

JORDAN INGO FORUM NEWSLETTER



JORDAN
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FORUM

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Artwork by Fowza Abdullahi Abukar, artist and refugee from Somalia, for JRS Jordan

December Update JIF SECRETARIAT

In today’s complex and rapidly changing world, it is more important than ever to find ways to collaborate and work together effectively. This is especially true in the context of the Syrian refugee protracted crisis, where the challenges are numerous and the stakes are high. One way to improve the delivery of services is through partnerships between NGOs and governments.

NGO-government dialogue can be an effective tool for improving project development, approval, and implementation. By working together, NGOs and governments can share knowledge and expertise, identify common goals, and develop strategies to address shared challenges. This type of collaboration can also help to ensure that projects are aligned with the needs and priorities of the communities they serve, and that they are implemented in a transparent and accountable manner.

However, navigating the complex environment of NGO-government partnerships can be challenging. It is important for both sides to be open and transparent in their communication, and to establish clear roles and responsibilities from the outset. It is also essential to have strong systems in place for monitoring and evaluation, so that progress can be tracked and any necessary adjustments can be made.

Another important issue that needs to be addressed is the revision of the refugee coordination system. In order to ensure that this system is fit for purpose, it is necessary to bolster resource mobilisation and improve humanitarian development coherence. This may require prioritising certain projects or activities based on available resources, in order to ensure that the most pressing needs are addressed first but this does need a robust overview of humanitarian needs in the country.

At the same time, there is a growing recognition within the humanitarian community of the need for a roadmap towards localisation. Many INGOs are revising their strategies and shifting towards a more localized approach, which requires a strong collective commitment to accompany national partners. This will help to ensure that services are delivered in a way that is equitable and meaningful for the communities they serve.

This year will be a busy one for regional events, with the Syria CSO summit, the Brussels conference, and the Global Refugee Compact all taking place. These events provide an important opportunity for NGOs and governments to come together and discuss ways to improve services, regulatory frameworks and address shared challenges. It is essential that we use these forums to raise the voices of those we serve, and to work together with our UN colleagues to find solutions that are effective and sustainable.

In conclusion, facilitating dialogue between Donors, UN, NGOs and governments is an important step toward improving services. By working together, we can identify common goals, share knowledge and expertise, and develop strategies that are fit for purpose and responsive to the needs of the communities we serve. By doing so, we can help to create a more inclusive and equitable world for all.

Badia's Vultures Story

Badia's Vultures: Mafraq's young footballers train as environmental ambassadors Mafraq – Ten-year-old Emad marched angrily off the pitch after losing a football game against his clubmates. His coach grabbed him and said: "That's not how we deal with losing, go back and shake their hands." The young boy did as he was told, but not happily.

"He is one of our best players, but I know he is a sore loser," said Radi Al-Masa'eed with a smile. Al-Masa'eed, and five other coaches, volunteer at "Badia's vultures" football academy in Um Al-Jummal, a village in Mafraq governorate in northern Jordan. More than 55 children aged between six and 17 come to the academy for football training and other recreational activities, free of charge. The coaches believe that providing a safe space for young people is vital to steer them away from drugs and violence, as well as boosting their skills, but resources are limited.

"Most of us have regular jobs. For instance, I serve in the military, and others serve in the civil defense, so we had to make time to help the academy. The lack of support and resources meant we had to take out loans to afford equipment and pitch reservations. There were times when we could not take part in tournaments because we could not afford transportation," said Al-Masa'eed.

Tackling environmental issues

Oxfam has worked in Um-Jummal and three other municipalities in Mafraq since 2017, operating a recycling scheme to collect and sort recyclable material from households and commercial entities. Mafraq hosts a large number of Syrian refugees; this initiative has helped mitigate the added pressure on municipal waste services caused by the rapid population growth, diverting 400 tons of waste from landfills over the past two years.

Through this initiative, Oxfam has provided short term income opportunities for more than 600 vulnerable Jordanians and Syrian refugees since 2020. They have collected and sorted recyclable waste, as well as raising awareness about sustainable waste management practices as part of Oxfam's community engagement teams.

The football academy offered an opportunity for Oxfam to engage with young people about the importance of taking care of the environment, through an activity they are passionate about.

"The coaches approached us for support, and we saw a great opportunity to use this platform to connect with young people and the local community through football," said Asma'a Thekerallah, Oxfam's project manager in Mafraq governorate.

The academy needed new kits, football shoes, and jerseys, which Oxfam supplied during a recent event. "This small contribution meant that we connected with the kids and the community much better," added Thekerallah.

Oxfam provided awareness sessions for the children about sorting and recycling waste and sound environmental practices, and the children will take part in clean up campaigns organized for schools in the area. Oxfam installed recycling bins around the pitch, and the children will encourage others to use these for water bottles and other plastic waste.



Emad attended an awareness session organized by Oxfam and the academy and learned about how he can take part in sorting and recycling waste.

"I only heard about recycling through the sessions ... honestly I did not care for this kind of stuff that much, but when it became part of our football activities I started to pay more attention," said Emad. Coach Al-Masa'eed added: "When we combine topics like recycling with football, kids become more excited and engaged. We'll work with Oxfam to provide these kids with learning sessions so they can advocate on these topics in their schools with their classmates."

At a recent event, Oxfam staff and the academy's coaches played a friendly match, which revealed the skills gap between football coaches and humanitarian workers. Despite valiant efforts, Oxfam's team was regrettably humbled on this occasion but looks forward to a rematch.

MEDAIR

In partnership with a Medair affiliated hospital in Amman, and in close coordination with UNHCR and Chaine D'espoir (CDE), Medair has been able to support 11 heart surgeries (6 pediatric, 5 adults). Medair became aware of a significant gap in services for hemodialysis patients and for patients requiring cardiovascular surgery, and under funding from BPRM has been able to cover the cost of these advanced cardiovascular surgeries for refugees (Syrian, Iraqi and Yemeni).

