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Managing Humanitarian Programs in Volatile Contexts. The Case of INGOs in Lebanon

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Abstract English

Non-governmental organisations view their employees as the most important asset of the organisation and consider it its backbone. While their importance is widely recognised, practices in organisations often hinder employees from reaching their full potential and maintaining their health in order to uphold high performance standards. This master's thesis examines human resource management practices in international and national non-governmental organisations (NGOs) operating in Lebanon during crisis conditions. The research is situated in the unique context of Lebanon, hosting the largest per capita population of refugees in the world and has taken in more Syrian refugees than all European member states combined. Lebanon's political and economic situation provide a suitable environment for the work of NGOs and multilateral cooperation, due to its succession of multiple crises throughout the last 15 years. While budget allocations and funding through partnerships and donors experienced a real upswing, and the period from 2020 to 2024 was considered its golden age, NGOs must prepare for the imminent cuts that will affect the entire humanitarian sector. Based on findings from Jana Abikova's global, quantitative study on humanitarian workers' motivation and job satisfaction, management practices and organisational policies were identified as primary sources of employee dissatisfaction in the humanitarian sector. This master's thesis provides a complementary managerial perspective through qualitative analysis and semi-structured guideline interviews with programme managers, country directors and HR professionals from six NGOs operating in Lebanon. The findings reveal that Lebanese NGOs demonstrate varying degrees of HR policy development, with management turnover emerging as the most significant negative factor affecting employee performance. While financial constraints limit the abilities for monetary compensation and career advancement opportunities, organisations possess substantial potential to leverage internal resources such as clear communication, social support and participatory decision-making processes. The master's thesis suggests that while funding constraints remain critical challenges, humanitarian organisations can create competitive advantages through strategic investment in human-centered and value-driven leadership practices and supportive organisational cultures.

Keywords: human resource management, employee motivation, job satisfaction, NGO management, NGO leadership practices, crisis management humanitarian organisations

Abstract Deutsch

Nichtstaatliche Organisationen verstehen ihre Mitarbeiter*innen als wichtigstes Kapital der Organisation und betrachten sie als deren Rückgrat. Obwohl ihre bedeutende Rolle anerkannt wird, hindern organisatorische Praktiken die Mitarbeiter*innen oft daran, ihr volles Potenzial auszuschöpfen und ihre Gesundheit zu erhalten, um hohe Leistungsstandards aufrechtzuerhalten. Die vorliegende Masterarbeit untersucht die Personalmanagementpraktiken in internationalen und nationalen nichtstaatlichen Organisationen (NGOs), die unter Krisenbedingungen im Libanon tätig sind. Der Libanon weist die weltweit größte Flüchtlingsbevölkerung pro Kopf auf und hat mehr syrische Geflüchtete aufgenommen als alle europäischen Mitgliedstaaten zusammen. Die politische und wirtschaftliche Lage des Libanon bietet aufgrund der zahlreichen Krisen der letzten 15 Jahre ein geeignetes Umfeld für die Arbeit von NGOs und multilateraler Zusammenarbeit. Während die Finanzierungsmittel durch Partnerschaften und bilaterale Geldgeber einen echten Aufschwung erfuhren und 2020 bis 2024 als goldenes Zeitalter galt, müssen sich NGOs auf die bevorstehenden Kürzungen vorbereiten, die den gesamten humanitären Sektor betreffen werden. Basierend auf den Ergebnissen der globalen quantitativen Studie von Jana Abikova über die Motivation und Arbeitszufriedenheit von humanitären Helfer*innen wurden Managementpraktiken und organisatorische Richtlinien als Hauptursachen für die Unzufriedenheit der Mitarbeiter*innen identifiziert. Die Masterarbeit liefert eine ergänzende Managementperspektive durch qualitative Forschungsarbeit und Leitfadeninterviews mit Programmmanager*innen, Landesdirektor*innen und Personalfachleuten von sechs NGOs. Die Ergebnisse zeigen, dass libanesische NGOs unterschiedliche Grade der Personalpolitikentwicklung aufweisen, wobei der *turnover* im Management als der bedeutendste negative Faktor hervorsticht. Während finanzielle Einschränkungen die Möglichkeiten für monetäre Kompensationen und Karriereförderung einschränken, verfügen die Organisationen über ein erhebliches Potenzial, interne Ressourcen wie klare Kommunikation, zwischenmenschliche Anerkennung und partizipative Entscheidungsprozesse zu nutzen. Die Masterarbeit kommt zu dem Schluss, dass humanitäre Organisationen durch strategische Investitionen in menschenzentrierte und werteorientierte Führungspraktiken und eine unterstützende Organisationskultur Wettbewerbsvorteile schaffen können.

Stichworte: Personalmanagement, Mitarbeitermotivation, Arbeitszufriedenheit, NGO Management, NGO Führungspraktiken, Krisenmanagement humanitäre Organisationen

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Table of Contents

1. Introduction

1.1. Establishment of Relevance

The humanitarian sector in Lebanon functions within an exceptionally challenging environment marked by overlapping crises, including the presence of 1.5 million Syrian refugees and 223,026 Palestinian refugees, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the country's ongoing political and economic collapse. In this fragile setting, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) play a critical role in providing services to the various communities in need. However, their effectiveness is significantly constrained by resource limitations, structural weaknesses and managerial challenges. Against this backdrop, the study of managerial practices and human resource (HR) policies is of particular importance, as the sustainability of humanitarian organisations depends not only on financial resources but also on their ability to motivate, retain, and support their workforce. Existing literature indicates that employees in humanitarian organisations are often driven by a desire to contribute to meaningful work, yet their long-term satisfaction is undermined by inadequate management practices, bureaucracy and weak HR structures.[1] Job satisfaction in the humanitarian sector is closely linked to fairness, recognition, and opportunities for career development, but NGOs frequently fail to address these dimensions. As a result, dissatisfaction and impeded employee health are recurrent challenges, undermining both organisational resilience and the quality of service delivery. Previous survey-based approaches have provided useful quantitative insights into the motivations and satisfaction of humanitarian workers, but this thesis goes further in capturing the perspective from a managerial angle and provides an examination of how HR policies are implemented in practice. The conducted semi-structured interviews with programme managers, directors, and HR professionals can thus provide richer insights into how organisational culture, leadership, and HR practices influence an organisation's and employee's performance. This aligns with calls for more exploratory research into the intersection of managerial practices and human resource management in humanitarian contexts. In Lebanon, where NGOs are under continuous strain, strengthening HR practices is essential to improving employee well-being and organisational effectiveness. By examining managerial decision-making and HR frameworks, this thesis contributes to

[1] Abikova 2025.

both scholarship and practice, supporting the design of more resilient and sustainable humanitarian organisations.

1.2. Study Purpose, Research Gap and Research Question

This master's thesis examines human resource management practices in international and national NGOs operating in Lebanon during crisis conditions, using Jana Abikova's research on humanitarian logisticians' motivation and job satisfaction as a foundation. Abikova's research represents the first targeted investigation of this professional group, highlighting a broader absence of role-specific studies.[2] The research identified critical organisational deficiencies, including poor management practices, limited career advancement opportunities, inadequate recognition systems, and problematic organisational policies that negatively impact employee satisfaction. The master's thesis therefore considers the country-specific perspective of management and the HR division in order to complement the overview Abikova provided. Abikova explains that the limitations of her study could be addressed by follow-up research involving in-depth interviews with HR managers from NGOs, which could provide an organisational perspective on HR practices in the humanitarian sector. Her study suggests that NGO employees struggle more with internal stressors within the organisation itself than with external circumstances such as the security situation. The study is also interesting in that in recent decades the humanitarian sector has undergone professionalisation and a shift towards corporate practices, which has not yet been reflected accordingly in academic research. The academic literature reveals significant gaps in understanding management and HR practices concerning employee motivation and satisfaction within Lebanon's organisational context. Similarly, Kabbara and Ozgit's study on Lebanese NGOs during COVID-19 exposed fundamental weaknesses in resource management and employee development, revealing how external crises exacerbate existing HR management shortcomings.[3] The literature particularly lacks comprehensive understanding of how Lebanon's unique socio-political environment characterized by economic instability, sectarian divisions, and ongoing humanitarian crises influences organisational behavior and employee motivation in NGOs. While Yassine and Zein's work provides some insights into HR practices in Lebanese NGOs versus private sector organisations, they do not lay an avenue of how to counter such harmful practices and which

[2] Abikova 2025.
[3] Kabbara & Ozgit 2023.

measures would help improve the management and HR practices currently applied.[4] Furthermore, comparative studies examining differences between local versus international organisations operating in Lebanon are notably absent, despite the significant presence of both types of NGOs in the country's development and humanitarian landscape. There is an existing body of research that has compared HR management in the public and private sectors[5], while other research inquiries the relation between human resource management and NGOs.[6] There has also been research carried out on the topic of human resource management in the Middle East but these were either investigations into gender equity issues or considered HR practices in companies in other countries than Lebanon.[7]

The thesis therefore investigates how NGO management practices affect employee well-being, retention and performance during humanitarian emergencies, particularly the 2024 escalation in Lebanon. It identifies specific organisational factors that either support or undermine staff effectiveness during crisis response. The pursuit of the thesis is to answer the following underlying and guiding research questions:

> RQ1: Which policies and managerial practices are currently applied in human resources in NGOs in Lebanon and how are those related to motivation and satisfaction at the workplace?
> RQ2: How do managers and the organisation's HR deal with organisational issues and apply their leadership, given the financial constraints that are negatively impacting HR practices such as salary, employee development and morale?
> RQ3: How is HR integrated into the organisations' strategy, in order to ensure a successful strategy?

I collected data through semi-structured guideline interviews with programme managers, country directors, and HR professionals from six NGOs operating in Lebanon. Using the Gioia methodology for qualitative analysis, the study applies the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model as its theoretical framework to categories organisational practices as either job demands, stressors that contribute to exhaustion, or job resources, which help employees

[4] Zein & Yassine 2016.
[5] Elliot & Tevavichulada 1999.
Farhan & Horton 2000.
[6] Padaki 2007.
Brewster & Lee 2006.
Ya-Anan & Bunchapattanasukda 2011.
[7] Metcalfe 2007.
Moideenkutty et al. 2011.

in dealing with the demands and developing themselves. The thesis demonstrates how the JD-R model can guide NGO management in balancing job demands with adequate resources, particularly during crisis periods.

1.3. Outline of Chapters

The thesis consists of six chapters. The first chapter gives a brief introduction to the topic of the research, the aim of the research and defines the main research questions.

The second chapter establishes the historical foundations of international humanitarian cooperation and defines the operational framework for contemporary NGOs. It traces their evolution from early multilateral cooperation to modern humanitarian action. Through the examination of key historical developments this chapter provides the understanding of the groundwork for modern humanitarian systems. This is followed by a sub-chapter dealing with humanitarian diplomacy and explores how soft power operates through non-coercive means in humanitarian contexts. To conclude the second chapter, I provide the reader with a working term definition of NGOs, in order to be clear on what type of organisation is dealt with and what its unique characteristics are.

In the third chapter the reader is guided through the contemporary practices of NGOs. Several sub-chapters explore the unique management challenges NGOs face, including navigating stakeholder ambiguity, balancing value-driven approaches with results-based management, and addressing structural differences from private sector organisations. In this chapter I examine the professionalisation process and organisational structures typical of modern NGOs. The "Emergency Response Preparedness" framework is presented, which demonstrates how NGOs prepare for and respond to humanitarian emergencies.

The fourth chapter situates the research within Lebanon's specific political, economic and humanitarian context. Lebanon as the country of the case study is presented, further providing a delve into the most recent crises of the country and a map of operating NGOs and their funding mechanisms.

The fifth chapter on human resource management provides the presentation of the empirical research, at the core of the master's thesis. The first sub-chapter gives an overview of HR challenges specific to humanitarian organisations. This is followed by a presentation of the foundational research of Jana Abikova, which investigates humanitarian logisticians' job motivation and satisfaction factors, inferring that many of the operational inefficiencies are related to management practices and organisational policies, giving way for the research endeavour of this master's thesis. The methodological approach is presented in a series of sub-chapters, introducing information on data collection, data analysis and the Job Demands-Resources Model as the theoretical framework. In the last sub-chapter of this section I present my own findings, in which I analyse and contextualise the data obtained through the interviews across six key areas and discuss their implications towards the research topic.

The sixth chapter concludes the findings and the whole research. After this chapter, there reader can find a bibliography, online resources and a list of sources of tables and figures.

2. Theoretical & Historical Background

2.1. The Rise of Multilateralism 1815 – 1945

In order to give the reader a better understanding of how non-governmental organisations work today and what their *raison d'être* is, I will provide a brief overview of the history of international cooperation. While the exact birthdate of humanitarian engagement cannot be pinpointed, and historians and scholars attribute its emergence to a range of different events, I have decided to date its historical beginnings to the Congress of Vienna in 1815. The genesis of contemporary multilateralism is traced through a series of events and establishments of institutions.

The rise of modern multilateralism dates back to the early 19th century, with the informal system of consultation at the Viennese Congress 1815. The transition from an international community in which conflicts are predominantly resolved through war to one in which conflicts are predominantly controlled through communicative processes has its origins in the peace and conflict management of the European Concert.[8] Driven by the urge to curb revolutionary and hegemonical aspirations, marked by France's hostility over the previous quarter-century, the Viennese peace order was established in 1815.[9] After Napoleon's failed invasion of Russia, almost all the monarchs of the European continent united to contain the French Empire and establish rules for peaceful coexistence. They were driven by the notion that Napoleon had to be overthrown, France permanently contained, and the independence and collective security of all states restored.[10] Amongst these newly formed union called European Concert were Austria, Prussia, the United Kingdom, Russia, with France joining at a later stage in 1818. Securing lasting peace for the future became the main concern of the monarchs and their main allies, prompting them to develop new forms of intergovernmental cooperation, which found their basis in the European Concert and the Vienna Peace Order of 1815. This decision came with much relief, as it was ultimately the great powers that waged war most frequently in the 18th century. Now they hoped that regular consultations would have a positive effect on the preservation of peace and security.[11] The conviction that had dominated until the end of the 18th century, namely that states should act strategically and militarily in international relations, was replaced by the introduction of the Concert, a

[8] Schulz 2009, P. 17.
Lavelle 2020, P. 1.
[9] Schulz 2009, P. 36.
[10] Ibd., P. 55.
[11] Albrecht-Carrié 1968, P. 42.

new form of communicative negotiation. The Concert provided a practice of consultations and occasional plurilateral conferences between the great powers on international security issues or conflicts. These were intended to lead to a rapprochement and coordination of opposing positions. The Concert transformed the understanding of diplomacy from an accessory tool of a strategic state to a cooperative coordination process for enforcing and maintaining peace.[12] While the Concert has commonly been denoted as the departure point of international and multilateral cooperation, it was still lacking essential attributes of international organisations in the modern sense. It didn't have a secretariat, nor fixed decision-making mechanisms – but it was already pointing and enabling multilateral modes of action, goals and fundamental norms. The European Concert developed institutional characteristics in the following sense: it exercised international political and moral authority within the framework of international law, where it dealt with the fight against the slave trade and piracy and accepted, processed, decided or rejected petitions and appeals from sovereigns and citizens. Its membership was limited to the five great powers, to which other states could be added if they were affected.[13] The conferences and congresses called into being, were defined as a consultative and decision-making body that could be convened with the consent of the major powers and, where appropriate, at the invitation of affected third countries.

Furthermore, the Concert was advocating for the first humanitarian interventions in emergency situations, as in the Great Eastern Crisis of May and June 1876 in Turkey. While the concept of balance had prevailed since the middle of the century, it increasingly became linked to humanitarian considerations, with calls from the United Kingdom for reforms in Turkey for better protection of the local Christian community.[14] The United Kingdom increasingly saw humanitarian efforts linked to the considerations of the European Concert, insofar as the balance of power was in harmony with the members and the humanitarian calls. It was equally through the establishment of this coordinated union, that matters concerning the abolition of slave trade were amongst the provisions of the "Treaty of Vienna".[15] The Concert thus presents the first pretext of collaboration of major international actors to cooperate in the wake of conflicts and can thus be summed up as the contemporary

[12] Nevertheless, it is important to mention that the Concert was not without its own difficulties. In 1833/1834, ideological divisions resurfaced, and in the 1840ies, the concert was misused by conservatives. For a more nuanced discussion see: Schulz 2009.
[13] Schulz 2009, P. 69.
[14] Ibd., P. 61.
[15] Ibd., P. 63.

view of collectively ensuring peace and security aspirations in a coordinated and collective manner. The important feature of the Concert remains that all the members kept their sovereign rights and committed themselves to certain standards of conduct.[16] They continued to act autonomously within their sphere of influence as long as no security problem arose that justified a general European interest.

Advancing further along the history of coordinated, collective cooperation of actors with the intention of serving civil society, we reach the year of 1863. On 17 February 1863, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) was founded in Geneva, previously under the name of the International Committee for Relief to the Wounded, with the aim of protecting and assisting victims of armed conflict. The International Committee of the Red Cross operates under its enduring motto, "inter arma caritas" – "in war, charity".[17] The origins of the committee can be traced back to the Swiss businessman Henry Dunant, who on 24 June 1859, was on his way to an audience with Napoleon III when he unwittingly passed through the battlefield of Solferino, where wounded Sardinian, French and Austrian soldiers had been left in a disastrous state.[18] Around 14,000 Austrian and 15,000 French-Piedmontese soldiers were killed or wounded, and the warring parties' sparse medical facilities were overwhelmed. Dunant came from Geneva and was part of the wealthy class, born into a Calvinist family. His father was connected to the Grand Council of Geneva through his business activities. Moved by the horrific scenes of war, Dunant went to the nearest village and organised a makeshift relief force and a field hospital with the local residents for all wounded soldiers, regardless of their nationality.[19] After returning to Switzerland, he reported the suffering he had witnessed to his church and the efforts of the volunteers from the surrounding village who had assisted the wounded with impartiality. At the same time, he promoted the importance of providing trained medical personnel and supplies. A few years after witnessing the battle scene, he wrote down his impressions in 1862 in "A Memory of Solferino". This pamphlet laid the groundwork for the organisational principles of the Red Cross societies, which took shape over the course of the century.

[16] Wellington 1867, P. 168.
[17] The ICRC also acknowledges the motto "Per humanitatem ad pacem" – "With humanity, toward peace", which since 1961 has been used more widely by the International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC). See International Committee of the Red Cross, "Statutes of the International Committee of the Red Cross", adopted on 2 December 2017, implemented since 1 January 2018.
Dromi 2020, P. 14.
[18] Ibd.
International Humanitarian Law Databases.
[19] Dromi 2020, P. 15.

Shortly after its publication, a lawyer named Gustave Moynier from Geneva came across "A Memory of Solferino". He approached Dunant, who in his book advocates for alleviating the suffering of wounded soldiers through volunteer aid workers and calls for the establishment of a neutral aid committee for wounded soldiers in every country.[20] Moynier wanted to put these proposals into practice and recruited the Swiss General Guillaume Henri Duhour, surgeon Louis Appia and Théodore Maunoir to form a committee, initially called the Committee of Five, which was later renamed into the International Committee for Aid to the Wounded. The five founding members organised an international conference in October 1863 that produced resolutions recommending national societies the neutral protection for sick and wounded in the battlefield and the establishment of medical personnel, a volunteer relief corps, a common emblem and further diplomatic action. The conference was attended by 18 states and laid the diplomatic steps to the First Geneva Convention, the first multilateral treaty to regulate protection for victims of armed conflict.[21] The resolutions adopted formed the basis for the establishment of aid societies in various nations, which were to provide aid to soldiers and were based on voluntary work rather than military medical facilities, as had previously been the case. The advocacy of the neutrality of medical personnel on the battlefield, the protection of wounded soldiers and the subsequent succession and compliance with conventions formed the basis for international humanitarian law.[22] The committee thus established the first legal, organisational and cultural frameworks for humanitarian work. Scholars therefore regard Dunant's writings and subsequent events as the first steps towards organised, volunteer-based humanitarian work, which laid the foundation for humanitarian NGO work and international humanitarian law globally.[23]

By the late 19th and early 20th century, the Hague Peace Conferences of 1899 and 1907 constituted the next milestone in the development of multilateralism, with its first attempts to establish mechanisms to forge government cooperation and develop rules in the common interest. The period between the Napoleonic Wars and the First World War (WWI) was relatively peaceful in Europe, which can be attributed to the Geneva Conventions and their

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[20] International Humanitarian Law Databases.
[21] Ibd.
Dromi 2020, P. 16.
There is a discrepancy regarding the correct number of participating states. While Dromi mentions 18 participating states and several unofficial participants, the International Humanitarian Law Databases lists 16 participating states and 4 philanthropic institutions. The current signatory parties amount to 196 countries that have signed the 1949 Geneva Convention, which comprises the first founding document and the three subsequent amendments.
[22] For the full history of the Geneva Convention from the ICRC perspective, see Pierre Boissier 1985.
[23] Dromi 2020, P. 16.

subsequent negotiations in The Hague.[24] These were the first formal statements concerning the treatment of individuals and the use of weapons in a new conception of secular international law. In 1899, Tsar Nicholas II of Russia convened a further peace conference in The Hague, which was intended to lead to an expansion of the existing body of international law.[25] The purpose of the conference was to discuss peace(-making) and disarmament. The treaties that resulted from this and subsequent meetings are the first codified declarations regulating the law of war and war crimes. The first Hague Conference in 1899 resulted in the "Convention on the Pacific Settlement of International Disputes", which provided the establishment of a permanent set of rules and institutional structure for tribunals, known as the Permanent Court of Arbitration.[26] This machinery consisted of a permanent office set up in The Hague, which served as a secretariat and enshrined the rules that were agreed upon. Later, in 1907, the Second Hague Conference was called to review the convention and refine the rules. Scholars have considered the 1899 and 1907 Hague Conventions as landmark developments in that they placed the conduct of war within a regulated legal framework and set boundaries through the peaceful settlement of international disputes and laws of warfare concerning the production and transport of armaments.[27] The evolution of the Red Cross, the Geneva Conventions, and the Hague Conventions, in their sequential order, are a testament to the efforts to contain and restrict wars through diplomatic and legal means. Lavelle attributes the relatively few wars fought in the second half of the 19th century, the Italian Wars of Independence (1859, 1866), the Crimean War (1853–56), and the American Civil War (1861–65), to the rise of multilateralism and willful cooperation between states.[28] The Hague Conventions concerned the possession and use of weaponry and created a structural procedure that required all participants, regardless of territorial size, economic independence or military superiority, to engage in negotiations.[29] This is considered a major step in the expansion of international diplomacy beyond the borders of Europe towards a collective community of states.[30] The body of international humanitarian law that emerged in the course of the 20th century, draws

[24] Lavelle 2020, P. 4.
[25] Lavelle 2020, P. 13.
[26] Ibd.
[27] Baker 2009.
[28] Lavelle 2020, P. 14.
[29] Ibd.
[30] Claude 1971, P. 29.

its recurrence to peaceful settlement of disputes, arms control and the laws of war, from the mentioned events at the turn of the century.[31]

At the onset of the 20th century, following the developments in Hague, and as a consecutive development of the peace efforts, the League of Nations was created and opened a new chapter in the institutionalisation of multilateralism, as the first international organisation created with the aim of fostering peace and cooperation among states. It is regarded as the first version of a collective security system as it compromised governments and private associations, known today as non-governmental and inter-governmental organisations. The League of Nations grew out of the will of the victorious parties of WWI with its fundamental principle "to develop cooperation among nations and to guarantee them peace and security", that the members subscribed to.[32] The countries that united in opposition to the central powers (Germany, Austria-Hungary, Ottoman Empire) were called the Allied Powers of WWI and consisted of Great Britain, France, Russia, Italy and the United States, calling itself an Associated Power.[33] Earlier efforts of seeking a league of peace envisioned a four-stage process, the first of which has been established by the Hague Conventions which established a framework and machinery.[34] The next step in this process would be the actual implementation of this work, followed by the imposition of sanctions for non-compliance by tribunals and, as a final step, the enforcement of sanctions by courts. The League of Nations would thus require the states concerned to submit their quarrels to the organisation before violent outbreaks occurred.[35]

Despite its humanitarian and well-intentioned aim of promoting cooperation between states, the League of Nations was unable to prevent Japan's invasion of Manchuria, Italy's annexation of Ethiopia in 1936, Germany's reunification with Austria under Hitler 1938, and the mass extermination of the Jewish people. In this sense, the League of Nations was ineffective and powerless, with participating states slowly but surely diminishing[36], thus

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31 Baker 2009.
32 UNOG Library, Registry, Records and Archives Unit.
33 Britannica.
34 Dromi 2020, P. 18.
35 Holt 1917, P. 258.
36 See Dromi 2020, P. 27.
Afghanistan, Ecuador, and the Soviet Union were the last three members to join in September 1934. Costa Rica and Brazil had given notice of withdrawal in 1925 and 1926. Withdrawals escalated in the 1930ies, beginning with Germany and Japan in 1933. Paraguay followed in 1935. Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua offered notice in 1936. Italy and Salvador followed in 1937, Chile and Venezuela in 1938. In the unfolding of WII 1938, Germany united with Austria, and in 1939 Italy annexed Albania. Hungary, Peru, and Spain offered

contributing to the decline of the organisation from 1940 onwards.[37] Throughout the existence of the League of Nations, Germany maintained a consistently ambivalent relationship, whose movement towards multilateralism was set back by the Second World War (WWII) and the dawn of the nuclear age.[38] Nevertheless, the League of Nations made an important contribution to paving the way for international organisations in areas that were secondary aspects of its objectives: international technical cooperation. During the League's span of activity, relevant conferences and intergovernmental meetings were held on various topics such as health, social issues, transportation, communication, finance and cultural cooperation.[39] The League and its organs functioned in accordance with procedures that had been systematically applied in earlier methods of peaceful cooperation dating back to the 19th century, such as the Hague Conference, the Permanent Court of Arbitration and public international unions.[40] The League's Assembly and the Council followed the example of the Concert of Europe, to which it contributed important innovations: the compromise between larger and smaller states, clearly established and defined procedures, and links to other parts of the system of international organisations. During the Concert of Europe, countries and governments came together in times of imminent crisis, while the League required regular participation in the Assembly or Council and gave these bodies the right to address disputes and impose sanctions on the belligerent party.[41]

Further, the League also established a permanent court of International Justice.[42] The Covenant between the signatory states, was the document serving as the rules and regulations of the League, which outlined the efforts of open diplomacy and global consensus of the organisation. The Covenant was finalized four months after the first draft, on 29 April 1919, and came into force on 10 January 1920 as the first part of the Treaty of Versailles.[43] The rules formulated in the Covenant gave rise to a number of relevant international organisations, as it provided for the establishment of bodies dealing with technical issues of cooperation.[44] This led to the creation of the Health Organisation, Mandates Commission,

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notice of withdrawal in 1939. During that year, the council declared that the Soviet Union would no longer be a member. Romania offered notice of withdrawal in 1940, and Haiti in 1942.

[37] UNOG Library, Registry, Records and Archives Unit.

[38] Dromi 2020, P. 29

Lavelle 2007.

[39] UNOG Library, Registry, Records and Archives Unit.

[40] Dromi 2020, P. 19.

[41] Howard-Ellis 1929, P. 122.

[42] Dromi 2020, P. 19.

[43] UNOG Library, Registry, Records and Archives Unit.

[44] Dromi 2020, P. 20.

Economic and Financial Organisation, and Communications and Transit Organisation, alongside a host of other bureaus and committees, such as the Permanent Central Opium Board, Advisory Committee on the Traffic in Women and Children, Slavery Commission, Refugees Commission, Disarmament Commission, and Committee for the Study of the Legal Status of Women. These entities were relevant foundations that enabled the transition from the social movements of the 19th century to the contemporary organisational structure of international and multilateral cooperation. Many of those transformed into international organisations known to us today and are thus considered the precursors of the various bodies of the United Nations after WWII. The "Treaty of Versailles" also gave rise to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in 1919, today a specialised agency of the United Nations.[45] In its early days, the ILO already issued an "International Labour Convention" and dealt with issues of social justice, such as working hours in industry, unemployment, maternity leave, night shifts for women and children, and the minimum age for employment.[46] It was also the League of Nations that made the first efforts to provide refugees with documents and other necessities. As a result of the 1917 revolution in Tsarist Russia and the political transition to a socialist state, no fewer than 1.5 million Russians became refugees scattered across Europe.[47] As refugees, they had neither the right to claim nationality nor any kind of financial security. In response, the League of Nations established a refugee organisation in 1921 to address these needs. Nansen was appointed its High Commissioner and, after providing assistance to Russian refugees, assisted Armenian, Assyrian and Greek refugees who had been displaced and expelled from the Ottoman Empire. It quickly became clear that, in this environment, the temporary unit of a refugee organisation would become permanent. The organisation remained active throughout WWII and was transformed into the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in 1947. Other international organisations that remain to this day and have their origins in the League of Nations are the World Health Organisation (WHO), formerly Health Organisation, the Food And Agriculture Organisation (FAO), formerly the Nutrition Committee, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), formerly Committee of Intellectual Cooperation, and the UNHCR.[48]

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[45] Dromi 2020, P. 19.
[46] Ibd., P. 20.
[47] UNOG Library, Registry, Records and Archives Unit.
[48] Ibd.

