessarily be transferred to account for all Palestinian refugees.

livelihood as a result of the 1948 Arab-Israeli conflict.¹⁷ Their definition of a *Palestine* refugee was implemented for “working purposes” and therefore included, for example, all refugees from 1948, as well as Jews and others who do not consider themselves “Palestinian”. On the other hand, the UNRWA definition up to 1993 excluded those Palestinians who were not “in need” and those living outside of UNRWA’s area of operation. Those who did not lose both their land and their livelihood continue to be excluded from the definition.¹⁸ In this thesis I use the term Palestinian refugees, since I want to include all those in Lebanon who consider themselves as such.

State of the research

Since the peace negotiations started in the early 1990s, a plethora of European and North American institutions have undertaken Palestinian refugee studies, conferences and collations in order to serve negotiators’ needs for “facts” and “solutions”. The Norwegian Institute of the Applied Social Sciences (Fafo), McGill University, and the Refugee Studies Programme, University of Oxford, are some examples. As such there have been several studies conducted on the living conditions of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, as well as in other areas.¹⁹ There has also been some attention to the legal situation of the refugees in Lebanon and on Lebanon as a host country.²⁰

Regarding research on Palestinian refugees in Lebanon and the humanitarian assistance provided to them, two articles in particular stand out. Firstly, an article written by Marie-Louise Weighill entitled “Palestinians in Lebanon: The Politics of Assistance” which was part of the Refugee Studies Programme at the University of Oxford.²¹ The article was published in 1997 and explores the extent to which political considerations have affected and continue to affect both the planning and delivery of assistance to Palestinians. The article outlines the history of the assistance as provided through UN, Palestinian actors and the Lebanese government. Weighill argues that, “The autonomy and prerogatives of

¹⁷ UNRWA Online (c).

¹⁸ For example, excluding people on the Golan heights who had their home on the Syrian side of the border, but used land on the other side for their herds i.e. livelihood.

¹⁹ Fafo 2003, 2005.

²⁰ El-Natour 2007, Haddad 2003, Knudsen 2009, Reme 2007, Takkenberg 1998.

²¹ Weighill 1997.

the refugees as *parties* to the Arab-Israeli conflict are obscured by their status as objects of relief. The marginalization of the refugees is, at least in part, a consequence of their place within the framework of humanitarian assistance.”²²

The article does not go into detail about the role of NGOs involved with the refugees. This is, however, done in an article by Jaber Suleiman, an independent Palestinian scholar from Lebanon. In the article “Palestinians in Lebanon and the Role of Non-governmental Organizations” from 1997, he analyses the social, political and legal context and provides insight into the roles and activities of the local NGOs.²³ This article has provided an important background for the work on this thesis.

In 2001 the Ajial centre, a Palestinian NGO also called the Statistics and Documentation Office, prepared a study about NGOs working in the Palestinian community.²⁴ It includes 46 Palestinian and 20 International NGOs, and is the most comprehensive study on Palestinian NGOs that I have found. It is based on a survey of the NGOs engaged in various types of service provision for the Palestinian refugee population in Lebanon and includes interviews with senior members of the relevant NGOs.

Secondly, another focus of this thesis is NGOs and research concerning NGOs in general with particular focus on Norway. I have concentrated on the works by the social scientist Terje Tvedt, mainly due to his involvement with some of the first evaluations which were conducted of NGOs in Norway. There have also been some studies conducted concerning NGOs in the Occupied Palestine Territory (oPt).²⁵ The main study is by sociologist Sari Hanafi with Linda Tabar, entitled “The Emergence of a Palestinian Globalized Elite: Donors, International Organizations and Local NGOs”.²⁶ I have used these studies as references, because some of the aspects of the NGO scene in oPt are similar to those in the Palestinian community in Lebanon.

²² Weighill 1997, 311.

²³ Suleiman 1997.

²⁴ Ajial 2001.

²⁵ Hanafi and Tabar 2005, Hammami 2001, Brynen 2000.

²⁶ Hanafi and Tabar 2005.

Thirdly, this thesis singles out one NGO, the NPA, as a case study. There is not much literature written about NPA per se, with the exception of a book written for their 50th anniversary in 1989.²⁷ The information on NPA is therefore largely based on interviews and reports conducted by NPA and others.

Finally, I have included in appendix I a synopsis of the NGOs which are involved with the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. It includes 97 Palestinian NGOs and 62 international NGOs, in all 159 NGOs that have at some point been involved with the Palestinian community in Lebanon.²⁸ To my knowledge, this is the most comprehensive synopsis of NGOs in this community that has been compiled. The sources and methods used to compile the synopsis are discussed in appendix I.

Presentation and discussion of my sources

Oral sources

I have interviewed several people who are working with both local and international NGOs in Lebanon. Some of them I have interviewed in person: members of local NGOs;²⁹ three people who work with INGOs;³⁰ and two scholars.³¹ It was my intention to also interview the beneficiaries of NGOs services, but I was not able to arrange any meetings during my field work. I have also had e-mail correspondence and telephone interviews with people who work for INGOs. However, I have decided to make these

²⁷ Lyshagen 1989.

²⁸ The term “NGO” as used by my sources in the synopsis is very wide, and includes for example one Palestinian Popular Committee, a research institution and a range of single project NGOs as well as major international NGOs.

²⁹ Most of them are partner organisations to NPA: Kassem Aynaa, Director of Palestinian NGO Beit Atfal Al- Sumod; Mariam Suleiman, Administrator of the Beit Atfal Al- Sumod center in Rashidieh; Amne Jibril, Head of the General Union for Palestinian Women (GUPW); Ahmad Sharour, engineer working for Popular Aid and Relief and Development (PARD); Anni Kanafani, President of the Ghassan Kanafani Foundation; Soheil El-Natour, Palestinian lawyer in Mar Elias, member of Human Development Center, member of DFPL, author of the book “The Legal Status of the Palestine refugees in Lebanon and the Demands of Adjustment” and other articles. (Notably under the name Soheil El-Natour as well as Soheil Al-Natour)

³⁰ Haifa Jammal, Human Rights Coordinator and Gender Adviser, NPA Lebanon; Leila Zakharia, Country Manager of Welfare Association (WA), Lebanon Branch; and David Bergan, Middle East and Latin America Advisor at NPA Oslo, in person and by telephone.

³¹ Jaber Suleiman, Palestinian researcher, author of the article “Palestinian NGOs in Lebanon”. Sari Hanafi, Professor at the Issam Fares Institute at American University in Beirut, member of the faculty advisor committee of the program “Policy and Governance of Palestinian Refugee Camps”.

people anonymous for reasons described below. My in-person interviews were conducted between 11 January, 2008, and 22 January, 2008, with the exception of some of my anonymous sources and Sari Hanafi, whom I met on the 19 February, 2009.

An interview situation is always affected by both the interviewer and interviewee. Basic things can influence the course of the interview, like the fact that I am a western female student. In my role as interviewer I am the one to decide the topic and more or less direct the conversation in the direction I am interested in. However, my interviews were not wholly structured and I mostly let the interviewees lead the way as long as they were, to some extent, within the topic of the conversation. Some of my interviews were conducted via e-mail, and as such are written sources. However, they were “oral” in form and I will treat them as oral sources. Most of the people I interviewed were quite used to being approached by researchers to talk about their work. Most of them talked on behalf of their organisation and not as private individuals, and many of them agreed to be recorded on tape. All of these factors contribute to make the interview setting formal, and people do not necessarily speak as frankly as they would in an everyday conversation. Irrespectively of this, many of my interviewees were quite open.

The reason for making some of them anonymous is that I faced the common challenge researchers often meet when researching NGOs. There is a kind of internal censorship in the NGO community which means that many are wary of being critical towards other NGOs, especially not to openly express criticism towards their own organisation.³² An intensifying factor is also that the NGO scene working in the Palestinian community in Lebanon is not that large, and people cooperate closely or meet at different events. The fact that I chose to make all of these interviews anonymous does not mean that they all had critical comments, but that those who did had a wish to stay anonymous. In order not to reveal them I chose to make them all anonymous. The exceptions are Dagfinn Bjørklid from the Norwegian Aid Committee (NORWAC) and Gry Ballestad from the Norwegian

³² Tvedt 1998, 221.

Refugee Council (NRC) which represents the two major Norwegian NGOs other than NPA, which are present in the Palestinian community.³³

Written sources and field visits

In 2001, an evaluation of NPA's Lebanon program was conducted.³⁴ The report was ordered by NPA International and conducted by two consultants: one Palestinian political scientist and one Norwegian anthropologist. The report includes field work in Lebanon and an extensive number of interviews with NPA staff, partner NGOs and others. In 2007 the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad), made an evaluation of NPA's work as a part of their ongoing evaluation of all Norwegian NGOs working with aid.³⁵ The report covered only NPA's development work financed by Norad and not humanitarian aid supported with grants from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and other international donors. Therefore it did not cover the Lebanon program, which for reasons explained in chapter 8 is not financed by Norad. However, the report provides information about NPA in general and has therefore been of use for this thesis.

I have spent some time at the NPA archive in Oslo and was also sent some of the annual reports of NPA Lebanon by e-mail. As the 2001 evaluation report presents a relatively detailed account of NPA's Lebanon program up to 2001, I have concentrated on annual reports from NPA thereafter. I have had a closer look at the reports from the period 2001-2006. The final reports for 2007 and 2008 are not yet finished. I have also benefited from information material which is produced by NPA and other NGOs to provide information to the donors, the public and the beneficiaries. I have also visited NPA's rehabilitation centre in Mar Elias, Beirut, and was given a tour of the centre by one of the staff there. It was during the summer holiday so there was not much activity, but I still got a good impression of the centre.

³³ E-mail correspondence with NORWAC 13.11.08 and NRC 06.11.08.

³⁴ Buvollen and Abdul-Hadi 2001.

³⁵ Norad 2007. Norad has established a database with several NGOs' own evaluations available at Norad Online (a).

NGOs' annual reports represent a distinct genre. They are a description of what the NGO has achieved the previous year, and to some extent what they did not achieve. Some reports are written for internal use, while others are written as part of an application for funding. This inevitably shapes what kind of information is presented. The reports often use the "NGO speak" and as a result, reports from NGOs working in quite different countries and environments are strikingly similar.³⁶ Norwegian NGOs have recently been criticised for focusing too much on the process of their work and not enough on the results in their reports.³⁷ Whilst working with the reports and the information material, I have to be aware of the fact that they inevitably present a glossy picture of the organisation.

I have used articles from The Daily Star, the major English newspaper in Lebanon, to keep up to date on the ongoing developments related to the Palestinian refugee community in Lebanon. The articles are available to view online for one week for free, and subsequently with a charge.

Finally, I have greatly benefited from the fact that in 2005, I lived for six months in Rashidieh, the southernmost refugee camp in Lebanon, where I met many Palestinians, listened to their stories and was a part of everyday life in the camp. Through this I have had the opportunity to closely observe life in a refugee camp and both the private and public workings of that society. I have not recorded any interviews with the people there, but the general observations from Rashidieh have formed my perceptions of the situation. It should be noted that NPA do not have any projects (other than through partners) in Rashidieh.

There exists quite an overwhelming amount of reports, evaluations and information material produced by the NGOs that are active in the Palestinian community. It is beyond

³⁶ Cf. NPA Online (a).

³⁷ Terje Vigtel, director of Norad's department for civil society said in February 2008 that the requirements for report submission from the organisations will become stricter with consideration to results: "The organisations are surprisingly bad at stating the reason why they shall receive money. I have lately tried to read up on and have revised a number of reports from Norwegian aid organisations. There are many descriptions of what one plans to do and of different activities. However, there is usually very little about what one actually achieves." (Bistandsaktuelt 02/08) cited at NPA Online (a) (my translation.)

the scope of this thesis to dig deep into all of them, and this is limited to my case study of NPA. Therefore, parts of the thesis are based on secondary sources. This thesis is the result of my effort to combine self-generated material with these sources.

Language

Many of the names of both people and places are written in several different ways when translated from Arabic to English. For the names of the Palestinian refugee camps I use the names as they are written by UNRWA as found in the map on page 8. I do not read Arabic and Arabic sources could, therefore, only be consulted in translation. However, the fact that much of the NGOs information material and reports are written both in English and Arabic, and that most of the NGO workers speak English well, means that this has not made such an impact on my ability to gather and understand my sources. Moreover, many of the secondary sources I use are written by scholars who are themselves Arabic speakers and I trust that they have access to and can offer insight into the Arabic material that exists.

Outline of the thesis

In order to understand the role of NGOs in the Palestinian community, it is first necessary to provide some background information about the particular history and status of this community. It is also necessary to provide information about the other actors that are involved with the refugees. Chapter 2 presents the historical background and political events taking place concerning the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. Chapter 3 provides an outline of the international and political institutions which are involved with the welfare of the refugees, such as UNRWA and PLO. Chapter 4 looks into the development of the socio-economic standing for the refugees since their arrival in 1948. Chapter 5 outlines some features of the NGO sector worldwide and of Norwegian aid channelled through NGOs in particular. Chapter 6 discusses the role of the Palestinian NGOs which work in the refugee community. Chapter 7 provides insight into the work of international NGOs in the Palestinian community. Chapter 8 analyses the development of NPA's work in Lebanon and discusses the role of this NGO in the refugee community.

Chapter 2

Historical background - Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon

Becoming refugees and starting over (1948-1969)

After the First World War, Palestine became a British mandate. However, there were tensions between the local population and the immigrating population of Jews. The British government was not able to solve the conflict that developed and in 1947 passed the responsibility over to the recently established UN. The General Assembly then voted on the 29 October, 1947, for the partition of Mandatory Palestine into two states, one Jewish and one Arab. The British declared that they would be leaving the area on the 15 May, 1948, and the day before, the leaders of the Jewish organisations proclaimed the Israeli Declaration of Independence. As a consequence of the resulting tension and the Israeli-Arab war, some 600,000-760,000 Palestinian Arabs fled to the neighbouring countries.³⁸ It is today an indisputable fact that the Palestinian population who became refugees did not flee voluntarily. However, the Israeli government has disputed this and has therefore not been involved with the international assistance to the refugees. Arab governments on the other hand insist that Israel has the responsibility.³⁹

Approximately 100,000 refugees sought refuge across the border in Lebanon. Due to the urgency of their situation, Count Folke Bernadotte, the UN Mediator for Palestine, set up a sixty-day UN Disaster Relief Project (UNDRP) in July 1948 to coordinate aid to the refugees from local governments and NGOs.⁴⁰ It was succeeded by the United Nations Relief for Palestine Refugees (UNRPR) which was established in November 1948 to implement a relief program for the Palestinian refugees as a first response to the

³⁸ Takkenberg 1991, 417. He notes that "More accurate figures do not exist, and these numbers have long been the subject of dispute between Israel and the Arab states."

³⁹ Such as this statement from the Lebanese government: "Israel bears the fundamental responsibility for the creation of the Palestinian refugee problem, having denied the refugees their rights for more than half a century." (The Lebanese Government, 2007.)

⁴⁰ Schiff 1995, 14. Cf. also Takkenberg 1998, 21-32 for a detailed account of the early interventions of the UN.

emergency situation.⁴¹ They contracted with the International Committee of the Red Cross, the League of Red Cross Societies and the American Friends Service Committee to carry out relief activities.⁴² However, as it became evident that the refugee situation was not a temporary one, the scope of the UN mission was expanded. They established UNRWA, which will be looked at in more detail in chapter 3. Some better-off Palestinians settled in the Lebanese cities and became well integrated into their new environment. Some of the Christian Palestinians even acquired Lebanese citizenship in the early 1950s.⁴³ However, most of the refugees had been landowning or sharecropping peasants back home and with the loss of their land they became dependant on others to survive as the old political and social institutions from Palestine also began to disintegrate. In 1951 an UNRWA officer reported that, “The lack of certainty about the future haunted the refugees... They felt ‘forsaken and abandoned’ by political organizations, international institutions, and the big powers.”⁴⁴

Most refugees therefore became dependent on UNRWA. The refugees were allowed to settle in certain areas of Lebanon, which would later become the 15 officially recognised refugee camps. The camps consisted of canvas tents, sometimes reinforced with wooden planks, corrugated iron and metal barrels. Over the years the tents were replaced with cement houses covered by zinc roofs. The Lebanese authorities prohibited the use of concrete roofs, and the refugees also rejected this as a sign of permanence. Most of the Palestinians worked in agriculture; as factory workers; building workers; and in other low-paid physical work. Gradually, UNRWA established schools and healthcare facilities in the camps and became an employment opportunity for educated Palestinians. In the 1960s and 1970s, the oil boom in the Gulf and Saudi Arabia also provided employment opportunities for many educated Palestinians from the camps. During their first decade in Lebanon, the refugees experienced a generally welcoming attitude, freedom of expression and political activity. However, after the Arab nationalist rebellion in 1958, the camps

⁴¹ Besson 1997, 335.

⁴² Schiff 1995, 14-15. In Lebanon the League of Red Cross Societies was responsible for the relief assistance. This organisation is today known as the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

⁴³ Takkenberg 1998, 164.

⁴⁴ Chief District Officer R.M Courvoiser, cited in Schiff 1995, 21.

became subjected to tight control, and there was a more aggressive policy towards the Palestinians. The League of Arab States Protocol of 1965 called for Arab host states to give the same rights for Palestinian refugees as for their own citizens. However, Lebanon refused to apply this.⁴⁵

Civil War and PLO dominance (1969-1990)

Until 1967 the “Palestinian case”, and thus the refugees’ plight, was seen as a pan-Arab struggle against the Israeli state. The Arab League was supposed to be responsible for speaking on behalf of the Palestinians, but was crippled by internal disagreements. In the Six-Day War in 1967, Israel occupied the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and the Palestinians lost their faith in any help from the Arab countries. The Palestinian resistance movement took control over PLO, an umbrella organisation which had been established by the Arab League in 1964.⁴⁶ Fatah was the biggest faction in this movement, with Yassir Arafat as its leader.⁴⁷ On 1 January, 1965, PLO launched a guerrilla war across the Israeli border.⁴⁸ Due to major Arab political pressure, the Lebanese army signed the Cairo Agreement with PLO in November 1969.⁴⁹ In this agreement Lebanon agreed to let the Palestinian guerrilla use parts of Lebanon as a base in their warfare against Israel. It placed the refugee camps in Lebanon under the authority of the Palestinian forces. The agreement also gave the Palestinian refugees the right to work, move freely and live in Lebanon.⁵⁰

In 1970 the leadership of the PLO was thrown out of Jordan during the “Black September” campaign and moved all their operations to Lebanon. In Lebanon they were welcomed with open arms by most of the Muslim population. PLO represented for them a leadership in the pan-Arab movement, and a partner in their own opposition to

⁴⁵ Schulz, Helena Lindholm with Juliane Hammer 2003, 53. The reasons for Lebanon’s relationship with the Palestinian refugees will be discussed in chapter 3.

⁴⁶ Khalidi 2001, 2.

⁴⁷ The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP); The Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFPL); General Union of Palestinian Women (GUPW); and other unions are also members of PLO. (Peteet 1991, 29.)

⁴⁸ Peteet 1991, 27.

⁴⁹ Khalidi 2001, 3.

⁵⁰ Khalidi 2001, 2.

Christian Lebanese particularism. Existing tensions between Lebanese political factions became heightened by PLO's presence and in 1975 the Lebanese civil war began.⁵¹ During the civil war the central government lost much of its power and PLO sometimes functioned as a "state within the state", with a separate Palestinian economy next to the Lebanese economy.⁵² PLO's political power contributed to the establishment of a range of social institutions in this period. Also, some of the Palestinian NGOs emerged in this period, which will be further explored in chapters 4 and 6.

The refugee camps became the focus of the Lebanese right-wing militia and several were destroyed in the fighting. The camps were under heavy Israeli bombardments, and in 1974 Israeli air raids completely destroyed the Nabatiyeh camp.⁵³ Three of these camps were not rebuilt, which means there are only 12 refugee camps today.⁵⁴ Israel invaded Lebanon in 1978 and 1982 with the purpose of removing the PLO guerrilla once and for all. Eventually, PLO was forced to evacuate in the summer of 1982 after an Israeli siege over Beirut and moved its headquarters to Tunis. When PLO was evacuated the Palestinian refugees lost the only political and military organisation protecting them.⁵⁵ On 17 September, 1982, the Phalanges militia entered Shatila refugee camp and killed more than 1,000 Palestinian and Lebanese civilians who were left without protection after PLO's evacuation.⁵⁶ This event led to a major international focus for the first time on the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, and an advent of several international NGOs into the Palestinian community, which will be explored in chapters 7 and 8. In May 1983 there was a split within Fatah, which had a profound impact on the political and organisational situation in the camps.⁵⁷ The internal struggle between the Syrian-backed breakaway forces and the groups loyal to Arafat led to the defeat of the loyalists and their evacuation

⁵¹ For further information about PLO and the civil war cf. Brynen 1990.

⁵² Suleiman 1999, 67. "PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat was now head of state in all but name, more powerful than many Arab rulers. His was no longer a humble revolutionary movement, but rather a vigorous para-state." (Khalidi 1986, 29, quoted in Schulz 2003, 55.) In 1982 the Palestinian economy generated more than 15 per cent of the Lebanese gross national product (GNP). (Schulz 2003, 58.)

⁵³ In the 1982 invasion 70 per cent of homes in Rashidieh camp were destroyed and Ein el-Hilweh was completely demolished. The Lebanese authorities recorded over 3,000 Israeli attacks on Lebanon between 1968 and 1974. (Khalidi 2001, 3-4.)

⁵⁴ Cf. map at p. 8.

⁵⁵ For more information on PLO's social role see chapter 3.

⁵⁶ Brynen 1990, 181. No-one knows the number precisely, but it is likely to be more than 1,000.

⁵⁷ Suleiman 1999, 68.

from Beirut and the northern camps. In 1985, the so-called “War of the Camps” began where different Palestinian groups fought each other and the Shiite Amal militia. The camps of Beirut and the south were under siege for up to two years, and approximately 2,500 people were killed.⁵⁸ In 1987, the Lebanese government abrogated the Cairo agreement. Importantly though, the refugee camps remained under the authority of the Palestinian parties in terms of security.⁵⁹ The civil war lasted with more or less intensity until 1990, and the alliances and conflict lines between the different groups shifted along the way.

Marginalisation (1990-2005)

In these two last decades the situation for Palestinian refugees was largely influenced by events outside of Lebanon. Firstly, by the peace negotiations that took place in Madrid and Oslo between the Palestinian leaders and Israel from 1991 to 1993. In the negotiations, the “refugee problem” was postponed until “final status negotiations”. These have yet to take place. In Lebanon, the Palestinian groups were split between support and opposition to the Oslo Agreement, which in 1993 set up the Palestinian Authority (PA) in the West Bank and Gaza. Secondly, after the Persian Gulf War in 1991, PLO lost its revenues from the Gulf states and plunged into an economic crisis. The Gulf War also resulted in the expulsion of tens of thousands of Palestinian workers from the Gulf countries.⁶⁰ Many of them had sustained their family members in Lebanon, but they now had to return to the camps in Lebanon themselves. Neither the PLO in exile nor the PA has had enough resources or influence to secure the rights of the diaspora-refugees, i.e. those Palestinians who are not living inside the West Bank and Gaza. After the Oslo Agreement, the Palestinian leadership was able for the first time to establish themselves in the West Bank and Gaza and their main focus shifted to these areas.

In 1989, the Ta’if Agreement put an end to the Civil War in Lebanon. The dialogue between Palestinian and Lebanese leaders formally resumed in 1991 and the Palestinians’

⁵⁸ Khalidi 2001, 7.

⁵⁹ One Palestinian leader who participated in the Lebanese-Palestinian dialogue committee in 1991 said: “When it came to the security of the camps... the Lebanese representatives told the Palestinians it was their own responsibility.” (Reme 2007, 88.)

⁶⁰ Abu-Habib 1996, unpaginated.

heavy weapons were handed over to the Lebanese military. In June 1991, the Lebanese army took up positions in the south of Lebanon and established checkpoints at the entrances of the camps.⁶¹ The topics discussed at these dialogue meetings, which still continue to dominate the Palestinian-Lebanese dialogue were: firstly, the Palestinian military presence in Lebanon; secondly, the security situation in the camps; and thirdly the social and civil rights of Palestinians in Lebanon.⁶² The Palestinian delegation submitted a memorandum entitled “The Civil and Social Rights of the Palestinian People”, but there was no continued dialogue until 2005.

Israeli attacks on Lebanon have continued throughout this period, with major onslaughts in 1993 and 1996. In 2000, Israel withdrew from the security zone they had occupied in the south since 1978.

Hope and destruction (2005-present)

After the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri in February 2005 and the following evacuation of Syrian troops from Lebanon, there has been more public and official Lebanese acceptance to discuss the Palestinian refugees’ rights. In 2005, a Lebanese Palestinian Dialogue Committee (LPDC) was established, with Lebanese ambassador Khalil Makkawi as its leader.⁶³ The PLO representative office in Beirut was reopened in 2006, led by Abbas Zaki. The same year UNRWA, in partnership with the dialogue committee and other groups, held a donors’ conference to raise money for all of the Palestinian camps in Lebanon. According to Makkawi this was “The first time the [Lebanese] government has given its [support] to improving the conditions of the camps.”⁶⁴ According to Richard Cook, former Director of UNRWA Affairs in Lebanon, “[current Lebanese Prime minister] Siniora is building his approach [towards the Palestinian refugees] on four pillars: improving the humanitarian conditions in the camps,

⁶¹ Suleiman 1999, 69.

⁶² Suleiman 1999, 69.

⁶³ LPDC Online. I have tried to get in touch with the LPDC but there was no response to my efforts.

⁶⁴ The Daily Star, 16 September, 2008.

establishing diplomatic relations with the PLO, control of armament inside the camps, and the decommissioning of arms outside the camps.”⁶⁵

In 2004, Mahmoud Abbas visited Beirut as the first Palestinian official to do so in 22 years.⁶⁶ In 2008 he returned, this time as the Palestinian President. According to newspaper reports after this meeting, Abbas and former Lebanese President Amin Gemayel, “Agreed that it is imperative to introduce drastic improvements to the living conditions of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon and we also agree on rejecting the settlement of Palestinians.”⁶⁷ Abbas told a media conference after a meeting with the Lebanese President Michel Sleiman that, “The Palestinians have the right of return and this is an issue we are discussing with the Israelis.”⁶⁸

In July 2006 there was a new outbreak of fighting between Israel and Lebanon. Much of the Lebanese infrastructure was damaged and approximately 900 civilians were killed in Lebanon as well as 39 civilians in Israel.⁶⁹ In May 2007, clashes between the Lebanese Army and a militant group called Fatah al-Islam destroyed the Nahr el-Bared camp completely.⁷⁰ The inhabitants of the camp had to move to other camps and areas of Lebanon until the reconstruction of their houses. UNRWA, together with a number of local and international organisations, is currently working to rebuild the camp. They expect all of Nahr el-Bared’s residents to be back in the camp by 2011.⁷¹

Recently, several studies have been published regarding Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon and the growing presence of radical Islamist groups in some camps.⁷² This does not mean that the majority of Palestinian refugees are more radical, militant or Islamist than the average Lebanese citizen. It is rather a result of the special security status that is

⁶⁵ Cook 2008, unpaginated.

⁶⁶ The Daily Star, 10 December, 2004.

⁶⁷ The Daily Star, 30 August, 2008.

⁶⁸ The Daily Star, 29 August, 2008.

⁶⁹ According to Human Rights Watch Online.

⁷⁰ Over 30,000 camp residents left the camp, which lay in ruins. According to military and government sources, the battle resulted in the deaths of 166 Lebanese army soldiers, 220 Fatah al-Islam militants, and at least 40 civilians, most of whom were Palestinians. (Human Rights Watch Online.)

⁷¹ The Daily Star, 6 June, 2008.

⁷² Rougier 2007, Knudsen 2005, Hanafi 2007 and International Crisis Group 2009.

accorded to the refugee camps and the lack of a unified Palestinian leadership in the camps, as will be discussed in chapter 3. However, Palestinian refugees feel they are collectively and unfairly blamed. “If anything happens in Lebanon, ‘Ayn El Helweh [sic] is responsible.”⁷³ Throughout autumn 2008 and spring 2009 there were concerns that similar clashes to the one in Nahr el-Bared would break out in Ein el-Hilweh.⁷⁴

The total destruction of Nahr el-Bared in 2007 shows that the camps can be dangerous places, not least for the Palestinians who live there. The anxiety has spread to the other camps. “Following Naher El Bared [sic], men are scared to death from going into a mosque so as not to be accused of belonging to a certain organisation and get arrested and thrown in prison.”⁷⁵ Many feel that, “We are being held hostage in this camp because of not more than a hundred militant [sic].”⁷⁶ Others feel that the presence of armed personnel in the camps is their only protection in the absence of a strong Lebanese state and refer to the Sabra and Shatila massacres as examples of what may happen if they are left unprotected. The important thing to remember is that most of the refugees have no other choice than to stay. It is often believed that bad living conditions, unemployment and a general feeling of hopelessness for the future can be recruiting grounds for militant groups.⁷⁷ Lina Abu-Habib wrote in 1996: “As for the present, keeping thousands of unskilled and idle youths trapped in camps by poverty and by official indecision concerning their status is not the best way to contribute to a lasting peace in the region.”⁷⁸

⁷³ Abu Sharar 2008, 13.

⁷⁴ Cf. these newspaper headlines from The Daily Star: 18 September, 2008: Grenade attack heightens tensions in Ein al-Hilweh; 13 September, 2008: ‘Al-Qaeda has infiltrated Ain al-Hilweh [sic] camp’ Group seeks to enlist Palestinians - Jordanian official; 31 March, 2009, Blast targets Fatah member in Ain al-Hilweh [sic]; 1 April, 2009: Another bombing rattles Ain el-Hilweh [sic] camp.

⁷⁵ Abu Sharar 2008, 13. I have also heard of religious refugees who have shaved (their beard) in order to look less “islamistic”.

⁷⁶ Abu Sahrar 2008, 28.

