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The Syria crisis: UNIDO projects in the affected region



INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

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Introduction

The crisis in Syria is the largest political, humanitarian and development challenge that we're facing in our time. The protracted conflict has directly resulted in losses of human lives, significant displacement and migration, weakened social services, and the destruction of basic social infrastructure, loss of livelihoods and property.

With more than 4.5 million Syrian refugees by the end of 2015 – and more than 7 million in total displaced – the crisis is challenging the international community to think and act differently in how to respond. We recognize that the conflict is not only inciting an unparalleled humanitarian situation in the country, but also compromising prospects for current and future generations in all impacted countries.

The crisis is putting a strain on already vulnerable resources in the region's middle-income countries. Neighbouring countries have spent billions of dollars to help protect and house refugees. Even so, these countries can no longer cope with the massive number of refugees, and displaced persons are therefore fleeing to countries outside the region.

We have a responsibility to ensure that everything is done to help people and communities deal with the crisis, even as it advances. The United Nations has embraced life-saving humanitarian assistance by providing food, water and shelter, but people need more than that. They also need to maintain livelihoods, access to education and healthcare, and more. People need to know they can believe in an end to the crisis, and be ready to recover from it, to regain social cohesion, and to resume progress as soon as they can.


UNIDO Intervention

The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) is playing an important role as the UN agency committed to promoting inclusive and sustainable industrial development. UNIDO's approach to development has always been to create stable employment and increased income, thus stabilizing societies by addressing the root cause of social and economic instability, and reducing migration pressures in countries of origin.

The Organization has been working in some of the most challenging operating environments for 50 years, and has provided assistance in a range of countries affected by crises, including war and natural disasters. UNIDO's work in this context focuses on building resilience and promoting social cohesion.

One way UNIDO focuses on human security and post-crisis rehabilitation is by raising skills for greater (self-) employability and restoring productive capacities. This contributes to the restoration of livelihoods devastated by conflicts and natural disasters by creating economic opportunities for the affected populations – refugees, internally displaced persons, returnees, demilitarized groups or simply civilians striving to rebuild their livelihoods.

Post-crisis assistance includes restoring economic activity for affected populations and micro- and small-scale enterprises, rehabilitation of damaged agricultural or industrial infrastructure, and employment creation and community stabilization.



UNIDO also assists with the reintegration of externally displaced persons back into their homeland once the security situation allows their repatriation. Nowadays, the average length of refugees' exile is nearly 20 years, and there are more than ten million people living in protracted refugee situations across the world. This means UNIDO has a huge role to play during and after protracted refugee situations.