The structure of international cooperation and peaceful dispute resolution was severely shaken and partially demolished by WWII. Towards the end of the war, new structures and diplomatic channels for seeking consensus started emerging again. The Bretton Woods Accords, which laid the foundations for a global economy in the post-war period, are considered a return to the distribution of decision-making. In addition to the rules, governance structure and financing mechanisms of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, the value of an ounce of gold was set at 35 dollars. From then on, this fixed value served as a reference point for all existing currencies.[49] This development can be attributed to the economic work of the League of Nations, whose economic aspect and contribution are often overlooked, as its mandate was considered minor in trade and the global economy. Nevertheless, the League was significant in the development of the operations of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank in the aftermath of the WWII.[50] The United Nations Monetary and Financial Conference was held in Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, for a period of three weeks in July 1944. The conference, attended by 730 delegates from around 44 nations, discussed the general rules and regulations governing the management of global finances. In addition to the IMF, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank) and the "Agreements on Tariffs and Trade" emerged from this conference.[51] The understanding of the events at Bretton Woods as a return to multilateral processes is often underestimated. The rules and institutions established there required the agreement of all participating parties. For this reason, Scott-Smith and Rofe see Bretton Woods as a development far more inclined towards multilateralism and a return to global governance than, for example, the diplomatic meeting of the Great Powers at Dumbarton Oaks.[52] Nonetheless, it cannot be denied that Bretton Woods was a contest over global economic influence between the United States of America and Great Britain, which was presented as an apolitical process in the search for a functioning system, but clearly had political undercurrents.[53] It is only in the sense of a fair representation

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[49] Scott-Smith & Rofe 2017, P. 2.
[50] Pauly 1996.
[51] Scott-Smith & Rofe 2017, P. 1.
[52] Ibd., P. 3.
Dumbarton Oaks, which paved the way for the San Francisco Conference and the formation of the UNO in April 1945, involved representatives from the USA, Great Britain, China, and the Soviet Union and was very much a Great Power affair, while Bretton Woods involved a myriad of attending states of various economic power and previously excluded from global inter-governmental dialogue.
[53] Ibd., P. 3-4.
Bretton Woods was marking a key moment of transition in imperial power from Great Britain to the United States of America.

of history to say that Bretton Woods did not satisfy the demands of the countries of the "Global South".[54] It was by no means a flawless model of global development that benefited everyone. Since the World Bank had to borrow from the capital markets, it assumed the role of a guarantor rather than a lender, becoming an instrument for development projects and thus contributing to a partly adverse impact on the global environment. Bretton Woods is an example of socio-economic reconstruction and the satisfaction of basic needs after the devastating war years and the resumption of multilateral cooperation. The large number of participants and the multilateral cooperation between North and South in the form of dialogue on issues of global financial governance, with the involvement of other countries' interests, are the achievements of this conference.[55]

In the 1970ies, a new type of humanitarian work modality emerged after the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) had been at the forefront of global aid supply for about a century.[56] This type of "new humanitarianism"[57] differed considerably from the traditional values of the Red Cross in that it provided medical assistance in emergency situations while at the same time criticising the circumstances that had created these emergencies in the first place. The Red Cross organisations have traditionally refrained from commenting publicly on armed conflicts, preferring to act behind the scenes and through diplomacy. The ICRC received criticism after the end of WWII for its inadequate approach, as it did not address the genocide despite being aware of it. As a result, the ICRC was widely reproached for prioritising its diplomatic influence over its care for human life.[58] The work of Médecins Sans Frontières[59] (MSF), an organisation consisting of volunteer physicians who broke away from the French National Red Cross Society in 1921, is referred to as "new humanitarianism". These volunteers did not adhere to the Red Cross policy of not

[54] Since the 1970ies, the terms "Global South" and "Global North" have been used in the context of social and political order. These are politicised terms whose use should be critically assessed, as they establish a set of assumptions on hierarchies. "Global South/North" are increasingly replacing the previously used classification of "First, Second and Third World". The classification by numbers became redundant after the end of the Cold War, as the distinction between the (US-dominated) First World, the (Soviet-dominated) Second World and the (non-aligned) Third World became obsolete. It is also sometimes used as a substitute for the value-laden term "developing countries" and "emerging economies". While the terms "Global South/North" are established among NGOs in the field of development cooperation and some humanities disciplines, government agencies such as the German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ) and the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) prefer to use terms related to "development".
[55] Scott-Smith & Rofe 2017, P. 10.
[56] Dromi 2020, P. 116.
[57] Allen & Styan 2000, P. 825-842.
Hammond 2002, P. 176-195.
[58] Dromi 2020, P. 121.
[59] Engl.: Doctors Without Borders.

interviewing people in the field or discussing the events they had witnessed.[60] After returning from Nigeria and participating in the relief effort in Biafra, the physicians Kouchner and Recamier and other volunteer doctors spoke out about the unacceptable conditions they encountered.[61] In 1970, they founded the Groupe d'intervention medico-chirurgicale d'urgence[62] (GIMCU) and Secours medical francais[63] (SMF). These two associations later merged to form Médecins Sans Frontières.[64]

An important factor contributing to the emergence of this humanitarianism was its timing. In the 1960ies, a large number of French baby boomers who had trained as doctors started joining humanitarian NGOs. The situation on the French labour market did not look promising, oversaturated and in no need for the young professionals. This new generation of trained practitioners found it difficult to secure jobs in their own country and sought new and more exciting employment opportunities elsewhere.[65] Since they could not find employment easily in France, they seized the opportunity to work in emergency relief in the Global South.[66] MSF's radical approach and its commitment to truthful and unvarnished reporting in the form of testimony has led MSF into delicate situations in the 1970ies and 80ies. Their role of an open outlet for the recipients of aid often came with the neglect of the precarious nature of humanitarian interventions. These relate in particular to operational implications and disregard for state sovereignty.[67] In its early days, MSF refused to establish a fundraising infrastructure or to cooperate with existing government institutions. MSF activists preferred an informal, non-hierarchical organisational structure and rejected bureaucratic formalities.[68] However, this made the volunteers dependent on other aid organisations to provide the necessary infrastructure. While MSF's mission in Lebanon in 1976 helped to position the organisation as a reliable actor, its rejection of operational organisation prevented MSF from raising the necessary resources to be adequately prepared for crisis situations and to be able to offer first aid in a timely manner.[69]

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[60] Dromi 2020, P. 123.
[61] Fox 2014.
[62] Engl.: Group for Medical and Surgical Emergency Intervention.
[63] Engl: French Medical Relief.
[64] Dromi 2020, P. 124.
[65] Phelan 2009, P. 8.
[66] See Davey 2015.
Eleanor Davey argues that the emergence of MSF in the 1970ies was precipitated by a French preoccupation with the Third World, in particular gaining rise throughout the 1950ies and 60ies.
[67] Dromi 2020, P. 127.
[68] Stroup 2012, P. 71-134.
[69] Dromi 2020, P. 128.

I would like to highlight another characteristic of the mission's participants, as this will be discussed later in the context of job motivation and satisfaction among current employees of the humanitarian sector. In Abikova's study of motivational factors, 20 out of 96 respondents stated that they were motivated by curiosity and the opportunity to experience an "adventure", while 13 out of 96 respondents said that their current job was too routine and boring.[70] Similarly, 29 of the respondents stated that they view the unpredictability of field assignments as positive and motivating, which is surprising, as one would assume that unpredictability in one's own workplace would usually be viewed as negative. In the same vein, MSF volunteers describe their assignments as "adventures" and report the following: "It's more fun than sitting in an office. After running a hospital and doing surgery, you could never be a nurse in Europe and wear your funny little hat again".[71] One volunteer's worst nightmare is "to be married with two children and a mortgage".[72] Another volunteer says that she loves Africa because "Here, everything is real, not phony, it's life and death".

The organisational structure of MSF underwent changes when Claude Malhuret was elected president in 1977. He represented the succession of the first generation of MSF by introducing changes in the organisation's operational fields, adapting measures to professionalise the NGO, and establishing a comprehensive fundraising scheme.[73] In the same year, the MSF charter was adapted to emphasize that its members should refrain from interfering in the internal affairs of sovereign states. In 1978 at MSF France, institutional regulations were introduced to the effect that only the bureau has the responsibility to report on human rights violations. Under Malhuret's leadership, the distinctive feature of bearing testimony was practiced symbolically, as it was excluded from MSF's rules and regulations. Concerns about organisational sustainability and long-term programming came to the fore, which not only brought MSF closer to the Red Cross policies in its ideological approach, but also set the tone for the common practice of INGOs today. The former "veterans" and older generation, including Kouchner, were not content with such changes and founded the NGO, Médecins du Monde (MDM). Kouchner believed that bearing witness was the most effective way to expose crimes and suffering.[74] MSF's much more radical commitment nevertheless relied heavily on the Red Cross's infrastructure in the field of humanitarian work, which it

[70] Abikova 2025, Table 4.
[71] Leyton 1998, P. 58.
[72] Ibd.
[73] Dromi 2020, P. 129.
[74] Ibd., P. 130.

had built up over a period of 100 years.[75] The Red Cross positioned itself as an advocate of universal ethical standards for human dignity, which included taking an impartial position in its observation of world politics and conflicts. At the end of the 20th century, the National Red Cross institutions had accumulated a considerable amount of experience in the coordination of local relief work and were recognized in their home countries for their efforts.[76] The majority of National Red Cross organisations underwent a process of professionalisation through the accumulation of NGO management expertise gained through their long-term commitment and the generational turnover.[77]

2.2. Humanitarian Diplomacy and Soft Power Diplomacy

Following the historical account of the origins of multilateral and international cooperation and its regulatory framework, the next section will focus on humanitarian diplomacy and the means of soft power, which underpin the work of today's organisations in the humanitarian field.

Humanitarian diplomacy refers to a range of diplomatic measures to influence decision makers, parties to armed conflict, and any actor with the ability to help prevent, mitigate and resolve humanitarian crises.[78] The concept of this stand-alone diplomacy is attributed to the events mentioned in the previous chapter, in the founding of the International Committee of the Red Cross as a result of Dunant's demands and concerns. Although the vocabulary did not exist at the time of its inception, Dunant is considered the pioneer of humanitarian diplomacy through the strengthening of the principles of humanitarian action in international law. The term "humanitarian diplomacy" was first introduced by Oscar Straus to distinguish it from the traditional practice of state diplomacy.[79] Humanitarian diplomacy is therefore considered a strategy for influencing the parties to armed conflicts and others, states, non-state actors and members of civil society.[80] Its purposefulness relates entirely to humanitarian concerns and is based on cooperation and a network of bilateral as well as multilateral, official as well as informal communication channels, and is subject to international law.[81] It

[75] Dromi 2020, P. 130.
[76] van Heyningen 2015, P. 999-1028.
[77] Dromi 2020, P. 118.
[78] Humanitarian Diplomacy OCHA.
[79] Straus et al. 1912, P. 45-59.
[80] Harroff-Tavel 2005, P. 1.
[81] Ibd.

is therefore used to influence actors in conflicts who hinder access to humanitarian aid, conveying between states and non-state entities, such as armed groups.

Humanitarian diplomacy operates in a discrete and unobtrusive manner and does not align itself with any of the rival sides, as its application should not be misunderstood and should not be seen as favoring one of the parties to the conflict.[82] It is used to address and respond to protection concerns at a global humanitarian level. While the ICRC is the most prominent reference point and archetype for humanitarian diplomacy because it has a unique legal status under the Geneva Conventions, it is not the only entity acting within this logic of diplomacy. Throughout its existence the term has evolved and has come to include a broad range of other organisations, such as international NGOs and civil society networks. Practitioners conduct dialogue with governments and armed groups to gain access to detainees, negotiate safe humanitarian passage, advocate for access to vulnerable populations, influence international bodies and donor states on refugee protection, funding, and humanitarian principles in compliance with international humanitarian law.[83] The international non-governmental organisations that share the same vision of humanitarian values as the ICRC have committed themselves to a code of conduct that outlines their commitments in the "Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organisations in Disaster Relief".[84] Acting in the means of humanitarian diplomacy means to serve as an impartial humanitarian body and a neutral intermediary, strictly adhering to neutrality, impartiality, and independence, which gives credibility to its diplomatic role.[85] In addition to the code of conduct, the "Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability"[86] is a nine-part commitment that humanitarian organisations adhere to in order to support the quality and effectiveness of their work and support the principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence.[87] These principles, which originally grew out of international humanitarian law, were codified and consolidated by the UN General Assembly in Resolutions 46/182 and 58/114.

The ICRC derives both rights and obligations from its special status and its mandate under international law. In its role as mediator, it has the right to offer its services to the parties of

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82 Harroff-Tavel 2005, P. 6.
83 Ibd., P. 3.
84 Ibd., P. 15.
Signatories to the Code of Conduct.
85 Harroff-Tavel 2005, P. 3.
86 Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability.
87 UNHCR Emergency Handbook and Humanitarian Principles.

a non-international armed conflict, whereby this offer does not constitute interference in the internal affairs of the state. States, in turn, conclude agreements with the ICRC on cooperation in the field of humanitarian law. These tasks of the organisation provide ICRC delegates with privileges and immunities similar to those of diplomats and necessary for the performance of their functions.[88] Humanitarian diplomacy is often confused with foreign policy because of its nature.[89] A country's foreign policy sets the objectives that diplomacy then implements, but other levers such as military power and economic pressure are also used for this purpose. As one of the possible levers of foreign policy, diplomacy has the function of representing the state externally, conducting negotiations, concluding treaties and establishing rules in the international system. Diplomacy is a form of communication designed to regulate disputes, whereas humanitarian diplomacy is severely limited in its scope. Through its network of relations, it seeks to draw attention to humanitarian needs and the victims, support humanitarian action and remind parties of humanitarian law.[90] At the same time, humanitarian diplomacy has more freedom to address non-state actors in order to achieve its goals, because states fear that by turning to unrecognized groups and actors, they could legitimize them. While diplomats represent the interests of states, ICRC delegates represent the victims of emergencies and armed conflicts.[91] Diplomats are limited in their actions by the constraints of foreign policy and, in their role, represent a conception of society that may be shaped by the history, ideological and religious beliefs, and identity attributions of their respective country. ICRC delegates do not favour any single or specific societal model over another.

In addition to the form of diplomacy committed to humanitarian standards, I would also like to point to soft power diplomacy as a further means of explaining the concept lines of international non-governmental organisations (INGOs), which overlaps with and complements humanitarian diplomacy. Soft power diplomacy is referring to the ability of nations and organisations to influence others through non-coercive means such as policies and values rather than military or economic force.[92] Unlike hard power, soft power operates through intangible assets such as cultural appeal and diplomatic persuasion and tries to influence the preference of decision-makers by means of cultural exchange, diplomacy and international cooperation. In this sense, soft power and hard power are complementary, and

88 Harroff-Tavel 2005, P. 3.
89 Ibd., P. 4.
90 Ibd., P. 5.
91 Ibd., P. 9.
92 Alisawi 2023, P. 5318.

their simultaneous application has become an international standard and plays a decisive role in participation in global governance. While soft power can consist of various initiatives such as cultural diplomacy, public diplomacy, education and exchange programmes[93], I am primarily interested in its contribution to humanitarian aid efforts.[94] Since soft power contributes to the development of multilateral solutions to global and transnational problems, it thereby embeds international (non-governmental) organisations as important implementors and actors in the application of soft power and its utilisation for global governance.[95] International organisations can vary greatly in legal form, mandate and size, ranging from global intergovernmental organisations such as the United Nations to local or international non-governmental organisations. Regardless of their range, these organisations play the role of platforms for multilateral cooperation, policy coordination and conflict resolution within their sphere of influence, whether global or regional.[96] International organisations are committed to promoting shared fundamental norms, ethical values and principles that foster global cooperation. Through their advocacy, engagement and participation in normative frameworks, international organisations contribute to the diffusion of soft power initiatives such as human rights, democracy and sustainable development.[97] International organisations also contribute to soft power objectives by collaborating in the areas of education, health, climate protection and governance. An example of such practical cooperations are the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)[98], adopted by the United Nations in 2015, which serve as a universal call to end hunger, protect the planet and ensure peace.[99] Through cooperation between governments, non-governmental organisations and private sector companies, international organisations contribute to the implementation of soft power objectives and to goals such as gender equality, hunger and poverty eradication. By coordinating development projects, humanitarian aid and capacity-building initiatives, these organisations promote friendly relations and solidarity between states, thereby strengthening the impact of soft power.[100]

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[93] Joseph Nye frames soft power in three main pillars: culture, political values, and foreign policies. Cultural diplomacy, public diplomacy and educational exchange programs are among the primary instruments through which soft power is exercised.
[94] Alisawi 2023, P. 5318.
[95] Foot & Walter 2011, P. 447-469.
[96] Alisawi 2023, P. 5321.
[97] Barnett & Finnemore 2004.
[98] United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
[99] Alisawi 2023, P. 5323.
[100] Ibd., P. 5320.

Of course, both of these instruments are also susceptible to manipulation for other interests, which is why soft power initiatives can be undermined if it becomes apparent that they serve the purpose of imposing one's own values and ideologies and promote one's own convictions.[101] Governments can use cultural diplomacy as a tool of propaganda or to advance geopolitical ambitions.[102] Soft power and humanitarian diplomacy strategies must therefore be authentic, transparent and in line with the interests of the target group or beneficiaries. In the field of humanitarian diplomacy, too, it is important to remain vigilant and not to integrate humanitarian responses into an overarching military and security concept, as this gives the impression that the integration of aid is part of a larger strategy.[103] Humanitarian and soft power diplomacy are fundamental means of establishing contact and dialogue across nation states. By fostering inclusive dialogue and cooperation, international organisations can genuinely support the philanthropic aspirations of diplomacy and mobilise collective action towards common goals of prosperity for all human beings.[104]

2.3. Defining the Term NGO and their Operational Scope

In this section, I would like to define the term and introduce a working term definition that I will use consistently throughout this thesis. At the same time, this section serves to illustrate the (I)NGOs with which I conducted interviews in the empirical part of my master's thesis in order to create an understanding of which type of NGOs I am referring to in my description and analysis of human resource management and the operational structure inherent to the organisations.

Various terms such as "voluntary organisation" and "non-profit organisation"[105] exist, to name but a few. Sometimes the term non-governmental organisation is applied in one cultural context or country, while in other parts of the world these would refer to non-profit organisations or another term, but inherently referring to the same type of organisation, while there might not be much reason for why they apply one over the other, apart from the cultural custom. There is no evident or binding terminology in the plenitude of the large amount of different names for the organisations of the third sector, but all the terms have their distinct

[101] Haass 2008, P. 44-56.
[102] Alisawi 2023, P. 5323.
[103] Krähenbühl 2004, P. 512.
[104] Alisawi 2023, P. 5325.
[105] Lewis 2001, P. 33.
"Voluntary organisation" or "charity organisation" are terms widely used in Britain, where there is a tradition of volunteering and a history of charity law which emphasizes Christian, sometimes paternalistic, values. "Non-profit organisation" is commonly used in the United States, where alternative forms of organisations receive fiscal benefits if they can demonstrate that they are not commercial, profit-making entities.

cultural, evolutionary history, drawn from each specific social, economic and political context.[106] Fully aware of the shortcuts in a consistent terminology, I further want to emphasise a coherent use of terminology, knowing that the lack in consistency has contributed to difficulties for researches to develop theoretical work on NGOs, as it impedes comparative analysis of empirical work and therefore might reduce the potential for NGOs to passing on knowledge and learning from scientific and empirical sources.[107] By applying a term in a consistent form, I seek to provide one form of category of NGO term definition that is part of the myriad of third sector organisations. Ultimately the matter of categorisation has proven to be difficult due to the vast diversity of different organisations in function, mandate, and the fact that organisations increasingly carry out a scope of different activities, and are dependent on their geographical location and with which government they have to deal with on national or local level, further influencing the range activities they are able to carry out.[108]

The term "non-governmental organisation" is mostly used for third sector organisations that work internationally or organisations that belong to the context of developing countries, and stems from the United Nations.[109] After the WWII, this term was introduced for international non-state organisations that had consultative status in UN activities. In 1992, Salamon and Anheier developed a structural-operational definition for organisations in the non-profit sector, which they based on five main characteristics. I consider this definition useful for my master's thesis because it provides a suitable framework for the NGOs I am studying, especially since they display a high degree of professionalisation, standardised operational procedures and organisational structures. These NGOs are divided into different departments with different tasks, and therefore operate in a manner similar to private sector companies. The five characteristics are as follows:

1. The organisation is formal, meaning that it is institutionalised and has regular meetings, office bearers and some organisational permanence.
2. The organisation is private, meaning that it is institutionally separate from the government, though it may receive some support from government.
3. The organisation is non-profit distributing, and if financial surplus is generated it does not accrue to owners or directors.

[106] Lewis 2001, P. 33.
[107] Ibd., P. 36.
[108] Ibd., P. 33.
[109] Ibd., P. 34.

4. The organisation is self-governing and therefore able to control and manage its own affairs.
5. The organisation is (partially) voluntary, and even if it does not use volunteer staff as such, there is at least some degree of voluntary participation in its conduct or management, such as a voluntary board of directors.[110]

In addition to this definition, I want to add Vakil's definition to allow for some nuance:

> "NGOs are best understood as self-governing, private, not-for-profit organisations that are geared to improving the quality of life for disadvantaged people."[111]

This definition places NGOs in the context of the "aid industry". It is important to me to mention this definition so that NGOs in addition to their operational attributes are also recognised in their field of activity, since the majority of NGOs that contributed to the empirical part of the work are active in humanitarian emergency response and aid provision, including disaster risk reduction. They alleviate suffering caused by various instances such as conflicts, the economic collapse or the ongoing refugee crises of Syrians, Palestinians and internally displaced people, the Beirut blast, and other ongoing security emergencies. They act in emergencies, disasters and extreme climate conditions, including heat waves, forest fires and in the maintenance of the shorelines and water management, as well as agricultural initiatives. The definition provided by Salamon and Anheier is useful in that it includes institutionalised NGOs, which can generate income and engage in profit-making activities, although this does not make them commercial businesses in the conventional sense.[112] It also emphasises that NGOs cannot be part of the government or organised and managed by the government, although they are subject to applicable state law and may be required to register with the government. Last but not least, the definition points out that NGOs are independent entities with their own leadership and implementation, and for this purpose have their own structures and bodies. While the structural-operational definition provides a certain level of formality to the NGOs and therefore might exclude smaller scale and community-based organisations, it fits the purpose of the underlying study. Although NGOs are generally perceived to adhere to grassroots approaches and informal structures, an NGO can definitely have a formal and administrative structure, paid headquarters and field staff whose operating

[110] Lewis 2001, P. 37.
Salamon & Anheier 1992, P. 125-152.
[111] Vakil 1997, P. 2060.
[112] Lewis 2001, P. 38.

style is similar to that of a business, without these disqualifying it from being a third sector organisation.[113] The organisations I will describe in my thesis have all of the above characteristics, not to the same extent, but to various degrees. Further NGOs can be organisations that originated in another country than the one in which they are operating, in this case they will be labeled as INGOs. Or NGOs can develop autonomously in the country where they set up their operations.[114] We can also distinguish between INGOs and local NGOs, the first is operating internationally, at large scale, in a professionalised manner and resource-heavy. INGOs tend to partner with local NGOs for a localisation agenda. Local NGOs are based in-country, rooted in a community and posess local legitimacy and contextual expertise. They are more often resource-restrained due to the lack of stable core funding and their fund system is based on being the sub-grantee rather than the primary recipient and therefore tend to run on short-term project grants.

[113] Levitt 1975, P. 63.
[114] Lewis 2001, P. 39.

3. NGO Management

3.1. Navigating Ambiguity and Stakeholders

In this chapter, I will focus on the various approaches and challenges involved in the management of NGOs and how these differ from the private sector and thereby significantly shape their practice. Despite the diversity and different mandates of NGOs, all of them have to manage three areas:

1. the organisational set-up of their internal structures and processes
2. their activities in the form of projects, programmes and services
3. their relationships with other institutional actors, such as the state, the private sector, other NGOs and the communities they serve[115]

The context of each NGO is essential, as it has political, historical, and cultural implications and the entities of the same INGO can be exposed to very different factors depending on the context and country of operation, which subsequently affects operational planning and internal management. NGOs typically navigate a field in which they are exposed to different interests from a variety of stakeholders. A typical challenge for organisations in the NGO sector can be unclear organisational objectives, the need to balance multiple responsibilities from different stakeholders inside and outside the organisation, and the resulting complex management structures.[116] NGOs must uphold their organisational values while not compromising on performance and effectiveness of their service delivery. They are influenced both by donors, who provide financial resources, often shaping NGO priorities and accountability mechanisms, and by their boards, which provide governance, strategic direction, and oversight. In some cases, NGOs also join a consortia, which are alliances formed for joint programming, advocacy or donor engagement. This landscape of multiple interests and influences accounts for the particular complexity of the tertiary sector.

Since the late 1970ies, with the first NGOs applying operational planning and managerial practices, the humanitarian sector has undergone a process of professionalisation that has increased its quality and effectiveness, introduced bureaucratic structures and established paid staff.[117] As NGOs grew in size and ambition, they also had to recognise their limited capacities in terms of effectiveness and improve their management. For decades now, NGOs

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[115] Lewis 2001, P. 21.
[116] Ibd., P. 185.
[117] Rességuier 2018.

have been paying much thought to their operational function and questions such as efficiency, accountability and effectiveness and developed their internal and external management.[118] Since the 1990ies, NGOs have been confronted with the need to develop strategic planning systems, which were a popular business management approach in the private sector in the 1970ies. A recurring feature was the organisational weakness of NGOs, which needed to be addressed, as their operational mode of responding immediately to events meant that their planning focused on short-term interventions rather than long-term planning and strategies.[119] While donors in the development sector typically worked with governments, yet unsatisfied with the results, they increasingly turned to non-governmental organisations as alternatives.[120] NGOs therefore had to keep pace with the growing expectations of funders and policymakers, who prompted NGOs to revise their initial understanding and practice of basic management skills.[121] Professionalisation can therefore be attributed to an internal response to organisational challenges, the increased standards as well as to external pressure from donors and policymakers. NGOs today exist in a state of (inter-)dependence on other parties in order to fulfill their mission and provide humanitarian aid. This puts the decision-making and operational process into a dependency relationship between NGOs, local state institutions, the business environment and the community.[122] The uncertain funding climate often affects planning because it leads to a dynamic in which NGOs display a “grant mentality” when it comes to securing funding, thereby overlooking other opportunities for fund mobilisation. Frank noted that role ambiguity and conflicting performance standards can occur in NGOs, as they must prioritise their objectives in accordance with various stakeholders. Therefore, managers in the tertiary sector may develop different approaches to decision-making than those commonly used in the private sector, which have to consider the multiple objectives and potentially conflicting standards.[123] Suzuki identifies similar additional challenging factors when NGOs have to balance organisational maintenance with project implementation. He attributes this to the fact that organisations must prioritise providing reports and information to the donors who fund them, while simultaneously implementing their projects and maintaining effective

[118] Lewis 2001, P. 20.
[119] Sahley 1995.
[120] Lewis 2001, P. 27.
[121] Ibd., P. 39.
[122] Prasad et al. 2016.
[123] Frank 1959.
Lewis 2001, P. 181.

relationships with their beneficiaries.[124] The result is conflicting priorities in a work environment that demands both flexibility and consistency, as donors establish a system of rules and regulations to ensure performance and accountability, but the work in country offices is confronted with the local realities on the ground.

