

LEBANESE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

What are the Impacts of Art on Syrian Refugee Youth in Lebanon?

By

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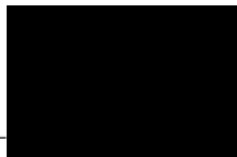
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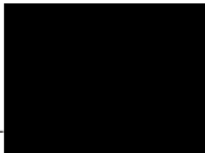
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ABSTRACT

Since 2011, a huge number of Syrian refugees have been forced to leave their country due to one of the world's bloodiest civil wars. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR 2022), Lebanon hosts the world's largest number of refugees per capita and square kilometer, with a government estimate of 1.5 million Syrian refugees. Forced displacement has massive negative effects that are difficult to overcome without the necessary tools, especially when hate speech is encouraging violence toward this category of individuals. Driven by the need to look at ways to improve Syrian refugee lives in Lebanon, this research examines how art can positively affect Syrian refugee youths' experiences in the Lebanese community.

This thesis presents an overview of the role of art projects in Syrian refugee youths' lives. To illustrate understanding, I have used a qualitative research strategy based on in-depth interviews. The study demonstrates the challenges Syrian refugees have been facing in Lebanon and asserts how art projects have been helpful in the most severe situations. Results indicate that art projects

have had a positive effect on the Syrian refugee youth in the programs studied, building self-confidence, encouraging diversity, and clarifying misconceptions. Moreover, it argues that art is a tool to empower the Syrian refugee youth morally and financially, by allowing them to exhibit their works and put their artworks into practice. The study seeks to raise awareness of the role of art projects in improving the Syrian refugee youths' lives in Lebanon and prompts policymakers to consider art as a critical tool while applying strategies regarding the Syrians' coping mechanisms in Lebanon.

Keywords: Syrian Refugee, NGOs, Arts, Lebanon, Creativity, Empowerment, Peace building, Inclusion.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

INC.....	International Medical Corps
POA.....	Peace of Art
PTSD.....	Post-traumatic stress disorder
SCI.....	Save the Children International
UNFPA.....	United Nations Population Fund
UNESCO.....	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF.....	United Nations Children’s Fund
UNHCR.....	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

When individuals' words are silenced, the world can hear their voices through art. Art is a universal language which can be used by everyone, and it is expressive by everyone. In many cases, words are insufficient for youth to express themselves, especially refugees who are facing many challenges in wartime. Art is the only language that can translate refugees' feelings of loss, confusion, depression, war, death, and nostalgia. The 1951 Convention states that a refugee is a person who has "a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country" (UNHCR, n.d.).

Previous studies have highlighted the importance of creativity-based group programs such as singing, writing poetry, crafts, embroidery, and theatre to attract refugees' contribution in social events, workshops, and groups. They have proven that such activities may help refugees rebuild communication skills in host countries (Jefee-Bahloul, 2015). Jones (2018) refers to art as an alternative to medications, helping refugees in their healing process as a therapeutic and social transformational tool, which in turn improves communities and cultures. Research has also focused on the role of art in facilitating the self-expression of refugees who are denied a public voice (Khoo, 2017). However, there has been little research on the impact of art activities on

Syrian refugees' lives in Lebanon. Considering art as an essential focus in refugees' studies, this research aims at providing a foundation for future research on how art projects can improve the Syrian refugee youth lives in Lebanon. The findings are based on art projects between Lebanese citizens and Syrian refugees since it was vital to explore their effectiveness in all aspects, within the Syrians' personal lives, communities, and on a bigger scale, among the Lebanese society.

Before turning to the central research question on main hypothesis, some information about the Syrian refugee community in Lebanon is described below.

1.1 Syrian Refugees Distribution in Lebanese Areas

Two thirds of all current global refugees come from five countries, one of which is Syria, where 6.8 million individuals have been forced to flee their country since the war began in 2011. This number has been estimated as one-third of the world's refugee population (UN Refugee Agency numbers, 2021). Regarding Lebanon in 2021, the government estimated 1.5 million Syrian refugees in its territory besides the illegal ones, however, the number of Syrian refugees registered in the UNHCR was under million 844,056 (UNHCR, 2021). 522,000 of the registered Syrian refugees by UNHCR in 2021 are children and youth between the ages of 3-24 years old (UNHCR, 2021). The number of Syrian refugees registered in Lebanon has significantly subsided. In December 2016, the number was 1,011,366 (UNHCR, 2019). According to the UNHCR (2021) considering the number of unregistered refugees as well, the total number reached around 1,500,000 Syrian and Palestinian refugees from Syria in 2016, which made it 30% of Lebanon's population.

Per estimations in the year 2021, 329,223 Syrian Refugees were located in the Bekaa, 229,123 in North Lebanon, 194,878 in Beirut, and 90,832 South Lebanon (UNHCR, 2019).

1.2 Background\ Governmental Policies

Although Lebanon has long experience in hosting refugees, it has never signed the 1951 Refugee Convention on the Status of Refugees nor the 1967 Protocol, which means that Syrian refugees in Lebanon are not legally recognized as "refugees" as defined by international law. Instead, they are considered "displaced". Conversely, Syrian refugees are required to hold a legal residency permit. Nevertheless, 71% of registered Syrians affirm that obtaining a residency permit in Lebanon is very difficult. The requirements of a sponsor and an annual renewal payment fee of \$200 per individual have been the main legal challenges hindering them from obtaining residency permits and legalizing their status. (Lebanese Center of Human Rights, 2016).

In December 2014, the Lebanese government tightened the restrictive measures and policies on all entry points along the Syrian border, suspending the bilateral agreement for Economic Social Cooperation and Coordination signed in 1994, which was characterized by an "open door" policy between the two countries. Eighteen entry points were shut with Syria at that time to prompt Syrians to return to their homeland and reduce their entry to the Lebanese territory. But as the current numbers demonstrate, this policy change as well as others did not lead to a significant decrease in the number of Syrian refugees in the country (Levy and Shamiyeh 2016).

Moreover, the Lebanese government maintains its refusal to register Syrian refugees with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR); a decision adopted in 2015 (Al

Zoubi, 2022). The combined old and new policies imposed by the Lebanese government, alongside the lack of formal legal recognition of Syrians as refugees, has contributed to intensified pressure on the refugees, demanding a response from international organizations to develop strategies to protect them. For instance, the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP) developed models to "strengthen community-based protection while providing refugees with counseling sessions and legal awareness workshops, reaching in 2016, 25,000 people" (Lebanese Center of Human Rights, 2016).

The last three years have seen a further deterioration of the situation of Syrian refugees in Lebanon. The economic, financial, and political crises and the COVID pandemic have made Lebanon significantly poorer as well as less willing and less able to host the Syrian refugees (Fouad, McCall, Ayoub, Abu-Raddad, & Mumtaz 2021).

1.3 Hypothesis and Research Question

As the situation of Syrian refugee in Lebanon worsened; a need for creative programs has become a necessary. The thesis hypothesizes that through art, Syrian refugee youth in Lebanon have a chance to positively transform their lives. I believe that art might be a healing tool to reduce the consequences of war on refugees in host societies. This belief has emerged after a private conversation with a Syrian child living in our building who had asked me for coloring crayons and a paper to draw a beautiful house with a garden. When I asked him why he chose such drawing, he said, "I want another future for me and my family". This encounter is one of the reasons that lead me to the current research aiming to reach a new theory or add-on that shows the importance of art activities in the lives' of Syrian refugees as a way to spread hope. Moreover, throughout my job as a journalist, I have read about and witnessed cases where Syrian

refugees feel joy and pride when they engage in shared art projects. Empirically speaking, I was curious to transform such observation to a study.

The purpose of this thesis is to answer the following question: What are the impacts of participating in art projects on Syrian refugees' youth in Lebanon? This question is important to ask because it helps show the impact of creativity-based projects on Syrian refugee youth on an individual level and as a whole. Asking such a broad question is significant because while I hypothesize that this participation will have positive impacts on the refugees' displacement, the research question captures the role of art in refugees' lives and among their community on one hand, and within the Lebanese community on another. Also, by asking this question, I can gather data that better links how and when art benefits the studied category to cope with the psychological, social, and economic hardships in Lebanon as a host country. This data will be helpful for future research about art and Syrians refugees in Lebanon. In addition, NGOs, local, and international institutions would be encouraged to establish more interactive programs.

In conclusion, due to restrictive policies by the Lebanese government as mentioned above, as well as, the economic and Corona pandemic, it was hard for Syrian refugees to encounter or socialize with Lebanese people. Not giving any space for refugees to express their feelings in a foreign society can probably create more hardships on them. For this reason, I choose them as my case study to examine how art could change their lives.

CHAPTER TWO

METHODOLOGY, STRATEGY, AND DESIGN

This chapter outlines the methodology used in this academic research, and it is divided into six sections. The first section describes the research strategy used, the second explains the case study as a research design, the third states the research methods used for collecting data, the fourth defines the study population, the fifth discusses the method used to analyze the data, and the last part states the ethical considerations that guide the research practices.

2.1 Research Strategy:

The objective was to analyze the views, opinions and thoughts of the representatives of four NGOs to understand the effectiveness of art programs on Syrian refugee youth in Lebanon. For this reason, this study utilized a qualitative strategy. Bryman (2016) explains that in social sciences studies, qualitative strategy is widely employed as it aims to delve into a deep qualitative analysis that results in new interpretations to the studied case. It provides “high environmental validity as well as being just truthful and well trusted” (Bryman, 2016). Throughout this research, the qualitative strategy uncovered sources of data that have been limited due to lack of literature on art and Syrian refugee youth in Lebanon. It also helped push for more information to apprehend unseen information.

