

Beirut Port Explosion Response & Recovery Project

Final report, phase 1



On August 4, 2020, a deadly explosion at the Beirut Port killed at least 178 people and injured 6,000 others, causing heavy destruction across the city. The past 9 months the inhabitants of Beirut faced a recovery period that was challenged by the global pandemic and political and economic instability. The value of the country's currency continues to fall, making it difficult for vulnerable families to pay for basic commodities and services -food, water healthcare, education- and secure shelter. With regards to the damage, over 170,000 people's home were impacted by the blast including:

- **30,000 apartments:** minor damage including shattered windows, doors, and facades.
- **17,000 apartments:** moderate damage, with residents unable to return to their homes safely.
- **1,100 buildings have extensive structural damage:** need significant and complex repairs, demolition and complete reconstruction.

Habitat's Disaster Response

Since the lifting of COVID related lock-downs earlier this year, the Habitat/CRS team has finished the activities in the original neighborhood Habitat started their disaster response activities which means that the Immediate Disaster Response-project has now finalized the activities of the first phase of the project.

With the funding mobilized Habitat:

1. **Supported at least 135 affected households to gain access to safe and secure shelter through direct support to selected partners implementing rehabilitation and repairs in affected homes**



- *Output 1:* Light repairs such as replacing windows and doors; weatherproofing; repairing ceilings and water systems - **54 households supported**
 - *Output 2:* Repairing and rehabilitant damaged shopfronts - **9 businesses supported**
 - *Output 3:* Develop quick impact projects and neighborhood action-plans (including street lightning, cable management, solid waste management)
2. **Support local agencies capacity to better respond to the blast through organizational capacity strengthening and technical assistance**
 - *Output 1:* Habitat and CRS have partnered to collectively provide financial and technical support to four local community-based organizations (CBOs) implementing housing repairs and community

action plans (The Social Association; Awareness & Consultation Association; Cenacle de Lumiere; Islamic Social Welfare Association)

- *Output 2:* Co-leading the Lebanon Shelter Sector Working Group (WG) on Area based Approaches. **2 sector-wide documents created**
- *Output 3:* Core members of the Shelter Sector WG on Housing, Land and Property. **1 sector-wide guidance document created**

Challenges & Recommendations

The following challenges and recommendations resulting from the finalisation of the first phase of Habitat's Disaster Response project in Beirut:

1. Covid-19 Lockdown

As a result of the surge in COVID-19 community transmission, extreme lockdown measures were in place for the first 6 to 8 weeks of 2021, causing notable delays in household and shop-front repairs. As restrictions gradually lifted, Habitat and CRS continued to follow the strict COVID-19 protocols.

2. Importance of sector-support

Habitat's intentional focus on providing technical support to the sector has been well received. Habitat's convening of the Area-Based Approach Working Group has been supported by sector partners including UN-Habitat, UNHCR, IFRC, Medair, CARE, Norwegian Refugee Council, Solidarities among others. Due to the momentum generated by this group, discussions are underway to develop an inter-sector working group to promote the approach nation-wide.

3. Promoting urban recovery

Habitat facilitated the development of neighborhood action plans which identified community priorities across different sectors and indicated that street lightning and electricity/cable management should be a short term priority in all community based upgrades. To complement the household level repairs, Habitat and CRS continue in their attempt to strengthen social cohesion in poor and vulnerable neighborhoods through undertaking community based quick-impact projects that will benefit the whole community (street lightning and greening). Habitat works together with partners to implement the priorities of the most vulnerable in these neighborhoods. Moving forward, this approach is aimed to become a foundation of Habitat's programs across Lebanon.

Habitat continuous to support Beirut

Looking ahead, Habitat will continue to rebuild in a new neighborhood (Maraash). In this neighborhood Habitat will support remaining households that are affected by the blast, with increased focus on supporting small businesses and shopfronts that are damaged as well as urban recovery through community action plans.

Across Lebanon, Habitat has been working for years to support vulnerable Lebanese and Syrian and Palestinian refugees. Pending further research and consultation in the coming months, Habitat hopes to enter into strong new partnerships to help many more people in Lebanon find safe housing. The above activities and lessons learned provide a good basis for a future, potential regional program.