⁷⁷ Ambassador Makkawi, leader of LPDC is quoted in a newspaper article: “Squalid living conditions in Lebanon’s refugee camps are partly to blame for the rise of the Islamic extremist group Fatah al-Islam. ... Until action is taken to improve the situation for Palestinians in the Middle East, the appeal of militant fundamentalism in these areas will continue to fuel violence throughout the region. ... Unless you find a solution --a just solution-- to the Palestinian problem, there can be no peace in the Middle East.” (CNN 2007.)

⁷⁸ Abu-Habib 1996, unpaginated. In 2008 journalist Marc J. Sirois, emphasises: “Helping the camps would help Lebanon... All [the new threats] stem at least partly from the general dissatisfaction that rightly characterizes the long-suffering refugee population, making individuals, families and even entire neighbourhoods susceptible to seduction by radical ideas.” He calls on the international community to “Help Lebanon and its Palestinian population avoid what would just be the latest side-effects of a

13 years later this is no less true. The situation of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon is perceived as a threat to Lebanon's stability. However, it is also highly unlikely that the PA and Israel can achieve a durable peace if the refugees in Lebanon and elsewhere are left behind.

Throughout the 60 years of residence in Lebanon the Palestinian refugees have lived in tents, fought in wars, gone to school and raised their children in an often hostile environment. Their situation continues to be volatile and in the next chapter I will give an outline of the actors who are responsible for their social welfare.

historical injustice that has been abetted by some western countries and ignored by others. A little bit now will save a whole lot more later.” (The Daily Star, 16 December, 2008.)

Chapter 3

Actors who are involved with the welfare of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon

This chapter will present the actors, other than the NGOs, which play a part in the socio-economic support for the Palestinian refugees.

The United Nations (UN)

The United Nations' responsibility for the Palestinian refugees derives from its role in 1947 in promoting the partition into two states of Mandatory Palestine. With this they paved the way for the creation of the state of Israel and the beginning of the Palestinian refugee situation. The right of return for the Palestinian refugees was confirmed by UN Resolution 194 in December 1948. The resolution:

Resolves that the refugees wishing to return to their homes and live in peace with their neighbours should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return and for the loss of or damage to property which, under principles of international law or in equity, should be made good by the Governments or authorities responsible.⁷⁹

The UN has, however, not been able to enforce the implementation of the resolution, which has left the refugees in limbo, with no chance to return home. The UN has been unable to broker a final solution to the situation, and has instead taken on the responsibility to provide humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian refugees until a solution can be established. First however, two UN actors, who do not play any part when it comes to the socio-economic situation of Palestinian refugees, are still worth mentioning, ostensibly because one could assume that they should have done so.

⁷⁹ UN Resolution 194 (III).

The United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine (UNCCP), The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Refugee Convention

The United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine (UNCCP) is the body established by the UN Resolution 194 in 1948 to provide protection for Palestinian refugees.⁸⁰ The General Assembly authorised the Commission to provide protection and facilitate durable solutions for people displaced as a result of the 1947-1948 conflict and war in Palestine.⁸¹ In 1950, the Assembly specifically requested the UNCCP to protect the rights, properties and interests of the refugees. The Commission is composed of representatives of the United States, France and Turkey.⁸² However, by 1952 the UNCCP had ceased to work for the implementation of protection: “The Commission reached the conclusion that it was unable to fulfill [sic] its mandate due to the lack of international political will to ensure the return of those refugees and displaced persons wishing to go back to their homes and villages.”⁸³ When the UNCCP was established, one did not foresee that the refugees would not be able to return, and the UNCCP was not given the resources or machinery to continue to work for such a long period of time. Today, UNCCP has no budget and no staff, with the result that the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon are left with no international agency which works explicitly for their protection.⁸⁴

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was established in December 1950 to provide protection to asylum seekers who were recognised as refugees. UNHCR was followed by the 1951 Geneva Refugee Convention. The Refugee Convention secures refugees the right to work, travel, receive social security and enjoy the freedom of association. However, the UNHCR statutes, “Stipulate[s] that a person receiving assistance or protection from another UN organ or agency is not entitled to

⁸⁰ Schulz 2003, 37.

⁸¹ This includes internally displaced Palestinians inside Israel. The UNCCP does not have a protection mandate for Palestinian refugees and internally displaced persons from later conflicts.

⁸² BADIL Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights Online.

⁸³ BADIL Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights Online.

⁸⁴ The same is the case for refugees in Syria, Jordan, West Bank and Gaza, i.e. the fields of UNRWA operations as will be explained below.

UNHCR assistance/protection.”⁸⁵ Thus, because UNRWA and UNCCP were already established to care for assistance and protection of the Palestinian refugees in their field of operation, these refugees have to this day been excluded from the UNHCR mandate. The same is true for the Refugee Convention, which Lebanon in any case has not signed. There has been much confusion and discussion about what the practical implications of these exclusions actually are.⁸⁶ In 2002, in order to clarify the issue, UNHCR stated that:

If the person concerned is inside UNRWA’s area of operations and is registered, or is eligible to be registered, with UNRWA, he or she should be considered as receiving protection or assistance within the sense of paragraph 1 of Article 1D, and hence is excluded from the benefits of the 1951 Convention and from the protection and assistance of UNHCR. [] If, however, the person is outside UNRWA’s area of operations, he or she no longer enjoys the protection or assistance of UNRWA and therefore falls within paragraph 2 of Article 1D, providing of course that Articles 1C, 1E and 1F do not apply. Such a person is automatically entitled to the benefits of the 1951 Convention and falls within the competence of UNHCR. This would also be the case even if the person has never resided inside UNRWA’s area of operations.⁸⁷

UNHCR are thus responsible for Palestinian refugees in Lebanon who come from areas outside of UNRWA operation, such as Palestinian refugees from Iraq, but not the “original” Palestinian refugees.⁸⁸

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)

As mentioned in chapter 2, the UN realised they had to expand their work for the Palestinian refugees and established UNRWA. The agency was established by UN Resolution 302, on 8 December, 1949 and started their operations on 1 May, 1950. By 30 June, 1950, the number of refugees registered with UNRWA was 914,221.⁸⁹ In chapter 1, it was described that UNRWA uses the term “*Palestine* refugees” which has several limitations. The terms “registered”, “non-registered” and “displaced person” have determined who is entitled to certain rights and services and who is not as we will see in

⁸⁵ Briefing note on non-ID Palestinian refugees living in Lebanon, 2007.

⁸⁶ Cf. Takkenberg 1998, 349-350.

⁸⁷ Note on the Applicability of Article 1D, UNHCR 2002.

⁸⁸ As of 3 October 2007, 8719 non-Palestinian refugees were registered with UNHCR’s office in Lebanon; more than 97 per cent of them are of Iraqi origin. (Lebanon-Support Online (a).)

⁸⁹ UNRWA Online (d).

chapter 4. UNRWA's services are available to all those living in its area of operations who meet their definition, who are registered with the Agency and who need assistance. UNRWA's definition of a refugee also covers the descendants through the male line of people who became refugees in 1948.⁹⁰ UNRWA services are usually restricted within their mandate areas in the officially recognised refugee camps.

UNRWA's work

UNRWA was mandated to:

Carry out direct relief and works programmes in collaboration with local government, to consult with the Near Eastern governments concerning measures to be taken preparatory to the time when international assistance for relief and works projects is no longer available and to plan for the time when relief was no longer needed.⁹¹

UNRWA was designed to inaugurate a work program which would make the refugees self-supporting and eventually make the agency redundant, as well as to care for the immediate needs of the refugees. However, the work program was not successful and only the relief part of UNRWA's program is still in place.⁹² Long-term refugee assistance became increasingly indistinguishable from development aid.⁹³ The mixed mandate of providing relief and at the same time making plans with the aim of finalising this aid turned out to be too big a challenge. Peter Hansen, Commissioner-General of UNRWA in 2004, reflected upon the issue like this:

In a stroke of vision and good sense, a component was introduced of what today is called "development", "income-generation" and "self-reliance" – the antithesis of welfare. This led to the "works" part of our name. Hence, when the United Nations itself was in its infancy, it developed one of its earliest programmes

⁹⁰ UNRWA Online (c). Notably, refugee status can not be transferred through a woman. For example a woman who is registered with UNRWA, but is married to a man with no identification, can not transfer her status to her children. This is the same practice as in Lebanese law, which means that a woman with Lebanese citizenship who gets married to a Palestinian refugee can not transfer her citizenship to her children.

⁹¹ UNRWA Online (e).

⁹² Cf. Schiff 1995, 21 for a more detailed account of UNRWA's work program and the reasons for its failure.

⁹³ Schiff 1995, 274.

as a mix of relief and development, something which the international community struggles to combine even today.⁹⁴

In 1982, UNRWA ceased distribution of food rations to all registered refugees and began to focus their relief assistance on those refugees most in need, the so called “special hardship cases”, which in Lebanon constitutes 12 per cent of the refugees.⁹⁵ As will be further explored in chapter 4, UNRWA’s main responsibilities are to offer education, healthcare, infrastructure improvements such as solid waste management, monetary support for hardship cases and, for some, job opportunities. UNRWA’s field of operation today is Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, West Bank and the Gaza Strip,⁹⁶ which represents approximately three-quarters of Palestinian refugees worldwide.⁹⁷ UNRWA programs today are Relief and Social Services, Education, Health, Micro-Finance⁹⁸ and Infrastructure and Camp Improvement.⁹⁹ UNRWA has in all areas of operation more than 27,000 staff members.¹⁰⁰

UNRWA’s relationship with the Palestinian refugees

The Palestinian refugee population has become inevitably connected to UNRWA in many ways through their long-lasting relationship, which may be described as a love/hate relationship.¹⁰¹ The common perception prevails that UNRWA is the sole duty bearer responsible for ensuring assistance and protection, a perception that is reinforced by the existing international mechanisms.¹⁰² UNRWA has therefore become in practice something more than just a service provider. In many ways UNRWA has become a social authority substitute for the national civil authority which is not there, and is made

⁹⁴ Hansen 2004, Keynote/vision remark.

⁹⁵ UNRWA Online (f).

⁹⁶ Until June 1952, UNRWA was also responsible for 45,800 people receiving relief in Israel. (UNRWA Online (d).) At times, UNRWA has provided assistance to Palestine refugees and other Palestinians registered with the Agency in additional areas of the Near East, including Kuwait, the Gulf States and Egypt. (Cf. Note on the applicability of Article D, UNHCR.)

⁹⁷ UNRWA Online (g).

⁹⁸ Launched in 1991, operating in West Bank, Gaza, and later expanded to Jordan and Syria. (UNRWA Online (h).)

⁹⁹ Created in 2004. (UNRWA Online (h).)

¹⁰⁰ Report from Commissioner-General 2007.

¹⁰¹ Abu Sharar 2008, 21.

¹⁰² ENGO report 2007, 9.

responsible in many ways for the welfare provision, and the lack thereof, for the camp refugees. It is said to be:

Considered by the Palestinians as a Palestinian organization, by the Arab countries as a source of financing for host governments in the service of the Arab cause, and by the international community, which finances it, as an international humanitarian organization - and therefore neutral and apolitical by definition and mandate... [and therefore] has had to face the most delicate political situations in order to be able to pursue its operations.¹⁰³

UNRWA's view on assistance versus protection

Many refugees have seen it as the responsibility of the UN, which in practice became UNRWA, to help them to return to their homes. The UN response has so far been limited to confirm Resolution 194 every time they renew UNRWA's mandate, which has been approximately every fourth year. From UN's point of view the mandate of UNRWA has only been to provide humanitarian aid until a peace settlement could be reached.¹⁰⁴ Since the beginning, UNRWA has been considered as a service provider organisation. As such, they have played an important role for the survival of the refugees. The agency was not empowered to guarantee the safety, security or legal and human rights of the refugees.¹⁰⁵ However, with the UNCCP out of practice and the UNHCR not responsible, UNRWA has gradually been forced to act somewhat out of their mandate. Since the Geneva donor meeting in 2004, UNRWA has started to link its service provision to advocacy, and a more rights-based approach to their humanitarian mandate is emerging.¹⁰⁶ They now state that, "UNRWA is responsible for providing humanitarian and human development services to one group of refugees, the *Palestine* refugees, in its areas of operation. UNRWA's role encompasses assistance, protection and global advocacy for *Palestine* refugees."¹⁰⁷ However, some important donors express scepticism towards the possibility for UNRWA to look for durable solutions and becoming too politicised, and the agency

¹⁰³ Besson 1997, 345.

¹⁰⁴ Weighill 1997, 305.

¹⁰⁵ Shiblak 1996, 37.

¹⁰⁶ Hanafi 2007, 9.

¹⁰⁷ UNRWA Online (i) (my *italics* added.)

has to tread carefully.¹⁰⁸ Karen Abu Zayd, Commissioner General of UNRWA since June 2005, states, “We should leave those political things to the politicians, because if we step over the line too far we will be prevented from doing our work.”¹⁰⁹ Richard Cook, former director of UNRWA Affairs in Lebanon, writes:

As a humanitarian agency the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) is not mandated to play a political role. However, it views a political solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and the related refugee crisis as paramount. Until a political solution is found, UNRWA will first and foremost continue to work on improving the status of the Palestinian refugee community in Lebanon.¹¹⁰

Funding

Most of the international assistance to the Palestinian refugees is channelled through UNRWA.¹¹¹ 94 per cent of UNRWA funding comes from governments and the European Union (EU).¹¹² In absolute terms the largest donor for UNRWA in 2003 was the US, followed by the EU, Japan and Sweden. Norway, the US, Sweden and Switzerland give approximately 1 per cent of their total aid to UNRWA.¹¹³ UNRWA relies on voluntary donations, which makes it vulnerable to shifting donor priorities. Almost from the beginning they have suffered from delayed and unreliable funding. Over the last two decades in particular, the agency has suffered from chronic under-funding, or more precisely, a relatively constant budget for an increasingly growing refugee population.¹¹⁴ In 1975 the expenditure per refugee was US\$200. In 2000 that figure had declined to US\$75.¹¹⁵ This has inevitably resulted in understaffing, a reduction of services and a hindrance to long-term planning.¹¹⁶

¹⁰⁸ The UNHCR for their part has been able to successfully combine the search for durable solutions with their humanitarian mandate in other conflicts. (Hanafi 2007.)

¹⁰⁹ Abu Zayd 2008.

¹¹⁰ Cook 2008, unpaginated.

¹¹¹ Edminister 1999, 17.

¹¹² UNRWA Online (j).

¹¹³ Fafo 2003 (415), 8.

¹¹⁴ Edminister 1999, 17.

¹¹⁵ Schulz 2003, 147.

¹¹⁶ The Daily Star, 25 September, 2008.

UNRWA in Lebanon

UNRWA's headquarters were situated in Beirut between 1950 and 1978, before they moved to Geneva, and since 1996 in Gaza and Amman.¹¹⁷ UNRWA is the only UN organ never to have left Lebanese soil since 1950 and has never ceased its operations.¹¹⁸ In general, the Lebanese authorities have cooperated closely with the agency, mainly because they saw this as a way to avoid resettlement of the refugees, as will be explained below. Another factor was to safeguard their political position towards the refugee question; specifically that the refugees are the responsibility of the international community, through the UN, and not that of Lebanon.¹¹⁹

Criticism of UNRWA

One criticism of UNRWA has been that the agency is actually preventing a political solution to the refugee problem. By providing services and “keeping the refugees alive”, they have eased the urgency and thus the pressure on Israel, the Palestinian leaders, Lebanon and the international community to find a political solution to the problem. However, as the agency itself states, “Removing UNRWA from the scene would not cause the refugee issue to disappear, but it would lead to untold suffering and hardship.”¹²⁰ The agency has also been criticised for being hierarchical and not including beneficiary participation in its program design.¹²¹ In contrast to assistance programs run by the UNHCR, UNRWA “Is notable for the lack of refugee participation in the design and implementation of assistance, and the lack of involvement of local and international NGOs in its assistance programmes.”¹²² UNRWA has also been accused of corrupt practices and favouritism.¹²³

¹¹⁷ UNRWA Online (k).

¹¹⁸ Besson 1997, 345.

¹¹⁹ Besson 1997, 344. More about Lebanon as host country below and in chapter 4.

¹²⁰ UNRWA Online (l).

¹²¹ Schiff 1995.

¹²² Weighill 1997, 306.

¹²³ It is my experience in conversation with many Palestinian refugees that this is a common accusation made against UNRWA. Also reported in Abu Sharar 2008, 23.

Continuing need for UNRWA

UNRWA was from the beginning meant to be a temporary organisation. In the period following the Oslo Agreement, it was thought that one could see the beginning of the end of UNRWA. Yves Besson, Director of UNRWA operations in the West Bank between 1990 and 1992, wrote, “UNRWA is destined to disappear gradually as the peace process progresses.”¹²⁴ However, with the failure of the peace process, the dissolution of UNRWA does not seem realistic in the near future. All relevant parties stress the need for UNRWA to continue its services and UNRWA’s mandate was most recently renewed until 30 June, 2011.¹²⁵

Palestinian actors

Palestinian Authority (PA)

From the perspective of most Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, the Palestinian Authority (PA) has from its establishment in 1994 been almost irrelevant, “A leadership in abeyance.”¹²⁶ A great majority of the refugees in Lebanon felt abandoned and disappointed by their leaders after the Oslo Agreement. As mentioned earlier, however, the PLO representative office in Beirut was reopened in 2006 and it has been approved to replace this office with a Palestinian embassy.¹²⁷ This, together with Mahmoud Abbas’ recent visits to Beirut, is a sign that suggests that the PA is taking a greater interest in the refugees in Lebanon.

PLO and other political parties

PLO functions much as a para-state formation. They have many of the underpinnings of a government, such as a bureaucracy, a military function, financial resources, and in the West Bank and Gaza, a network of institutions through which it tries to exercise political power.¹²⁸ The camps in Lebanon have been under the authority of PLO since the signing of the Cairo Agreement in 1969. As mentioned in chapter 2, PLO developed a vast

¹²⁴ Besson 1997, 341.

¹²⁵ UNRWA Online (m).

¹²⁶ Sayigh 1995, 41.

¹²⁷ The Daily Star, 29 November, 2008 (a).

¹²⁸ Norton (ed.) 1995, 245.

network of social and cultural institutions in the 1970s. They provided security, quasi-governmental services and became an important part of the Palestinian and Lebanese economic sector. This assistance provision was implemented with impressive speed. The Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS) had only one hospital before 1975, but by 1976 it had four in Beirut alone.¹²⁹ PRCS used to be sponsored by the PLO and has a largely local staff, providing healthcare through hospitals, clinics, home visits, health education, mother and child care facilities and sanitation programs in the camps. The period from 1974 to 1982 was undoubtedly the heyday of Palestinian self-supporting ability. PLO employed as much as 65 per cent of the Palestinian workforce as military personnel, healthcare personnel, social workers, teachers and factory workers.¹³⁰ PLO became an important employer for women in particular. During these years, PLO evidently became a kind of embryonic government for the refugees, providing a range of ordinary services far beyond those of a strictly military nature for which it is more commonly known. As a result, the camp population became involved with the political body in most spheres of their lives. It was rare to find a household without at least one member active in politics.¹³¹ With the evacuation of PLO in 1982 most of these institutions disappeared.

As mentioned earlier, since 1982 the political environment amongst the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon has been characterised by fragmentation and rivalry which means that the camps are governed by a complex web of actors. The political parties can be divided into three main groups: loyalist (those who are pro-PLO); the opposition (those who are pro-Syria); and Islamist groups. Cooperation and coordination between these groups is very difficult, and sometimes impossible. One synopsis shows 23 different Palestinian factions in Lebanon, with 7 of them belonging to the PLO and controlling 70 per cent of the camps.¹³² However, no political party is able to speak on behalf of the

¹²⁹ Weighill 1997, 300.

¹³⁰ Suleiman 1997, 399.

¹³¹ Peteet 1991, 29.

¹³² These factions are: Fatah Movement; Palestinian Liberation Front (PFL); Popular Struggle Front (PPSF); Arab Liberation Front (ALF); Arab Palestinian Front; The Fada Party; Hamas; Islamic Jihad; PLO (Janah Talaat wing); Fateh-Al Intifadah; Al Saiika; The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC); The Palestinian Popular Struggle Front; The Communist Revolutionary Party; The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP); Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP); Fatah-Revolutionary Council; Osbat Al Ansar; Ansar Allah; The Jihadist Islamic Movement; Jund Al Sham; The Islamic Liberation Party. (Lebanonwire Online.)

whole refugee population. This inevitably makes it difficult to negotiate for improvements, both with the Lebanese government, UNRWA and other international agencies.¹³³

Since 1982, most of the political parties have continued to offer some form of social service such as kindergartens, clinics, culture clubs and financial support to poor families. However, the PLO services such as PRCS and the kindergartens run by the General Union of Palestinian Women (GUPW) increasingly have to depend on foreign support and apply for funding from donor agencies.¹³⁴ Due to the political fragmentation, the field of service provision has become one of competition, which results in duplication and a lack of coordination.¹³⁵ This will be further discussed in chapter 6. The parties offer services in order to gain political support for their party and are accused of being more interested in competing for providing services than to elaborate policies to improve the overall situation in the camps.¹³⁶ The political parties have also been accused of corruption and favouritism.¹³⁷ This was especially the case during the civil war but, as we shall see in chapter 6, it is a reputation the Palestinian NGOs, which often grew out of the political parties, are still struggling with.

The number of people working for the PLO has greatly reduced since 1982. However, PLO is still an important employer of many Palestinians in Lebanon, thus providing the livelihood of many families. In the southern camps, as many as 11 per cent are employed by PLO and other political factions.¹³⁸ It should be noted that for many Palestinians, interest in the political parties is often economically motivated, and many shift alliance according to where they can benefit most.¹³⁹ As Suleiman emphasises, “In general [] it should be noted that the realignments and political machinations have little effect on

¹³³ Suleiman 1999, 76, demonstrates this by telling of the Director of UNRWA who “Recently received three memoranda from three different organizations in ‘Ayn al-Hilwa [sic] (the Popular Committee, Popular Action Council, and Popular and Union Action Bureau) all of which repeat the same basic demands.”

¹³⁴ Interview with Amne Jibril 23.01.08 and interview with Haifa Jammal 16.01.08.

¹³⁵ Weighill 1997, 299.

¹³⁶ Kortam 2007, 9.

¹³⁷ Weighill 1997, 299. Reported also by Abu Sharar 2008, 27.

¹³⁸ Fafo presentation 2007.

¹³⁹ Conversations with several Palestinian refugees.

ordinary camp residents' lives, the political groups by and large remaining distant from their concerns."¹⁴⁰ The PLO's and the PA's economic ability is vulnerable and negatively affected by political events, such as the Gulf War in 1991 and the international embargo which was imposed on the PA after the election of Hamas in 2006.¹⁴¹

The Popular Committees

The Popular Committees operate as municipalities in the camps and they were first established by the PLO in 1971.¹⁴² They are composed of representatives from the major political factions and independents, as well as camp elders and notables. Together with UNRWA, they are responsible for maintaining services such as garbage collection, electricity, water and sewage. They also used to have a function to maintain law and order in the refugee camps. However, in most cases they are not elected bodies and in some camps the chairmanship of the committee is linked to pro-Syrian parties. Instead of challenging this leadership, other parties have established rival committees.¹⁴³ After 1982 the Popular Committees were therefore weak. The influence of the Popular Committees varies regionally, with the strongest influence being in the south of Lebanon and the weakest being in the Bekaa Valley and the Mount Lebanon areas. Due to the lack of a unified political authority amongst the Palestinian refugees, however, the Popular Committees often function as the camps' representatives in discussion with the Lebanese government or other law enforcement agencies.¹⁴⁴

Lebanon as the host country

A survey which has been carried out regarding Palestinian refugees in the Middle East and North Africa shows that most of the refugees live in conditions quite similar to that of the populations of their host country, and are doing quite well compared to the populations of other countries in the region. The main exception of this, however, is the

¹⁴⁰ Suleiman 1999, 73.

¹⁴¹ Due to the embargo, the payment of salaries and other financial support for the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon was stopped for several months.

¹⁴² Kortam 2007, 10.

¹⁴³ Knudsen 2005, 219.

¹⁴⁴ This statement from UNRWA confirms this: "Popular Committees in the camps representing the refugees regularly discuss [] with the Lebanese Government or with UNRWA officials, and they call for better living conditions for the refugees." (UNRWA Online (n).)

case of the Palestinian refugees in camps and gatherings in Lebanon.¹⁴⁵ There, the survey found huge differences between the living conditions for Palestinian refugees in camps and gatherings and the host population. In order to understand the reasons for the particular treatment of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, some aspects of that country and its history must be explained.

Lebanon is a country made up of several religious and ethnic groups. The 3.5 million inhabitants belong to 18 officially recognised sects or confessions, and have for centuries lived together with a fragile power balance between them.¹⁴⁶ The economic situation has for a long time been difficult and this, together with the civil war, has led to huge emigration from the country. Most ethnic Lebanese today live outside of Lebanon. The arrival of 100,000 Palestinian refugees in 1948-1949 into a country which had at the time a population close to 900,000 naturally had a tremendous impact on the demography.¹⁴⁷ Since their first arrival, the Palestinian refugees became a threat to the precarious confessional balance in Lebanon. The predominately Sunni Muslim Palestinians were viewed by many among Lebanon's Christian minority as a political threat. During the civil war, the Palestinians became active combatants, as well as attracting attacks by Israel on Lebanon, and alienated other confessional groups as well.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁵ Fafo 2003 (415), 57. "Gathering" is the term used for areas, outside of the official camps, where 25 or more Palestinian households live together. (Fafo 2005 (464), 12.) Read more about the situation in Lebanon compared to Jordan, Syria, West Bank and Gaza in (Fafo 2005 (464).) UNRWA uses the term "unofficial camps" (UNRWA Lebanon Annual report 2007, 3.) There are between 15 and 20 such gatherings.

¹⁴⁶ The number of inhabitants is approximate. Because of the precarious and delicate sectarian arrangement in the body politic of Lebanon, the government has deliberately avoided conducting a comprehensive update of the 1932 census. A confession is a group of people who belongs to the same religious faith. The biggest confessions in Lebanon are Shiite Muslims, Sunni Muslims, Druze, Maronite Christians, and Greek-Orthodox Christians.

¹⁴⁷ The 1932 census registered 861,399 Lebanese, including those living abroad. (Library of Congress Country Studies Online.) It has been estimated that in proportion to population it was, "The equivalent of the whole population of the island of Ireland, North and South, arriving destitute on the shores of mainland Britain and being given shelter." (Parsons 1997, 234.)

¹⁴⁸ Many Lebanese blame the Palestinian refugees and PLO for the outbreak of the war, and this belief (whether accurate or not) is influencing the attitudes towards the refugees also today. (Cf. El-Khazen, Farid, 1997 and Reme 2007.)

***Tawtin* and “right of return”**

Lebanon does not want to take on responsibility for a refugee problem which they blame Israel and the international community for creating. It has therefore been important for the Lebanese government to reject *tawtin*, the Arabic expression used to describe resettlement or assimilation. As a part of this policy it has been important to emphasise the Palestinians’ “right of return” as confirmed in UN Resolution 194, and the need for international support through UNRWA. The late Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri uttered in 1998, that “Lebanon will never, ever integrate Palestinians... Integration would take the Palestinians off the shoulders of the international agency which has supported them since 1948.”¹⁴⁹ The “right of return” continues to be of utmost importance both in the refugee community and in Lebanese political debate.¹⁵⁰ The result of these combined issues is that in post-war Lebanon, one of the few things that all Lebanese agree on is resistance to *tawtin*. Michel Suleiman, the current President of Lebanon, has said that Lebanon is “Facing three main dangers; Israeli threats, international terrorism, and the threat of the resettlement of Palestinian refugees here.”¹⁵¹ This illustrates the importance of the anti-*tawtin* debate in Lebanon.

Unfortunately for the Palestinian refugees, the Lebanese rejection of *tawtin* has been linked with the provision of civil rights and social services. The belief has been that if the refugees were granted any rights in Lebanon, it would eventually lead to their resettlement in the country. The practical implications of this will be further discussed in chapter 3. It is, however, worth mentioning here that this confusion of terms is still quite present in Lebanese political debate as this statement shows: “‘If it were up to me, I would give them [the Palestinian refugees] the right to **work** tomorrow,’ said Saad Hariri, of the Future Tide party... ‘But if the Palestinians **stay** in Lebanon it will change the

¹⁴⁹ Haddad 2003, 143.

¹⁵⁰ “Some Lebanese argue that if Palestinians are given the right to work and the right to own property, this will prevent them from going back to Palestine and will make them lose their will to return... Abbas Zaki, PLO representative in Lebanon emphasise: ‘We are guests, waiting patiently in Lebanon for the right of return.’” (Cited in The Daily Star, 6 November, 2008.)

¹⁵¹ The Daily Star, 10 September, 2008.

whole situation demographically.’ He said that he believed that they would eventually return.”¹⁵²

The main actors who are responsible for the welfare of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon are the UN, several Palestinian political actors and the Lebanese government. As discussed above, all of the involved actors have some limitations to the services they provide. The next chapter will discuss what the practical consequences of this welfare system are for the Palestinian refugees.

¹⁵² The Guardian, 29 May, 2007 (my emphasis added.)

Chapter 4

The consequences of the prevailing welfare system for the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon

The socio-economic situation for the Palestinian refugees is a result of several factors. Firstly, they lost their land and livelihood before and during the Arab-Israeli war in 1948 and became refugees. Secondly, they have lived through a civil war, Israeli bombardments and have on several occasions been the main target for violence and destruction, from different actors. Thirdly, the refugees in Lebanon suffer from social, economic (and of course political) restrictions and legal regulations created by the Lebanese government.¹⁵³ This chapter will explain what consequences these factors have on the welfare of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. Firstly, I will present the different categories of refugees. Secondly, the Lebanese legislation that is implemented will be outlined. Thirdly, the economic standing of the refugees will be presented together with some comparisons to the Lebanese host population. Lastly, the chapter will discuss what implications the history and legal status have on the fields of employment, social security, education, health and housing for the Palestinian refugees.

