



NORWEGIAN
REFUGEE COUNCIL

Fact Sheet | Integrated Urban Shelter Programme (August 2014)

Shortfall of adequate housing in Jordan

The influx of Syrian refugees into Jordan has put considerable strain on the local housing market. As the Syrian conflict enters its fourth year, there are now more than 600,000 registered Syrian refugees in Jordan, 80 per cent of whom are living outside of formal camps in cities, towns and villages throughout the country.

The Syrian crisis has exacerbated the existing shortage of affordable housing in Jordan. The Government of Jordan noted that in the seven years prior to the Syrian conflict the Jordanian housing market faced an annual shortfall of 3,400 housing units (a housing unit is defined as the space needed to accommodate an average family size).

“Each month we struggled to pay the rent, always scared we could be evicted,” Mahmoud told us. “I am responsible for eight children and both my wife and my brother’s wife. If we had been evicted, I would have had no option but to return to Syria and I am scared to think of what could happen to us there”

An additional 120,000 new housing units are therefore needed to accommodate the current numbers of Syrian refugees in Jordan. The

refugee influx is now impacting poor Jordanian households with recent assessments indicating actual or fears of rising rental prices and competition to secure adequate housing as the two main areas of tension between refugees and host communities.

Many Syrian refugee families are therefore struggling to find adequate and secure accommodation. In 2014, UNHCR noted that more than half of Syrian refugee shelters assessed outside of formal camps are substandard. For those able to find a roof over their heads many are not able to pay rising rents, which in some refugee influx areas has risen by more than 25% between 2012 and 2013.

Syrian refugee families assessed by NRC often tell of multiple moves inside Jordan as they try to find adequate and affordable shelter impacting their ability to access basic services such as keeping their children in schools, stay connected to their family and support networks and crucially stay legal as they are required to update their place of residence on government-issued service cards in order to access local services.

NRC Jordan’s urban shelter approach

To respond to growing shelter needs, NRC is putting new housing units on the market through an innovative integrated Urban Shelter programme which provides tangible support to Jordanian host communities while meeting the immediate shelter needs of vulnerable Syrian refugees.

NRC is providing financial incentives and technical support to Jordanian landlords in northern Jordan to bring new units onto the rental market. In return, vulnerable Syrian refugee families identified by NRC are provided with rent-free accommodation of between 12 – 24 months.

Since July 2013 NRC has put an additional 1,500 housing units on the market benefiting more than 5,000 Syrian refugees. NRC has more than 8,400 Syrian beneficiaries currently on waiting lists for the project now operating in 48 villages across the Greater Irbid and Jerash areas.



The Integrated Urban Shelter Programme is supported by NRC's Information, Counselling and Legal Assistance (ICLA) teams who conduct regular follow up house visits with beneficiaries to provide information and counselling and monitor and respond to any landlord-tenant relationships.

NRC Jordan's urban shelter approach

Unlike other shelter approaches (i.e. cash for rent or repair of substandard dwellings), this project crucially contributes towards the creation of additional housing units. The development and increase of available and secure housing opportunities in local communities will help stabilise rents and reduce current inflation rates within the rental market - the main concern facing urban refugees and host community residents alike.

“It's a good project,” Abu Fathi one Jordanian landowner told NRC. “It's good for the Jordanians as it's difficult and expensive to secure loans to build our houses. And it's good as it also helps the Syrians”

NRC Jordan currently has funding for 4,000 a total of housing units by end of 2014. NRC estimates that it will have invested some USD 10 million (JOD 7 million) in the local Jordanian economy through construction materials, labour-costs and other income generating opportunities. NRC is the only organisation currently implementing this shelter methodology in Jordan and across the region. It is one of the key approaches outlined in the Syria Crisis Regional Response Plan (RRP) and highlighted in the Government of Jordan's National Resilience Plan (2014 – 2016).

The project is being developed in collaboration with the community-based organisations and in coordination with the relevant governmental departments.

The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) is an independent, humanitarian, non-profit, non-governmental organisation which provides assistance, protection and durable solutions to refugees and internally displaced persons worldwide. In Jordan, NRC has directly assisted over 350,000 Syrian refugees in both camps and host communities. In 2014 NRC requested more than USD 33 million in response to the Syrian Regional Response Plan (the largest appeal by an NGO) to support the continuation of our essential services across the shelter, non-food item (NFI), education, youth and protection sectors. NRC has offices in Zaatari, EJC and Azraq camps and in Amman and Irbid with more than 300 staff. NRC Jordan is a key partner of UNHCR and UNICEF and work closely with a large number of Jordan municipalities/authorities and local and international INGOs to provide assistance and protection to refugees from Syria in Jordan.

NRC Jordan's Integrated Urban Shelter Programme is currently supported by:

