HUMANITARIAN SHELTER PROGRAMS AND THE CAPACITY TO ACHIEVE HOUSING STABILITY FOR SYRIAN REFUGEES IN LEBANON

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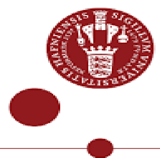

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ABBREVIATIONS

ABA	Area-based Approach
CVA	Cash and Voucher Assistance
HH	Household
HLP	Housing, Land, and Property
HOH	Head of Household
INGO	International Non-governmental Organization
IO	International Organization
ITS	Informal Tented Settlement
LCRP	Lebanese Crisis Response Plan
MPCA	Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
SBA	Settlements-based Approach
UNHCR	United Nations Refugee Agency

KEY CONCEPTS AND TERMINOLOGY

GENERAL CONCEPTS AND TERMINOLOGY

Al-Shawish: An Al-Shawish is a Syrian community representative selected by residents to self-manage an Informal Tented Settlement. The Al-Shawish liaises with the landlord, municipality, and humanitarian actors on behalf of the settlement. At the onset of the Syrian Refugee Crisis, the role of Al-Shawish was connected to foreign labor organizing, particularly in agriculture (1,2).

Daily work: Daily work describes economic opportunities that are characterized by unpredictable and contract-less employment, primarily involving manual labor, trade skills, or selling items on the street (3).

Informal Tented Settlement (ITS): An ITS is an "unofficial group of temporary residential structures, often comprising of plastic-sheeting and timber structures and can be of any size from one to several hundred tents" (1). ITSs proliferated across the Bekaa Valley following the Lebanese government's decision against establishing formal refugee camps (1). These settlements primarily formed on agricultural plots of land and rely on ad-hoc agreements with landlords. ITS residents are not confined to their settlements and settlements are self-run by an Al-Shawish (1,4).

Non-permanent structures: Structures erected in an ad hoc manner that can be quickly dismantled and moved such as the makeshift tents and temporary building materials used primarily in ITS (5).

Non-residential structures: Structures that are not designed for human inhabitance such as shops, workshops, farms, garages, factories, or active construction sites (5).

Residential structures: Structures designed for human inhabitance such as apartments, houses, or concierge rooms (5).

STUDY SPECIFIC CONCEPTS AND TERMINOLOGY

Housing Stability: This study uses the definition of housing stability put forward by Woodhall-Melnik et al. which defines stability as a combination of material elements, including permanence and affordability, as well as emotional elements, including sense of safety, comfort, and ability to establish a consistent routine (6). Permanence describes "the ability to maintain housing for a significant length of time" with length of stay and tenure security serving as indicators for this study (6). The term permanence in this case is not a reference to housing as a permanent structure or permanent solution. Affordability is linked to financial independence and the ability to be self-reliant and make routine house payments (6). Emotional elements of housing stability include the assurance that housing is a "safe place", that housing is a place of "comfort", and that housing contributes to "living in a normal atmosphere, which is consistent, has consistency, has routine" (6).

Humanitarian Organization: The term humanitarian organization is used in this study to describe local NGOs, INGOs, and IOs that work, or have worked, on projects pertaining to shelter and settlements or housing, land, and property in response to Syrian displacement in Lebanon.

ITS HHs: The term ITS HHs refers to the Syrian HHs participating in this study that were located in the Bekaa Valley and primarily engaged in ITS since their initial displacement to Lebanon by the Syrian Civil War.

Migration HHs: The term Migration HHs refers to the Syrian HHs participating in this study that were located in Beirut and have only engaged in residential structures since their migration to Lebanon prior to the Syrian Civil War.

Non-ITS HHs: The term Non-ITS HHs refers to the Syrian HHs participating in this study that were located in Beirut or the Bekaa Valley and had only engaged in residential or non-residential shelters since their initial displacement to Lebanon by the Syrian Civil War.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

According to UNHCR's latest figures, approximately 82.4 million people are displaced worldwide, with around 20.7 million of that figure comprising refugees (7,8). The number of displaced people around the world has doubled since 1990, and as this number increases, the nature of displacement continues to shift away from formal camp settings and into rental markets (9). Since 2003, the global number of refugees displaced in urban areas jumped from 15 to 60 percent while the number of refugees displaced in formal camps fell by more than 10 percent (9,10). As the landscape of displacement moves towards self-settlement, humanitarian actors look to strengthen interventions in rental markets where there remains a recurring need for shelter support with unique challenges to programming brought on by host-country economies, common practices, and infrastructure (11).

This reality is reflected in Lebanon where 85 percent of Syrian refugees are engaging in rental markets due to the government's decision to institute a "no camp" policy following the large number of displacements between 2011-2014 (12). Since the onset of the Syrian Refugee Crisis, housing stability[1] has been at the forefront of challenges for refugees as they confront barriers to livelihood recovery amid low housing stock and an absence of affordable rent (13,14). In 2018, approximately a quarter of Syrian households (HHs) were spending 80 to 100 percent of their monthly income on shelter (14). Housing stability has further deteriorated for HHs in recent years as the collapse of the Lebanese economy in 2019 and the continued devaluation of the Lebanese Lira has 90 percent of Syrian refugees living in extreme poverty (12).

Over ten years after the onset of the Syrian Refugee Crisis, the self-settlement of Syrian refugees in Lebanon serves as a prime case study to evaluate the long-term implications of rental markets on housing stability and the ways in which humanitarian shelter assistance has influenced these outcomes. Currently, humanitarian organizations are using Cash-for-Rent, Shelter Rehabilitation, and In-kind assistance as primary shelter interventions in Lebanon (15). As each of these programs provides short timelines for support, questions emerge as to how refugees have managed shelter over the course of long-term displacement, what role humanitarian organizations have occupied in their recovery, and how the shelter sector is evolving to meet the continued need for housing stability.

This study evaluates housing stability and the outcomes of humanitarian shelter programs for Syrian HHs over the course of migration and displacement in Lebanon. It contributes to a limited body of knowledge surrounding the housing experiences of Syrian HHs from the onset of the Syrian Refugee Crisis to present day, while also investigating challenges to stability that prevent humanitarian support from spurring longer-term improvements to housing stability post-program. This study relies on qualitative in-depth interviews with Syrian HHs and shelter sector practitioners to accomplish three core objectives:

I. To describe the housing stability of selected Syrian HHs since the onset of displacement,
II. To determine the impact of humanitarian shelter programs on the housing stability of selected Syrians HHs, and
III. To investigate strategies for achieving housing stability through shelter programming from the perspective of selected sector practitioners in Lebanon

FINDINGS ON OBJECTIVE I: TO DESCRIBE THE HOUSING STABILITY OF SELECTED SYRIAN HHS SINCE THE ONSET OF DISPLACEMENT

This study identified distinct housing stability patterns among three groups of HHs.

MIGRATION HHS: HHs that migrated to Lebanon before the Syrian Civil War that engaged in shelter through renting or owning residential structures.
ITS HHS: HHs displaced to Lebanon by the Syrian Civil War that primarily engaged in shelter through renting plots of land in Informal Tented Settlements (ITS).

[1] See *Key Concepts and Terminology* on p. 4 or *Defining Housing Stability on* p. 9 for expanded framework.

NON-ITS HHS: HHs displaced to Lebanon by the Syrian Civil War that engaged in shelter through renting residential and nonresidential structures.

For Migration, ITS, and Non-ITS HHs, both the timeframe of arrival to Lebanon and the type of shelter they initially secured were principal determinants in the level of stability they experienced over time. Migration HHs saw significantly higher housing stability than ITS and Non-ITS HHs due to relative financial stability and longstanding relationships with their landlords. ITS and Non-ITS HHs experienced low housing stability throughout displacement and were frequently unable to make rent payments. Non-ITS HHs underwent the highest number of relocations of any HH group, frequently relocating to address issues with affordability, comfort, and security. While ITS HHs confronted consistent challenges to affordability and physical comfort, relocating did less to address these challenges. See *Findings Section I* on p. 10.

FINDINGS ON OBJECTIVE II: TO DETERMINE THE IMPACT OF HUMANITARIAN SHELTER PROGRAMS ON THE HOUSING STABILITY OF SELECTED SYRIAN HHS

For Migration and Non-ITS HHs, engagement from the shelter sector was limited to one instance of short-term support despite many HHs reporting longstanding or urgent threats to their shelter and basic needs. Alternatively, ITS HHs were integrated into humanitarian support mechanisms since the onset of displacement and received recurring evaluations for In-kind assistance. Overall, the most consistent humanitarian support received by HHs was supplied outside of the shelter sector through monthly Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA).

When assessing the impact of four different humanitarian shelter programs on HH housing stability, this study found that shelter programs were effective in providing needed financial relief or physical improvements to shelter, but that all shelter programs were ill-equipped to provide the multi-faceted support needed to maintain housing stability post-program. Only those programs providing physical changes to a shelter's comfort had impacts that could be sustained post-program. See *Findings Section II* on p. 12.

FINDINGS ON OBJECTIVE III: TO INVESTIGATE STRATEGIES FOR ACHIEVING HOUSING STABILITY THROUGH SHELTER PROGRAMMING FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF SELECTED SECTOR PRACTITIONERS

Shelter practitioners indicated barriers to achieving post-program housing stability that included high demand and a limited timeframe for support, limited capacity to focus on long-term outcomes, and limitations to tenure security in the context of extreme poverty. Shelter practitioners recommended five strategies for the sector to combat these barriers. See *Findings Section III* on p. 15.

FIVE PRACTITIONER RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING HOUSING STABILITY POST-PROGRAM
1. *Create additional opportunities for collaboration amongst humanitarian actors*
2. *Prioritize advocacy for housing policy and tenure security on a national level and within local communities*
3. *Examine the negotiation strategies used with landlords when creating contracts for tenure security*
4. *Further integrate livelihoods and shelter programming*
5. *Extend post-program monitoring*

CONCLUSION

The findings presented in this research were used to create a *Guide to Discussion* that proposes guiding questions to support practitioners in identifying ways in which context-specific shelter programming can contribute to a holistic approach to housing stability. See *Conclusion* on p. 18.