3.2. Strategic and Results-Based or Value-Driven and People-Centred

While public assumptions about NGOs center on the disorganisation of the NGO sector, strategic management has long found its way into the approach of NGO management. NGOs need to clearly articulate and integrate their vision, mission and role, using strategic planning to translate the organisational strategy into programs on the ground.[125] Within an organisation, effective management relies equally on participatory and instrumental dimensions of management, so that decision-making is consultative enough to ensure shared ownership of the results but also directed enough to produce timely results.[126] Organisations should focus its attention on learning processes for improved effectiveness, aligning the importance of the micro- and macro-levels of its activities. It is common for NGOs to use strategic planning, whether in the broader context of humanitarian cooperation, such as the "Emergency Response Preparedness" framework, or for their own organisational purposes. However, this doesn't necessarily happen in the traditional sense, where a dedicated planning unit presents the blueprint, although some larger international NGOs could have a strategy, planning and policy unit in the HQ. The overall strategic direction is usually provided by the highest governance level, the board of directors, indicating long-term plans and alignment with the mission, while executive directors or secretary generals and senior management would refine and implement the strategy. Programme and sector teams would chip in by identifying field-level needs and risks.

When strategic management is carried out adequately, it becomes an inclusive and consultative process that engages employees at all levels of the organisation to identify and implement organisational decisions.[127] Effective and functional management in today's world of global challenges therefore recognises flexibility as a beneficial quality in addition to the accomplishment of set tasks. When resources are limited, learning and thinking become relevant at all levels of a business, and employees at a lower level are expected to

[124] Suzuki 1997.
Lewis 2001, P. 195.
[125] Lewis 2001, P. 193.
[126] Fowler 1997, P. 61
[127] Lewis 2001, P. 39.

be involved in the various aspects of organisational development.[128] Based on approaches borrowed from the private sector, results-based management, also defined as “management by objectives”, has become fundamental in today’s NGOs. Results-based management is a strategic approach that in addition to activities and outputs focuses on the achievement of measurable and intended results. This requires organisations to systematically use tools from the business sector for planning, monitoring and evaluating projects in order to assess results’ alignment with goal-setting. NGOs therefore collect information to improve their decision-making processes, increase their transparency and be accountable to stakeholders and donors.[129]

In its early days, the management system of non-governmental organisations was designed as a management practice based on the approach of an “evolving process”. This model recognises the importance of open systems, as it responds to potential emergencies and was understood in contrast to the goal-oriented and task-specific methods of the private sector, such as “management by objectives”.[130] Nowadays, however, the consensus developed towards an understanding that strategic planning must be incorporated to ensure viability of the organisation, while responding to unforeseen incidents. NGOs have been fond of value-driven and participatory management approaches, and while these aligned well with their general ideologies and objectives, such employee involvement is more commonly found in stable, well-defined organisations with good support structures and institutions.[131]

While organisations may value people-centred approaches, Dichter’s idea that “management is management” is pertinent, arguing that regardless of the type of organisation, a general requirement for management rules is indispensable.[132] The Weberian model of the functional manager who works towards the fulfilment of hierarchically derived, goal-oriented tasks is countered with the manager as a facilitator and information gatherer, representing a person who seeks reciprocal feedback with colleagues.[133] The NGOs I interviewed stated that they try to combine both modalities in their practice, in which the fulfilment of tasks is essential for mission achievement, but the approach is described as ”humanitarian and people-centered”. It is also worth noting that management functions relating to controlling,

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[128] Parker 1998, P. 146.
[129] Lewis 2001, P. 183.
[130] Ibd., P. 181-182.
[131] Ibd., P. 40.
[132] Ibd., P. 39-40.
[133] Ibd., P. 182-183.

planning, motivation, delegation and monitoring must be distinguished from the style of management, which can be consultative, participatory, cooperative and yet top-down.[134] Accordingly, management is not only related to the aspect of "what is done" but also with "in what way it is being done". The problems for management in the tertiary sector are the difficulty of assessing organisational performance, the reconciliation of multiple stakeholders, conflicts between professionalism and voluntarism, and the difficulty of maintaining the founding values of the organisation and an inclination for setting unclear organisational objectives.[135]

3.3. Distinct Challenges of (I)NGOs

While NGOs have moved closer to the approaches and methods of the private sector in their organisational practices, there are still some notable features that clearly distinguish them from commercial enterprises. INGO management faces the particular challenge of geographical distance between the various offices and the HQ. They must therefore ensure that their decision-making process is as consistent as possible across the various locations they operate around the world, that the structures among their members and core values are balanced, but simultaneously adapted to cultural and regional differences.[136] INGOs need effective communication channels to ensure participation and a global perspective, in addition to a national one, which must function convergently. They have to take language and culture into account and design meetings in an inclusive manner, while being able to address local operational issues, and orientate their management towards internationalism rather than nationalism.[137] Due to communication across geographical divisions between the HQ and country offices, specific management problems may arise concerning poor financial and institutional planning, weak fund-raising management, issues in governance relations and the functioning of Boards, or the management of human resources.[138] Some of the problems identified arise precisely from the nature and evolution of NGOs, which have their origins in voluntary work but are now adopting corporate features in order to ensure their continued operation and viability. Billis argues that there is great potential for tension between the different parts of the organisation, between volunteers and paid employees,

[134] Paton 1991.
Lewis 2001, P. 31-32.
[135] Lewis 2001, P. 38.
[136] Ibd., P. 198.
[137] König 1996.
Lewis 2001, P. 199.
[138] Lewis 2001, P. 191-192.

since the latter work according to a formal job description and on their assigned areas of responsibility, while the former lack such definition by job description.[139] The elephant in the room remains the question of how volunteers should be treated and whether they should be left to their own devices in the tertiary sector as good-natured amateurs.[140] However, a drive towards professionalisation emerged amongst volunteers, and pressure is being exerted on NGOs by paid staff and volunteers alike to provide more institutional and professional support to them. This refers to a shared system of benefits and capacity building, in which volunteers are treated as unpaid professionals and receive some form of institutional recognition and development. At the same time, however, the problem also lies in the heterogeneous expectations of the volunteers themselves, among whom there are those who want formal training and job descriptions and those who don't wish for such services.

While management approaches are highly diversified and have transformed over time, it is not possible to find a universally applicable, all organisations encompassing model reflecting the diversity of (I)NGOs in Lebanon. However, the organisations interviewed in the course of the master's thesis all share a high degree of institutionalisation, they all have a board of directors responsible for the primary strategic outset, and they obtain their funding from government cooperation with development departments of embassies, EU funding pots and, in crisis situations, from extended budget requests or the Flash Appeal. They are accountable for their expenditure and the performance of programmes in which they apply results-based management, where they have to monitor and report their activities on a regular basis. Through decades of operations and therefore bypassing small-scale and informal NGO practices, these organisations have established themselves as major implementers and are built on formal and bureaucratic organisational structures and forms.

3.4. Organisational Structure of an (I)NGO

In practice, the organisational structure of an NGO may well resemble that of a business, however, its differing aspects are presented below. The hierarchies and distribution of roles listed here may vary from organisation to organisation. The aim here is to illustrate a generic organisation's set-up. While public opinion often considers low overheads to be a criterion for an organisation's success, NGOs certainly rely on its administrative processes and

[139] Lewis 2001, P. 186.
Billis 1993.
[140] Lewis 2001, P. 188.

organisational structures and must incorporate the necessary portions of their funding into their maintenance.[141]

Typically, the top management of an NGO consists of three units: the board of directors, the General Assembly and the executive director. Many NGOs stipulate that membership of the board is voluntary and unpaid.[142] Board meetings are closed, but protocols are recorded and made available for transparency purposes. Under the Lebanese Law of Associations from 1909, NGOs must register as associations and have a clear internal governance mechanism.[143] To formally establish an NGO, it has to be registered and approved by the Lebanese Ministry of Interior, under the provision of a copy of bye-laws, a report on the NGO's objectives and planned activities, a list of the founding members, a financial statement and a plan describing the NGO's headquarters.[144] Depending on the type of NGO, the board will be responsible for various tasks, such as hiring and supervising the executive director, developing and approving budgets, representing the NGO to the public, and in some cases, obtaining funding for projects. The executive director[145] is responsible for the overall direction in which the NGO moves, and oversees the day-to-day activities, whilst serving a function at the board, often in the role of reporting as executive secretary. The General Assembly is a group of all the members, including board members and employees and meets (bi-)annually. The General Assembly is the highest authority, but it is not a prerequisite and not all NGOs have one. However, it often proves helpful, as it demonstrates the NGO's commitment to transparency and builds trust among partners, stakeholders, and in public relations and fund-raising activities. On the level beneath the executive director we will find the staff members, who are responsible for the NGO's activities and report to the executive director. The staff members of an NGO will fall into three groups: Administration, Communications/PR/Marketing/Advocacy and Programmes/Projects. Each of these departments has its own downward set of hierarchy.

In an (I)NGO with country offices, the organisational structure will differ from the HQ. While the executive director is the global head of the NGO at headquarters level, the country director is the top representative in a specific country office of the international NGO. The country director either reports to a regional director or to the HQ senior management directly.

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141 Lewis 2001, P. 23.
Smillie 1995, P. 151.
142 Organizational Structure of an NGO.
143 International Center for Non-Profit Law.
144 NGO Report How to Register an NGO in Lebanon.
145 May also go by the title of Executive Coordinator, Chief Operating officer, CEO.

Under the supervision of the country director there are two pillars in the organisational structure, as the departments will be separated into operations departments, which are functional and by task, and programme departments, which are sectoral and by thematic area. The operations departments are handling the internal enabling environment and are divided into:

- Finance & Administration
- Human Resources
- Logistics & Procurement
- Security & Risk Management
- Grants & Partnerships
- Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability & Learning (MEAL)
- Communications/PR/Marketing/Advocacy

Each of the departments with hall a head or director, which can also be called a manager or coordinator, and in larger missions might require a deputy head or senior officer to support them. Underneath there will be a structured hierarchy of officer and assistant positions. These departments are the backbone of operations and may also be called "support services".

The other pillar is the NGO's technical areas of work, which are often aligned with humanitarian clusters or sectors and can be divided into Health, WASH, Food Security & Livelihoods, Shelter/Non-Food-Items, Education, (Child-)Protection and Gender-Based Violence (GBV). Each of those programme areas usually has a programme or technical manager or coordinator, who is supported by officers, assistants and field staff. It is also quite common to find a few cross-cutting functions within (I)NGOs which span across both pillars such as the MEAL teams which can sit between programmes and operations, or gender or protection mainstreaming advisors and emergency response preparedness coordinators.

However, the roles and responsibilities presented here are not set in stone and may include other areas of responsibility depending on the NGO, or positions with shared and related responsibilities taken on by one person. Details about the legal, financial and organisational foundations, as well as hiring procedures, staff responsibilities, and the overall structure of the NGO have to be recorded in the bye-laws. The organisational structure further depends on the currently supported programmes and projects and may therefore change depending on the project repertoire.

3.5. Emergency Response Preparedness – Before and After

The non-governmental organisations discussed in this master's thesis respond to humanitarian crises and participate in the collective societal response, providing relief and humanitarian assistance during public health, environmental and humanitarian crises.[146] The emergency response system for pre-disaster planning, disaster response and post-disaster assistance is a mechanism that involves numerous NGOs and requires their routine participation. The Emergency Response Preparedness approach is an international humanitarian system allowing for proactive and coordinated action in the onset of a disaster.[147]

The International Monetary Fund defines exogenous shocks as "sudden events beyond the control of the authorities that have a significant negative impact on the economy".[148] Exogenous shocks therefore present unpredictable risks, but can also harbour opportunities.[149] For companies, this means unfavourable internal conditions and changes, such as the loss of human capital, leading to a decrease of productive skills and technical knowledge.[150] Exogenous shocks can therefore affect the core of a business and their target groups and markets, and restrict access to the resources and capacities needed for growth or the continuation of activities.[151] In addition, exogenous shocks affect businesses and organisations by compelling them to change their strategies, business models, structures and processes in order to respond to the changed conditions.[152] Pandemics such as COVID-19, as well as earthquakes, floods and wars, are unforeseen exogenous shocks that affect entire populations and thus also companies and organisations in the private and tertiary sectors.[153] While it is more common in the humanitarian sector to use vocabulary such as crisis, disaster or emergency, the same consequences of exogenous shocks are implied, when a crisis represents a situation that poses a threat to the population of a country and necessitates an urgent response under conditions of uncertainty and time pressure.[154] In these situations,

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[146] Doerfel et al. 2013.
[147] Lai et al. 2019.
IASC Inter-Agency Standing Committee Guidance Emergency Response Preparedness.
[148] Geithner 2003, P. 4.
International Monetary Fund Public Information Notice on Exogenous Shocks.
[149] Trkman & McCormack 2009.
[150] Noy & Nualsri 2007.
Geithner 2003.
[151] Chakrabarti 2015.
[152] Martins et al. 2015.
[153] Lipscy 2020.
[154] Brecher et al. 2020.

humanitarian actors and governments need immediate access to accurate data on the specific shocks, their magnitude, location and affected areas in order to respond quickly and effectively to the crisis.[155]

The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), the main humanitarian coordination forum of the UN, has developed the Emergency Response Preparedness (ERP) guidelines, which provide common tools and a framework to help the government, NGOs and other actors assess risks and prepare for potential emergencies. The central concern of the ERP is to improve the speed and scope of critically needed assistance at the very beginning of a humanitarian crisis.[156] Due to the unforeseen nature of an emergency, external support can take days or weeks to arrive. Successful management therefore requires a plan that works with the in-country capacities to cope with the initial phase of the outbreak. The responsibility for providing humanitarian assistance lies with the government, and the ERP identifies the additional support the international humanitarian community can provide for the national response. The ERP therefore provides guidance when situations exceed the scale of the crisis in such a way that pooled action by various agencies and organisations is required. In the ERP, the humanitarian community can define its capacities and added value in how it can support national response. At the core of the ERP is the intention to respond to the emergency in an appropriate manner with the necessary assistance, therefore the guidelines are a tool to develop clear roles and responsibilities before a crisis occurs, strengthening the internal systems in the departments of logistics, communication and HR, and coordinate across the different actors, such as UN bodies, NGOs and the government. The aim is to mobilise the necessary resources efficiently, including the development of contingency plans for specific risks for the initial planning reflected in a Flash Appeal. A Flash Appeal is a rapid, coordinated funding request issued by the UN and humanitarian partners in response to a sudden crisis, when immediate, large-scale humanitarian needs exceed existing response capacities.[157] Its purpose is to mobilise international funding for life-saving assistance to provide a common framework for NGOs, UN agencies and governments to coordinate their response over the first 6 months. The ERP is a coordination tool to strengthen humanitarian leadership, streamline coordination and enhance accountability, and is part of the Humanitarian Programme Cycle (HPC).[158] In the case of a

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[155] Mueller et al. 2023.
[156] IASC Inter-Agency Standing Committee Guidance Emergency Response Preparedness, P. 5.
[157] OCHA Flash Appeal: A Quick Guide.
[158] IASC Inter-Agency Standing Committee Guidance Emergency Response Preparedness, P. 6.

country as Lebanon, where emergencies occur in a continuous manner, the ERP is mainstreamed into the general humanitarian response planning process, known as the Lebanon Response Plan. The ERP therefore gives directions for the preparedness of the management for the possible humanitarian relief requirements during the crisis. The ERP thus produces opportunity costs as it puts demands on organisations' time and resources. ERP is an ongoing process divided into three parts:

1. Risk Analysis and Monitoring
2. Minimum Preparedness Actions (MPAs)
3. Advanced Preparedness Actions (APAs) and Contingency Planning (CP).[159]

The team that manages and coordinates the ERP across organisations consists of the resident or humanitarian coordinator, who is supported by the humanitarian country team. In Lebanon, the chair is held by the UN resident/humanitarian coordinator and representatives from UN agencies, OCHA, international and national NGOs, as well as members of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. A developing crisis is addressed at various levels:

1. at the inter-agency level, which forms the overarching framework for overseeing the collective actions of all potential humanitarian actors
2. at the sector/cluster level, which defines cooperation between agencies in order to achieve sector-specific goals
3. at the organisational level, where organisations determine how their own response will be delivered[160]

The essential dimension for this master's thesis is the organisational level, which is affected both in short-term and long-term resource planning throughout the ERP, including human capital. The HR department has responsibilities in various areas when it comes to coordinating ERP. They must ensure appropriate workforce planning and allocation, which includes identifying surges in capacity needs and maintaining a roster of trained and deployable staff for emergency mobilisation. Furthermore, they must be prepared to initiate and implement new recruitment and onboarding processes to hire new employees or reassign

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The Humanitarian Programme Cycle (HPC) is a term to describe the coordinated process through which humanitarian actors work together. For more information on the HPC, see: IOM Humanitarian Programme Cycle (HPC) Emergency Manual.

[159] IASC Inter-Agency Standing Committee Guidance Emergency Response Preparedness, P. 9.

[160] Ibd., P. 11.

employees internally. This further includes the training and development of employee skills. It must be ensured that staff are sufficiently trained in emergency response roles at the time of deployment and are acquainted with safety protocols and humanitarian principles. The HR department is also responsible for ensuring the well-being of employees and fulfilling its duty of care. They are in charge of preparing support systems for mental health and psychosocial support, and providing insurance cover, in particular ensuring protection for staff deployed in high-risk areas. The transition to emergency mode also means that programme and sector managers and coordinators, who oversee teams, are assigned a number of modified tasks that must be carried out as accurately as possible. Managers must therefore ensure role clarity and the assignment of responsibilities within the team. Everyone must be made aware of their responsibilities in the preparedness and implementation of the emergency response plan. Managers and coordinators will also need to ensure team readiness. Teams must be adequately trained, briefed and logistically ready to participate in the response. Meanwhile compliance requirements must be met, all actions taken must be in line with IASC and ERP guidelines and coordinated with the inter-cluster and inter-sector groups. Managers will be asked to perform quick, time-sensitive and informed decisions, while maintaining accountability and adhering to ethical standards.

3.5.1 Risk Analysis and Monitoring

Risk analysis and monitoring are essential components of the ERP and the foundation of the response. Its objective is to ensure that planning is informed by shared understanding of potential hazards and monitoring is performed to remain responsive to the evolving context.[161] Risk analysis begins with the systematic identification of hazards, which can range from natural disasters, armed conflict, epidemics, drastic socio-economic deterioration to violations of international law. National authorities and other national actors are actively engaged in this process, and risks are ranked according to both impact and likelihood, using thresholds of low, medium, or high. When thresholds reach medium or above markers, the development of contingency plans is recommended. After the ranking is completed, risks are noted into the country risk graph, forming a country risk profile. In Lebanon, risk analysis and monitoring are coordinated at the inter-agency level, led by the HCT under the authority of the resident/humanitarian coordinator. A key tool supporting this process is the INFORM Lebanon Sub-national Risk Index, developed in collaboration with the Lebanon Joint

[161] IASC Inter-Agency Standing Committee Guidance Emergency Response Preparedness, P. 15.

Analysis Unit and which has been updated in 2024 by the governmental disaster risk management unit and the National Center for Natural Hazards and Early Warning, facilitated by CNRS, the National Council for Scientific Research.[162] This index provides a shared, data-driven risk baseline accessible to all humanitarian actors. In the next stage, risk monitoring mechanisms should be applied for all hazards that have been identified in the risk analysis, tracking specific indicators that may serve as early warning signals or tipping points.[163] These indicators are analysed to determine whether thresholds have been reached, and the HTC will review the indicators and decide in the case a threshold is met and a new level of preparedness in the onset of an emergency is needed. When significant risks are detected, the HTC communicates with OCHA's regional office, ensuring reporting to the IASC emergency directors group that the team is starting to develop or review the APAs and the contingency plans.[164] Risk monitoring is already one of the MPAs, of which I will speak in the following sub-chapter.

3.5.2. Minimum Prepared Actions (MPAs)

Minimum Preparedness Actions (MPAs) is a set of activities that every HTC must implement to ensure a minimum standard of emergency preparedness. Although every emergency situation has its own properties, the first relief needs might be similar, which makes it possible to develop non risk or scenario-specific MPAs, but which serve as a standard relief package.[165] MPAs are designed to be achievable without requiring major new resources, and form the baseline upon which more advanced preparedness and contingency planning can be built. Their purpose is threefold, first to establish a consistent standard of emergency preparedness, second, to provide basic operational readiness, and third, to enable the rapid scale-up of emergency readiness when a crisis occurs.[166] The process of an MPA is divided into four categories. Firstly, risk monitoring ensures that hazards are regularly tracked and analysed, maintaining an updated picture of potential threats.[167] In the second category, coordination and management arrangements need to clarify roles, responsibilities, and establish accountability mechanisms, which help individuals, teams and organisations to

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[162] INFORM Lebanon Sub-national Risk Index.
[163] IASC Inter-Agency Standing Committee Guidance Emergency Response Preparedness, P. 17.
[164] Ibd., P. 19.
[165] Ibd., P. 25.
[166] Ibd., P. 23.
[167] Ibd., P. 23.

assume their tasks and establish working relationships.[168] The third category consists of needs assessment, information management, and response monitoring and establishes systems for collecting, processing, and analysing aid recipients and type of aid delivered as well as the achieved results. The fourth and final category entails operational capacity and the arrangements to deliver relief and focuses on identifying sectoral and cluster capacities, as well as national capacity, NGO capacity and private sector capacity. The availability and location of critical relief items is mapped and logistical systems ensured, helping to minimise the initial assistance gap of 3 to 4 weeks, before full capacity is reached.[169] Importantly, MPAs are ongoing activities, requiring regular reviews within the HTC work plan.[170] By systematically applying MPAs, humanitarian actors can ensure that even before a crisis escalates, a basic level of operational readiness is in place, enhancing the effectiveness of emergency response.

3.5.3. Advanced Prepared Actions (APAs) and Contingency Planning (CP)

The Advanced Preparedness Actions (APAs) and Contingency Planning (CP) are complementary processes designed to strengthen readiness when risk analysis indicates a moderate or high level of risk.[171] These two sets of activities provide the link between generic preparedness measures and operational response planning. While MPAs form the foundation, APAs and CPs tailor preparedness to specific, anticipated risks and ensure that humanitarian actors can respond effectively during the first weeks of an emergency. APAs are risk-specific measures that go beyond the minimum preparedness standard. They guide the HTC and clusters in identifying key elements required for response, including human and financial resources. The main objective of the APAs is an increase in the overall level of preparedness of the HTC and the sectors and clusters, in a way that priorities and essential response elements are identified and ensured.[172] The APAs do not necessarily involve the development of a contingency plan but include essential preparedness actions to strengthen the collective ability to respond quickly and coherently. Previous situation and risk analyses have to be updated, including gender and diversity analysis, serving as a revised summary of what is likely to happen, the assumed impact, the capacity to respond and other planning

168 IASC Inter-Agency Standing Committee Guidance Emergency Response Preparedness, P. 24.
169 Ibd., P. 25.
170 Ibd., P. 22.
171 Ibd., P. 29.
172 Ibd., P. 29.

assumptions.[173] The CP states the initial response strategy to meet the humanitarian needs of the first 3 to 4 weeks of an emergency and provides a structured operational plan for the appropriate interventions and their implementation. It outlines the modalities of NGO involvement and the local government authorities on the distribution of relief items and steps such a logistics and needs assessments.[174] It establishes a shared understanding of the anticipated scope of emergency to all participants, explains the sector/cluster response strategies to the needs of the affected population, defines coordination mechanisms, communicates the necessary funding requirements, and initiates the draft of the Flash Appeal.[175] The HCT should make sure to draw an indicative budget as it gives donors and the HQ of organisations a clear indication for upcoming funding requirements and makes sure that when issuing appeals time is saved. The process of contingency planning itself is as important as the final document, as it ensures the record and joint ownership of the decision-making process and establishes commitment across partners. Both the APAs and CP adopt a forward-leaning, "no regrets" approach, ensuring that even in uncertain contexts, the system is ready to act.[176] When risks are identified as "medium" the CP should be updated with newly available information such as locations and likely humanitarian impact. Plans must be regularly reviewed and updated to reflect changing risks and institutional arrangements, such as change in membership or leadership in the HTC, ensuring plans remain an appropriate tool for collective action.

[173] IASC Inter-Agency Standing Committee Guidance Emergency Response Preparedness, P. 30.
[174] Ibd., P. 31.
[175] Ibd., P. 30.
[176] Ibd., P. 28.

4. Lebanon – The Country of the Case Study

4.1. Demographic, Economic and Social Overview of Lebanon

This section briefly outlines the demographic, economic and social aspects of Lebanon in order to provide a better understanding of the country and its development. Lebanon is a relatively small country in the Middle East, covering 10,452 km2 of land, making it the second smallest country in the MENA region, with a population of 5,855,784 (approximately 5.9 million inhabitants).[177] Due to its geographical location on the Mediterranean Sea and its diversity of socio-cultural backgrounds, Lebanon was considered a bridge between East and West. Before the civil war that lasted from 1975 to 1990, the country was in a phase of economic growth and prosperity and in everyday language was often referred to as the Switzerland of the Middle East, mainly due to its thriving financial sector, which offered banking secrecy and attracted foreign investment, similar to Switzerland's banking model.[178] The comparison also stemmed from Lebanon's stable economy and its role as a popular holiday destination, with its capital Beirut often called the "Paris of the Middle East". Lebanon's history can be traced back to the Phoenicians and is significantly shaped by the Arab civilisation and cultural influence. Lebanon was under Ottoman rule for around 400 years, while enjoying autonomous status, which reflects in the country's political and administrative structure.[179] After the WWI, the country, together with Syria, came under the French mandate, which was approved by the League of Nations in 1922. The colonial influence of the mandate and its formalisation of borders and administration under French rule has left its mark well into the 21st century and, in addition to political, economic and legislative impact, also had cultural and identity-related implications.

Lebanon's political structure is officially constituted as a unitary parliamentary republic and functions according to the model of a consociational democracy, in which the system is designed to allow the country's various religious communities to share power. However, the implementation of democratic principles can be described as poor.[180] Although elections, freedom of expression and the press exist *de jure*, in practice these are severely restricted by corruption, ailing legal principles and implementation, and a sectarian political system, limiting cross-communal engagement. The constitution is the foundation that regulates all

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[177] Worldometer - World Population Lebanon.
United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, World Population Prospects 2024.
[178] AbouAssi 2015, P. 215-216.
[179] Ibd., P. 216.
[180] Freedom House - Lebanon.

matters of state and ensures that citizens are governed by constitutional institutions.[181] The president is elected by parliament, which is popularly elected, whilst the president appoints the prime minister after consultation with parliament. It was not until January 2025 that Joseph Aoun was elected president, filling a two-year long vacancy, because the government failed to appoint a new president.[182] Based on long-standing agreements dating back to the French mandate and Lebanon's independence in 1943, an unstable and inequitable distribution of political power was established. Political power is divided between the different sects, whereby the president must be a Maronite Christian, the prime minister a Sunni Muslim and the speaker of parliament a Shia Muslim. Public officials are often appointed based on their religious affiliation rather than their abilities and qualifications and the elites dominating Lebanese politics oftentimes will include military veterans, former militia leaders and notable businessmen.[183] Within the established power-sharing system of Lebanon, none of the parties truthfully emerges as an opposition group and the consolidation of the political elites hinder true competition amongst political parties. Despite a newly established electoral system in 2017, political alliances remained the same as before, further manifesting the inadequate system whilst intimidation, social pressure and propaganda have established itself as legitimate political tools to marginalise nascent political movements.

In order to understand Lebanon's political landscape, it is also necessary to consider its immediate neighbours, which have contributed to the country's destabilisation. During the Civil War (1975-1990), Israel first invaded the South of the country in 1978 and then Beirut in 1982. The Israeli occupation lasted until 2000, when Israel finally withdrew from the South. However, after that Lebanon and its sovereignty were still subject to attacks by Israel, which caused devastating damage not only to infrastructure but also to human life. The most serious attack to occur in the early beginning of the century took place in July 2006 between Hezbollah and Israel, resulting in major emergency operations and recovery programming. Lebanon's second neighbouring country likewise interfered in its internal politics. Syria occupied Lebanon from 1976 to 2005, first sending troops to the Lebanese Civil War in June 1976 and maintaining a military presence and significant political influence for the next three decades until their withdrawal in 2005, following the assassination of former Lebanese prime minister Rafic Hariri, and the up-rise of the Cedar Revolution.[184] Syria's political

[181] AbouAssi 2015, P. 216.
[182] L'Orient Today, 9th January 2025.
[183] Freedom House - Lebanon.
[184] AbouAssi 2015, P. 216-217.

interference in its neighbour's affairs had an impact on presidential elections, the formation of the cabinet and appointments to public office, and also repressed political and civil insurgencies and opposition movements. Assassinations of political figures continued, and the country was in a state of permanent political instability and security unrest. In 2008, internal conflicts arose between various factions in which Hezbollah was active and manifested its sphere of influence.[185] Civil society organisations are meanwhile unable to influence these developments. Political participation by citizens remains low due to unfair election laws, controlled elections and low trust in the state. Citizens feel rather alienated from the government due to the wide spread of corruption in the public sector, enabling practices of nepotism, favouritism and bribes. According to AbouAssi "the public sector is oversized with many vacancies and high average age of older employees".[186] Due to a lack of human and technical capacity and resources, ministries are unable to fulfil their responsibilities. Efforts by civil society groups and reformists, supported by the international community, to improve government functions and public administration in the fight against corruption and to bring about effective reforms in the public sector have so far failed to yield results. The data provided by the World Bank shown below in Table 1 and Table 2 on governance indicators gives an overview of the development of the political situation and governance practices over a 10-year period, with specific figures for 2013, 2018 and 2023. Almost all indicators show a political deterioration, with the indicators worsening over time, developing negatively from 0 in the areas of "Government Effectiveness", "Regulatory Quality", "Rule of Law" and "Control of Corruption". Only in the indicator "Political Stability and Absence of Violence/Terrorism" has an improved score in 2023.

