During the second half of June, an escalation in military activity that included ground clashes and aerial bombardments led to the displacement of hundreds of thousands of civilians in the south of Syria. By the end of the month, 46 civilian deaths were documented, with many more injured. Some 20,000 individuals were estimated to have displaced towards the Nasib border crossing with Jordan. The area would see a surge of IDPs (up to 59,000 IDPs) and then a large decrease in the first ten days of July.

Despite several INGOs, the UN, and Human rights organizations calling for the opening of the border, the Government of Jordan announced in June that it would not let additional Syrian refugees cross into Jordan. Meanwhile, amidst growing insecurity, access to humanitarian assistance rapidly deteriorated. The last UN cross-border convoy from Jordan was sent on June 25th and humanitarian actors on the ground faced increasing risks while trying to deliver aid. Living conditions of IDPs stranded in the two border areas (near Jordan and the Occupied Golan Heights) became extremely difficult, with IDPs lacking adequate shelter, WASH facilities and sufficient amounts of basic assistance, particularly health.
The situation in Rukban, at the north-eastern border between Jordan and Syria, remained unchanged and no agreement to transport assistance from Damascus has been reached. UNOSAT’s latest satellite image from June located 11,702 shelters in the area, a 12% increase from the last image in January. Security clearance for medical admission for the most serious cases remain largely insufficient compared with the needs: in May and June, only 124 referrals were admitted in Jordan’s hospitals (See Health analysis report of Rukban clinic).

At the end of June, Azraq camp was hosting 36,480 individuals, including 9,465 individuals in Village 5 (V5). The screening process allowing V5 residents to transfer out of the fenced areas of the camp was still ongoing, albeit slowly. Approximatively two third of the residents had been stranded in V5 for more than two years and the situation of the forcibly relocated from host community to V5 (approximatively one third) remained unsolved, as no access to legal recourse had been granted to them.

Partners activities

Camps

Oxfam launches SuperAdobe and a new perspective on shelter

Oxfam inaugurated the innovative temporary building approach SuperAdobe in Zaatari camp in the presence of representatives from UNHCR, UNICEF and Syrian Refugee Affairs Directorate. Oxfam piloted the SuperAdobe building approach in District 8 of Zaatari camp with the support of Syrian cash-for-work volunteers. The result: a new community center, built using a form of “sandbag architecture” that can be done by virtually anyone, using readily available building materials: sand gathered on site, plastic bags, barbed wire, limestone, and bamboo.

SuperAdobe structures are quick to construct, cost-effective, and can provide a more livable built environment for refugees. They are cooler in the summer and warmer in the winter when compared with the conventional pre-fabricated caravans that house all of the refugees in Zaatari camp.

SuperAdobe structures can be used for over ten years – but despite their longevity, the structures can be demolished for low-cost and with minimal environmental impact or waste when the space is vacated. Such an approach is a quick and efficient solution to temporary housing in the current and continued crisis. Compared to caravans, they are faster to deliver, cheaper, more durable, and easily adaptable.

Diaa’ Ibrahim, a Syrian cash-for-work volunteer who helped to construct the SuperAdobe structure told Oxfam, “When I return back to Syria, I want to build a house like this. Our house in Syria is destroyed because of the war, and I want to build a house for me to live in”, he said.

Watch the video
On the first day of the Islamic holiday “Eid al-Fitr”, Plan International conducted a distribution of sweets to every family in Village five, Azraq Camp.

The distribution was done by Plan’s volunteers, community committee members, and beneficiaries supervised by Plan’s staff. The distribution was done plot by plot supervised by plot leaders who are appointed by UNHCR. Two bags of sweets were given for each family, to those who participated in distributing as well as community police who were on duty. In total 4,032 bags were distributed.

LWF’s Community Centre Brings Economic Opportunity and Social Cohesion

Opened in January 2018, the Lutheran World Federation’s (LWF) community center in Al Sariah, Irbid welcomes a steady stream of locals excited to develop new skills, socialize with one another and express their creativity through movement and art. Outdoor spaces buzz with sounds of football scrimmages and lively Capoeira drumbeats, classrooms teem with children and caretakers taking part in psychosocial programming, and smells of candle-making and traditional Syrian cooking waft from the kitchen.