2.2 Research Design:

One of the most important scientific research methodologies used in social sciences and humanities is the case study. Bryman (2016) describes it as "deep, intense analysis and detailed study associated with one or more individuals, which is taken as a model for a social, medical or psychological phenomenon". The case study provided a relevant context to answer my research question because it examined a particular community the Syrian refugee youth through specific art projects in which the youth participated.

2.3 Research Methods:

This research adopts semi-structured, in-depth interviews to gather data for the thesis. In-depth interviews provide an opportunity to collect direct and verifiable data on Syrian refugee youth's experiences in artworks through the lens of the representatives of NGOs. On one hand, the representatives were able to freely express their experiences and perspectives with no constraints and to elaborate on their answer. On the other hand, I had the chance to follow up on their answers, generating valuable interactions and conversations on the subject. Furthermore, semi-structured interviews allowed me to redirect the conversation when needed.

It is important to highlight the challenges and limitations that were faced throughout conducting this research. The Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the Lebanese American University prohibits graduate students from interviewing vulnerable populations, including Syrian refugee youth. This acted as an obstacle for me as a Migration Studies student since most of the population I would study is by definition, vulnerable. Consequently, I had to gather data through alternative means. Since the research question investigates the impact of art for Syrian

refugee youth in Lebanon, I went through NGOs that engage in art projects in order to reach the Syrian participants via NGO representatives.

Despite not being able to interview refugees directly and to limit the impact of this on my research, the interview questions were drafted to get transparent and honest answers from the representatives. I contacted three NGOs who had trustworthy reputations; however, their response was negative. One stated that they are no longer focusing on Syrians in Lebanon. Another answered that the directors of the arts programs are overseas and won't be back soon, while the third explained that art programs have been terminated due to the ongoing COVID pandemic. It was difficult to find NGOs that were still organizing art projects during the pandemic. Thus, I had two choices: adopt old programs in my research paper or conduct wider research to find other suitable NGOs. I believed that the more recent art programs are, the more valid the results and findings would be for future studies. However, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, it was extremely difficult to find organizations holding art projects due to the safety measures implemented at the time. After facing these constraints, I finally contacted UNHCR through email and asked for an interview with the representative of art projects. I also requested suggestions for credible NGOs since they are the main actors in my research and the whole analysis is based on their examples, stories, narratives, and videos. Based on the UNHCR Associate Communications Officer Nadine Mazloum's suggestions, I succeeded in conducting four in-depth interviews.

Another challenge I faced was related to the location of two of the NGOs. They were based in Bekaa, northern Lebanon. The Bekaa area is not generally safe due to continuous military operations by the Lebanese army and other, illegal activity. Consequently, I had to be

cautious, so I commuted with a local driver. There was no need to take permission from the municipality since I was not visiting the camp areas.

Despite the hardships, there were also upsides. I conducted the interviews in English since the four interlocutors are fluent in Arabic and English. Therefore, there was no need for a translator. In addition, after obtaining consent from the administration of the NGOs, the representatives shared their notes and oversights on the participants that they had previously documented.

2.4 Study Population:

Four representatives from four NGOs that promote art projects in Lebanon were selected to be interviewed for the sample. The sampling technique adopted ensured that the interviewees reported subjective stories concerning the topic. The selection of the NGOs was determined with respect to their roles in promoting art programs in the Lebanese community. The profile of each NGO is presented below:

1. The representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is the Officer of Community-Based Protection Centre Carole El Sayed. UNHCR was established in 1950 as a global organization that helps millions of refugees around the world. The UNHCR believes that one of the means of sustaining refugees' lives is to encourage them to use their creativity. For this reason, initiatives, workshops, and exhibitions were run or funded by UNHCR, such as Youth with Refugees Art Contest, Dreams of Humanity, The Za'atari Project, the Exile Voices project, and Artists for Refugees (UNHCR, n.d). In 2021, UNHCR gathered 16000 artwork and football designs from 100 countries related to the "Together through Sport" theme as part of the Youth with Refugees Art Contest initiative. The winning balls were published for sale on Alive

and Kicking's website. Football designs and other illustrations were also put on display in a 3D digital exhibition, where the age of participants ranged between 10-30. Other projects include photography, drawings, writing poetry, painting wheelbarrows and tents, and creating kites in refugee camps. UNHCR also focuses on empowering women through art initiatives. For instance, the 2019 edition of the "Art Stands with Refugees" program was dedicated to celebrating the social participation, economic empowerment, and strength of refugee women and girls. The original artworks done by women and girls, mainly paintings, sculptures and carvings, prints and multiples, drawings, photography, and scrolls, screens and fan paintings, were auctioned through the Made 51 project on the Live Auctioneers platform.

2. The representative of Peace of Art is the president of the NGO Vera Al Mawla. POA was established in 2016 in North Bekaa (Baalbeck-Hermel). The objective of Peace of Art is to use art as a tool to create peace, improve society, and help youth become leaders and change-makers through art education. The NGO focuses on art training (music, drawings, filmmaking, photography, and theatre) and civic training (leadership skills, citizenships, acceptance, diversity, and conflict mediation) to transform a culture of discrimination, extremism, violence and ignorance, into one of acceptance, tolerance and freedom (Peace of Art, n.d.). The titles of their projects give an indication of their objectives, such as "Art Against Violence (AAV)", "We Rise Through Art", "Art Rise Against Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV)", and "Art Against Discrimination" Initiative. The age of participants depends on the type and objective of the initiative. The age of participants of "Art Against Violence (AAV)" range between 15 and 29, coming from different areas

in the Bekaa. Participants of AAV create their own artworks, such as pieces of theater, short films, music bands, photography, and drawing exhibitions. The objective of the initiative is to build youth's capacities as active agents of peace, fighting extremism and violence in all forms through art activities. Another art initiative "We Rise through Art" focuses on training including psychosocial support, drawing, percussion and music, drama, dance, and sport. Forty Lebanese and Syrian children and young voices were engaged in this project, ages 7-16. The aim of such an initiative is to create a space for resilient youth and children, to express themselves through arts and stand with each other to overcome the Beirut explosion in 2020 in Karantina area. The latest project of POA is "Peace Microphone Podcast", a local podcast based in the Baalbek-Hermel area. The aim of such a project is to deliver the voices of youth across the neglected area and to empower youth to highlight community problems and find non-violent practices to solve it (Peace of Art, 2022).

3. The representative of Seenaryo is the Head of Arts Lama Amine. Seenaryo was founded in 2015 in Beirut. It supports marginalized groups to thrive in communities in Lebanon and Jordan through theatre and play-making. The organization has reached approximately 19,554 total beneficiaries (children, youth, and women) as of 2021. It has produced fifty-nine theatre productions which include *As If Nothing Happened* in December 2021, *31/12* in June 2021, and *The Metamorphosis* in September 2019. These shows were written and performed by youth in Lebanon from different nationalities. Seenaryo has also trained 800 teachers to support learning through play-making (Seenaryo, 2021).

Seenaryo works with children, youth, women, and teachers, and its projects are divided into two sections. The first section focuses on theatre for children, youth, and women, in which participants write their own scripts and play. The latest theatre project is named "The Weaving of Threads" to encourage women to express their feelings and concerns. The second section is play-based learning, in which they support teachers of 3-8-year-olds to deliver their curriculum through story, music, and play. This includes the Seenaryo Playkit phone app that contains videos, music tracks, and flashcards. Playkit has been delivered to over 140 schools and NGOs, transforming classrooms for over 30,000 children. Most of the Seenaryo projects are led by facilitators who train as part of the process. Seenaryo launches projects in different cities in Lebanon. For instance, "As If Nothing Happened" was located in Saida- Ishbilia Theatre, and presented in December 3-4 of 2021. From May until June 4, they organized a devised play by youth in Lebanon named "31\12" at Beit El Fan Theatre-Tripoli. Moreover, the "Tilka" project was displayed in Sunflower Theatre- Beirut in July 3 & 4 of 2021. The projects mentioned above are all devised by youth in Lebanon. In many cases, artists present their plays in different settings and cities.

4. The representative of Tafaol Association is the art director Khaled Al- Omary. Tafaol is a civil society organization established in 2017 based in central and western Bekaa. It provides means of support to enhance the living situation of Lebanese people, Syrian and Palestinian Refugees, and people with no identity through small projects and empowerment programs which include artworks (Tafaol, n.d). "Recycling Lebanon's Future" was one of the projects in partnership with Tafaol in which twenty youth students (Lebanese and refugees) participated to produce embroidered pillowcases, toys, scarves

and knitted dolls from recycled materials. The geographic coverage of Tafaol is located in different regions in Bekaa: Hawsh Al Harimeh, Qab Elias, Omariyah, Khyara, West Bekaa, and Chtoura. One of the core values of Tafaol is creativity and empowerment. Creativity means all forms of handmade crafts, jewelry, interior design, etc. Tafaol seeks to secure a decent life for all people, mainly the most vulnerable among them, especially children and women.

In addition to the interviews, this research analyzes the project “Art against Violence” by POA since it included 300 participants from Syria and Lebanon, which is a significant number to study. The project was also a fair reflection of the targeted population and the question in study.

2.5 Analysis

Thematic analysis is used to analyze a qualitative data, in which the researcher identifies patterns and themes across data sets (Braun and Clarke, 2014). Interviews were transcribed and data was divided in relevance to each of the sub-research questions/interview questions. Themes were gathered based on common ideas or words by the interviewees. The aim of identifying the main themes was to answer the overarching research question. In addition, unexpected common main ideas were highlighted and analyzed.

