



## **A STUDY ON THE ALTERNATIVE MEDIA PLATFORMS IN LEBANON**

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## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ARCPA	Arab Resource Center for Popular Arts
DW	Deutsche Welle
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
KII	Key Informant Interview
LGBT	Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transexual
NA	Not Applicable
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PRL	Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon
PRS	Palestinian Refugees from Syria
ToR	Terms of Reference

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# I. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

## 1.1 Background

The shifting socio-political landscape in Lebanon has riveted the world's attention and despite this attention, research on alternative media has to-date not received its due. Many people in Lebanon, whether nationals or refugees, view mainstream media as an extension of the sectarian politics, often acting as "the mouthpiece of political leaders and a powerful tool for sectarian incitement and polarization at the social, political, ideological, and socio-economic levels"<sup>1</sup>. This has led alternative media outlets to present themselves as empowering the voiceless since they offer news about issues and areas not traditionally covered in mainstream media or tackle them differently. In fact, new media technologies have facilitated different forms of media practices including alternative media practices. This has been fueled by a new tendency among journalists and bloggers in Lebanon coming from different backgrounds, nationalities, and age groups to use the Internet to preserve their journalistic independence and circumvent censorships.

With the recent socio-economic crisis facing the country, the Lebanese traditional media sector has been facing a profound crisis, with many journalists, media staff, and media platforms weakening and/ or closing<sup>2</sup>. A study implemented by Deutsche Welle (DW) on Lebanon's media landscape<sup>3</sup> deduced the following key findings:

- Lebanon's media is very partisan
- The media in Lebanon suffers from a lack of funds
- Media start-ups generally target a pan-Arab audience
- No university degrees in media management or media viability exist
- The number of detentions related to freedom of expression spiked in 2018
- A law for the protection of freedom of speech online is under discussion in 2019

To offset these restrictions and the trend of politicizing media according to the sect of the founder/ owner, civil society actors and media activists have increasingly sought to provide alternatives to the mainstream media, offering a substitute to the often-biased framing of news and information. Using the web's open infrastructure, these online journalists are establishing alternative forms of media practices that are viewed as critical to the survival of democratic institutions in Lebanon and the region. Often, online news works in conjunction with social movements fighting for social justice and political rights. The empowering aim of this alternative media often rests on the implied participatory nature of the journalism genre that enables citizens and residents to exercise representative power. Accordingly, this study works to map the different alternative media platforms active in Lebanon and analyzes user interaction with them.

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<sup>1</sup> Beyond Reform and Development (2012). *Media in Lebanon: Towards Enhancing Freedom of Expression*. Lebanon.

<sup>2</sup> Retrieved from <https://medialandscapes.org/country/lebanon>

<sup>3</sup> Retrieved from <https://www.dw.com/en/lebanons-media-landscape-struggling-with-digitalization-and-media-freedom/a-48635698>

## 1.2 Scope and Purpose

This study is jointly implemented by the Arab Resource Center for Popular Arts (ARCPA/ Al-JANA), Maharat Foundation, and DW Akademie. It aims at giving an overview of media platforms/ citizen media platforms in Lebanon producing quality public interest journalism in print, radio, television, or digital formats. It encompasses profiling information about various existing alternative media platforms and provides information on user interaction, including information on which media/ citizen media people are using and why, how are people using the media platforms, and what people's information needs are. Concurrently, the study works to identify alternative media platform pressing needs and challenges faced.

## 1.3 Methodology

At the initiation of this study, data collection tools<sup>4</sup> were developed including:

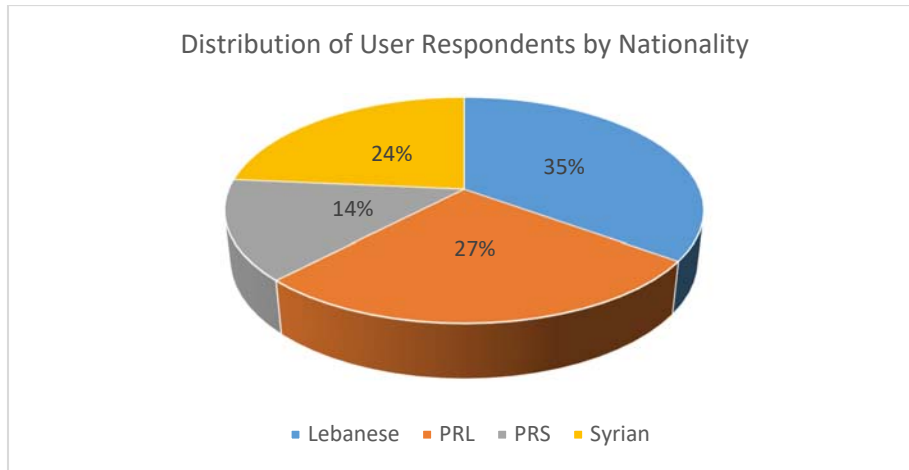
- Guidelines for FGDs held in communities across the Lebanese Governorates. The aim of these FGDs was (a) to identify alternative media platforms most commonly used among the targeted groups/ communities and (b) to support overall analysis of user patterns and help develop an understanding of the state of community, citizen and alternative media in Lebanon.
- Guidelines for KIIs held with alternative media platforms mapped on (a) a national level, (b) among refugee communities, and (c) among marginalized groups.

A meeting was held with partners and field coordinators to discuss and agree on the criteria to be used in selecting the alternative media/ citizen media platforms to be addressed in this study and the drafted data collection tools. Following, data collection commenced and spread over the period of seven weeks. A total of 178 community members/ users were contacted to participate in this assessment, map alternative media most commonly used by them and understand user interaction. 140 community members/ users agreed to respond/ participate, making the response rate 79%.

Of those consulted, 35% were Lebanese and 65% were distributed among Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon (PRL), Palestinian Refugees from Syria (PRS), and Syrian refugees as shown in Figure 1.

