

CASE STUDY

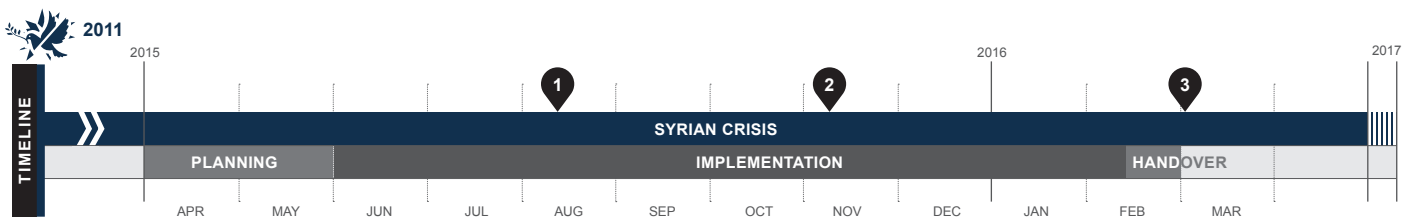
LEBANON 2015-2016 / REFUGEE CRISIS

KEYWORDS: Urban, Housing repair / retrofitting, Cash / vouchers, Advocacy / Legal, Training, Guidelines / Mass communications, Community participation

CRISIS	Syrian Refugee crisis in Lebanon, 2011-ongoing	
TOTAL PEOPLE AFFECTED	1.04 million Syrian refugees in Lebanon <small>(Source: Syria Humanitarian Needs Overview 2017)</small>	
PROJECT LOCATIONS	Beirut and Mount Lebanon governorates	
BENEFICIARIES	<p>706 households (3,751 individuals) assisted with shelter repairs (Including Lebanese and Syrian families, with a minority of Palestinian and other minorities).</p> <p>2,745 households attended hygiene promotion sessions (Lebanese, Syrian and Palestinian households).</p> <p>35,700 individuals attended HLP awareness sessions.</p>	
PROJECT OUTPUTS	<p>499 shelter upgrades</p> <p>207 shelter rehabilitations</p> <p>Other outputs: 25 Focal Points and Committee Members trained; Establishment of a roster of 14 skilled workers; 1,222 man-days of construction activities.</p>	
MATERIALS COST PER HOUSEHOLD	Upgrades: USD 636 - Rehabilitations: USD 1570. As per sector standards, upgrades are minor works up to USD 700 and rehabilitations are major works up to USD 1,500.	
PROJECT COST PER HOUSEHOLD	USD 1,731 on average.	

PROJECT SUMMARY

The organization used a holistic, neighbourhood, approach across delineated zones in dense urban areas. Shelter rehabilitations and upgrades were provided to 207 and 499 households respectively, along with improvements to water and sanitation facilities. Campaigns on hygiene promotion and housing, land and property rights were also conducted. Community-wide projects were implemented to improve service delivery, such as water and solid waste management.



- 1** Aug 2015: Neighbourhood-level social and shelter mapping, establishment of focal point networks and committees, and capacity-building.
- 2** Nov 2015: Beneficiary-led voucher-based emergency shelter and WASH upgrades to substandard shelters completed.
- 3** Mar 2016: Rehabilitation of occupied shelters units completed.

STRENGTHS

- + Enhanced local technical skills and sense of ownership.
- + Raised awareness about HLP rights and obligations, and improved landlord-tenant relationships.
- + Served as a platform for information sharing between community members and municipalities.

WEAKNESSES

- Strategy had to be adapted due to a lack of empty units available.
- Information flow and community participation could have been improved.
- Recruitment of staff/labour from within the community, quality control and flexibility in specifications could have been stronger.



The majority of refugees in Lebanon stayed in rented accommodation. High housing demand, combined with the high cost of living, led to many people living in substandard and overcrowded conditions.

CONTEXT

For more background information on the situation and shelter response in Lebanon, see overview A.29.

Lebanon suffered from structural inefficiencies even prior to the Syrian conflict. In 2015, an estimated 87.7% of the population was urban¹, and there was a significant heterogeneity between rural, urban and peri-urban areas, in terms of institutional service delivery and governance². This was further exacerbated by the conflict in Lebanon (lasting over two decades) and the political fractionalization that brought the country to a standstill.

