Humanitarian and Development Overview

The situation in Rukban, at the north-eastern border between Jordan and Syria, remains unchanged and the agreement has not been finalized to transport assistance from Damascus. Despite advocacy to the government, medical admission to hospitals in Jordan for the most serious cases remains very complicated and largely insufficient compared to the needs because of security clearance. (See Health analysis report of Rukban clinic)

Around 9100 refugees remain stranded in Azraq, village 5. According to UNHCR 13,000 refugees have been screened out of the fenced area since June 2016. Since early fall 2017, more than 2100 refugees were forcibly relocated by authorities from host community and other camps to the village on security grounds, however, they reportedly had no access to any legal recourse in the process.

The Rectification of Status Process (RSP) announced on March 4th to legalize the status of urban Syrian refugees living informally outside of camps is ongoing. As of April 30th, an estimated number of more than 32,000 individuals came forward for rectification and almost 14,349 Asylum Seeker Certificate were granted.

1 UNHCR (April 2018), Syria Regional Refugee Response Inter-agency Information Portal
2 UNICEF (Mar. 2017)
3 UNHCR (April 2018) April Fact sheet
Focus group discussions led by the INGO consortium during the first weeks of the process show that the RSP was viewed by most participants as a first step to obtaining other documents, such as work permits, marriage ratifications, and legal and civil documentation for children. The discussions also reveal a certain level of misperception among refugees, who may associate the RSP with “a protection against exploitation and abuses from employer”, a way to “access health services like Jordanians” or to “obtain Jordanian nationality or permanent residency”.

Access to health for Syrian refugees has further deteriorated following the government’s decree to cut subsidies to healthcare. Fees have increased two- to five-fold for most services, with charges for a regular hospital birth – for example – rising from 60 JoD to 240 JoD and a caesarean section increasing from 240 JoD to 600 JoD. Patients have reported skipping consultation to the doctors or self-medicating as a coping mechanism. In the lead up to the Brussels Conference, international financing to health and a transition from emergency relief to sustainable support were largely discussed between donors and the Government of Jordan.

The Brussels Conference concluded on April 25th, with $ 4.4 billion pledged for both Syria and the region for 2018, as well as multi-year pledges of $ 3.4 billion for 2019-2020 and $ 21.2 billion in loans. Specifically, for Jordan, international community’s political and financial support was reaffirmed. The UK will notably host an international Conference with Jordan in London later this year to mobilize support, while the World Bank is working on a 5-year reform plan dedicated to growth and job creation. The partnership paper between Jordan and the international community mainly details the progress made in implementing Jordan Compact commitments, whilst overlooking the considerable challenges that Syrian refugees face in Jordan – especially in terms of protection, freedom of movement or right to seek asylum.

**Host Communities**

Vision Hope new program: resilience, psychosocial support and social cohesion

Vision Hope International partners with local NGOs in Karak and Manshiyya to implement a Women’s Employment Project that aims to empower both Syrian and Jordanian women to generate an income by equipping them to run their own businesses. Each woman receives technical training to learn a trade, business training to ensure sustainability and profitability, and a small amount of start-up capital.

By bringing together Syrian and Jordanian women in this transformative project, members of the two communities are finding friendships in which they can help each other succeed. They have fun learning together, building their knowledge on business creation, and hearing each other’s stories. Psychosocial and other support services create a safe space to help trauma-burdened refugee women both move forward with creating their own businesses, as well as integrating with and contributing to their host communities.

While the project is still in its early phases, both the Syrian and Jordanian communities are already experiencing its benefits. Abeer, a participant in the Women Employment Project, said, “My self-confidence has increased. I am a productive person and can work. I used to doubt that I could ever succeed in life but now I have hope for the future and believe that I can continue to grow my business and, as a result, improve life for my family”.

Vision hope program began in February and is expected to run until December this year. It is then expected that the women will be self-sustaining by this point. Learn more about the Women’s Employment Project and other initiatives that bring together refugees and Jordanians.

