

Landscape International Workshop

e - s c a p e

transitional settlement

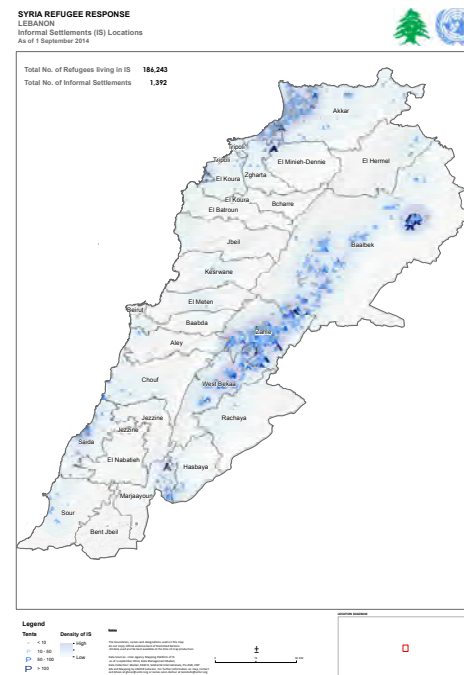
Bar Elias, Lebanon

January 16 - 24 , 2015





About 1,300 illegal tents are scattered in the country in close to 1,700 locations throughout Lebanon mainly concentrated in the north and the Bekaa Valley.



The Lebanese government has resisted establishing formal refugee camps, with some fearing a repetition of the country's experience with Palestinian refugee camps, which largely operate outside of the control of the Lebanese authorities.

But the deterioration of the situation calls for the development of a strategic plan at the national and regional level able to face the issue of transitional settlement and shelter needs for the displaced population. According to the data on the UNHCR website with the escalating number of refugees in Lebanon,

public services have become overstretched, job opportunities have diminished, and the prices of basic goods have risen sharply due to inflation. Increasingly, refugees are adopting negative coping mechanisms to survive. Pressure on services and increasing economic competition threaten the wellbeing of both refugees and vulnerable Lebanese. Diminishing salaries and opportunities linked to an increasing workforce have brought about tensions and restrictive government policies regarding livelihoods programs for Syrians. The impositions of curfews in a growing number of local villages and a recent spate of evictions of refugees from informal settlements are testament to rising tensions.

Coordinated planning is key to involving the displaced, locals, governments, and all sections of the international community in successful transitional settlement. From the emergency phase on, the siting and form of transitional settlement options influences the protection and security of displaced populations, and the effectiveness of the aid community and each sector of operation within it.

Good planning has supported displaced people in maximizing internal and external protection and security, in reaching durable solutions, in avoiding natural hazards, in minimizing disease spread, in maintaining their relations

with their hosts, in managing natural resources sustainably, and in contributing to local livelihoods. Good settlement planning has also determined the success of aid operations, and of other sectorial programs within those operations. While provision of emergency shelter to satisfy immediate needs is crucial, there has to be consideration in program planning for maximizing the potential for displaced persons to begin to re-establish their own livelihoods in some form, to promote dignity and self-respect and reduce the possibility of a dependency culture. (Corsellis & Vitale, 2004)

Good planning permit to change the way we continue consider the refugee camps shifting from extraterritorial zones, non lieux, to temporary cities often transformed in time in permanent slums.

Erected in different areas of Lebanon, the informal settlements are enclaves of migrant seeking to establish communities and ground connections. Re-create the sense of place, of belonging became more important in a refugee mind that experienced the separation from is home, culture, society. Place is an important aspect of human existence and an important source of security and identity. Places shape our memories, feelings and thoughts and in turn people shape landscape around them trough their experiences and actions. In this way place is also tied to cultural history and identity. Cultures

are imbedded in places and lands become the storehouses of ideas.

e - scape transitional settlement Landscape International Workshop, Bar Elias, Lebanon / 16 - 24 January, is organized by the AUB Landscape Design and Ecosystem Management in collaboration with the Center for Civic Engagement and Community Service (CCECS) at AUB, the Kayany Foundation and the International Federation of Landscape Architects (IFLA)

The workshop aims to address the Syrian refugee issue in Lebanon tackling the landscape architecture contribution on improving the quality of life in the transitional settlements scattered in the country in close to 1,700

locations throughout Lebanon.

The deteriorating situation calls for the development and implementation of interventions able to face the problem of settlements and shelter needs for these displaced population. As landscape architect we can help people, that are experiencing the separation from their family, home, culture, society, in recreating the Sense of Place, of belonging.

In 8 days of on site work, students, researchers, professors and local communities will define a strategy of intervention at the large scale tackling environmental problems and giving new input/ideas, and at the smaller scale of the community to practically implement project for community and social interaction, and for children interaction building place where they can regain the children status, and learning while playing.

The influx, movements and localizations of legal and illegal settlements are shaping and creating new landscapes. Together we will work to harmonize and coordinate the different local and refugee needs as well as the responsibility towards spatial, cultural, economic, environmental, aesthetic and social aspects. How is it possible to preserve the characters of the landscape

and its peculiarity as well as quality in the continuously changing territories?

The benefits of such an activity are multiple for host communities, Syrian communities, students, and professors.

The pedagogical design approach being the catalyst of the project, the students are however, expected to benefit from this experience on many other levels:

- It will require students to explore new territories (beyond the known landscape design problematic) and move beyond their comfort level.
- It will expose students to 'different social environments' and make them understand, analyze and finally act when interacting with displaced and less fortunate populations.
- It should develop sensitivity and awareness of their role as designers in terms of civic and political engagement/ responsibility .
- Finally it will push students to question important issues that are the issues of place, of belonging, of borders and proximity in such geopolitically sensitive regions .

