

JORDAN INGO FORUM NEWSLETTER



JORDAN
INGO
FORUM

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April Update JIF SECRETARIAT

I would like for this first letter of 2022 to thank all humanitarian and development actors working tirelessly to implement diverse programs to alleviate poverty and suffering in the Kingdom.

The Jordan INGO forum has developed solid, trustful, and meaningful partnerships with national NGOs, government, international donors, and our UN colleagues. This constant engagement allowed us to collectively achieve several positive results towards a brighter future for the people we serve. Jordan's government and population remain committed to hosting all refugees despite the deterioration of the economy and the structural challenges which are being tackled by ambitious and necessary reforms. As we all know, only a political solution will allow an end of this long-protracted refugee crisis, and the risk of reduced humanitarian funding due to the impact of the global pandemic is tangible. While some protection concerns remain, several positive discussions are taking place around the One Refugee Approach and other challenges refugees are facing under UNHCR's leadership. Several policy changes we are advocating for still remain relevant and should encourage us to continue translating these at the implementation level. It is imperative to develop solutions aligned and harmonized with the national strategy and policies while pursuing our advocacy engagement. As the INGO community, we should accompany Jordan through the challenging time by bolstering innovative and efficient programming.

While in 2019, national NGOs were implementing a major component of humanitarian and development programming, they had no official representation in the existing donor and UN coordination structures in Jordan. Today, they participate officially through JONAF and HIMAM fora in most existing refugee and development coordination mechanisms. JIF has systematically supported equity in representation in the consultation and joint advocacy initiatives for high-level events such as the Brussels conference. This was a right that should have been enforced a long time ago! I believe this opens up an opportunity for improving qualitative and

equal partnership and enables National NGOs to perform the role and responsibilities they deserve after decades of commitment and expertise. On the localization front, the Humanitarian Partners Forum adopted a MEAL framework that would enforce accountability from INGO, Donors, and UN toward a meaningful and qualitative localization agenda. The ongoing works around Association Law by the government and the resumption of key UN working groups testified to an increased awareness of the importance of civil society engagement in Jordan. We should pursue with all our strength to support our national partners' representation towards any consultation process. We should not just hear them but listen carefully to build more coalition of the willing about key challenges lying ahead of us. It is with this spirit that JONAF, HIMAM, and JIF are running an inclusive and open national civil society consultation that will capture the rich and diverse aspirations and ideas for the international community to listen to.

Finally, the discussion to improve humanitarian-development coherence resumed with integrated advocacy with a range of civil society actors. While the outcome remains unclear and might be a constant adjustment, there appears to be a clear shift in some significant funding towards a mid, long-term approach like social protection and the future of the camp. Jordan is a context where we respond to a protracted refugee response that has worsened pre-existing inequalities and the development challenge has only increased post-pandemic. Therefore, classic humanitarian programming is no longer relevant. Decision makers' perceptions and objectives about the international humanitarian actor's presence are diverse- from providing stability in a humanitarian context to investing in the Kingdom's development. As independent INGOs, we should consistently reflect on the relevance of our programming, ensure the most vulnerable are supported with efficiency and develop more robust and equitable long-term national partnerships. Always remember our objective by principle is not to be needed anymore someday!

CARE INTERNATIONAL_STORIES OF SOLIDARITY AND HOPE FROM AZRAQ CAMP

In Azraq Camp, Syrian Woman Supports Her Family and Community

Back in 2016, just like millions of others, Etidal and her family fled their war-torn homeland. Etidal, a 46-year-old Syrian refugee and mother of three, is originally from the western Syrian city of Homs. She stayed with her family in Syria for almost four years after the war broke out. “We lived the toughest days of our lives. We kept moving from one village to another,” she says.

One day, her husband decided that it was time for them to seek safety, especially because one of his daughters has a mental disability. Etidal expressed that her daughter’s safety and protection was their main priority. “She was always terrified of loud noises. She cannot endure living in fear all the time,” she continues with tears in her eyes. “It was really tough for me because I knew she was unaware of what is happening.”

The family’s journey to Jordan was an easy one, according to Etidal. However, her daughter’s condition got worse along the way. She was stressed, confused and scared. “I tried as much as possible to make it easier on her and make sure she understands that we are going to have a better life.”

The family stayed at the Jordanian-Syrian border for seven months before they entered Azraq camp. As soon as they were settled, her husband got diagnosed with severe diabetes because of the fear and stress he experienced. Etidal started searching for work opportunities to support her family. “I found a paid volunteering opportunity with CARE International in hydroponics. Through my job in the camp, I became the only financial supporter of my beautiful family.”



Etidal in CARE community center in Azraq Camp
©CARE

Etidal is overwhelmed with joy and happiness that she is able to provide her family with basic needs. Over a short period of time, she became a trainer in hydroponics with CARE International in Jordan. She trains other participants; both men and women. For her, it is a beautiful feeling to support other refugees and give them the opportunity to believe in themselves. She feels proud of the woman she is now.

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY IT IS TIME TO STEP UP CONFIDENTLY

“You are angels sent to us from God” ... These are the words Rida Ali said with a big smile when he greeted the team of Habitat Jordan at his home. Rida is an old man, who lives in East Amman with his beloved family, in a house with a main gate that can only be accessed by stairs.

A sheet of metal was fitted to his left leg as he had a car accident 20 years ago, and still suffers from the accident implications. He also has a herniated disc of several vertebrae in his back, which makes him use a crutch to walk. In addition, he was diagnosed with a rare disorder that causes blood vessel inflammation (Behcet’s syndrome), which worsened his health.