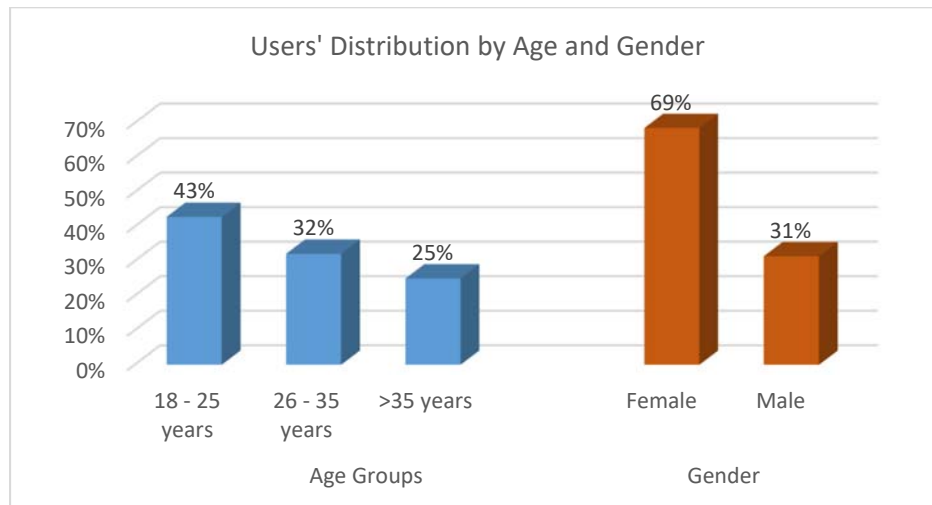
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<sup>4</sup> Please refer to Annex A for a copy of the data collection tools



**Figure 1:** Distribution of Total Respondents from the Local Communities by Nationality

75% of the 140 respondents were youth aged between 18 and 35 years. As to gender, respondents were predominantly females, noting that females were targeted as a marginalized group in addition to targeting them as part of the other groups.



**Figure 2:** Distribution of Total Respondents from the Local Communities by Age and Gender

Since no significant differences were noted in responses collected from “other marginalized groups” such as the Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transexual (LGBT) who expressed the absence of a dedicated platform that caters for their information needs, and since the whole study focused on gathering feedback from marginalized communities and users who are presumed to be highly likely to use alternative media, analysis concentrated on differentiating responses provided by refugees from those provided by non-refugees to check for common patterns and differences. Figure 3 shows the area distribution of respondents. The “Not Applicable - NA” points to marginalized groups whose opinions were collected irrespective of their area of residence and included feminist groups, LGBT, university students, and people of influence.

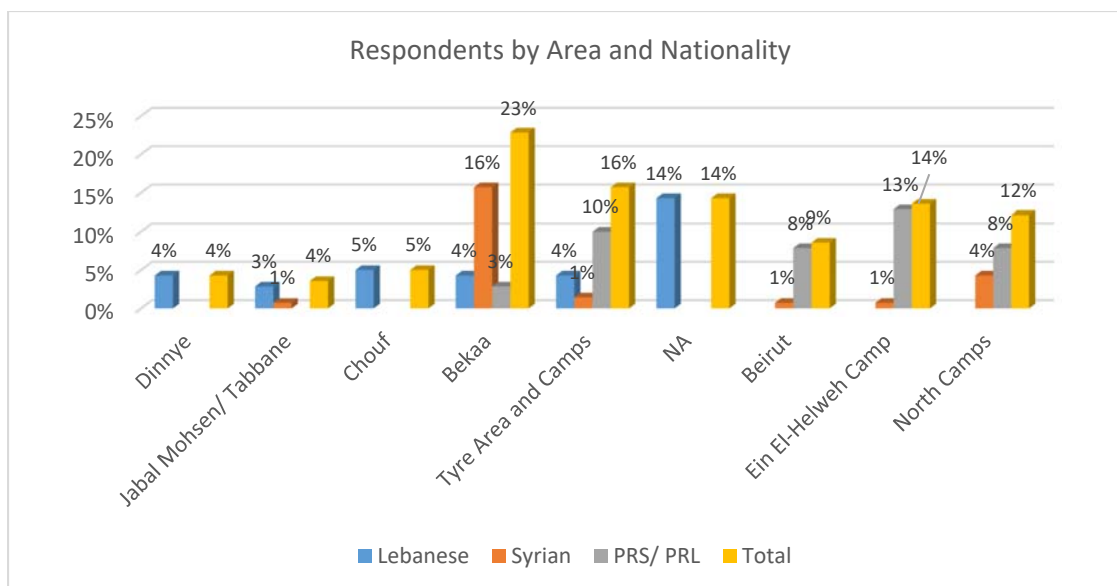


Figure 3: Distribution of Total Respondents from the Local Communities by Area and Nationality

Additionally, a total of 24 media platforms were interviewed as shown in the table below. These platforms were selected based on (a) users' responses and (b) the platforms' willingness to participate in this survey. Overall, 13 platforms with a national target, 10 with a focus on Palestinian refugees, and 1 with a focus on Syrian refugees were successfully reached and interviewed. A profile for each of the interviewed platforms is provided in an appendix.

Platforms with a National Target	Platforms Run by/ Focused on Refugees
Lebanon 365 News	Naastopia
LebanonTimes	Shababik
Raseef 22 (رصيف 22)	Campji
Legal Agenda (المفكرة القانونية)	Jouzour
Rehla	Mountada North
17tashreen (جريدة ١٧ تشرين)	Tafa3ol - تجمع الاعلاميين الفلسطينيين في لبنان
Shareeka Wa Laken (شريكة ولكن)	Ein El-Shatat (عين الشتات)
Daraj (درج)	Saida Gate
Megaphone	Shada
180 post (180 بوست)	Asimat El-Shatat (عاصمة الشتات)
Khamsmieh (خمسمية)	Syrians in Bekaa
Khateera (خطيرة)	
Maharat News	

## 1.4 Key Challenges and Limitations Facing this Study

The kick-off of this study came at a time when Lebanon was hit by a great tragedy; the Beirut port explosion which resulted in the death of more than 200 persons, the injury of over 6000 persons, and the destruction of thousands of homes and businesses. This catastrophe resulted in some delays in the study. Moreover, due to the lock-down imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, most focus group discussions shifted to one-on-one interviews implemented over the phone and social media tools.

