

CASE STUDY

TURKEY 2017–2018 / SYRIA CRISIS

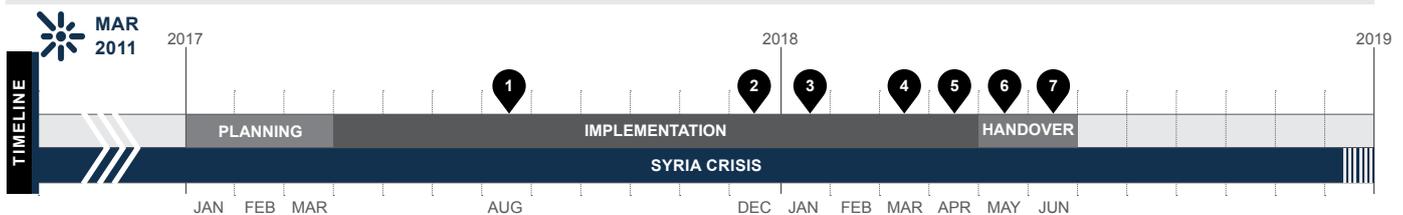
KEYWORDS: Housing repair, Security of tenure, Social cohesion, Local private sector engagement

CRISIS	Syrian refugee crisis in Turkey, 2011–onwards
TOTAL PEOPLE DISPLACED¹	3.5 million Syrians under temporary protection
SHELTER TARGETS²	49,050 people in 2017 (87,198 reached) ³ 175,070 people in 2018 (15,218 reached) ⁴
PROJECT LOCATIONS	Hatay and Sanliurfa Provinces, south-east Turkey
PROJECT BENEFICIARIES	1,300 households (6,951 individuals. 26% host community. 18% headed by women)
PROJECT OUTPUTS	1,200 houses rehabilitated (contractors) 100 houses repaired (cash modality) 100 shelter construction material kits provided 100 individuals trained on repair skills and received cash for work
OUTCOME INDICATOR	81% of beneficiaries satisfied with the assistance
SHELTER SIZE	50m ² on average
SHELTER DENSITY	4.5m ² of living area per person on average
MATERIALS COST PER SHELTER	USD 800 for the contractor-led modality USD 150 for the cash-based modality
PROJECT COST	USD 800 per household on average



PROJECT SUMMARY

The project assisted Syrian tenants and local host community households in south-east Turkey with rehabilitation and upgrade works and written landlord agreements. It was one of the first shelter interventions in the area and was mainly implemented via contractors, with only a small conditional cash component for lighter repairs. Upgrades included the installation of walled partitions with locks, improved lighting, repairs of water and sanitation facilities, sealing of exposed roofs and walls, and thermal insulation. The project also provided training, tools and job opportunities for refugees and host community members.



- 1 Aug 2017: Start of shelter technical assessment by field engineers, preparing landlord agreements and BoQs.
- 2 Dec 2017: Procurement process to select contractor starts.
- 3 Jan 2018: Rehabilitation works under the contractor modality start.
- 4 Mar 2018: Materials arrive and repair works under the cash-based modality start. The project shifts locations due to security issues.
- 5 Apr 2018: Cash-based repair works completed and payment to working groups.
- 6 May 2018: Completion of rehabilitation work, quality control and handover to beneficiaries.
- 7 Jun 2018: Post-implementation monitoring and evaluation reports.

STRENGTHS

- + Coordination and effective communication with local authorities.
- + Rental agreements improved households' tenure security.
- + Clear vulnerability criteria and effective selection process.
- + Targeting both refugees and host community members.
- + Flexibility to adapt and include a cash-based modality.
- + The use of local labour and materials.

WEAKNESSES

- Limited resources to cover the intended targets.
- Mismatch between targets and people in need in some districts led to challenges and delays.
- The cash-based modality had limitations in the type of work that could be conducted.
- Delays in identifying contractors.
- Lack of technical personnel in the procurement unit.
- Unplanned visits to the households caused fatigue.

¹ UNHCR Turkey: Key Facts and Figures July 2018.
² The Basic Needs Sector in Turkey focused on provision of cash-based interventions (CBI), NFI, WASH, infrastructure and shelter solutions. In 2017, 1,739,441 people benefited from CBI and 593,616 people from NFI.
³ Turkey Basic Needs Sector Dashboard 2017 Q4, <https://bit.ly/2T56w8R>.
⁴ Turkey Basic Needs Sector Dashboard 2018, <https://bit.ly/2FYXPTp>, and Syria 3RP 2018-2019 – Turkey, <https://bit.ly/2U9PW88>.