INTRODUCTION

THE SYRIAN REFUGEE CRISIS IN LEBANON AND GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

After the onset of the Syrian Civil War in 2011, Lebanon quickly became host to one of the largest concentrations of refugees per capita in the world (16). Syrians remain a large target for humanitarian aid and comprise 98 percent of the 854,590 registered refugees in Lebanon (17). Although the focus of this study is on Syrian HHs, it should be noted that this official figure does not include the large populations of Palestinian refugees that are present in Lebanon, and in many cases, have been present for much longer periods of time (17).

After the start of the Syrian Civil War, Lebanon's open borders, proximity to Syria, and strong preexisting social networks facilitated the largescale migration flow of approximately 1.5 million Syrian refugees to Lebanon between 2011 and 2014 (1,18). The arrival of large numbers of Syrian refugees in need of immediate shelter prompted the Lebanese government to institute a "no camp" policy disallowing the formation of organized refugee camps (19,20). This decision was motivated by Lebanon's prior experience with longstanding camps during previous waves of forced displacement in the 20th century (1,21).

In January 2015, the Lebanese government made the decision to close its borders to Syria due to rising political, social, and economic tensions. By May 2015, it ordered UNHCR to completely halt the registration of refugees (18). This decision, along with the cost and complexity of residency permit renewal for registered refugees, has led to 84 percent of Syrians in Lebanon being without legal residency (12). Even with legal residency and the right to work, refugees are prevented from workforce participation in all but three sectors: agriculture, construction, and sanitation (13).

SYRIAN MIGRANTS IN LEBANON

Lebanon has hosted migrants and seasonal laborers from Syria through longstanding migration networks for decades (18,21,22). The establishment of a bilateral agreement between Syria and Lebanon in 1993 formalized the porous movement between shared borders (21). At the start of the Syrian Refugee Crisis, around 300,000 to 700,000 Syrian labor migrants were already estimated to reside in Lebanon (21). These numbers were likely higher as migrants frequently lacked official documentation or registry (21).

The distinction between Syrian labor migrants and the Syrian refugees displaced to Lebanon during the Syrian Civil War has remained ambiguous and subject to conflation (21). Syrian labor migrants held deep ties to Lebanon prior to the Syrian Refugee Crisis. Although these longstanding ties were in contrast with the experiences of newly arrived refugees, both groups of Syrians were subjected to the same risks of return and were considered refugees by international organizations (21). Former Syrian labor migrants comprise an important component of Syrian refugees in Lebanon and will be incorporated as a key demographic in this study.

CHALLENGES TO HOUSING STABILITY FOR SYRIAN REFUGEES

The decisions made by the Lebanese government to prohibit formal camps and refugee registration directly impacted the way in which Syrian refugees engage in shelter with lasting implications on housing stability (20).

In Lebanon, most Syrian refugees self-settled in residential and non-residential structures while around 22 percent self-settled in non-permanent ITS shelters (12). Almost all Syrian HHs have engaged in rental markets since the start of the crisis. This includes HHs in ITS as these small plots of land emerged as a new market amid a preexisting shortage of low-cost housing stock (23).

Barriers to work and low-paying jobs create severe limitations to livelihood recovery that leave access to shelter at the forefront of challenges facing refugees in Lebanon (23). From the onset of displacement, opportunities for securing safe and affordable shelter were scarce (23). In around 2014,

the typical cost of rent for rooms in a low-income neighborhood of Beirut was approximately 250 to 300 USD while the average Syrian worker earned only USD 277 a month (23). The limited availability of low-income housing combined with legally restricted work opportunities made housing stability largely untenable for households without humanitarian support (12). Housing stability is further compromised by weak government regulation on tenure security and a pervasive culture of contract-less rent agreements (23).

At present, Syrian HHs continue to experience barriers to housing stability. Consecutive crises, including the Beirut Port Explosion, the collapse of the Lebanese economy, and the COVID-19 pandemic have led to a dramatic increase in levels of extreme poverty and housing insecurity among both Lebanese and refugee households (12). The findings of UNHCR's 2021 Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees (VASyR) in Lebanon indicate that nine out of ten Syrian refugees live in extreme poverty and many cope with insufficient funds by skipping rent payments (12,17). Between October 2019 and June 2021, the cost of food rose by 404 percent, requiring the diversion of HH finances away from shelter to meet immediate food needs (17). Inflation continues to heighten the cost of rent, with the sharpest increase in rent price seen among non-permanent shelters in ITS, which rose in cost by 43 percent (12). Despite the continued work of the humanitarian sector, 57 percent of Syrian refugees live "in overcrowded shelters, shelters below humanitarian standards, and/or shelters in danger of collapse" (12).

Refugee households are increasing their reliance on debt to support their shelter needs (12). As of 2021, 92 percent of Syrian HHs are in debt with 54 to 62 percent of HHs in shelter-related debt. Average debt levels doubled between 2020 and 2021, reaching 3.4 million LBP for Syrian refugees (12). The majority of HH debt is borrowed informally from networks of friends in Lebanon (12).

Identified Research Gaps and Objectives

Both in Lebanon and in the shelter sector at large, a gap remains in understanding the implications of distinct self-settlement pathways on housing stability over time. Although the refugee crisis in Lebanon began in 2011, Syrian HHs in residential, non-residential, and non-permanent shelters continue to urgently need humanitarian support to meet their shelter needs. While the economic barriers to housing stability are largely understood, there is limited knowledge available on individual HH experiences with stability in diverse shelter settings over long-term displacement. As recently as 2021, shelter professionals articulated the need to prioritize research that uncovers "long-term shelter outcomes" outside of formal camps and in rental markets (24).

At present, humanitarian organizations employ a variety of shelter assistance programs in rental markets to target the specific needs of vulnerable refugee HHs. In Lebanon, the primary programs utilized within the sector include Cash-for-Rent, Shelter Rehabilitation, and In-kind assistance (15). These programs offer short-term support, typically lasting between six and twelve months, or in the case of In-kind assistance, programs are confined to the distribution of shelter items. The limited nature of humanitarian shelter assistance in the context of long-term displacement has led shelter professionals calling for research that will "methodologically follow projects and communities over time to more fully understand the impact of shelter support mechanisms" (24). Research that addresses this gap is key to determining pathways that promote housing stability as Syrian HHs continue to engage in rental markets amidst evolving complex crises in Lebanon. Further insight into the impact of humanitarian programs on HHs over time will ultimately support organizations in identifying opportunities to bridge the transition between emergency and recovery assistance (24).

The gaps in knowledge highlighted above give rise to the two research questions that form the basis of this study:

- How have self-settlement strategies and the corresponding humanitarian shelter response informed housing stability for Syrian HHs in Beirut and the Bekaa Valley over the course of their displacement?

- How can the humanitarian shelter sector evolve to address the continued need for housing stability among Syrian HHs as they seek to recover years after initial displacement?

The primary objective of this research is to evaluate housing stability and the role of humanitarian shelter programs over the course of displacement for Syrian HHs in Beirut and the Bekaa Valley. The specific objectives of this research are a) to describe housing stability of selected Syrian HHs since the onset of displacement, b) to determine the impact of humanitarian shelter programs on the housing stability of selected Syrian HHs, and c) to investigate strategies for achieving housing stability through shelter programming from the perspective of selected sector practitioners in Lebanon.

DEFINING HOUSING STABILITY

There is absence of concrete academic or sectoral framework that defines the ability to stabilize a shelter situation in the context of long-term displacement. This study, therefore, borrows from the definition of housing stability put forward by Woodhall-Melnik et al. that stability is comprised of material elements, including permanence and affordability, as well as emotional elements, including sense of safety, comfort, and ability to establish a consistent routine (6).

According to Woodhall-Melnik et al.'s definition of material housing stability, permanence describes "the ability to maintain housing for a significant length of time" and uses length of stay as an indicator for stability (6). Permanence in this case does not refer to housing as specific to a permanent structure or permanent solution, rather it looks at the current or prospective longevity of a HH's residence in a given location. In addition to length of stay, this study will assess the strength of tenure security as an integral component of permanence. In defining affordability, Woodhall-Melnik et al. uses indicators including financial independence and the ability to be self-reliant and make routine rent payments (6).

Emotional elements of housing stability include the assurance that housing is a "safe place", that housing is a place of "comfort", and that housing contributes to "living in a normal atmosphere, which is consistent, has consistency, has routine" (6). The incorporation of these psychosocial indicators into the conceptualization of housing stability is an expansion upon the classical understanding of stability and mirrors the current strategy put forward by the Shelter Sector to improve access to adequate shelter using protection-focused shelter assistance " to create the premises for people to feel safe, to live in privacy and security, and to mitigate health risks (both physical and psychosocial)" (25).

Through using Woodhall-Melnik et al.'s understanding of housing stability as a joining of material and emotional factors, this study takes a comprehensive look into shelter over time for Syrian HHs in Lebanon and the role humanitarian organizations have occupied in the search for stability since initial displacement.

Housing Stability Categories	Housing Stability Elements	
Material	Permanence	Measured by tenants' ability to maintain housing for a significant length of time using length of stay and strength of tenure security as indicators.
	Affordability	Measured by tenants' ability to consistently and independently make routine rent payments and avoid shelter-related debt or eviction.
Emotional	Safety	Measured by tenants' perception that shelter provides a safe and secure living environment.
	Comfort	Measured by tenants' perception that shelter provides a comfortable living environment.
	Life Routine	Measured by tenants' perception that shelter promotes consistency and allows for the development of routine living patterns.

METHODOLOGY

DATA COLLECTION

Primary data was collected for this study using key informant interviews performed by the researcher in partnership with several humanitarian organizations operating in Lebanon. Two groups of key informants were selected for this study using a purposive model for participation.

1. Syrian HHs in Beirut or the Bekaa Valley that have received humanitarian shelter assistance through In-kind, Shelter Rehabilitation, or Cash-for-Rent programs

2. Shelter practitioners representing organizations involved in the provision of humanitarian shelter and Housing, Land, and Property (HLP) assistance

These two groups were selected for study as their dual perspectives combine to generate a comprehensive assessment of housing stability and the role of humanitarian shelter programs over time. In total, 21 key informant interviews were conducted for this research, including 11 interviews with Syrian HHs and 10 interviews with shelter and HLP practitioners. Additional details on methodology are provided in Appendix I.

FINDINGS SECTION I: HH PERSPECTIVES ON HOUSING STABILITY OVER TIME

Section I of this study describes the housing stability experiences of Syrian HH participants from the time of their displacement in Lebanon to present day. Using Woodhall-Melnik et al.'s definition of housing stability, findings were categorized according to material stability, which is defined by permanence and affordability, and emotional stability, which is defined by sense of comfort, safety, and life routine. The consideration of material and emotional elements of housing stability resonated with HHs' description of their experiences sheltering in Lebanon.

HH GROUPS

The evaluation of housing stability using Woodhall-Melnik et al.'s framework uncovered critical distinctions between three principal groups within the study population. These groups corresponded with a HH's shelter type and whether the HH had arrived prior to or during the Syrian Civil War. For the purpose of this research, these distinct groups are labeled as Migration, ITS, and Non-ITS HHs. They will be used throughout these findings to analyze distinct HH trends in housing stability. This study comprised 3 Migration HHs, 4 ITS HHs, and 4 Non-ITS HHs. See Appendix II for additional information regarding individual HH composition.

Migration HH	Households located in Beirut that have only engaged in residential structures since their migration to Lebanon prior to the Syrian Civil War
ITS HH	Households located in the Bekaa Valley that have primarily engaged in ITS since their initial displacement to Lebanon by the Syrian Civil War
Non-ITS HH	Households located in Beirut or the Bekaa Valley that have only engaged in residential or non-residential shelters since their initial displacement to Lebanon by the Syrian Civil War

While all Migration HHs included in this study resided in residential structures, HHs displaced to Lebanon by the Syrian Civil War primarily rented either ITS or Non-ITS structures over the course of their displacement. For ITS and Non-ITS HHs, their finances upon arrival informed their initial and future shelter type, which in turn informed their overall housing stability. Of these two HHs groups, those that arrived to Lebanon debt-free or with savings all secured initial shelter in residential buildings upon their arrival. HHs that arrived with migration-related debt all secured initial shelter

through ITS as their debt was principally financed by an Al-Shawish, who paid for their transportation from Syria and tent materials.

Although HHs relocated throughout their displacement, they continued to engage in the same shelter type and stayed within the same region where initial displacement occurred. Changes to shelter type were uncommon and demonstrate that initial finances upon arrival as well as initial shelter type can serve as indicators of future housing stability.

SUMMARY OF HH HOUSING STABILITY OVER TIME

Migration, ITS, and Non-ITS HHs experienced distinct housing stability patterns over the course of displacement. The findings on these patterns are summarized below with the expanded analysis on material and emotional stability presented in Appendix III.

MIGRATION HHS

Migration HHs had the highest levels of housing stability out of all three HH groups. These HHs were located in Lebanon years prior to the start of the Syrian Civil War during which time they were able to establish relative job security. They were well-integrated into the host community at the start of the Syrian Refugee Crisis, with each family comprising a spouse or parent of Lebanese nationality. Strong community ties and relative economic stability facilitated better access to tenure security and strengthened HHs' ability to make routine rent payments. This ultimately increased length of stay with only one HH relocating once in the ten years prior to the date of interview. Their strong material stability correlated with increased emotional stability, most prominently through supporting consistent life routine. Although the onset of economic crisis in Lebanon largely deteriorated their moderate financial stability, the housing stability of Migration HHs proved resilient to these economic changes and they continued to secure the same shelter.

ITS HHS

ITS HHs experienced low to moderate material housing stability and low emotional housing stability. In terms of material stability, HHs had low tenure security and low affordability, but experienced longer lengths of stay than Non-ITS HHs. Over the course of displacement, ITS HHs confronted challenges to affordability and were periodically unable to make monthly rent payments. While lack of affordability did trigger relocations, overall, ITS HHs typically maintained their length of stay in shelters for multiple years. In particular, one ITS HH lived in the same location for ten years prior to the date of interview. The prolonged length of stay in the same shelter that was seen in ITS HHs resulted from settlements being the lowest cost option. Relocation to other ITS did not always address problems with affordability or concerns for comfort, especially as HHs owned their tents and landlords charged similar rent rates across settlements. Although ITS HHs experienced longer lengths of stay, when incorporating emotional elements such as comfort into analysis, the relative stability attained by ITS HHs presents as much more tenuous.

NON-ITS HHS

Non-ITS HHs experienced low material housing stability and low emotional housing stability. Material stability for Non-ITS HHs was characterized by frequent relocation, low tenure security, and increasingly poor financial health and affordability. Although Non-ITS HHs arrived free of debt or with savings, their savings were rapidly depleted to meet their minimum shelter and basic needs. Length of stay was adversely impacted by the frequent need to seek lower cost options due to rent hikes and constrained financial resources. HHs also confronted challenges to emotional stability that either prompted or resulted from relocation. Relocation was used as a coping mechanism to address or avoid threats to emotional stability, including comfort or safety, when issues such as harassment or discrimination occurred. However, frequent relocation disrupted life routine and made it difficult to build relationships and maintain jobs.

HOUSING STABILITY AND THE IMPACT OF TENANT-LANDLORD RELATIONSHIPS

The landlord-tenant relationship fundamentally impacted housing stability across all HHs. In the absence of regulated standards for tenure security in Lebanon, landlords were able to make pivotal decisions regarding affordability and eviction for tenants with little advanced notice or rationale. This style of unexpected decision-making increased anxiety in HHs and fueled emotional and material instability. Yet, landlords also made decisions that increased housing stability for HHs. Some landlords were willing to allow the accumulation of rent debt for a period of months or even years before threatening eviction. While poor tenant-landlord relationships frequently motivated HHs relocations, multiple HHs cited flexibility and good relationships with their landlords as the primary factor behind their continued stay in current residences, despite previously, or currently, owing months of rent-debt.

KEY FINDINGS

- Migration HHs saw the highest lengths of stay, tenure security, and affordability of any HH group. They experienced challenges to comfort that impacted their emotional stability, but these challenges did not motivate HHs to relocate.
- ITS HHs experienced moderate to high lengths of stay over the course of their displacement, despite having low tenure security and affordability. HHs experienced challenges to comfort that heavily impacted their emotional stability, but these challenges had only a moderate impact on HH relocation. Rent increases and issues with the Al-Shawish were the most common reasons for HH relocation. See *Figure 5* in Appendix III.
- Non-ITS HHs experienced the lowest average lengths of stay of any HH group, low tenure security, and low affordability. Affordability, comfort, and safety were all primary motivators for HH relocations. See *Figure 5* in Appendix III.

GENERAL FINDING

- HH relationships with landlords occupy a key role in increasing or decreasing housing stability for tenants when there is an absence of strong and pervasive tenure security practices.

FINDINGS SECTION II: THE IMPACT OF HUMANITARIAN PROGRAMS ON HH HOUSING STABILITY

Section II of this study investigates HH interaction with humanitarian shelter programs over the course of displacement. It uses the framework set forward by Woodhall-Melnik et al. to identify how HH housing stability has been shaped by four of the predominant shelter interventions in Lebanon. As the implementation of these four programs varies between organizations, the chart below provides an outline of the context and structure of the programs included in this study.

Shelter Program	Program Structure
Minor Rehabilitation for Rent-freeze	Contract-led repair program for minor damages caused to apartments by the Beirut Port Explosion. Repairs were facilitated in exchange for a one-year lease during which time the landlord agreed not raise the rent for the HH tenants.
Major Rehabilitation for Occupancy Free of Charge (OFC)	Contract-led repair program for unfinished residential structures in need of significant construction expenditures. Repairs were facilitated in exchange for a one-year rent-free period for the HH tenants who were already living in the structure prior to the program's initiation.

Cash-for-Rent	Six-month program with fixed monthly cash payments made to the HH. The program was designed for HHs in residential buildings facing eviction threats.
In-kind Assistance	Periodic distribution programs within ITS that include shelter kits comprising items such as tarps, wood, and related household items. Strategies for humanitarian intervention in ITS are heavily restricted by the Lebanese government. (25)

HH INTERACTION WITH THE HUMANITARIAN SECTOR

The frequency of HH interaction with the humanitarian shelter sector varied principally between ITS HHs and the two HHs groups residing in residential structures.

ITS HHs received engagement and support from the humanitarian shelter sector much earlier into their displacement than Non-ITS and Migration HHs. One ITS HH, HH7, described shelter support as starting "since the moment we arrived" and multiple HHs mentioned yearly visits from Save the Children to assess in-kind needs within the settlement. Although HHs may not receive new In-kind materials every year, their housing stability has been shaped by this long-term engagement with the humanitarian shelter. This engagement with ITS also served as an entry point for additional shelter services. The two HHs receiving OFC support, HH8 and HH9, were previously located in ITS where they had been identified and engaged with by sector actors.

Alternatively, Non-ITS and Migration HHs are often reliant on hotlines and referral systems to be identified and evaluated for assistance. In both Beirut and the Bekaa Valley, Migration and Non-ITS HH received only one instance of humanitarian shelter support. This support occurred in 2020/2021, which was 5-10 years after initial displacement for Non-ITS HHs. Additionally, for HHs in Beirut, interaction with the shelter sector was prompted by their geographic proximity to the Beirut Port Explosion, as opposed to the sector proactively addressing their status as Syrian HHs experiencing housing insecurity.

While ITS HHs saw more consistent humanitarian shelter services over the course of displacement, all three HH groups have been responsible for engaging in self-recovery in an effort to attain housing stability.

n, on the right is a group of tents in an ITS that is periodically assessed for In-kind assistance needs (Source: author).