Another challenge facing this study is the low level of community awareness on what constitutes alternative media, often confusing it with the general social media and web browsing. For example, many users included AJ+ and MTV online as part of alternative media platforms. Moreover, there is an evident reluctance of some citizens/ users to share information due to fear of actions that may be taken against them by political actors who are increasingly suppressing the freedom of speech, expression, and media. Such reluctance is almost matched by the alternative media platforms themselves, who are hesitant to share information related to their members, operations, and structure, feeling that their freedom and the freedom of their platform would be jeopardized if they become more known in light of their views that oppose those of the government.

Other important limitations to highlight have to do with objectivity. Since every individual user tends to follow a broad spectrum of news/ platforms rather than one individual page, it is difficult to directly attribute a users' satisfaction or dissatisfaction with scanned platforms, considering the diverse platforms that they tend to follow. In addition, people tend to be influenced by others around them, and so, they might be driven to follow a platform as they become more aware that the people around them are following it or they follow a specific platform because they are interested in the views of one person who posts on it.

Last but not least, it is worth noting that mapping platforms concerned with Syrian refugees was quite challenging, whereby it seems that Syrian refugees tend to either follow platforms that focus on news inside Syria and the diaspora in general or the same platforms followed by Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, whereby many refugees have a tendency to follow news related to the areas they reside in.

## II. KEY DEFINITIONS AND CRITERIA

### 2.1 Definition of Alternative Media

This study adopts the following key definitions:

- **Alternative media** is “crucially about offering the means for democratic communication to people who are normally excluded in mainstream media<sup>5</sup>”. It allows those who are most often under- or misrepresented in mainstream media to tell their own stories through their own media. For the purpose of this study, the following key points have been added to clarify the definition:

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<sup>5</sup> Atton, Chris. *Alternative Media*. London: Sage Publications, 2002.



- Targets niche audience, serving a different target group and providing a voice to communities who do not have a voice
  - Has the potential to grow
  - Presents alternative content outside the current formal structure (format, innovation, approach)
- **Marginalized communities:** are communities which suffer from social, economic, geographical, and/ or political marginalization. Marginalization can be measured by a combination of factors, including the following:
    - Geographical scope/ reach covering remote areas
    - Weak social and economic infrastructure
    - Has marginalized groups who are traditionally more marginalized than the typical community (e.g. women, youth...)

## 2.2 Criteria

For the purpose of this study, the following criteria were used to identify alternative media platforms:

- Providing regular content (frequency of update/ sustainability of broadcasting). To measure regularity, the study looked into the number of monthly publications over the past three months and excluded those with fewer publications (those who have not published for more than six months)
- Serving a specific target group
- Responding to the community needs and/ or serving a public interest
- Has the potential to grow (reach, innovation, and approach)
- Avoids propaganda (i.e. does not act as a formal spokes-media on behalf of a political party)

## III. MAPPING OF ALTERNATIVE MEDIA PLATFORMS IN LEBANON AND USER INTERACTION

In this report, the term “alternative media” is used for the national platforms while that of “citizen media” is used for media platforms used by or for refugee and marginalized communities. In the context of this research, no difference was identified between the two terms. In fact, the two terms are rather compared and contrasted to traditional media.

### 3.1 Mapping of (Citizen) Media with a National Target Audience and User Interaction

#### 3.1.1 Mapping of Citizen Media with a National Target

13 alternative media platforms have been mapped with a national target, established between 2000 and 2020. All of the mapped media platforms use digital media, except for three who additionally use print media. The main language of publication is Arabic with six having English

publications as well. 85% publish on a daily basis and the remaining publish either weekly or monthly. All enable users to interact with the platform, providing their feedback. Moreover, the majority use Facebook as the primary means for publishing and disseminating news followed by Instagram and dedicated websites (please refer to Figure 4 for information on the number of platforms who use each of the social media tools).