[185] AbouAssi 2015, P. 217.
[186] Ibd.

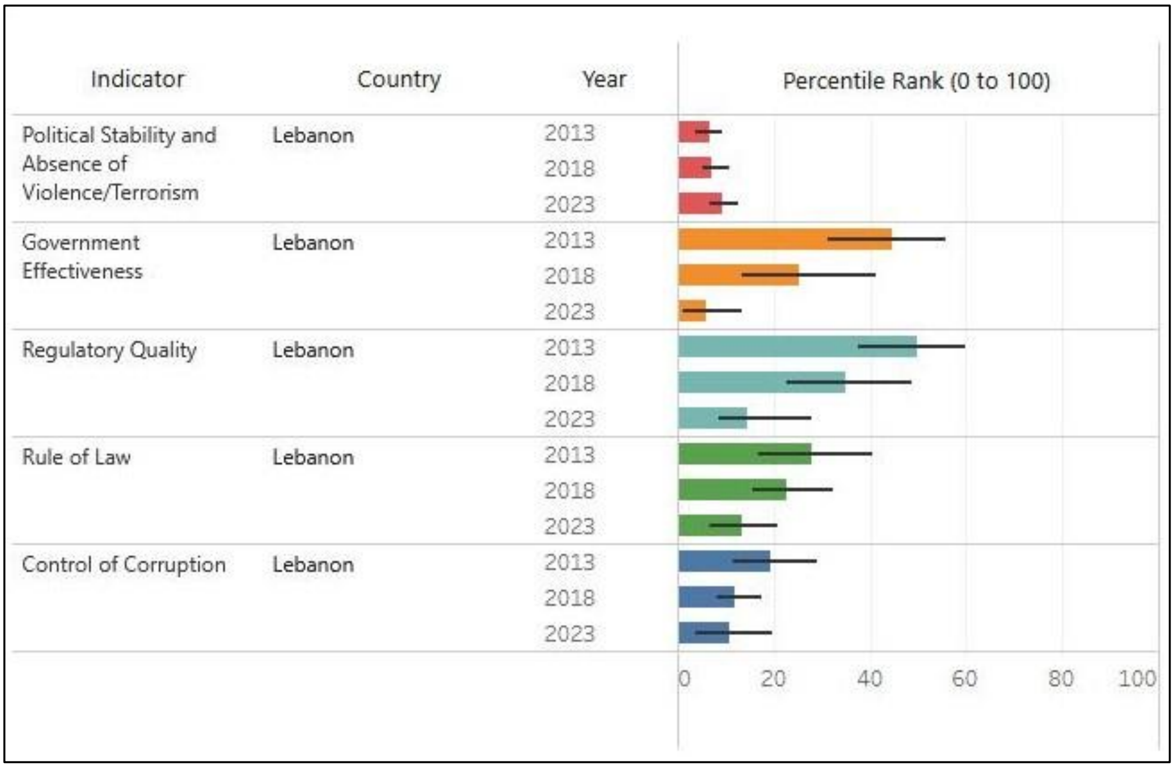

Table 1: Governance Indicators on Political Stability and Absence of Violence/Terrorism, Government Effectiveness, Regulatory Quality, Rule of Law and Control of Corruption in Lebanon, comparing indicators from 2013, 2018 and 2023 in a Table View.

Indicator	Country	Year	Number of Sources	Governance (-2.5 to +2.5)	Percentile Rank	Standard Error
Political Stability and Absence of Violence/Terrorism	Lebanon	2013	8	-1,69	6,64	0,23
		2018	8	-1,62	7,08	0,21
		2023	6	-1,52	9,48	0,23
Government Effectiveness	Lebanon	2013	8	-0,31	44,55	0,21
		2018	8	-0,67	25,24	0,22
		2023	5	-1,58	6,13	0,30
Regulatory Quality	Lebanon	2013	9	-0,08	49,76	0,20
		2018	9	-0,45	34,76	0,20
		2023	6	-1,01	14,62	0,23
Rule of Law	Lebanon	2013	14	-0,73	27,70	0,15
		2018	11	-0,78	22,86	0,16
		2023	8	-1,17	13,21	0,18
Control of Corruption	Lebanon	2013	12	-0,92	19,43	0,14
		2018	10	-1,13	11,90	0,14
		2023	7	-1,23	10,85	0,18

Table 2: Governance Indicators on Political Stability and Absence of Violence/Terrorism, Government Effectiveness, Regulatory Quality, Rule of Law and Control of Corruption in Lebanon, comparing indicators from 2013, 2018 and 2023 in a Table View.

Politics and religion are closely intertwined in Lebanon's social fabric. There is no clear separation between state and religion, and one influences the other, as religious leaders are involved in key positions in the political decision-making process and the civil lives of people. Lebanon recognises 18 religious communities, all of which have their own traditions and institutions supported by the government. While this is a confirmation to the plurality of the citizens, civil life and status affairs are very much organised and influenced by religious authorities and their practice.[187] 95% of Lebanese are of Arab ethnicity, 4% of Armenian and 1% Other.[188] Out of these 61.1% are Muslim, splitting into 30.6% Sunni and 30.5% Shia, and some smaller percentages of Alawites and Ismailis, 33.7% are Christian, with the Maronite Catholics constituting the largest of the Christian groups,[189] 5.3% are Druze and small numbers of Jewish, Baha'i, Buddhist and Hindu.[190] Lebanon ranks 109th out of 193 countries in the most recent Human Development report of 2023-2024, issued by the UNDP and measuring different average achievements, aggregated as the Human Development Index on the dimensions of longevity and health, education level and decent standard of living.[191] Lebanon has approximately 1,400 schools, of which some are private educational facilities and others are managed by NGOs, and 48 nationally accredited universities for higher education.[192] Medical and health facilities in Lebanon are well equipped and offer a wide range of services, but access to comprehensive and adequate healthcare is insufficient. The Central Administration of Statistics reports that only 49% of the population has access to health insurance, while 51% have no insurance coverage of any kind. Among those who are insured, 44% are covered by the National Social Security Fund, 7% have private insurance and 18.2% have health insurance provided by the UNHCR or other NGOs.[193] Exact figures and statistics on disabilities and injuries resulting from the protracted civil war

[187] AbouAssi 2015, P. 218.
[188] Lebanese Information Center.
[189] Other Christian religious affiliations include: Melkite Greek Catholic Church, Antiochian Orthodox (Greek Orthodox) Church, Armenian Orthodox, Armenian Catholic, Syriac Orthodox, Syriac Catholic, Assyrian, Chaldean Catholic, Coptic Orthodox, Protestant, including Presbyterians, Baptists, and Seventh-day Adventists, and Roman Catholics.
[190] Lebanese Informatin Center.
[191] UNDP - Human Development Report 2023-2024.
[192] AbouAssi 2015, P. 218.
UNHCR - List of Accredited Private Universities and University Institutes or colleges by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, Lebanon.
[193] See Central Administration of Statistics on Health, Insurance & Disability in Lebanon for full display of the numbers from 2022. Excluding migrant workers, who suffer under the exploitative kafala (sponsorship) system, and trapping thousands of migrant domestic workers in highly abusive conditions amounting to modern slavery. Lebanese law fails to protect the workers, and the establishment has no interest in changing the system.

and other armed conflicts are not available. According to AbuAssi, 2.3% of the population, or 90,000 people, are affected by disability. Kabbara reported in 2013 that 77,000 people were registered with the government for disability cards, 57% of whom reported having a physical disability, mostly as a result of war injuries.[194] While the Central Administration of Statistics report an unemployment rate of 29.6%, the numbers provided by the World Bank Group speak of 11.6%, based on the International Labour Organisation's investigation, showing the percentage of the total labour force.[195] Further, AbouAssi points out that Lebanon has been experiencing a drop in the number of males aged 24 and below, and traces the phenomenon back to the fact that young males emigrate in order to acquire a job abroad.[196] Migration for economic reasons has a long history in Lebanon and in turn reflects on the labour market and employment.

Regarding the economic situation of the country, Lebanon's status as a bridge between West and East has evolved the country into a primarily service-oriented economy with limited natural resources.[197] In the words of AbouAssi, Lebanon remains a "developing country", since its economy has suffered from its civil war and the ongoing and past confrontations with its neighbours, Israel and Syria.[198] The Lebanese economy and is largely based on the tertiary sector, with tourism being an important revenue source.[199] The country also has a well-developed private sector, which drives the economy, and a strong third sector in the form of NGOs, which supplement the public services that the government was unable to provide during the civil war and have since established a firm presence in the country. Many families living in Lebanon, and thus also the local economy, are dependent on remittances and support payments from the Lebanese diaspora.[200] It is socially ingrained that Lebanese migrants and their descendants maintain a connection and sense of responsibility towards their country, which they fulfil by providing financial support to their direct family members and by contributing to the development of their home villages, schools, hospitals and small businesses.

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[194] Kabbara 2012, P. 32.
[195] Central Administration of Statistics on Key Indicators.
World Bank Group on Unemployment Rate.
[196] AbouAssi 2015, P. 219.
[197] Ibd., P. 220.
[198] AbouAssi 2006.
[199] AbouAssi 2015, P. 220.
[200] Trent 2012.

But the country is in an economic slump. In 2008, public debt stood at 163.5% of the gross domestic product, and little has changed since then. Latest numbers in 2024 recorded 164.1% of public debt relative to the GDP, and generally public debt to GDP in Lebanon averaged on 168.2% of GDP from 2000 until 2024, reaching to this day's highest 360.9% of GDP in 2021 and a record low of 131.1% of GDP in 2012.[201] Following the nationwide uprising *thawra* in October 2019, for the duration of four months, the Lebanese population gathered in a series of civil protests against the reigning political elite, calling for their withdrawal. This was the culmination of years of anger against governmental corruption, economic mismanagement, and the failure to provide basic services. The official exchange rate on the evening of the revolution in October 2019 was 1,507 Lebanese Pounds to 1 Dollar.[202] The currency continued to lose value, and by the beginning of 2022, the value of money was 30,000 Pounds to 1 Dollar on the black market, accompanied by rapidly rising inflation. Prices for products rose by 200% at the end of 2021, while the national currency had lost 95% of its pre-crisis value by that point. In this light, it was not unusual for my interview partners to refer to a "pre-crisis" period and a "post-crisis" period with vastly different economic and social conditions. The average salary of public sector employees lost 6-8 times its purchasing power, with many salaries dropping to less than 50 Dollars per month.[203] The financial crisis following 2020 combined the aspects of foreign debt default, the currency devaluation and the collapse of the banking sector, with the Lebanese government declaring a default in debt repayment in 2020 and the effective collapse of the Banque du Liban. Lebanese citizens began withdrawing their savings, which Lebanese banks unilaterally restricted in 2019 by limiting access to customer deposits in US Dollars, reducing balance sheets, and establishing capital controls, all actions taken outside the legal framework. The result of these measures was a total decay of local and international trust in the financial system and disintegration of the payment system, with many international banks in Europe and the US halting money transfers to Lebanon.[204]

In immediate succession, on 4 August 2020, the largest non-nuclear explosion in modern history occurred at the port of Beirut, where approximately 2,750 tons of ammonium nitrate were inappropriately stored, causing the explosion.[205] The enormous medical, psychological and social impact coincided with the coronavirus pandemic and resulted in 6,000 casualties,

[201] Trading Economics on Government Debt to GDP Lebanon.
[202] Snaije 2022, P. 2.
[203] Ibd.
[204] Ibd., P. 6.
[205] El Sayed 2022, P. 1.

800 regular hospital unit admissions and 130 intensive care unit admissions, as well as in 200 deaths.[206] Buildings and neighbourhoods, as well as hospitals, were destroyed or unable to operate, while the national and international emergency response mobilised resources in response to the severely affected health sector. Infrastructural deficits are evident in other countless areas when it comes to the provision of public services. Another example is Électricité du Liban (EDL), whose inadequate operation forces the entire population into dependency on private companies for their energy supply. After a complete blackout in October 2021, this event repeated in August 2024.[207] In both cases, the state was unable to provide electricity because it did not release the necessary funds to import fuel for EDL, causing operations to cease. The interruption brought public services such as the airport, water filtration and pumping systems, the port and prisons to a halt.

The government remains largely dependent on external sources of revenue, as national income from taxation and other sources is insufficient to cover the necessary services and budget. This brings us back to the work of NGOs and development projects, which are involved in reconstruction and the provision of basic services. The state executive body responsible for acquiring funding and overseeing reconstruction and development efforts, the Council for Development and Reconstruction, is financed by external resources rather than its internal revenues. In crises and situations of emergency, foreign funding takes the form of grants and soft loans.[208]

After outlining Lebanon's political and economic situation, it becomes clear how external sources of funding and institutions are filling the gaps that the state and private sector cannot fill on their own, creating a suitable environment for the work of NGOs and multilateral cooperation. In this context, one of the interviewees described the years between 2020 and 2024 as the golden age for NGO work in Lebanon. "We were really in the centre of everything, having lots of budgets, lots of projects"[209] she says, as project funding and programme delivery continued to increase in response to the port explosion 2020, the financial crisis and the instability caused by COVID-19. The international community focused on the successive sequence of these diverse crises, which were countered by increased emergency funding and project inflows. "Now, as of last year, for everyone, it's changing. And it's a very common phenomenon called donor fatigue. They get sick of you

[206] Helou et al. 2022, P. 2200.
[207] Article, EDL: At the Heart of Lebanon's Energy Crisis.
[208] AbouAssi 2015, P. 220.
[209] Author's own work from the conducted interviews.

and your country and say – okay, we need to do something else. And lots of things happened in Europe, Ukraine, European countries now spending more money on the weapons. You had Gaza, you had Syria, everything changed. So now it's normal, normal that people will probably start shifting [their funding] a bit more."[210]

4.2. Description of Recent Crisis and Humanitarian Needs

Lebanon has the largest per capita population of refugees in the world and has taken in more Syrian refugees since the outbreak of civil war in 2011 than all European member states combined.[211] This is in addition to the 110,000 Palestinians that fled to Lebanon in 1948 and have a presence ever since under highly precarious conditions, with current numbers of 222,000 Palestinians residing in the 12 Palestinian refugee camps under administration of the host authority.[212] Since 2013, Lebanon has received between approximately 900 million and 1.1 billion Dollars annually in humanitarian aid funds in support of Palestinian and Syrian refugees, as well as Lebanese vulnerable groups.[213] Major contributors in 2024 include the European Union and the United States, which account for a significant portion of overall aid to Lebanon, followed by contributions from Germany, France, United Arab Emirates and the United Kingdom.[214] The distribution of the funds is subject to negotiations between donor states, UN agencies, the Lebanese government and the manifold INGOs and local NGOs partners. In 2015, the Lebanese Crisis Response Plan (LCRP) was introduced, a situation-adapted framework for emergency relief measures that defines investments and interventions within the coalition of various actors.[215] The LCRP represents the governmental and humanitarian commitment to share tasks and capacity building in a setting where different languages, perspectives and organisational mandates converge, and where dedicated coordination is the only way forward for effective humanitarian aid work. However, looking at the figures, there is a noticeable decline in the amount of funding from 2024 to 2025, with a drop from 1.34 billion Dollars to 439.5 million Dollars. Figures 1 and 2 show the shift in the countries' yearly contribution of funding, with a significant decline in American funding, which has ever since been the largest contributor. 2025 most of the

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[210] Author's own work from the conducted interviews.
[211] Dinger 2022, P. 218.
[212] United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East.
[213] Financial Tracking Service Lebanon 2013.
Financial Tracking Service Lebanon 2024.
[214] Financial Tracking Service Lebanon 2024.
Interactive Encyclopedia on the Palestine Question.
[215] Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2015-2016.
Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2017-2020.

funding comes from European Commission with 32% of the total, while the US contributes 24.6% of the funding.[216]

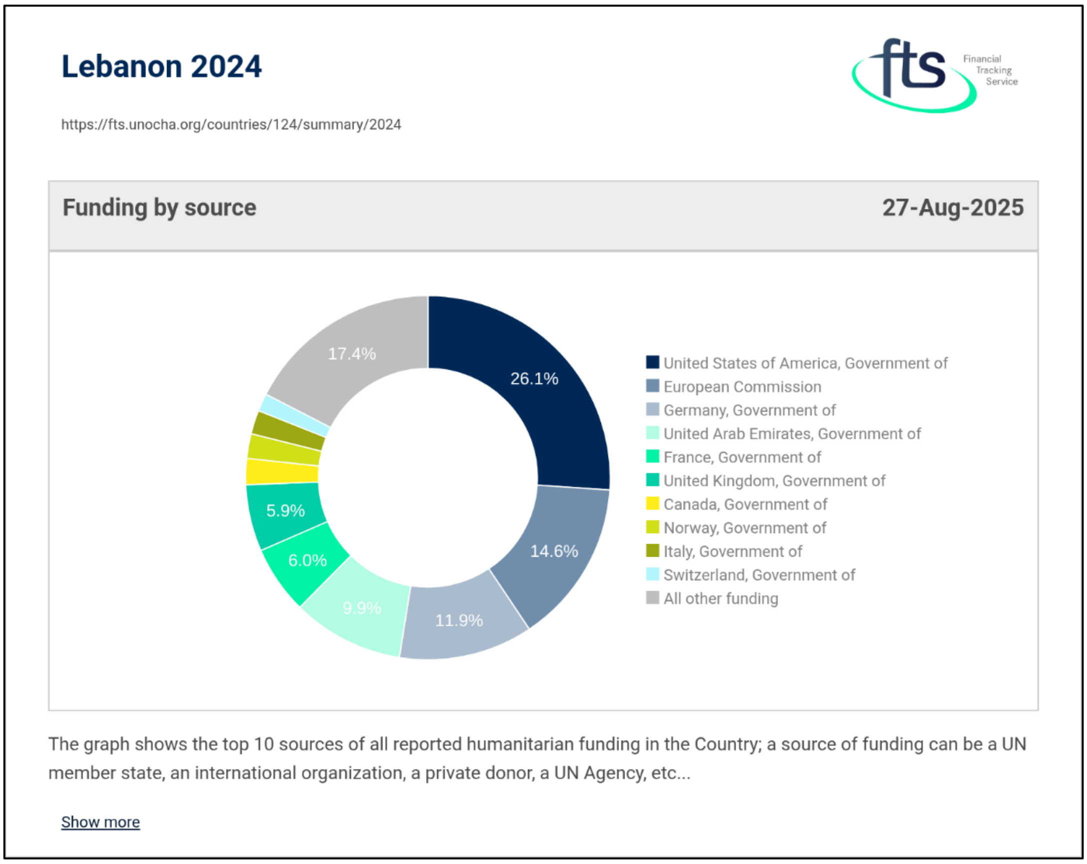

Figure 1: OCHA Financial Tracking Service, displaying funding sources by coutnry for coordinated response plan in Lebanon, 2024.

[216] Financial Tracking Service Lebanon 2025.
By comparison, in 2024, the US provided 26.1% and the European Commission 14.6%. Across the years, it was the US that made the largest contribution in terms of volume, with the exception of 2018 and 2019, when Germany surpassed it.

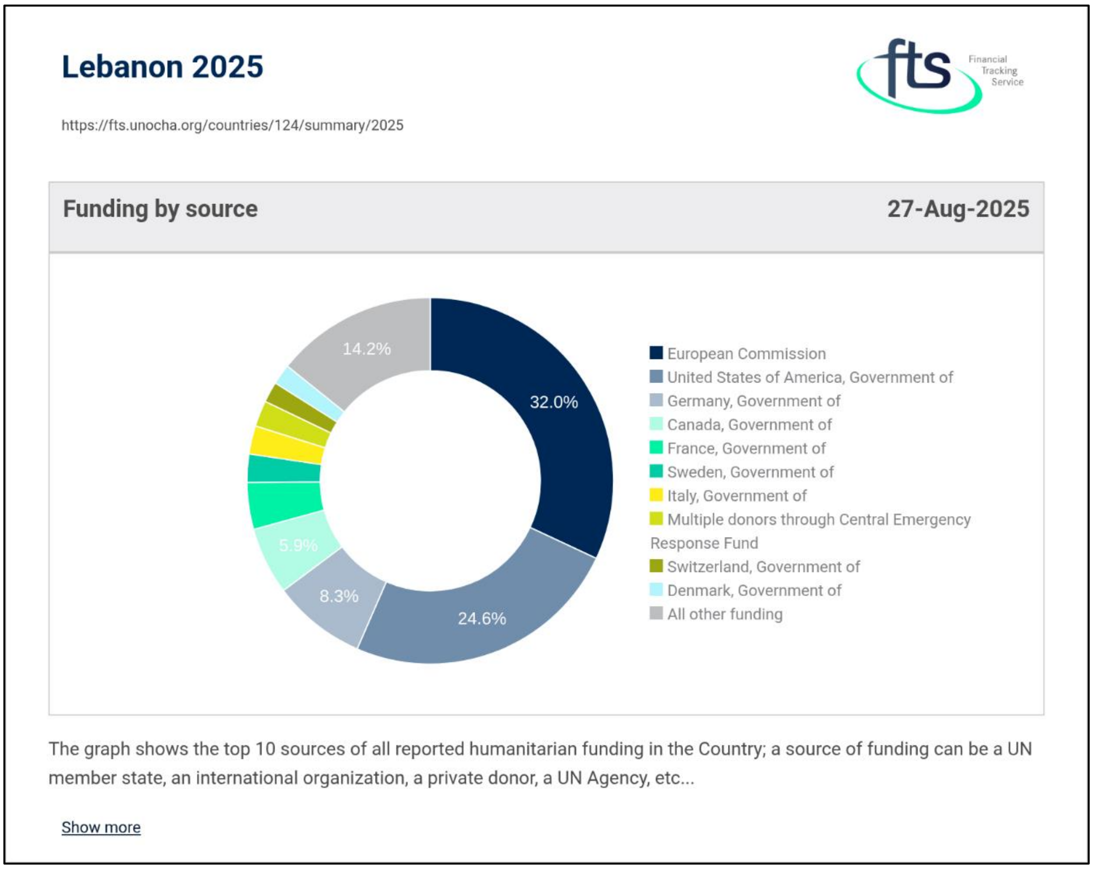

Figure 2: OCHA Financial Tracking Service, displaying funding sources by coutnry for coordinated response plan in Lebanon, 2025.

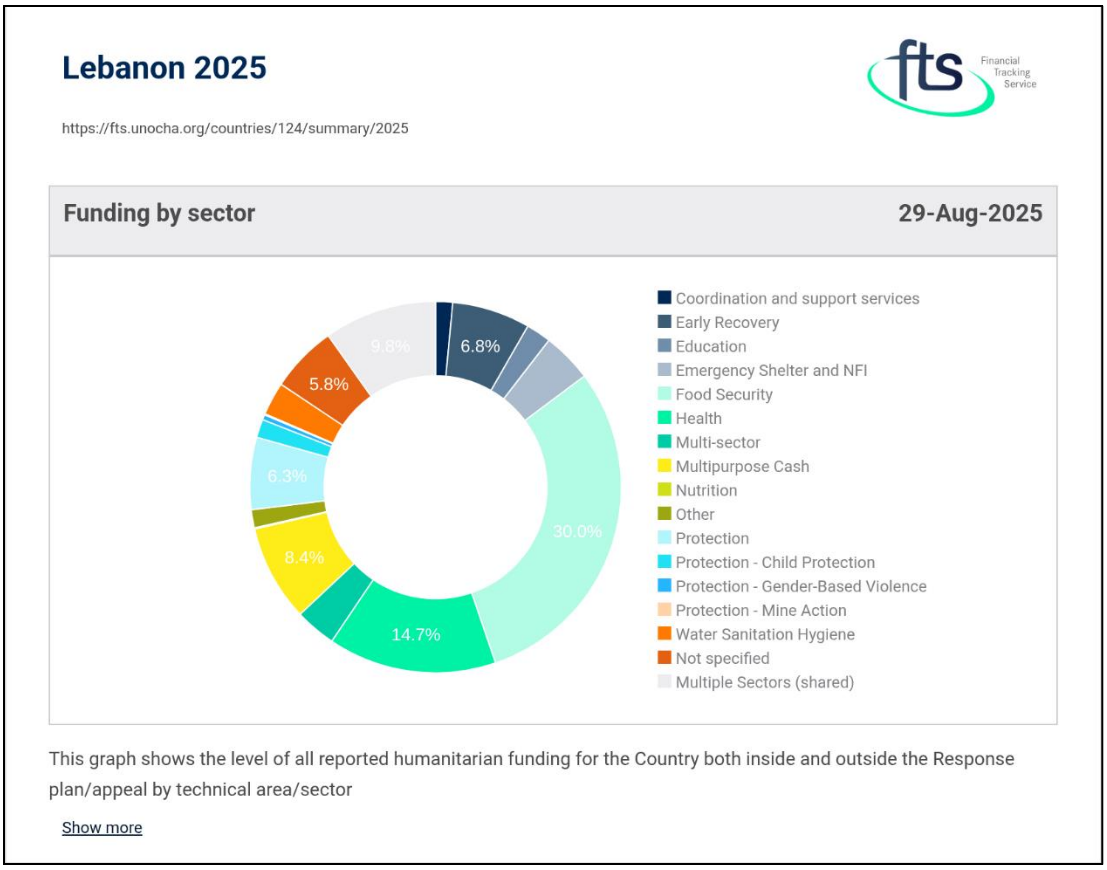

Figure 3: OCHA Financial Tracking Service, displaying funding sources by sector for coordinated response plan in Lebanon, 2025.

Figure 3 shows a breakdown of funding for 2025 by sector. Thr largest share of the budget is allocated to Food Security with 30%. This is followed by 14.7% invested in the Health sector, 8.4% for Multipurpose Cash, 6.8% for Early Recovery and 6.3% for Protection.[217]

I will not delve too deep into previous Crisis Response Plans, but describe the needs and necessities of the 2024 humanitarian aid response and the most recent emergency Flash Appeal of January to March 2025. The Flash Appeal complements and supports the overarching Lebanon Response Plan 2025, which provides the objective framework for the humanitarian response in coordination with the Lebanese government.[218] Typically, the LRP covers the immediate and medium-term objectives and needs of vulnerable groups by supporting Lebanese institutions and public services. It is therefore necessary to advance the financing of both frameworks, the LRP and the Flash Appeal. This year's Flash Appeal aims to mobilise an additional 361.4 million Dollars to provide life-saving assistance and security to Lebanese, Syrians, Palestinian refugees from Lebanon and Syria, and migrants who have been displaced and whose livelihoods have been weakened by the recent escalation in 2024.

At the end of September 2024, the conflict with Israel escalated, leading to a two-month state of emergency in Lebanon, which followed 11 months of clashes and resulted in the most extensive destruction of resources and infrastructure across the country since 2006. According to the Ministry of Health, 4,047 citizens had been killed as of December 2024. After the conclusion of a ceasefire and the cessation of hostilities, the situation nevertheless remains fragile.[219] In 2024, the Lebanese government estimated that there were approximately 1.5 million displaced Syrians, 23,026 Palestinian refugees from Syria, 200,000 Palestinian refugees from Lebanon, and another 11,200 refugees of other origins. The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) determined that there were a further 175,947 migrant workers in Lebanon, 70% of whom were women.[220] Amid these already escalating and alarming humanitarian conditions, it is estimated that between 8 October 2023 and 24 November 2024, at least 899,725 people were displaced from their homes in

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[217] Previous distributions of funding follow a similar logic, with Food Security accounting for 34.2% of the funding, followed by Multi-sector (21.4%), Health (10.9%) and Education (7.1%) in 2024. Similarly in 2023 Food Security accounted for 35.7% of the spending, followed by Education (9.4%), Health (10.8%) and Protection (8%).
See: Financial Tracking Service Lebanon 2024.
Financial Tracking Service Lebanon 2023.
[218] Flash Appeal Lebanon, Covering the Period January-March 2025, P. 6.
[219] Ibd., P. 5.
[220] Ibd.

