’We always make sure to build strong communication with the beneficiaries, we show them respect and dignity, we are there if they need someone to hear and listen to them. Many say this is the first time they have been treated like this.’

ALI FAKHRULDDIN HUSSEIN, TEARFUND BENEFICIARY ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICER, IRAQ
BRINGING HOPE: HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE AND PEACEBUILDING IN THE MIDDLE EAST

The ongoing conflict in the Middle East has caused one of the largest, most volatile and most complex humanitarian crises in the world. Tearfund has been responding to the emergency needs of displaced communities from Syria and Iraq, as well as building the capacity of local peacebuilders to bring about longer-term stability and peace in the region.

REASONS FOR OUR RESPONSE
To date, the conflict in Syria has taken the lives of an estimated 322,000 people and has caused large-scale displacement and humanitarian need. About 85 per cent of the population are living in poverty, 6.3 million Syrians have been internally displaced and five million have sought refuge in neighbouring countries, including Jordan and Lebanon. They have had to leave everything behind – homes, possessions, jobs and communities. The influx of refugees has put a huge strain on the host countries. The 1.5 million refugees who arrived in Lebanon, for example, have increased the country’s population by 25 per cent. Refugees are without adequate food, water, sanitation or shelter. Extended families can be found sharing one room or tent, and many children have been out of education for several years.

The psychological impact of losing homes, professions and the ability to provide for one’s family is huge. Men, who are traditionally the breadwinners and heads of household, are left frustrated and lacking self-esteem. These exceptional circumstances place a huge strain on personal relationships and can lead to cases of violence against women.

The urban environment in which this humanitarian crisis is unfolding presents unique challenges for a humanitarian response. Throughout the region, IDPs and refugees are located both in camps and within host communities, in abandoned or incomplete buildings, in makeshift shelters and rented rooms. This can make it difficult to identify those in need and creates new needs to be met, such as finding money for rent.

This chapter explores how Tearfund has been meeting the needs of people affected by conflict in the Middle East and how this response has been evolving in reaction to changes on the ground.

‘We were so scared, we didn’t know what to do. We set up a makeshift tent with one room. All of us live there, my children and grandchildren, because we do not have money to pay rent. We have nothing here.’ – Miran, internally displaced person (IDP).

As the humanitarian need in Syria escalated, Tearfund launched its response to the crisis in 2013 and worked with international and local partners to meet the needs of Syrian refugees living in Jordan and Lebanon.

By 2014, ISIS controlled parts of Syria and moved swiftly to take territory in Iraq, causing the displacement of an estimated 3.1 million people by 2016. In response, Tearfund began an operational programme in Iraq in 2014 to meet the needs of the internally displaced people (IDPs), who face very poor living conditions and emotional trauma.

‘I witnessed the war in Syria and I watched the buildings collapse next to my house and then my house too. I heard bombs and I knew that everything was being damaged by war.’

AIMAR, 10, SYRIAN REFUGEE
1) SYRIA CRISIS STRATEGY
With the humanitarian crisis escalating in Syria, and growing numbers fleeing to neighbouring countries, Tearfund launched an emergency appeal and an initial two year Syria Crisis Strategy in February 2013. Working through international and national partners, Tearfund delivered vital aid and support to Syrian refugees in Lebanon and Jordan.

Tearfund’s response was based on three principles: ‘Life’, to ensure the survival of displaced people and meet their basic needs; ‘Recovery’, to bring psychological healing and rebuild infrastructure and livelihoods; and ‘Hope’, to equip the church to play its part in restoring broken relationships.

2) WORK WITH REFUGEES IN JORDAN
In Jordan, Tearfund worked with local partners to distribute essential items such as bedding, toiletries, kitchen equipment and ‘winterisation kits’ to prepare refugees for the winter months. Through our partner Medair, Tearfund provided vulnerable families with money for rent and, later, to cover basic needs.

Tearfund also provides psychosocial support to refugees. One Tearfund partner runs support groups, with trained coaches, for refugee women to safely share and process their experiences. Another partner runs exercise classes for refugee men to help build positive physical and mental health and promote healthy relationships.