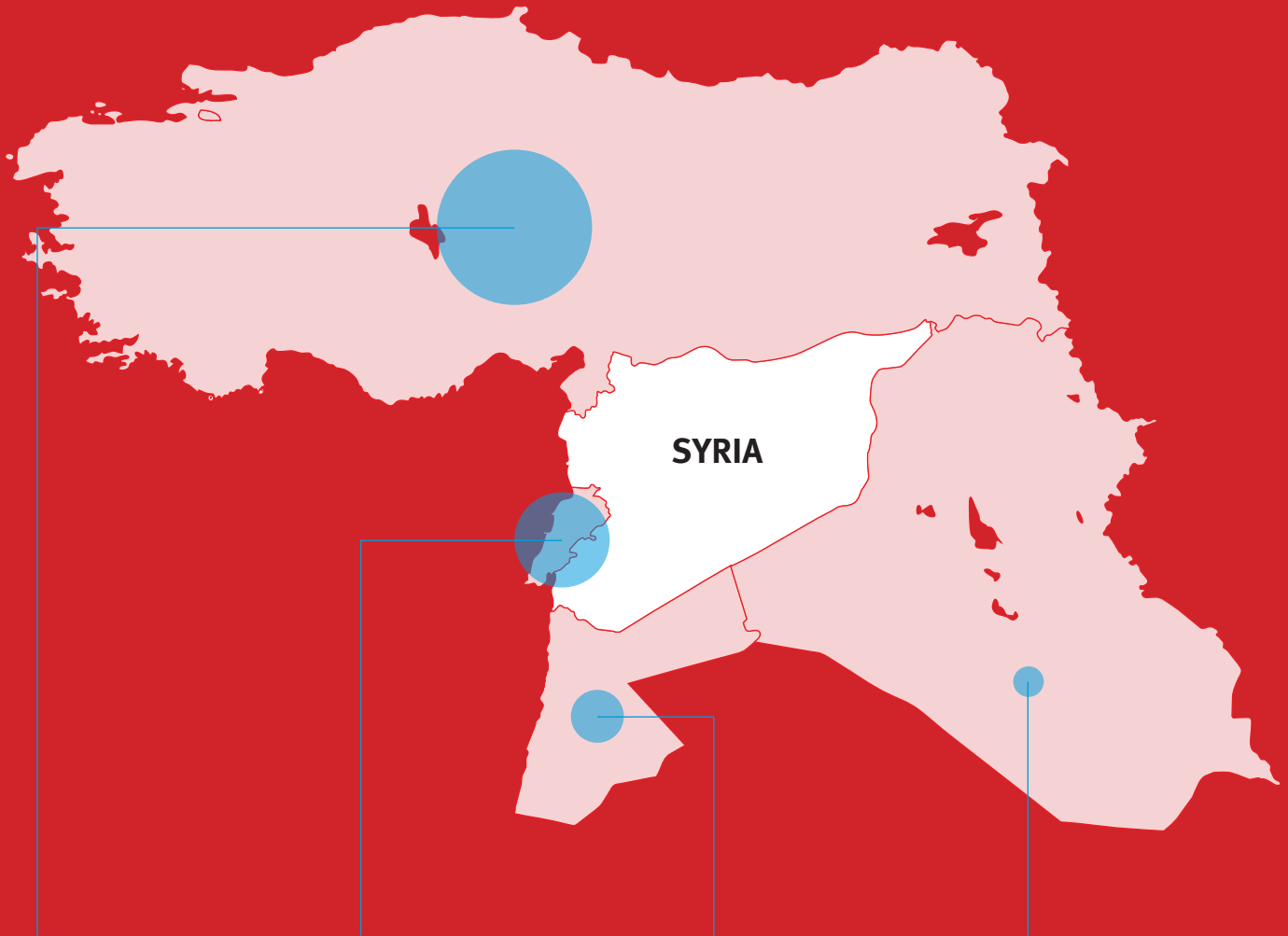
In the context of the Syria crisis, UNIDO is helping to mitigate the impact of the crisis in the region by strengthening the resilience of neighbouring host communities, and addressing unprecedented migration by creating jobs and income in these communities. UNIDO has been working with the private sector to create development solutions in crisis-affected situations, and more are expected in the coming years.

After five years, there is no end to the conflict in sight. We must work more than ever to help during these times of crisis, and UNIDO is committed to working to support the livelihoods of those most in need who have been affected by the Syrian crisis.

The international community is increasing its call to scale up economic opportunities for the communities most affected by Syrian refugees. With unemployment rates estimated at well over 30% in the neighbouring countries, concern is rising that in absence of opportunities, young people are more likely to resort to negative coping strategies, including violent groups and extremism.

Protecting young people in the most affected areas from the pull of criminality, as well as preserving their human potential, is pivotal to maintain both local and regional stability. Job creation and livelihood opportunities are an essential dimension to preserving stability in the countries that host most of the refugees. The partnership with local communities, as well as with the international private sector, is recognized as a crucial dimension for strengthening resilience of the countries affected.

In this context, UNIDO considers entrepreneurship, vocational training, and local skills development for unemployed youth and women as necessary. Assistance to local micro-, small- and medium-sized companies is critical to rehabilitation, and staying afloat in a time of crisis.



TURKEY

~2.18 million refugees

~54% under the age of 18

~44% between ages 18-59

~4% over the age of 60

LEBANON

~1.1 million refugees

~51% under the age of 18

~45% between ages 18-59

~3% over the age of 60

JORDAN

~633,000 refugees

~52% under the age of 18

~44% between ages 18-59

~3% over the age of 60

IRAQ

~245,000 refugees

~42% under the age of 18

~56% between ages 18-59

~2% over the age of 60



“Regional stability is buckling under the weight of the Syrian crisis. Nearly half of the country’s men, women and children have been forced to flee their homes.