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1 The ECHO funded consortium is made up of the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC), INTERSOS, Mercy Corps, and Premiere Urgence Internationale (PUI).
**WUSC launches the Student Refugee Program**

The Student Refugee Program (SRP) just launched the application call for the next cycle of 2019/20 for candidates to resettle and receive one-year sponsorship in Canada. The application is open to all nationalities who are registered refugees under the UNHCR and meeting the eligibility requirements.

**War Child Canada’s Communication champions**

War child Communication Champions finalized two round of activities in the last two months. First, a photography and basic art training dedicated to youth from local and refugee community in Sweileh and Hashmi Al-shmali. Second, a tree planting campaign and a distribution of food and non-food items to vulnerable families in both areas.

The Communications Champions program provides children and youth with safe space where they can work on their own personal development, choosing skills and activities they would like to be champion in. They also raise awareness on child protection within their communities and engage with all youth, whatever the gender, the origin or the religion.

**Voices from Jordan**

**Meeting Eid, with IOCC Agriculture program**

Eid is a Jordanian father of eight living in Balqa 18 kilometers away from the nearest village. Two years ago, this brawny retired soldier in his 60s, who grew up helping his parents farm, became a participant in International Orthodox Christian Charities’ (IOCC) agriculture and food security project, which assists 80 households across Balqa, Jerash, and Karak Governorates.

Agriculture is vital to Jordan’s economy, with an estimated 25% of poor households relying on it. Food and water have long been stretched thin in Jordan, and in recent years the crisis in neighboring Syria has added more than 660,000 registered refugees to Jordan’s population.

In April 2016, IOCC provided him with five goats under a stewardship agreement between him, IOCC, and the Jordanian Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), plus six months of food for the animals. Today, through his hard work and with follow-up support from IOCC, he has built up his herd to twenty. Eid’s farming experience has served him well, and his wife has learned how to prepare dairy products.
The two produce enough to not only feed their family but also to generate regular income by selling their products in nearby villages and towns, as well as in Amman. On top of regular follow up, IOCC has offered specialized training sessions, in coordination with the Jordanian MoA, to teach Eid and farmers like him the fundamentals of caring for livestock and of managing household farm budgets and resources.

“I love my work; I love my goats. Before, I used to sit around, doing nothing and struggling to make ends meet. Now, I feel young again; I ramble around with my goats all day,” Eid explains. “I am my own boss, I manage the herd as I want: for our food consumption, for the dairy [sales], or for big expenses.” This new income stream has allowed the family to improve their house, diversify the family’s diet, build a well in the garden, and hire an English tutor for one of their sons, who is still in high school.

IOCC’s agriculture and food security program includes providing livestock- to farming families, and constructing greenhouses and water catchments to help farmers conserve water. Read Eid’s full story on our website.

Saba’ Khalayleh “I will occupy an important position someday!” by Action Aid

It was a defining moment when the young Saba’ Al-Khalayleh stood up and asked the government representative in one of the halls to recount the results of the recent decentralized elections in Zarqa because she spotted a mistake. She did not hesitate to perform her duty as a “local” observer, despite the fact that her claim electrified the atmosphere in the room to the point that the counting manager said: “If your claim of error is incorrect, you will leave the room.”

“I was sure about my position,” said 24-year-old Saba’, “I have received a two-day training with ActionAid as part of the Local Election Observation Project, and I knew my job thoroughly. I stood behind my statement and the employee ended up thanking me in front of everyone.”

Saba’s studying journalism and media at Zarqa Private University. She is learning a lot from her studies, but the experience monitoring the decentralized elections was different. “I really felt that I had a role and influence and that I was respected by everyone.”

“Opportunities for political participation for young women in Jordan are virtually non-existent.” Saba’ continues, “This project is an opportunity for real work and influence.” As part of the project, Saba’ invites “young women in particular in the governorate, to take part in various political activities, not only social, cultural, and artistic ones.”

“I want to prove to all that we, as youth have a fundamental role in society and the right to lead, manage, and serve our community” She concludes

ActionAid works with local communities in the Arab region to develop the capacity of women and young leaders to advocate for their rights. Saba was part of the Youth Civic Engagement and Political Participation project funded by the Danish Arab Partnership Program (DAPP) in 2017 aiming to support young people as one of the key actors of social, economic, and political change in Jordan and studying the obstacles that affect the participation of youth into political life. The project also focuses on monitoring the decentralization process and elections in Jordan and youth role within it.