SITUATION IN TURKEY IN 2017

For more information on the situation and shelter response in Turkey, see overview A.29 in *Shelter Projects 2015-2016*.

In 2017, Turkey remained home to the largest refugee population in the world, hosting over 3.4 million Syrians under temporary protection. The majority lived in host communities (93%), often with insecure tenure arrangements, while only seven per cent lived in the 21 official temporary accommodation centres (TACs).⁵ Given the protracted nature of the crisis, Syrians largely exhausted their savings, therefore requiring continued support to meet their basic needs. Over 64 per cent of refugee households outside of TACs lived below the poverty line.⁶

In a joint inter-agency assessment conducted in five provinces of south-east Turkey in mid-2017, refugees reported inadequate shelter and WASH conditions, poor hygiene (28%), lack of protection from the weather (19%), and lack of privacy (10%).⁷ 60 per cent shared accommodation and 10 per cent lived in informal tented settlements, unfinished buildings, barns, shops and factories.

Within the provinces of Hatay and Sanliurfa (targeted by this project), Syrian refugees totalled 28 and 24 per cent of the overall population respectively,⁸ increasing population density, waste volumes and water consumption. Prior to the crisis, some of the rural areas already had low access to infrastructure services, and many low-income families lived in the peri-urban areas of large cities, where housing quality was poor.⁹ In the seventh year of the Syria Crisis, municipalities were providing an ever-growing share of services to Turkish residents and Syrian refugees, stretching public funding, infrastructure and operational capacity. Competition for services, such as education and health, had an increasing potential to fuel social tensions between host communities and refugees.

NATIONAL RESPONSE

The Turkish government led the delivery of assistance within the TACs, with the support of humanitarian partners. In host communities it was more challenging to identify and assess the needs of refugees. Shelter activities were coordinated under the Basic Needs Sector, including core relief items, water, sanitation and hygiene, and infrastructure services. Most interventions were conducted through cash-based modalities, particularly multipurpose cash.

LOCATIONS AND BENEFICIARY SELECTION

The targeted provinces hosted large refugee populations due to their proximity to the border. Districts were selected based on the shelter conditions and number of refugees hosted, after coordination with local authorities. Only three major international partners were active in shelter interventions in the project areas at that time.



The project targeted Syrian refugees and Turkish host communities with rehabilitation works implemented by contractors and, for a small caseload, through cash grants.

Refugees were supported to register with the relevant Turkish authorities. Initially, only refugee households were targeted for this project. However, after realizing that this was causing significant tensions within the local communities, 25 per cent of host community members were also added. Households were targeted from two main groups, namely refugees tenants and local Turkish owners and tenants.

A careful selection process was designed to prioritize households, using a combination of socio-economic vulnerabilities and shelter and WASH conditions:

- First, a list of damaged houses was collected from the local municipalities;
- Then, field engineers conducted house-to-house shelter and WASH assessments, categorizing the house according to three levels of damage.¹⁰ Protection considerations were also applied, by looking at lighting, locks, doors and windows conditions;
- 10 vulnerability indicators were also assessed, according to a list prepared by the organization. Each indicator was assigned a score of one, and a minimum of four points was the threshold for selection;¹¹
- A database was established with the results of the assessment, containing both household and landlord information, as well as pictures of the house;
- A basic ownership verification was conducted;
- The final list of eligible households was shared with the municipalities for validation.

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

The project was one of the first shelter interventions in the area and was based, in part, on the lessons and implementation modalities of a previous project conducted by the organization in Iraq.¹² One of the main differences was that refugee tenants were targeted, which meant that security of tenure was a more pressing issue, and that an indirect benefit also reached the local landlords. This project also aimed at increasing social cohesion, by targeting host community households.

⁵ TACs are large-scale camp-like settings providing collective accommodation and meals for individuals under temporary protection in Turkey.

⁶ Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) 2018-2019 – Turkey.

⁷ The assessment is available at <https://bit.ly/2RZ0c3W>.

⁸ Directorate General of Migration Management, <https://bit.ly/1Np6Zdd>.

⁹ 3RP 2018-2019 – Turkey.

¹⁰ 1) No damage (0–10%); 2) Partial damage (10–30%), minor repairs needed; and 3) Significant damage (30–70%), with major repair works needed.

