



SUPERADOBE BENEFICIARY FEEDBACK

Assessment date and location:

July 9th, 2018, Oxfam Community Center D8, SuperAdobe building, Zaatari Refugee Camp.

FGD: 7 women, 3 of them took part in activities that were held in the SuperAdobe.

Key interviews: 2 male workers who were involved in the construction of the SuperAdobe. The other workers were not available as they are engaged in other livelihood activities.

Report: Nour Ali MEAL Officer, Zaatari Refugee Camp



MAIN FINDINGS:

1. More livable homes

Both the SuperAdobe workers and users expressed that the caravans are better shelters than the tents, but that they present many problems to which the SuperAdobe is a solution.

The caravans are badly insulated. During the winter, they get very cold, leak water and smell of humidity. The floor, made of wood or cardboards, gets flooded and rotten. When a gas heater is used for warmth, the smell of gas is suffocating due to poor ventilation. In the summer, the heat inside the caravan is unbearable, and there are insects. Moreover, the caravan can easily burn from a short circuit, as it is made of highly inflammable materials.

A house made of soil, like the SuperAdobe, is healthier, does not burn, is warm in winter, and cool in summer. Most importantly, the users insisted, its structure, space, color, and the many windows which bring natural light, give them psychological comfort and well-being.

2. Acquired skills: “We’ve learned to make something out of nothing”

The users were not questioned about the skills acquired during the project as they did not take part in the construction.

The workers learned to build a house from materials that can be found anywhere, which is a valuable life skill for refugees. No expertise was needed from them, anyone could learn. The workers said they have gained a lot of experience from the project, the mistakes made and the struggles faced, as well as specific building techniques, like the use of plastic bags in the construction, making and measuring circles, constructing a dome...The SuperAdobe differs from the construction technique the workers were familiar with back in Syria (it only uses soil, and does not need to be mixed with straw).

“We were asked to show our experience through this project. So, I told the workers, we have to do something with this project, to show the engineer that we’re able to do something out of nothing. So, we did that small construction for the guard. It’s a bit different, but essentially the same.”



Of course, there were mistakes, obstacles that we had to overcome, like in any project. The project took a lot of time, 6 months. Some of the materials took time to arrive to the camp, there were some delays. We were very afraid that the project fails, and that all our efforts would be in vain. We used to work under the sun, in the middle of August, in an extreme heat, for 8 hours....”

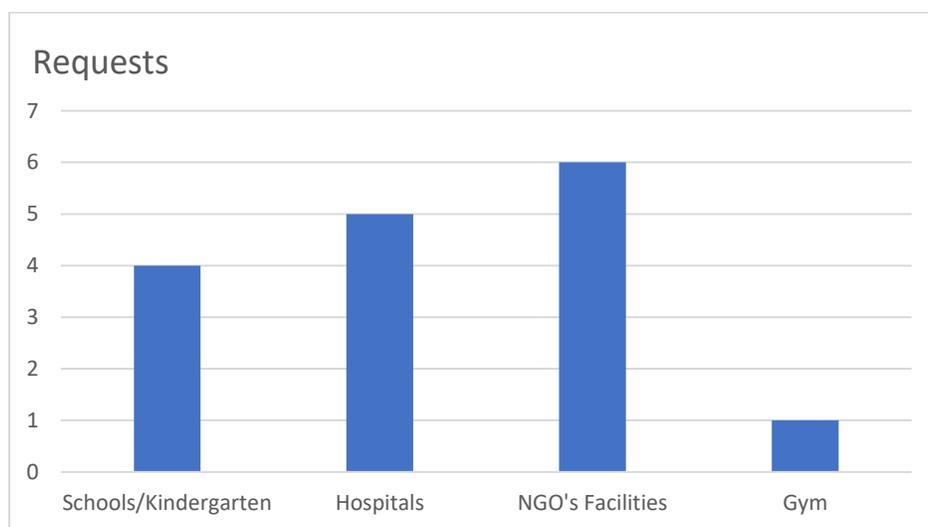
3. Project upgrade and expansion

The users suggested the construction of SuperAdobe buildings for the following public spaces: Hospitals (mentioned 5 times), Schools/Kindergarten (3), NGO's facilities (6) (meeting rooms, community centers, psychological support units...), Gym (1). They pointed out the importance of having such buildings for any psychosocial support facility, and facilities for children, as some of the Zaatari's children have never seen anything beyond their caravans. They support the idea of houses built with this technique, or at least units of the house, like the bedrooms/living rooms. They added that many people would be interested in learning and being involved in the building process, mostly the youth (15-18 years old).

The workers as well suggested buildings for the children, to play or to receive trainings, and that SuperAdobe houses are desirable; even just a unit, as a bedroom/ or the bathroom.

One of the workers pointed out that not everyone in the camp has seen the SuperAdobe, or is aware that there is a construction in the camp that has been built from the soil. He encourages the project expansion to the rest of the camp, to bring visibility to it and to spread this technique.

Requested Public spaces using SuperAdobe structure



4. Project impact

The users seem to think that the building techniques already known in Syria are easier, less time-consuming and more practical to implement. They often referred to the use of straw and mud. However, it should be noted that they were not involved in the SuperAdobe construction process and not as fully aware of the technique's advantages as the workers, who, for their part, showed interest in using this technique to build homes for themselves once they return to Syria.



“Back in Syria, our homes are destroyed by the war, mine included. When I come back, I’ll have this experience that will help me build a new home there.”

“I’d love to use this technique to build a house back in Syria. I’d have the same design, same construction, and I would live there.”

5. Satisfaction

The average score given during the FGD with the users is **7,9/10**. The women explained that the SuperAdobe building, as a result, deserves a 10, but that the building process needs adjustments, on the level of the technique used. According to them, the SuperAdobe technique, compared to other ones, is difficult and takes too much time. There are techniques used in Syria that are less time-costly and more practical to build homes that can last for a century.

Both interviewed workers gave a score of **10/10**.

“I’ve been working for this project since the beginning, and was very interested in it. I made a video to document the process, and all the efforts made, I encouraged the rest of the team, telling the workers that this isn’t an Oxfam project, it’s a project for all of us, it’s ours, we are the ones learning from it, we’re going to benefit from it, and once we’re back to Syria, where we don’t have homes anymore, we’ll be able to build new ones. I was very excited about this project. I’d love to do more.”

Overall, they all expressed interest in seeing their caravans replaced by SuperAdobe homes.



“I wish I could live in such a place, or that my home was close to this center, I often come here when it’s that hot...”



RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The consistency of the comments on the SuperAdobe building technique suggests that awareness raising activities can be conducted in the camp first to bring visibility to the SuperAdobe technique, and second to ensure an understanding of its added value compared to other building techniques.
- The psychological wellness expressed regarding the use of the Super Adobe building emphasizes the relevance of using such buildings as psychosocial support facilities, schools and kindergarten, and how users should be consulted in the design, to take better account of their comfort and give them a sense of ownership.