

A.14 Lebanon – 2012 – Syria conflict

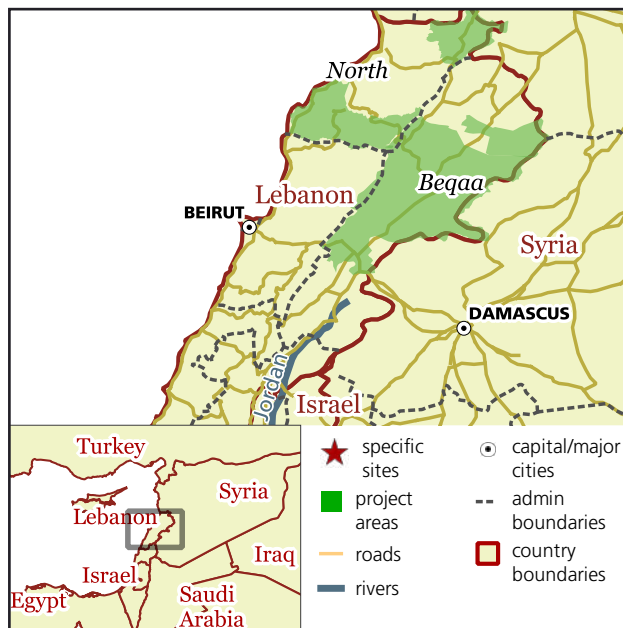
Case study

Keywords: Household items; Construction materials; Emergency shelter; Rental support; Housing repair and retrofitting; Cash / vouchers; Site planning.

- Emergency:** Syria crisis, refugees in Lebanon.
- Date:** Conflict begins: March 2011 (ongoing). December 2012: over 100,000 Syrian refugees in Lebanon.
- People affected:** Total: over 3.1 million refugees. Lebanon: over 1.1 million (Oct. 2014)
- Project location:** Parts of Bekaa (Beqaa) and North Governorates.
- Beneficiaries:** 20,000 families (over 100,000 individuals) as of September 2014.
- Outputs:** 20,000 families supported through a combination of weatherproofing kits, vouchers, cash-for-rehabilitation and site improvements.
- Occupancy rate:** 100% (inhabited shelters targeted)
- Shelter size:** Variable.
- Cost:** Range of assistance packages e.g:
 - Emergency assistance: US\$ 250 per family (US\$ 100 project costs, US\$ 150 direct assistance)
 - Building rehabilitation: US\$ 2,350 per family (US\$ 850 project costs, US\$ 1,500 direct assistance)

Project description:

Several different assistance packages made up a larger programme, aimed at improving the living conditions of the most vulnerable Syrian and Lebanese families living in poorest quality shelter. The programme was a multi-sector response, integrating WASH and Child Protection, using multiple modalities, such as NFI distribution, cash and vouchers.

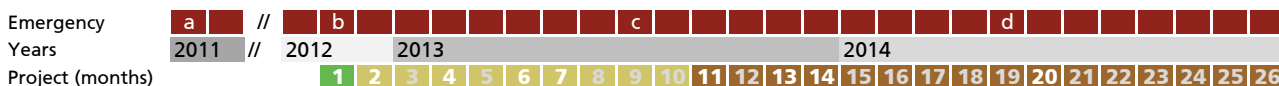


Emergency timeline:

[a] March 2011, Syria conflict begins. [b] 100,000 refugees. [c] 500,000 refugees. [d] 1 million refugees.

Project timeline (number of months):

- [1] Nov. 2012: Staff recruited to meet escalating need.
- [2] First distributions in Bekaa. [4] Phase 2 begins. [6] Livelihoods component included. [7] Rehabilitation of sub-standard buildings. Inclusion of WASH component.
- [11] Scaling-up for winter. Strengthening of Child Protection. [13] NFI component included.
- [14] Programme reaches 50,000 people.
- [20] June 2014: Programme reaches 100,000 people and is due to continue throughout 2014 and into 2015.



