FROM ROOMS FULL OF PAPER VOUCHERS TO A COMMON E-CARD SYSTEM

A case study of the innovation process of the One Common Card system for Syrian refugees in Lebanon

Nora Dokken Harboe

Master's Thesis

Centre for Technology, Innovation and Culture

Faculty of Social Sciences

UNIVERSITY OF OSLO

May 2020

Cover photo (private):

The Common E-Card, Lebanon

From rooms full of paper vouchers to a common e-card system

A case study of the innovation process of the One Common Card system for Syrian refugees in Lebanon

2020

From rooms full of paper vouchers to a common e-card system: *A case study of the innovation process of the One Common Card system for Syrian refugees in Lebanon*

Nora Dokken Harboe

http://www.duo.uio.no/

iv

Abstract

The challenges facing international humanitarian actions are growing in scale, scope and complexity. Making humanitarian assistance more efficient and effective is therefore important in order to reduce the gap between what is needed and what can be provided. One of the instruments dealing with this is *humanitarian innovation.* Increased attention has been devoted to find new solutions for how humanitarian actions can be organized more efficiently and cost-effectively, while at the same time maintaining high quality humanitarian assistance. However, there is an absence of "best-practice" examples, both in literature and practice.

The current study presents a pioneering humanitarian innovation, the electronic, cash-based system for humanitarian assistance to Syrian refugees in Lebanon: The One Common Card system, initiated and developed by the United Nations (UN) World Food Programme (WFP). An investigation of the innovation process of the One Common Card system has been conducted in order to contribute to the understanding of key preconditions, drivers, and constraints for innovation in humanitarian actions.

The study has combined the influential model of innovation processes developed by the Minnesota Research Program (MIRP) and a more specific model on humanitarian innovation, developed by the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance (ALNAP) in order to analyze how the One Common Card system was initiated, developed and became implemented.

Using qualitative, in-depth interviews with people involved in the innovation process, documents analysis and observations through fieldwork in Beirut and Rome, this study has provided insights on how the innovation process of the One Common Card system has been a complex story, involving many actors at many levels. The combination of the right contextual and institutional conditions; WFP's organizational willingness and ability to search for new solutions; the collaboration with the private sector; and availability of funding, were important drivers and preconditions.

In terms of theoretical implications, the study has found that there is a need to develop a humanitarian innovation model in which contextual and institutional factors are included. Current research on humanitarian innovation processes does not sufficiently cover the complexities associated with the humanitarian innovation process.

Acknowledgements

Much like the innovation process, this year has been a combination of well-planned strategies and unforeseen events (read: a revolution and a pandemic). I would like to acknowledge and thank the following people who have supported me throughout this journey.

First of all, I would like to thank my supervisor, Professor Taran Mari Thune, for valuable insight, criticisms and support during the master's process. Further, I would like to express my gratitude to Elizabeth Rasmusson for introducing me to key people in WFP in Rome and Beirut.

To all my informants in Beirut and Rome, thank you for providing valuable inputs and sharing your thoughts on humanitarian innovation processes.

Mom and dad, thank you for proofreading, and the countless supportive text messages and phone calls. And to my little brother for always having my back.

Sissel, I owe you the greatest gratitude for your amazing hospitality; for letting me stay with you in Beirut; and for being my friend and second mom while conducting my fieldwork between a revolution and a pandemic.

Morten, thank you for proofreading the thesis during the lockdown in Farnham. I am impressed by your ability to make "Track Changes" a joyful exercise.

I also wish to thank my fellow TIK students, especially "Los Omelettos" (you know who you are) and the TIK Centre for providing 5000 NOK towards travel expenses.

Last but not least, thank you Håvard for being unbelievably patient with my ups and downs during the whole process. Sharing my home office with you has been a blessing in disguise.

Nora Dokken Harboe, Oslo, May 2020

Abbreviations

ALNAP	Learning Network for Accountability and Performance
BLF	Banque Libano-Francaise
CO	Country Office
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
E-card	Electronic card
ECHO	The department for humanitarian aid and civil protection (EU)
E-voucher	Electronic voucher
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization (UN)
FO	Field office
HIF	Humanitarian Innovation Fund
HIP	The Humanitarian Innovation Platform
HQ	Headquarter
LCC	Lebanon Cash Consortium
LOUISE	Lebanon's One unified Inter-Organizational System for E-cards
MIRP	Minnesota Innovation Research Program
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN)
R&D	Research & Development
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VASYR	Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon
WFP	United Nations World Food Programme

x

Table of contents

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 INNOVATION TO SOLVE SOCIAL CHALLENGES

Innovation is not always driven by commercial markets or consumer needs. There is also a strong tradition of social need providing the pull for new products, processes and services. The challenges facing international humanitarian actions are social needs that are growing in scale, scope and complexity. According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), in 2019 over 133 million people were in need of humanitarian assistance in 42 countries. International humanitarian agencies are already struggling to meet these growing and increasingly complex needs (OCHA 2018). The number of refugees is the highest since the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was established in 1950 (UNHCR 2017b). Making humanitarian assistance more efficient and effective is therefore important in order to reduce the gap between what is needed and what can be provided. In this context, many are calling for radical changes to both *what* humanitarian actors do and *how* they do it. One of the instruments dealing with this is *humanitarian innovation* (Betts and Bloom 2014; Obrecht and Warner 2016; Ramalingam et al. 2015). Because innovation in the humanitarian action is faced with a complex network of political interests, contextual constraints and different actors, most of the innovations in the sector fail and there is a lack of "best practice" (Elhra 2018). In consequence, there is a need for studying examples of humanitarian innovation in order to better understand how such innovations evolve and how best to manage humanitarian innovation in order to improve its contribution to the increased humanitarian challenges worldwide.

One area where innovation has been used in order to deal with humanitarian challenges is linked to one of the greatest humanitarian challenges of our time, the refugee crisis caused by the outbreak of the Syrian civil war in 2011. In order to deal with the huge influx of Syrian refugees in Lebanon – one of Syria´s neighboring countries – the UN's World Food Program was rethinking the modality of humanitarian assistance to refugees. The outcome was one of the most complex and innovative ways to distribute basic assistance in a humanitarian crisis ever demonstrated. Through collaboration with local authorities, private enterprises, other UN agencies, donors and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), WFP has developed a One Common Card system for the distribution of humanitarian assistance to all Syrian refugees in Lebanon through an electronic bank card (e-card). The system is named LOUISE: Lebanon's One unified Inter-Organizational System for E-cards. Today, 70% of all Syrian refugees in Lebanon receive 27 dollars a month through the One Common Card system, which can be spent

to withdraw money from the bank or to shop in UN-contracted stores. The system is unique in that it has made the refugees part of the local economy by giving them access to the financial system and it has managed to combine the forces of the agencies providing basic assistance in a humanitarian crisis. The system is not bulletproof, and the journey has not been straightforward. Still, it can be argued that the emergence and development of the One Common Card system for Syrian refugees in Lebanon is a good example of how innovation in humanitarian action may take place. By analyzing how this system emerged developed and became implemented, the purpose of this study is to contribute to a better understanding of key preconditions, drivers and constraints for humanitarian innovation, as well as identifying general learnings relevant to a better understanding of innovation processes in general.

1.2   RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Building on the arguments above concerning the humanitarian sector´s need and ability to use innovation as a tool in facing increased humanitarian challenges, the overarching research question of this study is: *How did the One Common Card system for Syrian refugees in Lebanon emerge and develop over time?* By answering this question, the study aims at contributing to a better understanding of key preconditions, drivers, and constraints for innovation in humanitarian actions and from this, contribute to a better understanding of innovation processes in general. Based on the theoretical and conceptual framework that will be presented in the next chapter, three sub-questions have been developed in order to answer the overarching research question:

> ***RQ 1:*** *How did the humanitarian crisis in Syria trigger the search for novel solutions in humanitarian assistance to refugees in Lebanon?*

> ***RQ 2:*** *How did institutional and contextual conditions influence the emergence and development of the One Common Card system?*

> ***RQ 3:*** *Which actors were dominant in the process and how did they influence the process?*

In terms of delimitation of the study, I have chosen to look at the period between 2012 and 2016, because the innovation activities towards the One Common Card system started in 2012, due to the humanitarian crisis in Syria, and became officially implemented in 2016, with the launch of the One Common Card System. However, since an aspect of the study is to look at contextual conditions that were influencing the process, parts of the empirical work and analysis are concerned with contextual conditions occurring prior to the initiation of the innovation process.

3

1.3 GOAL AND RELEVANCE

This thesis has both a theoretical and applied relevance. Concerning the *theoretical* relevance of this study, the thesis aims at contributing to the understanding of innovation processes in general and in particular important drivers, constraints, and preconditions for innovation in humanitarian actions. There is a shortage of empirically founded research on humanitarian innovation (Betts and Bloom 2014; Elhra 2018; Obrecht and Warner 2016; Ramalingam et al. 2015).

Concerning the *applied* relevance, there have not been as many refugees as there is in the world now since the Second World War (FN-Sambandet 2019). Therefore, it is more important than ever to make the humanitarian system more efficient and effective. For this particular case, which to some extent can be considered a best-practice example of humanitarian innovation, there still seems to be no research available on how this innovative system was developed and implemented. There are some reports and evaluations on the impacts of the system and whether it is better than other systems for distributing humanitarian assistance,[1] but the innovation process itself has not been studied. Therefore, it is both relevant and interesting to study this case in-depth in order to learn from a humanitarian innovation that, at least by some parameters, has been successful. By studying successful humanitarian innovations, we can learn more about how innovation in the humanitarian system occurs. This study attempts to make such a contribution.

Inspired by the innovation journey perspective (Van de Ven et al. 1999) this thesis aims to make the journey of humanitarian innovation shorter, easier and/or less costly to undertake, by learning from an example of a pioneering innovation in the humanitarian domain. By field visits to Lebanon and the WFP HQ in Rome, I have conducted interviews with key actors involved in the development and implementation of the One Common Card system. Combining the interview data with document analysis, this study has revealed that the humanitarian innovation process is a complex journey, involving many actors with different interests (Bessant and Tidd 2013; Garud, Tuertscher, and Van de Ven 2013; Pavitt 2006; Van de Ven et al. 1999; Van de Ven 2017). The process of the development of the One Common Card system has been highly influenced by global and national political agendas. In many ways, the Lebanon context has

---

[1] See for example (Boston Consulting Group, 2017; WFP, 2014a).

4

been a laboratory for experimenting with new modalities for humanitarian assistance as outlined in the humanitarian strategies of the largest humanitarian donor countries.

In addition, few studies have addressed the contextual and institutional conditions in which the humanitarian innovation process is embedded and how the interests of different actors influence the process (Betts and Bloom 2014; Elhra 2018; Obrecht and Warner 2016; Ramalingam et al. 2015). Research has called for contributions to what successful humanitarian innovation looks like and how it is achieved (Betts and Bloom 2014; Elhra 2018; Obrecht and Warner 2016; Ramalingam et al. 2015). This study aims to shrink this knowledge gap.

1.4 BACKGROUND

The following section will provide the reader with the background information necessary for the reader to understand the context of the case. The first section gives an overview of what humanitarian assistance is and how it is different from development assistance, this chapter will also briefly explain how humanitarian actions have changed over recent decades. The following section will explain how the UN system works with humanitarian crises. The next section will give the reader a brief understanding of the Syrian civil war. The final section is an overview of what the One Common Card system is and how it works.

1.4.1 HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

Humanitarian action is assistance to people in severe need of help (Euprha 2017; OECD DAC 2010). The people in need of help are typically refugees and victims of natural disasters, famines, and wars. Humanitarian actions are, at least supposed to be, short-term help until governments and institutions replace it with long-term help (Euprha 2017).

Humanitarian action is different from development assistance (as shown in Table 1), in that development assistance has a longer time frame, and focuses more on systemic, country-wide development goals (Humanitarian Coalition 2015).

Humanitarian Assistance	Development Assistance
Short term	Long-term
Delivered in disaster zones	Delivered in developing countries
Response to an incident or event	Responds to systematic problems
Focused on saving lives	Focused on economic, social and political development

Table 1 Differences between humanitarian aid and development assistance (Humanitarian Coalition, 2015).

The boundaries between humanitarian and development aid are getting blurred: prolonged poverty in fragile states, climate change, and armed conflicts have led to more complex crises, that are lasting longer and affecting more people than earlier crises. This despite the fact that donors are giving more and that the humanitarian organizations are reaching more people (Utenriksdepartementet 2017). This has changed, and is still changing, the perception of what humanitarian action involves, and how to meet increased humanitarian needs (OCHA 2016). The main objective during humanitarian crises is still to save lives, but saving lives is no longer the only objective. (OCHA 2016). With the changes in the format of humanitarian crises, the humanitarian system has, in many ways unintentionally, been given an extended mandate. The extended mandate is that the humanitarian actors to a greater extent are combining short-term humanitarian assistance with longer-term development assistance (Utenriksdepartementet 2017).

In order to fulfil the extended mandate, and respond to the changed format of humanitarian crises, policymakers, aid workers, and companies have had to rethink the means and modalities of humanitarian assistance. Hence, innovation and the use of modern technology and digital solutions, in order to meet the changing landscape of humanitarian crisis, has become an increased focus for many humanitarian organizations, companies and donor countries (Elhra 2018; Obrecht and Warner 2016; Ramalingam et al. 2015).

One important change in terms of humanitarian means as a response to the changing crisis, and which is relevant for this case, is the gradual move from *in-kind distribution* to *cash distribution* in humanitarian assistance (Heaslip, Kovács, and Haavisto 2018; Inter-Agency Standing Committee n.d.; Overseas Development Institute 2015).

In-kind distribution is the distribution of *physical commodities* such as food parcels and rations, materials for shelter, and household items. While cash distribution is *monetary assistance* that lets the refugees themselves purchase the food, products, and services they need. Cash-based

assistance can take the form of paper notes or coins, paper vouchers, electronic vouchers, or bank cards and comes with different types of conditions and restrictions (NRC 2016). Table 2 gives an overview of the most common types of cash-based assistance, the categories are not mutually exclusive.

Unconditional cash grants	Based on needs, and people do not have to do anything to receive them
Conditional cash grants	Must be earned through certain activities, such as working or going to school
Unrestricted cash grants	Can be used for anything the refugee chooses
Restricted cash grants	Designated for a certain use or to buy a certain item
Multipurpose cash grants	Regular or one-off cash transfers to cover a family's needs for food, shelter, education, health, water and sanitation facilities, and to earn a livelihood. The family is free to use the cash as they wish.

Table 2 Types of cash-based assistance (NRC, 2016).

1.4.2 THE UN HUMANITARIAN SYSTEM

The UN agencies, especially the WFP, are the actors who have been most involved in the innovation process of the One Common Card system. In humanitarian actions in general, it is usually the UN which has the main responsibility for the humanitarian response, in collaboration with The Red Cross Movement and local and international NGOs. Together these actors are supporting local responses to humanitarian crises. The UN, and the other humanitarian actors, receive their funding from donor countries, companies, and philanthropists (Euprha 2017).

The UN agencies that are involved in a humanitarian crisis have distinct mandates and associated tasks. As shown in Figure 1-1 (OCHA n.d.) the UN humanitarian system is dominated by the World Food Programme (WFP), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees UNHCR, and United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) (Humanitarian Response n.d.).

The UN agencies involved in a humanitarian response have different responsibilities, such as registration, provision of shelter, provision of food, and education. In countries affected by humanitarian crises, several UN agencies are usually present with country offices in the capital as well as field offices in the most affected areas, for example in areas with refugee camps. This

is also the case in Lebanon. The different agencies are responsible for different parts of the overall humanitarian response. The responsibility for coordination of a national UN humanitarian response is delegated to the UN Residential Coordinator (RC). The UN RC is responsible for the increased efficiency and effectiveness of the operational activities of the UN at the country level (UNSDG n.d.).
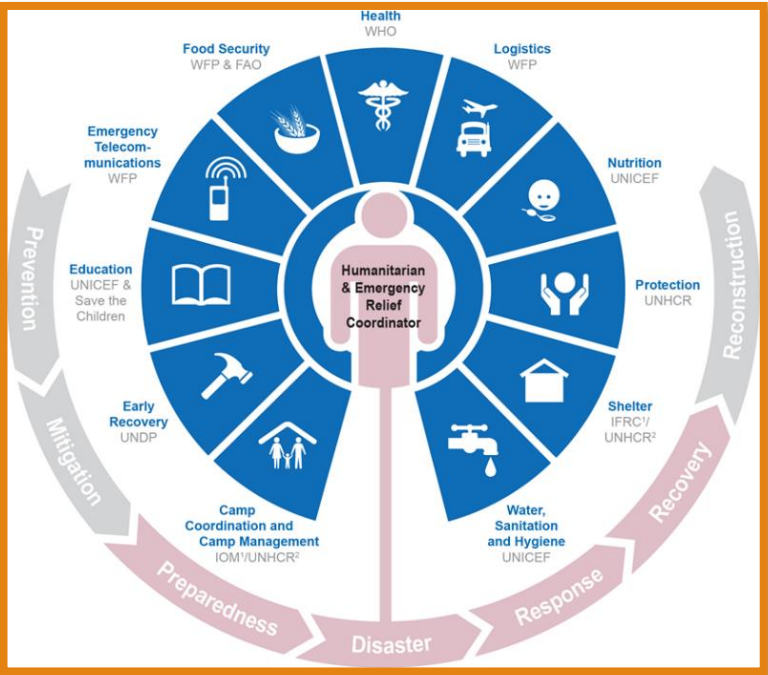
Figure 1-1 The Un humanitarian system

1.4.3 THE SYRIAN CIVIL WAR

The humanitarian crisis resulting from the Syrian civil war is an example of how humanitarian action has changed in format and means, as outlined above. The crisis has now entered its 10th year and millions of Syrians are living in the neighboring countries, with little hope of returning in the near future (UNHCR 2018). The e-card system, and later on the One Common Card system, was developed as part of the UN-led humanitarian response in Lebanon.

The UNHCR High Commissioner, Filippo Grandi, calls the humanitarian crisis in Syria the "biggest humanitarian and refugee crisis of our time" (UNHCR 2018). 5.6 million Syrians have been forced to flee the country and another 6.1 million are internally displaced within the Syrian borders since the beginning of the war (Leraand 2019).

Syria was one of many countries that experienced protests, riots, and demonstrations against regimes in the spring of 2011 - often referred to as the Arab Spring. The reason for the uprising

in Syria was similar to the reason for the other uprisings during the Arab Spring, namely protest against an oppressive regime run by a small elite. In the case of Syria, the elite was the Assad-family´s authoritarian regime which had governed the country for more than four decades. The initially relatively peaceful demonstrations were brutally repressed by the Assad-regime, which in turn lead to the protests becoming more violent and spreading across the country (FN-sambandet, 2020). When the violence increased, people started to flee the country and by 2013 more than 1 million Syrians had fled. Most of the refugees fled to the neighboring countries. In 2020, 4.6 million of the 5.6 million refugees were in Turkey, 910 000 in Lebanon, and 655 000 in Jordan. Over 90 percent of these refugees live in urban settings and not in refugee camps (UNHCR 2020b).

The Syrian refugee crisis is an example of how humanitarian actions have changed, because of its scope: it has been lasting for almost ten years; because of its scale: it has led to 5.6 million refugees; and because of its complexity: it involves many actors and alliances at different levels and several lines of conflict (FN-Sambandet 2020; Leraand 2019).

1.4.4 THE CASE: THE ONE COMMON CARD SYSTEM

One of the most important parts of the humanitarian response in Lebanon, like in any humanitarian response, is the provision of food and basic assistance to the affected people. How food and basic assistance is provided to Syrian refugees in Lebanon has changed substantially since the beginning of the humanitarian crisis. The development of the One Common Card system is an example of an innovation to meet the complex needs of a prolonged crisis, as explained above.

WFP has been the main provider of food assistance to the Syrian refugees in Lebanon since the beginning of the crisis, initially by in-kind assistance. The innovation which is the focus for this study is how WFP developed an electronic system (e-card system) for distribution of food assistance, and how they later managed to combine forces with other UN agencies and NGOs and develop the One Common Card System, based on their own e-card system. The One Common Card system, sometimes referred to as the Lebanon One Unified Inter-Organizational System for E-card (LOUISE), lets WFP, UNHCR, and UNICEF transfer separate amounts to the refugees on one common e-card. Using this system, the refugees benefit from various humanitarian programs through a single medium. In other words, the card is cash-based and electronic.

The e-card itself, as shown in Figure 1-2, is a re-usable and re-loadable plastic prepaid card with a magnetic strip (like an ordinary bank card).

The efficiency gains of the e-card system led to unprecedented reductions in costs. For example, thanks to the common system, the operating costs in some areas of Lebanon have been halved or brought close to zero. Before the introduction of the common card, eligible

Figure 1-2 The One Common Card

refugees had to use several different cards and report to various distribution points to receive assistance (Overseas Development Institute 2017).

The reason I stated earlier in the introduction that the system is a successful example of humanitarian innovation, at least on some parameters, is that this unified large-scale electronic system for humanitarian assistance was the first-of-its-kind (UNHCR 2017c). Hence, when it comes to efficiency and effectiveness issues the system can be said to be successful. However, humanitarian innovations are not only evaluated in terms of efficiency and effectiveness (Betts and Bloom 2014; Obrecht and Warner 2016; Ramalingam et al. 2015) Successfulness in humanitarian action is to a large degree measured by an improved situation for the beneficiaries, in this case, the refugees. This study, however, focuses on how humanitarian assistance in Lebanon became more efficient and effective as a result of the innovation and not the impact the system has had on the well-being of the refugees.

The efficiency and effectiveness of the One Common Card system are still present today. Lebanon has experienced a challenging past seven months, with uprisings against the regime since October 2019 (Patience 2019) as well as being hit hard by the Covid-19 epidemic (BBC 2020). Nevertheless, the One Common Card system has been robust even in this time of crisis (Donor Cash Forum 2020). Pioneering innovations must be able to withstand "bad weather" and the One Common Card system is an example of that.

For clarification, in the rest this thesis, the e-card system will refer to the system that was in place before the agencies came together on one card (until 2016), while the One Common Card system or LOUISE, refers to the system whereby WFP, UNHCR, UNICEF, and LCC coordinated their aid by eventually using a single card (in 2016).

10

1.5 OUTLINE OF THESIS

This introductory chapter, *Chapter 1*, has presented the research topics, research questions, the goal of the study, the main findings, and relevant background information.

In *Chapter 2,* the theoretical and conceptual framework for this study will be presented and discussed. The chapter is structured like a funnel: starting with perspectives on the innovation processes in general and moving on to more specific theories and concepts on social and humanitarian innovation processes.

Chapter 3 provides a presentation and discussion of the methodological approach and choices made in this thesis. The chapter concludes by discussing which measures I have taken in order to ensure the trustworthiness of the research.

The empirical findings and analyses are divided into two chapters: *Chapter 4* and *Chapter 5*. Chapter 4 analyzes *which* contextual and institutional conditions, and actors and networks influenced and shaped the innovation process of the One Common Card system. Chapter 5 analyses the innovation process and *how* the contextual and institutional conditions, actors and networks, social problem, and novel solution, shaped and influenced the process over time.

Chapter 6 provides a discussion of the specific research questions and ends with a discussion of the theoretical implications of the study.

In *Chapter 7,* the main findings from the study are summarized. The following section provides brief implications for policy practice. The chapter ends with a discussion of the limitations of the study and suggestions for further research.

2 THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter presents the theoretical and conceptual framework for the subsequent analysis of the empirical data. The chosen theoretical and conceptual framework is structured like a funnel (see Figure 2-1). The top of the funnel represents a general theoretical point of departure for studying innovation, namely to study innovation as a process (Van de Ven et al. 1999). The second part of the funnel represents the innovation journey model, which is a classic and influential model for studying innovation processes, developed by the Minnesota Research Program (MIRP) that explains how innovation processes, in general, are initiated, developed and implemented over time (Van de Ven et al. 1999). The third and fourth part of the funnel represents more specific theoretical and conceptual frameworks, more narrowly related to the case studied: social innovation and humanitarian innovation, respectively (Betts and Bloom 2014; Cajaiba Santana 2014; Elhra 2018; Lawrence, Dover, and Gallagher 2014; Mulgan 2006; Obrecht and Warner 2016). The fourth part is represented by a process model of humanitarian innovation developed by the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance (ALNAP), which is a humanitarian sector network made up of key international humanitarian organizations and experts (Obrecht and Warner 2016).

