



ACTED

Winterization of Sealing Off Kits, providing life-saving assistance to vulnerable refugees and IDPs in northern Iraq

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INTRODUCTION

Following the fall of Mosul in June 2014, over 500,000 people sought refuge in the contested districts in the north of Ninewa, Duhok, and Erbil Governorates. In December 2015, the KRI was hosting 901,3201 IDPs, approximately 28 per cent of the overall displaced population, many of which were living in unfinished or abandoned buildings and makeshift shelters. Furthermore, the KRI was hosting over 210,000 Syrian refugees in and out of camps throughout its governorates. The Shelter Cluster in Iraq assessed that one fifth of the IDPs were living in “critical shelters” and were in dire need of shelter assistance to meet basic accommodation needs, and regain privacy for their household members. Identifying this need to provide shelter assistance to the most vulnerable IDPs living in abandoned or unfinished buildings, ACTED, with the support of Shelterbox, has implemented a project supporting 390 internally displaced families that fled conflict and ISIS-led offensives in order to re-give access to IDPs to suitable and season-appropriate shelters. The assistance was provided under the form of Sealing-Off Kits composed of doors, windows and items and materials supporting isolation from the cold, mould or potential leaks in the winter and summer months. Three different governorates have benefited from the provision of Sealing-Off Kits, i.e. Dohuk, Kirkuk and Diyala; kits allocation per governorate was determined as follows:

Governorate	District	Number of SoKs
Dohuk	Sumel / Zakho	150
Kirkuk	Kirkuk city	90
Diyala	Khanaqeen / Kifri	150
	TOTAL	390

Potential recipients were selected based on a set of pre-defined vulnerability criteria, which comprised living in an abandoned or unfinished building, intending to stay longer than a month in the same location and the lack of or poor condition of roof, windows and doors for each household. In addition, ACTED sought the landlord’s authorization to proceed to any change in their houses’ structure. ACTED Appraisal, Monitoring and Evaluation Unit (AMEU) proceeded to beneficiary selection from January to April, assessing the needs of the households through door-to-door visits, observation checklists and short surveys with a shelter representative; distributions occurred between the 15th of March and 28th of March in Diyala, on 4th, 5th and 6th of April in Kirkuk and between the 15th of April and 10th of May in Dohuk.

ACTED AMEU committed to ensure that the highest standards of programme quality and accountability towards beneficiaries were met over the course of the project by conducting On-Site Monitoring (OSM) activities during distributions as well as overseeing carpenters’ work. In addition, a Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM) survey was conducted at the end of the project in order to determine levels of satisfaction, use of shelter materials provided and quality of installation, thus ensuring a measure of the outcomes on the displaced communities, with a view to provide strategic guidance for the design and implementation of future shelter and NFI programming in emergencies. The general objective of this evaluation was to assess the outcomes and impact of this Shelter project; specific objectives included the identification of the main achievements of the project as well as potential shortcomings in the implementation process to be incorporated into ACTED’s future programming as lessons learned, the assessment of beneficiary appreciation of the distribution system and the materials received, and the identification of immediate and medium-term needs met through the provided shelter assistance. This report is organised as follows:

- I. The first section consists of the description of the methodology used for the various project monitoring and evaluation activities, including beneficiary selection, On-Site Monitoring and Post-Distribution Monitoring;
- II. The second section outlines the limitations of this study as well as challenges encountered while conducting assessments in the field;
- III. The third section summarizes the main findings of this evaluation measuring effectiveness, efficiency and outcomes;
- IV. The fourth section provides a brief overview of challenges encountered during the project implementation;
- V. The fifth and last section presents subsequent AMEU lessons learned for future shelter and NFI programming.

METHODOLOGY

BENEFICIARY SELECTION

ACTED AMEU led the beneficiary selection process at the initial stages of the project, conducting 534 household-level, door-to-door assessments and site visits in order to determine 390 eligible shelters based on the selection criteria outlined above. Assessments for selection were a mix of direct observation of shelters in the field and questions to shelter representatives. AMEU aimed at defining parameters in order for enumerators to be able to assess the shelter conditions as good or poor; for instance, roofs with visible foundation iron bars or walls with large cracks and holes in them were considered as in poor condition. In addition, the AME Officers across bases visited nearly all shelters and confirmed the ones in poor conditions to qualify for the assistance so that shelter conditions were assessed in a standardized manner. From beginning of January to beginning of May, AMEU continued assessing shelters in each base until the number of households found eligible matched with the number of kits allocated to each governorate, with the AME Manager verifying and analysing the database every day after the data collection teams returned from their field mission. Beneficiary selection started in Dohuk governorate, with the help of WASH teams available for data collection; assessments were first conducted in Basitke, Batel (Sumel), Batifa, Ardwan, Dwazdemlan (Zakho) and Zawita (Dohuk); from February onwards, assessment teams focused on Sege, in Sumel district, where a high density of IDPs living in unfinished buildings was observed during field visits. In February, March and April, shelters in Alyawa, Jabrawa, Serwan, Tolafrash, Karim Dawod, Bakhtiari (Diyala) and Qrablag (Kifri) were assessed from Kalar base. Finally, in March, shelters in Kirkuk city were assessed by the AME Monitor based in Erbil with the help of the distribution teams.

ACTED base	Governorate of distribution	Number of kits per base	Number of assessments per base
Dohuk	Dohuk	150	223
Kalar	Diyala	150	199
Kirkuk	Kirkuk	90	112
TOTAL			534

ON-SITE MONITORING

ACTED AMEU conducted process monitoring activities during shelter materials distributions, verifying that standards of quality were met in terms of distribution planning and organisation, items handling, crowd control and security management, communication with communities and set up of accountability mechanisms. The AME Officers based in Dohuk, Erbil and Kalar were tasked with observing a few days of distribution, assessing and reporting on how well the distribution was planned and conducted, how safely the kits were distributed to and collected by beneficiaries, and how efficiently and effectively information was given to beneficiaries on distribution venue, time, steps of the process and availability of feedback mechanisms.