The influx of Syrian refugees into such context dramatically deteriorated the living conditions for both refugees and host populations. The crisis increased population density in Lebanon from 400 to 520 persons per km², especially in urban areas, leading to urban congestion, competition over housing, increasing pressures on existing resources and tensions between host populations and refugees³. This situation was particularly constrained in Beirut and Mount Lebanon, with only a limited number of informal settlements in the area. Most refugees in Beirut and Mount Lebanon (92%) resided in rented apartments or houses, although the comparatively high cost of living meant that many refugee families were only able to afford substandard or overcrowded accommodation. An assessment by the organization in the target areas showed that 23% of households in Beirut and 59% in Mount Lebanon lacked basic facilities and were in need of urgent rehabilitations.

PROJECT GOAL AND TEAM STRUCTURE

The objective of this project was to provide immediate community-driven WASH and Shelter support to the most vulnerable Syrian populations and their host communities in Beirut and Mount Lebanon.

The organization had been registered in the country since 2006 and had an established country office in Beirut, as well as a field office in Akkar, with established links with local au-

¹ CIA World Factbook, [Accessed 6 August 2015].

² Lebanon: Promoting Poverty Reduction and Shared Prosperity, World Bank, June 2015.

³ Lebanon Crisis Response Plan, 2016, pp. 16.

thorities and civil society stakeholders. The team for this project included one project manager, two team leaders, nine field staff and four technical staff, in addition to support staff.

LOCATIONS AND BENEFICIARY SELECTION

Firstly, target communities were identified based on 1) refugee concentration; 2) socio-economic vulnerability; 3) access to basic services; 4) willingness of local stakeholders to host refugees and collaborate; and 5) interventions by humanitarian actors. This selection was informed by Key Informant Interviews and inter-agency rankings. Based on the knowledge of the target areas, the organization provisionally identified clusters from which target communities were selected.

Secondly, the priority in target neighbourhoods was to **gain a thorough understanding of local community dynamics**, including mapping key stakeholders from relevant demographic groups (Syrian and Lebanese), inter-community dynamics and current WASH and shelter conditions. This included an overview of main shelter types, the state of landlord-tenant relationships, and any issues which could impact the prioritization and implementation of shelter activities. In order to do this, a social-mapping process was conducted, which involved semi-structured interviews and focus-group discussions with immediately identifiable local key informants, including municipal authorities and local NGOs or community-based organizations. Within target areas, vulnerable households were targeted irrespective of shelter type or nationality.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

The neighbourhood approach used to implement this project relied on beneficiary involvement in the development and delivery of all activities, at both the community and household levels. Following the mapping of local stakeholders and identification of community representatives, consultations were held to review the proposed selection criteria (for household-level assistance) and identify key challenges of the target communities, to be addressed through small-scale emergency projects. Following consultations, the organization established a network of community focal points, committed to improving their neighbourhoods. These assisted in identifying shelter units in need of rehabilitation, and in liaising with landlords.



Many refugees in Lebanon settled in unfinished buildings, often in urban areas.

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

The project initially focused on the rehabilitation or upgrading of empty shelters within the targeted community, to have alternative housing options for families facing eviction. However, due to a number of contextual challenges, **the organization shifted to a beneficiary-led model of rehabilitation or upgrading of their own properties.** Through this, beneficiaries received the main inputs with a voucher scheme, and were paid for fittings and installation on cash-per-task basis. Apart from providing livelihood opportunities to some beneficiaries, this modality also helped the organization to overcome the issue of having limited access to the sites.

Agreements were signed with local suppliers for material procurement, and vouchers provided to each family in one instalment. The value was based on a bill of quantities that covered the repairs specific to each household. The beneficiaries redeemed their vouchers through one purchase and were given ownership over their own installations. In addition, the organization closely monitored the distribution of materials, to ensure high quality.

In order to support vulnerable populations without formal rental contracts, landlords and tenants were asked to sign a lease agreement in order to participate in the project. **The organization also provided sessions on hygiene promotion and legal advice on Housing, Land and Property (HLP) issues** through this intervention. This included training for local committee members, as well as campaigns in targeted neighbourhoods. Participants of these campaigns received information on how to obtain a lease agreement, obligations of each party and how to avoid legal trouble. This included advice on handing over of the rented premises, guaranteeing against hidden defects upon move-out and against eviction following end of lease, and advice on conducting major repairs and maintenance, to avoid unexpected costs upon lease termination.