THE ROLE OF HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE OUTSIDE THE SHELTER SECTOR

Along with humanitarian shelter assistance, some HHs also reported receiving humanitarian support through non-shelter Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA). For these HHs, monthly CVA represented

the most consistent form of humanitarian support received over the course of their displacement. HHs receiving CVA were provided monthly electronic payments intended either exclusively for food support or for unrestricted multi-purpose cash assistance (MPCA).

As seen in Appendix II, CVA was particularly prominent in the Bekaa Valley, where most HHs reported receiving regular CVA since initial displacement or in the years following their registration with UNHCR. The majority of HHs received monthly vouchers for food support with only a small number of HHs receiving MPCA. The monthly amount of CVA was based on family size and ranged from 500,000 to 4,00,000 LBP (around 16-133 USD at the time of interview).

HHs receiving CVA heavily relied on this assistance to subsidize a portion of their basic, medical, and shelter needs. HH6 stated their "whole income is from the food support that we are getting, which is 500,000 Lebanese Lira. They do not give it to us in cash, but we have to go to the supermarket in order to get it." Food support vouchers provided particularly low flexibility for HHs, as HHs typically cut on food costs to avoid eviction or prioritize electricity payments. This practice was seen in HH9 which resorted to using their food vouchers to access funds for monthly rent payments after completing their OFC program. This finding demonstrated that non-shelter CVA can function as a shelter support mechanism.

In Beirut, the only Migration HH to receive six months of MPCA, HH3, also used this assistance for rent payments. While HH3 already owned their home, the family used the 50 USD of MPCA to cover the cost of rent for the HoH's independent business. This practice demonstrated that in addition to providing HHs much needed flexibility, MPCA also had the capacity to support HHs with long-term livelihood investment in the absence of urgent shelter needs.

SUMMARY OF THE IMPACT OF HUMANITARIAN PROGRAMS ON HH HOUSING STABILITY

HHs engaging in self-settlement are primarily engaging in self-recovery with few opportunities for shelter assistance to support their emergent and ongoing needs. For the HHs interviewed in this research, support from humanitarian shelter actors was exclusive to participation in one time-limited program or In-kind assistance. Some HHs also benefited from long-term CVA that was supplied outside the shelter sector. In these cases, CVA served as a monthly contribution towards HH expenses, filling a portion of the gap in need created by the absence of consistent shelter assistance.

IMPACTS OF HUMANITARIAN SHELTER SUPPORT ON MATERIAL AND EMOTIONAL STABILITY

Major Shelter Rehabilitation, Minor Shelter Rehabilitation, Cash-for-Rent, and In-kind assistance all had distinct impacts on the material and emotional housing stability of HHs during and post-program. These impacts are outlined below with expanded analysis provided in Appendix IV.

HH findings indicated that humanitarian shelter programs could effectively target certain elements of material and emotional housing stability during the program. However, all programs demonstrated limited capacity to facilitate changes that could be sustained post-program. While shelter programs addressed a HH's urgent shelter needs and provided stabilization for a given timeframe, these benefits were largely unsustainable for HHs as they continued to confront the same vulnerabilities, and therefore, the same challenges to stability post-program.

In analyzing material stability, none of the four shelter programs provided or connected HHs with services designed to improve affordability post-program. Some shelter programs, including Shelter Rehabilitation and In-kind assistance, did promote more sustainable changes to emotional stability post-program. These programs involved physical upgrades to shelter that provided direct and lasting changes to feelings of safety and comfort. The durable nature of these emotional impacts are important measures of housing stability that may not be widely acknowledged in regular discourse. Although these benefits are more durable, they can only be sustained as long as HHs are able to afford residing in the same shelter post-program.

Without any proactive support towards material stability post-program, HHs expressed feeling their shelter situation remained insecure. In addition to recurring affordability concerns, findings also suggested there being room within the shelter sector to continue expansion into a more holistic approach to comfort, safety, and life routine. Considerations for emotional stability became especially important when alternative housing options were not available, not accessible, or limited. This was the case for ITS HHs which experienced reduced options for substantially improving their living conditions through relocation to another ITS.

KEY FINDINGS

- Outside of periodic In-kind assistance for ITS HHs, engagement from the shelter sector was primarily limited to one instance of support for HHs since initial displacement. This support occurred in recent years for the study population.
- The most consistent humanitarian support HHs received over the course of displacement was supplied through non-shelter CVA programs, which some HHs used to support their shelter needs.
- Some humanitarian shelter programs improved both material and emotional housing stability during the program, but all programs demonstrated limited capacity to improve material housing stability post-program. See *Figure 6* in Appendix IV.

FINDINGS SECTION III: HOUSING STABILITY FROM THE PRACTITIONER PERSPECTIVE

Section III of this study uses the perspective of shelter practitioners to identify the barriers to achieving housing stability using current shelter strategies in Lebanon. It discusses the strategies practitioners have suggested to combat these challenges.

CURRENT APPROACHES

According to sector actors, while In-kind shelter programs for HHs in ITS have been in place since the onset of the crisis, other shelter programs have seen more fluctuation over time. Beginning around 2018, Cash-for-Rent and Shelter Rehabilitation for major (OFC) and minor repairs (Rent-freeze) became predominant shelter support strategies for Non-ITS HHs. Alongside these interventions, Shelter and Area-based Approaches, SBA and ABA respectively, have been gaining traction as a new path forward. These interventions aim to bridge the humanitarian-development nexus by targeting the multi-dimensional needs within a community. In addition to providing shelter rehabilitation services, SBA and ABA address longer-term stability through an integrated approach that can include WASH, community infrastructure, legal, and livelihoods projects. While SBA and ABA rely on the same shelter rehabilitation projects at the center of current shelter programming, these interventions utilize a door-to-door approach to identify beneficiaries. This practice differs from the referral networks that actors typically use and is intended to identify and reach the most vulnerable members of the refugee and host community more effectively. One of the INGOs interviewed in this study had begun piloting an SBA program in 2020 that was in its final stages at the time of interview.

BARRIERS TO ACHIEVING HOUSING STABILITY

In the context of the economic crisis and severe restrictions on refugees in Lebanon, humanitarian organizations indicated confronting universal barriers to generating housing stability across shelter programs. These barriers include the high demand for humanitarian support, limited capacity to focus on longer-term outcomes, as well as the constraints on tenure security posed by poor HH finances.

LIMITED TIME-FRAME FOR SUPPORT AMIDST HIGH DEMAND

In Lebanon, there continues to be an overwhelming need for shelter support services and requests for assistance are far beyond what practitioners have the capacity to deliver. Practitioners confirmed that apart from In-kind assistance in ITS, HHs generally receive only one instance of humanitarian shelter support, most often because of high demand. One practitioner stated, “I closed the helpline and I closed the outreach…Our average target per month is like 60 to 70 households... and on a monthly basis, we received about 1,500 cases over the shelter helpline.” (SI2) It becomes infeasible for organizations to respond to and evaluate such high numbers of requests when operating with constrained financial resources. Practitioners indicated that they refrain from repeating beneficiaries in what is perceived as a duplication of services as their priority is to reach as many HHs as possible.

LIMITED CAPACITY TO FOCUS ON LONGER-TERM OUTCOMES

Humanitarian organizations have worked to refine their approach to shelter support over the ten years since the migration crisis began. One practitioner stated these changes promoted emotional housing stability for HHs as organizations “started to focus on their privacy and the protection issues. Not only to have a shelter with minimum standards and that's it.” (SI2) While there has been progress towards considerations for emotional housing stability within the sector, practitioners agree that the predominant shelter programs continue to fall short of addressing overall housing stability post-program, particularly as it relates to affordability. The same practitioner summarized limitations to housing stability post-program by stating,

> “For the Cash-for-Rent and for the OFC, the main question that always comes to my mind is, what is after this one year? It's mainly the sustainability of the service and the ability of those targeted people to cope and be able to support themselves by themselves… is a big gap in both models” (SI2).

Another practitioner noted that after the end of shelter support programs “the problems that were present at the beginning sort of rose again or new dynamics, new problems, new threats arose.” (SI9) One of the reasons sustaining housing stability post-program proves challenging is that the HHs prioritized for shelter support are identified as being particularly vulnerable. By default, their vulnerabilities are often characterized by permanent or recurring challenges that make it difficult to independently support their shelter and basic needs in the long-term. As a result, practitioners stated that exit strategies are focused on the outcome of the initial intervention, namely, avoiding eviction, as opposed to methods for improving housing stability and self-reliance post-program.

Even SBA and ABA can present limited capacity to address housing stability post-program. These interventions are both structured as time-limited programs that aim to address the integrated needs of a neighborhood or area within one or two years. Without providing the community with a consistent presence, practitioners felt this approach offers little flexibility when it comes to longer-term shelter needs or community projects that require continued support or maintenance. One practitioner articulated this gap in continued support by saying “we don't have this option because we would work in this neighborhood, we leave the second year, we work in another neighborhood.” (SI4) While SBA and ABA appear to be a promising path forward, it is important to explore how these programs will confront the same challenges to stability as the shelter rehabilitation programs at their core, which is that they can only provide a brief window of time for support to tenants.

LIMITATIONS TO TENURE SECURITY

Tenure security is a key component of shelter programs for Non-ITS HHs and was widely recognized for its capacity to strengthen housing stability. However, practitioners acknowledged that tenure security alone could not completely address the gap between HH finances and the fair market value for shelter. Even with increased tenure security, many HHs continue to be unable to afford shelter and negotiations with landlords can do little to achieve housing stability when HHs owe months of rent-debt. As one practitioner involved in landlord mediation stated, “most of the work that even we do…is sort of delaying an eventual eviction…we're not actually reaching that point where we're guaranteeing [their] stability for a very long term” (SI9). Tenure security is also limited to the

duration of the contract and as one practitioner stated, “After the contract time is over, it's meaningless” (SI8). HHs are at a disadvantage when trying to seek tenure security without the assistance of being enrolled in a shelter program. Even when HHs are provided with knowledge on how to access their rights, HHs are hesitant to engage with public authorities or court systems due to the perceived risk.