The reason for presenting the theoretical and conceptual framework of this study as a funnel is that the process of social and humanitarian innovation is not necessarily different from other innovation processes, but it adds some specificities and conditions to the innovation process. The same pattern also accounts for humanitarian innovation, which is not substantially different from social innovation, but rather a more specific form of social innovation, and therefore adds some additional conditions and aspects to the innovation process.
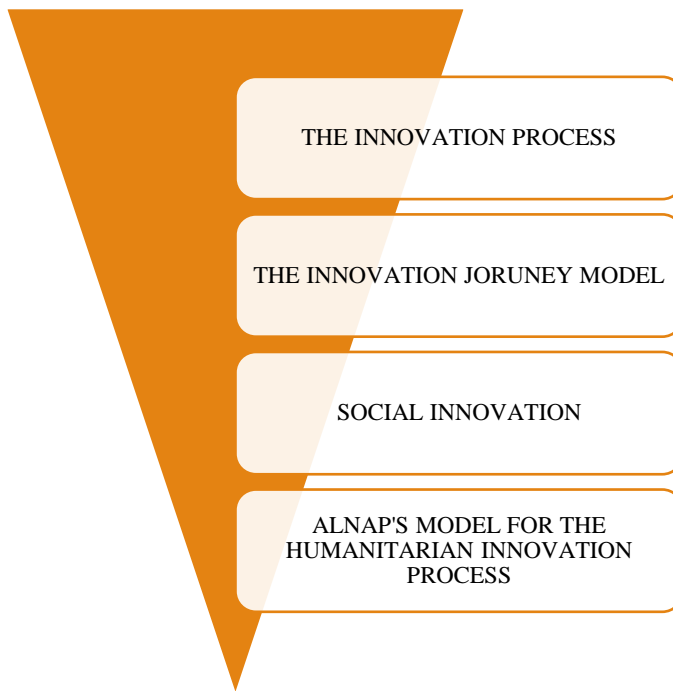
Figure 2-1 The humanitarian innovation funnel

From literature reviews of the different parts of the funnel explained above, it became apparent that the scholars within the fields of social innovation and humanitarian innovation were highly influenced by the more general literature on innovation processes (Betts and Bloom 2014; Cajaiba Santana 2014; Elhra 2018; Lawrence, Dover, and Gallagher 2014; Mulgan 2006; Obrecht and Warner 2016). Many of the concepts and definitions are similar, but as explained above, additional aspects and dimensions have been added to the more specific literature on social and humanitarian innovation. Therefore, it is both possible and logical to combine the lessons from the more *general* theoretical frameworks with the more *specific* theoretical frameworks, in the analytical framework I will use for analyzing the collected data.

At the end of this chapter, lessons from the more general theoretical framework of the MIRP´s process perspective on innovation, in combination with the more specific perspectives on social and humanitarian innovation, will form the basis of the analytical framework for this study.

2.1 CHALLENGES CONCERNING THE CHOICE OF THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

It is challenging to place the selected case in the innovation management literature because it in some ways falls between two chairs in the literature. First of all, it can be argued that the case studied is a case of management of innovation in the *public* sector, because the UN system is inter-governmental, funded by its member states, and must act in accordance with political

decisions. Most theories on innovation management in the public sector, however, study innovation at the *national* level. UN organizations, on the other hand, are not national, but "supranational". Therefore, I will argue that most theories and concepts from the management of innovation literature in the *public* sector are not automatically suitable for explaining and analyzing an innovation process in a UN organization. Secondly, it can be argued that the case is a case of *social* and *humanitarian* innovation. But, theories on social and humanitarian innovation, are often focusing on social and humanitarian innovation in the public sector (at a national level), in NGOs, or in private enterprises, all of which are fundamentally different from a supranational public organization (Betts and Bloom 2014; Elhra 2018; Obrecht and Warner 2016; Ramalingam et al. 2015). Still, in the social and humanitarian innovation literature, there are more concepts and theories explaining innovation in the development assistance sector and the humanitarian assistance sector. Therefore, I will argue that it is more suitable to use the concepts from the social and humanitarian innovation literature, rather than the public sector innovation literature.

2.2   THE INNOVATION PROCESS

Before moving into MIRP´s innovation process framework, I will explain what we mean by looking at innovation as *a process.* I will also explain how a process perspective of innovation distinguishes itself from earlier ways of studying innovation.

Within the field of innovation studies today, it is common to see innovation as the *process* of turning ideas into reality (Bessant and Tidd 2013; Garud, Tuertscher, and Van de Ven 2013; Pavitt 2006; Van de Ven et al. 1999; Van de Ven 2017). This common understanding is based on the idea that there is a distinction between *invention* and *innovation* (Fagerberg 2003a). While invention is the first incident of a new idea, innovation is the *process* of developing this idea into practical use (Fagerberg 2003a). This understanding also indicates that the invention itself does not have any real monetary value; the real value is not realized before the invention has been adapted into the market or the society. Therefore, many researchers of innovation management seek to establish a better understanding of why some inventions, over time, are transformed into products, system processes, and/or services with societal and economic impact, while others are not. In other words, rather than studying innovation as an *outcome*, the researchers attempt to study the *process* from ideas to implementation, for example by studying how this process evolves, and important drivers and constraints influencing the process. Researchers that study the innovation processes argue that it is more accurate to be able to

14

understand outcomes, by studying innovation as a complex, societal process (Garud, Tuertscher, and Van de Ven 2013; Pavitt 2006; Van de Ven 2017).

Studying innovation as a process is not a novel idea, but since the innovation processes differ in many respects, for example, according to the sector, field, type of innovation, historical period and the country concerned, there is no widely accepted theory on exactly what an innovation process looks like. Still, within the field of innovation management, researchers tend to agree that the innovation processes usually follow three overlapping subprocesses: the production of knowledge; the transformation of knowledge into products, systems, and processes; and the continuous matching of the artifacts to market needs and demands (Pavitt 2006). An innovation process model for studying innovation is, therefore, an evolutionary model. "Evolutionary perspectives on innovation seek to explain at different levels of analysis dynamic time paths, or how technologies, organizations, and practices change over time in ways that are not deterministic" (García 1998).

The understanding of what an innovation process is and how to study it has changed over time. Earlier process models, from the 1960s and early 1970s, saw innovation as a linear model of activities. In the linear model, the innovation process begins with basic research, which is transformed into applied research, and in turn, is adapted or diffused into the marketplace (Godin 2016; Rothwell 1992). In the literature, it is common to distinguish between two linear models. The first linear model, which is often referred to as a first-generation innovation process, emphasizes R&D activities and how new technology "pushes" innovation. The second linear model, which is often referred to as a second-generation innovation process, emphasizes marketing and that markets are directing innovation R&D. Following the two linear models as presented above, what is referred to as the third-generation innovation process appeared. This model, named the coupling model, recognizes the need for both technical capability and the needs of the market when doing innovation in a firm. Still, the model is sequential and there is little functional integration. One of the most famous coupling models is the stage-gate model – a model dividing innovation into stages with assigned "gates", that act as decision points in the innovation process (Rothwell 1992).

In addition to linearity, the earlier process models did also stress the important role of *individuals*, rather than *organizations*, in the innovation process. For example, the earlier models developed by the innovation analysis pioneer Joseph Schumpeter had an individualistic perspective focused on the determination and the character of the understanding of individuals

(Fagerberg 2003b). In his earliest models, Schumpeter defined innovation as "acts of will" rather than "acts of intellect" (Schumpeter 1934, 46:78).

Due to this perception, most of the earlier studies of innovation were personal memories and anecdotes of scientists, managers, or inventors, and there was an absence of systematic analysis and comparisons between cases (Pavitt 2006). Of course, this view reflected the evidence that was available to Schumpeter at the beginning of the twentieth century and even though the way in which researchers look at innovation processes has changed dramatically, Schumpeter and earlier scholars of innovation studies created an important fundament for studying innovation.

Contrary to the linear and individualistic models presented above, most of the recent work on innovation processes attempt to use a more complex model for studying innovation. Still, it is important to notice that even the more complex process models do not try to give a perfect description of how the process of innovation works; it is rather a way of structuring and framing how we think about the process. In the same way as a "map is not the same as the territory it represents", a process model of innovation is not a perfect description of how and why innovation unfolds (Bessant and Tidd 2013, 64).

In the more recent innovation process models, especially three characteristics are highlighted. Firstly, that innovation processes are uncertain. This uncertainty makes the process difficult, and it may even be impossible to predict the cost and performance of an innovation (Garud, Tuertscher, and Van de Ven 2013). Secondly, the innovation processes involve the explorations and exploitation of opportunities for new or improved artifacts, based on technical practice or change of demand in the market, or a combination of those two. Innovation can, therefore, be said to be a matching process (Mowery & Rosenberg, 1979; Pavitt, 2006). Thirdly, the innovation process is considered to be inherently complex, because many variables interact, and the outcome of their interplay cannot be predicted or controlled. Garud et al. (2013) explain how the complexities associated with innovation processes arise because innovation processes are: "(a) co-evolutionary, as they simultaneously implicate multiple levels of analyses; (b) relational, as they involve a diverse set of social actors and material elements; (c) inter-temporal, as temporal events and sequences are experienced in multiple ways; and (d) cultural, as they unfold within contextual settings" (Garud, Tuertscher, and Van de Ven 2013, 776).

Because of the uncertainties and complexities associated with innovation processes, it is easy to understand that innovation processes are hard to control and even harder to manage. This heterogeneity among innovations also means that there is a lack of one simple "best practice" innovation model for firms or managers to follow. But the lack of best practices does not mean

16

that an innovation strategy does not matter, nor that good management cannot make a difference to a firm, an organization, or a public agency's productivity, market share, or profitability. One way in which firms or organizations can be better equipped for innovation processes to come, is for them to understand more about how and why innovation unfolds. Below, one of the most influential frameworks on how an innovation process emerges, develops, and becomes implemented, will be presented.

2.3   THE INNOVATION JOURNEY MODEL

The process of developing the One Common Card system is complex. It implicates multiple levels of analyses; it involves a diverse set of social actors and material elements; it is inter-temporal, and it is influenced by the contextual settings (Garud, Tuertscher, and Van de Ven 2013). Consequently, there is a need for an analytical framework that allows for the inclusion of all these complexities, in order to understand and explain how the One Common Card system ended up being as it is today. In an influential research program, of case-study based research looking at widely different innovation types, Andrew Van de Ven and colleagues of the Minnesota Innovation Research Program (MIRP), tried to explore the complex ways in which innovation evolves (Bessant and Tidd 2013). The reason for the creation of this program was the existence of a knowledge gap concerning how innovations emerge, develop, and become implemented or terminate over time. Furthermore, the MIRP scholars argued that few process models of innovation examined how an innovation process follows a sequence of events. Through the case-study research, the researchers developed a framework based on two underlying assumptions: firstly, that even though you cannot control an innovation process, you can learn to maneuver it, and secondly, that even though innovation processes rarely are equal, they do tend to follow similar patterns (Van de Ven et al. 1999; Van de Ven 2017). Based on these two assumptions the Minnesota group argued that by learning how to manage and maneuver the innovation process, one cannot ensure success, but one can influence the odds for success (Van de Ven et al. 1999).

The MIRP perspective on the innovation process was a reaction to earlier process models. First of all, it was developed in contrast to the linear and individualistic models mentioned in the previous section. As the authors of the Minnesota studies argue in "Research on the Management of Innovation": the earlier process models of innovation are "normative and lack empirical research to substantiate their validity" and these models, for example, the stage-gate model, "propose a simple unitary progression of phases or stages of development over time" (Van de Ven et al. 1999, 108). Further, they argued that earlier innovation process research was

17

merely about finding the antecedents and consequences of innovation and explaining the links between the different stages (Van de Ven et al. 1999). By doing this, the MIRP researchers argued, earlier studies are reducing complex innovation processes to simple linear stages and may, therefore, be inadequate. The lack of empirical findings did also lead to inadequacy, according to the MIRP scholars (Van de Ven et al. 1999).

Based on the inadequacy of earlier studies, MIRP wished to create a "road map" of how the innovation process typically unfolds, with the idea that such a map is a useful first step in maneuvering what they called "the innovation journey". The assumption was that by understanding how the innovation process usually unfolds, it is easier to undertake that journey in the future (Van de Ven et al. 1999). To create this "road map" the MIRP researchers studied administrative innovations, technological innovations, innovation within and across established firms, and innovations within entrepreneurial start-ups to collect empirical evidence on which sequence of events happens over time in innovation processes and what the drivers of change in these processes are (Garud, Tuertscher, and Van de Ven 2013).
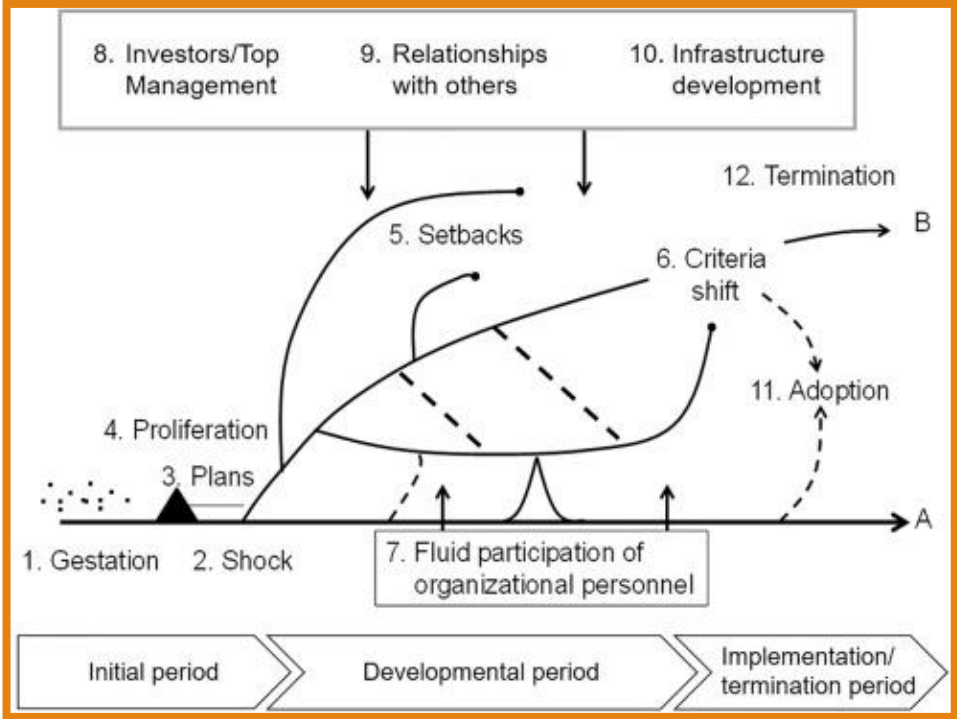
Figure 2-2 The innovation journey model

The innovation journey model, as illustrated in Figure 2-1, based on the findings from the case studies, suggests that the innovation process is a non-linear cycle of divergent and convergent activities. Innovations are unique, but there still seem to be patterns of communality linked to initiation, development, and implementation periods (Garud, Tuertscher, and Van de Ven 2013). The divergent activities are the expenditure of resources within the firm or organization,

18

including people, money, time, and ideas, beyond the normal business activities (Van de Ven et al. 1999). The convergent activities are the exogenous or endogenous constraints. The exogenous constraints are for example institutional rules, and endogenous constraints are for example lack of resources in the firm or organization.

As explained in the previous section, it is common to study innovation as a process with underlying sub-processes: the production of knowledge; the transformation of knowledge into artifacts; and the continuous matching of the artifacts to market needs and demands. The innovation journey model characterizes these sub-processes as an initial period; a developmental period; and an implementation or termination period. Furthermore, the three sub-processes have underlying process patterns as shown in Figure 2-2.

2.3.1 THE INITIAL PERIOD

The initial period of the innovation process, according to the model, consists of three process patterns: *gestation*, *shock,* and *plan*. The observations show that innovation does not happen from one day to another, by a single incident or by a single individual, but goes through a gestation period of several years with several events occurring that set the stage for the start of the innovation process. When the gestation period has been going on for some time, "shocks" from sources either external or internal to the organization trigger the initiations of more concentrated efforts towards the innovation. The MIRP scholars argue that this observation is consistent with the idea that opportunities, necessity, or dissatisfaction are important preconditions for challenging "business as usual" in organizations (Van de Ven et al. 1999). When the organization is starting the more concentrated efforts towards the innovation, plans are developed and formulated, especially plans directed to those in the organization that is responsible for resources in order to obtain the needed resources to announce the beginning of the innovation development. At this early stage of the process, the plans are mostly about gaining attention and support, for example from investors, and not so much a realistic picture of how the development of the innovation will evolve.

2.3.2 THE DEVELOPMENTAL PERIOD

Following the initial period, the developmental period of the innovation process, according to the model, consists of five process patterns: *proliferation, setbacks, shifting and fluid participation, different stakeholders,* and *the development of an industry infrastructure*. In this period, the innovative ideas proliferate into many ideas and activities. As explained above, the

19

activities are both convergent and divergent and are happening in parallel. Part of the job is linking the relevant parallel cycles of activities (Van de Ven et al. 1999). In addition to the proliferation of ideas, the developmental period is characterized by setbacks. Even though setbacks may hamper the speed of the development of innovations, the model underlines that when managing the developmental period of the innovation process, it is more important to understand the learning process of setbacks and surprises, than trying to remove the setbacks and surprises (Van de Ven et al. 1999). Furthermore, conscious management of setbacks involves reflection on how the setbacks may influence the desired result, the ability to distinguish real setbacks from "noise" and the perception that it is acceptable to admit mistakes (Van de Ven et al. 1999).

The developmental period is also characterized by criteria shifts, for example by major changes internally, within the organization, or externally, in the organization's environment. Usually, the innovation is not an addition to former ways of activities, but is rather replacing, or becoming integrated with, former ways of doing things. In other words, while during the developmental period several divergent and parallel activities are happening, after a while, these activities are converted and replace or adjust existing organizational arrangements (Van de Ven et al. 1999).

Another process pattern during the developmental period is concerned with how "innovation personnel participate in highly fluid ways" (Van de Ven et al. 1999, 25). The study shows, that in most cases, the innovation personnel usually have high turnover rates and are involved only part-time. Concerning the investors and top management, they are a more consistent part of the developmental period, but they have different roles and interest; while the investors are mostly concerned with profit and economic growth, the top management tends to be the driving force for organizational growth and initiation of new activities. Together they "serve as checks and balances on one another". The findings also underline that no problems or setbacks during the developmental period were resolved without the involvement of investors or top management (Van de Ven et al. 1999)

The developmental period also consists of creating relationships with other organizations. These relationships can be a bit problematic, in that based on which "others" the organization creates a relationship (Van de Ven, 1999). In addition to creating relationships with others for innovation activity purposes, the organization also usually develops loose relations with entities such as competing agencies, trade unions, and government agencies to develop an infrastructure for the continued development of the innovation (Van de Ven et al. 1999).

20

2.3.3 THE IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD

Following the developmental period, the implementation period of the innovation process, according to the model, consists of either adoption or failure. It is important to notice that implementation starts already in the developmental period when the organization is replacing or integrating new activities with old ones, as described above. While the developmental period is characterized by divergent and convergent activities, the activities are stabilized in the implementation period. Therefore, when the innovation has become implemented, or when resources have run out, the innovation process, according to the model, ends (Van de Ven et al. 1999).

Altogether, the three sub-processes make up what the researchers refer to as "the innovation journey". The researchers stress that even though the sub-processes of the innovation process with underlying process patterns did not occur in all the innovation cases they observed "overwhelming support was evident for these process patterns in majority of the cases" (Van de Ven et al. 1999, 66). Therefore, the model provides a good picture of how innovation processes in general typically unfold. Still, the model is a very generic "one size fits all" model. Therefore, there is a need to supplement understandings from this generic model with more specific models relevant to the case studied in this thesis.

A limitation of the innovation journey model is that it ends the innovation process prior to implementation. Still, I find the model useful, because the scope of this study is to look at the innovation process leading up to the implementation of the One Common Card.

2.4   SOCIAL INNOVATION

The previous section gave the reader an understanding of studying innovation in general from the MIRP process perspective and the complexities associated with the innovation process. The following section discusses innovation in more specific contexts relevant to the case studied. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the process of social and humanitarian innovation is not necessarily different from the process model presented above, but these kinds of processes add some additional aspects to the different stages of the innovation process. As social innovations are similar to other types of innovation, many of the characteristics of organizing and managing social innovation are similar to the characteristics found in the general process perspective literature. In the section below, I will focus on the characteristics of social innovation that are adding additional aspects to the innovation process.

21

Social innovation can broadly be defined as "the development and implementation of new ideas (products, services, and models) to meet social needs" (Mulgan 2006, 9). In the last couple of years, there has been an increased interest in managing social innovation from the private, public, and not-for-profit sectors. There has also been increased interest within think tanks, foundations, and academia in writing about social innovation. Still, academic literature on social innovation remains limited and underdeveloped, and there are few widely shared concepts within the field (Cajaiba Santana 2014; Lawrence, Dover, and Gallagher 2014). Despite the lack of widely shared concepts, there is some consistency within the field regarding what social innovation is and which factors contribute to social innovation.

The main characteristics of social innovation are the focus on a social problem and on finding novel solutions to that problem (Lawrence, Dover, and Gallagher 2014; Lettice and Parekh 2010; Mulgan 2006; Phills, Deiglmeier, and Miller 2008) In that way, it distinguishes itself from pure business innovation in that the end of business innovation is increased profit, while the end of social innovation is to contribute positively to a social problem. Social innovation can also contribute to increased profit for the private, public, or not-for-profit organizations involved, but increased profit is not the end in itself (Lawrence, Dover, and Gallagher 2014; Pol and Ville 2009). The novel solution to the social problem can take many forms, including process, product, technology, system, as well as a broader response to the problem, such as legislation or a movement (Lawrence, Dover, and Gallagher 2014), but the novel solutions should be more effective, efficient, sustainable, or just than existing solutions (Phills, Deiglmeier, and Miller 2008).

Secondly, social innovation usually evolves through collaboration between different actors. The reasons for this are first, because it is more practical, suggesting that there are limited resources, money-wise and expertise-wise. Therefore, it is better to work across sectors to solve social problems. Secondly, because of the creativity that emerges through cross-sector collaboration. But collaboration does not only mean innovating together, it can also mean being part of a network of innovators to share ideas, failures, and experiences. These networks can be both informal and formal (Lettice and Parekh 2010).

Thirdly, social innovation is usually highly influenced by cultural and historical context, and social systems with underlying institutions (Cajaiba Santana 2014; Lawrence, Dover, and Gallagher 2014; Westley and McGowan 2017). This also means that social innovation is more likely to happen when the right contextual and institutional conditions are present (Mulgan 2006).

Since social innovations usually are highly influenced by context and institutions, although they may be quite incremental, many require fundamental and systemic change (Lawrence, Dover, and Gallagher 2014; Lettice and Parekh 2010).

2.5 THE HUMANITARIAN INNOVATION PROCESS

Social innovation can take many forms and it can unfold within many different types of organizations and sectors. While social innovation can be concerned with any type of social problems, humanitarian innovation is about solving social problems within humanitarian action. In other words, humanitarian innovation is a form of social innovation.

If the field of social innovation is understudied, the field of humanitarian innovation is even more so. Until recently, there has not been a strong focus on the concept of innovation in humanitarian actions neither in practice nor in the literature. While innovation has always been a part of humanitarian action, the system does not consistently invest in innovation; humanitarian agencies do not actively manage innovation processes, and the agencies often struggle to take good ideas to scale. Because of this, there are few examples of landmark innovations that have been adopted in the humanitarian system (Obrecht and Warner 2016; Ramalingam et al. 2015)

Still, during the last years, there has been an increase both in practice and research. The research that has been conducted has mainly occurred within the humanitarian sector itself and an increasing number of humanitarian agencies have begun to focus on ideas and principles of innovation in solving humanitarian problems. The main reason for this, as already mentioned in the introduction, is due to how the humanitarian system has changed over the last decades: the crises are getting more complex; there is an increased range of humanitarian needs, and there is a larger need for resources. Because of the changing nature of the humanitarian system, it has become increasingly important to think creatively about how to solve complex problems with limited resources at hand. Innovation has shown to be one of the useful tools in the toolbox to make humanitarian assistance more robust, effective, efficient, and flexible to the changing paradigm (Betts and Bloom 2014; Elhra 2018; Obrecht and Warner 2016; Ramalingam et al. 2015).

For the humanitarian actors and agencies to be able to actively use innovation as a tool to make the humanitarian action more efficient and effective, the innovators need to know more about how best to manage innovation activities. Even though there is limited evidence in the literature on how best to manage humanitarian innovation due to the relative newness of the field as

mentioned above, some characteristics and important preconditions are highlighted across the literature.

A milestone in the research on humanitarian innovation was the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance (ALNAP) study from 2009, outlining the role of innovation across the humanitarian sector. ALNAP has continued to be one of the most important actors within the research on humanitarian innovation. In their latest publication *More than just luck: Innovation in humanitarian action* (2016), the authors define humanitarian innovations as "an iterative process that identifies, adjusts and diffuses ideas for improving humanitarian action" (Obrecht and Warner 2016, 17). As one can see, the definition focuses on the non-linear *process* of innovation, relating it to concepts on innovation processes in general and the innovation journey model more specifically (Garud, Tuertscher, and Van de Ven 2013; Pavitt 2006; Van de Ven et al. 1999).

Further, as with social innovation, the goal is not increased profit, but rather contributing to addressing a social problem – in this case, improved humanitarian action. As the title of the ALNAP report indicates, and in coherence with the innovation journey model presented in an earlier section, innovation in humanitarian actions is "more than just luck" – there are choices and strategies humanitarian actors and agencies can adopt in order to engage successfully in innovation processes.

