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LOCAL LEADERSHIP IN HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

Case Study

JORDAN

InterAction

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Case Study

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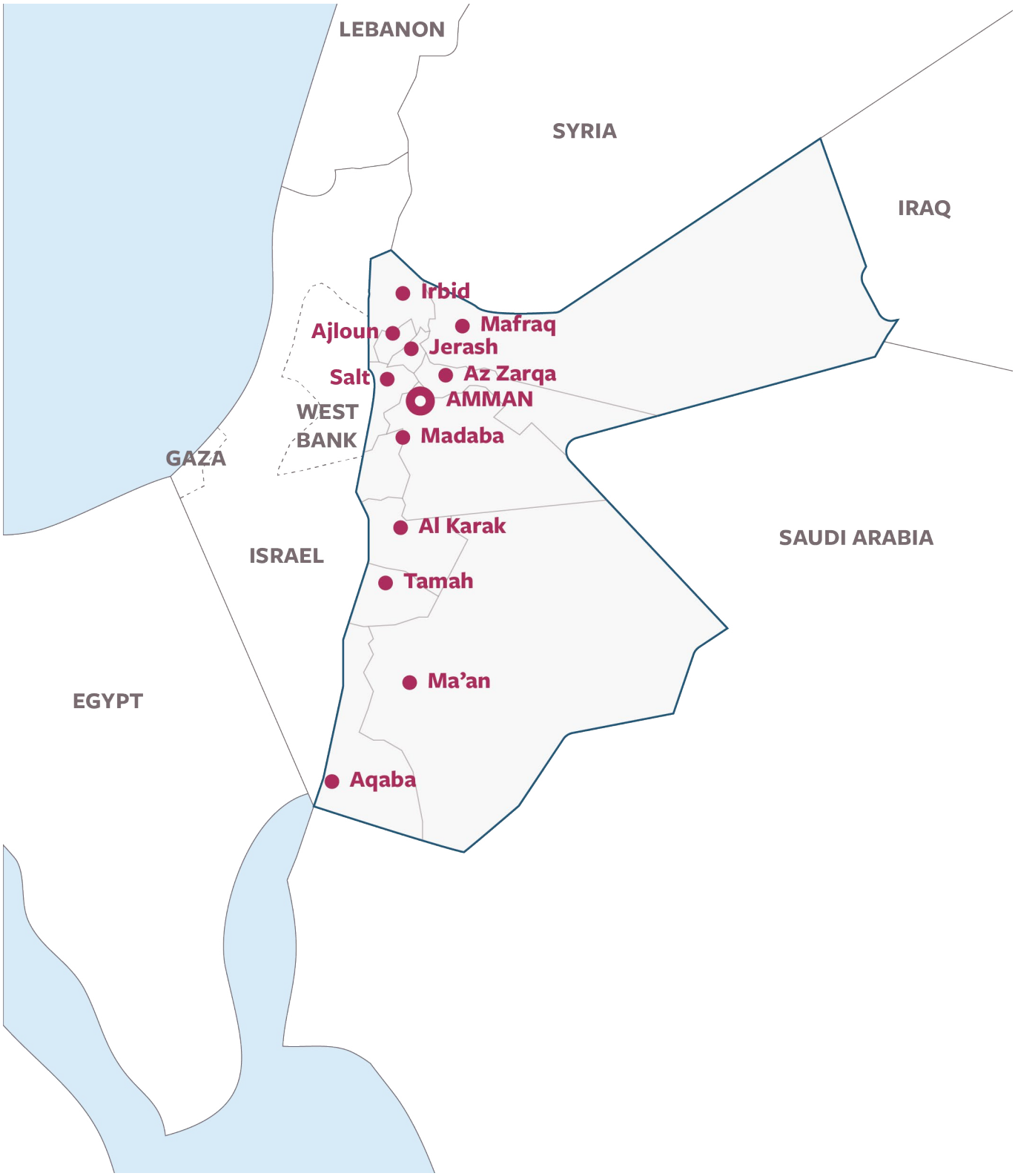
MAP

Jordan



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The following case study aims to understand the different efforts that are being made in Jordan to increase the participation, inclusion, and decision-making role of local and national actors in the humanitarian shelter and settlements response. It further explores the perceptions different actors have of localization, the tensions and challenges faced, and the role different stakeholders play across multiple contexts.

Sitting in the center of a volatile region, Jordan presents an anchor of stability, and a destination for many displaced individuals and families from neighboring countries looking for refuge. Jordan hosts millions of refugees, most notably Syrians, Iraqis, and Palestinians and smaller populations of Somali, Sudanese, Yemeni and Libyan refugees.

The overall humanitarian response in Jordan is comprehensively led by international NGOs and UN agencies. The Jordan Response Plan (JRP), which is the main instrument for planning and funding humanitarian assistance to refugees in Jordan (mainly Syrian), sets froward a collaborative relationship between the Jordanian government and the international community in coordinating, delivering and managing assistance; however, the shelter and settlements response is particularly dominated by international NGOs and UN agencies based on the notion that there is no or limited capacity among local partners in that sector.

There is a clear variation among stakeholders in the way localization is defined and hence aimed for in Jordan. However, **collaboration with local organizations** (be it governmental or non-governmental), **community engagement**, and a **contextual understanding** were among the key concepts highlighted in the study, particularly by local organizations. Whilst INGOs and UN agencies agree to the significance of localization, particularly in relation to the effectiveness and sustainability of solutions, yet they maintain the leading role in the equation, receiving the funding and leading the humanitarian response. The collaboration with local CBOs and NGOs happens to either identify beneficiaries or contribute to vulnerability assessments. However, local organizations don't participate in the design, implementation or evaluation of the shelter interventions.

Local CBOs and NGOs are not intimidated by the presence of the international NGOs in the response but rather by their own marginalization. There is a clear gap between local and international organization under the shelter sector that is specifically weakening and hindering any localization efforts. **Capacity** of local organizations, the high **budgets** required for shelter projects, and lack of **trust** between local and international organizations were among the key factors identified to hinder any well-formed localization efforts. Localization within the current circumstances and context of shelter is happening by default rather than by planning. A protracted emergency with decreased amounts of funding is pushing international NGOs and UN agencies to consider localization as a solution and an exit strategy.

Amid a challenging context and an evident gap between local and international organizations, **meaningful and equal partnerships** that challenge the hierarchical structures between local and international NGOs were among the key recommendations proposed by participants of the study. Participants further confirmed the availability of local expertise in Jordan, and the importance of which in future planning for localization. However, local talent requires capacity building and mentorship in critical areas, such as project management, financial management and grants management.

The protracted nature of the refugee crisis in Jordan and the limited resources necessitate an integration between development and emergency approaches within a strategic framework and in coordination with key national stakeholders in that regard. Hence, the formation of coalitions was another key recommendation, where a **coalition** of local and international organizations can be mobilized to allow for impactful, sustainable, and long-term solutions/interventions in the sector, and which could serve both humanitarian and development objectives. Other recommendations included donor flexibility, logistical collaboration and facilitation of coordination efforts, capacity building of local organizations, and multi-sectoral integration.

ABBREVIATIONS

ARDD	Arab Renaissance for Democracy and Development
CBO	Community-based organizations
CSO	Civil society organizations
HfH	Habitat for Humanity
IOCC	International Orthodox Christian Charities
ISWG	Inter-Sector Working Group
JIF	Jordan INGO Forum
JONAF	Jordan National NGOs Forum
JRP	Jordan Response Plan
KII	Key informant interviews
MoE	Ministry of Environment
MoI	Ministry of Interior
MoLA	Ministry of Local Administration
MoPIC	Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation
MoSD	Ministry of Social Development
MoPWH	Ministry of Public Works and Housing
MoWI	Ministry of Water and Irrigation
NAF	National Aid Fund
NGO	National organization
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
SWG	Shelter Working Group
UNHCR	UN Refugee Agency
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees
JHCO	Jordan Hashemite Charity Organization
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
MEAL	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MoHPW	Ministry of Housing and Public Works
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this research is to understand what efforts are being made to increase the participation, inclusion and decision-making role of local and national actors in humanitarian shelter and settlements response. The specific focus of this study is on the perceptions of different actors involved in the response, the tensions and challenges faced, and the role different stakeholders play in different contexts.

This research used a qualitative approach which consisted of a desk review, stakeholder mapping and semi-structured interviews with representatives of the different actors in the Shelter and Settlements Sector. Further details on the methodology are in Annex A.

2. CONTEXT OVERVIEW

This section provides a brief introduction to the country context and the localization landscape, as well as an overview of shelter and settlements response in the country. It provides a summary of key factors that influence local leadership in shelter and settlements response in Jordan. Annex B contains a detailed overview of the country context and localization efforts. This section contains extracts from that Annex.

2.1 Country situation

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, a constitutional monarchy with a representative government, is strategically located in the heart of the Middle East. Bound by Syria, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and occupied Palestine, Jordan is surrounded by multiple protracted conflicts and humanitarian emergencies.

Sitting in the center of a volatile region, Jordan presents an anchor of stability, and a destination for many displaced individuals and families from neighboring countries looking for refuge. Jordan hosts millions of refugees from different conflicts surrounding the country, most notably 1.36 million Syrians, in addition to Iraq, 2 million Palestinians and smaller populations of Somali, Sudanese, Yemeni and Libyan refugees totaling 90,000.

While politically stable, Jordan is a small country with very limited resources and a struggling economy. Furthermore, Jordan is highly dependent on foreign aid, and is considered among the top US and international foreign aid recipients globally. In addition to economic struggles, Jordan is one of the most water-scarce countries in the world and is facing climate-related hazards, including temperature increases and droughts.

The main instrument for planning and funding humanitarian assistance to Syrian refugees in Jordan in the Jordan Response Plan (JRP), while the needs of Palestinian refugees are addressed by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA). The JRP clearly stipulates in its background section that, *"The government of Jordan and the international community once again worked together to develop a new JRP 2020-2022" It also notes that "...needs and proposed responses are developed through the task forces composed of line ministries, donors' community, UN agencies and NGOs to mitigate the impact of the Syrian crisis."*

There is no mention of the non-Syrian refugees in the JRP. There is minimal presence of local NGOs and an absence of refugee voices in all the instruments that have been developed to coordinate the response to the refugee crisis, as well as to a certain extent the working groups and networks created for that purpose.

The civil society sector in Jordan is young, and its ability to create a well-networked sector has been hampered by limited space and legal provisions. While civil society organizations (CSOs) in Jordan play a key role in providing social assistance and services to local communities, they face multiple challenges. According to one report, limited coordination and cooperation with the government, as well as difficulty in obtaining financial resources, are among the key challenges faced by the sector (Phenix Center for Economic and Informatics Studies, 2022). The relationship between the Jordanian government and CSOs is described as bitter, and the lack of trust between both parties hinders cooperation and the growth of the latter.

Several structures/networks have been created in Jordan in the past decade to coordinate the work among local and international NGOs and donor agencies. These promote the localization agenda and enhance collaboration and long-term development interventions rather than short humanitarian assistance. They include:

- **Jordan National NGOs Forum (JONAF)**. Established in 2016 by the Arab Renaissance for Democracy and Development (ARDD) and other CSOs, community-based organizations (CBOs), experts and media activists from across Jordan. JONAF's purpose is to activate the localization and decentralization of humanitarian and development work in Jordan, and to emphasize the role of women in security and peace building.
- **Jordan INGO Forum (JIF)**. A network of 62 international NGOs implementing development and humanitarian programs in Jordan.
- **The Coordination Commission for Civil Society Institutions (Himam)**. Established in 2015 by 13 CSOs that came together to uphold the values of democracy and human rights in society.
- **MEAL Framework of Humanitarian Action in Jordan**. A localization task team, established in 2021 and chaired by UN Women and the INGO Forum, promotes strengthening partnerships between international and national NGOs "to improve the quality and availability of local partners' expertise, and to advocate for more direct funding to national organizations."

2.2 Localization efforts

The overall response is comprehensively led by international NGOs and UN agencies. Even within the collaborative relationship between the government and the international community under the JRP — rather than collaborative or consultative — based on the notion that there is no or limited capacity among local partners, hence international organizations take the lead in coordinating, delivering and managing assistance (Arab Renaissance for Democracy and Development, 2023). However, it has been noted in the past few years that the decreasing funds to international aid organizations in Jordan are pushing them to collaborate with local actors. The aim is to decrease their operating and project costs rather than a predesigned and intended approach toward localization. Furthermore, whilst local CBOs have a more in-depth understanding of their local communities and its members, international actors prefer to work with national NGOs, who can meet due diligence and compliance requirements.

The ARDD report asks whether it is fair to criticize the Jordanian CSO sector for its lack of capacity, lack of strategic planning, fraud and being driven by economic self-interest among other issues. It highlights that the governmental legislative and political restrictions have had a toll on the ability of these organizations to grow, focus as well as access funding (be it national or international). Logistics of working and sub working groups have also been noted as potential challenges in the face of local organizations' participation, particularly those that have an interest/potential to collaborate. Challenges include:

- Language used in meetings (as well documentation of meetings) is English.
- Meetings usually take place in Amman, where potential local partners are not necessarily based, and even if they are, they might not have the required time or means for attending these meetings.
- The time for attending and following up on coordination meetings could also be another challenge, particularly for organizations short on staff.
- What's in it for them? Local organizations don't necessarily understand the potential outcomes and benefits of being part of such working groups, and consequently don't put an effort to participate.
- Finally, the attitude of staff in UN agencies and international NGOs, particularly toward local organizations has also been noted as a repellant factor to local NGOs and CBOs.

2.3 Shelter and settlements response

The housing sector in Jordan was already suffering from lack of affordable housing for lower income families, and the refugee crisis has only worsened the situation. Within such a context, there hasn't been a scaled response from either the government or the private sector to increase the supply of affordable housing sector since the onset of the Syrian crisis. Therefore, rent increased for vulnerable communities (Jordanian and refugees), leading families to live in substandard housing and over-crowded accommodation (UN Habitat, 2015). Poor urban planning along with outdated building standards have been identified as key challenges in the housing sector in Jordan (Myriam Ababsa, 2021). According to the JRP, it is estimated that 30% of Jordanians and 48% of Syrian refugees lack access to affordable housing.