Wateen is a Syrian baby, living with her family in Irbid, and was the first to have open heart surgery paid for by Medair. Her mother Heba, expressed her thankfulness when our team conducted a follow-up visit:

"I didn't imagine that I would find support in this short time, I feel happy when I see Watan eating, drinking, and sleeping. I'm thankful to the people who saved our child's life. I was afraid of losing my daughter but now I can sleep."

In response to emerging needs within Jordan, Medair has provided specialized capacity development sessions for children with hearing disability and impairment and their principal caregivers in basic sign language. Since October 2022, Medair has delivered 30 sessions, targeting 45 children and their caregivers in Amman, Irbid and Mafraq. It is the first time Medair has delivered this activity. The focus of the sessions is to self-empower participants and improve communication between children and their caregiver. Topics

covered in the sessions included the alphabet, numbers, colours, food, culture and family.

Khadija is one of the mothers who attended the sessions. Her son Rami is 10 years old and lost his hearing after a bomb fell next to their home in Syria. She explained how the sessions have made a difference for Rami:

"After the first session, when he back he came and hugged me, he was so happy. He was laughing, and trying to express that he found many deaf children like him, and that made him so excited"



"I didn't imagine that I would find support in this short time, I feel happy when I see Watan eating, drinking, and sleeping. I'm thankful to the people who saved our child's life. I was afraid of losing my daughter but now I can sleep."

EFE-JORDAN

EFE-Jordan submission - EFE Summit 2022

EFE-Jordan Hosts the EFE Network Annual Summit in Amman

Education for Employment Jordan hosted the annual EFE Networking and Learning Summit. This event allowed the affiliates, global experts, and pioneers to connect and exchange expertise in the field of youth training and employment.

Supported by Bank of America, the three-day event was held in the Grand Hyatt Amman Hotel. During the summit, a number of innovative workshops, several teambuilding & collaboration activities were conducted, which allowed the EFE staff and attendees to share and extend their knowledge and skills in education & training, program management, business and partnership development, and several more fields, with the purpose of advancing the network's strategy and accelerating youth employment solutions across the region.



EFE Network has affiliates in Jordan, Egypt, Morocco, Palestine, Tunisia, Yemen, and Saudi Arabia. The Affiliation also has global offices in the United States (Washington, DC), Europe (Madrid), and the UAE (Dubai) which provide assistance, training, expertise, and networks to support the regional affiliates.



EFE-Jordan is a local NGO that leads a national initiative to create job opportunities for unemployed Jordanian youth, by providing targeted market-driven vocational, technical and job-readiness training programs that meet the needs of potential employers

BLUMONT

From Farm to Market: Generating Year-Round Income for Smallholder Farmers



Anwar opened a food processing plant in Mafraq, Jordan, to fill agricultural production gaps.

When Anwar was growing up, he learned a lot about farming by working in his family’s agricultural business in Jordan. Wanting to follow in his father’s footsteps, Anwar pursued a university degree in agricultural engineering.

In his work and studies, Anwar noticed an absence of agricultural food processing facilities for farmers in Mafraq. Processing and storage units were only accessible for those farming on a large scale, leaving smallholder farmers with limited means for packaging and keeping produce fresh. The only available facility for smallholder farmers was in Amman—a 69-kilometer (43 miles) journey—and farmers had to cover the cost of transportation and risk products being damaged by heat or travel.

“The costs of sending produce to the available units were too high for them to afford,” said Anwar. “They also couldn’t store produce over time, so they were forced to sell it right after harvest and often had to accept lower prices.”

To fill this gap, Anwar opened Souhoul Al Ola in Mafraq, with the goal of offering packaging and storage services to smaller, local farms. After identifying a location for the facility, he sought out funding to purchase equipment and start operations.

Anwar found critical support in the Smart Desert project, an effort to help improve practices, working conditions, and year-round income opportunities for Jordan’s agricultural workers. The project

helped him install a food production line. Now, farmers can pay a small fee to send their produce to Souhoul Al Ola where trained workers inspect and sort it to ensure only quality fruits and vegetables are sold. The produce is then packaged and stored in the freezer or prepared for sale.

Funded by the Agence Française de Développement through a consortium led by the International Union for Conservation of Nature, Smart Desert is working with Jordanians and Syrian refugees in the agricultural sector. Blumont, an international NGO that is part of the Smart Desert consortium, works with Souhoul Al Ola and other businesses to establish sustainable, year-round income opportunities.

At Souhoul Al Ola, farmers have the option of immediately selling their products or storing it in the facility for sale in the off-season. Some farmers choose to sell their produce directly to Souhoul Al Ola to guarantee the sale of their crops each season. Anwar then sells products to local markets or distributors and uses profits to continue operations.

Funding from the project has allowed Anwar to hire 100 people, 70 percent of whom are Syrian refugees. Souhoul Al Ola is also ensuring that employees are processing and packaging local farm products in a safe working environment—a drastic change for many of these daily laborers.



By working at Souhoul Al Ola, Fatima is supporting her family of six and saving up for school.

Fatima, an 18-year-old Syrian refugee who works at the processing unit, dropped out of school at a young age to support her family. She often resorted to taking on labor-intensive jobs that were unsafe for women. At Souhoul Al Ola, she and other employees have a safe place to work, and her rights are protected by labor laws.

“I used to work in farms where the conditions were not suitable for women as we did not have bathrooms and had to leave our houses before dawn,” shared Fatima. “Working at Souhoul Al Ola has been a shift in my life. I am now treated with respect.”

With the income she earns, Fatima is now able to support her family of six. She is also saving up to go back to school, where she hopes to pursue a degree in medicine.

