Words from the JIF

“First of all, I would like to thank all partners and members for your warm welcome and valuable exchanges during my induction period. After 2 months, I wish to share with you my first impressions.

JIF member’s projects are broad: from small community projects existing for 20 years in Jordan to large scale operations. Our members are working towards a better alignment with national strategies, including the Jordan Response Plan; the Vision 2025 and the accompanying Executive Development Programme. JIF members employ over 4,000 Jordanians in 2019. Their internal training capacity and investment in staff development enabled many young Jordanians to occupy management positions. This is reflected in the decrease in the percentage of the expatriates, from 15% of the workforce back in 2015, to 4.5% in 2019¹.

Despite challenges inherent to any coordination mechanism in a development and/or humanitarian context, the participatory cooperation model in Jordan allows space for proactive engagement of all stakeholders - NGOs included. The new Jordan Response plan is a result of this extensive collaboration, and we call upon all stakeholders to actively engage in the planning process to improve the quality and relevance of our response in Jordan, based on the needs of refugees and vulnerable host communities.

The challenges lying ahead for Jordan require a collective effort to develop further innovation and collaboration. JIF member’s diversity presents an amazing opportunity to overcome many challenges.” - JIF Team

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¹ Based on an internal JIF Members data profile. The Human Resources data correspond with a similar level of funding and number of projects which enable comparison.
CRP: Summertime in Downtown Centre

Before the start of many of Collateral Repair Project’s (CRP) summer camp sessions, the school-age participants recite, in Arabic: “All that I think, say, and do helps everyone and does not harm anyone.” This mantra reinforces one of CRP’s core values of holistically supporting urban refugees and vulnerable Jordanians to heal, grow, and rebuild their lives. CRP’s approach is strictly non-sectarian and the organization actively encourages integration and social cohesion among all groups. Fostering personal relationships among children, in particular, allows them to transcend the mental and physical borders that divide their communities. It is common to see children and adults of all nationalities bonding over meals, coffee, or games.

For the past 12 years, CRP has been running a community in Hashemi Shamali, a neighbourhood in East Amman that is home to many Syrian and Iraqi refugees. But newer communities of Yemeni, Sudanese, and Somali refugees could not afford the taxi or bus fare to this neighbourhood, so it was decided to open a second centre in Downtown Amman in the fall of 2018. The two centres complement one another, hosting emergency food assistance, English classes, gender-based violence workshops for both men and women, and fun activities for the youngest members of the community. Both of them are open to anyone in need of assistance or resources.

CRP’s inaugural summer session at the Downtown Center has been extremely popular. School-age children attended two sessions per day. This was an opportunity for them to escape from the stressors of everyday life. On any given day, the children enjoyed a magic show, yoga, dancing, literacy games, and making new friends. During their time at CRP, they were encouraged to be creative and to help one another. The Downtown Center is a safe place to grow, make mistakes, and have fun. Importantly, these sessions allowed their parents to participate in workshops or take care of a pressing matter such as applying for emergency food assistance.

Through CRP trauma relief activities, educational programs, and opportunities to play, the hope is to enable each child to leave the difficulties of their past behind and become happy and thriving members of the community. CRP’s philosophy centres on the needs and desires of the organization’s beneficiaries so they can succeed. The expansion to downtown Amman reflects a desire to widen CRP’s circle and encourage social cohesion between the diverse communities that call Amman home.

ACTED - Ensuring appropriate living conditions through improved access to water and sanitation facilities

At 55 years old, Dalal lives alone with her son – who suffers from mental and physical disabilities – in a small house in the outskirts of Mafraq in northern Jordan. Despite her reduced mobility, Dalal is solely responsible for the everyday care of her son and herself. These factors prevent Dalal from looking for a job and she is left with no choice but to rely on a governmental monthly allowance for vulnerable people of 80 JODs (100 Euros) and support from her neighbours.

"It's all thanks to my neighbours that I have been able to support my family lately,” Dalal said. “Although limited, their contribution helped me to satisfy part of my family's needs. However, I still hope for improved living conditions for me and my son.”