Upon reviewing the different interventions of international NGOs and UN agencies under the Shelter and Settlements Sector, the majority of work carried out since the start of the Syrian conflict included the following interventions, in addition to providing shelter through the refugee camps:

- Rehabilitation of substandard homes.
- Cash-for-rent programs.
- One of the successful projects in the north of Jordan included finishing unfinished homes within local communities to be rented to Syrian refugees for an average of 18 months free of charge.

Most of the work that is done under the humanitarian response in Jordan is carried out by international NGOs and UN agencies. There is minimal participation for local organizations (NGOs and CBOs) in the Shelter Working Group (SWG) in Jordan, but more importantly there is lack of knowledge among key international stakeholders and SWG members as to whether there are any potential local partners in that sector. The SWG never conducted a mapping exercise in that regard in the past decade. However, expanding the presence of local partners in the group is on their agenda for the upcoming strategic plan and the proposed new executive committee of the SWG. Staff of international NGOs and UN agencies have a pre-assumption — which they carried over the past 10 years — that national organizations don't have the capacity or the interest to be involved in shelter projects.

The Ministry of Interior (MoI) is the direct line ministry for the Shelter Sector, which is another challenge for stakeholders, particularly for including a government representative in the SWG meetings. However, several ministries are involved in sheltering work, but none of these ministries are represented in the SWG.

Upon reviewing local initiatives within the shelter sector in Jordan it was noted that most of the financial assistance to families in need or rehabilitation of homes locally (outside the scope of the JRP) is done by charity organizations and faith-based NGOs/CBOs. Multiple CSOs and CBOs have a "home rehabilitation" component under its umbrella. Many of the following entities are faith-based and depend on Zakat and Islamic compatible funding for their finances and the funding of their home rehabilitation/financial assistance programs. Depending on the community they are based in, they could be working with refugees in addition to vulnerable Jordanians.

Availability of funding for sheltering is another major issue that the sector is currently facing. Moreover, flexibility of funding is also another issue, in that it lacks allowances for capacity building of local partners. UN and international NGOs argue that short-term funding is one factor preventing them from entering more strategic partnerships with local organizations (Arab Renaissance for Democracy and Development, 2023). Declining funds and high donor requirements in the Shelter and Settlements Sector, as well as the high financial costs per household under sheltering is limiting international NGOs and UN agencies to invest in strategic partnerships with local organizations. Amidst the commitments made by the headquarters of these organizations, there hasn't been any clear intention/steps toward purposeful collaboration.

3. FINDINGS

This section presents the key findings from key informant interviews, drawing on the key themes identified during the desk review.

3.1 Influence of context on initiatives

Shelter response in Jordan

The context of the Shelter and Settlements Sector in Jordan is complicated and compounded by multiple difficulties and challenges, aside from the humanitarian needs of refugees, which makes the planning, implementation and sustainability of interventions more difficult. This also impacts the possibilities for and approaches toward localization.

While the humanitarian sector in Jordan is specifically dominated by international NGOs, it is also evident that there are national efforts under multiple ministries in Jordan addressing shelter and public housing. Participants from governmental organizations noted that there are multiple governmental interventions in relation to public housing in Jordan carried out by three main entities: the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD), the Royal Court and the Ministry of Public Works and Housing (MoPWH). However, none of these organizations works solely on public housing, hence there is neither a public housing agency nor a public housing strategy in Jordan specifically for displaced populations. Furthermore, none of the international NGOs interviewed were aware of the work implemented by these entities locally nor did any of the interviewed organizations collaborate strategically with them in this regard. Collaborations took place with MoPWH for the preparation of refugee camps, and with the MoSD for the identification of Jordanian beneficiaries for projects in urban settings.

However, the fact is, there is no one line ministry focusing on shelter in humanitarian settings. The MoI is the prime ministry in that regard for security reasons, and not MoSD and MoPWH, and that changes the dynamics of coordination and collaboration according to interviewed international NGOs. All projects must be approved by the MoI before involvement of other ministries, such as MoSD and MoPWH, and implementation of interventions. Hence, approvals from the different entities and the bureaucracy of such entities are two key challenges that this sector is facing according to participants in the KIIs, particularly for local organizations or for projects that involve Syrians.

> **"Home rehabilitation requires a lot of coordination with multiple national organizations, such as municipalities, ministries, the Land Department, and utility companies (water, electricity). This coordination requires a lot of effort at the CBO level, particularly that there are high levels of bureaucracy in these organizations and that is demanding for CBOs that suffer from high levels of turnover and low numbers of staff vs volunteers."** (*J14, male, CBO, 25 June 2023*)

According to participants in the KIIs, there is a limited number of CSOs working in the Shelter Sector in Jordan. Shelter is not among the common areas in which CSOs are involved, compared to health, education and psychosocial interventions. Shelter requires high amounts of funding, which most local NGOs/CSOs cannot raise, as explained by one participants:

> **"The main problem is the lack of funding for us as a local organization. The costs of rehabilitation is high for us as CBOs, and we are unable to raise such funds."** (*J14, male, local CBO, June 2023*)

Yet, there are several CBOs across the north and the center of Jordan that work in the Shelter and Settlements Sector and provide shelter services for local and refugee communities. Refer to Box 1 for an example of a local organization from the north of Jordan.

A local CBO in the north of Jordan

"We have a local team under our organization which includes handymen and craftsmen from a variety of professions related to construction and home rehabilitation. We've rehabilitated over 850 homes in the north since our establishment. Recently we rehabilitated 77 homes to mark the 77th anniversary of Jordan's Independence Day, and we also did 10 additional homes in celebration of the Crown Prince's wedding.

These homes we work on usually require rehabilitation services and sanitary facilities: kitchens and bathrooms. We raise funds through crowdfunding, but we also receive some assistance from the private sector and the Royal Court.

We realize the significance of shelter services and we can see how vast the need is across Jordan. We therefore tried to advocate for changes in the national system that would allow the Ministry of Awqaf to endorse home rehabilitation as a "waqf" under the Islamic law, but unfortunately, we weren't successful."

The majority of humanitarian funding under sheltering is specifically channeled for Syrian refugees—the government requires a 30% Jordanian target in all projects serving refugees, including shelter projects. However, funding for non-Syrian refugees is very limited, although they are extremely vulnerable across multiple sectors, including shelter. A participant from a local NGO further explained:

> **"There are limitations in the work with UNHCR, particularly that they don't treat all refugees equally. I don't understand why, if they all have the status of a 'refugee,' why do they differentiate between the various nationalities of refugees? They are all registered with the UN but they don't all receive similar services. When we ask about the reason, many would say 'donor requirements,' unfortunately."** (*J13, female, local NGO, June 2023*)

Since Jordan is not a signatory of the convention and protocols, the projects, policies, and procedures for serving refugees vary depending on the nationality of refugees and the funding or projects available to serve them, as well as the timing and nature of the emergency. Non-Syrian refugees are marginalized by the international NGOs, government, and UNHCR according to feedback from local NGOs and refugee-led organizations and initiatives. Refugee led organizations (RLOs) take the form of an initiative since they can't be formally registered in the country. There is also a lack of involvement by local researchers and academics working on sheltering and urban planning:

> **"The sector is chaotic.— The sector is dominated by UN agencies and [international] NGOs. Unfortunately, UN agencies and [international] NGOs haven't been cooperative with researchers from the academia, although there's a lot for both sides to benefit from. As academics, we want to do the research for the benefit of refugees and the work of these organizations in the camps, however, they weren't cooperative."** (*J20, female, university professor, July 2023*)

Participants further explained that UN agencies and international NGOs rely on their own human resources, and many times headquarters, when it comes to research and evaluation, hence minimal collaboration exists with local universities and research centers.

Furthermore, a local participant in the KIIs noted that none of the interventions addressed the structural problems of shelter, such as the laws governing the rights and responsibilities of the lesser and lessee in the Jordanian law or a national strategy for public housing. These could have a longer-term impact on both vulnerable Jordanians and refugees.

Protracted nature of the Syrian crisis

The protracted nature of the Syrian crisis (similar to other crisis in the region; Palestine and Iraq) was repeatedly mentioned and emphasized by international and local NGOs and UN agency participants in the KIIs. The protracted nature of the refugee situation necessitates an integration between development and emergency programs within a strategic framework and in coordination with key national stakeholders in that regard.

The fact that most refugees are not in camps, but rather in vulnerable and poor communities or districts which need assistance themselves makes it even more challenging for local and international organizations to plan and implement interventions. The head of a CBO in Mafraq, in the north of Jordan explains:

> **"Our district is a poverty pocket. Many families are eligible when it comes to aid and shelter, there's a big need among refugees as well as local communities, hundreds of homes need rehabilitation, and choosing the most vulnerable is not an easy task, particularly in light of the limited resources."** (*J14, male, CBO, June 2023*)

The majority of humanitarian sectors are suffering from a decrease of funding amid a dire need:

> **"Funding is decreasing, now we are thinking of how we reach and define the most vulnerable—this is a difficult process. When you have thousands of people on your waiting list and a small case load,— how are we going to do this as fairly as possible."** (*J9, female, international NGO, June 2023*)

Participants in KIIs further explained that the situation post COVID has become even more difficult:

> **"The situation post COVID is very difficult, funds decreased and economic conditions worsened for both host and refugee communities."** (*J16, female, CBO, July 2023*)

It has been evident from the interviews with local and international stakeholders that solutions have thus far been emergency solutions, but this cannot continue for a protracted crisis like the Syrian crisis:

> **"Ten years later, nothing seems to change in the status of refugees. Those returning to Syria are a very low percentage. Everybody else is still in the country and under the same circumstances."** (*J16, female, CBO, July 2023*)

The protracted nature of the crisis and the challenging circumstances in the country necessitate that both local and international organizations address these compounded issues with a "development" lens and a comprehensive long-term strategy rather than an "emergency" approach.

3.2 Perceptions of localization

It was evident from the KIIs that there is variation in the way localization is defined and hence aimed for. The term itself is problematic, since "localization" is not defined in Arabic, and the translated term is not a common concept, particularly among local organizations (governmental and non-governmental). However, **collaboration with local organizations** (be it governmental or non-governmental), **community engagement**, and a **contextual understanding** were among the key concepts highlighted by participants in KIIs to define localization within the sector:

> **"Localization is being local. The necessity of having empowerment to the locals to provide their services within the shelter maintenance and support. Locally made and locally supplied to enhance the local economy. Empowerment means that you enable them (host communities) to take part in providing support to refugees (an interactive part within the process). Localization means contextualization within the Jordanian context."** (*J2, male, UN/IO, March 2023*)

INGOs agree with the significance of localization, particularly in relation to the effectiveness and sustainability of solutions. However, the discussion revolves around the participation of local organizations — how and where they can be involved — yet international NGOs and UN agencies maintain the leading role in the equation, receiving the funding and leading the humanitarian response. All stakeholders realize that the donations are channeled through UN agencies and international NGOs. They also realize that the humanitarian work happens through these organizations, and therefore, any arrangement must have UN agencies and international NGOs at the forefront, followed by local organizations.

While the international NGOs and UN agencies emphasized the significance of local NGOs' participation and involvement in the humanitarian/shelter response, local NGOs emphasized the importance of communities' participation and the significance of working **with** the people and not only for the people:

> **"The significance of the community committee, particularly in reaching out to refugees and local communities, and participating in designing and implementing of initiatives and programs is significant is inevitable."** (*NB, female, local NGO, June 2023*)

The gap between local and international organizations was evident in their interpretation of the term itself. While international NGOs and UN agencies are trying to adapt their interventions to accommodate localization, local NGOs and CBOs think that this is an inevitable mindset that should always be at the forefront of interventions:

> **"For me, I have a problem with this term 'localization.' Many times, I see people referring to localization about people who are not able to do work in their country and someone from the outside telling you how to do the work. The people who come up with this term are trying to impose it. It's like humanization—people are already human, the same applies to localization, you would know what is local without localizing it. Localization is more about the communities working together, the people from the community leading the work — who is making the decision and who is involved in the implementation — totally led by the locals, not outsiders trying to localize efforts. It's the community power and community dynamics, rather than pushing it to be localized."** (*J12, male, RLO, June 2023*)

Local CBOs and NGOs are not intimidated by the presence of the international NGOs in the response but rather by their own marginalization. Local NGOs don't want to eliminate the role of international NGOs, but they want to be equal partners at the table. They realize that the funding is channeled through international NGOs and UN agencies, but they also realize that they have the local and contextual expertise; an understanding of the community and the context that can't be overlooked or disregarded:

> **"We need to work more closely with each other, —rather than local organizations randomly responding to calls for proposal by [international] NGOs and UN agencies. Even the government needs to sit with us as key partners and decide on how we need to respond. This doesn't happen. There's a high number of refugees and there's a lot of need."** (*J13, female, local NGO, June 2023*)

Local organizations interviewed with a shelter rehabilitation component do not necessarily know about the work carried out by the Shelter Sector, nor the coordination that happens within the SWG. These meetings take place in Amman and are conducted in English.

> **"The planning takes place in Amman, however, knowledge of the community, the context and the people in which the interventions take place are crucial for the sustainability and the impact of projects in the governorates."** (*J16, female, CBO, June 2023*)

While Caritas and H4H are considered local organizations and their work is close to localization, these organizations are different than other local organizations working in either the development or emergency sectors in Jordan. Caritas and H4H are affiliated with a bigger umbrella organization (usually international) that provides them with funding as well as systems and structures. That is different than local organizations, that are found and operated totally locally.

However, several members of international NGOs/UN agencies claim at times that local NGOs are not interested to become part of such coordination bodies, groups and meetings.