With respect to archiving, all data was safely stored on the researcher’s laptop. A hard copy was also kept in a sealed and restricted document in order to avoid loss of information. Moreover, all stored files were destroyed after accomplishing the academic work paper.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

In order to apply one of the basic conditions in research ethics in LAU, I obtained the approval of Institutional Review Board from the Lebanese American University (IBR). IRB is responsible for the review and approval of research projects involving human subjects "to ensure that the proposed research conducted under its auspices encompasses the ethical principles of the Belmont Report and the protections provided by the regulations and guidelines governing research" (LAU, n.d.).

I was aware of not exploiting any information during the interviews for having a better academic work, such as taking pictures the representatives don't want to show or adding data that are not mentioned by them. My goal was to represent the situation rather than my thesis, and this could be reached by objective and accurate content analysis.

My interviewees were free to stop their interviews at any without considering benefit or potential risk. Some of the names of Syrians refugee youth mentioned in the narratives and stories were changed for anonymity and confidentiality reasons.

2.7 Thesis Map

This thesis is constructed as follows: the next chapter goes over the literature review.

This thesis is constructed as follows: the next chapter goes over the literature review. It introduces the theoretical framework associated with the research topic and summarizes previous studies relevant to the main theoretical pillars. Also included in this chapter is discussion of the structural relationship between Lebanese and Syrians, the Lebanese response plan towards Syrian influx, and the impact of the Lebanese plan on Syrian Refugee youth lives in Lebanon. The fourth chapter analyzes data and themes based on the interviews conducted for this academic

paper. The last chapter gives a clear understanding of the main findings and answers the research question, as well as gives recommendations for policy makers and organizations that seek to improve Syrian refugee youth in Lebanon.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Literature Review

The current literature makes a solid case that arts or creative-based projects facilitate self-expression for refugees and asylum seekers who often have little voice in defining their refugee experience. Then it moves to explain the role of art as a form of mediation for refugees who face distorted scenes in their memories of the war zones they fled. Finally, the literature including findings about artistic Syrians for whom art improves their lives in and outside Lebanon.

Creative acts include painting, writing, dancing, art craft, music, film and image-making, which are defined as "symbolic languages representing reality through metaphorical forms – using text, voice, gesture, rhythm or image" (Jones, 2018:11). Creativity transforms people's lives through three stages: self-healing the wounds of the past, learning how to access endurance and power in the present, and creating new meanings and identities in the present and for the future (Jones, 2018). Creative self-expression can be fundamental to adapting with uncontrollable external circumstances and a transformational process towards change, empowerment, public health and social integration (Jones, 2018). Creative practices and activities bring joy and spreads hope for a brighter future. Research shows that adult artists are much more likely to strive to improve their community (Bergner, 2019). Especially for refugees, art is a platform for them to reach out to the world and inform what they have witnessed in the

wartime in their country (Bergner, 2019). Art identifies cultural norms and explores power dynamics that contribute to the development of individuals (refugee as well as non-refugee) well-being, which motivates collective, social and political shifts. "Art-based projects operate within complex social and political systems" (Phillips, 2019:13) and can help change the environments created by those systems, if not the systems themselves.

3.2 Art: Survival Tool in Detention Centers

Ahmed (2017) describes art as a survival tool inside detention centers. He elaborates that refugees and asylum seekers inside the Villawood Immigration Detention Centre in Australia have no information about their release date so that they lose hope and start showing signs of mental illness. When a non-profit organization first established an art project named "The Refugee Art Project", refugees portraits showed a high level of depression, suicidal tendencies, and self-harm. However, art has played a vital role in "reconciling experiences of personal and collective trauma" (Ahmed, 2017:24). Moreover, Ahmed (2014) indicates that art might challenge preconceptions about the refugee crisis, suggesting that artworks by refugees can alter Australians' perception of the issue so that they think more ethically about refugees seeking asylum in their country. Likewise, Khoo (2017) explains that inside detention rooms, where there are restrictive rules such as: no cameras, no phones, and no journalists allowed visiting; art is not only an expressive tool of trauma, but also a relational, in which incarcerated artists create an ethical and emotional encounter with audiences living outside through the emotions translated in their artwork. Moreover, Derosa (2012) explores that art offers a chance to rebuild communication skills inside detention centers by sitting with friends and talk for hours, "art

projects can help them immerse themselves in an activity, then it's a good thing" (Derosa, 2012).

3.3 Art Therapy

Two thirds of the Syrians from inside and outside Syria suffer from emotional disorders including anxiety, depression, and high numbers of Syrians were diagnosed with a psychotic illnesses and non-post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), a report by International Medical Corps (INC) states (Jefee-Bahloul, 2015). The report concludes that mental health services are important for those refugees to complete their lives, as "those with mental illness often struggle to complete the daily tasks needed to meet basic needs, raise children or have supportive relationships with others", notes Inka Weissbecker, International Medical Corps Mental Health and Psychosocial Advisor and Co-Author of the report. Weissbecker adds that "this is why INC is providing mental health services and psychosocial support to the children, women and men affected by the crisis in Syria"Jefee-Bahloul (2015) indicates that Creativity-based group programs use arts to attract refugees to contribute in workshops, social events, groups, and other recovery-oriented activities to support their healing process. Jefee-Bahloul (2015) points out that recovery programs by art restore relationships, build healthy interaction, manage stress, and develop coping mechanisms.

Arja (2015) narrates a story of a Syrian artist Diala Brisly who has created artworks in a refugee camp in Aarsal, a town in Lebanon. The writer says that in 2014, Brisly decided to spread joy and happiness in an area characterized by poverty and underdevelopment by transforming the walls and the tents into canvases. Brisly painted the school tents since children were skipping classes, and she succeeded to attract children again to attend schools. The artist told HuffPost Arabi that the project gave the children "a taste of the home they left behind and of the parks

they used to play in" (Arja, 2015). From Brisly's own perspective, there were no efficient ways to encourage families in the camps who were experiencing depression, loss, and severe sadness, to express their anger and transcend miserable situation of the camps, except through painting (Arja, 2015). However, Arja (2015) indicates two problems when spreading and normalizing the importance of art therapy. First, people in the Middle East consider art to be a luxury, even though it has an important role in supporting a well-balanced life. The second problem is that art projects do not receive the support of the parents because they underestimate of the importance of art therapy.

UNICEF Lebanon established an art project named "Haneen", a word in Arabic means the nostalgia of everything we have lost. It is a collective project of Lebanese and Syrian artists on the impact of war on childhood. Thirty-nine poems and stories were written by Syrian children about their trauma and their daily struggle in different informal camps. The project aim is to give the refugees a way of healing through expressing themselves and through writing. Refugees are in need to express their problems, they cannot bury them inside, and this is why art therapy initiatives like "Haneen" help them come across these hardships (Tracing Voices, 2019).

When the children wrote the poems, the group "Haneen" promised them that they would do something with it, so they came up with an idea to illustrate their words by Lebanese and Syrian artists. One of the phrases written by a Syrian child was "my homeland is now destroyed, wretched to the ground", another phrase was so touchable "did my doll grow up too early, like I did"? "Haneen" is a generational transmission of memory through art, where artists who have lived the war in their childhood (in the Lebanese war) are echoing Syrian children, who are

living the war in present time. The best part of the project is when the children had the chance to present their words and stories in an exhibition. "Our voice was finally heard" one refugee said, and added with a pride in her eyes "people were complimenting and encouraging us". Syrians displaying their thoughts and experiences at an exhibition were proud and delighted that they were allowed to convey their messages without restrictions, revealing the severe truth of the tragedies of war. It is a message of waking up, a message of peace that those children in need, a message of hope and communication (Tracing Voices, 2019). "I was not aware that I have all this talent, I discovered I had ability to write", a Syrian refugees contributing in " Haneen" project stated with a big smile and glittering eyes.

3.4 Syrian Artists and Globalization

Syrian artists were affected adversely due to the continuous conflicts and political situation in Syria. 85% of the galleries and art venues in Damascus have halted business indefinitely, and artists were faced with two choices: either to quit their artwork or to move to another country (Ginanne, 2014). Ginanne (2014) states that many of the Syrian artists chose Beirut as an alternative chance to rebuild their future, because it is geographically and culturally close to them. Hence, whenever one is in the capital of Lebanon; one can see many galleries showing arts done by Syrian artists. "Really, Beirut is like the oxygen for Syrian artists, the de facto capital of the Syrian art scene", Samer Kozah, who closed his art gallery in Damascus and moved to Beirut, said. He continued, "Jordan closed its doors, Egypt did not give visas, and Turkey was also complicated for artists" (Ginanne, 2014). Indeed, Syrian Artists who chose to complete their artwork and moved to Lebanon utilized their creative talent as a tool to survive and resettle. On one hand, Syrian refugees were excited and sought to connect with the world

and contribute to globalization. On the other hand, international institutions were interested in collecting Syrian art in which it become a staple, with the help of the art galleries in Lebanon" (Ginanne, 2014). Founders of the art galleries in Lebanon launched art exhibitions to represent the Syrian art world widely like in London, Paris, and Dubai. One of the founders of art galleries is a Beirut-based Syrian civil engineer Raghad Mardini who opened his art house "ART Residence Alley" in 2012, located in Lebanon's mountains. Mardini decided to provide Syrian artists with the space, materials, accommodations, and finance as a humanitarian message with an artistic dimension. "Our artists focus on peace in order to highlight the positive image of a creative and talented Syrian youth", Mardini said, and continued, "It is a gateway to a new life" (Syrian artists find space in Lebanon's mountains, 2013). Syrian artists who have produced art pieces in Art Residence Alley have been invited to participate in shows in Washington. Due to this, artists have come in contact with a wider audience. Mardini's next plan was to take the exhibition to Jordan, Berlin and Spain. "The more it will be seen the more it will impact", Mardini highlighted (Syrian artists find space in Lebanon's mountains, 2013).

