LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION

LWF Jordan Update

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LWF Jordan would like to thank its donors for their support during the month of April:

- **CLWR** *(food project in Zarqa)*
- **Act Alliance Appeal - Syr151** *(Peace Oasis, hygiene sessions, and food for Iraqis)*
- **BfdW** *(workshops in Irbid)*

Program Achievements and Updates

April Activities:

Host Communities

- 1600 food vouchers were distributed during the month of April to Syrian refugee and vulnerable Jordanian families in the governorate of Zarqa. This represented the last distribution under the current project.
- LWF provided 600 Syrian and Jordanian women with hygiene awareness sessions in the governorates of Irbid, Mafraq, and Zarqa. Hygiene vouchers will be distributed to participants in the following months.
- 68 Iraqi refugees leaving in churches in Amman received food assistance.
- 11 women participated in sewing workshops and 11 men participated on mobile phone repair trainings in Irbid.

Zaatari Camp

- Psychosocial support, awareness raising and recreational activities continue at the Peace Oasis. 152 refugee youth participated in PSS activities and 106 in awareness raising sessions in April.
- LWF Peace Oasis welcomed 19 youth to its English course.
- 87 youth have joined the Peace Oasis football team, the karate club, and the reading and cultural club. 27 young adolescents participated in the art club this month.
- LWF Peace Oasis offered this month sewing, barber, hairdressing and computer courses for young adults.
- The library at LWF Peace Oasis remains open three times a week and during the weekend. Girls and boys have started forming reading circles.

Woman in Zarqa redeeming LWF food voucher at a local shop.

Meetings:

LWF Jordan and Islamic Relief Worldwide conducted a joint workshop, seeking to collaborate more closely to respond together to the Syria Crisis and to build a long-term strategy. This comes as part of the long-term inter-faith collaboration that IRW and LWF are fostering at a global level.

Situational Update:

- In Jordan, of the 627,287 Syrian refugees, 84% live in urban areas. Two thirds are living below the poverty line and 1 in 6 are below the extreme poverty line.
- As of April, there is a funding gap of 81% in the 3RP Regional refugee and resilience plan.
- With 17,967 refugees, Azraq camp marked its first year anniversary at the end of April.

More Assistance for Refugees

By Rifat Kassis

António Guterres, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, revealed the deepening humanitarian crisis facing Syrian refugees when he said at the launch of a UNHCR study, Living in the Shadows, that "Large numbers of Syrian refugees are sliding into abject poverty, and at an alarming rate, due to the magnitude of the crisis and insufficient support from the international community." He added, "More children will drop out of school to work and more women will be at risk of exploitation, including survival sex."

Today, more than two-thirds of Syrian refugees in Jordan live below the poverty line. A majority of those refugees are growing more and more dependent on humanitarian assistance and the situation is worsening. One thing is clear here in Jordan: any further reductions in the current levels of support will have immediate and serious consequences for Syrian refugees – and might also affect the stability of Jordan and its citizens. Jordanian resources and infrastructure have been stretched to the breaking point; we should not expect Jordan to provide more of them.

Peacebuilding sessions in LWF Peace Oasis at Zaatari camp.

At the Living in the Shadows launch, Mr. Guterres proposed some solutions to the crisis. He said, "unless the international community increases its support to refugees, families will opt for ever more drastic coping strategies."

This is true. The international community should increase funding to alleviate the suffering of the refugees. It should also support Jordan and Jordanians, helping them increase their capacities to meet emerging needs in different sectors under pressure: the educational and health sectors, for instance, as well as water, which are scarce across the entire region.

Furthermore, I also believe that it is necessary to rethink some of the methodologies used in working with refugees in the first place, not just the amount of aid sent. Most importantly, some of Jordan government's requirements and conditions must be modified: at present, Syrian refugees are banned from working or engaging in any kind of income-generating activity– or even from receiving vocational training. External assistance is for humanitarian purposes alone and does not contribute in any way to securing reliable income or food security. Jordan fears, of course, that if refugees are allowed to work and be trained, they will compete with Jordanians for already scarce resources and jobs. But in Syria there is no political solution in sight – no solution that would restore peace and allow refugees to come home. What must happen now is an open, honest dialogue between the UNHCR, donors, back donors, international and local implementing NGOs, representatives of Syrian refugees, and the Jordanian government. This dialogue must be based on Jordan's and Jordanians' interests and security – but also on the interests and rights of the refugees.

Girls playing soccer in LWF Peace Oasis at Zaatari camp.

Ultimately, the goal of lifting restrictions and changing requirements is to strengthen refugees' self-sufficiency. Conditions must be changed, and solutions found in order to increase refugees' autonomy and decrease their dependency on external aid. We must introduce innovative initiatives that allow refugees to stabilize their access to food and economic self-sufficiency in a way that does not threaten Jordanians' job security. Jordan can and should control refugees' role in the workforce to avoid competition with Jordanians and also to avoid exploitation– as well as to tax refugee work and obtain structural benefits from it, instead of maintaining it informal and uncontrolled. We must find ways to ease the burden on resources, like water and electricity, by offering greater support to Jordanians while simultaneously developing the use of solar and wind energy, increase the recycling of waste water for use in agriculture, and introduce low-cost housing methods to overcome the housing crisis. These are just some examples among many other initiatives that could be explored and implemented.

Humanitarian assistance is important, but it often turns into another kind of burden: it locks refugees into a cycle of dependency, keeping both their community and their host community stagnated, pressured, and unable to grow. Assistance alone is a band-aid. Instead, we must pursue deeper changes – changes affecting the structure of aid itself, the structure of job allocation and taxation, the structure of resource control – in a way that provides greater stability both to Syrian refugees and to the Jordanian society.

Staff Updates

Amman Office

Name	Position
Rifat Kassis	Country Representative
Dr. Saad Gedeon	Program Manager
Bassam Karam	Finance and Administration Manager
Fidaa Khoury	Senior Logistician
Analia A. Restrepo	Program Officer
Rasheed Nijm	Distribution Manager
Ashraf Sahawneh	Project Engineer
Khader Al Billeh	Logistics Officer
Hiba Khoury	Finance and Administrative Assistant
Maysa Khoury	HR and Administrative Assistant
Fayez Al Nemri	Site Engineer, Shelter and Schools
Mohammad Abd Elaal	Logistics Support Assistant
Emad Al Rawash	Project Assistant

Zaatari Office

Name	Position
Wejdan Jarrah	Psycho-social Support Manager
Nofa Bani Khalid	Team Leader, Zaatari Camp
Yazan Al-azzam	Team Leader, Zaatari Camp
Khairat Ghazeah	Activity Animator, Zaatari Camp
Muhanned Husain Al Alo	Youth Educator, Zaatari Camp
Mohammad Khair	Youth Educator, Zaatari Camp

Visitors to the LWF Jordan Office in March

John Nduna, ACT Alliance General Secretary and Gorden Simango (ACT Alliance)

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