WHAT WOULD PRACTITIONERS LIKE TO SEE TO COMBAT THESE BARRIERS?

When asked what practitioners would like to see from the sector, study participants highlighted five key strategies to enhance the provision of shelter services in order to achieve broader housing stability for Syrian HHs in Lebanon. These five strategies are put forward in the following recommendations.

1. CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR COLLABORATION AMONGST PRACTITIONERS

Practitioners believed there continues to be space to learn from each other, engage more often, and collaborate intersectorally. especially as geographic areas of coverage create silos between organizations working within the same or related sectors.

2. PRIORITIZE ADVOCACY FOR HOUSING POLICY AND TENURE SECURITY ON A NATIONAL SCALE AND WITHIN LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Practitioners believed bolstering advocacy is essential to influencing both national housing policy, local tenure security practices, and social cohesion. They stated working towards a national housing policy is essential to stability as NGOs design shelter programs within the framework of existing legal infrastructure and host government decision making. Host and refugee communities also represent a key entry point for promoting housing stability as one practitioner reflected “we need special advocacy processes, special advocacy procedures that can really combine with the crisis, with the mentality, with the behavior, and with the attitude of the people here” (SI2).

3. EXAMINE TENURE NEGOTIATION STRATEGIES

Practitioners indicated the potential to examine and identify improved strategies for negotiation with landlords. Innovating in this area can provide benefits that are as significant as a rent reduction in place of rent-freezes for HH.

4. FURTHER INTEGRATE LIVELIHOODS AND SHELTER PROGRAMMING

Practitioners indicated the opportunity to enhance integration between livelihoods and shelter programming as the bridge between these programs was still developing. Practitioners believed livelihood programs should expand beyond a youth-focused approach to investigate livelihood opportunities for adults that are compatible with HH vulnerabilities as a way of addressing affordability post-program.

5. EXTEND MONITORING POST-PROGRAM

Practitioners suggested extending monitoring beyond endline surveys to allow for further learning from HH experiences and to provide insight into addressing the longer-term applications of programs.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this research was to examine the housing stability patterns of Syrian refugees in Lebanon and to leverage the expertise of shelter practitioners to identify ways in which shelter programming can better address barriers to housing stability. This study analyzed findings on housing stability using the framework put forward by Woodhall-Melnik et al., which describes stability as deriving from both material and emotional factors. This interpretation of housing stability resonates with the shelter sector's priority on movement towards more integrated approaches to programming in Lebanon, as outlined in the LCRP's Theory of Change (25). The findings of this study are separated into three key sections; HH perspectives on housing stability over time, the impact of humanitarian programs on HH housing stability, and housing stability from the practitioner perspective.

SECTION I: HH PERSPECTIVES ON HOUSING STABILITY OVER TIME

HHs frequently engaged in the same shelter type over the course of displacement. A HH's shelter type and whether they arrived to Lebanon before or after the onset of the Syrian Civil War generated specific challenges to material and emotional housing stability outlined briefly in Section I and expanded upon in Appendix III.

SECTION II: THE IMPACT OF HUMANITARIAN PROGRAMS ON HH HOUSING STABILITY

Humanitarian shelter assistance over the course of displacement was primarily limited to one fixed-period program for eligible HHs. This assistance provided HHs with limited improvements to housing stability post-program. When present, post-program improvements were principally linked to emotional stability and changes to physical comfort and safety. The most consistent humanitarian support available to HH was supplied through non-shelter CVA programs, which contributed to HH shelter and basic needs. Findings on the impact of humanitarian shelter programs are outlined in Section II and expanded upon in Appendix IV.

SECTION III: HOUSING STABILITY FROM THE PRACTITIONER PERSPECTIVE

Shelter practitioners echoed the challenges to attaining post-program stability expressed by HH. They highlighted concerns regarding the high-demand and limited timeframe for support as well as the persistent barriers to affordability experienced by HHs. Using the insights of practitioners, five strategies for shelter programming were laid out in Section III.

These findings illustrate that self-settlement provides a challenging context for service provision that necessitates self-recovery and generates a state of perpetual housing instability for many HHs. Humanitarian organizations operate in an environment of overwhelming need and under the pressure of limited resources, requiring organizations to limit program duration and repetition of beneficiaries. As the sector searches for solutions that support sheltering in challenging market contexts, programs must provide HHs with effective tools that support self-recovery in order to promote their capacity to independently work towards housing stability. While such tools include the recommendations outlined in Section III of this research, at each stage of program implementation, consideration for material and emotional elements of stability is crucial to designing programs that proactively reduce recurring need for humanitarian shelter support.

On the following page, this study puts forward guiding questions to support practitioners in evaluating opportunities to address these multi-faceted challenges to housing stability. It offers a multi-tiered analysis of housing stability as practitioners must first identify context-specific challenges then later HH-specific barriers to stability through individual assessment. These questions also serve as a tool to guide engagement across practitioners. They can be used as a unifying basis for conversation as the sector continues to incorporate new and innovative strategies into programming for housing stability in complex and protracted crises.

Guide to Discussion Questions for Practitioners Implementing Shelter Programs

SECTION I: PROGRAMMING FOR POST-PROGRAM HOUSING STABILITY

Permanence

What are the context and HH-specific barriers that have driven relocations for beneficiaries over the course of their displacement?

- How can this program be designed to reduce the number of relocations a HH will need to make in the future?
- How can this program be designed to increase tenure security for a HH post-program?

Affordability

What are the context and HH-specific barriers that have prevented beneficiaries from being able to afford rent payments over the course of their displacement?

- How can this program be designed to help a HH afford rent payments post-program?

Comfort

What are the context and HH-specific barriers that prevent beneficiaries from feeling comfortable in their home?

- How can this program be designed to increase physical shelter comfort for HH members?
- How can this program be designed to target the psychological barriers to comfort that a HH is experiencing?

Safety

What are the context and HH-specific barriers that prevent beneficiaries from feeling safe in their home?

- How can this program be designed to make shelter physically or structurally safer for HH members?
- How can this program be designed to make HH members feel safer within their community?

Routine

What are the context and HH-specific barriers that prevent beneficiaries from establishing routine and building community?

- How can this program be designed to support a HH in generating a consistent life routine?
- How can this program be designed to support a HH in feeling grounded and building relationships within their community?

SECTION II: PROGRAMMING COLLECTIVELY

- How can we incorporate this program into a multi-sectoral and integrated approach?
- How can we collaborate with other actors to improve our strategies and reach our goals for this program?
- How can we involve key stakeholders in the design and implementation of this program?
- How can this program fit into our collective goals for advocacy within the sector?
- How can we use follow up as a tool for further learning in this program?
- In what areas can we build the capacity of HH to maintain housing stability before, during, and after intervention?

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS FOR THE GUIDE

The *Guide to Discussion Questions for Practitioners Implementing Shelter Programs* is separated into two primary sections.

Section I, *Programming for Post-Program Housing Stability*, is intended to support practitioners in identifying both context and HH-specific challenges to material and emotional stability. It provides prompts for thinking through how a specific shelter program can address these challenges. This section can serve as a universal foundation for housing stability analysis as any shelter intervention has the capacity to influence a HH's material and emotional stability. While programs often focus on a specific set of material or emotional indicators based on shelter type, this guide recognizes the interdependent characteristics required to achieve housing stability. These questions consider the ways in which programs can holistically evaluate and target these indicators. For instance, Cash-for-Rent programs typically focus on affordability during the program, but how can participation in Cash-for-Rent be used to support HH in building community? In another example, In-kind assistance programs typically provide basic tent materials that increase physical comfort for HHs, but can In-kind assistance also target psychological elements of comfort through thinking creatively about what contributes to a HH's sense of home?

Section II, *Programming Collectively*, is intended to support practitioners in evaluating opportunities for programs to incorporate shelter into a holistic framework for stability. For instance, if housing stability is shaped by initial shelter type, when practitioners ask the question, *"in what areas can we build the capacity of HH to maintain housing stability before, during, and after intervention?"*, organizations can consider shelter-specific tools HH need at the onset of displacement to best prepare them for maximizing the opportunity to achieve housing stability. This could lead to brainstorming around orientation programs about local culture, local market practices, tenure security, and financial planning at locations frequented by new arrivals. In this way, this section of the guide introduces the questions practitioners have cited as being the most critical to generating stronger housing stability outcomes post-program.

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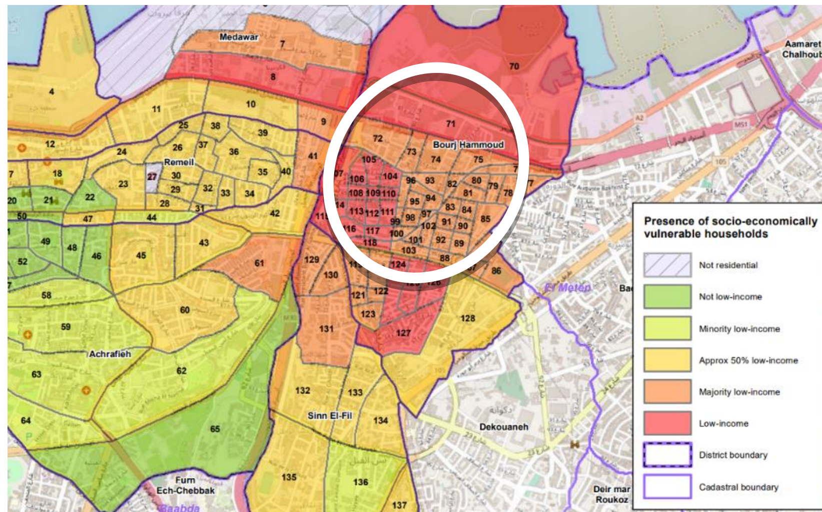
APPENDIX I: EXPANDED METHODOLOGY

STUDY AREA AND POPULATION

BOURJ HAMMOUD

Bourj Hammoud is an urban municipality within the district Baabda (26). It borders the municipality of Beirut and is integrated into the larger Beirut metropolitan area (26). Bourj Hammoud was the primary low-income area impacted by the Beirut Port Explosion in 2020 and became a focal point for humanitarian shelter response (26,27). In Bourj Hammoud, the majority of Blast-affected buildings were assessed to be habitable, with minor damage including damage to windows, doors, and hairline cracks in walls and structural elements (26). Figure 2 shows a map of the Blast-affected areas of Beirut according to their socio-economic status (27). Bourj Hammoud is circled in white.