During the months of May and June, women of all ages participated in the livelihood program, in which they learned from one another and benefited from the practical skills training provided by LWF. The informal leader of a sewing group explained, “I have been sewing my whole life. I welcomed the opportunity to teach my skills to the younger women, and now I can earn an income while doing what I love.” The women sold their products at local markets, bazaars, and to family and friends.

The livelihoods self-help groups also foster relationships between Syrians and Jordanians. A 19-year handicrafts group member remarked, “I didn’t know any Syrians until I signed up for the handicrafts group. Now, the Syrian girls are some of my closest friends. We learn about each other’s cultures, but really, we find we are the same.” As important as social cohesion, livelihoods groups give women the opportunity to provide for their families and find purpose and optimism. A cooking group participant described, “If it wasn’t for my cooking group, I might be sitting at home doing nothing. My children have all grown up and moved out. But I am a businesswoman now, and I have many plans for my future.”

Al Sariah lies less than 20 km from the Syrian border and as such has been significantly impacted by the refugee crisis. The Al Sariah community center strives to become a safe space open to all members of the diverse community, irrespective of gender, nationality, age or faith, and is founded on the principle that lasting impact derives from long-term community involvement and building trust.
CARE: Conditional Cash for Education and Protection Program

In May and June, 1,846 Syrians and Iraqis children, almost half of them girls, received support from Care Conditional Cash for Education and Protection Program. The program targets out-of-school children and children at risk of dropping out, girls at risk of early and forced marriage, and support their return to school. It is implemented in close collaboration with families and parents, key community leaders and CARE’s community committee members, Civil Society local partners and the Ministry of Education.

Based on a needs assessment, the program provides essential information, case management, psychosocial support and monthly cash assistance ($100/month for 10 months/household) to support families as the child returns to school. The monitoring system is robust to ensure that children’s parents support their children and that children are able to perform well at school and integrate the education system. Not only the attendance of children is closely monitored, but also their achievements and grades at school. In addition, CARE’s team conducts regular home visits, school visits and individual interviews with children, their teachers and parents/guardians.

Families eligible for conditional cash assistance are also referred to other CARE services, such as the resilience and livelihood programs, psychosocial programs, and regular cash assistance programs. The parents/guardians attend psychosocial sessions on children’s rights.

The Program started 3 years ago, at first with only 100 boys and girls. In June, CARE was successful in securing more funding to increase the number of beneficiaries to more than 2,500.

TDH-IT – Volunteers boost clinic outreach in Zarqa

By the end of June, the clinic of Terre des Hommes Italy’s (TdH-IT) local partner, Soldier’s Family Welfare Society (SFWS) in Zarqa had provided free services to 2219 Jordanian and Syrian women and 2523 children since the beginning of the year. SFWS clinic employs several medical personnel, community health volunteers, and outreach workers in order to provide reproductive health care services (among which antenatal care, postnatal care, counseling on family planning, laboratory testing) and pediatric healthcare services for vulnerable Jordanians and Syrian refugees, who can also benefit from free access to medication. Moreover, a medical mobile unit is employed for reaching beneficiaries unable to come to the clinic.

The clinic also relies on the essential of support of TdH-IT’s volunteers, such as Noor, who fled Syria for Zarqa with her husband, their two kids, and her husband’s family five years ago. As Noor’s husband cannot work, she is striving to support her family, juggling between small jobs and her role of mother. Thanks to the volunteering activities she is carrying out in collaboration with outreach workers, she has the chance to make a difference for the community of Syrian refugees living in Zarqa - a community that she knows very well and whose everyday hardships she shares. According to her, being a volunteer makes her feel powerful as she supports her community and shares her strength with the women and children she meets.
UPP - Awareness sessions for Sudanese women

According to UNHCR, approximately 4,000 Sudanese are living in Amman. They escaped extreme poverty and a long conflict and while their status of asylum seekers is recognized, the process for obtaining such a status usually takes a lot of time, during which they are not targeted by major international aid projects. Just like many Jordanians, Palestinians, Syrian, Somali and Yemeni refugees, the high cost of living seriously cripples the lifestyle of the Sudanese and the legal barriers preventing regular work are even higher for this neglected community.

