PCPM – Polish Center for International Aid: update on activities in Lebanon
17 November 2014

Cash for shelter
PCPM has operated a cash for shelter project in Akkar since mid-2012, gradually increasing the number of beneficiaries from 360 Syrian refugee families in 2012 to over 1,700 Syrian refugee families in September 2014.

The cash for shelter project has two main objectives:
- Humanitarian objective: to provide Syrian refugees with a proper and stable shelter options;
- Community stability objective: to provide Lebanese communities with an additional, stable source of income from rental of apartments, garages and other dwellings and to link Syrian refugee and Lebanese host communities with a sound, economic bondage.

PCPM assists a Syrian refugee to meet regular rent payment obligations by covering part or all of the rent by transferring it directly to the ATM card held by the Lebanese landlord. In this respect we have adhered to the Government’s policy put in place in 2012 discouraging direct cash payments to the refugees. The cash for shelter assistance is paid basing on a tripartite agreement between a Lebanese landlord, a refugee and PCPM which sets out the level of rent and level of PCPM co-financing, paid directly to a PCPM-issued ATM card held by a landlord.

As of September 2014, the cash for shelter project benefitted over 1,700 Syrian refugee families who lived with 975 Lebanese landlord families. As the cash for shelter disbursement amounted in recent months to $160,000/month, an average additional income of a Lebanese landlord family was $165/month. However, landlord families owning several apartments co-funded by PCPM have often benefited from additional income in excess of $1000/month.

Regular monthly rent payments of $160,000/month, disbursed in 25 villages of Akkar, has an economic equivalent of creating 317 full-time jobs for local community members at $500/month. In a town of Bire, our project has an economic effect as if 101 regular jobs were created for the local community members. Furthermore, our activities have a secondary effect of limiting competition on the local job market as many Lebanese families can derive additional income from property rental and are less forced to compete for scarce employment opportunities.

Since July 2012 to September 2014 PCPM disbursed a total of $3.6 million in direct cash for rent payments to the Lebanese landlords of 24 Municipalities in Akkar with the largest number of Lebanese landlord beneficiaries in Bire, Machta Hassan and Hammod and Dousse. In contrast to other community support activities these were directly disbursed to the Lebanese families.

The PCPM project in Akkar, implemented continuously since mid-2012, has been financed from three sources: the Government of Poland (Polish Aid), UNHCR and the UN Emergency Response Fund.

Winterization assistance
Prior to the winter of 2013 and 2014 PCPM has implemented a winterization program which included distribution of stoves, blankets and fuel to the Syrian refugees. Some 10% of the program were vulnerable local Lebanese families, mostly older persons, who benefited from the same fuel vouchers or cash for fuel as the Syrian refugees. In 2013, PCPM winterization program benefitted 650 Syrian and Lebanese families, while the target for November-December 2014 is 550 families. The program is entirely funded by Polish Aid.

Community support and development
In 2013 thanks to the funding from Polish Aid and UNHCR, PCPM:
- Undertook fire brigade training for Qubayat Fire Brigade Station and 10 village-level fire stations, led by Polish State Fire Brigade instructors. This activity is based on PCPM’s expertise in training and equipping fire brigades with the past and current programs in Georgia, Tajikistan, Kenya, Ethiopia and South Sudan. The 2013 training has been agreed with and cleared by the National Civil Defense HQ in Beirut.
- Constructed two playgrounds for the general public: one in Bire and another in Aidamoun;
- Provided the Aidamoun Municipality with a sewage tank and tractor that allowed the Municipality to run sewage removal (cesspool emptying), which decreased the cost of this service to the general public by 50-60%.

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