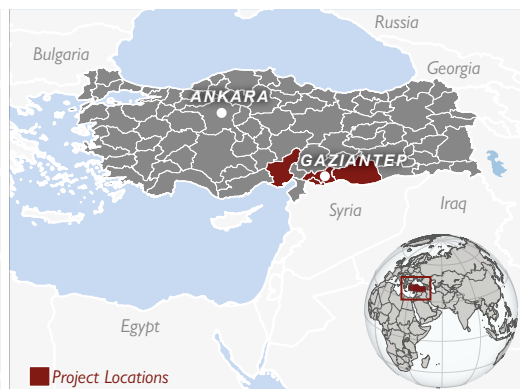


CASE STUDY

TÜRKİYE 2022-2025 / COMPLEX CRISIS

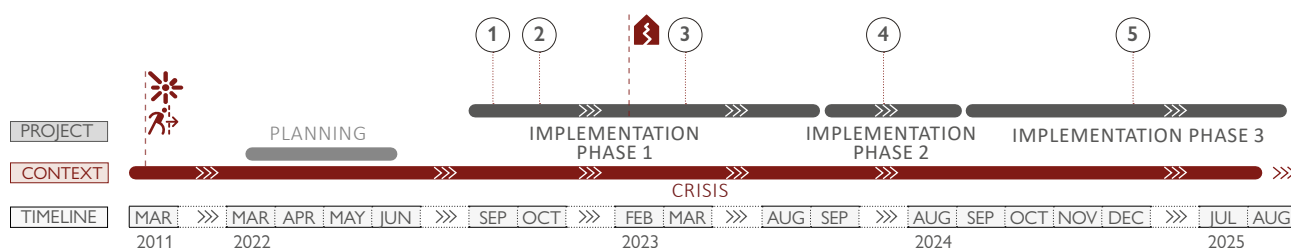
CONTEXT / SETTLEMENT	SHELTER TYPE	SUPPORT METHODS
CRISIS Syrian Crisis and 2023 earthquakes		
PEOPLE DISPLACED 3.65 million people (Syrian refugees in Türkiye)*		
PROJECT LOCATION Sanliurfa, Gaziantep, Kilis and Adana		
PEOPLE SUPPORTED BY THE PROJECT 37,868 individuals (18,693 male, 19,175 female) including approx. 10,230 with shelter rehabilitation, and 27,638 with access to upgraded buildings.		
PROJECT OUTPUTS 1,144 homes rehabilitated 150 communal buildings upgraded (including schools, homeless shelters, primary health centres, cancer shelters, and orphan shelters).		
SHELTER SIZE Various sizes between 20–80 m ² (45 homes of <20 m ² , 354 homes of 21–40 m ² , 594 homes of 41–60 m ² , 126 homes of 61–80 m ² , and 25 homes of >80 m ²)		
SHELTER DENSITY 4-12 m ² per person (or 7.6 m ² per person on average)		
DIRECT COST USD 700 per household (for housing rehabilitation) USD 3-5,000 per building upgraded (on average)		
PROJECT COST USD 1,600 per household on average		



PROJECT SUMMARY

The shelter rehabilitation project in Türkiye aimed not only to address shelter needs in underserved communities but also to promote social cohesion between Syrian refugees and host communities in border regions. Using an area-based approach, the project supported household-level shelter rehabilitation through cash assistance for repairs to rented apartments, alongside the rehabilitation of communal buildings used by both Syrian refugees and host communities. Shelter, protection, and livelihoods interventions were delivered within the same neighborhoods to promote integrated community recovery. Following the February 2023 earthquakes, the project adapted the ongoing interventions to respond to emerging needs while maintaining its community-based approach.

* UNHCR Data Portal, as of Sep 2022.



Mar 2011: Syrian civil war begins.

- Sep 2022:** Project and Year 1 implementation started. Needs and market assessment conducted.
- Oct 2022:** Selection of communal buildings and facilities for rehabilitation. Development of Bills of Quantities.
- Mar 2023:** Following the earthquakes, the intervention was adapted to respond to the new needs, with a stronger focus on earthquake-affected households and adjustments to the scope of repairs and rehabilitation costs.
- Mar 2023 - Aug 2024:** During Year 2 implementation, coordination with local authorities is strengthened and additional communal facilities are targeted to impact women's economic empowerment.
- Dec 2024:** Project Evaluation and Lessons Learned.



The project rehabilitated homes with light interventions such as covering cracks and repainting, particularly targeting vulnerable households.

NATIONAL SHELTER STRATEGY

Throughout 14 years of displacement from Syria into Türkiye, particularly into southeastern provinces, the increasing refugee caseload added substantial pressure to local housing markets and services. In response, national authorities encouraged shelter actors to prioritize longer-term, sustainable rehabilitation in high-pressure communities. After the 2023 earthquakes, both government and the shelter sector further emphasized the need to upgrade the housing stock in affected areas to enable safe return where possible.

PROJECT DESIGN

The project was designed as a three-year intervention to address shelter needs linked to the large influx of refugees and to the pre-existing strain on urban infrastructure in the southeast. It concentrated on improving safety and quality in substandard, rented apartments in densely populated neighborhoods, while also rehabilitating communal buildings that served both refugees and host communities. The approach was area-based and multisector, with established internal referrals to link shelter with protection and livelihoods support where needed.

The selection of project participants combined assessments of the housing habitability conditions with the socio-economic vulnerability of the household; homes requiring minor rehabilitation were prioritized over those with structural issues, as any structural intervention required certified engineering assessment and approval by local authorities through a process that was left outside the project's remit. Cash modality was chosen based on its flexibility and capacity to stimulate local markets, already functional, and offer opportunities for semi- and unskilled labor, particularly for Syrian workers, while fostering links to the host community. For communal buildings, a contractor-led modality was used to ensure quality control.

Participation was built into design and delivery. Households were engaged to determine the type of rehabilitation needed in their rented apartments. In parallel, local authorities collaborated with the team to identify communal buildings whose rehabilitation would provide wider community benefit.



Rehabilitation works included WASH facilities and kitchens, and were implemented with a cash-based modality in two tranches.

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

A multidisciplinary team of shelter specialists, engineers, and monitoring staff implemented the activities, with staff trained on protection mainstreaming and related reporting pathways. Data on shelter conditions and vulnerability were gathered through field assessment and analyzed via an internal scoring tool to produce the final participant lists. For each household, engineers developed a customized Bill of Quantities (BoQ) focused on practical needs, plumbing, plastering, repairing or replacing doors and windows, and accessibility improvements. Women and people with disabilities were specifically consulted to ensure features such as designated cooking areas, grab bars, and seated toilets were included where relevant.

Implementation used a clear agreement and verification process. Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) were signed with project participants to formalize the agreed BoQ and timeline. Cash was disbursed in two tranches into participants' bank accounts, 75 per cent upfront to initiate works, and 25 per cent upon completion and verification. Households were generally given 15 days to complete repairs. A dedicated channel via an instant messaging app provided ongoing technical support and follow-up. A final technical visit verified the completed works against the BoQ, with a technical committee reviewing any justified variations; once quality and quantity were confirmed, a completion report signed by the committee and the participant authorized the second tranche.

Post-activity monitoring and case committee records reinforced this quality assurance process: completed cases were reviewed against the agreed BoQ, safety checklist status, implementation progress, and eligibility for the second payment before final closure.

The project also supported communal buildings, such as schools, health facilities, women's centers, and community centers, with selection criteria oriented to maximizing community benefit and creating economic opportunities for women (for example, rehabilitating women's markets). Design focused on enhancing access and functionality, with BoQs developed collaboratively by center management, local authorities, and the technical teams. MoUs clarified responsibilities and scope of work, and handover followed completion verification.



Beyond shelter rehabilitation, the program renovated 150 communal buildings such as schools and health facilities, using an area-based approach.

Adaptations followed the 2023 earthquake. With many team members also personally affected, the project shifted field practice to maintain continuity. Plastering to fill and cover cracks became a major line of work, modest in technical impact but critical in helping families cope with the psychological trauma associated with visible earthquake damage. Where access was constrained due to damaged roads or safety restrictions, the team implemented remote BoQs using the instant messaging app, with residents sharing photographs to support assessment and supervision.

TARGETING

Areas were prioritized in coordination with local authorities and rest of shelter actors, based on needs assessments and the presence of refugees. After the earthquake, the focus narrowed to affected neighborhoods. Participant selection combined shelter condition and vulnerability scoring, with particular attention to women-headed households, households with people with disabilities or chronic illness, older persons without working-age adults, people at risk of protection concerns, and other highly vulnerable groups. Monitoring samples confirmed that both Syrian refugee and Turkish host community households were included, supporting the project's social cohesion objective while prioritizing humanitarian need. Most supported repairs were undertaken in rented apartments; involving landlords was often difficult because many owners lived elsewhere and were hard to reach or reluctant to sign formal documents. Given the light nature of works, often including plastering and simple door or window repairs, tenant consultations were prioritized and the average unit cost was capped at approximately USD 700 per household.