3) MEETING THE NEEDS IN LEBANON
In Lebanon Tearfund is working through local partners, including church-run organisations, to help refugee families cope with daily life by taking care of their nutritional, health and shelter-related needs. This shows how the local church can use its position and resources to understand and serve the needs of the refugees on their doorstep and begin to overcome deep historical divides between religious and ethnic groups.
4) IRAQ RESPONSE
In 2014, Tearfund launched a direct operational programme in Iraq delivering quick and effective assistance to IDPs. The response first distributed essential items and later moved on to SGBV and protection work, WASH programming and cash assistance.

The WASH programme initially focused on delivering safe water and sanitation facilities, such as latrines, hygiene kits, handwashing facilities and access to clean water. The second phase involved rehabilitating water sources and sanitation facilities for when IDPs returned home. The multi-purpose cash projects proved very effective as beneficiaries were empowered to determine how they spent their money to meet their emergency needs – maintaining their dignity and independence (see case study).

Tearfund continues to implement these activities, responding to new waves of IDPs as well as those still displaced.

5) EUROPEAN REFUGEE RESPONSE
In continental Europe, refugees were arriving by sea in search of safety. Greece alone received 924,724 refugees, with half remaining in camps across the mainland and islands. Donations from Tearfund’s supporters enabled us to help local partners to deliver food, shelter and psychological support to those most in need, as they transited through.

5) PEACEBUILDING INCUBATION HUB

Tearfund joins group of NGOs to coordinate a Civil Society Day supporting the conference, raising over £9.45 billion to support humanitarian response in the region.

6) PEACEBUILDING
In 2015, Tearfund established its Peacebuilding Incubation Hub to explore its response to the growing number of fragile and conflict-affected states it was working in, with a key focus on piloting in the Middle East. Here, new models of peacebuilding are researched and tested and local Communities of Peacebuilders receive mentoring to develop and achieve their visions for restoring peace in their communities.

To mark 5th anniversary of Syrian conflict, Tearfund calls the government to:
• take steps to prioritise a political solution to the conflict
• ensure the rights of minority groups
• improve humanitarian access

IMPACT OF THE CONFLICT TO DATE
Syria:
13.5 MILLION people need urgent humanitarian assistance
6.3 MILLION internally displaced people
5.2 MILLION registered refugees

Iraq:
11 MILLION people need urgent humanitarian assistance
3.1 MILLION internally displaced people
15 MILLION people living in conflict affected areas

OUTPUTS TO DATE:
23,040 individuals provided with clothing
2,374 heaters keeping 11,949 individuals warm
319 individuals given healthcare and legal advice
92,819 individuals provided with clean water and sanitation facilities
76,192 individuals given cash to meet basic needs
20,199 hot meals
20 safe-houses hosting the most vulnerable refugees
270 medical consultations and psychological support sessions
2,335 hygiene packs to give refugees basic sanitation

To mark 5th anniversary of Syrian conflict, Tearfund calls the government to:
• take steps to prioritise a political solution to the conflict
• ensure the rights of minority groups
• improve humanitarian access

Photos (left to right): Hannah Maule-ffinch, Abigail Drane, David Cavan/Tearfund
SAMI’S STORY

Sami’s life changed forever the night ISIS came to his village. ‘I was a farmer and I enjoyed life in my village,’ Sami says. ‘There were no strangers, we were all relatives and friends who supported each other.’

Then one night, ‘ISIS came through our streets on motorbikes shooting bullets in the air, I could not sleep, I was so worried for the safety of my family. I gathered my family, I did not have time to get my clothes or items from the house.’

Sami fled with his wife and six children, leaving everything behind. ‘We were hoping to go back but there is nothing there now. ISIS have stolen our possessions, and our buildings and homes have been destroyed by the fighting.’

Sami and his family sought refuge in Kirkuk, Northern Iraq, but health problems kept Sami from working. Thanks to Tearfund’s cash transfer programme the family can now meet their primary needs, such as purchasing essential items for the winter like heating and blankets.

They have felt respected and valued by Tearfund throughout the process: ‘The Tearfund staff treated us with so much respect. They even had water for us and we were able to make copies of our documents,’ said Sami.

‘Thank you so much, we have everything we need for winter. We are so grateful.’
Wisely, people know what they need and spend money in a dignified way. When faced with disaster, the flexibility to prioritise their needs rather than receiving cash over in-kind assistance as it gives them the freedom to buy what they need. Evidence suggests that beneficiaries prefer to buy goods and services with cash on their specific emergency needs.

