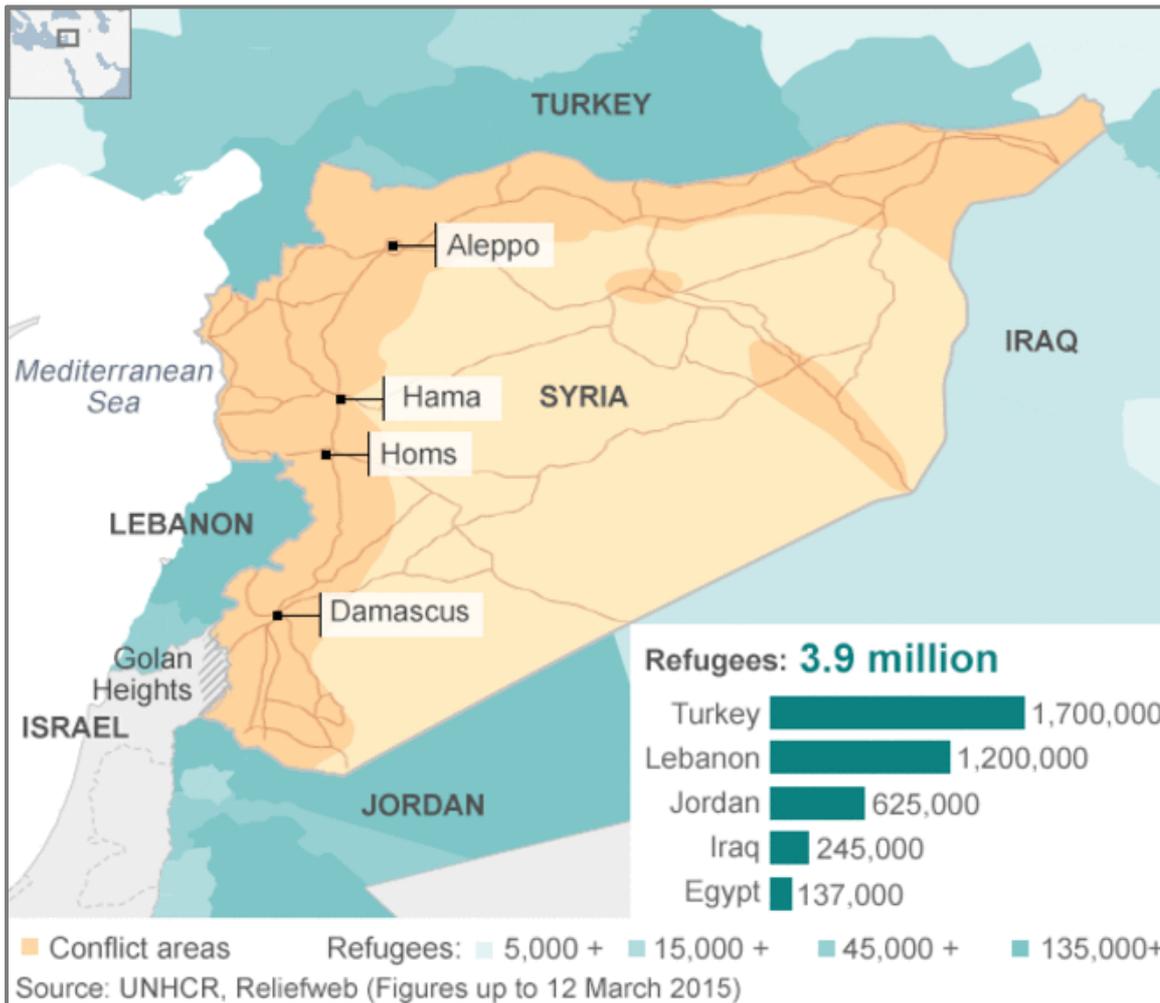


Disasters Emergency Committee Syria Crisis Appeal

Final Report



28/09/2015
Disasters Emergency Committee
Prepared by Sean Kenny



Syria Crisis Appeal – Summary report

When civil unrest, widely referred to as the “Arab Spring” swept the Middle East, peaceful protests in 2011 soon turned into an all-out civil war, and Syria moved from middle income country to become one of the world’s worst humanitarian crises.

The conflict intensified in the early months of 2013, leading to a dramatic increase in humanitarian need. In January around 1,000 refugees a day were fleeing Syria. This increased to 8,000 refugees a day by March, which is when the DEC launched its appeal. The appeal raised £27 million, £14 million via the DEC and the other £13 million directly by the member agencies themselves. Fundraising ended in October 2014 after an unprecedented 19 months, extended from the usual six month due to the continuing conflict and worsening of the humanitarian situation.

The DEC supported member agencies in four affected countries: Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq. Of the initial £5.4 million allocated £4.4 million was used over the first six months, with £8.17 million spent in the following 18 months. At the end of the two-year response period a balance of £400,000 remain on the account, which has been allocated to programmes in Syria only.