We know that essential services, such as health, education and sanitation are at a breaking point. Competition for jobs, housing, water and land is undermining social cohesion in neighbouring countries.

Every day it gets worse — for the people of Syria and the region at large. The United Nations is working to address the conflict’s deep roots and devastating impact. The Syrian people are looking to us. We must deliver. I thank you very much for your leadership and commitment. ”

– Ban Ki Moon

Iraq: Partnering for employment and economic revival of its industrial manufacturing sector

Context

The UN estimates that at least 3 million Iraqis have become internally displaced persons in the course of the recent fighting and have lost their homes, jobs, and businesses.

The security situation, and political and economic challenges create a high level of unpredictability for a country that is struggling with a high budget deficit due to decreases in oil revenues. Unemployment continues to be a serious issue for Iraqis, especially among youth, who represent around 78% of the population. The war in Iraq severely disrupted the local infrastructure, including numerous higher education and vocational training institutions. As a result, there remains a shortage of opportunities for individuals to develop their vocational and professional skills, which, in turn has led to a significant lack of heavy equipment mechanical maintenance personnel, needed by modern industries.

Strategy

UNIDO, and Scania, a leading manufacturer of heavy trucks, buses and engines, have established the Swedish Academy for Training in Erbil, in the Kurdistan region of Iraq. The academy, which is funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, and which is the only one of its kind in the Iraq, helps unemployed Iraqis under the age of 30, offering them a chance to develop relevant skills and to find professional employment. Simultaneously, the training facility aims to bolster Iraq's wider economic development by addressing the shortage of skilled labour required by modern enterprises operating and expanding in the country today. Courses are offered not only in maintaining and

operating heavy machinery, such as modern fleets of trucks, engines and agricultural equipment, but also in improving English language and computer literacy skills.

In 2013, the programme was extended to include after-sales support and business management. Although typically male dominated professions, the academy aims to achieve a 30% female participation. Women are actively encouraged to attend the technical and managerial trainings, so that they are also well prepared for opportunities in the workplace.

The academy aims to train at least 300 students a year. Training is delivered so that skills are transferable to various platforms. After graduation the academy will actively connect students with local companies in the region. This includes Scania, which has a national dealership and maintenance centre in Erbil.

Outlook

The conflict in Iraq, aggravated by the Syria crisis, has left the country in a desperate humanitarian and economic state. Many youth are left without any perspective for the future and are braving the deadly route of human traffickers to cross into Europe. The training infrastructure established by UNIDO and Scania was intended to serve the economic growth projections for the transport sector defined in 2011-2012. By engaging in joint activities, UNIDO and Scania are helping to ensure that a lack of skills does not limit or hamper industrial investment and can build resilience for Iraqi people to be better placed to take full advantage of the region's developing industries.



Jordan: Promoting social cohesion and harmony in the host communities of the Syrian refugees in Mafraq

Context

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan has hosted Syrians since the beginning of the conflict, and is currently one of the countries with the highest number of refugees per capita in the world. More than 1.2 million Syrian refugees currently reside in the country.

More than 80% of Syrian refugees live outside camps in host communities. The Mafraq Governorate, which hosts 25% of the Syrian refugees in Jordan, including those in the Zaatari Camp, are amongst the most economically vulnerable areas in the country.

Over the last five years, resources in these communities and their respective safety nets have been exacerbated by the influx of refugees, creating competition over jobs and adding additional pressure to already vulnerable Jordanians. Situations similar to this could lead to building social tension in these communities.

Strategy

With the financial support from the Government of Japan, the UNIDO intervention aimed to contribute to the efforts of the Government of Jordan to alleviate socio-economic pressure in the host communities in the Mafraq Governorate, by promoting resilience and self-reliance of vulnerable women and youth in the region, and promoting social cohesion and harmony in the host communities by creating and improving local livelihood opportunities.

The project built on the existing handicraft production skills that local women possessed and aimed to build the capacity

to design, produce and market innovative and eco-friendly handicrafts that met market demand, drawing on their cultural identity and utilizing local raw materials. The main activities of the project were the following:

- Build technical capacity of the community based organizations in providing entrepreneurship training and skills training.
- Provide entrepreneurship training and skills training in designing, producing and marketing handicrafts to local women and youth.
- Facilitate establishment of producer groups as self-help initiatives and provides tools that can be used collectively.

