

Syria In Focus

April 2017



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UNHCR Emergency Response to Daraa



Because of the deteriorating security situation in Daraa which has resulted in many people being displaced, on 06 March UNHCR dispatched four trucks of NFIs to Daraa city containing mattresses, blankets, plastic sheets, jerry cans, sleeping mats, kitchen sets, hygiene kits, winter jackets, carpets and sleeping bags. UNHCR partner GOPA received the NFIs which were subsequently distributed to those most in need.



UNHCR Shelter Interventions in Aleppo

During March, UNHCR and partner Al Taalouf started the installation of shelter kits in six mosques in Aleppo providing essential assistance to displaced people. The kit consists of timber, plywood and a tool kit which enables the residents to reinforce and adjust their shelter to changing climate conditions, if need be. These interventions have benefited 675 individuals.



Installation of Shelter Kits at Al Nawawee Mosque



Installed Kits at Zainab Mosque



Installed Kits at Al Hasan Mosque



After Shelter Intervention at Al Mustafa Mosque

In addition, UNHCR, with its Partner PUI, started the rehabilitation works in two schools in Aleppo, Samir Abu Hersh in the Al Sukkari area and the Nadim Nahhas in Bustan Al Kaser. These works included the removal of debris, internal and external WASH as well as rebuilding damaged walls. The rehabilitation will benefit more than 700 students.

International Women's Day Celebrated in Syria



Every year, on 08 March, International Women's Day, a global day honoring the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women is celebrated. Originally called International Working Women's Day, it was first celebrated on 28 February 1909, in New York in remembrance of a 1908 strike of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union when 15,000 workers, including many immigrants, marched through the city's lower east side to demand social and political rights. The first modern International Women's Day was held in 1914, five years after its inception, on 8 March. International Women's Day was celebrated for the first time by the United Nations in 1975. Then in December 1977, the General Assembly adopted a resolution proclaiming a United Nations Day for Women's Rights and International Peace to be observed on any day of the year by Member States, in accordance with their historical and national traditions.

This year on 08 March, UNHCR Syria organized several events throughout the country. In Aleppo, UNHCR and its partners initiated a campaign with many activities, including plays, awareness sessions, focus group discussions and entertainment activities, which will continue through 21 March. In addition, from 09 to 12 March, a Business Woman's Exhibition, initiated by UNHCR partner, Namaa, was held, which included different contests, gift giving and messages disseminating ideas about SGBV.



In Hama, a campaign titled “woman’s work empowers her” was run by UNHCR partner, the Social Care Society, and the Women’s Union. This campaign aimed to raise awareness on the importance of women’s work particularly during the present crisis, as well as focusing on the daily risks that face female workers.



In Sweida on 09 March, UNHCR partner, GOPA, conducted an event targeting 40 IDP women, during which examples of exceptional women throughout the world were presented. A number of IDP women also presented their success stories during the event.



In Tartous and Lattakia, under the theme “UNHCR Supports Women’s Right to Decent Work”, UNHCR partners Al Batoul, GOPA, the Syria Trust and SSSD conducted recreational and awareness sessions benefiting more than 3,000 individuals. The events were organized inside and outside the community centres, cultural centres and schools using handcrafts, poems, drawings, paintings, songs, sketches, videos and success stories to deliver different awareness messages. Women seized the opportunity to share their experiences and success stories inspiring other women to overcome difficult times.



In Damascus, UNHCR celebrated this occasion at the Iraqi Cultural Forum, where the UNHCR Representative spoke to crowds of women and thanked the outreach volunteers. This event included poetry, exhibitions and songs by a group of young refugees and displaced Syrians.



UNHCR Organizes Emergency Trauma Bag First Responder Course in Syria

For over six years now, the conflict in Syria continues to affect the lives of millions of people and leave them dependent on humanitarian assistance. Simultaneously, attacks on local humanitarian relief organizations have resulted in the deaths of aid workers and the destruction of vital life-saving equipment and supplies. 147 humanitarian workers have been killed since the start of the Syria crisis with many more wounded.

With a view to mitigating risk and ensuring staff members are properly trained and prepared, UNHCR implemented the Emergency Trauma Bag First Responder Course (ETB-FRC) for staff members in Syria. The primary purpose of the Emergency Trauma Bag and its associated training is to ensure that proper first responder care, life-saving tools and supplies are readily available to provide adequate emergency medical treatment to UN personnel. It has three main objectives, firstly to train participants as emergency medical first responders, secondly, to familiarize participants with the ETB and finally, to impart participants with the baseline skills necessary to respond to a mass casualty incident.



“Humanitarian workers in Syria are prone to face life-threatening situation every day” Said Joanna Morris, Senior Clinical Nurse at UNHCR, “This training will provide them with the skills needed for managing traumatic incidents with confidence.”

Twenty three UNHCR staff members attended this intensive training with UNHCR also facilitating 17 staff members from other UN agencies. “Participants had the chance to practice the exercises in a scenario that simulate a real-life emergency situation.” Said Joanna Morris, “It helped them realize what they’re truly capable of and also realize the situations where referral for a medical specialist is necessary.”



UNHCR Community-Based Protection: The Importance of Community Centres

UNHCR's protection response strategy follows a community-based approach, including community mobilization and emphasis on self-reliance which aims to reduce vulnerabilities and protection risks. Community centres and mobile units operating from the community centres, are a fundamental tool for the implementation of this UNHCR strategy by helping to reach out to affected populations, assess protection risks and assess needs using a participatory age, gender and diversity approach, identify community resources, and offer services and support to the affected populations.



Community centres are safe public places where women, men, boys and girls of diverse backgrounds can meet for social and recreational activities and obtain integrated protection services ranging from legal aid, education and livelihoods training and start-up business grants to primary health care, psycho-social support, SGBV prevention and response activities, child protection interventions, to in-kind assistance to address the specific needs of persons with disabilities and the basic needs of vulnerable persons. In addition, the community centres reach out to populations of concern and carry out awareness-raising activities. The main objectives of community centres are:

- Mobilize and empower displaced people and affected host communities and provide them with a forum to promote their participation in decisions that affect their lives.
- Establish community interaction space where community members can meet, plan and organize activities.
- Help communities to identify needs, available community capacities and formulate and implement practical solutions.
- Gather qualitative and quantitative data about the needs and profiles of IDPs and affected populations.
- Assess community's coping mechanisms and identify mitigation measures.
- Set up a community outreach system to facilitate community mobilization with a view to responding to the needs and the priorities of the communities.
- Map available services and develop a protection referral system, and thus strengthen the overall quality of the humanitarian response.
- Anchor a community-based protection approach in the community to ensure their ownership of the responses and increase sustainability.



Community Participation

UNHCR places great importance on displaced people and the affected population being involved in the planning, implementation, assessment, monitoring and evaluation of the programmes and services provided in the community centres.



The availability of a wide range of integrated services and programmes for people of diverse profiles and with diverse needs in one location is particularly important for displaced people, whose mobility may be hampered by distance, transportation costs or security concerns. This aspect of community centres as a “One Stop Shop” is therefore particularly relevant in remote areas where availability of services is scarce. Moreover, community centres cooperate with other facilities and service providers to ensure complementarity in service provision.