For many in agriculture, income and reliable work come and go with each growing season. Mowafaq, a 30-year-old Jordanian, had struggled to build a consistent livelihood, but Souhoul Al Ola has given him a new opportunity.

“I have been looking for job opportunities for years. I wanted a stable job, which is rare in the agriculture sector,” said Mowafaq. “I am grateful for this opportunity because now I have a stable income.”



Mowafaq found stable work at Souhoul Al Ola.

With support from Blumont, Souhoul Al Ola continues to grow, and Anwar has hopes to reach even more people.

“The production line has allowed me to grow exponentially. We can now process and sell 50 percent more,” said Anwar. “We have also begun exporting our food to Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt, among other countries.”

CARE

Aisha Alyassin - "I love you Mama"

Aisha Alyassin was only one year-old when her father passed away at the beginning of the Syrian crisis, leaving behind him his wife and 5 children; 4 boys and a girl; Aisha.

Aisha has no memories of her father neither her homeland since her mother was forced to seek refuge in Jordan back in 2016. Aisha and her family faced difficulties crossing the borders until they reached Azraq refugee camp. Afterwards, they moved to live in the city of Azraq.

Aisha used to feel lonely, and she only has a few friends. Every day, she had to walk on her own to school, which was far away from her house. Aisha does not know how to express herself or her feelings to her family and friends. These difficulties significantly affected Aisha on personal and academic levels. Her mother Asma says "Aisha is the youngest, and the only female between 4 young males. She was treated with extra care. Yet, she never communicates what she wants, she never expresses herself or her issues. You also won't hear any courtesy words."

Aisha joined the Social Emotional Learning program implemented by the psychosocial support team at CARE International in Jordan and funded by the Austrian Development Agency. A program that supports individuals' mental health and helps them solve problems, communicate, and understand each other. Develop new sets of knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop their characters and allow them to manage their feelings and emotions, achieve personal and group goals, feel empathy for others, create and maintain positive and supportive relationships, and make responsible and ethical decisions.

When the program started, Aisha had to break the fear and shyness barriers. She used to stand still at the hall door lacking the self-confidence to join the

group. With the help of CARE staff, Aisha learned new skills in how to build good friendships, deal with tension, control her reactions, enhance her self-confidence, ask for help and most importantly express her feelings and thoughts. Aisha says "When I came to CARE, I made new friends. I also learned many new things like don't harm yourself, don't harm others, and listen to your friends. My team and I won several games throughout the program activities."



Aisha Alyassin, 11 years old, a Syrian refugee participates in a drawing workshop inside CARE Community Center in Azraq, Jordan

The program wasn't only for children, their parents had their own sessions too. Asma - Aisha's mother - joined the program and learned about its goals and benefits. Asma says "The program was an eye opener for me, Aisha and I learned a lot. Aisha was unable to express simple feelings nor was able to share things like "Mom, I love you, or thank you, Mother". Today, she can talk about her problems and share love. She even knows how to handle people and different situations. Asma added with a sense of humor "Aisha nowadays does not stop talking."

Aisha aims to complete her university education and become an art teacher; she loves to express herself through drawings. She now has many friends at her school and the CARE community center. Aisha visits the center frequently, and her mother encourages her to participate in all the available activities and trainings provided by the CARE psychosocial support team as she witnessed the positive impact of such interventions on her child's personality.



Aisha Alyassin, 11 years old, a Syrian refugee living in Azraq, Jordan

AMERICAN FOUNDATION FOR RELIEF AND RECONCILIATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

General David Greer Scholarship

This year, the American Foundation for Relief and Reconciliation in the Middle East (American FR-RME) created The General David Greer Scholarship to provide educational scholarships through financial assistance to deserving refugee youth enrolled in grades 9-12 (high school). The scholarship is named after the organization's former and beloved executive director, General David Greer.

General Greer had a vision to help refugees empower themselves and improve their lives through education. In loving memory of General Greer's commitment to service and education, American FRRME has established a tribute to honor his legacy – an annual scholarship that would enable dedicated, hardworking Iraqi refugee youth with the opportunity to stay in school and continue their education.

The recipients of the scholarship must be active in supporting the community where they live and show an eagerness to achieve success through education by intending to pursue post-high school course of study at either a college/university, post-secondary educational institution, or vocational training school. This year the American FRRME Board approved that the funding of scholarships for refugees in Amman and in Madaba, Jordan. The applicant must demonstrate positive-impact involvement in High School and/or within his or her respective community and demonstrate continued improvement and success in scholarship and community involvement. The applicant must

also submit two short statements explaining their educational goals, goals following high school, and address the question of what effect this award will have on the applicant's future.

Congratulations to the first group of scholarship recipients on this achievement. We send you best wishes and hope for a brighter future ahead!



Meet Ban from Erbil, Iraq. Ban is a recent recipient of the first annual General David Greer and has lived in Jordan for the past six years. Her favorite subject in school is history and while living as a refugee in Jordan, she has pursued her passion of history by visiting local sites like Petra and Wadi Rum.



The Madaba recipients of the first annual General David Greer Scholarship

DRC

The RYSE project: Opening doors for A Woodwork painter Farouk, an expert woodwork painter, never stopped believing that an opportunity will knock at his door



From rural Damascus to Karak, Farouq with his five children came to Jordan in 2012 seeking protection. Today, Jordan is the second largest refugee-hosting country per capita, with more than 650,000 Syrian refugees currently living in the country.

After losing everything to the conflict, Farouq worked hard to make ends meet, snatching every opportunity possible to secure a better life for his family. “Once I arrived here I took whatever jobs I could find, from painting to fixing furniture, working for other people,” said Farouq. Back in Syria, Farouq used to own his own workshop, but after moving to Jordan, opening his own shop was not easy.