¹¹ Vulnerabilities included: female-headed households; pregnant and lactating women; youth-headed households; chronic disease; disability; lack of labour power or member of working age; no previous shelter assistance received; damaged shelter; families with over five members; elderly without support.

¹² See A.34 in *Shelter Projects 2015-2016*.



The organization had offices in both targeted governorates and was implementing shelter projects in south-east Turkey since mid-2016, with a total of 15 dedicated shelter staff, including 5 female and 8 male engineers. The project was part of a wider multisectoral refugee programme. With its wide footprint, the organization had direct access to remote areas, where many people in need were residing.

The project was implemented mainly through local contractors (1,200 houses). A cash-based modality was also used for a small portion of the targeted households (100 houses), after discussion with the local authorities. This was added for houses in the first damage category, after assessments showed that refugees and host community members had construction skills and were looking for employment opportunities.

Before the start of the rehabilitation activities, project staff conducted half-day induction sessions explaining project objectives, process and steps, including works schedules and landlord agreements.

CONTRACTOR MODALITY. After the assessments, field engineers prepared individual Bills of Quantities for the contractors and oversaw the signature of rental agreements between households and landlords. Works included roofing insulation; electrical repair; internal and external rehabilitation of roof and walls, including of washrooms; floors; plumbing for kitchen and washrooms; waste water system; and replacement of doors and windows. A special BoQ for accessible toilets for people with disabilities was also prepared. Contractors were selected with an open tender advertised through newspapers, social media and the organization's website. During the works, refugees would either stay in other rooms of the same house, or transfer to relatives in the same area for a few days.

CASH-BASED MODALITY. For this portion of the project, standardized raw materials and construction tools were procured and distributed by the organization, while works were conducted by groups of workers from the refugee community, including some of the targeted households. Ten groups of 10 workers each (both skilled and unskilled) were identified by the organization and represented by one focal point. The organization conducted an induction training to the groups, after which tools were distributed. Cash for work was paid as a lump sum to the groups after completion of repair works in one house.

For both modalities, field engineers monitored the implementation through house-to-house visits, about three times a week. After completion of the works, quality control reports were prepared by the engineers, landlords and households filled a form to approve the works, and the houses were handed over to the beneficiaries. In a post-implementation survey conducted by the monitoring and evaluation unit, it was found that 81 per cent of the households were satisfied with the assistance, while 13 per cent were dissatisfied. The main problems faced were that the repairs had not been completed (17%), the roof had not been properly repaired (9%), or there were issues with the paint, doors and windows installed.

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY

All technical specifications were prepared by the organization's engineers to ensure quality. To support the local economy, all materials and tools were procured from local markets. Local contractors were also encouraged and prioritized during the selection process.

COORDINATION

The organization worked closely with governors, subgovernors and local organizations during the project, to select locations, prioritize needs and define the implementation process. At times, local organizations in the area were also identified to complete some rehabilitation works. Inter-agency coordination was important in joint needs assessments and for referrals between agencies.

SECURITY OF TENURE

As many refugees did not have any legal or written rental agreements with the landlords, they were exposed to risks of eviction or sudden increase of rents. Firstly, the organization assessed the tenure situation by including HLP criteria during the beneficiary selection process. These included whether the household was a tenant or owner, if and what type of ownership or rental documents were available and, if any rental agreements existed, what was their duration and if rehabilitation works were allowed by the owner. Local authorities, established community representatives and neighbours were approached to verify ownership claims made by beneficiaries and landlords.



Repairs included roofing insulation, walls rehabilitation, electrical works, floor repairs, plumbing and replacement of doors and windows.

To improve households' tenure security, rental agreements were signed between the landlords, the households and the organization. The agreements contained the following provisions:

- Identification of land/property (location and boundaries);
- Parties to the agreement and proof of their identity;
- Acknowledgement of ownership status of land/property;
- The shelter intervention does not legitimize or confer ownership rights over the property in question;
- Roles and responsibilities of each party;
- Process in the event of breach of agreement – which should reflect what is most suitable to the parties in the local context. The final resolution could be facilitated by the de facto local authorities, village chief or other actor trusted by both parties;
- Conditions and process for termination of agreement.

The agreement bound landlords to continue hosting the households for a minimum of 12 months, with the following three options:

1. Rental freeze for at least 12 months (53% of the cases chose this option);
2. Free rent, duration depending on the negotiation (33%);
3. Rental discount for 12 months (14%).