In addition, AME Officers accompanied the carpenters in each governorate for one day each, in order to assess whether the work was completed effectively and efficiently and determine levels of satisfaction of beneficiaries with their guidance and help in installing the shelter materials. Each Officer administered one to ten On-Site Monitoring checklist per day, depending on the number of upgraded shelters, and subsequently reported on the process to the AME Manager in Erbil.

POST-DISTRIBUTION MONITORING

After the completion of all rounds of distributions to 390 households in the three selected governorates, ACTED AMEU conducted Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM) surveys in April and May 2016. Survey respondents were selected using random sampling with a 90 / 10 level of confidence and margin of error for a total of 133 structured, close-ended interviews.

Governorate	District	Objective PDMs	Achieved PDMs
Dohuk	Sumel / Zakho	47	44
Kirkuk	Kirkuk city	39	39
Diyala	Khanaqeen / Kifri	47	50
TOTAL		133	133

LIMITATIONS AND CHALLENGES

BENEFICIARY SELECTION

VARIATIONS IN SELECTION CRITERIA

In the beginning of the project, there has been slight differences in selection criteria across the governorates due to various constraints, especially initial difficulties in finding eligible shelters in Dohuk or finding landlords granting authorization for carpentry work on their property, leading AMEU to deem certain shelters as eligible, although in slightly better conditions than in other bases; in the end, it was found that all the shelters that received the Sealing Off Kits across governorates respected at least one shelter vulnerability criterion, i.e. missing or poor condition of door, window, roof or wall.

RELIANCE ON DAILY ENUMERATORS

Hiring daily enumerators instead of relying on contracted, and trained, Monitors, not only implies time-consuming preparations and trainings and longer data collection periods, but the quality of the work might suffer as well, with increased error occurrence in assessments, longer data cleaning process and more inclusion errors. Particular to this beneficiary selection assessment was the inclusion of one entire village in Diyala (Karim Dawod), although houses were made in clay and structures could clearly not support plastic doors and windows, which was not taken into account by the enumerators while conducting the assessments.

DISCREPANCIES BETWEEN REPORTED INTENTIONS AND REALITY

There were some discrepancies between the assessment results and the reality. Some beneficiaries shared that their landlord would agree with the installation of doors and windows on their shelter, even though landlords eventually did not or were not reachable. Some IDPs, hoping to receive the assistance, made assumptions on their landlord's authorization, omitting to mention that they were not in regular contact or did not have a way to contact them directly. In addition, some beneficiaries also reported their intention to stay longer in the unfinished shelter, yet eventually changed their mind and decided to leave their transitional shelter to return home with the materials, or with the earnings obtained through the sale of the materials received.

CONTINUING NEED FOR RE-ASSESSMENT

In Dohuk, 223 surveys have been conducted by AMEU to determine eligibility of shelters in the areas, out of which AMEU was able to find 150 eligible shelters based on the pre-determined set of vulnerability criteria. However, initially selected sites had to be abandoned for several reasons, including unfitting materials, inability to obtain landlord permission to install the kits, men working in different locations and beneficiaries reporting that they had not been informed in advance about the day, time and location of the first distribution in Basike, Sumel. Further assessments had to be conducted in Sege, Sumel, a high-density area with many IDPs living in unfinished or abandoned shelters, which explains the rather high number of assessments that had to be done in Dohuk over the course of the project whilst compared to other bases.

PROCESS MONITORING

LACK OF DISTRIBUTION MONITORING IN ARDWAN, DOHUK

Only distributions in Sege have been monitored in Dohuk; however, the majority of the Sealing-Off Kits have been distributed in that location in Dohuk governorate.

POST DISTRIBUTION MONITORING

POST DISTRIBUTION MONITORING VIA PHONE IN KIRKUK

Post-Distribution Monitoring surveys were conducted via phone with Sealing-Off Kit recipients in Kirkuk due to security considerations, with no male team member able to accompany the female AME Monitor based in Erbil and in charge of conducting the PDM in Kirkuk. Although this data collection method is not a shortcoming in itself, the information is worth sharing in this report since it has prevented AMEU to conduct in-person technical spot-checks of the installations of the doors and windows in Kirkuk.

SAMPLE BREAKDOWN TARGET IN DOHUK

Although the overall target sample was by far over reached by the assessment teams with 133 surveys against 58 required for a 90 / 10 representative sample across the three governorates, due to time and staff constraints, the broken down sample was slightly under-reached in Dohuk governorate, with three missing surveys to attain the objective sample. Thus, the results specific to Dohuk governorate are slightly less representative than the ones presented for other bases.

MAIN FINDINGS

ON-SITE DISTRIBUTION MONITORING

DIYALA GOVERNORATE



Sealing Off Kits distribution in Diyala

Distributions in Diyala governorate started on March 15 and ended on March 28. During this timeframe, AMEU accompanied the distribution teams for three days on March 24, 27 and 30 and completed 13 observation checklists for process monitoring purposes. There were three different open-air distribution points, with most shelters located near the selected sites, namely Khanaqeen center, Karim Dawod village and Qarblaq-Duluju. The distribution team called beneficiaries on the beneficiaries list; the latter received their kit after signing at the distribution point. However, the distribution team was unable to reach a number of selected beneficiaries for various reasons: some of them had their phones switched off, others reported to have moved to new houses, although previously asked if they were intending to stay in their current shelter during the initial eligibility assessment, or had gone back to their area of origin (AoO). In the case where selected beneficiaries could not be reached, more eligible shelters were taken from the eligibility list since slightly more than 150 shelters had been found eligible in the initial assessment.