> **"Among the challenges that we face with local CBOs and associations is their level of interest, —from my observation; they are not interested in being part of such working groups. They don't know what it's all about— and what's in it for them."** (*J18, female, UN/IO, July 2023*)

> **"Some refer to localization as also hiring local staff but that is not enough when staff are from or in Amman. In terms of localization being practiced in Jordan—it is being advertised for—in the SWG we are always looking for CBOs to tell them about the SWG and invite them to join us. They have their own projects and mandates, I don't know what gets lost, but they don't show up."** (*J18, female, UN/IO, July 2023*)

However, according to one of the local organizations interviewed:

> **"I was once invited to a SWG meeting, and it was interesting to learn about all those efforts in Jordan and present the work of our organization, but I don't know what happened afterwards. I didn't know of subsequent meetings, although we're very interested to collaborate."** (*J6, male, CBO, June 2023*)

It is important to note that the government is present within the humanitarian response in general; the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation leads the development of the JRP in collaboration with relevant ministries, UN agencies, international NGOs and very few national NGOs. However, the government's agenda varies, and doesn't necessarily support the agenda of the communities and CBOs on the ground. The JRP does not specify any considerations or regulations regarding cooperation with communities and CBOs, which was evident in the interviews conducted for this research paper. Furthermore, the fact that Jordan is not a signatory of the 1951 Refugee Convention or any of the Protocols gives it the upper hand when it comes to key decisions within the different sectors under the humanitarian response.

Lack of examples of localization in shelter

There is a lack of localization examples in the Shelter Sector—for both the government and CSOs. This lack contributes to the differences in the definition of localization. None of the individuals interviewed were able to identify a robust example of localization, or locally led project under the Shelter Sector. No local partners sit on the SWG (except Caritas Jordan, Islamic Relief Jordan and Habitat for Humanity Jordan, which are not completely local). Furthermore, there is no partner line ministry within the SWG, and it was evident from the KIIs that the government organizations and the international NGOs don't necessarily know about each other's work, be it on the strategic level or the implementation levels.

> **"I haven't seen any existing practice of localizations in my work in shelter. I might have seen it in other sectors, [for example] livelihood and women empowerment and revolving funds for home-based businesses in direct collaboration with local CBOs and NGOs, but not in shelter."** (*J3, male, I-JNGO, July 2023*)

Decisions, planning, and strategizing is done by the donors, international NGOs, and UN agencies, and they decide accordingly on how and when to involve local partners. Although the government is involved, the involvement is at an overarching level. They set the JRP together, and decide on the overall guidelines, but they are not necessarily involved in the daily implementation plans, particularly in shelter (besides the approvals of projects and target groups). The level of governmental involvement varies across sectors and key players.

> **"For example, if the government didn't approve the issuance of work permits in certain sectors for Syrian refugees, they would not have had the right to work by any other legal agreement or convention, which is the case for non-Syrian refugees. Hence, projects and interventions are limited to what is approved/accepted by the government of Jordan."** (*J13, female, local NGO, June 2023*)

Localization by default

Localization within the current circumstances and context of shelter is happening by default rather than by planning. A protracted emergency with decreased amounts of funding is pushing international NGOs and UN agencies to consider localization as a solution and an exit strategy.

The upcoming strategy for the SWG is one example. An international NGO representative in one of the KIIs noted:

> **"So now this is pushing us to work with more local institutions so we can have an exit strategy (particularly that this is a protracted situation) and we are not a development organization. How can I, as an [international] NGO, help local organizations carry on the work [before] I leave? It's an interesting time in Jordan because you still have humanitarian needs. The recent return of Syria to the Arab League raised a question of whether it will affect the humanitarian situation, and will this be fast? There's a lifespan for the humanitarian case; Syria got a lot of attention, and we don't know for how long it will continue."** (*J9, female, international NGO, June 2023*)

3.3 Experiences and challenges

Humanitarian-development tensions and divide

Lack of communication and collaboration between the humanitarian and development sectors in general (as well as under the Shelter and Settlements Sector in particular) was clear in the KIIs as an issue that is specifically weakening and hindering any localization efforts. Local NGOs and CBOs within the development sector in Jordan lead major programs and projects related to education, health, employability, and social protection and welfare that primarily target Jordanians. Shelter, while minimal, is also present within the development work in the country. Humanitarian work cuts across similar sectors as development work, however interventions mainly target refugees. Yet, within a protracted emergency situation, with an increasing number of vulnerable local communities and a majority of refugees outside of refugee camps, drawing the line between humanitarian and development work becomes very challenging.

Within the Shelter and Settlements Sector, it was evident from the KIIs that both sides don't know about each other's work; international NGOs don't know the local context of the sector and they haven't been obliged by the government or any national policies to work with local partners under the Shelter and Settlements Sector. There is a gap in knowledge about who might be out there within that sector/context, although it has been more than 10 years since the Syrian crisis erupted.

> **"What's hard in Jordan [is that] we don't know who is doing what in the sector."**
> (*J9, female, international NGO, June 2023*)

"There is lack of connection between [international] NGOs' work on shelter and the work of [Ministry of Housing and Public Works] in relation to urban planning. We work in separate spheres and there is no connection or collaboration on that front. There are also multiple ministries involved when it comes to shelter work: MoSD, MoHPW, MoI, but there is no direct coordination between the work of such ministries and our humanitarian response." (*J3, male, I-JNGO, April 2023*)

"We at the Ministry are not aware of the work that is being done for Syrians. There is a special focal point within the Ministry, they are the ones that follow up on such projects." (*J19, female, government, July 2023*)

However, international NGOs noted that they get their lists of potential local beneficiaries from the MoSD for Jordanian beneficiaries within their projects.

Since 2003, MoSD and the Royal Court constructed, rehabilitated or bought 4832 units (2688 by the Royal Court and 2144 by MoSD). Yet, international NGOs don't know about the local work done by MoSD and the Royal Court, neither the modality nor the existence of such projects.

This lack of collaboration between local and international organizations led to challenges that heavily affected development efforts outside of the humanitarian response, including:

- Tensions between host and refugee communities resulting from focusing on vulnerable refugees in vulnerable host communities. Local members of these communities suffer similar (and sometimes) worse economic hardships, yet they do not necessarily have access to similar programs and interventions.

"At the beginning of the crisis, it was sudden, local communities didn't have acceptance for Syrians and we (as local organizations) didn't have experience to work with refugees. We didn't realize the significance; it was even different than the Iraqi situation and we didn't realize that it will be that long. The social dynamics were difficult, and the relationship was tense, and we were not getting guidance from anyone. We didn't realize how the integration can happen, particularly that these are vulnerable communities too." (*J8, female, CBO, June 2023*)

- Lack of coordination and collaboration that affects the impact and sustainability of interventions from the point of view of local NGOs.

"When [international] NGOs don't work with us, they wouldn't understand the local context, and they wouldn't plan in accordance with our interventions, so we have to find our way in the middle of all these interventions instead." (*J7, female, CBO, June 2023*)

- Programs for refugees have also introduced new logistics for implementing programs in the "development" sphere, which have become the norm and pose challenges for local NGOs to maintain. Transportation allowances and food packages are two examples.

"Beneficiaries ask many times 'What's the transportation allowance for the training/awareness program?' and if we don't have any they wouldn't come. I understand that transportation allowance can be important, but we always attracted communities without such a condition previously, and more importantly, we can't always afford it." (*J16, female, CBO, July 2023*)

"Certain practices enhanced the charity mentality—beneficiaries only come if we give them food or transportation allowance, and although we realize the significance of the humanitarian aid/needs, we also want people to look at things from a rights approach/perception." (*J8, female, CBO, June 2023*)

> **"They have shifted even our approaches to development work. One example is transportation allowance to attend awareness/training sessions. Because this has become the new norm, if we don't provide transportation allowance (which wasn't common in the development work in Jordan previously) then the beneficiaries don't come."** *(J16, female, CBO, July 2023)*

The international NGOs and UN agencies at one end and local NGOs/governmental organizations at the other end criticize each other's work. While there is a general framework for the humanitarian response under the JRP, this is not translated in the daily work, partnerships, planning and implementation of initiatives at the intervention level, including the Shelter and Settlements Sector.

Limited role for local organizations in the sector

Participants of KIIs confirmed that international NGOs and UN agencies use local NGOs and CBOs under the Shelter Sector only to gain access to the local communities and potential community and refugee representatives for the shelter projects. They either run the vulnerability assessment test or invite community and refugee representatives to meet with potential organizations on their premises. However, they don't take part in the planning or implementation of the shelter interventions. Hence, there isn't a direct contribution for local NGOs and CBOs in the humanitarian response under sheltering. Furthermore, participants of KIIs noted that international NGOs and UN agencies have their own offices in the governorates that have a high percentage of refugees, and consequently their own staff.

> **"Big NGOs have their own staff and their own offices in the northern governorates — Irbid and Mafraq, hence they do the work directly and not necessarily in collaboration with local organizations."** *(J10, female, I-JNGO, June 2023)*

> **"Our implementing teams are either split in the host community or the camps. They don't have partnerships with local organizations, they do the work directly."** *(J9, female, INGO, June 2023)*

> **"We can collaborate with other organizations through referrals, to coordinate efforts and prevent duplication of work or duplication/deprivation of assistance to families in need, but we have our own centers and staff, why do we need to work through other organizations? We don't."** *(J10, female, I-JNGO, June 2023)*

Hence, the collaboration happens to either identify beneficiaries or contribute to vulnerability assessment. However, local organizations don't participate in the design, implementation or evaluation of the shelter interventions. Furthermore, local CBOs don't sit on any committees related to shelter or the SWG. Within that limited role, local CBOs and NGOs explained that they don't feel valued within the humanitarian sector (including the Shelter Sector).

> **"We are not only implementers or recipients of training, but we are also partners and key players, and we need to have a voice in the decision-making process."** *(J7, male, CBO, June 2023)*

> **"CBOs are many times facilitators of the project, and the space in which the project is implemented. Yet, their staff does not necessarily take part in the implementation of the projects itself."** *(J14, male, CBO, June 2023)*

"Besides the fact that the key organizations in the field are the international organizations. There are no local organizations in that sector. Local organizations work in a very sporadic and random approach. Their work is seasonal: during Eid and when they have funds for a particular cause. This is our mere observation, however, there might be other organizations that we don't know of. The SWG mentioned that as part of their strategy for this year, they'll be doing a mapping exercise to identify local organizations in the sector." (*J10, female, I-JNGO, June 2023*)

"Any project for shelter goes through one of those governmental organizations but we've never seen anyone at the table in the SWG. The case is similar to local non-governmental organizations, although we know of a few that work in shelter, such as Helping Hand, but they're also not at the table. Maybe local organizations don't know or maybe they don't have the capacity; we need to find out."
(*J17, male, I-JNGO, July 2023*)

"There are NGOs/CBOs in the sector, but not as much as we hope for. They are similar to donors, they are focused on something clear, like education and health, but not the shelter. Because the capacity is not available it is more difficult. Shelter rehabilitation/or cash-for-rent—the impact of such projects requires high funds, they would prefer to cover medical expenses compared to paying thousands [for] a small number of shelters." (*J18, female, UN/IO, July 2023*)

Following are the main reasons that international participants in KIIs highlighted as factors behind the limited role for local organizations in the Shelter and Settlements Sector.

- **Capacity**, including technical and managerial capacity, staffing and lack of experience in managing such projects.

"To secure funding they need to have technical capacity and project management. That includes capacity to write proposals and manage projects. They need support systems and units too, such as financial departments, [human resources], operations. This is not there in the local authorities. Many lack [human resources], financial systems and MEAL. If we have more funds for CBOs, we can certainly build the capacities of these CBOs and NGOs, but unfortunately, we don't." (*J18, female, UN/IO, July 2023*)

It is important to note that local organizations confirm that they realize that they require additional capacity on multiple fronts, including proposal writing, grants management and financial management. They also express interest and willingness to enhance their capacity, but they are suffocating in between governmental restrictions and donor requirements.

- **Very high budgets** that are difficult to raise. Local organizations look at the projects per beneficiary and that makes it a very high budget per beneficiary when it comes to shelter (if compared to projects in education and health for example)

"Fundraising is particularly difficult for us. MoSD and MoPIC sometimes don't accept the donors, and we can't find other ways to raise funds. We therefore rely on projects coming from international NGOs and their priorities (not necessarily ours)." (*J14, male, CBO, June 2023*)

"[International] NGOs shouldn't be replacing local orgs but helping them. The requirements of donors are difficult for local organizations, so they need to be supported." (*J9, female, international NGO, June 2023*)

- **Credibility**. Lack of trust from international NGOs in local organizations and their capacity to carry any interventions in the Shelter and Settlements Sector is another issue raised by international NGOs. The potential for fraud was repeatedly mentioned by international NGOs in KIIs, although examples of actual fraud were few.

> **"The practice of localization should always start with a small pilot with the local authorities or local organizations in a particular context and accordingly we can test their capacity and their ability to get the work done. We start with a small budget and a small scope, and later we decide how the coordination and partnership can be expanded."** (*J-17, male, I-JNGO, July 2023*)

Partnerships between local and international organizations

Sub contractual relationships dominate partnerships between local and international organizations according to participants of KIIs.

> **"[International NGOs] always see us as implementers because they consider us weaker. They also want to ensure the satisfaction of the donor. Donations also decreased. There's a lot of tension between us as implementers and community organizations and [international] NGOs. They justify the design as to 'this is what the donor wants,' whereas we are here on the ground, and we know what works in our local communities."** (*J13, female, local NGO, June 2023*)

> **"Projects are usually predefined with a design, workplan and budget. We collaborate on the implementation of the project after all contractual matters have been taken care of."** (*J7, female, CBO, June 2023*)

Tensions between local and international NGOs could be over budgets and budget items within that partnership.

> **"We receive the project details and budgets ready, we are only expected to implement. However, we don't necessarily have a voice on how budget items are allocated, and it's not always easy to request changes."** (*J13, female, local NGO, June 2023*)

Very few local organizations are strong and empowered enough to negotiate and demand changes within the budget according to participants of KIIs. The majority are vulnerable and in need of financial assistance, so they are not in a strong position to negotiate such changes.

> "At the beginning they had the projects ready and they approached us only for implementation. Although we push many times towards a participatory approach, particularly that we have a deep understanding of the community and its needs, its not yet equally participatory.
>
> "Our views are not taken as we want it to be, they claim that this is because of the donor requirements. There are certain targets and objectives, and we have to meet them. We negotiate many times, but we don't always succeed in making the changes that we want.
>
> "Many times, the programs are abrupt, we know because we are here to stay in the community. For example, they want to do economic empowerment for women. The program includes training of women, or youth, and after the training they leave them. Is training alone enough? It's not; they need support in other aspects upon the completion of the training, but this is not necessarily included."
>
> *J13, female, LNGO, June 2023*

Participants of KIIs further explained that there are many elements within the structure/approach of humanitarian international NGOs and UN agencies that are intimidating to local NGOs and CBOs. These include:

- The hierarchy (international NGOs and UN agencies being on always on top).

> **"Hierarchy—it is put in place by who receives the funding. In the same way the UN receives the majority of funding, and they choose partners, this also happens between [international and local] NGOs. Who gets the funding holds the lead in the relationship. It is the same in the consortium—who leads in the consortium."** (*J9, female, international NGO, June 2023*)

- The language. English dominates meetings of, correspondence with and proposals to international NGOs and UN agencies.
- The attitude of international NGOs towards the local organizations. Local organizations are always viewed as secondary and less capable in comparison to the "internationals."

> **"As qualified CBOs and NGOs we feel humiliated by the government and the international community. We are not only implementers, we have a voice and we're at the forefront in the local communities in which refugees reside."** (*J13, female, local NGO, June 2023*)

The challenges are compounded and it's a complicated situation; at one end the international NGOs are not working with local partners in a meaningful and strategic approach, yet from the other end the CBOs and NGOs are struggling to survive amid governmental fundraising restrictions, approvals for projects, and lack of technical/managerial support.

It is important to note that there is direct collaboration between UN agencies and governmental institutions compared to non-governmental and CBOs, particularly on key projects in governorates (and as identified in the JRP).

> **"Since the establishment of the camps, we have full coordination with MoHPW—they are the one that did the roads, floors of the shelter units, lighting. But the camp management is led by the UN. As for urban shelters, depending on the governorate, the collaboration with the municipality, there are multiple examples. For example UN Habitat collaborating with Mafraq municipality on a recent project."** (*J18, female, UN/IO, July 2023*)

Differential standards and criticisms of international NGOs

Whilst the majority of international NGOs speak of the inadequacy and lack of local NGOs within the Shelter and Settlements Sector, international NGOs have also been criticized by their local counterparts for prioritizing quantity over quality of shelters provided/rehabilitated. Decreased funding and lack of cooperation with local community-based partners inhibits international NGOs' long-term impact and sustainability of their interventions.

> **"International organizations do minimal rehabilitation work per household. Their budget is usually 1000-2000 USD per household. Such a small budget doesn't allow you to do real rehabilitation, eventually they are after the quantity not the quality. Most of the rehabilitation work that they do is cosmetic. One year later, the homes require rehabilitation again. Unfortunately, [international] NGOs are after quantity not quality, our work is more comprehensive."** (*J19, female, government, July 2023*)

MoSD claims that their work is more comprehensive since they have larger budgets per household.

> **"The majority of the interventions are, unfortunately, quick fixes. Once done, problems erupt again. [International] NGOs are after the targets and numbers many times; they don't necessarily plan for the sustainability of interventions."** (*J13, female, local NGO, June 2023*)

> **"Ten years after the crisis you can't see a long-term impact, unfortunately, not within the host or refugee communities."** (*J16, female, CBO, June 2023*)

Local NGO participants during the KIIs noted that whilst they are criticized for being donor led, so are international NGOs and UN agencies. They further explained that the programs and services provided by international NGOs and UN agencies are also provided upon the availability of funding at one end, and the government approval at the other end. This is clear in the absence of programs and services for non-Syrian refugees.

> **"This program is specifically for Syrians and Jordanians. We have a small percentage for Iraqis. The donors decide on the percentage of the refugees under each project. However, 30% is allocated for Jordanians as per the Jordanian government requirement."** (*J10, female, I-LNGO, June 2023*)

With regards to shelter interventions, participants in KIIs noted that solutions within the Shelter and Settlements Sector are short term and temporary in the face of a protracted emergency. The majority of cash-for-rent projects ranges from 1-6 months, and rehabilitation of homes is minimal in comparison to the situation of most homes rented by refugees.

> **"After the renovation, we realize that months later the houses require additional rehabilitation. The original quality of the house is very weak."** (*J17, male, I-LNGO, July 2023*)

> **"We lack a strategic solution towards these communities. The majority of solutions are quick fixes; once done, problems erupt again."** (*J17, male, I-LNGO, July 2023*)

A participant from a refugee-led organization noted that:

> **"Support in the Shelter and Settlements Sector is sporadic and not sustainable. The community becomes dependent on your support and then suddenly you disappear; you are putting them in additional risk. The need is to establish programs that continue to be consistent and sustainable."** (*J12, male, RLO, June 2023*)

Challenges facing local organizations

> "We don't have many organizations working in shelter. The Sector needs a lot of requirements, manpower, raw materials, and a long work process.
>
> It's a heavy sector in terms of expertise, time and money, and there is no support for the CBOs — financially—that's why we can't do enough work in that sector.
>
> The work that we do is already minimal. If we get support, then we are willing to expand our work or even work under the umbrella of another organization".
>
> (*J6, male, CBO, June 2023*)

Lack of institutionalization among CBOs was a key issue that was raised by international NGOs and local NGOs alike. Participants referred to the lack of institutionalization among CBOs, and the dependency of such organizations on individuals many times rather than systems and structures. Local organizations and particularly CBOs are short on staff in general. This is a challenge that stands in their way for taking an active role in the humanitarian response, including the Shelter and Settlements Sector.

Participants in KIIs noted that the work of CBOs is dependent many times on volunteers since CBOs don't have sustainable sources of income that can maintain staff, and when they do, they are core program/management staff.

> **"Most of us work voluntarily and our services are free of charge, we therefore can't always maintain programs, let alone expand."** (*J13, female, local NGO, June 2023*)

Yet, shelter work requires demanding levels of follow up and work that cannot be maintained based on volunteer work (whereas educational services, recreational activities, and awareness programs are among the activities that CBOs can maintain with a low budget and volunteer work, and that's the majority of CBO work out of the realm of funded projects). Furthermore, local CBOs and NGOs cannot afford grants management staff who can take care of writing proposals, drafting agreements, and monitoring and evaluating programs/projects.

With regards to receiving funds and sustaining programs/services, participants in KIIs noted that the process of receiving funds is dependent on proposal writing and submission, a complicated process many times by donors and international NGOS. CBOs and local NGOs further explained that they lack capacity in proposal writing (as well as English fluency many times). They further explained that a good proposal doesn't necessarily mean a good organization, hence international NGOs and UN agencies should have other methods for identifying potential partners, such as references and previous experiences, rather than solely depending on proposals.

> **"Nominations shouldn't always be through proposals; it could be through nominations from partners and local authorities. We can't always apply electronically and in English. Some organizations can afford to hire freelancers who can write a good proposal but their work on the ground is not as good as ours. But we can't afford to pay freelancers to write our proposals."** (*J6, male, CBO, June 2023*)

> **"Very few [local] NGOs have the capacity internally to write full-fledged proposals and responds to the complicated donor requirements. Donor proposal and financial requirements are quite difficult and require advance capacities from local organizations. That should probably be the focus of capacity building in the future."** (*J21, female, local NGO, August 2023*)

Participants from local NGOs explained that while they are continuously accused of being donor led they suffer from a decrease of funding for their projects and initiatives. The majority of funding in the country over the past decade was channeled towards projects serving Syrian refugees, so they had to make the shift to survive.

> **"Most of the projects in the governorate has been for Syrians. We therefore decided to join the work, otherwise, we wouldn't have survived."** (*J8, female, CBO, June 2023*)

Local NGOs further explained that even when they are subcontracted for the implementation of projects and programs, funding is allocated for core project activities, with minimal allocations for overhead expenses.

> **"We don't get any allowances from MoSD, and even when we receive funding as part of a project with an [international] NGO, the project would only cover direct costs of the activities but barely any of our overhead expenses. Paying our rent and utilities is a recurring concern for us every year."** (*J7, male, CBO, June 2023*)

> **"We are given a very specific and many times a limited role in partnerships. Project don't cover overhead expenses either."** (*J21, female, local NGO, August 2023*)

Local NGOs and CBOs are suffering from lack of funding, governmental restrictions and a big increase in the number of CBOs in Jordan since 2011. This impedes their ability to actively engage in the humanitarian response.

> **"The space for civil society is limited—we're not Lebanon. Civil society and municipalities play a very big role in the Shelter [and Settlements] Sector in Lebanon for example, but that's not the case in Jordan."** (*J9, female, international NGO, June 2023*).

Furthermore, there has been an abrupt increase in the number of CBOs and NGOs since the beginning of the Syrian crisis, many of which; explained interviewees, are charity based and not necessarily professional. The increase in CBOs is making it more difficult for the professional and well-established CBOs to maintain their presence among the crowd.

> **"We feel humiliated. There were 70 CBOs/[local] NGOs before the crisis in Mafraq; now we have more than 3000. We can't consider them all at the same level, the most active and established, even before the crisis are five. I always question those who are charity based and opened only after the crisis. Their credibility is questioned and eventually affect our credibility as well."** (*J16, female, CBO, July 2023*)

> **"There are more than 21 CBOs in our district; only three or four are effective and well functioning. The remaining work within a seasonal approach—only when there is funding, or assistance—charity rather than development based."** (*J14, male, CBO, June 2023*)

Participants in KIIs further explained that the current legal framework for civil society in the country is weakening their position and their ability to seek funding and become independent. This contributes to the fact that they are donor driven, and many are even charity based. In addition to local NGOs, it was noted that the law doesn't allow the registration of refugee-led organizations or refugee-led initiatives, which impedes the ability of refugees to formally include their voice, hence contribute to the humanitarian response. An active refugee under the auspices of a local NGO further explained:

> **"We are trying hard to push back the power dynamics that have been dominating. We have many activities, but we don't have a choice, and we are unable to implement it in our own way many times. This is because it is not possible to register the initiative; legally we are not allowed to register any initiative as refugees. People speak of refugee-led organizations, but at the end of the day there are so many policies which affect our wellbeing and status negatively. We mobilize assistance from other organizations, but we can't raise funds for our initiative. There is something to learn from refugees and not only to give them—they are resourceful."** (*J12, male, RLO, June 2023*)

Interviewed local NGOs further explained that they need capacity building in areas such as financial management, and that this is an area they need further support in. However, they have no fraud intentions as claimed by international NGOs.

> **"Although we have high credibility within our local communities, our credibility was questioned in some of the work with [international] NGOs because of the timing of implementation. This work that is related to rehabilitation of homes requires a lot of time, particularly in terms of follow up with other organizations, and donors/[international] NGOs want it done within a short timeframe. This is particularly difficult for us because we depend on volunteers in our work and not staff, and the job becomes demanding, hence there are delays that eventually affect our credibility."** (*J14, male, CBO, June 2023*)

It was evident from the KIIs that local NGOs and CBOs in general are aware of their challenges and weaknesses amidst the requirements of the humanitarian sector, as well as the challenges that they are facing to assume a bigger role. international NGOs and governmental organizations didn't exhibit such awareness about their weaknesses or the structural challenges within their institutions, which impedes interventions, partnerships and localization.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

This section shares the lessons learnt and recommendations from participants of KIIs.

In the midst of a complicated and challenging context under the humanitarian response in general and the Shelter and Settlements Sector in particular, participants highlighted a variety of lessons and recommendations that are important to be taken in consideration in the planning, implementation and evaluation of shelter interventions. It is also important to note as well that amid the criticism, [international and national] NGOs are expressing interest and willingness to collaborate in a more impactful, strategic and sustainable approach.

Increased voice

Well established NGOs and CBOs have a strong community participation element which they considered crucial in localization, in line with the notion that the people should be part of the process and intervention and not only at the receiving end of programs and initiatives. Multiple participants noted embedded approaches and strategies within their organizations that enhance and promote community participation, such as community committees, refugee-led initiatives and youth-led initiatives.

> **"There is something to learn from refugees and not only to give them, they are resourceful, and they also have the right to be part of the decision-making process when programs and services involves/ targets them"** (*J12, male, RLO, June 2023*)

Local expertise

Participants confirmed the availability of local expertise in Jordan, and the importance of this in future planning for localization. However, local talent requires capacity building and mentorship in critical areas for project/ intervention planning and management, such as project management, financial management and grants management.

UN SCDF

An important enabling factor mentioned by UN agencies is the UN Sustainable Cooperation Development Framework, which includes a big component on localization. (UNHCR 2022) This is a cross-cutting document across all UN agencies in Jordan in which they are trying to align what they do with the government agenda.

Environmental approaches

Many shelter-related projects combine work with environmentally friendly solutions. This serves two purposes: environment and reduced running costs for beneficiaries. Within that context of green buildings, the government in partnership with UNDP is currently finalizing and endorsing a national strategy on climate change. In addition to that, the Green Building Council has recently joined the SWG meetings.

Overhead allocation

> **"Increased localization within the sector starts from donor requirements and trickles down to [international] NGOs and implementing partners. Hence, donors should also be held for their responsibilities towards the Grand Bargain, followed by [international] NGOs and governments. It's a collective process, and everyone should assume their role towards an inclusive and enabling civic space."** (*J21, female, local NGO, August 2023*)

This can also be reflected in the way capacity building strategies are set, capacity building is conducted and overhead expenses are covered.

Similar percentage of overhead coverage between INGOs and local partners was an important achievement.

> **"There has been steps to make things better; we are looking at that as an international NGO and the multiple ways we can use to enhance our partnerships (giving benefits and flexibility to our local counterparts). Being flexible of costs that the CBOs have/require (i.e., we need a printer for the project, then allocate for that because many times CBOs lack resources) a lot of trust building is needed."**
> (*J4, female, international NGO, April 2023*)

Improved partnerships

Shaking the hierarchical elements between local and international NGOs. This could be achieved by equal engagement, working together from the design phase, and meaningful collaboration across planning, implementation and evaluation. It could also require guarantees through governmental policies and supportive legal frameworks at the national level.