COORDINATION

In addition to conducting coordination through the Sector Working Group meetings in Beirut, the organization liaised with local NGOs conducting other shelter projects by sharing beneficiary lists to avoid overlaps, as well as by referring cases between agencies to avoid gaps in coverage. The organization also liaised with NGOs conducting other protection and WASH projects in the target area, to share ideas on the neighbourhood approach used and, in some cases, other INGOs attended the organization's forums to learn more about this approach.

MATERIAL PROCUREMENT

The organization conducted detailed market assessments and selected local suppliers for materials to be procured locally. This reduced operational costs and increased support for the local businesses, thereby contributing to the area's economic

development, and reduced tensions with host communities over limited resources and jobs.

For larger rehabilitations, the organization signed contracts that included material specifications and prices with local contractors. Sourcing the materials from within the neighbourhood or district was key to reduce transportation costs and contribute to the local economy. Moreover, it was important to rely on materials that were accessible and affordable to all beneficiaries. Finally, cash was provided for transport in cases where a large volume of materials had to be shipped to the beneficiary's house.

MAIN CHALLENGES

SECURITY ISSUES IN ACCESSING CERTAIN AREAS. Such risks imposed restrictions on the selection of target communities. The rapidly evolving security context in Lebanon required the organization to increase engagement with neighbourhood focal points and local municipalities. Daily monitoring of shelter activities also contributed to stronger relationships with beneficiaries. However, in many other vulnerable areas where other INGOs faced difficulties for gaining access (due to socio-political issues), the organization was able to successfully implement the project, through its engagement with local authorities.

LOW QUALITY MATERIALS. Due to complaints of low quality materials being used for rehabilitations and upgrades, the organization instituted a new process, in which a follow-up agreement was signed with the supplier, specifically on material quality. In some cases, low quality items were replaced, in order to address beneficiaries' complaints. The quality of materials was continuously assessed by the project engineers during the distributions. In any event where materials were considered substandard, they were returned and the distribution was delayed.

MANAGING BENEFICIARIES' EXPECTATIONS. Some complaints on the quality were also due to high expectations that were unrealistic, given the project budget. To avoid this challenge, the organization ensured that each household received complete information on the quality of work that would be provided. Agreements were signed with one local supplier per target area, which beneficiaries could select to complete the works if they desired. Beneficiaries were informed of their ability to register complaints at fora and via the organization's local hotline, and these were followed up by the project engineer after implementation.

LAND OWNERSHIP ISSUES AND INSECURE TENURE AGREEMENTS. Some of the targeted households had no proof of ownership, which is a widespread issue, given the complex context in Lebanon. Close collaboration with the municipality was needed for verifications of ownership. Additionally, very often only verbal agreements existed between landlord and tenants, without any rental contract. This was tackled through prolonged negotiations between both parties, to clarify the terms of the housing arrangement and to sign a lease agreement.

WIDER IMPACTS OF THE PROJECT

At the community level, the project provided a catalyst for change, combined with continued community engagement and capacity-building activities, to highlight needs such as HLP, protection, hygiene promotion, conflict resolution, participatory planning and community-based solutions. The project also helped to identify engagement opportunities for better responses in the future. For example, the committee in one of the neighbourhoods was able to solve a ten-year problem related to solid waste management, by relying on the initiative of the community and planning opportunities that were generated during this project.

STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES AND LESSONS LEARNED



The project made basic upgrades, but it became challenging to find enough buildings in the targeted communities.



Bathrooms were also repaired and upgraded under the project.

STRENGTHS

- + **The cash-for-task concept** allowed beneficiaries to contribute in their own communities and enhanced their technical skills. While all supplies were made available before the works, cash was given following the completion of activities.
- + **The project improved the organization’s visibility and credibility.** Community engagement activities, conducted throughout the course of the project, led to a widespread acceptance of the organization for future interventions.
- + **HLP considerations and significant improvement in tenant-landlord relationships,** as both parties became more aware of their rights and responsibilities.
- + **Served as a platform for information sharing** between the community members and the municipalities, and responded to the urgent needs of both parties.