Lebanon.[221] Of these internally displaced persons and refugees, 190,102 are divided between communal shelters and the 11 UNRWA emergency shelters. 105,000 refugees have already been displaced twice in Lebanon. As a result of the escalation in Lebanon and following the overthrow of Bashar al-Assad in Syria, 562,000 people, of which 37% were Lebanese and 63% Syrian, crossed into Syria, while 41,442 Lebanese left the country to enter Iraq. 25,000 migrants were also forced to flee their homes and consequently lost their jobs. Since 26 December 2024, 819,693 displaced people returned to their homes within Lebanon's borders, with the largest return movements in the districts of Nabatieh, Sour, and Baalbek. A further 160,900 people remain displaced from their homes, mainly from the districts of Aley, Saida, Beirut and Chouf.[222] Approximately 4,485 displaced people continue to stay in collective shelters. Cross-border movements continue on a daily basis, both legally and illegally. Many of those returning are confronted with the destruction of infrastructure in their home districts and have only limited access to basic services. Approximately 100,000 housing units have been completely or partially destroyed in the areas affected by the conflict. The World Bank estimates the damage to physical structures to be 3.4 billion Dollars and economic losses at 5.1 billion Dollars.[223] It is still not possible to return to 60 localities in southern Lebanon, as the Israeli army continues to issue warnings of possible strikes in these areas.[224] The conflict has affected 1 in 10 hospitals and led to the killing of 241 health workers while they were carrying out their duties. The impact on health infrastructure has been severe, leading to an increase in health needs.[225] The destruction of health, water and sanitation infrastructure has increased the risk of disease outbreaks. The parties to the Flash Appeal also note that injuries caused by the conflict require reconstructive surgery and additional mental health care.[226]

Furthermore, new needs have arisen in the area of education, as the conflict has disrupted the education of 2 million children. Over 397 schools and universities were closed due to insecurity, and approximately 599 educational facilities were used as emergency shelters. Because of the intensification and escalation of the conflict, food security conditions have worsened due to the lack of agricultural activity, inflation and disrupted supply chains. 130 municipalities report damaged agricultural land and assets, resulting in a 40% drop in grain

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[221] IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix.
[222] Ibd.
[223] World Bank, Lebanon Interim Damage and Loss Assessment.
[224] Flash Appeal Lebanon, Covering the Period January-March 2025, P. 5.
[225] WHO Lebanon: A Conflict Particularly Destructive to Health Care.
[226] Flash Appeal Lebanon, Covering the Period January-March 2025, P. 6.

production below average. Even before the outbreak, a quarter of the Lebanese population suffered from inadequate food intake, while half of the Syrian refugees suffer from acute food insecurity.[227] The Flash Appeal therefore is a means to mobilise additional funding in response to the novel needs arising from the escalation.[228] The Ministry of Public Health is overseeing the health response which provides essential health services and health supplies and support the integration of mental health and psychosocial services into hospitals, including trauma and emergency care, as well as continuing on the provision of sexual and reproductive health services and other medication and hospitalisation support. The Ministry of Social Affairs is assisting in the provision of relief within the collective shelters, providing emergency winter preparation, essential supplies and basic assistance to internally displaced people in the shelters. The most urgent needs for which the fund has been called upon consider food, water, shelter, nutrition supplies, educational materials and core relief items. Further, partners continue on an upscaled level to support basic services and protection services with logistics support continuously providing aid delivery and storage capacity since October 2024.

As already mentioned, the humanitarian situation was dire even before 2024. I will briefly talk about the sectors affected and how the events restricted and challenged the operational capacity of NGOs. The outbreak of COVID-19 in Lebanon came at a time when the country was already hosting one million Syrian refugees living in precarious conditions, coupled with political instability, mismanagement and corruption, and a cumbersome health system.[229] The spread of the COVID-19 virus invariably increased demand for food assistance and shelter, increasing the necessity of NGO assistance in those sectors. However, while NGOs had to respond to the increased demand, their own employees were affected and unable to work due to poor health. The shortage of staff caused by the pandemic meant that numerous organisations were unable to run their programmes, obtain funding and serve beneficiaries.[230] Crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic impose sudden changes in

[227] FAO/WFP Special Report 2024 Crop and Food Security Assessment Mission to the Lebanese Republic.
[228] According to Lebanon Aid Tracking, humanitarian partners have mobilised 245.3 million Dollars for the emergency response under the Flash Appeal (October-December 2024), as of 16 December. There have been allocations from the Lebanon Humanitarian Fund (12 million Dollars emergency allocation in October and 30.3 million Dollars reserve allocation in December), complemented by UN Central Response Fund (CERF) disbursement of 10 million Dollars in October and December.
[229] Bartels et al. 2021.
Fouad et al. 2021.
Kabbara & Ozgit 2023, P. 2.
[230] Santos & Laureano 2022.

organisational functionality and thus require operational changes and new strategic planning.[231] The Lebanese government's action plan and efforts to meet the impact of the pandemic excluded the most vulnerable groups of refugees, detainees and elderly people.[232] People from vulnerable groups who were unable to work due to quarantine or were already in illegal employment conditions had no access to income and were therefore dependent on health, financial and social services provided by NGOs. The UNHCR supported the response to the COVID-19 pandemic by providing isolation rooms, increasing hospital capacity, covering the costs of testing and treatment for refugee patients, and running community engagement and awareness sessions.[233] Demand for NGO services increased in many regions, while lockdown prevented organisations from assessing needs and offering capacity building in problem areas.

Simultaneously to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Beirut port blast posed an additional challenge to the already unfolding crisis conditions and on-going aid response. The blast triggered the displacement of 300,000 Beiruti residents and posed material damage to property amounting to 15 billion Dollars.[234] Nonetheless, the NGOs already operating in the country managed to quickly adjust their operations from providing aid to refugees to supporting recovery efforts. In their analysis Mona Harb and Mona Fawaz describe the disappointing experience of coordination efforts to address the crisis and provide relief, in which the participating organisations had to coordinate with the Lebanese Armed Forces and the government's Higher Relief Council under difficult conditions, as they were required to register before being granted access to the affected neighbourhoods. This reveals that the state's participation in the recovery process was limited to its military and security presence and reduced the scope of the aid provided to physical reconstruction, slowing down the process and disabling comprehensive recovery.[235] In the wake of the explosion, donor countries have been under pressure to avoid direct cooperation with the Lebanese government due to its obstruction and to allocate their aid funds directly to neutral organisations. As a result, out of the 39 million Dollars raised by OCHA's Flash Appeal, only 3.6% were allocated to national organisations, pointing to the drawbacks and damage caused

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[231] Rottkamp 2021.
[232] UN Global Humanitarian Response Plan COVID-19 (April-December 2020).
[233] UNHCR Lebanon COVID-19 Response Dashboards (September 2020).
[234] Dinger 2022, P. 234.
See El Sayed 2020 for more information on the dual impact of the pandemic and the explosion at the port.
[235] Beirut Urban Lab, Article "Is Lebanon Becoming Another 'Republic of the NGOs?".

by non-complementary action of the state and organisations.[236] The immediate actions necessary included conducting damage assessments, removing debris and rebuilding homes, the delivery of services for basic needs and the provision of psychosocial and medical support in the neighbourhoods affected by the blast.[237]

In times of crisis, organisations are forced to adapt and develop new alleyways for their performance.[238] During the pandemic or other types of natural or man-made disasters, many organisations struggle to hold fundraising events, while access to services for those in need remains difficult. At the same time, donations and NGO personnel capacity declined considerably during COVID-19. During this period, organisations were concerned about the loss of income, the interruption of cash flow, reaching out to and attracting supporters, human resource issues such as payroll, remote work management, as well as the health and anxiety of their employees.[239] On the other hand, donors and foundations provided flexibility and extra funding to NGOs, by easing the conditions on reporting requirements and limiting reporting requests, thereby reducing the amount of human resource necessities, and in some cases offering additional grant funding.[240] During the pandemic as well as in other crises, organisations have to dedicate their attention to increasing their donation income or obtaining additional funding through mechanisms such as the Flash Appeal or requests to corporate partners.[241] The challenges for NGOs in in crises therefore consist in mending reduced fundraising capacity and staffing difficulties, while simultaneously needing to maintain services for vulnerable populations and the organisation's operations.

4.3. Mapping of Active (I)NGOs in Lebanon

In this section, I present the (I)NGOs currently operating in Lebanon and the various stakeholders and areas of activity according to sectors and thematic scopes in which the organisations are active. This serves as a supplement to the graphics on funding by country and sector provided in Figures 1 to 3. The number of NGOs does not provide information about the scope of their sector-specific activities. The attempt to draw a map of (I)NGOs in Lebanon approximates the situation on the ground and is based on various sources, which

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236 Dinger 2022, P. 234.
237 Civil Society Knowledge Center, Beirut Blast Response: Civil Collective Actions vs. State Responses.
238 Wilke et al. 2020.
239 Stewart et al. 2021.
EFA Summary Report 2020 The Impact of COVID-19 on Non-profits in Europe.
240 Mikołajczak et al. 2022.
241 EFA Summary Report 2020 The Impact of COVID-19 on Non-profits in Europe.

also partly deviate from each other. The author has therefore attempted to combine these sources in a manner by drawing conclusions through the comparison of different platforms and their intersections. The overview therefore not be regarded an exhaustive presentation.

While AbouAssi speaks of 15,000 existing NGOs, of which 5,000 are registered, 700 of them are said to be active on a regular basis.[242] A similar figure can be found on the website arab.org, the most comprehensive and detailed platform for documenting NGOs in the Arab world.[243] It lists 838 organisations registered in Lebanon, regardless of their number of staff or size and whether these organisations are operational. 202 organisations are said to be based in Beirut.[244] It is difficult to detect an exact number because users and organisations can add information to the database by signing a submission form. The other point of reference is the Lebanon Humanitarian INGO Forum (LHIF) which lists 65 partner organisations in Lebanon.[245] It is an informal and independent coordination body for international non-governmental organisations working in Lebanon. Its purpose is to facilitate the work of its members by providing better coordination and enhancing engagement in humanitarian response planning. The LHIF represents INGOs at the UN and governmental level and is also cited by OCHA in the Lebanon Humanitarian Fund Report 2024 as an advisory board member, thus providing a reliable overview, at least with regard to INGOs.[246] The INGO members of LHIF work in all sectors, covering Health, Food Security, Basic Assistance, Shelter, Education, Livelihoods, Social Stability, Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH), Protection, Child Protection, and Sexual & Gender-Based Violence (SGBV).

A detailed list of active INGOs based on the Lebanon Humanitarian INGO Forum is provided in the Appendix. In addition to those INGOs, national and international humanitarian organisations in Lebanon under the National Society of the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement, such as the Lebanese Red Cross, the French Red Cross and the German Red Cross are functioning as an auxiliary to the public authorities in humanitarian matters. National organisations such as the Lebanese Association of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta are part of larger humanitarian networks in the world. The UN is present through its bodies such as the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), the United Nations

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[242] AbouAssi 2006.
AbouAssi 2015, P. 221.
[243] NGO Portal arab.org.
[244] NGO Portal arab.org Beirut.
[245] Lebanon Humanitarian INGO Forum.
[246] Lebanon Humanitarian Fund Annual Report 2024.

Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Refugee and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), further the World Food Programme (WFP), the World Health Organisation (WHO), and the International Organisation for Migration (IMO) are active in Lebanon. Many of these implement longer-term development programs and work with local and national NGOs to collectively employ around 4,000 Lebanese citizens.

The arab.org platform is a useful resource for gaining an overview of the various sectors of activity and their distribution. Figure 4 below, shows the different sectors (health, advocacy/legal aid, economic, environment, food, education, social, animals) or types of organisations (faith-based, development, relief/emergency). The larger the circle, the more NGOs are registered in that category. Since organisations often work across sectors and serve multiple needs simultaneously, double or multiple counts are possible here, as the organisations operate in several field. A distinction is also made between types of services delivered and the mandate of the organisations. Faith-based indicates that the organisation has connections to religious or spiritual groups and that its values and operations are driven by religious beliefs. Humanitarian NGOs provide urgent, short-term aid to save lives during crises, focusing on immediate needs while development NGOs carry out long-term projects to address root causes of poverty and improve quality of life. The largest number of registrations can be found under the categories of “Advocacy/Legal Aid” (449), “Development” (445) and “Social” (394).[247] The Financial Tracking Service showed that the majority of funding is channeled towards food security projects. While a comparatively small number of 63 organisations are registered as organisations working on the subject “Food”, this implies that they implement larger funding volumes.

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[247] For detailed information on each category, numbers and operated service areas please visit: NGO Portal arab.org Lebanon.

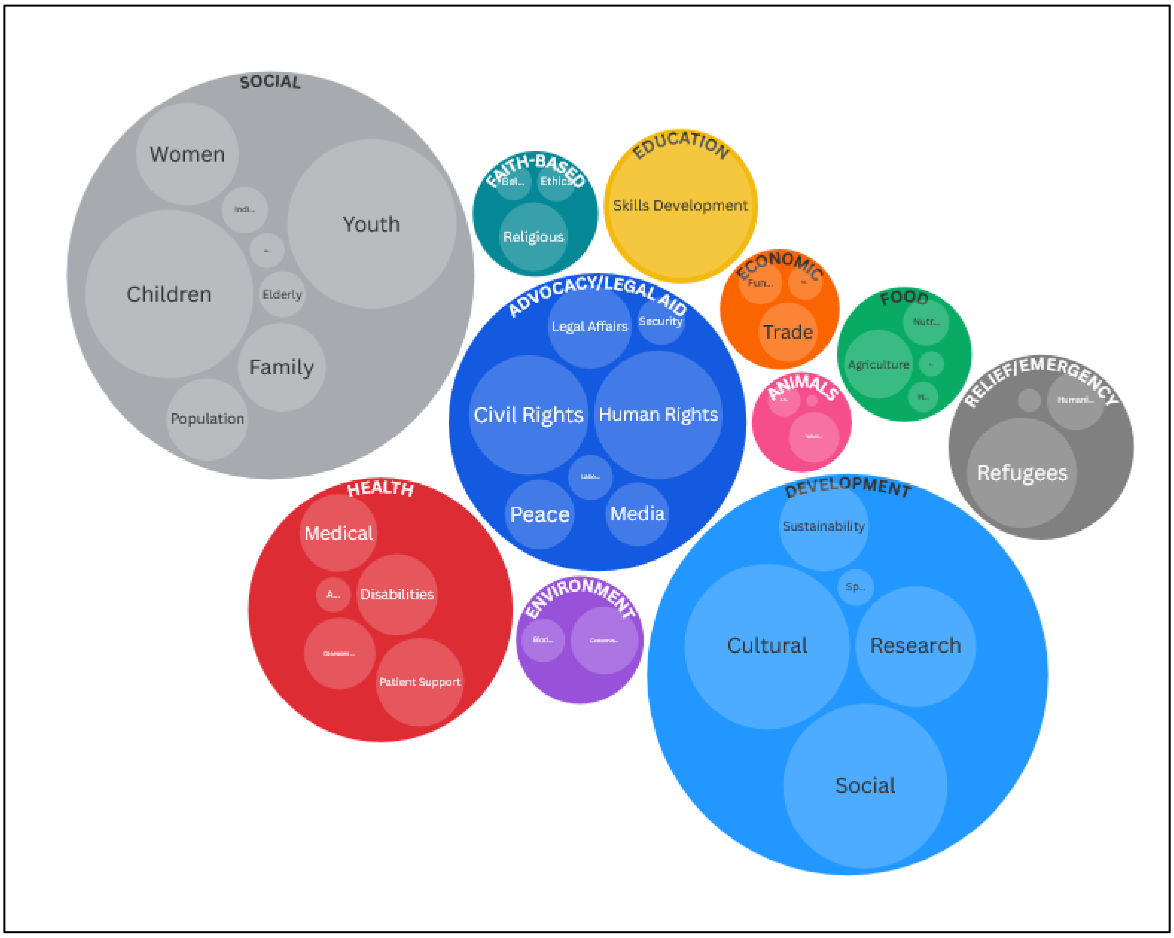

Figure 4: Circle chart visualizing the NGOs by sector operating in Lebanon, according to the organisations registered with arab.org.

Similarly, the comparatively low number of humanitarian NGOs can be explained by the fact that not all NGOs have the operational capacity, planning and resources for emergency operations, as these involve higher institutional costs and risk anticipation, which must be based on a sufficiently developed organisational infrastructure in the areas of logistics, supply chain and procurement.

For the empirical part of my master's thesis, I spoke with six organisations, all of which are involved in acute disaster relief and emergency response and therefore have a humanitarian mandate, although some of them may also be active in the field of development. The organisations serve in various thematic areas, including food security, agriculture and livelihood projects. They participate in emergency response by providing medical, social and agricultural assistance, being global experts in domains such as WASH and shelter. Some of the organisations operate mobile medical units delivering medical care and essential supplies and running primary healthcare centres. The organisations active in health operate medical-social centres, dispatch rooms, blood transfusion centres and training centres for local capacity building, nursing centres and youth clubs. Some of the organisations run a disaster risk reduction unit helping to build safe and disaster resilient communities and support ministries and governorates in conducting more effective risk-informed management, contingency planning and more effective mobilisation of resources by local authorities. By bringing community engagement and digitalisation and the use of software and tools in anticipation of a disaster, these organisations support the initial emergency response. By implementing emergency management services and geospatial data, they provide the knowledge and technology needed in crisis response. Some of the organisations were active in the training and capacity building for setting a plan of action for COVID-19 by supporting municipalities and local authorities in their preparedness, and to align efforts on local and national level. Other organisations were responding to the Beirut blast by running national emergency operation rooms and supporting the Lebanese Army. Emergency operation rooms were kept operational daily, and were supported by these organisations in data collection, technical support and digitalisation. They provided technical support to different ministries and the disaster risk management unit at the Council of Ministries. Some of these organisations also work across borders and go on missions to Syria to support local needs there.

5. Human Resource Management and Empirical Findings

5.1. Human Resource Management from an (I)NGO Perspective

NGOs today have shifted from employing volunteers to experienced and skilled employees. The professionalisation the organisations and the sector underwent have impacted the recruitment, training and deployment of professionals.[248] Regardless of an organisation's primary purpose, making a difference in humanitarian crisis cannot be achieved without effective human resource management.[249] The success or failure of an NGO depends on its ability to attract and retain staff.[250] A foundation for communication and the achievement of organisational goals, strategies and actions that provide acceptable working standards are indispensable. The human resource department manages these practices, which must be customised to the type of organisation, as each organisation recruits and manages in line with its mission and objectives.[251] NGOs must not overlook the fact that they are not only service providers but also play an important role in the human capital sector. Effective and profitable strategies for policies and practices therefore do not set limits, but identify and address individual needs.[252] The function of human resource management in NGOs is to make best possible use of employee performance in pursuit of its strategic objectives.[253] It is in the interests of the master's thesis to determine and reflect on the status quo of management and HR practices in NGOs in Lebanon, to contribute to a bettering of systems, that seemingly work but could need some enhancement. Understanding current practices and their effects on employees could enhance effective recruitment, training, career management and turnover. Using human resources effectively is necessary since there are only limited amounts available to organisations. Certain inefficiencies in human resource management persist and hinder the optimal use of human capital and organisational leverage.

Human resource management is responsible for identifying workforce needs, the design of job descriptions, gathering candidates and managing the hiring process. For the effective functioning of an NGO it is essential to hire, develop and retain the right person, at the right

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[248] Walker et al. 2010.
Barnett 2011.
[249] Martínez & Martineau 1998.
[250] Bromdieh 2011.
[251] Lewis 2001.
[252] Zein & Yassine 2016, P. 34.
[253] Johnason 2009.
Zein & Yassine 2016, P. 35

time, in the right numbers.[254] After successful recruitment it is the responsibility of the HR department to overview and forecast staffing needs based on the organisation's goals, the humanitarian needs and employee turnover, to ensure the organisation has the right skills available when necessary. The cost of losing employees is very high when it implies the loss of tacit knowledge and therefore poses the urgency to retain valuable employees.[255] Human resource activities in NGOs sometimes only amount to basic HR functions. From a competitive advantage perspective, the level of employee engagement is important though because it influences the work performance of each department and thus contributes to the overall organisational performance.[256]

One of the major challenges facing the NGO sector remains the recruitment and retention of skilled staff, as the sector continues to struggle with staff capacity.[257] Staff capacity refers to both the "size of the pool of skilled and experienced people" and "the level of their skills".[258] It is common for humanitarian workers to perceive their job as a temporary career choice, potentially resulting from the strains it puts on employees' personal life.[259] Job insecurity is a central issue in this sector and short-term contracts are a decisive factor for people leaving the sector.[260] Employees ask themselves whether long-term quality of life is possible under conditions such as the demotivating return home to unemployment, the difficulty of planning one's life, the unpredictable and unpaid intervals between missions and the length of these intervals without guidance on the next assignment. NGOs often lack organisational support structures for transitioning out of the humanitarian sector and therefore contribute to difficulties adjusting to life in the home country of employees. Functional ebriefing processes should be considered to assist and recognise the importance of the well-being and relationships of the staff, which enhances job satisfaction and reduces turnover. Research reveals that NGOs view their employees as the most important asset of the organisation and consider it its backbone, which has led to over-relying on their resilience.[261]

The human resource department further handles compensation and benefits, including the design of pay structures, bonuses, health insurance set-ups and retirement plans to attract

[254] Meduri 2014, P. 139.
[255] Droege & Hoobler 2003.
[256] Zein & Yassine 2015, P. 35.
[257] Suh 2018.
[258] Richardson 2006, P. 335.
[259] Abikova 2025, Table 9.
[260] Buny 2019.
[261] Jachens 2019.

and retain talent. Pay-for-performance systems are more common in the private sector than in the NGO sector. While monetary incentives are less prevalent in NGOs compared to the private sector, they certainly influences motivation and job satisfaction of humanitarian staff.[262] The impact of salary on job satisfaction is considerable, and salary was cited as the top reason why employees decide to leave their jobs.[263] The negative influence of salary on job satisfaction and motivation has been observed earlier in research, where the negative impact on motivation appears to be even more prominent than on job satisfaction.[264] An ambiguous and two-fold influence of salary has been detected by Abikova with almost a third stating that it positively affects their motivation, and another approximate third citing it has a negative influence on motivation.[265] Similar results were produced for job satisfaction and monetary incentives were found to constitute one of the reasons why people continue working in the humanitarian sector. While salary is not the only factor influencing job satisfaction and motivation of humanitarian workers, it is one that must be considered, pointing to the importance of how compensation packages are structured to attract and retain talent while taking the stressors and motivators of humanitarian work into account.

It is up to the human resource department to provide training and development to its workers, which is integral to career development and relates to hiring practices. On-boarding and pre-deployment training, as well as supporting career growth through workshops and continuous mentoring ensures that employes stay competent and adaptable. In comparison, opportunities for learning, growth and development are more widespread in the private sector, while still lagging in NGOs. The corporate world offers well-developed career progression programmes to its employees.[266] NGOs do not yet assign enough importance to the training of workers and seem to do poorly on the training of employees, with many of them not receiving any formal training opportunities.[267] The provision of development and training activities contributes to the identification of job tasks in alignment with an organisation's mission. While NGOs are aware of such a relation, training opportunities are often lacking as an overall organisational strategy for the retentions of employees.[268]

[262] Suh 2018.
[263] Lu et al. 2016.
[264] Abikova 2025, sub-sec. Discussion.
Koroma et al. 2021.
[265] Abikova 2025, sub-sec. Discussion.
[266] Merchant 2010.
[267] Abikova 2025, sub-sec. Discussion.
Mukasa 1999.
[268] Colarelli & Montei 1996.

International assignments and postings abroad should be considered a valuable resource, as they provide opportunities to acquire new skills, which in turn can advance career development.[269] Recognising the hardships faced in various posting countries can therefore offer career benefits, such as the development of transferable skills that can be used across different localities in the humanitarian sector.[270] Good career management recognises the skills the employee brings to the organisation and ensures that he is placed in the positions that match his qualifications and expertise. Job satisfaction increases when job assignments are aligned with an employee's career trajectory, and his roles and responsibilities contribute to their career development.[271] On the other hand, the absence of such strategies can negatively impact job satisfaction and motivation. It is therefore crucial that NGOs recognise the interest of employees for career advancement, precisely because humanitarian workers can pursue international assignments for their personal development.[272] An established set of performance standards directed by the HR and the use of appraisals and evaluations to track and advance progress, as well as feedback sessions can help the employee to align with the organisational objectives. A transparent and functional career management mechanism establishes the alignment of job assignments with overall career goals, and can further contribute to job satisfaction.[273]

It is the responsibility of the HR department to ensure the health, safety and well-being of employees through the implementation of policies. They further have to ensure adherence to labour laws, anti-discrimination regulations and health and safety rules. NGOs have to comply with a duty of care towards their staff and must mitigate the risks their employees face by protecting staff well-being through suitable strategies and measures.[274] The context in which humanitarian workers operate is characterised by the challenges and dangers of the environment, which exposes them to a number of risks. One of the risk is physical harm, as humanitarian aid workers can become victims of the disasters just like the communities they serve.[275] There are documented cases in which humanitarian workers have been specifically

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[269] Lazarova et al. 2021.
[270] Dickmann & Cerdin 2018.
[271] Brendel et al. 2023.
[272] Bjerneld et al. 2006.
[273] Lazarova et al. 2021.
[274] Darby & Williamson 2012.
Guisolan et al. 2022.
[275] Ali et al. 2015.

targeted through harassment, kidnapping and murder.[276] An increased mortality rate among humanitarian workers has been observed, which can be attributed to intentional and unintentional violence, illness and accidents.[277] In addition, they are exposed to stress factors such as cuts to essential services or delays in salary payments.[278] The other risks refers to stressors and implications on mental health as humanitarian workers are exposed to primary and secondary trauma and staff is at risk of developing mental health issues such as post-traumatic stress disorder, depression and anxiety.[279] The exposure to unstable security situations, lack of communication, job insecurity, low salaries and insufficient living conditions contributes to the development of burnout.[280] However, external threats and factors are not the only challenges affecting the work environment. Effective internal regulations are necessary to establish boundaries, identify and respond to individual needs, and help HR make the most of limited resources.

The human resources department is responsible for mediating relationships between employees and resolving workplace conflicts through confidence-building measures and communication between employees and management. Relationships within a team are crucial for well-being, mental health and job satisfaction.[281] This includes both the quality of the relationship with the supervisor and with colleagues. Poor relationships are a common reason for staff turnover.[282] While the organisation's mission can create a sense of identity and belonging, team dynamics are of high importance, as many humanitarian employees can feel socially isolated during missions.[283] Supportive structures are therefore necessary to prevent social isolation, burnout and traumatisation.[284] A sense of belonging and commitment to the organisation increase job satisfaction.[285] Additionally, the recognition of the capabilities of humanitarian workers, respect for their abilities and voicing that they are

[276] Aboutanos & Baker 1997.
Peytremann et al. 2001.
[277] Sheik et al. 2000.
[278] Elnakib et al. 2021
[279] Connorton et al. 2012.
Ali et al. 2015, P. 156.
[280] Lopes Cardozo et al. 2012.
Lopes Cardozo et al. 2005.
[281] Abikova 2025.
[282] Suh 2018.
[283] Wersig & Wilson-Smith 2021.
[284] Gustavsson et al. 2020.
[285] Kiliç et al. 2021.

valued plays an important role.[286] NGOs therefore should make sure to verbalise the appreciation of the employee's contribution and establish channels to communicate those.

Zein and Yassine have compared human resource practices in Lebanon with those of the private sector and identified notable differences in job satisfaction. Their study showed that private sector employees report higher satisfaction across nearly all aspects of their work, including the nature of their job, pride in their work, salary and incentives and their overall happiness with outcomes.[287] The most significant areas of dissatisfaction across both sectors were salaries, incentives, and perceptions of equity and fairness in the workplace. This suggests that financial and reward systems remain a central challenge. When examining employee development, the private sector scored higher, with staff reporting greater opportunities for growth and encouragement. NGOs scored particularly low on the statement "I get encouragement," pointing to gaps in support structures.[288] The lack of development not only hinders motivation but may also explain higher turnover tendencies within NGOs. Regarding employee retention, the study revealed that NGO employees are more actively searching for jobs outside their organisations compared to those in the private sector. Private sector employees tend to experience a more stable and organised work environment as the private sector also provides greater financial security and clearer promotion prospects.[289] Their findings underscore the need for NGOs to improve HR practices to strengthen reward systems and development opportunities to support long-term employee growth and their subsequent retainment.