Where the context allows for it, the use of CTP in emergencies is a popular response across the humanitarian sector, with widely recognised benefits. Tearfund partners and operational teams have been implementing a variety of cash and voucher programmes for several years. In 2016 alone Tearfund implemented 12 countries, reaching 106,800 people. The trend has been to move from cash transfers to multi-purpose cash assistance for specific needs, such as food or rent, to predominantly ‘multi-purpose cash’ programming that involves the provision of cash grants or vouchers to cover people’s basic needs and support the economic recovery of communities affected by disasters.

Evidence suggests that beneficiaries prefer receiving cash over in-kind assistance as it gives them the flexibility to prioritise their needs in a dignified way. When faced with disaster, people know what they need and spend money wisely. There are also benefits for the local economy, as money is spent on local goods and services.

Cash transfers have been a key part of Tearfund’s response to the Iraq conflict since 2014. As a result of the conflict many families have been forced to flee their homes and relocate to relatively safe areas, with many settling in the Kirkuk governorate. The IDPs arrived with few possessions and took refuge in abandoned buildings, makeshift shelters, or with host families. They had limited access to clean water and sanitation facilities, had few income-generating opportunities and lacked essential items such as heating fuel, clothes and bedding. To survive, many IDPs were forced to reduce food consumption, send their children to work, sell assets or take out large loans.

Tearfund found that the needs of the displaced population were diverse and markets were functioning well enough for IDPs to purchase goods locally. Cash was therefore an appropriate form of assistance. An example of this work is the multi-purpose cash project run by Tearfund in Kirkuk from July 2015 to June 2016. An estimated 5,277 individuals from 1,282 of the most vulnerable households were reached with cash assistance.

Working with the wider humanitarian sector and the local government, Tearfund also developed a referral system to ensure IDPs had access to other essential services, such as healthcare and psychological support. Tearfund led the Cash Working Group in Kirkuk to coordinate all cash programming activities in the area and develop standards of best practice. An evaluation conducted in 2016, found that cash grants helped beneficiaries to meet their diverse needs and avoid resorting to negative coping strategies. Beneficiaries preferred cash to any other kind of assistance since their needs were so varied; 98 per cent said they had no problem accessing markets to buy the resources they needed.

Cash was predominantly spent on rent, medical expenses and food, with some families paying off their debts and a few investing in productive assets. Beyond the economic benefits, cash had an important psychological impact. Beneficiaries said that they felt respected and dignified because they were trusted to choose how to spend their money and more relaxed knowing some of their urgent needs would be met.

Tearfund is committed to ensuring that beneficiaries feel trusted and empowered throughout their programmes and works hard to ensure the process of distributing cash is a comfortable and dignified process.

‘Each person has their own story, each family its unique strengths and challenges. Giving cash grants, where the context is appropriate, allows people to make choices for themselves. That is the true power of cash. This is dignity.’

DORA PISCOI, TEARFUND CASH ADVISER

KIRKUK, NORTHERN IRAQ

Cash transfers have been a key part of Tearfund’s response to the Iraq conflict since 2014. As a result of the conflict many families have been forced to flee their homes and relocate to relatively safe areas, with many settling in the Kirkuk governorate.

The IDPs arrived with few possessions and took refuge in abandoned buildings, makeshift shelters, or with host families. They had limited access to clean water and sanitation facilities, had few income-generating opportunities and lacked essential items such as heating fuel, clothes and bedding. To survive, many IDPs were forced to reduce food consumption, send their children to work, sell assets or take out large loans.

Tearfund found that the needs of the displaced population were diverse and markets were functioning well enough for IDPs to purchase goods locally. Cash was therefore an appropriate form of assistance. An example of this work is the multi-purpose cash project run by Tearfund in Kirkuk from July 2015 to June 2016. An estimated 5,277 individuals from 1,282 of the most vulnerable households were reached with cash assistance.

Working with the wider humanitarian sector and the local government, Tearfund also developed a referral system to ensure IDPs had access to other essential services, such as healthcare and psychological support. Tearfund led the Cash Working Group in Kirkuk to coordinate all cash programming activities in the area and develop standards of best practice.

WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES CASH MAKE?