After being introduced to DRC, Farouq decided to participate in the Resilient, Youth, Socially and Economically Empowered (RYSE) project in Karak. Under the umbrella of the project, which is funded by Novo Nordisk Foundation the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) is delivering the Graduation Approach, which aims to help families in Madaba, East Amman, and Karak, through a series of intensive skills and technical trainings, along with support to increase their financial literacy thus giving them opportunities to become self-reliant.

“My wife and I started to attend the financial literacy sessions. Our life is built on participation and sharing, and these sessions strengthened our bond,” he said. Through the sessions, Farouq and his spouse gained knowledge about the terminology and the marketing techniques of his trade, which contributed to better household and business management, in addition to meeting new people and forming new friendships.

Farouq received a business grant to help him buy tools and start his own business, as part of the process of helping families graduate from needing assistance to self-reliance. Farouq is now a proud business owner who is eager to learn more, develop more and open more colourful doors for his family.

Youssef's Story

Youssef, 4 years old, suffers from hypoxia that affected the balance area in the brain, causing him to have a problem in balance and difficulty in performing motor tasks such as running, going up and down stairs and moving independently, which led to weakness in the muscles of the onyx and lower limbs.

Yousef was transferred by another organization to SAMS Rehab Center in Amman, Jordan, where he was examined by the rehabilitation doctor and developed a treatment plan for him and transferred to the physical therapist who began to evaluate the patient's condition and began to implement the treatment plan, and today after 25 sessions for 6 months we met Youssef and his mother, who said, "Youssef has become more balanced steps, he can play with children, he has regained his childhood."

The physiotherapist says that Youssef visits the doctor every 10 sessions to evaluate his condition by the doctor, and then his plan is developed according to the case and Youssef's condition responded to the treatment quickly.

Youssef's mother says about the service provided, "Every time we come to the center, Youssef is overjoyed, as the therapist has become his friend and feels that Treatment time is time to play, I thank everyone who helped treat Youssef"

SAMS Rehabilitation center was opened in Wadi Al-Seir Comprehensive Health Center a year ago in cooperation with the Ministry of Health, during this year medical services were provided to more than (1256) of them 20% of children.





Jordan Red Crescent's Mobile Clinic in close collaboration with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and Partner National Societies has exceeded all expectations with the COVID-19 outbreak in Jordan. The Mobile Clinic has achieved numerous milestones by maintaining primary health care services and health awareness efforts with the Jordanian Ministry of Health (MoH) at remote community areas all throughout the country. The combination of the mobile clinic service with other humanitarian actions provided a comprehensive approach to vulnerable communities. A few of these milestones entail: spreading awareness and encouraging the public to take the COVID vaccinations via SMS and through Jordan Red Crescent's volunteers in all branches, It is significant to note that "in cooperation with the Heads of Jordan Red Crescent's branches in various governorates, the mobile clinic was launched and reached 432 patients in Balqa, Ma'an and Mafraq; 191 in Balqa, 133 in Mafraq, and 108 in Ma'an with a total of 156 males and 276 female in a single campaign. We greatly applaud and appreciate the efforts of the Jordan Red Crescent volunteers and employees. Each and every individual has dedicated their time, effort and support in order to ensure the Mobile Clinic was and still is an on-going success.



As Jordan Red Crescent's Mobile Clinic continues its services around Jordan, the Clinic is looking ahead to plan for stronger mobile clinic operations in order to make it more accessible to more communities and cities all throughout the country. The Mobile Clinic will continue ensuring the use of good quality supplies while planning to renovate an additional mobile clinic.

The IFRC is incredibly proud and grateful of Jordan Red Crescent's Mobile Clinic active efforts. May they continue encouraging and inspiring individuals to care about the health and safety of people throughout Jordan.

The level of empathy and compassion from Jordan Red Crescent's volunteers and employees is outstanding to observe. Young professionals throughout the country are inspired by these endeavors and are now wanting to be a part of such an amazing cause.



INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL CORPS

International Medical Corps Relax Hotline Saves Young Lives

Protection and Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) remain priority interventions among vulnerable populations in Jordan, including among the refugees and host communities that have suffered from economic hardships as the country continues to accommodate for the needs of its diverse communities. IMC has provided more than 200,000 consultations over the past four years (64,951 in 2020). In 2020, of all MH beneficiaries, 68% were Syrian, 21% Jordanians, 4% Iraqis and 7% were from other nationalities (Sudanese, Palestinians, Somali, Egyptians and other).

More than half (56%) of these consultations were attended by female beneficiaries. Most common Mental Neurological Substance Use disorders diagnoses were: Depression (21.3% females and 12.2% males); Generalized Anxiety Disorder (15.3% females and 14.2% males); and Epilepsy (10.9% females and 15.0% males).



COVID-19 has exposed how susceptible the fragile community to economic and healthcare shocks, given their unreliable sources of income and greater psychosocial challenges. Coping mechanisms vary, with most exhibiting resilience and utilizing pre-existing coping skills to recover, particularly among Syrian refugees.

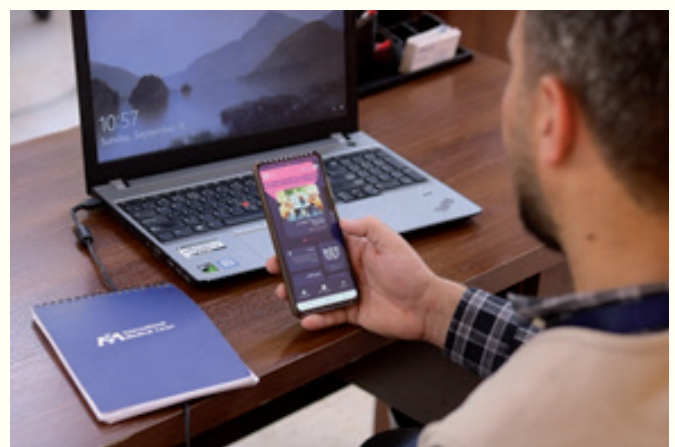
Some, however, require basic emotional support and referrals to improve their psychosocial well-being, whilst others specialized services. Consequently, specialized MHPSS services remain crucial in Jordan. Access to comprehensive MHPSS services in urban and remote areas, remains challenging due to the lack of available MHPSS services

at the Primary Health-Care level (PHC), only made worse due to poor recognition and stigmatization of MH issues.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE BENEFICIARY

Samah is a 38-year-old female Jordanian who lives alone and works at a local university. Samah is divorced and although she has relatives, the relations with her family had been strained for a long time. Prolonged family conflicts have caused a lot of psychological suffering for her. Added to that, economic hardships had left her unable to provide for the relatives that depended on her income. Over some time, Samah had felt trapped as she could not find support from anyone she could consider close.