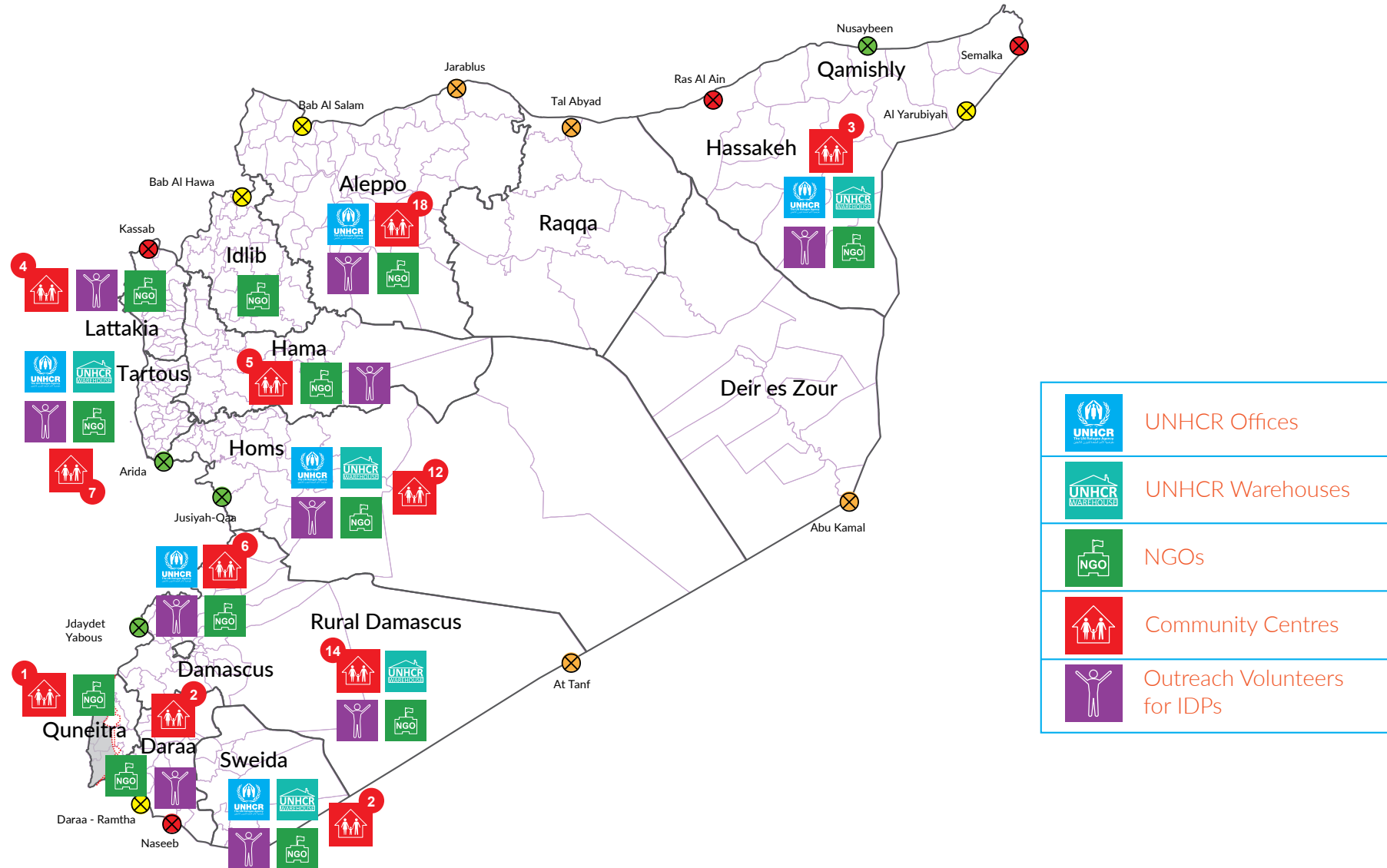
In addition each community centre is supported by approximately 25 outreach volunteers who inform communities of the services available in the community centres, identify needs, provide a first response and refer cases. In order to increase the outreach to the most vulnerable populations who do not have easy access to the community centres for a variety of reasons, including their residence in hard-to-reach locations, and to react flexibly to new displacement or return trends, UNHCR and partners have created mobile units which operate from the community centres and provide prioritized protection services based on the identified needs.