The DEC member agency programmes have mostly been focusing on providing life-saving humanitarian aid. Inside Syria this has largely been food, water and sanitation, household goods and medical supplies but education needs and psycho-social support has also been provided. In both Lebanon and Jordan many Syrian refugees live amongst host communities and agencies have given cash grants to help them avoid being displaced multiple times. Some Syrian refugees in Jordan have been housed in large camps, where agencies have helped them to deal with camp life and cope with the new and difficult environment. Agencies have also worked to help communities – particularly children – deal with the psychological trauma of living through conflict.

Although the DEC appeal funds were nearly all spent by the end of March 2015, the Syrian crisis remains one of the world’s largest humanitarian crises and the member agencies continue to run their own appeals for Syria and to seek other donors in order to carry on their work in the region.

Background

The Arab Spring, which started in Tunisia in December 2010, reached Syria a couple of months later, when protests broke out against the incumbent regime in March 2011. These continued into the summer, and by the end of 2011 the country was in a state of civil war.

In early 2013 the fighting dramatically intensified with increasingly effective Islamist militias joining the fray and defeating government forces in many areas. The humanitarian situation took a dramatic turn for the worse, with the number of refugees fleeing the country increasing eight-fold in just a few months.

Faced with an emergency situation the DEC launched its Syria Crisis appeal in March 2013. At the time of the appeal there were 1 million refugees in neighbouring countries, with a further 2 million people displaced within Syria itself. Since then the situation has deteriorated dramatically, with over 4 million refugees and 6.5 million people internally displaced. Over 4 million people in Syria are estimated to be in need of food aid and over 12 million in need of some form of humanitarian assistance.

Nearly every Syrian family has been affected by the conflict. The suburbs of Damascus and large areas of other cities have been reduced to rubble and their citizens left without food, electricity or basic goods. The economy is ruined and food production has stalled. Syria is now the world’s biggest internal displacement crisis. Many people have been displaced multiple times, moving to escape each new round of fighting and leaving everything behind. Aid agencies struggle to reach hundreds of thousands of people who remain trapped in besieged towns and cities and nearly five million people live in hard to reach areas, particularly in eastern Syria. More than half the Syrian population lives in extreme poverty, unable to securely access basic food and household items. They are completely reliant upon humanitarian aid.

Things are little better for Syrian refugees. In Jordan around half a million refugees live in the community whilst a further 100,000 live in camps. They are under increasing pressure, for example the Jordanian government suspended free medical care for Syrians in November 2014 and they are completely reliant upon the humanitarian aid effort which is chronically under-funded. The Lebanese government indefinitely suspended the registration of refugees in May 2015, with hundreds of thousands of refugees now estimated to be unregistered and unable to access UN support and government services.

With 1.2 million Syrian refugees registered in Lebanon, more than 25% of the people now living in Lebanon are actually Syrian refugees, putting the entire country under massive strain. The economy is suffering and the conflict is spilling over the border, exacerbating already existing ethnic, political and sectarian tensions within Lebanon. Many Lebanese believe Syrian refugees are unfairly receiving aid and these perceptions are damaging relations between the refugees and the host communities. Some DEC members' projects have targeted not only the refugees themselves but some of the very poorest families in host communities in order to support those overstretched communities and ease tensions. With savings dwindling many Syrians in Lebanon have fallen into poverty and struggle to access health and education. Some families have resorted to child labour and early marriage to cope and in desperation Syrians – including children – have returned to the conflict to join armed groups who they hope will pay them.

In Iraq, where many Syrians fled for safety, the continuing conflict between the government and Islamist rebels has led to hundreds of thousands of Iraqis being displaced. This is putting great strain on the authorities in Baghdad and the Kurdish areas, as well as local and international NGOs. The increasing competition for resources has left many Syrian refugees suffering.

Despite the huge challenges facing aid organisations DEC member agencies have reached millions of people, many of them inside Syria¹. However Syrians continue to need more help than either the DEC agencies or the wider humanitarian system can provide.

Overview of DEC appeal and members' response

The DEC Syria Crisis appeal raised £27 million, of which £14 million was donated directly to the DEC and the rest to individual member agencies. The first phase of the response was from March 2013 to September 2013, with the second lasting from October 2013 to March 2015. Usually in the first phase agencies concentrate on emergency relief work, moving into longer-term assistance and recovery in the second phase. This change in priorities was far less pronounced with the Syria response, as the continuing conflict and the worsening humanitarian situation meant agencies tended to concentrate on emergency relief work for the entire two years.

Within Syria insecurity and access problems meant agencies worked almost entirely through partner organisations. The delivery of food and household items formed the backbone of the response with considerable psychosocial work done to help people, particularly children, cope with the effects of conflict.

Programmes in Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq focused on refugees. Agencies helped them to survive in host communities, for example grants to help with rent and prevent them from being evicted. Other programmes worked with refugees living in camps.