> **"This requires trust building and committing to interventions together. If they view you as the police rather than the partner then you wouldn't go far together."** (*J4, female, international NGO, April 2023*)

> **"I respect strategic long-term partnerships—a strategic approach, multiple phases to work with local organizations. This creates clear impact, sustainability and an exit strategy. This is the approach we should follow in partnerships. Strategic, long term and a clear financial support, with a clear exit plan from the beginning. Localization starts with long-term and strategic partnerships and KPIs. This will allow us/prepare us to any upcoming emergency in a very structured approach."** (*J16, female, CBO, July 2023*)

> **"Stakeholders, international and national, particularly governmental, should safeguard the independence and engagement of local NGOS."** (*J21, female, local NGO, August 2023*)

International NGOs and UN agencies in KIIs emphasized the importance of a stronger role for the local NGOs in the Shelter and Settlements Sector and the SWG. However, if they are not present in the humanitarian shelter scene, how can they assume a stronger role? In an interview with a representative of a UN agency; the participant explained that:

> **"We hope that local organizations will lead the steering committee under the SWG."**
> (*J2, male, UN/IO, March 2023*)

But how can they lead the steering committee if they are not active members of the SWG? This is an important consideration for the future operations of the sector, and the collaboration between local and international organizations.

In addition to meaningful/equal partnerships with local NGOs, UN agencies and international NGOs (as well as local NGOs in the humanitarian field) are advised to collaborate with local academics, universities and research centers, to enhance the design, impact and evaluation of the multiple initiatives and programs across the humanitarian sectors. Local universities, academics and research centers are already engaged in the Shelter and Settlements Sector (as well as other sectors), and their work can certainly give insight, depth and sustainability to the interventions and programs in that sector.

Coalitions

Whilst the international NGOs believe that there aren't any local examples or organizations working in the Shelter and Settlements Sector, it was evident that there are both local and governmental organizations involved at varying levels, hence a coalition of local and international organizations can be mobilized to allow for impactful, sustainable, and long-term solutions/interventions in the sector, and which could serve both humanitarian and development objectives.

CBOs are also encouraged to create coalitions across different sectors to create a stronger force for fundraising and project implementation.

> **"This allows them to survive difficult phases and times, as well as overcome their weaknesses by bringing their strengths together."** (*J8, female, CBO, June 2023*)

Practical solutions/flexibility

The language and venue of coordination meetings are key considerations when it comes to enhancing the engagement of local partners. Holding the meetings in Arabic, or with the availability of translation, as well as hybrid meetings are two practical recommendations that were highlighted by local partners.

In addition to practical solutions, flexibility of donors and international partners when it comes to the language of proposals and reports. Translation can be shifted to donors and international NGOs rather than the other way around, to allow local organizations to focus on the design and implementation of their work, hence report in their mother tongue, while the international parties take care of translation.

Donor flexibility

Participants highlighted the importance of donor flexibility when it comes to accommodating project activities and components as a response to community needs and the implementation context. Adaptability of projects and the collaboration of donors are significant elements particularly in humanitarian/emergency contexts.

Within that flexibility and responsiveness, participants have also highlighted overhead expenses, and the allocation of those to local partners, similar to international partners. Overhead expenses are significant to local partners' sustainability, growth and capacity building.

Local policies and guidelines

Participants also referred to the governmental support within that sphere by setting general policies and guidelines that would govern the work of international NGOs and UN agencies in the country, and promote and ensure the collaboration between these organizations and their local counterparts across the different humanitarian and development sectors (particularly in light of the protracted nature of almost all emergencies in the region).

Identification of local partners

Local partners specifically highlighted the fact that international NGOs and international donors can use multiple methods for identifying potential partners to collaborate with rather than solely depend on proposals. References by other organizations and pilot projects were two suggested approaches, particularly in light of the complexity of proposals and language barriers.

Multisectoral integration

Participants also emphasized the significance of integrating shelter interventions and other sectors, such as WASH and livelihoods, particularly if we are considering long-term solutions, and ones that are development based and not only within the realms of an emergency response.

> **"There should also be increased coordination between the different organizations when it comes to relief programs and assistance. Some families benefit from multiple organizations and others don't benefit at all. Coordination should be endorsed at an institutional level."** *(J11, female, CBO, June 2023)*

Capacity strengthening

Examples of capacity-building requirements for LNGOs as shared by participants of KIIs

- The significance of structured capacity building of NGOs/CBOs; financially, managerially.
- Assist CBOs in strategic planning; building the CBOs vision, mission and strategy.
- We need to learn how to do needs assessment, planning, and proposal writing.
- Capacity building for local organizations for strategy building and sustainability (operations, management and financial).
- Structured/well-planned capacity building for the staff and management of CBOs.
- Proposal writing, report writing, and financial planning and reporting should be among the key topics for capacity building of local NGOs and CBOs.

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6. ANNEXES

Annex A: Methodology

Annex B: Context analysis

Annex C: Stakeholder mapping

ANNEX A: METHODOLOGY

A.1 Purpose

The purpose of this research is to understand what efforts are being made to increase the participation, inclusion and decision-making role of local and national actors in humanitarian shelter and settlements response. The specific focus of this study is on the perceptions of different actors involved in the response, the tensions and challenges faced, and the role different stakeholders play in different contexts.

The specific objectives of the study include:

- Explore how different stakeholders in the humanitarian Shelter and Settlements Sector understand and experience localization.
- Critically reflect on examples of locally led shelter and settlements response and the conditions or processes that enabled them, including tensions or conflicts faced by different actors and how they were navigated.
- Compare the potential outcomes of locally led response with reported outcomes from locally led responses in various contexts.
- Analyze how these factors differ across contexts and examine the implications on the roles played by different actors.

A.2 Methods

This research used a qualitative approach which consisted of a desk review, a stakeholder mapping, and semi-structured interviews with representatives of the different actors in the Shelter and Settlements Sector as described below.

Desk review

The desk review included a variety of research papers, articles (as well as newspaper articles), national strategies and plans, and reports (organizational and national) and any other relevant documentation on localization in the shelter and settlement within the humanitarian response in Jordan. The review of documents was considered a first step towards understanding the context of the Shelter and Settlements Sector within the humanitarian response in Jordan, as well as a foundation for identifying key stakeholders in that regard. The desk review has also helped to identify possible gaps in information that had to be collected during the interviews, hence informed the stakeholder mapping and the development of Key Informant Interview guides.

Stakeholder mapping

The stakeholder mapping exercise included the review of documentation on the Shelter and Settlements Sector in Jordan in general and within the humanitarian response in particular, as well as initial interviews with key stakeholders in the sector to identify key players. This allowed the researcher to identify key national partners in the governmental and non-governmental sectors, as well as within the UN agencies and international NGOs. In addition to interviews, the minutes of meetings of the Shelter Working Group (SWG) as well as national plans/ strategies within the sector and websites of key organizations facilitated the completion of the mapping exercise.

Key informant interviews

A total of 20 semi-structured key informant interviews (KIIs) were conducted with 22 professionals and experts from UN agencies, international NGOs, local NGOs, CBOs, Government and Universities/Research Institutions as follows:

Seventeen interviews were conducted in person and three were conducted remotely via Zoom. Based on the type of interviews, two interviews were group interviews and 19 were individual interviews. Most interviews took place in June and July 2023, with two interviews in April and one interview in August.

Code	Type of organization	Gender of interviewee(s)	Date of interview	Location of interview	Method
J1	international NGO	Female	27/03/2023	Amman	In person
J2	UN/IO	Male	29/03/2023	Amman	In person
J3	I-JNGO	Male	18/04/2023	Amman	In person
J4	international NGO	Female	27/04/2023	Amman	In person
J5	Academia	Female	06/06/2023	Amman	In person
J6	CBO	Male	12/06/2023	Irbid	In person
J7	CBO	Female	12/06/2023	Irbid	In person
J8	CBO	Female	12/06/2023	Irbid	In person
J9	international NGO	Female	19/06/2023	Amman	In person
J10	I-JNGO	Female	22/06/2023	Amman	In person
J11	CBO	Female	22/06/2023	Amman	In person
J12	RLO	Male	22/06/2023	Amman	In person
J13	local NGO	Female	24/06/2023	Amman	In person
J14	CBO	Male	25/06/2023	Mafraq	Remote
J15	Academia	Female	23/06/2023	Amman	In person
J16	CBO	Female	02/07/2023	Mafraq	In person
J17	I-JNGO	Male	12/07/2023	Amman	Remote
J18	UN/IO	Female	12/07/2023	Amman	Remote
J19	Government	Female	17/07/2023	Amman	In person
J20	Academia	Female	18/07/2023	Amman	Remote
J21	local NGO	Female	05/08/2023	Amman	In person

Table A1: Summary of KIIs

Key informants were informed about the purpose of the research, how data will be collected and were assured that any information they provide will be treated anonymously and with confidentiality. Informed verbal consent was sought from all respondents prior to the start of the interviews. The interview duration ranged from 60-90 minutes. All interviews were recorded in word format and reviewed to ensure coherence and consistency. Data were further analyzed across the objectives of the study and findings curated under key thematic areas corresponding to the main objectives of the study.

A.3 Research limitations

One of the major limitations that the research faced is lack of documentation of local initiatives under the Shelter Sector, particularly if they were not directly connected to the JRP or the working groups under the humanitarian sector in Jordan. A snowballing approach toward identifying local organizations in the Shelter Sector was sought. Hence, there might be other initiatives and projects that the research didn't come across due to lack of documentation and lack of visibility within the humanitarian sphere.

Another challenge was the delay in responding to interview invitations. Several local and international NGOs, as well as UN agencies, were not readily keen on responding to our invitation and participating in the interviews. While international NGOs and UN agencies had rigid participatory procedures and their own limitations to information sharing beyond what is publicly available, local organizations don't know of InterAction, probably because InterAction doesn't have a presence on the ground in Jordan.

Finally, the lack of understanding/awareness of the term "localization" and the lack of an Arabic term for it might have led to various interpretations of the concept as outlined in the perceptions section and consequently varied responses to challenges and opportunities. The research team, however, managed to the best of its ability to break down the term under "locally led initiatives" and "local participation" to allow for an enhanced participation and responses from KII participants.

A.4 KII questions

A. International organizations, UN agencies and governmental institutions

The guide for international organizations and UN agencies will focus on the following questions:

A1. What role does your organization play under the Shelter Sector of the humanitarian response in Jordan:

- **a.** Type of work done.
- **b.** Geographical distribution.
- **c.** Key achievements realized thus far.
- **d.** Main challenges faced by the sector in Jordan.

A2. What is localization:

- **a.** What in your opinion is meant by localization? What do you understand by the term "localization," and what in your opinion should it entail?
- **b.** Who should be involved? And how?
- **c.** How is it generally practiced within the humanitarian response in Jordan?

A3. How are locally led initiatives supporting sheltering in Jordan?

- **a.** Can you give us examples of what are those locally initiative?
- **b.** What kind of partnership/grant was developed/endorsed and how?
- **c.** What worked throughout the process, and why? What were the enabling factors in this partnership/project?
- **d.** What didn't work? What were the challenges/gaps/tensions in this partnership/project? How did your organization navigate through them?
- **e.** What are the key lessons learnt from such projects/experiences?

A4. What — from your experience and understanding of the sector/context— are the main challenges/hindering factors when it comes to increasing the role of local actors in general / within the sheltering response in particular?

- **a.** Why in your opinion are these challenges coming into play in the sheltering sector?
- **b.** And how in your opinion they should be addressed in the future by the sheltering sector in Jordan? And by whom?

A5. Any enabling/supporting factors/conditions that you believe can/should be further enhanced/built upon to increase local leadership within the shelter response specifically in the Jordanian Humanitarian response?

- **c.** What are these enabling/supporting factors?
- **d.** Why in your opinion are these enabling/supporting factors important for locally led initiatives in the sheltering sector in Jordan?
- **e.** And who are the key stakeholders to enhance/promote/develop these enabling/supporting factors? Why?

A6. What are the key lessons learnt/recommendations for future localization plans within the Jordanian context to increase local leadership and/or local voices in decision making?

- **a.** What are the key changes required and who needs to make them?

B. Local networks

The guide for local networks will focus on the following questions:

B1. Can you give us some background on the work of your network:

- **b.** When was it formed? Key objectives? And key members?
- **c.** Key achievements realized by the network?
- **d.** Any members of your network playing a key role in the sheltering sector in Jordan (particularly under the humanitarian response). Who and how?

B2. What is localization:

- **a.** What in your opinion is meant by localization? What do you understand by the term "localization," and what in your opinion should it entail?
- **b.** Who should be involved? And how?
- **c.** How is it generally practiced within the humanitarian response in Jordan?

B3. How are locally led initiatives supporting sheltering in Jordan?

- **a.** Can you give us examples of what are those locally initiative?
- **b.** What kind of partnership/grant was developed/endorsed and how?
- **c.** What worked throughout the process, and why? What were the enabling factors in this partnership/project?
- **d.** What didn't work? What were the challenges/gaps/tensions in this partnership/project? How did your organization navigate through them?
- **e.** What are the key lessons learnt from such projects/experiences?

B4. What — from your experience and understanding of the sector/context— are the main challenges/hindering factors when it comes to increasing the role of local actors in general / within the sheltering response in particular?

- **a.** Why in your opinion are these challenges coming into play in the sheltering sector?
- **b.** And how in your opinion they should be addressed in the future by the sheltering sector in Jordan? And by whom?

B5. Any enabling/supporting factors/conditions that you believe can/should be further enhanced/built upon to increase local leadership within the shelter response specifically in the Jordanian Humanitarian response?

- **c.** What are these enabling/supporting factors?
- **d.** Why in your opinion are these enabling/supporting factors important for locally led initiatives in the sheltering sector in Jordan?
- **e.** And who are the key stakeholders to enhance/promote/develop these enabling/supporting factors? Why?

B6. What are the key lessons learnt/recommendations for future localization plans within the Jordanian context to increase local leadership and/or local voices in decision making?

- **a.** What are the key changes required and who needs to make them?

C. National organizations and government

The following guide is for national and government organizations:

C1. What role does your organization play under the humanitarian response in general and in the Shelter and Settlements Sector in particular (further understand the role in sheltering — if any — even if it is not part of the humanitarian response in Jordan):

- **a.** Type of work done.
- **b.** The in-house capacity available within the organization as well as its partners.
- **c.** Geographical distribution.
- **d.** Type of funding acquired.
- **e.** Key achievements realized thus far.
- **f.** Main challenges faced by the sector in Jordan.