Figure 2: Blast-affected Area of Beirut

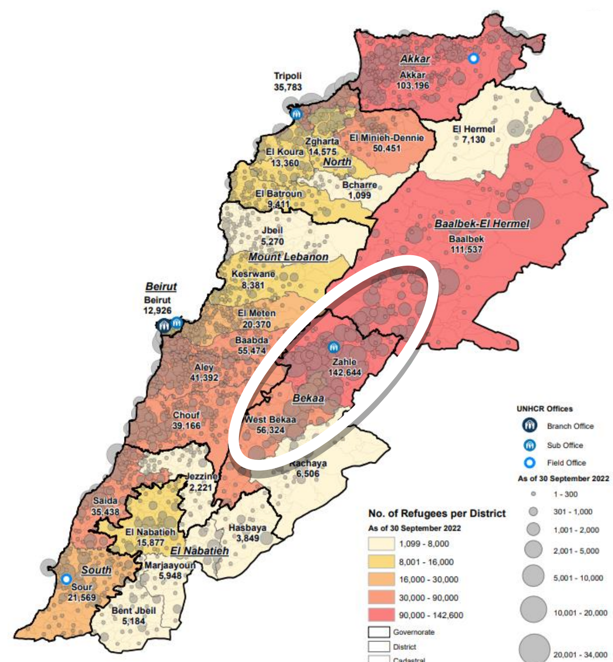


A local NGO coordinated HH interviews with five Syrian beneficiaries in Bourj Hammoud for the purpose of this study. This organization operates throughout Lebanon and participated in the collective organized response to the Beirut Port Explosion, providing minor shelter rehabilitation through door-to-door neighborhood surveying within assigned zones in Bourj Hammoud.

THE BEKAA VALLEY

The Bekaa Valley is comprised of peri-urban and rural towns, largely within the Bekaa governate and shares a direct border with Syria (28,29). Due to its proximity to the Masnaa border crossing, the Bekaa Valley hosts the largest number of Syrian refugees in Lebanon and is the site of many ITS (30). Figure 3 shows a map of Syrian refugee density as of 2021 in Lebanon with the Bekaa Valley circled in white (31). Humanitarian response to the mass displacement of Syrians has been ongoing in this region since around 2012 (30).

Figure 3: Syrian Refugee Density in Lebanon



The regional office of an INGO coordinated HH interviews with six beneficiaries of Cash-for-Rent, OFC, and In-kind assistance programs for the purpose of this study. This INGO has been active in the region and participating in the response to the Syrian Refugee Crisis since its onset. It is responsible

for implementing a variety of shelter assistance programs for Syrians displaced in ITS, residential, and non-residential buildings in the Bekaa Valley. These shelter programs are designed to address the specific needs of HHs according to their shelter type.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

This study was conducted using purposive sampling through in-depth semi-structured interviews with key informants involved in the reception and delivery of humanitarian shelter assistance in Lebanon. Qualitative data gathering was chosen as the foundation for this study to gain insight into the experience of these informants where statistical data is limited or could not otherwise capture elements impacting the shelter outcomes of beneficiaries. Field research in Lebanon was carried out in August 2022. Further data collection occurred through virtual interviews that took place between September and November 2022.

Key informants were identified for interview based on representation from distinct shelter assistance programs, interest in participation, and response to contact. All interview participants provided informed consent and HH interviews were conducted in the presence of a representative from the coordinating organization to ensure the protection of participants and to provide an alternate mechanism for feedback. Interviews with both groups of key informants typically lasted around 70 minutes.

HH INTERVIEWS

HH interviews were conducted with Syrians residing in the Bourj Hammoud and the Bekaa Valley. These two areas were identified for study as they represent unique regional characteristics with distinct triggers for assistance. Interviews with Syrian HHs were conducted in-person at HH residences using an Arabic language interpreter. Typically, multiple family members chose to actively engage in interviews. HH interviews were centered around guiding questions that targeted information regarding finances, shelter history, reasons for relocation, and participation in humanitarian programs over the course of their displacement.

PRACTITIONER INTERVIEWS

Practitioner interviews were conducted with representatives from five organizations operating throughout Lebanon. Interviews include representatives from one IO, two INGOs, and two local NGOs that are directly involved in administering shelter or HLP programs in Lebanon. These practitioners occupied a variety of roles including: two MEAL Officers, two Shelter/WASH Program Managers, a Shelter and Settlements Specialist, a Shelter Coordinator, a Shelter Officer, a Project Coordinator, and an HLP Legal Research Officer. The majority of practitioners comprised members of the host community, many of whom had longstanding ties to the shelter sector in Lebanon.

Interviews with practitioners were conducted one-on-one in English either in-person or virtually, with the exception of one joint interview with two MEAL employees working at the same organization. The guiding questions for practitioner interviews targeted shelter program goals, outcomes, limitations, and the prospects for increasing housing stability post-program.

DATA ANALYSIS

Interviews were then analyzed and coded using NVIVO software to identify patterns within the experiences of individual HH and the institutional knowledge of practitioners in the field. While this study is based on a small sample size, key insights from the individual experiences of HHs corresponded with the data provided by shelter practitioners during practitioner interviews.

APPENDIX II: TABLE ON HH COMPOSITION, SHELTER, AND HUMANITARIAN SUPPORT

HH Type	Research Id	Location	Arrival Date	Current HH Size	Current Family Profile	Number of Residences Since Refugee Crisis	Initial Residence	Current Residence	Currently in Debt	Shelter Support	Other Humanitarian Support
Migration	HH1	Bourj Hammoud	Born in Lebanon	4	Syrian (stateless) single female HoH, living with her three adult brothers. One brother has a cronic medical condition.	1	N/A	One bedroom apartment	Yes: rent	Minor Shelter Rehabilitation: 2021	None
Migration	HH3	Bourj Hammoud	Prior to 2000	4	Syrian HoH married to a Lebanese woman, living with their two adult children. No medical vulnerabilities reported.	1	N/A	Multi-bedroom apartment (owned)	No	Minor Shelter Rehabilitation: 2021	Short-term MPCA Post-Blast: 2022
Migration	HH5	Bourj Hammoud	2000	4	Syrian HoH married to a Lebanese woman, living with their two young minor children. HoH is recovered from a recent serious medical condition.	2	Multi-bedroom apartment	One bedroom apartment	Yes: rent	Minor Shelter Rehabilitation: 2021	None
Non-ITS	HH2	Bourj Hammoud	2012	1	Adult male HoH. No medical vulnerabilities reported.	6	One bedroom apartment	Shared multi-bedroom basement apartment	No, but was without electricity as unable to afford payment	Minor Shelter Rehabilitation: 2021	None
Non-ITS	HH4	Bourj Hammoud	2014	6	HoH couple, living with their three young minor children and one paternal brother. Two children have medical conditions, with one in need of surgery.	3	One bedroom house	Multi-bedroom apartment	Yes: rent, basic needs, and medical care	Minor Shelter Rehabilitation: 2021	One-time installment of MPCA Post-Blast
Non-ITS	HH10	Bekaa Valley	2015	2	Single female HoH, living with her 12 year old daughter. Daughter has a cronic medical condition.	7	Unfinished multi-room house	Multi-bedroom apartment	Yes: rent, basic needs, and electricity	Six-month Cash-for-Rent: ongoing	Ongoing Monthly CVA via Food Card; 2 instances of Short-term MPCA for Winter Needs
Non-ITS	HH11	Bekaa Valley	2013	6	HoH couple, living with their three adult children, one of whom is married. One HoH has a cronic medical condition.	11	One room house	Multi-bedroom apartment	Yes: medical care and children's higher education	Six-month Cash-for-Rent: ongoing	None
ITS	HH6	Bekaa Valley	2010	2	Older HoH couple. One HoH has a cronic medical condition.	2	One bedroom house	Multi-room tent	Yes: rent and medical care	In-kind assistance for ITS: previously received and periodically assessed	Ongoing Monthly CVA via Food Card
ITS	HH7	Bekaa Valley	2012	12	Older HoH couple living with their two minor children, two adult married children, and their respective families. Both HoH have a cronic medical condition.	2	Multi-room tent	Multi-room tent	Yes: rent, basic needs, and medical care	In-kind assistance for ITS: previously received and periodically assessed	Ongoing Monthly CVA split between Food Card and MPCA for separate HH sheltering together
ITS	HH8	Bekaa Valley	2013	6+	HoH couple living with their two minor children, paternal parents, several paternal siblings, and their respective families. No medical vulnerabilities reported.	3	Multi-room tent	Multi-bedroom house	Yes: rent	In-kind assistance for ITS: previously received Major Shelter Rehabilitation (OFC) for current residence: Ongoing	Ongoing Monthly CVA via Food Card
ITS	HH9	Bekaa Valley	2013	9+	Older HoH couple, parents of eight, living with their young minor children, some of their adult children, and their respective families. One HoH and one minor child have cronic medical conditions.	4	Multi-room tent	Multi-bedroom house	Yes: medical care	In-kind Assistance for ITS: previously received Major Shelter Rehabilitation (OFC) for current residence: 2022	Ongoing Monthly CVA via Food Card

APPENDIX III: EXPANDED FINDINGS ON HH HOUSING STABILITY

MATERIAL STABILITY

The following section investigates the material housing stability of Migration, ITS, and Non-ITS HHs over time using permanence and affordability indicators. Permanence is measured using a HH's length of stay and the presence of tenure security, which represents the security of that stay. Affordability is measured through HH finances and the ability for HHs to make routine rent payments.