LEARNINGS

- **Stimulating local livelihoods.** The beneficiary-led approach was largely successful in stimulating the local economy and empowering beneficiaries in implementing their own rehabilitations. The final assessment found that the target of 490 man-days of labour was greatly surpassed, with 1,222 man-days created through these works.
- **The organization was aware that not all target households would have sufficient technical skills** to conduct such upgrades. As a result, the team identified skilled workers from the neighbourhoods, and households were able to utilize these workers to complete their upgrades. In addition, 30% of beneficiaries were found to have conducted further home improvements at their own expense.
- **Maintaining community ties and livelihoods.** One of the key learnings from previous programming was that geographically spread-out shelter works, especially for empty shelters, created a problem for evicted beneficiaries by forcing them to move to a new neighbourhood, severing ties with their communities and threatening their livelihoods. The neighbourhood approach was specifically designed to overcome this.

WEAKNESSES

- **The organization could not identify sufficient empty shelters in the target communities** to be rehabilitated and, for the small number identified, landlords refused to sign rental agreements (binding them to keep the shelters empty until potential evictions occurred). Given such a context, the organization modified its strategy, and capacitated the focal points to rapidly respond to evictions, by providing housing to beneficiaries in alternative houses within the same neighbourhood, as well as conducting emergency referrals to other agencies working in the areas, until a more permanent housing solution could be identified.
- **Community engagement could have been improved.** Better information flow and participation of affected communities in the identification of activities and target areas, as well as in the discussion of gaps and challenges, could have ensured a more tailored and effective assistance.
- **Recruitment** of staff/labour from within the communities (by the organization and contractors), **quality control** of materials, **stricter procedures** in signing changes in BoQs and **flexibility in specifications** could have been stronger.

CASE STUDY

LEBANON 2015-2016 / REFUGEE CRISIS

KEYWORDS: Shelter retrofitting, NFI distribution, Winterization, Insulation

CRISIS	Syrian Refugee crisis in Lebanon, 2011-ongoing
TOTAL PEOPLE AFFECTED	1.04 million Syrian refugees in Lebanon <small>(Source: Syria Humanitarian Needs Overview 2017).</small>
PROJECT LOCATIONS	Bekaa and Akkar regions, Lebanon.
BENEFICIARIES	2,346 households (11,608 individuals: 3,259 boys; 3,005 girls; 2,301 men and 3,043 women).
PROJECT OUTPUTS	2,346 insulation kits distributed (set of roofing nails, carpentry hammer, stanley knife, insulation adhesive tape, 2 insulation foil and foam rolls - 30x2m, instruction sheet and content list)
MATERIALS COST	USD 229 per household.
PROJECT COST	USD 295 per household.
OUTCOME INDICATOR	80% of vulnerable children and families reporting improvements in thermal comfort in their shelters.

PROJECT SUMMARY

This project provided fire-retardant insulation kits and weatherproofing to over 2,300 refugee households in informal settlements and incomplete dwellings. The kits provided thermal comfort, enhanced health outcomes and decreased fuel consumption, without adding to the fire hazard.



- 1 Jun 2015: Approval of insulation materials by the Ministry of Social Affairs
- 2 Aug 2015: Insulation kit pilot project in informal settlement
- 3 Nov 2015: Mapping assessment in all informal settlements in East Akkar and North and Central Bekaa
- 4 Dec 2015: Start of procurement of insulation foam from China

- STRENGTHS**
- + Significant improvement to living conditions, effective weatherproofing and fire hazard mitigation.
 - + Buy-in and high beneficiary satisfaction.
 - + Adaptable kits.
 - + Significant saving on fuel.
 - + Speed and scalability of the intervention.
 - + Additional support provided for vulnerable cases.

- WEAKNESSES**
- Inadequate fixing items in some cases.
 - Communication issues with beneficiaries.
 - Part of the winter window was missed due to procurement delays.
 - Adequate insulation material was not available locally.

CONTEXT

For more background information on the situation and shelter response in Lebanon, see overview A.29.