Outlook

Entrepreneurship development and handicraft skills-training materials were developed specifically for the targeted beneficiaries. In this context, the capacity of the General Federation of Jordanian Women has been expanded to help deliver entrepreneurship and handicraft skills-training to locals.

In total, 228 local women and youth have been trained in entrepreneurship development and 136 trained in handicraft skills. In addition, self-help producer groups have been established in Al-Mafraq and Al-Baeg, Manshiet Bany Hassan, Al-Za'atree Mughair and Al Sarhan, in basket weaving, up-cycling/recycling handicrafts and embroidery. Sewing machines, embroidery machines and irons were provided to these producer groups.



Lebanon: Support for host communities affected by the high influx of Syrian refugees

Context

Since the outbreak of the Syrian crisis, more than 1.2 million refugees have fled to Lebanon, which has increased the population by over 25%, and communities inside Lebanon have reached a critical point. Public services are overwhelmed, economic growth has faltered and unemployment is rising at record rates. As social tension grows, Lebanon is concerned about protecting its now fragile stability.

Job creation is considered of particular importance by the Government of Lebanon and the United Nations as a mechanism to counterbalance weak economic growth and threats to social cohesion. Lebanon's job-creating markets are shrinking with revenues from tourism, and services and cross-border trade are down as a direct result of the conflict. Employment rates are falling while the labour market is expanding. One-in-five Lebanese is now jobless, which is twice pre-2011 World Bank estimates. Taking this into consideration, it is crucial to continue to improve livelihood and job opportunities in the most affected communities in Lebanon, focusing on marginalized people and youth in particular.

Strategy

With the support from the Governments of Italy and Japan, this UNIDO project aimed to improve host communities' production capacity and enabled them to respond to local and external market demand, while generating livelihood support and economic recovery. UNIDO focused on the actual needs and demands of the markets, developing skills and know-how, and promoting solutions to the current socio-economic challenges. The project main components included:

- Mobilization and organization of targeted communities: the adoption of a participatory approach to all project activities to ensure the involvement of both the host community and the refugees (Confidence building).
- Capacity building and skills development: The project leveraged on its past experience working in Lebanon with the Ministry of Industry as its main partner; by making use of already well-established training facilities. These served for skills enhancement and diversification in different sectors based on local demands and needs.
- Sustainable Livelihoods of host community: The project facilitated establishing (or upgrading) selected enterprises through the provision of training and technology. The creation of 'producer groups' was encouraged and individual entrepreneurs were linked to business mentoring and other enterprise development and business service providers. Linkages were made with relevant private sector institutions and other financial entities for financing options for project targeted entrepreneurs.

Outlook

It is estimated that approximately 300 households benefited directly from the project (about 1,500 people). The Lebanese authorities, as well as refugee populations, benefited from capacity building activities and improvement of infrastructure. Small- and medium-sized enterprises with high potential for job creation were among those most benefited by the project.

Lebanon: Community empowerment and livelihoods enhancement project (CELEP)

Context

The CELEP project was developed in partnership with UNIDO and the Istituto per la Cooperazione Universitaria to assist the Government of Lebanon, by improving the performance of select enterprises to enhance their competitiveness and integration into the global market, and by supporting rural communities in promoting income-generating activities and strengthening their household economy.

Strategy

With the financial support of the Government of Italy, the UNIDO project provided direct technical assistance to cooperatives and small- and medium-sized enterprises throughout Lebanon, with specific focus on sectors of textile, leather, furniture, metal works, food and beverages, olive oil, apiculture and essential oil.

Enterprises and cooperatives received tailored assistance, which included training on construction works, new machinery, technical and managerial assistance, and food safety. The new machinery has given SME owners a renewed sense of pride in their work, and has helped them adopt new production techniques for better quality products.

UNIDO's capacity building efforts, which targeted entrepreneurs and representatives of the government and business associations, were carried out in the form of on-site training programmes and study tours to relevant fairs and trade-shows. The training programmes adopted a practical approach for the different sectors.

Outlook

An employment generation survey undertaken in August 2014 showed that around 3,000 households in the targeted areas have benefited from the project activities. 53 enterprises and 17 cooperatives increased their production levels and generated new jobs. The livelihoods of the employees and their families, including extended family members, have been enhanced, and food security in the targeted areas has improved.