AMEU did investigate both on the IDPs intention to stay in their current shelter and on the landlord's agreement for the kit to be installed; nevertheless, during AMEU visits and informal exchanges at a later stage of the project, some IDPs have eventually reported, that they were considering returning to their Area of Origin, wishing to take the Sealing Off Kits back to their home, reportedly in dire need of repair. Damages induced by the conflict seemed to be one of the reasons preventing IDPs from going back, an issue that would have been partially solved if they could use the newly received shelter materials. Jalawla, Saadia and other cities in Khanaqeen and Muqdadiyah districts have been recaptured from ISIS end of 2014 / beginning of 2015, and although many of these remained "ghost towns" for months after the liberation operations, a significant part of the IDP population now wishes to return, especially if shelter assistance is being provided. In addition, many of them reported the fear that their landlord, although the latter committed to sign an agreement for the shelter materials to be installed, would evict them once the houses' conditions are upgraded and would keep the materials for themselves. Finally, some beneficiaries were keen on selling inputs received, an issue that was further in-depth analyzed during the Post Distribution Monitoring to determine the reasons leading beneficiaries to favour cash assistance over in-kinds and better inform future response in Shelter / NFI and Cash-Transfer programming.

On site, beneficiaries were asked to rate the quantity and quality of the items included in the Sealing Off Kit; all of them replied that the quantity exceeded their needs and that the shelter materials were of excellent quality. In the majority of sites assessed, AMEU observed that the kits content was suitable for the needs of the beneficiaries, although a minority had issues with size of the windows that did not fit into their house's structure. Considering that the kits, with plastic doors, window frames, window glasses, toolkits and other binding and fixing materials, were big in size and heavy in weight, beneficiaries had to hire trucks to transport the materials home, and thus pay for transportation of humanitarian assistance. However, ACTED staff did make great efforts to help the most vulnerable families to transport their items back home to the greatest extent, using ACTED cars for free, loading materials in the pick-ups and directly transporting some of the kits to the beneficiaries' houses.



Door with Shelterbox and ACTED logo

The distribution team distributed manuals explaining the installation methods and use of the shelter materials included in the kit; in addition, they quickly went through the manual's content with each beneficiary to provide an overview of the intended use of the materials and of the tools. A majority shared with AMEU that they had someone in their household able to install the kit; however, while some respondents said that someone in the community would help them install the Sealing Off Kit, a minority still did not have the capacity or support enabling them to install the materials. At the time, no mason had been hired to support or check on the shelter kit installation, although some beneficiaries said that they would benefit – and were hoping for – external assistance. Furthermore, with no actual training, households with no technically skilled member were unable to make use of the materials. This was taken as a lesson learned over the course of the project, and a carpenter was eventually hired to assist a minority of households with the installation. AMEU called back all beneficiaries to get updates on the status of the installation, and those who still had the materials but had not installed them yet were supported with technical help.

KIRKUK GOVERNORATE

Distributions were held in Kirkuk city for three days, namely on April 4, 5 and 6, with 22 observation checklists conducted by AMEU. There were three different open-air distribution points, namely Panja Ali apartments near Solaf Club, Celebrations square and Dubs Road near Faelaq Checkpoint. ACTED staff and a Focal Point among the IDPs were present on site. On the first day, 42 kits were distributed, 33 on the second day and the remaining 16 on the third and last day; however, not all beneficiaries received the tools on the first day, including saw, hammer, screwdriver, silicon gun and pliers, as the distribution teams had not loaded them into their truck in the morning. Many beneficiaries had difficulties in transporting the items back home and had to rent trucks for this purpose, similarly to the situation in Diyala. Complaints Desk was set up at the distribution site as well. However, due to overcrowd issues, mostly due to a high number of non-beneficiaries coming to complain about their non-inclusion in the lists, and the Asayish (local police) stating that they could not control the crowd and would rather suspend the distribution at this stage, the Complaints Desk had to be shut down in order not to jeopardize the whole operation. The majority of non-beneficiaries complaining would probably have been deemed as eligible if they had been assessed; however, ACTED simply did not have the capacity to include all vulnerable households in the beneficiary list as only 90 kits could be distributed in Kirkuk. There are huge remaining needs and gaps in Kirkuk, with little coverage from other organizations as well.



Distribution of window glasses, Kirkuk



Doors ready to be distributed, Kirkuk

The vast majority of beneficiaries said that the quantity offered in the Sealing Off Kit exceeded their needs and all rated the quality of items as excellent. In the majority of sites assessed, AMEU observed that the kits content was suitable for the needs of the beneficiaries, although there were some issues with size of the windows in a minority of sites. From direct observation and informal exchange, it seemed that while some beneficiaries were satisfied with the kit, others were already thinking of selling them. Many beneficiaries met at the distribution site shared that they did not have someone in their household able to install the kit; although almost all could have gotten the support of friends, relatives and other community members, a vast majority of people interviewed during the On-Site Monitoring shared that they would also need external assistance from a skilled carpenter to make the required installations. In order to help the most vulnerable households in this task, a carpenter was hired and AMEU once again called all the beneficiaries back to determine which ones would benefit from the external help based on their needs and own wishes.

DOHUK GOVERNORATE

Distributions started on 14th of April, 2016, with challenges in beneficiary selection and obtaining landlord permissions having resulted in subsequent delays in planning. Materials were stocked in Sege warehouse, located five minutes away from all houses in the village, and delivered to each household, most of them having a private car to take the materials back home. Carpentry work was completed the same day for all shelters receiving the assistance. AMEU conducted 19 spot-checks, all in Sege. It was observed that one kit was not sufficient for most of the unfinished buildings, as several doors and windows would be required to provide beneficiaries with suitable, private shelters. In order to meet individual needs as accurately as possible, distribution teams decided to distribute several kits to one shelter in case needed, and to split up the kit, which implied to select less beneficiary households, yet allowed for a significantly increased positive outcome for those who did benefit from the shelter assistance. In addition, finding eligible shelters had appeared to be a challenging process, thus, distributing more to less beneficiaries certainly is a good practice to be replicated in similar circumstances. Some items were broken in the kit, i.e. some door and window handles were not closing properly, yet could not be replaced due to unavailability of extra items. AMEU would recommend, as commonly accepted good practice, adding budget for extra kits in case of non-functional items or damages occurred during transportation or distribution, especially for fragile materials such as window glasses.