Categories of refugees

The refugees are divided into three categories which have direct implications for their access to UNRWA services amongst things.¹⁵⁴ The first category includes those who are registered with UNRWA, as well as with the Lebanese authorities. Most of these arrived to Lebanon in 1948. Secondly, there are Palestinian refugees registered with the Lebanese authorities, but not with UNRWA. This category is therefore called “non-registered Palestinian refugees”. It is estimated that between 10,000 and 40,000 refugees belong to this category. Half of these refugees were registered by the Red Cross and later by the Lebanese Government, and are also 1948 refugees, while the rest were registered under the orders of former Interior Ministries in the period 1969-1978 and are people who

¹⁵³ Cf. Lebanon as a host country in chapter 3. For a comprehensive reading about the legal status of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon see El-Natour 2007 and Knudsen 2009.

¹⁵⁴ Cf. Shafie 2007, 2-3.

arrived after the 1967 war. The third category of refugees are the so-called “non-ID Palestinian refugees”. Their numbers are unknown, and estimates range from 3,000 to 16,000.¹⁵⁵ These refugees moved to Lebanon in the 1970s after the events of Black September in Jordan or as a result of the civil war in Lebanon and were not able to or did not consider it necessary to register themselves due to the turmoil of the country. However, after the PLO political military infrastructure in Lebanon was disbanded and the redeployment of the Lebanese security over Lebanon, their lack of documentation became a prominent issue. These refugees are residing in Lebanon without papers, and thus cannot access education, work, health or travel. Some of these refugees are actually registered with UNRWA in other fields of operation. Due to the fact that refugee status is passed on through the father, children of non-ID refugees also become non-ID refugees, thus increasing the problem. Recently, attention has been drawn to this category of refugees.¹⁵⁶ In 2006, UNRWA stated that in view of the exceptionally difficult circumstances of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, it provides services to all three categories of refugees.¹⁵⁷ In 2008 the Lebanese government agreed to give a form of identification paper to the non-ID refugees.¹⁵⁸

Lebanese legislation: “A special kind of foreigners”

The political reasons why the Palestinian refugees are worse off in Lebanon than in other host countries was discussed in chapter 2. Here, I will look at the practical implications and legislations which have been implemented in Lebanon to create this situation. In 1950, the Lebanese government created a special committee entitled the Central Committee for Refugee Affairs to administer the Palestinian presence in Lebanon. In 1959, new legislative decrees were added and the Lebanese government created the Department of Affairs of the Palestinian Refugees as an office within the Ministry of

¹⁵⁵ The International Federation for Human Rights issued a report in March 2003 estimating there to be 10,000 non-ID refugees. The US Committee for Refugees estimated 16,000 while the Danish Refugee Council estimated the number to be 3,000. (Shafie 2007, 2.)

¹⁵⁶ “One incident in 2001 drew the authorities’ attention to the existence of thousands of undocumented Palestinians living in fear of discovery. Hosni Ghazal was stopped at a checkpoint outside Ain al-Helweh, [sic] the largest camp in Lebanon, and told to get out of his car. He panicked and ran away, and soldiers shot him dead. The source of his panic [] was his forged ID.” (IRIN 11 March, 2008.)

¹⁵⁷ Shafie 2007, 2.

¹⁵⁸ The Daily Star, 16 January, 2008.

Interior.¹⁵⁹ In 2000 the name was changed to the Department of Political and Refugee Affairs.¹⁶⁰ Refugees must register their births, marriages, changes of residence and other aspects of their social life here. However, the Department, and the Lebanese government, is in no way made responsible for providing social services for the refugees by these decrees. They pledge only to "... 'contact' UNRWA to 'ensure' that basic social services are being provided.”¹⁶¹

Some important legal instruments have been used to achieve the political goals. Firstly, in Article 1 of the Law Pertaining to the Entry Into, Residence In and Exit From Lebanon from 1962, and Decree No.1766 from 1964, Palestinian refugees are defined as “foreigners”.¹⁶² This means that they are not treated as Lebanese citizens, even though 90 per cent of them are today born in Lebanon.¹⁶³ In some ways they are treated as any other foreigner, even though they, unlike other foreigners, do not have the option of going back to their own country. In other ways, however, they are treated as a special group of foreigners. This is based on the principle of reciprocity, which assumes that:

A given state (a) will treat the citizens of another state (b) who reside in it according to specific laws and conditions that also guarantee for the citizens of (a) on the territories of (b) equality in treatment according to equivalent laws and conditions.¹⁶⁴

This means that as long as Palestinians are stateless, they can not give the Lebanese the same rights in their home country, and therefore they are denied these rights in Lebanon. As an example, the Lebanese Social Security Law states that: “On the basis of this law, foreigners that work in Lebanon territory do not benefit from any or all forms of social security, except on condition that the country to which they belong treats Lebanese citizens according to the principle of reciprocity in the field of social security.”¹⁶⁵ In November 2008, the Lebanese government offered for the first time to recognise the state

¹⁵⁹ Said 2000, unpaginated.

¹⁶⁰ Shafie 2007, 9-10.

¹⁶¹ Said 2000, unpaginated.

¹⁶² Said 1999, unpaginated and El-Natour 2007, 68.

¹⁶³ Suleiman 2008.

¹⁶⁴ El-Natour 2007, 72.

¹⁶⁵ Paragraph 3, clause 2 of Article 9 of the Social Security Law. (Al-Natour, 2007.)

of Palestine, and to establish diplomatic relations with them.¹⁶⁶ This should in theory have implications for the principle of reciprocity, but it remains to be seen what changes will follow.

Economic standing

Lebanon is regarded as a middle-income country, but one with huge income disparities. At the bottom tier of the income ladder one finds the great majority of Palestinian refugees. In one survey, 44 per cent of Palestinian households fall into the lowest income bracket (earning less than US\$2,400 per year) compared to 6 per cent of Lebanese households.¹⁶⁷ In Lebanon, 12 per cent of the Palestinian refugees are registered as “special hardship cases” by UNRWA, which is the highest percentage in UNRWA’s area of operation.¹⁶⁸ These “special hardship cases” receive direct support from UNRWA including food aid, cash assistance and shelter rehabilitation.¹⁶⁹ While the current living conditions are better than they were for the first generation of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, the progress made during the first decades after 1948 is today seriously stagnating and even deteriorating.¹⁷⁰ The source of income of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon today depends on five primary sources: employment with UNRWA; remittances from relatives employed in the Arab and foreign countries; employment with Palestinian associations and organisations; employment in agriculture; and (illegally) in Lebanese institutions and companies; and employment in the camp economy which consists of small shops and enterprises within the camps.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁶ The Daily Star, 29 November, 2008 (a).

¹⁶⁷ As many as 87 per cent of Palestinian households are found in the three lowest income brackets, (out of nine) compared to 39 per cent of Lebanese households. The Fafo-report is gathered from 57 refugee communities. However, it is suggested that Palestinian refugees living outside of these camps and gatherings are better off. The report therefore represents the segment of refugees facing the worst living conditions. (Fafo 2005 (464).) However, according to Sayigh 1995, 46: “While it is true that a Palestinian wealthy class exists, its size has been sharply reduced through migration.”

¹⁶⁸ UNRWA Online (f). In December 2006 the percentage of special hardship cases reached 12, and continues to rise, increasing from 10.2 per cent in 1997, the first year with statistics available at UNRWA Online. In comparison the percentage of special hardship cases in Gaza, June 2008 was 9. This number may have changed though after the 2009 Gaza War. (UNRWA Online (o) and (p).)

¹⁶⁹ Shafie 2007, 5.

¹⁷⁰ Fafo 2005 (464), 9.

¹⁷¹ Ajjal 2001, ch. 2.1. Nearly 80 per cent of households have close relatives living aboard. (Fafo presentation 2007.) The limits of employment opportunities will be discussed below.

Still though, there is a commonly held myth in the Lebanese society that there is no real difference in the status of Palestinian and Lebanese and that “Each community has its rich, its middle class and its poor.”¹⁷² This gap between reality and myth shows that there is a great lack of knowledge in the Lebanese society about the situation for Palestinian refugees and especially about the conditions in the refugee camps. Most Lebanese have never visited a refugee camp, as most Lebanese have no Palestinian acquaintances and therefore no reason to go there.¹⁷³ Furthermore, the camps have a reputation for being dangerous places, even though the majority of the 12 camps are quiet areas. Even Palestinians living outside of the camps are afraid to enter the camps and Palestinians from other camps are afraid to enter Ein el-Hilweh, the most turbulent camp. To enter the southern camps as a non-Palestinian, one also needs to get permission from the Lebanese military.¹⁷⁴ After the demolition of Nahr el-Bared in 2007, one also needs a permit to enter there.¹⁷⁵ These are all reasonable obstacles to visiting the camps. However, it leads to ignorance by the majority of Lebanese about the living conditions which more than 300,000 of their fellow countrymen are enduring.¹⁷⁶ When Lebanese government members recently visited some of the camps, they were “Clearly shocked by the conditions they encountered there.”¹⁷⁷ Importantly, humanitarian assistance channelled through UNRWA, as well as support from international NGOs, has created tension with the poorer part of the Lebanese population, who see free services being given to Palestinians while they are not being provided for.¹⁷⁸ The lack of knowledge and fear of the Palestinian camps is also widespread among international visitors and workers, for example in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL).¹⁷⁹ Hansjorg Haber, the German Ambassador to Lebanon, visited Ein el-Hilweh in May 2008, and said that

¹⁷² Sayigh 1995, 45.

¹⁷³ Only 18 per cent say they have a Palestinian acquaintance, and 65 per cent claim to have no contact with Palestinians at all. (Haddad 2003, 92.)

¹⁷⁴ It may not be the most important civil right; however, to not be able to decide yourself who can come to visit you in your own house is another frustration experienced by the refugees.

¹⁷⁵ The Daily Star, 16 February, 2009.

¹⁷⁶ The ignorance results in mistrust as this quotation illustrates: “I met [a] few rich guys at the university and when they knew I was Palestinian their father forbade them from talking to us again. This did not continue for long since after they got to know us they asked me if all the people at the camp are like me. I asked and how are we supposed to be? They replied [:] with long nails and long hair and you kill anyone you speak to.” (Abu Sharar 2008, 6-7.)

¹⁷⁷ Cook 2008, unpaginated.

¹⁷⁸ Weighill 1997, 304. Also IRIN 10 October 2005.

¹⁷⁹ Conversations with UNIFIL workers, summer 2006.

“The harsh living conditions that Palestinian [s] had to endure shocked him ‘and went beyond anything he ever saw or heard in the media.’”¹⁸⁰

Implications on employment and social security

The difficulties that Palestinians experience in obtaining work in Lebanon have the greatest influence on their socio-economic situation. In 1951, the Minister of Social Affairs issued a law “Requesting Palestine refugees to abstain from work, on the pretext that they are working without permits and are competing with Lebanese labour.”¹⁸¹ According to the aforementioned laws from 1962 and 1964, it became conditional for foreigners to obtain work permits, which is common practice in many countries.¹⁸² However, because the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon are defined as foreigners, but with no home country to seek legal employment in, they are left in a difficult position. According to some scholars these laws are in violation of international law.¹⁸³ If a Lebanese company employs a foreigner without a work permit, the company risks having to pay a fine for each day the foreigner is employed.¹⁸⁴ With the exception of the years of the Cairo Agreement (1969-1987), this regulation applied to all refugees. However, also before Cairo, an oral agreement between PLO and the Lebanese authorities stated that Palestinians should not be arrested for working without a permit, but only be given a warning the first time they were discovered.¹⁸⁵

During the civil war, much of the Palestinian workforce was employed by different groups in the Palestinian resistance. PLO’s political power contributed to the establishment of a range of social institutions in this period, as mentioned in chapter 3.¹⁸⁶ When the war ended the Lebanese government established a program to absorb the people who had been employed by the different Lebanese militias. They did not, however, make any similar effort to create new job opportunities for the Palestinian

¹⁸⁰ The Daily Star, 5 May, 2008.

¹⁸¹ El-Natour 2007, 67.

¹⁸² El-Natour 2007, 68.

¹⁸³ Said 2001, unpaginated.

¹⁸⁴ Al-Natour 2007, 3.

¹⁸⁵ Al-Natour 2007, 3.

¹⁸⁶ The establishment of new institutions was at its highest in 1982, before the evacuation of PLO. (Suleiman 1997, 400.)

fighters. The Palestinian resistance, or PLO, was too weak to take care of their own, and many of the fighters faced unemployment. After the civil war, the Lebanese government gradually manifested its power and started to reinforce the pre-war regulations, this time with no PLO stronghold to worry about. Only a few months after the evacuation of the PLO in 1982, Palestinians were barred from entering a number of specified jobs, at most 72 different occupations.¹⁸⁷ In the 1990s the state introduced the condition that all government employees must have been Lebanese citizens for a minimum of 10 years. To work in professions such as medicine, law and pharmacy one has to be member of an association. To become a member, one either needs to have been a Lebanese citizen for a minimum of 10 years, or come from a state which can apply the principle of reciprocity, an impossibility for Palestinian refugees.

This means that the Lebanese labour market has become almost impossible to enter in a legal way since 1990 for the Palestinian refugees. In order to obtain a work permit, the Palestinian refugee must be born in Lebanon, be registered with the Ministry of Interior, and have a contract with a specific employer. The permits are expensive and need to be renewed every two years.¹⁸⁸ In other words, many Palestinians regard the application for work permits as too much trouble and expense for no benefits. In 2005, only 270 of 109,000 work permits applied for by foreigners were applications from Palestinians. The following year that number dropped to 39.¹⁸⁹ The actual Palestinian labour force is

¹⁸⁷ For example: Director, assistant director, manager, financial secretary, accountant, secretary general, clerk in charge of the deposits, computer employment, protection, warden, guard, warehouse director, sales, money exchange, jeweller, laboratory work, barber, electrical and glass installation, health equipment, mechanics, and industrial employment. In general trade, import and export, commissions and commercial agencies, as well as any form of trade in prepared clothing, capital, jewellery, gold, gems, other precious stones, cars (and related goods), and houses. In 1993 other occupations were added: teaching in the elementary, intermediate, and secondary levels (except the teaching of languages when necessary), engineering, waiters, and driving taxis and private cars. Restrictions upon the owners of capital: auditing, contracting, the production of shoes, clothing furniture, or sweets, printing, publishing, distribution, the production of building materials, barbers, and the rebuilding of cars (mechanics, glass installation, furnishing, and electricity). In 1995 yet more occupations were added: construction and its derivatives (except the installation of electricity, medical equipments, and glass – which had already been restricted), agricultural employment, tanning and leather, excavation, carpet weaving, the production of metals, employment as beauticians, dry nurses, nurses, servants, and cooks, and the cleaning and oiling of cars. (Compiled from Al-Natour 2007, 4.)

¹⁸⁸ Aruri (ed.) 2001, 133.

¹⁸⁹ IRIN News, 17 October, 2007.

calculated to number between 70,000 and 80,000.¹⁹⁰ In 2005 the Labour Minister proposed a bill that reduced the number of restricted jobs from 72 to 25. However, work permits are still required and the bill has not been put into practice.¹⁹¹ The new bill is of great symbolic importance though, and may suggest some change in the Lebanese policy. The decrees issued by the Lebanese Labour ministers are, however, arbitrary and unstable and can be changed according to later ministers' or governments' will.¹⁹²

The dominant industries employing Palestinian refugees are trade, followed by construction, agriculture, education and health services, and manufacturing. Together, these five industries account for around 80 per cent of the employed Palestinians.¹⁹³ UNRWA schools, clinics and relief work constitute an important working arena for the Palestinian refugees without permits. UNRWA is also attractive because they offer a steady income, long-term jobs and a social security plan covering the employee and part of his/her family. UNRWA employed 3,265 Palestinians and 6 international staff in Lebanon in late 2008.¹⁹⁴ NGOs, PRCS, farming and small businesses inside the camps are the other work arenas that do not require work permits. Political organisations also remain today an important employer. The majority of the workforce is, however, either unemployed or employed in the illegal market without any form of security.¹⁹⁵ Different studies calculate the unemployment among Palestinian refugees to be between 40 and 60 per cent.¹⁹⁶ A survey conducted in 2003 found that there was less difference in the employment structures in Lebanon than what should be expected on the background of the restrictions on labour. They did not find one broad sector from which the refugees are barred, with the exception of the small public sector.¹⁹⁷ However, the Palestinians who work in the illegal market risk being fired at any time, have no social security, maternity

¹⁹⁰ El-Natour 2007, 74.

¹⁹¹ The Daily Star, 6 November, 2008.

¹⁹² Suleiman 2008, unpaginated.

¹⁹³ Fafo 2005 (464), 24.

¹⁹⁴ UNRWA Online (b). 2,179 of these worked as teachers.

¹⁹⁵ This quotation reflects the situation: "I am a teacher working at a private school, I get paid every few months and not at the end of each month like my Lebanese colleagues. My biggest fear is for my employer to discharge me from my job without paying me my salary or any re-compensation. This has happened to so many people I know there is nothing I can do simply because there is no law to protect me." (Abu Sharar 2008, 7.)

¹⁹⁶ El-Natour 2007, 74 and Aruri (ed.) 2001, 156.

¹⁹⁷ Fafo 2003 (415), 9.

leave, pensions and often have to work for longer hours and for lower wages than their Lebanese colleagues. Even with unskilled manual labour jobs, Palestinian refugees compete with permitted workers from Asia, and some 400,000 Syrian workers.¹⁹⁸ They can afford to work for considerably lower wages than Palestinians, as the living costs in Syria or their Asian countries of origin are much lower than what the Palestinians face in Lebanon. The Palestinians who are able to find work, legally or illegally, do as mentioned not benefit from Lebanon's National Social Security Plan, due to the principle of reciprocity. This plan covers illness, maternity leave, workplace accidents, and includes a family compensation plan and an end-of-services compensation plan.¹⁹⁹ Those with a work permit are, however, required by law to pay taxes and fees to the plan even though they do not benefit from it.

As mentioned in chapter 2, Palestinian refugees in Lebanon used to have the opportunity to work in the Gulf states. After the Gulf War this became difficult. Some 100,000 Palestinian refugees have left Lebanon, many to Europe, particularly the Scandinavian countries and Germany, especially after the Israeli invasion and the "War of the Camps".²⁰⁰ In the 1990s there was a growing trend among young Palestinians, especially males, to seek work outside of Lebanon. Illegal emigration out of Lebanon of Palestinians reached high numbers. However, the tightening of immigration regulations in Europe has made it more difficult to obtain residence there.

Education

UNRWA is the main provider of basic education amongst Palestinian refugees. Education is the most important activity for UNRWA if one looks at monetary expenses, and they run 81 elementary and preparatory schools.²⁰¹ Because of the difficulties Palestinian children have in entering Lebanese secondary schools, UNRWA also started offering secondary education in Lebanon in 1993, and as of 2009 they run 6 secondary

¹⁹⁸ Edminister 1999, 13.

¹⁹⁹ El-Natour 2007, 68-69.

²⁰⁰ Hanafi 2007, 6. About 15,000 Palestinian refugees from Lebanon live in Sweden and 2,000 in Denmark. (Shafie 2007, 3.)

²⁰¹ UNRWA Online (b).

schools.²⁰² Sibling is the vocational training centre of UNRWA and offers vocational training for between 600 and 700 students.²⁰³ For the scholastic year 2002-2003 UNRWA could only offer 5 partial University loans. However, with support from the US, Qatar, and Canada, UNRWA granted 108 scholarships to female graduates from UNRWA and public schools for the scholastic year 2003-2004. This scholarship was full and covers the students' fees until they graduate. However, the scholarship raised criticism and protest in the Palestinian community because it created a gender imbalance. The Palestinian community was requesting donors to create a similar fund for male students since the needs are high for them also.²⁰⁴ This is an example of a donor intervention with supposedly good intentions which created unintended tensions in the Palestinian community.

NGOs are the main provider of pre-school education for the camp population. During the school year 1998-99, 28 different NGOs operated a total of 85 pre-schools.²⁰⁵ NGOs are also a provider of vocational training and pay for approximately 10 per cent of those who receive job training.²⁰⁶ NGOs have also offered computer training for UNRWA students as computer skills have become a part of the official exam, while UNRWA has not been able to computerise their schools.²⁰⁷

The civil war limited the education opportunities for many Palestinians in the 1970s and 1980s and resulted in high levels of illiteracy. Despite this, literacy rates of Palestinian refugees continue to be considerably higher than those of the Arab World as a whole.²⁰⁸ Since the 1990s the increasing difficulty of entering the labour market in Lebanon has greatly influenced the motivation to finish an education. Some students are also forced to quit early to work and help the family economically. 21 per cent of children between the

²⁰² Fafo 2003 (409), 110. They do not offer secondary education in their other fields of operation. (UNRWA in figures, June 30, 2008.)

²⁰³ The total number of Palestinian refugees in the age group between 15 and 20 is over 50,000. (NPA 2001 (a).)

²⁰⁴ NPA 2004 (a).

²⁰⁵ Fafo 2003 (409), 109.

²⁰⁶ Fafo 2003 (409), 122, 153.

²⁰⁷ NPA 2004 (b).

²⁰⁸ Hillenkamp 2008, unpaginated.

ages of 7 and 18 are not enrolled in school. For the ages 5 to 9, the rate of enrolment in school is the same as for Lebanese children, but for the ages 15 to 24 the Palestinian rate drops to half of the Lebanese.²⁰⁹ Also compared to Palestinian refugees in the West Bank, Gaza and Jordan the level of education of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon is low. Only 12 per cent have completed at least secondary education, compared to 39 per cent in the West Bank and Gaza, and 28 per cent in Jordan.²¹⁰ Palestinians are granted admission to university education in Lebanon. However, there are upper ceiling quotas for admitting foreigners, including Palestinians, particularly in technical colleges.²¹¹ The tuition fees used to be the same as for foreigners, which is considerably higher than for Lebanese citizens. This was however changed from 2005, when it was decided that Palestinian refugees could pay the same fees as their Lebanese peers.²¹²

The health sector

According to the employment restrictions mentioned above, Palestinian physicians can not work legally in Lebanon outside of PRCS hospitals or other clinics in the camps. The law also prohibits Palestinians from establishing private hospitals outside of the camps.²¹³ This, together with the high cost of private Lebanese healthcare, which holds 90 per cent of hospital beds, and restrictions on access to public health, means that Palestinian refugees are very dependent on UNRWA when it comes to healthcare.²¹⁴ They run 30 primary healthcare facilities, which provide dental care, vaccines for children and contraceptives.²¹⁵ UNRWA also contracts beds at non-governmental or private hospitals. A reduction in UNRWA budgets, as seen in the 1990s, therefore directly results in reduced health services for the refugees. Between 1989 and 1995 the number of hospital

²⁰⁹ Khalidi 2001, 12.

²¹⁰ Khalidi 2001, 12.

²¹¹ ENGO report 2007, 13.

²¹² Hillenkamp 2008, unpaginated.

²¹³ El-Natour 2007, 91.

²¹⁴ PARD 2006, 10. Health coverage by various service providers according to gender show that UNRWA caters for 40.9 per cent of the male population and 47.2 per cent of the female population. The remaining population is catered for by PRCS hospitals and clinics (20.3 per cent males, 16.6 per cent females), and NGOs (5.2 per cent males and 6.1 per cent females) (Ajial 2001, ch. 3.1.4.1.) The Ajial study states that “The current available services do not cover all the Palestinians in Lebanon as indicated in table 1.” I interpret this to mean that the remaining 33.6 per cent of males, and 30.1 per cent of females are using private healthcare.

²¹⁵ UNRWA Online (b).

beds available for Palestinians in Lebanon decreased by over half, from 0.56 beds to 0.25 beds per 1000.²¹⁶ UNRWA covers only one third of hospital fees excluding doctor's fees, laboratory tests, x-rays and emergency admissions. Patients suffering from chronic illnesses, women in labour, emergency cases and the disabled are not provided with any financial assistance.²¹⁷ People over 60 years of age have also been excluded from UNRWA benefits.²¹⁸

The PRCS also provides healthcare services. During the PLO heyday, PRCS was seen as one of the best and most effective hospital services in Lebanon, but with the reduction of PLO funding, their services are severely reduced. Today UNRWA focuses principally on primary healthcare, while PRCS are concentrating on the secondary level. The patient/doctor ratio for Palestinian refugees in Lebanon in 1997 was 1166:1, compared to a ratio of 318:1 for Lebanese.²¹⁹

Amongst the camp population many diseases originate from poor diets, poor sanitary conditions and poor ventilation. In the words of the Lebanese government, "The prevalence of diseases among Palestinian children is directly related to poverty and substandard housing and unhealthy environments where they live."²²⁰ Rates of chronic infant illnesses are twice or three times higher than the Lebanese national average.²²¹ Nearly one in five of the refugee population suffers from chronic health failure.²²² However, many diseases are brought on by stress that is typically associated with the developed world, reflecting the instability and insecurity of the refugees' situation. UNRWA spends more on hospitalisation in Lebanon than in any other field of its operations.²²³

²¹⁶ Khalidi 2001, 13-14.

²¹⁷ Aruri (ed.) 2001, 154.

²¹⁸ NPA 2001 (b).

²¹⁹ Aruri (ed.) 2001, 128.

²²⁰ Save the Children, 2008.

²²¹ Hanafi 2008, 5.

²²² Fafo 2003 (409), 67.

²²³ Cook 2008, unpaginated.

Housing

The 12 official refugee camps are situated on land that the UN has rented. However, the boundaries of the camps have not been expanded along with the population growth. This means that young Palestinians would have to build on top of already existing buildings, which can be a risky business. In some of the most crowded camps in Beirut, it is not possible to see the sun from the alleys because of the high buildings and narrow streets. Building restrictions have been imposed on the camps in several periods, and when building is allowed, building permits from the Lebanese government must be obtained to bring building materials into the camps. This has made repair, expansion and improvement of homes impossible at times, and difficult at best. Overcrowding also puts pressure on the infrastructure, such as sewage systems, electrical capacity and water supplies. Daily cuts in the public electricity are a common feature for most inhabitants of Lebanon. The Lebanese state is not able to produce enough electricity to cover demand, and has introduced savings. It means that all households need to have fuel-driven generators in order to have a stable electrical supply. Those who cannot afford generators are often without electricity for up to 20 hours per day.

Another option for Palestinian refugees who want to establish their own household used to be buying apartments or land plots outside of the camps. However, the real estate tax required for foreigners, including Palestinian refugees, which is 16.5 per cent versus 6.5 per cent for Lebanese, and the rent-free nature of the camps prevented many from doing so.²²⁴ In 2001, the Lebanese parliament passed law 296 amending decree 11614 of 1969, which deals with the ownership of real estate in Lebanon by non-Lebanese nationals. The amended first clause states that no ownership of realty right of any kind is permitted to any person who does not hold citizenship from a recognised state, or to any person where such ownership contravenes the provisions of the Constitution concerning Palestinian settlement.²²⁵ The principle of reciprocity and the fear of *tawtin* are again used to limit Palestinian refugees' rights. The law also prevents Palestinians from inheriting property.

²²⁴ Aruri (ed.) 2001, 128.

²²⁵ El-Natour 2007, 54. The Lebanese government said it passed the law to support the right of return of Palestinians. (IRIN News, 2 October 2005.)

Palestinians who can afford to buy land outside the camps now have to align with a Lebanese citizen to do so, by registering the property in the name of a Lebanese friend or relative. This leaves them in a very vulnerable position.

Almost half of the refugees have, however, settled outside the camps. They are therefore outside of UNRWA's mandate.²²⁶ Formally they should be looked after by local authorities, but for many of them, particularly in the "gatherings", the services provided are very poor.²²⁷ Approximately 40,000 live in these gatherings; another 35,000 who were displaced during the civil war are still housed in makeshift shelters.²²⁸ UNRWA is not responsible for infrastructure services in the gatherings such as water, electricity, sewage and garbage collection. One third of the refugee population lives in towns or cities and ranges from those who own or rent their own residence, to homeless squatters.

The Palestinian refugees in Lebanon continue to live under very difficult socio-economic conditions. These conditions are a result of several factors, such as their expulsion from Palestine in 1948, the civil war in Lebanon and Lebanese legislation. On the basis of the socio-economic background which has been outlined in this chapter and on the limitations of the actors involved with the provision of services and protection to the refugees which was outlined in chapter 3, it becomes evident that there is a need for NGOs to be involved. However, the nature of NGOs provides them both with opportunities, but also with limitations, and this will be explored in the next chapter.

²²⁶ Cook 2008, unpaginated.

²²⁷ Fafo 2003 (409), 257.

²²⁸ Aruri (ed.) 2001, 127-128. The old Gaza Hospital in Shatila camp, which was destroyed in the civil war, still houses more than 1,000 people. (PARD 2006, 83.)

Chapter 5

History of NGOs in development

This chapter presents the history of NGOs in development in order to place the NGOs working in the Palestinian community into the broader picture. It also discusses some of the particularities of the NGO system which are of most importance when evaluating the NGO sector there. The chapter includes an outline of the Norwegian NGO sector and development institutions to present a background for NPA's work in Lebanon

The development aid system

A development NGO is defined as, "An organization receiving donor funds for development, which is institutionally separated from the government and is non-profit-making."²²⁹ The development aid system grew out of the inequality in power and resources between the different parts of the world. In the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, NGOs role in development originated as a result of American and UN initiatives and pressures in the early 1960s.²³⁰ The original justification for governmental support for NGOs was that western governments ought to broaden their support for aid to the developing countries.²³¹ It was thought that NGOs could be useful in increasing and rooting public support for the official aid project.²³² There was also a need for alternative channels for aid directed to sensitive areas and groups, such as the Palestinian refugees, and NGOs were seen as a perfect tool.²³³ The Norwegian government in 2009 states the following as the reasons to use NGOs as a channel for aid:

²²⁹ Tvedt 1995, II.

²³⁰ Tvedt 1995, II. The institutionalisation of NGOs was initially instigated to be used as a political weapon in the Cold War. (Tvedt 1998, 224.) The OECD countries are in 2009: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Mexico, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain, Switzerland, Sweden, South Korea, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States of America.