Dalal’s accommodation was in dire need of renovation, particularly the toilet facilities. Located outside her home, the facilities lacked access to water, a roof as a protection from the weather and even a door. This deprived Dalal and her son of any privacy and exposed them to an increased risk of disease due to the extremely poor hygiene conditions. Furthermore, the facilities were hardly accessible for people with reduced mobility, such as Dalal and her son.
In 2017, ACTED, supported by European Union, through its Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis "MADAD," began to work with Dalal and her family as well as more than 400 other families to provide them with adequate water and sanitation facilities. In April 2019, after a technical evaluation and assessment of the alternations that Dalal’s sanitation facilities needed, ACTED carried out comprehensive rehabilitation works. These alternations aimed at installing new water and sanitation facilities inside the house: in a spare side of the living room, ACTED installed a new toilet, sink, water heater, and a light. ACTED also added a door and mobile partition walls in the room to give Dalal and her son the privacy they were lacking.

"We finally have a bathroom inside the house," Dalal said with joy. "Our hygiene and living conditions in general have improved a lot. Although providing for my family will still be hard, now my son and I can have access to water and live in appropriate conditions."

ACF: Jamalat - implementing solid waste management in Azraq town

In Azraq Town, Jordanians and Syrians are working together through Action Against Hunger’s project, “Implementing Solid Waste Management in Azraq Municipality for Host Communities and Syrian Refugees in Azraq Town,” funded by Taiwan International Cooperating and Development Fund (ICDF) and Ville de Paris. This project provides short-term employment opportunities on a cash for work basis to produce organic compost to sell to local farmers in the area. To complement the compost production, the project conducted studies of local solid waste management practices and the marketability of compost in the surrounding area. It also contributed to local institutional capacities, set up a waste sorting unit, and promoted messages on solid waste management with the local public.

One of the Jordanians employed through the project is Team Leader Jamalat. "I do not like being without work and was always passionate about discovering new job opportunities," Jamalat explained during a visit to the compost site. After obtaining her Tawjihi, the general high school examination certificate in Jordan, she worked as the manager of a sewing factory and making pastries before landing a job at Azraq Refugee Camp. It was while working at the camp that she heard about Action Against Hunger’s project in Azraq Town. She applied for the job, as she understood the nature of composting, and passed the application process with flying colours.

Jamalat oversees the “Cash for Work” workers at the compost site, including managing their rosters and annual leave. She also monitors the compost production mixing process and general site control. With time, she acquired experience and competence, building up her own managerial skills. As her contract was approaching to an end and she was preparing to leave, she received the good news that she had been extended. “Upon hearing this, I was ecstatic. This boosted my morale and my motivation” she recalls. In the team she monitors, Jordanians and Syrian refugees work side by side towards the same goal: contributing to the local community by re-using farming waste “I know that this work is not easy, but the project we are working on is meaningful and so rewarding that it is worth the effort.”

ACF Implements Cash for Work projects engaging both Syrian and Jordanian population, and provided short-term employment opportunities through to 284 workers in Azraq, Irbid and Madaba governorate in 2019.

ActionAid: Nazeh: Unstoppable Youth

Nazeh Shukri, is a 23-year-old young man from Zarqa, Jordan, and a community youth activist with a wide experience working with different local and national organization. He was one of 24 young men and women who participated in “Campaigns Training of Trainer” as part of ActionAid’s Arab Region project “Strengthening youth civic and political engagement in Jordan” funded by the Danish Arab Partnership Programme (DAPP).
Nazeh never misses an opportunity to empower himself, he always searches for workshops, trainings, and seminars to level up his knowledge and career. He lives within a marginalized community in Zarqa and is not only a youth activist, but also a volunteer with the psychosocial support project of ActionAid Arab Region Zarqa Community Center. He founded the “Youth 2030 Network”, with an aim to increase the youth participation within their community, “it was a dream to create a network like that in Zarqa, which revolved around sustainable development goals”, Nazeh said.

Earlier this year, Nazeh participated in ActionAid’s Training of the Trainers for the campaigning workshop. The seven days training took place in Amman, targeting young men and women from three governorates (Karak, Zarqa, Amman), on how to train others to develop campaigns and advocacy.