In January 2020, Samah contacted International Medical Corps operator at Relax Hotline, which offers mental health and psychosocial support services (MHPSS). An International Medical Corps operator found Samah in severe emotional distress, crying and speaking in a quivering voice. The operator understood that Samah needed Psychological First Aid and used active listening techniques to create a safe environment where Samah could feel comfortable enough to talk freely and share her story and feelings without the fear of judgement.



Audai Al Smadi, Mental Health Hotline Operator

Samah shared with the operator that she wished to end her “lousy life”. She explained that she tried to commit suicide two months prior, by intentionally causing a car accident. She survived and continued to suffer from low mood, sleep disturbances, low appetite, recurrent suicidal thoughts, and workplace conflicts.

INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL CORPS' ASSISTANCE AND HOW IT HELPED

It was challenging to manage the severe emotional distress and to prevent the situation from escalating into suicidal and self-harm behaviors in someone who was calling the helpline for the first time. The hotline operator took as much time as was necessary to hear Samah out and through careful discussion succeeded in convincing her to pledge not to make any suicidal or self-harm attempts. Based on Samah's consent, the operator then helped link her to the nearest mental health clinic as an emergency case and provided the Mental Health (MH) team with a brief about her situation. The MH operator contacted Samah on the next day and was able to confirm that she visited the clinic and learned about the support that could help her cope.

Similarly, the clinic updated the hotline operator about Samah's visit at the clinic and reported that she was under the management of the multidisciplinary MH team. Following a tailored management plan that included psychological therapy in combination with psychotropics, one month later, Samah contacted the MH operator to personally thank him for his kind support that he provided her over the phone at a very critical moment of her life. She especially appreciated the operator's approach that made her feel comfortable to seek support whenever she needed, that the operators were there for her anytime when she felt that *Mental Health Operator Using Relax Application* she needed to speak with someone. "It's the first time that I feel comfortable and better than before. I am glad to tell you that I am on a treatment plan with a good

progress," Samah said.

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic in Jordan, International Medical Corps (IMC) launched the free online application "Relax" to expand mental health and psychosocial support services and making them available to a much wider population online, at a time when in-person access became restricted. The application was developed with three main aims: to raise public awareness through offering information on common psychological and neurological disorders as well as tips on how to deal with stress during the COVID-19 pandemic; to provide contact and access information for all IMC community mental health and psychosocial support clinics in Jordan; and to open a direct support hotline, which was immediately accessible, free of charge and completely confidential. The Relax application and hotline plays an important role in improving access to mental health and psychosocial support services for those most at-risk and vulnerable who would otherwise not be able to access the service due to physical and financial barriers.

Since its launch in October 2021, the hotline received more than 800 calls from different age groups, both men and women, and from people from diverse community backgrounds, including refugees. Almost 60% of callers were identified and referred to the nearest Community Mental Health clinics who provided them with comprehensive MH package of services via a multidisciplinary team using a bio-psychosocial model. Mental Health Operators at the hotline receive rigorous training from International Medical Corps and are available 24/7 to respond to a variety of call inquiries.

LWF Jordan offers a second chance to juveniles through community service

This year, LWF Jordan’s “Aman” community centers in Irbid and Zarqa governorates received accreditation from the Ministry of Social Development (MOSD) as establishments offering community service opportunities to young delinquents. The Memorandum of Understanding between the parties is emblematic of the unwavering partnership between LWF and the MOSD in pursuing common good. Through this recognition, LWF Jordan joins early the effort to uphold juvenile rights by promoting and providing community service opportunities.

Since receiving this acknowledgement and responsibility, LWF Jordan has adopted a holistic approach to managing the cases of juveniles referred to the center and their families by addressing multiple risk factors at all levels in a child-friendly and safe social environment. Upon referral by the court and the behavior monitor, the youth and their family are provided with complete case management and psychosocial support services to identify their specific needs. After the introductory session, the adolescent participates in different entertaining and educational activities that help them develop transferrable skills and benefit the local community.

The “Aman” centers in Irbid and Zarqa have already received their first cases. The youths were so excited to realize that there are safe community spaces in their neighborhoods catering to their needs, that they brought and introduced friends to the center. LWF’s staff is now developing a plan for these youngsters to be involved in skills-developing creative activities, such as ceramics workshops and sessions raising awareness about important issues prevalent in the community.

“The activities our case managers plan are not only meant to benefit the community, but they are also designed to unfold the children’s potential and help them develop into well-rounded people while enjoying themselves.” - Ameera Khamees, LWF Jordan Country Director.



Figure 1 ‘Aman’ Community Center in Zarqa. Photo: LWF/Albin Hillert

Nirmeen Saadeh, LWF Jordan’s protection focal point, emphasizes the benefits of community service for young delinquents:

“The presence of children in safe community space provides them with acceptance and opportunity to develop their skills and create healthy social relationships. This, in turn, helps them correct their behavior and think in new ways”.