²³¹ Tvedt 1998, 78.

²³² Tvedt 2002, 368.

²³³ Tvedt 1995, 3.

Civil Society in developing countries have an important function through their ability to give clear political messages and hold their own authorities accountable for following-up on decided politics. Norwegian and international NGOs can contribute by building networks between important actors in the North and South, cooperating with local partners within the civil society and contributing with capacity building activities in sister organisations in areas such as environment, human rights, freedom of media and anti-corruption. NGOs are important development actors and play an especially important role by being innovative and flexible in demanding situations. Organisations can for example reach out with health and education services in areas were neither the state, bilateral or multilateral, are able to work, such as in war zones, and to pursue humanitarian aid after man- or nature-made catastrophes in certain situations.²³⁴

By the end of the 1980s the NGO system had been transferred from the western welfare states to most countries in the world. Organisations belonging to the NGO system are found in such different places as the countryside of Kenya and Afghanistan, in the big cities of Brazil and France, as well as in refugee camps in Lebanon. NGOs today deliver more official development assistance than the entire UN system, excluding the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).²³⁵

Northern and Southern NGOs

Even though the heterogeneity within the so-called Northern NGOs, as well as within the so-called Southern NGOs may be greater than the heterogeneity between those NGOs in general, this term has still been applied to distinguish between NGOs from developed countries and NGOs from developing countries. I choose to use the term here because NPA falls into the category of a typical Northern NGO while the local NGOs in the Palestinian community are representative of typical Southern NGOs, and I want to highlight some features of these categories.

International development agencies such as the World Bank and western advocacy groups have encouraged NGOs to play a greater role in many parts of Africa and Asia, including the Middle East.²³⁶ Increasingly, the political and ideological development in developing countries has made obsolete the “old” model of Northern expatriates staying

²³⁴ St.prp.1 2008-2009, 8.3 (my translation.)

²³⁵ Hanafi and Tabar 2005, 38.

²³⁶ Carapico 2000,13. The World Bank introduced a policy of reducing expenditure and state responsibility for social services in developing countries, which made room for NGOs.

in a Southern country for years to develop them. People in developing countries are better educated and want to control their own development. The emerging trend in the 1990s was therefore to establish partnerships with Southern NGOs, or as in NPA Lebanon's case, to transfer the local administration to local people. As a result of this development Northern NGOs have competed to find suitable and good local partners, which means that Southern NGOs have flourished in response. The potential for growth of NGOs in developing countries is, however, linked to the countries' level of education, urbanisation and organisational history.²³⁷

NGO rhetoric asserts that NGOs do not work *for* but *with* others. The Southern partner should define the problem, while the Northern NGO provides the means to solve the problem. The increase of partnerships has therefore created new challenges. Partners should by definition be equal and the local administration should have as much influence as the head office. Institutional development and capacity building for local partners have therefore become important features of Northern NGOs work because responsibility for their own development presupposes robust, stable organisations.²³⁸ Despite considerable investment, however, it is clear that relatively few Southern NGOs are independent entities, or even sustainable without major resources from the North, which is also the case with the local NGOs in Lebanon.²³⁹ For example, Southern NGOs often depend on a limited number of sources for funding. Historically shaped and continually reproduced unequal aid relationships are not easily transformed into equal partnerships as Tvedt argues: "A change in vocabulary – to 'equal partnership' or a 'global civil society' as it has recently been termed in UN documents – will not alter this reality."²⁴⁰

Comparative advantage?

In the development aid system different actors are supposed to manifest different advantages. The advantages of NGOs as opposed to other development aid actors, i.e. the

²³⁷ Tvedt 1998, 63. There is for example a much stronger NGO sector in India than in the Southern Sudan.

²³⁸ Hanafi and Tabar 2005, 181 suggest that "Management and capacity building are so common that they constitute their own donor fashion."

²³⁹ Wells 2001, 75. Likewise, most Northern NGOs are unsustainable without external funding. Cf. Opoku-Mensah 2007, 165.

²⁴⁰ Tvedt 1998, 224.

UN, WB, IMF and others are illustrated by the above cited statement from the Norwegian government. They are said to be flexible and possess local anchorage and due to this, are seen as most effective to reach the poorest and build independent civil societies in the developing countries.

During the 1980s NGOs were furthered by both right and left as an answer to the problem of the authoritarian state. As a result, international agencies such as the World Bank, as well as radical critics of top-down development thought have embraced NGOs as the solution to all problems. NGOs were said to fill a gap that neither the governments nor the business community were able to fill. The idea was that NGOs had the capacity to transfer training and skills that enabled individuals and communities to compete in markets, to provide welfare services to those who were marginalised by the market, and to contribute to democratisation and the growth of a robust civil society.²⁴¹ The faith in the advantages of NGOs was, however, exactly that. As more detailed studies of the NGO sector were conducted, the results were sobering.²⁴² It has not been possible to empirically confirm that NGOs per se possess the advantages they were said to.²⁴³ As organisations, they are as vulnerable to all the problems that befall other kinds of institutions, including the dangers of routinisation and the gradual conversion of democratic to oligarchic rule.²⁴⁴ In fact, Tvedt argues that NGOs in some cases have a comparative disadvantage because they can survive despite organisational failures.²⁴⁵

A study performed by the Rattsø Committee in 2006 concluded that Norwegian NGOs are good at implementing projects, yet they often have short-term objectives and lack knowledge about long-term objectives and effects.²⁴⁶ The study confirms that the NGOs are good at strengthening the institutional sustainability of partner organisations, but that the economic sustainability of partners is weak. The study concludes that the advantages of NGOs in relation to other development aid actors are: Firstly, they are often more cost

²⁴¹ Fisher 1997, 444.

²⁴² Opoku-Mensah [et al] 2007, 28.

²⁴³ Tvedt 1998, 130 and Fisher 1997, 441.

²⁴⁴ Fisher 1997, 456.

²⁴⁵ Tvedt 1995, 19.

²⁴⁶ Norad and MFA 2008, 21. The Rattsø Committee was appointed by the Norwegian Parliament in 2005 to critically evaluate the NGOs as channels for Norwegian aid. (The Norwegian Government Online (a).)

effective than bilateral and multilateral organisations, especially in emergency situations. Secondly, the advantage of being non-governmental gives them larger freedom to work in societies where it is not possible or desirable to work with state authorities. Thirdly, they are often closer to target groups outside of the elite, even though they are unable to reach the poorest part of the population. However, continuity and local presence gives local knowledge and anchorage. Fourthly, most NGOs work with sister organisations, and do therefore not require a separate project administration. Fifthly, they offer their partners an added value of capacity building and international contacts that one does not necessarily find with bilateral or multilateral donors. And lastly, they are principally flexible, creative and innovative, but show this only exceptionally in practice.²⁴⁷

The annual report from Norad and MFA in 2008 highlighted how “The choice of channel and organisation which implement aid, may have significance for the results.”²⁴⁸ It concludes however, that:

The different channels do not deliver as different result as expected from their different mandates. This is caused by thematic overlaying and corporate task solving within parts of the aid. It is also due to the fact that the demands for good aid are quite similar across the different channels... All results depend more on the cooperation partners and receivers, their interests, efforts and capacity to implement the programs, than on Norway’s choice of channel.²⁴⁹

A globalised elite?

Hanafi and Tabar argue in their study about NGOs in oPt that there is an emerging Palestinian globalised elite.²⁵⁰ This elite is composed of leaders of NGOs and the local leaders of INGOs, and they define it as “A local social formation which is informed by and/or closely aligned with global debated and agendas.”²⁵¹ NGOs in oPt and, I will

²⁴⁷ Norad and MFA 2008, 21.

²⁴⁸ Norad and MFA 2008, 14 (my translation.)

²⁴⁹ Norad and MFA 2008, 5 (my translation.) The annual reports from Norad and MFA 2007 and 2008 and the report from the Rattsø Committee became an object of public debate in Norway.

²⁵⁰ Hanafi and Tabar 2005, 247.

²⁵¹ Hanafi and Tabar 2005, 247-248. They emphasise that a globalised elite does not mean a global elite, but rather that they have ties to global actors, such as INGOs and donors. Participation in global events does not necessarily mean that the Palestinian NGO leaders are contributing to the decision making of these events, but it gives the leaders a new legitimacy back home.

argue, also in Lebanon, are increasingly entering the international community of development cooperation. They attend global conferences and are forming their own relations with INGOs. Personal relationships between personnel in INGOs, NGOs and the donor system play an important role as to who gets the funding and support.²⁵² The study does not, however, want to adopt the label of an epistemic Northern and Southern NGO community, and argues that there is more in common in terms of institutional form than of knowledge.²⁵³ The study concludes that donors are not directly imposing ideas on NGOs, but that they have an impact on methodology, project approaches and administration.²⁵⁴ The NGO community is in this way perhaps more influenced by foreign political decisions than events in their own society. This can be illustrated by the fact that their work is influenced by the “hot topics” of the aid system. Both organisational structure and policy directions are influenced by these international trends. Today, donor support is most easily available for new programs in sectors relating to the contemporary thematic concerns or bilateral programming of agencies, such as human rights, democratic development, gender and the environment.²⁵⁵

Representing the local community?

The entry of NGOs into development cooperation and the reliance on western funding is accompanied by changes in both the internal organisation of the NGOs and the NGOs external way of relating to society. Internally, the conditions for funding require increased focus on organisational capacity. Externally, it is not so much that an NGO becomes detached from the grassroots, as that the development professional adopts a particular way of relating to society. The development professional approaches society as the problem field, which he can fix through interventions of technical procedures.²⁵⁶ The NGOs may therefore not necessarily have significant constituencies of public support beyond the involvement of beneficiaries.²⁵⁷

²⁵² Hanafi and Tabar 2005, 198. “The pomp and formality associated with formal diplomatic relations among state actors remains intact: delegations of foreign visitors, international experts and donor mission are a routine part of the NGO’s external relations.” (Hanafi and Tabar 2005, 228.)

²⁵³ Hanafi and Tabar 2005, 199.

²⁵⁴ Hanafi and Tabar 2005, 199.

²⁵⁵ Brynen 2000, 188.

²⁵⁶ Hanafi and Tabar 2005, 224.

²⁵⁷ Cf. Wells 2001, 75 and Pitner 2000, 36.

The criteria for funding have created a hierarchy amongst organisations in terms of access to funding, where professionalism of the organisation is more important than the actual work on the ground. The result is that “traditional”, unprofessionalised, charitable societies are marginalised and a few professionalised organisations receive a large share of the total funding.²⁵⁸ Funding also largely arrives with predefined priorities. Actually, if NGOs should adapt to every changing local circumstance they would not be as accountable upwards in the system as they are supposed to be.²⁵⁹ Donors provide support for a certain project and expect the program to be implemented, even if the situation changes on the ground, as was the case in Nahr el-Bared in Lebanon, as we will see in chapter 6. It is easier to receive funding for projects, which are limited in time, space and have a defined objective, than for program proposals, which are focused on long-term development.²⁶⁰ For example, it is typical that donors donate medical equipment but do not provide funds to cover operating costs.²⁶¹ Project funding is strongly criticised for undermining long-term planning in the local society, but is still favoured by donors who perhaps do not want long-term responsibilities.

Humanitarian relief versus development

As the importance and influence of Southern NGOs is increasing, Northern NGOs have to develop new strategies for organisational survival. One strategy is to become more involved in emergency aid, which is an area still more or less monopolised by operational Northern NGOs, which means those who implement their own projects.²⁶² NPA has specialised in mine clearance, as will be seen in chapter 8. Emergency aid typically involves provision of food, shelter and medical assistance to refugees and other affected populations. Development assistance on the other hand focuses on long-term sustainability, or as the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of OECD puts it, to:

²⁵⁸ Hanafi and Tabar 2005, 25, 196. They call the latter “Mega NGOs”.

²⁵⁹ Tvedt 1998, 161.

²⁶⁰ Hanafi and Tabar 2005, 189.

²⁶¹ Edminister 1999, 18-19.

²⁶² Tvedt 1998, 222.

Improve the capacity of developing countries to carry forward their own development, by integrating social, economic, and ecological perspectives in a sustainable way... establishing sound principles and effective donor frameworks, promoting flexible approaches, longer time frames and innovative funding mechanisms, to encourage growth and reduce poverty, while protecting the environment, and to foster widespread capacity development – in particular for environment, technological capability, good governance and conflict management.²⁶³

Much of the increase in funding for the NGO system has been for emergency aid rather than for development.²⁶⁴ This happens in spite of the fact that governments in developing countries express a wish that donors should put more emphasis on development, and policy declarations stating that, “Emergency aid should be more closely linked to development assistance, and that long-term development [is] most important.”²⁶⁵ In practice, experiences from several humanitarian crises show that there is often a financial gap when emergency allowance in a country is ended. The result is that there is an overall lack of funding for early recovery and rebuilding efforts.

The question of whether humanitarian relief is opposed to long-term development cooperation, or is in harmony with long-term social and economic development in recipient countries, has lately become a much debated issue in development.²⁶⁶ As we will see in chapters 6 and 7, the division of emergency aid and development work has great impact on the NGOs working in Lebanon. Hanafi and Tabar mention four factors which complicate the debate: firstly, the fact that donors have very rigid administrative distinctions between relief and development budgets, which makes it difficult to respond quickly or to coordinate types of aid; secondly, that development agents prioritise long-term initiatives and focus on state cooperation, which is not the case with humanitarian relief agencies; thirdly, that it is difficult to coordinate the implantation of development and humanitarian aid simultaneously; and fourthly, that donors may be unwilling to

²⁶³ DAC, quoted in Brynen 2000, 235.

²⁶⁴ UD evaluation 4.98 1998, 21.

²⁶⁵ Report to Storting NO51 91991-92 quoted in Tvedt 1995, XI.

²⁶⁶ Hanafi and Tabar 2005, 47. UNDP stated in 1994: “If conceptualized, planned and implemented in isolation (relief) will replace development and breed to term dependencies, undermine indigenous coping strategies and increase vulnerabilities.” (UNDP 1994, quoted in Tvedt 1995, 109.)

support a particular political regime.²⁶⁷ All of these factors influence the way that humanitarian assistance to Palestinian refugees in Lebanon is implemented.

Advocacy versus service provision

As mentioned in chapter 1 there is an ongoing discussion in the NGO community as to whether NGOs should focus more on advocacy or service provision. Advocacy can mean both to work with governments to influence structural changes, but also to advocate towards the population to empower or educate them. In this thesis I argue that the first kind of advocacy ought to play an increasing role in the Palestinian NGO community. However, the latter form of advocacy is also becoming an increasing part of NGOs' work. Hanafi and Tabar claim there are three logics behind this development: Firstly, neo-liberalism focuses on the need to empower the individual to look after themselves, while the government services are reduced. Secondly, institutional constraints of the donors, for example budget restrictions, lead donors to favour advocacy over services as advocacy can have an impact in the short-term and with less financial resources. As an example, it is cheaper to talk to people about health issues than to train them to become doctors. Thirdly, the authors bring up the logic of cultural and historical bias of the (western) donor in their developmental framework with regard to gender. They argue that workshops and conferences dealing with the empowerment of women are prioritised over monetary support, for instance, which enables women to get transportation to school. They also claim that much of the advocacy work is aimed at empowering those who belong to the elite, or "high" culture, as do most of the NGO workers, instead of reaching out to the population at large. For instance, many of the workshops are advertised in the newspapers which are read by few, instead of on television which is seen by most.²⁶⁸

²⁶⁷ Hanafi and Tabar 2005, 47.

²⁶⁸ Hanafi and Tabar 2005, 191-193. They write about the situation in the oPt. I will argue that in Lebanon the workshops conducted in the cities may also attract the "elite" of Palestinian refugees. However, since many workshops are conducted inside the camps, where more than half of the refugee population live, they might be more open to "everyone."

History of NGOs in development in Norway

The first Norwegian NGOs working in developing countries were missionary organisations that started to send people abroad from the 1860s.²⁶⁹ As one of the founding members of the OECD, Norway followed the lead of the US and UN and decided to involve NGOs more in development. In 1963 the Norwegian government channelled money through NGOs for the first time. In 2007, Norwegian aid was channelled through 117 Norwegian and approximately 200 international or regional NGOs, and close to 250 local NGOs in receiver countries.²⁷⁰ The support through NGOs constituted approximately 20 per cent of the total aid and was 4.3 billion NOK in 2007.²⁷¹ The role of NGOs in the disbursement of aid is larger in Norway than in any other OECD country and reflects the close relationship which has developed between the Norwegian government and NGOs.²⁷²

The Norwegian state and business community has few political, strategic or economic interests in the developing world. Therefore, the work of NGOs in developing countries has from the start been perceived as the work of “good-hearted” people and organisations, maybe more so in Norway than in other countries. This continues to be the self-understanding and ideology of NGOs and their staff, which emphasises that:

Norwegian development aid is based on a strong attitude of solidarity. It's neither connected too much to economic interests, nor to political interests. In some contexts it might be, but not much. Other major nations do that a lot, lot more. USA, Japan, and Germany, so when I sort of see Norwegian foreign policy, and also Norwegian development aid, it's a lot about solidarity and actually a desire to help the world.²⁷³

The work of NGOs is vital to the creation of the Norwegian national image as a humanitarian superpower and peacemaker. The strength of this image means that there is broad political and societal support for foreign assistance in the Norwegian society.

²⁶⁹ The term NGO is not directly translatable to Norwegian, and Norwegian NGOs are known as voluntary or private organisations. In Norwegian the definition is “Frivillige organisasjoner: Betegnelse for ikke-statlige, private/humanitære/ideelle organisasjoner.” (Norad Online (b).)

²⁷⁰ Norad and MFA 2008, 16.

²⁷¹ Norad and MFA 2008, 18.

²⁷² Norad Online (c).

²⁷³ Fretheim 2008, 229 (my translation.)

The NGO channel has become an important instrument in Norwegian foreign policy initiatives. The policy of the MFA has changed from one of relative lack of interest to one of active consultation and cooperation. They have increasingly realised that the work of Norwegian NGOs has in a direct or indirect way influenced Norwegian foreign policy, and perhaps so in a rather unplanned manner. The MFA has therefore initiated several research programs recently to improve their work.²⁷⁴ The close relation which has developed between MFA and NGOs in Norway is not a common trait in other countries.²⁷⁵

The six largest NGOs who receive aid from the Norwegian government are the Norwegian Refugee Council, Norwegian Church Aid, NPA, the Norwegian Red Cross, Save the Children and Norwegian Missions in Development.²⁷⁶ The first four mentioned of these received approximately 400 million NOK each in 2007. This constitutes 55 per cent of the total support given through NGOs.²⁷⁷

Until 2004 Norad was responsible for long-term bilateral aid, while MFA was responsible for the administration of aid through international organisations such as the UN, the World Bank and the IMF, as well as emergency and humanitarian aid. In 2004 the Norwegian development cooperation administration was re-organised, and the responsibility for long-term government-to-government cooperation with developing countries was transferred from Norad to the MFA. Also the responsibility of all embassies who work with aid was transferred to MFA. Norad is still responsible for a portion of the aid directed through NGOs, and is considered as an agency which contributes with independent professional advice to the aid business.²⁷⁸ NGOs can also receive funding for NGO-initiated activities or funding for a project implemented on behalf of Norad or MFA. Larger and more established organisations can obtain frame

²⁷⁴ Seminar at MFA 2006.

²⁷⁵ Tvedt 1995, 103.

²⁷⁶ Bistandsnemda, The Norwegian Missions in Development is an umbrella organisation which, on behalf of its members, enters into and administers a cooperation agreement with Norad. (Bistandsnemnda Online.)

²⁷⁷ St.prp.1 2008-2009, 8.5.

²⁷⁸ Norad Online (d).

agreements in support of their self-initiated activities. These agreements normally last for five years. In 1996, 18 organisations had such agreements and NPA is one of those.²⁷⁹

Norway in Lebanon

It is obvious that the humanitarian support for the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, past and present, is part of Norway's foreign policy. The continuous support from the MFA to the NPA's work in Lebanon has strong political backing.²⁸⁰ Approximately 3 per cent of the Norad budget which was channelled through NGOs was in 2000-2002 directed to the Middle East, with the oPt receiving the great majority of this.²⁸¹ In 2006, due to the July war, Lebanon was number 12 on the list of countries receiving most aid from Norway. The following year it was out of the top 35 list.²⁸² The Norwegian initiative to start a process for an international ban against cluster bombs after the 2006 war gave additional reasons to support NGOs, such as NPA, and countries, such as Lebanon, who were involved with or affected by cluster bombs.²⁸³

The bilateral aid for Lebanon in 2006 was channelled mostly through Norwegian NGOs, with a share of 65.3 per cent. In addition, 4.2 per cent was given to local NGOs. None of the aid was given as government-to-government aid, while multi-bilateral aid constituted 6 per cent of the total. The rest was shared between international NGOs (0.7 per cent) and Nordic Research institutions (1.2 per cent).²⁸⁴ As mentioned, 2006 was not a typical year due to the July war. 73.9 per cent of the total aid was given as "emergency aid and other

²⁷⁹ UD evaluation report 4.98 1998, 23.

²⁸⁰ E-mail correspondence with MFA, 03.03.09.

²⁸¹ The Middle East in this context is the oPt, Iran, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Yemen. The oPt received approximately 35,000,000 NOK of a total of 42,000,000 NOK in the years 2000-2002. (Norad Online (e).)

²⁸² The oPt was number two in 2006, and third in 2007 after Sudan and Tanzania. (Norad and MFA 2006, 1 and Norad and MFA 2007, 3.)

²⁸³ The Norwegian Government Online (b). An international ban against cluster ammunition was signed in Oslo, 3 December, 2008.

²⁸⁴ Norad and MFA 2006, 41. MFA supports several international, Norwegian and local NGOs in Lebanon in 2009. First, international NGOs: Right To Play; Mines Advisory Group; Search for Common Ground; Conflicts Forum; International Alert; and Soliya. Secondly, Lebanese Organisations: Nawah Al-Muwatiniya; The Lebanese Center for Policy Studies; Zakira – Image Festival Association; The Lebanese Association for Civil Rights; and the Lebanese Red Cross. Thirdly, the MFA support three Norwegian NGOs: Norwegian People's Aid; Norwegian Refugee Council; and the Norwegian Aid Committee. (The Norwegian Embassy in Lebanon Online.)

unspecified.”²⁸⁵ It is however, typical in that the majority of aid to Lebanon is channelled through NGOs.

NGOs’ role in development has been of increasingly greater importance over the last 30 years. This is the trend in Norway, Lebanon and the world at large. NGOs are seen to have some advantages in comparison to other actors in the development aid system. As the discussion above shows, the reality is more complex than the theory, and the difference between NGOs and other actors may not necessarily be so great. In many aspects, NGOs are more a creation of international trends and pressure than of a natural need in their community. The relationship between governments, Northern INGOs and local NGOs, as well as between leaders of local NGOs and their community shows the complexity of this scene. Certain features of donors, INGOs and NGOs behaviour such as the division of humanitarian relief from development aid, and the preference of advocacy over service provision, creates sometimes unintended results on the ground. The next chapter will look into how local NGOs working in the Palestinian community have been integrated into the development aid system and how this has implications for their role in the Palestinian community.

²⁸⁵ Norad and MFA 2006, 41. In comparison, in the oPt 38.4 per cent of the bilateral aid was given as government-to-government support, and only 29.3 per cent to Norwegian NGOs; 2.7 per cent to local NGOs; 0.3 per cent to regional NGOs; 1.3 per cent to international NGOs; 0.3 per cent to Nordic research institutions; and 27.8 per cent as multi-bilateral aid, which means earmarked aid through multilateral organisations. (Norad and MFA 2006, 40.)

Chapter 6

Palestinian NGOs

To talk about Palestinian NGOs in Lebanon is actually a bit misleading, as officially there is no such thing. Firstly, there is the theoretical dilemma of using the term “non-governmental organisations”, when there is no government to work in partnership with or even to counterbalance. There is no effective Palestinian government and the Lebanese government has refused to cooperate with Palestinian organisations to a large extent since the end of the civil war in 1990.²⁸⁶ Secondly, Palestinian refugees in Lebanon are prevented from establishing organisations by Lebanese law, as will be discussed below. However, in reality there are a wide range of “NGO-like” organisations which work in the Palestinian community and which consist of mostly Palestinian employees. This thesis, in the same manner as the Lebanese and Palestinian populations themselves, uses the term Palestinian NGOs to describe these organisations.²⁸⁷ In the synopsis in appendix I, 97 Palestinian NGOs are listed. This chapter will analyse what role these NGOs have taken on in the Palestinian community.

The legal aspect

The right to establish an association is guaranteed by Article 13 of the Lebanese constitution and is governed by the Ottoman Law of Associations of 1909, which in turn was based on the French Law of 1901.²⁸⁸ Everyone who wishes to form an association has to submit an application for notification of formation or founding to the Ministry of Interior in order to receive a license.²⁸⁹ In order to submit such an application, however,

²⁸⁶ This is discussed in Suleiman 1997, 397.

²⁸⁷ For example The Daily Star writes an article about a demonstration made by “A coalition of Lebanese and Palestinian NGOs...” (The Daily Star, 9 January, 2009.)

²⁸⁸ IRIS Online 02.11.08.

²⁸⁹ Prior to 2005, NGOs had to be licensed, but this was changed to “A requirement to notify of the group’s formation.” (Freedom House Online 03.11.08.) The law is open for interpretations which mean that in practice different ministers have been able to grant or revoke licenses in accordance with the shifting political interests. In 1992 for example, the Ministry of Interior withdrew as many as 120 registrations, presumably a “clean up” after the Civil War. Between 1980 and 1999, the number of withdrawn registrations ranged from none to 8 per year. (IRIS Online 02.11.08.) In the period after the Hariri

the founder of the association must be a Lebanese citizen.²⁹⁰ It means that Palestinians who wish to establish an association legally have to align with Lebanese friends or sympathisers to fulfil the requirements. A Lebanese have to submit the registration or notification and be member of the boards on their behalf. They would set up a head office outside the camps and employ a certain number of Lebanese citizens to work there. The boards have to be comprised of a majority of Lebanese citizens.²⁹¹ While the nominal leadership is comprised of Lebanese citizens, however, the executive bodies of these NGOs usually include Palestinian activists and the majority of their services are in the Palestinian community. These NGOs, while legally indistinguishable from Lebanese NGOs, are therefore de facto Palestinian NGOs.²⁹² As long as the NGOs work only inside the camps, however, the Lebanese government has mostly tolerated their existence and the fact that they employ Palestinians.²⁹³ It can be argued that this is because they are providing services that the government is not willing to provide, and “Making the Palestinians not be thieves afterwards.”²⁹⁴ However, the lack of registration may be very negative for the NGO sector because it creates a lawless situation which could be misused.²⁹⁵

assassination in 2005, the process to register was eased, then tightened again. (Interview with Jaber Suleiman 17.01.2008.)

²⁹⁰ The only exception is the Palestinian Red Crescent Society, (PRCS). (Shafie 2007, 15.)

²⁹¹ According to Laila Zakharia from WA, these Lebanese citizens do take their work as board members very seriously and represent Palestinian-Lebanese solidarity. “The people in these boards put their reputation at risk because they work with Palestinians, and they stay with them, and support them so that their NGO can continue to exist, and this is very beautiful.” (Interview with Laila Zakharia 22.01.2008) Others, like Haifa Jammal suggests that “Maybe if we had the right to establish NGOs we could choose Palestinian figures instead of Lebanese who could understand more.” (Interview with Haifa Jammal 16.01.2008) In The National Institute for Social Care and Vocational Training, (Beit Atfal Al-Sumod) one of the major Palestinian NGOs, the board consists of six Lebanese and one Palestinian. (Interview with Kassem Aynaa 17.01.2008.)

²⁹² Suleiman 1997, 401.

²⁹³ Interview with Kassem Aynaa 17.01.2008, Suleiman 1997, both describe one NGO which had to close, The National Association for Vocational Training and Social services (NAVTSS) cf. appendix I. The reason for the closure was that the NGO was accused of being supported by PLO. (NPA 2004 (c).)

²⁹⁴ Interview with Kassem Aynaa 17.01.2008.

²⁹⁵ “If you have money and find donors, you can rent a room and make a name and you have an NGO... An NGO should have a board of directors, a membership, account, sustainability, a legal audit. People are giving us money to spend it on the people, the donors; if you don’t have an audit, elections, board of directors, how can this be an NGO?... Without registration, [you can’t open a] bank account in the name of the organisation. We can work [without registration] but you have to open a bank account in your own name and that is not right, not helping us to be transparent.” (Interview with Kassem Aynaa 17.01.2008.)

At certain periods, particularly during the civil war, it has been impossible for Palestinian NGOs to register with a Palestinian name. The NGO now called Popular Aid for Relief and Development (PARAD) was originally named Palestinian Agency for Relief and Development (PARAD).²⁹⁶ Lately, this restriction has been eased and, for example, the Palestinian Human Rights Organization was registered in 1997.²⁹⁷ The Lebanon-Support group now includes several NGOs who use the word Palestinian.²⁹⁸

Classification of organisations

The organisations that work in the Palestinian community can be divided into four main types as follows: Firstly, organisations that have received a license from the Lebanese government by following the procedure described above. In 2006 this was approximately 20 organisations.²⁹⁹ According to the Ajial study from 2001, the licensed NGOs at the time represented 40 per cent of the total number of NGOs.³⁰⁰ Secondly, there are organisations that have legitimacy by virtue of their closeness to the PLO, such as the GUPW.³⁰¹ Thirdly, some organisations are religious organisations. Finally, many Palestinian organisations choose or are not able to obtain notification of formation or

²⁹⁶ Interview with Ahmad Sharour 17.01.2008 and Jaber Suleiman 17.01.2008. The same obstacle was faced by several INGOs. The Norwegian solidarity group the Palestine Committee started to send health workers to Palestinian camps in Lebanon in 1976. When PLO was evacuated in 1982 it became politically impossible to work under the name of a solidarity group in favour of the Palestinians. They therefore re-organised and established a humanitarian NGO, NORWAC. It did not take too long though before the Lebanese security found out that NORWAC was only a “cover” and the first coordinator was arrested and deported to Amman. However, through networks and contacts in the Lebanese society, NORWAC has been able to continue their work in Lebanon. (E-mail correspondence with NORWAC, 13.11.08.) The Palestine Committee and NORWAC later split their organisations, and the Palestine Committee is today involved with a small solidarity project in Lebanon.