Unfortunately, getting in and out of his home was unsafe for Rida; the stairs did not have handrails which Rida could lean while taking the stairs, and this caused him to fall from the stairs more than one time and get hurt. These accidents provoked Habitat Jordan team to act quickly; they visited him, conducted a socio-economic assessment, and assessed his home conditions.

The visit revealed other problems besides home accessibility, mainly in ventilation and lighting. The walls of two bedrooms, for example, were covered with molds, and a musty smell filled the place. The smell made his daughter sick and asthmatic. The house also was dark and gloomy, as the sun light could not get inside. Other problems were also revealed, such as water leakage from the house’s main door during rainy days as the door was old and rusty, in addition to some sanitation problems.

Habitat Jordan, through prompt shelter intervention, not only seeks to offer its beneficiaries a decent place to live, but also gives its beneficiaries

who live difficult conditions a big punch of hope and happiness. Therefore, Habitat Jordan team fixed all issues relating to unsafety and unsanitary conditions in the house with a focus on safety, security, accessibility, health, and WASH criteria.

Today, Rida enjoys the small front house garden, as he can go up and down easily without the risks of falling. He and his family also enjoy the sun rays that visit their house daily and lighten their home, and his daughter can sleep well without night coughs.

Habitat for Humanity Jordan is a non-profit housing organization, working in Jordan since 2002 with the Ministry of Social Development. It is dedicated to eliminating poor housing by repairing, rehabilitating, and restoring homes, hoping to empower people through this process, and creating a secure environment to foster stability and self-reliance. HFH Jordan implements two main projects in different areas in Jordan targeting vulnerable communities (Jordanians with low income, and refugees): The Revolving Fund Program (RFP), and Middle East Refugees Crisis Initiative (MERCII). The projects are implemented according to a clear and flexible plan that go in line with beneficiaries’ needs, their geographical distribution, and a specific timeline, adopting the vision: “A world where everyone has a decent & affordable place to live”. For more information visit the website: <https://habitatjordan.org/>

HUMANITY & INCLUSION_INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Humanity & Inclusion (HI) - Jordan has initiated its new project titled “Pre-school Inclusive Education” financed by GIZ as commissioned by the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany. This pilot project targets 50 children with disabilities to enroll them in Kindergarten level 1 and 2 in Zarqa Governorate.

The activities include individual children’s assessment and support through home visits to identify their needs (and refer them to the needed services), capacity building for teachers to improve the interaction in the classroom, and parents’ awareness sessions to support the access to education for their children with disabilities.

UNESCO defines inclusive education as a transformative process that ensures full participation and access to quality learning opportunities for all children, young people, and adults, respecting and valuing diversity, and eliminating all forms of discrimination in and through education.

While the Ministry of Education in Jordan and the Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities define it as the process of ensuring the right of all children with disabilities to access, attend, participate, and succeed in their mainstream local schools, by removing barriers to learning and participation.

Ideally, children with disabilities should not go through a long process of registration in schools per the Disability-inclusive education policies in Jordan as the Jordanian law preserves the rights of education for all children including children with disabilities. However, due to negative attitudes toward children with disabilities, and lack of the education system’s capacity, most of the children with disabilities still do not access formal education.

‘My son is 10 years old and he has never been to school. But he is eager to learn. I hope someday he can go – Jordanian mother of a child with cerebral palsy in Zarqa Governorate, Jordan.

Targeting private and public schools, the project is in progress to change the attitude of the school principals and teachers toward children with disabilities. What is hoped to achieve is a mind-shift toward children who initially thought are not able

to learn into children who can astonishingly achieve through different education strategies. Even the misconception of children with disabilities who should only belong to special education schools should gradually fade through capacity building and awareness raising at all levels of interventions including teachers, principals, families and communities. As one principal stated, the change can start from the schools themselves.

Finally, Humanity & Inclusion is enthusiastic about the outcomes from this partnership, and the international and national interest on inclusive education in Jordan as we believe that all the joint efforts and initiatives are a start point of change toward the importance of education for children with disabilities, leaving no one behind.



© O. van den Broeck/HI, Kindergarten, Jordan.

LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION_ SUPPORTING FEMALE ENTREPRENEURS / NURTURING WOMEN’S ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT

With strong patriarchal traditions, division of labor, limited availability of employment opportunities, and childcare, home-based businesses (HBBs) are some of the few options for many marginalized refugee and Jordanian women who wish to be economically active and make a living. Promoting women’s ability to participate in existing markets and women’s economic empowerment through cultivating female entrepreneurial skills has been a long-standing priority for LWF Jordan. Many LWF Jordan projects target women to address Jordan’s gender labor force disparities.

Last year, LWF Jordan partnered with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) to support 54 women in Za’atari camp and Irbid to set up their HBBs through grants and loans. Business plans were rigorously assessed by a panel composed of LWF, Irbid Municipality, and Ministry of Agriculture representatives before receiving financial support.

Samah Al-Shadoh, a 28-year-old mother of three, who aspired to become an entrepreneur, had one of the winning projects to receive financing. She is now a proud owner of a sweets-making business in Irbid. Despite facing the challenges of unstable market demand, she works to produce creative and innovative sweets designs to ensure a steady flow of income for her family. She says:

“It feels good to be a business owner and not just be standing at home. I also feel that I’m a strong woman because others that face similar challenges would have probably surrendered by now.”

Indeed, HBBs are a major vehicle to reduce women and youth unemployment in Jordan. Many women have dreams and ideas, but not all have the knowledge and support to start one. Realizing the importance of skill and confidence for the success of HBBs, LWF Jordan piloted a project called “Journey of Entrepreneurship” for a group of 30 women in cooperation with Thaka Jordan in November last year. The combination of soft and technical skills training helped participants unlock their business potential and build their entrepreneurial mindset. After completing the project, many female participants developed their business ideas. One of them is Reem Zakaria, 21, who, just like Samah, has dreamt of starting her own business; however, some challenges in her life prevented her from doing so. During the program, she developed the needed professional and financial skills. Besides, she received the moral support of the trainers and the rest of the women. Shortly after completing the program, Reem set up her sweets-making online shop, which is steadily gaining popularity. She shares:



“...my fear or anxiety about my future is starting to fade because I am working with clear and confident steps.”