At LWF’s “Aman” centers, the youth have an opportunity to be productive members of society and join educational and entertaining activities, which is a much more beneficial alternative to detention and institutionalization. Substituting limiting freedom with community service for minor juvenile crimes reduces the cost of justice and protects children from the risks and harms of incarceration. It also has a restorative effect on children in conflict with the law, their families, and society.



Figure 2 Nirmeen Saadeh, protection focal point and team leader for Zaatari and Zarqa, photo: LWF Jordan

MERCY CORPS

Helping vulnerable households carve a path out of poverty



The Syrian refugee influx has had a notable impact on Jordan's socioeconomic conditions and has placed growing pressure on the country's already fragile economy and social fabric. It resulted in an increase of the unemployment rate among both Jordanians and Syrians, decrease in the average wages, overburdening of the available infrastructure and social services, and increase in child labor.

One of the groups most impacted by the crisis is youth, with current unemployment rates at 46.1%. Most vocational training institutes in Jordan tend to provide traditional programs that are not in line with youth's aspirations and fail to deliver sufficient and holistic educational investments required for graduates to succeed in the workforce.

Ahmad Saoud, 33, is a general construction contractor, based in Mafraq. When Ahmad first started working, he was compensated with a very low daily rate, reaching a total monthly salary of only 250 JDs in a good working month. In addition, in order to perform his job, Ahmed had to rent construction tools for a 70 JOD/two-day fee that he had to cover out of his own earnings.

Ahmad's low income made it difficult for him to provide for his family and pay off their mounting debts, creating significant economic constraints.

Traditional assistance approaches to address the issue and empower households often include training marginalized individuals in new technical and

social abilities. However, in the absence of long-term solutions and access to livelihood opportunities, vulnerable households often continue to be marginalized. Therefore, the RYSE consortium designed the Graduation Approach (GA) under which households are targeted with a holistic intervention that includes coaching, general family guidance, cash support and individually designed pathways for family members to 'graduate' towards sustainable livelihoods.

“Without the support from RYSE, I would not have been able to pay off all of my debts in such a short period of time.” - Ahmad, 33-year-old

Ahmad was selected among the youth members targeted under the RYSE project in April of 2021. Since then, Ahmad's life has changed significantly; the Graduation Approach took him on a journey of technical and soft skills training and coaching that were complemented with a tailored solution to Ahmad's challenges in generating sustainable income for himself and his family. Ahmad attended training sessions on a variety of topics including financial literacy which has helped him define his long-term financial goals. RYSE offers training on a wide range of topics, including but not limited to: Introduction to Protection, Self-awareness, Self-esteem, Personal Goal Setting, Entrepreneurship, Gender, My Rights at the Workplace, Preparation for the Workplace, Stress Management, and more.

As part of his tailor-made pathway under RYSE, Ahmad was provided with the required equipment to perform his job as a construction contractor effectively. Ahmad was able to practice the financial management skills gained from this project to better manage his business and contribute to the financial stability of his family.

As a result of this intervention, Ahmad is now being awarded government construction bids. **“My life has completely changed; I have regained hope in life and my mental health has improved”** says Ahmad. Having the tools and equipment at his disposal, Ahmad was able to take on more orders and deliver better quality. Ahmad’s new salary now exceeds his previous one by three times, which has given him the financial security to pay off his accumulated bills.

As a next step towards the longer-term goals that Ahmad has set, he will expand his business by opening a maintenance shop and undertake new training on repairing central heating systems and boilers. Ahmad got a head start on his dream and successfully passed a practice test that would allow him to launch his own shop.

The RYSE (Resilient Youth, Socially & Economically) project is a flagship multi-stakeholder partnership including Jordan River Foundation, Generations for Peace, Mercy Corps, INJAZ, and DRC (Danish Refugee Council) as lead agency. The Novo Nordisk Foundation is the grant holder. RYSE engages 25,000 Syrian refugees and vulnerable young Jordanians affected by the Syrian crisis who will be the beneficiaries of a 3-year program (2020-2022) empowering the youth socially and economically.

SPARK

“From Innovation to Creation”, a one-day discussion about the start-up ecosystem in Jordan

This multi-stakeholder meeting organized by SPARK in collaboration with the European Union (EU) and SPARK’s entrepreneurship development partners in Jordan, TTi, Ruwwad Al Tanmeya and Alfamar to review and validate the startup ecosystem in Jordan and how existing programmes and services can be strengthened.

The meeting, chaired by Rodrigo Romero Van Custom, Delegation of the European Union to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, was attended by various institutions, universities, donors, governmental entities, international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), startups and private sector businesses.

Afterwards, round table discussions took place to identify challenges and opportunities for strengthening innovation in the Jordanian start-up ecosystem. These discussions also covered joint research and joint programmes, in addition to enhancing lessons learned and research cooperation, sharing best practices and experiences between all actors in the ecosystem with the aim to increase the capacity of the ISOs (Innovation Support Organizations).



This meeting is part of a series of meetings on the local and regional levels under the “Strengthening innovation through supporting cluster cooperation and start-up ecosystems in the South Neighborhood countries” programme, funded by the European Union aiming to improve local policies/regulations supporting business support centres and Innovation hubs, and growing a business and innovation network beyond borders to exchange knowledge.

Full article: <https://spark.ngo/from-innovation-to-creation-a-one-day-discussion-about-the-start-up-ecosystem-in-jordan/>



Huda*,10 and Ghina*, 9, are cousins and best friends who left school in 2020—once the COVID-19 pandemic broke out.

“After the school closed, we started helping my dad and uncle to collect scrap and sell it,” says Huda. Although accompanied by adults, the girls used to run into different dangers on the streets, “We once found a snake near a scrap pile,” says Ghina.

Due to their difficult financial conditions, the little girls couldn't learn remotely although they loved studying. This caused a gap in their education track; they missed more than a year of school,

which caused their grades to significantly drop. In 2022, Terre des hommes (Tdh) in Jordan provided Huda and Ghina with the needed support to get out of work and a private teacher was hired to deliver remedial education sessions covering Mathematics, Science and English.