¹ Including programmes funded by other sources.

| Total people reached by all agencies² | Phase 1 | Phase 2 |
|---|----------------|----------------|
| ALL SECTORS | 313,793 | 915,675 |
| Water, Sanitation and Hygiene | 98,204 | 474,098 |
| Food | 188,735 | 183,509 |
| Health | 11,153 | 6,666 |
| Livelihoods | 1,767 | 1,985 |
| Shelter | 8,110 | 5,600 |
| Education, Training & Capacity Building | 10,666 | 10,711 |
| Non Food Items | 13,431 | 124,231 |
| Policy & Protection | 10,354 | 97,903 |
| Emergency cash transfers | 9,592 | 21,425 |
| Other | - | 8,678 |

Table 1: Beneficiaries reached by DEC member agencies

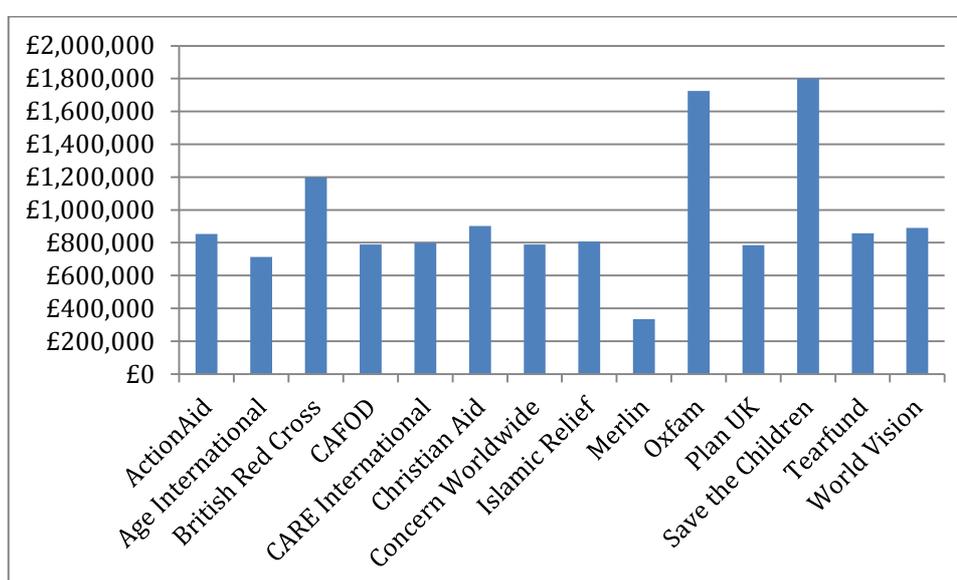


Figure 1: Total allocation of DEC funds to member agencies (£GDP)

Early response by member agencies – Phase 1

All 14³ of the DEC’s member agencies took part in the Syria Crisis Appeal. A few agencies launched responses on the back of the appeal, but most were already responding to the crisis and the DEC funds helped them to scale-up pre-existing programmes.

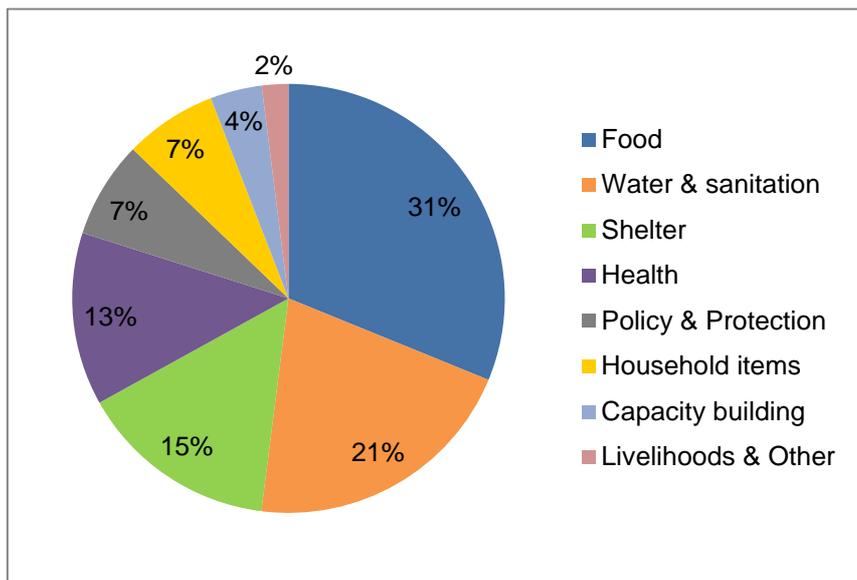
The money raised by the DEC was largely spent in Syria, with Jordan and Lebanon getting similar amounts; a small proportion of the money was spent on refugees who had fled to Iraq.

Most programmes in Phase 1 of the response, from March 2013 to September 2013, delivered food packages, hygiene and sanitation items and emergency healthcare. Refugees in Jordan and Lebanon received cash transfers to help keep their households solvent and particularly to pay rent for

² Some people will have received aid in more than one sector so the total reached is not the sum of the different sectors. Also the two phases are programmed separately so some but not all beneficiaries will have been reached in each phase.