Sege Village, Sumel District, Dohuk



Sealing Off Kits stocked in Sege warehouse, Sumel District, Dohuk

ON SITE CARPENTRY WORK MONITORING



Carpenter repairing a shelter in Kirkuk

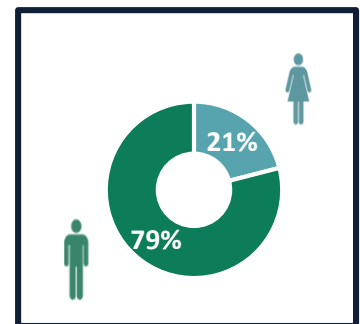
Instead of providing mason training to beneficiaries, ACTED decided to employ masons to help households with no technical skills or physical capacity to install the kits, as per recommendation based on lessons learned from past shelter programming. However, while a mason was employed from the beginning of the project in Dohuk base and helped every single beneficiary with the carpentry work, this was not the case in Kirkuk and Diyala governorates, where a mason was hired only at a later stage, a few days or weeks after the distributions had been completed. This difference in project implementation resulted in different numbers of beneficiaries assisted with the installation of the materials, including all 150 shelters in Dohuk, but 9 in Kirkuk and 6 in Diyala only. Monitoring checklists and surveys were used to assess whether the mason had provided clear guidance and useful help to the beneficiaries, remaining polite and respectful at all times and completing his tasks in a timely manner. In addition, ACTED distribution staff was always present on site to supervise the mason's work. In all governorates, the mason was observed to be polite and

respectful in all situations, and provided clear and simple guidance to beneficiaries to help them install the doors and windows. While the mason installed the materials himself in Khanaqueen and Kirkuk, in Dohuk beneficiary households also participated in the installation and said that the carpenter answered all of their questions and gave them useful instructions on how to proceed. A vast majority across all three governorates considered that the mason had done an excellent work on their shelter.

POST-DISTRIBUTION MONITORING

DEMOGRAPHICS

ACTED AMEU made efforts to include women among its interviewees, with one out of five being female. Average age of respondents was 43; more than three quarters were the heads of their household (76 per cent), with the remaining quarter mostly being part of the nuclear family, i.e. their wives, sons and daughters. One shelter was shared by 2 to 3 families in average, with a maximum of 6 families staying in the same unfinished dwelling. Average total family size amounted to 9.3 with significant differences across governorates. While IDP households in Diyala and Kirkuk governorates had an average number of 6 and 7 household members, displaced populations in Dohuk had an average family size of almost 15 members, including 9 women aged 18 to 59. Among the beneficiary households, 5 per cent were headed by a single woman, 11 per cent were elderly-headed, a proportion going up to one fifth in Dohuk, and another 11 per cent of the households contained persons with disabilities (PwD), with the figure going up to one fifth in Dohuk again. Among those, households usually had one or two differently abled relatives to take care of in each family. Noticeably, almost one in ten respondent households were even headed by a person with disabilities. On the economic level, more than half of the beneficiaries had no access to a permanent income. Over 7 per cent of the respondent households were taking care of separated or unaccompanied children.



PROCESS EVALUATION



Visibility during distribution, Kirkuk

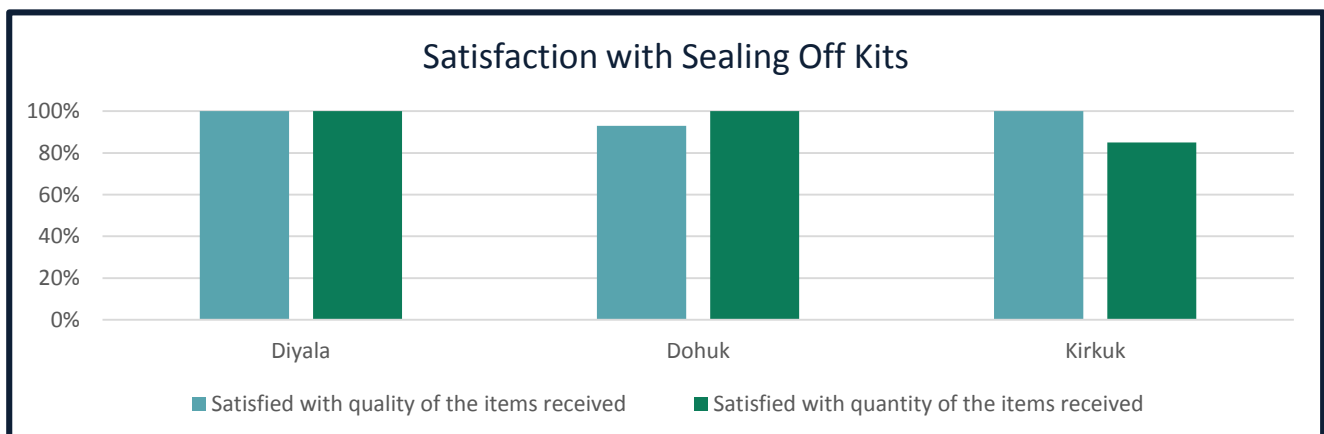
All beneficiaries were aware, in all three governorates, that ACTED was distributing the items with the support of Shelterbox, indicating strong visibility in the field and a successful communication strategy. The distribution sites were generally well situated, and rather near the beneficiaries' houses, especially in Dohuk; 83 per cent of beneficiaries traveled for less than half an hour and 10 per cent received the Sealing Off Kit almost directly at their house, which was deemed as an acceptable traveling time for 92 per cent of the target populations. However, a significant proportion of beneficiaries, even though already financially vulnerable, had to pay for transportation (41 per cent, with a breakdown of 85 per cent in Kirkuk and 32 per cent in Diyala) for an average of 4,500 IQD (adding up to 8,900 IQD in Kirkuk).