LCE: Minas, 11 Years Old, can use her left hand

Minas, 11 years old, was born in Syria in a happy family of 5 members. At 3 years old, her father and her had a motorcycle accident, and she lost her left thumb that terrible day. At that time, her parents tried to find medical treatment, but doctors told them that nothing could be done. In 2011, Minas’ father passed away before her eyes, soon after the war in Syria broke out. In 2013, Minas’ mother had no choice but to flee to Jordan. As a refugee and a widow, she struggled to make ends meet and to take care of her family. She was always striving to find basic life support, shelter, a job - and of course, medical care for Minas so she won’t keep feeling different from her sisters and any other young girls.

In 2017, Minas’ mother heard about La Chaîne de l’Espoir surgical missions through a Syrian "Facebook community group" and contacted the medical team in Jordan. Minas was rapidly registered and selected for an upper-limb orthopaedic procedure. She started her treatment in February 2018 with Dr. Rui Ferreira, a Brazilian orthopaedic surgeon specialized in hand surgery who travelled to Jordan as part of the volunteer medical missions of La Chaîne de l’Espoir. Dr Rui Ferreira conducted 2 surgeries, the first one in February 2018 was a toe to thumb transfer. The second one was in April 2019 in order to make the thumb fully functional.

Today, Minas can use her left hand, grab anything and simply use it like any other child. Her mother rejoices "it is a dream come true, to see Minas using her left hand like anybody else". And she adds "Minas wants to become a Dentist".

For the last 7 years, La Chaîne de l’Espoir has come to the support of refugee children and vulnerable Jordanians thanks to the help and financial support of The European Union - Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid (ECHO).
Behind the walls, tiny voices chatter and laugh. When Reema opens the doors, visitors are instantly hit by a world of colour. A wall mural with a height chart and a giant giraffe decorate the reception room and the floor is covered in multi coloured tiles shaped as puzzle pieces. In the Day Care Centre at Al Yarmouk Governmental Hospital in Irbid, Reema is surrounded by a group of toddlers. It has just been renovated by Oxfam’s local partner, King Hussein Foundation (KHF).

In Jordan, the lack of affordable child care centres acts as an obstacle to women who want to work. “If nurseries and day care centres were established in our area with good quality, I would be comfortable and relaxed about leaving my children there. I would then join the workforce or work at any place with ease,” said Rasha, a mother living in Irbid.

Oxfam and KHF are working to encourage and boost women’s participation in the labour market. Jordan boasts one of the highest literacy rates for women in the Middle East at 97%. However, educational advancement does not always transfer over to the job market; Jordan has one of the world’s lowest rates of workforce participation for women, at only 14%. Some estimates suggest that closing the gender gap in Jordan could boost GDP by a staggering 45%. Household responsibilities are unevenly distributed and women typically find themselves responsible for the vast majority of household care work, including taking care of children. When quality care services are available - like those at Al Yarmouk’s day care - women have a wider array of options to choose from, including joining the workforce.

“Before, there were cockroaches running around in the kitchen. The center didn’t use to be clean and I didn’t want to leave my daughter here. But I didn’t have any other option”, says Buthayna, a nurse at the hospital whose three-year-old daughter attends the center. In a room decorated in blue, small babies sleep in cots and carriers, snuggled under blankets and watched over by attentive care workers who received training through the project. “I have been working in this Day Care Centre for fifteen years. The center didn’t look like this before. Mothers used to have to collect money to buy curtains and rugs”, remembers Reema.

Part of the project plan has been to buy toys for the center that would also be educational. “Now we teach the children better than we used to, because we have more things to show them. The new toys are helping them to learn,” Explains Reema. In addition, the center allowed some structural changes, for example to the toilets and sinks, which have been exchanged for miniature sized versions suitable for children. Care workers were also given training on early childhood development to ensure the children who attend the center are learning as well as having fun. More than 60 women and mothers from Irbid received this training in order to find jobs in other day care centers.

“We benefited a lot from this training, we learned how to interact with our kids at home, in the community and at school, how to be positive with them and how to raise children with confidence in themselves” conveyed Tahani, one of the women who received the training on early childhood development. “When the parents saw the changes, they were very thankful to King Hussein Foundation and Oxfam. They never expected the situation to be improved so much.” At the moment this nursery is just for parents who work in the hospital, but now that the renovation is over, the center is working on allowing parents from outside of the hospital to use the services.