²⁹⁷ Palestinian Human Rights Organization Online.

²⁹⁸ Palestinian Arab Women [sic] League; Palestinian Children and Youth Institution; Palestinian Human Rights Organization; Palestinian Popular Committee – Beddawi; Palestinian Scouts and Guides Association; Palestinian Women’s Humanitarian Organization; and General Union of Palestinian Women are listed. (Lebanon-Support Online.) They are not all licensed, however.

²⁹⁹ Interview with Kassem Aynaa 17.01.2008. Since registrations have been somewhat eased in recent years the number might be slightly higher. It has not been possible to receive any accurate information from the Lebanese Ministry of Interior. The Ministry requested me to consult Lebanon-Support Online for that purpose and that online resource does not provide a comprehensive picture as will be discussed in appendix I. (E-mail correspondence with Ministry of Interior & Municipalities, 06.03.09.)

³⁰⁰ Ajial 2001, ch. 3.2.4. The Ajial study operates with a total number of 46 Palestinian NGOs, which means that the percentage may not be accurate today, but it gives an idea of the situation.

³⁰¹ Interview with Amne Jibril 23.01.2008. The GUPW is a union which belongs to PLO. They are therefore not registered as an NGO with the Lebanese government, but they run kindergartens, youth centres, and libraries; they cooperate with NGOs and in many ways function as an NGO.

founding and so function without a permit. They constitute about 40 per cent of the organisations working in the Palestinian community.³⁰² However, many of these organisations are small and limited in scope. In fact, most of these last three types of organisations lack the structure, operational procedures and legal independence that would classify them as NGOs.³⁰³ This study, however, also includes these types of organisations, because part of the study's aim is to show the plethora of organisations present in the Palestinian refugee community.

The history of Palestinian NGOs

As has been discussed in chapter 5, the term NGO is quite a modern and western invention. However, charitable organisations have for a long time been part of the Arab world, through the so-called *waqf* system.³⁰⁴ In Mandatory Palestine, an array of organisations existed, such as religious bodies, clubs, labour unions, women's societies, and charitable societies. During the national struggle in the 1920s and 1930s, many of these organisations were drawn into the political apparatus of the Palestinian national movement.³⁰⁵ When the Palestinians had to leave their stable society and became refugees it took some time before they were able to establish new organisations. As shown above, the Lebanese government prevented them from doing so, especially during the strict regime between 1959 and 1969, when no organisations were permitted to operate in the refugee camps.³⁰⁶ Before the 1970s there were only three Palestinian NGOs.³⁰⁷ During the PLO period in the 1970s, eight NGOs were established, in addition to the numerous PLO institutions.³⁰⁸ During the Lebanese civil war, the public sector in

³⁰² Ajjal 2001, ch. 3.2.4. The Ajjal study includes all types of organisations.

³⁰³ Suleiman 1997, 398.

³⁰⁴ Interview with Jaber Suleiman 17.01.2008.

³⁰⁵ Norton (ed.) 1995, 246.

³⁰⁶ Ajjal 2001, ch. 2.1.

³⁰⁷ Ajjal 2001, ch. 2.1. These organisations are the Association for the Development of Palestinian Camps (al-Inash); PRSC; and the Palestinian Arab Women Union. (Also written as Palestinian Arab Women League, cf. footnote 298 and appendix I.)

³⁰⁸ Ajjal 2001, ch. 2.1 and Suleiman 1997, 410. These organisations are today the biggest NGOs and run 50 per cent of all projects in 2001. They are Najdeh Association; National Association for Medical and Social Services (Beit Atfal Al- Sumod, also written as The National Institution for Social Care and Vocational Training and others cf. appendix I); Ghassan Kanafani Foundation; General Union of Palestinian Women; Palestinian Student Fund; Department of Refugee Affairs; and Beneficence Association for the Detainees and Captives. Suleiman adds Association Samed (1973) which in the Ajjal study is called Palestinian Martyrs Works Society (Samed) and has no year of establishment.

Lebanon overall was marginalised, which resulted in the emergence of numerous non-governmental, private and voluntary organisations aiming to fill the gap left by the absence of the governmental sector.³⁰⁹ For example the first project of the NGO The National Association for Social Medical Care & Vocational Training (NAMSVT) was based on the realisation that the majority of nurses at the PRCS hospital in Bar Elias in the Bekaa Valley had not received any formal training, but rather worked on experience in the health field. To correct this shortcoming, a training course was established for 20 nurses from PRCS and other clinics in Bekaa.³¹⁰

As with NGOs in Mandatory Palestine, most of the NGOs in the Palestinian community in Lebanon had their roots in the Palestinian national movement's mass mobilisation or national front strategy, but became increasingly linked to different political factions within PLO. The organisation structures were informal and there was an emphasis on voluntary work. From the mid 1960s to the early 1980s, PLO provided funding for the organisations through their allied factions. Simultaneously, some NGOs started to form contacts with European donor NGOs, and thus became a part of the development aid system.³¹¹ When PLO had to evacuate from Lebanon in 1982, the number of Palestinian NGOs increased to fill the void that was left with the disappearance of the PLO institutions. The greater dependence on foreign funding after this period also meant that the NGOs faced pressure to depoliticise themselves. 13 organisations were established in the 1980s, and another 21 in the 1990s, thus making a total of 46 NGOs in 2001 according to the Ajjal study.³¹² According to my registrations the number of large and small NGOs is today 97 as mentioned.³¹³ The increase in the number of organisations from the Ajjal study in 2001 until today reflects the popularity of the NGO channel in the world at large as well as the impact of the July 2006 war and the Nahr el-Bared crisis, in Lebanon in particular. Several organisations provide services in all Palestinian population concentrations, while others are concentrated in only one location.

³⁰⁹ PARD 2006, 9.

³¹⁰ NPA 2001 (c).

³¹¹ Hammami 2000, 16.

³¹² Ajjal 2001, ch. 2.1. 16 of the organisations established in the 1990s were single project organisations.

³¹³ Cf. appendix I.

Field of work

Palestinian NGOs are mainly working in service provision in order to fill the gaps that are not covered by UNRWA. As such they provide services that are much needed in the Palestinian community. As one NGO worker said: “Our people need more than the Lebanese people; they are supported from the government.”³¹⁴ Health and pre-school education comprise 45 per cent of the projects of NGOs.³¹⁵ Most of the kindergartens are run by NGOs; in 1997 20 NGOs ran 68 kindergartens.³¹⁶ A number of organisations run fixed or mobile dispensaries and health clinics. They are also involved in rehabilitation for the disabled. Some are involved in environmental health, such as garbage collection, especially in the gatherings.³¹⁷

Vocational training is another field where many NGOs are active. Different NGOs provide training lasting for 3 to 12 months in over 30 different occupations.³¹⁸ In addition to this there are a number of illiteracy classes, especially focusing on women. This field of work has, however, been criticised for not being very effective and not making the students able to find work afterwards. As one author described it: “The market had become over-saturated with people with similar qualifications and in the case of more specialised courses (e.g. typing, languages...), the methods and curriculum were so outdated that students could not meet the standards required.”³¹⁹

Some organisations are also involved in cultural heritage, folklore, oral history, embroidery and handicrafts.³²⁰ Other organisations offer social welfare, the most

³¹⁴ Interview with Mariam Suleiman 18.01.2008

³¹⁵ Ajial 2001, ch. 3.2.4. According to one study, health NGOs serving Palestinian refugees in Lebanon employ 1,533 people (900 full-time and 633 part-time) in addition to some 420 volunteers. (WA and NPA 2000, 5.)

³¹⁶ Suleiman 1997, 403. According to Aruri (ed.) 2001, 154, 18 kindergartens were located in Nahr el-Bared, and I assume most of them were destroyed in the 2007 fighting. Today UNRWA runs five kindergartens that are supported by the French government. (Hillenkamp 2008, 3.)

³¹⁷ Suleiman 1997, 404.

³¹⁸ Suleiman 1997, 403.

³¹⁹ Abu-Habib 1996, unpaginated.

³²⁰ Suleiman 1997, 405.

important being National Institution for Social Care and Vocational Training (Beit Atfal Al-Sumod), which runs a sponsorship project for orphans and children from vulnerable families.³²¹ Income generation programs and micro-credit programs are also prevalent, but are limited in number and scope.³²² Recently, some NGOs have started working with advocacy for Palestinian civil rights. As such, the NGOs may constitute a link between the Lebanese government, who are sceptical to talk to political factions, and the Palestinian community. In 2005, for example, 40 local NGOs, youth groups, women's associations, labour associations, and individual activists participated in a campaign entitled "Civil Rights till Reaching the Right of Return."³²³ However, Palestinian NGOs are still limited in this respect and it is my understanding that their role continues to be mainly as providers of services and in charity.³²⁴ There are several reasons for this, such as funding mechanisms, and lack of coordination and planning which are further discussed below.

Funding

Since the Palestinian NGOs in Lebanon are affected by the overall Palestinian situation, they are influenced by many of the same mechanisms as the NGOs in the oPt. Political scientist Rex Brynen argues that prior to the establishment of PA, i.e. a state apparatus, the NGO sector there were "Responsible for a significant portion of the health, education, and social welfare sector, as well as development and other activities."³²⁵ The NGO sector at that time received approximately US\$170-240 million from the PLO, international donors and private benefactors. However, as a consequence of the Gulf War and the redirection of funds to the PA, the amount fell to US\$60-90 million per year.³²⁶ Funds were also redirected from the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon and the NGOs working there, to the development of Palestinian official institutions in the oPt. The

³²¹ Interview with Kassem Aynaa 17.01.2008 and visit to the Beit Atfal Al-Sumod centre in Rashidieh on several occasions.

³²² Ajial 2001, ch. 3.2.4.

³²³ NPA 2005 (a).

³²⁴ Several of my interviewees answered that advocacy was not a part of their organisation's work, but that they worked with human rights and civil rights for the Palestinians through the services they offered. They said that advocacy was mostly taken care of by the Coordination Forum. (Interviews with Kassem Aynaa 17.01.2008, Ahmad Sharour 17.01.2008 and Anni Kanafani 22.01.2008.)

³²⁵ Brynen 2000, 187.

³²⁶ Brynen 2000, 187.

refugees in Lebanon have no direct benefits from these institutions, however, and the reduction of funding for NGOs therefore had greater implications for the refugees there than in oPt.

NGOs working in the Palestinian camps today are almost entirely dependent on foreign support, with between 80 and 90 per cent of the resources coming from foreign donors.³²⁷ The donors range from embassies; INGOs from Europe, America, Australia, Japan and Malaysia; the Gulf states; the Humanitarian Aid Department of the European Commission (ECHO); and the Welfare Association (WA).³²⁸ Reliance on foreign funding does, however, make the NGOs vulnerable to political agendas of the funding agencies. Once funds stop, many projects cease to exist.³²⁹ The funding is often given for only one or two years, which makes it difficult to make long-term plans. The Palestine Student Fund is an example of an NGO that used to be self-sustaining, but now has to apply for funds from INGOs and the general public. The organisation was set up in 1972 by Arab businessmen and intellectuals. Their aim was to provide loans for Palestinian students, the idea being that the students would pay back these loans, and in turn pay for new students. However, the Gulf war together with the deteriorating economic situation of the Palestinians in Lebanon meant that the organisation lost both donations and paybacks from the students and had to look for funding from other sources.³³⁰

The introduction of western funding in the 1980s meant an expansion of activities and service provision, but also placed new demands on NGOs, both internally and externally, as discussed in chapter 5. It is clear that in the Palestinian NGO community there is a hierarchy in terms of which organisations have the easiest access to funding. The unlicensed, less professionalised organisations especially face problems to receive money from donors which apply certain criteria, such as accountability and sustainability. The process of fund-raising has become very bureaucratic and requires a certain level of

³²⁷ Khalidi 2001, 11.

³²⁸ The Welfare Association is a Geneva based NGO, run by wealthy Palestinians. The funding information is compiled from interviews with Ahmad Sharour 17.01.2008, Kassem Aynaa 17.01.2008, Anni Kanafani 22.01.2008 and Haifa Jammal 11.01.2008.

³²⁹ Ajjal 2001, ch. 3.3.6, and Suleiman 1997, 408.

³³⁰ NPA 2001 (d).

economic, legal and administrative skills which many of these organisations lack. The limited dependency on local resources may also give the NGOs few incentives for linking up with the grassroots, as mentioned in chapter 5. The Palestinian NGOs may be more accountable to foreign donors and Palestinian political factions than to a popular constituency. However, as also discusses in chapter 5, the employees of NGOs are relevant in that there is a new structuring of knowledge, practice and elite formation among them, i.e. the globalised elite.³³¹ Hanafi and Tabar argue that it might be the increased elitism among NGO actors, rather than their connection to donors, that removes them from the grassroots.³³²

Palestinian NGOs receive no financial support from the Lebanese government, including those who are legally registered as Lebanese NGOs. For example, the Lebanese NGO kindergartens get a certain amount of financial support from the Government per child. The kindergartens run by Palestinian NGOs get no such support, even if they sometimes include Lebanese children.³³³ One must keep in mind that it is very difficult to fundraise in the Palestinian community itself, because so few have anything to spare.

Employment

One important aspect of the NGOs is that they offer employment opportunities to educated Palestinians. International Governmental Organisations (IGOs), and NGOs in all employ 13 per cent of the Palestinian population.³³⁴ As the employment situation for Palestinians remains difficult, this aspect of their work should not be underestimated; it provides some of the educated Palestinians with a reason to stay. Many are frustrated with the political organisations and they see NGOs as a way to get involved and “do something”. The salary level in the NGO sector is comparatively high and creates a much needed opportunity for Palestinians to earn a decent living. NGOs constitute an important employer, especially for women and the disabled.

³³¹ Hanafi and Tabar 2005, 63.

³³² Hanafi and Tabar 2005, 250.

³³³ Interview with Anni Kanafani 22.01.2008.

³³⁴ Fafo 2003 (409), 142. They do not specify in the report what they consider to be IGOs rather than INGOs.

Many local NGOs have very stable staff, who have been working with the organisation for years. This is positive for the sustainability of the organisation, but may be negative for the development of the organisation. The staff inevitably become very dependent on their job, and can sometimes be afraid to criticise the leadership and suggest changes.³³⁵ This contrasts with most INGOs, who on many occasions hire local staff for only a certain project period. The INGO approach is undoubtedly more vulnerable for the local staff, who frequently have to look for a new job. It does, however, create job opportunities for a larger part of the Palestinian population.³³⁶ It may also make changes and development in the organisation move more smoothly. For the Palestinian population it could be suggested that it would be better with more stable working conditions, but this is not a feature of the INGO sector.

The combination of education and high salaries has brought up accusations that NGOs are an employment sector for the (already) economically privileged.³³⁷ Rema Hammami writes:

NGOs are among the few workplaces perceived to operate according to professionalism. They have thus become desirable workplaces for a new generation of middle class professionals who view NGO employment as a career path to more lucrative salaries and prestigious jobs in international organizations. Speaking English, dressing well and maintaining a nice office are all part of this new culture.³³⁸

Both Rema Hammami, and Hanafi and Tabar, who talk about the development of a Palestinian globalised elite as mentioned in chapter 5, write about the NGO scene in oPt. As I understand it, however, this development is also evident in Lebanon. There seems to be a majority of educated, non-camp refugees working in the local NGOs. This may mean that the employees in NGOs are sometimes removed from the “world” of their beneficiaries, i.e. those who are most in need in the community. The employees of NGOs are in a position where they control the distribution of resources in the Palestinian community to some extent, and this may place them in a position that is easy to abuse. As

³³⁵ Interview with I.

³³⁶ Interview with F.

³³⁷ Hammami 2000, and Hanafi and Tabar 2005.

³³⁸ Hammami 2000, 27.

such, the employees of NGOs, particularly those in a high position, play an influential role as leaders in the Palestinian community. Their role is further enhanced by the lack of strong political leaders.

Humanitarian relief versus development

The situation for Palestinian NGOs has been characterised by the unstable political situation in Lebanon. They have had to adapt to the changing situations, sometimes having to function as emergency, relief NGOs, while in quieter periods transforming themselves into development NGOs. However, the constant emergence of new crises has meant that long-term projects are often replaced by emergency projects. Inevitably, this has reduced the capacity for NGOs to develop and evaluate their projects. In emergency situations, such as the 2006 war, the Palestinian NGOs have proved to be very effective in their coordination and distribution of emergency assistance.³³⁹

The humanitarian relief versus development dilemma, as discussed in chapter 5, greatly influences the funding of Palestinian NGOs. After the civil war they faced a decrease in aid provided by NGOs, states, and foreign governments that consider the struggle in Lebanon to have ended.³⁴⁰ While there was little trouble in securing funding for the Palestinian NGOs between 1982 and 1990, they faced dramatic decreases in the 1990s.³⁴¹ After the war in 2006 and the Nahr el-Bared crisis in 2007, much funding was directed to emergency relief at the expense of development funding.³⁴² However, as is the case with Nahr el-Bared, it is not enough to plan emergency programs lasting for only three months. The emergency situation has so far lasted for almost two years and requires long-term planning and funding. The earmarking of donor money for certain projects has made it difficult to move the money around to where it is most needed. For example, the money that was given to rebuild the physical infrastructure of Nahr el-Bared could not be reallocated to provide food and shelter for the population in the meantime.³⁴³

³³⁹ Interview with Jaber Suleiman 17.01.2008.

³⁴⁰ Al-Natour 2007.

³⁴¹ Edminister 1999, 20.

³⁴² Interview with Anni Kanafani 22.01.2008.

³⁴³ The Daily Star, 25 September, 2008.

Coordination and planning

Coordination between Lebanese and Palestinian NGOs has been almost non-existent. An explanation for this is that “The priorities for Lebanese and Palestinian NGOs are different.”³⁴⁴ Interestingly, the only cooperation which has taken place between Palestinian and Lebanese NGOs in advocacy is concerned with the right of return. During periods of war and crisis, the coordination is greater.³⁴⁵ Recently, the LPDC has initiated some efforts to encourage coordination.³⁴⁶

The lack of planning and coordination among Palestinian NGOs has been raised as a major problem by several sources.³⁴⁷ It is linked to the factionalism of the Palestinian community with every political party historically having their own NGO.³⁴⁸ As Haifa Jammal states, “The NGOs are independent, but some... most of them are little bit affiliated with political parties.”³⁴⁹ Officially, however, most of the NGOs themselves claim to be apolitical and insist that their services are for the whole population. The funding from international agencies has, as mentioned, given the NGOs the opportunity to distance themselves from the political factions.³⁵⁰ However, many of the people working with NGOs have earlier worked for different political factions.³⁵¹ It is my experience that the camp population still regards certain NGOs as belonging to this or that political party and chooses to use only certain NGOs services because of that. There is also a widespread belief in the Palestinian population that the NGOs only provide help for “their” people.³⁵²

³⁴⁴ Interview with Haifa Jammal 16.01.2008.

³⁴⁵ During the 2006 war, for example many Lebanese sought refuge in the Palestinian camps and were taken care of by Palestinian NGOs. In the rebuilding of Nahr el-Bared, Lebanese NGOs also take part.

³⁴⁶ In July 2007 they organised a “Dialogue Session: The Role of Volunteerism and Humanitarian Work in Bringing the Lebanese and Palestinian Communities Closer together” and a workshop called “Coordination of Lebanese-Palestinian Dialogue Initiatives” in November 2008. (LPDC Online.)

³⁴⁷ Ajial 2001, ch. 3.2.4; Suleiman 1997; 408 and Sullivan 1996, 95.

³⁴⁸ Sullivan 1996, 95.

³⁴⁹ Interview with Haifa Jammal 16.01.2008.

³⁵⁰ Hammami 2000, 17.

³⁵¹ Interview with Jaber Suleiman 17.01.2008.

³⁵² Conversations with several Palestinian refugees.

In an effort to improve the coordination, The Coordination Forum of the NGOs working among the Palestinian Community was established in 1994.³⁵³ It consists today of 18 NGOs who are all legally registered with the Lebanese government.³⁵⁴ INGOs have the right to be full members or, if they wish, to apply for “observer status”. In 1997 NPA had such observer status together with Save the Children, UK branch.³⁵⁵ In my list from 2008, however, NPA is listed as the only foreign observer together with the WA.³⁵⁶ From the answers I received from INGOs it appears that the Coordination Forum is regarded as a forum for local NGOs, and none of my INGO sources had considered joining. While some are very positive to the Forum, there seems to be some confusion as to what the Forum is and what it is supposed to do.³⁵⁷ Several of the Palestinian NGOs stated that the Forum was not very effective.³⁵⁸ The strategy of the Coordination Forum was revised in 2005.³⁵⁹

The lack of coordination leads to insufficient utilisation of available resources and duplication of projects. As an example, many organisations are involved in kindergartens, but very few cater for the young and the old. One explanation behind the concentration in services may be that these services are the easiest to get funding for.³⁶⁰ For example,

³⁵³ Suleiman 1997, 402.

³⁵⁴ The Coordination Forum of NGOs Working among the Palestinian Community in Lebanon: List of members and member information, received from Haifa Jammal, 11.01.08. However, this list does not coincide with Suleiman 1997, 410; he names 17, and not all are mentioned in the above list.

³⁵⁵ Suleiman 1997, 410.

³⁵⁶ The Coordination Forum of NGOs Working among the Palestinian Community in Lebanon: List of members and member information, received from Haifa Jammal, 11.01.08.

³⁵⁷ Examples of answers to my question about the Coordination Forum: “We are in constant contact with them and I think their work is very efficient in avoiding overlapping and duplication in the different projects implemented by INGOs and NGOs.” (Interview B.) “I think this forum most recently was reactivated in order to fundraise for Naher El-Bared [sic]. I don’t think the Forum actually exists as one organization that does work. We’d have no problem being an “observing member”, but it’s difficult to see what this would offer as I think the forum already shares what it produces (when it produces something) with us.” (Interview D.) “[We] are not part of the Coordination Forum either which is for local organizations working in the Palestinian community.” (Interview F.) “It is a problem that they do not include everybody. It is difficult to join for new NGOs.” (Interview G.)

³⁵⁸ Interview with Jaber Suleiman 17.01.2008 and Ahmad Sharour 17.01.2008. “18 organisations have different attitudes, also as everything else in this country, influenced by political forces.” (Interview with Anni Kanafani 22.01.2008.) Also other coordination committees are mentioned like the Palestinian Civilian Rights Committee, but their work is claimed to be infrequent and limited.

³⁵⁹ NPA 2005, (b).

³⁶⁰ Interview with Soheil El-Natour 16.01.2008.

health services and income generation programs are limited in scope.³⁶¹ According to Soheil El-Natour the reason why few NGOs are engaged in the health sector is because it requires a lot of money. Due to the legal requirements it is extremely difficult for Palestinian NGOs to get medication and instruments through the Lebanese customs.³⁶²

The services are also not distributed evenly in different areas; for example, there are five vocational training programs in the El-Buss camp, while the neighbouring camp of Rashidieh has none.³⁶³ Some camps have many projects, while others with a larger population have comparatively few.³⁶⁴ The Palestinian gatherings have very few NGOs working among them. One result of the lack of long-term development plans and coordination are that projects are implemented without seeing the broader picture. As an example, the percentage of illiteracy continues to be high even after many years of literacy courses. Soheil El-Natour suggests that it is, “Because it is not linked with the social development of the family of the woman, and the women together.”³⁶⁵ In other words, Palestinian NGOs are too limited by financial and administrative constraints so that they are not able to provide the long-term planning that the Palestinian community needs. Today there is an increase in the influence from Islamic NGOs that are close to Salafi groups and Hamas. They rely mostly on their own sources of funds, *zakat* contributions and support from the Palestinian diaspora.³⁶⁶ This is quite a recent development and creates new challenges for the existing secular NGO environment. So far there is little cooperation between the secular and Islamist NGOs.³⁶⁷

“Hot topics”

In the donor agencies and the NGO community there are what can be called “hot topics”, as we saw in chapter 5. Many projects are started on the basis of the demands from the

³⁶¹ Ajial 2001, ch. 3.3.

³⁶² Interview with Soheil El-Natour 16.01.2008. The customs procedure is difficult also for INGOs.

³⁶³ Ajial 2001, ch. 3.2.4.

³⁶⁴ Ajial 2001, ch. 3.3.5.

³⁶⁵ Interview with Soheil El-Natour 16.01.2008.

³⁶⁶ Hanafi and Tabar 2005, 242. *Zakat* is the Islamic principle of giving a percentage of one’s income to charity.

³⁶⁷ Interview with Haifa Jammal 16.01.2008 and Kassem Aynaa 17.01.2008.

funding agencies and not necessarily on the local priorities and needs.³⁶⁸ Often the priorities of the international donors are not those of the Palestinian community. Especially problematic is the continual need for service provision in the Palestinian community in relation to the donors' focus on the "hot topics" such as democracy, gender and the environment. For example, it is easier to get support for workshops about children's rights than to get support for the running cost of a kindergarten.³⁶⁹ Soheil El-Natour recalls that the infliction of the "hot topics" in the Palestinian NGO community, especially after the Oslo Agreement was met with "A generally complete fear, how can we think of developing society which doesn't have anything of a real stable society?"³⁷⁰ Anni Kanafani recounts:

For example, women empowerment is very much in fashion now; we do not have a direct program on this, but since we started our first kindergarten we did empower women by employing them, giving them a chance to receive education, to have a salary, to give the mother a chance to work and take education. It is part of our holistic approach, empowerment in an indirect way. But you have to convince the donors that this is acceptable for them.³⁷¹

The result of the dissonance between the needs of the community and the demands from the donors, is that the NGOs have often adopted their already existing programs to fit into the NGO speak.

Corruption and politics

As mentioned, Palestinian NGOs in general lack connection to the grassroots, and are characterised by a lack of democratic structures. Only 6 per cent of the Palestinian population are members of an organisation, whether it is a women, youth, social, sports, cultural or religious organisation.³⁷² Many organisations are run by a single individual

³⁶⁸ Ajial 2001, ch. 3.3.6.

³⁶⁹ Interview with Anni Kanafani 22.01.2008.

³⁷⁰ Interview with Soheil El-Natour 16.01.2008. "The donors for a time were interested in the Oslo Agreement agenda, sometimes they are interested in ... peace for example, so really they dictate the agendas. And they have the money and still there is a vicious circle, the link between recipients and donors because of the lack of democratisation." (Interview with Jaber Suleiman 17.01.2008.)

³⁷¹ Interview with Anni Kanafani 22.01.2008.

³⁷² Fafo 2003 (409), 241.

whose decisions are final.³⁷³ This creates an atmosphere of mistrust and indifference from the population and reduces the opportunity to recruit volunteers. Some NGOs leaders have been accused of benefiting personally from the money received for the NGOs work.³⁷⁴ It is beyond the scope of this thesis to establish if this accusation is true or false. However, the fact that this accusation is prevalent amongst the camp population suggests that the NGOs still have much work to do to become transparent and trustworthy, not only towards donors and the NGO community, but towards the people they are supposed to serve.

Palestinian NGOs in Lebanon are undoubtedly offering some very important social services for the Palestinian community. They also constitute an important employer for the educated Palestinians. However, they continue to face many of the challenges that are quite common to Southern NGOs, such as weak financial and managerial foundations. Since the early 1980s they have entered the development aid system and are competing for funds and attention with NGOs all over the world. As such, Palestinian NGOs in Lebanon have both the advantage and disadvantage of being part of a political issue. They receive attention because they are part of a high profile conflict, but simultaneously may be neglected in relation to the core areas of the conflict, the West Bank and Gaza. As part of the development aid system, they have to adjust to the “hot topics” of the moment. It might also make the NGO actors feel somewhat removed from the grassroot, and part of a globalised elite. The Palestinian NGOs are very much affected by the volatile situation in Lebanon, and the challenge of combining relief with development. The volatile situation is part of the explanation to why there is a lack of long-time planning among the NGOs. Another factor is the divided Palestinian community which has made coordination difficult. Some of the “cultures” found in Palestinian NGOs are quite prevalent in Lebanese society in general, such as hierarchical organisational structures and links to political entities. However, some features, such as the ambiguous process of

³⁷³ Ajial 2001, ch.3.3.4 and Suleiman 1997, 408- 409.

³⁷⁴ Ajial 2001, ch. 3.3.4; interview with Soheil El-Natour 16.01.08; and an accusation widespread among the camp population. Interviews reported a climate of mistrust against the NGOs. (Hanafi 2007, 18.) It should be noted that Lebanon in general has a problem of corruption. On an index between 0 and 10, where 0 is completely corrupt and 10 is completely clean, Lebanon gets a score of 3.6. (Norad and MFA 2006, 41.)

legislation, and the uncertain future of their target population are unique for Palestinian NGOs. This chapter has made it clear that my first hypothesis was too optimistic of the Palestinian NGOs' ability to become agents of change. They are too limited by financial and administrative weaknesses, as well as a lack of coordination and cooperation in the local NGO community, and as such confirm my second hypothesis. The next chapter will look into whether INGOs have been able to play such a role in the Palestinian community.

Chapter 7

The role of International NGOs in Lebanon

As mentioned in chapter 5, an increasingly large part of development aid is channelled through NGOs, and large INGOs receive a major share of this. It is therefore worth presenting some history and characteristics of the INGOs which work in Lebanon. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to go into detail on every INGO present in the Palestinian community in Lebanon. The thesis will provide an analysis of one of them, the NPA, in chapter 8. However, according to the synopsis of NGOs in appendix I, as many as 62 INGOs have been present at some time in the Palestinian community.

