

## PROJECT OVERVIEW

# Returning Evacuees To Urban Residences Now (RETURN)

SEPTEMBER 2020 – MAY 2021 | USAID BHA

### PROJECT GOAL

Repair moderately damaged homes to habitable status, affording some stability to vulnerable families already coping with the economic, political and pandemic crises.

On August 4, 2000 a cache of 2,750 tons of ammonium nitrate warehoused in the port of Beirut exploded at 6:07 pm, killing nearly 200 people, injuring more than 6,500 and destroying more than 40,000 buildings. More than 300,000 people were displaced – their homes destroyed or damaged beyond being livable. The blast worsened the country's economic crisis and many affected were left with little to no means to rebuild.

Lutheran World Relief has worked at the nexus of humanitarian assistance and development in the Middle East since 1948 and in late 2017, we began working in Lebanon to address the diminishing economic opportunities and improve social cohesion between Lebanese locals and Syrian refugees. When the explosion rocked Beirut, we rushed to respond.

With \$2.2 million in funding from USAID's Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance, Lutheran World Relief implemented the RETURN project as part of its multi-pronged emergency response to the explosion, working with local partner the Makhzoumi Foundation.

### RESULTS

- 1,986 houses repaired and returned to habitable status for 8,000 people in just 9 months.
- 20 Engineers assessed and supervised the completion of repairs.
- 3,100 technical assessments of damage conducted across 114 zones.
- Families protected from winter conditions, COVID-19 and the spread of other illnesses often experienced when living in inadequate shelter.
- Savings from repairs cost spent on basic needs, such as food, medication and education

### The Corus Effect

Founded by Lutherans in the United States at the end of World War II to serve refugees, Lutheran World Relief has grown into a leading humanitarian assistance and development organization that specializes in analyzing market systems, strengthening agriculture value chains and the capacities of enterprises, and promoting livelihood diversification, rural financing, climate smart and improved agriculture practices, and sustainable water and land management.

Lutheran World Relief is a part of the Corus International family, an ensemble of long-serving, global leaders in international development and humanitarian assistance committed to ending poverty and building healthy communities across Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Middle East, and Africa. Alongside communities and local partners in fragile settings, Corus' dedicated experts across the family of organizations integrate disciplines, approaches and resources to overcome global health challenges, develop productive and stable economies, improve resilience in the face of climate change, and respond to natural disasters and humanitarian crises. With the support of our family's diverse set of partners and funding – from multi- and bilateral institutions and foundations to the private sector and individuals – we invest in solutions that are innovative, scalable, holistic and move the needle towards transformational change.



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



**LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF**  
In concert with Corus International

LWR.ORG