³ Since the launch of this appeal Merlin has merged with Save the Children

accommodation. Agencies also helped refugees with information about services and UN registration procedures. Over 313,000 people were helped in Phase 1 by the DEC funds.



With security concerns making Syria extremely dangerous, most agencies that worked in the country did so through local partners. Often these were faith-based, allowing agencies to use pre-existing networks which simplified the process of identifying suitable beneficiaries and responding to the fluid and rapidly changing humanitarian crisis. The British Red Cross worked with the Syria Arab Red Crescent which is mandated to coordinate humanitarian aid within Syria and which has branches right across the country.

Figure 2: Expenditure of funds by programme sector over the first six months

They delivered food parcels to over 19,000 families in the first six months with DEC funds alone. Oxfam worked with the Syrian Ministry of Water Resources on rehabilitating the water system, which reached over 28,000 people.

In August 2013, five months after the appeal was launched, a review of the DEC agencies' response found member agencies were playing an essential role in the humanitarian response to the Syrian crisis.

In the first six months, agencies were allocated £5.41 million. They spent 82% of this, with the unspent funds being absorbed into the spending plans for the following 18 months work in Phase 2.

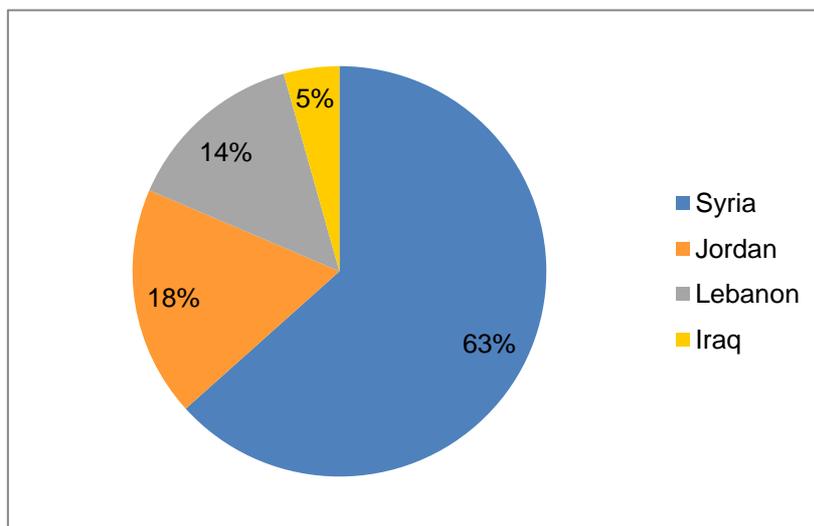


Figure 3: Expenditure of funds by country in Phase 1

Response in Phase 2

A total of 913,520 people were reached in Phase 2 of the response with DEC funds. Although the funding allocated to Syria dropped to 30%, 72% of beneficiaries were within that country.

In Phase 2, much of the work was a continuation of the work done in Phase 1. Provision of food dropped slightly, but it remained one of the largest categories of aid spending (along with policy and protection). Supplying household items increased and shelter work remained important.

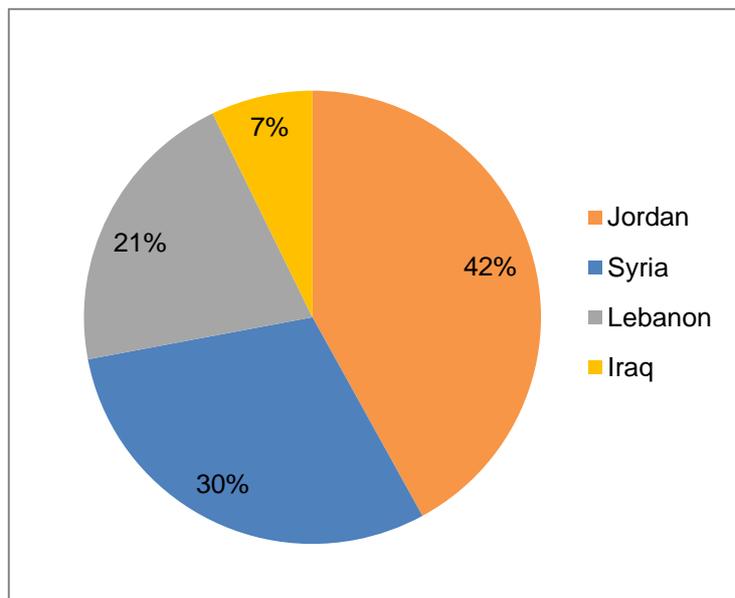


Figure 4: Funds allocated by country in Phase 2

Agencies inside Syria concentrated on food delivery, water and sanitation, household and other non-food items including basic first aid kits, and psychosocial work with children and families. Those working in Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq also worked on cash-for-rent and unconditional cash transfers, improving relations between refugees and host communities and helping refugees adjust to life in camps and in the new societies in which they now live.