Un Ponte Per... established a partnership with Sawiyan, a Jordanian grassroots organization which has been campaigning for the rights of minorities in Jordan since 2015. From February to May 2018, the two organizations organized a series of monthly awareness sessions with Sudanese women. Each month, a different NGO was invited to give a speech to the group of women and answer their questions related to protection issues. The topics covered ranged from legal rights (in partnership with ARDD-Legal Aid) and mental health to refugee rights and relocation possibilities.

Un Ponte Per... and Sawiyan arranged a safe and friendly space for the awareness sessions where every woman could feel free to ask personal questions. During the event, volunteers entertained the children of the women in order to give them the possibility to fully participate in the initiative. Un Ponte Per... and Sawiyan also provided the attendees with transportation and refreshments.

The events resulted in high participation rates, increasing up to as many as 75 women and around 50 children per session. These figures demonstrate the true interest and the need for protection-related activities targeting the Sudanese community. Un Ponte Per... and Sawiyan will continue to work alongside this community, planning to include also men in the forthcoming awareness sessions.

War Child Canada provides life skills sessions and remedial classes for out-of-school girls

As a part of War Child Canada’s (WCC) women and girls safeguarding from violence, WCC conducted three rounds of activities in the last three months. These activities assisted school girls from local and refugee communities in Sahab and Nuzha to acquire basic literacy and life skills. The program provides these girls with educational support, encourages them to return back to schools, increases their wellbeing and coping mechanisms and engages both communities (host and refugee).

Remedial sessions took place and included Arabic, English, and Mathematics with a curriculum that suits different age groups according to placement tests. WCC is directly implementing the activities through facilitators from the local community. The cycles of these activities are conducted on a monthly basis, in which about 60 girls are being enrolled per cycle.

The girls showed 96.8% improvement in their educational levels and they showed a 59.3% increase in their life skills. A new cohort of girls will be enrolled in the activities that not only targets girls but also the mothers who attend Psychosocial support, life skills and legal awareness sessions and their young children who are registered in the daycare and participate in daily recreational activities.
TDH-Lausanne Raise your hand against child labor

Terre des hommes (Tdh) and its local partner the Hashemite Fund for Human Development (JOHUD) marked the World Day Against Child Labor in June.

The event, which was held in JOHUD’s Social Support Centre in Marka neighborhood in the eastern part of Amman, brought together Syrian and Jordanian children and families affected or at risk of child labor.

All along the day, the children and young people, with the support of the psychosocial staff and local artists, organized group discussions to discuss and debate on the meaning of child labor, its root causes and what we can do to prevent it.

The event was concluded by revealing a mural and children signing with a handprint to vow to work to end child labor. “I hate going to work. This is why I am signing against child labor” said one of the children participating in the event.

This activity is one example of a solid partnership between Tdh and its local partner JOHUD in January 2018 and with the support of UNOCHA, to support child labor in industrial underserved areas in Amman and Zarqa. Since then, both organizations have been working as one team to provide protection services for the affected communities.

Amidst worsening economic situations and reduced aid, Jordanian and Syrian families have turned to child labor as a coping mechanism. An assessment conducted by Tdh in 2016, revealed that poverty and the family’s need for survival are the main causes of child labor among Jordanians and Syrians alike. Most children interviewed worked long hours up to 9 or 12 hours mainly in restaurants, shops, and factories and streets.

Over the past six months, the project has served more than 389 families with child protection case management services, 201 families received unconditional cash assistance transfer, 66 young people were referred to vocational training, 350 children attended psycho-social sessions, 100 adolescents aged attended life skills training on communication, interpersonal and entrepreneurship skills, 630 of community members have increased awareness on the negative impact of child labour and 160 parents attended support group sessions.

Vision Hope: Signs of Hope exhibition

In June, Vision Hope organized the Signs of Hope Exhibition in Jordan, showcasing art pieces created by Syrian refugee children in Jordan.