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In a new report, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development stated that Jordan’s economy is expected to see a modest increase in the pace of growth this year and the year after, supported by stronger private consumption driven by a rising population of refugees and the implementation of structural reforms.

JIF campaign counters the narrative of the crisis which tends to systematically oppose refugees to host communities. This dehumanizing discourse overshadows the countless acts of solidarity that individuals have initiated towards one other throughout Jordan. As part of this new campaign, JIF INGOs have chosen to highlight these individual stories of trust, friendship and solidarity that they witness so often working along host communities, refugees and minorities in Jordan.

Contribute, send your story to JIF.

In Jordan, children bake goodness for vulnerable refugee women from Hussein refugee Camp.

Read about the little volunteers in the Jordan Times.

How a Syrian refugee and a Jordanian immigrants became 'brothers' in Canada...?

Read Hassan and Guss’s story in the National Observer.

In picture: “Stop bullying refugees at school”, Collateral Repair Projects recounts the testimonies of two Jordanian teens who stepped up against discrimination at school.

Click here to learn more.

In video: “Stronger Together”, the Danish Refugee Council celebrates the diversity of the population in Jordan, and invites us to explore similarities between communities.

Click here to watch the video.
Ayman, Iqbal, and Hisham

By Un Ponte Per...

Ayman, Iqbal, and Hisham are three friends. They live together in Amman, sharing the same apartment. They have their habits, friends, families and hobbies, ambitions and dreams. The same they had in Syria, before getting shot and forced to live their lives in a wheelchair.

They arrived in Jordan around four years ago and immediately got in contact with the local community of people with disabilities (PWDs). They received physical and psychological therapy for one year and a half while starting to make a living with small gigs. Later that year, they left the center to live on their own.

Their example first impacted their neighborhood. They convinced the responsible parties to turn the mosque, the park and the medical center more accessible and inclusive of PWDs, involving all the community. Later, they were introduced to Al Hussein Society - Jordan Center For Training & Inclusion, where UPP met them last October, as part of a health assistance initiative Adreen (We can).

At first beneficiaries of the project, Ayman and his friends became focal points and crucial links with the local community of PwDs, providing lists of names of people in need of customized mobility aids, home adaptations or prostheses, referrals for surgeries and other activities. They became the heart of a solidarity network, including Yemenis, Iraqis, and Palestinians along with Jordanians and, of course, Syrians wounded by war just like them.

Two/three times a week, they train themselves and their peers at the Sport Citadel because “life goes on” and as Iqbal says “how can you find a wife without muscles?”. As occupational therapy is crucial, each one of them also rolls up their sleeves to fill the days: studying Islamic law, repairing electronics and keeping an eye on the news from Syria.

Their principal aim is to show that PwDs can do things on their own. Their example is changing the whole community here in Amman. Even the hair-dresser working in the salon at the bottom of their building wants to adapt the entrance of his shop to allow clients with disabilities to get in.

Ayman, Iqbal and Hisham’s biggest wish is to come back to Syria one day, when the war is over, and help their peers there too, overcoming the boundaries with their astonishing, tireless endurance.

Adreen project is funded by the Jordan Humanitarian Fund. Un Ponte Per... and Al Hussein Society lead the efforts in delivering comprehensive rehabilitation services to people with physical and psychological disabilities including amputees and war-wounded.

Read the full story

Find out about our campaign, check out JIF website
World Vision partnered with Al Jazeera’s virtual reality studio Contrast VR to release “Dreaming in Za’atari: Stories after Syria,” an immersive film exploring the hopes and dreams of three young people living in Jordan’s Za’atari refugee camp. VR animations bring their stories to life, transforming the spaces around them.

For Iyad, making and selling his paintings has contributed to an increased sense of self-reliance and self-sufficiency while allowing him to cope with and navigate his new surroundings.

Talents and skills have blossomed and IRD’s Art from Za’atari committee’s paintings have been exhibited alongside the more experienced artists in various galleries for both national and international audiences. A total of 60 paintings produced by the committee were on exhibit during the 2018 Laureates and Leaders for Children Summit, which was held at the Dead Sea on March 26 – 27 and of these, 40 were sold to the public.