In the development aid system described in chapter 5, INGOs play an important role in shaping the organisational landscape. They are supported by many donors: the UN system; their “home governments”; other governments; and NGO networks. They are many and large, and run a multitude of activities; they have access to substantial funds and they manage the “NGO speak”.³⁷⁵ They therefore wield much more power and potential for influence than the Palestinian NGOs, and should in that respect have a greater opportunity to act as agents of change. However, INGOs also suffer from some constraints, which means that they are not always capable of realising their full potential. As mentioned in chapter 5, NGOs per se do not necessarily hold the comparative advantages they are said to, compared to governments or multilateral organisations. Most importantly though, for the role of INGOs in the Palestinian community, they do not necessarily relate to the Palestinian refugees as a “special case”, but treat them like any other object of relief. Whilst doing so, they are obscuring the refugees’ autonomy and prerogatives as parties to the Arab-Israeli conflict, as Weighill argues.³⁷⁶ The fact that the Palestinian refugees as part of a long-term political conflict have been objects of relief for more than 60 years has not necessarily affected the INGOs’ working methods. In fact, the

³⁷⁵ Tvedt 1998, 65.

³⁷⁶ Weighill 1997, 311.

political feature of the “Palestinian refugee problem” has played to their disadvantage when it comes to the activities of INGOs as will be explained below.

History and scope of work

As mentioned in chapter 2, the responsibility for the refugees in Lebanon was initially accorded to the League of Red Cross Societies. The initial relief operations seem to have been implanted in quite a patronising way, as this excerpt from a Red Cross report illustrates:

Experience has proved that conditions were too unstable, poverty too great, and political and personal influence too prevalent to allow main responsibilities to be put into the hands of local people. After a few unpleasant experiences, all main control of funds, supplies and ration cards distribution had to be taken back by the Swiss delegates.³⁷⁷

As the initial emergency situation became permanent, the Red Cross handed the responsibility over to the UN. It is, after all, not in the mandate of a humanitarian NGO to act as a government.

The first INGOs that supported local NGOs during the 1970s and 1980s were solidarity groups that played a major role during this period with a focus on relief.³⁷⁸ For example, the Norwegian Palestine committee started to send health workers to Lebanon in 1976 to work in the hospitals of the Palestinian camps.³⁷⁹ In the western political environment at the time, with a strong support for Israel, it was not clear that European and American NGOs should get involved with projects in support or even in relation to Palestinian refugees. Most donors preferred to channel the assistance to Palestinian refugees through UNRWA. As a result, very few INGOs were active in the Palestinian community. According to the Ajial study, only two foreign organisations were engaged in service provision for Palestinian refugees before 1982.³⁸⁰ In Lebanon the situation changed somewhat with the civil war, especially after the massacres of Sabra and Shatila. The

³⁷⁷ Report from the Red Cross cited in UNRPR report 1950, cited in Weighill 1997, 296.

³⁷⁸ Hanafi and Tabar 2005, 35.

³⁷⁹ The Palestine Committee Online.

³⁸⁰ Ajial 2001, ch. 3.2.3. The study does not identify these organisations.

public in Europe and America became aware of the refugee camps in Lebanon and there was increased public demand for emergency relief for them. However, for many donors and NGOs the political aspect of getting involved with the Palestinian refugees was still problematic. Some international agencies ran separate programs for Lebanese and Palestinians, while others ignored Palestinians altogether.³⁸¹ According to the Ajial study, by the end of the 1980s only six INGOs had established offices in Lebanon and worked with the Palestinian community.³⁸² When one bears in mind that there was a civil war at the time and a high need for emergency relief, the number of INGOs is not impressive.

With the beginning of the peace process in 1991, many NGOs adopted a “wait and see” attitude to planning assistance for Palestinians in Lebanon. They did not want to be accused of predicting the outcome of the political negotiations or of increasing the post-war tensions between the Palestinians and the Lebanese community.³⁸³ After the establishment of the PA in the West Bank and Gaza, many of the INGOs followed the donors’ wishes and focused their attention there. However, the peace process also made it more politically acceptable for the home public of the INGOs to get involved with Palestinian refugees also in Lebanon. This, together with the overall increase of NGOs as discussed in chapter 5, meant that in the 1990s, 13 new organisations got involved in the Palestinian community in Lebanon.³⁸⁴

In the Ajial study from 2001, 20 INGOs are listed which extend direct or indirect support to the Palestinian community. The July 2006 war and the Nahr el-Bared crisis in 2007 brought a number of new INGOs to Lebanon, as illustrated in appendix I, with the total number now being 62. Some of them stayed on after the emergency situation and established offices in Lebanon. A number of them got involved in the Palestinian community. In coherence with the development of NGOs in general, few of the INGOs in

³⁸¹ Sayigh 1996.

³⁸² Ajial 2001, ch. 3.2.3.

³⁸³ Weighill 1997, 302.

³⁸⁴ Ajial 2001. Save the Children Sweden writes for example at their webpage: “The peace process between Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) in the 1990s and the Oslo Agreement in 1993, which was supposed to be the first step towards an independent Palestinian state created new opportunities in the Middle East region. An office was established in Jerusalem in 1997 and activities were initiated in the West Bank and Gaza as well as in Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon.” (Save the Children Sweden Online.)

Lebanon today are acting as solidarity groups and the majority are closer to the model of professionalised INGOs.³⁸⁵ This means that they to a larger extent provide humanitarian assistance as a business, more than doing work based on a strong feeling of solidarity with the beneficiaries. Only a few INGOs are running their own operational development projects. Some of them are involved with short-term projects, especially in rebuilding after warfare. As such they provide important, albeit unstable, employment opportunities for the Palestinian community. Most of them are, however, working through local organisations and maintain a purely financial role. It continues to be difficult for INGOs to raise funds for work in the Palestinian community. The American Near East Refugee Aid (ANERA) writes in their 2008 annual report:

ANERA is unique among American NGOs in Lebanon in that supporting Palestinians has historically been our primary mandate. The challenge we face is a lack of funds to support work with Palestinians in Lebanon. Institutional donors (e.g. USAID, UN agencies, and foundations) tend to have support for Lebanese communities as their first priority, and private donors who are willing to assist Palestinians have generally focused their generosity to attempt to respond to the ever-deteriorating conditions in Palestine, especially Gaza.³⁸⁶

The characteristics of INGOs in the Palestinian community

A striking feature of the INGOs is that many of them are only involved in the refugee community for a short period and especially true of most staff of international organisations. Most of the INGOs are relief organisations that come to the country whenever there is an emergency. Some of them have been present in Lebanon for many years though, which reflects the volatile situation in the country. In the words of one Red Cross employee, “Come to think of it, if the ICRC needs to be in a country for 40 years, that’s bad news.”³⁸⁷ Since many INGOs, and their personnel, are only present for a short period of time, coordination and long-term planning becomes difficult. An example of an attempt to improve coordination is the ENGO group, which was established in June

³⁸⁵ Hanafi and Tabar 2005, 23. The study is from the oPt, but the same development is found in Lebanon.

³⁸⁶ ANERA 2008.

³⁸⁷ The Daily Star, 14 November, 2008.

2005.³⁸⁸ This was a group of European NGOs which all worked in the Palestinian community and there was a wish to coordinate their activities better. The group started out with six organisations, but by 2006 they consisted of 13 member organisations. In the summer of 2007, they contracted a consultant to develop a common strategic framework for all the groups.³⁸⁹ Due to the Nahr el-Bared crisis and the involvement of most of the group members in the relief work, the availability to provide input to the report was somewhat limited, but the report provides quite an extensive list of the main activities undertaken by these organisations and their local partners. The initiative to establish a coordination group for European NGOs was really a positive step in order to improve the long-term planning for INGOs' work in the Palestinian community. However, the fate of the ENGO group is also an example that INGOs are quite unstable actors. To my knowledge, the ENGO group had dissolved by autumn 2008. The explanation for this was that some of the most active expatriate staff left to work in other countries and also that some of the member NGOs finished their work in Lebanon after the initial emergency phase following the July war and Nahr el-Bared crisis.³⁹⁰

Advocacy

It should be evident from chapter 4 that most of the social problems of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon are due to political and economical constraints, rather than cultural attitudes. However, as political scientist Sheila Carapico comments in an article about NGOs, one characteristic of INGOs is that:

In the 'liberal' thinking of Western NGOs social problems like female unemployment are attributed to attitudes and lifestyles, while they may overlook political and economical constraints in the societies. The NGO solution is therefore to 'change' the individual, not society.³⁹¹

³⁸⁸ The members of the ENGO group were: Caritas Austria; Comitato Internazionale per lo Sviluppo dei Popoli (CISP); Danish Refugee Council (DRC); Handicap International (HI); Medical Aid for Palestinians UK (MAP UK); Movimiento por la Paz, el Desarme y la Libertad (MPDL); Netherlands Red Cross Society (NL RC); Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC); Première Urgence (PU); Ricerca e Cooperazione (RC); Save the Children Sweden (SCS); Welfare Association (WA); and World Vision (WV). (Lebanon-Support Online.)

³⁸⁹ ENGO report 2007.

³⁹⁰ Interview with G.

³⁹¹ Carapico 2000, 13.

As discussed in chapter 1 there are disagreements in the NGO community about what the role of NGOs should actually be. As I argued, in the case of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, the biggest potential influence of INGOs is to change the society, not the individual. In other words, to advocate and lobby towards their own governments and other decision makers about the refugees' situation in order to bring about a durable solution. It appears to me that the INGOs are fully aware of this; the ENGO report for example concludes:

What the report shows is that there will be no sustainable solution unless there is a profound change in the national and international laws and mechanisms to protect the rights of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon and in the region. The ENGO, as a group, has the potential to influence decision-makers and donors to find a more durable solution in this direction.³⁹²

For the ENGO group the cooperation ended, and as such the potential as a group to influence decision-makers. The lack of cooperation and continuation then appears to be a major disadvantage for INGOs in this respect. However, it seems clear that advocacy will continue to be one of the most important aspects of the work of INGOs. An example of successful advocacy is the Danish Refugee Council, which has worked to raise awareness about the situation of non-ID refugees in Lebanon³⁹³ Their survey report about non-ID refugees has been used as a tool in the work to change the situation for this group of refugees.

Working in the Palestinian community

In the Palestinian community where most of the population is deprived of their most basic civic rights, it is sometimes difficult to know where to start. There are examples of INGOs who come to the Palestinian community and implement programs that are not really needed or even wanted by the refugees. It is in the nature of gifts, however, that few will refuse to accept what they are given. This excerpt from a newspaper article illustrates the issue:

³⁹² ENGO 2007, 1.

³⁹³ LPDC 2008, and Danish Refugee Council & Palestinian Human Rights Organization 2005. Save the Children Sweden together with NPA is also doing valuable work in this field. (Cf. The Daily Star, 29 November, 2008 (b).)

'Here in their hands is the ability to learn and connect to the world,' said Middle East director of 'One Laptop Per Child Europe', Matt Keller. Sahar Dabdoub, head teacher at the Ramallah School in Chatila said, 'This is very important. It will be easier for the students to use their minds and to practice working.'

... However, there was also some scepticism about the program's priorities. 'It's good for the children, but there are more important things,' said Najiba, a teacher, as her students excitedly examined their new computers. 'Ensuring their fathers' right to work would be more beneficial.'³⁹⁴

The excerpt is included here not to discredit the work of one NGO in particular, but to illustrate the particular limitations of NGOs which are involved with single projects, and perhaps do not fully understand the environment they enter into. The excerpt also illustrates the ambiguous feelings of many Palestinian refugees, who have seen INGOs come and go for several decades, but perhaps do not see how this in the long run, has affected their situation for the better.

INGOs hold a potential to act as agents of change through their connections to political actors at home and abroad. They often have strong financial and managerial foundations, at least compared to local NGOs. However, they are most often very volatile actors, and are present in the Palestinian community only for a period of time, and as such with a short-term vision. Their strength in advocacy is severely limited by these factors. INGOs have also been very wary about the political aspect of the Palestinian issue, and humanitarian support for Palestinians has at times been difficult for many INGOs to engage in. Due to these limitations, INGOs have contributed with important emergency aid, but have in general lacked the long-term development commitment to the Palestinian community. The main role of INGOs is therefore a financial one in that they are providing funds for the Palestinian NGOs. It appears then that my second hypothesis is mostly correct concerning the work of most INGOs in Lebanon. They are too limited by some features of INGOs, in particular their short-term presence to play a leading role as agents of change in the Palestinian community. In the next chapter I will present my case study of one INGO which unlike most has been present for a long time, and see what role they have taken on in the refugee community.

³⁹⁴ The Daily Star, 17 September, 2008.

Chapter 8

Norwegian People's Aid (NPA)

This chapter will present a case study of NPA, and the role the organisation plays in the Palestinian community, with particular focus on their ability to become an agent of change. The chapter will highlight what is characteristic for NPA as an international organisation and how these characteristics have influenced their work in Lebanon. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to give an in depth evaluation of the quality of NPA's work or their organisational structure; this has been done quite thoroughly by the 2001 evaluation report mentioned in chapter 1.³⁹⁵ In this chapter I will firstly introduce NPA as an INGO and dwell upon some issues which they themselves consider to be their comparative advantages in relation to other INGOs. Secondly, I will give an outline of NPA's history in Lebanon and its current program there and analyse their role in relation to the Palestinian community.

This thesis argues that NPA is quite extraordinary in their relation to the Palestinian community. There is no other INGO that has been present continuously in the Palestinian community for so long and with such a large staff. NPA is in fact an international NGO gone local. This is how NPA Lebanon presents itself, and it is also a view raised by both the local population and other NGOs. In the process it has avoided some of the pitfalls that INGOs might be affected by, as discussed in chapter 7. However, while becoming a "local organisation" has many advantages, NPA has also picked up some of the less valuable aspects of being local, as discussed in chapter 6.

NPA International

NPA is the humanitarian solidarity organisation of the Norwegian Labour Movement. It was founded in 1939 by the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (LO).³⁹⁶ It is

³⁹⁵ Buvollen and Abdul-Hadi 2001.

³⁹⁶ For more information about the early work of NPA and their work in Norway, cf. Lyshagen 1989, and NPA's different webpages. (NPA Online.) NPA Lebanon's webpage was developed in 2006. (NPA 2006 (a).) The webpage provides good information about NPA Lebanon's history, their programs, their

today one of the largest NGOs in Norway and its four main focuses are youth work, health work and community orientated work in Norway, as well as international work.³⁹⁷

In Norwegian aid politics during the 1960s, the principle of neutrality in conflicts was seen as fundamental in order for NGOs to get governmental support. During the 1970s, however, there was an increased pressure from the public to open up long-term aid for national and social people's movements. NPA, with its roots in the social democratic labour movement, were given project support in line with parliament decisions and through MFA, primarily to the African National Congress (ANC) in South Africa.³⁹⁸ The International Department of NPA was established in 1976. Before 1981, however, the international activities of NPA were rather modest, and basically consisted of emergency relief to populations hit by natural disasters, support for ANC and solidarity commitments with Chile and Nicaragua.³⁹⁹

The international aspect of NPA's work has grown extensively since then. Between 1981 and 1991, there was an increase in projects from 7 to 99.⁴⁰⁰ During the 1990s NPA continued to expand and was in fact the Norwegian NGO with the most expansive development, with an increase of state support of more than 255 million NOK from 1991 to 1996. Much of this growth was a result of NPA getting involved in mine clearance work. NPA was approached by MFA in 1992 and asked if they were interested in engaging in this field of work. At the end of the 1990s NPA was the Norwegian NGO with the largest budget for international work.⁴⁰¹ Today NPA has local or regional offices in 13 countries and projects in 36 countries in Africa, Latin America, Eastern Europe, Asia, and the Middle East.⁴⁰² NPA is today considered the world's largest humanitarian

principles and strategies and policy of partnerships. However, the webpage is very infrequently updated and several of the linked pages are "coming soon..." and have been so since I started to work on this thesis. I guess that this suggest that NPA does not consider the internet as their most relevant channel to reach their target group in Lebanon and therefore does not give the update of their website a high priority. (NPA Lebanon Online.)

³⁹⁷ NPA Online (b).

³⁹⁸ Tvedt 2003, 110-111.

³⁹⁹ Lyshagen 1989, 117.

⁴⁰⁰ Tvedt 1995, A 4 and A 18.

⁴⁰¹ Tvedt 2003, 93.

⁴⁰² NPA International 2007, 13.

de-mining organisation. Its international work is focused along three lines: support for liberation movements and other groups who are fighting for political and social rights; support for local organisations in their fight against poverty, for human rights and even distribution of sources; and lastly, in mine clearance and political work to ban cluster bombs.⁴⁰³ In the Middle East, aside from Lebanon, NPA has worked in the oPt since 1987 and in the Kurdish part of Iraq since 1995. More recently, NPA established a mine clearance program in Jordan in 2006.

Solidarity and partnership

“Solidarity in Practice” is today the slogan of NPA. While NPA at the outset presented itself more as an aid organisation, it has increasingly emphasised that it is a solidarity organisation.⁴⁰⁴ As mentioned in chapter 5, solidarity is regarded as an important aspect of Norwegian NGOs in general, and for NPA this aspect seems especially strong. Solidarity means that NPA supports groups so that they will themselves be able to defend and promote their own interests. The method which is used to achieve this has since the mid-1990s been working through partnership with local NGOs.⁴⁰⁵ NPA emphasises playing a supportive rather than a leading role and seems aware of the different limitations for developing partnerships, such as the imbalance of power between Northern and Southern NGOs.⁴⁰⁶ It appears to me that NPA has come a long way in thinking about what partnerships entail.

In 2003 NPA presented a new strategy for international development. The strategy defined a change in the overall direction of NPA, and indicated an attempt to move further away from being an operational NGO providing service, to being a rights-based organisation which works with partners.⁴⁰⁷ Both NPA and partner organisations it works

⁴⁰³ NPA Online (b).

⁴⁰⁴ For example in the “Program of Principles” from 1999-2003 NPA calls itself “The labour movement’s humanitarian aid organisation” but in 2003 it changed this to “The labour movement’s humanitarian solidarity organisation.” (Cited in Ryen 2005, 98) (my translation.)

⁴⁰⁵ NPA Lebanon Online (a).

⁴⁰⁶ An annual report from NPA Lebanon states that “The partnership that NPA created with its partners is based on solidarity, equity, and mutual interest. As such, NPA is different from so many foreign NGOs who still have a donor-recipient relationship with local NGOs.” (NPA 2001 (e).)

⁴⁰⁷ Norad 2007, 1. The strategy is set for the period 2004-2007.

with should be rights-based, which entails that the organisations must acknowledge and respect the human rights. The strategy for 2008-2011 continues along the same lines.⁴⁰⁸ It should be noted that these kinds of changes take time and the organisation is still in a transition process.

Political aspects of NPA's work

NPA is not a politically neutral organisation and considers this as one of its major advantages. "We take a stand in important social debates. Our aim of achieving greater fairness in the world means that we often choose partners who can be opposed to the authorities."⁴⁰⁹ In its partnership program NPA states: "Respecting the priorities defined by local actors, NPA does not aspire to be neutral, but rather to take sides, supporting partners that stand for the same fundamental values and development objectives as us."⁴¹⁰ NPA therefore considers it important to be present in politically difficult areas. This has become a trademark of the organisation and an important aspect of the organisation's identity. An NPA employee answers this when asked about in what way he/she thinks NPA is distinct from other NGOs: "[I] think that NPA is different because it has chosen to take sides in conflicts, which implies that we sometimes have been able to come closer to our target groups."⁴¹¹

Funding aspects of NPA International

In 1983 NPA acquired the revenues from the Norwegian "Television Campaign." This is an annual event, where the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation (NRK) links up with Norwegian NGOs to raise money for different causes. The campaign raised approximately 70 million NOK and made it possible for NPA to increase its international work. An MFA evaluation report from 1992 showed that NPA had a very weak funding base in the 1980s and 1990s because so much of its work and expansion was based on this one-time fundraising event.⁴¹² The scope of the organisation and work exploded but

⁴⁰⁸ NPA Online (c).

⁴⁰⁹ NPA International 2006, 2.

⁴¹⁰ NPA Lebanon Online (a).

⁴¹¹ Fretheim 2008, 138.

⁴¹² Tvedt, with Einar Barkved [et al] 1992.

the sources of income did not follow suit.⁴¹³ It is argued in the report that the difficult financial situation was the reason for NPA's increased focus on emergency aid and refugees. In 1988 these projects constituted 2/3 of the total project volume and by 1991 they had become 3/4 of the total. The evaluation report writes:

It is not without connection to these hard institutional and economic facts that NPA is focusing more on what is called 'long-term emergency aid', where organisations have committed to provide aid in chronic emergency situations, and where the finance comes from MFA's political office. The organisation has few possibilities to fulfil NORAD's [sic] demands for an individual share, if not an economic miracle, like a new national 'Television Campaign' happens. NPA can in this way be an example of the ambiguity of building aid activity on the base of an individual share which was a one time fundraising.⁴¹⁴

This was written in 1992 and luckily for NPA the miracle happened. In 1994 NPA was again assigned the outcome of the "Television Campaign" and this time 123 million NOK was raised.⁴¹⁵ Today, NPA international derives close to 95 per cent of its funds from state funding from Norway, as well as other governments.⁴¹⁶ 37 per cent of all funds in 2005 came from international donors.⁴¹⁷ The remaining funds come from LO and the trade unions, private donations, as well as lotteries and games.⁴¹⁸ NPA Head Office continues, however, to face financial challenges.⁴¹⁹ In 2007, NPA developed a new, regular donor concept, called *folkehjelper.no*, which was expected to show significant results in 2008.⁴²⁰

As discussed in chapter 5, the Norwegian aid for long-term assistance is generally channelled through Norad, while MFA is responsible for emergency and humanitarian aid. NPA has several projects which are funded mainly through MFA, and Lebanon

⁴¹³ The turnover in the international department was 1.3 million NOK in 1977, increasing to 15 million NOK in 1981 and making a major leap to 198 million NOK by the end of the 1980s. (Tvedt with Einar Barkved [et al] 1992, 88.)

⁴¹⁴ Tvedt, with Einar Barkved [et al] 1992, 88 (my translation.)

⁴¹⁵ NRK Online.

⁴¹⁶ NPA International 2006, 12.

⁴¹⁷ Norad 2007, 36.

⁴¹⁸ Lotteries and games brought in 25 million NOK in 2007, a gross reduction of 15 million NOK on the 2006 figure. Income from slot machines was drastically reduced after Norsk Tipping, the Norwegian Lottery Company, was granted sole operating rights. (NPA International 2007, 13.)

⁴¹⁹ Norad 2007, i.

⁴²⁰ NPA International 2007, 13.

represents the longest running program.⁴²¹ The financial resources from Norad make up an increasingly small share of the total, despite the fact that NPA intends to move away from operational activities and focus more on rights, i.e. long-term work, as its strategy implies. It seems like the financial realities which the evaluation report from 1992 described are still valid.

NPA in Lebanon

The beginning (1981-1982)

The NPA program in Lebanon was among the first programs to be established by the International Department of NPA.⁴²² At the end of 1980 the Palestine Front, one of two Norwegian solidarity movements with the Palestinian people, approached NPA in search of support for Palestinian children in southern Lebanon. They emphasised that, “The medical support work can in our opinion be regarded as a solely humanitarian and civilian project, and does not implicate a direct stance to the controversial political questions such as recognition of PLO etc.”⁴²³ This was at a time in Norwegian politics when political *and* humanitarian support for the Palestinian case and the Palestinian people were politically controversial. However, the LO congress in 1981 decided to support the establishment of cooperation with the Palestinian Workers Union (PTUF).⁴²⁴ The commitment of NPA for Palestinian refugees in Lebanon was therefore controversial, but not impossible.⁴²⁵ During 1981 NPA supported some small projects in Lebanon financially.

⁴²¹ These are the programs in Lebanon (1981); Sri Lanka (2002); Northwest Russia (1998); the Balkans (first program in Albania 1995); and Northern Iraq (1995). Norad 2007, 64. (Year of establishment compiled from NPA Online.)

⁴²² Buvollen and Abdul-Hadi 2001, 23.

⁴²³ Note from the Palestine Front (my translation.) The other solidarity group was the Palestine Committee, the precursor of NORWAC, cf. footnote 296.

⁴²⁴ LO- bladet 1996/1997, 3. LO had since the Second World War been in a close relationship with the Israeli Workers Union, Histadrut. The decision to establish contact with PTUF was taken after intense debate both within the congress and in the Norwegian media.

⁴²⁵ For further information about Norwegian attitudes and politics to the Palestine/Israel conflict cf. Berg 2003, ch.2.

Early days (1982-1987)

In September 1982 the massacres of Sabra and Shatila led to international outrage, and resulted in important solidarity manifestations in favour of the Palestinians. In Norway the media coverage was broad and economic support was collected among labour unions and the Norwegian population. NPA coordinated the humanitarian tasks and the Palestine Front the political ones. While other Norwegian NGOs continued to hold a low profile in the Palestinian issue, NPA now established a program in support of the Palestinians.⁴²⁶ As mentioned earlier, NPA acquired the revenues from the national “Television Campaign” in 1983 and the implementation of these funds constituted the proper initiation of a NPA Lebanon Program. When Israeli forces withdrew from Beirut in 1983, NPA had established a presence in the Shatila refugee camp. NPA chose to promote physical rehabilitation for war victims, and established a physical rehabilitation centre in the Shatila camp in January 1984. A project had also been started to collect garbage in the immediate surroundings of Shatila.⁴²⁷ In April 1984, Wafa Yassir was recruited to prepare a vocational training centre in Shatila, and later a second centre was initiated in the Burj el-Barajneh camp. In 1986, Wafa Yassir was appointed as Resident Representative of the NPA Lebanon Program, and continues to hold this position today.

In the early 1980s Beirut was considered to be one of the most dangerous cities in the world. The Norwegian staff had to evacuate on several occasions and it was difficult to maintain follow-up and implementation of projects under these circumstances. The local staff had to take on larger tasks than anticipated.⁴²⁸ In 1985 the “War of the Camps” began and made it even more difficult to continue the project. In April 1985, most staff contracts were suspended and the expatriate staff left Lebanon while a cooperation agreement was made with UNRWA to keep the rehabilitation centre and the vocational training centres operating with earmarked funding from NPA. The centre in Shatila was completely destroyed by warfare in late 1985. The training centre in Burj el-Barajneh,

⁴²⁶ Buvollen and Abdul-Hadi 2001, 23.

⁴²⁷ Buvollen and Abdul-Hadi 2001, 24.

⁴²⁸ Buvollen and Abdul-Hadi 2001, 25.

however, carried out its first course year between December 1984 and February 1986, and 21 students graduated.⁴²⁹

Re-establishment (1987-1995)

In 1987 the vocational training centre and the rehabilitation centre were re-established and relocated to the Mar Elias camp which had not been subject to military attacks.⁴³⁰ The Lebanon Program was then completely restored in 1987 with a rehabilitation program, vocational schools in Mar Elias and Burj el-Barajneh and a project for refuse removal in Shatila. A more systematic office operation was being developed from 1987 onwards. In 1989 NPA decided to move the vocational training centre school in Burj el-Barajneh to Ein el-Hilweh outside Sidon where it can be found today. In 1988, NPA recruited two Norwegian physical therapists to work on the transfer of the rehabilitation centre in Mar Elias to local staff. In 1991, they finalised their transfer of skills and responsibilities to local therapists, hereby making the entire NPA operations in Lebanon local.⁴³¹

NPA was legalised in Lebanon in 1990 as a branch of a foreign NGO, with presidential decree number 829/1990.⁴³² That same year, the civil war in Lebanon came to an end and the political situation calmed down. The reconstruction of the camps was in progress and the NPA programs were running without obstacles. The signing of the Oslo Agreement created certain constraints in the relationship between NPA headquarters and NPA Lebanon. Wafa Yassir signed a declaration criticising the agreement while Halle Jørn Hansen, the head of the International Department of NPA, favoured it. Unlike many other INGOs, however, NPA did not consider leaving Lebanon after the civil war. It regarded its program in Lebanon as a political and solidarity support for the Palestinian refugees, and as such seems committed to continue its support.

⁴²⁹ Buvollen and Abdul-Hadi 2001, 26.

⁴³⁰ NPA 2008 (a).

⁴³¹ Buvollen and Abdul-Hadi 2001, 27.

⁴³² Buvollen and Abdul-Hadi 2001, 32.

Working through partnership (1995-2000)

From the mid-1990s, working through local partnerships was the form of cooperation preferred by NPA International and the Norwegian donors. Formalised partnership cooperation was included in the NPA Lebanon Program in 1995. NPA was one of the driving forces behind the establishments of the Coordination Forum as mentioned in chapter 6. It was also active in the establishment of The Coordination Forum of NGOs Working in the Disability Field among the Palestinian Community, later re-named the Palestinian Disability Forum which was created in 1997. As I understand it, NPA is one of the driving forces in the Palestinian NGO community to initiate and administer coordination. This is a result of the combination of being a large, stable INGO, and simultaneously feeling close to and responsible for the development of the local NGOs.

Throughout the years of operations in Lebanon, NPA has built close partnerships with a number of NGOs, especially the members of the Coordination Forum. NPA also started to contribute financially to some partner NGOs in the mid 1990s, and in 2001 NPA gave financial support to eight NGOs.⁴³³ However, as mentioned above, NPA strongly emphasises that its partnership cooperation entails more than a primarily funding role. As of 2009 NPA has 33 partners, including NGO networks, UNRWA, Palestinian and Lebanese NGOs.⁴³⁴

When I asked Haifa Jammal, the Human Rights Coordinator and Gender Adviser in NPA, about the criteria they have for choosing partners she said:

In fact we work with specific partners; we consider ourselves as neutral, but in practice we have a specific number of partners and we prefer to work with these partners. We can not work with all. We receive many applications - maybe 80 per cent of the NGOs working with the Palestinian community apply to the NPA funds, but we have limited resources. We prefer to work with a specific number of NGOs. We focus on the

⁴³³ NPA 2001 (e). These NGOs were: Ghassan Kanafani Cultural Foundation (GKCF); Association Najdeh; The National Institution for Social Care and Vocational Training (NISCVT, Beit Atfal Al- Sumod); The National Association for Vocational Training and Social Services (NAVTSS); The National Association for Social Medical Care and Vocational Training (NAMSCVT); Palestinian Student Fund; Health Care Society (HCS); and Popular Aid for Relief and Development (PARD). (NPA 2001 (f).)