A copy in Turkish, Arabic and English was prepared and signed by the three parties. In case of violation of the agreement, the landlord would be responsible for paying all expenses to the organization. While this in the beginning caused landlords to complain, project staff organized meetings with them to explain and discuss the terms and agree on a rent amount, based on the approximate cost of repairs from the initial BoQ.



The project also provided rehabilitation of water supply and sanitation facilities.

MAIN CHALLENGES

Security concerns along the border caused the suspension of project activities in some districts. To meet project targets, the caseload was shifted to safer districts. However, the shift in locations caused additional delays, for instance in the selection of contractors.

Challenges were also faced with the chosen contractors, as in some cases these (or their subcontractors) were unqualified to do the works. After the quality control visits showed such issues, the contracts were suspended and new contractors selected, which led to delays in the implementation.

WIDER IMPACTS OF THE PROJECT

Given the scale of the refugee population and the small number of actors engaging in shelter activities, the shelter coverage was very limited in Turkey. This project was considered as a first step to facilitate the involvement of local authorities in housing rehabilitation, as well as to highlight the role of shelter as a key factor to improve health, hygiene and living conditions of the refugees and host communities alike. In some districts, works were referred to local government organizations.

Besides, the project contributed to the local economies through procurement of materials and creation of job opportunities, as well as supporting social cohesion by reducing the tensions between refugees and host communities. After the project, the number of complaints received by the local authority in the target locations decreased.



By targeting both host communities and refugees, the project contributed to social cohesion. After its completion, the number of complaints to local councils about tensions between the two groups dropped.



Beneficiaries were selected in coordination with the municipalities through a combination of technical assessments, vulnerability criteria and ownership verifications.

STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES AND LESSONS LEARNED

STRENGTHS

- + **Coordination and effective communication with local authorities**, village leaders and local organizations granted easy access to locations and information, such as households lists.
- + **The notarized agreement improved households' tenure security** to protect them from eviction or exploitation, as well as giving them more stability in their current residence.
- + **Clear vulnerability criteria and effective selection process**, allowing the prioritization of the most vulnerable households.
- + **Targeting both refugees and host community members fostered social cohesion.**
- + **Flexibility to adapt and include a cash-based modality**, although for a limited caseload, which enabled households to build their capacities and earn an income, while choosing how to conduct the repairs based on their needs.
- + **The use of local labour and materials** which supported local markets.

WEAKNESSES

- **Resources were limited to cover the intended targets**, resulting in lower impact and effectiveness (especially for rehabilitation of roofs). Due to the **currency inflation**, which was not adequately anticipated, labour markets were affected and the high labour costs impacted on the extent of works that could be covered under the contractor-led modality.
- **Mismatch between targets and people in need led to challenges.** Because of security concerns in some districts, the organization shifted target locations hurriedly, selecting houses far from each other, which then caused challenges in selecting contractors and further implementation delays.
- **The cash-based modality had limitations**, as households often did not have skills to conduct heavier repairs (i.e. for damage category 2) and some works were dangerous.
- **The identification of potential contractors** in the targeted areas took a long time at project inception.
- **Continuous delays in the procurement of items with technical specifications**, due to the absence of technical personnel in the procurement unit.
- **Unplanned visits to the households** sometimes caused fatigue and were perceived as intrusions. Stronger field-level coordination would have mitigated this.

LESSONS LEARNED

- **A more organized, phased approach to the contractor-led modality** would have been more effective. For example, the organization could have maintained a database to organize houses in batches, depending on whether technical assessments had been conducted or not, thereby **allowing the implementation of works to start at different times**. Using an electronic portal would have also helped in producing BoQs, reports and all other project documents more quickly and in digital form.
- **Quality control systems should be in place from project inception**, to enable the timely identification and resolution of problems. This could have been achieved by a better collaboration between programme and monitoring and evaluation units.
- **Donor visibility can create tensions and should be carefully considered**, in consultation with local authorities. For example, the donor flag was displayed during project activities, which was not well received by some members of the host communities, due to the political tensions between the countries.
- **Stronger community engagement and more freedom for the households** to choose their priorities would have led to higher satisfaction. For example, it was found that beneficiaries in many cases would have focused more on lighting and sanitation facilities. **The cash-based modality was more successful**, as it enabled a certain degree of customization. The organization was planning to expand it for future projects.



Local materials and labour were used in the project to support local markets.



Households were protected from exploitation or eviction from landlords through an agreement signed between the two parties and the organization.