Photograph 1: Samah Al-Shadoh, LWF Jordan/ Ana Catalina Arenas

HELPAGE INTERNATIONAL_MS. FATIMA ABDULLAH AL YAMANI, 64 YEARS OLD, FROM YEMEN

“I feel happy, content, and hopeful again”

Ms. Fatima Abdullah Al Yamani, a 64-year-old Yemeni, worked as a home economics teacher back in Yemen, where she lived with her husband and two sons. She says, “I used to love and enjoy my job a lot. I had a busy life with my family and my job, and doing a lot of activities, such as soap making, field farming, sewing workshops, beekeeping workshops, and training of businesswomen.”

About 6 years ago, my life turned upside down; my husband and sons died during the war in Yemen, which led to me leaving the school in which I worked for 30 years due to the war and the prevailing circumstances there and moving to Jordan. It wasn't easy for me to absorb all the changes and adapt to them; leaving work, losing my source of income, losing my loved ones, and being deeply saddened by the passing of my dear husband and sons. My mental health began to deteriorate day after day and I was suffering very difficult conditions, this was perhaps the most difficult time of my life, as I had never lived through such a mental state before.

I stayed in this bad psychological state for a long time until I began to lose hope of getting out of it until a team of volunteers from Zarqa working in one of the programs of the Institute of Family Health, funded and technically supported by HelpAge International, contacted me and explained the objective of the program and the services they provide. They filled out my information to get in touch with me and follow up on my mental health.

So I decided to begin the medical follow-up in their specialized clinics since I developed diabetes after the war, and indeed, I went and started monitoring my blood pressure and blood sugar levels, and received valuable medical advice from the nurse and the doctor there. And after several follow-up visits to the medical clinic, I was invited to participate in the support sessions for older people. I thought about it and decided to go in the hope of finding something that would change my life, meeting new people, changing my daily routine, and getting out of the rut.



Image source: Noor Al Hussein Foundation - Institute for Family Health

After attending the first support session for older people and getting to know the group, I felt a beautiful sense of relief. “I realize now that life did not end, and that hope will always be restored when we have friends around us and when we set goals for our lives. I learnt to break down my negative feelings into small parts and to deal with them one at a time. I could discuss my feelings with others in the group with whom I had lots in common and who showed understanding and support.

I hope that these activities customized for older people continue as they have a great positive impact on older people and that such an opportunity will be given to everyone who has gone through difficult experiences and needs the support of those around them.

AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE_ ALSHABAB PROGRAM

Program Updates and Activities Shabab's program Graduation- First cycle

AFSC carried out a graduation event to celebrate the closure of the first cycle of the Shabab Program. In this event, the youth participants showcase their experiences creating and implementing initiatives with their communities.

The event provided a space where the participant discussed how the implemented initiatives impacted their families and communities. The engagement with the local community realities allowed for the creation of four innovative and community-focused initiatives implemented in Amman and Zarqa, with the support of our local partners: Balkoneh, Ezshababak, Naya, and Athar.



Domestic violence initiative: Talk to Protect

The youth team launched this initiative in Zarqa to educate and bring attention to the issue of domestic violence. The community initiative focused on creating interactive awareness-raising through different activities that included: developing creative and engaging activities such as painting murals with local volunteers, screening movies, and launching essential discussions on domestic violence. Also, the youth team organized online campaigns to maximize engagement and spread awareness around reducing domestic violence in Zarqa.

Impact of technology on children initiative: Farah's journey.

This initiative aims to bring awareness of technology's negative impact on young children and reduce excessive screen time. The youth designed a playbook with a local early childhood expert that includes imaginative activities for parents and their children to spend quality time together away from phones. The youth implemented several sessions with parents in Al Rusifieh to distribute and introduce the book.



Labor Economic rights in Jordan initiative: Your Cause Matters.

The initiative aims to create a platform to enhance the protection of workers' economic rights. The youth team established a referral platform in collaboration with the Ministry of Labor to assess cases where workers without a union require legal help. The youth team utilized community resources and relationships to connect with specialized lawyers who acted as consultants and broadcast their mission on social media platforms. Also, the initiative included a series of consultation sessions with employers and workers in Sahab to increase collaborative communication.

MERCY CORPS LAUNCHING THE “RAWAFID” CAMPAIGN ON RAISING COMMUNITIES’ FLOOD RESILIENCE IN JORDAN

Summary: “Rawafed Campaign” is the first step in Mercy Corps’ direction towards building community resilience and response to floods in Jordan.

Jordan is located in a high-risk earthquake-prone area due to its proximity to the Rift Valley separating the African and Asian plates. This makes Jordan vulnerable to flash floods and landslides in Amman, Jordan Valley, Petra, and most other populated urban as well as rural areas. Climate change is likely to further exacerbate the frequency and intensity of already existing main hazards in Jordan, such as flash floods.

Through the “Building Communities Flood Resilience in Jordan” project, and in partnership with the Zurich Flood Resilience Alliance (ZFRA) Mercy Corps, in collaboration with Madaba Governorate, Madaba Works Directorate, the Civil Defense, and Madaba Directorate of Agriculture, and local communities, is working to reduce the vulnerability of communities susceptible to flooding through preparedness and mitigation activities. Jordan’s capacity to deal with natural hazard risk is still predominantly focused on the response stage, through the “Building Communities Flood Resilience in Jordan” project, Mercy Corps is working alongside the government entities concerned and the local communities to shift the focus of communities’ flood resilience to the prevention and preparedness to such disasters.