[286] Yu et al. 2020.
Bjerneld et al. 2006.
[287] Zein & Yassine 2016, P. 37.
[288] Ibd., P. 38.
[289] Ibd.

5.2. Motivation and Job Satisfaction according to Abikova

The research paper by Jana Abikova in the "Journal of Humanitarian Logistics and Supply Chain Management", which publishes the latest research in the field of humanitarian and development emergency logistics and supply chain management, served as the thematic departure point for this master's thesis.[290] Her research identifies the various factors that have a positive as well as a negative impact on the motivation and job satisfaction of humanitarian logistics personnel. To this purpose, she developed an exploratory research design, which included a literature review and an anonymous, semi-structured online questionnaire.[291] The study examines the reasons for entering the sector as well as the reasons for remaining in the job. Participants in the questionnaire included INGOs and national NGOs, UN agencies, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, logistics clusters from various countries and the Humanitarian Logistics Association. The study found that the policies, culture and practices of humanitarian organisations have a profound impact on employee well-being. While many declare altruistic motives and moral convictions when entering the job, employees lose job satisfaction due to problems with management practices, unfair treatment, bureaucracy and the impact on work-life balance. Understanding the potential problem areas for employees before, during and after their deployment in NGOs is crucial for maintaining functional and successful organisation. Regarding demographic information, the majority of respondents were men (67.7%), with women accounting for 32.3%.[292] In terms of educational background, 55.2% of respondents stated that they had a university degree, 32.3% had a postgraduate degree, which is equivalent to a master's or doctoral degree in the European education system, while 12.5% had completed high school. Abikova largely surveyed field staff (70.8%), staff at the NGO's headquarters (14.6%) and 14.6% stated that they worked in both job placements.[293] The breakdown of field staff revealed that 76% of respondents are expatriates and 19.8% are local employees, while 4.2% stated that they had never been employed in the field. Of the group of all respondents, 80.2% had previous work experience in the private sector.

The reasons the respondents of Abikova's research cite for joining the sector, as shown in Table 3, are multiple, ranging from altruistic motives to personal and practical motivations,

[290] Journal of Humanitarian Logistics and Supply Chain Management.
[291] Abikova 2025, Abstract.
[292] Ibd., Table 1.
[293] Ibd., Table 3.

.[294] The primary reason is “the chance to help people” (58.3%) while 37.5% of logisticians are motivated by “the chance to change the world and make some contribution”.[295]

List of factors	n/N (%)
The chance to help people	56/96 (58.3)
The chance to change the world and make a contribution	36/96 (37.5)
The opportunity to gain international experience	29/96 (30.2)
The opportunity to try something different and gain new work experience	26/96 (27.1)
The chance to justify one's life and give back to society	24/96 (25)
Curiosity and the opportunity to seek adventure	20/96 (20.8)
The chance for career development	19/96 (19.8)
The opportunity to test my own limits	16/96 (16.7)
The perception that my current job is routine and boring	13/96 (13.5)
The opportunity to understand myself better	13/96 (13.5)
The chance to escape from a difficult personal situation or relationship	2/96 (2.1)

Table 3: List of factors motivating humanitarian logisticians to join the sector.

These motivations resonate with the humanitarian commitment to service and improving the lives of people affected by crisis. Other considerable motivations to join the humanitarian sector mentioned are “the opportunity to gain international experience” (30.2 %), “the opportunity to try something different and gain new work experience” (27.1%), “the chance to justify one’s life and give back to society” (25%), “curiosity and the opportunity to seek adventure” (20.8%), “the chance for career development” (19.8%),”the opportunity to test my own limits” (16.7%), “the perception that my current job is routine and boring” (13.5%) and “the opportunity to understand myself better” (13.5%). The responses give an idea of the many diverse interests in the sector and are based on the ambition to advance one’s career, gain abroad experience, engagement and contribution to society, experience something exciting or deepen one’s self-understanding either by challenging one’s boundaries or just by putting oneself in an uncommon situation. Exceeding the Table’s content and added to Appendix, other respondents pointed to more pragmatic reasons, such as the alignment of their skills with the sector’s needs, the absence of personal commitments or the potential for better income.[296] Overall, the initial drivers for entering the humanitarian sector are diverse, combining altruistic impulse, personal satisfaction, professional growth and the pursuit of

294 Consistent with the finding of Elnakib et al. 2021, Rességuier 2018, Anderfuhren-Biget et al. 2013 and Yu et al. 2020.
295 Abikova 2025, Table 4.
296 Ibd., Appendix.

meaningful work. This range of motivations highlights the complexity of the humanitarian sector.

List of factors	n/N (%)
The chance to help people	67/96 (69.8)
The possibility of making a difference	62/96 (64.6)
The reputation of the humanitarian organisation	53/96 (55.2)
The potential risks and challenges of fieldwork	31/96 (32.3)
The level of recognition of my abilities by the organisation	30/96 (31.3)
The stance of my superior	29/96 (30.2)
The unpredictable conditions in the field	29/96 (30.2)
The opportunities for career advancement	28/96 (29.2)
The salary	26/96 (27.1)
The possibility and necessity to stay busy	19/96 (19.8)
Job security	15/96 (15.6)
The living conditions during field missions	15/96 (15.6)
The chance to be "somebody" in the community	13/96 (13.5)
The stance of my family members	13/96 (13.5)
The fear of being socially alienated upon returning home	6/96 (6.3)
Concerns about insecurity affecting my work performance	2/96 (2.1)
The fear that my family or friends do not understand my decision	1/96 (1)

Table 4: List of factors which positively affect the level of motivation of humanitarian logisticians.

Abikova's findings in regard to the factors that positively affect motivation are shown in Table 4 and reveal that the major constituting factor is "the chance to help people" (69.8%), closely followed by "the possibility of making a difference" (64.6%), both evidencing the commitment to humanitarian principles and service. As many as 55.2% are motivated by "the reputation of the humanitarian organisation", 32.2% enjoy "the potential risks and challenges of fieldwork", while 31.1% are pleased by the "the level of recognition of my abilities by the organisation". Other noteworthy factors include "the stance of my superior" (30.2%), "the unpredictable conditions in the field" (30.2%), "the opportunities for career advancement" (29.2%) and "the salary" (27.1%). In the Appendix the respondents additionally mentioned the chance to explore places and meet people, technical aspects of the job, the motivation of the co-workers and the continuous learning environment, including challenges and solution-seeking.[297] Additionally, 76 out of 92 respondents said that their motivation increases when their efforts are acknowledged.[298] An overwhelming 92 respondents stated that seeing the results of their work boosts their motivation. Furthermore,

[297] Abikova 2025, sub-sec. Appendix.
[298] Ibd., Table 9.

83 stated that they feel a strong moral motivation based on personal standards and ethical judgements. However, it is important to note the difference between the motivation of national staff in NGOs and that of expatriates. National staff may be motivated by their commitment to their own community, their attachment to their country, religious beliefs and humanitarian values.[299] They are equally motivated by offering help to people and bring about change, but other priorities such as career advancement and income are given greater weight. Local staff view working for an NGO as a stable and profitable source of income.[300] Unlike foreign staff, local staff are not motivated by the potential risks and challenges of field work or its unpredictable conditions. The latter two are among the strongest negative influences on motivation. Expatriates feel that their potential and skills are more valued by the NGO.[301] The literature also critically discusses the perception of national employees as less competent and professional compared to their international colleagues.[302] This perception negatively influences the valuation of the expertise of national humanitarian workers and a lack of opportunities for career development, reflected in the appointment of Western expatriates to high-level positions in NGOs.[303]

List of factors	*n*/*N* (%)
The salary	32/96 (33.3)
The stance of my superior	31/96 (32.3)
The limited opportunities for career advancement	26/96 (27.1)
The living conditions during field missions	26/96 (27.1)
The impossibility of making a difference	23/96 (24)
Job insecurity	21/96 (21.9)
The limited chance to help people	20/96 (20.1)
The level of recognition of my abilities by the organisation	17/96 (17.7)
The reputation of the humanitarian organisation	16/96 (16.7)
Fear of being socially alienated upon returning home	14/96 (14.6)
The potential risks and challenges of fieldwork	14/96 (14.6)
The unpredictable conditions in the field	14/96 (14.6)
Concerns about insecurity affecting my work performance	12/96 (12.5)
The stance of my family members	11/96 (11.5)
The fear that my family or friends do not understand my decision	8/96 (8.3)
The possibility and necessity to stay busy	4/96 (4.2)
The limited chance to be "somebody" in the community	1/96 (1)

Table 5: List of factors which negatively affect the level of motivation of humanitarian logisticians.

[299] Kallström et al. 2022.
[300] Slim 2015.
Kallström et al. 2022.
[301] Benton 2016.
[302] Bandyopadhyay & Patil 2017.
[303] Bian 2022, P. 3.

Factors that diminish motivation among humanitarian logisticians, displayed in Table 5, are led by concerns over salary, as indicated by 33.3%.[304] This is followed by issues caused by relationships with management, especially with the behaviour superior, as 32.3% have indicated. 27.1% feel that they are lacking opportunities for career advancement and 27.1% are demotivated by the living conditions during field missions. In the Appendix people elaborate on further issues including difficulties communicating with people in higher levels in the hierarchy, insufficient support, unfair treatment, unqualified leadership, bureaucratic aspects of the job and pre-set procedures that don't allow for taking responsibility in tasks.[305] People loose motivation due to the excessive computer work and the lack of hands-on task, as well as not being able to secure the desired or suitable role in the mission. Further, operational inefficiencies and poor organisation, unprofessionalism within the organisation, lack of qualified colleagues and frustrations due to the nature of work are mentioned. Inefficiency, poor leadership and management and the troubles of planning and lack of compensation in between missions are further noted.

List of factors	*n*/*N* (%)
The chance to do things for other people	60/96 (62.3)
The chance to make use of my best abilities	57/96 (59.4)
The relationship with my co-workers	55/96 (57.3)
The chance to do something different every day	54/96 (56.3)
The chance to try my own methods of doing the job	37/96 (38.5)
The way my boss handles their employees	28/96 (29.2)
The working conditions	26/96 (27.1)
The opportunities for career advancement	24/96 (25)
The way my boss provides help with difficult problems	24/96 (25)
The unpredictable conditions in the field	23/96 (24)
The praise I get for doing a good job	22/96 (22.9)
The policies and practices towards employees of the organisation	21/96 (21.9)
Salary	19/96 (19.8)
The chance to be important in the eyes of others	18/96 (18.8)
The living conditions during missions in the field	17/96 (17.7)
The possibility and necessity to stay busy	17/96 (17.7)
Job security	16/96 (16.7)
The job description	12/96 (12.5)
The way my job provides for a secure future	9/96 (9.4)
The chance to do things that don't go against my religious beliefs	8/96 (8.3)

Table 6: List of factors which positively affect the level of job satisfaction of humanitarian logisticians.

304 Abikova 2025.

305 Abikova 2025, sub-sec. Appendix.

Job satisfaction is an important work-related factor affecting employee turnover.[306] It is known that positive evaluations, higher autonomy and control over one's own work lead to increased job satisfaction.[307] In Table 6, the research result reveals that the strongest factors on job satisfaction are tied to "the chance to do things for other people" with 62.3%, "the chance to make use of my abilities" with 59.4%, "the relationship with my co-workers" with a percentage of 57.3% and "the chance to do something different every day" mentioned by 56.3%.[308] In addition to the well-known desire to help others, it is also clear that employees are interested in being able to leverage their skills. At the same time, it is evident that a social and supportive work environment and variety in the tasks are decisive factors for job satisfaction. The desire for autonomy and proving capable is expressed by the 38.5% who value "the chance to try my own methods of doing the job". Respondents additionally mentioned that their personal belief in the mission of the NGO and being included in team settings and decision-making processes contributes to their job satisfaction.[309] Compared to expatriate staff, national employees are more motivated by working conditions and job security, while expatriate staff are primarily motivated by the opportunity to provide assistance.[310]

[306] Dubey et al. 2016.
[307] Lopes Cardozo et al. 2012.
Hackman & Oldham 1976.
[308] Abikova 2025, Table 7.
[309] Ibd., sub-sec. Appendix.
[310] Ibd., sub-sec. Discussion.

List of factors	n/N (%)
The way my boss handles their employees	33/96 (34.4)
The policies and practices towards employees of the organisation	29/96 (30.2)
The job insecurity	28/96 (29.2)
The impossibility to make use of my best abilities	27/96 (28.1)
The opportunities for career advancement	26/96 (27.1)
Salary	24/96 (25)
The limited chance to do things for other people	23/96 (24)
The impossibility to try my own methods of doing the job	19/96 (19.8)
The working conditions	19/96 (19.8)
The way my boss provides help with difficult problems	18/96 (18.8)
The relationship with my co-workers	17/96 (17.7)
The living conditions during missions in the field	15/96 (15.6)
Job description	12/96 (12.5)
The unpredictable conditions in the field	11/96 (11.5)
The praise I get for doing a good job	10/96 (10.4)
The impossibility to do something different every day	9/96 (9.4)
The way my job provides for a secure future	8/96 (8.3)
The impossibility to be important in the eyes of others	6/96 (6.3)
The possibility and necessity to stay busy	6/96 (6.3)
The chance to do things that don't go against my religious beliefs	4/96 (4.2)

Table 7: List of factors which negatively affect the level of job satisfaction of humanitarian logisticians

As can be seen in Table 7, 34.4% state that their job satisfaction is negatively affected by "the way my boss handles their employees", 30.2% by "the policies and practices towards employees of the organisation", 29.2% by "job insecurity", 28.1% by "the impossibility to make use of my best abilities", 27.1% by the lack of "opportunities for career advancement" and 25% are unsatisfied with the salary.[311] The statements from the Appendix include boredom due to periods of inactivity and the absence of long-term planning and a clear vision for the future. Other problems mentioned concern the arrogance of leadership and the poor inclusion of employees by the hierarchy. The survey results have demonstrated that relationships with colleagues and supervisors are both a source of struggle and support. Other concerns raised related to the perceived unfairness in benefit access due to favouritism, and frustration with the recruitment process that values academic qualifications over practical work experience.[312] Meanwhile, limited career opportunities are a significant negative factor among national staff and have greater impact than on expatriates. The hierarchical rift, where national employees are more often found in support roles and expatriates in leadership roles, has the potential to cause tension.[313] This tension is

[311] Abikova 2025, Table 8.
[312] Ibd., sub-sec. Appendix.
[313] Bian 2022.

particularly pronounced when national staff train and brief international colleagues but receive fewer opportunities for promotion.[314] The perception that managers are not competent in their roles exacerbates this frustration.[315] Organisations must address these disparities in order to increase job satisfaction and retention amongst national staff and equally distribute promotion regardless of an employee's background. The task of NGOs is therefore to focus on creating an inclusive and equal working environment that values the participation of all employees without bias.

List of factors	*n*/*N* (%)
The level of resources (funding, human resources)	47/96 (49)
The disorganised environment inside the organisation	42/96 (43.8)
The fact that your job is never done	41/96 (42.7)
The excessive workload expected by the organisation	39/96 (40.6)
The unpredictability	39/96 (40.6)
The disorganised environment surrounding the organisation	33/96 (34.4)
The impossibility of combining this career with family and personal life	33/96 (34.4)
The pressure inside the organisation	33/96 (34.4)
The potential risks and insecurity in the field	25/96 (26)
The lack of training	23/96 (24)
The living conditions during missions in the field	21/96 (21.9)
Job insecurity	19/96 (19.8)
Social alienation upon returning home from the field	17/96 (17.7)
The pressure surrounding the organisation	12/96 (12.5)

Table 8: List of demanding factors of the job.

In Table 8, when respondents were asked about the demanding aspects of their work, 49% gave the answer "the level of resources (funding, human resources)", 43.8% said "the disorganised environment in the organisation", 42.7% "the fact that your job is never done" and 40.6% stated "the excessive workload expected by the organisation".[316] Many of the respondents struggle with "the unpredictability" (40.6%), "the impossibility of combining career with family and personal life" (34.4%), "the pressure inside the organisation" (34.4%), "the potential risk and insecurity in the field" (26%) and "the lack of training" (24%). Abikova additionally recorded concerns which related to over-organisation and difficulties with interpersonal relations, especially at the headquarters level and the perception that managers are not empathetic. 64 out of 96 respondents said they found it challenging to stay engaged in their work due to poor management, ambiguous practices,

314 Roth 2015.
315 Redfield 2012.
316 Abikova 2024, Table 11.

financial limitations, concerns over securities and the lack of progress. The survey also reveals that the majority of the employees consulted view their roles in the humanitarian field as transitory.

In summary, it can be said that dissatisfaction with work is most strongly influenced by management and the organisation's own policies and practices. The results of the study show that although the external threats and stakes are high, employees struggle more with internal stressors. External challenges might even motivate rather than discourage employees, in the case of expats.[317] In the area of job motivation, the attitude of the supervisor is also the second most decisive factor. Many of the grievances raised by Abikova have to do with the evaluation and recognition of employees and their opportunities to apply their own skills and methods. Almost half cite insufficient resources in terms of staff deployment and personnel management as a stress factor. The following chapters therefore examine the management practices and regulatory frameworks of NGOs in Lebanon and their human resource practices and policies in light of Abikova's findings.

5.3. Methodology

5.3.1. Qualitative Research Approach and Data Collection

The current thesis employed inductive as well as deductive qualitative methodology to evaluate the managerial practices on team and organisation level and general HR practices during day-today operations and the eruption of the escalation in the period from 1 October 2024 until 27 November 2024. Field research was conducted, relying on empirical research tools and observations. Qualitative methods are used in particular to gain insights from experiences and opinions during or after disasters, which enrich quantitative research by taking into account organisational, managerial and staff-related needs exceeding quantitative and standardised frameworks.[318] Qualitative data can provide important information about the complexity of evolving circumstances, such as personal experiences of the challenges described in the workplace and navigating changing resources and organisational conditions. The recovery and renewal of organisational insights and practices during and after a disaster are supported by the specific insights and contribute to institutional learning. Research based

317 Abikova 2025, sub-sec. Conclusion.
318 Mueller et al. 2023.
Merry 2021.
Lawson 2021.

on qualitative data therefore contributes to responding to the challenges of disasters and humanitarian needs.

For the master's thesis, semi-structured guideline interviews were conducted with interviewees from NGOs in Lebanon, in which the interviewee acted as a "supplier of information".[319] Interviewees from NGOs included programme managers, disaster risk reduction project officers, programme managers and administrative managers, human resource directors and coordinators and country directors. Semi-structured interviews are always context-specific and dynamic, but the interviewer steers the conversation in order to generate expected or new information.[320] There is a degree of structure but in contrast to quantitative surveys, the data obtained cannot be statistically evaluated due to the low standardisation of the data collection instruments. However, some decisions regarding the direction of the research are determined in advance by using this method, such as the definition of the research questions, the theoretical framework and the selection of interview partners.[321] The limitation of such a method is that the exchange of knowledge, especially tacit knowledge, through personal interaction can never fully be exploited.[322] The structure provided by the guideline is intended to organise the conversation and is a tool for controlling the course of the interview. There is a general principle to openness, allowing deviations from the guideline and making it appropriate to ask questions that were not previously planned. However, the guide is also intended to ensure comparability of the data collected throughout several interviews.[323] A certain number of questions thus must be answered by every interviewee. The thesis uses a multi-case study approach in order to offer several perspectives on the subject under analysis. The master's thesis therefore reports on the different observations, evidences and practices of stakeholders in various roles in NGOs regarding the increased needs arising from the emergency situation and humanitarian concerns in different sectoral areas.

[319] Kaiser 2020, P. 289.
[320] Ibd., P. 286.
[321] Ibd., P. 291.
[322] Ibd., P. 293.
[323] Ibd., P. 294.

5.3.2. Categories and Coding according to Gioia Methodology

The first step in preparing the data material was to transcribe the audio material into a written text. Further the Gioia methodology was applied as the qualitative research approach, which has established itself in the field of international business and management and complies with the standards of scientific accuracy. It is based on the following three pillars:

- developing a data structure
- developing a grounded model based on that data structure
- presenting findings[324]

The method involves data-coding and data-analysis techniques that take a holistic approach and do not derive its concepts exclusively from inductive inferences.[325] The data structure is an aggregation of analytical categories which includes first-order, informant-centred codes and second-order theory-centred themes. The data structure is important because it links the informant-based codes with the researcher-based themes.[326] Taken together, the first-order analysis should remain as close as possible to the informant's terms and information. The most important categories are given distinct labels or descriptions. The generation of second-order themes involves a process of sorting, reducing and aggregating first-order codes. The researcher must demonstrate interpretative awareness and a consciousness of one's subjectivity in the research process. The development of a grounded theoretical model occurs through the ongoing comparison of data across the different informants. Based on the data structure, a grounded model is developed, consisting of a theory-based introduction, in the case of this research in the following chapter about the Job Demands-Resource Model, a literature review, as has been done in the previous chapters, a presentation of results, and a discussion.[327] The presentation of results and discussion in this master's thesis are merged into one chapter in which the theoretical framework is directly applied throughout the evolving presentation of the findings, so that the thematic categories are dealt with in an instant and successive manner. A summary of the key points of the discussion and inferences will be presented in the conclusion.

The analytical process of the Gioia Methodology develops a deductive approach that progressively evolves inductive categories alongside deductive reasoning through the

[324] Magnani & Gioia 2023, P. 1.
[325] Ibd.
[326] Ibd., P. 2-3.
[327] Ibd., P. 3.

systematic integration of emerging field data with existing theory. In the final part of the data presentation, the findings are presented through a detailed, data-based narrative juxtaposing and blending the second-order themes. This method therefore has knowledge-enriching potential because it uses an inferential process that involves both inductive and deductive[328] categories that allow for new theoretical insights.[329] A systematic data structure therefore takes into account both first-order, informant-based and second-order, researcher-based understandings. The research process of the Gioia Methodology can be seen as a transition from inductive findings in data patterns to deductive expansion of the material. This constitutes a process in which the researcher draws conclusions by combining data and theories, thereby gaining new theoretical insights. First the researcher takes a bird's-eye view of the subject through the development of first-order concepts based on the words of the informants.[330] This is followed by an analytical process that occurs from the establishment of second-order themes and the interweaving of induction and deduction, a process of theoretical development and knowledge enrichment.

5.3.3. Theoretical Framework: JD-R Model

The Job Demands-Resources Model (JD-R Model) is derived from situational behavioural theory and suggests that leaders and management must adapt their leadership style to specific contexts. The JD-R Model addresses both health-impairment and motivational processes, based on engagement supported by feedback, autonomy, and recognition. This dual-pathway logic is relevant when analysing how managers perceive and manage staff well-being, retention and morale under crisis conditions. The Job Demands-Resource Theory aims to understand how organisations and employees can best deal with crisis situations in the workplace.[331] Crises have revealed that job characteristics alone are not sufficient to understand employee health and motivation. Rather demands and resources available to individuals, the job and the organisation interact with each other and impact work outcomes. In addition to the proposed individual regulatory strategies, attention is paid to the manager's and the organisation/team's involvement in order to identify the demands' and resources' weight on outcomes. In a revised edition of the JD-R theory, crisis management is included

[328] The author applies the term "deductive" instead of Magnani's and Gioia's "abductive" because she is more familiarised with its use and distinction. Deductive category development refers to categories that are derived from existing theories and previous research, rather than being obtained from the data itself. Abduction is a term coined by Magnani that refers to the creative and selective generation of hypotheses or inferences, diagnostic reasoning and selection from pre-existing ideas.
[329] Magnani & Gioia 2023, P. 2.
[330] Ibd., P. 4.
[331] Demerouti & Bakker 2022.

in the overall assessment. The JD-R theory is applied in this master's thesis by weighing its implications against the data material and specific statements of the interviewed NGOs in order to classify their management and organisational practices analytically and extract relevant implications for the study's purpose.

According to JD-R theory, every work context can be classified into two categories of job characteristics: job demands and job resources. Job demands are the characteristics of work that require continuous physical or psychological effort, such as work pressure or cognitive challenges, and therefore incur physical and psychological costs.[332] Job demands are characterised by the fact that they require cognitive energy because fulfilling them is part of the job. By contrast, job resources are those characteristics of work that enable and facilitate the achievement of work goals, reduce job demands and their physical and psychological costs, or stimulate personal growth and development.[333] Examples of job resources are social support, task significance and opportunities for growth. The key aspect of job resources is that they generate motivation and reduce the impact of job demands, thereby contributing to the
well-being and performance of employees.[334] Emergencies exacerbate the relation between demands and resources, by leading to an increase in job demands, while the importance of job resource availability also rises.[335]

JD-R theory suggests that jobs are ideally designed when they place a manageable amount of demands on employees and offer sufficient resources to cope with them.[336] Job demands are less draining when there are sufficient resources available in the work environment. When both job characteristics exist in a balanced way, this ensures that employees remain healthy and motivated and are able to perform their tasks. However, if the necessary job resources are lacking during a crisis, or if the demands cannot be met in view of the increased requirements caused by the crisis, the likelihood of demotivated and fatigued employees rises. Overworked and under-resourced employees may lose their commitment to contributing to organisational outcomes or are unable to make valuable contributions due to a lack of energy, time, physical resources or health problems. In the particular situation of the crisis, it is more important than ever to find the optimal ratio between the pair of demands

[332] Demerouti et al. 2001.
[333] Ibd.
[334] Bakker & Demerouti 2017.
[335] Demerouti & Bakker 2022, P. 216.
[336] Ibd., P. 214.

and resources. Job demands could include instances such as health impediments, destructive leadership, excessive workload, physical and emotional demands, work-home interference, altered resources such as lack of financial resources, additional health and safety measures due to crisis, insecurity, role ambiguity and uncertainty, social isolation and the loss of usual working routine. The job resources can manifest in adjustments of ways of communication, autonomy, social support and relationship with peers and leadership, changing the workflow, organising work remotely, improvement of office and building infrastructure, providing proper equipment and tools, providing protective equipment, feedback on performance, clear communication of effects of crisis, task significance and opportunities for growth. The authors of JD-R theory propose that proactive individual regulatory strategies can limit the negative effects of demands and boost the positive effects of resources.[337] The same applies to regulatory strategies employed by the leader/manager and the team/organisation.[338]

Employees should therefore develop individual strategies and coping mechanisms to help them support different domains of their lives in crisis situations. Employees can actively seek to increase their job resources, for example by asking for feedback or help, or actively take on challenging job demands, such as taking on a new project or learning a new skill.[339] Employees can also reduce the difficulty of job demands by limiting task interruptions or overcoming bureaucracy. Another suggestion is job-crafting, which involves personally shaping and re-defining one's job to achieve a better person-job fit.[340] Job-crafting leads to changes in the balance of job demands and resources, as well as increases in work engagement and a decrease in burnout.[341] Other suggestions include proactive vitality management. Employees report better working days when they engage in self-leadership, such as goal setting, self-reward and self-monitoring. Such self-regulatory strategies are suggested to strengthen the motivational effects of resources and reduce the health and psychological constraints of job demands.

Leaders play an important role in the process of resource allocation and coordination and have a number of regulatory strategies for this purpose. Within the organisation, they take

[337] Demerouti & Bakker 2022, P. 224.
[338] Ibd., P. 227-228.
[339] Ibd., P. 222.
[340] Tims & Bakker 2010.
Wrzesniewski & Dutton 2001.
[341] Demerouti et al. 2015.
Gordon et al. 2018.
Van Wingerden et al. 2017.

on the role of assessing the threat and determining what the crisis is about, which is referred to as sense-making.[342] A crisis forces the organisation to face challenges that it does not encounter daily and thus poses a challenge for leadership.[343] Leaders communicate the extent of the crisis and the necessary measures to assist employees in sense-making, reducing ambiguity and supporting employees in managing the crisis.[344] In addition to these top-down strategies, which are necessary due to time pressure and knowledge concentration in leadership positions, according to JD-R theory, leader's most-used strategy should include the provision of resources such as information, clarity, means and direction.[345] This puts leaders in a crucial position to motivate teams and individuals and contribute to the organisation's performance. According to the theoretical framework successful leaders inhabit task-oriented behaviour and apply agency, by using clear communication, project management and display communal and relational behaviour, such as providing social support and displaying sensitivity.[346] According to the JD-R model leaders ought to provide sufficient tangible rewards, such as career opportunities, increased job security and psychosocial resources, including emotional and instrumental support, role clarity, coaching, recognition of hard work, constructive feedback, relevant and timely information and fair treatment to the subordinates and teams to deal with altering conditions of the job.[347] Simultaneously leaders are the ones who determine the job demands, known as as targets, tasks and requirements. They are responsible for overseeing the level of job demands placed on employees, ensuring that these demands do not overwhelm them while reinforcing a strong culture of workplace safety. Leaders are required to listen to employees' concerns when communal behaviour takes on particular importance in times of reduced job security.[348] In this way, effective leaders provide resources in such a way that the organisation's viability is ensured through performance, while demands are managed and under control.