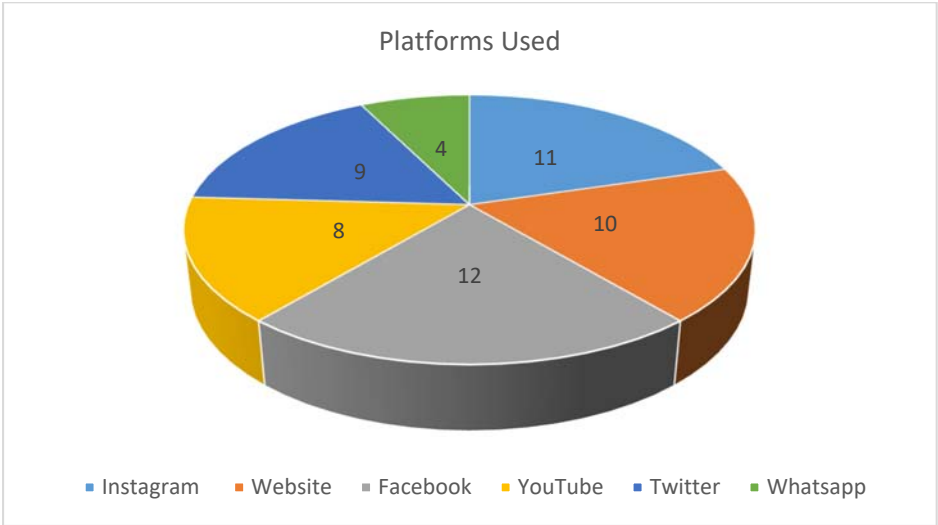
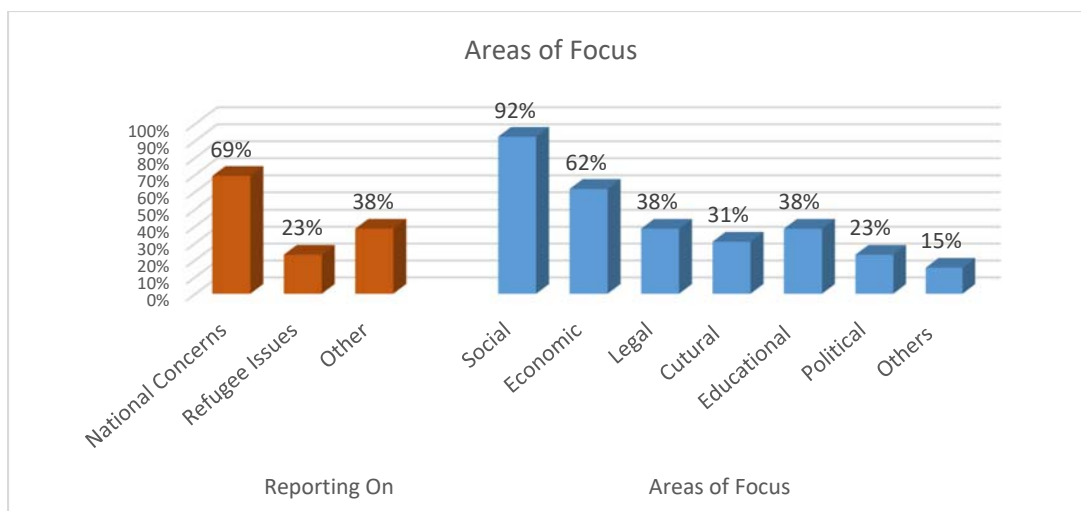


Figure 4: Platforms used by Alternative Media with National Target to Disseminate/ Publish News

77% have formally written vision and mission statements while only 46% have a written code of conduct. Three of these platforms totally rely on volunteers and the majority have Lebanese as their core team members, except for two who have mixed members (Lebanese and other nationalities). All core members are university graduates having different majors, such as Journalism, Political Science, Graphic Design, and Media, among others. Team member roles are distributed to include editors in chief, editors, researchers/ investigative reporters, graphic designers, art directors, and social media managers. When asked about their affiliations, all surveyed platforms affirmed their non-association with a political party.

The majority (62%) indicated having verbal guidelines for publishing while 38% affirmed that their guidelines are written. As to main funding sources, very few have sustainable sources such as direct sales revenue and/ or advertisements, with the majority relying on grants and/ or members' contributions that varied in amount. Nevertheless, 69% indicated having sufficient access to necessary resources such as electricity, production equipment... However, very few (23%) have built a business model for sustainability, varying to include hybrid models integrating production services, advertisements, subscriptions, crowdfunding, and co-production. When asked about what they report on, the majority indicated their focus on national concerns and social issues either targeting youth or all ages. For the national platforms, national concerns include a wide array of subjects varying from safety and geopolitical to economic and law, provided as news flashes with some analysis/ opinions.

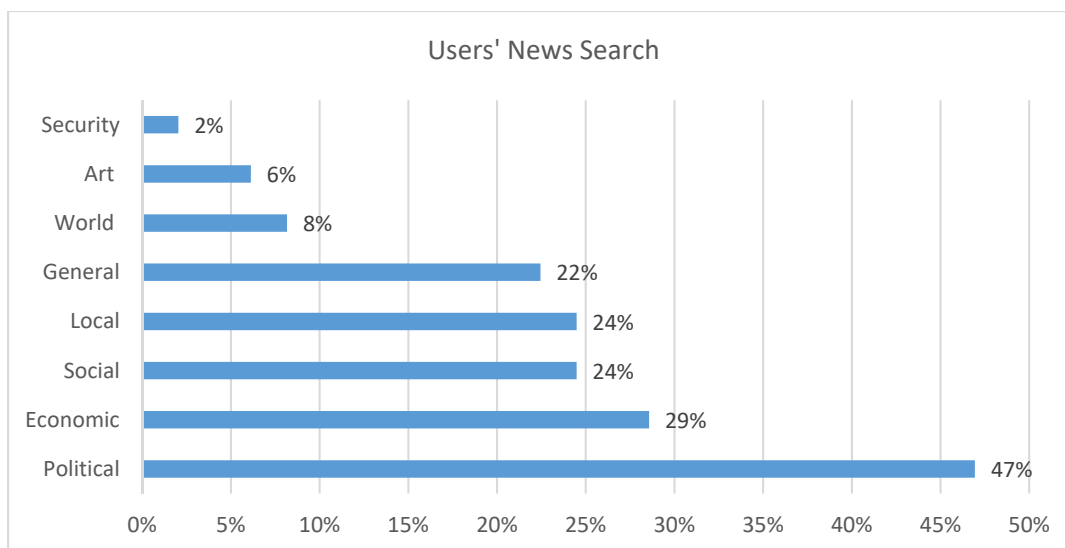


**Figure 5: Platforms' Areas of Focus – National Target**

To gather feedback from audience, the majority look into social media insights or comments/ messages shared on their pages, with only one using google analytics and one sending surveys via email to particular individuals, usually members.