C2. What is localization:

- **a.** What in your opinion is meant by localization? What do you understand by the term "localization," and what in your opinion should it entail?
- **b.** Who should be involved? And how?
- **c.** How is it generally practiced within the humanitarian response in Jordan?

C3. How are locally led initiatives supporting sheltering in Jordan?

- **a.** Can you give us examples of what are those locally initiative?
- **b.** What kind of partnership/grant was developed/endorsed and how?
- **c.** What worked throughout the process, and why? What were the enabling factors in this partnership/project?
- **d.** What didn't work? What were the challenges/gaps/tensions in this partnership/project? How did your organization navigate through them?
- **e.** What are the key lessons learnt from such projects/experiences?

C4. What — from your experience and understanding of the sector/context— are the main challenges/hindering factors when it comes to increasing the role of local actors in general / within the sheltering response in particular?

- **a.** Why in your opinion are these challenges coming into play in the sheltering sector?
- **b.** And how in your opinion they should be addressed in the future by the sheltering sector in Jordan? And by whom?

C5. Any enabling/supporting factors/conditions that you believe can/should be further enhanced/built upon to increase local leadership within the shelter response specifically in the Jordanian Humanitarian response?

- **c.** What are these enabling/supporting factors?
- **d.** Why in your opinion are these enabling/supporting factors important for locally led initiatives in the sheltering sector in Jordan?
- **e.** And who are the key stakeholders to enhance/promote/develop these enabling/supporting factors? Why?

C6. What are the key lessons learnt/recommendations for future localization plans within the Jordanian context to increase local leadership and/or local voices in decision making?

- **a.** What are the key changes required and who needs to make them?

ANNEX B: CONTEXT ANALYSIS

B.1 Country context

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, a constitutional monarchy with a representative government, is strategically located in the heart of the Middle East. Bound by Syria to the north, Iraq to the northeast, Saudi Arabia to the east and south, and the occupied Palestine to the west, Jordan is surrounded by multiple protracted conflicts and humanitarian emergencies.

Sitting in the center of a volatile region, Jordan presents an anchor of stability, and a destination to many displaced individuals and families from neighboring countries looking for refuge. Jordan today hosts millions of refugees from different conflicts surrounding the country. There are more than 2 million Palestinian refugees registered with UNRWA, and 1.36 million Syrian refugees (nearly 13% of the total population). Of the Syrian refugees, 655,435 are registered with UNHCR.[1] Furthermore, Jordan hosts more than 70,000 Iraqis, and smaller groups of Somali, Sudanese, Yemeni and Libyan refugees.[2] With an increasing number of refugees, it is worth noting that Jordan is not a signatory of the 1951 Refugee Convention. The government does not also specify in its constitution what it defines as a "refugee," which allows it to make decisions as per the context in a given situation, given the ongoing turmoil in its surroundings. However, the government of Jordan signed a memorandum of understanding with UNHCR in 1998, amended in 2014, that stipulates the major principles of international protection standards for refugees.[3]

Whilst politically stable, Jordan is a small country with very limited resources and a struggling economy. The country still suffers from a high overall rate of unemployment (22.6%) which is above pre-pandemic levels,[4] and around 27% of Jordanians living in poverty.[5] Furthermore, Jordan is highly dependent on foreign aid, and is considered among the top US and international foreign aid recipients globally.[6] In addition to economic struggles, Jordan is one of the most water-scarce countries in the world and is facing climate-related hazards including temperature increases and droughts. Jordan's population more than doubled over the past two decades (from 5 million to 11 million), further exacerbating its limited resources.

Since 2012, the Syrian conflict led to a huge influx of Syrian refugees, and a humanitarian movement toward supporting refugees on Jordanian land. More than 90% of Syrian refugees are living outside camps in local communities. The highest density of refugees is found in Amman, Mafraq, Irbid and Zarqa.[7] (the governorates that include most of the work of the humanitarian sectors including sheltering). As for camps hosting Syrian refugees, Jordan is home to three refugee camps:

- Za'atari camp — managed by UNHCR — is in Mafraq in the northern part of Jordan and hosts 80,000 Syrian refugee. Za'atari is the largest refugee camp for Syrians in the Middle East.
- Azraq camp — managed by UNHCR — is in the northeast of the country and hosts 40,000 Syrian refugee.

[1] The Jordan Response Plan for the Syria Crisis (2020-2022), http://www.jrp.gov.jo/Files/JRP%202020-2022%20web.pdf

[2] El Abed, O, Najdi, W, and Hoshmand, M (2023) Patterns of Refugees' Organization Amid Protracted Displacement: An Understanding From Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey, Journal on Migration and Human Security 2023, Vol. 11(1) 109–12

[3] Williams, A (2023) Is the Humanitarian Sector Practicing what it Preaches?

[4] https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/jordan/overview

[5] https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/jordanians-are-protesting-again-its-time-for-economic-and-administrative-reforms/

[6] https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/jordanians-are-protesting-again-its-time-for-economic-and-administrative-reforms/

[7] The Jordan Response Plan for the Syria Crisis (2020-2022), http://www.jrp.gov.jo/Files/JRP%202020-2022%20web.pdf

- Mrajeeb Al Fhood camp, also known as the Emirati-Jordanian refugee camp, is located in the eastern part of the country and was opened in 2013 to cope with the overflow of refugees in Za'atari. The camp hosts over 4000 refugees and is funded by United Arab Emirates.

As for Palestinian refugees, there are more than 2 million Palestinian refugees in Jordan, registered by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA). Only 18% of Palestinian refugees live in 13 refugee camps dispersed across the country, three of which are unofficial camps and the other 10 are recognized by UNRWA.[8] An estimated 96% of Palestinian refugees living outside camps and 85% of refugees living inside camps hold Jordanian citizenship. Non-citizen Palestinian refugees (majority of which are ex-Gazans displaced from Gaza) are the most vulnerable and three times more likely to be among the poorest, living on less than 1.25USD a day.[9] Another extremely vulnerable category of Palestinian refugees are the tens of thousands of Palestinian refugees that were displaced from Syria and sought refuge in Jordan. The majority of them live in extreme poverty and in a precarious legal status.

In addition to refugees from Palestine and Syria, Jordan hosts over 90,000 refugees from other countries, including Sudan, Yemen, Somalia and Iraq. Although UNHCR registers refugees and asylum seekers from Syria, Sudan, Yemen, Somalia and Iraq, the Jordanian authorities only recognize refugees and asylum seekers from Syria. Since January 2019, UNHCR has also been prevented from registering non-Syrian refugees for Asylum Seeker Certificates, hence preventing them from accessing public services and exposing them to threats of detention and deportation.

There is a noticeable hierarchy among refugee communities in Jordan, Syrian being at the top of the ladder (since the majority of funding is currently focused on Syrian refugees), followed by Palestinian and Iraqi, which have been big in scope over the past 50 years, and lastly are minority refugees from Yemen, Sudan and Libya (which account for 90,000 refugees out of a total of almost 2 million refugees in Jordan). Their number and legal status in the country make them the most vulnerable among refugees. Although on paper the government should protect the rights of all UN registered refugees and asylum seekers, the politics of Jordan towards the different groups of refugees has been inconsistent as noted in the literature[10] and the interviews with organizations working with non-Syrian refugees. This has placed non-Syrian non-Palestinian refugees in an adverse situation that further increases their vulnerability and exposes them to additional risks.

Jordan Response Plan

Since 2015, the government of Jordan closely coordinated the response to the Syrian crisis in partnership with the international community through the Jordan Response Plan (JRP). The JRP is considered the main instrument for planning and funding humanitarian assistance to Syrian refugees in Jordan. Unfortunately, there is no mention of the non-Syrian refugees in the JRP. However, the needs of Palestinian refugees are addressed under the UNRWA and a special department under the Ministry of Exterior; the Palestinian Affairs Department.

In light of the protracted nature of the Syrian conflict, the Jordan Compact was also signed in 2016 at a high-level conference in London hosted by Germany, Kuwait, Norway and the United Nations, shifting the focus from short-term humanitarian assistance to the host country to multi-year grants and concessional loans for humanitarian and development funding.[11] That included support to education, growth, investment and job creation for both Syrian refugees and Jordanians.

The most recent JRP (2020 -2022), which has been extended to 2023, affirms the significance of empowering local systems in the country to support Syrian refugees and vulnerable Jordanians alike. The JRP refers to clear

[8] https://www.unrwa.org/where-we-work/jordan

[9] https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/insights_into_the_socio-economic_conditions_of_palestinian_refugees_in_jordan.pdf

[10] El Abed, O, Najdi, W, and Hoshmand, M (2023) Patterns of Refugees' Organization Amid Protracted Displacement: An Understanding From Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey, Journal on Migration and Human Security 2023, Vol. 11(1) 109–12 Williams, A (2023) Is the Humanitarian Sector Practicing what it Preaches?

[11] Barbelet, V, Hagen-Zanker, J & Mansour-Ille, D (2019) The Jordan Compact, Lessons learnt and implications for future refugee compacts (Policy Briefing)

objectives and components related to enhancing the capacity of local authorities and the infrastructure within relevant local communities to respond to the crisis in a long-term development approach, however, this is not necessarily the case on the ground when assessing the work done under the different sectors of JRP.

Within the governmental structure, the JRP is overseen by a special unit under the auspices of the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation. The unit organizes efforts with other line ministries, UN agencies and international NGOs. Line ministries that are heavily engaged in the JRP include the Ministries of:

- Interior, Planning and International Cooperation
- Foreign Affairs
- Labor
- Education
- Higher Education
- Health
- Justice
- Social Development.

Furthermore, the government established the Syrian Refugee Affairs Directorate under the Public Security Directorate/Ministry of Interior, for all security and regulatory issues related to Syrian refugees as well as the co-management/coordination of the Za'atari and Azraq refugee camps.[12]

There is clear agreement and coordination between the government and UN agencies/international NGOs represented by UNHCR in developing the JRP and following up on its implementation. The JRP clearly stipulates in its background section that "the government of Jordan and the international community once again worked together to develop a new JRP 2020-2022:

> **"Needs and proposed responses are developed through the task forces composed of line ministries, donors' community, UN agencies and NGOs to mitigate the impact of the Syrian crisis."**

Furthermore, Jordan's refugee response is also coordinated by UNHCR through eight sector working and subworking groups, in line with the Refugee Coordination Model, and an Inter-Sector Working Group, chaired by UNHCR. All of the eight sector working groups are chaired and co-chaired by UNHCR, UN agencies or other international NGOs. It is also worth noting that membership of sectoral working groups in Jordan is limited to agencies working with Syrian refugees, since they were established under the Syria Crisis Refugee Response Coordination Mechanism.

However, there is minimal presence of local NGOs and an absence of refugee voice in all the instruments that have been developed to coordinate the response to the refugee crisis (and to a certain extent the working groups and networks created for that purpose). It is also important to note that while UNHCR has a highly collaborative relationship with the government of Jordan, it has been criticized for being complicit when it comes to certain procedures by the government of Jordan that have been identified to be against the interests of refugees, particularly non-Syrian refugees.[13]

Civil society and the development sector in Jordan

The role civil society plays in a particular context is heavily associated with the context and the enabling environment facilitated by the government, its policies and practices. Although there are more than 6000 CSOs registered under the MoSD in Jordan and more the 1100 civil not-for-profit companies registered with the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Supply, the "civil society" sector in Jordan is young and its ability to create a well-networked "civil society" has been hampered by limited space and legal provisions.

[12] https://www.unhcr.org/jo/partners

[13] Williams, A (2023) Is the Humanitarian Sector Practicing what it Preaches?

Within that context, there is also a clear hierarchy among national development organizations in Jordan which affect their outreach, capacity, and access to funding/technical assistance. Royal NGOs are considered at the top of the hierarchy, followed by national NGOs and lastly placed are the local NGOs and CBOs. Within this hierarchy there is no mention of refugee-led organizations, which remain informal and unofficially found (unregistered), hence difficult to be part of any formal initiative/agreement.

As for the international community in Jordan, there is currently a large international aid community working in Jordan and from Jordan (providing remote assistance to Syria, Iraq and Yemen, among other countries). Although there has always been a strong presence for UN agencies and the international NGOs in Jordan, that presence increased/expanded after the war in Iraq in 2003 and following the Syrian crisis in 2011.[14]

While CSOs in Jordan play a key role in providing social assistance and services to local communities, they face multiple challenges. According to a report by the Phenix Center for Economic and Informatics Studies (2022),[15] limited coordination and cooperation with the government as well as difficulty in obtaining financial resources are among the key challenges faced by the sector. The relationship between the government of Jordan and CSOs was described as bitter and the lack of trust between both parties hinders their cooperation and the growth of the latter.

According to an assessment by USAID in Jordan (2016), the majority of local CSOs remain charity and service-delivery focused, with only a few national and royal NGOs that tackle broader development issues. The sector has been described as donor driven and donor dependent, hence mostly activity- or project-based work, rather than mission driven according to the assessment. However, the Jordanian CSO sector is organized by a heavily restrictive legal framework; the 2008 Law on Societies (amended in 2009), as well as by key provisions in other texts relevant to civil society operations, including the Penal Code, which contains several provisions that curb free expression (particularly Articles 149 and 191); the 2004 Law on Public Gatherings (especially Article 4); and the 2006 Anti-Terrorism Law as amended in June 2014.[16]

The requirement for receiving governmental approval for foreign funding (from multiple organizations many times) has been highly contested by CSOs. Such requirements are hindering CSOs' ability to work freely, meet timelines and access funding resources. CSOs further expressed, in a series of national debates held by Phenix Center across Jordan in 2021,[17] that they are not considered attractive to the private sector. CSOs feel that the private sector prefers to donate to Zakat funds and other national NGOs (formed by a royal decree) to receive tax deductions; these are not applicable to CSOs. Furthermore, CSOs have also expressed that the current law doesn't explicitly allow them to build coalitions, hence complications arise when they attempt to collaborate. This has also been highlighted by the USAID assessment:

> **"CSOs have been unable to form durable alliances and coalitions to articulate a coherent and compelling vision of the changes to which they aspire, and how they propose to bring about those changes."** [18]

Local networks and forums

In addition to the sector working groups under UNHCR, several structures/networks have been created in Jordan in the past decade to coordinate the work among local NGOs, international NGOs and donor agencies, in the hopes to promote the localization agenda and enhance collaboration and long-term development interventions rather than short humanitarian assistance. These include:

[14] ARDD (2020) Strengthening Localization in Jordan. Localization: Reinforce and support do not replace or undermine

[15] https://en.phenixcenter.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Report-national-and-local-debates-sessions-on-the-role-of-CSOs-in-Enhancing-social-protection-2021.pdf

[16] https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00M5C4.pdf

[17] https://en.phenixcenter.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Report-national-and-local-debates-sessions-on-the-role-of-CSOs-in-Enhancing-social-protection-2021.pdf

[18] https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00M5C4.pdf

- **Jordan National NGOs Forum.** JONAF[19] was established in 2016 by the ARDD and other non-governmental CSOs, CBOs, experts and media activists from across the Kingdom. JONAF's purpose is to activate the localization and decentralization of humanitarian and development work in Jordan, and to emphasize the role of women in security and peace building. JONAF advocates for the localization of aid and equal treatment of national actors in the humanitarian response and long-term development efforts in Jordan.