The delivered support has been funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and Tdh Lausanne.

*Names were changed to protect identities.



Huda,10 and Ghina*, 9, are cousins and best friends who left school in 2020—once the COVID19- pandemic broke out.*

The World University Service of Canada – Jordan Office Supports Social Initiatives to Serve the Community November 2022



The World University Service of Canada – Jordan Office, in partnership with the Canadian Leaders in International Consulting (CLIC), has concluded two 2-day-workshops on “Community-Led Initiatives” in the capital Amman and in the Irbid governorate. Its goal was to increase the capacity of 50 community leaders and CBOs’ staff /volunteers and provide them with the needed technical support to implement initiatives in their own communities. They learned how to create a mission statement for their initiative and present it to the media, how to network, create partnerships with the private sector, and develop an understanding of gender and social stereotypes.

“It is important to give youth the opportunity to lead the change they need in their communities. Through the Women’s Economic Linkages and Employment Development (WE LEAD) project, funded by the Government of Canada, WUSC provides direct financial funding, in addition to technical support, to enable these community leaders to implement initiatives which are designed to raise awareness of the importance of women’s economic empowerment and to shed light on the challenges that women face in the labor market” said Raya Al Omari, WE LEAD Project Manager at the WUSC Jordan Office.

In July 2022, WUSC launched a call for applications to fund social initiatives, under specific conditions, in three areas: Amman, Zarqa and Irbid. The project team received 120 applications; 23 were selected to proceed with their proposals.

As Jordanian youth, we have creative ideas and the energy needed to implement innovative initiatives to serve our communities - all we need is guidance and financial support” said Roud Saleh, a member of the “Violence Against Women” initiative. Fayza added, “Women with disabilities are the most vulnerable to all forms of violence. Therefore, through our initiative “ Violence Against Women” we will break the silence and talk about this taboo, and raise women’s awareness about their legal rights”.

Ahmad Al Jammal, a community leader from Irbid and a member of “For better working environment” said: “The workshop was very helpful. Facilitators used participatory approaches to share their knowledge on financial management and budgeting, strategic planning, and the best practices for implementing our initiatives within our communities”.

The community led-initiatives component is one the WE LEAD Project in Jordan 2017-2024 is a project funded by the Canadian government and launched at will by the Canadian International Consulting Company. Jordanian women and young women at work and highlights the most prominent gender challenges after joining without joining the labor market, such as: social norms, transportation, childcare, high-quality childcare, in addition to a decent work environment. The World University Association in Canada - Jordan Office is working to implement this project through its various partners from public universities, and in three different governorates: Amman, Irbid, and Zarqa.

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

Habitat for Humanity Jordan Launching the First National Housing Forum



The Jordan National Housing Forum 2022 (JNHF) is the first national housing forum to take place in Jordan. JNHF is part of the MENA Housing Forum 2022 which includes Jordan, Egypt, and Lebanon. The MENA Housing Forum is also part of a global Housing Forums series that runs through different regions around the world covering most of the Habitat for Humanity offices in 70 countries.

We were honored to have the patronage of the Kingdom's government at the JNHF, which was held on October 19th last month. Speaking on behalf of the Prime Minister was His Excellency Eng. Yahya Kasabi, Minister of Public Works and Housing.

We have carefully invited the participants to ensure that we will receive valuable and practical recommendations. Starting with the panelists where we invited experts and professionals from various sectors who thoroughly discussed housing challenges. We were honored to have representatives from UN-HCR, the World Bank, UN-Habitat, the Jordanian Engineers Association, the Jordan Green Building Council, the Cities & Villages Development Bank, Community-based organizations, representatives from the governmental sector, civil society, NGOs, donors, and the private sector and direct beneficiaries as the number of attendees reached (100) attendees.

The recommendations and outcomes were insightful as a result of three extensive sessions. Panelists have discussed the need for shelter in the refugee

communities and to develop livelihoods in the aftermath of COVID-19 to support adequate housing. Also, the multiple challenges in the housing sector which complicated Habitat's work with CBOs. During the discussion on possible opportunities, experts suggested better support for the rapid urbanization and confronting the environmental impact of urban sprawl by understanding how to create affordable greenhouses in Jordan, with the support from Habitat for Humanity best practices and solutions to housing problems.

Experts have agreed that housing solutions must be linked to a financial mechanism for convenient payment by beneficiaries. Stakeholders should focus more on enhancing the internal adaptation of individuals within their villages, hence, substituting the fleeing to cities. Increasing donor's awareness towards giving more funds to the shelter sector by promoting the high sensitivity of housing and shelter.

Growing partnerships with the local organizations and private sector were recommended by experts in order to collaborate with more competent and specialized entities such as the Engineers Association to conduct accurate studies on the situation of buildings in Jordan, especially buildings that are about to fall apart.

Lastly, at the Forum we identified interested partners to join the Jordan Housing Advisory Committee, and the number of signatures reached (32) experts and specialists.

HUMANITY INCLUSION

Gina's Story

Gina is a 13-year-old Syrian refugee whose family fled the war in 2014 after the bombing started approaching their village, situated 35 kilometers southwest of Damascus, seeking safety.

She is now an eighth-grade student living in Zarqa Governorate, Jordan, with her extended family of five.

Since they arrived in Jordan, Gina had experienced pain while walking and had a recognizable limp. Her parents visited an orthopedic doctor, and they were informed that she has “Developmental dysplasia of the hip” and is in need of surgery on the hip.

“Going to school was a big challenge for me, because my class is on the second floor, and it was painful to climb the stairs.” Gina said.