Available Services in Community Centres



UNHCR Community Centre Network In Syria

As of March 2017, there are 74 community centres operational in eleven governorates. Subject to humanitarian access and sufficient funding, UNHCR is planning to expand the network of community centres to 130 throughout 2017, including mobile units, and the number of outreach volunteers to 3,000 targeting in particular remote/rural locations with a large presence of IDPs or returnees throughout the country.



Qamishly: A Day in the life of a Community Centre

UNHCR in Qamishly, just like other governorates, provides protection services for refugees, IDPs and the local community through community centres run by its partners. One such community centre is run by partner SSSD and on a UNHCR monitoring visit, the team members observed the great work being done there.

While there the team met Ismail a four year old boy who has brain atrophy and his family. They had originally approached the community for assistance with his medical situation as they had trouble taking care of him and providing for him. The community centre volunteers welcomed both the mother and child and talked to them about their situation and the services provided in the community centre, and then directed both of them to the suitable services. Ismail started receiving physical therapy sessions and activities, while his mother received awareness sessions and training. After all the hard work of Ismail, his mother and the staff, he is now able to move both his legs and hands. Moreover, he has started to stand leaning on the wall. He was also taught to spell and pronounce a few simple words. The improvement of his situation has been attested by his doctor who said: 'it is impossible that this is the same child I've seen before'.

The team also met Yazan, a 12 year old deaf and mute boy who expresses his needs and feelings through drawing and painting. He regularly attends the activities in the community centre, and with the help of the volunteers he always hangs his drawings on the wall. In the past, he used to get nervous due to his inability to express what he wanted, but after the training and psychological support both he and his mother received at the centre, his situation has changed drastically, with Yazan now much calmer, less frustrated and a lot happier due to his ability communicate better.

'Seeing the smile on the faces of those kids who need our support, removes the word 'impossible' from our dictionary and replaces it with hope, belief, help and support' on UNHCR staff member says after the visit