To raise the resilience and awareness of targeted Jordanian communities to better deal with torrential rains and floods, the project has launched an awareness-raising campaign on February 1, 2022, with the aim to implement a number of nature-based activities in the Ma’in area that will alleviate floods and torrential rains during the winter. The project targets another three flood-prone areas of Jordan including Sweimeh, Wadi Musa (Petra), and Northern Azraq.

Mercy Corps, in coordination with the Civil Defense Directorate, first embarked on conducting a 3-day awareness session on how to evacuate, rescue, and provide first aid assistance during flash floods, with sessions targeting Ma’in local community. Moreover, the organization aims to plant more than 250 forest trees over a two-day period, in coordination with the Madaba Agriculture Directorate, the Greater Madaba Municipality, and volunteers from

the local community of the Ma’in area. Trees will be planted on the sides of valleys and main roads to help prevent soil erosion during floods.

The “Rawafid” campaign will also support the cleaning and opening of the valleys’ streams to ensure proper drainage of rainwater, thereby limiting the possibility of rainwater flooding. These activities will be conducted in cooperation with the Directorate of Madaba Works, the Municipality of Greater Madaba, and volunteers from the local community in the Ma’in area over a period of five days.

At the beginning of the campaign event, Country Director, Mrs. Kari Diener, expressed how proud Mercy Corps is to partner with the official authorities for the implementation of this project, which aims to enhance the resilience of the flood-prone communities in Ma’in suffering from the impact of climate change.

Mrs. Diener further noted, “we hope that the Rawafed campaign will achieve the desired results and be the first step in Mercy Corps direction towards building the resilience and response of communities to floods.”

In his speech, the Governor of Madaba, Mr. Nayef El Hedayat, pointed out the importance of this type of project and the pivotal role it plays in addressing the phenomenon of sudden floods in the winter season. He also praised the role of Mercy Corps in supporting projects that build the resilience of local communities, including Ma’in in addressing various environmental and societal challenges.



[Link to body image 3](#)

Afterward, the mayor of Madaba, Mr. Ahmed Al-Zuhair, shed light on the most important severe effects caused by floods to the environment, infrastructure, services, and others, as these effects constitute 60% of the economic losses of the state.

Project Manager, Engineer Shorouq Abu Razzouq, indicated that the project “Building Communities Flood Resilience in Jordan.” targets the communities most at risk of flooding in four regions in Jordan, as the past years have witnessed the significant negative impact of sudden floods on communities during the winter season in particular, and that the project is based on a participatory approach that brings together all parts of society.

Mercy Corps Jordan through the ZFRA program is working with 11 flood-prone communities (in urban and rural areas) to measure their resilience, develop interventions with the communities to address flood risks, advocate with the government to address these gaps, and share learnings with government officials and in global-level policy, forums focused on climate change and disaster risk reduction. The interventions will not only strengthen physical infrastructure but also build social and human capital through activities such as the participatory development of community evacuation plans. The program will further facilitate the development and training of community advocacy committees – the committees will identify flood resilience support needs and advocate local government stakeholders on improved policies and investment. This participatory approach will equip communities with networks, platforms, and skills so they can actively engage with and influence local policies beyond the program ph



[Link to body image 4](#)

Caption: Rawafed Campaign, implemented by Mercy Corps, will last until the end of February 2022 and aims to build resilience and response of communities to floods in prone-flood regions of Jordan.

PLAN INTERNATIONAL_‘FIRST STEPS’, BIG PROJECT STEP

Narmin:

“Our children are our biggest investment”

Narmin Al-Khayrat is a Syrian mother of two children currently residing in Abu Nsair, Jordan.

Narmin Al-Khayrat is a Syrian mother of two children currently residing in Abu Nsair, Jordan.

She first heard about Plan International’s First Steps’, Big Step (FSBS) project from a past participant during the outreach phase.

Initially, Narmin was skeptical and doubtful of the sessions, she assumed that as a mother she already had the knowledge needed to raise her children. However, her expectations of the sessions massively transformed once she began interacting with the material and delving into the knowledge.

She began to comprehend how little one actually knows about being a parent.

According to Narmin, the most valuable takeaway from the sessions was learning about her children’s right and their psyche.

Realizing that all parents should provide united fronts to their children, Narmin eagerly relayed the information she gathered to her husband. **“He was very keen on gaining new information”**.

He became very emotionally considerate towards the children, explained Narmin. He would ask them questions about their day and was very careful

about his selection of words.

When disciplining her kids, Narmin began instilling a calmer approach and involved her kids in decision-making processes. She offered them a say in their lives which resulted in fewer tantrums and were more receptive to requests, discipline and chores.

Understanding that children need to feel the presence and involvement of their parents, Narmin made great efforts to involve herself in her kid’s playtime, instead of leaving them to entertain themselves. “I noticed the light in their eyes when I would join them”. Narmin now uses the time to play with her kids to strengthen their bond with each other. All these changes in Narmin’s household promoted a calmer and enriched environment for raising her children.

“I noticed a change in my behavior. I believe greatly in the significance of these sessions”. In fact, Narmin believed so much in the sessions that she became a facilitator herself, and began her training. She is now helping other mothers gain the knowledge she had the chance of attaining. “It is so important to change the culture of parenting here. I believe that the knowledge I gained once spread to other parents will change the overall scope of parenting and early childhood”.



