

HOUSING UPGRADING ACTIVITY

Bader District, Amman

I. Context

Influx of Syrian refugees to urban hubs

As of February 2017, 79% of 656,170 Syrian refugees registered under UNHCR in Jordan live outside the camps in urban and pre-urban areas, with 26.9 % or 176,419 living in Amman governorate. The Greater Amman Municipality 2015 Census shows 31,236 Syrians living in Bader district, in south of Amman. French Red Cross, in partnership with Jordanian Red Crescent, set to upgrade housing for nearly 300 most vulnerable Jordanian and Syrian families living in Bader district. This activity was part of the multi-sectorial urban development project “**Improvement of living conditions of refugees and host communities in Bader district**”, whose main objectives were to increase social cohesion and decrease tension between the Syrian refugees and Jordanian host community.

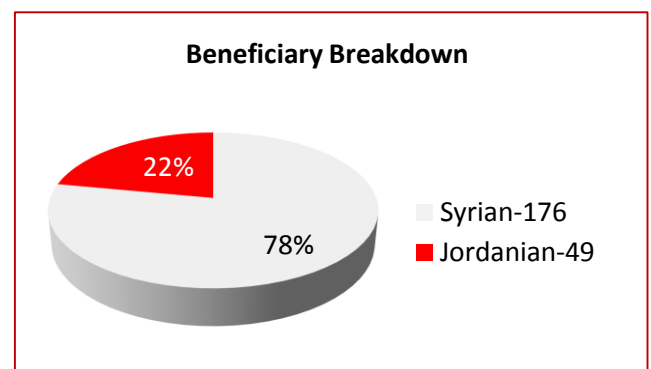
Due to owner expression of disapproval already during the early assessment phase, some households were excluded from the beneficiary list for shelter upgrading activity. As those were among the most vulnerable families, it was decided to support them through the distribution of winter kits, focusing on heating (stoves and fuel vouchers) and insulation (mats, tarpaulin, silicone sealant, etc.). The final target was thus modified to the following:

- Upgrading of 225 houses (average budget of approx. 800 JOD per house).
- Distribution of 60 winter insulation kits (value of approx. 150 JOD per kit).

The distribution of winter insulation kits took place in January 2015 and implementation of upgrading of 225 houses took place from April to December 2016. Out of the 225 upgraded houses, 176 were Syrians (all renters) and 49 Jordanian (36 owners and 13 renters).



Bader District
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II. Methodology

Renovation process

The chart below summaries the various steps which were taken throughout the planning and implementa-

tion phase for the renovation of the aforementioned 225 houses.

HOUSES RENOVATION PROCESS

Step 1: Establishment of beneficiary's database based on lists collected from UNHCR, CBOs, Ministry of Social Affairs and project hotline.

Step 2: Establishment of vulnerability Criteria's and tree based on contextual analysis and projects objectives.

Step 3: Beneficiaries' need Assessment and vulnerability confirmation (by phone or house visits)

Step 4: Beneficiary list finalization.

Step 5: Contract type selection (Framework/unit price), technical assessment of some houses to develop technical specifications, call for quotations and contractor selection.

Step 6: Legal firm selection and preparation of legal document templates.

Step 7: Implementation Phase:

- Houses technical assessment and meeting with beneficiaries (owner to be presented) with a team consisting of 1 FRC/JRCS Engineer, 1 contractor Engineer and the lawyer from ARDD – Legal aid .
- MOU signing with the owner of the houses
- Purchase Order signing with the contractor
- Construction Supervision
- Reception of work/M&E by FRC/JRC team.
- Reception of work signing by FRC/JRC team, owner and contractor
- Maintenance follow-up

Steps 1 to 4: Vulnerability Assessment & Beneficiary Selection

Initially, a list of 1714 households was collected from various sources: 990 Jordanian vulnerable households (provided by the Ministry of Social Development) and 724 vulnerable Syrian households (collected from UNHCR, MoE, CBOs and hotline). This list then was verified and narrowed down to 1211 households with whom a vulnerability assessment survey was conducted in late 2014. The vulnerability assessment survey was a point-based survey with questions in the three main categories of **economic situation, house condition and health**.



Step 5: Renovation contract type and contractor selection

A Framework Agreement Construction Contract with the price per unit for 74 construction items/work (58 items original, 16 added later) was then developed in the four following main categories:

- Masonry
- Plumbing
- Electricity
- Openings (Doors & Windows)

One important selection criteria for the contractor was that a minimum of 20% of the labor used for this activity would be from Bader district (as shown on National IDs), in order to increase the project's economic impact in the implementation area.

Step 6: Legal firm selection and preparation of legal document templates.