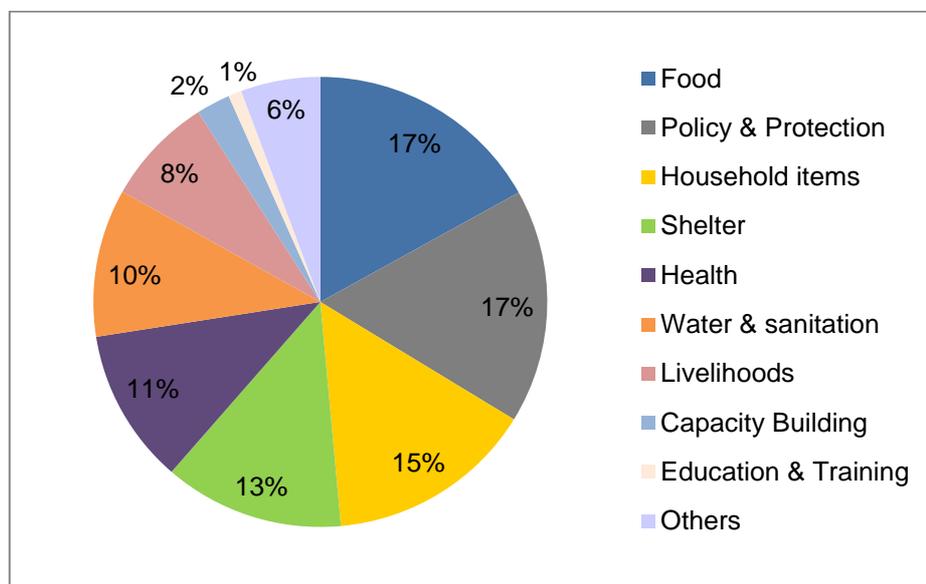


Figure 5: Expenditure of funds by programme sector in Phase 2

Agency performance against objectives

Despite huge challenges most of the agencies working on the Syria response met their objectives and in some cases agencies even managed to dramatically over-reach their targets. For example Christian Aid in Iraq planned to facilitate awareness sessions for 500 Syrian refugees in health, hygiene and first aid,

but the programme eventually reached 1,900, nearly four times as many people as planned. In an extremely hard-to-reach area of northern Syria, Concern Worldwide had planned to renovate infrastructure to provide 200,000 people with clean water. In fact their technicians' repair work meant the water systems reached 255,000 people. An Oxfam cash-for-rent programme in Lebanon reached double the number of households it had originally targeted.

Sometimes agencies did not meet their planned objectives for a variety of reasons. Inside Syria itself security, staff safety and freedom of movement were key factors. In neighbouring countries the temporary and makeshift aspects of refugees' lives complicated service delivery. For example, refugees sometimes struggled to attend every training session on vocational courses as they had to take up temporary work.

In the refugee camps such as Zaatari in Jordan, the shifting, ever-changing population makes planning difficult. Inevitably some agencies did not meet targets due to the churn of people in and out of the camps. However they usually only missed targets by a small margin, and generally took a flexible approach and used the freed-up resources for other programmes. For example World Vision fell slightly short of its targets on distributing nappies for infants due to lower demand so instead it supported more elderly refugees.

Continuing humanitarian work

In many DEC-funded responses the aim of the second phase has been to return beneficiaries to something close to their previous, pre-disaster lives. Syria is very different as agencies' work has taken place in a deteriorating situation. The conflict is intensifying and the humanitarian needs have actually increased during this phase. As a result, much of the work done during the so-called recovery phase has been a continuation of the emergency work undertaken in phase one of the response.

For example the British Red Cross, working through the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC), provided food for up to 168,000 people in Syria over an eighteen month period from late 2013 and into 2015, as well as offering health services. It was estimated that by the end of the DEC appeal response period over 80% of the people still in Syria would need some kind of humanitarian support, with a large proportion of those needing life-saving assistance, and that these figures would continue to increase. The people most in need are living in besieged towns and cities, remote rural areas or those regions which are heavily fought over by armed groups. In addition, the presence of large numbers of internally displaced people and the disruption of markets has caused further suffering.

Over 60% of the food parcels provided by SARC was distributed to people in hard to reach areas, particularly previously inaccessible places which are only just opening up. Often their teams only have brief windows of opportunity to access neighbourhoods which are besieged or cut off by fighting, so they rush in pre-positioned stocks of food parcels and hygiene kits whilst they can. This allows them to reach areas which other agencies cannot, however the agency does not consider its provision of emergency food aid as sustainable in the long term. Rather it keeps people alive and gives them the time and energy to meet their many other needs.

Concern Worldwide is one of the few organisations which worked in northern Syria before 2014 and has managed to continue its work there as the conflict intensified. Whilst its projects were ongoing, Concern Worldwide managed to provide help to 60,000 people who had returned to Kobane and were facing very basic living conditions following the well-publicised conflict there.