Although overall measures of permanence varied between these three groups, for ITS and Non-ITS HHs there was an initial surge in relocations around the first year after arrival. This relocation was due to a readjustment to HH shelter needs or problems arising with neighbors, the landlord, or Al-Shawish. Outside of this surge, relocations happened sporadically for individual HHs and average length of stay for HH groups did not increase or decrease over time.

MIGRATION HH

HHs in Lebanon prior to the Syrian Civil War experienced the highest levels of permanence and affordability out of all three HH groups. Migration HHs specifically saw higher lengths of stay, tenure security, and ability to make routine payments.

Permanence: Migration HHs experienced almost no relocations over time. HH3 owned and resided in the same apartment for around 25 years and HH1 lived in the same apartment all of their life. The remaining HH, HH5, was a long-term tenant in their current building and had only relocated once since 2005 to a new apartment in the same building after getting married. Migration HHs also experienced higher tenure security with two HH securing extended permanence through homeownership or a longstanding rental contract. While HH5 did not indicate having a rental contract, he maintained a positive relationship with his landlord who was lenient on rent price and late payments.

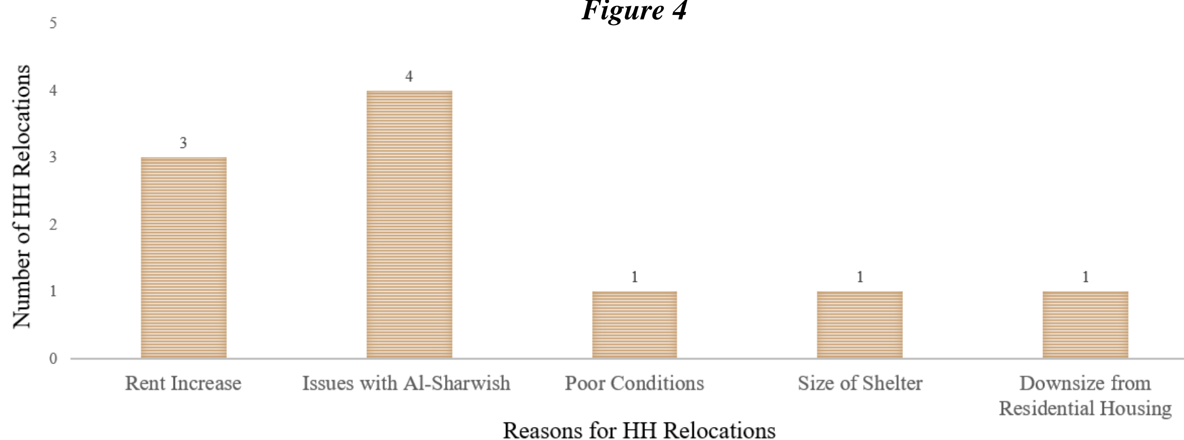
Affordability: Migration HHs experienced higher affordability than any other HH group prior to the economic crisis in Lebanon. HHs had steadier finances due to increased job security from being contracted employees of companies or having independent businesses. These HHs had predictable monthly earnings that met their housing and basic needs. HH3 was able to invest in higher education for their two daughters and HH2 engaged in healthy borrowing, completely paying off the $7,000 of debt used to finance their wedding. Although Migration HHs experienced some financial stability, HHs still put the majority of their earnings toward routine living costs and were unable to set aside funds for general savings. The fragile nature of this affordability meant that HHs facing the financial impact of sudden unexpected expenditures or the loss of a breadwinner would rapidly fall behind on shelter and basic needs for extended periods of time. HH1 experienced long-term financial instability after losing several nuclear family members, including both parents around 2016. This HH was unable to make rent payments for the following four years due to this loss and the high cost of burial expenses. After four years of unpaid rent, an eviction threat from the landlord led to the borrowing of debt and continued weakening of finances. While some Migration HHs experienced sustained affordability in the absence of destabilizing financial events, at present, the economic crisis has deteriorated affordability for all HHs. Migration HHs have lost their stable work and steady income and are now seeing similar monthly income as Non-ITS and ITS HHs. As seen in Appendix 1, the two Migration HHs that rent their shelter currently have rent-related debt.

ITS HH

ITS HHs experienced moderate to high levels of permanence over the course of their displacement, but experienced low affordability.

Permanence: ITS HHs experienced a low to moderate number of relocations over time. The total shelter count for two of these HH was just two shelters since initial displacement while the remaining two HH had resided in three and four shelters. HH length of stay varied significantly between settlements and ranged from approximately 2 to 10 years. For ITS HH the decision to relocate was prompted by rent increases, issues with the Al-Shawish, poor conditions, size of shelter, and a downsize from residential housing, as seen in Figure 4. Although ITS HHs saw longer lengths of stay, these increases did not correlate to higher tenure security. ITS HHs experienced low levels of tenure security and were subjected to rent hikes and evictions with little notice. While ITS HHs do have a representative, the Al-Shawish, who facilitates agreements with the landlord on behalf of the community, the Al-Shawish may also be a source of tenure insecurity as the Al-Shawish can independently decide a family must relocate. Two ITS HHs were evicted from ITS after disputes with the Al-Shawish. One of these evictions occurred because a HoH was no longer physically able to engage in the manual labor required by the Al-Shawish.

Figure 4



Affordability: ITS HHs experienced consistent challenges to affordability and struggled to make routine rent payments over the course of their displacement. The migration-related debt that ITS HHs owed to Al Shawish upon arrival rapidly resulted in additional debt accumulation as the low-paying agricultural work required by Al-Shawish was insufficient to cover shelter and basic needs. All three ITS HHs that arrived to Lebanon with debt reported taking on additional debt to cover rent at their initial ITS. Over the first two years of displacement, HH8 accumulated an additional 4,000,000 LBP (then around 2,660 USD) in debt for groceries while working off their preexisting debt to the Al Shawish. Even after repaying their debt to the Al-Shawish, economic opportunities remained limited to daily work, which was insufficient to cover the cost of rent, basic needs, or sudden emergent expenses. Although the cost of housing in ITS is significantly lower than in residential buildings, ITS HHs still relocated to more affordable settlements, fell behind on rent, or took on debt to cover rent payments over the course of displacement. The current economic crisis has also brought affordability to its lowest point for ITS HHs. As seen in Appendix II, all ITS HHs are currently in debt with multiple HHs accumulating rent-related debt.

NON-ITS HH

Non-ITS HHs experienced the lowest levels of permanence and low levels of affordability.

Permanence: Non-ITS HHs experienced the highest number relocations out of any HH group. The total shelter count for these four HHs was 3, 6, 7, and 11. HH length of stay varied between shelters, but frequently lasted less than or around one year. Non-ITS relocations were prompted by similar indicators in both Beirut and the Bekaa Valley. As seen in Figure 5, these included increases in rent, high cost of rent, eviction due to late rent payments, issues with neighbors, discrimination, or general security, poor living conditions, size of shelter, and gender-based harassment by the landlord. In some cases, multiple reasons contributed to the a HH's decision to relocate. Similar to ITS HHs, Non-ITS

HHs experienced low tenure security throughout displacement and were subjected to rent hikes and eviction with little notice. The one Non-ITS HH with a lower shelter count, HH4, serves as an outlier within this group. This HoH was steadily employed by a private company in Lebanon prior to his HH's displacement from Syria. This HH therefore shares important characteristics with Migration HHs that demonstrate the connection between prior establishment in Lebanon and increased permanence.

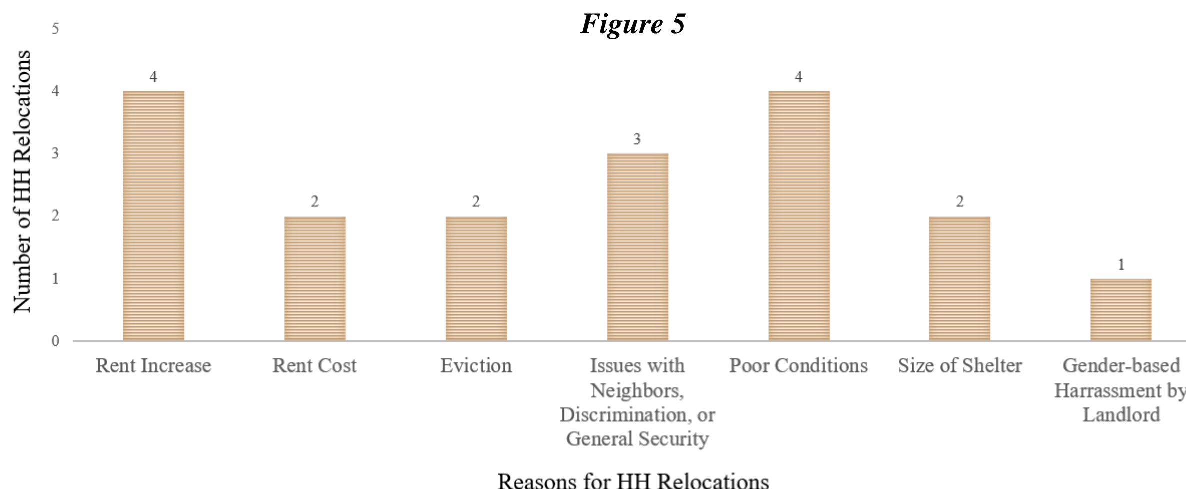


Figure 5

Affordability: Similar to ITS HHs, Non-ITS HHs experienced consistent challenges to affordability and struggled to maintain rent payments throughout displacement. Although Non-ITS HHs had a stronger financial standing upon arrival, low-earning daily work opportunities meant that HHs arriving with savings saw these savings rapidly depleted. HH2, a single man, arrived to Lebanon with 9,000 USD in savings, however, these savings were gone within the year due to the gap between his daily work earnings and the cost of meeting his basic and shelter needs. Once HHs depleted their savings, debt accumulation was quick to follow as HH income continued to be insufficient to meet their needs. To navigate these challenges to affordability, Non-ITS HHs relocated to more affordable housing, downsized, fell behind on rent, and took on debt to cover rent payments throughout their displacement. Challenges to affordability further escalated to rent-related evictions for half of these HHs. Similar to ITS HHs, the low rates of affordability within this population have been further destabilized as a result of the ongoing economic crisis in Lebanon. As seen in Appendix 1, three Non-ITS HHs are currently in debt, with one HH, HH10, seven months behind on rent payments.