Art is a natural form of expression for children, one in which they can communicate unspeakable thoughts, feelings, and experiences without words, thereby enabling them to process difficult experiences. Vision Hope’s Family Centers are run by the local charities Branches of Mercy and Manshia Bani Hassan. At the centres, children from refugee families routinely engage in art therapeutic activities to support their self-awareness and emotional resilience.

Many drew detailed pictures that portray the war experiences that their families faced in Syria. One comforting factor that the children consistently mentioned was their families providing a sense of safety during the time of fear and insecurity.

Many children drew their houses in Jordan as their safe places, as their everyday lives now provide them with a much-needed sense of stability. A house, in general, is the most common symbol for a safe place in art therapeutic projects with refugee children. Expressing their wishes for the future was an easy task, as they all quickly came up with ideas of what they want their futures to hold. Many want to become doctors, engineers, architects, and teachers so that they can help rebuild Syria.
World Vision’s Remedial Education Project

World Vision’s (WV) project “Improving quality education opportunities for targeted Syrian and Jordanian girls and boys aged 6-13 in the host communities in Jordan” is a Remedial Education-focused intervention, funded by Japan Platform (JPF), and implemented in Irbid Governorate. Recently completed in June, this project supported three public schools in Sarih and Nuaymeh Districts, and targeted 432 students: 216 Jordanians and 216 Syrians.

The two core project objectives consisted of 1) Improving the quality and quantity of remedial classes for disadvantaged children 2) Improving the environment of child protection for children at schools and in households. After joining the remedial classes, all students have improved their academic performance in 3 subjects, as reflected in their grades. 400 parents attended caregiver awareness sessions and mentioned that they have improved their caring for their children.

From June 10 through to June 14th, WV managed the graduation ceremonies of 432 students by having evening graduation ceremonies. The students and their families enjoyed refreshments, song, and dance, and also received graduation gifts. Attended by Ministry of Education officials and local school administration, the students were able to formally celebrate their accomplishments as remedial education graduates. WV also collected feedback from the students and their caregivers on the quality of the program.

Advocacy

Plan International and NCFA to establish an Early Childhood Care and Development platform

Plan International and National Council for Family Affairs (NCFA) signed a partnership agreement on 20th May 2018 to fill the gap in Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) services and foster coordination between actors. The objective of the partnership is to work together to establish a National ECD platform/Team based in Amman that is able to:

1) coordinate with ECD actors in the country and support their interventions also through innovative approaches/tools;
2) ensure inter-sectoral coordination;
3) raise the awareness of the International Community and Humanitarian Platforms on the needs of children and parent/caregivers in the Syrian Crisis response,
4) advocate for ECD funding and the inclusion of ECD in Humanitarian response, Resilience Plans and sectoral standards.

In June, a consultative meeting for all ECD stakeholders was held and included representatives from Ministries of Education, Social Development, Religious Affairs, and representatives from National and International organizations. The vast majority of the participants showed great interest in the initiative that will bring all ECD actors under one umbrella. Interested actors may contact Plan International.
When recycling leads to social rehabilitation

By ACF

“To tell you the truth, I found myself in this project,” says Sameera, sitting in her living room, and gluing folded pieces of paper, which will later become a handbag once they dry. Back in Syria, her home in Nawa was close to military barracks, and they could hear and see the constant barrage of bullets and grenades. A grenade hit their home and completely destroyed it in 2012, so they left in the middle of the night, crossing the border to Jordan with almost no possessions to claim their own.

Although she had her sister to lean on, Sameera says that living in Irbid was really difficult in the beginning. She found Jordanians friendly and welcoming, but often a bit restrained and withdrawn; she thought they were different and did not want to mingle with Syrians. One day, a neighbor dropped by and told her about a job opportunity to collect rubbish with Action Against Hunger. She hesitated in the beginning because of the usual stigma about collecting garbage. With her husband left paralyzed after a stroke in 2017, the family was in financial turmoil and Sameera felt she did not have much of a choice. This decision, she claims, was one of the best in her life. Not only was she able to get a paid job for a while, but she also gained many Syrian and Jordanian friends along the road.