How to preserve the **characters of the landscape** and its peculiarity and quality in the **continuously changing territories**?

How the afflux, movements and localizations of legal and illegal new settlements are **shaping and creating new landscape**?

How we can harmonize and coordinate the different needs (local and refugee) and **the responsibility towards spatial, cultural, economical, environmental, esthetical and social aspect**?



Al Tilyani Camp

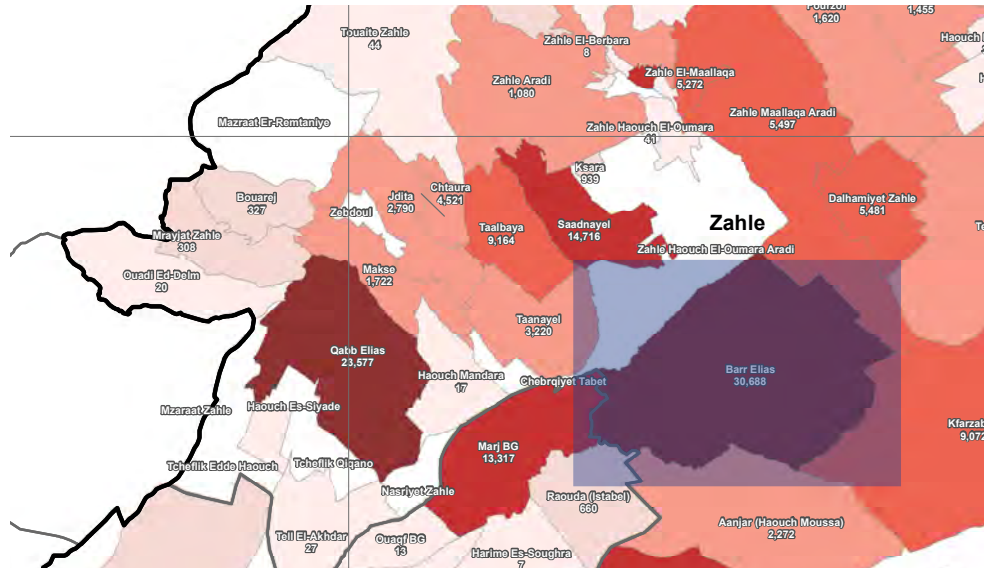
Situated on an agricultural field amongst many others, at the edge of Bar Elias village in the Beqaa lays Al Tilyani Camp.

Over the past 3 years, since the beginning of the Syrian crisis, the site has been accommodating displaced Syrians who are coming from various rural villages to seek refuge.

Today, the site has an average area of 9000 sq.m, with a total of 65 tents. Al Tilyani camp hosts many facilities including:

- ‘Ghata’ School by KAYANY Foundation and AUB CCECS
- UN Educational Tent
- Grocery Store (run by Mr. Mostafa, known as the “Shawish” of the camp)

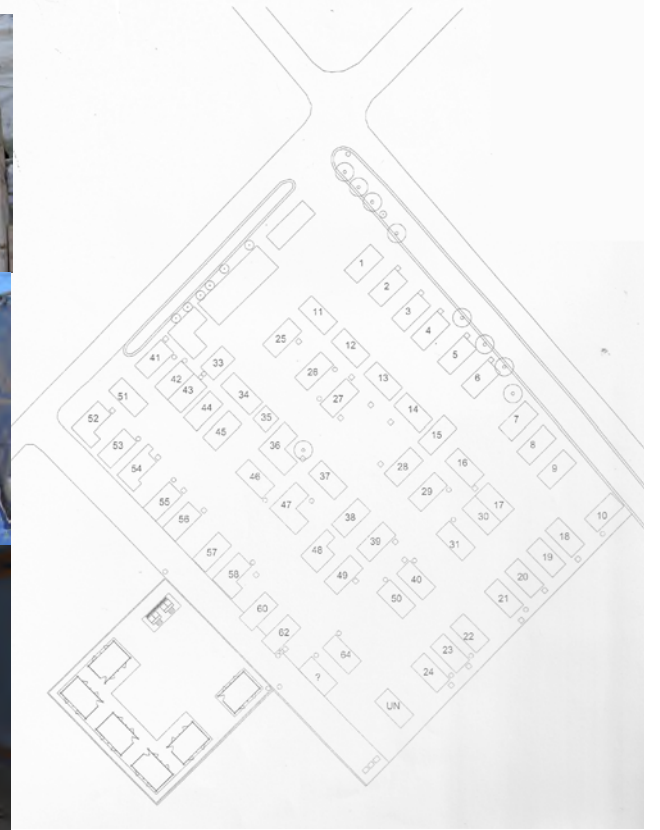
Several UN bodies and NGOs are involved in providing basic services to the camp (Ex: Toilets, Water tanks, basic sewage infrastructure...)



Mr. Mosaad Al Tilyani, the owner of the land, collects monthly fees from the deported families in exchange for the rented land (100\$ per tent). In case a family failed to cover the cost, they are asked to evacuate and leave.

The camp and its residents are facing many challenges, some of which include:

- Lack of water: The municipality provides Water once every 3 days.
- Pollution: The ground is covered by gravel and concrete; polluted water from the bathrooms and domestic use is infiltrating into the ground, and into the swales surrounding the site.
- Lack of “Personal Space” for the users who are trying to create their own “borders” to cater for their needs (example: gathering space for the family, laundry space...)
- Lack of job opportunities, which is resulting in the kids and adults working in collecting garbage and selling it.













transitional settlement **e-scape**



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