

Livelihood Opportunities for Refugees

July 2019

Operational Context

Livelihoods is a key component in enhancing refugee economic inclusion in line with the [Global Compact on Refugees \(GCR\)](#), which underscores the need to mobilize additional actors and to adopt a whole-of-society approach to strengthen refugee self-reliance and help ease pressure on host countries. Promoting refugees economic inclusion is a key development area that enables the achievement of such objectives and contribute to the [2030 Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#).

Leveraging the growing global momentum, UNHCR Jordan is working to translate the objectives of the GCR into impactful results for persons of concern, including through follow-up on pledges made through the [2019 Global Refugee Forum \(GRF\)](#). Contributing to this global roll-out of the GCR, the Livelihoods unit has worked towards the following results:

- 1) Collaborate in joint advocacy, through the Livelihoods Working Group, to enable refugees to work through disseminating information on the right to work, access to economic opportunities and existing services.
- 2) Seek new partnerships and strengthen existing ones, including with the donor community, private sector, development actors, government institutions and specialized agencies to advance the economic inclusion of refugees.
- 3) Enhance ongoing livelihoods and economic inclusion programming through evidence-based and market-driven approaches.

The Livelihoods unit works closely with multi-functional teams on subjects including, but not limited to, protection, education, cash assistance, partnerships, research and analytics. Externally, the unit helped in promoting refugees' economic inclusion through effective partnerships and Livelihood Working Group (LWG) with relevant government line ministries, development actors like GIZ and JICA, private sector, International Labour Organization (ILO) and UN agencies, international organisations and NGOs, and research institutions and universities, both at the global and country levels.

In addition, the ILO adopted [the Guiding principles on the access of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons to the labour market](#), thus becoming a key player in the realisation of the Jordan Compact. [The Letter of Understanding between UNHCR and the ILO](#) allows for synergies, increased coordination and more effective advocacy.

Jordan Compact

Support to Ministry of Labour

A key commitment of the [London Conference in 2016](#) was that the Jordanian Government would start issuing work permits for Syrian refugees in mainly construction and agriculture sectors. As of the end of June 2019, the cumulative number of work permits registered with the Ministry of Labour stands at 146,178 out of whom 17,024 have been issued in 2019.

The regulatory system which facilitates access of Syrian refugees to work permits was improved with new decrees adopted in 2018, including the extension of the grace period of waiving fees of work permits

issuance till end of 2019. UNHCR has been supporting the Ministry of Labour in applying the necessary regulatory changes in order to implement the work permits system.

Zaatari Office for Employment (ZOE), and Azraq Center for Employment (ACE)

ZOE and ACE are unique joint initiatives of ILO and UNHCR. Established inside the two refugee camps, the offices allowed refugees to receive counselling services on employment, issue work permits, and attend job fairs where they can meet employers. A database programmed by UNHCR records the work permits and facilitates the movement of workers in and out of the camps, helping them make the most of their jobs through this increased mobility.

The number of work permits for camp residents, registered at ZOE and ACE, stands at 18,391 as of end June 2019. The enhanced mobility arrangement for refugees works well in Zaatari as well as in Azraq camp, since Syrian refugees can use their work permits to leave the camp for up to one month.

Home Based Businesses (HBBs)

The number of work permits held by refugee women is still low, although it did increase from 4% in 2018 to 6.7% in mid-2019. Discussions with women – including the beneficiaries of the UNHCR-funded livelihoods project – continue to indicate a preference for women to work from home. The Cabinet decree on Nov 2018 allowing Syrian refugees to register and operate Home Based Businesses has allowed UNHCR to continue to support the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MOPIC) in reaching the HBBs ‘compact’ target, which is 100 HBBs licenced and owned by Syrian refugees. Specifically, UNHCR Jordan aims at supporting the establishment of some 80 Home Based Businesses by the end of 2019.

Alternative Pathways to Cash Assistance

The livelihoods project implemented since 2017 by the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) and Jordan River Foundation (JRF), is based on the principle of the graduation approach, whereby individuals who would be rotated out of cash assistance are identified to be potential beneficiaries. The Alternative Pathways to Cash Assistance project aims at improving the livelihoods of the target population in different governorates and their families through the implementation of small economic projects, by enabling access to available economic opportunities through career guidance, intensive coaching, and sensitizing formal participation in the labour force by obtaining work permits.



Figure 1: Syrian refugees and Jordanians attending a workshop on Small Medium Enterprises (SME's).

In the first six months of 2019, a total of 413 beneficiaries were provided with entrepreneurship/business training, 3,139 were provided with guidance on business and market opportunities, and 761 were provided with guidance on labour market opportunities. Participants received continuous follow up while being employed or self-employed, as well as support with work permits and HBB licenses. The livelihoods unit rolled out the revised global Livelihoods monitoring indicators and a mobile platform to collect baseline information by mid-year. The 2019 monitoring will be finalized in 2020 and the end-line should be providing some interesting insights on the impact, gaps, areas of strengths, and challenges for future interventions.



MADE51

MADE51; the global initiative which brings artisanal refugee-made home décor and fashion accessories to global markets, has brought refugee handmade products which combine contemporary design with traditional skills to a global market. Many products have been made by UNHCR partners in Jordan, including SEP, Jordan River Foundation (JRF) and Tribology. Several of these products have been showcased through locally-organized [#WithRefugee Bazaars in Jordan](#), the last one during World Refugee Day (20-22 June 2019).

Figure 2: Supported by SEP Jordan, a MADE51 partner, handmade by a group of experienced and talented Syrian artisans who live in Azraq refugee camp.

Steps towards Inclusion

UNHCR, together with other partners, continues to promote access to economic opportunities in areas refugees have expressed greater interest in. Collaboration with development actors and employment-oriented initiatives continues, as well as with private sector and financial service providers, to harmonize livelihoods activities with the overall development strategies in the country. UNHCR focuses on mainstreaming protection, promoting women's work, mainly through Home Based Businesses, reaching out to refugees and providing strong support to livelihoods sector partners including financial services providers. Promoting the livelihoods and the financial inclusion of refugees remained a priority of the international community.

UNHCR Jordan will continue to promote the humanitarian-development nexus by ensuring that refugee women and men are informed of opportunities, referred to livelihoods projects, and are aware of their rights in the labour market.

Figure 3: A formally registered joint business between a Syrian and a Jordanian lady, producing natural soups



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