KIT CONTENT AND MISSING ITEMS

The full Sealing Off Kit was received by all beneficiaries in Kirkuk, 96 per cent in Diyala and three quarters of respondents in Dohuk (77 per cent). In the latter governorate, distribution teams decided to split up the kit between beneficiaries, which probably resulted in a few households not receiving exterior grade plywood, nails, duct tape and windows and doors. Noticeably, some respondents reported that they did receive windows and doors, yet that they were missing locks or handles. In addition, the glass and / or frame of the windows and doors have been broken or cracked in almost one fifth of the cases, either during transportation or during installation. While it did seem to have prevented the majority of beneficiaries to make repairs to their shelters, a few respondents in Dohuk stated that they could not install functional doors and windows due to these missing or broken items.

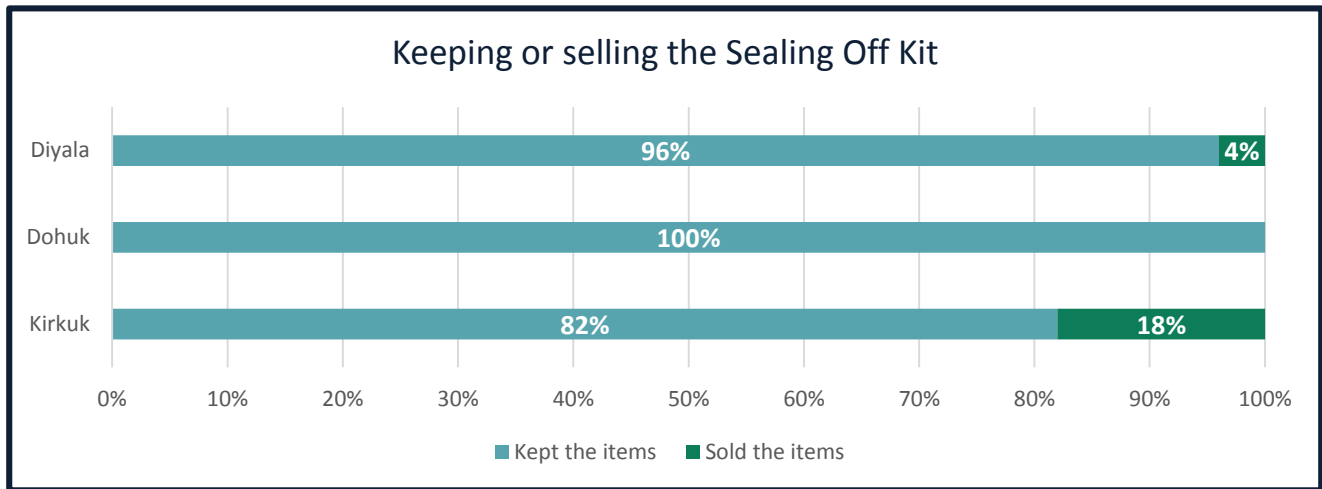
SATISFACTION LEVELS

Almost all respondents were happy with the quality of the kits' content (98 per cent); the unsatisfied ones explained that the doors and windows did not cover the whole space in the walls, even after the carpenter was done working on their house, which was also observed on very few shelters by AMEU teams during spot-checks. An overwhelming majority was also happy with the quantity of the items the kits were composed of (95 per cent), the remaining 5 per cent explaining that they still had doors and windows missing, and that the content of the kit was simply not enough to cover their shelter needs.



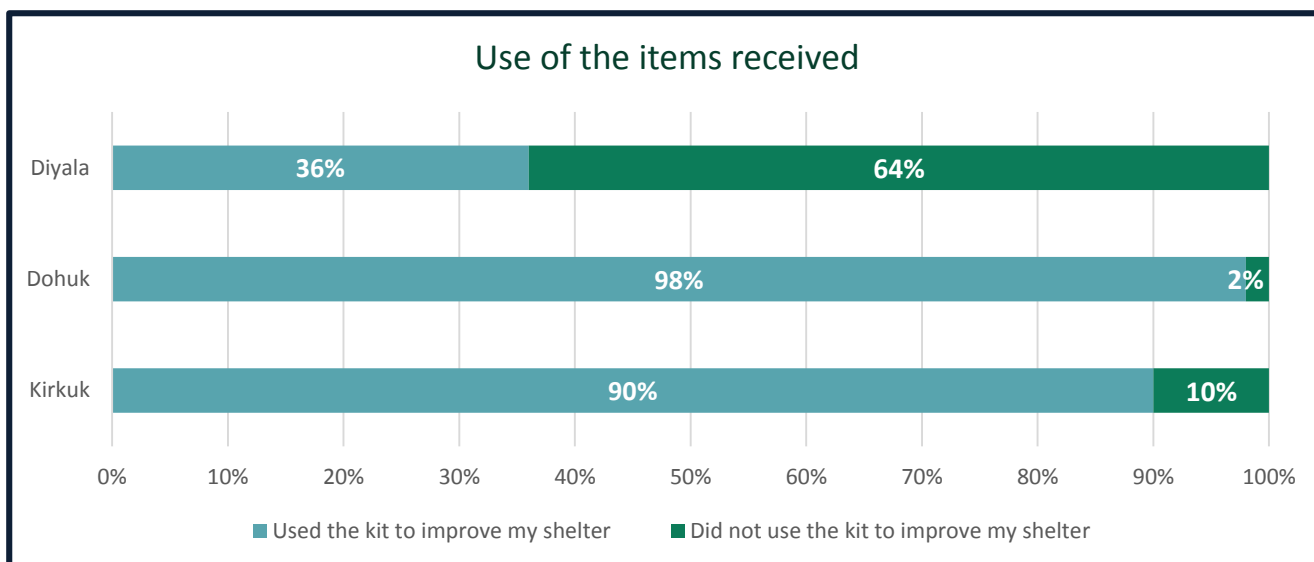
KEEPING OR SELLING THE SEALING OFF KIT

While a vast majority decided to keep the kit received from ACTED and Shelterbox (93 per cent), a minority made the decision to sell it instead in order to generate an additional and immediate source of revenues for the household. While 5 per cent sold some of the items in the kit (including one tenth of Kirkuk's beneficiary population and 4 per cent in Diyala), only 2 per cent decided to sell the entire kit (all of them in Kirkuk city, representing 8 per cent of the project's target population in this governorate). When asked why they decided to sell the kit instead of using it, 78 per cent responded that they had other basic urgent needs to fulfill. With the cash that they received in exchange of selling their Sealing Off Kit, three quarters purchased medicines (78 per cent) and two thirds bought food. Few also stated that they bought other, higher quality or size-fitting doors and windows.