ALNAP, in collaboration with Elhra's Humanitarian Innovation Fund, (HIF), undertook 15 case studies of humanitarian innovation and identified criteria for what successful humanitarian innovation looks like, in addition to what a humanitarian innovation process looks like. Elhra is a global charity focusing on humanitarian research and innovation (Elhra n.d.) The humanitarian innovation process, according to the ALNAP study, follows the similar sub-processes as in general process models, but they have divided them into five, and not three, parts: recognition, ideation, development, implementation, and diffusion. ALNAP's model presents and explains how the success criteria work within each sub-process. The success criteria are:

Collaborating with others	How an innovating team collaborates with other actors to innovate
Organizing an innovation process	How an innovation manager or innovating team plans the innovation process and manages it in a timely manner
Generating and integrating evidence	The generation of information that can be used to support the various parts of an innovation process
Engaging with the end-users and gatekeepers	How innovating teams relate to the end-users and gatekeepers relevant to their innovation, both to elicit input for the innovation and to influence to encourage uptake
Resourcing an innovation	How an innovation process is financially supported
Managing risk and accountability	How an innovating team thinks about the risks posed to the innovation's success as well as those posed by the innovation to other stakeholders
Creating a culture for innovation	The background norms and practices within an organization that support the skills and activities needed for successful innovation

Table 3 ALNAP's seven success factors for humanitarian innovation (Obrecht & Warner, 2016).

As one can see, ALNAP's criteria for successful humanitarian innovation are quite generic and could have been used to explain innovation success in another setting as well. Still, by combining these seven success criteria with the humanitarian innovation process it is clearer why these success factors are important for humanitarian action, and how they relate to a humanitarian context.

According to the ALNAP study, the seven criteria presented above are present in all stages of the innovation process and are critical to the success of the innovation. Still, they influence innovation in different ways during the process. As with the innovation journey model, the ALNAP study stresses that the model is not linear and that the sub-processes might overlap (Obrecht and Warner 2016).

Recognition – "What is the problem or opportunity for improving humanitarian action?"

The recognition stage is about identifying a humanitarian problem or opportunity, and generating initial ideas and knowledge on how to improve humanitarian action. The innovation can be either problem-driven or opportunity-driven. This stage involves "recognition activities" such as discussions, conferences, strategic reviews, or horizon scanning exercises. It also involves recognizing the problems or solutions through different "channels" such as field staff, affected people, or evaluations. The challenges the organization is faced with during this stage involves "finding momentum" on when to address a humanitarian problem or opportunity, and due to that, the humanitarian agencies often do not have incentives or defined pathways on how to address challenges (Obrecht and Warner 2016).

In the recognition stage, the success criteria involve i) identifying who has expertise in the problem or solution, either internally or externally to the organization, ii) identifying sources of information, iii) conduct research in order to understand more about the identified problem, iii) mapping the end-users and primary beneficiaries (Obrecht and Warner 2016).

Ideation – "What is the potential improvement for humanitarian action?"

ALNAP defines this stage as the most creative part of the process, because during this stage, it is all about generating new ideas. The generation of ideas can be done through including experts, innovators, people familiar with the humanitarian context, and potential beneficiaries. At this stage, it is important to create a safe space for ideation (Obrecht and Warner 2016).

In the ideation stage, the success criteria involve i) creating formal relationships with people with expertise in the topic, context or technology, ii) starting efforts to focus and formalize the ideas, iii) generating evidence based on present or former humanitarian action, iv) identifying the needs of the end-users and primary beneficiaries and gatekeepers. This can include senior leadership and donors (Obrecht and Warner 2016).

Development – "How can it work?"

This stage of the process involves bringing innovation into life. The development of the idea often happens throughout the whole process. An important part of this stage is the combination of having good structures, in addition, to allow for flexibility. A challenge during the development period, concerning the nature of humanitarian action, is that due to the short timeline of humanitarian actions, the organizations can move away from a good idea or initiative because there is no time. Therefore, many humanitarian innovations end at this point (Obrecht and Warner 2016).

In the development stage, the success criteria involve i) planning the next parts of the innovation process and dividing tasks, in collaboration with the actors involved, ii) getting feedback from beneficiaries or gatekeepers on the design of the innovation, iii) consider how diffusion may be possible already at this stage (Obrecht and Warner 2016).

Implementation – "Does it work"?

Implementation is the application of the innovation. This can involve prototyping and field testing. Prototyping and field testing can be challenging in a humanitarian setting because of the crisis-affected nature of the areas in which the organizations operate. When doing piloting there should be good communication between the field team and the innovating team, which might be at the headquarter level (Obrecht and Warner 2016).

In the implementation stage, the success criteria involve i) clear roles and responsibilities in order to manage the risk related to the implementation of innovations in emergency settings, ii) the innovation manager should make sure that once the prototype is ready for an emergency setting it should be established within short time iii) selecting appropriate pilot sites in order to reduce risk and unintended outcomes that can harm the affected people (Obrecht and Warner 2016).

Diffusion – "How can wider ownership for this improvement be achieved?"

This stage is about taking the ideas "to scale". Since humanitarian innovation is about improving humanitarian action, and the "selling" of the innovation is very political, it requires building partnerships with governing authorities. Furthermore, it is usually based on political interests and biases and it is therefore difficult to account for success criteria for diffusion. Still, some successful trends were observed in the case study research, especially that the innovators should keep the possibility for diffusion in mind during the whole innovation process.

The ALNAP model goes on by presenting 10 different strategies for diffusion of humanitarian innovation, but since this thesis is not about the diffusion of innovation, but rather about understanding the process *ahead* of diffusion, I will not elaborate on these diffusion strategies.
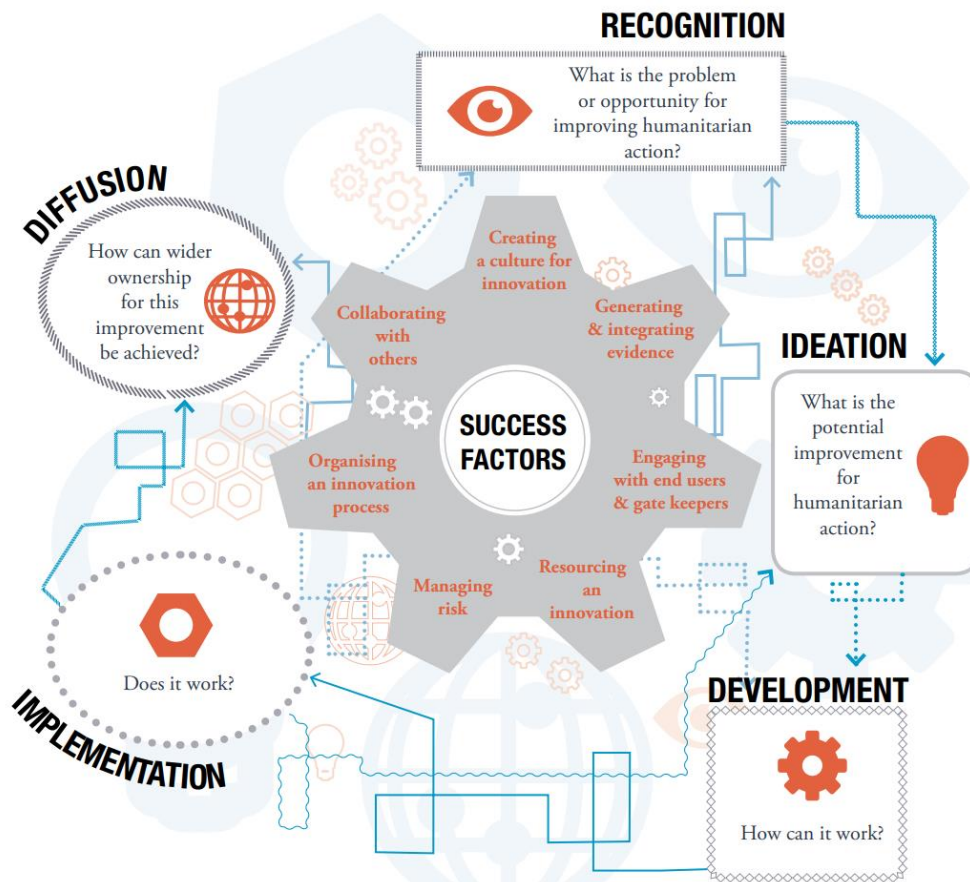
Figure 2-3 ALNAP's humanitarian innovation process (Obrecht and Warner 2016).

It is clear that the ALNAP model for humanitarian innovation has many similarities with the innovation journey model, and process models of innovation in general. Many of the arguments are similar, for example concerning the objectives of the different stages, or periods, of the innovation process, the importance of collaboration, and how the organization should have structures for innovation, but still be flexible. This highlights the point that the humanitarian innovation process is not necessarily different from other types of innovation, but that it adds some extra dimensions or conditions to the process.

2.6 ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

The two models alone can explain many aspects of the innovation process of the One Common Card system, but do not cover all the aspects of the process that I examine. This is why it is important to combine the two. The innovation journey model is a good analytical tool for analyzing innovation processes in general, especially how the process is influenced by

conditions internal and external to the organization but does not address the specific conditions of a *humanitarian* innovation process. The ALNAP model, on the other hand, focuses specifically on the process of facilitating the development of innovation. As such, it does not pay attention to how external conditions are shaping and influencing the innovation process. Since I am interested in understanding a humanitarian innovation process including how the process is influenced by contextual and institutional conditions, it is useful to combine the innovation journey approach with the ALNAP approach.

By combining these models, it is possible to examine how the humanitarian innovation process begins with a) a social problem pushing for a b) novel solution to that problem. The process is c) shaped and influenced by actors and networks - involving both the organizations' innovation capacity and the collaborations between actors. The process is also d) shaped and influenced by institutional and contextual conditions. All the various factors may change over time and may play different roles during the innovation process.

Table 4 illustrates how I will investigate the preconditions, drivers and constraints for the One Common Card system, by analyzing how the social problem, the novel solution to that problem, institutional and contextual conditions and the actors involved, influenced how the system emerged and developed over time.

	Initial period 2011-2013	Developmental period 2013-2016	Implementation period 2016
SOCIAL PROBLEM			
NOVEL SOLUTION			
INSTITUTIONAL AND CONTEXTUAL CONDITIONS			
ACTORS AND NETWORKS			
Time →			

Table 4 Analytical framework: A process model on humanitarian innovation

The analytical framework is based on the specific research questions and will be used in order to answer them. The first two cells on the vertical axis of the analytical framework are related

to RQ1*: How did the humanitarian crisis in Syria trigger the search for novel solutions in the distribution of aid to refugees in Lebanon?*

The third cell on the vertical axis is related to RQ 2: *How did institutional and contextual conditions influence the emergence and development of the One Common Card system?*

The fourth cell of the vertical axis is related to *RQ 3: Which actors were dominant in the process and how did they influence the process?*

Combining the four dimensions on the vertical axes, with the time-specific cells on the horizontal axis, the analytical framework as such will be useful in order to answer the overall research question: *How did the One Common Card system for Syrian refugees in Lebanon emerge and develop over time?*

In the empirical findings and analysis chapters, the analytical framework will be used in order to structure the analysis. The findings will be plotted into the table along the way. Consequently, at the end of the empirical findings and analysis chapters, the reader will have an understanding of the social problem, the novel solution, the institutional and contextual conditions, and the actors and networks that were influencing and shaping the innovation process over time.

3 METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH APPROACH

The following chapter describes the research process as well as the measures taken in order to ensure rigor. The research process, like the innovation process, is not linear but follows some of the same patterns.

3.1 THEMATIZING AND DESIGNING

The first step of a research process usually involves finding the theme or topic of interest, asking questions, selecting the case, and designing the research. Carefully devised research design is important to ensure rigor. Rigour enhances the trustworthiness of the research. The research design depends on the questions asked, as well as the focus of analysis (Bradshaw and Stratford 2005).

3.1.1 ASKING QUESTIONS

The questions we as researchers and master's students are asking ourselves largely depend on the academic disciplines we are part of, because all disciplines have defined theories and research methods that influence the research. The interpretative community we are part of, be it disciplinary or interdisciplinary, influences our choice of topic and approach (Bradshaw and Stratford 2005). The interdisciplinary field of technology and innovation studies have sets of theories and methods that are common within this research community. Innovation management is a branch of innovation studies that, among other things, is interested in understanding more about the process of innovation management: how and why innovations are developed, implemented, and diffused (Bessant and Tidd 2013). Being part of such an innovation research community has, therefore, made me both more interested in, and more apt to, analyze processes of innovation management. In addition, my academic background and work experience before starting the master's program at the Center for Technology, Innovation, and Knowledge (TIK) have influenced my thematic interests. Through work, I have been traveling to several refugee camps and seen interesting cases of how technology and innovation are used in order to solve complex humanitarian challenges. Furthermore, my bachelor's degree in political science has given me an understanding of, and interest in, humanitarian aid policy and politics. In combination, being part of an innovation research community and having worked with humanitarian issues, I ended up wanting to contribute to the understanding of humanitarian innovation.

In the same way as our interpretative community influences the questions we ask, the questions we ask influence the research design. This is because some methods are more suitable for answering certain questions than other methods. It largely depends on what we intend to do with the collected data (Bradshaw and Stratford 2005). Since I was interested in finding out more about *how* humanitarian innovations are initiated, developed, and implemented, it was most suitable to use a qualitative research design. Qualitative research aims at finding reasons for something, in comparison with quantitative and extensive research, which tries to identify patterns and regularities (Bradshaw and Stratford 2005).

3.1.2   SELECTING THE CASE

The next step of my research process was to find a case that was suitable in contributing to the understanding of how innovation in the humanitarian system occurs. Therefore, it was my theoretical interest in humanitarian innovation as a research field that drove the selection of the case, and not the case itself being the driver for the research. Furthermore, while doing initial research on the topic of humanitarian innovation, I realized that one of the main missing links within the field, was the lack of success stories on how innovation in the humanitarian system emerge, are developed and become implemented, because most of the innovations within the humanitarian system fail (Elhra 2018; Obrecht and Warner 2016).

Due to the limited research that has been conducted on humanitarian innovations, I decided early in the process that I would have to conduct fieldwork in order to have enough empirical data. When searching for a case I had three things in mind. Firstly, I was searching for (a) case(s) of (an) innovation that had already been implemented in order to contribute to the knowledge gap within the field. Secondly, since it is advisable to choose sites for fieldwork that are practical and appropriate (Kearns 2000), I searched for a case in a geographical area that was accessible and safe to travel to as a master's student on a low budget. In many humanitarian contexts, there are major security issues, I, therefore, narrowed the search down to humanitarian settings where the security situation is relatively safe. Thirdly, I searched for a case in an organization or agency where I had some sort of personal connection, in order to make it more likely to get hold of relevant informants.

The One Common Card system for Syrian refugees in Lebanon met all these criteria: 1) it is an example of a humanitarian innovation that has already been implemented; 2) Lebanon is a relatively safe country; it is not too far away, and regular flights are operating; 3) I know people

working in the relevant UN agency and I have friends and former colleagues who are living in Lebanon.

I choose a single-case study design for several reasons. First of all, the high complexity of the cases would have made it difficult to dig deep enough in several cases. Secondly, due to the immature research in the field, the research field can be regarded as "pioneering work" and it is, therefore, necessary to understand the individual cases first before being able to compare cases. Thirdly, related to the previous argument, it is difficult to find comparable cases within the field. Lastly, due to practical issues related to the collection of empirical data, it would have been costly and time-consuming to do fieldwork in more than one geographical location.

Based on the initial research in the field of humanitarian innovation and the case chosen, I formulated my research questions. Since there are few theories on what successful innovation in the humanitarian system looks like, especially including contextual and institutional conditions, and since there seemed to be no research available on how the One Common Card system was put in place, I decided that it was more appropriate to use an inductive rather than a deductive approach when doing the collection of empirical data in order to answer my research questions. An inductive approach starts with the observations, and theories or concepts are suggested towards the end of the research. Unlike a deductive approach that starts with the theories or concepts and looks for data to falsify or support these theories or concepts (Hay 2016).

An inductive approach allowed me the flexibility to adjust the areas of concern according to the information I gathered. Subsequently, the research questions were also adjusted and re-formulated based on the insights I gained through my fieldwork (Hay 2016). However, the distinction between a deductive and inductive logic is not mutually exclusive, and the categories of interest that I wanted to examine (the social problem, the novel solution, the contextual and institutional conditions, and the actor) were based on my theoretical and analytical approach.

3.1.3   SELECTING PARTICIPANTS

Selecting relevant participants for our research is an important part of qualitative research (Bradshaw and Stratford 2005). In this study, I selected participants through what Michael Patton (2002) defines as *snowball sampling*. Snowball sampling is a form of sampling whereby the researcher gets suggestions of participants from people involved in similar cases (Patton 2002). At the beginning of the research process, I had one contact in a leading position in WFP, and she introduced me to relevant people in WFP in Lebanon and at the WFP innovation unit

at the HQ in Rome. They again introduced me to relevant people at their offices and in other agencies and organizations.

Snowballing as a sampling form can be problematic in that it can cause bias in the data material, because the researcher has less power over the selection of participants. This may adversely affect the validity of the study (Patton 2002). In order to minimize the bias in the data material, I used other data sources, such as documents, to "cross-check" the interview findings.

Since WFP was the actor who has been most closely involved in the innovation process of the One Common Card system, I was most interested in getting the perceptions of the WFP staff. In order to get a fuller perspective and make sure that the information was not biased, I included some other actors who were involved in the process in the sample of participants.

I chose not to include refugees and the shopkeepers in the sample for three reasons. Firstly, because the purpose of this study was to study the innovation process and not the consequences for the refugees and shopkeepers. Secondly, because of the current situation in Lebanon during my field visit, it was not recommended to travel outside Beirut more than necessary. Thirdly, since the initiation, development, and implementation of the system happened between 2012 and 2016, I figured that it would be difficult to find refugees or shopkeepers who remembered *if* and *how* they were involved in the process.

It would have been useful to interview some of the major donors involved, especially DFID and ECHO. I made several attempts to get in touch with them in Beirut, but without success.

Another informant I did not manage to reach was UNICEF. Though it would have been interesting to get their perspective as well, I will argue that this is not fundamental for the findings, because, according to the reports I have read, they were not a crucial part of the development of the system, but joined later on in the process.

3.2 STRATEGY FOR DATA COLLECTION

In order to answer my research questions, the next step of the research process was to choose a strategy for data collection. The data has been collected through a combination of semi-structured interviews, document analysis, and observations.

Nine out of ten interviews were conducted through fieldwork at the WFP HQ in Rome and with different agencies and organizations in Beirut. The tenth interview was conducted via Skype from Oslo. As part of the fieldwork, I spent one week in Rome followed by more than four weeks in Beirut. Even though the main location for the innovation process of the One Common

Card system was Lebanon, I chose to travel to the WFP HQ in Rome because 1) WFP is the actor who has been most involved in the innovation process of the One Common Card system from 2012, 2) the WFP HQ has its own innovation unit and therefore was expected to have important insight and 3) the director of the innovation unit at the WFP HQ came from the position as country director of the WFP country office in Lebanon, where he seemingly had played an important role in the development of the system.

In addition, before the fieldwork and the main data collection, I conducted preliminary interviews and observations with relevant actors in Oslo and attended relevant seminars and workshops.

In other words, I have collected the data through *methodological triangulation*. Methodological triangulation is the use of multiple methods, in this case combining interviews, observations, and document analysis, in order to confirm or verify the results. Methodological triangulation is a common strategy for securing rigor because it can "incorporate *checking* procedures into our research" (Bradshaw and Stratford 2005). Through using multiple methods, I was able to constantly cross-check my data.

3.2.1   PRELIMINARY INTERVIEWS AND OBSERVATIONS

Since the theoretical and thematic information about the case chosen was limited, I spent some time during the initial phase of the research to meet with people working in humanitarian innovation and to attend seminars and workshops with themes related to humanitarian innovation. Preliminary interviews or observation are useful strategies to get an initial grasp of the perspectives of the participants (Bradshaw and Stratford 2005).

The preliminary interviews included interviews with Advisor for the Humanitarian Innovation Program in Innovation Norway and Global Innovation Advisor in the Norwegian Refugee Council. The seminars and workshops included *Humanitarian Innovation Day* arranged by The Humanitarian Innovation Platform (HIP), *Innovative Financing*, organized by Innovation Norway and KPMG, and *The Norad Conference 2019: Digitalization and development*, organized by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad).

3.2.2   SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

One of my main sources of empirical data was the interviews I conducted during fieldwork in Beirut and Rome. Using interviews as a data collecting method is about understanding the informants´ views and reporting these views in a systematic manner (Dunn 2006). There are

three common ways of conducting interviews: structured, unstructured and semi-structured. In my research, I chose to conduct semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews are the middle way between structured and unstructured interviews. This type of interviewing has some predefined order but still a large degree of flexibility. When conducting semi-structured interviews, the interviewer uses an interview guide with topics or fully worded questions. In structured interviews, the interviewer must follow the fully worded questions strictly, while in semi-structured interviews the interviewer is not restricted to this. Hence, the role of the interviewer is important in semi-structured interviews, to ensure that the conversations follow the theme or topics, even though you open up for the possibility to move "off script" (Dunn 2006).

I chose to interview as a data-gathering method because 1) it is a good way to fill the gap that other methods, such as document analysis and observations, are unable to do, 2) it is a suitable method for investigating behavior and motivation that is of a complex character, 3) interviewing helps to understand the diversity of opinions and 4) to check if my tentative opinions could be confirmed and verified (Dunn 2006).

3.2.2.1 DESIGNING AND CONDUCTING THE INTERVIEWS

Successful interviewing requires careful planning and preparation, yet the design of the interviews should be dynamic throughout the research process (Dunn 2006). When starting to prepare for the interviews, I prepared interview guides that were slightly different depending on the informants. All the interview guides included four main categories of questions with underlying lists of questions, keywords, and concepts. The categories were based on my research questions and the analytical framework (the social problem, the novel solution, contextual and institutional conditions, and the actors).

The interview guides switched between primary questions and secondary questions. Primary questions are questions that initiate discussion, while secondary questions encourage the informant to follow up on an issue (Dunn 2006). Further, I followed a *funnel structure* which means starting with broader questions and moving into more particular topics (Dunn 2006). This included that I touched upon the more sensitive issues in the second half of the interviews when the informants had become more comfortable with the situation. This proved to be a useful strategy in order to preserve *rapport* between me and the informants. Shortly after the interviews, I wrote down immediate reflections on the interview.

I asked the informant beforehand if I could record the interviews. Based on the consent of the informants, I ended up recording five of the interviews. Table 5 gives an overview of the conducted interviews. The time of the interviews was recorded, and durations were rounded to the nearest quarter-hour.

INFORMANT	ORGANIZATION	POSITION	DATE	LENGTH
WFP, Informant 1	WFP Headquarter	Director of Innovation	07.01.2020	45 min
WFP, Informant 2	WFP Headquarter	Program Policy Officer, Cash-Based Transfers	07.01.2020	35 min
WFP, Informant 3	WFP Headquarter	Senior Program Advisor, Cash-Based Transfers	07.01.2020	30 min
WFP, Informant 4	WFP Headquarter	Head of Global Business Innovation	07.01.2020	30 min
Donor, Informant 5	Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Ambassador to the UN-delegation in Rome	08.01.2020	45 min
WFP, Informant 6	WFP Country Office in Lebanon	Program Policy Officer E-cards	31.01.2020	1 hour
WFP, Informant 7	WFP Country Office in Lebanon	Country Director	31.01.2020	45 min
NGO, Informant 8	One of the members of LCC. The NGO prefers to stay anonymous	Manager the cash specialist	03.02.2020	1 hour
UNHCR, Informant 9	UNHCR Country Office in Lebanon	Deputy Representative (Operations)	04.02.2020	1,5 hours
UNHCR, Informant 10	UNHCR Country Office in Lebanon	LOUISE Project Manager	19.02.2020	45 min

Table 5 Overview of conducted interviews

3.2.3 DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

In addition to the semi-structured interviews, document analysis was one of my main data gathering methods. As with the selection of participants, the documents were chosen according to the four categories of interest relating to the One Common Card system (the social problem, the novel solution, the contextual and institutional conditions, and the actors). I analyzed documents that were directly related to the One Common Card and documents that were

important for the contextual understanding of the case. This included: UN reports; UN decision documents; external reviews of the pilots and the system at different stages of the innovation process; UN humanitarian strategies; and national humanitarian strategies.

3.2.4 OBSERVATIONS

In addition to the interviews and document analysis, I collected data through observation.

It can be argued that many of the interviews I conducted could have been conducted through Skype or other online platforms. Besides the obvious counterarguments that using online platforms makes the interviews more "staccato" and that you lose important facial expressions and body language, there is also an important counterargument concerning the possible scope of the data collection. Through my fieldwork in Rome and Beirut, I was, in addition to the interviews, able to take part in informal conversations and gatherings where "off-the-record" information was shared. In addition, being physically present where the innovation process happened made it easier to get a grasp on how the process had unfolded. This contextual understanding is a form of observation. The goal in contextual observation is to gain insight of a particular time and place through direct experience (Kearns 2000). Although interviews are social situations, the interview situation is very different from an "every-day-situation". Therefore, it was a useful complement to the more controlled method of interviewing, to see the participants in their "natural habitat" through observations. In Rome, I spent three full days at the WFP HQ. Being at the office made me understand more about how their organizing for innovation worked in practice. The same accounts for Beirut, where I got introduced to many relevant people that to a greater or lesser extent had something to do with the development of the One Common Card system.