Agencies have found that purely humanitarian work has positive and unintended knock-on effects. One DEC member's food deliveries in besieged or hard-to-reach areas in Aleppo, Rural Damascus and Daraa were run by local community groups from diverse religious and ethnic backgrounds. This brought people together and supported the process to rebuild the peaceful coexistence that was broken down due to perceptions that certain groups are sympathisers with a particular party to the conflict. By engaging with different communities of displaced people, both aid workers and beneficiaries found their perceptions changed for the better.

Community resilience

Against this backdrop of massive unmet humanitarian needs, agencies have managed to do much to increase the long-term resilience of communities, both inside and outside Syria.

The British Red Cross' partner the Syrian Arab Red Crescent is the largest humanitarian organisation in the country with a nationwide branch network. It is hoped that by strengthening it during the current emergency it will be better prepared to provide essential services at some point in the future when Syria has stabilised.

Many agencies have run psychosocial programmes to help children deal with the fear and uncertainty of growing up in conflict, and put on extra classes to help them keep up with any schooling they may have missed. These child friendly spaces offer art therapy and music. Plan's partners work on such schemes in extremely violent and insecure areas of northern Syria. Here they have managed to give children an environment in which they can learn to manage their emotions and relationships, which is helping them to cope with life under conflict conditions and hopefully beyond too.

CAFOD has run similar schemes in Lebanon which help refugees deal with fear, nightmares and household conflict. They also give women and children a social support network in which participants can help each other to recover from traumatic experiences and share information on resources such as medical specialists. In Jordan's huge Azraq refugee camp CARE runs sports events for children and teenagers, including taekwondo for both boys and girls. These were very well received and CARE has developed a funding request by the International Olympic Committee to establish a multi-purpose sports ground.

Given the long-term nature of the Syrian conflict, agencies are extending the traditional thinking about emergency "non-food items" to include goods that will increase resilience. Some packs now include children's games, crayons and books, as many Syrian children have not received any new toys or things to play with for several years. Distributions of warm clothes allowed children to carry on attending school in the winter. Agencies are providing first aid kits and basic training so families can look after themselves despite the paucity of medical facilities and the high cost of medicines in much of Syria. This can prevent small wounds and infections becoming more serious.

Age International worked with older refugees in Lebanon to help them cope with the effects of chronic diseases such as diabetes and hypertension and have worked with local organisations such as the Lebanese Diabetes Society and the Lebanese Cardiology Society.

Partnership working and capacity building

Due to security concerns almost all work in Syria has been done through local partners. Some of these were existing civil society organisations from the pre-conflict era while others are grassroots groups that sprung up in response to the conflict and humanitarian situation, but because Syria was a middle income country they did not have enough experience in humanitarian work. The situation in the country soon became extremely serious and agencies had to start running emergency aid programmes before their partners had developed the necessary skills. Because partner organisations are taking on risks which the member agencies cannot, it was vital that they received high-quality training to help them mitigate those risks and to help them deliver aid as safely as possible.

Member agencies used each successive delivery phase to improve local partners' capacity so they can work at the level of a professional NGO. This entailed an intensive cycle of training, aid delivery and learning, including developing new methods of remote working suitable for the Syrian context. Consistent capacity building can be difficult due to shifting front lines and staff turnover.

Agencies spent a lot of time and effort delivering training, usually in Lebanon, or using distance learning for people who remained in Syria. Programmes in Syria are fragile and at risk from fighting or the closure of the Syria border, making remote training and development essential. These distance learning techniques include e-learning modules on humanitarian work and project management, and include sections on proposal writing, budgeting, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. The training material uses example from local projects to ensure it's relevant to the Syrian context. DEC funds have been

used to develop a smartphone app which doesn't need a stable internet connection. Private social media groups help with communication and monitoring aid deliveries.

Agencies are beginning to develop long-term plans to engage with Syrian partner organisations; this involves diversifying partners and developing their technical skills, such as in how to undertake needs assessments, design new programmes and also how to approach donors to support the continuing response.

Adhering to sector standards

The combination of security constraints and dependence upon partners who are new to humanitarian work means that agencies have had to devote time and resources to ensuring aid work inside Syria meets recognised and accepted international standards. For example, funding restrictions mean partners prefer to do small-scale distributions over a long period which can lead to problems with aid quality.

Agencies are providing technical support to help partners provide high-quality programmes that meet the same standards they would work to. One agency ran training courses which introduced Syrian aid workers to Sphere standards, the most widely known and accepted set of technical standards for humanitarian work. Two agencies also introduced a "Syrian Partnership Programme" to ensure accountability to beneficiaries by involving communities in and across the project cycle: design, implementation, selecting beneficiaries and monitoring and evaluation. So far this partnership programme has trained more than 100 Syrian aid workers from 17 different organisations. Save the Children has developed innovative ways to help grassroots groups in Syria build their capacity as professional humanitarian organisations through distance and a series of e-learnings about project management and essentials of humanitarian work. This can be accessed on both computer and on smartphones.

Accountability to beneficiaries

All member agencies working on the Syria response have involved refugees, displaced people and host communities in the design and implementation of their programmes, or when working remotely have helped partners to include these features.