Since the start of the Syrian crisis, a significant proportion of the population in Lebanon has been living in poverty, concentrated in the impoverished North of the country and the Bekaa region. With over one million Syrian refugees registered in Lebanon, the government’s refusal to establish camps (fearing that they would turn in permanent settlements) has been particularly detrimental for those in mountainous areas, such as North Lebanon and Bekaa (which hosted the bulk of the displaced population).

Lebanon’s weather conditions can be extreme, and vary throughout the year. Winter usually begins in November and lasts until March, bringing rain, snow and a significant drop in temperatures. The North of the country and Bekaa valley experience particularly harsh conditions, with even colder temperatures and snow in the mountains and at higher elevations.

Socio-economic vulnerabilities, substandard accommodation and exposure to winter conditions have had severe impacts on households, making adequate shelter especially important.

NATIONAL SHELTER STRATEGY

In the absence of formal refugee camps, the sector lead agency, in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Affairs and in coordination with other international organizations and national NGOs, has implemented a number of integrated shelter interventions. Although shelter assistance is provided all-year round, there has been a focus on providing vulnerable households with weatherproofing kits to help withstand the harsh winter months. There are five kits provided as part of shelter winterization interventions: Sealing off kit (for unfinished houses), Light repair kit (plastic sheeting), Medium repair kit, Heavy repair kit / New arrival kit, and Insulation kit.

PILOT PROJECT

In early June 2015, the Ministry of Social Affairs approved the installation of insulation materials within informal settlements. In August 2015, the organization piloted a winterization project, upon request of the sector lead agency. The aim was to develop a technical intervention that could support the Shelter Working Group and shelter actors in the field, give recommendations on winterization solutions and improve protection against the elements more generally. Two insulation foams were used: 1) Expanded polyethylene insulation foam (EPE), foil faced on both sides; and 2) Cross-linked polyethylene insulation foam (XPE), foil on one side and white PE film on the other. Both reflect radiant energy and act as effective barriers against moisture, air currents and vapours, protecting from both hot summer temperatures and wet and cold winter conditions. The second option achieved better results and was therefore chosen for the subsequent phases.

The pilot project demonstrated that the installation of insulation provided physical protection from the harsh weather, improving the thermal conditions inside shelters. Testing carried out in the summer indicated that indoor temperatures differed on average by 5°C from the outdoors. Once the pilot results were analysed, the organization decided to include the insulation kits in its weatherproofing interventions.

LOCATIONS AND BENEFICIARY SELECTION

An informal settlement mapping assessment was carried out, using the Inter-Agency Mapping Platform, in all informal settlements in East Akkar and North and Central Bekaa. This tool has been used by partners on the ground to collect information of all informal settlements on a bi-monthly basis. The information was then used to coordinate humanitarian activities in these informal settlements. Partners were assigned areas of implementation, to ensure there were no overlaps or gaps in interventions. Coordination also ensured effective targeting of the most vulnerable households.

Informal settlements in Bekaa and Akkar (at altitudes higher than 800m above sea level) were prioritized for this project, based on a combination of needs (most vulnerable to the harsh, wet and cold winter conditions), gaps in assistance and the organization's operational coverage. **A blanket approach was used in these areas**, for equity reasons and staff security, as well as to mitigate any possible tension between households in the informal settlements. A total of 11,608 individuals were targeted for insulation support – across 48 informal settlements, in 17 villages in East Akkar and 127 informal settlements, in Central and North Bekaa. Within these relatively large areas, cadastral zones were prioritized on the basis of community-level vulnerability, as defined by the inter-agency mapping tool.



The insulation foam was to be applied to both walls and ceilings, and in some cases people were creative and made decorations out of the same material.

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

The project was implemented directly – and distributions carried out – in partnership with key actors, including the sector lead agency and partners.

A total of 37 project staff implemented the project: seven technical staff, 20 unskilled distribution support staff and 10 drivers. As part of distribution, field staff explained programme selection criteria and the technical guidance (needed to install the insulation) to recipients. Each kit contained a toolbox and two rolls of insulation foam that can cover 60m².