While IRD provides the workshop and gallery space in its community center, as well as materials and coordination support for the committee to meet, it is fully self-managed and passionately driven by the community members themselves. It remains a clear example of solidarity, ambition, and talent.
“These young Syrians have grown up under constant news coverage of their plight, but rarely have they been given the opportunity to share their stories and shape news coverage” explains Contrast VR. “It was clear they had their own stories they wanted to share. By training a new group of young storytellers, we can see their perspectives come to life in an intimate and visceral medium.”

**IMC: Fighting Child Labor in Zaatari Camp**

Since the start of 2018, International Medical Corps is now working with UNICEF to reduce child labor in the camp. In Zaatari camp, IMC has a well-established child protection case management program, with case managers in districts 1, 6, 8, and 12 covering the whole camp with outreach and home visits. IMC child protection case manager and supervisor explains that “children are leaving school to work in nearby farms and factories. Some are sole providers for their family, while others are leaving the camp daily with their families, working together”. Both girls and boys commonly start working as young as 10 years old, sometimes younger, in villages within 30 to 60 minutes’ drive from the camp.

A UNICEF outreach activity in 2017 identified around 1400 working children in Za’atari camp. With child protection case managers, Syrian volunteer para-case workers and outreach staff, IMC contacts and individually assesses each of these children and their families. The approach is to offer a job opportunity to families of working children to reduce the need for children to work, and in fine enroll them in school. Since February 2018, IMC identified 50 of the most vulnerable families, with parents who agreed to be supported. Out of these, 20 parents were offered cash for work opportunities.

**Plan International: Women supporting women in Azraq Camp**

Plan International Jordan, in partnership with the King Hussein Cancer Foundation, celebrated International Women’s Day on March 8, 2018 in Azraq Camp’s Village 5, where Syrian refugee women had the opportunity to support Jordanian women fighting breast cancer.

All the films can be viewed across World Vision’s social media channels, and on Al Jazeera English, Al Jazeera Arabic, AJ+, Contrast VR and Samsung’s social media channels. Check them out

Amongst them are 14-year-old Ibrahim and his family. The youngest child of 3, he had dropped out of school in his first grade to work in farms. Ibrahim’s parents are elderly, and his father is working in the camp using an old trolley to transport goods. Barely fulfilling their needs, the family had to sell their UNHCR food allowance to buy clothes for Ibrahim. Every day, Ibrahim was waking up at 5 am to leave the camp for a long day working on a farm. Finally, Ibrahim’s mother was offered cash for a work opportunity and started working soon after. Now Ibrahim is spending his days with friends, playing football in one of the nearby safe spaces. Resuming his studies is complicated, as he now needs to start over. IMC para-case worker is supporting him, explaining him the importance of completing his studies, whether by starting over in formal education or by taking learning support services classes in Makani. While Ibrahim is not confident that he can do it, IMC will continue to follow and support him to ensure that he does not return to work and is able to engage in educational opportunities instead.

Plan teamed up with the King Hussein Cancer Foundation and Dr Azhar Al-Nasser for an awareness raising event. Women received information on breast cancer, learnt how to perform self-breast examination and were provided free breast cancer screening.

For the occasion, the 40 participants also created handmade small gifts that were sent to 100 breast cancer patients in the Jordan Breast Cancer Program supported by the King Hussein Cancer Foundation.

“We want to show that we don’t just receive support as refugees, but we can also give support to these women, even if it’s just a simple or symbolic act,” said one the participant.
SAMS Medical Mission

Last month, 53 skilled medical volunteers came to Jordan from all over the world to participate in the Syrian American Medical Society’s (SAMS) April Medical Mission. Throughout the six-day multi-specialty medical mission, volunteers worked in over 10 locations, including Al-Zaatari Refugee Camp, treating over 4,300 patients, including more than 1,000 children. SAMS volunteers, including plastic surgeons, and general surgeons provided over 200 surgical procedures, including ophthalmological procedures.