Hage (2016) talks about one of the art centers that attracted many Syrian artists, named Ayyam Gallery. The director of this center, Rania Mounzer pointed out that among the Syrian artists who settled in Beirut, many have had the chance to move Dubai, Germany or the Netherlands. For instance, Nihad Al Turk was chosen to move to London with the support of the United Nations, and another one is Oussama Diab who settled in the Netherlands. Others left Beirut to the Gulf countries and Europe.

Another case that shows how art can affect perfectly Syrian refugees' lives is the case of Syrian refugee Zain Al Rafeaa who played the main role in the movie "Capharnaum" directed by

the Lebanese Nadine Labaki (Martinez, 2018). When a "documentary-like realism" movie succeeds in delivering the message of a homeless child, Zain, through the boy's exceptional talent in acting, Zain and his family got noticed by the West and resettled in Norway (Martinez, 2018). "I have a bed to sleep on, my dream comes true and I started going to school!" Zain said (UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency 2018).

3.5 Art Reduces Tension

Very few camps were established in Lebanon for Syrian refugees, causing many Syrian refugees to live among Lebanese citizens who are as impoverished as they are. There is "a constant high risk of tension among the host communities and Syrian refugees over competition for services and limited resources", the U.N. humanitarian coordinator for Lebanon, Philippe Lazzarini, said (Schlein, 2016). In Lebanon, one in four or five people is a Syrian refugee (CARE International, 2018). Although international communities provide Lebanon with funds and Syrian refugees with humanitarian aids to survive, there is a need for maintaining projects that support social cohesion and inclusion. "There is a risk always that if we loosen our attention, this might trigger host community fatigue and social tension will follow", Lazzarini added (Schlein, 2016).

Forty-one percent of Syrians have considered suicide as an option to the hardships they face as refugees in Lebanon, according to a report done by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and Save the Children International (SCI) (Chahine, Al Masri, Abi Samra and Abla, 2014). The extended stay for refugees in Lebanon has transformed

the relationship between Lebanese citizens and Syrians along different stages, from willing to help to dissatisfaction. Moreover, the report illustrates how adolescents have been affected by the Syrian crises when displaced in another country and found that two thirds of Syrian refugee youth do not have Lebanese friends. Syrians believe that the behavior of the Lebanese towards them is both negative and positive and the reason of the negative attitude is due to economic conditions, especially competition over employment. Despite Lebanese feelings of prejudice and fear of the number and duration of Syrian refugee stays, empathetic signs were nonetheless noticed (Chahine, Al Masri, Abi Samra and Abla, 2014).

One of the UNHCR actions to respond to youth concerns in Lebanon and to promote social cohesion is by supporting projects that help them build self-confidence, learn positive communication skills, and practice tolerance. UNHCR said that it works in creating recreational activities, including music, drawing, and sport events to bring Lebanese and Syrians together (Chahine, Al Masri, Abi Samra and Abla, 2014).

At the Zaatari Refugee Camp, 2000 Syrian and Jordanian youngsters and international artists have been contributed in a project titled "Colours of Resilience" to colorfully decorate carts with mural painting. This street art brings joy into the everyday chores of life. "One of the main aims of our project is to ensure social cohesion between the two communities," Suranga Mallawa, deputy country director of Agency for Technical Cooperation & Development (ACTED) in Jordan said (Emam, 2014). Here we see that such everyday art can have more than one positive outcome.

In conclusion, refugees-who live in a state of permanent limbo-use art as a way to heal themselves from the consequences of war. Art allows refugees to convey their messages and shows the unseen hardships in refugees' journey, as well; in some cases it changes the lives of artistic Syrians. It is by art that refugees self-defend themselves from any new suffering related mainly to social cohesion and inclusion.

CHAPTER FOUR

SYRIAN SITUATION IN LEBANON

4.1 Structural Relationships between Different Groups

As stated in chapter three, Social cohesion between Lebanese and Syrians has been difficult to obtain due mainly to economic reasons. However, this chapter discusses the structural relationships between different groups currently in Lebanon and indicates some reasons (political, psychological and economic) why Lebanese perceive Syrian refugees as a threat. The chapter also explains how the Lebanese response to the Syrian refugee crisis, mainly the strict entry policy and the no-camps policy, has led to informality and illegality. The chapter ends with research findings about the effect of the Lebanese response strategies on Syrians' lives and situation in Lebanon.

Vallejo-Martin, Canto, Garcia & Novas (2020) state that the level of threat and hostility towards arrived immigrants are measured according to the nature of the relation between groups (Vallejo-Martin et al., 2020). They explain that the reaction and attitude of a majority group against out-groups vary according to the characteristics of the out-groups and on the perceptions of threat they cause on economic resources, properties, or values (Vallejo-Martin et al., 2020). In academic terms, the fear of others is labeled as "out-group hostility" (Cottrell and Neuburg, 2005). Intergroup Threat Theory (ITT) divides sources of threats into two categories: symbolic and realistic threats. ITT defines realistic threat as "the perception of competition between in-group and out-group for scarce resources, such as employment, social services, education and

healthcare". However, ITT explains that symbolic threat focuses more on morals and values, in which "perception of differences in values and beliefs that members of out-groups are thought to have" (Cottrell and Neuburg, 2005).

The Stereotype Content Model indicates that judgment is a result of structural relationships between different groups. These relationships are determined according to groups competing for statuses and resources. Perception of other groups varies according to two aspects: competence and warmth (Leach, Ellemers, and Barreto, 2007). Studies have concluded that warmth includes two dimensions: morality and sociability. Sociability is defined as the ability and desire to interact with other people or groups. On the other hand, morality is the degree to which the behavior of the person or group is perceived within a specific community as proper (Leach, Ellemers, and Barreto, 2007). In fact, the dimension of morality has proved to have the highest influence on the perception of other groups. A recent study on refugees in the Spanish context examines the importance of "perceived morality in prejudice" (Vallejo-Martin et. al, 2020: 3) for immigrants and refugees. In other words, when citizens in host societies perceive a high level of out-group morality, the out-group (migrants, displaced people or refugees) no longer becomes a threat (Vallejo-Martin et. al, 2020).

Regarding the Lebanese society's perception of Syrian refugees, Alsharabati and Nammour (2015) affirm that the Lebanese perceive refugees as a threat to their economy, financial status and employment. The study also concludes that Syrians trigger feelings of fear and resentment among Lebanese citizens, reactions stemming from previous experiences of the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990) and the Syrian occupation of Lebanon (1990-2005) (Meier 2014) where "a vivid memory of humiliation, killings, and arbitrary power over Lebanese citizens remains" (Meier 2014: 382). The Lebanese mostly associate Syrians with the Assad

regime and its brutal method of rule. This biased preconception has had a negative effect on the way the Lebanese government responds to the Syrian refugees in the country, and it is the reason why Lebanese citizens are reluctant to accept those refugees (Meier 2014).

4.2 Lebanese Response Plan Toward Syrian Influx

Nassar & Stel (2019) argue that the Lebanese response to the Syrian refugee crisis is characterized by informality or "institutional ambiguity", which means "an unpredictable, hybrid form of governance that emerges at the continuously shifting interface between formal and informal forms of regulation" (Nassar & Stel, 2019: 44). Institutional ambiguity is a result of chaos and is intensified by the lack of the Lebanese government's measurements and resources as a consequence of "dysfunctional sectarian system" (Nassar & Stel, 2019: 44). The Lebanese government refuses to establish formal refugee camps; instead, it implements strict regulations related to residence, registration, and work. In October 2014, the Lebanese government issued a policy paper on Syrian refugees displacement (carried out in January 2015) to limit the number of refugees settling in Lebanese areas (Cherri, Gonzalez, and Delgado, 2016). The Lebanese government claimed at that time that the policy's aim is to "ensure humanitarian protection and assistance for Syrian 'de facto' refugees and the poorest Lebanese, strengthening the associated capacity of national and local public service delivery systems, and support Lebanon's economic, social, institutional, and environmental stability" (Janmyr, 2016).

4.2.1 Entry Strict Policy

Janmyr (2016) explains that the policy allows Syrians to enter Lebanon territory only if they suits a specific entry category, including any of the following: business tourism, landlords, shopping, tenants, studying, transiting to a third country, displaced persons, medical treatment,

embassy appointments, and those holding a pledge of responsibility (Lebanese sponsor). However, the "displaced persons" category requires compliance with one of the other categories or with the government's "humanitarian exceptions criteria" which states, "[u]naccompanied and/or separated children with a parent already registered in Lebanon; persons living with disabilities with a relative already registered in Lebanon; persons with urgent medical needs for whom treatment in Syria is unavailable; persons who will be resettled to third countries" (Janmyr, 2016: 68). Hence, Syrians fleeing armed conflicts, persecution, or violence are not allowed to seek protection and safety in Lebanon. Furthermore, Syrians crossing borders to Lebanon should hold valid documented papers, which can be expensive, time-consuming, and difficult to attain (Janmyr 2016). Janmyr (2016) describes these regulations as extremely illogical, strict, and vague policies imposed on Syrian refugees.

Another difficulty Syrian refugees face due to implementing the new policy is the confusing process of residency renewal for lawful status. This complex, burdensome process of gaining residency involves paper work, expensive fees (\$200) and often inconsistent policies (Grandi, Mansour, & Holloway, 2018). In addition, finding sponsors for unregistered refugees is a challenge that worsens the situation; consequently, these prohibitions force refugees to resort to illegal options (Abi Khalil & Bacchin, 2015). Thus, Fakhoury (2017) concludes that the policy paper on Syrian refugee displacement has established a form of "discretionary governance measures and increased refugee vulnerability by restrictive, tedious and changing procedures, leading to migrant illegality and creating new forms of precariousness "(Fakhoury, 2017: 687).

