

## “El Hay”: integrated multi-scale intervention for the vulnerable population of Tripoli, Lebanon



**Urban Centre:** Neighbourhood of Qobbe, Tripoli, Lebanon – in particular the areas of Chaarani, Rahbet, Old Qobbe.

**Project timeframe:** November 2016 – January 2018 (13 months) – for the component of the program funded by the Lebanon Humanitarian Fund (LHF)

**Type of project:** Neighbourhood approach transitioning from emergency to development including mainly the following sectors: Shelter, WaSH, Energy, Social Cohesion

**Project partners:** SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONALE (SI)

**Coordination framework:** Municipality of Tripoli, UN-Habitat

**Agency submitting the case study:** SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONALE (SI)

### CONTEXT

The Syrian crisis which started in 2011 has led to the displacement of over 5 million refugees. Over 1 million<sup>2</sup> fled to Lebanon, a neighbouring country with a long common history with Syria. The protracted conflict in Syria has forced these families to remain in Lebanon longer than they initially hoped.

In a heavy historical context (linked in particular to the common troubled history of Lebanon and Syria as well as the settlement of Palestinian refugees, creation of camps and civil war), this protracted crisis has faced multiple challenges from high humanitarian needs to intensification of structural difficulties. This has, in particular, steered 83% of the refugee population to settle outside of informal settlements, very often in urban settings and in particular in highly dense and vulnerable neighbourhoods.

Tripoli, the second biggest city of the country, has been chosen by many refugees as it offers a cheap rental housing stock that they could afford: sub-standard buildings often located in the poor neighbourhoods previously affected by war (conflict between Tabbaneh & Jabal Mohsein in particular). There, the needs are numerous and affect both host and refugee communities: deficient WaSH infrastructure, damaged buildings, structural unemployment, drug abuse and tensions leading to insecurity.

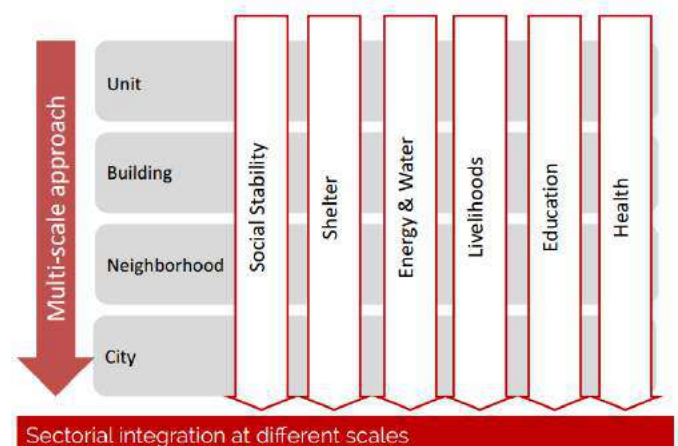
### PROJECT APPROACH/OVERVIEW

After a few years of implementation of emergency shelter rehabilitation resulted in build a strong knowledge of urban dynamics, SI started to develop a larger multi-sectorial approach. The vision of the programme was that the structural needs mentioned above could only be tackled through a multi-year, multi-scale approach involving the local authorities and the communities (as well as local partners).

To reach this objective, a transition was necessary: from 1 NGO/1 main sector to a coordinated approach.

The project funded by the Lebanon Humanitarian Fund (LHF) managed by OCHA over a one year period offered the possibility to:

- › Continue covering the most pressing needs with emergency intervention (in particular shelter rehabilitation),
- › Enlarge the scope of intervention to other sectors (Social cohesion, Energy, WaSH – Solid Waste management),
- › Build a stronger relation with the community and in particular build trust through the realisation of visible activities in a “short” timeframe,
- › Build the way forward through the collaboration with UN-Habitat in their profiling exercise to identify more precisely the structural needs that would require longer term intervention.



<sup>1</sup> From “101 facts & figures on the Syrian Refugee Crisis”, Nasser Yassin, AUB, March 2018

<sup>2</sup> Estimation of UNHCR-registered refugees in country in 2017, the figure of 1.5 million is commonly used to include the non-registered refugees.

## PROJECT PHASING

This LHF project (in yellow in the graph below), made it possible to implement activities in a phased manner.



The main project phases were

- Step 1** • Identification and selection of sub-neighborhoods of intervention.
- Step 2** • Initial community engagement and identification of focal points.
- Step 3** • Participation to the profiling exercise with UN-Habitat.
- Step 4** • Utilisation of the data to pre-select sites for intervention.
- Step 5** • Modification of the foreseen procurement process.
- Step 6** • Implementation of activities at household level and building level
- Step 7** • Implementation of activities at neighborhood level: public space, street lighting

## PROJECT OUTPUTS

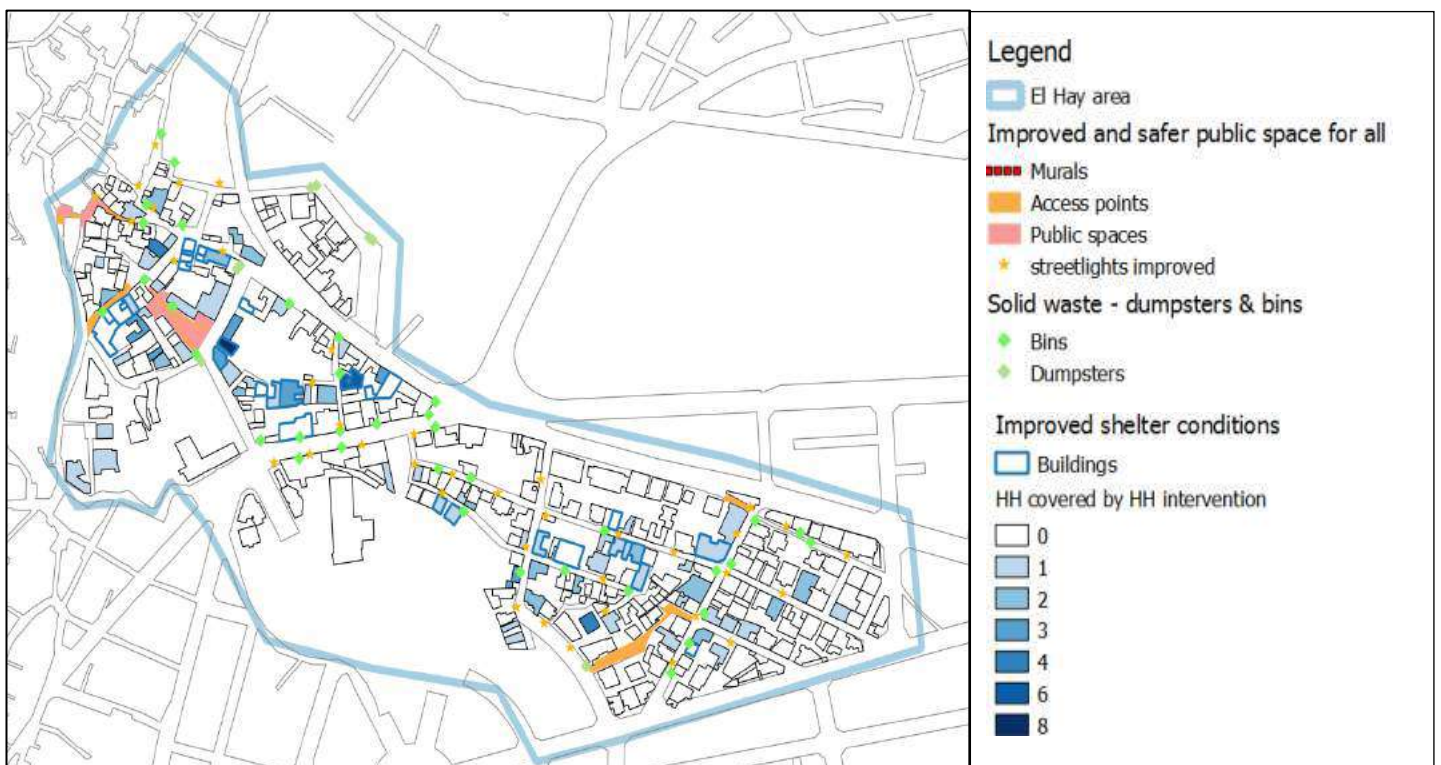
At the end of the project the following outputs were achieved:

- › **203 housing units rehabilitated** ensuring privacy, access to basic services (water, sanitation and electricity), safety and weatherproofing. All 203 households also received hygiene promotion sessions;
- › **30 buildings** hosting 135 households have seen their **common areas upgraded** (safe staircases, improved accessibility and roof weatherproofing...);
- › **3 public spaces were rehabilitated**: including, in particular, the creation of a small basketball field;
- › Realisation of **4 murals** in the community;
- › **5 access points** were enhanced: asphaltting of road, restoration of stairs and pathways eased access in the area.
- › **75 streetlights were upgraded**: replacement of HPS bulbs by LED light, addition of solar panels or batteries to cover for black-outs at night;
- › **Installation of over 50 bins & dumpsters** in the community to facilitate waste collection;
- › **4 events** to raise awareness on improved solid-waste management: promotion of recycling, reduction of waste production and better hygiene practices.

After the end of the project the following behaviours have been noted:

- › Self-organisation of mini “cleaning campaigns” by residents in connection with the firm in charge of solid waste collection in the area;
- › Maintenance of public spaces.

Figure 4: Map of intervention in the area





## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- › **Implementation of activities in the neighbourhood while the profiling exercise was being conducted:** this helped manage tensions and expectations in the community.
- › **Strong coordination with the profiling exercise:** SI team members participated in the data collection required for UN-Habitat's profiling which contributed to build internal trust and understanding of the data collected. This facilitated the use of the data directly in the project implementation: the pre-selection of buildings and identification of dark areas within SI project (requiring streetlights) were based on UN-Habitat profiling findings.
- › **Selection of 3 sub-neighbourhoods (instead of 1):** the neighbourhood identified was actually composed of multiple sub-neighbourhoods with sometimes very different urban patterns (from one that was part of the old city with narrow stairs to one more structured with large avenues) and different community dynamics. 3 of them were selected which allowed to adapt activities depending on needs but also to still be able to implement activities if some tensions were appearing in another neighbourhood.
- › **Public spaces are keys to restore social cohesion, dignity and pride** of the inhabitants. At the end of the project, the main highlights mentioned by inhabitants are the public spaces created, mentioning that they have attracted residents from outside the area.
- › **Use of noble materials:** for the public spaces, arabesque tiles were used. They were the symbol of a cultural identity as well as a sign of "wealth" that was very appreciated by residents.
- › **Objectives were reached thanks to the conjunction of activities of different sectors.** For example: additional dumpsters combined with hygiene sessions and renovated public spaces that the residents would want to maintain (arabesque tiles) ensured that these public spaces would be maintained clean by the residents.

## MAIN CHALLENGES

- › **Lack of public space:** The initial hope was to create large public spaces. However the public land in the selected area was finally very reduced which is often the case in the region. This led to re-formulate the public space intervention around main circulations: in areas where public spaces are inexistent, the streets (and the stairs in this case) are the places where people meet, exchange and live together.
- › **Committees:** To maintain its governance over its territory, the government of Lebanon refuses to include Syrian refugees in assemblies that would have a decision-making capacity. It was consequently complicated to create committees that would represent the full population of the area. It was therefore decided to work through a network of focal points of all nationalities present and who would be consulted at required times to ensure that the intervention would respect the will of all groups in the community.

- › **Revision of procurement strategy:** SI predominantly worked with a pool of small contractors. These contractors were unfortunately not accepted in the area and residents required that the people from the area would be hired. While maintaining its competitive process of selection, SI finally shifted its approach to larger contractors to whom some quota of recruitment from the area were imposed.

## LESSONS LEARNT

- › **Neighbourhood borders are not well defined in Lebanon and trying to define them might create tensions:** at the beginning of the project, a phase of delineation of the area to target was launched, implicating field assessment, contact with local leaders. Recommendation were not to try to identify "neighbourhoods" per say, as the boundaries were actually blurry, and they were afraid that building up on these "artificial borders" could create tensions in the future. The recommendation was to select an area even if it didn't match exactly to a specific artificial neighbourhood identity.
- › **Time required for neighbourhood selection:** This initial work generally takes longer than expected but is key to start building necessary relationships for the good development of activities later on.
- › **Mapping of authorities:** A good mapping of the different relationships between the different levels of local authorities (ministry, municipality...) would have saved time in execution with some time lost in validation process for intervention.



## CONTACT

For more information, contact: Lora Vicariot, Shelter Advisor SI, [vicariot@solidarités.org](mailto:vicariot@solidarités.org)