Works also focused on accessibility improvements for people with disabilities.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Engagement with affected people was continuous and practical. Households participated in defining and agreeing the BoQ and were supported to make decisions on what to prioritize and where to procure materials. Monitoring findings indicated that most households felt their views were taken into consideration and that many managed the rehabilitation process themselves, reinforcing ownership and accountability. The cash modality increased choice and control, enabling families to select vendors, negotiate prices, and, when possible, undertake additional minor improvements beyond the BoQ. This approach strengthened ownership of the process and allowed for personalization, even down to choices such as tile colors, so that completed works reflected households' preferences and contributed to a stronger sense of home.

COORDINATION

The project was implemented within a coordinated framework aligned with national and local shelter strategies. Collaboration with local authorities and humanitarian actors guided area selection and participant targeting and helped ensure complementarity and efficient resource use. This coordination also provided a platform to balance household-level rehabilitation with improvements to communal infrastructure, in line with national shelter priorities and area-based programming.



Sources of leaks and humidity, as well as external insulation, were addressed by the renovation interventions, to improve living conditions.



Following the earthquake in 2023, some of the activities were adapted.



© CARE Türkiye

Among the interventions conducted in communal buildings, the organization installed railings along staircases, such as this one in an orphanage that was renovated.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Environmental considerations were integrated into both household and communal works. At household level, repairs targeted common sources of inefficiency and deterioration, fixing leaks, addressing humidity, improving sealing of doors and windows for better insulation, and upgrading locks for security. At community level, the project emphasized green initiatives such as rehabilitating parks, installing solar energy systems where appropriate, and improving waste management through the placement of recycling bins, supporting local environmental objectives and energy efficiency.

MAIN CHALLENGES

- **Tension between landlords and project participants.** Improvements sometimes led owners to seek higher rents or to reclaim units, occasionally resulting in eviction risks. The organization's legal team followed up these cases, though incidents were not always formally reported. Including property owners in MoUs with clear provisions against rent increases or eviction due to repairs was identified as a potential way forward and would have required agreement with local authorities and sector leads.
- **Increasing shelter needs and limited resources.** Post-earthquake demand for rehabilitation far exceeded available resources, underscoring the need for additional funding and partnerships. The project confined itself to minor, non-structural works that safely complemented larger-scale recovery led by other actors.

- **Field visits and BoQ verification.** In-person assessments and supervision were resource-intensive and required more staff time than anticipated, even though they were essential for quality assurance and accurate costing.
- **Challenges in cash distribution.** The two-tranche model sometimes faced delays in releasing the second tranche. Contributing factors included households using some funds to meet other urgent needs, unexpected emergencies, and misunderstandings about the BoQ. Additional follow-up and support were required in these cases.
- **Accountability and feedback follow-up.** Although most participants knew how to provide feedback, monitoring showed that not all beneficiaries were aware whether suggestions or complaints had been followed up. This highlighted the need to close the feedback loop more visibly and communicate follow-up actions more consistently.



© CARE Türkiye

Water taps were installed in schools and other communal buildings.



© CARE Türkiye

Educational and community facilities were renovated in coordination with local authorities, with interventions including painting and waste recycling.

STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES AND LESSONS LEARNED

STRENGTHS

- ✓ **Relevance:** rehabilitation activities addressed **substandard living conditions** among both refugees and host communities, with particular attention to women, children, older persons, and people with disabilities. By focusing on practical home improvements, the program directly improved housing quality and everyday safety where people lived.
- ✓ **Effectiveness:** project participants reported **high satisfaction** with improvements such as better locks, lighting, privacy features, doors, windows, and WASH-related repairs, which translated into safer, cleaner, and more dignified living environments. Monitoring also confirmed high satisfaction with the timing and overall rehabilitation process. Opportunities remained to strengthen accountability, particularly around transparency in needs assessments, resource allocation, and feedback follow-up.
- ✓ **Impact:** household-level works delivered **immediate improvements** in safety, hygiene, privacy, weather protection, and overall well-being, while rehabilitation of communal facilities supported community well-being more broadly. The combination of household and communal interventions reinforced stability and contributed to social cohesion.
- ✓ **Sustainability:** many repairs, especially **permanent upgrades, were expected to benefit families over the long term** by making homes safer and more durable. Continued maintenance remained a challenge that extended beyond the project's scope.
- ✓ **Coherence with an area-based approach:** integrating shelter rehabilitation with protection and livelihoods support within the same neighborhoods ensured complementarity and helped avoid duplication. Coordination with local authorities ensured that the most pressing needs were addressed and that benefits were shared by both refugees and host communities.

WEAKNESSES

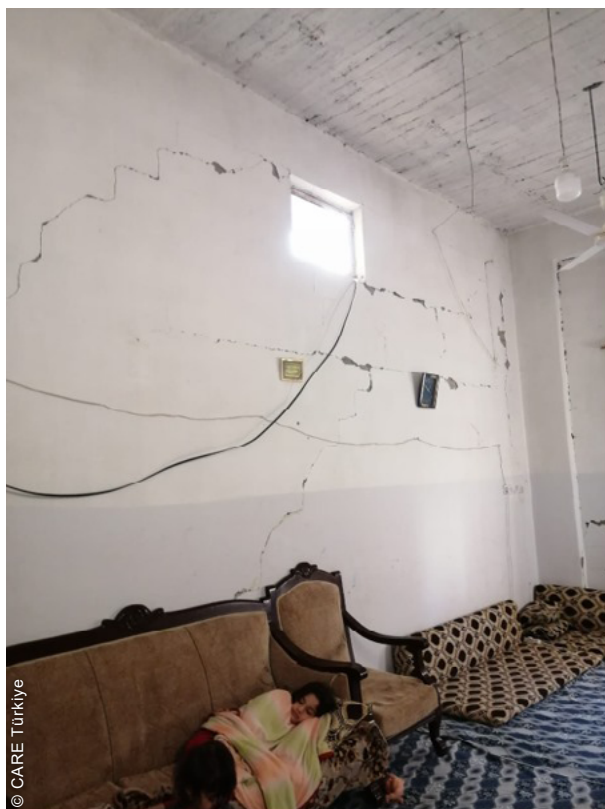
- × **Limited scope for major repairs and long-term recovery needs.** Government regulations and earthquake damage classifications limited assistance to non-structural works. The project achieved its objective of improving safe and habitable living conditions for affected households. However, many communities continued to face wider housing recovery challenges that could not be addressed through this intervention alone, highlighting the need for complementary structural rehabilitation and reconstruction support.
- × **Increased housing costs and risk of eviction.** Post-earthquake market tightening led to higher rents in some locations. After upgrades, some landlords attempted rent increases or reclaiming units, creating risk for already vulnerable households.
- × **Insufficient support for vulnerable groups within the shelter scope.** Despite prioritization of vulnerable participants and referrals to protection, legal assistance, case management, and livelihoods services, some needs required longer-term or more specialized support beyond what shelter rehabilitation alone could provide.
- × **Feedback follow-up and communication gaps.** While feedback channels existed, some participants were not aware whether suggestions or complaints had been acted upon, indicating a need for clearer response tracking and communication with affected households.



FURTHER READING ON SHELTER PROJECTS

On Türkiye: SP 17-18 / A.32; SP 8TH ED. / A.27.

On housing rehabilitation: SP 17-18 / A.27 IRAQ;
SP 15-16 / A.31 LEBANON; SP 8TH ED. / A.24 SYRIA;
SP 10TH ED. / A.22 JORDAN.



Choosing to repair cracks and cover the signs of the earthquake was an important step in helping affected households move on after the disaster.

LESSONS LEARNED

- **Strengthen community roles in communal upgrades.** Transferring more responsibility to community members for verifying needs, implementing works, and monitoring delivery could deepen local ownership and support sustainability.
- **Collaborate across sectors at neighborhood level.** Expanding multisectoral assessment and response to cover the full range of community challenges could reinforce the area-based approach and the impact of combined shelter, protection, and livelihoods activities.
- **Engage homeowners earlier and systematically.** Securing owner consent and participation from the outset could reduce HLP risks. This required harmonized approaches among shelter actors and closer coordination with sector leads and authorities to mitigate eviction and rent-increase risks and to clarify responsibilities of owners and tenants.
- **Close the accountability loop.** Feedback systems should not only have collected complaints and suggestions but also communicated what action was taken, when, and why. This would have strengthened trust and helped participants understand how their views influenced implementation.

RECOMMENDATIONS MOVING FORWARD

- **Develop measurable indicators for social cohesion and integration.** Defining specific, practical indicators to track how shelter works influenced social cohesion and integration outcomes, using regular monitoring, could have guided adaptations and evidenced results for stakeholders.
- **Prepare transition arrangements earlier.** Developing practical exit and handover plans for each activity stream, including documentation, local capacity building, and clear responsibilities for maintaining gains after external support ended, could have strengthened transition planning.
- **Promote women's leadership in communal projects.** Creating structured opportunities for women to lead small-scale communal upgrades where context allowed could have built networks, technical skills, and leadership capacity as part of community resilience.