4.2.2 No Camps Policy

The no-camps policy is a decision resulting from the Lebanese government's fear stemming from the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon, as the government believes that formal camps might lead to the permanent settlement of Syrian refugees (Fakhoury, 2017). It is also assumed that Syrian refugees would use camps as safe havens for terrorist activities (Nassar & Stel, 2019). As a result, refugees have often been forced to live in informal settlements and overcrowded conditions, such as collective shelters, unfinished buildings, and wood-framed houses (Grandi, et al., 2018). Moreover, Syrian refugees in Lebanon suffer from strict regulations related to restrictions on access to work and freedom of movement (Grandi et al., 2018). As the armed conflicts in Syria have escalated, it has become clear that returning home is not a viable option for most refugees. As such, the displacement of Syrians has become a burden on the Lebanese government and host communities. As a result, tensions between refugees and less affluent host communities have intensified (Fakhoury, 2017).

4.2.3 Effects of the Lebanese Response on Syrian Refugees

The Lebanese government's response to Syrian refugees has had several effects on the refugees' situation in Lebanon. To begin with, the refusal to recognize Syrians as "refugees" has deprived them of legal residency. The formalization of informality has also reinforced vulnerability, creating a protection gap that encourages exploitation. For example, Syrians face difficulties in obtaining documented papers, and thus, they depend on landlords, sponsors, and local state authorities; this "thereby abandons refugees to extreme forms of marginalization and abuse" (Nassar & Stel, 2019: 49). In fact, strict regulations implemented by the Lebanese

government impinged a variety of human rights (Amnesty International, 2015).

In addition, the illegality of Syrian refugees' status has made it difficult for them to move freely since they are at risk of arrest at checkpoints. This fact, combined with the overwhelming number of settling refugees in Lebanon, has created a security process that reinforces the refugees' marginalization (Dionigi, 2016). For instance, municipalities imposing curfews to limit the refugees' mobility is one of the examples that show how the Lebanese officials treated the Syrian refugee case as a security threat rather than a humanitarian issue (Abi Khalil and Bacchin, 2015).

Syrian refugees are also exposed to a border policy that prohibits back and forth visits to their home country in which they might seek cheaper goods, free medical care, civil documentation, passport renewals, or attend family events. As a result, most Syrian refugees live below the poverty line since humanitarian aid alone cannot fulfill their expenses, including the refugees who have jobs (Abi Khalil & Bacchin, 2015).

Furthermore, many employers take advantage of the illegal status of refugees and their lack of documentation, thus threatening to withhold payments, fire them from work, report them to authorities, and even prohibit them to seek assistance from local authorities (Abi Khalil & Bacchin, 2015). Consequently, Syrian refugees in Lebanon live in constant fear and uncertainty. They cannot maintain connections with their homeland, overcome the harsh situations they face, nor obtain the rights granted to them by the refugee status. Although humanitarian organizations try to remedy the situation, their attempts have remained inefficient (Nassar & Stel, 2019). The illegality status and the informal settlement of refugees have made it difficult for humanitarian

organizations to improve the living conditions of this marginalized group. Nevertheless, the no-camp policy by the Lebanese government could not prevent the establishment of many informal camps and scattered tents. Thus, the illegal status of refugees, along with the absence of effective policy and official camps, has put the protection of self-settled refugees and those in informal settlements in danger because they “do not have recourse to law in case they are evicted” (Nassar & Stel, 2019, p. 50).

In conclusion, the Lebanese response towards Syrian refugees has been strict and vague, exacerbating the situation instead of treating it properly. Such policies have had negative consequences on Syrians and Lebanese themselves, leading Syrians to "illegality and distancing the Lebanese and Syrian communities from each other. Thus, it was crucial to study how artistic activities could relieve Syrians who are experiencing uncertainty, and soften the relationship between Lebanese and Syrians, and findings are discussed below.

CHAPTER FIVE

RESEARCH RESULTS\FINDINGS

This chapter includes a critical examination of the gathered data and conclusions of the thesis, eliciting vital information about the significance of shared art projects by NGOs in altering the lived experiences of certain Syrian refugee youth in Lebanon. Tables in the chapter represent the three common themes by the four representatives about the importance of art in Syrian youth lives and within the Lebanese community. I used inductive coding in order to capture the themes. This coding type is better to involve research participants in the analysis process. After transcribing the interviews, I started to identify patterns across the different interviews to drive themes, and then I reviewed and named the themes. The first section describes the profile of the representative and their role in managing art projects. The second part discusses common narratives between the representatives under theme 1, theme 2, and theme 3. The Last section introduces the relationship between art and self, the economic empowerment of refugees.

As indicated before in the methodology section, Syrian youth refugees are a vulnerable demographic. The rules of the IRB office at LAU prohibit conducting interviews with them for research reasons. To get a comprehensive understanding of the experiences of Syrian refugee youth in Lebanon, I selected for my thesis to use NGOs as an entrance point. Despite the fact that it was incredibly difficult to locate NGOs that were still doing art initiatives during the COVID Pandemic, it was possible to do so. I maintained that my study findings will be based on current observations and data on Syrian refugees. Basme and Zaitoone NGO said, "Unfortunately, we have ceased all art-related activities since the epidemic began". Some institutions placed me on

wait for days and weeks without responding. Others, such as Act4hope NGO, have said that they are relocating to a different location and that their art directors are abroad. After doing months of extensive study, I was able to conduct four interviews. In-depth interviews with four art directors presented me with examples, success stories, photographs, films, and narratives of Syrians youth engaging in art programs.

5.1 Profile of the Interviewers

Although finding NGOs who had established recent art projects was very challenging, the next phase of the mission related to conducting interviews was uncomplicated. The time of each interview was specified as 30 minutes. I explained to the representative the nature of the above research study, the aim, and its benefits. They welcomed me in their places and had the chance to view by myself the rehearsal rooms where art projects were taking place. Furthermore, the representative allowed me to see some artwork pieces done by the refugees.

In this thesis, it is essential to discuss the function of each interviewer selected expressly to explain why data collection was conducted via their recorded information about participants.

Carole El Sayed

Carole El Sayed, UNCR Community Based Protection Officer, is my first interviewer. In 2015, she and her team earned the UNHCR Excellence in Service Award for Community Service Achievements. The official UNHCR statement announcing the prize noted, "Her (Carole's) team was lauded for its exceptional achievement in empowering refugees to take a major role in their

safety via the Refugee Outreach Volunteer program". Recently, in 2022, she was one of the presenters at the AUB NGO Forum 2022 to discuss the refugee issue in Lebanon.

Vera El Mawla

Vera El Mawla is the president and co-founder of the non-governmental organization Peace of Art. She is a musician and trainer who has worked with children and youth from a variety of backgrounds. She has served as the organizer and artistic director of several pieces and art projects inside the NGO. She represented Peace of Art at the United Nations HQ in New York and the Asilah Arab forum in Morocco

Lama Amine

Lama Amine, the Seenaryo organization's head of the arts, is my third interviewee. Lama Amine administers Seenaryo's music and theater activities. She's a performer, movement director, choreographer, instructor, and activist. She delivers art and education so that participants' voices are heard and they feel empowered to utilize it. Amine and her team at Seenaryo collaborated with 150 people in Lebanon and Jordan to develop and shoot a unique music video during the lockdown. As part of Refugee Week, the video debuted in June 2020.

Khaled Amoury

Khaled Amoury is the art director for Tafaol's projects. He directs a team of participants, analyses their requirements, monitor their artwork, produces reports after each session, develops plans, and designs graphics for campaigns.

Considering the four interviews, three recurring themes that address my study topic were identified. The first theme is that arts help Syrian refugee youth in Lebanon build confidence and strengthen their personalities, the second theme is that arts encourage the concept of accepting diversity by creating a space to interact with others, and the third theme is how art helps to dispel stereotypes between refugees (Syrians) and citizens (Lebanese) living in the same community.

Before talking about theme one, it is important to highlight that the analysis is based on youth participants, with an age range between 15 till 29. The representatives ensured that they consider gender equality when choosing the participants of their art initiatives. Most of the participants in the art projects by the four NGOs have obtained a high school diploma, and few are undergraduates. Concerning marital status, the majority are either engaged or never married.

5.2 Theme One: Building Confidence

The four delegates emphasized the significance of art projects in aiding Syrian refugee youth to connect and express themselves, mingle, discuss their tales or messages or problems, use their abilities and build new ones, and, most importantly, show their work in public. When all of these conditions are met, Syrian youth gain confidence.

El Sayed remarked, "When young Syrian refugees believe they have something worth displaying, they feel confident. Confidence is crucial to everyone's existence". Similarly, El Mawla said, "the concept of peace of art began in a neglected region of northern Bekaa where there is no room for young people to express themselves". She continued, "Initially, the majority of Syrians were reticent and did not participate, but later they were able to discuss their difficulties, express their opinions, and offer them to the public".

Lama Amine illustrated how art enhances the individuality of the examined category. Once upon a time, she directed a play, and the audience was packed. A Syrian participant who volunteered to sell her kid in front of the crowd was a major character. She lacked the confidence to address it with her family since they may murder her, so she did it on stage. Amine: "This was a memorable moment since she was so courageous and self-assured to discuss intimate things about her personal life in front of everyone". In 2021, the Seenaryo Impact Report said that among 184 trainees in theatrical work, 52% felt more confident in their ability to address behavior concerns in workshops. 95% of youth people believed that they had acquired abilities that will be valuable in their future careers (Seenaryo, 2021).

The next section uses a refugee narratives (as retold by the NGO representatives that I interviewed) to highlight how refugee participation in art projects can help build confidence.