### **3.1.2 Summary of User Interaction with Citizen Media having a National Target**

The majority of consulted Lebanese users reported referring to alternative media sources due to faster and easier access on any portable device and with one simple click rather than having to wait for a set televised broadcast. Many felt that such sources are “more like them” providing them with diverse and objective views that traditional media does not provide. They came to know about such platforms mainly through friends or social media; notably Facebook and twitter. Platforms most frequently mentioned by consulted users included Megaphone followed by Daraj and Raseef22. Nevertheless, many use Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and WhatsApp groups to gather information without necessarily consulting specific alternative media platforms. Information mostly sought/ browsed by users included political in the first place, followed by economics and social, as seen in figure 6 below. Note that the “General” category refers to non-specific and varied news.



*Figure 6: Information Most Sought by Users/ Browsers*

Across all age groups, the general impression was that alternative media targets youth in the first place, with few stating that it addresses local communities, independent citizens, and women. Women are mainly addressed by Shareeka Wa Laken and Khateera.

40% of users spend an average of two to four hours a day on alternative media platforms, and another 35% spend more than four hours. These percentages do not seem to be affected by age or gender. Moreover, while some view certain sites on a daily basis, the majority follow interesting links shared by friends or that they come across while scanning social media. Majority of users read/ view the headlines and then go in-depth into topics that attract them while few go over all content in details.

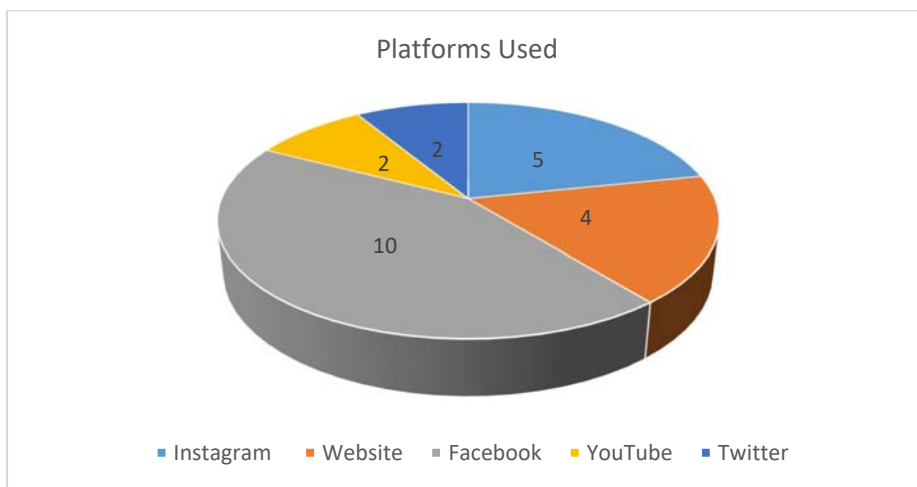
While the majority of users are satisfied completely or to a certain degree with the alternative media platforms present, expressing that they fulfill their information needs, around 18% are dissatisfied, believing that some platforms have hidden agendas, lack objectivity, lack professionalism, provide inaccurate information, and/ or violate privacy and copyrights. These views persist despite the fact that all platforms interviewed affirm that they are neutral and unaffiliated. When asked to elaborate, these users further noted the lack of accuracy of information provided by alternative platforms commenting on the “quantity over quality” aspect of delivering news so quickly and so accessibly and highlighting the fact that because of the huge volume of information being presented, the accuracy of the information tends to be lost.

## 3.2 Mapping of (Citizen) Media Run by Palestinian or Syrian Refugees or Reporting on Palestinian and Syrian Refugees and User Interaction

### 3.2.1 Mapping of Citizen Media Run by or Reporting on Refugees with Focus on Palestinians

10 platforms were mapped with focus on Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. All of the mapped media platforms run by or reporting on refugees use solely digital media. The main language of

publication is Arabic with two having occasional English posts. 70% publish on a daily basis and the remaining publish either weekly or monthly. 80% enable users to interact with the platform, providing their feedback and comments. Moreover, the majority use Facebook as the primary means for publishing and disseminating news followed by Instagram.



*Figure 7: Platforms used by Alternative Media Run by or for Refugees to Disseminate/ Publish News*

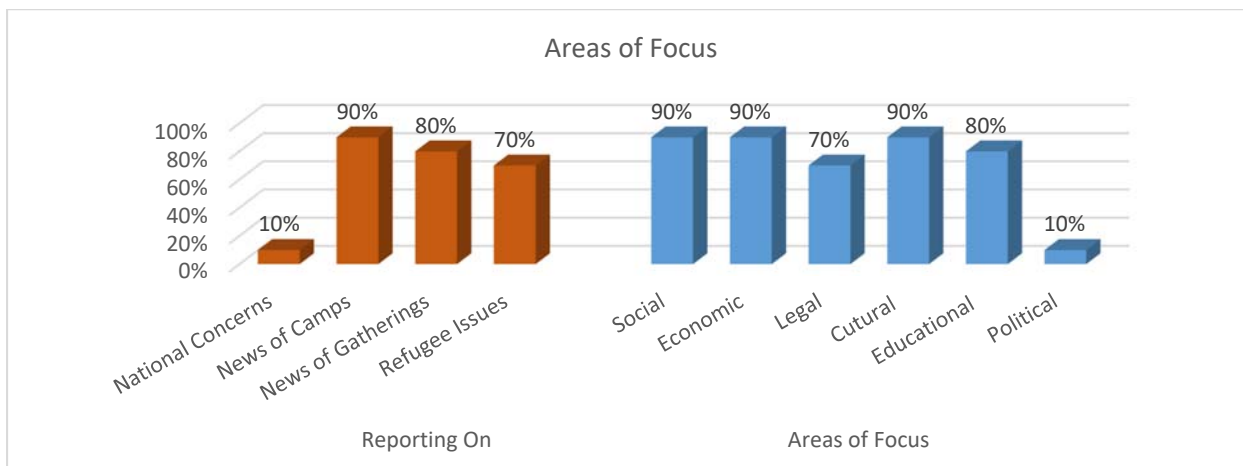
Only 40% have formally written vision and mission statements while 30% have a written code of conduct. Four of these platforms totally rely on volunteers. 90% have Palestinians as their core team members, including four who rely on mixed members (Lebanese, Syrian, and Jordanians in addition to Palestinian). All core team members are university graduates having different majors, such as Journalism, Radio/ TV, Media and Communications, and Engineering, among others. All these platforms have distributed the team members' roles to include editors, reporters, authenticators, photography directors, graphic designers, and field officers. When asked about their affiliations, all surveyed platforms once again affirmed their neutrality (i.e. non-association with a political party).