USE OF THE SEALING OFF KITS

Overall, almost three quarters of beneficiary households did use the kit to make improvements to their shelter; results showed that all items were useful for the households to repair and upgrade their shelter as none was left unused by the households who made use of the kit. However, figures varied a lot across the three governorates. While almost all beneficiaries had used the kit items in Dohuk and Kirkuk, only a third had done the same in Diyala. Among those who did not use the kit, one in ten did not know how to install it; almost half did not have anyone to help them install the kit. This was true for over a half of respondents in Diyala (53 per cent). The main reason for not using the kit was the wish to get cash instead by selling the kit (as reported by 14 per cent of all respondents). Almost one in ten respondents among those who did not install the kits reported that their landlord had not given their permission to make changes to the houses' structure. The same proportion said that the assistance did not meet their shelter needs. In Diyala, almost one tenth of beneficiaries were planning to return to their Area of Origin (AoO) and to bring the Sealing Off Kit there. Interestingly, no beneficiary planned to move back without taking their new shelter materials with them, confirming the hypothesis that some beneficiaries saw this assistance as a way enabling them to go back home and repair their old damaged house. A minority (6 per cent) were also planning on moving soon to a permanent finished house within Diyala governorate itself.



Respondents who did use the kits were asked whether they had to buy additional materials to make use of the distributed items and construct their shelter. Almost one in ten respondents replied in the affirmative, with a vast majority of those having bought additional fixing materials (83 per cent) and almost one fifth that bought either appropriate tools for construction and repair work or other construction materials, such as concrete or timber (17 per cent). In average, IDPs who bought additional materials had to disburse 24,000 IQD (15 GBP) to finalize the construction work on their shelter.

INSTALLATION OF THE SEALING OFF KIT



Carpenter installing a window, Kirkuk

Almost all shelters in Dohuk reported that a mason or engineer employed by ACTED had helped them with the construction works, which was only the case of one in ten beneficiaries in Kirkuk (9 households assisted out of 90) and 2 per cent reported in Diyala (a figure that amounted, in reality, to 9 per cent, with 6 shelters upgraded by a carpenter out of a total 150). Over one third of the total beneficiaries reported that the whole construction work had been completed by the carpenter, including 80 per cent of households in Dohuk where the mason visited all the shelters one by one, one fifth in Kirkuk (21 per cent) and one tenth in Diyala (12 per cent). Almost half had one household member installing the items directly, and a few were also helped by their community, friends and neighbors, which was the case for almost one fifth of the respondents in Kirkuk (18 per cent). However, some respondents, and up to 17 per cent in Kirkuk, still had to hire unskilled labour to help them repairing their shelter, further adding to the additional transportation costs induced by the weight of the kit.

All of them had received a manual explaining the content of the kit and the use of the items, yet a slightly smaller proportion had received a short training based on its content. The decrease in proportion, however, was probably due to the fact that Dohuk distribution teams had already hired a carpenter to help the households with the work the same day as the distribution, making the manual-based training unnecessary and too simplistic.

Almost all beneficiaries (99 per cent) had also received the necessary tools to make the needed repairs. Noticeably, all but 2 per cent in Diyala said so; however, AMEU teams on site did monitor the distributions and checked that everyone was receiving a toolkit in addition to the Sealing Off Kit. Yet, tools were shared between four to five families, and few might have had encountered difficulties to respect and equally benefit from this sharing system. In Kirkuk it occurred that some beneficiaries did not receive some tools the first day of the distributions, but they eventually shared with other beneficiaries and it was not reported as a major issue having prevented them to make any required repair on their shelter.

Beneficiaries were asked if they thought that the most vulnerable households had been able to install the items in the kit, and repair their shelter with the assistance received. While all respondents in Dohuk and Kirkuk replied affirmatively, less than one quarter did in Diyala (24 per cent). The three quarters in Khanaqeen and Kifri who did not think that the assistance had been sufficient for vulnerable households to meet their most basic shelter needs, representing 28 per cent of the total target population, were asked to prioritize different action points that, in their eyes, would have enabled these households to make proper and full use of the shelter materials. Two thirds considered that cash should have been distributed to enable them to hire labour, with the other third who would have required an in-depth training on how to use the specific items in the kit; as a second choice, 45 per cent said that vulnerable households would have needed to receive a general masonry training on how to repair or build a safe building, followed by 29 per cent saying that they would have needed a specific training on the kit content; finally, these two latter options were also chosen as third priority to provide to the most vulnerable households.



Carpenter installing a door, Dohuk

OUTCOMES OF THE PROJECT

Two thirds of respondents considered that their door was in a very poor or poor condition before receiving the Sealing Off Kit, with another 2 per cent who had no door at all; only 5 per cent thought the same at the end of the project, with over the quarters describing their door's state as "good" or "very good" (78 per cent) compared to only 6 per cent before the start of the project's implementation. A vast majority had poor or in-existent windows as well before receiving the shelter assistance from ACTED and Shelterbox (70 per cent); this figure was divided by ten at the end of the project, with only 7 per cent reporting that their window was still in a poor condition and three quarters of respondents (76 per cent) with windows in good or very good conditions compared to only 5 per cent before the start of the activities. Respondents were also asked if they could lock their doors before receiving the new ones; over half said that they could not (53 per cent), with an additional third who simply had no door, adding up to 86 per cent with no privacy or security guarantee in their shelter. At the end of the project, 92 per cent of beneficiaries reported to be able to lock their door from the inside.