“I thought could possibly prepare me for the reality of parenting. There are things we just aren't aware of regarding childhood and ECD”

INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL CORPS_SUPPORTING THE MENTAL HEALTH SYSTEM IN JORDAN WITH A NEW SMART PHONE APP

The COVID-19 pandemic has had an extraordinary impact on economies and health systems around the world. But as people have struggled with the illness and death of loved ones, the loss of jobs and income, and the prospect of an uncertain future, a mental health crisis has also emerged that has overwhelmed mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) services in many countries. Physical distancing measures have further restricted communities' access to key services, creating additional obstacles.

International Medical Corps' team in Jordan, led by Country Director Dr. Ahmad Bawaneh, began to investigate ways to meet increasing mental health needs while mitigating the disruption to MHPSS services. Supported by a grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the team designed the Relax app—a unique platform that improves access to MHPSS services in Jordan and facilitates their in-person and remote delivery. International Medical Corps worked in close collaboration with the Ministry of Health (MoH) and the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD) to develop this innovative app, increase the capacity of those providing MHPSS services in Jordan and ensure that the platform and its messages are in line with the country's COVID-19 strategies and objectives.

Using this app, International Medical Corps has already trained 50 non-specialist MoH staff about the Mental Health Gap Action Programme Intervention Guide (mhGAP-IG), which equips primary healthcare workers with the knowledge and skills they need to detect and manage clinical mental, neurological and substance-use disorders. We also have trained another 57 MoSD staff in mental health case management, early detection and intervention, enabling them to initiate proper cases management processes and referral if needed.

Although still in the early stages of implementation, the app has been celebrated by a number of key stakeholders in Jordan. In an interview with Al Ghad, a national newspaper, Director of the MoH's Disability and Mental Health Directorate Dr. Malak Al-Ori said, "The application is a step forward in making mental health services available in Jordan. International Medical Corps is making leaps in improving mental health services, in cooperation with the ministry."

The Relax app is available to download on iPhone through the [Apple store](#) and on Android through the [Google Play store](#). For more information about the Relax app and the work that International Medical Corps is conducting in Jordan, please contact [Ahmad Sallam](#).

JESUIT REFUGEE SERVICE_ JESUIT REFUGEE SERVICE

A new opportunity for Elaf, across the ocean

Elaf's smile lights up with the sun rays peeking out through the branches of the olive tree in front of JRS community center. She visited many times JRS centers to take part in English classes, activities and courses. Her family fled from Iraq, and she grew up in Jordan as a refugee. Soon, she will leave the country, embarking on a new chapter of her life.

As many other Iraqi refugees, she struggled to find opportunities to continue her studies in Jordan. She tells us that it was hard to find a scholarship as an Iraqi refugee in Jordan, and to sustain the costs of higher education such as the tuition fees for universities.

"I took so many activities at JRS, including English courses, and recently I attended a women empowerment workshop. It helped me so much, it improved my English, my personality, and it also made me make new friends" she says. "Also, JRS helped me to register to the WUSC sponsorship, and because of that, in August I will be resettled there, to Canada, to complete my higher education".

WUSC scholarship is the dream of many young refugees in Jordan wishing to complete their studies. WUSC is a Canadian international development non-profit organization dedicated to improving education, employment and empowerment opportunities for youth, women and refugees. The Student Refugee Program founded by WUSC combines resettlement with opportunities for higher education. The program supports over 150 refugee students per year through active partnerships with over 100 Canadian universities, colleges, and campuses. Crucial to the program's success is its unique youth-to-youth sponsorship model which empowers students in Canada to play an active role in the sponsorship of refugee students. The campus-based Local Committees raise funds and awareness for the program on their campus and in their community. They also play a critical role in of-

fering day-to-day social and academic support to newly-arrived students.

What is Elaf hoping to find in Canada? "Through the WUSC sponsorship I hope I will find a better opportunity for higher education, find a good career, and I hope one day I will be a role model in women's rights, especially refugees" she says.

Elaf also has a wish for all the people like her and her family, who had to flee conflicts and violence in their homeland: "I wish for refugees that they can find peace, I wish their kids can have a good education. And I wish that women will have more confidence in themselves, I wish they find a good life, a good opportunity. And I wish peace... that is what we all wish for".



09 February 2022, Amman. Elaf, 23 years old, a refugee from Iraq living in Amman, poses for a portrait in front of JRS Pathfinder Education and Community Center. Elaf benefitted from JRS scholarship support, and got a sponsorship from the WUSC Student Refugee Program to continue her higher education in Canada.

Photo by Silvia Mazzocchin/JRS

TDH_RASHA'S STORY

Over 673,000 registered Syrian refugees live in Jordan, that is nearly seven percent of Jordan's population. However, only 19.5 percent of them live in refugee camps. The Emirati Jordanian Camp (EJC) also opened in 2014 and has been hosting more than 6,000 Syrian refugees, more than half are children. Rasha*, is one of thousands of children who has been spending her childhood in refugee camps.

Rasha's Colourful Strength

Rasha, 15, was born in Syria a few years before the conflict broke out in 2011. In 2013, her parents decided to leave before the war took anything dear from them, **"I don't remember how Syria used to be; I was five years old when we left,"** Rasha recalls. The family arrived in Jordan by car and was registered to be transported to Za'atari Refugee Camp.

Back in Syria, the family lived in a six-room house, **"I was able to purchase a land of my own and built a beautiful house for us,"** Rasha's father, Kamel*, says. Although their financial situation was not above average, his work and efforts as a police officer bore fruit once he'd retired.

Growing up in the camp and being the youngest of her sisters, Rasha felt left out, **"Three of my sisters are married. One of them stayed in Syria and the other two were married in Jordan and now live in EJC,"** she said and added: **"I hated school—I had no energy to study. I just didn't."** At that time, Rasha dropped out of school, and later on, she was experiencing physical changes; she drank a lot of water, got tired easily and suffered headaches that made her sleep for long hours only to find out she had diabetes.