Regulatory strategies of the organisation/team include fostering a shared responsibility and synergetic contributions and building on and expanding existing team process to contribute to positive impact of resources or contain the impact of demands.[349] Organisations must do

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[342] Santos et al. 2016.
[343] Heifetz et al. 2009.
[344] Santos et al. 2016.
[345] Crayne & Medeiros 2021.
[346] Eichenauer et al. 2021.
Taylor & Kavanaugh 2005.
[347] Demerouti & Bakker 2022, P. 226.
[348] Ibd.
[349] Ibd., P. 228.

more than simply increase the frequency of communication. Similar to individual leaders, management must maintain or establish an organisational culture that values and rewards contribution, and communicate appropriately the effects of the crisis.[350] Because risk mitigation is a shared responsibility and employees are interdependent, there must be a shared understanding and agreement about the crisis and the response to the risks in the workplace.[351] Shared responsibility and employee involvement ensure that there is consensus across the organisation on the scope for action. Consensus requires a competent leader who is not afraid of dialogue and can thus motivate workers to achieve the strategic goals during the crisis.[352] Well-functioning teams are based on a process that manages the limited resources by upfront assessment of backup key stakeholders, maintaining a flexible approach to potential role changes and recognising the impact of emergencies on the entire team.[353] In addition to effective teamwork, existing or new communication channels are needed to obtain and provide essential information. If activities and roles have already been tested before the crisis, information sharing about the consequences and coping strategies will be easier to manage.[354] Connections with key stakeholders should be established before the crisis, making the organisation more successful in countering miscommunication, as this creates a general understanding of who these stakeholders are, how they will respond to the crisis, what resources and information are available to them in response to the crisis and what the potential costs of the crisis might be on them.[355]

[350] Clarke & Ward 2006.
[351] Weick et al. 2005.
[352] Bowen & Ostroff 2004.
[353] Demerouti & Bakker 2022, P. 227.
[354] Pearson & Clair 1998.
[355] Mitroff et al. 1996.
Pearson & Clair 1998.

5.4. Presentation Own Findings

This chapter provides the interpretation of the statements obtained from the interviews, which were categorised and coded, and are further juxtaposed with the theoretical frame of the JD-R model. By combining the data with the theoretical model, inferences and statements are drawn that provide insight into current practices and identify areas for improvement that serve the well-being of employees and the long-term effectiveness of the organisation.

5.4.1. Staff Retention and Turnover

To start with, it should be noted that all organisations predominantly employ Lebanese nationals. Two of the organisations state that they consist entirely of Lebanese employees, except for those employees who are responsible for partnerships with donors and function as their representatives. One NGO stated that it actively nationalises its positions after expatriate contracts end and the position gets re-advertised for Lebanese employees. As indicated in the literature, NGOs report that job insecurity makes it difficult for employees to plan for the future and maintain sustainability. Short duration of project funding is a decisive factor. Donors can request concept notes and project periods of 6, 8 or 10 months. Although projects have a specified duration, one NGO reports that they usually last between one and three months and are rarely multi-year projects. Donors can terminate them at unanticipated times, which makes planning for both the organisation and employees difficult. The period between 2021 and 2024 is described as the golden age of NGOs, as a lot of funding was available and there was little turnover during this period. Lebanon developed into a sort of regional hub, with lots of delegations rushing in, as its proximity to Syria gave it a crucial role in responding to this particular humanitarian crisis. Events such as the port explosion attracted attention and high funding budgets, which have been declining significantly since 2024. Short project terms and funding periods are an overall obstacle faced by the NGOs, which results in short term contracts for staff. A local NGO reports that the majority of its employees are hired on a project basis and their contracts are renewed every year. An INGO mentions that the significant difference between international and national contracts is that international staff is employed at HQ level and sent on missions on fixed-term contracts, and none of them have permanent contracts. However, this is offset by benefits that local staff do not receive, such as housing allowances or per diem.

According to the overall statements, turnover is very low and emergency situations and increased demands have no negative impact on it. In general, NGOs track turnover and retention using HR systems and databases and report that there is very little tendency for spontaneous departures. When such departures do occur, employees report to have found longer-term employment opportunities and more secure NGOs, while remaining in the same sector and not moving to the private sector. Reasons for changing NGOs are attributed to finding better opportunities. One NGO reports that the one departure they have had since 2019 was due to a better package. While the salary was the same, the other NGO included flexible working hours and a home office policy, as well as insurance for the entire family. The NGO emphasises that it was not in a position to make a counter-offer at that time. In the case of expats, leaving the organisation after a 2 to 3 year mission is common and seen as part of the progression of the career path, taking on new challenges or moving into higher positions and gaining other benefits. However, the difficulties this creates for the delegation are highlighted.

It is also pointed out that local NGOs cannot compete with the salaries offered by their partner organisations (INGOs). One NGO reports that, due to budget constraints or specific budget cuts and project gaps, they try to retain employees during periods of unemployment by offering them volunteer work or keeping them as part-time employees. Another NGO attributes turnover in its organisation to the fact that when the primary goal is self-enrichment and not dedication to the mission, turnover occurs. Four of the six organisations report organisational growth over the last five years. One organisation reports that it grew particularly between 2020 and 2024, resulting in the establishment of new departments, many new recruitments and the implementation of large-scale projects. While 12 people were employed in administration in 2019, increased recruitment began in 2021, and the organisation has now grown to 80 employees. This has also led to a change in management practices and the organisational structure. Today, the entire organisation is structured around split areas of responsibility and departments. Another organisation reports that it started with one health centre in 2013 and now operates 13 such units. Until now, they haven't had difficulties in securing employees as the projects have grown gradually, but challenges are now arising with next year's budget shortfalls. While there have been no staff reductions due to the cuts at this point, difficulties are expected for next year. This NGO's mitigation strategies are currently based on liaising with its partners, donors and cross-cutting networks to emphasise the importance of retaining certain employees. Another option that has not yet been given sufficient consideration is reducing working hours or working days in order to retain employees. However, as this option involves a great deal of bureaucracy and requires the approval of the HR department, the secretary general's office, the directors of the individual units and the board, a final decision has yet to be made. The upcoming cuts are viewed with caution, as one NGO reports that it has been in a growth phase over the last 10 years of its global operations, and its recruitment gaps have so far been greater than human resources have been able to fill. International employees, with previous positive evaluations, were able to work between missions in a continuous manner, given a willingness to relocate. Nevertheless, there will be significant staff reductions at HQ level, and the projection is that international staff will migrate to technical and management positions in HQ. In view of the financial cuts, questions of workforce reduction are inevitably raised. One NGO states that they are larger than they should be in any case, so they are now applying the strategy of not replacing positions when departure occurs, thus leading to a natural reduction in staff numbers. Another NGO, on the other hand, has to actively reduce its workforce, for which it has a tool that records the legal approach, family situation, evaluations over the years and issued warnings. However, even when a mission ends, they try to retain good employees and offer them positions in other departments or, depending on availability, higher or lower positions if they wish to stay. A third organisation notes that downsizing inevitably leads to a high level of conflict and demotivation, with staff refusing to come into the office, as these decisions can also occur unexpectedly.

Two organisations identified issues related to seniority and newcomers. While in one organisation, the annual salary increases based on seniority and serves as a strong incentive for retention, it has a negative impact on the performance of those employees. The higher the seniority, the more HR found that these employees are demotivated, dislike their job, underperform but do not leave their position because of the salary. The HR coordinator says they might not even be able to do change to another organisation because they wouldn't meet performance standards. At the same time, the NGO lacks attractiveness for new recruits, who don't consider this NGO because the salary offers are not sufficient enough. These young professionals move to other jobs as they have high qualifications. Another NGO also notes that while long-term employees do not change jobs, there are no competitive rates and salaries for young, new recruits. They predict a future problem with attracting a new generation of employees who value their well-being more highly.

In addition to paid employees, volunteers working for NGOs must also be mentioned, as one interviewee summarised, "it's a huge compound that we have on the side". This organisation has a dedicated manager responsible for the volunteer section of the organisation. Volunteers do not receive any kind of financial compensation because the NGO cannot afford it, especially given the number of volunteers and the fact that the budget is invested in ongoing project activities. It would not be possible to reward or gratify additional people. Another NGO mentions that they have around 600 volunteers who are the main implementers of their projects. Volunteers are recruited for their centres through initial interviews and must meet specific profile requirements and bring the expertise that the organisation is looking for. Educational background often plays an important role in this process. Recruitment usually takes place through informal channels via the existing body of volunteers and is described as a "head-up process" and not very structured. The majority of volunteers are youths and young adults who are in university education. This NGO is currently in the process of setting up a system to place volunteers under management to structure the recruitment and retention process. A former project manager at this NGO though says that the way volunteers are deployed, as well as the way they are recognised and communicated with, is outdated and should be adapted. She predicts that the willingness of the new generation to work unpaid and under precarious health conditions, in the absence of insurances, is rather low.

5.4.2. Leadership, Organisational Culture and Policy Practices

The interviewed NGOs inherently face the challenge of reconciling diverse and potentially conflicting requirements in their management. Fundamentally their management style is forged around the management of emergency responses. It's framed within ranges that are made in order to be as reactive and agile as possible but at the same time, trying as much as possible to ensure the necessary degree of compliance with financial and procurement procedures, as to avoid exposure to the donors that would be compromising them. So, by nature the management is built around two conflicting priorities, where NGOS have to be quick and emergency-oriented to respond but in a manner ensuring they don't submit themselves to compliance risks. One NGO states that those NGOs that work primarily in acute crisis situations are constantly overwhelmed. While such actors are important, the person notes that many NGOs have not adapted their management in recent years to address outdated and reluctant practices. Another NGO describes themselves as objective-oriented, rather than task-oriented in their management, while incorporating the principles of humanity, impartiality and neutrality. They provide the space for each team to work together across the departments on project implementation as long as it is in the frame of achieving organisational goals. Another NGO mentions humility as its core value and calls their management style "human", while gradually embedding management practices based on objectives, rationality and strategy. The HR director of said organisation sees the NGO in a transition between "two worlds".

The interviews were conducted with organisations that have their own human resources departments as well as those that, due to their small number of employees, have individual employees who fulfil HR functions. In all cases, there is no mandatory set of policies prescribed by HQ to be implemented globally, instead, policies are established by the various NGOs on a country-specific and needs-based approach. One of the organisations that has experienced extensive growth in recent years states that an organisation of 80 people cannot be managed in the same way as one with 10 people, which is why many new policies and procedures were established last year, as previously there were only few HR-related policies. Another bigger INGO states that policies are an articulation of what the situation on the ground requires, such as typical living standards or family conditions, on the basis of which working hours and duration of shifts are determined. Especially the flexibility of home office policies has been adapted as one NGO tells, leaving the rigid schedule to a more situational concept for all positions. General policies might be directed by HQ, while the exact set-up is left for the mission to decide, taking the general policy and adapting it to the legal framework and culture of the country or autonomously creating policies adapted to local needs. However, HQ in one NGO ensured that a paragraph related to “Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse” (PSEA) was included in the contracts. The organisational environment and net of policies rely on the sensitivity of the senior management of the mission and the efforts of human resource departments and the country director. The HR coordinator of the same NGO said that it would best serve the organisation if they were to harmonise and make sure that all policies and procedures were enforced across the different departments. She expresses a lag regarding enforcement and different departments wanting individualised and self-imposed approaches, which slacken the NGO’s functioning. Another NGO expresses that their organisation needs an acute catch-up on staff-related policies and attributes its lack to their growth over the past ten years, when a lot of projects opportunities came in and big numbers of people were recruited, while the HR policies never were adapted to the change the organisation went through.

In the words of an INGO working with them provides a higher degree of social protection than the private sector standards in Lebanon when it comes to health insurances and other types of benefits. They provide a secure salary because it’s paid in Dollars. National employees are subject to the Lebanese labour law which is very protective of the employee and demands that after two years on a short-term contract, the employment conditions has to be changed to an open-ended contract. This adds another layer of protection in economic terms and the lay-off of staff with open-ended contracts has to be processed through the

Ministry of Labour. In the area of health, the Lebanese law does not do well, as one NGO tells. Social security, obligatory by law and registered in the national security funds, does not sufficiently cover medical and health-related needs. People who receive social security pay a tax to the Ministry of Finance, that is channeled into the fund and pays for the medical treatment. Up until 2019 these funds were an alternative for private medical insurance. However, starting 2019, after the economic crisis and the successive devaluation of the Lebanese Pound, this institution is not efficient anymore. One NGO reveals that they didn't have medical insurance, in addition to social security, up until 2024. Due to short funding the NGO was not able to pay private medical insurance in addition to the social security for their national workers, which they got covered by another institution, trying to maintain minimum requirements until the NGO was able to provide it themselves. According to the JD-R theory framework, the inadequate health insurance coverage functions as a significant job demand that consumes employees' psychological and potentially physical resources. NGOs' inability to provide supplementary private medical insurance creates stress and uncertainty about healthcare access for national employees. Worries about health-related issues and insurance coverage force employees to expend mental energy worrying about potential medical costs and healthcare accessibility. This diverts cognitive and emotional resources away from the primary work tasks and can contribute to the health impairment process described in JD-R theory.

In a bigger INGO the relation and organisational structure of the HQ is mirrored in the country set-up when it comes to reporting lines and the organigramme, but the operational leadership and operational decision-making power sits with the field coordinators and country directors. A system of safety nets is in place, while the HQ serves as a safety net to the country office and ensures compliance with donor expectations, the country office serves as a safety net for the field offices. They apply a pyramidal scheme and don't have a decentralised approach. Although the decision-making power and a certain degree of independence lies with the country office, due to the limited core funding the INGO needs to make sure losses are kept low and reporting and compliance are performed adequately. Another NGO's relationship to HQ is sustained by the head of delegation exclusively, who conducts meetings with upper management and decisions regarding management are top-level decisions. However, employees are encouraged to provide suggestions and recommendations to voice their own concerns and ideas. Encouragement of ideas and involvement in decision-making is a resource that upper level responsibles can provide to their subordinates, to keep them engaged and motivated. Two NGOs say that they actively build on a culture of inclusion where employees from different departments with different level of responsibilities play a role in the decision-making process and contribute to the strategy drafts of the upcoming year. Involving employees in the process to put ideas from paper into practice makes them understand how they contribute in "supporting their community in the best way".[356] Another way in line with the JD-R theory of ensuring employees well-being and motivation is to provide them with autonomy in their own role, meaning that they can change their own work flow and are responsible for the task achievement. One sector coordinator comments, "I'm not a micromanager. You signed the job description. You know what we want. We assign tasks as a team. In every step, you should know what to do. It's your job to organise it from A to Z. It's not my job. I have different duties." Eliminating role ambiguity and uncertainty, as well as communicating and setting clear task distribution contribute to a functional work environment and satisfied employees. Another project manager says, "Sometimes the roles and responsibilities for other departments and staff are not that clear. It's challenging. If you have clear roles and responsibilities, it will help you in managing things under pressure and during the response", adding to the beneficial connotation of distinctive areas of responsibilities and roles.

Another way of ensuring clarity on the goal achievement and responsibilities of all the involved actors and their contributions are (team) meetings. While one NGO mentions they do not have any impositions of how regularly such a meeting should take place, they do encourage team meetings as good practice that they aim to promote in all departments, including visits to the field office to consult with the technical implementers. Whether this is practiced at a regular level remains open. One NGO says they would very much welcome meetings on a regular, weekly or bi-weekly basis across different teams and programmes, but it is not part of their organisational practice. Instead, their meeting structures consist of reporting to upward level positions and donors about progress, but there are no measures in place to keep colleagues up to date. Adequate communication remains an important resource to support employees in their tasks and involve them in an overall understanding of the organisation and their contribution. The NGO that has invested into its development of internal communication reports to have really grasped the added value it has brought to the operation. Another NGO expresses that they unfortunately have not established a bottom-up process for feedback for receiving employees' evaluation but are planning to introduce them as part of their action plan. Bottom-up mechanisms providing information from employees

[356] Author's own work from the conducted interviews.

to detect areas of improvement and recognise and integrate their needs are essential organisational resources. This organisation on the other hand arranges regular meetings between staff, team coordinators, the head of the field office, the HR coordinator and the country director. This constellation is though recognised to come with some draw-backs as it is quite a formal set-up and doesn't give the opportunity to be directed by the employee itself.

When it comes to accountability mechanisms NGOs generally are well-equipped with different channels to address misconduct or instances seriously compromising the organisation's performance or credibility. This is attributed to the compliance commitments that NGOs have towards their donors and explains why there are such developed systems in place. Complaint mechanisms and accountability systems can provide different tools and methods to submit the complaints, all while ensuring confidentiality. One NGO explains how their accountability mechanism is functioning: "There is a hierarchical channel, a channel that runs through human resources, and one through upper-level channels, meaning the department manager. If the concern is a sensitive matter or a particular complaint possibly corresponding to abuses, there are additional lines that can be used, including direct contact with HQ."[357] They make sure these multiple channels are established and regularly send out reminders and include information on them in briefings that are provided to all employees. Another of the larger NGOs, in its pursue of enhancing HR processes, has revised their feedback response mechanism, which existed previously but not in a consolidated way, storing all the information in one place. This HR tool allows them for a two-way system of gathering suggestions and complaints from beneficiaries and employees to improve their projects and ensure accountability.

In terms of the JD-R theory, leading during crises requires leaders to provide sufficient psychosocial resources, which could be providing emotional support and fair treatment to their teams and subordinates. One of the NGOs explained how they provide psychosocial support through their units and employees and volunteers are trained in psychological first aid. On top of that the NGO provides internal support for mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) to all staff in need. Following the incident of the death of one colleague additional support sessions for the team were established to support them navigating the challenge and sharing their thoughts. Many of the NGOs compared their relationship to their colleagues as to their family, pointing at the unique social constellation and resource that

[357] Author's own work from the conducted interviews.

creates a supportive environment and serves as emotional support. Another NGO says in terms of psychological and emotional support, they provide individual session as part of their health insurance and established group sessions for discussions after the emergency in 2024, especially in the regions which were affected by airstrikes during the escalations. This is part of the organisation's duty of care, which includes psychological as well monetary support during crisis. Another team manager reports that it is vital to take the time to understand the emotional turbulences their team members are going through and regularly check on them but says this ultimately depends on each leader's individual approach and personality. The person also points to the difficulty of reconciling the safety and security procedures and the responsibility for the team while wanting to fulfil the needs of beneficiaries in affected regions.

When asked what detail an HR coordinator perceives as having the strongest negative impact on employee and team performance and what she would like to change, the answer is management turnover. She speaks from her experience working with five NGOs and says that in all these organisations, the main problem is that team management changes too often. This affects the quality of work regardless of whether there is a robust and supportive set of HR policies in place within the organisation. Despite the policies, each manager has a different approach, style and mentality. A harmonised approach and policies reduce the problem of manager turnover, but only to a certain extent. The more developed the set of policies and the stricter their implementation, the better the counteraction to management turnover. The fewer policies and procedures there are, the greater the improvisation in management. Continuous change in leadership is a major demotivator because employees must prove themselves each time all over again and their performance history has to be re-started from zero. She describes this problem as a never-ending chain, especially as employees get older, they get more frustrated by the recurrent restarts with new team leaders. She therefore believes that in order to minimise demotivation, turnover in management must be reduced. This is confirmed by a manager in another NGO, who says that turnover in management has a highly negative impact on the working atmosphere in the team. Organisational achievements and employee satisfaction suffer from the recurring transition to new managers with their individual approaches and styles.

5.4.3. Compensation, Incentives and Financial Recognition

Salaries have a profound and complex impact on humanitarian workers that organisations must carefully consider in their practices. While NGOs would like to assume that remuneration in the humanitarian sector is of secondary importance, research suggests that salary is indeed a relevant factor. Inadequate compensation is one of the primary drivers of employee turnover in the humanitarian sector, making it a critical retention issue. Statements from an INGO indicate that salaries are relatively harmonised among NGOs in Lebanon. This INGO benchmarks salary levels against factors such as the cost of living and comparisons with other NGOs. They are currently revising their salary scale, which is adjusted to the minimum expenditure basket and to the salary levels of other NGOs in order to remain competitive, which also applies to lower-level positions. The INGO pays above the national minimum wage as the minimum income in Lebanon is insufficient to cover basic necessities. In their adjustment of salary scales, they consulted with NGOs with similar HR systems and payroll set-ups. After the analysis, the INGO was able to identify in which positions they needed to catch up and adjust their salary grids by the end of the year. This organisation also notes that, contrary to popular assumptions, the salary gap between international and national employees is not as large as assumed, and that employees with high seniority receive a good salary and additional benefits. One national NGO notes that it cannot compete with INGOs in terms of salaries, which will always be able to provide higher salaries. The NGO admits that its ability to pay competitive salaries is limited and that it follows the scales set out in the Lebanese labour law. However, the reason why its employees stay with them is that they see the impact of their work on the community and can gain greater exposure and experience with local actors.

Monetary incentives in the form of bonuses aside of salary payments, as a motivational measure for good performance, or as recognition for achieving goals or rewarding loyalty are generally not offered. One NGO commented in this regard: “No bonuses, we don’t have something called bonuses because we are in the humanitarian world and we cannot. If we did this, we would have to give a bonus every day to someone different. Because the people working in the field, the social workers, the midwives. Everyone sometimes works more than expected, which is normal. It’s normal. It’s a humanitarian mission that you’re doing”.[358] Further some inconsistent and inefficient practices can be observed with regards to salary increases. One NGO states that there is no clear HR policy on salary increases, partly because HR has to deal with other issues first, as it has to manage so many different types of employees and contract types. As this NGO belongs to an overarching structure that has other entities, coordination is difficult, and the decision was made to block salary

[358] Author’s own work from the conducted interviews.

increases due to the increased effort involved. The organisation feared that people with similar job responsibilities and similar amounts of work experience in the sector would start arguing once they start adjusting salaries based on effort and merit. This means that long-term employees who started on a moderate salary have not progressed very far. From an organisational practice perspective, salary considerations are essential because they directly affect motivational processes. It is important to reflect employee's additional effort in the remuneration. When salaries are inadequate, employees start to invest psychological resources and worry about economic concerns, rather than their humanitarian mission.

Another INGO reports a "catastrophic" decision four years ago, when funding began to diminish, and the organisation decided to refrain from salary reviews and did not to give salary increases based on positive evaluations, since 2021. As a result, positive or negative performance no longer had any influence on the amount of salary. The organisation points out that this decision resulted in considerable impact on employee motivation. Organisations must recognise that salary is not merely an operational cost but a strategic tool for maintaining workforce stability and effectiveness. Given that monetary incentives help retain people in the humanitarian sector, organisations should apply compensation strategies that acknowledge the efforts that employees contribute to the organisation, especially if they provide high performance measures. Consequently, employees in the organisation showed a reluctance to undergo the annual evaluation, which, in addition to possible salary increases, is intended to contribute to performance assessment and possible areas for improvement. This is now to be reversed and positive evaluations are planned to be recognised financially again. The organisation further plans to recognise good performance as an element of promotion and not solely offer recognition in the form of seniority.

Benefits that can be used to supplement compensation payments in order to offer employees an attractive and competitive package and have considerable impact on retention and turnover in organisations. Therefore, they should be considered a strategic tool and not merely a by-product of a work engagement. Benefits in NGOs in Lebanon vary greatly and are also strongly influenced by whether the organisation is national or international and depends on the type of contract under which a person is employed. One INGO reports that international employees receive benefits in the form of per diem and housing allowances. National employees, on the other hand, are allowed to work from home three days per month, while international staff must always be in the office. This INGO also offers benefits for single mothers, who are more often allowed to work from home. The HR coordinator of this

INGO also says that benefits vary greatly from country to country. In the case of Lebanon, for example, there is no need for several per diem policies or overnight policies, as there are no hard-to-reach rural regions compared to other countries. Neither do they need extensive housing allowances for local employees and other benefits that motivate people to travel to rural areas as those are in reach of the capital. She mentions though that many employees are interested in health insurance that covers the whole family and not just the individual employee. Another national NGOs offers benefits to their national employees but those are set in accordance with governmental requirements. The transport benefit for local employees is set by the government and although the HR manager knows that it is insufficient, this is pre-set for all Lebanese citizens. For international employees in this organisation, there is a package that includes per diems, daily allowances and housing allowances. Due to the escalation of the war in 2024, the security situation changed and the family posting for the head of delegation was cancelled, which included school fees, per diems, and life and medical insurance. The crisis situation therefore had an impact on the design of benefit packages for certain roles. In terms of benefits, national NGOs can't compete with private companies or INGOs. One NGO says that its benefits consist of allowing employees to take compensation days off when they repeatedly work on their weekend. This NGO, for which financial or monetary compensation is out of the question, says that paying overtime would open Pandora's box, and every employee would then demand payments. They therefore avoid paying money but offer other forms of recognition such as education opportunities and trainings.

5.4.4. Recognition and Reward

According to the JD-R theory, an essential resource that helps employees overcome the demands of their work tasks is adequate communication, social support and a supportive environment with colleagues and superiors. The HR director of an NGO explains how they fostered motivation and a sense of belonging by establishing new internal communication channels. The aim was to bring together employees scattered across different locations within the large structure and emphasise the importance of their contributions. As the NGO consists of many small units working separately from one another across the country, HR visited all the different units in the field. Some of those remote units might not fully be aware of what is going on in the office in the capital and the overall processes and were thereby included in the work community. In addition, since last year, they have been organising an internal communication workshop to which all employees from the different units are invited to elaborate on their challenges, what makes them proud and their achievements. These stories are then taken up by HR, highlighted and incorporated into a presentation. Based on this feedback and the presentations, the management of various departments was also addressed when the exercise highlighted areas for improvement. Improving internal communication and involving all employees in a unified process is a resource that organisations can use to motivate employees and make them feel appreciated.

The coordinator of a sectoral department says that, looking back on her career, the invitation of to help drafting and strategising organisational goals when she was in lower positions always motivated her. She believes that it is more common in the tertiary sector to seek out and listen to the contributions and ideas of lower-level employees. This kind of recognition effectuates the dynamic between the management and the team itself. She says this contrasts with her experience in the private sector, where only the owner's vision counts. While it is necessary to have social support and recognition of employee's efforts, one NGO says this doesn't shun the necessity of equally providing financial rewards to employees. During the emergency in 2024, some organisations supported employees living in affected regions by providing shelter, which they mentioned as a form of recognition. Similarly, two NGO recount on extra payments and provision that were provided to staff in particularly affected locations, especially to those employees who had been displaced by the conflict and were therefore incurring additional costs. Two interview partners, the administrative manager and the project manager of an NGO, say that it was reassuring to talk to employees at HQ during the emergency when those simply asked about their well-being and showed concern.

5.4.5. Employee Development, Talent Management and Career Advancement

Employee development, talent management and career advancement represent critical organisational resources that influence the motivational processes driving employee engagement and retention. The question of whether education or practical experience in an NGO is valued more highly varies. According to one NGO, if very specific profile is required, for example a lawyer or specialist in geographic information systems, a university degree is a must. However, if the position involves working directly with the community, such as head of operations, practical experience is preferred. The HR director of an NGO says that when hiring, the HR team does not only inspect technical skills but rather looks at whether the person is socially engaged, whether they participate in social activities in a community, and while education is an important factor, it is not the main one. She explains that the interview procedure has a two-stage process: the first round is with HR and the line manager who assess the candidate's skills, while the second round, especially for key positions, focuses on understanding the person, their behaviour and motivation. The HR director explains since they are not hiring for a corporate job, the organisation is looking for someone who truly identifies with the organisation's mission.