From tarpaulins, blankets and plastic sheeting to lockable plastic doors

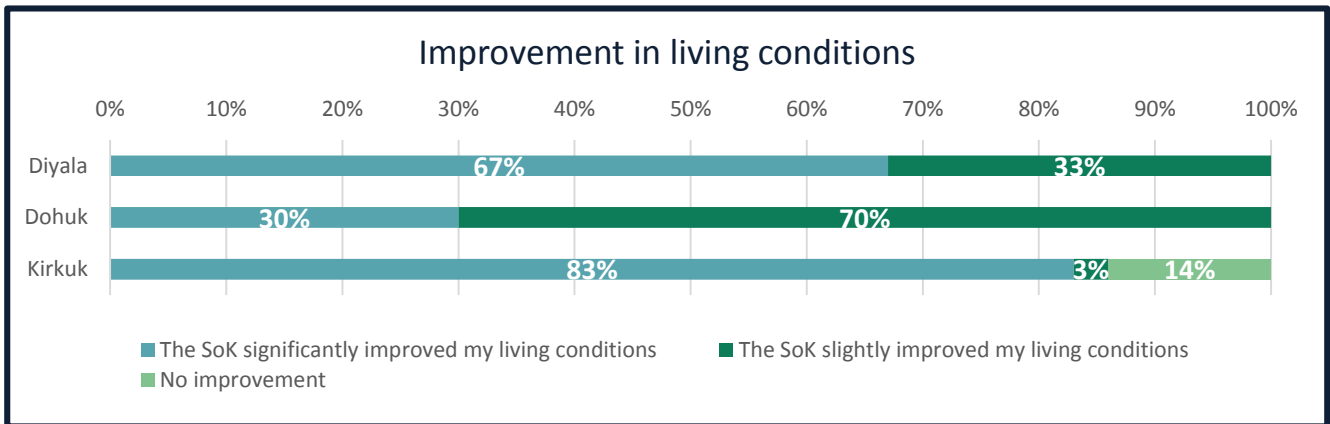


Newly installed window and door, Kirkuk

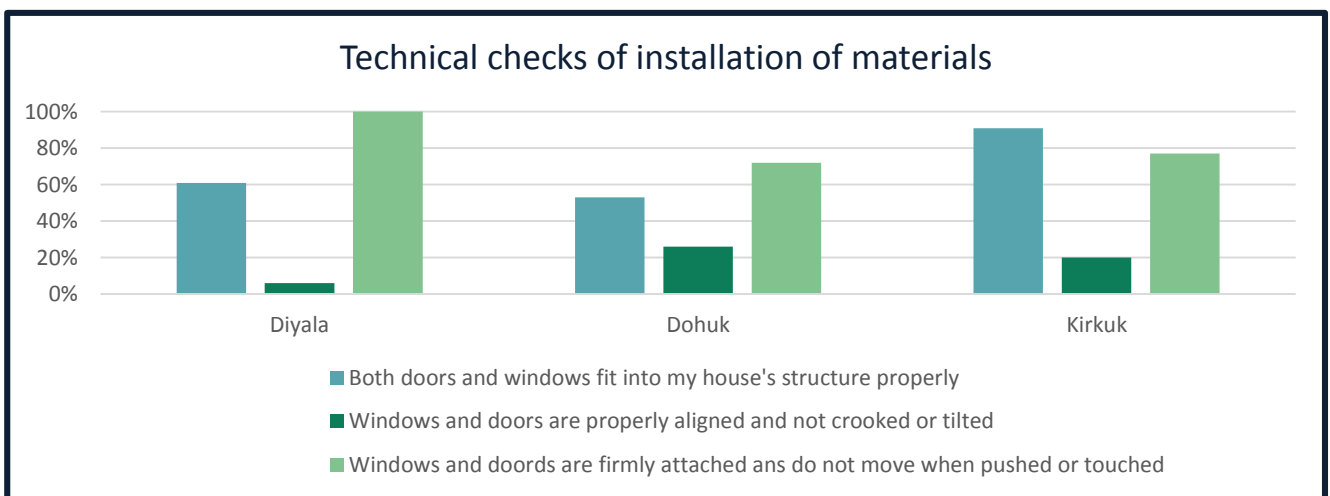
One third of respondents never or rarely had a wind-proof shelter before they received the SoK (32 per cent); their shelters had holes in the walls, or missing windows. After installation of the kit, this proportion fell to 21 per cent, with individuals stating that their shelter was now always wind proof going up from 23 to 49 per cent. The increase was particularly spectacular in Kirkuk, where none of the respondents felt that their shelter was protecting them from changing weathers before the project, while 80 per cent felt that the assistance received had made their shelter wind-proof after installation. Proportions of water-proof shelters, with, for instance, no rain leak in the roof, went up from 18 to 42 per cent, with an additional third saying that their shelter was now most of the times protecting them against the rain. Again, the positive change is especially visible in Kirkuk, where 77 per cent said that their shelter was now always and completely water proof, which wasn't the case for any of the shelters there before. The reception of the Sealing Off Kits also had a great impact on the warmth of the shelters, with more than half of the households considered that their shelter was

usually cold before they received the shelter materials, with one fifth saying that it simply never was warm. After receiving the kit, no household considered that their dwelling was always cold; 45 per cent actually considered that they were able to maintain high enough temperatures at all times, with an additional third stating that their shelter was often warm.

Overall, almost all beneficiaries thought that their shelter conditions had significantly or at least slightly improved as a result of the Sealing Off Kits distribution (95 per cent), with noticeable variations across governorates. The 5 remaining per cent had not yet used, or not yet sold, the kit because they were planning to move out or because they were afraid that their current house was in too much of a bad shape to be upgraded. When asked if the reception of the Sealing Off kit allowed beneficiaries to improve their shelter conditions during the winter months specifically, 93 per cent agreed, and a slightly higher proportion (96 per cent) thought that it would be useful for the upcoming spring and summer months. More than half (53 per cent) considered that the timing of the distributions was perfect, but 45 per cent estimated that they would have needed even more critically before, i.e. during the winter. Only 2 per cent thought that the items were not needed any longer by the time they were distributed.



