

Country Focus: Lebanon



What is Better Assistance in Crises (BASIC) Research?

BASIC Research is a Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) funded programme examining why, how and when to use social protection approaches in protracted crises, to more effectively support vulnerable populations in coping with acute shocks as well as strengthening their livelihoods in the longer-term. Ultimately, BASIC Research aims to generate evidence and fresh perspectives on how to improve the provision of social assistance in the most difficult protracted crisis settings and for the populations that are the hardest to reach.

What work is BASIC Research doing in Lebanon?

BASIC Research is working across over 11 countries, including Lebanon. There are three projects conducting research in Lebanon. The first explores the geographies of social assistance in urban informal settlements in Beirut, the second analyses the politics of social assistance and the role of “parallel non-state” systems, and the third investigates configurations of social assistance in situations of mass displacement. The research is conducted and supported by the [Institute of Development Studies \(IDS\)](#), [ACTED](#), [World Vision Lebanon](#), [The Policy Initiative](#) and the [University of Sussex](#).

1. Geographies of social assistance in urban informal settlements

During the civil war in Lebanon, Beirut was divided into a Muslim West and a Christian East, which has, since, continued to affect

the spatial make-up of the city. As well as this, an influx of Palestinian and Syrian refugees has led to unique pressures and tensions on social assistance within and between neighbourhoods. In the Lebanese context, the state as well as parallel non-state actors play a role in providing services, resulting in a fragmented and politically sensitive social protection landscape.

This research project explores how these different stakeholders – including municipalities, political parties, NGOs, and others – are directly or indirectly involved in the provision and (re)distribution of social protection. It investigates how these patterns of delivery produce distinct and spatially specific outcomes of different urban populations based on their urban geographies. The research utilises predominantly qualitative methods, including interviews, spatial mapping and participatory methods such as transect walks and PhotoVoice.

2. Politics of Social Assistance

The politics of social assistance is a broad research project which examines how the implementation of social assistance in crisis-affected settings is mediated by politics, resource constraints and the attitudes and beliefs of those responsible for shaping policy. The project examines these dynamics in the contexts of Nigeria, Yemen, Ethiopia, and Lebanon. In Lebanon, the social protection problems and challenges are not due to capacity constraints, but political choices. Thus, this research focuses on answering the question:

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- What challenges or opportunities do Lebanon's "parallel non-state" social protection systems pose for building a comprehensive nation-led assistance programme?

To answer this question, desk reviews of existing literature and data as well as key informant interviews with local-level actors, social assistance providers, and other relevant stakeholders are being used. However, there are challenges of data obscurity which will affect analysis.

3. Configurations of social assistance in situations of mass displacement

Lebanon has seen a massive influx of refugees from other conflict-affected areas in the region, including Palestine and Syria. These refugees enter the country with social assistance needs, which they attempt to fulfil in various ways. This project investigates how displaced people evaluate, secure, and mobilise the range of social protection measures available to them. This component forms part of a broader project also looking at social assistance and displacement in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Pakistan.

In order to understand the social assistance dynamics and how they relate to displaced people, this project uses Q-sort methodology, interviewing displaced people, to develop data which can be used for ranking and analysis.

Where can you find out more?

To keep up to date with the latest BASIC Research activities, follow our [webpage on LinkedIn](#). There are already a variety of BASIC Research outputs examining social protection and humanitarian responses in Lebanon, which can be found on the IDS website, including:

- Sabates-Wheeler, R.; Lind, J.; Harvey, P. and Slater, R. (2022) [Strengthening Responses at the Nexus of Social Protection, Humanitarian Aid and Climate Shocks in Protracted Crises: BASIC Research Framing Paper, BASIC Research Working Paper 1](#), Brighton: Institute of Development Studies, DOI: 10.19088/BASIC.2022.001
- Zoughaib, S. (2023) [Why is politics critical for understanding social assistance in Lebanon?](#), BASIC Research Video
- el Khayat, N. (2023) [How is BASIC Research investigating segregated social assistance delivery in Beirut?](#), BASIC Research Video
- Collyer, M.; Zaman, T. and te Lintelo, D.J.H. (2022) [Displacement and Social Assistance, BASIC Research Theme Brief](#), Brighton: Institute of Development Studies, DOI: 10.19088/BASIC.2022.029
- Lind, J. and Harvey, P. (2022) [The Politics of Social Assistance in Crises, BASIC Research Theme Brief](#), Brighton: Institute of Development Studies, DOI: 10.19088/BASIC.2022.024
- Collyer, M.; te Lintelo, D.J.H.; Mutambasere, T. and Zaman, T. (2022) [Moving Targets: Social Protection as a Link Between Humanitarianism, Development and Displacement, BASIC Research Working Paper 17](#), Brighton: Institute of Development Studies, DOI: 10.19088/BASIC.2022.017