The support given to the Al Yarmouk Governmental Hospital Day Care Centre was made possible thanks to funding from the European Regional Development and Protection Program (RDPP). Read the full story on Oxfam’s blog https://oxfaminjordan.exposure.co/
Can a park be a safe and secure environment for women? How can a park rehabilitation cash for work project trigger women ownership of the public space? Gweirah Park is one of the few parks in Gweirah, a small town located in the south of Jordan, 55km north of Aqaba. After being closed for several years it has recently been reopened after rehabilitation, as part of the “Improvement of Green Infrastructure in Jordan through Labour-Intensive Measures (cash for work)” project implemented by AVSI and GIZ on behalf of the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

The main outputs of the project are the rehabilitation of the park and the short-term employment of 144 workers (50% Jordanians and 50% Syrians with a minimum 20% women). After the re-opening of the park in January 2019, the women of Gweirah, at their own initiative, wanted to take ownership of the space. AVSI supported them by hiring them through ‘cash for work’ to maintain the park on a daily basis. Today, the park is jointly run by the women’s committee and the municipality. The women’s daily duties include watering the plants and cleaning the paths. More importantly their presence has created a friendly and safe space which encourages other women from the community to visit and enjoy the park, socialize and organize activities. The municipality of Gweirah is very proud of the initiative and has committed to supporting it into the future.

Every woman has the right to feel safe and welcome in a public space. Initiatives like this one does not only improve the use of the public space but also empower women, making them more visible in the public sphere and promoting fair and more equal access to services. By including women in the design, implementation and maintenance of public spaces, AVSI created a space which responded to their needs and expectations.

The play was something we were all very proud of! We got together, and we decided to write the script ourselves. With this initiative, I felt responsible for sending out those messages to prevent child marriage. It was such a great joy.” These were Sara’s own words after the first graduation ceremony of the Terre des hommes’ Psychosocial Support beneficiaries program earlier this year. Sara is a 15-year-old Syrian girl who lives in the Emirati Jordanian Camp (EJC), the third Syrian refugee camp in Jordan located in the eastern desert of Jordan, in Zarqa’s governorate.

The graduation gathered 180 beneficiaries and is part of the project “Access to child protection and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) services in EJC”, an initiative funded by the Jordan Humanitarian Fund – OCHA. The objective is to ensure that children, adolescent girls and young women are safe and empowered, and that their rights are upheld. It focuses on preventing and responding to child protection and SGBV concerns in EJC.

With the support of Tdh’s staff and volunteers, Sara and her peers took the lead on organizing the play to raise awareness about child marriage in the camp. To do so, they started approaching the school of the camp, wrote the script and, eventually performed the play in front of all who attended the graduation.

“Those activities made me really strong and taught me how to think in ways that are creative, critical and outside the box. Also, being part of the Life Skills activities I learnt a lot about how to plan for my life wisely and take good and reasonable decisions for myself”. Sara added.
Tdh’s action is also supported by the establishment and training of Community Based Child Protection Committees and Youth Committees, which conduct peer awareness and initiatives with parents on child protection. Tdh is one of the main actors responding to protection concerns in EJC. Learn more here.

LWF: Inclusiveness of all persons in need in LWF’s programmes

Over one billion people in the world live with a disability. In Jordan, according to the Higher Council of Affairs of Persons with Disabilities, 13% of the population is with disability. Among the Syrian refugee community, an estimated 30% have special physical or intellectual needs (Thompson, 2018), and most of them experience psychosocial distress due to their injuries. Negative attitudes such as discrimination and exclusion exist in some local communities, however recent evidence indicates that more positive beliefs about disabilities are being adopted, leading to a more inclusive society.

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) ensures that all its programming contributes to the inclusiveness of People with Disabilities (PwD) in Jordan, to empower them to achieve their equal rights to resources and services.

Ibrahim, a 16 years old Syrian boy, attends the IT class at LWF’s Community Centre “Peace Oasis” in Za’atari Refugee Camp. Back in Syria, he was in the back seat of his parent’s car when a bomb exploded on the road. Ibrahim lost his right arm. Tareq, 13, was also victim of a bomb explosion back in Syria. He was at home when he felt the explosion into his living room and was injured in his left leg. The two boys always get the highest scores out of all the other students in the IT class. They are both very motivated to learn, as they believe it will help them a lot in their future. For example, Ibrahim wants to become a pharmacist, so he will have to keep an up-to-date Excel medical database. Abdallah rightly said that “all life now revolves around computers and technology”. They both feel accepted at Peace Oasis, amongst the other beneficiaries and from the LWF staff who has been trained by Humanity & Inclusion on how to provide support to PwD. The centre is fully accessible as it is equipped with ramps to access the different caravans. The boys also feel accepted by their families and the broader community, especially because there are many injured and person with disability in the refugee camp.