The majority (70%) indicated having verbal guidelines for publishing while 10% affirmed that their guidelines are written. The remaining 20% expressed a lack of formally structured guidelines.

As to main funding sources, very few have sustainable sources such as direct sales revenue and/ or advertisements, with the majority relying on grants and members' contributions<sup>6</sup>. While 30% indicated having sufficient access to necessary resources such as electricity, production equipment..., others expressed being challenged by such access. Additionally, none seem to have built a business model for sustainability. When asked about what they report on, the majority indicated a focus on news of the camps (i.e. reporting on events taking place inside the camps or

<sup>6</sup> Platforms with a refugee target who rely on members' contributions include Mountada North, Tafa3ol, Ayn Shatat, and Asimat Shatat

the state of the camps) and social, economic, and cultural issues targeting refugee youth, and notably Palestinians.



**Figure 8:** Platforms' Areas of Focus – Refugee Target

To gather feedback from their audience, 80% of alternative media platform rely on Facebook interaction, such as likes, comments, and messages. One platform relies on an external evaluation and on quarterly polls (Naastopia) and another relies on direct community feedback collected from the field (Mountada North).

### 3.2.2 Mapping of Citizen Media Run by or Reporting on Refugees with Focus on Syrians

Tracking platforms focused on Syrian refugees in Lebanon was quite challenging, since the majority of surveyed Syrian refugees and Palestinian Refugees from Syria (PRS) seemed to refer to the same platforms used by the PRL. These platforms are not mutually exclusive; many of the Syrian and Palestinian refugees explicitly named the same platforms, with minimal variations mainly highlighted when Syrian refugees mentioned that they follow national news of Syria or when Palestinian refugees named specific political pages related to Palestine. Nevertheless, consulting key stakeholders active among the Syrian refugee community resulted in 8 references to Facebook pages or groups known to be run by Syrians:

- Syrians in Beqaa, a public Facebook page
- Ana Laje'e Fi Lubnan, a private Facebook group
- Ana Laje'e (I am a Refugee), a public Facebook page
- Al Laje'een Al Souriyeen Fi Lubnan (Syrian Refugees in Lebanon), a public Facebook page
- Syria Sawa (Syria Together), a public Facebook page
- I am a Refugee Child, a public Facebook page
- Afrah wa Ahzan Ahel Al-Qaseer (The Joys and Sorrows of Al-Qasser People), a public Facebook page
- Akhbar al Mou'tasimeen al Souriyeen Fi Lubnan (The News of the Syrian Protestors in Lebanon), a public Facebook group

After reviewing the pages, it was noted that only 3 of the aforementioned platforms focus on news of Syrians in Lebanon (Al Laje'een Al Souriyeen Fi Lubnan, Syrians in Beqaa, and Akhbar al Mou'tasimeen al Souriyeen Fi Lubnan) and were accordingly contacted, while the others were more focused on news about Syria. Of the three contacted, only one (Syrians in Beqaa) responded and was interviewed. Nevertheless, a summary profiling sheet is provided in an appendix summarizing whatever information was accessible on the 8 platforms mapped.

### 3.2.3 Summary of User Interaction with Citizen Media Run by or Reporting on Refugees

93% of consulted refugees follow alternative media platforms mainly due to their ease of access. In fact, 56% of the consulted refugees believe that these platforms answer to their needs due to the speed of access, while 22% find such platforms to lack credibility. Another 22% indicate that their satisfaction with the respective platforms depends on the perceived need for information.

Whereas the majority of refugees follow local news and information related to the refugee status, some follow economic news, especially the dollar to Lebanese Lira rate, security news and road blockages, and health and COVID-19 updates. Both males and females also rely on alternative media platforms to look for jobs and travel/ immigration opportunities. Additionally, around 11% of the females indicated that they use such platforms to access social information, including fashion news.

The majority of refugees, whether Palestinians or Syrians, follow Campji and Naastopia, followed by Aj+. 22% mentioned other alternative media platforms, such as Megaphone, Jaafar talk, Lebanon news, Nabad, Shababik, and Political Pen.