In Diyala and Dohuk governorates, where the Post-Distribution Monitoring surveys were conducted in the field, technical checks were done on site based on direct observation; AME teams had to rely on answers given by the beneficiaries themselves in Kirkuk, where the PDM was conducted via phone. One door was installed in each shelter, although in average two doors are still missing in each of them. One or two windows are also still missing in the shelters, although one window in Diyala and two in Dohuk and Kirkuk respectively were installed in average in one single shelter. Despite the fact that the kit was not sufficient to meet all shelter needs, the vast majority of respondents (89 per cent) considered that the main areas which were missing doors and windows before have now been filled. In addition, two thirds of both doors and windows were fitting into the structure properly, with an additional tenth (11 per cent) of doors only fitting and 14 per cent with windows only. Still 6 per cent reported that neither the doors or the windows were now completely adapted to the house's structure. In addition, only one fifth said that both their new window and door were not crooked or tilted, in proper alignment with the house's walls, indicating that longer masonry work on each shelter might have been necessary to make sure that the materials were correctly installed. In most of the cases, however, the materials were firmly attached to the walls (79 per cent) with functional accessories such as handles and locks (91 per cent), and 80 per cent of the gaps of the door and window frames had been sealed with silicon.



CHALLENGES IN PROGRAMMING

OBTAINING AUTHORIZATION TO CONDUCT ASSESSMENTS IN KIRKUK

Obtaining local authorities' authorization to conduct assessments in Kirkuk was a new and successfully overcome challenge for ACTED; however, it did causes some delays in starting the selection assessment, and thus in procurement and project activities.

OBTAINING LANDLORDS AGREEMENTS

After all assessments had been conducted and 150 shelters had been found eligible in one of the bases, distribution teams were not successful in obtaining the landlords' written permissions to install the materials on their shelters in many locations that had been assessed by AMEU. Reasons given were that the window and door sizes were not adapted to their house's structure, that the materials were made of inferior quality plastic and that they could afford better quality once they would return to their house to finish it, and finally, they shared their frustration of seeing IDPs receiving assistance while Host Communities seemed to be systematically excluded from humanitarian aid provision in the area. They also feared that the IDPs would not want to voluntarily leave their transitional shelter once conditions would be upgraded, and that landlords would have to forcibly evict them in the future. Some landlords also stated that they might ask the IDPs to leave once the doors and windows are installed and sell or exchange them for higher quality ones for their own benefit. Many sites found eligible had to be left aside, while AMEU negotiated in-person with Mukhtars and landlords in Sege, a high-density area with many IDPs living in unfinished or abandoned buildings, in order to obtain the permission to distribute the majority of the kits there. Few doors and windows were also installed in a community centre in Sege after discussions with the Mukhtars. Few landlords in Ardwan also consented to have shelter materials installed on their house during the last days of the project.

OFFERING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO BENEFICIARIES

Based on experience and lessons learned from past projects, hiring a mason was already recommended by AMEU in the kick off meeting before the start of the project, taking into account that a meaningful assistance and positive outcome would require technical assistance to vulnerable households, which could not install the kits themselves. However, two bases did not hire a mason until the latest stages of the project, with AMEU calling back every single beneficiary to get an update on the status of the kits installation and ask whether they would need a mason to come help them install it. The delays in hiring a professional carpenter resulted in having many beneficiaries who had already sold or exchanged the kit, a risk that may have been mitigated if technical assistance had been provided immediately following the distributions.

LESSONS LEARNED

- For future shelter projects, initial eligibility assessments for beneficiary selection could comprise of a vulnerability scoring matrix, helping AMEU and the Programme teams to better select and prioritize beneficiaries based on a more comprehensive understanding of their individual needs.
- Ideally, the assessment should have been further composed of questions about number of doors and number of windows required by each shelter, and whether the main entry door was missing in order to better capture the needs of the shelters. This would have helped the Programme teams to decide on an accurate geographic allocation of kits.
- The assessment should have been composed of technical checks as well, in order to make sure that window and door sizes were adapted to the structures of the houses. For future shelter projects, it is recommended to have individual technical assessments in order to procure kit's content based on actual needs, or to incorporate adequate funding for masons to work on the shelters. However, the second option might reveal to be challenging due to the temporary stay of the IDPs and the unfinished nature of the shelters, leading landlords to refuse or show reluctance that carpenters make changes to their houses.
- Distribution teams should inform beneficiaries at least three days in advance about the date, time and location of distributions.
- AMEU recommends ensuring that distribution points, if not door to door, are very near the households' homes as elderly, persons with disabilities, women and children might not have the physical or financial capacity to bring heavy or bulky shelter materials home, as it was observed during this project with some beneficiaries having to rent trucks to transport the windows and doors to their house, adding an unnecessary financial burden for already economically vulnerable households.
- AMEU would recommend, as commonly accepted good practice, adding budget for extra kits in case of non-functional items or damages occurred during transportation or distribution, especially for fragile materials such as window glasses.
- Distribution teams should always obtain written and signed landlord agreement for carpentry work on their property; making modifications to personal shelters without prior permission may put the organization at risk of legal proceedings.
- There is a need to focus on providing technical assistance to all households to ensure that they have the skills or physical or financial capacities to build their shelter. Basic masonry training, for instance in the framework of a Cash for Work programme, and tools should be provided to beneficiaries, with additional manuals translated into relevant languages and including visuals. If extremely vulnerable households are targeted with no one physically able to make shelter installations, skilled labour such as a professional carpenter should be hired (henceforth budgeted) to assist them in building, repairing or upgrading their shelter. All respondents unanimously thought that they needed external, technical assistance from a carpenter, even those who did have someone physically able to do it in the household; furthermore, some of them felt uncomfortable asking for help from the community.
- Programme teams and AMEU need to work in close collaboration, with a focus on improving information-sharing mechanisms between the two departments and incorporating lessons learned and recommendations into programming.