Four toddlers attend LWF’s child day care centre “Smurf Centre” also in Za’atari camp. Murad is a 5-year-old Syrian boy and does not talk properly yet and only makes sounds to express himself. The facilitator, Tala, says it is challenging to take care of a child like Murad, especially when there is a whole class of young children to look after at the same time. “When I tell the children to do something, they all start their task, while I must spend five to ten minutes with Murad because he requires much more support. However, all the children in the class understand that they are all equal, but that Murad just needs I little more help from me.” Tala also has another little girl under her care who is physically disabled. Smurf Centre is also equipped with ramps to access the caravans and the toilet adapted to children with disabilities.

LWF also rehabilitates schools and builds bathroom blocks in 75 Jordanian public schools. The team strives to make most of the schools accessible to PwD, when possible, by installing hand rails, building ramps to access the different buildings, and constructing a toilet specifically adapted and accessible for PwD. LWF will continue to promote inclusiveness of all persons in need in all its future programming, and is proud to see PwD fully integrated in its current different activities.

To see more about how LWF is making 75 Jordanian public schools accessible, click here.
MC: Syrian girls guide teen through the mysterious world of puberty

"I asked my mom about the period, she only told me it's blood." – 11-year old Syrian girl

Puberty is tough anywhere. In Za’atar refugee camp, the day a girl gets her period can be an abrupt end to childhood: adults may restrict her mobility and socializing, shutting the door on opportunity and fueling school drop out, child marriage and early pregnancy.

Young girls in Za’atari turn to older teens to understand their changing bodies, but there is a lack of accurate, positive and adolescent-friendly information. Through Mercy Corps’ Wisdom and Information on Sexual Health Education by Girls — WISE Girls — and with the support from IDEO.org and DFID, nine Za’atari teenagers decided to design and lead their own puberty education program for tween girls. At its heart is the girl-authored storybook, Jazirat Al Zohoor (Island of Flowers), which blends reproductive health education, peer support and leadership skills in a fun way for tweens.

What helps girls to dream up, create and lead Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) solutions? Human-Centred Design (HCD), an approach refined by our partner IDEO.org that Mercy Corps uses to put girls at the center of our work in Jordan.

Over a year, Mercy Corps worked through HCD stages with Za’atari teens to identify SRH education gaps, then prototype, test and iterate solutions. The girls chose a solution that fits their needs — the story of Zahra, a Syrian girl who gets her period and is taken on a magical journey to learn how and why she is changing and who to ask for support.

The teenagers read the story aloud to spellbound groups of 11 - 13 year olds, acting out the characters and engaging the tweens with games and quizzes. Blood, breasts, body hair — nothing is off limits in these storytelling sessions for girls, by girls. Sessions end with emoji ratings and a charge to share the story with other girls and family members.

The teen educators have helped 127 tweens safely navigate menstruation, and 94% reported that their SRH knowledge increased. WISE Girls has sparked organic growth of SRH storytelling and information sharing in the camp and the HCD process has helped girls build assets and agency in the program and in their households.

RI’s Drop Out Program in Za’atari Camp: Graduation Ceremonies

After two years of hard work, the first batch of students from Relief International’s Drop Out Program in Za’atari Camp successfully completed the program. In order to celebrate the major accomplishment of completing the Drop Out program for the students, RI organized two Graduation Ceremonies earlier this year in Za’atari Camp, the first one under the patronage of H.E. Dr. Walid Maani, Minister of Education and Higher Education in Jordan.

“I joined this centre 16 month ago. Prior to joining the centre, I had many challenges and difficulties in my reading and writing skills, so much so that I was ashamed in front of my friends, and of myself! However, now, thanks to our continued commitment and guidance from Relief International’s facilitators and staff, we have become armed with knowledge and education to face the future."