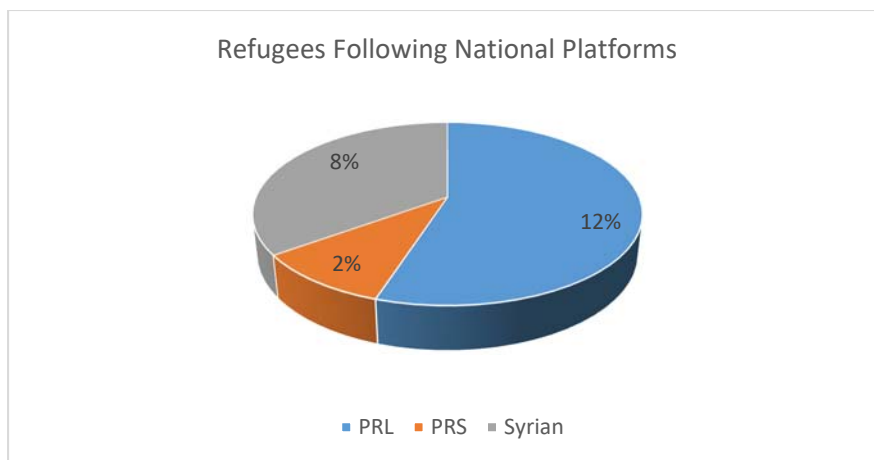
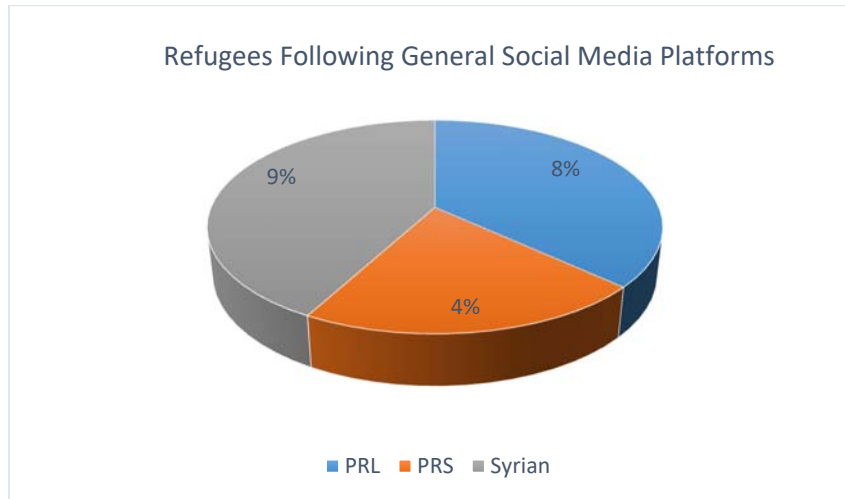


Figure 9: Percentage of Consulted Refugees who Follow National Platforms

Similar to Lebanese citizens, many refugees use Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and WhatsApp groups to gather information without necessarily consulting specific alternative media platforms, as seen in the chart below, where 21% stated that they follow such social media platforms with no specific page or news platform in mind.



*Figure 10: Percentage of Consulted Refugees who Follow General/ Random Social Media Platforms*

Moreover, the majority believe that these platforms have no specific target audience and have come to know them either through friends or through research.

34% of users browse alternative media platforms for two to four hours a day, while another 23% browse it more than 4 hours, with some indicating spending up to 12 hours a day on these platforms. While some skim headlines, many go into in-depth reading and viewing.

## IV. ANALYSIS: STATE OF ALTERNATIVE MEDIA IN LEBANON

### 4.1 Key Findings related to the State of Community, Citizens, and Alternative Media in Lebanon

Tens of alternative media platforms exist in Lebanon, with many coming to existence after prominent events such as the 17<sup>th</sup> of October revolution... In general, the local community in Lebanon, whether nationals or refugees, expressed their distrust of traditional media, relying on such alternative platforms. One of the advantages that most users mention when it comes to alternative media platforms is the quick access provided on two levels. First, when any incident is happening, alternative media usually provides a live coverage faster than traditional media. Second, when a person is searching for a specific topic, alternative media such as twitter and Facebook pages, allows them to search using specific and fast search tabs. Surprisingly, and despite the prevalent use of alternative media platforms, many young community members and citizens rely on WhatsApp groups for their information, coming to know about such groups mainly through friends or through social media.



Despite the fast access that online media grants to users, some participants expressed being dissatisfied by the currently existing platforms, stating that their credibility is questionable. Nevertheless, over 50% spend more than 2 hours browsing these platforms on a daily basis, with some spending as much as 12 hours a day.

As to alternative media platforms, not all accept to share information related to their structures and operations. Among those surveyed, many have started off as non-specialists enthusiasts and are currently shifting to professionalizing their work. However, despite their efforts, they are distant from the legal requirements of professionalizing themselves and formalizing their posts and methods of broadcasting information. In other words, they do not have the means/ coverage to formalize their operations and establish themselves as a registered and certified news entity. While some platforms have become highly competent, others lack the technical know-how and are still adopting traditional methods away from technological methods and tools as well as interactive productions. Moreover, many lack the marketing skills required to promote their work.

The majority of alternative media platforms in Lebanon, whether having a national or a refugee focus, rely on digital media and publish their news mainly in Arabic to ensure wide accessibility. Media tools most commonly used by both are Facebook followed by Instagram. Whereas 77% of those with a national target have written vision and mission statements and 46% have a written Code of Conduct, the percentage decreases when considering those with a refugee focus to 36% and 27% respectively. In light of the unsupportive legal registration requirements, most alternative media platforms are unregistered or operate under a registered Non-Governmental Organization (NGO). Additionally, most do not seem to have sustainable sources of funding. Only one national platform benefits from direct sales (Post 180) and two benefit from advertisements (Post 180 and Raseef 22). Similarly, one refugee-focused platform benefits from direct sales (Naastopia) and one from advertisements (Saida Gate). When asked about their business model for sustainability, 23% of alternative media platforms with national targets mentioned having such a model while none of the refugee-focused platforms had it.

## 6 Mapping Similarities Between The Two Types of Citizen Media

The following infographic shows points of similarity between the two types of citizen media.



Figure 11: Similarities between Citizen Media with National and Refugee Focus

## 4.2 Key Challenges Related to the State of Alternative Media in Lebanon

Alternative media in Lebanon faces a fear of censorship, oppression, and limitations imposed on the freedom of speech of media actors. Additionally, some are underfunded and have no sustainable sources of funding.

Another challenge facing some media platforms is their high reliance on volunteers who came together driven by a cause or a position with no funding sources. Such platforms lack the financial capacity to seek legal and technical support and institutionalize their work.

Main challenges mentioned by platforms with national targets include funding (69%), exposure and social media reach (23%), and risk of freedom oppression (31%). As for needs, 77% indicated funding and 46% indicated their need for talent attraction/ recruitment and capacity building on the implementation of technical research, network development, and business model development.