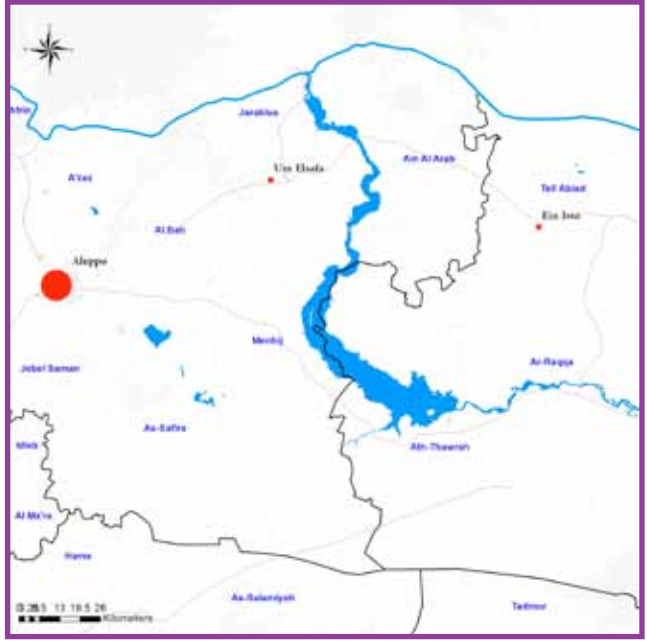
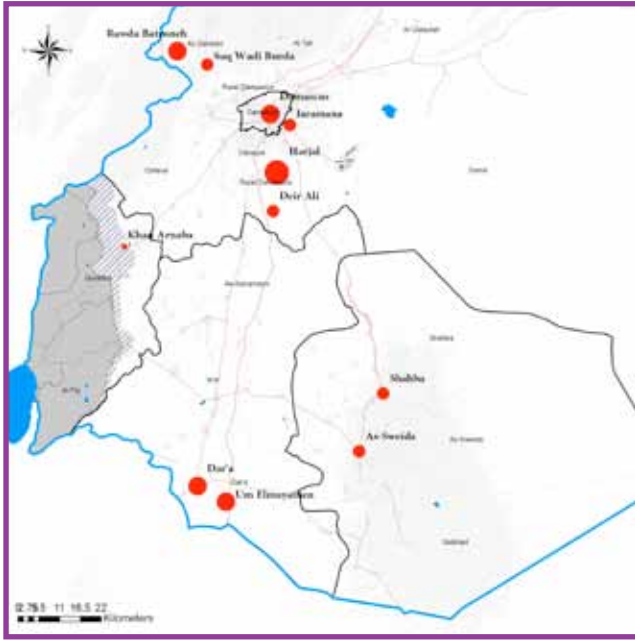
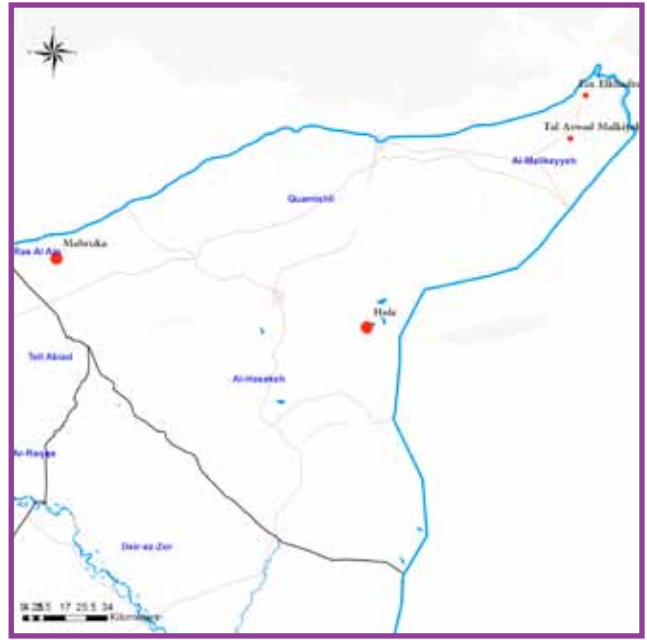
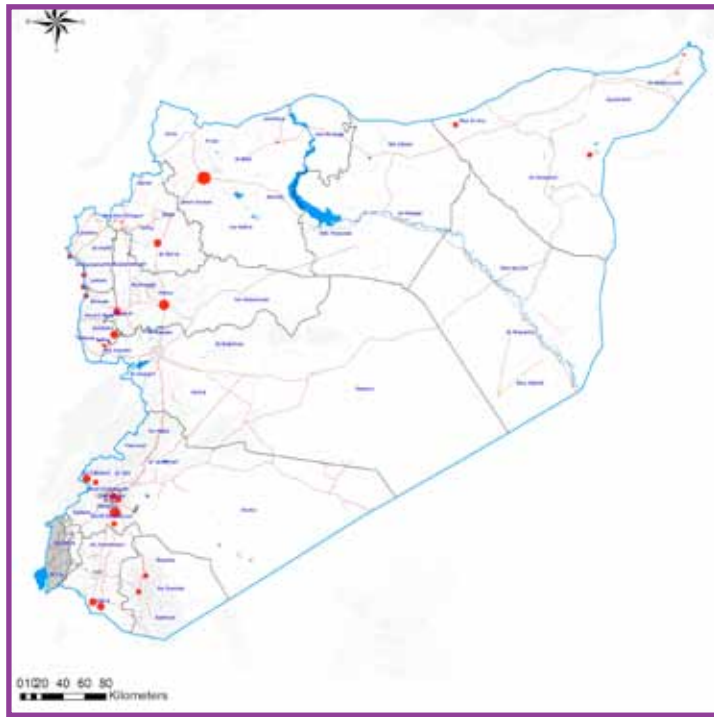
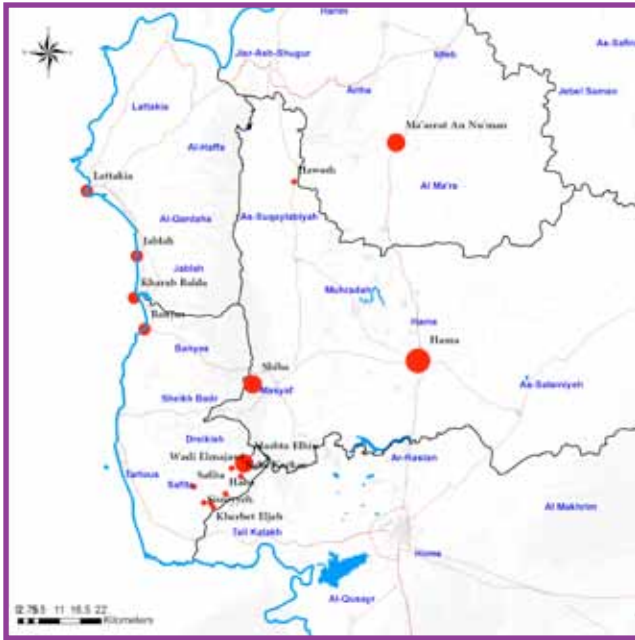
UNHCR Continues to Deliver Assistance throughout Syria during March 2017