Narratives

A Syrian refugee Fida, a Youth Theatre Participant in Seenaryo theatre noted that: "it means a great deal to be a member of this group since I come from a conservative home and am unlike the rest. My self-confidence has grown substantially, and I now find myself at the theater. The play allowed us to express ourselves freely and gave me the confidence to say anything I want in front of others. Since then, Fida has been recruited as a designer for our children's Showbuilds and an assistant facilitator for the Women's Theatre program at Seenaryo.

Hanan is a 16-year-old Syrian girl whose family fled to Lebanon, but her dissident journalist father was returned across the border. Hanan initially had difficulty pronouncing her name and was continuously worried. As soon as she discovered we were putting on a play, she showed excitement, and days later she opted to do a solo. Hanan was unable to participate in

theatre or music in Syria because she believed she could not perform in front of an audience.

However, theatrical training dramatically altered her demeanor.

Art has been impactful in Syrian refugees' youth lives for building confidence, in which refugees become more able to discover what they can do on stage, bring up their problems in public with no fear, share their own feelings and opinions, and freely talk to others in the Lebanese community.

As table 1 indicates, the four representative states that art brings immense confident and pride to refugees.

Table 1 1: Art and Building Confidence

Representative\NGO	Theme\Confidence
Carole El Sayed\UNHCR	Syrian refugees who have something that is worth showcasing feel more confident
Vera Al Mawla\POA	At the beginning, most of the Syrians were shy and not participating, but then they were able to talk about their problems, express their ideas and present it to the audience

Lama Amine\Seenaryo	Art help refugee know themselves from inside to outside and to be who they wants to be in lives; art helps to build up their personality
Khaled Amoury\Tafaol	Art has a positive effect on Syrians financially and psychologically; art builds confidence, appreciation, and morality

5.3 Theme Two: Encouraging Diversity

The rise of hatred against Syrian refugees, primarily during the last three years, and the economic collapse in Lebanon, precludes them from engaging in activities outside of their houses or in Lebanese society. "As the number of Syrian migrants in Lebanon has increased, so has the hostility directed at them, with direct attacks against informal encampments and public restrictions on Syrian mobility through localized curfews, military checkpoints, and restrictions on access to public space and transportation" (Wane and Larkin, 2022)

However, art initiatives provide a forum for communication between individuals of diverse origins, nations, faiths, and even political viewpoints, not just between Syrians and Lebanese but also among Syrians of different backgrounds. The objective of shared art projects art is to demonstrate that we have nothing to fear from diversity. "We always include civic education into art projects, with an emphasis on dispute resolution and tolerance," said El Mawla.

She continued, "In Lebanon, there are no clubs or organizations that foster social integration between Syrians and Lebanese, therefore the only way to link them is via the space created by NGOs through art initiatives". It is intriguing to observe that this space extends beyond the geographic boundaries of the NGOs and continues after the project has finished. Representatives of nongovernmental organizations concurred that Syrians and Lebanese participants often grow close and that their connection subsequently evolves into friendship. They collaborate outside of planned programming, form an art group, and build social media profiles to promote the music and theater in their creative group. Throughout this process, Syrians and Lebanese come to appreciate and respect each other's cultures, recognize where the limits are, and most significantly, realize that there is no need to hate each other just because they are different. In the end, Syrians and Lebanese accept standards that were not previously accepted in a particular group (e.g., different dialects, mentalities, expressions, clothing, etc.). "We are all Arabs who speak the same language, we are all human beings who must respect and care for one another", as said by Lama Amine. In the end, they become part of each other's psychological and social networks. Art projects offer a chance for Syrian refugee youth to make new social links and interact with others while presenting or performing their artwork. El Mawla "we combat stress with art, variety changes the artwork into something deeper due to the many ideas originating from various backgrounds, and participants become more like family".

Seenaryo NGO said in its 2021 "Impact" report that 79% of youth expressed they will have at least one new meaningful connection with a person of a different nationality or religion as a result of the initiative (Seenaryo, 2021).

Najah from Aleppo, Syria, has participated in all three Women's Theatre programs offered by Seenaryo so far. In her spare time, she teaches football at a nearby school. She claims:

"Theatre organizes my life, my time, and my views with the people around me: occasionally I disagree with them, but I don't believe anyone's viewpoints are 100 percent the same. I do not need to concur with everyone to commit to remaining with them".

Zeinab, a Syrian member of the Seenaryo group stated, "I met a man from Beirut who does not look or sound like me, yet he is my friend".

Table two explains the link between art activities and theme two: encouraging diversity as stated by the four representatives. As mentioned in the table below, gathering people from different backgrounds in one room to produce artwork will create a safe space to interact and accept each other.

Table 1 2: Art and Diversity

NGO Representative	Theme\Accept diversity\Interaction
Carole El Sayed\UNHCR	People are not supposed to live in isolation; the nature of human beings is to be social and interact with others
Vera Al Mawla\POA	Participants start to accept norms that were not normal before in a specific community (accent, mentalities, expressions, type of clothes, etc.) everyone agrees that diversity makes their work deeper as different ideas come up
Lama Amine\Seenaryo	Participatory theatre brings people from different backgrounds into one place, where

	they share stories and create scripts; at the end, they discover that they have same struggles.
Khaled Amoury\Tafaol	Through these art programs we discover the reasons for social distancing between Syrians and Lebanese in order to break them.

5.4 Correct misconceptions\stereotypes

Theme two leads to theme three, as when diversity is accepted and dialogue is exchanged between Lebanese and Syrians, misconceptions become more clarified, and even stereotypes are fixed. Arts collaboration and interaction between refugees (Syrian) and citizens (Lebanese) in shared projects allows them to begin a dialogue about each other's perspectives and points of view, and most importantly, to correct the previous stereotypes and assumptions in a safe environment. El Sayed: "At the start of a project, people are usually apprehensive and reticent, but as time passes, you can see that the boundaries have dissolved, and they have become friends".

Jamila, a Syrian woman who participated in a UNHCR creative project, stated, "I've always assumed that I can't communicate with Lebanese people, but now that I'm playing theatre with them, I realize that they have the same difficulties that I do, and sometimes I have more privileges than Lebanese." She said, "Lebanese women are housewives just like Syrian women; they clean, have children, and take care of their husbands".

Ahmad, a Syrian youth who participated in one of the UNHCR's initiatives, said, "I am laughing with someone I have just met; we have broken down all the barriers".

A group of Lebanese, Palestinian, and Syrian youths between the ages of 15 and 20 performed Franz Kafka's *Metamorphosis* around Lebanon in the fall of 2018 and spring of 2019. The participant actors are orphans from Syria, Palestine, or Lebanon. They collaborated to interpret the tale of Franz Kafka in their time, place, and words. Al Araby Al Jadeed noted, "Many Syrians had never been friends with any Lebanese or Palestinians before. The Lebanese had never seen Shatila camp. The Palestinians didn't necessarily understand where Syrians were coming from" (Frakes, 2019).

Table three shows that art could be an "icebreaker" between Lebanese and Syrians. The representatives stated that art creates a warm environment, in which Lebanese and Syrians become more open to sharing old perceptions stemming from society and they resolve their relationships.

Table 1 3: Art and stereotypes

Representative\NGO	Theme\ clarifying stereotypes
Carole El Sayed\UNHCR	Art creates opportunity for joint collaboration and interaction for the aim of producing better artwork—this can change perceptions, especially when people are seen as resources and having helpful skills
Vera Al Mawla\POA	Artwork is a chance for Lebanese and Syrian

	to open to each other and get each other perspectives, they both could express themselves freely and no one judge them
Lama Amine\Seenaryo	We always have misconceptions between the communities that create barriers to interaction. When we bring them together, they start lowering these barriers. When we have the communities engage, we try to remove all the [negative] descriptions the society puts on refugees—we don't even use the word refugee.
Khaled Amoury\Tafaol	After participating in these programs, Syrians proved that they have a role in the Lebanese community and they can share skills and cooperate to improve the community.

5.5 Theme four: Art as an Empowerment Tool

Throughout the study, it was fascinating to examine the connection between arts and the three themes discussed. However, one more unexpected but common and in-depth theme has also emerged. The findings demonstrate that art is linked to the empowerment of refugees, mostly women, in host communities. Art for Empowerment is "A strength-based and solution-

focused conceptual framework and approach for using visual arts to encourage self-reflection, self-healing, and self-empowerment" (Kazmierczak, 2017).

Self-empowerment and economic empowerment are the two components of the empowerment process. The first section explains how art could be a catalyst for Syrian refugee youth to attain personal growth and participate in community building. The second section demonstrates how artists assist refugees to obtain employment and earn revenue.

5.5.1 Self-Empowerment: Interpersonal skills

NGO arts initiatives cover courses in interpersonal skills, including motivation, adaptability, problem-solving, presenting skills, communication, civic training, time management, and public speaking. Representatives of non-governmental organizations argue that refugee youth might be change agents for their future and their community if they are allowed to follow their dreams and play an active part in securing them.

In addition to their primary role in the artwork, Syrian refugee youth serve as facilitators who inspire others, coordinate the team's artwork, guide and assist other participants in working together to achieve the project's objective, lead art projects after gaining the necessary experience and work independently within their communities.

PULSE is an initiative aimed at empowering Syrian Arts in Exile. The Pulse project by Seenaryo educated eight prospective theatre-makers and facilitators between the ages of 19 and 30 to create a fully completed production of *Shajarat Al Durr*. The actors presented the piece in several locations and visited camps and schools. All of the facilitators created a one-hour

workshop for the youngsters who attended the play after the performance concluded. Lama Amine invigorates them and motivates them to start their initiatives in their communities.