An evaluation conducted in 2016, found that cash grants helped beneficiaries to meet their diverse needs and avoid resorting to negative coping strategies. Beneficiaries preferred cash to any other kind of assistance since their needs were so varied; 98 per cent said they had no problem accessing markets to buy the resources they needed.

Cash was predominantly spent on rent, medical expenses and food, with some families paying off their debts and a few investing in productive assets. Beyond the economic benefits, cash had an important psychological impact. Beneficiaries said that they felt respected and dignified because they were trusted to choose how to spend their money and more relaxed knowing some of their urgent needs would be met.

Tearfund is committed to ensuring that beneficiaries feel trusted and empowered throughout their programmes and works hard to ensure the process of distributing cash is a comfortable and dignified process.

THE POWER OF RELATIONSHIPS

Understanding social connections and trust dynamics within communities is important to designing contextually appropriate relief and development work that builds on local resilience.

Tearfund is working with Queen Margaret University in an innovative research project in Iraq, analysing social connections and perceptions of trust within communities, in terms of meeting basic needs, conflict resolution, and SGBV.

This approach could help Tearfund, and other humanitarian agencies, to better understand community dynamics and social contexts, particularly among conflict-affected and displaced populations, and to design effective programmes that encourage local resilience.

This could benefit Tearfund’s cash programming work by highlighting existing trusted local structures for meeting basic needs, which could be strengthened and supported through cash transfers, and exploring the levels of access and barriers for different groups – men and women, displaced or ‘host’ communities – to access support.
‘If another big drought hit, it wouldn’t be like before, ample food would still be available within the community since some farmers have greatly increased their production and we have savings from previous years...we are much more secure now.’

PARTICIPANT FROM TEARFUND’S DISASTER RISK REDUCTION TRAINING, MALAWI
ANNEX B

ABBREVIATIONS

ANC – Antenatal Care
CA – Conservation agriculture
CAG – Community Action Group
CCM – Church and community mobilisation
CHO – Cambodian Hope Organisation
CTP – Cash Transfer Programming
DFID – Department for International Development
DRC – Democratic Republic of Congo
DRR – Disaster risk reduction
ICD – Integrated Community Development programme
MBC – Myanmar Baptist Convention
MCPP – Malawi Church Partnership Programme
MoH – Ministry of Hope
NGO – Non-governmental organisation
ODI – Overseas Development Institute
PAG – Pentecostal Assemblies of God
PSVI – Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative
QuIP – Qualitative Impact Assessment Protocol
SGBV – Sexual and gender-based violence
SHGs – Self-help groups
SWIFT – Sustainable WASH In Fragile conTexts
TNE – Theology Network Engagement
WASH – Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WHO – World Health Organization

ANNEX C

REFERENCE LIST

13. Flowers C (2016) Bridging the gap: the role of local churches in fostering local-level social accountability and governance
14. Tearfund and Bath (2017) Faithful and flourishing communities
15. In the last 10 years the Theology and Network Engagement (TNE) team have hosted seven gatherings in Mumbai, Durban, Uganda, Egypt, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso and Nepal, reaching an estimated 1,500 influential leaders.
16. Tearfund and Bath (2017) Faithful and flourishing communities
20. Ibid
25. Loots L (2016) Our Daughters’ Voices – working with faith communities to heal the wounds of sexual violence in Myanmar
28. Ibid
31. Ibid
32. Tearfund (2015) Improving Food Security and Livelihoods of Rural Households in Salina District, Malawi
34. Tearfund (2017) Khwamba Sustainable Livelihoods Improvement Project (KSLIP) Mid Term Evaluation
35. Ibid
38. According to research carried out by Servants and Task in Phnom Penh in 2006
42. Tearfund (2015) Improving Parent and Child Outcomes (IMPACT) in Nigeria
43. Ibid
45. Tearfund (2015) IMPACT in Nigeria
46. Ibid
49. Ibid
50. HEAL Africa (2006) Gender and Violence Against Women
51. The ‘SWIFT’ Wash programme is being carried out by the SWIFT Consortium which aims to deliver sustainable access to safe water and sanitation and encourage the adoption of basic hygiene practices in the DRC and Kenya. For more information see – http://swiftconsortium.org/
52. Tearfund (2008) Working in the Margins: Unexpected Church-Based Responses to HIV
Following Jesus where the need is greatest