In March, UNHCR Syria reached a total of 264,430 individuals with CRIs, including 11,000 in hard to reach areas, while 36,100 individuals were reached by cross border deliveries pursuant to UNSC resolution 2332

Some Highlights included:

- On 05 March, UNHCR participated in an inter-agency mission to the hard-to reach Rawda in Rural Damascus delivering solar lamps for 7,000 individuals/1,400 families.
- On 06 March UNHCR dispatched four trucks of NFIs to Daraa city containing mattresses blankets, plastic sheets, jerry cans, sleeping mats, kitchen sets, hygiene kits, winter jackets, carpets and sleeping bags.
- On 14 March, UNHCR participated in the inter agency mission to Zabadani, Rural Damascus with staff carrying out Shelter and NFI needs assessments as well as Protection Monitoring.
- On 24 March, a UN/ICRC/SARC convoy reached Wadi Barada area in Rural Damascus with food, nutrition and core relief items for 24,500 people in need. The convoy was delayed for one day to secure the necessary approvals. The joint mission was the first inter-agency convoy to enter Wadi Barada area; UNHCR contributed 4,000 blankets and two UNHCR staff members conducted a rapid needs assessment.
- On 28 March, a UN inter-agency convoy reached Bloudan in Rural Damascus which was last reached in May 2016. During the mission, food and medicines were delivered to IDPs in the area; UNHCR's participation pursued the objective of conducting a rapid assessment of the population's needs. Accordingly, UNHCR will be delivering core relief items through the next convoy to the area.
- Also on 28 March another UN inter-agency convoy reached Talbiseh in Homs Governorate with food and emergency items. Here, as well UNHCR's participation aimed to conduct a rapid needs assessment.





UNHCR Multifunctional Team Mission to Hama

On 20 March a UNHCR multifunctional team conducted a mission to Hama where they met with government authorities and partners such as the Social Care Society, Aoun, Al Birr and SSSD as well as visiting three shelters where UNHCR NFIs such as mattresses, blankets, mats, plastic sheeting and kitchen sets were being distributed.

The three shelters visited were: the Rawdit Al Zanabiq Shelter in the Garb Al Mashatal Area, the Al Touruq wa Al Jousour Shelter in the Aleppo Road Area and the Naasa Shelter in the Al Rabaeen Area. During the visits beneficiaries expressed their appreciation for the assistance and stated that they were a great help for their daily life in the shelter.



Smiling Beneficiary at the Naasa Shelter



Distribution at the Naasa Shelter



Distribution at the Al Touruq Shelter



Distribution at the Al Touruq Shelter



Distribution at the Al Touruq Shelter

UNHCR Builds the Capacity of Outreach Volunteers (ORVs) in Hassakeh and Sweida

In Qamishly during March UNHCR and partners expanded the both the capacity and number of ORVs, always ensuring that the Age Gender and Diversity (AGD) approach is respected and UNHCR strategies are adhered to. UNHCR carried out Community Mobilization training with ORVs from partner GOPA and then a second round of this training was carried out with 25 ORVs from another partner SSSD. This increases the number of ORVs to 50 who will work in Qamishly, Hassakeh city and Rural Hassakeh.