Being cooped up in a caravan while experiencing diabetes' symptoms made Rasha want to isolate herself even more, **"I couldn't believe my diagnosis. I was scared and angry; I felt like my life was put on hold,"** she shares. Her mother was diagnosed with diabetes around the same time, which put their household under strain. **"We tried to encourage Rasha to go back to school, but she wouldn't listen,"** her father says then continues: **"She couldn't accept having to live with medication for the rest of her life."**

In 2018, the family reunited with Rasha's older married sisters living in EJC. Rasha's situation was no different, in fact, she started surrounding her-

self with friends who negatively influenced her to escape the environment at home. Nevertheless, Kamel was able to get a job in the camp, **"A colleague at work recommended Terre des hommes (Tdh) to me and I was encouraged to seek help for my family,"** he mentions how he was introduced to Tdh.

In 2020, Kamel attended Tdh's sessions to help him improve his parenting skills and his wife was provided with the same sessions at home, **"The sessions came in handy; they helped us so much in improving our relationship with each other and with our children,"** Kamel says with a smile on his face. On the other hand, Rasha was convinced to go back to school, **"Tdh staff changed the way I perceived school. I can now see education as my powerful weapon!"** Rasha says with enthusiasm.

Rasha was warming up to school and participating in indifferent activities so she could learn ways to cope with anger, **"I learned how to sew and received a sewing certificate this year (2022), but most importantly, I can draw and colour on paper whenever I feel frustrated or helpless!"** Rasha says as she was carefully arranging her drawings.

[Syrian Refugees in Jordan as of February 2022 – UNHCR, 3 Feb 2022](#)

[10 Facts About the Syrian Refugee Crisis in Jordan – UN WFP USA, 14 Dec 2021](#)

[External Statistical Report on Registered Syrians as of 31 December 2021 – UNHCR, 2 Feb 2022](#)

[Operational Data Portal: Syria Regional Refugee Response – UNHCR, 31 Jan 2022](#)



Photo 1: Rasha holding one of her favourite drawings

Rasha wants to become an art teacher so she could paint the world with colours of hope, **“Children should prioritise their education. There is a solution to every problem, never give up,”** she confidently says.

“At first, Rasha didn’t seem like she was willing to accept any support. I was surprised to see her unleash so much energy! All she needed was a push, and her father’s efforts to learn from the parenting skills have positively impacted their household. Kamel has encouraged all of his children to participate in our activities,”says Hasan, a Case Manager at Tdh.

The ‘Life-Saving Essential Health Care and Protection’ project has been running in the Emirati Jordanian Camp with support of the European Union Humanitarian Aid and funds from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). So far, Tdh has reached **2,159** Syrian refugee beneficiaries, including **1,378** children and **262** youth, through providing services like awareness sessions on child protection and gender-based violence, structured mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), learning support services (LSS), positive parenting skills, structured support group sessions, child protection case management and the facilitation of safe spaces for children and youth.

IOCC_OMAR'S STORY

by Loren Hyatt, IOCC Jordan

As a young child, Omar struggled to see. His difficulties impacted every aspect of his life, including his ability to learn. Living as refugees in Jordan and trying to make ends meet, Omar's parents struggled to find the treatment their son desperately needed while also meeting the needs of their other five children.

However, in 2021, Omar's parents learned of IOCC's activities for refugees and vulnerable Jordanians with impairments and disabilities at the Noor al Hussein Foundation Institute for Family Health (IFH) clinic in Zarqa. Interested to learn more and see whether the clinic could provide assistance for Omar, his mother contacted IFH for an appointment with a disability specialist.

Omar first saw an optometrist for an eye examination. Due to the nature of his impairment, Omar was referred to an ophthalmologist for a more specialized diagnosis. The specialists confirmed Omar's need for both glasses and a low-vision device. Omar's family had been unable to afford these types of devices in the past. However, with support from the U.S. Bureau for Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM), Omar received both glasses and a magnifier. In addition, to address challenges Omar faced due to his impaired vision, he began occupational therapy with one of the project's rehabilitation specialists. Through these sessions, he improved his fine motor skills and ability to focus.

With support from IOCC, Omar can now participate in life more fully – from everyday interactions with his family to learning at school. His parents expressed great thanks for his progress and are happy to see him thriving. With the assistive devices and rehabilitation support he needs, Omar is not letting anything get in his way!



Omar participates in occupational therapy sessions

Community-Driven Waste Management Solutions: Integrating circular economy components to address waste management challenges

Under the GIZ's Waste to (Positive) Energy programme, ACTED is organizing dialogue forums within multiple municipalities to increase the knowledge about waste management among different population groups, including women, youth, religious leaders, agricultural workers and shop owners.

These sessions aim to enable community members to learn more about proper waste sorting and recycling practices. The sessions allow participants to exchange and create dialogue on common waste challenges and encourage them to be leading drivers of change and raise awareness within their communities. Following these dialogue platforms, these groups launched various community-driven initiatives to solve waste management challenges, often integrating circular economy components to leverage waste solutions for income generating opportunities.

Production of organic fertilizer: One of the supported participants from the religious group in Deir Alla has used the knowledge gained from the dialogue sessions to implement a circular waste initiative on his land. In July 2021, he decided to replace chemical fertilizers with plant and animal waste to nourish his produce. This initiative has allowed him to increase both the quantity and quality of his production, decrease input supply costs and reduce his waste production.

Don't throw away your dress: A woman who attended the dialogue sessions in Irbid is collecting unwanted and damaged cloths thrown away in her community and recycling the fabrics into shopping bags and masks. She then distributes the final products to her relatives, friends and neighbors. She has now inspired other women in her community to follow the same idea and create their own products.