In order to "record" the observation, I kept a notebook with field notes during the whole process where I wrote down my thoughts and observations.

3.3   STRATEGY FOR PROCESSING THE DATA

The next step of the research process consisted of organizing the data that would later be used for analysis. I processed the interview data through transcribing and later coding the transcribed interviews, field notes, and documents in the software program Nvivo (Nvivo n.d.). The notes I had taken during the interviews that were not recorded were also coded in Nvivo, as were relevant field notes.

In Nvivo, I made *analytical codes* of the data material based on the themes in the analytical framework presented in Chapter 2, namely the social problem, the novel solution, the contextual and institutional conditions, and the actors. Analytical codes reflect the theme the researcher is interested in (Cope 2016), in this case, the abovementioned themes based on the analytical framework.

Coding the written material was useful in order to observe patterns and regularities in my data material in a structured way. Coding also allows for *reflexivity,* "that critical self-evaluation of the research process" (Cope 2016).

3.4 STRATEGY FOR ANALYZING THE DATA

Analyzing data means extracts meaning from the data. One way to do that is through content analysis (Hay 2016). Content analysis means to categorize data material into themes, relationships, or patterns. It is common to distinguish between latent content analysis and manifest content analysis. Manifest content analysis looks at the visible content from the interview transcripts, for example, how many times a certain word is repeated in the data set. Latent content analysis, on the other hand, is searching for themes in the data material, which also requires looking for what is said "in-between the lines" (Dunn 2006). Since I was interested in specific themes, namely how a social problem, the novel solution to that problem, contextual and institutional conditions and actors influenced the innovation process over time, I analyzed the data material through latent content analysis:

1. I analyzed whether there was support for the themes I had identified in my analytical framework
2. I identified which sub-themes seemed to have influenced the innovation process and in what way

3.5 PRACTICAL AND ETHICAL ISSUES

3.5.1 PRACTICAL ISSUES

There were several practical issues related to the collection of data. First of all, it was difficult to get access to informants, and it would probably not have been possible if I did not know relevant people before starting the study.

Secondly, there were some safety issues related to the fieldwork in Lebanon due to the ongoing uprising in the country. Initially, I had planned to travel to Lebanon earlier than I did, but

because of security issues related to uprisings against the regime, I decided to postpone the visit. I was lucky to be able to stay with a former colleague who works at the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Beirut and I was therefore well informed about the safety and security issues in the country at all time.

3.5.2 ETHICAL ISSUES

Ethics is an important part of the research process. Since qualitative research often involves engaging with people, it is important to observe certain ethical considerations (Dowling 2010). The research I conducted touched upon some ethical issues regarding the collaboration between the different UN agencies, the NGOs, and the donor countries. When touching upon these issues I was careful and made it clear that it was possible to withdraw from the study at any point. All the informants had to sign an "Informed Consent Form", where the purpose of the study was clearly stated.

Another ethical issue that we as researchers must consider is related to our *positionality*. Positionality is the researcher's relative position to the informants, for example in terms of gender, education, and nationality (Hay 2016). My informants were from many different countries and had many different cultural backgrounds. I was very careful when I touched upon themes that could be controversial in terms of cultural differences, political and religious beliefs.

3.6 ENSURING RIGOR

An important part of the entire research process has been to ensure *rigor*, meaning the trustworthiness of the work. Bradshaw and Stratford (2005) highlight how "it must be possible for our research to be evaluated" (p. 126). In order to ensure rigor, I have tried to complete the four "tests" outlined by Yin, as best as possible. These tests are *construct validity, internal validity, external validity,* and *reliability* (Yin 2009).

Construct validity means that the study is measuring what it is supposed to measure (Yin 2009). In order to increase the construct validity of this research, I have thoroughly defined and defended which parts of the humanitarian innovation process I am interested in and which actors I have identified as the most important. However, since the case is of a complex character and has involved many actors and contextual conditions it has been challenging to "draw the border" of the cases. Still, I have attempted to define it in a transparent way whenever I have

refined the study. Further, during the data collection, I used mythological triangulation in order to constantly "cross-check" my findings.

Internal validity means to establish causal relationships between different conditions in the research (Yin 2009). Since the focus of this study has been to analyze how different factors influenced the establishment of the One Common Card system, increasing internal validity has been an important method to secure rigor. In order to increase the internal validity of the study, I was constantly looking for rival explanations for why *x* leads to *y,* both during the interviews and in the document analysis. Sometimes during the interviews, it was difficult to distinguish whether an explanation was a *real* explanation of what had happened, or whether it was the informant's personal interest or opinion that was presented. In my analysis, I have attempted to give a transparent picture of these situations in order to increase internal validity.

External validity means to demonstrate to what extent the study is generalizable (Yin 2009). In this study that would be whether my findings can say something about humanitarian innovation in general. In qualitative studies, this relates to *analytical* generalization, as opposed to *statistical* generalization. Analytical generalization is "to generalize a particular set of results to some broader theory" (Yin 2009, 5:43). In that way, how a social problem, a novel solution to that problem, contextual conditions, and actors influence and shape the humanitarian innovation process, in line with the innovation journey model and the ALNAP model, is the field to which the results from this study can be generalized. However, it would be necessary to replicate the findings from this study by applying the analytical framework to additional similar cases, to consider if the results are generalizable.

Reliability means to demonstrate how the research process can be repeated by others, but still yield the same result (Yin 2009). In order to increase the reliability of this study, I have presented a transparent picture of my research process; I have reported all the stages of my research process and defended the choices I have made, and I have been aware of my biases when conducting the data collection and writing the analysis. Further, raw data, including the recordings, are available on request.

EMPIRICAL FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The analysis and empirical findings are divided into two chapters. Chapter 4 will be analyzing *which* contextual and institutional conditions, and actors and networks have influenced and shaped the innovation process of the One Common Card system, based on the empirical findings. Chapter 5 will be analyzing the innovation process and *how* the contextual and institutional conditions, actors and networks, social problem, and novel solution, shaped and influenced the process over time, based on the findings from Chapter 4, and in light of the theoretical and analytical framework presented in Chapter 2. In combination, Chapter 4 and Chapter 4 will contribute to the examination of my research questions, which will be discussed in Chapter 6.

4 CONTEXT AND ACTORS

This chapter will be analyzing *which* contextual and institutional conditions, and actors and networks have influenced and shaped the innovation process of the One Common Card system, based on the empirical findings.

4.1 CONTEXTUAL AND INSTITUTIONAL CONDITIONS

Based on the analyzed documents and the information gathered through interviews, both global, national, and regional contextual and institutional conditions seem to have influenced the innovation process of the One Common Card system. Below, the contextual and institutional conditions that seem to be most prominent, will be presented and discussed.

4.1.1 GLOBAL CONTEXTUAL CONDITION: CHANGING MODALITIES OF HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

As explained in the background chapter, humanitarian actions are changing in format and means. Since the focus for this study is the modality for humanitarian assistance in Lebanon, the following section will discuss which global changes relating to the modality for humanitarian assistance that have occurred and how this has influenced the innovation process of the One Common Card system in Lebanon.

The modality of delivering humanitarian assistance has during the last decade changed mainly in two ways, both of which appear to have influenced the innovation process of the One Common Card: a) there has been a change towards more use of cash-based transfers (CBT) (Heaslip, Kovács, and Haavisto 2018; Inter-Agency Standing Committee n.d.), and b) there has been an increased focus on technology and digital solutions (Overseas Development Institute 2015). Earlier, humanitarian assistance had mainly been given in form of in-kind (see chapter 1.4.1), the rationale for moving away from in-kind assistance was to leave more power in the hand of the people receiving aid and to stimulate the local economy by disbursing cash into the economy (Heaslip, Kovács, and Haavisto 2018; Overseas Development Institute 2015).

Most of my informants argue that the motivation behind developing a cash-based, technological system for humanitarian assistance in Lebanon was largely driven by the changes in the humanitarian landscape. For example, Informant 10 from UNHCR underlined this change, and expressed the following:

> *"I think the rationale to go towards that [the e-card system) was largely driven by the humanitarian summit and the global humanitarian objectives for cash assistance"* (Informant 10, UNHCR).

While today, CBT is a common way of delivering humanitarian assistance across the UN system and within many NGOs, this was not the case at the beginning of the last decade, when the e-card system in Lebanon was initiated. In 2004, the use of CBT represented less than one percent of overall aid delivered (Overseas Development Institute 2015). Informant 3 from WFP highlights how the perception of CBT in the UN system has changed:

> *"In 2010, or even more recently, WFP still saw it that it [CBT] will destroy the food security populations, UNHCR thought it would harm refugees and now everybody is behind it."* (Informant 3, WFP).

The statements of both Informant 5 from WFP and Informant 10 from UNHCR highlight the changes that were happening in the UN at the beginning of the last decade. In an influential document, the five years action agenda published by the UN Secretary-General in January 2012, named "The Secretary-General five-years action agenda" stresses that the UN agencies should move towards more use of CBT (United Nations Secretary-General 2012). In addition to explicitly stressing the efforts towards increased use of CBT in humanitarian responses, the agenda highlights the importance of using innovation as a tool to meet increased humanitarian needs: one of the five objectives of the agenda is: "Building a safer and more secure world by innovating and building on our core business", which includes: "Build a more global, accountable and robust humanitarian system" (United Nations Secretary-General 2015). As we shall see in the next chapter, the action agenda, as well as the gradual change towards more use of CBT, played an important role in the initiation and development of the One Common Card system.

None of my informants explicitly mentioned the five years action agenda as an important contextual condition for the initiation of the e-card system. However, most of them mentioned Grand Bargain as an important contextual condition. Grand Bargain is a declaration that was signed at the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016. The goal of the declaration was to reduce the humanitarian funding gap through efficiency, innovation, and better interaction with long-term development efforts. Grand Bargain has nine main objectives, one of them being: "Increase the use and coordination of cash-based programming" (IASC 2020).

As the Grand Bargain was initiated in 2016, it happened after the implementation of the One Common Card system in Lebanon and could therefore not have influenced the initiation and development of that system. However, the Grand Bargain was the culmination of the five years action agenda (United Nations Secretary-General 2012) and the content of the agenda could thereby still have influenced the development of the One Common Card system.

In addition to being reflected in international humanitarian strategies, the change in the modality of humanitarian assistance in terms of increased use of CBT and technical and digital solutions, is also reflected in national humanitarian strategies of the largest humanitarian donor countries.

Since the UN system ultimately *is* its member states, it is no wonder that the UN strategies are reflected in national strategies and the other way around. Still, since the largest donors to the humanitarian action in Lebanon, especially the European Commission and the UK, appeared to have played a particularly important role in pushing for the use of more technologically advanced solutions and streamlining of cash assistance in Lebanon, it is interesting to consider how this goal is reflected in the countries' national humanitarian strategies.

Contributors to WFP		
1	USA	10,446,448,016
2	European Commission	2,495,632,195
3	Germany	2,091,180,952
4	UK	2,019,504,853

Table 6 Four largest contributors to the WFP. Accumulated from 2011 to 2016 (in USD). Source: (Contributions by Year | World Food Programme, n.d.)

As shown in Table 6, the four largest donors to WFP between 2011 and 2016 were the USA, the European Commission, Germany, and the United Kingdom (UK). The European Commission, Germany and the UK's humanitarian strategies between 2011 and 2016, demonstrate how there has been a move towards approaches for humanitarian assistance that

are on one hand more cash-based, and on the other hand more innovative and technologically advanced among the largest donors:[2]

The European Commission is mentioning cash in the strategic plans for humanitarian assistance for 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014[3], but it is not until the strategy for 2015 that there are explicit goals towards a more cash-based approach in the strategy:

> *The Commission has been at the forefront in pioneering the move from in-kind food aid to food assistance as a holistic response to victims of a humanitarian crisis, involving the direct provision of food, but equally a wider range of tools, of which cash-based assistance is a major part. The use of cash and vouchers has increased (with its share of the EU's food assistance budget for 2013 standing at 34%, up from 2% in 2007)(European Commission 2014, 11).*

In the German "Strategy of the Federal Foreign Office for Humanitarian Assistance Abroad" cash-based assistance is not mentioned (Federal Foreign Office 2012). However, in the strategy for 2019, the use of cash-based transfer as a means of humanitarian assistance, has its own chapter (Federal Foreign Office 2019). Since there has not been any public strategy between 2012 and 2019, it is difficult to say something certain about how this evolution has happened, but it is natural to think that this happened gradually.

In the DFID Strategy paper "Promoting innovation and evidence-based approaches to building resilience and responding to humanitarian crisis" from 2012 there is a strong emphasis on "further testing of cash-based approaches", and the need for "innovative technologies and approaches to provide a more effective response" (DFID 2012).

Further, Informant 5, representing one of the European donor countries argues that today:

> *"All the donors agree on that more digitalization and use of technology is needed in the development and humanitarian policy"* (Informant 5, Donor).

Based on the examples above, it is clear that the largest donor countries to WFP at this time were moving towards more use of cash, as a way of, on one hand making humanitarian

---

[2] There is limited access to humanitarian public strategies and policy papers from the USA in general and no public information about the American perception in the use of cash instead of in-kind.

[3] The European Commission's strategic plans can be found here:
https://ec.europa.eu/echo/who/accountability/strategy_en

assistance more effective, and on the other hand empowering the refugees, by giving them more autonomy. As we shall see, this thinking to a high degree influenced the choices and priorities made by the largest donors in Lebanon as a response to the humanitarian crisis caused by the Syrian civil war.

In conclusion, around the same time as the innovation process of the e-card began, UN agencies and big humanitarian donor countries had started to become increasingly interested in more use of cash-based and digital solutions for humanitarian assistance. This is reflected in the UN humanitarian agendas and strategies as well as the strategies of the largest humanitarian donors.

4.1.2 REGIONAL CONTEXTUAL CONDITION: THE HUMANITARIAN CRISIS IN SYRIA

The One Common Card system was initiated and developed by humanitarian actors who were involved in the humanitarian response to the Syrian refugee crisis in Lebanon, therefore the humanitarian crisis resulting from the Syrian civil war played an important regional contextual role.

Several of the informants from WFP, UNHCR and the NGO argued that the humanitarian crisis in Lebanon as a result of the Syrian civil war, appeared to be a context where the changes in international and national humanitarian strategies, as presented above, could be put into practice.

The reasons for this, given by the informants were that a) the scale of the crisis, with 5.6 million refugees, made it necessary for the UN agencies and NGOs to think differently about the delivery of humanitarian assistance in order to meet the need of the people and that b) the humanitarian response in Lebanon involved a complex set of actors which made it important to find new mechanisms for collaboration and streamlining of cash assistance. After a while, also c) the fact that the humanitarian crisis was lasting longer than expected, made the donors, the UN agencies and the NGOs rethink how humanitarian assistance could be distributed in an as effective manner as possible. Informant 8 from WFP underlines how the Syrian crisis was different from the previous crises and how this influenced the rethinking of the organization:

> *"Things have changed, you're dealing with a different kind of crisis – a complex crisis which has been going on for nearly a decade. We had to change. We had to innovate"*
> *(Informant 8, WFP).*

Informant 1 from WFP also highlights how the availability of funding to the Syrian response was important in order to be able to experiment and innovate with new solutions:

> *"On top of it you have a donor interest and a huge critical mass of money, so you're not trying to do something with a small mini-program, here we talk million people. 330 million dollars WFP program, so you know, there is real stuff going on and if you put all these things together it becomes much easier to do something innovative, technologically or process-wise or inter agency-wise"* (Informant 1, WFP).

The informant is referring to WFP's program in Lebanon, which has been one of the main receivers of refugees. In line with Informant 1's argument, between 2012 and 2016 the total humanitarian funding in Lebanon, including all the UN agencies and the NGOs in the country, was nearly 5 billion dollars, making the Syrian crisis one of the most expensive humanitarian crisis in history (OCHA 2019).

Between 2011 and 2016, 1.5 million people fled from Syria to Lebanon. Figure 4-1 illustrates how most of the refugees entered between 2012 and 2014. It was particularly between the last months of 2012 and until the end of 2013 that the influx of refugees from Syria to Lebanon multiplied rapidly (UNHCR n.d.). As we shall see in the next chapter, this was around the same time as the innovation process of the e-card system was initiated.
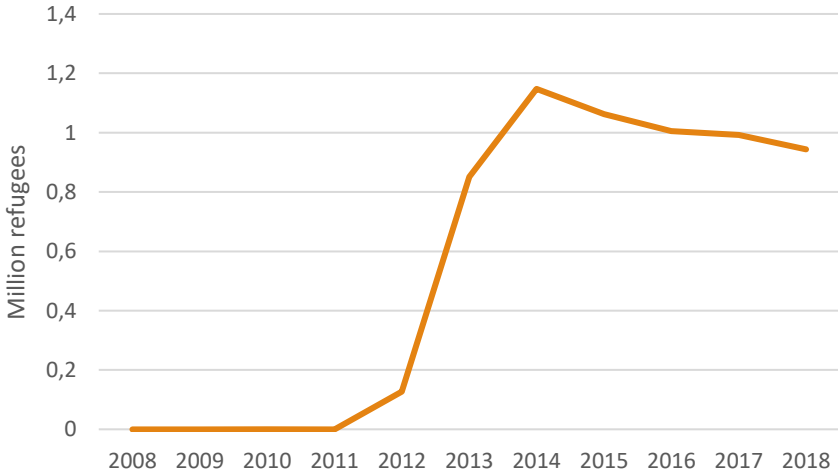
Source: UNHCR's Statistics Database

Figure 4-1 Syrian refugees in Lebanon

Lebanon, with a territory of 10,452 km^2, about the same size as the county of Rogaland in Norway, and with just over 6 million inhabitants (including the refugees), hosts the largest number of Syrian refugees per capita (UNHCR n.d.).

48

NATIONAL CONTEXTUAL AND INSTITUTIONAL CONDITIONS: LEBANON AS A RECEIVING COUNTRY OF REFUGEES

Since the innovation process happened within a national context, it is natural that the process was influenced by national contextual and institutional conditions. There are mainly two national contextual and institutional conditions that appear to have influenced the innovation process of the One Common Card system according to the analyzed documents and the interviews: Lebanon's refugee policy and the relatively well-functioning banking system in the country.

4.1.3.1 LEBANON´S REFUGEE POLICY

It is difficult to fully grasp Lebanese official refugee policy, but especially two parts of the Lebanese refugee policy seem to have had a particular influence on the limitations and possibilities for the humanitarian action in Lebanon: the "Open door" policy and the "Out of camp" policy.

Lebanon adopted an "Open door" policy between 2011 and 2014, meaning that Syrian refugees could freely enter the country. The refugees were free to enter, but the UN, in collaboration with the NGOs, has had the responsibility for the protection and humanitarian assistance to the refuges. When the Syrian refugees started to enter Lebanon, the informal deal between the Lebanese government and the UN agencies was that the UN was responsible for the protection of and assistance to the refugees, while the Lebanese government was responsible for the assistance to the vulnerable Lebanese (Civil Society Knowledge Centre 2014).

Despite the refugees' possibility to freely enter Lebanon, the "Out of camp" policy says that the Government does not allow the UN system to set up formal refugee camps. Consequently, the refugees in Lebanon live in the cities, in villages, or informal tented settlements (UNHCR 2020a).

This is different from other refugee situations where the UN agencies set up refugee camps in areas agreed on by the local authorities. In this case, the humanitarian assistance is mainly provided within the borders of the refugee camps, whereby the refugees live in concentrated areas, or in tents usually provided by the UNHCR or by NGOs. The refugee camps are in many ways small societies where the refugees, in theory, have access to all necessary commodities without the need to exit the camp (UNHCR 2020a). Figure 4-2 shows how the Syrian refugees

have been spread all over Lebanon since the beginning of the crisis and that the "Out of camp" policy has made the settlement situation different from a refugee camp context.
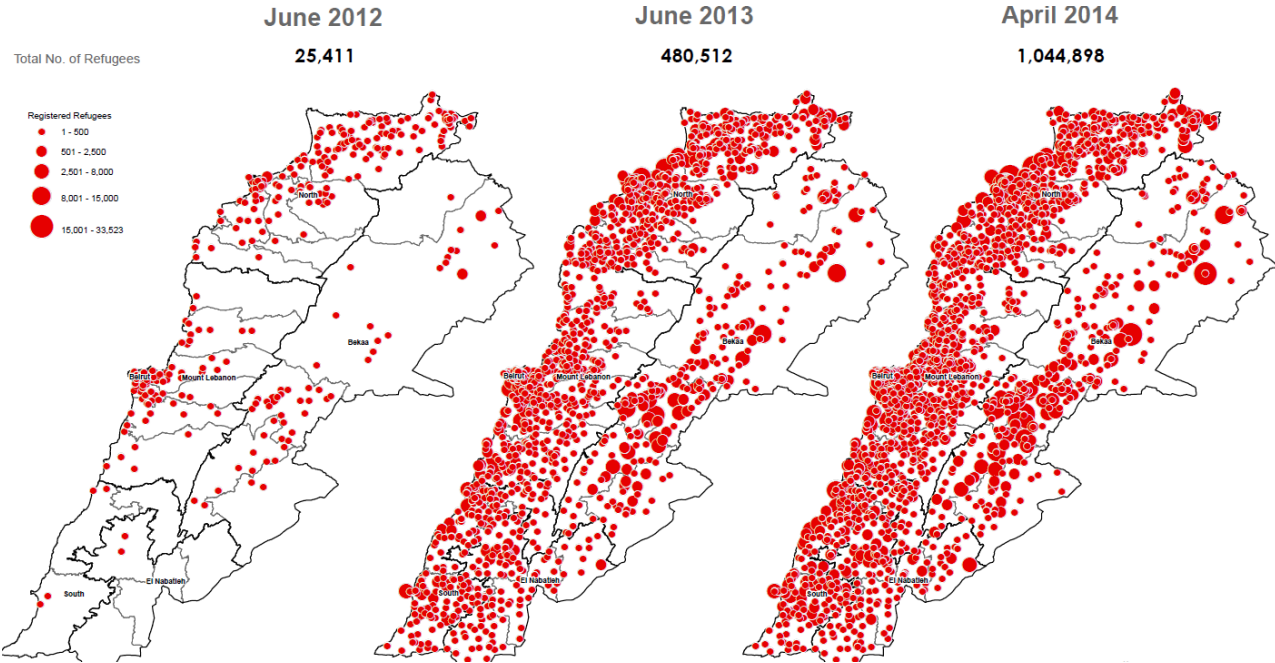

Figure 4-2 Syrian refugees registered by area in Lebanon (ReliefWeb 2014)

The fact that the Syrian refugees are spread all over the country has made the UN's mandate to operate differently from when formal refugee camps are in place. In the Lebanese context, the refugees living outside of the camps have been more reliant on providing basic needs themselves, such as housing and food, with financial support from the UN agencies and the NGOs. Since they are living out of camps, they are living alongside functioning markets and many of them had to pay rent, pay for food, etc. As we shall see, this played an important role in order for WFP and the other UN organizations to roll out the One Common Card system.

The refugees in Lebanon as well as the managers of the humanitarian response, have been faced with a dilemma concerning the Government's policy for Syrian refugees. On one hand, the refugees have not been allowed to stay in formal camps or settlements, but at the same time, they have not been allowed to become fully integrated, and have thereby been excluded from for example the ability to work legally in Lebanon. However, the government of Lebanon has allowed Syrians to access education and health systems (UNHCR n.d.).

Another problematic side of the "Out of camp" policy is that it has led to tensions between the refugees and the host communities. Many Lebanese feel that it is unfair that the Syrians are getting assistance from the UN agencies, while vulnerable and poor Lebanese are not getting any help (Harb 2014). As we shall see, this was one of the motivations behind developing a

50

system where the Syrians "pay back" by spending the aid they have received from the UN in the Lebanese market.

4.1.3.2 WELL-FUNCTIONING BANKING SYSTEM IN LEBANON

In addition to Lebanon's refugee policy, the relatively well-functioning banking system in Lebanon appears to be an important institutional condition for the possibility to roll out an e-card system.

Lebanon is, and was back in 2011, a small, upper-middle-income country (The World Bank 2020) with relatively large, functioning markets (Boston Consulting Group 2017). This means that the basic needs – such as food, shelter, and hygiene items – are available through the local market. Furthermore, ATM services are easily accessible. This means that the infrastructure for setting up an e-card system was already in place, and it was possible to develop a humanitarian assistance system based on electronic payments, without needing to build up, improve or change the banking infrastructure or the market structures (Creti 2015).

In other refugee settings, for example in South-Sudan or Myanmar, the banking system is weak and the market is more irregular, meaning that an e-card system would probably not have been possible without improvement of the banking infrastructure. Informant 4 from WFP expressed it like this:

> "In Lebanon, with a healthy financial sector, and healthy markets, you don´t really need to be doing in-kind" (Informant 4, WFP).

Informant 4's argument also relates to the "Out of camp" policy whereby the refugees are living alongside functional markets.

In the table below I have summarized the contextual and institutional conditions which appear to have influenced the innovation process of the One Common Card system.