Participant feedback mechanisms allowed beneficiaries to evaluate the programme and contribute to its ongoing improvement. Regular and timely communication of relevant information was vital to maximize participation of all stakeholders and beneficiaries. A monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning specialist team also monitored project indicators, through the organization's Post-Distribution Monitoring tool.

FIRE RISK MITIGATION

An increasing number of fire incidents, injuries and fatalities have been reported in informal settlements and substandard buildings. Contributing factors range from heating practices to electrical wires being exposed to the rain during the winter, whilst in the summer incidents are due to dry materials and melting of electric wires. These factors are further compounded by the use of high fire-loading building materials, such as wooden frames, plastic, cardboard and hardboard sheeting, used to construct shelters in informal settlements. This led to the decision to use a **fire retardant insulating foam**.

PROCUREMENT

The insulating foam was procured from China, as **no insulation material available in country met the minimum standards** outlined by the sector. Procurement was undertaken in January, once funding had been secured, and the lead time required 60 days from production to delivery, delaying implementation and causing the project to miss coverage for part of the winter. However, as the insulation kits were intended to be used all-year round, this was not detrimental overall.

WIDER IMPACTS OF THE PROJECT

In September 2015, following the successful pilot project, the Shelter Working Group **adopted the insulation kits as part of the winterization component of the integrated Lebanon Crisis Response Plan**. The main agencies active in the country have since distributed the insulation kits.

STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES AND LESSONS LEARNED



People installed the insulation foam to reduce the heat loss, which generally tends to be higher through the ceiling/roof and the floor/ground.



Before installation of the insulation kits, poor quality plastic sheeting and other temporary materials, such as cardboard, were commonly used in most of the shelters targeted by this project.



The foam was applied to walls and ceiling, while mats and pillows were used to insulate the floor. This achieved a full insulation of the shelter, which ensured a significant reduction of the heat loss during the winter, as well as good performance during the summer.

STRENGTHS

+ Significant improvement to living conditions and effective weatherproofing. The insulation kits were one of the most significant improvements made to shelters, with 84% of sampled households reporting their living conditions having greatly improved as a result of installing the kits. The main added value was the improved thermal comfort during both winter and summer seasons. Some beneficiaries also reported that the presence of insects decreased.

+ Buy-in and beneficiary satisfaction. Post-Distribution Monitoring reports indicated that 94% of beneficiaries installed the kits fully, and the remaining 6% partially. In some cases, refugees took initiative to use the insulation to improve their homes in alternative ways. 95% of households expressed satisfaction regarding the quality of the kit received.

+ The kits are adaptable and can be utilized within shelters or incomplete buildings.

+ Significant saving on fuel. Heat loss calculations showed that the insulating foam can lead to significant heating savings, of up to USD 150 per household.

+ Speed and scalability of the intervention. A large number of shelters can be insulated in a short period of time.

+ Fire hazard mitigation. The use of fire retardant insulation foam ensured the intervention was not adding to the fire hazard in the makeshift homes.

+ Additional support provided to install the kits. Due to their high vulnerability, some families required additional support, which was provided by skilled daily workers, hired specifically for these cases.

WEAKNESSES

- The items provided to fix the insulation were not always adequate. Roofing nails provided in the kits were in some cases too long and pierced through the timber into the covering plastic. The insulation in some cases was difficult to secure adequately, due to adhesive tape becoming loose. This was due mostly to the irregular surface of walls and ceilings.

- Communication issues. A combination of tips sheets (including pictures) and verbal instructions were used during distribution. However, community sessions explaining the benefits of the kit and the best practices for installation were observed to be more effective.

- Lack of locally available insulation material that met minimum standards outlined by the sector.

- Part of the winter window was missed due to procurement lead times that caused delays in the project. However, the kits were intended to be used for both summer and winter conditions.

LEARNINGS

- **The insulation was one of the most significant improvements made to shelters.** The installation of insulation foam on walls and ceilings in contact with the outside led to an **indoor temperature decrease of 5°C during the summer**, on average. **In the winter, the indoor temperature was 4°C higher** than the outdoors, on average.
- Beneficiaries attempted to resolve the lack of adequate fixing items by using other methods, for example screws, shorter nails and staples. As a result, **the content of the kit was revised** as part of following procurement and distributions, to ensure that a variety of nail sizes and lengths would be included.