Although it was their last resort, Gina underwent the surgery a few months ago, covered by a donor. The surgery was successful, but after that, she stayed in bed for six weeks with a cast, and needed physiotherapy rehabilitation sessions to be able to walk again.

HI's intervention with Gina started through the local partner, the Community Development Center (CDC) in Zarqa, where physiotherapy, occupational therapy, and psychosocial support services are provided to beneficiaries there with the support of HI thanks to the funding provided by the United States Government.

Gina's journey started with three physiotherapy sessions per week, and she received a home exercise plan after she was identified by the HI team. At first, she wasn't able to walk independently and

used a walker to do so for small movements. She also used a wheelchair while traveling long distances.

The physiotherapy session focused on strength and range of motion exercises, gait training, and balance exercises. These exercises enabled Gina to walk independently within a period of 3 months. Also, her mother started receiving psychological support sessions to empower her as a caregiver who supports her children.

“The home program exercises were very efficient in my treatment plan, now I can walk without any support, and I can walk to school with no feeling of pain.” -Gina said.

Gina was so delighted to receive rehabilitation sessions at the CDC Zarqa, and the physiotherapist there followed her step by step, starting from coming in a wheelchair at the beginning until walking home without assistance.

Gina is a very ambitious girl. She loves cooking and has a passion for the Spanish language, although she only has a few words in her vocabulary. She dreams of becoming a veterinarian when she grows up and helping all the animals one day.



Going to school was a big challenge for me, because my class is on the second floor, and it was painful to climb the stairs

IOCC

“If life can change overnight, so can we.”

This is how Sarah, a 32-year-old Syrian woman striving to provide for her family, began her conversation with IOCC staff.

Sarah lives with her husband and two children in East Amman, Jordan. Her husband is a worker at a local tissue factory and receives a salary of around 350 JD per month.

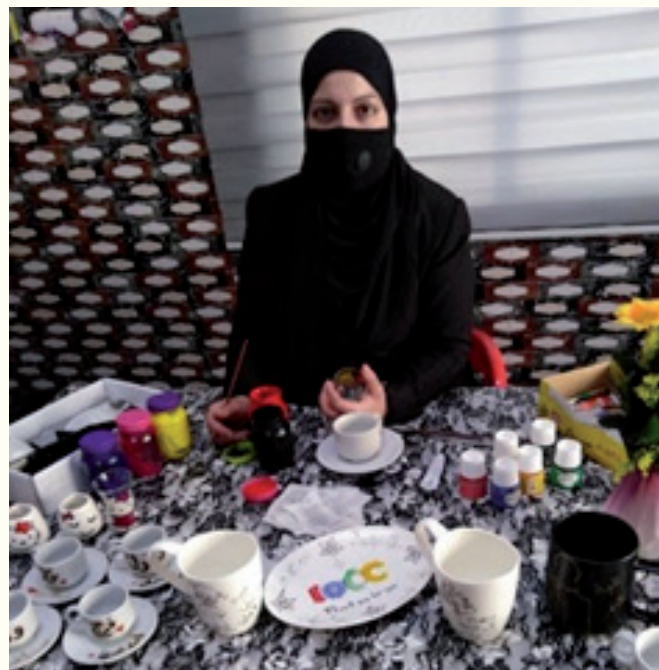
The family came to Jordan from Homs, Syria, in 2012, fleeing the conflict. Her parents followed her later that year and now live nearby in the East Amman neighborhood.

Sarah learned about IOCC’s local partner, IFH, through her mother, who had received a hearing aid from IOCC. Moreover, Sarah’s sister has also received special education sessions from IFH. Sarah’s husband has heart disease, and Sarah is now supporting him along with her mother and a sister with disabilities.

Sarah told staff that she used to spend all her time at home and described herself as an “antisocial person.” She did not interact with others much and did not participate in social events. “The change started,” she said, “when I was invited to participate in the women’s support groups that IOCC conducts for IFH’s recipients.” She continued: “I began attending women’s support group sessions through Zoom. In the beginning, the Zoom sessions were convenient for me, because I did not want to leave my house. However, the discussion and the experiences shared throughout the sessions inspired me to start changing my lifestyle.”

Sarah attended five virtual group meetings with other women with disabilities and caregivers of PWDs. She then actively participated in employability skills training and became interested in vocational training. After completing basic vocational training in handicrafts, Sarah began planning to work to support herself and her family. Ultimately, she decided to join the advanced vocational training to gain more experience. Sarah’s dedication to attending all the trainings and her ability to form relationships with the trainer and her colleagues were noted by IOCC staff. “What I’ve learned in the trainings has sparked my curiosity... Following the vocational training classes, I even practiced at home every day,” she said.

“Before joining IOCC’s project, my life was monotonous and boring,” Sarah said. “However, after participating in IOCC’s activities, my life has



Sarah shows off hand-painted items that she now sells to increase her family’s income.

transformed, and I chose to start over, since I felt like I had a purpose in life. Leaving the house was difficult since my husband was against the idea of me going outside the house. However, during the time spent with IOCC and other PWDs and caregivers, I learned how to negotiate and persuade. I was able to convince my husband.... He even became more supportive after that, advising me to attend the business development plan training and then follow up with IOCC to apply for a small grant. He also assisted me in marketing my products and supported me in purchasing the items I needed to establish my own business at home.”

Sarah shared that the training classes had a significant impact for her, as they enabled her to learn new skills and motivated her to make changes in her own life. Through the training, Sarah learned how to market her products and set up her own social media business page. With the limited income from her new business, she has been able to better assist her sister.

“I’m attempting to improve my family’s situation in every way possible, not just financially. I’ve realized the necessity of continuous learning that will help me and my family grow and change for the better,” Sarah concluded.

IOCC projects focus on equipping people to overcome the various challenges they face. IOCC helped Sarah gain the skills and experience she needed to establish her own business and start supporting her family, including two relatives with disabilities.