



CASE STUDY

IRC + AquaPoro Ventures: Addressing Water Scarcity and Stimulating Investment

THE CHALLENGE

According to UNICEF, “Jordan is the second most water-scarce country in the world. [Its] annual renewable water resources are less than 100 cubic meters per person, significantly below the threshold of 500 cubic meters per person that defines severe water scarcity.” This problem has the potential to disrupt IRC operations in the region, and imperils health, sustainability and economic viability for Jordanians and the region’s large population of displaced people.

This is a challenge both of funding and innovation, with a need for new solutions. Humanitarians have a role to play, but the humanitarian sector also **faces a funding gap**: 67% of need, or \$41B, went unfunded in 2023, and 88% of all humanitarian funding comes from 10 government donor budgets. Current funding frameworks are unsustainable, and more must be done to leverage existing grant funding to be catalytic.

THE PILOT

IRC innovative finance is seeking to address this resource concern while stimulating investment in the Jordanian economy by launching an innovative partnership with a startup called AquaPoro Ventures. AquaPoro Ventures is a Jordanian startup developing an innovative water technology – an atmospheric water-generating device that produces clean, drinkable water even from dry desert air.

Together, IRC and AquaPoro Ventures are piloting a ‘procurement as investment’ pilot, providing IRC operations with a sustainable switch to a more effective product while ‘investing’ in innovative startups to stimulate innovation in the Jordanian economy. This collaboration will enable IRC Jordan to provide a sustainable drinking water supply at a cheaper cost than its current drinking water procurement. The partnership will first be tested in the Zaatari Health Clinic.

This is good news for the region, where we believe AquaPoro Ventures’ innovative products will provide fresh, clean drinking water to tens of thousands. It’s also a unique approach to collaboration at the nexus of procurement and financing: The project is an example of IRC’s ability to ‘invest’ in local startups, by being an early ‘offtaker’ of technology and placing one of the initial purchase orders of machines. This funding will allow the company to grow to the next stage and attract greater investment capital, while lowering IRC’s costs and providing better outcomes to clients in its health clinics.

OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

Our partnership with AquaPoro Ventures reflects our view that gaps in funding and infrastructure can be met by innovative partnerships at the nexus of humanitarian aid and investment. Through this project and others, we’re demonstrating proof of concept that if humanitarian actors are able to provide advisory services rooted in client-centered, localized expertise to investors financing projects in fragile/conflict settings then the humanitarian impact of investments on crisis-affected populations will increase and risks to investments will decrease, incentivizing further such investments.

Learn more [here](#) about the *Advisory Model for Investor + Humanitarian Partnerships*.