UNHCR Outreach Volunteers play a crucial role in assisting affected populations throughout Syria as in many cases they are able to access areas that UNHCR cannot reach. They are involved in community mobilization and recreational activities for families, youth, elderly, and persons with special needs. In addition they conduct counselling sessions, home visits and organize support activities for IDPs, refugees, asylum-seekers and the host community. The outreach volunteers also play an essential role in capturing new trends in protection risks among the various communities such as school drop-out, SGBV, and displacement patterns, which in turn helps UNHCR design its prevention and response activities.

In addition, UNHCR in Sweida conducted training targeting 54 ORVs and ORV Focal Points of partners the Syria Trust, Baraem and GOPA on Community Based Initiatives (CBIs). The training covered Community Based Protection and the Community Based Approach, the concept of Community Centres, Community Mobilization, Analyzing Community Problems, Assessing Community Needs and Resources, and the steps for implementing CBIs.

Using the examples of past CBIs in the governorate, the training aimed at clarifying to the participants where proposals need to improve and the reasoning behind the criteria for selection (or rejection) of proposals.



GOPA ORVs presented with certificates for attending UNHCR Community Mobilization Training



UNHCR Conducting Training with SSSD ORVs



CBI Training for ORVs

Startup Small Business Grants (SSBG) Reshaping Lives in Lattakia

In 2013, Alaa Aldin suffered a serious leg injury after he was caught in an explosion in Sa'adallah Al-Jaberi Square in Aleppo. Shortly afterwards his father went missing and he and his family fled Aleppo to Lattakia. Being an IDP with an injury, Alaa faced many difficulties finding a job until he approached the MSJM Vocational Training Centre in Lattakia to apply for the SSBG Program. He had previous experience with sewing and tailoring and wanted to establish his own business. In 2016, he was successful in his proposal, got the grant and opened a small tailor business. On a recent follow up monitoring visit, Alaa told UNHCR staff how he now makes trousers, pajamas, cotton clothing and sells them to a suppliers in cooperation with a number of other small businesses. "Now, I feel that I can overcome all obstacles with my family and my own business, nothing seems too difficult anymore. I cannot believe that UNHCR help made my dream come true" he adds smiling.



Alaa Hard At Work



Mohamad displaying his specialized Fungal Spores

In Jableh, Rural Lattakia, Mohamad 30, is an IDP who lives with his parents, two brothers who have suffered injuries and a sister. Through a friend he became very interested in the cultivation of fungal spores for the production of different types of mushrooms. Although the coastal area is an ideal environment for such projects, he realized that very little was being done in this regard and wanted to start a pilot project to pioneer the industry. Upon hearing from a UNHCR Outreach Volunteer about the SSBG Programme, he got excited and applied to UNHCR's partner GOPA at their community centre in Jableh. He then attended the business management training and after a panel reviewed his feasibility study and proposal, Mohamad's project was successful. On a UNHCR follow up visit he reported that he had created his own Facebook account and was getting orders all the time. He is extremely grateful for the opportunity, which is now supporting him and his family. He also feels that he should give something back to the community for his good fortune and as such is planning to support all farmers growing mushrooms in the area.



UNHCR Syria End of Year Report 2016 entitled
'Working Towards a Better Future'
in both English and Arabic which provides an overview
of UNHCR Syria's operations and achievements during 2016.

It can now be accessed and downloaded from ReliefWeb at the following link:

<http://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/working-towards-better-future-unhcr-syria-end-year-report-2016-enar>

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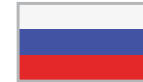
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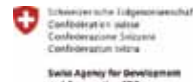
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