Hot Spot Initiative: In Deir Alla, various dialogue forum groups joined together to launch a new community initiative. The initiative aims to improve waste collection, specifically carton and plastic waste, by setting up and managing seven easily accessible collection points within the municipality.

ACTED also helped connect them with the GIZ municipality focal point to ensure close collaboration and the sustainability of the initiative. All collected waste is now being transferred to Deir Alla sorting station and has exceeded the municipalities expectations, resulting in a 30% increase in the quantity of collected waste within the Deir Alla station.

These successful initiatives express the need to strengthen the roles of individuals within the local community, utilize their potential and unite groups from different nationalities, genders and ages to launch community-driven environmental projects. They are the first to be affected by environmental issues and the first to benefit from their resolution.

RELIEF INTERNATIONAL_HOW A LIBRARY BECAME A SAFE HAVEN

In Azraq Camp, Syrian Woman Supports Her Family and Community

Yara* works at one of Relief International's (RI) six libraries in the Jordanian refugee camps. "I love working at the library, I feel it's like my second home – no, you know, it's even my first home! I feel very relaxed and happy at the library," she says.

Before the war began in Syria, Yara lived a comfortable life. This all changed when Yara was forced to support her family alone.

"Before the war started in Syria, I was living happily with my husband and children. But not long after the start of the war, armed men came to our house and took my husband away. He never came back; I still don't know what happened to him.



"I waited for a year, hoping that he would return. Then, our house was attacked. We didn't feel safe, so we fled to Jordan."

Yara arrived at Za'atari camp in 2013 with her three sons and only a few items of clothing. Za'atari camp hosts more than 80,000 Syrian refugees; roughly 30% of these are women like Yara who suddenly found themselves as the heads of their households.

Yara was determined to find a way to support her children. "I started taking courses; I did a course on how to be a librarian, and eventually I got my current job as a librarian with RI. That was four years

ago, and I've been here ever since."

RI runs six libraries in Azraq and Za'atari camps. They were originally set up to help support the 2,000 young refugees enrolled in our educational programs but are open to all in the camps. Staffed by Syrian refugees, the libraries also provide a valuable means of employment.

"A lot of people use our library. Of course, our priority is students, but you would be surprised how many adults use the library. I have set up my own initiative to give classes and help women learn how to read and write."

For Yara, finding work has given her the strength and confidence to cope with the challenging circumstances she faces.

"When the conflict first started, I was very weak and shy. But after I started working, I became independent; now I take decisions with more confidence."

Yara's story is part of our series highlighting the lives and incredible resilience of Syrians affected by a decade of war.

*Name changed to protect identity.

RIGHT TO PLAY_OVERCOMING ADVERSITY AT HOME THROUGH PLAY BASED ACTIVITIES

Fatima, Syrian refugee and grandmother, well into her forties, was trusted with her two granddaughters' care after her son left back to Syria, unable to overcome the loss of her wife, who abandoned him and the two girls. Over the next 6 years, her granddaughters became distant from her and rejected their father, who kept in touch via phone calls. Fatima wanted to raise her granddaughters to overcome their situation and have a sense of normalcy, but felt afraid of becoming estranged from them if she was too strict in their upbringing.



In an already complicated context, the COVID-19 pandemic brought further strain upon many families, including Fatima's.

Many families experienced difficulties communicating and engaging positively while forced to stay at home for months.

As restrictions eased and activities resumed, Fatima was invited to partake in a community meeting with the ACCESS Core project to discuss how families and communities can develop resilience and overcome the challenges of the pandemic.

Though it took a great deal of bravery, she shared her family's story with peers in the community and spoke about how alienating it felt to be unable to communicate with her granddaughters and help them overcome the burdens they had borne so early in life.

"The [Syrian civil] war had uprooted my family, the life of a refugee had broken my son's family, and the [COVID -19] pandemic had worsened life for my granddaughters who call me 'Mother' even though I am not their true mother. I cannot afford to lose my granddaughters as well."

By regularly participating in Families Day's activities, Fatima learned to use simple activities and games to communicate with her granddaughters in a fun way. She had been skeptical at first, thinking that she would be too old and infirm. However, she quickly realized that it was still possible to build a stronger and more positive relationship with her granddaughters.

Fatima regained hope for her family and improved her communication skills and response to her granddaughters' mental health and social needs. After her experience, she would share her story with peers and encourage other parents to improve their communication skills to foster a better home environment.

ACCESS Core project activities focus on creating a positive play environment for the families, helping parents and caregivers find better ways to enhance vulnerable children's protection and promote social cohesion.



BLUMONT_ FOR WOMEN, ACCESSING NEW MARKETS LEADS HOME-BASED BUSINESSES TO SUCCESS

Encouraging home-based entrepreneurship is an important factor contributing to economic growth in Jordan. This is especially true for women.

When women run their own businesses – even from home – they can make an outsized impact on their household income and the local economy.

Together UNHCR and Blumont are facilitating this change and creating opportunities for both Syrian and Jordanian women to reach their potential as business owners. **Since 2019, the Jordan Livelihoods Project (JLP) has helped more than 260 Jordanian and Syrian refugee-owned home-based businesses (HBBs) become formally registered and licensed in Jordan. Working across seven host communities, the project is increasing economic opportunities and financial agency for women such as through helping business owners access new markets and customers.**

Ghada: Accessing new markets through local retailers

Ghada, a Syrian refugee, fled to Jordan in 2012. A keen home cook, she soon started trying to sell her food to friends and neighbors but without the proper tools was limited in what she could do.

neighbors with no direction or business knowledge,” Ghada explained.

After applying the the JLP though, Ghada has been able to expand her home-based business.

“Blumont helped launch my business properly. They helped me register my business, provided me with business and financial training, bought the equipment I needed, and most importantly, supported me in accessing the market.”