CONTEXTUAL AND INSTITUTIONAL CONDITIONS		
Global contextual conditions	The gradual move towards more use of CBT	
	The gradual move towards more use of technological and digital solutions	
	The 2012 Secretary-General five-years action agenda	
Regional contextual conditions	The Syrian civil war	
National contextual and institutional conditions	Lebanon's refugee policy	
	Lebanon's well-functioning banking-system	

Table 7 Contextual and institutional conditions

4.2 ACTORS AND NETWORKS

An important part of the study has been to map which actors were involved in the innovation process, and how they influenced the process. The innovation process of the One Common Card system involves many actors at many levels. Below, the main actors that appear to have influenced and shaped the innovation process of the One Common Card system directly will be presented. The presentation involves both a general overview of the organizations or agencies as well as their specific role in this context. In addition, I will explain how it appears that the different tasks have been divided between the agencies in Lebanon.

4.2.1 THE UN

In the innovation process of the One Common Card system, WFP, in addition to UNHCR and UNICEF were the UN agencies that were most dominant. WFP, UNHCR, and UNICEF all have country offices in Beirut, with underlying field offices (UNHCR 2020c; UNICEF 2020; "WFP" 2020b).

The high influx of Syrian refugees to Lebanon in such a short time resulted in many challenges for the UN system in Lebanon. The challenges included the difficulty in securing protection for the huge number of refugees, issues concerning reaching everyone in need with humanitarian assistance as well as issues concerning tensions between the refugees and the host community (Overseas Development Institute 2014). As we shall see, all these issues motivated the initiation of the e-card system.

In the beginning, the UN agencies were giving in-kind humanitarian assistance to the refugees, mainly through food parcels (Overseas Development Institute 2014), but as we shall see, the agencies soon after the beginning of the influx, started to move away from in-kind distribution.

4.2.1.1 WFP

Naturally, since it was WFP who initiated the e-card system, WFP is the actor that has been most closely involved in the innovation process. WFP is the world's largest humanitarian agency promoting food security and addressing hunger. Their "raison d'être" is to eliminate hunger and malnutrition (WFP 2013). The organization does both emergency relief work and long-term development projects, but is mainly involved in emergency relief work (United Nations 2014). Previously, WFP received donations primarily in the form of in-kind assistance, especially from food surplus in the USA, but in the last decade, donations are to a greater extent given in monetary ways, in order for WFP, and the beneficiaries themselves, to buy food locally. One of the objectives behind this change has been to strengthen the local markets of the humanitarian operations (FN-Sambandet, n.d.) which is in line with many of the objectives of the five years humanitarian action agenda presented above. WFP has its headquarters in Rome. In addition, the organization has 80 country offices all around the world, with underlying field offices (WFP 2013).

WFP's increased use of CBT as the means of humanitarian assistance is an example of how the UN agencies have been adapting in order to meet the changing humanitarian landscape. WFP's book *Revolution: From Food Aid to Food Assistance—Innovations in Overcoming Hunger* from 2010, underlines the beginning of this change:

> *"... modern WFP not only delivers food – it delivers hunger solutions. It is not instrument-based, but problem-based. This historical shift – the revolution – has positioned WFP as a catalyst of practical hunger innovations with fundamental changes in the way WFP implements programs, shapes key policy debates, and engages strategically with actors and partners" (WFP, 2010:3).*

WFP calls it a revolution, and indeed it was. One of the most "revolutionary" parts of the objectives in the book was WFP's focus to shift away from in-kind to increase the use of CBT. For WFP, this book was one of the first times where objectives to use more CBT was stated in official WFP strategies (WFP n.d.). As we shall see, WFP's response to the Syrian crisis in Lebanon seems to be one of the crises where the objectives in the book were put in to practice.

In addition to WFP's operational changes around the same time as the e-card system was initiated, many of the informants highlighted that WFP has a culture for innovation. The head of the WFP business unit told me that all new staff in WFP has innovation as part of their mandatory training and another WFP employee expressed it like this:

> "The other UN agencies have innovation as a part-time job, in WFP we have it as a full-time job. Innovation is a priority in WFP" (Informant 4, WFP).

Several of the informants argue that WFP's culture for innovation is related to its mandate as a relief organization. Informant 5 expressed it like this:

> "It probably has a lot to do with culture. WFP is a relief organization that must be effective and constantly innovate. FAO [UN's Food and Agriculture Organization], for example, is more about expertise - it gives a different culture." (Informant 5, donors).

And informant 1 expressed it like this:

> "At the end of the day, the needs in the world, humanitarian needs for WFP are 11 billion, we are able to raise 8 billion, so we still have a delta of 3, that we need to overcome through different solutions, through working smarter, through being innovative, etc." (Informant 1, WFP).

WFP's mandate as a relief organization and its innovative culture seemed to have influenced their ability to lead the innovation process of the One Common Card system. How this came about will be analyzed in more detail in the second part of this chapter.

4.2.1.2 UNHCR AND UNICEF

In addition to WFP, UNHCR, and UNICEF, especially UNHCR, influenced the innovation process of the One Common Card system. As we shall see in the next chapter, they became part of WFP's system in 2015/2016.

UNHCR's mandate is to "protect refugees worldwide and facilitate their return home or resettlement."(United Nations 2014). UNHCR is responsible for directing and coordinating international efforts to protect and assist refugees. The organization assists refugees with exercising their right to find refuge in another country or seek asylum. UNHCR is responsible for the registration of refugees when the refugees enter a new country, and they are usually responsible for the logistics in the refugee camps and for providing shelter in the camps. Together with WFP, they are also responsible for providing food to the refuges (WFP n.d.).

UNHCR's headquarters is in Geneva. In addition, they are present in 130 countries (FN-Sambandet, n.d.).

UNHCR's largest cash program is in Lebanon and according to Informant 9 from UNHCR, "*UNHCR was the first to do cash unconditionally in Lebanon*" (Informant 9, UNHCR). Due to the fact that the refugees in Lebanon were not living in formal refugee camps, as explained above, UNHCR did not perform their traditional role of providing shelter in camps. However, they distributed unconditional cash, from the beginning of the crisis, so that the refugees could pay for rent in the urban areas. Informant 9 from UNHCR puts it like this: "*In the cities, the refugees have to pay rent, therefore it is important with cash*" (Informant 9, UNHCR).

UNICEF's mandate is "to save children's lives, to defend their rights, and to help them fulfill their potential, from early childhood through adolescence" (United Nations 2014). UNICEF is the world's largest humanitarian organization for children. In a crisis, UNICEF provides medicines and equipment to fight HIV / AIDS and diseases such as the Ebola epidemic and malaria, and recently the Covid-19 epidemic. In addition, they have many long-term projects that help children with education and their right to be heard. UNICEF's headquarters is in New York. In addition, the organization has country offices in more than 150 countries (FN-Sambandet n.d.).

Compared to UNHCR and WFP, UNICEF is the smallest of the agencies in Lebanon in terms of financial volume (UN Lebanon n.d.)

4.2.1.3 COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE UN HUMANITARIAN ACTORS

As humanitarian agencies have different mandates, they are getting involved in crises with different perspectives. It can therefore often be challenging to organize a humanitarian response, despite having a resident coordinator. Furthermore, as one can see from the descriptions of the different UN agencies above, the differences between the agencies' mandates are blurred, which makes it challenging to decide who should be responsible for which parts of the response. Not only is it difficult to coordinate the action across the UN agencies. Local governments and NGOs are also part of the humanitarian response plan in a country affected by a humanitarian crisis and they too have their own approaches to how the response should be managed (Humanitarian Response n.d.).

An important part of the collaboration between UNHCR, WFP, and UNICEF have been the annual publishing of the Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees (Vasyr) in Lebanon, which was first published in December 2013 (WFP, UNICEF, and UNHCR 2013). One of the

informants from UNHCR highlights that this was important in order to "pave the way" for later collaboration.

> *"Vasyr was pre-LOUISE [the One Common Card system] and might have paved the way, getting the agencies to start working together" (Informant 9, UNHCR).*

4.2.2 PRIVATE FIRMS: MASTERCARD AND BLF

While the UN agencies have humanitarian programming expertise, they did not have the technical expertise to develop the technical aspects of the e-card. Hence, they outsourced this part of developing the system to MasterCard. MasterCard had been a partner to WFP for many years (MasterCard n.d.) and according to the informants I talked to from WFP, even though there was a tender process, the already established partnership between MasterCard and WFP was an important reason why they got the job. In addition to MasterCard, WFP established a relationship with a local Lebanese bank, named Banque Libano-Francaise (BLF). BLF has been working as the financial service provider and has been using MasterCard cards. Based on the interviews I had and the documents I have analyzed, neither BLF nor MasterCard played an active role in the innovation process, they rather served as financial service providers and technology providers (MasterCard n.d.).

4.2.3 THE BENEFICIARIES AND THE NGOS

The One Common Card system is developed in order to meet the humanitarian needs of the Syrian refugees in Lebanon. In that perspective, the refugees are the main beneficiaries of the system. However, as we shall see, one of the main motivations behind initiating an e-card system was to make humanitarian assistance more effective and efficient. In that way, it can be argued that the beneficiaries are also the humanitarian workers: UN staff and NGO staff, especially those who are working in the field. Furthermore, the shopkeepers, who are using the system in order to get increased profit by expanding their customer base, are also beneficiaries of the system.

The NGOs that seemed to have been most involved in the innovation process of the One Common Card were the NGOs that were part of the Lebanon Cash Consortium (LCC), which was an umbrella organization of humanitarian NGOs in Lebanon that were providing cash assistance. As will be explained in more detail in the second part of this chapter, LCC was encouraged to join with the UN agencies in using one common card

Furthermore, several NGOs – for example Action Contre La Faim, Danish Refugee Council, InterSOS, Mercy Corps, Première Urgence Aide Médicale Internationale, Save the Children, and World Vision (WFP 2015b) – have served as cooperating partners for WFP. Informant 8, explained to me what a cooperating partner means:

> "WFP has the program, but there are the agencies who have the cards and that are actually implementing and giving the cards to the beneficiaries. WFP would call them cooperating partners." (Informant 8, NGO).

However, based on the interviews I had with WFP, UNHCR, and the NGOs, the cooperating partners were not an active part of the innovation process itself.

4.2.4 THE DONORS

The donors played a prominent role in the innovation process, especially in the developmental period of the process. The donors worked as the financial providers of the initiation and development of the system, and thereby had the power to influence and shape the system. The humanitarian response in Syria, as explained above, is one of the largest humanitarian responses in the history of humanitarian assistance in terms of funding (UNHCR, 2018). At the outset, the donors gave the UN organizations a lot of autonomy, but as we shall see, after the crisis had been going on for some time, they started questioning the effectiveness and efficiency of UN's humanitarian response. Based on the interviews and the documents, the donors that seems to have been most involved in the innovation process are the UK, through DFID and the EU, through ECHO (Creti 2015; WFP 2014; 2015a). This is not surprising, given that they are two of the largest donors to the humanitarian response in Lebanon, as explained above. As we shall see, the donors pushed for the harmonization of cash assistance to the Syrian refugees in Lebanon during the developmental period of the innovation process, or as Informant 5 from the NGO put it:

> "LOUISE [the One Common Card system] was a donor vision, a call for accountability and a call to have better harmonization for cash assistance" (Informant 5, NGO).

In the table below, the *mandate* of the actors who were involved in the project, as well as their *role* in the process, are summarized.

ACTORS		
	Mandate	**Role in the process**
WFP	Eliminate hunger and malnutrition	The initiator of the e-card system
UNHCR	Protection and registration of refugees	Became part of WFP's system in 2015/2016
UNICEF	Save children and defend their lives	Became part of WFP's system in 2015/2016
MasterCard	Multinational financial service cooperation	Provider of the e-cards. Developed the technical parts of the system together with BLF
BLF	National bank	Financial service provider. Developed the technical parts of the system together with MasterCard
The Beneficiaries	The receiver of humanitarian assistance	Providing feedback
The NGOs	Different social/humanitarian mandate depending on NGO	Cooperating partner of the UN agencies. LCC joined WFP's system in 2015/2016.
The donors	Funders of the UN agencies and the NGOs	Funding the process and influencing decisions

Table 8 Actors

5 THE INNOVATION PROCESS

The following chapter will analyze how the contextual and institutional conditions as well as the actors presented in Chapter 4 shaped and influenced the innovation process, in light of the theoretical and analytical framework presented in Chapter 2. In accordance with the analytical framework and my research questions the focus will be to analyze how the Syrian civil war influenced the search for a novel solution; how actors and networks influenced the process; how contextual and institutional conditions shaped the process and how all these factors changed during what Van de Ven (1999) define as the initial period, the developmental period and the implementation period.

In Figure 5-1, a timeline of the major events influencing the development of the common card system is provided. The figure also gives an overview of how the methods of payment changed along the way, and which actors have been involved during different periods.

What	When	Form of payment				Actors involved						
		In kind	Paper voucher	E-card	One Common Card	WFP	BLF	Master-Card	ECHO /DFID	UNHCR	LCC	UNICEF
June 2012	WFP starts distributing food to Syrian refugees in Lebanon	●				●						
August 2012	WFP moves from in-kind to paper vouchers		●			●						
November 2012	WFP starts experimenting with different modalities		●			●						
September 2013	WFP starts the piloting of an e-card		●	●		●	●	●				
October 2013	WFP starts scaling up the e-card		●	●		●	●	●				
December 2013	ECHO and DFID develop a roadmap aimed at providing program harmonization			●		●	●	●	●			
Beginning of 2014	UNHCR and WFP started discussions around a joint platform based on the WFP/BLF prepaid card system			●		●	●	●		●		
December 2014	LCC NGOs joins the OneCard platform			●	●	●	●	●		●	●	
July 2015	UNHCR formally joins the OneCard platform			●		●	●	●		●	●	
July 2015	Pilot of the One Common Card System			●		●	●	●		●	●	
December 2016	LOUISE MoU signed by WFP, UNHCR and UNICEF			●		●	●	●		●	●	●

Figure 5-1 Timeline of the One Common Card system (the timeline is based on the information gathered from the interviews, as well as the analyzed documents)

60

5.1.1 THE INITIAL PERIOD OF THE INNOVATION PROCESS

5.1.1.1 THE GESTATION PERIOD: A CHANGING UN AND THE LARGEST HUMANITARIAN CRISIS OF OUR TIME

According to the innovation journey, model innovation does not happen from one day to the next, by a single incident or by a single individual, but goes through a gestation period of several years with several events occurring that set the stage for the start of the innovation (Van de Ven et al. 1999). Furthermore, within the field of social innovation, it is common to see social innovation as highly influenced by cultural and historical contexts, and by social systems with underlying institutions, and that social innovation is more likely to occur when the right contextual and institutional conditions are present (Cajaiba Santana 2014; El-Huni 2015; Lawrence, Dover, and Gallagher 2014; Westley and McGowan 2017). In line with both the innovation journey model and theories on social innovation, the e-card system seems to have undergone a gestation period which was influenced by contextual and institutional conditions. What can be defined as the gestation period of the process includes the UN's in general, and WFP more specifically, incremental move towards cash-based and electronic ways for distribution of humanitarian assistance. Further, it is influenced by the beginning of the humanitarian crisis due to the Syrian civil war. Below how these factors were part of the so-called gestation period will be examined.

5.1.1.1.1 THE UN HUMANITARIAN SYSTEM IS CHANGING

The UN's incremental, but strategic move towards cash-based and more technologically advanced routes of distribution of humanitarian assistance, especially regarding the preparations leading up to the UN Secretary-General's five years action agenda, influenced the search for new solutions. When asked about which contextual conditions the informants think influenced the initiation of the e-card system, several of the informants mentioned the increased interest in the use of CBT within the UN system in general, and in WFP more specifically, as an important contextual condition for the initiation of the e-card system. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the action agenda was saying that the "UN agencies should move towards more use of cash" and use innovation as a means to improve humanitarian actions. The action agenda was signed at the beginning of 2012, just a few months after the Syrian refugees had started to enter Lebanon.

The UN system had already, in accordance with the action agenda, started experimenting with cash-based and electronic approaches for distribution of humanitarian assistance (Overseas Development Institute 2015), meaning that parts of the idea and objective were already there before WFP initiated the system. Hence, what was needed was an actual need or push to put the idea into practice.

Not only did the changes in the UN humanitarian system in general play an important role in the gestation period, but also the fact that WFP specifically was changing seems to have been an important internal contextual condition during the gestation period. Even though WFP traditionally had been an organization in favor of in-kind assistance, this had slowly, but steadily started to change around the same time as the crisis in Syria broke out. There was a strategic priority from WFP HQ to use a more cash-based approach, and to experiment with electronic solutions for the distribution of basic assistance, in line with the publishing of the book *Revolution: From Food Aid to Food Assistance—Innovations in Overcoming Hunger* from 2010, as explained in Chapter 4.2.1.1.

The changing strategic priorities in the UN and WFP seem to have been "setting the stage" for the initiation of the e-card system.

5.1.1.1.2 HUMANITARIAN CRISIS IN SYRIA

In addition to the changes in the UN's humanitarian system in general and in WFP in particular, the Syrian civil war and the following start of the humanitarian crisis were also "setting the stage" for the initiation of the e-card system. Several of the informants argue that the nature of the Syrian crisis, both the high influx of refugees in a short time as well as Lebanon's institutions were important contextual and institutional conditions for why the initiation of a large-scale e-card system happened there, and not in another location.

WFP started providing food assistance to Syrian refugees in Lebanon in June 2012 following a request from the Lebanese Government in May 2012 (WFP 2014). Two of my informants, who were working for the WFP CO in Lebanon at the time, told me that in-kind distribution, through food parcels, was chosen as the means of assistance at the start of the crisis in order to give the refugees immediate relief. At that time, the humanitarian team present in the country was small; the main objective was to save lives, and there was little time for discussing alternative modalities of distribution. WFP had been distributing food parcels in numerous humanitarian crises before and it was therefore understandable that they continued with what they were best at. But as Informant 1 from WFP noted, the distribution of food parcels had problematic aspects:

"Food parcels are not a sustainable thing, it doesn't give a choice, it is complicated in terms of the local economy" (Informant 1, WFP).

Even though informant 1 from WFP today identifies the problematic sides of in-kind distribution, around the time of the beginning of the humanitarian crisis in Syria, WFP was skeptical towards moving away from in-kind humanitarian assistance. In many ways, it seems like the humanitarian response to the Syrian crisis was one of the first examples of WFP's gradual move towards more use of CBT. It appears that there were mainly two reasons for this. First, WFP in Lebanon was influenced by the visions and ideas towards the increased use of CBT, stated in UN strategies, especially the *2012 action agenda*. In a report published by the Overseas Development Institute, an independent think tank on international development and humanitarian issues, named *Doing cash differently. How cash transfers can transform humanitarian aid,* the authors argue that the humanitarian crisis in Lebanon as a result of the Syrian civil war made "the WFP emergency response an opportunity for large-scale implementation of WFP innovative programming approaches, in terms of: … (b) Modalities: cash & voucher, use of technologies such as biometrics, electronic vouchers, and one-card systems" (Overseas Development Institute 2015).

Secondly, WFP in Lebanon was faced with a crisis where the distribution of food parcels did not make sense because the refugees were not living in camps; they were spread all over the country, and they were living alongside functioning markets. Since the refugees were living across the country in functioning markets it was more logical to make them part of the formal economy than to make them reliant on collecting food parcels from UN field offices, according to my informant. Further, it was costly for the UN organizations and NGOs to distribute food parcels all over Lebanon.

Informant 9 from UNHCR explains why the Lebanon context, especially concerning that most of the refugees were living in urban areas, was more suitable for cash assistance than in-kind assistance, like blankets:

"Blankets etc. didn't make sense in a city context. There was a need for something that was flexible. In the cities, the refugees have to pay rent, for example, therefor it was important with cash" (Informant 9, UNHCR).

Therefore, WFP in Lebanon shortly after the beginning of the influx of refugees, around August 2012, started distributing *paper vouchers* to the refugees in Lebanon. As explained earlier, paper vouchers (and electronic vouchers) are regarded as a form of cash-based assistance, but

it is conditional, meaning that it can only be spent on certain commodities. Around this time, most of the refugees would get food parcels upon arrival, and thereafter receive food vouchers weekly or monthly. WFP distributed one voucher per person. The voucher could be exchanged for food in shops contracted by WFP. At this time, WFP still regarded the caseload of paper vouchers as small, at "around 30 000 people" (Informant 7, WFP).

WFP in Lebanon's move from in-kind to paper voucher around August 2012, marks the first important step towards a cash-based electronic modality for distribution of humanitarian assistance in Lebanon.

WFP, as well as the other actors involved in the humanitarian response in Lebanon, soon realized that the tens of thousands of refugees that had entered from Syria to Lebanon in the spring and summer of 2012 were only the beginning. As already explained, between the last months of 2012 and the end of 2013 the influx of refugees from Syria to Lebanon multiplied rapidly, from 100,000 in October 2012 to 800,000 in December 2013 (UNHCR 2012; 2020c).

When WFP in Lebanon realized that the influx of refugees would continue and probably escalate, they started exploring alternative ways of distributing humanitarian assistance-Informant 1 from WFP expressed it like this:

> *From November 2012 we started exploring what we could do with more electronic projects. We tried to explore, we conducted different types of assessments, what were more efficient methods, etc. (Informant 7, WFP).*

Again, WFP seems to have been influenced by UN and WFP strategies to make use of more technological and digital solutions in humanitarian actions. According to my informants, around this time, WFP was forward-leaning in experimenting with new solutions.

Due to the high influx, the paper voucher system was at a breaking point: there were too many refugees; too few financial resources; and not enough organizational capacity for distribution of the vouchers. One informant told me: "We were desperate to find new solutions" (Informant 7, WFP) another informant told me: "the paper vouchers would fill an entire room" (Informant 1, WFP). Distribution of 30 000 paper vouchers weekly or monthly might be doable, but it was clear that the same was not the case for distribution of nearly *1 million* paper vouchers. Informant 1 from WFP told me:

> *Producing and tracking paper vouchers is not something easy. The paper vouchers potentially lend themselves for being photocopied, you know people they get inventive. So, they started to produce holograms. Then counting paper vouchers… I mean, can*

you imagine counting a whole room of paper voucher, because in the end, it's like cash. So, they introduced bar codes to read those [paper vouchers], then they moved to have those [paper vouchers] in size of banknotes, that could be counted with a counting machine (Informant 1, WFP).

In conclusion, the gestation period of the innovation process was influenced by a combination of global and national strategies and political objectives to increase the use of CBT in humanitarian actions and the capacity challenge of WFP in Lebanon, due to the high influx of Syrian refugees in a short time.

5.1.1.2 THE SHOCK: WFP'S SYSTEM FOR DISTRIBUTION OF HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE IS AT A BREAKING POINT

An old English-language proverb has it that "necessity is the mother of invention". Admittingly, necessity, according to my informants and the documents analyzed in this study, pushed WFP in Lebanon's search for new ways of distributing basic assistance. Moving away from proverbs to the theory, the innovation journey model suggests that the gestation period is followed by a *shock*, either internal or external to the organization, and triggers the initiations of more concentrated efforts towards the innovation (Van de Ven et al. 1999). I would argue that WFP in Lebanon experienced an external shock when the paper voucher system was at a breaking point, due to the high influx of Syrian refugees into Lebanon in a short time as explained above. Informant 1 from WFP expressed the pressing needs like this:

"You need to imagine that in the period of one and half years, suddenly you have one million more people in a territory that is the size of one region in Italy" (WFP, Informant 1).

The gestation period, in line with the innovation journey model, had been "setting the stage" for the initiation of the innovation, by WFP being more interested in the use of CBT based on UN strategies; by the context in Lebanon being suitable for a cash-based system; by WFP experimenting with alternative solutions, and by the current system for humanitarian assistance being at a breaking point due to the high influx of refugees. What was needed to actually "make the move" was a *shock*.

That a shock, or a need, is an important driver for innovation is in line with theories on social innovation and humanitarian innovation, that social or humanitarian problem's "push" the search for novel solutions (Lawrence, Dover, and Gallagher 2014; Mulgan 2006; Obrecht and Warner 2016; Phills, Deiglmeier, and Miller 2008). WFP in Lebanon was, and still, is faced

with the largest humanitarian crisis of our time. The humanitarian crisis was, of course, a social problem in itself but it also generated underlying social problems which in turn influenced the search for novel solutions in Lebanon. These problems were related to protection issues, problems regarding reaching everyone with humanitarian assistance, and malnutrition issues. The underlying problem which seems to have influenced the initiation of the e-card system, based on the documents and the interviews, was the challenges associated with the distribution of humanitarian assistance to refugees and being able to reach everyone in need of humanitarian assistance (El-Huni 2015; WFP 2014; WFP, UNICEF, and UNHCR 2013).

In order to understand more about which social problem(s) generated the search for novel solutions, I asked all the informants about what they perceived as the motivation behind the initiation of a cash-based electronic system for humanitarian assistance in Lebanon. All the informants, naturally, argued that it was because of the Syrian civil war and the resulting humanitarian crisis. But I wanted to dig deeper into which aspect of the crisis played the most important role in the search for new solutions. I, therefore, dwelt on that question in order to understand more about the motivation. Through this, I learned that the perception among the informants was that there were three motivations for the initiation of an electronic, cash-based system. Firstly, it was motivated by finding a more effective and efficient system for distribution, that could serve more people in a shorter time and with fewer resources. Secondly, the increased dignity of the refugees was an important motivation behind developing a system where the refugees could choose for themselves which commodities they needed. Thirdly, that a more cash-based approach for distribution was motivated by the desire to allow the refugees to contribute to the local economy and thereby decrease the tensions between refugees and the host community.