Strengths

- ✓ Successfully scaling-up in a complex, dynamic context to meet needs of the beneficiaries before winter.
- ✓ Different types of assistance were provided for different needs. Low-cost, high volume interventions ran in parallel with more complex rehabilitation.
- ✓ A door-to-door approach to assessment, technical support and multi-sector follow-up increased staff costs but enhanced impact and community trust.
- ✓ Field teams were made up of a mix of technical and outreach staff, helping to see the bigger picture and to respond to non-shelter needs.
- ✓ Rehabilitating the existing, inhabited shelters reduced dealings with complex regulations relating to new construction and the rental market.

Weaknesses

- ✗ Security issues caused delays to direct implementation by the organisation. A shift to a mix of implementing directly and through partners increased access.
- ✗ The organisation's initial technical WASH capacity required more support. This was provided once donors saw the benefits of multi-sector intervention.
- ✗ The initial staffing structure lacked the flexibility to adjust to rapid changes in needs. Field-teams were re-structured to overcome this.

Observations

- The concentration of refugees in dispersed urban and peri-urban rental situations complicates a humanitarian response. The context can be extremely challenging and the usual "minimum" standards may not be achievable or appropriate.



Buildings like this unfinished house in Bekaa Valley typically lack adequate protection from the elements, security, privacy and adequate access to water and sanitation. Approximately 25% of the Syrian refugee population live in these sort of conditions alongside an increasing number of Lebanese families. Photo: Ahmad Baroudi/Save the Children Lebanon

Situation before the crisis

Lebanon is considered an upper middle income country with a highly privatised economy. The population is concentrated in Beirut and its suburbs, with the vast majority of residences being owner-occupied. Prior to the Syrian crisis, Lebanon already suffered from a lack of affordable housing, with no significant policy in place to mitigate this.

Situation after the crisis began

The Lebanese government normally has not formally sanctioned camps. Instead, refugees are dispersed across more than 1,700 different host communities.

The large influx of Syrian refugees into Lebanon (rising six-fold during 2013 to over a million today, making up around 25% of Lebanon's population), has resulted in further pressure on the rental market, inflating prices.

Recent assessments by international organisations note that the lack of an adequate and safe supply of shelter has pushed many of the poorest Syrian and Lebanese families into sub-standard shelters, with the situation worsening. In March 2014 a shelter survey indicated that:

- 57% of Syrian refugee families live in finished apartments or houses.

- 25% live in sub-standard buildings (such as unfinished houses or non-residential buildings).
- 15% live in informal settlements (i.e. ad-hoc, self-settled camps made up of improvised temporary shelters or tents).
- Less than 3% live in collective centres.

New-arrival refugees are increasingly vulnerable, obliged to accept evermore inadequate and overcrowded accommodation.

Many refugee households have covered the cost of their rent through diminishing savings, cash assistance and increasing debt levels, as well as other forms of negative coping mechanisms such as withdrawing children from school and engaging them in work.

Shelter strategy

With the Lebanese government generally unwilling to consider the option of camps, the vast majority of families are dispersed through hundreds of communities.

The Shelter Sector Working Group in Lebanon focuses on the following:

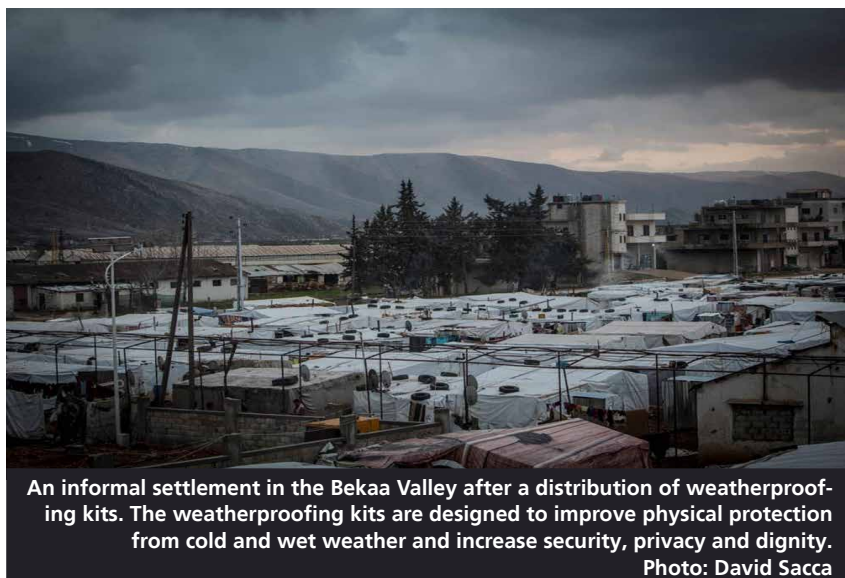
- Providing safe and dignified emergency shelter to

new arrivals and to the most vulnerable.

- Improving sub-standard shelters, including through the upgrading of local properties.
- Advocating for larger formal settlements.

The organisation's own strategy is built on the working group's strategy with additional areas of focus:

- Child focus: addressing the basic needs of children and their families can reduce negative coping mechanisms (such as child labour and early marriage) and increase investment in human capital such as education and healthcare.
- An integrated approach: Shelter, NFI and WASH assistance were provided together where required, with staff also trained in identifying child protection vulnerabilities and key messaging.
- Occupied shelters: the vast majority of refugees access shelter through informal market channels and the number of homeless refugees is very low. Consequently, the focus is on



upgrading existing, but sub-standard, occupied shelters.

- Community outreach: shelter programming is delivered at the household-level, which allows for direct targeting of the most at-risk families and helps to build trust in communities. Shelter and WASH field teams are an important source of referrals to the organisation's Child Protection Case Management team.
- Emergency and long-term solutions are implemented in parallel, by offering a range of Shelter and WASH assistance packages for differing levels of needs.

Project implementation

To respond to the different living conditions of beneficiaries, the organisation developed five different interventions to be employed in order to support families living in two types of situation:

- Informal settlements: self-settled sites with families living in tents or makeshift shelters.
- Sub-standard buildings: unfinished housing or converted non-residential structures such as garages or shops.

The five types of intervention, providing different types of assistance using different modalities, were:

- A: Weatherproofing in informal settlements – following government stipulations, this assistance was provided as direct distribution of a kit of materials.
- B: Temporary Emergency Shelter – only a small caseload required a full shelter kit, but the families were some of the most vulnerable.
- C: Site improvements – informal settlements suffered from ad-hoc layouts and rapid growth, resulting in risks for flooding and fire. Improvements were made to drainage and layouts to improve living conditions. This was implemented using a casual labour initiative in order to create an income for participants.
- D: Emergency Shelter/WASH in sub-standard buildings – a rapid, relatively cheap intervention using vouchers to provide flexible solutions for the upgrading of shelters. Technical staff from the organisation were present on suppliers' premises on voucher redemption days to ensure quality control.

- E: Rehabilitation of sub-standard buildings – permanent upgrades were funded in exchange for a 12-month period of secure tenure and a rental reduction equivalent to the value of the work carried out. Money was transferred in three tranches (20%, 40% and 40%) via an ATM card which could be used in all major banks in Lebanon. The transfer of cash was conditional on technical monitoring and achieving pre-agreed work stages.

The programme was supported financially with multiple funding streams, with different donors supporting activities most relevant to their mandate. As the programme developed, a multi-sector approach was taken, integrating Shelter, WASH, NFI, Child Protection, Cash, and Livelihoods components.

Direct implementation was used for the majority of locations. Local partners were used to increase access in more insecure areas.

Household-level door-to-door distributions were more resource-intensive. However, this allowed tailored solutions, the identification of non-shelter needs, and the building of trust and relationships.

