Innovation in access and mobility upgrades for shelters in camps: Kurdistan 2015

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Objectives of the project

• Improve accessibility in shelters and shelter plots and surroundings in camps (including access to nearby WASH facilities)
• Improve quality of life in shelters and shelter plots for individuals with disabilities
• Provide a starting point for incrementally improving accessibility across the camps
History of camps in Kurdistan

- First camp (Domiz) for Syrian refugees established in March 2013
- Domiz camp population 55,000, four other camps built for refugees in 2014 (total 27,000 pop.), then 13 more camps built in 2014-15 for IDPs
- Many types of shelters provided
- Many types of shelter materials provided
- Many types of shelters or materials not permitted by the authorities (but with sudden changing of decisions)
Challenges of shelter and accessibility technical guidance – existing resources

- Handicap International Accessibility For All In An Emergency Context 2009
- IFRC/Handicap International All Under One Roof 2015
Gaps in international guidelines for shelter and accessibility – and needs for innovation

- Little accounting for the Middle East context – carpets and diwans, not tables and chairs
- Only general principles for the ‘process’ of shelter, or the upgrading of shelter
- No accounting for starting with already self-built shelter
- Insufficient attention to carers and entire families
- Lack of charting a pathway from shelter to settlement
- Not enough attention to quality of life within the shelter, apart from issues of actual mobility
Challenges of shelter and accessibility – Kurdistan camp perspective summary (from Handicap International Report Dec 2013, and NRC proposal narratives Jan 2014)

• Lack of camp plan for accessibility
• Tensions between privacy, dignity and protection – and accessibility and mobility
Scope of the problem in Kurdistan

- across the 4 camps of Erbil 651 households out of 6,806 (approximately 9%) had at least one individual with special needs. Most prevalent types of disability:
  - prevalent types were physical disabilities (61%), sensory disabilities (29%) and cognitive disabilities (18%). Up to 30% of the suffered from multiple conditions.
  - Of those with physical disabilities, 70% had issues with lower limbs, 22% had issues with upper limbs, 15% had issues with back/spine and 12% suffered from some form of paralysis.
  - in the camps of Erbil, approximately 260 were under the age of 18, and 460 were adults. 57% of these individuals were male and 43% were female.
- Gaps in support/services for PWDs and their families
Commonly found engineering challenges

• Attachment of handles to soft tent or plastic sheeting walls
• Supports for people sitting down and standing up off the floor or diwan
• Extension of supports into open shelter space
• Supporting the way from shelter to latrine
• Making exits easier for PWDs – and their carers
• Quality of Life, temperature control in the shelters
Commonly found engagement challenges

- Eliciting the priorities of PWDs
- Balancing the expectations and wishes of the families
- Looking around the shelter, as well as listening
- Being the primary NGO supporting the families, when there were gaps in support from other sectors
Some good examples of how things were done well – and innovatively
Challenges learned

- Degree of engagement with other actors
- Ad hoc outreach to families by staff – how to improve and systematise communication?
- How to train staff to also think like innovators?
- How to scale up – or streamline resources?
Thinking to the future

• How will beneficiaries further upgrade themselves?
• What about the entire camp/settlement? – how to join all the dots?
• What about outside the camp – transfer of experience to urban settings and repairs of unfinished buildings?
Thank you! Any questions?