THE NOVEL SOLUTION		
Electronic, cash-based system for humanitarian assistance		
THE SOCIAL PROBLEM		
Humanitarian crisis due to the Syrian civil war		
THE UNDERLYING SOCIAL PROBLEMS		
Ineffectiveness and inefficiency	Low dignity for the refugees	Tensions between refugees and host community

Table 9 The social problem

In Table 6, what seems to be the perceptions among my informants regarding what motivated the search for a new system for the distribution of basic assistance, is illustrated.

Due to the high influx and a feeling among WFP staff that the current system was at a breaking point, the efficiency and effectiveness issues, according to the informants, was the main motivator for searching for, and later developing, an electronic, cash-based system for distribution of basic assistance to the refugees.

Research on social innovation and humanitarian innovation stresses the importance of addressing an actual social/humanitarian problem or need when developing humanitarian innovation (Lawrence, Dover, and Gallagher 2014; Mulgan 2006; Obrecht and Warner 2016; Phills, Deiglmeier, and Miller 2008). Through the interviews, it was clear that addressing the stressing humanitarian needs associated with humanitarian assistance through paper vouchers was an important driver for the search for novel solutions and the initiation of an electronic and cash-based system. Informant 1 from WFP emphasized how the initiation of an electronic system was based on needs:

> *I'm telling you an evolution based on need, it was an immediate reaction to addressing the hungry people. A person that is in distress cannot wait for you to do fantastic stuff three years later. In the meantime, you have a civil war, or you have a migration crisis (Informant 1, WFP).*

In conclusion, both the concept of a *shock* found in the innovation journey model as well as the common view within the field of social and humanitarian innovation that successful humanitarian innovation should address a real need, are suitable theoretical tools in order to explain how and why WFP in Lebanon initiated an electronic system for distribution of humanitarian assistance.

5.1.1.3 PLANS: PILOTING OF AN E-VOUCHER SYSTEM

The *shock*, according to the innovation journey model, sets planning in motion: especially plans directed to those in the organization that are responsible for resources in order to obtain the needed resources to announce the beginning of the innovation development (Van de Ven et al. 1999). What happened, in this case, was that in order to make the system for distribution of aid to the Syrian refugees in Lebanon more efficient and effective WFP, in collaboration with MasterCard and BLF, started piloting an electronic model for humanitarian assistance in September 2013 (El-Huni 2015).

I would argue that September 2013 marks the transition from the initial period of the innovation process to what the innovation journey model defines as the developmental period of the

innovation process, because at this time, more concentrated efforts to set up an electronic, cash-based system began.

MAIN DRIVERS AND PRECONDITIONS IN THE INITIAL PERIOD

In conclusion, what can be defined as the initial period of the innovation process seems to have been highly influenced by finding a more effective system for humanitarian assistance in order to deal with the high influx of refugees to Lebanon. Further, the Syrian civil war was both the root of the social humanitarian problem, and an important contextual condition. Other important contextual conditions were Lebanon's "Out of camp" policy which made WFP rethink the way it delivered humanitarian assistance, as well as the changing humanitarian strategic priorities at both global and national level, which both drove the movement towards more use of cash and more use of technology and digital solutions in humanitarian actions. In this part of the process, WFP in Lebanon was the most dominant actor, but they were leaning on technical support and expertise from BLF and MasterCard.

Table 10 summarizes the findings from the initial period based on the analytical framework presented in Chapter 2.

	Initial period 2012-2013	Developmental period 2013-2016	Implementation period 2016
SOCIAL PROBLEM	o The humanitarian crisis in Lebanon o Distribution of basic assistance through food parcels/ paper vouchers is: - Inefficient and ineffective - Problematic for the local economy - Problematic in terms of refugees' dignity		
NOVEL SOLUTION	o An E-card for distribution of humanitarian assistance		
ACTORS AND NETWORKS	o WFP in Lebanon o BLF o MasterCard		
INSTITUTIONAL AND CONTEXTUAL CONDITIONS	o Lebanon's "Out of camp" policy o The 2012 UN Action Agenda o UN's gradual move towards more use of cash and digital solutions		
Time →			

Table 10 The initial period of the innovation process

5.1.2 THE DEVELOPMENTAL PERIOD OF THE INNOVATION PROCESS

According to the innovation journey model, during the developmental period of an innovation process, the innovative ideas proliferate into many ideas and activities. The activities are both convergent and divergent and are happening in parallel. Part of the challenge is linking the relevant parallel cycles of activities (Van de Ven et al. 1999). During the development period of the innovation process of the One Common Card system, what can be seen as two parallel innovation streams dominated the developmental period. The first stream was linked to the refinement, improvement, and scaling of the electronic system, while the second stream was linked to growing interest, especially among DFID and ECHO as donors, to combine the forces of the humanitarian agencies in Lebanon on one common system for humanitarian assistance.

5.1.2.1 STREAM 1: E-CARD PILOT AND SUBSEQUENT ADJUSTMENTS

An important part of the developmental period of the innovation process was the refinement, improvement, and scaling of the electronic system that had been piloted in September 2013. This involved both of what the innovation journey model defines as convergent and divergent activities.

Regarding the divergent activities, which are the expenditure of resources within the firm or organization, according to my informants from WFP, WFP in Lebanon was at that time spending human and financial resources beyond the normal business activities, in order to develop the electronic cash-based system. The possibility to do so appears to have been influenced by what the innovation journey model defines as convergent activities (Van de Ven et al. 1999).

The convergent activities, which are the exogenous or endogenous constraints (Van de Ven et al. 1999), were around this time mainly related to the institutional constraints in the country, especially Lebanon's well-functioning banking systems and financial markets. All the informants I have been talking to argue that Lebanon's well-functioning banking-system made it possible to continue the development of the e-card system. For example, one of the initiators of the e-card told me:

> *"One of the reasons we could start this kind of programming was that Lebanon had a well-functioning banking system" (Informant 1, WFP).*

In an economic impact study on the e-card system conducted in 2014, it is also clear how the Lebanese market structure was taken into consideration before WFP started scaling the e-card system:

> *"E-cards were adopted as the primary modality of assistance after establishing that local markets were elastic enough to meet increased demand without adversely affecting local supply and prices" (WFP, 2014:6).*

As stated in the report, a well-functioning market structure was important in order to prevent inflation. Since the markets in Lebanon functioned well, cash assistance could serve as a viable alternative to in-kind assistance (Creti 2015).

Therefore, after establishing that the market was well-suited for a cash-based electronic system WFP in Lebanon, in collaboration with MasterCard and BLF, started the scaling of the e-card:

> *"Already in October 2013, we started scaling up. We gradually increased the e-card system and decreased the paper voucher and in-kind distribution. In December 2013 we were no longer giving paper vouchers" (Informant 6, WFP).*

This means that both convergent and divergent activities, in line with the innovation journey model influenced the further development of the system.

Above, informant 6 highlights how WFP gradually started to move away from the paper voucher and in-kind distribution after the introduction of the e-card. This is in line with Van de Ven's argument that innovation usually is not an addition to former ways of activities, but are rather replacing, or becoming integrated with, former ways of doing things (Van de Ven et al. 1999).

Table 11 illustrates the growing number of Syrian refugees in Lebanon that were receiving e-cards from January 2014 to May 2014 (WFP 2014). In May 2014, 1 million Syrian refugees were registered in Lebanon, meaning that more than 70 % of them, 732,318, received humanitarian assistance through WFP's e-cards (UNHCR n.d.).

Month 2014	e-cards	Amount (US$)
January	553,535	16,606,050
February	620,408	18,612,240
March	669,774	20,093,220
April	708,091	21,242,730
May	732,318	21,969,540

Table 11 Number and amount (in US$) of e-cards distributed by month in 2014 (WFP, 2014).

Based on the organizational capacity of the actors involved as well as the exogenous and endogenous constraints as explained above, the technical parts of the system were adjusted and refined. For example, there had to be made changes relating to the pin code, because, as informant 1 from WFP expresses it:

> *"People are used to read from right to left instead of from left to right[4]. And then they do 3 times the wrong pin, and then the pin gets blocked and then you need to get a new card." (Informant 1, WFP).*

This example illustrates why, as in accordance with the ALNAP model, it is important to make the end-users part of the design and development stage of a humanitarian innovation due to the cultural differences that may exist between the innovators and the end-users (Obrecht and Warner 2016). According to my informants, WFP learned from this mistake and included the beneficiaries to a greater extent in the later stages of developing the system. This also highlights how the innovation process changes "as we go" and that WFP was open to learn from mistakes and make adjustments based on experience.

Besides the correction of the pin-code, the system was also further advanced during this period. Informant 1 explains how WFP were constantly advancing the system during the developmental period:

> *We became more sophisticated. We introduced a biomatrix and iris scan, triangulation software, and stuff like that. We changed the patterns of how we loaded the money etc. (Informant 1, WFP).*

---

[4] Arabic, which is the official language in Syria, is written from right to left (Mejdell 2020).

Several ideas for adjustments were done during this early stage of the development period, and part of the task was to decide which ideas were feasible, realistic and would actually improve the system, and which would not. According to Van de Ven (1999), this is an important part of the innovation process and in many ways what "separates the wheat from the chaff". It is easy to get too *inventive* and as informant 5 expressed it: "In WFP, there are many weird, 'Gyro Gearloose[5]' solutions". Still, I will argue that during the innovation process of the electronic system, WFP managed to filter out the best solutions.

One of the important adjustments that were done during this period, according to the informants, was the adjustments related to reducing the risks associated with the system. As explained in the ALNAP model, there are considerable risks associated with humanitarian innovation because you are experimenting with new solutions in environments where people are very vulnerable. A big part of the humanitarian innovation process is, therefore, to constantly monitor and reduce the risks (Obrecht and Warner 2016). Referring to the introduction of additional aspects of the e-card, like biomatrix and iris scan, informant 1 made this comment about the challenges in working with vulnerable people:

> *"Those are all aspects that become very sensitive in environments where people are very vulnerable. We had to make sure that there was proper data protection etc."* *(Informant 1, WFP).*

Besides informant 1 from WFP, several of the other informants were mentioning how ensuring data protection issues and mitigating associated risks was a big part of the development of the system. But when I asked more about what had been done in order to deal with the risks, the answers were not as clear. According to the NGO I was speaking to, apparently, there are still several risks associated with the system, especially concerning the possibility that personal data will get into the hands of unauthorized people.

Consequently, what I have defined as stream 1 of the developmental period of the innovation process was concerning adjustment and refinement of the e-card pilot, based on convergent and divergent activities, especially including technical corrections; and adjustments relating to mitigation of risks.

---

[5] The informant is referring to Gyro Gearloose, a fictional character created by The Walt Disney Company. Gyro Gearloose is known for his creative, but maybe not so useful, inventions (Inducks n.d.).

What I have defined as stream 2 of the developmental period of the innovation process is related to the stream of activities that were happening in parallel to the adjustments and refining of the system, relating to the establishment of a common card for humanitarian assistance in Lebanon.

In parallel with WFP's development of an e-card system, UNHCR developed its own system for the distribution of cash assistance to refugees through ATM cards (Creti 2015; UNHCR 2017a). On top of that, several NGOs also developed electronic cash-based systems for humanitarian assistance (Overseas Development Institute 2017).

At the beginning of the crisis, the donors had an "arms-length distance" to the UN and the NGO's response to the crisis, but as the crisis continued they became more aware of and involved in the efficiency issues related to the response, especially concerning all the different e-card systems. As well as the donors getting more involved in the process, as we shall see, WFP at HQ level did play a more prominent role in this part of the process than they did in the initial period.

According to the ALNAP model, during the development period of a humanitarian innovation process, due to the short timeline of humanitarian actions, the organizations within the humanitarian system often move away from a good idea or initiative because there is no time available for that. Therefore, many humanitarian innovations end at this point (Obrecht and Warner 2016). Based on this argument, I would argue that it was precise because both the UN system and the donors experienced a long-lasting humanitarian crisis, that it was possible to develop a complex system for humanitarian assistance. To develop such a system takes time and resources and would probably not have been possible, in line with the argument in the ALNAP model (Obrecht and Warner 2016), in contrast with a more concentrated crisis, for example, a tsunami or a hurricane, or in crises with fewer financial and human resources.

The humanitarian crisis in Lebanon on the other hand, was far from short-term. As explained in Chapter 4, the UN's and the donor countries' humanitarian strategies have changed during the last decade in order to meet the increased humanitarian needs, characterized by longer and more complex crises. This second stream of the developmental period seems to have been highly influenced by the changes in humanitarian strategies. Many donors, especially ECHO and DFID, saw the humanitarian response in Lebanon as a context in which the recommendations from the "The Secretary-General's five-year action agenda" as well as their

national humanitarian strategies (concerning efficiency, increased use of cash and joint approaches), could be put into practice (Overseas Development Institute 2017).

DFID and ECHO, in accordance with their national humanitarian strategies, found the fragmentation of humanitarian assistance through e-cards and e-vouchers challenging for several reasons. The main reason was that they saw it as ineffective to have many different systems; "In 2014, 30 organizations were involved in providing cash and vouchers for at least 14 different objectives, resulting in many households receiving different transfers from different organizations" (Overseas Development Institute 2017). The second reason was that there was a risk of giving double assistance to some refugees and nothing to others. In 2014, a DFID study reported estimates of 100,000 duplicate cards (Venton et al. 2015).

Accordingly, DFID and ECHO argued that a common electronic system used by both the UN agencies and the NGOs for humanitarian assistance in Lebanon would be more effective. In order to verify their assumptions, DFID and ECHO ordered an independent analysis from the consultancy firm Avenir Analytics. In compliance with DFID and ECHO's assumptions, the analysis concluded that:

> *"The optimal operational set-up for multi-actor provision of unconditional cash grants is the use of a common delivery mechanism, which would allow negotiating better rates, assisting hard-to-reach populations, and responding to sudden influxes or scale downs"(Avenir Analytics 2014, 10).*

The fragmented system also implied challenges for the refugees and the shopkeepers, which respectively had to report their expenditures and incomes to several humanitarian actors. The fragmented system made the refugees confused; and the shopkeepers had many contractors that they had to deal with (UNICEF 2016). The advocates for a common system argued that it would be more manageable for the refugees and that they would not need to participate in separate training or distributions (Overseas Development Institute 2017).

The change in priorities and ECHO and DFID's desire to harmonize the e-card and e-voucher systems in Lebanon lead to what the innovation journey model defines as the *criteria shift* in the innovation process. At this point, the focus for WFP was no longer only to make an electronic and more effective system for humanitarian assistance, but also to look at the possibility of streamlining the systems of the different humanitarian actors, in order to meet the requirements of the donors. It appears to be that the reason for this was that WFP understood where "the wind was blowing". They understood that the donors, especially ECHO and DFID,

were moving towards supporting more harmonized cash responses. They did not want to lose their relevance and therefore decided to "beat the donors to the punch" and harmonize their cash assistance before the donors made it a requirement.

Besides being a criterion shift in the innovation process, this step towards harmonization of the fragmented card systems can also be seen as an adjustment of the social or humanitarian motivation for the innovation. As already explained, a humanitarian problem is usually the push for humanitarian innovation. While as we saw earlier in this chapter, the humanitarian problem which was the push and motivation behind establishing an electronic, cash-based system was the efficiency and effectiveness issues related to humanitarian assistance to the high influx of refugees caused by the Syrian civil war. Now, the social problem according to the donors was the fragmentation of the system, which lead to confusion for the refugees and the risk of giving twice to some refugees and nothing to others. Thereby, they had contributed to change the motivation for the innovation of the system, which has gone from finding a more efficient and effective system for humanitarian innovation to a less fragmented and streamlined system for humanitarian assistance. However, the root of the problem, and the main social and humanitarian problem was still the humanitarian crises due to the Syrian civil war, but the main motivation for the innovation process had changed.

In the innovation journey model, the authors make the argument that the investors and top management have different roles and interests during the developmental period of an innovation process; while the investors are mostly concerned with profit and economic growth, the top management tends to be the driving force for organizational growth and initiation of new activities. Together they "serve as checks and balances on one another" (Van de Ven et al. 1999). In this case, the donors can be seen as the investors as they are responsible for the funding of the innovation, while WFP at HQ level can be seen as the top management because they are in charge of the actual implementation of the innovation. WFP at HQ level, on the other hand, is the driving force for organizational growth and initiation of new activities or innovation.

Even though Van de Ven et al.'s (1999) argument is related to increased profit, and therefore refers to innovation in private firms, I would still argue that that the argument is suitable for explaining the case of the innovation process of the One Common Card system. One of ECHO and DIFID's main interest is to get good value for money. They are not "investing in", in this case, funding, WFP in order to get increased profit; they are funding in order to implement their humanitarian policies. In other words, the more of their humanitarian policies that can be implemented with as little funding as possible, the better. As with the largest investors in a

private firm, the largest donors naturally have more power to influence policy decisions and strategic plans, than smaller donors. According to informal conversations I had in Lebanon with representatives from the donor community, this was also the case in Lebanon. Consequently, the largest donors to WFP, and the other UN agencies, could influence and push for a harmonized system for humanitarian assistance in Lebanon.

In line with the arguments above, it appears to be that WFP, strongly influenced by the largest donors, in December 2014, established a partnership with the Lebanon Cash Consortium (LCC) on a common card for humanitarian assistance, named the OneCard (not to be confused with the One Common Card system). The idea behind the OneCard was to offer other humanitarian agencies the opportunity to channel their funds into that card (Creti 2015; WFP 2015b). This marks an important step towards the One Common Card system (LOUISE).

According to both the innovation journey model and the ALNAP model, the developmental period of, respectively, an innovation process in general and a humanitarian innovation process in particular consists of informal and formal creations of relationships with others. The relationship that was created with LCC is an example of one of the relationships that were created. What is particularly interesting about this relationship, is that LCC was apparently really pushing for a unified system together with WFP. Informant 8, from the NGO, put it like this:

> "The LCC pushed really hard for the harmonization for a while because they felt that WFP was 'dragging their feet' a bit and that they were not so into it." (Informant 8, NGO).

The reason why this is interesting is that one would think that the NGOs that constituted the LCC would be concerned that a big actor like WFP would override LCC completely if they came together on one card, but, according to my informants, it seems as if LCC were more worried about losing their relevance and therefore pushed for a more harmonized system.

In addition to the LCC/WFP partnership an important collaboration that was created during this period, was when WFP, UNHCR, and LCC later in 2014 started conversations with the donors in order to discuss the possibility of coming together on one card (Creti 2015). The idea suggested by the donors was that UNHCR should join the WFP/LCC OneCard because it had the highest coverage rate (Creti 2015). But, as we shall see, WFP and UNHCR were not too happy with this idea.

According to the innovation journey model, the developmental period of an innovation process contains a lot of setbacks. Van de Ven et al. (1999) make the argument that rather than trying to avoid setbacks, the innovators should reflect on how it will influence the outcome (Van de Ven et al. 1999). The setback that seems to have been the most challenging for WFP and WFP's collaborators during this process was the process of trying to streamline WFP's and UNHCR's cash assistance in Lebanon. Even though WFP and LCC had tried to meet with the donors' requirements by establishing a common platform, the donors were still not satisfied. The platform developed by WFP and LCC had one card, but both organizations could program their funds through the card. But the donors wanted just *one* agency in charge of cash programming in Lebanon: *one* card and *one* agency only.

This statement, made by DFID in a response to a blog on the Cash Learning Partnership discussion group, highlights the donors' objective:

> *"The sooner humanitarian actors in Lebanon can provide a system that can be co-funded by development actors, the better. Streamlining of systems and rationalization of actors involved is critical for that aim." (DFID response to a blog on the Cash Learning Partnership discussion group).*

According to my informants, WFP, UNHCR, and LCC were very frustrated by the donors' push towards "one card one agency". Informant 9 from UNHCR puts it like this:

> *"Some donors were very dogmatic in their thinking"* (Informant 7, Donor).

WFP and UNHCR perceived that the donors were talking about collaboration but were fostering competition: they wanted the UN agencies to collaborate to meet the complex humanitarian needs in Lebanon, but at the same time they wanted to support just *one* cash program.

WFP and UNHCR also perceived that ECHO and DFID were so concerned with establishing a harmonized system, and thereby meet their political objectives, that they did not consider the advantages of having different systems, as well as the advantages of different UN agencies having different mandates.

According to my informants, WFP and UNHCR tried to argue that there were several advantages of having different UN agencies, and NGOs, as parts of a common system. The main advantage was apparently that the different agencies have different mandates and areas of

expertise and this is fruitful in order to deal with a complex crisis. Informant 9 from UNHCR puts it like this:

> *To have different modalities among the UN-agencies (diversity) proved to be fruitful, we approach things in different ways. It´s productive* (Informant 9, UNHCR).

Informant 9 also from UNHCR also argues why DFID and ECHO were perceived to be dogmatic in their thinking:

> *DFID and ECHO were very dogmatic when it came to this, it was a long conversation. DFID and ECHO wanted one agency to do cash. WFP, UNHCR, and UNICEF were a bit frustrated about this approach from the donors and were saying "the donors should help us working together". The donors in many ways pushed for competition between the UN agencies (Informant 9, UNHCR).*

Based on informal conversations I had with the donor community in Lebanon, many made it clear that not all the donors supported the pragmatic attitude of ECHO and DFID. Some of them, especially the Nordic donors tried to get ECHO and DFID to make a compromise with UNHCR and WFP, but without succeeding. As noted earlier, the largest donors have more power to influence policymaking in the UN organizations than the smaller donors.

According to the innovation journey model setbacks are dealt with from the top-management level (Van de Ven et al. 1999). In this case, the headquarters of WFP and UNHCR became involved in negotiations around a common system (Creti 2015). Until this point, according to my informants, the WFP and UNHCR headquarters had not been very involved in the innovation process, other than providing technical, legal, and programmatic assistance to their respective Country Offices.

5.1.2.2 PILOT OF A COMMON CARD BETWEEN WFP AND UNHCR

Following the discussions at the HQ level, an agreement was signed between UNHCR and WFP in June 2015 to come together on one card (Overseas Development Institute 2017). In July 2015, UNHCR and WFP developed a one common card pilot based on WFP's OneCard. On this platform, the UNHCR could provide cash assistance, via WFP e-vouchers (WFP 2015c). In the pilot, there were two "wallets": one voucher wallet used by WFP and one cash wallet used by UNHCR (Creti 2015). In this way, the beneficiaries could use one card to access both food and cash assistance. The pilot did therefore not meet the full requirements of the donors,

since even though it was just *one* card, several agencies were running the system. Informant 7 from WFP, highlights how this harmonization was based on the donors' push:

> *"In July 2015 the UNHCR was pushed by donors to join WFP´s system. The thinking was that since LCC was able to join, so could UNHCR. We made a small pilot on this collaboration"* (Informant 7, WFP).

According to the ALNAP model, when conducting a pilot in the humanitarian system, it is important to include the beneficiaries and end-users in the process (Obrecht and Warner 2016). In this case, the beneficiaries took part in the process by being asked whether they preferred one common card or separate cards after the pilot had been conducted. The evaluation found that 47 % of the beneficiaries preferred one common card, mainly due to "its user-friendliness". 16 % preferred two separate cards, mainly due to being afraid of losing that only card, and 37 % did not express any preference (Creti 2015).

In addition to evaluating the beneficiaries' perception of the One Common Card system, the pilot was also evaluated in terms of possible efficiency gains.

The evaluation found that the common card reduced costs *"owing to pre-negotiated agreements, reduced aggregate card numbers, and shared cost"* (Creti 2015, 25). However, the evaluation also found that the WFP/UNHCR arrangement *"created inefficiencies in communication and implementation, as well as lack of clarity about roles and responsibilities"* (Creti 2015, 26).

Therefore, the concluding recommendation from the evaluation was the following:

> *"In the current Lebanon context, due to the outreach and level of development of the two existing card systems, as well as the different expectations of the agencies involved, it is advantageous to keep both card systems"* (Creti 2015, 26).

Despite the recommendation of continuing with different agencies providing different systems, the donors kept pushing the agencies for coming together on *one* card with *one* responsible agency.

It seems like UNHCR, WFP, and LCC were desperate to find a solution that would still allow all the different agencies to continue cash assistance in Lebanon. They started conversations with UNICEF and together they began developing a system based on their different programmatic areas (Overseas Development Institute 2017). Informant 1 from WFP, who was a central part of the process told me that:

That step of bringing everyone, all the actors, onto one card is something that takes time, takes leadership, takes good connection between UNHCR, UNICEF, and WFP at the time. You need to be mindful of what the institutions, or mandate functions of the various agencies are, and a bit of what the politics of the UN agencies is. I think we were lucky that we navigated that well between the head of UNHCR [in Lebanon], the head of UNICEF [in Lebanon] and myself [as the head of WFP in Lebanon]. We sat together, we figured out: 'so what is the best interest of the beneficiaries, what's the best interest of the donors, and how can we make it work with the environment and the team that we have'." (Informant 1, WFP).