Some of the methods used were:

- Setting up suggestions and complaints boxes where aid is delivered.
- Revising relief kits to take into account growing humanitarian needs and local tastes, and getting feedback on kits during distributions.
- Involving community members in project design and implementation.
- Using community feedback for repairs on water infrastructure.
- Using volunteers, the host community and displaced people to select beneficiaries and monitoring partners to ensure that selection is based on need, not political, religious or ethnic background.

These mechanisms allowed agencies to make substantial changes to their programmes. For example, as a result of beneficiary feedback Tearfund stopped giving cash for rent and made the transfers unconditional as the recipients wanted more freedom of choice in how to spend the money. The primary method for delivering unconditional cash was through iris scan banking technology. However, a minority of beneficiaries were unable to register for this service due to their disability or their government documentation, so ATM cards were granted based on this feedback and to ensure those beneficiaries

Advocacy

Agencies have done very little advocacy work on the Syrian crisis, mainly because of security concerns and for staff safety. What advocacy work has been done is in neighbouring countries. CAFOD's partner leads the Lebanon Humanitarian INGO Forum and works on advocacy with donors, the government and UN agencies. In Jordan, Tearfund has worked through local partners on issues around the legalisation of livelihoods programmes for Syrian refugees, and examined how the Syrian crisis has affected the local labour markets.

Innovation

The Syrian emergency is complex and difficult emergency and agencies have reported using a variety of innovations to better deliver aid.

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| CARE International Jordan | Working in partnership with Libraries without Borders, CARE created the Ideas Box, which gives remote and marginalised communities access to cultural and educational materials. Working with Radio Netherlands Worldwide, CARE has also set up a content management system for Azraq refugee camp which gives refugees information through screens set up throughout the camp. CARE also ran information sessions to help new arrivals in camps to understand what services were available from a range of different organisations. |
| Concern Worldwide Syria | The security situation forced staff to remotely manage their project from Turkey. They had no direct contact with their colleagues in Syria for more than 12 months, and used Skype for meetings and WhatsApp to send videos and pictures of activities. They also triangulated key pieces of information, such as the price of fuel or water test results, with key informants and other agencies to build up an accurate picture of what was happening in Syria. |
| Plan UK Syria | Some of Plan's project areas are controlled by Islamist groups and it is difficult for them to run psychosocial support and recreational activities as they must now avoid music, art or colours. The team has developed methods which are fun for children and provide them with the necessary help. |
| Save the Children UK Syria | Quantitative data collection on aid distributions is impossible in Syria, so the agency relies on qualitative methods such as case studies and interviews. The partners also use a series of internal checks to ensure quality field work, for example randomly sampling beneficiaries to ensure they have received food rations. |

Key challenges in the response and lessons from evaluations

The two overwhelming challenges facing agencies in the Syrian response are the security situation and the scale of the disaster. From these two major problems a host of other challenges sprung, as detailed in the agencies' own monitoring and evaluation. The following agencies also commissioned independent evaluations of their work: Age International, CAFOD, Concern Worldwide, Merlin, Oxfam and World Vision. Both sources of information have been used to compile this overview of the challenges facing agencies in the Syrian response.

Security

The extremely volatile security situation makes working in Syria extremely difficult, even when working through local partners, who face great dangers and risk being detained, and so must keep a very low profile. One DEC member agency supported a project in the besieged city of Homs and no members of the local partner have been able to leave the city since the start of the project. Aid delivery through existing networks, usually faith-based, has been key to many agency responses.

Agencies were forced to reschedule aid distributions due to limited access, changing frontlines and road closures. In addition, aid conveyance within Syria in 2015 faced a new approvals process which was lengthy and time-consuming. The armed groups within Syria find local procurement of aid goods less sensitive than cross-border aid shipments. Many partners inside Syria – as well as those displaced themselves - prefer continuous delivery to smaller groups over large, one-off distributions, which they see as too risky.

In and around Raqqa the situation has been particularly difficult for aid workers. The pre-existing local authorities have been dissolved, making it very challenging to work alongside the new government whilst maintaining neutrality and independence. However, partner staff working with some DEC member agencies have, through humanitarian negotiation, attempted to continue working under the new administration in order to meet the basic and vital needs of communities.

The conflict has often spilled over into neighbouring countries, particularly Lebanon, making field visits impossible. Agencies were forced to delay or alter projects, for example providing equipment but cancelling training.

Extreme need

The levels of need remain extremely high. As of July 2015, when this report was written, more than 12 million people in Syria remained in need, nearly half of them children, and 7.6 million people have been displaced. Three quarters of Syria's population lives in poverty and agencies have struggled to identify who to help as nearly all households meet some of the vulnerability criteria.

Plans to transition from emergency response were dependent upon some parts of the country becoming safer. However these safe areas are increasingly difficult to find.

Monitoring and evaluation

Across Syria aid workers have been less accessible to the local community because they need to work in a very low-profile way due to security concerns. It is difficult for them to answer questions, receive complaints and do assessments and evaluations. Agencies instead use triangulation methods and photographs with date-stamps and GPS co-ordinates to ensure that aid is being delivered and rely on informal feedback as to its quality. In some areas household assessments are impossible; aside from their distrust of large-scale questionnaires, getting accurate information would be extremely difficult as men are banned from talking to unrelated women and women are not allowed to work.