  In 2021, JONAF launched **Al Nahda Localization Award** as a means of appreciation to the efforts of individuals and/or organizations that promote/advocate for localization as well as play a role in advancing and strengthening local civil society organizations in Jordan. In 2021, the award was presented to the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator Anders Pedersen and in 2022 it was presented to Baptiste Hanquart, JIF Coordinator.
- **Jordan INGO Forum (JIF)** is a network of 62 international NGOs implementing development and humanitarian programs in Jordan. Under its vision of "an enabling environment for NGOs as well as stronger, protected and resilient communities, the Forum—through its members—supports Jordan's humanitarian and development needs." As stated in its mandate, JIF members work closely with the Jordanian government and national NGOs, as well as with the United Nations agencies and donors.
- **The Coordination Commission for Civil Society Institutions (Himam)** is an alliance of Jordanian civil society organizations, established in 2015 by 13 civil society organizations that came together to uphold the values of democracy and human rights in society, push forward sustainable development and enhance the capacities of civil institutions and support them.[20] HIMAM works on supporting and enhancing the overall context of local CSOs and CBOs and is not bound to those working with refugees.
- **MEAL Framework of Humanitarian Action in Jordan.** A localization task team has been created in Jordan in 2021 to create a MEAL framework of Humanitarian Action in Jordan targeting all humanitarian actors in the county. The framework promotes strengthening partnerships between international NGOs and national NGOs "to improve the quality and availability of local partners' expertise, and to advocate for more direct funding to national organizations." However, it is not clear whether there has been any action yet toward those objectives on the ground yet. Furthermore, the localization task team was chaired by the UN Women and the INGO Forum, both are non-local organizations.

In a recent statement by JONAF, HIMAM and the INGO forum (February 2023),[21] members urged the government to review its project approval mechanism, hence allowing for faster processes and timely responses. This would ensure a timely and efficient collaboration between national, international and donor organizations. Members have emphasized the significance of a stronger efficiency, and overall cooperation between donors, the government of Jordan and NGOs in the face of the protracted nature of the Syrian crisis, the global recession and emerging conflicts in the broader region.

B.2 Overview of localization efforts in Jordan

There is no clear understanding nor an agreement among local and international organizations working in Jordan on "what is localization" and what it could possibly entail,[22] hence an assessment of its success/realization could be challenging. While the term is relatively used/noted among humanitarian agencies — national and international — there isn't necessarily a strong grip/understanding of what it entails and how it could possibly be done. There is also an apparent gap between what the headquarters of international and UN organizations signed up to under the Great Bargain and the awareness/interpretation of in-country staff of these organizations.

[19] https://ardd-jo.org/networks_and_coaliti/jordan-national-ngo-forum-jonaf/

[20] https://himam.org

[21] https://ardd-jo.org/news/statement-by-jordan-ngos-forum-jonaf-himam-and-the-jordan-ingo-forum-jif/

[22] ARDD (2020) Strengthening Localization in Jordan. Localization: Reinforce and support do not replace or undermine

The international response in Jordan has been described as "comprehensive,"[23] one that is based on the notion that there is no or limited capacity among local partners, hence international organizations take the lead in coordinating, delivering and managing assistance. Although in a protracted refugee situation, as is the case in Jordan, one would have hoped that the response would be collaborative (between national and international organizations) or even consultative, in which international organizations are only called to fill a particular gap or specialization, and the overall response is led by local capacity. However, the overall response is comprehensive led by international NGOs and UN agencies, even within the collaborative relationship between the government and the international community under the JRP.

However, it has been noted in the past few years that the decreasing funds to international aid organizations in Jordan are pushing them toward collaborating with local actors. The aim is to decrease their operating/project costs rather than a predesigned and intended approach toward localization. This has been described as localization by default compared to localization by design.

According to ARDD's Report on Strengthening Localization in Jordan (2020), the majority of international actors in Jordan describe local partners (whether national or community-based) as subcontractors or implementing partners rather than decision makers or strategic partners. Furthermore, while local CBOs have a more in-depth understanding of their local communities and its members, international actors prefer to work with national NGOs (rather than CBOs) due to their ability to meet their due diligence and compliance requirements.

"Lack of trust" and "deficit thinking"; which have been identified globally as two key issues impeding localization have also been noted in Jordan as main issues affecting localization and creating tensions between local and international actors. Local actors, particularly NGOs/CBOs are perceived as "high risk" and prone to fraud and corruption (by default). ARDD report argues whether it is fair to criticize the Jordanian CSO sector for its lack of capacity, lack of strategic planning, fraud and being driven by economic self-interest among other issues, to bear in mind that the governmental legislative and political restrictions have had its toll on the ability of these organizations to grow, focus as well as access funding (be it national or international). Moreover, international organizations have also contributed to their fragile positioning by always perceiving local organizations as junior and less capable. Lack of long-term funding as well as restricting funding to direct project implementation doesn't give these organizations the space to grow and be more strategic. The report further questions the high management and infrastructure costs that international organizations incur when setting their offices in the country (including salaries and benefits for international staff), yet fraud and corruption is always assigned to locals and local organizations.

The Humanitarian Partnerships and Capacity Exchange Analysis for 2021 highlights that the humanitarian actors included 10 UN agencies working primarily on humanitarian affairs, 54 international NGOs and 86 Local NGOs that partnered with either UN or international NGOs. The majority of the US$775 million of humanitarian funding entering Jordan is first channeled through the UN (US$690 million). US$ 232 million went through international NGOs (of which 1/3 was channeled through the UN), however, only US$ 56 million went to local NGOs, the overwhelming majority of which was channeled through bilateral partnerships, with less than 12% (7 million) received directly by local NGOs. Quality of funding is another important matter to take into consideration and one that has been affecting localization in Jordan, particularly the flexibility of grants to include capacity building and systems(s) development.

Logistics of working and sub-working groups have also been noted as potential challenges in the face of local organizations' participation, particularly those that have an interest/potential to collaborate.

Challenges include:

- Language used in meetings (as well documentation of meetings) is English.
- Meetings usually take place in Amman, however, potential local partners are not necessarily based in Amman, and even if they are, they might not have the required time/means for attending these meetings when it comes to logistics.

[23] ARDD (2020) Strengthening Localization in Jordan. Localization: Reinforce and support do not replace or undermine

- The time allocation they need to put for attending and following up on coordination meetings could also be another challenge, particularly for organizations short on staff.
- What's in it for them? Local organizations don't necessarily understand the potential outcomes/benefits of being part of such working groups, and consequently don't put an effort to participate.
- Finally, the attitude of staff in UN agencies and international NGOs, particularly toward local organizations has also been noted as a repellant factor to local NGOs and CBOs.

B.3 Shelter and Settlements Sector response

The housing sector in Jordan has already been suffering from lack of affordable housing for lower income families and the refugee crisis have only worsened the situation. Within such a context, there hasn't been a scaled response from either the government or the private sector to increase the supply of affordable housing sector since the onset of the Syrian crisis. Therefore, rent increased for vulnerable communities (Jordanian and refugees) leading families to live in substandard housing and over-crowded accommodation.[24] Poor urban planning along with outdated building standards have been identified as key challenges in the housing sector in Jordan.[25]

The shelter crisis in Jordan is compounded —whilst refugees and vulnerable Jordanians cite housing as their area of greatest concern, the housing sector in Jordan has an estimated gap of over 100,000 housing units and an acute shortage of affordable housing.[26] The housing sector has a high supply for middle to high income families, whilst the biggest need is among low income and vulnerable families (Jordanian and refugees). Lack of adequate housing in urban areas, in addition to high rental costs and insecurity of tenure has led the majority of Syrian refugees to live in substandard housing.[27]

According to the JRP, it is estimated that 30% of Jordanians and 48% of Syrian refugees lack access to affordable housing. These groups present the poorest population groups living mostly in the urban centers of Amman, Irbid, Mafraq and Zarqa.[28] This has been confirmed by UNHCR's Quarterly Assessment Report in the last quarter of 2022, which highlighted that the socioeconomic conditions of refugees are deteriorating and an increasing percentage of refugees are unable to pay rent. The report stipulates that more than half of these refugees live in poverty, with more than 80% of households being in debt; borrowing money from friends and family to cover basic needs, including food and rent. Furthermore, refugees believe that their financial situation is worse than last year and that it will only worsen.[29]

The sector overall objective within the JRP is to ensure *improved living conditions for vulnerable Syrian refugees and Jordanians through access to adequate, secure and affordable housing in the host communities and formal settlements in Jordan.* Sector-specific objectives include:[30]

- Adequate shelter and basic facilities provided for Syrian refugees in formal settlements through instalments of new shelters and or maintenance of existing ones in Syrian refugee camps.
- Access to adequate, secure and affordable housing provided for vulnerable Syrian refugees and Jordanians in host communities.
- Repair and/or extend social care shelters and public services facilities (for older people, people with disabilities, orphans, women etc.) and public services facilities.

[24] Jordan Affordable Housing Project – https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/download-manager-files/JAH%20%2003%20May%202015.pdf

[25] Myriam Ababsa (IFPO), Irene Salenson (AFD), Olga Koukoui (AFD) (2021) Crisis of Affordable Housing in Jordan, Policy Brief

[26] MoPWH (2016), Comprehensive Vulnerability Assessment, Shelter Sector

[27] MoPWH (2016), Comprehensive Vulnerability Assessment, Shelter Sector

[28] The Jordan Response Plan for the Syria Crisis (2020-2022), http://www.jrp.gov.jo/Files/JRP%202020-2022%20web.pdf

[29] UNHCR Socio-economic situation of refugees in Jordan Q4 2022

[30] The Jordan Response Plan for the Syria Crisis (2020-2022), http://www.jrp.gov.jo/Files/JRP%202020-2022%20web.pdf

Upon reviewing the different interventions of international NGOs and UN agencies under the sheltering sector, the majority of work carried since the start of the Syrian conflict, in addition to providing shelter through the refugee camps, included the following interventions:

- Rehabilitation of substandard homes.
- Cash-for-rent programs.
- One of the successful projects in the north of Jordan included finishing unfinished homes within local communities to be rented to Syrian refugees for an average of 18 months free of charge.

In addition to the sheltering programs at the household level, there are multiple objectives in the JRP on enhancing municipal capacities and infrastructure development to enhance service delivery and local development planning in areas/governorates where there is high concentration of refugees.

Figure B1 shows the funding received by the Shelter and Settlements Sector in Jordan (2015-2022).[31]

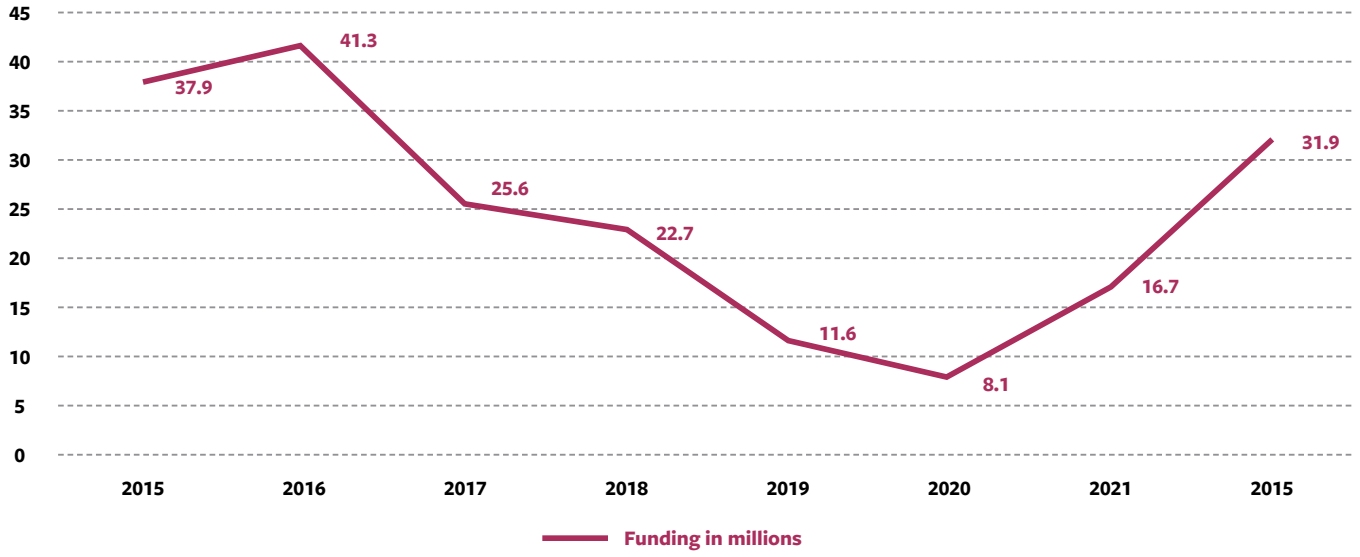

Table B1: Funding received by the Shelter and Settlements Sector in Jordan, 2015-2022

Leadership and representation in the Shelter and Settlements Sector

Under the sheltering component of the JRP, the government of Jordan clearly expresses its collaboration with the international community for providing assistance to vulnerable Jordanians and Syrian refugees in host communities, in addition to setting up and maintaining the refugee camps of Zaatari and Azraq. There is no mention of any national partners as key or eminent stakeholders under that sector.