During this mission, SAMS also partnered with Bridge of Life, an international nonprofit organization working to improve health, wellness, and vitality. With Bridge of Life, SAMS launched a large-scale chronic kidney disease screening for the first time ever on a mission. Together, they provided over 1,000 Chronic Kidney Disease screenings.

SAMS also welcomed actress and activist Amber Heard to their multi-specialty medical center in Al-Zaatari Camp during this mission. There, she met with the physicians and medical mission volunteers providing free medical care, as well as Syrian refugees receiving this vital service. In March alone, SAMS provided more than 11,000 medical services at their center.

The medical mission also included a training component. Five surgeons from Daraa came to Jordan for a training conducted by Massachusetts General Hospital and the training focused on the latest techniques and interventions in surgery, which they can adapt to a low-resource environment. Learn more about SAMS medical missions to the region.

Innovation

IRC social innovation program

The International Rescue Committee’s Mahali program is a social innovation initiative that puts the people affected by problems at the center of designing solutions. In 2017, the Mahali project hosted a series of community breakfasts with Syrian families across the country to hear about their challenges. Based on the feedback, IRC designed cartoons representing the issues and asked people to select their three most critical challenges. After tallying over 1,500 votes, IRC narrowed down the challenges that the Mahali program would tackle.

The first challenge was how to enable vulnerable families to meet their basic needs predictably, in ways that do not expose them to risk. Twelve activists from the community were recruited from a pool of nearly 900 applicants and worked with Mahali’s human-centered designers and other technical support to develop solutions with close testing and feedback from the community. Those solutions included platforms to lower housing costs, to provide access to transportation for disabled people, to connect low-income workers in the North to gig-economy opportunities, and to support the currency-free exchange of services among vulnerable households. Those four solutions are now competing for access to incubation and funding.

The second most commonly voted for was the challenge that people face navigating humanitarian services, and the experience of service delivery by NGOs – specifically for health, legal, and basic need services. People identified factors like employee behavior, the organization of services, clarity of procedures, impartiality, and consideration of special needs as being critical to assess service quality. 45 applicants are currently working with Mahali to come up with specific solutions.

This is where NGOs come in! IRC is currently looking for partners that are motivated to solve the same problems in service delivery that our community innovators are working on. NGOs will work together to frame the challenge and provide input on the solutions they develop to make sure they really meet the needs. This is an exciting opportunity to partner with the people who interact with our services, while they receive full support from the Mahali project to design, develop, and launch their solutions. Please email for more information on how to get involved.
INTERSOS launched the multimedia project RELOCATED IDENTITIES, funded by the European Commission’s Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid department (ECHO), which aims at documenting personal experiences of Syrian refugees men, women and children who face challenges in normalizing their legal and civil documents and status in Jordan.

Filmed in several locations, including Mafraq, Amman and surroundings ITS, Ma’an, and Karak, the multimedia project covers issues such as relocation to Azraq Camp, deportation to Syria, harsh living conditions - including separation from family, economic hardship, work exploitation, extreme marginality, gender-based discrimination and limited access to healthcare and public services.

Italian Photographer Alessio Cupelli and multimedia producer Katia Marinelli spent several weeks with INTERSOS’ team in Jordan collecting stories and unique interviews of Syrian refugee families.

By using immersive film and intimate photography, the project collects personal stories and draws sincere portraits and feelings of refugees. With a special attention to sounds and voices from the ground, the images create a strong connection between the viewers and the “characters”. Visit the website

JIF participates to 2018 Brussels Conference on Syria and supporting the region

JIF has particularly been active in the months leading up to the conference, collaborating with INGOs in Lebanon and Turkey to produce a regional briefing, organizing a consultation with local civil society in Jordan, and publishing a critical review of the Jordan Compact progresses. During the conference, JIF representatives supported civil society rapporteurs in briefing country delegations, notably on the topic of education and inclusive development.

In a statement released at the end of the conference, JIF spokesperson and Steering Committee member warned about the tens thousands of Syrian refugees excluded from development – stranded at the northeast border with Syria, detained in Azraq, or simply unable to secure a work permit and long-term job or to go to school. The JIF is now working with donors and UN agencies on identifying issues to follow up at the highest level.

The Jordan INGO Forum is generously funded by BPRM, DFID, European Union Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid and SIDA.