What seems to have been an important part of this stage of the process is that the UN agencies, together with LCC, managed to develop a system whereby all the different actors could continue with their mandate and their area of expertise and still meet some of the requirements of the donors. It could have been tempting for one of them to "leave" the others and satisfy the donors' complete requirements alone, a bit like the "prisoner's dilemma"[6]. However, they decided to collaborate.

This marks the transitions towards the actual implementation of the One Common Card system.

5.1.2.3 MAIN DRIVERS AND IMPORTANT PRECONDITIONS IN THE DEVELOPMENTAL PERIOD

In conclusion, what can be defined as the developmental period of the innovation seems to have been influenced by, on the one hand, the making of an e-card pilot and subsequent adjustment to the pilot. Lebanon's well-functioning banking-system appears to have been an important institutional condition for the rollout of the e-card system.

On the other hand, this period was influenced by the donor push for the development of a common card system across the UN agencies and the NGOs. During this period the motivation for the continued innovation changed from being about increased efficiency of humanitarian assistance to develop a common card system in order to reduce the fragmentation of cash-based assistance in Lebanon.

In the development period ECHO and DFID, as donors, played prominent roles in choosing the direction of the innovation. They were very eager to put humanitarian political objectives into

---

[6] The prisoner's dilemma is, in game theory, a situation in a two-person game where each player can confess or hold tight (Poundstone 1992).

practice. This caused tensions between the UN agencies and the donors, mainly because the UN agencies perceived that the donors were talking about collaboration but were fostering competition.

WFP and UNHCR met the donors "halfway" and developed a pilot of *one* system with *one* card. This system included the different agencies in running the system.

At the end of what I have defined as the developmental period of the innovation process, WFP, UNHCR, UNICEF and LCC started conversations on coming together on one common card.

Table 12 summarizes the findings from the developmental period based on the analytical framework presented in Chapter 2.

	Initial period 2012-2013	Developmental period 2013-2016	Implementation period 2016
	o The humanitarian crisis in Lebanon		
SOCIAL PROBLEM	o Distribution of basic assistance through food parcels/ paper vouchers is: - Inefficient and ineffective - Problematic for the local economy - Problematic in terms of refugees' dignity	o Fragmented cash-based systems - Inefficient and ineffective - Confusing and difficult for the refugees	
NOVEL SOLUTION	o An e-card for distribution of humanitarian assistance	o OneCard for distribution of humanitarian assistance	
ACTORS AND NETWORKS	o WFP o BLF o MasterCard		
		o LCC o UNHCR o ECHO o DFID	
INSTITUTIONAL AND CONTEXTUAL CONDITIONS	o Lebanon's "Out of camp" policy		
	o The 2012 UN Action Agenda o UN's gradual move towards more use of cash and digital solutions	o Well-functioning banking system in Lebanon o ECHO and DIFID wish to put humanitarian political objectives into practice	
Time →			

Table 12 The developmental period of the innovation process

5.1.3 THE IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD OF THE INNOVATION PROCESS

The implementation period of the innovation process, according to the innovation journey model, consists of either adoption or failure (Van de Ven et al. 1999), hence this chapter is shorter than the chapters of the initial period and the developmental period. However, implementation already starts in the developmental period when the organization is replacing or integrating new activities with old ones (Van de Ven et al. 1999). In this case, I would say that the implementation started already when WFP started concentrated efforts in order to develop a common card for humanitarian assistance in Lebanon based on the recommendations from the donors.

However, I would argue that the moment of adoption was when WFP, UNHCR, UNICEF, and LCC, in December 2016, officially launched Lebanon's One unified Inter-Organizational System for E-cards (LOUISE). LOUISE was a system for humanitarian assistance with a common platform, not owned by or attributed to any agency. The idea was to have "a system consisting of one common vulnerability assessment, one financial service provider, one distribution of e-cards, one monitoring and evaluation system, one training for beneficiaries, one communication system, one call-center for e-card queries and one informant portal" (LOUISE 2020). As with the one common card pilot, the refugees could use the card in WFP contracted shops to spend vouchers, and to withdraw multipurpose cash received by UNHCR or NGOs from ATMs. (Overseas Development Institute 2017).

In other words, the agencies had "met the donors halfway" with *one* system, as in the pilot, but including *all* the agencies. Informant 8 from the NGO expressed the motivation behind the decision like this:

> "A decision was taken to create the LOUISE [the One Common Card system], and to say 'you want a harmonized system? A harmonized card? You want everything to happen in one way? We have a consortium, and we will harmonize our criteria finally. We will listen to you. We will have one card, we will have one way of working, but all three of us will get the funding.'" (Informant 8, NGO).

The donors, on the other hand, were not completely satisfied with the result. As explained by informant 8, LOUISE rather became a compromise between the agencies and the donors:

> "LOUISE [the One Common Card system] was not what the donors wanted because they did not want to fund all these different agencies, but this was the compromise that came between the UN agencies and the donor agencies. (Informant 8, NGO).

Also, Informant 9 from UNHCR explains how LOUISE became a compromise between the agencies and the donors:

> *"LOUISE [the One Common Card system] was a kind of compromise from the UN-agencies side. With one system, but more agencies" (Informant 9, UNHCR).*

The One Common Card system was first-of-its-kind in that it unified the way humanitarian assistance was delivered at a country level (UNHCR 2017c; UNICEF 2016). The innovation was incremental, but it was a system change. Philippe Lazzarini, the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Lebanon at that time, expressed it like this:

> *"UN agencies and the Lebanon Cash Consortium have come together in a much-needed effort to make the delivery of aid as straightforward as can be for vulnerable refugees in Lebanon"(UNHCR 2017c).*

The e-card itself was, and still is, a re-usable and re-loadable plastic prepaid card with a magnetic strip (like an ordinary bank card). The electronic platform was managed by WFP and enabled financial transactions in partnership with MasterCard and BLF. The card allowed the refugees to receive assistance in the form of both electronic value transfers, and optional cash withdrawal through ATMs. In this way, the refugees could cover food, non-food, and cash needs through one single pre-paid e-card. The card was personal and was uploaded with USD 27 by WFP each month (WFP 2020a).

In addition to WFP, other UN agencies or NGOs could upload restricted or unrestricted cash to the card. Each card had a maximum number of five wallets, or sub-accounts, assigned to different humanitarian actors for various types of assistance. The card could be used at either a point of sale (such as WFP contracted shops) or an ATM to withdraw cash. The 480 shops were located across the country, and the transactions could be done at any ATM, regardless of bank. After a transaction, the refugee received an SMS message with the value spent, and the remaining balance on the card.

Nearly 70% of Syrian households registered with UNHCR as refugees' households in Lebanon now hold a common card in 2020. The assistance delivered through the common cash card now makes up the largest proportion of assistance to Syrian refugees, with around 650,000 Syrian refugees receiving USD 27 each month on the e-card (UNHCR n.d.). The card is also used for other kinds of cash assistance directed towards the most vulnerable refugees in need of additional support (UNHCR n.d.).

5.1.3.1 MAIN DRIVERS AND IMPORTANT PRECONDITIONS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD

In conclusion, what can be defined as the implementation period of the innovation process was first and foremost the final decision by the UN agencies and LCC to defy some of the requirements of the donors and launch the One Common Card system (LOUISE). The reason for this was motivated by the UN agencies' fear of losing their funding and mandate, and LCC's fear of losing their relevance.

Table 13 summarizes the findings from the implementation period based on the analytical framework presented in Chapter 2. The table now shows the whole innovation process through the lenses of my analytical framework.

	Initial period 2012-2013	Developmental period 2013-2016	Implementation period 2016
	The humanitarian crisis in Lebanon		
SOCIAL PROBLEM	o Distribution of basic assistance through food parcels/ paper vouchers is: - Inefficient and ineffective - Problematic for the local economy - Problematic in terms of refugees' dignity	o Fragmented cash-based systems - Inefficient and ineffective - Confusing and difficult for the refugees	
NOVEL SOLUTION	o An e-card for distribution of humanitarian assistance	o OneCard for distribution of humanitarian assistance	o The One Common Card system
ACTORS AND NETWORKS	o WFP o BLF o MasterCard		
	o LCC o UNHCR o ECHO o DFID		
INSTITUTIONAL AND CONTEXTUAL CONDITIONS	o Lebanon's "Out of camp" policy		
	o The 2012 UN Action Agenda o UN's gradual move towards more use of cash and digital solutions	o Well-functioning banking system in Lebanon ECHO and DIFID wish to put humanitarian political objectives into practice	
	Time →		

Table 13 The implementation period of the innovation process

This chapter has provided the reader with a detailed understanding of the innovation process of the One Common Car system. In the following chapter, the most important drivers and preconditions for the process as such and how this affected the outcome will be discussed based on the specific research questions.

6 DISCUSSION

6.1 RQ 1: HOW DID THE HUMANITARIAN CRISIS IN SYRIA TRIGGER THE SEARCH FOR NOVEL SOLUTIONS IN THE HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO REFUGEES IN LEBANON?

It is clear that the Syrian civil war and the following humanitarian crisis in Lebanon triggered WFP's search for novel solutions in order to meet the needs of the high influx of refugees at the beginning of the innovation process. This is in line with the common understanding within the literature on social and humanitarian innovation, that social and humanitarian problems trigger the search for novel solutions (Lawrence, Dover, and Gallagher 2014; Mulgan 2006; Obrecht and Warner 2016; Phills, Deiglmeier, and Miller 2008). Furthermore, it appears that the challenges relating to the efficiency and effectiveness issues associated with in-kind distribution and paper vouchers were the main motivation behind WFP's search for a novel solution at the beginning of the innovation process.

Van de Ven et al.'s (1999) argument that innovation goes through a gestation period of several years also showed to be a useful analytical tool in this case. The humanitarian crisis in Lebanon increased in severity during the first months of WFP's humanitarian operation and led to a breakdown in the paper voucher system for humanitarian assistance. This *shock* led WFP to rethink the modality of humanitarian assistance. WFP had already started to experiment with cash-based and electronic ways of distribution, ahead of the humanitarian crisis in Lebanon, and the crisis proved to be a "golden" opportunity, where WFP could test and put ideas into practice.

However, the previous chapter showed how the social problem *changed* over time, and so did the novel solution to that problem. During the initial period, the social problem was the efficiency and effectiveness associated with the in-kind system and the paper voucher system related to the humanitarian assistance due to the high influx of refugees, but the social problem changed when the cash-based assistance in Lebanon became fragmented.

Strongly encouraged by the donors, WFP started to experiment with novel solutions to harmonize their e-card system with the systems of other agencies. This step is in line with what Van de Ven et al. (1999) define as the *criteria shift* in the innovation process. At this point, the motivation behind the innovation was not just the social and humanitarian problems related to the high influx of refugees, but also the donors' wish to streamline cash assistance.

Consequently, WFP harmonized their system with LCC, and the novel solution was the OneCard.

But as we saw, the donors were still not satisfied, and again WFP, in collaboration with the other agencies had to rethink the system for humanitarian assistance. The humanitarian crisis was now more of a background motivation, while it was the donors' policies that triggered the search for novel solutions. WFP, together with UNICEF, UNHCR, and LCC ended up "meeting the donors halfway" and launched LOUISE.

In conclusion, at the beginning of the innovation process, the search for a novel solution was highly influenced by the Syrian civil war and the humanitarian crisis in Lebanon. However, eventually the motivation behind the search for a novel solution was to a greater extent influenced by the donors' wish to streamline cash assistance in Lebanon. Therefore, the ALNAP model (Obrecht and Warner 2016) and the perception within the field of social and humanitarian innovation (Elhra 2018; Lawrence, Dover, and Gallagher 2014; Obrecht and Warner 2016; Ramalingam et al. 2015; Westley and McGowan 2017) fall somewhat short of explaining how the social or humanitarian problem is not the only factor that motivates the search for novel solutions. In this case, contextual conditions, especially the humanitarian policies of ECHO and DIFID were also important triggers for WFP's search for novel solutions. The ALNAP model does not satisfactorily address how the motivation for humanitarian innovation may change during the innovation process.

6.2 RQ 2: HOW DID INSTITUTIONAL AND CONTEXTUAL CONDITIONS INFLUENCE THE EMERGENCE AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE ONE COMMON CARD SYSTEM?

The studied case is very complex, and it was difficult to draw a line when deciding which institutional and contextual conditions I should focus on in this study. I decided to choose those conditions that were most prominent in the documents I analyzed. Few innovations happen in a vacuum; this study is a clear example of that. The innovation process was influenced by national, regional, and global contextual conditions as well as national institutional conditions. All these conditions fall into what Van de Ven et al. (1999) define as *endogenous constraints.*

The national conditions served both as constraints and as possibilities. In terms of constraints, the Lebanese immigration policy, especially the "Out-of-camp" policy, pushed WFP and the other agencies to think differently about the modality of humanitarian assistance. With refugees

living all over the country, an e-card system proved to be much more effective than the distribution of paper-vouchers or food parcels.

In terms of possibilities, Lebanon's market structure and financial system made it possible to scale an e-card system without having to improve the banking infrastructure. Many of the informants argued that they think a system like this would have been impossible in contexts with weak banking infrastructure.

The contextual condition that appears to have been most prominent in influencing and shaping the innovation process of the One Common Card, is the way that both the UN system and the largest donors during the last decade have moved towards a) increasing use of cash-based assistance and b) more use of modern technology and digital solutions. This contextual condition seems strongly interlinked with the characteristics of the humanitarian crisis due to the Syrian civil war. The humanitarian crisis proved to be one of the crises in which it was possible to put the changing UN and donor countries' humanitarian policies into practice, mainly due to a) the prolonged crisis, b) the institutional conditions and c) a large amount of funding. In many ways, the humanitarian response in Lebanon became a laboratory for global and national strategies for humanitarian innovation.

Theories on social innovations stress how social innovation is strongly influenced by context and institutions, and although they may be quite incremental, many require fundamental and systemic change (Lawrence, Dover, and Gallagher 2014; Lettice and Parekh 2010). The Common Card system changed the system for humanitarian assistance in Lebanon, by making it cash-based; electronic; and delivered through *one* common card. It was incremental, but it was a system change.

Even though theories on social innovation highlight the importance of context and institutions, theories on humanitarian innovations, including the ALNAP model (Obrecht and Warner 2016) do not sufficiently take into consideration *how* institutional and contextual conditions influence a humanitarian innovation process (Betts and Bloom 2014; Elhra 2018; Ramalingam et al. 2015). The ALNAP model has a very process-oriented perspective that does not address the larger system in which the process is embedded. I would argue that the model is more suitable for analyzing humanitarian innovation processes that are less complex and to a lesser extent is influenced by the larger system in which the process is embedded. Since the innovation process of the One Common Card system is very complex, it was useful to combine the innovation journey model with the ALNAP model, as the innovation journey model takes contextual and institutional conditions into consideration (Van de Ven et al. 1999).

In conclusion, because this innovation process was highly influenced by institutional and contextual conditions, it was useful to combine the ALNAP model and the innovation journey model. Even though a combination of the innovation journey model and the ALNAP model to some extent is useful in order to explain these aspects of the process, it would have been fruitful to have an analytical framework that to a greater extent opens for the complexities associated with a humanitarian innovation process, especially how contextual and institutional conditions influence humanitarian innovation processes. However, due to the absence of such a model, I think that combining the ALNAP model with the innovation journey model was a productive approach. In the future, it would be appropriate to include contextual and institutional conditions in the ALNAP model to make it a more comprehensive tool for analyzing complex humanitarian innovation processes.

6.3 RQ 3: WHICH ACTORS WERE DOMINANT IN THE PROCESS AND HOW DID THEY SHAPE THE PROCESS?

In addition to being complex in terms of contextual and institutional conditions, the studied case is also complex in terms of the actors that influenced the process. Again, a demarcation was needed. In this study, I chose to focus on the actors that had been directly involved in the process, because I considered them as most likely of having shaped and influenced the innovation process.

Since the idea and initiative of the e-card system, which later became the One Common Card system came from WFP in Lebanon, they were the most prominent actor, at least in the initial period of the innovation process. In many ways, it seems that WFP, as a relief organization, is innovative "by default", because they constantly must respond quickly to new needs. There also seems to be a perception both inside and outside WFP, that WFP is an organization that has developed a culture for innovation. Both at the HQ-level and at country level, the organization is described by the informants as "forward-leaning" in the way they were thinking about different ways of meeting increased needs. At the same time, there was a huge amount of funding available, which created a "window of opportunity" in experimenting with and implementing new solutions.

Therefore, WFP in Lebanon was able to immediately respond to the increased influx of refugees by coming up with more effective and efficient solutions for humanitarian assistance. The possibility to do so was influenced by the national institutional conditions presented above, as well as the increased funding from the donors. As emphasized by the ALNAP model (Obrecht

and Warner 2016), WFP included the beneficiaries in the design and evaluation of the e-card pilot, which proved to be important for the user-friendliness of the solution.

When it comes to collaboration with the private sector, this study has shown that it can be productive to establish collaboration between UN-agencies and private enterprises when initiating and developing humanitarian innovations. The ALNAP model (Obrecht and Warner 2016) highlights that within the field of humanitarian innovation, there is an acknowledgment of the importance of collaboration between humanitarian actors and private actors, but that there still are many barriers to achieve this. Since this study just provides insight from one particular case it is difficult to say something about the success factors of innovation collaboration between private and humanitarian actors in general. However, two factors appear to have been important for the UN/private sector collaboration in this case. Firstly, that WFP delegated the responsibility for the technical aspects of the innovation to BLF and MasterCard. In that way, WFP themselves did not need to develop new technology but could lean on an already existing instrument. Secondly, it was productive to collaborate with a *national* bank, which was aware of the national context. Both these factors would be important to consider when initiating and developing humanitarian innovations in the future. They can contribute to the understanding within the field of humanitarian innovation research regarding what precisely productive collaboration between humanitarian actors and the private sector involves.

During the developmental period of the innovation process, it appears that WFP in Lebanon to a lesser extent than in the initial period had the opportunity to influence the innovation process. This was due to the increased involvement of the donors, especially ECHO and DFID. While it seems like the donors at the beginning of the humanitarian crisis let the agencies do what they wanted, as the crisis continued the donors were increasingly asking more questions about the efficiency and effectiveness of the response, especially regarding the fragmentation of cash-based assistance, as the crisis continued. The donors "sat with the money bag" and could consequently influence the direction of the innovation. They did not want a fragmented solution, but a unified system using only *one* card, backed by WFP, UNHCR, UNICEF, and LCC.

The developmental period was also dominated by conflicts of interests between the donors, the UN agencies, and the NGOs. The WFP and UNHCR were arguing that the different UN agencies had different mandates and that the donors, by asking for just *one* agency for cash-assistance in Lebanon were fostering competition. The NGOs, on their side, were afraid of losing their relevance.

89

The aim of this study was not to decide whether the NGOs should have been more included in the process or not, or whether WFP or UNHCR deserved to be the lead agency of the system, but rather to contribute to the understanding of how the dynamics between different actors in a humanitarian innovation process work. This study has examined some of the conflict lines that existed, and thus contributed to an understanding of what potential conflict lines can be found when carrying out innovation in a humanitarian setting. The ALNAP model addresses that collaboration and partnerships are important in order to succeed in humanitarian innovation (Obrecht and Warner 2016). However, the model does not satisfactorily address what the challenging parts of collaboration can be and how to tackle them.

What is a bit paradoxical, is that all the different actors involved in the innovation process of the One Common Card system agree that there is a need to make the humanitarian system more effective and efficient. At the same time, everyone I talked to highlights why maintaining *their* specific role and *their* specific mandate is very important for effective humanitarian actions. I think this illustrates how innovation in humanitarian action is not just about good ideas and innovative organizations, but is highly political and influenced by different actors with individual interests. This is something I would argue is not satisfactorily addressed neither in the ALNAP model (Obrecht and Warner 2016), nor in the humanitarian innovation literature in general (Betts and Bloom 2014; Elhra 2018; Ramalingam et al. 2015).

To establish good collaboration between the different actors is difficult, but not impossible. I think this study shows how WFP managed to maneuver between the humanitarian actors and interests and still develop a first-of-its-kind system for humanitarian assistance. As noted in the introduction, the system is not bulletproof, but it is an important step towards a more effective and less fragmented system for humanitarian assistance.

The strong pressure ECHO and DFID put on the UN agencies to develop a common card system challenges parts of the literature on humanitarian innovation processes, this is because donor/humanitarian agencies relations work differently from market-based relations. This study has illustrated how the donors may have a lot of power to influence innovation processes. However, how these dynamics work is to my understanding not covered sufficiently in the literature on innovation processes in general (Garud, Tuertscher, and Van de Ven 2013; Pavitt 2006; Van de Ven et al. 1999; Van de Ven 2017) nor in the literature on humanitarian innovation processes more specifically (Betts and Bloom 2014; Obrecht and Warner 2016; Ramalingam et al. 2015). Even though Van de Ven et al. (1999) explain how the dynamics between funders and top management influence the innovation process, this argument does not

90

cover the aspects of the donor/humanitarian agencies' relationship relating to the political objectives of the donors.

In conclusion, the case has illustrated that humanitarian innovation can be a complex interaction between many actors. The One Common Card system (LOUISE) became a compromise between the UN agencies and the donors after a long period of discussions and challenges. This study has illustrated that an important part of a humanitarian innovation process is that it involves many actors and is influenced by many contextual and institutional conditions. This is not sufficiently addressed in the humanitarian innovation literature (Betts and Bloom 2014; Obrecht and Warner 2016; Ramalingam et al. 2015).

This study has illustrated that humanitarian innovations can be inherently complex. I would, therefore, argue that it is important to consider the different interests and contextual conditions in a humanitarian innovation process and work *with* them rather than pretend that they do not exist. This is an important overarching argument of the innovation journey model (Van de Ven et al. 1999) which I think is highly relevant for this case.

6.4 THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

Altogether, this study has strived to fill a gap in innovation studies concerning how innovation in humanitarian actions is achieved. This has been done by conducting in-depth research on the humanitarian innovation process in a UN agency. A process approach seemed suitable for analyzing this case and to a large extent, my extended perspective provides a good fit for explaining the case.

I chose to combine the ALNAP model for humanitarian innovation processes and the innovation journey model, to have a more suitable analytical tool to explain a humanitarian innovation strongly influenced by contextual and institutional conditions, as well as the interests of different actors and networks. It was fruitful to combine the ALNAP model with the innovation journey model due to the fact that the innovation journey model fell short in explaining how social and humanitarian problems motivate the search for novel solutions; the fact that end-users or beneficiaries are important parts of the humanitarian innovation process; and that different dynamics exist in a humanitarian context relative to a private enterprise or public context.

At the same time the ALNAP model fell short in explaining how institutional or contextual conditions influence and shape the humanitarian innovation process. It therefore proved constructive to combine the ALNAP model with the innovation journey model, because the

91

innovation journey model allowed for the inclusion of the complexities associated with the innovation process of the One Common Card system.

The studied case was complex because it implicated multiple levels of analyses; it involved a diverse set of social actors and material elements; it was inter-temporal, and it was influenced by the contextual settings (Garud, Tuertscher, and Van de Ven 2013). In this way, this study has contributed to new knowledge that is not addressed satisfactorily in the innovation literature concerning that humanitarian innovation can be highly dependent on external conditions and that it involves a complex set of actors with different interests and mandates. Therefore, this study has shown that there is a theory gap regarding humanitarian innovation processes that are influenced by external factors, such as contextual and institutional conditions. This study has been a step towards filling that gap. However, more research on humanitarian innovation processes in which contextual and institutional factors are crucial is needed in order to support the findings from this study.

The purpose of this study has been to understand the drivers, constraints, and preconditions influencing the establishment of the One Common Card system, and by that contribute to the extended understanding of what successful humanitarian innovation looks like. In order to do so, I have examined the overarching research question: *How did the One Common Card system for Syrian refugees in Lebanon emerge and develop over time?* through three specific research questions:

RQ 1: How did the humanitarian crisis in Syria trigger the search for novel solutions in humanitarian assistance to refugees in Lebanon?

RQ 2: How did institutional and contextual conditions influence the emergence and development of the One Common Card system?

RQ 3: Which actors were dominant in the process and how did they influence the process?

Relating to research question 1, the most central findings have been that the humanitarian crisis resulting from the Syrian civil war was an important push for the search for new solutions in the humanitarian action in Lebanon. This contributes to the understanding of the importance of social and humanitarian innovation addressing real needs. However, the motivation of the innovation process changed over time, being increasingly motivated by political objectives, which has taught us that social and humanitarian problems do not necessarily alone influence humanitarian innovations.

Relating to research question 2, the most central findings have been that the global strategic move towards more use of CBT influenced the mindset of the UN agencies responding to the humanitarian crisis in Lebanon as well as the donors funding the actions. This has contributed to the understanding of how humanitarian actions are highly political and influenced by global and national policy objectives. Also, the Lebanese context, including the well-functioning banking system and the Lebanese refugee policy proved to be a fertile ground for the initiation and development of an electronic, cash-based system. This has contributed to the understanding of the importance of considering contextual and institutional constraint during a humanitarian innovation process and work *with* them rather than trying to change them.