Beneficiary selection

Geographic areas of intervention were selected based on needs and

Table of intervention types

Intervention	A: Weather-proofing	B: Temporary Emergency Shelter	C: Site Improvements	D: Emergency Shelter and WASH	E: Rehabilitation
Shelter type	Informal settlements	Informal settlements	Informal settlements	Unfinished houses and converted garages	Unfinished houses and converted garages
Description	Families received a shelter kit (plastic sheeting, timber, tools, etc.) to repair, reinforce or extend their existing shelter.	Families with no shelter received a full kit in order to build a tent in an informal settlement.	Communities implemented semi-permanent site improvements to informal settlements, reducing health and safety risks.	Families received a voucher that could be redeemed for Shelter and WASH materials to address their individual immediate needs.	Families received a conditional cash grant for upgrading. The landlord gave a year's secure tenure and reduced rent in exchange.
WASH component	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Modality	In-kind kit	In-kind kit	In-kind and casual labour	Voucher	Conditional cash grant (3 tranches)
Unit cost per household	US\$ 150 direct (US\$ 250 total)	US\$ 400 direct (US\$ 600 total)	US\$ 150 direct (US\$ 250 total)	US\$ 250 direct (US\$ 450 total)	US\$ 1,500 direct (US\$ 2,350 total)
Lifespan	6-12 months	2+ years	2+ years	2+ years	5+ years
Delivery time	3 months	3 months	3 months	3 months	5 months
Advantages	Relatively cheap and quick. No formal approval required.	Relatively cheap and quick. No formal approval required.	Relatively cheap and quick. Highly visible and significant improvements in living conditions.	Relatively cheap and quick. No formal approval required.	'Permanent' improvement in living conditions. Investment in infrastructure. Secure tenure for family. Rental reduction.
Disadvantages	'Temporary'. Not all core needs met.	'Temporary'. Not all core needs met.	'Temporary'. Not all core needs met.	'Temporary'. Not all core needs met.	Relatively expensive and slow. Formal approval required.

gaps as identified by the coordination mechanisms. Initial caseload estimates were verified through a rapid mapping assessment.

The beneficiaries were targeted based on vulnerability, rather than refugee status, which meant Lebanese families also qualified.

Detailed household-level technical and socio-economic surveys were carried out by teams of both men and women consisting of both technical shelter experts and staff with interviewing skills. The household survey data was indexed according to a vulnerability scale agreed on by several organisations.

Independent teams then conducted Post Distribution Monitoring in order to avoid conflict of interests.

Analysis of the available data showed that sub-standard shelters hosted on average larger families compared to refugees living in the formal rental market. Proportionally, there were more children in sub-standard shelters and recent evaluations concluded that assistance to cover basic needs has improved

nutrition, raised school attendance and has reduced child labour.

Coordination

The organisation is an active member of the joint UN-/government-led Shelter Sector Working Group at both national and local level, and took the lead in several technical working groups, including those for weatherproofing and for informal settlements.

All activities were in line with the inter-organisational agreed Shelter strategy and with all relevant Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), such as guidelines for rehabilitating sub-standard buildings or weatherproofing kit contents.

Materials

The vast majority of materials were available locally. The one major exception to this was humanitarian plastic sheeting, which was not available in either sufficient quantity or quality. Half the required amount of plastic sheeting was imported.

The organisation's technical staff conducted regular market assessments to track labour and material

costs in order to identify if the project was inflating prices.

Wider project impacts

A follow-up of the rehabilitation project showed that the vast majority of families remained in their accommodation for the full year. The rent reduction has enabled families to increase their human capital investment in education and healthcare.

Future challenges

The Syria conflict has become a protracted crisis and rents are continuing to rise while the shelter situation for many vulnerable Syrian and Lebanese families deteriorates.

Forced evictions are increasingly an issue which could be mitigated by projects helping to formalise tenancy agreements.

Community acceptance of such a large influx of people is critical to minimise insecurity, evictions and further displacement. The organisation has completed a research project to see how livelihood interventions can be integrated to strengthen social cohesion.