⁴³⁴ Cf. Appendix II.

quality, not only the quantity of our work. At the same time to be honest we prefer to work with secular NGOs, because we are secular. Concerning different political views, we do not distinguish between them; we work with all.⁴³⁵

It has been suggested by some of my sources that NPA's choice of projects and partners is based too much on networking and personal relationships.⁴³⁶ The close relationship between NPA Lebanon and its partners makes it difficult to change partners, and in the opinion of some this is not a healthy situation. I will argue on the contrary that it is a valuable aspect of NPA Lebanon that it does not change partners too often. In the difficult situation in which most of the Palestinian NGOs find themselves, they need someone who is stable and not as shifting as most INGOs and donors are. It seems to me that NPA represents one of the few stable institutions, in addition to UNRWA, which the Palestinian NGOs can rely on. It is in the nature of partnership that personal relationships influence the process and is obviously nothing special for NPA. While it might be true that to change partners is positive as not to make local organisations too dependent on one source of finance for example, I will argue that in the special circumstances Palestinian NGOs work in, NPA should continue to represent a stable figure.

Getting involved with mines in Lebanon (2000-2008)

When Israeli troops withdrew from southern Lebanon in May 2000, much of the population returned to the area. One result of the many years as a military area was the presence of landmines and unexploded ordnances in southern Lebanon and the Bekaa Valley. The Norwegian Embassy in Damascus proposed at a very early stage that NPA should get involved in de-mining activities, because it had built up expertise in this field as mentioned above. It was first decided, however, that NPA should focus on the rehabilitation of mine injury victims, due to the long-standing experience and capacity in physical therapy and orthopaedic work of NPA in Lebanon.⁴³⁷ At the request of the Lebanon Mine Action Centre, NPA expanded its program to include Mine Risk Education in mine affected and at-risk communities.

⁴³⁵ Interview with Haifa Jammal 11.01.2008.

⁴³⁶ Interview with A and G.

⁴³⁷ Buvollen and Abdul-Hadi 2001, 50 and NPA Online (d) and (e).

Current Programs (2008)

In 2008 NPA Lebanon branch is involved with the following programs:

“The Right of Disabled to Participate” program

This program is based in the rehabilitation centre in Mar Elias. The centre is seen as one of the best, if not *the* best, centres working with rehabilitation and documentation of disabled Palestinians.⁴³⁸ In 2005 the number of patients, treatment sessions and services of the rehabilitation centre numbered 1138.⁴³⁹ Together with The Palestinian Disability Forum, the NPA is working on advocacy for the disabled and capacity building for the organisations working with disabled people. NPA also cooperates with several Lebanese and international organisations in this field. The difficult economic situation in Lebanon also means that a number of Lebanese are using NPA’s services.⁴⁴⁰ In 2006 NPA cooperated with UNRWA to start a co-sharing fund to meet some of the needs of the Palestinian disabled people.⁴⁴¹ In line with the new strategy, NPA is in the process of moving from purely providing services for the disabled to working for the rights of disabled Palestinians as individuals, as is implied by the title of the program.

“The Youth Empowerment” program

This program includes both formal and informal education. NPA’s vocational training schools give courses in business and office practice, and 1475 students had participated in vocational training courses by 2004⁴⁴² Due to high applications for NPA’s vocational program, it has transferred part of its vocational training to one of its partners, the National Association for Vocational Training and Social Services (NAVTSS).⁴⁴³ In 2003 NPA succeeded in collaborating with a number of universities to deduct credits to its Business and Office Practice graduates who wished to continue their university

⁴³⁸ All of my interviews confirm this statement.

⁴³⁹ NPA Lebanon Online (b).

⁴⁴⁰ NPA 2004 (d).

⁴⁴¹ NPA 2006 (b).

⁴⁴² NPA 2004 (e).

⁴⁴³ NPA 2004 (c). For the scholastic year 2000-2001, 230 students applied. Due to limited places, both schools have accepted around 127 students. (NPA 2001 (g).)

education.⁴⁴⁴ The certificates issued by both schools are stamped by the Lebanese MFA, because they are signed by the Field Education Officer in UNRWA, whose signature is recognised by the ministry.⁴⁴⁵

In line with the change of strategy for NPA international, NPA Lebanon has started focusing on youth empowerment rather than service provision. For example, it established a Youth Resource and Training Centre in Beirut and later a Youth Centre in Sidon was also opened.⁴⁴⁶ The youth centres are supposed to be operated by young people themselves, and as such provide youths with additional skills, as well as arranging youth exchange. Through six local partners NPA supports several more vocational schools and training centres. NPA also supports recreational activities such as summer camps, sports and the scouts. Through one of its partners NPA provides educational loans for youths. Sometimes, NPA also provides educational scholarships directly.⁴⁴⁷ As mentioned in chapter 6, the vocational training centres run by Palestinian NGOs have been criticised for not being updated and being of low quality. Although NPA's vocational training is said to be among the best, it has been suggested that the work in the vocational centres and youth centres has room for improvement.⁴⁴⁸

“Humanitarian Aid” program

This program consists of three parts and is implemented by two of NPA's partners. The refuse removal project in Shatila was in 1988 renamed the Public Health Project in Shatila Camp and was eventually handed over to one of NPA's partners, the Popular Aid for Relief and Development (PARAD) in 2004. PARAD is also running the second project which is related to mother and child healthcare for refugees in displacement centres and in gatherings. Through a cooperating partner called Health Care Society (HCS), NPA has since 1995 supported the Palestinian hardship cases by paying a percentage of their hospitalisation expenses.⁴⁴⁹ HCS was established as a joint project by several local NGOs

⁴⁴⁴ NPA 2004 (e).

⁴⁴⁵ NPA 2004 (c).

⁴⁴⁶ NPA 2004 (e).

⁴⁴⁷ NPA 2008 (b), February page.

⁴⁴⁸ Interview with A and J.

⁴⁴⁹ NPA 2008 (b), July page.

and activists. 40 social workers from local organisations, including NPA, work as volunteers for this project.⁴⁵⁰ The WA and NPA are the major donors of this NGO.

“Organisational Development” program

NPA started an Organisational Development program in 1997 to enhance the capacity of local partners in the administrative and managerial fields. This project involves supporting partners in needs assessments, strategic planning, formulating plans of action, and training of staff on various topics.⁴⁵¹ NPA includes evaluation and monitoring, as well as the more technical aspects of report writing, English proficiency and computer operation in its capacity building program.

“Land Mine Action” program

In addition to the rehabilitation of mine victims and the mine education programs, NPA added a new component to the mine action program after the July 2006 war. It started an Emergency Mine Action Program to clear the land of the large amount of cluster bombs and other unexploded ordnances that remained in the field. Throughout 2006 NPA International also worked actively on encouraging the Norwegian authorities to call for an international ban on the use of cluster bombs.⁴⁵² NPA will continue its clearance activities until at least 2010.⁴⁵³

The Norad evaluation report states:

NPA’s Mine Action Program... can be looked at from two different perspectives – either as a strategic irregularity supported by NPA mainly to secure funding and a program creating tensions between two groups within the organisation. On the other hand, it can be seen as an example of how NPA was able to respond and respond well to a major humanitarian problem, support successful mine action programs and become internationally recognised as one of the leading NGOs in this area.⁴⁵⁴

⁴⁵⁰ NPA Lebanon Online (c).

⁴⁵¹ NPA 2008 (b), November page.

⁴⁵² NPA International 2006, 11.

⁴⁵³ Interview with David Bergan 16.04.2009.

⁴⁵⁴ Norad 2007, 19-20 (my translation.)

In the Lebanese case it seems clear that NPA is doing good quality work in its Mine Action Program. However, it has also been suggested that the introduction of a mine program has created some tensions within NPA Lebanon.⁴⁵⁵ The technical, “macho” and result-orientated work in the minefield is something completely different from the long-term development work of the other NPA programs. Adding to this is the disproportion in salaries between the development staff and the mine staff. It was not necessarily easy to integrate the “newcomer” into the already existing organisation. David Bergan, Middle East and Latin America advisor at NPA Oslo, however, regards the initial frictions to have “calmed down.”⁴⁵⁶

“The Human Rights and Advocacy” program

NPA has been active in advocacy and lobbying for the rights of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon from an early stage. This was done on a voluntary basis by the staff at NPA. The pressure on NPA in this respect became very high and it was decided to institutionalise this activity.⁴⁵⁷ This was recommended by the 2001 evaluation report.⁴⁵⁸ In 2004, an Advocacy and Networking Coordinator was therefore employed to handle NPA’s activities in advocacy.⁴⁵⁹ Part of NPA’s work in this field is to empower the Palestinian NGOs to become competent in advocacy. However, due to the limitations that most Palestinian NGOs still face both in finances and competence, much of the initiative and implementation is done by NPA.⁴⁶⁰ It takes time before a new program settles, but it seems that NPA Lebanon is making good progress to achieve their objective.

The program includes three projects which were initially set up as separate programs, namely the Children’s Rights Project, Women’s Rights Project and Palestinian Refugees’ Rights’ Project. Regarding children’s rights, NPA had since 1995 been supporting a

⁴⁵⁵ Interview with I.

⁴⁵⁶ Interview with David Bergan 16.04.2009.

⁴⁵⁷ A report from 2004 states: “The number of visitors who seek the help of NPA in organizing their trips to Lebanon has become a real burden on NPA’s office. This matter has been very time consuming. NPA has received over 100 delegations and persons in 2004. Tours of the camps have been organized in addition to schedule of meeting. Information packages has been prepared and distributed. This is besides the logistics which is time consuming also.” NPA 2004 (f).

⁴⁵⁸ Buvollen and Abdul-Hadi 2001, 11-12.

⁴⁵⁹ NPA 2004 (g). The post is today renamed Human Rights Coordinator and Gender Adviser.

⁴⁶⁰ NPA 2004 (g).

number of partners in pre-school education. Due to NPA's new strategy, however, NPA has phased out all projects in this field except one. NPA converted its work to concentrate on defending the rights of the Palestinian refugee children in Lebanon. It has for example supported the Coordination Forum to issue three supplementary reports on the human rights situation of the Palestinian refugee children in Lebanon.⁴⁶¹ In women's rights NPA has since 2005 been supporting its cooperating partner Association Najdeh in a project called "Combat Violence Against Women". In 2007, NPA started supporting another partner, the GUPW to start a similar project. At the end of 2006, NPA International started a project called "Women Can Do It". This project involves a number of Lebanese and Palestinian women organisations. It aims at empowering women by giving them additional skills that enhance their participation in political and public life.⁴⁶²

The project for Palestinian refugees' rights started in 2004. The project aims at helping partners and other human rights organisations to advocate and lobby for the rights of Palestinian refugees. It also aims to enhance and monitor their human rights situation. NPA supports the right of return, but also works for the Palestinian refugees' civil rights in Lebanon.⁴⁶³ In 2004 NPA employees from Lebanon contributed to a book which focuses on the Palestinians' democratic rights, and their right to land and resources.⁴⁶⁴

NPA has been present at several meetings both with the Lebanese-Palestinian Dialogue Committee and with the Lebanese Ministry of Social Affairs.⁴⁶⁵ It has also represented the Palestinian NGO community in the Committee of Employability of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. This committee consists of representatives from UNRWA, PLO, Lebanese Ministries, International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the Palestinian civil society.⁴⁶⁶ In 2000, NPA helped in organising a coordination meeting in Cyprus among

⁴⁶¹ NPA 2008 (b), April page.

⁴⁶² NPA 2008 (b), May page.

⁴⁶³ NPA 2008 (b), June page.

⁴⁶⁴ The book is called "The Fight Against Injustice." The book was published by NPA International and has contributions also from NPA staff from Palestine and several journalists. (NPA Online (f).)

⁴⁶⁵ NPA 2005 (a) and NPA 2006 (c).

⁴⁶⁶ NPA 2006 (c). NPA has also been represented at meetings related to the Euro Mediterranean partnerships; meetings related to the right of return; meetings related to campaigns for the civil rights of refugees; meetings related to disability and disability rights; as well as meetings related to children's rights and women's rights. (NPA 2005 (c).)

the three Palestinian NGO networks: The Coordination Forum of NGOs Working among the Palestinian Community in Lebanon; Palestinian Non-Governmental Organisation Network (PNGO) from the West Bank and Gaza Strip; and The Union of Arab Non-Governmental Organisations (Ittijha) from 1948 Palestine.⁴⁶⁷

To me it is striking that a specific advocacy program was not initiated at an earlier stage. The work towards securing the rights of Palestinian refugees in particular appears to have been part of NPA's work from the start and should, as I understand it, be fundamental for an NGO that works with the Palestinian community with such a strong commitment as NPA has presented. In my understanding there are several reasons behind this. Firstly, it seems like NPA needed some input from an "outsider", namely the 2001 evaluation report, to realise that this was needed. It may suggest that in such a large and old NGO as NPA Lebanon is the danger of routinisation emerges. It is maybe not as flexible and innovative as it is claimed to be as an NGO. NPA Lebanon has been characterised by its continuity, both in programs and in staff, rather than change and development, throughout most of its stay in Lebanon. Therefore it is important to sometimes be looked at with fresh eyes. The 2001 evaluation report was the first evaluation to be done on NPA Lebanon's program, and was an important step towards the development of the programs.

Secondly, the ascendance of the advocacy program coincides with advocacy getting greater focus as an approach in NGOs worldwide as mentioned in chapter 5. NPA International is following this trend and is in the process of moving from service provision to a rights-based approach, i.e. advocacy, as mentioned above. It is understandable that the work to organise trips for visitors from Norway and others is time consuming and sometimes may feel like a burden, as mentioned in the 2004 report above.⁴⁶⁸ I would however emphasise that, as I understand it, this is *the* most important work that NPA Lebanon undertakes. To spread information about the refugees' situation is fundamental in the work to press governments and politicians to change the situation.

⁴⁶⁷ NPA 2001 (e).

⁴⁶⁸ Cf. footnote 458.

Emergency relief operations

Since the civil war ended NPA has been involved with emergency relief operations in 1996, 2000 and 2006 during Israeli aggression. NPA has also carried out emergency relief operations during internal conflicts such as during the Nahr el-Bared crisis.⁴⁶⁹ NPA International has a policy of only engaging in emergency situations in countries where it already has or has had an established presence.⁴⁷⁰ In Lebanon, the fact that NPA has a local presence has meant that it can react swiftly in emergency situations, more so than other INGOs.⁴⁷¹

Funding for NPA Lebanon

During the entire period of NPA professional involvement in Lebanon, the majority of the funding has been obtained from the MFA as an extended emergency activity, and only small amounts come from Norad, which would normally fund long-term projects like this.⁴⁷² As such, the Lebanon program fits right in as a “long-term emergency aid” program, which the MFA report from 1992 suggested above that NPA needed due to financial constraints. The total contribution from the MFA for the Lebanon program increased from 4.6 million NOK in 1994 to 11.4 million NOK in 2001.⁴⁷³ NPA contributes with a 10 per cent proper share on the partner projects.⁴⁷⁴

As mentioned in chapter 5, the majority of aid from the Norwegian government to Lebanon is channelled through NGOs, and NPA receive the largest share of this. According to MFA:

⁴⁶⁹ UNRWA Lebanon Online. NPA is one of the most active organisations in this emergency situation according to this webpage.

⁴⁷⁰ NPA Online (c).

⁴⁷¹ For example: “The Red Cross had originally reduced its presence after the Civil War, down to one international representative and one Lebanese back in 2000. The 2006 war with Israel then had caught the organization off-guard. With virtually no staff, no stock and equipment slowly shipped in on cargo ships, the ICRC had no immediate response to the humanitarian crisis that had unfolded. As a reaction, the organization then went to 80 international staff and hired 300 local employees. With the situation improving again, there still remain 17 expatriates and 15 Lebanese staff with the ICRC.” (The Daily Star, 14 November, 2008.)

⁴⁷² Buvollen and Abdul-Hadi 2001, 6.

⁴⁷³ Buvollen and Abdul-Hadi 2001, 28.

⁴⁷⁴ Buvollen and Abdul-Hadi 2001, 101.

The reason for the long-term humanitarian support in Lebanon [for NPA] is the work directed towards Palestinian refugees. In the section for humanitarian aid we mainly give support for one year at a time. However, in many places there are long-term humanitarian crisis which means that we must be present with more long-term support. Here the Palestinian refugees represent a special case. Concerning NPA's work with cluster munitions - and mines clearance, we are currently in a process of elaborating a multiyear agreement. This is a pioneer project, which covers their work in several countries, including Lebanon.⁴⁷⁵

According to notes on several NPA applications, the funding for NPA Lebanon seems to have solid political backing.⁴⁷⁶ The relationship between the Norwegian MFA and Norwegian NGOs is as mentioned a particular close one.

It does strike me as somewhat odd that the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, according to the funding mechanisms, are handled as an emergency project, while the Palestinian refugees in the West Bank and Gaza are not.⁴⁷⁷ According to David Bergan the reason behind this is logistic, as there is "no room" for the Lebanon program within NPA's frame agreement with Norad.⁴⁷⁸ And because MFA shares NPA's commitment for the Palestinian refugees, it is willing to provide funding for the foreseeable future.⁴⁷⁹ The practical implication of the allocation under MFA funding is that the Lebanon program has to apply for funds on a yearly basis, instead of every fifth year as part of a frame agreement. Because the funding is still relatively stable, it has not had such a major effect on the Lebanon program's ability to plan for the long-term, but I assume it would be preferable to have more secure long-term funding. The fact that the Lebanon program, for example, is not included in the Norad evaluation report which looks at NPA's

⁴⁷⁵ E-mail correspondence with MFA 03.03.09. (my translation.)

⁴⁷⁶ "Referring to political clearing bill concerning distribution of aid from 02.04.08, the Embassy in Beirut is positive. NPA is doing an important job in LBN [sic]." (Handwritten note by MFA employee on NPA 2008 (c).) "The embassy in Beirut supports the application. [It is a] project of political importance, in relation to a ban against certain types of cluster bombs." (Handwritten note by MFA employee on NPA 2008 (d).) "It is the appraisal of the department that NPA through its humanitarian activities with Palestinian refugees and underprivileged Lebanese in Lebanon is playing an important role." (NPA 2006 (d).) (my translations.)

⁴⁷⁷ Due to the deteriorating situation in West Bank and Gaza a larger part of NPA program there than initially planned has also been "emergency programs", and as such funded from MFA. Parts of the program continue, however, to be included in the frame agreement with Norad. (Interview with David Bergan 16.04.2009.)

⁴⁷⁸ Interview with David Bergan, 16.04.2009. The frame agreement has a ceiling of 112 million NOK, while the Lebanon program is approximately 14-15 million NOK, in addition to the mine program of about 8-9 million NOK.

⁴⁷⁹ David Bergan calls it a "Companionship of fate." (Interview with David Bergan, 16.04.2009.)

development programs, while at the same time being one of the oldest development programs of NPA, is in my opinion a contradiction.

Employees

NPA Lebanon employs over 50 people. A number of them have been with NPA since its foundation in Lebanon.⁴⁸⁰ The staff employed by NPA seem highly qualified, dedicated and have developed a strong identity to NPA as their organisation. The fact that NPA employs almost exclusively local staff is an advantage for the organisation in that the staff are very familiar with the community they work with.⁴⁸¹ As an INGO the local staff have the opportunity to participate in international, regional and local training workshops and seminars. For other Palestinians working in local NGOs, this opportunity is not available.⁴⁸² If one were to make a hierarchy of the “globalised elite” in the Palestinian NGO community, I argue that the staff of NPA would be near to the top due to their access to both secure funding and international arenas.

However, by having a largely local staff, NPA is also affected by the difficult working situation in the Palestinian community in the same way as local NGOs. It is definitely a large carrier-step to become an employee of NPA. It means that the staff often become very dependent on their job, because they have few other alternatives. It therefore becomes one of the main tasks of the leadership to protect the jobs of their employees. As one of my sources said:

The employees are dependent on their job, so if there is decrease in the budgets or changes from the head office it is difficult to change locally. There is a danger that a certain dynamic is created; the most important is to provide for the local employees. People have been employed for 10-20 years and are dependent on their job; the local leadership will be held responsible if someone has to go.⁴⁸³

⁴⁸⁰ NPA 2001 (e).

⁴⁸¹ NPA has today one Norwegian employee in Lebanon who is responsible for the mine clearance program.

⁴⁸² Buvollen and Abdul-Hadi 2001, 42.

⁴⁸³ Interview with J.

The reason for this is understandable. As Sari Hanafi said: “What to do? Should one throw them on the street? It is different with international employees of international NGOs who can get work in other countries or other organisations. Palestinian refugees have few opportunities.”⁴⁸⁴ The dependency situation may, however, mean that there is less room for criticism within the organisation, and because of this it can be difficult to undertake major changes.⁴⁸⁵ This is not to suggest that the staff of NPA are necessarily afraid to express their opinions or that they should all be replaced. However, this is meant to highlight some of the challenges that Palestinian NGOs, and NPA as a “local” NGO, face as organisations.

It may also be the case that the aspect of personal relationships, networks and cultural closeness is a disadvantage in order to introduce new ideas into the community. A Norwegian NPA employee in Iraq emphasised this as one important aspect of their work there:

We must pressure for change. The traditions in the Middle East in general and in Kurdistan is... top-down, patronising in a way; one wants people’s best and then you think that you know how to promote people’s best. Then you do it for them; one comes and implements projects so that their situation is improved. The opposite bottom-up approach is quite alien in this community.⁴⁸⁶

I will argue that it is more difficult for an exclusively local staff to implement changes that contradict the local culture. As one of my sources said: “The advantage of a mixed [local and international] staff is that they learn from each other, and are not as tied by local strings.”⁴⁸⁷

The central role played by Wafaa Yassir as the “face of NPA” was brought up by several sources.⁴⁸⁸ In the evaluation report from 2001 this is said about the issue:

⁴⁸⁴ Interview with Sari Hanafi 19.02.2009.

⁴⁸⁵ Interview with I.

⁴⁸⁶ Cited in Ryen 2005, 120 (my translation.)

⁴⁸⁷ Interview with J.

⁴⁸⁸ Interview with G, H, I, J.

NPA staff and stakeholders have raised the issue of the extension of the contract of the NPA representative for an additional period of time, contrary to the formal policy and regulations of NPA of not recruiting a local NPA representative for more than five years. The NPA staff have expressed their concerns toward this policy and has recommended the extension of the contract for the NPA representative because of her important role in the coming period, which will witness a restructuring process. In addition to this, they strongly believe that NPA, within its existing organisational development phase, badly needs the continuation of the leadership role of the local representative. UNRWA and other local Palestinian NGOs have recognised the leadership qualities of the NPA representative and her important role in the sustainability of the organisations within the prevailing political socio-economic conditions of the Palestinian refugees community in Lebanon. It is recommended to discuss the extension of the post of the local NPA representative, not only according to NPA policy and regulations based on quantitative criteria, but also according to in-depth analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of NPA's decision in this regard, and according to a qualitative evaluation of the present representative.⁴⁸⁹

It seems clear that NPA has assessed this question in a profound way and concluded that it is for the good of the organisation to keep on the Resident Representative. However, it seems equally clear that this decision is not understood or appreciated by all.

Coordination and cooperation with other INGOs

The other Norwegian NGOs which are actively involved in Lebanon today are NORWAC and the NRC. NORWAC focuses on health and education and is working mainly through partners. It has been working in Lebanon since 1983 and has one Norwegian coordinator in Lebanon.⁴⁹⁰ NRC had for some time considered establishing a presence in Lebanon, with the focus on Palestinian refugees. However, it first got involved in Lebanon during the July 2006 war, and then at the beginning through its work with Lebanese Internally Displaced Persons.⁴⁹¹ NPA has coordination meetings with NORWAC and NRC on a regular basis every other month and otherwise when needed.

When I asked a number of INGO's about their relationship with NPA the answers were predominantly positive.⁴⁹² However, it was suggested also that the coordination with

⁴⁸⁹ Buvollen and Abdul-Hadi 2001, 85-86 (my translation,)

⁴⁹⁰ Cf. footnote 296.

⁴⁹¹ E-mail correspondence with NRC, 06.11.08.

⁴⁹² The exact statements are: "Our local Palestinian partners say that NPA is a very professional organization. They are very respectful towards the Palestinian population and very helpful whenever a

INGOs is somewhat neglected. It was argued that the reason for this was that NPA regarded itself as a local organisation and therefore focused more on coordination with the Palestinian NGOs.⁴⁹³ My source considered this to be a disadvantage for NPA and encouraged more coordination with INGOs.

Challenges of being international and local

As mentioned above, several of the programs have adjusted somewhat to the new international strategy of NPA which was introduced in 2003. In the evaluation report from 2001 it was “Recommended that NPA start thinking to reduce its direct involvement in providing services, and to increase its role in advocacy, capacity building and networking, and to institutionalize these program components.”⁴⁹⁴ This was enforced with the 2003 international strategy. There was, however, initial reluctance by the local staff in NPA Lebanon to stop the service provision. However, the report continues: “NPA Lebanon has realized the importance to conduct a serious discussion about the future perspective and future strategy of NPA in Lebanon. In spite of the staff reluctance to change the existing mandate as a service provider, a re-thinking process has been started and new dynamics and trends of thinking are taking place.”⁴⁹⁵ It is clear that as long as the future of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon is uncertain and as long as their socio-economic conditions continue to deteriorate, NPA projects can not be financially sustainable and none of NPA’s partners are willing to take over their operational projects.⁴⁹⁶ There is, however, an ongoing process to explore the possibilities for establishing new local NGOs to take over NPA’s operational programs.⁴⁹⁷

need emerges.” (Interview with B.) “NPA is one of the major and important INGOs who are working with the Palestinians in Lebanon and they enjoy big respect and recognition in the local community.” (E-mail correspondence with NORWAC 13.11.08.) “Our opinion of their work is that they are very professional and the work they do is essential; they are the main provider of rehabilitation services for the disabled Palestinians, they provide funding for local Palestinian NGOs, and their work in the landmines is very unique since very few organizations are doing this type of work.” (Interview with C.) “I generally have great respect for their work.” (Interview with D.) “We know them quite well but do not have them as partners.” (Interview with F.) “NPA has long-time experience and an impressive knowledge of the local circumstances in Lebanon.” (E-mail correspondence with NRC 06.11.08.) “We always talk to NPA while doing research in Lebanon.” (Interview with H.)

⁴⁹³ Interview with G.

⁴⁹⁴ Buvollen and Abdul-Hadi 2001, 12.

⁴⁹⁵ Buvollen and Abdul-Hadi 2001, 12.

⁴⁹⁶ NPA 2001 (h).

⁴⁹⁷ Interview with David Bergan 16.04.2009.

The implementation of the new strategy highlights some of the challenges for NPA Lebanon. It is part of a large INGO, which develops its strategy on a worldwide basis. Therefore sometimes the overall strategy or visions of NPA International may not coincide with what NPA Lebanon considers as appropriate in its community. As seen in other chapters, the Palestinian community is quite unique in that they have been regarded as refugees for more than 60 years. As such the refugees are treated as an emergency case. However, as new generations are born into refugeehood and the solution to their situation remains unknown, there has also been a need for working with long-term development.

Haifa Jammal highlights the complexity of the question like this:

It is difficult to work with development. We do work with “development”, but our situation is not like people living in their countries, even if we work with women’s rights, children’s rights, and to empower the “civil society” (in quotations, it is not the same as civil society in a country). We are refugees, have been for a long time and we do not know when it will change, so as refugees our situation is considered as relief and emergency. But at the same time we work with human rights, and development issues. Sometimes you feel the issues are a little bit contradictory with each other; we are considered as an emergency situation, but at the same time, we should also follow the main themes of the NPA strategies. We work on them and focus on them according to our situation; we can not talk about for example election for Parliament here.⁴⁹⁸

NPA Lebanon therefore has to balance its work in such a way as to adjust to both NPA International’s strategies and the particular situation for the Palestinian refugees. To maintain this balance is, as the quote illustrates, not always easy.

NPA’s role in the Palestinian community

NPA is regarded in a positive light in Lebanon and certainly in the Palestinian refugee community. The organisation has been present in the Palestinian community for more than 27 years and has developed a close relationship with the community. As mentioned above NPA considers itself to have become a local organisation. This is evident in

⁴⁹⁸ Interview with Haifa Jammal 16.01.2008.

statements like this, gathered from NPA's annual reports: "It [NPA] acts as a grass-roots organisation and is viewed as a local NGO because it is very community-oriented."⁴⁹⁹

NPA encompasses in my opinion a tremendous opportunity in their position as a bridge between the local community, with access to ideas, networks and funds as an INGO. NPA in Lebanon has developed from an emergency relief NGO to becoming one of the most important and oldest NGO actors in the Palestinian community. As I understand it, NPA holds a unique position in the Palestinian NGO community. It has the advantage of being a large INGO, with the financial and administrative stability that implies, as well as having easy access to international arenas. On the other hand, NPA is closely linked to the Palestinian community, and as it appears to me, plays a leading role in the local NGO community. It seems evident that they themselves are aware of this position: "Being dependent on local staff, NPA fully understands the cultural sensitivities in its area of operation. At the same time, being a branch of a foreign NGO has enabled NPA-Lebanon to integrate some of the concepts, values and objectives set by NPA worldwide."⁵⁰⁰ NPA's position enables it to maintain relationships with different stakeholders including the Lebanese government, UNRWA, PLO, Popular Committees in the camps, political parties, donors, and various existing NGOs.⁵⁰¹ However, NPA has also to be aware of the challenges the local staff faces in their intermediate position as international and local.

NPA has come a long way in treating the Palestinian refugees as individuals with rights, rather than objects of relief, a status which has marginalised the refugees as argued by Weighill.⁵⁰² With NPA's 2003 strategy this has become even more emphasised. By focusing on rights, it transforms the situation of the beneficiary group from being passive aid recipients to becoming right-holders. As individuals who entail rights, the Palestinian refugees therefore become responsible actors who can demand to be treated according to the human rights standards. It is clear that this is an issue which NPA is fully aware of.

⁴⁹⁹ NPA 2001 (e).