Relating to research question 3, the most central findings have been that the innovation process of the One Common Card system has involved several actors with many different interests. WFP availability and willingness to search for new solutions in times of crisis has been crucial.

This has contributed to the understanding that it is important to develop a culture for innovation within humanitarian agencies, so the agencies can quickly respond to increased or new needs through humanitarian innovation. Further, a central finding has been that donors, as funders of the humanitarian operations, have a lot of power to influence the innovation process and that political strategies can sometimes work counterproductively in relation to UN programmatic objectives.

All in all, the innovation process of the One Common Card system has been a complex story, involving many actors at many levels. The combination of the right contextual and institutional conditions; WFP's organizational willingness and ability to search for new solutions; the collaboration with the private sector; and availability of funding, were important drivers and preconditions for the innovation process of the e-card system, which later developed into the One Common Card system. This illustrates the general point made by Van de Ven et al. (1999) that the innovation process is a non-linear cycle of divergent and convergent activities.

7.1 IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE

The practical implications of this study are related to how prolonged and complex humanitarian crises require holistic approaches and coordination between different actors and means. I have the following suggestions for policymaking and humanitarian innovation practice in the future:

First, the donors should strive to focus more on the actual impact their policies have on humanitarian operations. This study has illustrated how the donors at some point became so concerned about achieving political objectives and strategies, that they forgot considering the progress the UN agencies and the NGOs were already making. The focus should be on results, rather than means. Even though political objectives are important to "stake out the course" it is not necessarily what is most effective and efficient on the ground.

This is related to the second practical implication of this study, which is concerning the importance of including field staff and people "on the ground" when initiating and developing humanitarian innovations. It is far between Brussels and Beirut, both in distance and in mindset. One of the major successes of the innovation process of the One Common Card system appeared to be that most of the innovation activities were happening in Beirut, and were thereby close to the actual problem.

Thirdly, the UN agencies should seek to innovate through collaboration and streamlining of their humanitarian programming, when possible. It can be confusing for the refugees to navigate the complex UN system. This study has shown that the UN agencies can collaborate and

streamline humanitarian assistance and still preserve the mandate and the programs of the specific agencies. In that way, the user, i.e. the beneficiary, only has to deal with "one UN", at the same time as the system involves different agencies.

7.2 LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The study comes with several methodological and theoretical limitations, and thereby acts as a starting point for further research. Regarding methodological limitations, mainly due to time and resource constraints, the selection of interview respondents included only 10 informants from an innovation process lasting for more than four years and involving a complex set of actors. This causes limitations both in terms of the applicability of the findings as well as the risk of the selection not being representative. However, I would still argue that the respondents provided useful insight into the innovation process due to the central position most of them have had in the process.

Secondly, as a continuation of the argument above, the one case-design also limits the applicability of the findings. For further research, it is advisable to compare the findings from this study with the humanitarian innovation process in other contexts.

Thirdly, even though DFID and ECHO were important actors of the innovation process, they were not included in the selection of respondents because I did not manage to get hold of them. Many of the documents I analyzed were written on behalf of DFID and ECHO. In that way, I managed to get an understanding of their perspective as well. However, due to the important role they have had in the process, I would still recommend including the perspectives of the donors or funders of humanitarian innovation when doing similar studies in the future.

Regarding theoretical limitations, this case is very complex, there are a lot of actors involved, and it was difficult to narrow down what to include and what not to include. Due to the focus of this study being on the innovation process rather than the impact, I did not include the shopkeepers and beneficiaries as informants. For further research, I would recommend bringing the impact perspective "on the table". In that way, one can address the link between humanitarian innovation and the impact it has had on factors such as the well-being of the beneficiaries or the local economy. This study has focused on how humanitarian and social needs push humanitarian innovation. By focusing on impact, rather than the innovation process, one can examine how social and humanitarian innovation actually contribute to solving humanitarian or social needs.

Secondly, this study has contributed to some understanding of innovation routines and innovation capacity in WFP, but this understanding was not comprehensive. Therefore, it would be useful to dig deeper into innovation routines in WFP, or other UN agencies, in order to understand more about innovation management in inter-governmental organizations. There is a lot of talk about innovation in WFP, and a lot of projects, but it is not that clear what these innovation activities actually involve, and if and how it spurs innovation.

Lastly, even though the chosen theoretical approach fits relatively well in relation to my case, as explained in Chapter 6, neither the innovation journey model nor the ALNAP model cover all the aspects of the innovation process of the One Common Card system. For further research it would, therefore, have been interesting to develop a process model for humanitarian innovation that embeds how contextual and institutional conditions, actors and networks influence the innovation process. One possible way to develop such a process model, would be to compare this study with humanitarian innovations in other contexts using the same analytical framework as has been used in this study.

REFERENCES

Avenir Analytics. 2014. "Research to Identify the Optimal Operational Set-up for Multi-Actor Provision of Unconditional Cash Grants to Syrian Refugees in Lebanon." https://www.alnap.org/help-library/research-to-identify-the-optimal-operational-set-up-for-multi-actor-provision-of.

BBC. 2020. "Lebanon Begins 'total' Shutdown as Cases Increase." *BBC News*, May 13, 2020, sec. Middle East. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-52637725.

Bessant, J. R., and Joseph Tidd. 2013. *Managing Innovation: Integrating Technological, Market and Organizational Change*. 5th ed. Chichester: Wiley.

Betts, Alexander, and Louise Bloom. 2014. "Humanitarian Innovation: The State of the Art." OCHA Policy and Studies Centre. https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/OP9_Understanding%20Innovation_web.pdf.

Boston Consulting Group. 2017. "Food-Restricted Voucher or Unrestricted Cash? How to Best Support Syrian Refugees in Jordan and Lebanon?" https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/wfp291346.pdf.

Bradshaw, M., and Elaine Stratford. 2005. "Qualitative Research Design and Rigour." *Qualitative Research Methods in Human Geography*, January, 67–76.

Cajaiba Santana, Giovany. 2014. "Social Innovation: Moving the Field Forward. A Conceptual Framework." *Technological Forecasting & Social Change* 82: 42. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2013.05.008.

Civil Society Knowledge Centre. 2014. "Official Response to the Syrian Refugee Crisis in Lebanon, the Disastrous Policy of No-Policy." Civil Society Knowledge Centre. January 10, 2014. https://civilsociety-centre.org/paper/official-response-syrian-refugee-crisis-lebanon-disastrous-policy-no-policy.

Cope, Meghan. 2016. "Organizing and Analyzing Qualitative Data." In *Qualitative Research Methods in Human Geography; OUP-Canada, 4th Edition.* https://www.academia.edu/38105514/Organizing_and_Analyzing_Qualitative_Data_in_Hay_I._2016_.

DFID. 2012. "Promoting Innovation and Evidence-Based Approaches to Building Resilience and Responding to Humanitarian Crises: A DFID Strategy Paper." https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-innovation-and-evidence-based-approaches-to-building-resilience-and-responding-to-humanitarian-crises-a-dfid-strategy-paper.

Donor Cash Forum. 2020. "Donor Cash Forum: Humanitarian Cash Transfers in the Response to COVID-19." https://www.sheltercluster.org/sites/default/files/docs/donor_cash_forum_-_humanitarian_cash_transfers_-_covid19_-_202005.pdf.

Dowling, Robyn. 2010. "Power, Subjectivity, and Ethics in Qualitative Research." *Qualitative Research Methods in Human Geography*, January, 26–39.

Dunn, Kevin. 2006. "Interviewing." In *Qualitative Research Methods in Human Geography*, edited by Iain Hay.

Elhra. 2018. "Too Tough to Scale." Elhra: London. https://www.elrha.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Elrha-TTTS-A4-FINAL.pdf.

———. n.d. "Elhra." Elrha. Accessed May 25, 2020. https://www.elrha.org/.

El-Huni, Ekram Mustafa. 2015. "WFP E-Voucher Programme in Lebanon." *Field Exchange 48*, July, 36. www.ennonline.net/fex/48/wfpevoucher.

Euprha. 2017. "The State of Art of Humanitarian Action." https://www.alnap.org/system/files/content/resource/files/main/EUPRHA-Report.-The-State-of-Art-of-Humanitarian-Action-2013.pdf.

European Commission. 2014. "General Guidelines for Operational Priorities on Humanitarian Aid in 2015." European Commission. https://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/strategy/strategy_2015_en.pdf#view=fit.

Fagerberg, Jan. 2003a. "Innovation: A Guide to the Literature." Working Papers on Innovation Studies. Centre for Technology, Innovation and Culture, University of Oslo. http://EconPapers.repec.org/RePEc:tik:inowpp:20031012.

———. 2003b. "Schumpeter and the Revival of Evolutionary Economics: An Appraisal of the Literature." *Journal of Evolutionary Economics* 13 (2): 125–59. https://doi.org/10.1007/s00191-003-0144-1.

Federal Foreign Office. 2012. "Strategy of the Federal Foreign Office for Humanitarian Assistance Abroad." https://www.alnap.org/help-library/strategy-of-the-federal-foreign-office-for-humanitarian-assistance-abroad.

———. 2019. "Federal Foreign Office Strategy for Humanitarian Assistance Abroad." https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/blob/282228/3cfd87de36f30bb61eed542249997631/strategie-huhi-englisch-data.pdf.

FN-Sambandet. 2019. "Flyktninger." 2019. https://www.fn.no/Tema/Flyktninger.

———. 2020. "Syria." 2020. https://www.fn.no/Konflikter/Syria.

———. n.d. "FNs barnefond (UNICEF)." Accessed April 28, 2020. https://www.fn.no/Om-FN/FNs-organisasjoner-fond-og-programmer/FNs-barnefond-UNICEF.

———. n.d. "FNs høykommissær for flyktninger (UNHCR)." https://www.fn.no/Om-FN/FNs-organisasjoner-fond-og-programmer/FNs-hoeykommissaer-for-flyktninger-UNHCR.

———. n.d. "Verdens matvareprogram (WFP)." https://www.fn.no/Om-FN/FNs-organisasjoner-fond-og-programmer/Verdens-matvareprogram-WFP.

García, Clara-Eugenia. 1998. "Managing Innovation from an Evolutionary Perspective." *Journal of High Technology Management Research* 9 (2): v–xv. https://doi.org/10.1016/S1047-8310(98)90001-3.

Garud, Raghu, Philipp Tuertscher, and Andrew H. Van de Ven. 2013. "Perspectives on Innovation Processes." *Academy of Management Annals* 7 (1): 775–819. https://doi.org/10.5465/19416520.2013.791066.

Godin, Benoît. 2016. "The Linear Model of Innovation: The Historical Construction of an Analytical Framework." *Science, Technology, & Human Values*, August. https://doi.org/10.1177/0162243906291865.

Harb, Dr Charles. 2014. "Refugee Research and Policy in the Arab World." Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs American University of Beirut.

https://scholarworks.aub.edu.lb/bitstream/handle/10938/21203/20140624_Social_Cohesion.pdf?sequence=1.

Hay, Iain, ed. 2016. *Qualitative Research Methods in Human Geography*. Fourth Edition. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press.

Heaslip, Graham, Gyöngyi Kovács, and Ira Haavisto. 2018. "Innovations in Humanitarian Supply Chains: The Case of Cash Transfer Programmes." *Production Planning & Control* 29 (14): 1175–1190. https://doi.org/10.1080/09537287.2018.1542172.

Humanitarian Coalition. 2015. "From Humanitarian to Development Aid." 2015. https://www.humanitariancoalition.ca/from-humanitarian-to-development-aid.

Humanitarian Response. n.d. "What Is the Cluster Approach? | HumanitarianResponse." Accessed April 27, 2020. https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/about-clusters/what-is-the-cluster-approach.

IASC. 2020. "The Grand Bargain (Official Website)." 2020. https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/grand-bargain.

Inducks. n.d. "Petter Smart." Accessed May 15, 2020. https://inducks.org/character.php?c1=date&c=GY&view=4.

Inter-Agency Standing Committee. n.d. "Increase the Use and Coordination of Cash-Based Programming | IASC." Accessed May 29, 2020. https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/increase-the-use-and-coordination-of-cash-based-programming.

Kearns, Robin. 2000. "Being There: Research Through Observing and Participating." In *Qualitative Research Methods in Human Geography*, edited by Iain Hay, 103–121. Oxford University Press.

Lawrence, Thomas B., Graham Dover, and Bryan Gallagher. 2014. "Managing Social Innovation." The Oxford Handbook of Innovation Management. January 1, 2014. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199694945.013.032.

Leraand, Dag. 2019. "Krigen i Syria." In *Store norske leksikon*. http://snl.no/Krigen_i_Syria.

Lettice, Fiona, and Menka Parekh. 2010. "The Social Innovation Process: Themes, Challenges and Implications for Practice." *International Journal of Technology Management* 51 (1): 139. https://www.academia.edu/435297/The_Social_Innovation_Process_Themes_Challenges_and_Implications_for_Practice.

LOUISE. 2020. "Louise | Lebanon One Unified Inter-Organisational System for E-Cards." 2020. http://iamlouise.com/.

MasterCard. n.d. "MasterCard Celebrates Partnership with Banque Libano-Française in Lebanon." MasterCard Social Newsroom. Accessed May 29, 2020a. https://newsroom.mastercard.com/mea/press-releases/mastercard-celebrates-partnership-with-banque-libano-francaise-in-lebanon/.

———. n.d. "MasterCard/World Food Programme Partnership Backgrounder." Accessed May 29, 2020b. https://newsroom.mastercard.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/MasterCard-WFP-Partnership-Backgrounder_FINAL_updated-27Sept13.pdf.

Mejdell, Gunvor. 2020. "arabisk." In *Store norske leksikon*. http://snl.no/arabisk.

Mulgan, Geoff. 2006. "The Process of Social Innovation." *Innovations: Technology, Governance, Globalization* 1 (2): 145–162. https://doi.org/10.1162/itgg.2006.1.2.145.

NRC. 2016. "Cash and Vouchers." NRC. 2016. https://www.nrc.no/what-we-do/themes-in-the-field/cash-and-vouchers/.

Nvivo. n.d. "Qualitative Data Analysis Software | NVivo." Accessed May 25, 2020. https://www.qsrinternational.com/nvivo-qualitative-data-analysis-software/home.

Obrecht, and Warner. 2016. "More than Just Luck: Innovation in Humanitarian Action." https://www.alnap.org/help-library/more-than-just-luck-innovation-in-humanitarian-action.

OCHA. 2016. "Humanitarian Development Nexus." OCHA. 2016. https://www.unocha.org/es/themes/humanitarian-development-nexus.

———. 2018. "OCHA 2018 Annual Report." https://www.unocha.org/sites/unocha/files/OCHA2018AnnualReport.pdf.

———. 2019. "Lebanon | Financial Tracking Service." 2019. https://fts.unocha.org/countries/124/summary/2019.

———. n.d. "What Is the Cluster Approach? | HumanitarianResponse." Accessed May 29, 2020. https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/about-clusters/what-is-the-cluster-approach.

OECD DAC. 2010. "Development Co-Operation Directorate Development Assistance Committee." http://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/38429349.pdf.

Overseas Development Institute. 2014. "An Evaluation of WFP's Regional Response to the Syrian Crisis, 2011-2014 Evaluation Report." Overseas Development Institute. https://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/reports/wfp274337.pdf?_ga=2.83763542.1304154701.1589355104-183884421.1587064175.

———. 2015. "Doing Cash Differently. How Cash Transfers Can Transform Humanitarian Aid." Centre for Global Development. https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/9828.pdf.

———. 2017. "The DFID/ECHO Approach to Cash Assistance for Refugees in Lebanon." https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/resource-documents/11899.pdf.

Creti, Pantaleo. 2015. "Evaluation of the OneCard Pilot in Lebanon." https://www.calpnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/erc-onecard-pilot-evaluation-web.pdf.

Patience, Martin. 2019. "A Lebanon Feeling Reborn." *BBC News*, October 22, 2019, sec. Middle East. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-50139850.

Patton, Michael Quinn. 2002. *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods*. 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publications.

Pavitt, Keith. 2006. "Innovation Processes." The Oxford Handbook of Innovation. January 19, 2006. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199286805.003.0004.

Phills, James, Kriss Deiglmeier, and Dale Miller. 2008. "Rediscovering Social Innovation." *Stanford Social Innovation Review* 6 (4): 34–43. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/242511521_Rediscovering_Social_Innovation.

Pol, Eduardo, and Simon Ville. 2009. "Social Innovation: Buzz Word or Enduring Term?" *Journal of Socio-Economics* 38 (6): 878–885. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socec.2009.02.011.

Poundstone, William. 1992. *Prisoner's Dilemma*. Doubleday.

Ramalingam, Rush, Bessant, Marshall, Hoffman, Bayley, Gray, and Warren. 2015. "Strengthening the Humanitarian Innovation Ecosystem." https://www.alnap.org/help-library/strengthening-the-humanitarian-innovation-ecosystem.

ReliefWeb. 2014. "Syria Refugee Response Lebanon: Time-Series Syrian Refugees Registered by Cadastral in Lebanon as of 30 April 2014 - Lebanon." ReliefWeb. 2014. https://reliefweb.int/map/lebanon/syria-refugee-response-lebanon-time-series-syrian-refugees-registered-cadastral-lebanon.

Rothwell, Roy. 1992. "Successful Industrial Innovation: Critical Factors for the 1990s." *R&D Management* 22 (3): 221–40. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9310.1992.tb00812.x.

Schumpeter, Joseph. 1934. *The Theory of Economic Development: An Inquiry into Profits, Capital, Credit, Interest, and the Business Cycle*. Vol. 46. Harvard Economic Studies. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.

The World Bank. 2020. "Data for Lebanon, Upper Middle Income | Data." 2020. https://data.worldbank.org/?locations=LB-XT.

UN Lebanon. n.d. "Lebanon Aid Tracking." United Nations Lebanon. Accessed May 29, 2020. https://www.un.org.lb/lebanon-aid-tracking.

UNHCR. 2012. "Number of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon Passes 100,000 Mark." UNHCR. 2012. https://www.unhcr.org/news/latest/2012/10/508671c36/number-syrian-refugees-lebanon-passes-100000-mark.html.

———. 2017a. "Critical Gaps in Lebanon and Jordan Spell Looming Destitution and Despair for Syrian Refugee Families." UNHCR. 2017. https://www.unhcr.org/news/briefing/2017/6/5936655d4/critical-gaps-lebanon-jordan-spell-looming-destitution-despair-syrian-refugee.html.

———. 2017b. "Forced Displacement Worldwide at Its Highest in Decades." UNHCR. 2017. https://www.unhcr.org/news/stories/2017/6/5941561f4/forced-displacement-worldwide-its-highest-decades.html.

———. 2017c. "PR_2016-12-06 (2) Common Card - UNHCR Lebanon." UNHCR. 2017. https://www.unhcr.org/lb/10287-aid-agencies-launch-common-cards-to-facilitate-access-to-humanitarian-assistance-in-lebanon.html/pr_2016-12-06-2-common-card.

———. 2018. "Syria Emergency." UNHCR. 2018. https://www.unhcr.org/syria-emergency.html.

———. 2020a. "Shelter - UNHCR Lebanon." UNHCR. 2020. https://www.unhcr.org/lb/shelter.

———. 2020b. "Syria Refugee Crisis Explained." 2020. https://www.unrefugees.org/news/syria-refugee-crisis-explained/.

———. 2020c. "UNHCR - The UN Refugee Agency." 2020. https://www.unhcr.org/.

———. n.d. "Lebanon | Global Focus." Accessed April 28, 2020a. http://reporting.unhcr.org/node/2520.

———. n.d. "Situation Syria Regional Refugee Response." Accessed May 8, 2020b. https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria/location/71.

———. n.d. "UNHCR - Lebanon." Accessed May 20, 2020c. https://www.unhcr.org/lebanon.html.

UNICEF. 2016. "Global Aid Agencies Launch 'Common Cards' to Facilitate Access to Humanitarian Assistance in Lebanon." December 2016. https://www.unicef.org/lebanon/press-releases/global-aid-agencies-launch-common-cards-facilitate-access-humanitarian-assistance.

———. 2020. "UNICEF." 2020. https://www.unicef.org/.

United Nations. 2014. "Funds, Programmes, Specialized Agencies and Others." 2014. https://www.un.org/en/sections/about-un/funds-programmes-specialized-agencies-and-others/.

United Nations Secretary-General. 2012. "The Secretary-General Five-Years Action Agenda." https://www.un.org/sg/sites/www.un.org.sg/files/atoms/files/sg_agenda_2012.pdf.

———. 2015. "The Secretary-General's Five-Year Action Agenda." United Nations Secretary-General. April 22, 2015. https://www.un.org/sg/en/priorities/index.shtml.

UNSDG. n.d. "UNSDG | 2030 Agenda - Leadership." Accessed April 28, 2020. https://unsdg.un.org/2030-agenda/leadership.

Utenriksdepartementet. 2017. "Strategi for norsk humanitær politikk." https://www.regjeringen.no/globalassets/departementene/ud/dokumenter/hum/hum_strategi.pdf.

Van de Ven, Andrew H. 2017. "The Innovation Journey: You Can't Control It, but You Can Learn to Maneuver It." *Innovation* 19 (1): 39–42. https://doi.org/10.1080/14479338.2016.1256780.

Van de Ven, Andrew H., Douglas E. Polley, Raghu Garud, and Sankaran Venkataraman. 1999. *The Innovation Journey*. Oxford: University Press.

Venton, Courtenay Cabot, Sarah Bailey, Sophie Pongracz, and Courtenay Venton. 2015. "Value for Money of Cash Transfers in Emergencies." https://www.calpnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/424-summary-vfm-cash-in-emergencies-report-final.pdf.

Westley, Frances, and Katharine McGowan. 2017. *The Evolution of Social Innovation: Building Resilience Through Transitions*. Edward Elgar Publishing.

WFP. 2010. "Revolution: From Food Aid to Food Assistance - Innovations in Overcoming Hunger." 2010. https://www.wfp.org/publications/revolution-food-aid-food-assistance-innovations-overcoming-hunger.

———. 2013. "WFP Mission Statement." WFP. https://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/newsroom/wfp076289.pdf.

———. 2014. "Economic Impact Study: Direct and Indirect Effects of the WFP Value-Based Food Voucher Programme in Lebanon." https://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/ena/wfp267746.pdf?_ga=2.74584980.765939250.1588843624-183884421.1587064175.

———. 2015a. "Situation Update, August 2015, Syria Crisis Regional Response." https://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/ep/wfp277660.pdf?_ga=2 .76238165.1304154701.1589355104-183884421.1587064175.

———. 2015b. "WFP Lebanon Situation Report July 2015." https://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/ep/wfp276565.pdf?_ga=2 .5570675.1304154701.1589355104-183884421.1587064175.

———. 2015c. "An Evaluation of WFP's Regional Response to the Syrian Crisis, 2011-2014 Evaluation Report." Humanitarian Policy Group. https://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/reports/wfp274337.pdf.

———. 2020a. "Lebanon | World Food Programme." 2020. https://www.wfp.org/countries/lebanon.

"WFP." ———. 2020b. 2020. https://www.wfp.org/.

———. n.d. "In-Kind Food Distribution | World Food Programme." Accessed May 7, 2020a. https://www.wfp.org/in-kind-food-distribution.

———. n.d. "World Food Programme." UNHCR. Accessed April 28, 2020b. https://www.unhcr.org/world-food-programme-49eed2ba6.html.

WFP, UNICEF, and UNHCR. 2013. "Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon. 2013 Report." WFP, UNICEF and UNHCR. https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/VASyRreportFinal11-12-13.pdf.

Yin, Robert. 2009. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. 4th ed. Vol. 5. Applied Social Research Methods Series. Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage.

APPENDIX

OVERVIEW OF DATA COLLECTION

SEMI STRUCTURAL INTERVIEWS

ORGANIZATION	WHO	DATE	LENGTH
WFP Headquarter	Director of Innovation	07.01.2020	45 min
WFP Headquarter	Program Policy Officer, Cash Based Transfers	07.01.2020	35 min
WFP Headquarter	Senior Program Advisor, Cash Based Transfers	07.01.2020	30 min
WFP Headquarter	Head of Global Business Innovation	07.01.2020	30 min
Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Ambassador to the UN-delegation in Rome	08.01.2020	45 min
WFP Country Office in Lebanon	Program Policy Officer E-cards	31.01.20	1 hour
WFP Country Office in Lebanon	Country Director	31.01.2020	45 min
Camealeon	The consortium manager and the cash specialist	03.02.2020	1 hour
UNHCR Country Office in Lebanon	Deputy Representative (Operations)	04.02.2020	1,5 hours
UNHCR Country Office in Lebanon	LOUISE Project Manager	19.02.2020	45 min

SCOPING OBSERVATIONS AND INTERVIEWS

SEMINARS			
NAME	**WHO**	**DATE**	**LENGTH**
Humanitarian innovation day	HIP platform	27.09.2019	5 hours
Innovative Financing	Innovation Norway and KPMG	27.11.2019	5 hours
Norad Konferansen 2019: digitalisering og utvikling	Norad	11.12.2019	7 hours
INTERVIEWS			
NRC	Global innovation advisor	17.09.2019	1,5 hours
INNOVATION NORWAY	Advisor, humanitarian innovation	11.09.2019	1 hour