Anas Al-Heamed is a 17-year-old student enrolled in RI’s Drop Out program who graduated in April 2019. Anas came to Za’atari Camp in 2012 with his mother, father, sister and brother. Shortly after arriving, Anas enrolled in Grade 5, but he dropped out of school in Grade 7 to work to support his family. After meeting with Relief International’s Outreach Volunteers about the Drop Out program, Anas chose to continue his education in the camp through the Drop Out program, and after two years, he successfully completed the program. Anas hopes to one day open his own business so that he can use the education he received in the camp to provide for his family.
Voices from Jordan

Rawaa- Member Jordan’s Women’s Leadership Councils

By Care Jordan

“My role in the Women’s Leadership Council (WLC) is to raise awareness about gender-based violence, early and forced marriage and discrimination against women and girls. We work on eradicating these phenomena in our cultures and we include men and boys to multiply our impact. I personally feel that I have positively affected many lives and have contributed to the well-being of many girls who are now at school instead of being married.

If I had to choose one success story that I experienced throughout my work with CARE, it would be a success story from within my own family. My husband was not so happy that I enrolled in the WLC, and he used to get upset or make a remark whenever I had a session and had to leave the house. But we were trained so well at CARE that I was able to apply everything we learned during the sessions to my own life, and especially to my situation with my husband. Persuasion, debate, and employing facts when they matter most worked wonders on my entire family. To prove it, last week, there was an interactive theatre session that I had to act in to showcase the negative impacts of early marriage. The cast consisted of my family, and my husband played a leading role as the father of the child bride.

Empowered women go a long way if they want to! Both my husband and my children tell me that they are very proud of me because I’m a changed woman.”

– Rawaa, Syrian wife and mother of four and a member of CARE Jordan’s Women’s Leadership Councils

Women’s Leadership Councils (WLCs) enable Syrian women to take part in activism, promote gender-responsive and participatory monitoring practices, and participate in key decision-making processes within their local communities in Jordan. Each council is made up of twelve members between the ages of 18-55 (with exceptions to qualified and committed women over 55). WLCs are funded by Global Affairs Canada and the United States Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration and they help raise the voices of Syrian women and girls by including them in policymaking and providing support to the women and girls in their communities.

The program targets out-of-school children aged 13 years and above (13-18 M, 13-20 F) who have been out-of-school for more than three years, and thus not eligible for formal education. The Drop Out program enrols adolescents in a two-year program; upon completing the program, graduates receive a document equivalent to a Grade 10 certificate, which allows them to access formal education, vocational-technical education, or work opportunities.

In October 2017, Relief International became the first organization in Za’atari Camp to provide the Drop Out program, and is the only agency authorized to do so in the camp. The Drop-Out program is a Ministry of Education (MoE) certified non-formal education program, implemented by Relief International in partnership with the MoE with technical support from Questscope.
In 2012, Sarah and her family were forced to flee Dar’aa, a city in south-western Syria. They found shelter in neighbouring Jordan. Sarah was pregnant at the time. Later on, she lost her youngest child to a congenital heart condition, aggravated by the physical and mental pressures suffered on the journey.

This loss greatly impacted Sarah and her family. Her husband who, with two jobs, used to be the sole family breadwinner, developed a deep psychological wound that rendered him unable to work normally. Her other two children were too frightened to sleep alone at night.

“Seeing my family’s situation and the condition of my husband and children, I had to do something. I had to overcome my sorrows, take charge of my family and support my husband,” Sarah explains. Trying to bring a sense of normalcy back to her life and that of her family, she began looking for employment.

She found a job with a local tailor, but the pay was too low to cover the growing expenses of her family, including their rent. Yet Sarah did not give up. Looking for better opportunities, she heard about ICMC’s livelihood program. This program is one of the ICMC’s activities funded by the US Bureau of Populations, Refugees and Migration. She enrolled and learned skills that allowed her to start a small sewing business at home.

“I was able to help my family overcome the loss of our child. Though I am still at the beginning of my career, doing mainly repairs for local ladies, I hope my business will pick up so that I can support my family better,” says Sarah.

“In the same way that ICMC has helped me, I am trying to help my husband to overcome his loss through teaching him to sew. I hope one day we will be able to open a successful sewing workshop of our own.”