⁵⁰⁰ NPA 2004 (f).

⁵⁰¹ Buvollen and Abdul-Hadi 2001, 41.

⁵⁰² Weighill 1997, 311. Cf. footnote 22.

Petter Eide, current Secretary General of NPA, wrote an article in a Norwegian newspaper in the aftermath of the 2009 Gaza War concerning this very issue:

Media and the international society leave an impression that the inhabitants of the Gaza Strip are passive victims with no capability to do something about their own situation. Focus on 'help from abroad' and a 'humanitarian crisis' transforms the Palestinians into clients. That is the opposite of what they need in a political fight against the occupation.⁵⁰³

The article concerns Palestinians in Gaza, but a similar attitude has been present concerning the refugees in Lebanon, as Weighill illustrated in the excerpt in chapter 1.

NPA International has increasingly emphasised its role in advocacy and working with rights. It has worked on advocacy for the rights of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon since the start of its program there but only recently institutionalised that part of its work. This signals that NPA in the future will play an even larger role in this respect. However, in Lebanon NPA also continues to this day to consider the implementation of services as part of its work, although this is in a process of transition. I assume, however, that even if NPA will eventually withdraw from running the operational programs itself, it will continue to play an important role in the Palestinian community and seem committed to stay present until the day when Palestinian refugees are no longer in need of international assistance.

⁵⁰³ Eide, Petter, Secretary General of NPA (my translation.) (NPA Online (g).)

Chapter 9

Summary and Conclusion

This thesis has offered a description and an analysis of the humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon and the role which NGOs have played in this assistance since 1948. I have combined the research done by others with my own material, to make the most comprehensive study to my knowledge about NGOs that are involved in the Palestinian community in Lebanon.

The first chapters of this thesis provided the background information for the status of the refugees as it has developed through their 60 years of presence in Lebanon. Above all, the Palestinian refugees hold the position they do today due to the fact that they became refugees of the 1948 Arab-Israeli war, as well as subsequent warfare between Palestinian actors and the State of Israel. The solution to the “Palestinian refugee problem” relies on negotiations between these two parties. At this point, it is not possible to predict what the outcome of these eventual negotiations will be or when they will take place. It does, however, seem likely that the Palestinian refugees will remain refugees for some time.

The Palestinian refugees in Lebanon have also been affected by the volatile political situation in the host country, and especially so during the years of the Lebanese civil war. They have been both participants and targeted victims of that war. After the civil war ended, the refugees were affected by several events that further marginalised their position. The decline in both PLO and UNRWA funding, the redirection of attention to the oPt, as well as the stricter enforcement of Lebanese legislation resulted in declining rather than improved conditions after the war. The last couple of years have been characterised by more openness and willingness from the Lebanese government and society to discuss the situation for the refugees. Some projects have been launched to enhance the situation for the refugees. However, the recent history of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon also includes the July 2006 war and the total destruction of Nahr el-

Bared, as well as heightened tensions in several other refugee camps. As of 2009, it is difficult to predict which course their future history will take.

The actors involved with the Palestinian refugee community

The major actors (other than NGOs) that are involved with the refugees' welfare are the UN and their agency UNRWA. Two other UN agencies that one could assume to be (more) responsible for the refugees' welfare, the UNCCP and UNHCR, are for reasons that are explained in chapter 3, not involved. The mandate of UNRWA has also for most of the time been restricted to those who fulfil the agency's rather strict set of criteria as explained in chapter 3. The refugees who fall outside of this definition are therefore especially vulnerable as outlined in chapter 4. Importantly, UNRWA's mandate has also been restricted to humanitarian assistance. UNRWA is, however, the main provider of both educational and health related services for the refugees despite both their limited mandate and financial instability. They also provide assistance for the most vulnerable, the so- called "special hardship cases," which in Lebanon constitute a high percentage of the refugees. The need for UNRWA to continue their services seems as important today as it was at their establishment in 1949.

The Palestinian political actors have been marginal and fractionised for most of the refugee sojourn in Lebanon, with the exception of the PLO heyday in the 1970s. Lebanon has, for their part, been a reluctant host country for a refugee population it feels it should not be held responsible for. For reasons such as the demography of the country and the volatile confessional make-up of Lebanon, the refugees have not been granted any civil rights by the Lebanese host government. Chapter 4 outlined the particular legislation which has been implemented to restrict the refugees' rights and the consequences of this on the refugees' socio-economic standing, which continues to deteriorate.

The Palestinian refugees have throughout their 60 year stay in Lebanon, faced restrictions which in turn have made it difficult for them to become self- supporting and independent from international assistance. They have also been subject to recurrent armed conflicts which has further intensified their status as "objects of relief." The first chapters of this

thesis have then proved that there is a need for continued international assistance for the refugees in Lebanon. The actors who are involved with the welfare of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, i.e. UN, Palestinian actors and the Lebanese government, are limited in their response or are outright unwilling to offer all the services that are needed for the Palestinian community to function. There is therefore clearly a need for the work of NGOs in the Palestinian community.

NGOs

NGOs have played an increasingly larger role in the Palestinian community the last three decades, due to the enhanced constraints on both UNRWA and PLO. However, the increase of NGOs in the Palestinian community has happened as NGOs have received an increasingly larger role in the development aid system in the world at large. One can say that there has been a need for NGOs to get involved, which has been intensified by the general promotion of NGOs as “a solution to all problems”. Chapter 5 outlined some of the factors which have led to the increased role of NGOs world wide. In Norway in particular, the role of NGOs in the development aid system is especially influential and there is a close relationship between the Norwegian government and NGOs. Norwegian aid to Lebanon is mainly channelled through NGOs.

As mentioned above it is clear that there is a need for NGOs to be involved in the Palestinian community due to the constraints of the other actors involved. NGOs as a whole provide important services and opportunities and as such play an invaluable role in the society. However, as discussed in chapter 5 NGOs are not the “solution to all problems” and are also constrained by their role in the development aid system and their organisational structures. Especially important in the Palestinian community in Lebanon is the relatively strict division between humanitarian relief and development programs which is prevalent in the development aid system. Due to the volatile situation in Lebanon, there have been channelled large amounts of short-term humanitarian aid in emergency situations, but less investment in, or time for, long-term planning. However, the Palestinian refugee community have been in a sort of “emergency situation” for 60 years and are in much need of long-term planning and stability. It is therefore a major

problem that the funding and international attention (for example from INGOs) has come and gone with the emergency events. The role of INGOs is therefore limited by their often short-term presence in the Palestinian community. They have also been influenced by the political aspect of the “refugee problem” which at times has made them reluctant to enter into relationships with Palestinian actors. The unstable presence of INGOs, and in particular their expatriate staff, means that they are limited in their long-term planning, coordination and capability to advocate for major changes.

The Palestinian NGOs are on the other hand typical Southern NGOs and are limited by their financial and administrative weaknesses. As part of the development aid system the Palestinian NGOs have to adapt to the “NGO speak” in order to get funds as well as to adjust to international trends. This sometimes makes it difficult to cater for the actual needs of the Palestinian community in particular, because it is still very much in need of basic services provided by the NGOs. Employment in an NGO is, next after UNRWA, the “top job” for educated Palestinians and may place them within a globalised elite. Because of this, there is both a danger that the employees of NGOs are *too* dependent on their job and that they get somewhat removed from the grassroots. The Palestinian NGOs continue also to be influenced by the fact that they are affiliated with the political environment in the refugee community and as such have some way to go in order to enhance cooperation. Due to the fragmentation of the NGO community, volatile finances, as well as the recurrent emergency situations, the Palestinian NGOs have not been able to provide as much long-term development or to advocate for structural changes as perhaps is wanted and needed.

NPA

The case study of NPA shows that it is not a typical example of an INGO. It is rather an INGO which has “gone local.” NPA International is one of the major NGOs in Norway and involved with projects in 36 countries around the world. It presents itself in terms of solidarity and of taking a stand in social debates. It is as such not primarily a humanitarian aid NGO, but regards for example its commitment in the Palestinian society as both a solidarity activity and politically important. It has then, been present in the

Palestinian community for almost three decades and declares a strong commitment to the Palestinian refugees. NPA Lebanon is almost entirely run by local staff and has been so for almost two decades. It runs two operational programs itself, and implements several others in cooperation with Palestinian partner NGOs.

There is currently an ongoing process to restructure the NPA program, and it is too early to predict exactly what the result will be. Most likely, NPA will focus more on and develop its partnerships with local NGOs, instead of continuing operational activities itself. However, it also seems clear that NPA is committed to continuing its presence in Lebanon until a solution is reached that will improve the situation for the Palestinian refugees. NPA Lebanon's challenge as an organisation in the meantime is to not "rest on the laurel" and to continue to develop its current programs. It also has to enhance its cooperation with both local and international and has to carefully balance its position between being an international and local organisation, so as not to teeter too much towards the latter. Because of its long presence and strong commitment, NPA enjoys strong support and a particular closeness to the refugee community, which I understand to be quite special to NPA in relation to most other INGOs. NPA functions as one of the driving forces behind coordination and long-term planning in the Palestinian NGO community. Its position as an INGO also provides some special opportunities to reach out and participate in the international civil society. I argue that because of this, NPA is playing a leading role in the Palestinian NGO community.

Critics of NGOs (and of UNRWA) claim that NGOs perform a maintenance function, and by "keeping the refugees alive" reduce the pressure for radical reforms. It is clear that the situation for the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon will not improve unless there are major shifts in the political will to do so. The dilemma is that without many of the services provided by NGOs (and UNRWA) in the Palestinian community the situation for the refugees would be very difficult. As long as the refugees are facing obstacles that prevent them from becoming self-supporting, they will continue to be in need of international assistance. The challenge for all actors involved is to not treat the refugees

as “objects of relief” but as individuals who are entitled to rights. NPA is as I understand it, in a very good position to do so.

In the introduction to this thesis I asked what the role of international and local NGOs is in the Palestinian community in Lebanon. I also presented two contradictive hypotheses that have formed the development of the thesis. The first hypothesis stated that NGOs play a larger role in the Palestinian community than in other communities, because there is no government in place and therefore more room for NGOs. The second hypothesis stated on the other hand, that NGOs are not capable of taking on such an influential role because there are some limitations in the NGO sector. Throughout the work on this thesis, it soon became evident that my first hypothesis was too optimistic regarding the capability of NGOs in general to take on an influential role, even if there is room for it. As with all other NGOs in the world, the NGOs involved in the Palestinian community do not necessarily hold the “solution to all problems”. My second hypothesis proved then, to be mostly correct; The Palestinian NGOs are too weak financially and administratively, and the INGOs are in general too fluctuating to play a leading role in the refugee community. However, I will also argue that NPA as a stable, committed INGO with a strong local connection has the opportunity to play an influential role in the Palestinian community and to be an agent of change.

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Appendix I

I have included in appendix I a synopsis of NGOs which are involved with the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. The literature and sources I have used to make this need some special attention and are explained below.

I can from the outset conclude that I will not be able to provide a complete synopsis of the NGOs which are involved in the Palestinian community, as their number and scope of work is too extensive. Even UNRWA, which is involved with the Palestinian community on a daily basis, are not able to provide an accurate and updated statistic of NGOs working in this community, and I must realise my limitations. Therefore, I will emphasise that there are certainly NGOs involved, events taking place and work being done without my knowledge and therefore left out of my analysis. The list includes huge INGOs as well as small local NGOs. It also includes research centres and Palestinian Popular Committees and is in this way a perfect example of the complexity of the NGO scene. It is also clear that many of the NGOs in the list are probably no longer active in the refugee community and new ones have most likely arrived. Several of the NGOs are only involved in one project or in a specific emergency situation, and then disappear out of the country or are dissolved. This is in the nature of NGOs and is part of why it is so difficult to provide accurate information on them. Another challenge when compiling this list is that, when the Arabic names of the NGOs are translated into English, the same NGO can be translated with several slightly different names. It is therefore possible that the same NGO is listed twice. This is particularly the case with a number of NGOs with “national” in their name. As will be evident from the synopsis, the confusion concerning these NGOs is prevalent in many of my sources also. With these limitations in mind, this thesis sets out to give a certain overview of NGOs who are involved in the Palestinian community.

The sources I have used for the synopsis are the following: Firstly, I have used a list I received from NPA presenting the members of the Coordination Forum of NGOs working among Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. I have compiled this with the

information about the Coordination Forum which is found in Jaber Suleiman's article mentioned in chapter 1. As mentioned in footnote 354, these two sources name 18 and 17 NGOs respectively, and not exactly the same organisations.

Secondly, NPA together with another INGO, the Welfare Association (WA) made a "Guide to Non-Governmental Organizations active in Palestinian Camps in Lebanon" in 2000.⁵⁰⁴ It was meant to serve as a guide for interested parties who wished to extend support to local NGOs, and as information to the target population. The guide includes NGOs that are supported by NPA and WA, which consists of 29 local organisations. The guide also includes 5 INGOs, or what they call, donor NGOs.

Thirdly, I have compiled information from a report which was made by the ENGO group in 2007. The ENGO group was a coordination group of European NGOs working with Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, mentioned in chapter 7.⁵⁰⁵ They do not present a list of all their partners, but I have compiled the information from their planning framework, which presents the actors they are involved with.

Fourthly, the Lebanon-Support portal is an online resource, launched as a response to the July 2006 war.⁵⁰⁶ It was designed to enhance coordination between local NGOs, INGOs and international agencies involved with assistance in Lebanon. The portal continues to be updated and when I asked the Lebanese Ministry of Interior for a list of the NGOs in Lebanon, they directed me to this site.⁵⁰⁷ It includes a list of national NGOs, INGOs, UN/International Agencies and Social Development Centres. It also provides information about the projects which are run by each organisation, but this information is not available for all organisations. Even though the site recently improved their search system, it is not necessarily straightforward to gather exact information and receive the "full picture". For example a search for national NGOs which work in "all [refugee] camps" will only show five NGOs, which is certainly not the accurate number. I have

⁵⁰⁴ Welfare Association and Norwegian People's Aid 2000.

⁵⁰⁵ Cf. pp. 93-94.

⁵⁰⁶ Lebanon-Support Online. I compiled my list in November 2008. There might therefore be more recently updates which I have not included.

⁵⁰⁷ E-mail correspondence with Ministry of Interior & Municipalities 06.03.09.

compiled my list on the basis of the project descriptions. This can not be all-inclusive since there might be organisations which work in the Palestinian community without providing information about it in this online resource, and there are a number of organisations without project description which may work in the Palestinian community. The Norwegian NGO NORWAC for example, is such an organisation. I have chosen to include in the list also the organisations that do not provide project information, but which I know for certain from the other sources are involved in the Palestinian community.

Fifthly, I received a list of NGOs which were compiled by the Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs at the American University of Beirut. This institute launched a program called “Public Policy and Governance Challenges of Palestinian Refugee Camps in the Arab World” in February 2008. One of the aims of this program is to compile and maintain a database of NGOs and other active groups in the camps.⁵⁰⁸

Sixthly, I present the information from the Ajial study which was mentioned in chapter 1.

Lastly, Forced Migration Online (FMO) is an online resource which provides access to a variety of online resources dealing with the situation of forced migrants. FMO is coordinated by a team based at the Refugee Studies Centre, University of Oxford. In 2007 Sherifa Shafie made a research guide about Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, which amongst other things included a list of NGOs. The guide is also offering links to a vast number of online resources concerning Palestinian refugees.⁵⁰⁹

The organisations which are set in **bold** letters are INGOs. The year of establishment is compiled from the Ajial study, Jaber Suleiman’s article from 1997 and the WA and NPA guide from 2000. The word “yes” in the synopsis implies that the NGO is found in that source.

⁵⁰⁸ Issam Fares Institute Online.

⁵⁰⁹ Shafie 2007.

Name of the NGO	The Coordination Forum 1997 and 2008	WA and NPA Guide 2000	ENGO report 2007	Lebanon Support 2006-	Issam Fares Institute, AUB 2008	Ajjal Center 2000	Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon, Sherifa Shafie 2006	Year of est.
'1 Association ASILES France					Yes			
Abna Al-Qassam, Burj Al-Barajneh						Yes		1988
Action Contre Le Faim, Spain, ACF-E			Yes					
Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development				Yes				
Aid Lebanon				Yes				
Al Irshad & Al Islah				Yes				
Al Karamah Association for Palestinian Disabled in Lebanon, Ain Al-Helweh				Yes				
Al Quds					Yes			
Al Rowwad Center, West Bank					Yes			
Al Sadaqa (friendship) Among People Association				Yes				
Al Shifaa Medical Center - North				Yes		Yes		1994

Al-Aman Charitable Association; The Islamic Welfare Committee, Al-Buss Camp						Yes		1994
Al-Ershad Association, Tyre						Yes		1986
Al-Eslah Welfare Association (Al-Jalil), Al-Jalil RC						Yes		
Al-Ghad Social Association				Yes				
Al-Khalsa Foundation, Tripoli, Lebanon					Yes	Yes		1984
American Near East Refugee Aid (ANERA)				Yes	Yes			
Amnesty International							Yes	
Arab Resource Center for Popular Art, (ARCPA), Beirut	Yes	1990						
Architects de l Urgence - Emergency Architects				Yes				
ARCI Cultura e Sviluppo				Yes				
Asamblea de Cooperacion por la Paz ACPP				Yes				
ASMAE				Yes				

Association for Development of Palestinian Camps in Lebanon (AADPCL) – Lebanon (Same as Inash?)					Yes			
Association Libanaise pour l'Education et la Formation				Yes				
Association Najdeh-Lebanon	Yes	Yes	Yes, as Najdeh	Yes, as Al-Najdeh Association	Yes	Yes	Yes, as Najdeh Association	1978, licensed 1997
AUB Public Health Department			Yes					
Aust Care Australia						Yes	Yes	
Beir Al-Maqdes Center, Tyre, Lebanon					Yes	Yes		1990
Beneficence Association for the Detainees and Captives, Al-Jalil RC						Yes		1973
Buds of the Future Institution, Tyre, Lebanon					Yes	Yes		1994
Canadian-Palestinian Educational Exchange, Canada					Yes			
Caritas			Yes	Yes, Caritas M.O.N.A coordination				

Caritas Austria				Yes				
Catholic Agency for Overseas Development, CAFOD							Yes	
Centro de Solidaridad Social (CSS) or as written in English Social Solidarity Center, Ain Al-Hilweh				Yes				
Centro Regionale d'Intervento per la Cooperazione (CRIC) Italy				Yes				
Charity Work Committee, Nahr Al-Bared						Yes		
Children and Youth Center – Shatila (same as Youth and Children center, Shatila?)		Yes		Yes			Yes	1997
Christian Aid UK				Yes			Yes	
CIPS (maybe same as CISP?)			Yes					
Circuna Sweden				Yes				
CISS international				Yes				

Comitato Internazionale per lo Sviluppo dei Popoli, CISP			Yes			Yes		
Committee for the Assistance of Open Heart Patients, Nahr Al-Bared						Yes		1999
Community Based Rehabilitation Association, CBRA			Yes					
Danish Church Aid				Yes				
Danish Refugee Council			Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	
Department of Refugee Affairs, Mar Elias						Yes		1973
Diakonia – Sweden – Jerusalem					Yes	Yes		
Disable Revival Association		Yes		Yes			YES, as Disabled Revival Association	1989
Disabled Union, Ain Al Hilweh						Yes		1992
Enfants Refugies du Monde, France						Yes		

ENGO- Coordination Group of European NGOs working with Palestinian refugees in Lebanon			Yes	Yes				
Friedrich Ebert Stiftung- Germany, Beirut					Yes	Yes		
General Union of Palestinian Women (GUPW)		Yes		Yes	YES, but oPt branch, Palest- inian Women General Union – Gaza OPT	Yes	Yes	1972
Handicap International, France			Yes	Yes				
Handicapped Social Association	Yes	Yes, as Social Handi- capped Assoc- ation					Yes, as Social Handicapped Association	Licensed, 1990
Health Care Society		Yes		Yes			Yes	1997
HOPING, UK					Yes			
Houleh Club Association		Yes						1973
Human Appeal International						Yes		
Human Call Foundation		Yes		Yes, as Human Call Assoc- iation, Ain Al- Hilweh		Yes		License 1988 (est. 1986)
Human Donation Society						Yes		1994
Human Rights Watch				Yes			Yes	

Informatics Development Association		Yes						1986
Information and Training Center, Mar Elias, Lebanon					Yes	Yes		1988
Institution of Humanitarian Information & Research / Lebanon Support				Yes				
International Center for Organizational Development (ICOD)				Yes				
International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)							Yes	
International Federation of Red Cross & Red Crescent Societies (IFRC/Fed)				Yes			Yes	
Irish Aid			Yes					
Islamic Relief Worldwide, UK				Yes				
Islamic Welfare Association				Yes				1985
Islamic Youth Union Association, Tyre						Yes		1992

Joint Christian Committee JCC, Beirut	Yes	Yes, as Joint Christian Committee for Social Services		Yes		Yes, as Joint Christian Committee for Social Services	Yes	1950
Karama, West Bank oPt					Yes			
KG Resource and Training Center, Beirut, or as K.G. Training and Resource Centre (KGTRC)	Yes	Yes						Licensed, 1993
Lebanese association for development Al Majmoua – Lebanon			Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		
Local Rehabilitation Center (Nahr Al Bared)						Yes		1998
Martyr Abu Jihad al-Wazir Institution		Yes			Abou Jihad Alwazeer Handicapped Foundation	Yes, as Abu Jihad Al-Wazir Institution, Tyre	Yes twice, as Abu jihad Al Wazir Institution (education) and Martyr Abu Jihad Al Wazir Institution (disabled)	1992 (1989)
Medecins du Monde-France (MDM-F)				Yes				
Medical Aid For Palestinians (MAP) UK		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	1984
Medical fund for emergency cases, Beirut					Yes	Yes		1998

Medicines sans frontiers – Switzerland					Yes	Yes	Yes	
Millenium Relief And Development Services (MRDS) Canada				Yes				
Mines Advisory Group (MAG)				Yes				
Monimondo (are not found, probably Movimondo, Italy? According to Lebanon support, not working with Palestinians the last period)						Yes		
Movimento por la Paz, el Desarme y la Libertad, (MPDL)			Yes	Yes, but with no project information			Yes	
Naba'a Association, Beirut -also know under the name Developmental Action Without Borders	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes, with the name DAWB	2001
Nabil Badran Centre for Disabled Children		Yes	Yes, as Nabil Badran Center	Yes			Yes	1995

Nabila Breir Social Foundation		Yes		Yes, as Nabila Breir Association (same e-mail address as General Union of Palestinian Women)		Yes		1987
National Association for Health, Educational and Social Services	Yes	Yes, as National Foundation for Health, Social and Educational services					YES, written as National Institute for Health, Social and Educational Services	Licensed, 1989
National Association for Health-Social services and Vocational Training	Yes					Yes, (?) National Association for Medical Services and Vocational Training, Al Beqaa		Licensed, 1989
National Association For Medical Services Care And Vocational Training, Beddawi				Yes				
Netherlands Red Cross (NLRC)				Yes				
NGOs Platform of Saida (TAJAMOH)				Yes				1993

Norwegian Aid Committee, (NORWAC)				Yes		Yes		
Norwegian Institute for Social Sciences (Fafo)							Yes	
Norwegian People's Aid (NPA)	Yes, as observer	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	
Norwegian Refugee Council			Yes	Yes			Yes	
Oxfam GB							Yes	
Palestine Red Crescent Society - Lebanon				Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	1968
Palestinian Arab Center		Yes						1990
Palestinian Arab Women League (PAWL), Beirut	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes, but written as Palestini an Arab Women Union, Beirut	Yes	Licensed 1956
Palestinian Children and Youth Institution				Yes				
Palestinian Diaspora and Refugee Centre (SHAML)							Yes	
Palestinian Human Rights Organization, Beirut			Yes	Yes	Yes			
Palestinian Martyrs Association					Yes			
Palestinian Martyrs Works Society (Samed), Beirut	Yes					Palestinian Martyrs Works Society (Samed), Beirut		License 1973

Palestinian Popular Committee, Beddawi				Yes				
Palestinian Scouts and Guides Association				Yes				
Palestinian Social and Cultural Society, Burj Al-Barajneh RC						Yes		1999
Palestinian Social Cultural Association (same as Palestinian Social and Cultural Society, Burj Al- Barjaneh?)		Yes					Yes	1998
Palestinian Student Fund, Beirut			Yes		Yes	Yes		1973
People In Need (PIN) Czech Republic				Yes				
Pharmaciens sans frontières –France					Yes	Yes		
Philantropic Martyr's Association						Yes		1996
Popular Committee, Mar Elias				Yes				
Popular Communication Committee, Burj Al Shamali						Yes		1998
Premier Urgence (PU) France			Yes	Yes				
Qatar Red Crescent				Yes				

Refugee Affairs Department				Yes		YES, as Department of Refugee Affairs, Mar Elias		1973
Refugees International				Yes			Yes	
Resource Center for Palestinian residency and Refugee rights (Badil), West Bank							Yes	
Response International UK				Yes	Yes		Yes	
Ricerca e Cooperazione (RC) Italy			Yes	Yes				
Sabra-Shatilla Memorial Scholarship Program (SSMSP)				Yes				
Sanabil Association for Relief and Development, Sidon, Lebanon					Yes	Yes	Yes	1994
Save the Children Federation (UK)	Yes, as observer (1997)	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes, international	1984 (In Lebanon)
Save the Children Sweden			Yes	Yes			Yes, international	
Sawa group				Yes				1990
Social Association for the Disabled, Badawi						Yes		1996
Social Association for the Rehabilitation of the Handicapped		Yes					Yes	1991

Social Care Association		Yes				Yes		1982
Social Communication Center (Ajjal)		Yes		YES, as Ajjal Social Communication Center	YES, as Statistics and Documentation Office (Ajjal Center), Beirut	Yes	Yes	1968 (or 1998 as in NPA and WA guide)
Social Help Association				Yes				
Solidarity Association for Social and Cultural Development				Yes				2005
Swedish Team for Rehabilitation						Yes		
Swiss Palestinian Organisation for Research and Development – DROPS Switerland				Yes	Yes, Tripoli, Lebanon			
Tamanna				Yes				2005
Terre des Hommes Italy (Tdh It)				Yes		Yes	Yes	
The Association for the Development of Palestinian Camps (Inaach), Beirut	Yes	Yes	Yes, as Inaach	Yes, as Inaach	Yes, but written Al-Inash	Yes	Yes	1969
The Ghassan Kanafani Cultural Foundation, (GKCF) Beirut	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	1974

The Martyr Association, Sidon						Yes		
The National Association for Social Medical Care & Vocational Training (NAMSCVT), Beirut	Yes	Yes		Yes, and also registered as National Association of Medical Social Care and Vocational Training, NAMSC, Beqaa, but with same e-mail address			Yes	Founding date 1983 as NAMSC
The National Association for Vocational Training and Social services (NAVTSS), Mar Elias, Beirut (Formerly known as Vocational and Technical Training Committee and Vocational Development Social Association)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Founded, 1983 (as VTTC) Registered 1986 (as VDSA) lost Registration in 1996 and re-registered in 1999 (as NAVTSS)

The National Institution for Social Care & Vocational Training (NISCVT) – also known as Beit Atfal Al-Sumod, Beirut	Yes	Yes	Yes, both as Beit Atfal Assoumoud and NISCVT	Yes, as National Institution of Social Care and Vocational Training (Beit Atfal Assoumoud) NISCVT	Yes, written as National Association for Medical and Social Services (AI – Soumoud) however, same manager as NISCVT and counted also as Beit Atfal Assoumoud	Yes, written as National Association for Medical and Social Services (AI-Soumoud)	Yes, written twice? (as National Institute for Social Care and Vocational Training AND The National Institute of Social Care & Vocational Training)	1976, licensed 1980
The Popular Aid for Relief and Development (PARD), Beirut	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	1990 (1985)
The Zakat Charities, Ain Al-Hilweh						Yes		1988
Un Ponte Per (UPP) Italy				Yes				
Universal Physicians						Yes		
Vocational and Developmental Association, Beirut	Yes				Yes, as Vocational and Developmental Society, Beirut	Yes		1983, license 1988
Welfare Association, Beirut	Yes, as observer (2008)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		1983
Women Charity League – North Lebanon (WCL)				Yes				1945

Women's Humanitarian Organization		Yes	Yes	Yes, twice as Women Humanitarian Organization and Palestinian Women's Humanitarian Organization	Yes	Yes		1993
World Vision Lebanon		Yes	Yes, as World Vision International (WV)	Yes		Yes	Yes	1985 (in Lebanon)
Young Men Christian Association (YMCA)				Yes				
Youth and Children Center, Shatila RC						Yes		1987

Appendix II

NPA Partners 2009⁵¹⁰

Abu Jihad Al-Wazir Institute for the Disabled

Al Karameh Association for Disabled

Aidoun Group

Arab NGOs Network for Development (ANND)

Arab Organization for Disabled People (AODP)

Assalam Social and Charity School (Salam)

Association Najdeh

Coordination Forum of NGOs Working Among Palestinian Community in Lebanon

Development Action without Borders (NABAA)

General Union of Palestinian Women (GUPW)

Ghassan Kanafani Cultural Foundation (GKCF)

Health Care Society (HCS)

Human Development Center

Inclusion International (II)

Lana al-Mostakbal Association

Lebanese Occupational Therapy Association (LOTA)

Lebanese Physically Handicapped Union (LPHU)

Lebanese Universitees [sic] League for the Blind (LULB)

⁵¹⁰ NPA Lebanon Online (d).

Nabil Badran Special School for Disabled Children

National Association for Medical Social Care and Vocational Training (NAMSCVT)

National Association for the Rights of Disabled People (NARD)

National Association for Vocational Training and Social Services (NAVTSS)

National Institution of Social Care and Vocational Training (NISCVT)

National Rehabilitation and Development Center (NRDC)

Popular Aid for Relief and Development (PARD)

Palestine Solidarity Association in Sweden

Palestinian Student Fund (PSF)

Society for the Care of the Disabled

The Disabled Revival Society

UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA)

Women Humanitarian Organization

Welfare Association for the Disabled

Rehabilitation International (RI)