Upon reviewing the available literature on sheltering projects in Jordan and talking to key international stakeholders under that sector and within the SWG, there is minimal participation for local organizations (NGOs and CBOs) in the SWG in Jordan, but more importantly there is lack of knowledge among key international stakeholders and SWG members as to whether there are any local potential partners in that sector in Jordan. The SWG never conducted a mapping exercise in that regard in the past decade, although expanding the presence of local partners in the group is on their agenda for the upcoming strategic plan and the proposed new executive committee of the SWG.

> **"We have never done a mapping even in the SWG. I can't remember we had local partners with us on the table, maybe once, but our assumption is that there isn't any"**
>
> (*Representative of an international NGO working in the Shelter and Settlements Sector in Jordan*)

[31] The Regional Refugee Resilience Plan – 3RP www.3rpsyriacrisis.org

Staff of international NGOs and UN agencies have a pre-assumption — which they carried over the past 10 years — that national organizations don't have the capacity nor the interest to be involved in sheltering projects. We didn't find, through this mapping exercise any example under the sheltering sector in which an international NGO partnered or even subcontracted a national organization (NGO or CBO) in its projects. It was noted in several examples that a local CBO could be involved in identifying beneficiaries or conducting the vulnerability assessment with the international NGO, but their role ends there. Most of the work that is done under the humanitarian response in Jordan is carried out by international NGOs and UN agencies.

> **"We don't know if local partners are interested or capable of work in sheltering. They haven't been there for the past 10 years — they might not even be comfortable or capable of joining the efforts in that sector."** (*SWG member and UN agency representative*)

According to ARDD report on Strengthening Localization in Jordan, there has been an "undermining" of Jordanian capacities within local organizations and limited donor/international NGO interest in organizational development across the different sectors including Shelter and Settlements. The same report highlighted as well that donor engagement lacks a strategic approach and is mostly project or activity centered. However, in the Shelter and Settlements Sector, the role of local organizations is minimal and on the periphery rather than at the core of the sector. Furthermore, and due to the fact that sheltering projects also include high amounts of cash/funding and require specialized technical expertise, there's an assumption that local organizations don't have the capacity to run/be part of such projects. Donors require a lot of due diligence and compliance work when it comes to sheltering projects that local organizations don't necessarily have the capacity to handle. One of the members of the SWG noted that there is a fear of fraud, particularly that their organization have had once a fraud incident with a local CBO working as an intermediary for a cash-for-rent project.

> **"Donors are also afraid of fraud, we're so concerned; can the [local] NGOs and CBOs meet the same level of compliance?"** (*SWG member and UN agency representative*)

Government roles

At the national level, one of the key issues that the sector is also facing is lack of a national sheltering strategy (as well as lack of a public housing agency). The government doesn't have a strategy when it comes to sheltering, and the humanitarian strategy proved not to be enough when addressing longer-term and strategic housing strategies and plans. Literature on the humanitarian response in Jordan doesn't show any key role for the MoPWH in Jordan. The Ministry is mainly involved in public works rather than "housing" and "sheltering" projects, hence the lack of involvement even in the sheltering sector under the JRP. Furthermore, it is also worth noting that sheltering has not been on the agenda of local NGOs, particularly national NGOs.

The MoI is the direct line ministry for the sheltering sector, which is another challenge for stakeholders, particularly for including a government representative in the SWG meetings. All sheltering projects should be approved by the Ministry (along with other ministries, including MoPIC for security purposes). However, several ministries are involved in sheltering work, including MoI, Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MoPIC), Ministry of Social Development (MoSD), Ministry of Local Administration (MoLA), Ministry of Public Works and Housing (MoPWH), Ministry of Environment (MoE), and Ministry of Water and Irrigation (MoWI), hence there is no one line ministry for the Shelter and Settlements Sector, as there is for education and health, for example. Yet, none of the aforementioned ministries is represented in the SWG. The upper hand within relevant ministries is for the MoI, which international NGOs find challenging to have on the table in their coordination group meetings.

Upon reviewing local initiatives within the sheltering sector in Jordan, it was noted that most of the financial assistance to families in need or rehabilitation of homes locally (outside the scope of the JRP) is done by charity organizations and faith-based NGOs/CBOs — (which are usually not attractive for international NGOs or UN agencies when it comes to collaboration and partnerships). Faith-based organizations identified through this

mapping exercise - which have a component on rehabilitation of houses - could target refugees under vulnerable communities, but as part of their own plans and interventions, rather than as part of the National Humanitarian Response to refugees. Development initiatives in Jordan — particularly by major/big national-based NGOs or Royal NGOs don't have any involvement in sheltering. This is compounded by the fact that none of the line ministries have a clear strategy/plan for public housing/sheltering in Jordan, and the lack of interest/involvement by the private sector in Jordan in the JRP in general including sheltering.

Challenges facing the sector

Availability of funding for sheltering is another major issue that the sector is currently facing. Moreover, flexibility of funding is also another issue, in which it lacks allowances for capacity building of local partners. UN and international NGOs argue that short-term funding is one factor preventing them from entering more strategic partnerships with local organizations.[32] Declining funds and high donor requirements in the Shelter Sector as well as the high financial costs per household under sheltering is limiting international NGOs and UN agencies to invest in strategic partnerships with local organizations. Amidst the commitments made by the headquarters of these organizations, there hasn't been any clear intention/steps toward purposeful collaboration. Lack of knowledge of who might be the potential partners on the ground is an alarming finding in that regard.

There aren't any evident/tangible actions toward local leadership in sheltering. Furthermore, the collaboration between UN agencies, international NGOs and the government of Jordan under the JRP doesn't include a strategic outlook either, particularly in light of multiple protracted emergencies. The protracted nature of the multiple emergencies that Jordan is responding to requires a longer-term, multi-sectoral and collaborative approach for multiple sectors, including Shelter.

As highlighted in the "Cities of Refuge in the Middle East" Policy note, there has to be a shift in the response from providing stand-alone solutions to actually supporting host communities to scale up existing shelter, services and jobs to meet the needs of both; local and displaced communities.[33] Since the refugee crisis and forced displacement in the Middle East and North Africa is projected to be protracted and long lasting, the response should be different: strategic, sustainable and embedded in/compatible with national plans. While the JRP is a 3-year plan, however, it also seems to suffer from similar challenges to those of the development sector in Jordan, yet the scope of funding allocated to an emergency is much higher, which should be an opportunity for a more strategic coordinated approach rather than another parallel fragmented system.

[32] ARDD, Strengthening Localization in Jordan. Localization: Reinforce and support do not replace or undermine (2022)

[33] World Bank, Cities of Refuge in the Middles East: Bringing an Urban Lens to the Forced Displacement Challenge (2018)

ANNEX C: STAKEHOLDER MAPPING

Local actors

The following local actors have been identified through this research to have a "home rehabilitation" component or financial assistance programs toward rent.

Non-governmental CSOs and CBOs

Many of the following entities are faith-based and depend on Zakat and Islamic compatible funding for their finances and the funding of their home rehabilitation/financial assistance programs. Depending on the community they are based in, they could be working with refugees in addition to vulnerable Jordanians.

- Tkiyet Um Ali — House rehabilitation component.
- Namaa مؤسسة نماء — Zarqa — House rehabilitation through crowd funding, donations from the private sector and Zakat.
- Islamic charity society in Mafraq — Provides assistance to refugees and vulnerable Jordanians in the north of Jordan.
- Kawaful Al Khair جمعية قوافل الخير — includes a house rehabilitation programs as well as cash assistance to vulnerable families across Jordan (although it is based in East Amman but has outreach to multiple governorates).
- Zadkom for Development in Zarqa —A local CBO in Zarqa and includes a house rehabilitation program
- Gardening on House Roofs — An initiatives through Princess Basma Center in Sahab that targets both vulnerable Jordanians and refugees.
- Greening the Camps — A gardening initiative that was launched in multiple Palestinian Refugee Camps in Jordan.
- A national campaign in 2016 — A collaboration between Roya TV and the Jordanian Engineers Union to renovate substandard housing units in Jordan. The campaign was covered by the media and renovated houses featured through Roya.
- Jordan Hashemite Charity Organization —Has multiple programs across Jordan serving both refugees and vulnerable Jordanians. JHCO is considered one of the key national organizations partnering with international NGOs and UN agencies in providing humanitarian assistance in Jordan.
- Jordan Green Building Council — A non-governmental organization founded in 2009. The Council advocates for the adoption of green building practices in Jordan and has been participating in the recent meetings for the SWG.

It is worth noting that there is a lot of work currently being done in Jordan on renewable/green energy and environment which could be aligned with the shelter strategy in Jordan. There is a national strategy in that regard, with many national NGOs and CBOs involved, hence a potential to build on their work in local communities and in the rehabilitation of public spaces and individual households under the humanitarian/development response.

Government

In addition to the role of MoPIC and MoI as outlined in the JRP section above, the following government organizations/departments also have a sheltering component under their programs that is not necessarily included in the JRP.

- MoSD — National Aid Fund (NAF) provides cash assistance and support to extremely poor/vulnerable Jordanian families/households. In addition to cash, NAF provides/facilitates the provision of winter kits (non-food items) which could include heaters, blankets and other relevant material. Under the sheltering sector of the JRP, NAF coordinates with international NGOs on eligible Jordanian families for house rehabilitation programs.
- Ministry of Awqaf — Zakat projects under the Ministry of Awqaf include "house rehabilitation" for vulnerable households in collaboration with MoHPW. Furthermore, the Zakat Fund includes affordable housing units for vulnerable families besides house rehabilitation. In a press release in November 2022, the minister of Awqaf referred to the Ministry's capacity in renovating housing units for the poor in Jordan through its Zakat fund.
- Palestinian Affairs Department — Under the Ministry of Exterior, the Department rehabilitates housing units in Palestinian refugee camps through royal grants (grants from the royal family in Jordan in support of Palestinian refugees).
- Greater Amman Municipality has a project for rehabilitation of houses based on Islamic funding principles.
- Zarqa Governorate Council has allocated budgets for 2022 and 2023 for the renovation of substandard housing units in the governorate (a total of 1.5million).

International actors

The following international organizations play a key role in the Shelter Sector under the current JRP:[34]

- **Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)**. Considered one of the key international organizations involved in the planning and implementation of sheltering programs under the JRP since the beginning of the Syrian refugee crisis in 2011. The organization has multiple projects under its shelter work, including:
  - Cash for rent.
  - Rehabilitation of houses.
  - Completing unfinished houses as potential housing for refugees. The program refurbishes uninhabitable units in return for an average of 18 month rent free accommodation for refugees. The project, which is called the Urban Shelter Project, was a finalist for World Habitat Awards in 2016.
  - Renewable energy interventions for both households and schools (within communities that have a high concentration of refugees in the north).
- **International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC)**. Another key international NGO in the sheltering sector and the current co-chair of the SWG. IOCC provides cash-for-rent and rehabilitation of houses in the north of Jordan.
- **Habitat for Humanity (HfH)**. Have been running a program since 2002 in the north of Jordan that provides loans for individual households through local CBOs targeting sheltering (construction or rehabilitation). In response to the Syrian refugee crisis, HfH launched their MERCI program in 2017 which aims to rehabilitate/refurbish substandard housing units in East Amman for the benefit of refugees and vulnerable Jordanian communities. The project is implemented directly by HfH and not local NGOs/CBOs (similar to their loans programs in the north). The project aims to provide refugees/vulnerable Jordanians with a reduced rent or grace periods when they have defaulted. They reached almost 1000 housing units since 2017.

  HfH has also a communal element to their project where they work on refurbishing/rehabilitating communal spaces (such as community centers or children's institutions). HfH collaborates with the MoSD or CBOs under the auspices of the Ministry to identify potential spaces and work on their rehabilitation.
- **Caritas**. An active international organization providing multiple programs for refugees and vulnerable Jordanians including a cash-for-rent program.

[34] It is worth noting that the websites of the majority of INGOs provides basic information of their programs, however, additional information from certain organizations was sought through interviews. That explains the difference in the level of information provided above. Additional information will be collected in the upcoming KIIs of the research.

- **UNHCR**. The key UN agency coordinating and facilitating all kinds of programs and assistance to refugees in urban communities and refugee camps. UNHCR works closely with the government of Jordan and international actors to provide assistance and protection (including sheltering) to refugees and Jordanian communities affected by the refugee influx. UNHCR Jordan is now running three main offices across the Kingdom (Amman, Irbid and Mafraq) and has presence in Jordan's two main refugee camps, Azraq and Zaatari. UNHCR currently co-chairs the SWGs with IOCC.

  One of the initiatives that is worth further researching in the upcoming phase of the project is an initiative by UNHCR in collaboration with Nuzha Center; community center in East Amman under the auspices of the Jordan Hashemite Fund for Human Development, a royal national NGO in Jordan. The initiative is led by a Community Support Committee, made up of 12 refugee and Jordanian volunteers who set the direction, activities and plans of the initiative in support of vulnerable Jordanian and refugee families.

- **UN Habitat**. Launched a project on affordable public housing in 2015, however, there is no mention of the progress or completion of the project in literature.

  Another project launched by UN Habitat in 2021 included safe and green public spaces for women in Ghor Al Safi in the southern Jordan Valley. The project was implemented by UN Habitat as the lead agency in collaboration with ILO, UNOPS, Zaha Cultural Center and the municipality of the southern Jordan Valley.

- **Islamic Relief**. Provides winter and survival items for Syrian refugees and vulnerable Jordanians, including heating costs for the months of winter. The organization provides financial assistance to these families and allows them to choose how to spend this assistance depending on the most pressing needs of the family; rent or utility bills. In 2020/2021 Islamic Relief Jordan implemented a project to repair substandard shelters for Palestinian refugees in Jerash (in northern Jordan). The organization distributed winter survival kits to Palestinian refugee families which include a gas heater, gas cylinder, two gas refill vouchers, blankets and clothes vouchers.[35]

[35] https://islamic-relief.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Jordan-booklet-2021_web.pdf

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