Another INGO says that because they are a highly technical and action-oriented organisation, they primarily need profiles with practical and technical knowledge and academic background is less valued than may be the case in other organisations that are more involved in policy development or advocacy. Many of the senior positions that involve management responsibilities are filled by people who joined the organisation from a practical-technical background and have acquired these positions over time. At the same time there are also very academically oriented career paths through HQ, which require an academic degree for accessing an internship and further developing to a grants and reporting officer, and then potentially going into management functions. However, this represents a very small fraction of the overall recruits. The HR coordinator of the same INGO explains that there was a discussion at HQ level about profiles and educational backgrounds. She personally stresses that she values education in the recruitment process, especially since it is accessible in Lebanon. Consequently, positions in this INGO require a certain level of academic education, but in some cases exceptions apply and can be substituted by several years of work experience. For example, people with a degree in English language have been recruited for positions such as head of support, HR coordinator, finance coordinator or procurement coordinator, because language and communication skills are equally relevant to perform well in the job. Expertise in the respective field comes with time, as the nature of the work is based on policies and procedures, which can be learned and with progress over time results in promotion to management positions. The INGO is open to develop employees with academic qualifications to acquire position-specific expertise. However, she believes this practice also produces delays and setbacks but she is convinced that education in humanities is very much relevant in the NGO sector. Another NGO confirms that, because the standard of education is very high in Lebanon, university degrees have become the norm in the NGO sector. However, not having a degree is not a disqualifying factor and academic education is not valued more than experience in the field. As the majority of applicants have an academic degree, work experience is the main factor taken into consideration when hiring.

The NGOs all follow a transparent, standardised and compliant recruitment process that is set out in their HR policies. They open calls, publish the position on various channels, conduct interviews, carry out assessments and ensure a competitive process in order to select the fitting candidates. One of the interviewees notes that, due to accountability requirements, the recruitment process in an NGO is more transparent, systematic and fair than in the private sector, while remaining competitive in nature. Interviews are conducted in the presence of the technical leads and a person based on the department, a line manager and a person from HR. A responsible from HR and a responsible from the department would do the first selection, and the head of department or line manager would inquire about the technical skills. Recruitment is clear and organised. One of the NGOs notes that it ensures that it does not recruit members from political parties and that its employees are committed to the principles and values of the organisation, because its high level of acceptance among its beneficiaries and in the community stems from their neutrality. Another INGO states that it prefers internal candidates to external candidates if they are qualified, or even if the internal candidates are less qualified than the externals. In doing so, they want to retain their staff and develop them for positions and advance their careers. There is an option to opt for recruitment only internally. The internal recruitment only happens if the employee is fitting the position, because the organisation says they previously preferred internals, but their capacities were insufficient and the organisation was paying the price by loosing performance. The HR coordinator expresses that they don't have the luxury for a line manager to work on improvement plans, so the applicant must fit the position and show good performance. She says work plans on capacities existed previously to the most recent war but are not applied in emergency. One of the NGOs received a complaint about biased recruitment practices and is looking into the case, as they want to provide fair treatment in the organisation.

Upon completion of a mission, one INGO reports, there is no structured template or obligation for the NGO to find a transitional position for the employee, instead, a pool system is used. Before the end of the assignment, the employee speaks with an HR representative to discuss their interests after the end of the assignment, whether they would like to start a new assignment immediately or take a break. Based on the outcomes, there is a matchmaking between the willingness of the staff and the needs of the organisation. While it is common under mutual satisfaction between the mission and the staff, to retain the employee for as long the position is available or sustainable, the NGO can reach an agreement to keep a person for several years, but within limits. Staying in the same position for five years is not acceptable, as people are expected to rotate more frequently as external employees.

Another psychosocial resources that organisations may provide to their employees are emotional and instrumental support in the form coaching and constructive feedback, which could be performance appraisals and evaluations, workshops, trainings and growth opportunities. Three NGOs report to perform appraisal regularly, either bi-yearly or yearly. In the humanitarian sector, appraisals are embedded in the HR policy of some organisations. Two of the interviewed organisations emphasise its importance in giving employees the opportunity to develop, and one of them confirms that the information gained through appraisal is used for capacity building, which is a key focus in the strengthening of their HR system. Two other NGO mention a yearly discussion on performance with the line manager, that is mandatory due to policies. One of these NGOs mentions that, due to its complicated internal organisational structure and the lack of a designated person, it does not carry out appraisals or evaluations for national staff. The policies are therefore not effectively applied to all employees and leave room for improvement in terms of development opportunities and their fair distribution. All NGOs try to offer workshops and training courses of varying scope. One NGO that invested in expanding its training programme has trained 40 internal employees to become trainers in different task areas. These include technical skills and soft skills, which are shared with employees and have been perceived as an immense motivational tool. The same NGO also offers capacity building programs and workshops in collaboration with the American University of Beirut or other external partners, in accordance with their budget. The organisations offered two of their staff joining a full university diploma the previous year, which they find an important support. Another NGO offers training and capacity building depending on the position and role, such as for managers, which can take place abroad. However, this is strongly determined by the position and the financing options. Another NGO reports that it offers training in line with the needs of the mission's achievements, for which it tries to identify employees with potential for training, but this is not an organic or self-evident process and is identified as an area for improvement within the organisation. Another NGO mentions that the delegation has its own budget for capacity building for employees, who have to identify courses themselves and demonstrate the relevance to their work. In addition to that option, there is also a training centre where workshops are held based on the organisation's needs, which are determined through needs assessments. Developmental opportunities function as job resources that help employees achieve work goals and stimulate personal growth and learning. Professional development and capacity building not only enhance employees' ability to handle current job demands but also signal organisational investment in their future, which strengthens psychological attachment and reduces turnover intentions.

Organisations are very limited in their ability to offer career plans and advancement. This is attributed to the structure of NGOs, because even when an organisation has grown to a considerable size, the teams and departments still maintain a simple structure. Apart from colleagues who work under the head of a unit, there is no sophisticated team structure or levels that offer opportunities for advancement. In this respect, NGOs differ greatly from the private sector. "We don't have this structure where you can move from step one, two, three, four. So, you're a team, you could manage this team, and maximum become director, and that's it".[359] Nevertheless, it is important to identify and encourage talented people and support them with capacity building and other training opportunities. One of the NGOs says while it has limited opportunities for career advancement they aim to support employees in their self-development. The HR director gives the example of how they identified a talented person and were able promote him from a basic position to a head of programme position by approaching him with job vacancies. However, the next step would be head of department, which is the final stage of the career progression. Another INGO reflects that it used to act as a kind of incubator for young talent, in the sense that young employees were first employed by them and then moved on to better-paying NGOs or government agencies. However, this is now very rarely the case, but there are examples of internal career progression from lower-level positions or positions focused on practical and technical tasks to managerial positions. The INGO admits, however, that they are not very developed in terms of career and talent management from a global perspective. "We don't have enough capacity and resources dedicated to get to that point. It's not easy because it requires certain expertise and bandwidth in terms of the timing available from the HR department to get to that".[360] Talent development requires capacity to supervise employees and articulate individual career development opportunities, which includes targeted training and coaching. The NGOs that are able to do this are bigger NGOs that have a higher proportion of core funding or very unpacked funding and can afford to allocate resources more specifically to such activities. This is simply not possible for the INGO with its current funding breakdowns and obligatory budget allocations. The HR coordinator of this INGO says that opportunities for development and growth in NGOs are limited by the organisations' fundings and

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[359] Author's own work from the conducted interviews.
[360] Ibd.

structures and aren't decided based on the individual and their aspirations, but on the requirements of the position and the needs of the organisations.

Looking to the future and the decline in funding, opportunities for growth and development are not likely to improve. When interviewees talk about their own advancement and development within their organisation, this however seems to represent only particularly committed and exceptional employees or volunteers that managed to progress with institutional support. One programme coordinator talks about his career progression, based on his positive evaluations and his interest in advancing his career, and which was supported by the organisation through an individual advancement plan. A project manager from another NGO, on the other hand, said that the only way to grow and develop was to move to another organisation because the potential for growth was exhausted at her previous placement, if she wanted to reach managerial positions and an increase in responsibilities. These findings reveal a strategic gap in how NGOs approach talent management. The flat organisational structures characteristic of most NGOs is forcing talented employees to seek advancement opportunities elsewhere. NGOs must reconsider their approach by developing creative advancement strategies that work within their structural constraints. Rather than accepting limited career progression as inevitable, organisations should implement more lateral and internal development opportunities, coaching, mentorship programs and workshops that provide growth experiences. The current approach, where development opportunities are determined by organisational needs rather than individual aspirations represents a missed opportunity to leverage employee growth and career advancement as a retention tool.

5.4.6. Emergency Response

The challenges of changing the way organisations operate in a crisis invariably create heightened demands and restraints to employee well-being. The Emergency Response Preparedness described earlier and its medium- and long-term planning measures, such as MPAs and APAs, are an active effort to limit the damage that employees and the organisation may suffer in an emergency. These planning and preparedness efforts aim to reduce demands and introduce resources like effective communication, role clarity, and the protection of individual resources such as time, physical and cognitive energy. Nevertheless, despite the containment activities and organisational efforts, an emergency situation causes the loss of habitual work routines, introduces additional health and safety requirements, physical and emotional demands and changes resource availability – all of which can strain the performance of employees and present demands, according to JD-R theory. During a crisis, changes occur in usual operations and adjustments are made to the policies that normally apply, particularly in the areas of security and work routines. One NGO reports that it had a committee for assessing the security situation for the two months during the emergency, in which the country director, employees with expertise in security and the HR department met on a daily basis. Every day after careful consideration, they decided whether the organisation will be operating the next day, whether employees will work from home or come to the office. This considered the security of the building and whether security could be guaranteed in the office and other locations such as medical centres. However, this also involved ethical considerations, as employees working in administration are safer than those in the field who keep the health centres operational. The organisation reports an interruption of operations of a few days, and decisions were made to have only a minimum number of staff working on site and to develop a rotation system instead. The decisions were therefore made on an ad-hoc basis and demanded flexibility and adaptation from the employees to the changing context.

One INGO reports that it had to balance considerations and adapt policies and procedures according to the emergency. While elements of the duty of care were enhanced to ensure psychological and health-related services and monetary support, the organisation was more demanding on other aspects. For example, the work from home policy was abandoned because in an emergency employees must be available and on site. An emergency recruitment process with a waiver was established in order to hire personnel at a necessary speed and based on need. Another NGO, on the other hand, introduced more flexibility in its remote working policy, allowing employees to decide on a daily basis whether they wanted to come to the office. However, this only applied to positions that are office-based. How an NGO is adapting to the situation and effectuating its policy change therefore depends to a large extent on the services an organisation offers and how it is involved in the emergency response.

In crisis situations, projects have to be adapted and teams re-organised. Findings from the interviews reveal how the emergency response required employees to navigate role ambiguity and uncertainty as teams were reconfigured, positions relocated and job responsibilities shifted, all while working under constraints such as time pressure and heightened security demands. One NGO reported that its international staff and the head of delegation were evacuated. The movement and re-location introduced gaps and delays in the operations of the organisation but due to security agreements, international staff were not allowed to remain in Lebanon. The evacuation of international staff and displacement of local employees disrupts established social support networks and working relationships, removing crucial job resources when they are most needed. One NGO describes the difficulty of putting together the team for the emergency operation, as participation is based on voluntary participation and self-assessment by each individual. The sector coordinator explains that there were difficulties in persuading employees to come to the office and take on MEAL (Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning) tasks. In such situations, there is always an increased potential for conflict, as people from different departments may be willing or unwilling to go into the field where there is increased risk, and complain about each other. The work in emergency is described as work under high pressure and with long working hours, which affects the irritability of employees and has an impact on tension within the team. Previous positive professional relationships are not decisive in this regard, as the emergency situation increases stress levels and leads to workplace conflict. Another NGO recounts that at the beginning of the crisis in 2024, it was difficult to control the movement of employees and to see how they could organise the re-deployment. One of their health centres was located on the border with Israel and had to cease its activities, which were then transferred to a neighbouring village. Other locations also had to be checked for safety and the routes to them had to be re-planned and adapted to the precautions taken. Time was needed to work out the team constellations, as some employees had been displaced from the South and they needed to work out what activities they could perform at the new location. However, as the group of beneficiaries had also been displaced from the South, needs had decreased in this specific location and increased in other places. Since there were fewer employees and beneficiaries due to the displacement, demand for services and needs remained in balance with what the organisation could offer. The NGO had to recruit some new volunteers and existing staff had to adapt their activities due to the standstill of some programmes while other emergency activities were newly established. Changes in staff capacities and workload have been described as a challenge, and the recruitment of volunteers and staff for new positions takes time and effort, which places further demands on already limited human and material resources. It took one of the NGOs almost two months, in order to go through the interviews and the recruitment process. The duration of the emergency was not clear at it’s onset, and ultimately the recruitment in this case was completed with the emergency’s unforeseen cessation. The unclear duration of emergencies create uncertainty that hinder employees from effectively planning or psychologically adapting to the altered work circumstances, contributing to stress and interpersonal conflict even among previously harmonious teams. Even after successful and timely recruitment and distribution of human resources, the return to normal operations can also pose challenges. One NGO that did not recruit any new employees recounts how, after the ceasefire was announced, those employees who had been assigned to new areas of responsibility and had familiarised themselves with their new roles had to return to their original positions. After the conclusion of the emergency situation these employees were not needed in their temporary roles as the department was previously operational in its day-to-day business and would have been overstaffed if they were retained. This abrupt reversal can create psychological demands because it negates newly developed capacities, potentially leading to feelings of frustration and wasted efforts. During this "downshifting" from potentially more challenging or engaging emergency roles back to routine operations, the JD-R model suggests, that additional emotional and cognitive resources are required to process the change.

None of the organisations reported on turnover during the emergency situation in 2024. Rather, the opposite has been observed, with an increase in willingness to participate in the response even in the role of a volunteer. Several NGOs enlarged their volunteer corps during last year's crisis. In addition, it was noted that employees were willing and open to work in areas specifically affected by the emergency: "We didn't force anyone. A lot of staff volunteered to go to hardship places because either they were originally from there or they felt it was part of the mandate of the organisation to do so. But for other staff who didn't feel safe to go, we didn't push them to do it".[361] The voluntary enrolment of employees for particularly challenging posts can be interpreted not only in terms of the reasons cited, but also in terms of JD-R theory and the individual regulatory strategy. One way of influencing one's individual work environment is to proactively change job demands by consciously committing to a challenge.[362] Being assigned to a challenging location can also be understood as a proactive step towards job crafting, where employees take the initiative to shape and redefine their job and area of responsibility. This also applies when interviewees describe their challenging work environment as an allure: "So, all the time you will have challenges, all the time you will have updates of your work, and you will feel more interested, because at the end it supports your community."[363] Another interviewee euphemistically described her working atmosphere as very dynamic, as she deals with

[361] Author's own work from the conducted interviews.
[362] Demerouti & Bakker 2022, P. 222.
[363] Author's own work from the conducted interviews.

various topics in the changing security situation, contributing to the understanding of challenges as motivators during exceptional circumstances.

Based on the experience of an INGO, various measures were applied during the emergency in terms of staff deployment, including surge capacity coming from outside Lebanon. Until last year, the previous major conflict occurred in 2006, so a lot of their staff didn't have direct exposure to critical operations in emergencies or certain types of environments. The organisation had a number of deployments from the emergency roster from the HQ or other short-term tools and resources to help them manage the complexities, the increased workload and the increased budget. The NGOs active in the emergency response experienced a shift in tasks, workload and availability of colleagues due to the emergency. Another NGO, which was not active in the field, participated in a fundraising campaign to support organisations operating on the ground in their response and therefore also had a shift in responsibilities and tasks. Emergency situations affect different employees in different ways. While employees who have better internalised an organisation's identity as a humanitarian responder are able to switch to a different mode more quickly in an emergency. Those employees who previously worked in development rather than critical humanitarian interventions, or who were newly hired, found it difficult to accept and implement the logic of the changed pace and the change in the working environment. However, this complete appropriation of an organisation's identity and mission has also been described in negative terms, because organisations and employees become so closely knit that recruitment and retention are neglected and teams become very static: "They [another NGO] have an issue with the retention of staff. Because the staff who are there, have been there for 10 years now, and are basically the people who have been volunteering with them for a long time. Their relationship with the [NGO] is not just that of an employee and employer. It is their family. So that's why some staff during emergency, they don't leave the office. It's their life. The NGO's identity becomes part of their identity".[364] The HR coordinator at an INGO also notes on the topic of emergency recruitment and retention, that employees recruited during a crisis often have a negative and demotivating perception of the working atmosphere due to increased demands and internal conflicts. As a result, recruits during this period are more likely to resign because they perceive the employer as unattractive.

Based on the JD-R theory, communication is central in crisis situations. It is the primary task of top management to foster an organisational culture in which communication regarding

[364] Author's own work from the conducted interviews.

risk-relevant events is ensured. Adequate communication throughout the organisation about issues related to the crisis is an essential job resource because it reduces the ambiguity of the situation. In this regard, an NGO reports that it had two dedicated security officers during the crisis, who were the main focal persons to monitor the development of the situation and provide information about it. In the words of another NGO, all communications were maintained and online meetings on updates continued. It was the head of delegation's responsibility to maintain relevant information on the situation and conduct the communication, as he consulted with national societies and senior management. The dissemination and availability of relevant information on the situation becomes a crucial aspect to support employees and give them a clear understanding of the security situation and its impact on the organisation.

Sustainability and operational performance remain dependent on the level of funding, and global and country-specific cuts are leading to pressure to acquire funding through project proposals, in an increasingly competitive environment while project terms keep getting shorter. "If you want to help, you need to go back to your donors, who will impose lots of things and you will need to participate in bids".[365] While financial constraints undeniably limit humanitarian organisations' capacities to provide comprehensive employee benefits and career development opportunities, the research demonstrates that organisations possess significant potential to leverage their internal resources within the JD-R framework. Leaders and managers can actively cultivate organisational cultures that prioritise clear communication, social support, and sensitivity toward employees. These are resources that require minimal financial investment but can substantially buffer the impact of job demands inherent in humanitarian work. The communal and relational behaviours that are already embedded within many humanitarian organisations' missions and principles, are yet not recognised as strategic tools for employee well-being and retention. Organisations can systematically develop their leadership capacities to provide emotional support and recognition that employees need to navigate the demands of humanitarian work. By providing peer support networks and participatory decision-making processes, NGOs can create internal systems that enhance employee performance and well-being without requiring additional funding.

Four of the interviewees emphasise, the goal of an NGO is to provide those in need with the necessary goods, "because our aim is not to have a salary at the end, but to work and provide

[365] Author's own work from the conducted interviews.

assistance to our community".[366] Especially during a crisis the provision of services remains the primary concern for NGOs. "The easiest thing would be to say we stop, but we are in the humanitarian business. If we stop at that point, it's like we don't need to exist".[367] NGOs therefore measure the success of an organisation by how effectively it addresses the needs of the various groups of individuals affected. Humanitarian workers are fundamentally motivated by their mission to serve communities in need, suggesting that organisations can tap into this intrinsic motivation by ensuring employees feel valued, supported and empowered within their roles, even when external and monetary rewards are limited. While funding will always remain a critical challenge, humanitarian organisations that strategically invest in developing human-centered leadership practices and supportive organisational cultures, can create competitive advantages in both employee retention and operational effectiveness.

[366] Author's own work from the conducted interviews.
[367] Ibd.

6. Conclusion

This master's thesis examined human resource management practices in international and national NGOs operating in Lebanon during crisis conditions, building upon Jana Abikova's foundational research on humanitarian worker motivation and job satisfaction. Throughout the course of the thesis following key findings and responses to the research questions have been elaborated:

> RQ1: Which policies and managerial practices are currently applied in human resources in NGOs in Lebanon and how are those related to motivation and satisfaction at the workplace?

The master's thesis reveals a diverse landscape of HR practices that significantly influence workplace motivation and satisfaction in Lebanese NGOs. Organisations predominantly employ Lebanese nationals and have adopted mixed management approaches that attempt to balance humanitarian values with operational efficiency. Most NGOs describe their management as "humanitarian and people-centered" while simultaneously embracing results-based management practices borrowed from the private sector. While NGOs have started to turn to private sector practices for successfully reviewing and monitoring the organisations outcomes and achievements, it was found that the HR practices of Lebanese NGOs should be altered to include elements of value-driven management. Practices such as recognition, rewards and incentives to show employees that they are valued are resources NGOs directly have at their disposal, that would positively impact standards of work and retention of valuable employees. The interviewed NGOs demonstrate varying degrees of development of policy systems and their application, with larger organisations developing country-specific HR frameworks while smaller organisations often lack comprehensive HR policies. Through insights from the field research, the issue of high management turnover emerged as the most significant negative factor affecting employee performance and motivation. Therefore, it is necessary for organisations to address and reduce management turnover, which could be facilitated by better succession planning, competitive packages for these key positions and the enhancement of internal knowledge transfer systems, to counter the negative impact of continuing management turnover. Organisations that invested in internal communication channels and employee recognition programmes are equipping and supporting their employees according to the JD-R model, by providing them with resources in order to facilitate the achievement of work goals. Including employees in decision-making processes and providing autonomy in role execution are crucial job resource that are available to organisations to enhance employee motivation. However, some organisations lack bottom-up feedback mechanisms, limiting their ability to address employee concerns proactively. Organisations should aim to establish regular feedback mechanisms, transparent decision-making processes, and institutionalised, inclusive management approaches, rather than relying on individual management styles. During the escalation in 2024 the NGOs demonstrated their adaptability to the emergency context, with organisations adjusting their security protocols, implementing flexible work arrangements, and providing additional psychological and financial support to affected staff. Notably, the research found no observable turnover during emergency period, moreover employee commitment and voluntary participation increased during emergency response efforts.

> RQ2: How do managers and the organisation's HR deal with organisational issues and apply their leadership, given the financial constraints that are negatively impacting HR practices such as salary, employee development and morale?

Financial limitations fundamentally shape HR practices, organisational capacities to respond to challenges and overall organisational set-up. NGOs operate under resource constraints due to their funding budgets and ongoing financial cuts that impact their ability to provide competitive compensation, career advancement opportunities and comprehensive benefits packages. Lebanese NGOs acknowledge they cannot compete with international NGOs in terms of compensation, yet employees remain in their jobs due to the meaningful nature of their work and strong association with the mission and values of an organisation. Some organisations have made counterproductive decisions, such as freezing salary reviews and performance-based increases, which further undermined employee motivation. Faced with budget constraints, organisations have to focus more attentively on resources under their direct control. These include providing clear communication, displaying supportive leadership behaviour, offering flexibility in work arrangements and creating inclusive decision-making environments. Some organisations also leveraged non-monetary benefits such as professional development opportunities, flexible working conditions and family-oriented policies to counter possible motivation deficits in the face of financial constraints. Organisations should strive to maximise job resources they have at hand in every possible sphere. During the emergency the organisations had to be flexible in their allocation of personnel to maintain operationality which they did by deploying capacity from headquarters, mobilising volunteers and strategically re-deploying existing staff. The research found that employees often voluntarily took on challenging assignments during crises, suggesting that meaningful work can compensate for increased demands during this time. Nonetheless NGOs have to come to terms with the transition from the golden age of NGO funding (2021-2024) in Lebanon to more dire financial outlooks. Therefore, organisations reported on implementing various strategies including naturally reducing workforce through non-replacement of departing employees, seeking alternative funding sources, and in some cases, active workforce reduction using structured tools.

> RQ3: How is HR integrated into the organisation’s strategy, in order to ensure a successful strategy?

While there is common understanding and acknowledgement of the importance of human resources, some NGOs lack systematic approaches to strategic HR planning. Smaller organisations often assign HR functions to individuals, while larger organisations struggle to harmonise their policies across different departments to have coherent application throughout the organisation. The master’s thesis therefore shows the variations in how effectively HR practices are integrated into organisational strategy, both during routine operations and the emergency response. The author concludes that smaller organisations should invest in professional HR development to ensure systematic HR integration into the NGO, while larger organisations have to enforce policy implementation more rigorously across departments. During the wake of a crisis organisations with better-integrated HR practices can manage their emergency response more successfully by establishing clear role definitions, additional crisis-relevant communication channels and psychological support systems. A deficit noted in ensuring successful organisational strategy is the gap between policy creation and its implementation. While organisations have developed HR policy systems, enforcement throughout the organisations remains inconsistent, with different departments wanting individualised and self-imposed approaches, that undermine organisational functioning and strategic coherence. A further field for improvement of Lebanese NGOs is talent management and employee development, although it remains questionable whether such growth and opportunity support can be established if the financial resources are insufficient. However, it is an active decision to prioritise short-term or long-term organisational goals and employee capacity and performance. In the long term it is worthwhile investing in the development of employees who maintain a high level of skills and provide valuable contribution to the organisation’s performance. Further career advancement opportunities remain limited due to organisational structures that offer few hierarchical levels, where the private sector logic of progression simply doesn’t apply. This structural limitation though affects long-term strategic planning and employee retention, particularly for ambitious or young employees that seek career progression as part of their professional life. Despite resource constraints, organisations should re-evaluate their stance towards employee development and growth and offer opportunities through mentoring and training, as a form of resource in the sense of the JD-R model, to establish a supportive work environment that rewards and recognises its employees.

The study focused on a specific geographical context during a particular crisis period, which limits the generalisability of findings to other contexts or time periods. Additionally, the research primarily captured management perspectives rather than the comprehensive employee viewpoints. The theoretical framework of the JD-R Model may not fully capture the complexity of humanitarian work environments where traditional management theories intersect with the exceptional operational considerations of NGOs, though it has previously been applied in crisis context such as COVID-19, but on private sector companies. As the master's thesis is based on a global qualitative survey of employee satisfaction and motivation, future research could include a quantitative approach to follow up on the staff's perspective in Lebanon or provide a qualitative investigation into the same topic with this regional focus. While topics such as the differences between national and international employees and organisational diversity have been touched upon, they have not been the core focus of this thesis. Similarly further research could have a stronger orientation towards the treatment of volunteers working in NGOs in Lebanon.

The findings of this master's thesis indicate that effective human resource management in NGOs operating in volatile contexts require a nuanced understanding of both operational demands and human and social dimensions of the organisation. While financial constraints pose significant challenges to each organisation prioritising clear communication, inclusive leadership, employee recognition, and strategic HR integration can be implemented to achieve better outcomes in terms of staff satisfaction, retention, and performance during both routine operations and crisis response. The study's application of the JD-R Model provides a framework for understanding how NGO managers and HR personnel can better balance the demanding nature of humanitarian work with adequate organisational support. In some cases external challenges were reported to increase motivation and employee engagement. However, this can only be considered a temporary effect, as the negative consequences on the working environment and health consequences were equally underlined. Most importantly, the research confirms that while external threats and challenging environments are inherent to humanitarian work, the quality of internal organisational management practices ultimately determines whether these challenges overwhelm the team and its physical and cognitive capacities or are met with adequate measures. Because emergency situations lead to scarcity of resources, information about how resources are presently allocated are crucial to an individual's and overall organisation's ability to direct those resources to where they are the most needed. As the humanitarian sector continues to evolve under increasing resource constraints and growing global needs, the success of humanitarian interventions ultimately depends not only on technical expertise and financial resources but on the organisation's ability to create supportive environments that sustain and motivate the human capital essential to their mission.

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Appendix

List of active INGOs in Lebanon

no.	name organisation
1.	Action contre la Faim
2.	Acted
3.	Anera
4.	Arche NoVa
5.	ARCS Culture Solidali

6.	Asmae Lebanon
7.	AVSI
8.	Care International
9.	Caritas
10.	Catholic Relief Services (CRS)
11.	Cesvi
12.	Comitato Internazionale per lo Sviluppo dei Popoli (CISP)
13.	Concern Worldwide
14.	Cooperazione Internazionale (COOPI)
15.	Danish Church Aid
16.	Danish Refugee Council (DRC)
17.	Danmission
18.	Diakonia
19.	DORCAS
20.	Fondation Mérieux
21.	Handicap International
22.	HEKS EPER
23.	HelpAge International
24.	Humedica
25.	IECD
26.	International Medical Corps
27.	International Network for Aid, Relief & Assistance (INARA)
28.	International Orthodox Christian Charities
29.	International Rescue Committee (IRC)
30.	INTERSOS
31.	Islamic Relief
32.	Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS)
33.	Johannites
34.	Jusoor
35.	Kvinna till Kvinna
36.	La chaîne de l’espoir

37.	Legal Action Worldwide (LAW)
38.	Lutheran World Relief
39.	MAG
40.	Medair
41.	Médecins du Monde
42.	Mennonite Central Committee
43.	Mercy Corps
44.	Near East Foundation
45.	Norwegian Church Aid
46.	Norwegian People's Aid
47.	Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)
48.	Oxfam
49.	People in Need
50.	Plan International
51.	Première Urgence International
52.	Project Hope
53.	Syrian American Medical Society
54.	Taawon
55.	Tearfund
56.	Terre des Hommes
57.	Trócaire
58.	War Child
59.	Welthungerhilfe
60.	Worldwide (GVC)

Source: Lebanon Humanitarian INGO Forum.