One of the participants was Zahira (34), a Syrian refugee who fled to Lebanon in 2012. In 2017, she joined the Pulse Theatre organization. Now, she is a community leader and theatrical facilitator. Before participating in the artwork, Zahera, a single mother of two girls, experienced custody battles with her husband. Then, without assistance from her husband, she managed to raise their girls financially on her own. Zahera plans to leave Lebanon and seek a career abroad.

Another program designed in purpose of empowering Syrian refugees is named Recycling Lebanon's Future. This program is a UNICEF-supported collaboration effort with Anera and Tafaol NGOs to conserve the environment. Twenty women of various nationalities, including Syrian youngsters, participated in the production of scarves, embroidered pillows, and knitted toys from plastic containers, abandoned cups, and other recycled materials in an effort to protect the environment. This initiative demonstrated that every community has a part by combining humanitarian activity and handicrafts. According to Khaled Al Amoury, "youth between the ages of 18 and 25 begin to consider their future and their purpose in the community, and they begin to value their lives within the community" One participant said, "I can impart my knowledge to my community. I want to serve the community and get noticed".

The second section of this chapter discusses how art assisted Syrians in constructing something financially beneficial for their family and themselves.

5.5.2 Economic Empowerment: Background and Challenges

Before discussing art as a tool for economic empowerment in detail, it is crucial to emphasize the challenges faced by Syrians trying to enter into the job market in a period when Lebanon was experiencing an economic collapse and anti-Syrians speech was prevalent.

As shown in Chapter 3, the Lebanese perceive Syrian refugees as a genuine threat to their economy and jobs, as discussed earlier in the thesis .Moreover, hatred between Lebanese and Syrians has risen due to the "institutional ambiguity" or "informality" employed by the Lebanese government in dealing with the influx of Syrian refugees. The arbitrary actions and practices of the Lebanese state have exacerbated economic and social inequality between residents and refugees, prompting the Lebanese to attribute the whole instability to Syrian refugees. Locals and Syrians have fallen prey to the ineffective decision-making of the Lebanese government. Decisions made by the Lebanese government, such as "no camp" rules, prevented Lebanese and Syrians from enjoying a good life during the economic crisis. Lebanese who suffer from power outages and water shortages have suffered as a consequence of sharing utilities with Syrians, which has led to intolerance between Lebanese and Syrian refugees in many regions of Lebanon, particularly in places with a high Syrian population, such as Bekaa.

Meanwhile, the rising unemployment rate is another significant issue for Lebanese workers. Lebanese labor law does not provide social insurance and a minimum salary for Syrian employees. Employers prefer to recruit Syrian labor with lower salaries and longer work hours as a consequence of discriminatory government rules. This has not only led to an increase in the unemployment rate among Lebanese, but has also intensified competition between Lebanese and Syrians in several professions, such as agriculture, machinery, and construction. In many cases, Lebanese no longer have access to these professions, as Syrians have taken them over (ILO,

2014). This circumstance has restricted employment opportunities for Lebanese people, prompting many to blame Syrian refugees (ILO, 2014).

Khaled Amoury said, "No Lebanese attend the show for Syrians, and in certain instances, the municipality refuses to allow us to use the exhibition space and asks why all your initiatives are for Syrians exclusively". Al Amoury claimed that Lebanese society fought against Syrians to deny them the opportunity to work, sell, buy, and integrate.

Representatives stated that Lebanese participants in art projects demonstrate empathy at the end of the projects and become more cognizant that the state is to blame, which encourages Syrian participants to engage not just in the projects but also in the community as a whole. Lama Amine "When Syrians and Lebanese discuss their everyday problems, there is an outpouring of support and inquiries about how to assist. The room becomes warmer and warmer, and they turn to become family". In addition, art initiatives alter the mindset of Lebanese natives, according to Carole El Sayed: "when individuals are seen as resources and possessing talents, they connect to them a little more, which opens up the adaptability element".

5.5.3 Economic Empowerment: Compensation for Artwork

Representatives believe that the role of Syrian refugee youth in the Lebanese society depends on efforts to empower them so that they become a resource in the future. Thus, since 2019, the majority of art initiatives developed for Syrian refugee youth have two primary themes: empowerment and employment. These programs seek to provide monetary compensation in return for labor and are separated into two parts: training and selecting the most art-passionate participants in order to integrate them into the labor market and exporting Syrian artwork beyond Lebanon.

Khaled Amoury said, "We used to speak with stakeholders to find employment for Syrians, but now we host an exhibition so that Syrians may showcase their work and meet stakeholders on their own". Amoury related the story of a Syrian who said, "At first, I questioned why I was alive; life is not just eating and drinking; today I feel I can alter my circumstances and create something; I can work; I have discovered myself".

El Sayed stated "We have documented evidence and surveys showing that art helped certain women to be economically independent, as well as the community's perception of them changing, even at the household level; all of this impacts how they interact even within their own family and their ability to move around freely as independent women; artworks promote women empowerment".

There is one interesting program that gives an indication of the importance of art to empower Syrian refugees' financially, mostly women.

The MADE51 concept is a market-based strategy developed by the UNHCR to assist refugees with artisanal skills in joining global value chains. Refugees are linked with seasoned local social business partners who produce market-ready goods. In brief, it is an invention that facilitates the integration of migrants into the global labor market and enables them to generate income (UNHCR, n.d.).

Wafaa is a Syrian refugee who joined MADE51; she arrived in Lebanon in 2012 with her three children. When the Syrian conflict damaged their homes and reduced their income to zero, she was forced to pull two of her boys out of school. Wafaa is an excellent illustration of how the arts play a crucial part in empowering people. Specifically, she began organizing painting classes at home. Later, she leased a business to begin her professional career with her sisters and other

women. The company expanded to provide a variety of services, including not just home decor but also bridal gowns and casual wear. In addition, she started her apparel boutique.

Wafaa said that she "would want to thank clients for purchasing our items since you are not only assisting a single individual but several families that are working hard to earn a living. Artworks offer me a source of income in light of the nation's severe economic circumstances, which has impacted Lebanese just as it has reached other residents".

Midia is another Syrian immigrant who concentrated on soap production to combat the COVID outbreak. UNHCR taught her how to manufacture soap via a virtual course during the lockdown. Midia eventually became a soap maker to support herself and her family financially. Her unique soap is comprised of all-natural components. She stated: "I work in my area, and preparing soap reminds me of home. It reminds me that we have an abundance of olives and olive oil in our Aleppo region". Midia is now respected in Lebanese society, and upon her return to Syria, she hopes to build a soap factory.

Shop.made51 is the online marketplace where refugees sell their goods. After reviewing the items, it is clear that many of them are made by Syrian refugees residing in Lebanon. A Syrian has recuperated materials from Beirut's port and converted them into a medium storage container with an industrial aesthetic design. Other Syrian refugee artisans in collaboration with a Lebanese designer have transformed up cycled boat cover material and cotton thread, to a laptop sleeve, and many more.

5.6 Art against Violence Project by POA

In addition to MADE51 market-based project, I chose to introduce specifically Art against Violence (AAV) program by Peace of Art in this thesis as it is one of the significant

efforts revolving around all the four themes discussed above. It lasted from September 2020 through March 2022. The program targeted 300 youth Bekaa residents of various nationalities between the ages of 15 and 29. Every fifty participants were divided into a separate art group. Participants were allowed to choose the sort of art in which they were interested and join the corresponding group. Photography, piano, theater guitar, sketching, and cinematography were incorporated into the program. In parallel there were civil trainings related to conflict resolution and mediation. These trainings focus on leadership, communication without violence, public speaking, and social cohesion. Each group executed its artwork. The primary purpose of the initiative was to assist talented youth in Bekaa by equipping them with the skills and opportunities necessary to serve as peacemakers via their artwork. Vera Al Mawla said, "The objective is to demonstrate that diversity is a positive quality. The participants showcase their artwork in four distinct locations".

On the basis of Peace of Art's declarations, news releases, and my conversation with Al Mawla, I have identified two of the project's most significant beneficial impacts on Syrian life. First, AAV is a chance for Syrian participants to show their artwork to Bekaa region stakeholders so that their talent and skills may be assessed and acknowledged. According to Vera Al Mawla, "several concerts and exhibitions were arranged by these artists in various locations with the assistance of our organization". Second, Syrians who face violence engage with members of other groups to defend themselves and spread their messages and stories of war. Thirdly, talented individuals earned money for their artistic endeavors. Towards this end, several Syrians devised novel and intriguing projects, such as carving on wood.

Furthermore, the AAV-delivered messages reflect the sociological context of the location. For instance, one may discuss the effects of unemployment on society and how it

increases crime, namely robbery. Another demonstrates the significance of free speech and human rights after being enslaved for a period of time. Others demonstrate that a group of liberated individuals collaborated to better the situation in Lebanon. "Art programs are evidence that Syrian refugee youth have a role in the Lebanese society and can share talents and collaborate to enhance, transform, and teach others to benefit the community," noted Khaled Amoury.

The delegates also paid close attention to the significance of art in recognizing the objectives and concerns of Syrians via their thoughts. Art is a technique for addressing the issues and concerns faced by Syrian refugee youth. Khaled Amoury "I ask the participant to design his home. One person drew a house with a fire, while another participant drew his parents fighting. We may discuss their difficulties". Consequently, decision-makers might rely on such initiatives to comprehend the special needs of Syrian youth.

The representatives also observed that via creative projects, they had the opportunity to identify Syrians with trauma or psychiatric issues. In the projects, it is the social worker's responsibility to watch any strange conduct (Syrian distancing himself, sitting alone, shredding the drawing paper). Observation might also be made by examining their artwork (sad pictures, black color dominated).

Amoury related the tale of a young person who was rescued by art.