UNIDO's interventions have achieved the main objective to improve the performance of selected agro-enterprises for enhanced competitiveness and broader access into markets, and to empower rural communities by strengthening the overall capabilities of local cooperatives and encouraging their participation in development activities in a gender sensitive manner.

The survey found an investment multiplication factor of 100%, with respect to the total support provided by the UNIDO project. This means that for every US\$1 invested by the UNIDO project for equipment, civil works or capacity building activities, the benefiting SMEs have invested the same amount from their own funds. Moreover, social coherence in the targeted areas was promoted through the project's activities by group organization of capacity building programmes.



Turkey: Vocational training for Syrian youth and women refugees using fixed and mobile apparel skills units

Context

There are currently more than 2.18 million registered Syrian refugees in Turkey. Approximately 40% of these refugees live in the 20 refugee camps, while the remaining refugees are living in urban centres. These cities are located in the Southeastern Turkey close to the Syrian border, creating social tension and pressure on the country's resources.

Even though there are currently a number of programmes targeting getting aid to the refugees, they are generally focus on basic needs, such as food, shelter, schooling, etc. However, it is very important to equip the refugee population with entrepreneurial skills in Turkey, as well as in their home country.

Strategy

In-line with the Government of Japan's commitments, this project aimed to start the recovery for refugees that have lost their homes, their jobs and most of their belongings. The project provided refugees with means and skills to generate income inside refugee camps, increasing the overall human security for the most vulnerable.

The transfer of vocational skills to Syrian refugees, in particular the youth and women, is very important because it will not only be useful to prepare them for a productive life once they return to Syria, but it will keep them busy and out of trouble during their stay in Turkey, too.

The project aimed to improve the livelihoods and social security of refugees, in particular the youth and women, by providing them with skills for employment.

Outlook

Approximately ten trainers and 1,000 refugees, mainly youth and women, benefited directly from skills training using fixed and mobile apparel units.

The Training of the Trainers programme included topics such as training, planning and delivery, instructional skills, and classroom management and mentoring. The technical training component of the course was complemented by a component of conflict resolution and mediation. The integration of technical and conflict mediation training sessions aimed to enhance other broader based community stabilization efforts that would be useful once the refugees are back in their countries. Furthermore, these skills are useful under many circumstance, and take into consideration the difficult conditions the refugees are facing.

The training programme was designed to build skills in order to equip them with knowledge and vocational skills for employment, entrepreneurship and income generation both in Turkey and Syria, including tailoring business management and other vocational skills according to market needs.

What UNIDO has to offer

With a view to balancing short-term humanitarian responses with long-term development needs, UNIDO's approach in post-crisis situations is about "teaching people how to make and use a fishing rod" rather than "handing out fish". We empower people to build a resilient and sustainable livelihood.

Efforts aimed at facilitating the livelihood recovery process set the stage for development. As such they render indispensable support to other reconstruction efforts. In the aftermath of a crisis, the immediate purpose of assistance is to reduce dependence on emergency aid by helping affected communities regain their capability to meet basic needs through productive activities. Reviving the potential of human resources, facilitating livelihood recovery and strengthening resilience is also required in the case of the Syria crisis. People need to preserve hope for the future, recover from the crisis, regain social cohesion, secure income, and resume progress as soon as they can.

As the only UN agency mandated to promote inclusive and sustainable industrial development, UNIDO takes a lead role within the UN system for cooperation with the private sector. We are ready to answer the call of the international community to scale up economic opportunities for the communities affected by the refugee crisis in close cooperation with our donors and partners.

Your funding will help UNIDO to:

- Rebuild damaged infrastructure and assist in the rehabilitation of productive infrastructure in agricultural, manufacturing and service industries.
- Transfer skills, knowledge and technologies to youth, women and other vulnerable groups, allowing them to find jobs, start their own business, secure income and sustain themselves and their families.
- Support local micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, modernize production techniques in an environmentally sustainable manner, and upgrade value chains.
- Support governments with industrial policy advisory services.
- Generate new and inclusive partnerships to build resilience, and enhance partnerships across the public-private divide by engaging the private sector as promising and effective engine of development.



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