“Waste to Positive Energy” project employed Syrian refugees and vulnerable Jordanians on a 50-day-fixed-term contract to clear up waste and recycle in the local area. Apart from paying a daily salary, the project also provided Syrian refugees with a 1-year work permit to allow them to work within the sector for the remainder of the year. The project also benefited the local area, which had suffered from the irresponsible disposal of plastic, paper, and other waste.

Beyond income, the project has managed to put together two communities who had previously been hesitant to intermingle. Sameera is the first to admit that she had her own opinions about the hosting Jordanians, having somehow thought that they are too different to be approached and that they would not welcome it anyway. By the time the project ended, Sameera says she had made friends for life: “We all were so attached, that when our contracts ended we all started crying, Jordanians and Syrians. We still call each other, up until today. We communicate all the time with our WhatsApp group. When one of us finishes a new product, she shares it in the group and we can all see it and get new ideas.”

Sameera says that beyond giving her an income to care for her family, the project completely changed her attitude towards the hosting community. After years of feeling helpless, she now has enough self-confidence to know that the differences between communities are few and that those that exist are a valuable asset rather than something that divides them.

Read the full story on JIF website
Teen friendship beyond nationalities
By CRP

Whether in school or out of school, refugee or Jordanian citizen, the first thing that draws teens to Collateral Repair Project (CRP) is the promise of English and computer classes.

Refugee teens are often shy when they first come, unsure about meeting new people. Faleh and Ra’ed fled from different parts of Iraq for the same reason. They both come from a minority religion, which follows John the Baptist as their prophet. Persecuted for their faith, they sought safety in Jordan. But they were intimidated to move to a new neighborhood, where the majority of people around them were a different religion.

Still though, since they are out of school, computer and English classes enticed them out of their new houses and to CRP. There, they met each other, and many other friends of different religions and nationalities. Faleh says, “I have many Muslim friends at CRP,” but admits that outside of CRP, he often feels he’s treated as an outsider.

Sami is a Jordanian member of CRP’s teen group and on any Saturday you can find him playing Ping-Pong with other teens between practicing English, computers, and other life skills. Though he goes to school, there are 45 kids in his class and he says that it’s hard to understand the teacher. They learn English at school, but he much prefers learning at the center.

When asked about how he feels as a Jordanian coming to a center that was set up for Syrian and Iraqi refugees, he says, “I am happy to see Iraqis and Syrians around because it is multicultural and I learn from that exchange.” Ra’ed feels similarly. “We don’t care if they are people of a different religion, they are just people like us so we don’t care where anyone comes from.”

The center has created a space where different teens of different circumstances can make friends, have fun, and learn from each other.

Solidarity in pictures
By ICMC

Omar, 14, left his hometown of Aleppo six years ago for Jordan. He has found it difficult to enter the Jordanian education system and doesn’t attend school. Along with 150 other children, Omar participated in ICMC’s Photovoice Project in Mafraq, which was possible with the support of the Australian Government. Through regular workshops, children learn how to use digital photography as a tool of self-expression and critical reflection.

Omar’s newfound love of photography has inspired him to capture the beauty in his daily life and as he explains, “better connect with my surroundings”. He describes how this process helps him to express what he is feeling inside. “I use photography to show my perspective on important issues. I like to show how things are, and how things should be.” A key theme arising from Omar’s photography is solidarity with the struggles of others who are different to him. Omar identifies the challenges in other people’s lives, and advocates for diversity and equality. His powerful words speak for themselves and demonstrate the great capacity of children to contribute to positive social change.

I have lots of friends from different countries and cultures. We play football to overcome our differences. This picture is taken by my friend and neighbor. He is Palestinian. Sometimes he feels discriminated against because of his nationality and skin color. I will stand with him to make his life better.”

“The first and last enemy is racism, racism can disperse many people and destroy all humanity. My brother and my neighbor are proof that we are not born with racism, we cultivate it. That also means that we can instill equality and love.”

Omar’s photos and stories were displayed in a photography exhibition in Mafraq to celebrate World Refugee Day. The collection will soon be published in a book. Read the story on JIF website
ActionAid: A big change in a little boy’s life

Zain was a small baby when he fled from Syria to Jordan; he was in his father’s hands with a blue blanket on top of him, “I held him tight with fear, it was dark and I was walking slowly”, said Zain’s father. “Crossing the border to Jordan was hard but I had to do it for my son”.