It is this access to selling her products, like stuffed eggplant, at a supermarket in Irbid, which has really allowed Ghada’s business to grow. In addition to higher sales, Ghada said she was proud to share her food with many new customers and hopes to own a shop to sell her products all around Jordan.



“I started with borrowed pots and mixers from the

Shereen: Advertising and selling products online

In 2013, Shereen fled the war in Syria with her three children to seek safety. Supporting her family was a challenge at first, but through the JLP she saw an opportunity to turn her artisanal skills in Mosaics making into a source of income.

With support, Shereen was able to purchase the tools needed to expand her business, as well as obtain a license and register with the Ministry of Industry and Trade. As part of the programme, Shereen was also given specialized one-to-one mentoring sessions, business counseling, and social media training. During the training, Shereen learned how to set up social media pages for her business and create content that would help bring in sales. Through opening an account with the e-commerce platform, Open Sooq, she also soon connected her customers across Jordan. “I am proud of my business. It not only provides financial income, but it also gives me purpose. Through my social media and online platforms, I can sell my products and meet customers from different governorates.”



Suaad: Joining the global market through social media

After graduating from the university specializing in vocational education, Suaad, a Jordanian national, was unable to find a job in her community. Despite this, she persevered and with a small budget, decided to open a crocheting business.

Over the last couple of years though, Suaad struggled to sell her work beyond her rural community and therefore, jumped at the chance to apply for the JLP with the hope of improving her sales and finding new customers.

After receiving, social media training and financial support from Blumont to advertise online, she developed a successful Facebook page with content that attracted buyers near and far. “After sponsoring my posts on Facebook, I got many orders from Jordan and abroad,” she said.

The social media page also helped connect her with a puppet theater that wanted to place an order. Suaad soon hired four women to meet the growing demand for her crocheted puppets and applied the management skills she learned from Blumont trainings.

From her remote village, Suaad is proud to be connected to other communities through her business.

WAR CHILD LOCALLY CREATED AND EVIDENCE-BASED: WAR CHILD HOLLAND AND ITS PARTNERS WORKING TOWARDS BRIDGING GAPS.

War Child Holland in Jordan

War Child Holland's work in Jordan has to date been strongly rooted in quality education and child protection support to conflict-affected children. Now, under a new strategic approach, it is transitioning to a more integrated 'care system' approach and to children beyond the camps settings.

This shift has meant moving its child protection and innovative education methods under a more holistic, mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) programming umbrella that addresses the broader contextual factors children and youth face.

To achieve its aims, it is broadening its support to children's wider support network – their families, communities, teachers and other caregivers, recognising that their competencies and wellbeing impact directly on those of the children in their care. In this way, parents, teachers, children and youth well-being is seen as a pre-condition for ensuring a child's protection, excelling in education and grasping the opportunities available to them.

War Child is implementing this approach by developing a set of integrated and innovative evidence-based methods, and then setting out to test their impact through a simultaneous rigorous research agenda. Importantly, it also shares these methods with key humanitarian and development actors with the aim of reaching more millions of children than it reaches alone.

For instance, its innovative EdTech Can't Wait To Learn method, already researched, tested and implemented in contexts worldwide, was approved by Jordan's Ministry of Education to adopt across the nation's formal education sector and to adopt across the informal education sector through other civil society organisations.

Two other new exciting initiatives – both already showing great promise – are our Nurturing Families and our Caregiver Support Intervention. These are currently being piloted, tested and adapted in Jordan with support from local partners in anticipation of scaling them more widely through other strategic partners. Both methodologies aim to provide improved protection and psychosocial support to children, families and their wider communities.

The Nurturing Families methodology, now being piloted with partners in Lebanon and Jordan, aims to support particularly vulnerable families to function better, feel stronger and ultimately offer a nurturing environment for their children. Addressing the family as a system of support, it aims to ensure that all members work together as a powerful protective unit – with more positive interactions and less conflict.

The Caregivers Support Intervention, aimed at a broader range of children and their caregivers, is currently being tested to understand how it can best be scaled.

One of War Child Holland's key partnership priorities this year is to maintain and enter into strong new partnerships with organisations active in its sphere of work, and in particular focused on integrated psychosocial support (PSS) services. This will help ensure that War Child Holland and its partners remain active and relevant to the very children, youth and their communities who need their support.

For further information, please contact:
Laura Miller
Country Director – Jordan
Regional Representative for the Middle East
Laura.Miller@warchild.nl



UNITED MISSION FOR RELIEF AND DEVELOPMENT _ MEET DILAL (BENEFICIARY STORY)

The youngest child of 8 and a Palestinian refugee, Dilal was diagnosed with severe hearing loss at 2 years old which subsequently left her unable to communicate with her family and friends.

Growing up in a refugee camp with limited access to healthcare and other medical resources, Dilal has faced countless roadblocks her entire life. She struggled to communicate her needs to her mother and found it even more difficult to create meaningful relationships with others.

It didn't take long for Dilal to feel isolated, cut off from the rest of the world. Finding it nearly impossible to play the same games as her siblings and friends, Dilal began to spend most of her time alone, giving up the hope that she would ever have the same opportunities as her peers.

Not only was Dilal lonely, but her deafness also meant that she would never be able to attend school or get any sort of education.

While in Jordan on our Medical Mission, UMR met with Dilal and connected her with our doctors and audiologists and she quickly received hearing aids.



Dilal is currently in the process of learning how to communicate with her family and friends now that she can hear proper sound and speech.

We are so excited for Dilal to experience a world full of opportunity, happiness, and love. Confident that she will be able to attend school, Dilal has a chance to pursue her dreams and create meaningful relationships with those around her.