Partnership and remote management

Generally partnership has worked well in the Syria response, with partner organisations keen to learn the latest humanitarian procedures and techniques. However sometimes it can be problematic to harmonise management styles, organisational approaches and ways of working.

Agencies have prioritised regular, structured communication with partners, paying particular attention to details such as staff changes to ensure service quality. One agency sent a consultant to Syria to monitor quality and provide training, however the consultant could not leave Damascus and received information from , videos, reports and meetings.

Cash transfers

Cash transfers help vulnerable families, increasing their income and meeting their basic, short-term needs. The majority of the money is spent on rent, and cash transfers help reduce the risk of eviction. However, they did not make a difference to debt repayments and did not stop negative coping strategies. There is a risk that Syrian refugee families will face a potentially disastrous income gap when cash transfers end. Even though landlords do not know which families get cash from NGOs there are some concerns that because they know such schemes exist, they put up rents disproportionately. Accommodation paid for by the cash transfers may not have always met humanitarian standards, and agencies did not necessarily consider this and devise ways to protect beneficiaries' well-being.

Host communities

The conflict in Syria is damaging the Lebanese economy and the number of vulnerable people in Lebanon is increasing. This also stokes tensions between poor Lebanese and Syrian refugees, as do security incidents in Lebanon. Agencies are starting to include Lebanese host communities in their projects, both to relieve poverty and to improve community relations. Sometimes this is straightforward, for example when agencies run mobile clinics, but at other times it is more problematic. Sometimes it is hard to get good information on vulnerable Lebanese people, at other times the host communities do not want to be classified as vulnerable and on the same level as Syrian refugees, even if it means they become eligible for free health care.

In Jordan government approval of projects is a lengthy process and then will only agree to projects working with Syrian refugees if a minimum of 30% of the beneficiaries will be Jordanian.

In Iraq the refugee and IDP crisis has put pressure on both partner staff and security. At times some Iraqi aid workers in partner organisations have themselves feared becoming displaced.

Training

Although many Syrian refugees find training useful, agencies found their attendance at training sessions was sometimes poor. Some refugees could not make all the sessions as they had many other demands on their time, such as looking after children or volunteering in the refugee camp for extra money. One agency improved attendance by hiring a bus driver to help beneficiaries overcome bad traffic and poor public transport.

Transparency

Humanitarian organisations operating in Syria have to keep a high degree of confidentiality and cannot provide the transparency that is usually provided in humanitarian operations. Agencies have developed new operating procedures for Syria that managed to document projects activities whilst ensuring staff and beneficiary safety.

Capacity building

Turnover in Syrian partner organisation is high due to young men fleeing conscription and the general brain drain of skilled adults. Partners are eager to expand to meet the humanitarian needs but this is a process which needs to be carefully managed if it is to be effective. Most agencies run training and capacity building courses in Lebanon, but in 2015 the border has been tightened and many Syrians find it hard to leave the country. In some areas of Syria the local authorities' distrust of aid agencies means capacity building is limited to informal mentoring and technical support. Agencies have dealt with this by developing e-learning materials to build capacity remotely.

Despite these challenges, many partners have successfully transformed themselves into humanitarian organisations capable of delivering aid in extremely difficult circumstances.

Headline Achievements

Key achievements over the two year response

| | Phase 1 | Phase 2 | |
|--------------------------|---------|---------|--|
| Food | 174,895 | 183,509 | people received food parcels or vouchers |
| Water and Sanitation | 44,605 | 7,011 | people received hygiene kits |
| | 45,500 | 255,500 | people were provided with access to sufficient water for drinking, cooking and hygiene purposes |
| | 30,000 | 396,000 | people benefitted from a decrease in the prevalence of sand-flies and mosquitos |
| Non Food Items | 10,831 | 116,042 | people benefitting from non food item kits/vouchers |
| Shelter | 8,654 | 4,681 | people provided with cash for rent assistance |
| Protection | 5,181 | 18,157 | children were provided with child-friendly spaces where services included educational and psychosocial support |
| Emergency Cash Transfers | 9,592 | 21,427 | people provided with emergency cash assistance to meet their basic needs |

Conclusion

Whilst the conflict continues unabated and with no end in sight, DEC members will continue to support those in need within Syria and refugees in neighbouring countries with the help of other funding sources. These can, however, never be adequate to meet all the needs.

The DEC Syria Crisis Appeal was extended for an unprecedented length of time in order that any opportunity to raise funds for the protracted crisis was not lost. Final Gift Aid claims have brought the balance on the account to £405,000. These funds were allocated in July 2015 to five agencies (British Red Cross, Concern Worldwide, Oxfam, Plan UK and Save the Children) with ongoing programmes in Syria for use up to the end of October 2015. Over 80% of these funds will be used to provide food parcels.