EMOTIONAL STABILITY

The following section investigates the emotional housing stability of Migration, ITS, and Non-ITS HHs over time. Emotional indicators, including safety, comfort, and the ability to establish a life-routine, are often less prominent in conversations surrounding housing stability, especially in emergency or protracted crises where securing a physical shelter is the foremost concern for HHs and humanitarian shelter organizations. This study found that not only are emotional indicators important to the wellbeing of HH members, but that these indicators fundamentally influence overall housing stability.

Emotional indicators, particularly safety and comfort, are measured using both psychological and physical dimensions. A shelter can be physically secure or comfortable, which contributes to positive associations with safety and comfort. Emotional indicators can also extend beyond the physical living conditions of a shelter. According to Woodhall-Melnik et al., safety and comfort also signify the absence of certain stressors or an overall sense of security and ease within the context of their environment (6).

MIGRATION HH

Migration HHs experienced challenges to comfort that impacted their emotional stability, but these challenges did not negatively impact their material stability. For Migration HHs, shelter did not present physical safety concerns until the Beirut Port Explosion and HHs did not experience any threats to their safety from landlords or neighbors. The presence of tenure security and amicable relationships with their landlords provided these HHs with increased feelings of comfort and sense of security. These factors allowed HHs to achieve extended lengths of stay and benefit from the ability to establish a consistent life routine. Migration HHs did express facing challenges to physical comfort which included apartment size, a lack of appliances, and the need for repairs, however, these challenges were outweighed by the presence of tenure security. As HH1, a female HoH explained, she and her three bothers experience discomfort from sharing a one-bedroom apartment, however, they continue renting the same apartment because of the value they attribute to having a longstanding rental contract, which provided a sense of comfort and safety. The HoH even expressed the fear that marriage could end her housing stability, believing that it would nullify her family's rental contract with their landlord. This thought process demonstrates the direct impact that tenure security has on emotional stability (1). Although Migration HHs experienced relative physical safety and the ability to establish a life routine, these HHs still faced concerns with physical comfort; and the emotional benefits provided by tenure security are seen as rare resource.

ITS HH

ITS HHs experienced challenges to comfort that heavily impacted their emotional stability, but these challenges had only a moderate impact on their material stability. When referencing emotional indicators, ITS HHs primarily discussed issues with comfort due to poor living conditions and particularly focused on the impacts of seasonal weather. While ITS HHs did not relocate at the same rate as Non-ITS HHs, tent size and issues with essential services did spur relocations between ITS for some HH. HH9 cited issues including water shortages and overcrowding as reasons for their move to another settlement. They stated "we could not even find a place to put our clothes after washing them". The less frequent relocations between ITS in the presence of poor living conditions for HHs was influenced by limited alternatives. As HH7 expressed, "it is not comfortable, but it is the only thing we have". As a consequence of limited alternatives, longer stays in ITS provided HHs with some benefits to emotional stability including a consistent life routine and stronger community ties within the settlement. Even so, emotional stability remained particularly low in ITS due to the consistent challenges to comfort, and relocation between ITS did less to resolve these challenges.

NON-ITS HH

Non-ITS HHs experienced challenges to safety and comfort that heavily impacted both their emotional and material stability. For these HHs, shelter presented physical and psychological safety concerns. HHs used relocation as a tool when they felt unsafe or when living conditions could be improved elsewhere. HH10 relocated due to gender-based harassment by her landlord. She stated, "In the first two months, the owner was good, but after I refused his proposal to marry him, he changed his attitude and the way deals with us, and we had to move out after two months". Discriminatory treatment by the host community also fueled feelings of insecurity that impacted housing stability. HH2, shared that he had to relocate "because of the neighbors' behavior… I faced discrimination". The search for increased comfort also influenced relocations in Non-ITS HHs. Three HHs relocated because of problems with water access and two HHs moved because the size of their home was unable to accommodate their expanding families. Emotional stability was regularly at risk for Non-ITS HHs and these HHs relocated when confronted with these concerns. Due to the frequency of relocations, these HHs were less able to establish a consistent-life routine.

APPENDIX IV: EXPANDED FINDINGS ON THE IMPACT OF HUMANITARIAN SHELTER PROGRAMS ON HH HOUSING STABILITY

IMPACT ON HOUSING STABILITY BY PROGRAM TYPE

As interactions with the humanitarian shelter sector occurred within a limited timeframe or at a limited scope, the ways in which these interactions shaped housing stability become especially critical to understand. Using material and emotional indicators adapted to this research, Figure 6 illustrates the changes to housing stability as they were articulated by HH participating in each of the four shelter programs. The analysis of both material and emotional indicators provided additional observation into the less visible protection-related impacts of humanitarian interventions on HH stability.

Figure 6

Minor Shelter Rehabilitation for Rent-freeze		Major Shelter Rehabilitation for OFC	
During Program		**During Program**	
Material Stability Benefits	X Tenure Security X	**Material Stability Benefits**	Length of Stay Tenure Security Affordability
Emotional Stability Benefits	Safety Comfort X	**Emotional Stability Benefits**	Safety Comfort Life Routine
Post-Program		**Post-Program**	
Material Stability Benefits	None Reported	**Material Stability Benefits**	None Reported
Emotional Stability Benefits	Safety Comfort X	**Emotional Stability Benefits**	Safety Comfort X
Cash-for-Rent		**In-Kind Assistance**	
During Program		**During Program**	
Material Stability Benefits	Length of Stay Tenure Security Affordability	**Material Stability Benefits**	N/A
Emotional Stability Benefits	X X Life Routine	**Emotional Stability Benefits**	N/A
Post-Program		**Post-Distribution**	
Material Stability Benefits	None Reported	**Material Stability Benefits**	X X Affordability (of supplies)
Emotional Stability Benefits	None Reported	**Emotional Stability Benefits**	Safety Comfort Life Routine

MATERIAL STABILITY

As seen in Figure 5, all HHs participating in humanitarian shelter programs experienced changes to certain material indicators of housing stability during the program (or post-distribution, in the case of In-kind assistance). HHs participating in programs that provided Major Shelter Rehabilitation for OFC and Cash-for-Rent saw increased material stability through the program's contribution to their length of stay, tenure security, and the affordability of rent. The incorporation of tenure security into programs was seen as particularly important to material stability with one Cash-for-Rent HH, stating "the main benefit is that the apartment owner has to abide by a specific amount of rent for six months" (HH11). In-Kind assistance and Minor Shelter Rehabilitation for Rent-Freeze made less of an impact on material indicators as these programs did not reduce the demand that rent payments placed on strained HH finances and therefore did not guarantee improved length of stay or affordability. While In-Kind assistance does not directly impact affordability of rent for ITS HHs, it provided other important financial benefits. A HH's tent is an investment that a HH owns and can sell. In-kind materials allowed beneficiaries to avoid pulling from HH funds or taking on additional debt for their shelter supplies. This support also directly contributed to their investment in housing stability by adding value and preventing expenditure on materials.

At the conclusion of fixed-period programs, material benefits were no longer guaranteed for HHs and many HHs reported anticipating or experiencing a rapid decline to their material stability post-program. In Beirut, tenure security reverted to the prior status quo, with one HH reporting their landlord intended to double their rent after the Minor Shelter Rehabilitation for Rent-freeze program. OFC and Cash-for-Rent HHs also expressed concerns regarding the rapid dissipation of permanence, tenure security, and affordability post-program. For one OFC HH, HH9, at the end of their rent-free period, the landlord decided to increase rent from 400,000 to 1,200,000 LBP (around $40 at the time of interview) citing the inflation of the Lebanese pound. Two months after concluding the program, this HH stated, "if we pay the rent, we must deprive ourselves of another need" (HH9). HH9 is currently covering rent payments using the monthly CVA they receive for food support. They have 8 million LBP (around 266 USD at the time of interview) in debt, primarily for medication, and continue to have insufficient earnings to sustain their family's needs. Another HH participating in Cash-for-Rent, HH10, explained that she owed seven months of rent debt to her landlord prior to the start of the program. While Cash-for-Rent protected her from eviction and covered her rent payments, she worried about her stability post-program as Cash-for-Rent had not altered her financial situation or allowed her to pay off her rent debt (10). Across fixed-period programs, increases to material housing stability post-program were untenable for HHs as their monthly income from daily work remained the same and tenure security was no longer guaranteed.

EMOTIONAL STABILITY

HHs also experienced changes to certain emotional indicators of housing stability during their participation in a humanitarian shelter program. Improvements to emotional indicators such as safety and comfort were primarily seen in HHs participating in Shelter Rehabilitation and In-kind assistance. This was due to the program's focus on physical improvements to the shelter that included securing the home or facilitating needed repairs. These programs increased a HH's attachment to their home and reduced the need to relocate to encounter better living conditions. HHs participating in Cash-for-Rent did not experience significant changes to comfort and safety, as the program was designed for shelters that already met minimum standards. Cash-for-Rent did directly contribute to HHs' emotional stability by preventing pending eviction and preserving continuity of life routine for the duration of the program. The potential to maintain this continuity was a benefit experienced by all HH participating in shelter programs that targeted affordability.

At the conclusion of shelter programs, emotional benefits, particularly comfort and safety, proved more resilient than material benefits as they were tied to physical changes to shelter. In this way, In-kind assistance represented a pivotal influence on emotional stability for ITS HHs as these HHs frequently resided in a shelter for significant lengths of time. Other HH groups expressed that limited

post-program affordability presented a barrier to preserving the extended benefits of emotional stability as it would eventually result in the need to relocate and the subsequent disruption to life routine. Additionally, although shelter programs generated improvements to emotional stability, many HHs still experienced concerns related to comfort and expressed anxiety and uncertainty about the future of their overall housing stability. As a result, most HHs indicated they have to take their sheltering and finances “day-by-day”.