ARDD - Legal Aid was selected as the project legal consultation company to assist the team to draft the necessary legal documents and to facilitate the communication with the beneficiaries and landlords. The following legal documents were used as part of the project:

- Three-party house maintenance agreement including a table with selected renovation items was signed between FRC/JRCS, the owner and the tenant of the house prior to renovation.
- New Lease agreement was signed in case of absence of a rental agreement valid at least for 6 months and up to one year with a fixed rate of rental amount (from the date of final technical assessment).

- Legal Document Approval sheet signed by the legal team for each house (to certify the existence and validity of the house ownership document).
- Signed Reception of work by owners.

Step 7: Implementation Phase

House Technical Assessment and meeting with beneficiaries

From April to December 2016, a team composed of 1 FRC/JRCS Engineer, 1 engineer from contractor team and 1 lawyer from ARDD-Legal Aid visited the previously identified houses twice weekly to:

- explain the process to the beneficiaries (owner to be present),
- check ownership documents and rent agreements (explain how to obtain one if necessary),
- get the permission of the owner(s),
- verify the necessity of house upgrading,
- agree on the work to be done.

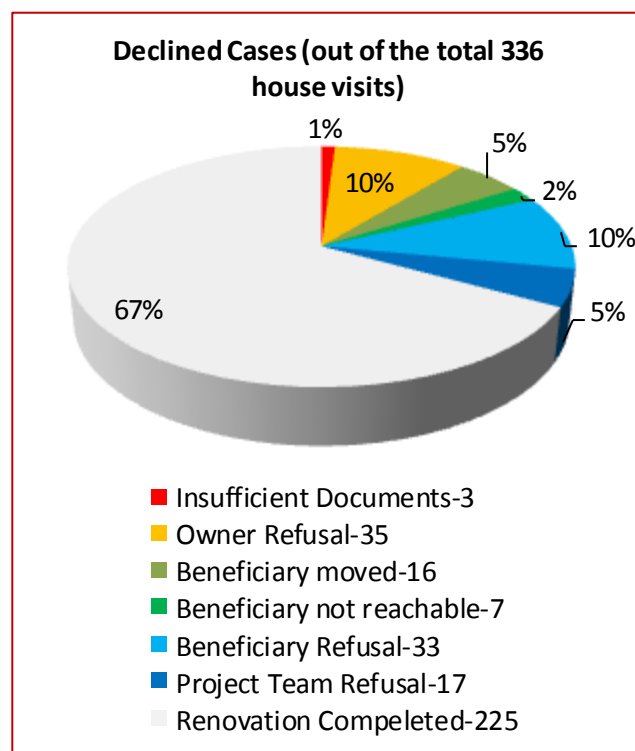


Declined Cases

In addition to the 225 upgraded houses, 111 houses were visited but were declined for various following reasons:

- Could not or did not provide the required documents (3 Syrian households),
- Owner refused the renovation or to sign maintenance/Lease agreement (35 houses: 9 Jordanian, 26 Syrian),
- Beneficiary had moved or were going to move to another house (16 houses: 4 Jordanian, 12 Syrian),

- Beneficiary was not reachable (number disconnected or the beneficiary had moved abroad) (7 houses: 1 Jordanian, 6 Syrian),
- Beneficiary refused the renovation (33 houses: 5 Jordanian, 28 Syrian),
- Houses were in good enough conditions (below the minimum set budget per house) (9 houses: 1 Jordanian, 8 Syrian),
- Houses needed substantial work (Over the budget) or not safe due to structural damage or extreme unhealthy living conditions (8 houses: 4 Jordanian, 4 Syrian).



Picture of one of the houses with substantial structural issue

Budget

Based on the initial technical survey, a price range for houses renovation was established. Accordingly, houses in need of minimal renovation (less than 150 JOD) or in need of substantial renovation due to structural damage or significant roof leakage (more than 2200 JOD) were not renovated.

Price		
Least spent	165 JOD (PO50 S064)	
Most spent	2196.86 JOD (PO113 S725)	
Range	Number of HH	Percentage
less than 150 JOD	0	0%
150-200 JOD	2	1%
200-500 JOD	34	15%
500-1000 JOD	136	60%
1000-1500 JOD	48	21%
1500-2000 JOD	4	2%
more than 2000 JOD	1	0%



Before renovation picture of house with most spent budget



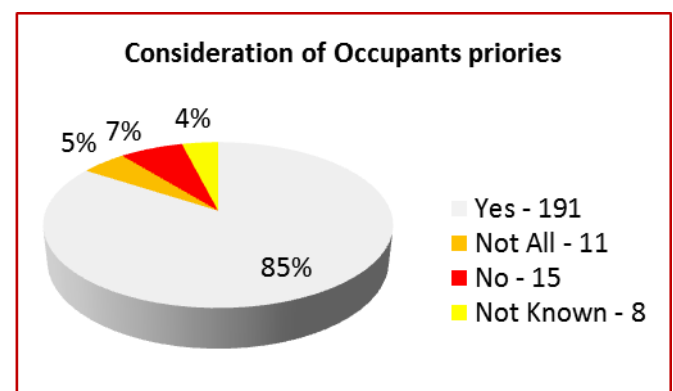
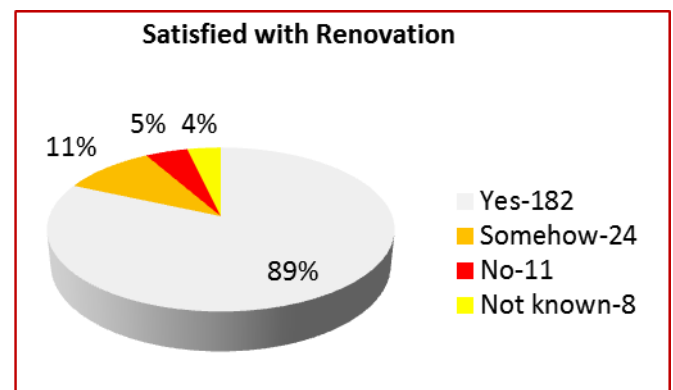
After renovation picture of house with most spent budget

III. Results

Monitoring and evaluation was done by the FRC/JRCS team for each house one to two weeks following the renovation completion. An evaluation questionnaire was developed to rate the satisfaction of beneficiaries with the renovation process and results, focusing mainly on:

- beneficiary satisfaction with the renovation in general and in consideration of their priorities,
- beneficiary satisfaction with the contractor team specially in regards to the length of the renovation work and their workmanship,
- if they have experienced a noticeable change after the renovation.

The evaluation results show that the renovation in general had been successful, with at least 80% of all beneficiaries responding positively to every question.



Following are some of the comments made by the beneficiaries regarding the positive impact of the renovation:

"We had no security before, we had lived for 2 years with a broken main door, my psychological state improved so much after the renovation, I am happier and more at ease."

"My psychological state is much better after renovation as I feel more comfortable to have guests over and the house is safer with new main door"

"Children are very happy with wash basin and yesterday they showered with hot water... we are very happy and appreciative."

"We used to get rats before the fly screens, now all is good"

"We are very relaxed now with windows protection and kids can play and we don't have to supervise 24/7"

"We feel a huge change, it is now more comfortable to open windows with children in the house"



IV. Lessons Learned

- Shelter activities are one of the most intimate interventions as they concern beneficiaries' private spaces and projects need to be designed and implemented with the respect and consideration of this point in mind. In case of working with external contractor, project team should ensure close monitoring of contractor's labor choices and timetable for renovation of each house to respect beneficiaries' privacy and time.
- Owners were generally and more than expected cooperative, so further negotiation regarding to

the increasing of contract length or decreasing rental prices could have been considered.

- There were almost as many cases beneficiaries declining renovation as owners. Reasons for the beneficiary refusal of renovation need to be understood and addressed better. This could be due to cultural factors with families especially husbands not being comfortable to let male workers into their home unless they are present. Training and engagement of female laborers in such renovation work should be considered.
- Some of the most vulnerable households living in dangerous or inadequate living condition due to structural or roof issues cannot be assisted unless collaboration with responsible local authorities is done to ensure landlords are held accountable for renting houses only with adequate living conditions. Lack of action or solutions in this area could lead to loss of lives or at least exploitation of refugee population and their limited financial resources.
- Until Syrian refugees could have sustainable income-generating opportunities, a longer lease agreement cannot always protect them against eviction as the owners are legally entitled to evict the renter after 3 months of not receiving rent. In addition, beneficiaries need to also be reminded prior to renovation that the renovation items belong to the owner of the house and not to them in case they leave the house.
- Unexpected Items such as secure main door, windows protection and windows fly screen could increase the quality of life and psychosocial wellbeing of the beneficiaries. This unintended positive impact of housing upgrading project, reflected on some of the beneficiaries' feedback below, needs to be further investigated and evaluated and could be an argument for viability of housing upgrading project as opposed to shelter cash for rent projects.

Charles DEBRAS

Middle East Regional Representative
Email: reg-middleeast@croix-rouge.fr

Charles AUROUET

Head of WASH and Food Security Department
Email: Charles.aurouet@croix-rouge.fr

Croix-Rouge française

98 rue de Didot
75694 Paris Cedex 14
www.croix-rouge.fr

PARTNERS



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