When they first arrived, Zain and his father stayed in Zaa’tari Camp until they moved to Irbid and finally, Zarqa. “Life here is better than the camp, I am married now, but for Zain who is now 6 years old, things are more difficult. It is hard for him to adapt in Zarqa’s community, because of the social differences, he refuses to attend school, even though I have tried several times to talk to him” Zain’s father explained.

Zain’s started psychosocial support activities as part of a project in ActionAid’s Zarqa community center, “he was shy, he always sat alone in the corner not willing to talk to other children” Khaled, ActionAid’s Youth Activities Facilitator explained.

ActionAid’s psychosocial activities aim to increase children’s social and psychological well-being, through object oriented activities using art tools (Art (drawing), Drama/ Theatre, Music/ RAP, and Puppets Theatre), in order to process difficult memories and find the strength to believe in the future and trust their own abilities. Activities are led by a youth facilitator who is trained on different methods to handle child behaviors as well as on leadership skills.

CVT: on the road to recovery

S.B.K.*, an Iraqi refugee, is a survivor of torture and a client at the Centre for Victims of Torture (CVT) in Jordan. He fled his home after his brothers were killed and he himself was kidnapped, his captors only releasing him after money was paid for his release. “For my wife and I, life was suspended on October 5th 2017,” he says.

Without effective therapy, he felt hopeless, helpless and depressed. Because of post-traumatic symptoms and depression, he was unable to deal with his feelings, notably anger. His daily life was directly affected: restless and irritated he became more isolated, avoided people, and memories of trauma and anxiety affected his functioning. Nonetheless, S.B.K kept on searching for assistance – a testament to his resilience and finally turned to CVT.

At CVT, he received psychosocial and physical therapy services and attended group sessions where he was able to reflect on his feelings and receive support from other members. Throughout the ten sessions spread over three months, CVT staff noticed his progress, moving from being isolated and a passive listener to becoming a very active participant, engaged in discussions and supporting other group members. While the process remained challenging, S.B.K built resilience, finding ways to express his feelings. He slowly regained hope, a sense of forgiveness and an ability to smile. Being in a group surrounded by peers gave him a sentiment of normalization, and by supporting the others, he started being aware of his own resources. With the support of CVT staff, he gained more control over his feelings and when he is reminded of traumatic events. He can now practice coping strategies to feel better, like doing research, writing and walking “even my relationship with my wife became much stronger” he confided to CVT.

*Name changed at client’s request.
“My name is Mariam. My husband and I are from southern Syria, and we have been living in Jordan since 2011. When we came we just had two children. We fled Syria the day the crisis started and we were very scared. We don’t know if our home is still there or has been destroyed. Here in Jordan, all we have is the tent where we live.

Earlier this year, I gave birth to twins. The babies were premature, and the birth was very difficult and very expensive. The bill came to JOD 1,000. We didn’t know what to do. My babies had to stay in the hospital for treatment, but it was so expensive that I had to leave the hospital. My husband didn’t leave our twins for a second, but it was very hard on me as I had to stay at home away from my babies.

Azeez borrowed money from our Jordanian neighbor to pay our hospital bill. After the birth, he had to find a way to repay our debt. He was able to find a health organization that helped us with to pay the bill for one of the babies. They couldn’t cover both, so they have referred us to Medair.

Medair helped us pay the hospital bill, and we were able to give the money back to our neighbor. Without that financial support, we would have been in trouble now.

Azeez and I have been married for almost ten years. We try our best to fulfill our family’s needs, and we make sure to spread love inside our house. We want them to be raised to love each other and to love and help other people. Before getting married I wasn’t too much in love with my husband, but now, I love him very much. Love after marriage is very beautiful.”

Medair provides financial support to refugee families to help cover urgent health procedures, as well as support for pregnant women before, during, and after delivery. Teams of community mobilizers visit refugee families in their homes, delivering health messaging on breastfeeding and vaccinating children. Medair has also formed support groups to provide a safe environment to discuss topics of concern, such as domestic violence, general health, and hygiene messages.