Main challenges mentioned by platforms with refugee target include content shortage/ inaccuracy of information (50%), funding (40%), and Facebook policy changes/ censorship of content (30%). As for needs, 40% indicated funding and 60% indicated their need for capacity building.

## V. KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

In parallel to the findings presented above, this study forwards the following key recommendations:



Figure 12: Key Recommendations

- To support alternative media platforms to formalize their operations, helping them develop a strategy, a code of conduct, and an editorial plan
- To support alternative media platforms to fundraise for their operations and establish sustainable business models
- To secure legal advice for alternative media platforms
- To train interested alternative media platforms on video journalism and other technology-based tools to help them move away from traditional techniques
- To train and coach interested alternative media platforms on the production of interactive material
- To build the marketing capacities of alternative media platforms

## VI. ANNEX A: DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

### Guidelines for Focus Group Discussions

<b>Name of Facilitator</b>		<b>Date of FGD</b>	
<b>Area</b>			

<b>Name</b>	<b>Nationality</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Gender</b>
			<input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F
			<input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F
			<input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F
			<input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F
			<input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F
			<input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F

#### **Guiding Questions:**

1. When it comes to media, what information do you seek?
2. Does mainstream media answer to your needs? Why or why not?
3. Do you seek alternative media platforms (different than mainstream media)? Why or why not?
4. What do you/ would you look for in alternative media platforms? What makes you select one media over the other?
5. What media platforms do you most frequently use? What is the type of each (television, radio, newspaper, digital...)?
6. What kind of information do you mainly seek from these platforms? What content to they publish?
7. Do such platforms target a specific audience? If yes, please specify.
8. On average, how many hours a day do you spend on each media?
9. Do you search for specific information or simply follow interesting links/ headings?
10. How do you consume information in feeds; through (a) scanning quickly headlines and pictures, (b) skimming/ quickly reading, scrolling, and viewing, or (c) reading/ reviewing/ watching content in detail?
11. Do the currently existing alternative media platforms satisfy your needs? Why or why not?
12. How did you come to know of these platforms?
13. How credible do you think these platforms are?
14. How do you rate the quality of the news you get through these platforms?

## Guidelines for Key Informant Interviews of Media Platforms

<b>Name of Interviewer</b>		<b>Date of Interview</b>	
<b>Name of Interviewee</b>		<b>Area</b>	
<b>Media Platform</b>		<b>Establishment Date</b>	

### GENERAL INFORMATION

<b>Type of Media</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Print <input type="checkbox"/> Radio <input type="checkbox"/> TV <input type="checkbox"/> Digital
<b>Language</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Arabic <input type="checkbox"/> English <input type="checkbox"/> French
<b>Average Frequency of Publications/ Update</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Daily <input type="checkbox"/> Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly <input type="checkbox"/> Other, specify:
<b>How can users interact with your platform?</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> View/ Read/ Listen Only <input type="checkbox"/> View/ Read/ Listen and Interact <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify:
<b>What platforms do you use for publishing and disseminating news?</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Instagram <input type="checkbox"/> Dedicated Website <input type="checkbox"/> Satellite TV <input type="checkbox"/> Facebook <input type="checkbox"/> YouTube <input type="checkbox"/> Twitter <input type="checkbox"/> SMS <input type="checkbox"/> Others, please specify:

### STRUCTURE AND FUNDING

<b>Do you have a formally written vision and mission?</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <i>If yes, pls. list where it can be accessed or provide a copy.</i>
<b>Do you have a formally written Code of Conduct?</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <i>If yes, pls. list where it can be accessed or provide a copy.</i>
<b>How many members does your media platform have?</b>
Full-time Staff: _____ Part-time Staff: _____ Volunteers: _____
<b>What is the nationality of the <u>main</u> team members running this platform (multi-selections are possible)</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Lebanese <input type="checkbox"/> Palestinian <input type="checkbox"/> Syrian <input type="checkbox"/> Others, please specify:

**What are the qualifications of the main team members?**

- High School                       Undergraduate Degree                       Post-Graduate Degree

*Please list the areas of study:*

**What are the roles played by the different team members?**

Team Member:	Role:
Team Member:	Role:
Team Member:	Role:
Team Member:	Role:
Team Member:	Role:
Team Member:	Role:

**Do you feel you have access to sufficient knowledge resources? Are you able to find and hire qualified staff with knowledge and skills in different areas? Why or why not?**

- Yes                       No

*Elaboration:*

**Are you legally registered? If no, why not?**

**With whom is your media platform mainly affiliated?**

**Do you have formal guidelines for publishing?**

- No                       Yes, verbal                       Yes, written (pls attach a copy)

**What are your main funding sources?**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grants-based, multiple donors | <input type="checkbox"/> Grants-based, single donor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Members' contributions        | <input type="checkbox"/> Advertisements             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Direct sales                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify:     |

**Do you have sufficient and affordable access to necessary resources, such as electricity, newsprint, production equipment, distribution systems etc...?**

**What is your business model for sustainability?**

**Do you face difficulties in diversifying your revenue sources? Please elaborate.**

## COVERAGE

**What is the main geographical scope of coverage of this platform (multi-selections are possible)**

- Camps                       Gatherings                       Marginalized Areas  
 All Areas across Lebanon

**What does your platform mainly report on?**

- News of Camps                       News of Gatherings                       Refugee Issues  
 National Concerns                       Others, please specify:

**What is the area of focus of your platform's reports?**

- Social                       Economic                       Legal  
 Cultural                       Educational  
 Other, please specify:

**Who is your main audience?**

*Please segregate by age, nationality, gender, geographical location...*

**How do you gather feedback from your audience?**

**How many viewers and followers does your media platform have?**

Number of Viewers: \_\_\_\_\_                      Number of Followers: \_\_\_\_\_

## CHALLENGES AND NEEDS

<b>In your opinion, what challenges face alternative media in Lebanon?</b>
<b>What needs do you have to grow your platform?</b>