"Once upon a time, the team and I noticed a bruise on a Syrian's body, and we suspected he was a victim of sexual harassment or violence. I lacked the authority to ask him if he was a victim of harassment, so I asked him to draw what first came to mind. He drew a person with

blood, and when the social worker asked the boy why he drew this, he revealed the problem. We saved him!".

This chapter discussed data that relates to the main question of the thesis: What are the impacts of participating in art projects on Syrian refugee youth in Lebanon? Data analysis based on the representatives of the NGOs shows that art projects contribute positively to Syrians' youth lives, building self-confidence and pride when exhibiting their artworks to the public, encouraging diversity by bringing together people from different backgrounds to produce artworks, breaking barriers and fostering them to socialize, and clarifying misconceptions. In addition, an unexpected and common theme was developed and has had a surprising depth. The information developed from the theme of empowering refugees through art is perceived as important by the representatives. The representatives stated that art can be a powerful tool for the Self and economic empowerment of Syrian refugees in Lebanon.

Based on the four interviews with four NGO representatives as well as deep research for analyzing the art projects done by the NGOs, I figured out that there is a mutual interest between NGOs and female participants to engage more than males in art projects. On one hand, NGOs seem to focus on empowering women refugees to show solidarity with women and girls forced to flee. NGOs and international institutions intend to convey a message that women and girls can be targeted as men and that they face specific forms of persecution, such as gender-based violence. For this reason, such institutions believe that art is a vital tool for women and girls who are facing threats and violence. "Refugee women and girls often demonstrate extraordinary resilience and courage in surmounting these obstacles and rebuilding their lives "(UNHCR, n.d.). The second reason for the focus of NGOs on women's resilience through art is that "more than half of the world's refugees are women and girls" (UNHCR, n.d.).

On the other hand, women show more willingness to join art projects as they see it as an opportunity to socialize, share their stories, and improve their families' financial situations. Unfortunately, most of the women who join such programs are supporting their families by themselves because of the absence of their husbands, for different reasons, but mainly due to the Syrian war. Many were struggling to find work in the local Lebanese economy, but through art, they were able to generate income and sell their artistic products. Others come from conservative families and are not able to enjoy their freedom and feelings. Inside the rehearsal rooms, women were able to share their fears without any restrictions. Women in such projects support, learn from each other, and share culture, skills, and special talents. Art promotes empathy and strengthens the social fabric.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

6.1 Conclusion

This thesis examines the impact of the arts on the lives of Syrian refugee youth in Lebanon. It targeted youth because they are creative agents who can use existing resources and participate in art activities to help them survive and build coping mechanisms for life in Lebanon, their host country.

In studies that have focused on young Syrian refugees in Lebanon, poverty, violence, employment, education, health, protection, and rights have often been examined. The purpose of this research was to address a vacuum in the literature about the experiences, and narratives of Syrian refugee youth who participate in art initiatives. The findings reveal that art initiatives were an effective means of improving the living conditions of Syrian refugee youth.

This study was able to dive into the human narratives and lives of Syrians via the perspective of art directors who coordinated and worked closely on art projects aimed at Syrian refugee youth. The in-depth interviews with the art directors were useful in revealing the minute aspects of the lives of these Syrians: their life before art projects, how art changed their lives, their present circumstances, and their future goals.

The comments of the NGO's representatives let us explore and comprehend how pleased the Syrians were with their accomplishments at the conclusion of each project, as well as their desire for further art initiatives. They were empowered on the individual, societal, and economic levels.

Art programs foster a high degree of happiness and awareness, allowing Syrian youth in Lebanon to progress in good ways: create confidence in themselves and others, enhance their individuality, and increase the significance of their lives. By making art, Syrians demonstrate that they are creative and useful and that they have a position in the Lebanese society in which they can share their abilities and work together to better the community. Participating in any kind of art provides a sense of success and pride. To return to a review of the literature, Syrians display their thoughts and experiences at an exhibition were proud and delighted that they are now allowed to convey their messages without restrictions, revealing the severe truth of the tragedies of war (Tracing Voices, 2019).

It has also been shown that collaborative art projects enable Syrian youth and Lebanese young from diverse backgrounds to communicate, connect, collaborate, and develop long-lasting connections that lead to reconciliation. After the completion of the initiatives, Syrians get a greater understanding of what is occurring outside their society, while Lebanese participants show their readiness to assist Syrians in expressing their problems. They are both more inclined to embrace differences and initiate conversation. In addition, several Syrians who were pressed and upset by hate speech and discrimination, particularly following the economic collapse in Lebanon, are establishing connections with the Lebanese population. Syrians have the opportunity to develop a sense of belonging and connection to the Lebanese community via the process of creating art. Same as Khoo (2017) noted in the literature study, "only by art, reconciliation as method could be achieved between the refugees and the audience (locals)".

This leads to a third outcome in which Lebanese and Syrians are able to connect, barriers are knocked down, and new bridges are constructed. Each corrects inaccurate assumptions and misconceptions of the other's community, particularly those about Syrian refugee youth.

This outcome was consistent with the existing academic understanding of the problem. In a literature review, Ahmed (2014) noted, "Art might challenge preconceptions about the refugee crisis, suggesting that artworks by refugees can alter Australians' perception of the issue so that they think more ethically about refugees seeking asylum in their country."

In addition, the findings revealed an unanticipated outcome: art projects are an instrument of empowerment that provides Syrian youth with the ability to make a living, restore their lives, and reestablish their independence. Therefore, art initiatives increase the resilience of Syrian youth in several ways, both morally and monetarily.

Art empowers refugees in extreme adversity by allowing them to express their thoughts and fears, narrate their stories following traumatic experiences, gain a voice and resilience through creative projects, increase their sense of belonging as active members in their host communities, and earn money by selling their art products. In the context of Lebanon's economic collapse and the growth of hate speech, it is essential to emphasize the function of art in reducing social isolation and anxiety and dispelling misunderstandings between displaced Syrians and Lebanese inhabitants. Importantly, groups of Lebanese and Syrians by themselves were able to inspire one another via art projects to develop a brand name, a social media profile, and even start their own company.

Despite the fact that the themes of inclusiveness and social cohesiveness go outside the scope of the study's research topic, I cannot ignore the fact that concerns relating to these themes have often surfaced in the interviews. I had previously examined in chapter 4 that Syrian refugee youth are learning to tolerate diversity and engage with others via project participation. Representatives believe that bringing people from the Lebanese and Syrian communities together to talk would increase social cohesiveness in Lebanese society as hate speech spreads. Future

studies should concentrate on the connection between art initiatives and minimizing the isolation of Syrian refugee youth in Lebanon.

6.2 Limitations

It is essential to identify some of the limitations of this research study due to constraints on the studied category. As described in the Methodology section, Syrian refugee youth are deemed a vulnerable demographic and, under LAU's IRB criteria, cannot be interviewed. In order to investigate the influence of art projects on the lives of Syrian refugee youth in Lebanon, I was compelled to employ a more innovative qualitative research strategy and choose four art directors from respected NGOs as a setting, causing a limitation which led to the results not being generalizable. Although conducting interviews directly with Syrian youth would have improved the veracity of this study, the selected technique allowed for the derivation of significant theoretical and conceptual conclusions. Another constraint is the difficulty I had in locating NGOs that were still conducting art projects during the COVID outbreak. When questioned about recent efforts including art projects for Syrian refugee youth in Lebanon, several NGOs answered negatively. The majority of initiatives conducted during the epidemic are concerned with health and safety. Despite the fact that interaction-based art projects were uncommon at the time, I was able to approach NGOs organizing them with the assistance of the UNHCR.

6.3 Recommendations

This study provided several of suggestions, which are mentioned below: These suggestions may aid academics in their future endeavors and give guidance and ideas for NGOs developing art programs for Syrian refugee youth in Lebanon.

NGOs and local or international organizations promoting the empowerment and learning of Syrian refugee youth should prioritize integrating art projects into their agenda. Syrian refugees may not have a direct interest in educational programs and courses such as conflict resolution or public speaking as they are interested in participating in artistic activities that include educational courses as seen in chapter 4; this might be a crucial opportunity for them to broaden their knowledge and improve their education and abilities.

Syrian refugees may not have a direct interest in educational programs, but they are interested in participating in artistic activities; this might be a crucial opportunity for them to broaden their knowledge and improve their education and abilities.

At the conclusion of each project, it is essential to create exhibits to showcase refugee-made goods. Syrian Refugee youth aspire to transmit diverse thoughts, perspectives, voices, and creative creations to locals and society's active citizens. This helps to combat the prevalent myths and preconceptions about refugees.

In light of Lebanon's ongoing economic collapse, art initiatives aimed at Syrian refugee youth should prioritize expanding access to work possibilities with partners interested in financially empowering talented refugees to actively enhance the Syrian youth's standard of living. It is essential for NGOs and local or international groups to understand the market's need

for distinctive talents (handmade crafts, decorations, embroidery, etc.) to assist Syrian refugees in putting their creative abilities to use and earning a living.

In Lebanon, Syrian refugees are subjected to hate speech and discrimination. More research and studies should be conducted on the function of art projects in the process of integration that Syrian refugees need most. Throughout the shared creative activities, Syrian refugee youth and Lebanese collaborate on the creation of products and join each other's social networks. Art initiatives provide more welcoming environments for Lebanese and Syrians to share tales and experiences. Focus and discussion groups aid Syrian youth in overcoming their apprehensions and anxieties. When such a theory is validated, policymakers and organizations with decision-making authority should finance more art programs that promote art and discourse to combat prejudice and advance social integration. Art initiatives might be used to promote social harmony within the host community. In contrast to Meier's (2014) assertion in the literature review that Lebanese residents are hesitant to embrace refugees, this dissertation's findings demonstrate Lebanese solidarity and empathy for Syrians who share their difficulties in Syria with the host society.

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