ICMC Jordan’s vocational training program helps Syrian refugees and vulnerable Jordanians develop a variety of income-generating skills. Some 200 students, including Sarah, have graduated over the last ten months. Usually, about half of the graduates manage to use their newly acquired skills to generate an income. ICMC also refers graduates to small businesses for job matching.

The name has been changed to protect the person’s identity.

Advocacy

JIF publishes the October 2019 Edition of the Walk the Talk

6 months after the Brussels Conference III, JIF reviewed the progress made and the challenges encountered by the international community and the Government of Jordan in implementing the commitments of the Jordan Compact. Both the government and international community have delivered on many fronts, including on the accountability one as they are conducting the first independent monitoring exercise of the Jordan Compact. As the gains remain fragile, it is of the utmost importance that the spirit of partnership, shared responsibility and international solidarity persists.

The Walk the Talk captures NGOs position on the Jordan Compact progress, in particular in the sectors of Education, Livelihood, Documentation, and Health in Jordan and offers key recommendations to take the commitments forward.

Download the Walk the Talk from our website
“Stories of Solidarity” is a campaign launched by the Jordan INGO Forum in 2018 to showcase the countless acts of solidarity between people impacted by the refugee crisis in Jordan.

For this edition, we welcome Researcher Zoë Jordan, based at the Centre for Development and Emergency Practice (CENDEP) at Oxford Brookes University. Her PhD research focuses on refugee hosting practices in the protracted urban context of Amman, Jordan. This article reflects the views of its author only. Read her full blog post on our website.

Refugee hosting: solidarity networks in Amman

Living with host families is a well-recognised coping mechanism for refugee populations, whereby individuals and families share their accommodation and resources with displaced people. However, it is difficult to put figures on the number of people living in such arrangements. In Jordan, CARE found that 23% of Syrian refugee households were sharing accommodation with non-family members in 2017. Rates among refugees from other nationality than Syrian, who do not access camps, may be even higher, and accommodation sharing has been noted as particularly prevalent among Sudanese men.

In my research, I worked with Iraqi, Somali, Sudanese, and Syrian individuals sharing accommodation with others to understand the different forms of hosting that exist in Amman and their experiences of living in hosting arrangements.

In addition to providing shelter, water and sanitation facilities, and food, participants in my research reported that connections made through hosting arrangements had helped them find work (typically this work was informal and insecure). Many also spoke about the protective function of hosting, reporting a greater sense of safety in living with others. Finally, for many of them, participating in hosting arrangements played an important role in their sense of contributing to a community, through sharing their resources and knowledge with new arrivals and supporting each other. This is vital in a context of protracted displacement. At the same time, very few of the participants saw hosting as desirable, pointing out the overcrowding, poor living conditions, ill-health, stress and lack of privacy.

Importantly, these relationships aren’t just about sharing rental costs but are a vital safety net in a context of uncertain informal employment and low levels of humanitarian assistance.

In the hosting arrangements that I encountered in Amman, refugees were hosted by other refugees, normally of the same nationality.

Syrian and Iraqi refugees were often hosted by family relations, normally those who had arrived in Jordan a few years or months earlier. While some groups can draw on family and pre-existing relations to find a host, this is by no means universal. In Jordan, I found that hosting arrangements between non-family members is common, especially in non-Syrian and non-Iraqi refugee populations, and particularly among young men. In these cases, single people join together to share accommodation, or un-related families form new households.

Sudanese and Somali refugees usually arrived in Jordan without knowing anyone, and rarely had the option to draw on pre-existing connections. Instead, they created hosting relations based on ideas of sharing and solidarity. For the men I worked with, motivations to host were based on a common understanding of life in displacement in Amman, and particularly experiences of racial harassment and violence and a lack of access to humanitarian assistance.

We need further and better analysis of the situations of host families. Doing so would provide us with greater insight into how humanitarian action already influences such practices and what we as humanitarian actors can do better. This would allow us to support positive aspects of hosting while minimising the risks and protection concerns. By placing people at the centre of response and focusing on dignity and resilience, we can enhance and promote existing support mechanisms—such as hosting—and prioritise the choices and preferences of people affected by displacement. My opinion is that we need to look at what people are doing for themselves, in particular, at the ways that refugees are helping other refugees, acknowledging that the main source of assistance is frequently not citizens of the host country nor governments or humanitarian actors, but rather other migrants, displaced populations and refugees.