Guidelines for Collective Shelters

Adapting Schools to Host Internally Displaced Populations in Crisis

Objective:

The objective of this project is to improve the living conditions and well-being of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Lebanon by enhancing the collective shelters established in public schools. Through comprehensive assessments conducted with IDPs, D4C developed guidelines that support the spatial division and organization of these shelters to effectively address the pressing needs of the displaced families.

Background:

Lebanon is confronting multiple challenges spurring increasing humanitarian needs across population groups (including Lebanese, refugees, and migrants) as the result of a complex confluence of crises. Conflict, political instability, economic turmoil, and public health concerns are converging, creating a perfect storm of hardship for the most vulnerable.

The ongoing conflict in Gaza has spilled over into southern Lebanon since October 2023, exacerbating an already unstable situation. Civilian casualties, widespread and growing displacement, and damage and destruction to household and public service infrastructure due to daily exchanges of fire in areas along the Lebanon-Israel border are rising steadily. As of 9 April 2024, more than 92,094 people had been internally displaced, fleeing their homes and villages in areas along the country's southern border, with the impact of displacement felt across Lebanon, especially in the governorates of South and Nabatiyeh.

Many IDPs are seeking refuge in public schools, which serve as collective shelters. However, the conditions in these shelters often fall short of meeting the essential needs of the displaced population, jeopardizing their well-being and dignity. There is a critical need to improve the existing shelters and pave the way for the eventual transition of IDPs to more sustainable housing solutions. D4C took the initiative to study the conditions of the collective shelters and identify ways of improvement to ensure the shelters meet the basic needs of the IDPs and alleviate the situation of the IDPs by restoring their dignity.

Approach:

Assessment Phase: D4C conducted a comprehensive study based on research, data gathered by NGOs doing relief works as well as the Shelter working group under LRP and a detailed assessment of a public school located in South Lebanon, where a significant number of IDPs reside. This assessment

phase allowed D4C to gather crucial information on the specific needs and challenges faced by the displaced families. The assessment was conducted by a team of young professionals and architects from the American University of Beirut (AUB) and Phoenicia University. The assessment process took approximately four months. The assessment took into account the IDPs behaviors, meals supply and distribution conducted on a daily basis and safety and security measures.

Guideline Development: Based on the findings from the assessments, D4C developed guidelines that provide practical recommendations for the spatial division and organization of collective shelters in public schools. The guidelines provided different scenarios based on the preferences of the IDPs and the number of persons per household. The recommendations included a zoning of the various living areas, which is based on the socio-spatial practices of the displaced communities, looking into sleeping arrangement, kitchen adaptations and communal spaces such as eating, playing, studying and social areas, as well as infrastructure such as water, sanitation, thermal comfort and food preparation. . These guidelines will serve as a valuable resource for NGOs, local agencies, and authorities involved in sheltering families.

Dissemination and Collaboration: D4C will share the study findings and guidelines with humanitarian agencies and NGOs working in the region to ensure that collective shelters meet the essential needs of IDPs while prioritizing their well-being and dignity.

Shelter Enhancement: With the support of funding received, D4C will work towards equipping the collective shelters with necessary facilities to create a safe and dignified living environment. These facilities may include communal kitchens, sleeping and living areas, and toilets, addressing the immediate needs of the displaced families. By implementing a pilot project that focuses on one school rehabilitation would enable D4C and other NGOs to assess the feasibility of the guidelines and replicate it in other schools.

Expected Outcomes:

- Improved living conditions and well-being of IDPs residing in collective shelters.
- Enhanced collaboration and coordination among NGOs, local agencies, and authorities involved in sheltering families.
- Increased awareness and understanding of the specific needs of IDPs in public school collective shelters.
- Facilitated transition of IDPs towards more sustainable housing solutions.

In conclusion, this project aims to provide immediate relief to IDPs while prioritizing their well-being and dignity. Through collaboration and the dissemination of guidelines, D4C seeks to ensure that the essential needs of IDPs are met, ultimately leading to their successful transition to more sustainable housing solutions.