

ANNUAL REPORT 2019

Supporting
the resilience
of local communities



United Nations Development
Programme in Syria



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FOREWORD



“The men, women
and children of Syria
have a right to a life
of dignity, peace and
prosperity”

This annual report captures UNDP's support to the Syrian people in 2019. The United Nations Development Programme has supported those in need in all 14 governorates of Syria through multisector interventions aimed at enhancing the resilience of Syrians to the crisis that has ravaged the country since 2011.

The severity analysis conducted by UNDP on behalf of the Early Recovery and Livelihood sector estimated that in 2019, 8.7 million Syrians needed early recovery and livelihoods support, and that in the absence of decent, long-term jobs and livelihoods opportunities, people have resorted to harmful coping mechanisms. These men, women and children have a right to a life of dignity, peace and prosperity.

In 2019, UNDP Syria continued to scale up its resilience-building assistance as articulated in the Humanitarian Response Plan and Country Programme Document, through three complementary pillars: Essential Services and Infrastructure Restoration, Livelihoods and Economic Recovery and Social Cohesion.

Programme delivery expanded significantly to newly accessible areas, including Sinjar and Dana in Idlib, Dar'a, Quneitra and Harasta in Rural Damascus. UNDP also expanded its strategic focus to areas such as Climate Smart Agricultural Livelihood for Rural Resilience, Disability and Social Protection, with increased geographic coverage in Context Analysis and Local Governance through community engagement, to address the location-specific needs of Syrians.

In line with the 2030 Agenda, people are at the heart of UNDP's response. Designing integrated, innovative and inclusive interventions that address identified needs is how lives and livelihoods can be sustained. Throughout the year, UNDP has contributed to improving access to basic services; creating employment opportunities; providing the less advantaged with access to quality legal aid; shifting to efficient and renewable energy resources; and supporting sustainable livelihoods. We have supported women to take leadership roles and provided persons with disabilities with the tools to integrate into the economy and society.

It has been my privilege to join the dedicated team of UNDP Syria at this critical time, as we pause and reflect on the achievements, challenges and lessons learned. The results achieved on the ground would not have been possible without the close collaboration with our numerous partners and the generous contributions of our donors.

Ramla Khalidi

Resident Representative
United Nations Development Programme

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ACRONYMS

CSO	Civil Society Organization	NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
ER&L	Early Recovery & Livelihoods	PwD	Person with Disabilities
HRP	Humanitarian Response Plan	SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
IDP	Internally Displaced Person	UN	United Nations
MSME	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme



Deir-ez-Zor Governorate © UNDP Syria

Impact of the crisis

For more than eight years, the resilience of Syrians has been tested every day. The massive damage inflicted to every aspect of life has prompted one of the largest population displacement movements in history, causing impoverishment and increased vulnerability. Families have been forced to repeatedly flee violence, leaving their homes with no significant assets or belongings. According to the 2019 Humanitarian Needs Overview, 6.2 million Syrians have been displaced and 11.7 million need humanitarian assistance.

Basic service provision has dwindled and livelihoods have been lost. Traditional market areas in Homs and Aleppo were destroyed, resulting in the disruption of many small businesses. Similarly, farming activities were jeopardized due to the deteriorating security situation and the low financial capacity of farmers to resume their income generating activities.

Education and health services have also been affected due to damage to schools, hospitals and health centres. Furthermore, the protracted crisis has undermined the

social fabric of the Syrian society, resulting in more social fragmentation and higher levels of tension.

The massive destruction of homes and properties and the protracted military conflict have led to the deterioration of the rule of law and overall safety and security.



For more than eight years, the resilience of Syrians has been tested every day

The limited economic opportunities and widespread destruction have also had a significant socioeconomic impact on the population. In 2019, the Humanitarian Needs report estimated that 8.7 million people needed livelihood support. In some cases, these exacerbated needs have led to chronic levels of deprivation, forcing people to adopt harmful coping strategies such as reducing food intake, deferring

or delaying necessary medical care, reducing hygiene practices (with the ensuing public health risks), spending savings and accumulating debt. Such coping strategies are not only damaging and unsustainable but may also increase exposure to more harmful practices such as child labour, including in its worst forms, recruitment of children as fighters, early marriage and other exploitative practices.



Humanitarian needs in 2019¹



11.7 Million

11.7 million people need humanitarian assistance



+50%

50% of the population has electricity access for only 12 hours, or less, per day.



8.7 Million

8.7 million people need livelihood support



+50%

+50% of the potential workforce does not have access to sustained employment.



6.2 Million

6.2 million internally displaced persons



3 Million

3 million people live with a disability

1. 2019 Humanitarian Needs Overview- Syria.UNOCHA. Available from: https://www.nolostgeneration.org/sites/default/files/webform/contribute_a_resource_to_nlg/9436/full_hno_2019_syria.pdf

UNDP'S RESPONSE IN 2019

The UNDP Syria country programme, with its resilience-based approach, has been designed to achieve two main outcomes:



1. Socioeconomic recovery

Supporting socioeconomic recovery and social inclusion



201 businesses revived



6,356 farmers supported



45,496 direct beneficiaries

To support socioeconomic recovery, UNDP revived 201 businesses by rehabilitating shops and supporting shop owners and micro-businesses with productive assets to enable them to resume their income generating activities. Nearly 7,000 men and women benefited from UNDP's capacity development programme and vocational training. Furthermore, UNDP supported 6,356 farmers so they could restart their farming activities and stabilize their livelihoods.

To improve access to basic services, UNDP supported the repairing of 179 km of water, sewage and electricity networks, as well as 25 schools and 10 health centres that were damaged during military operations; furthermore, debris and solid waste were removed from 271 neighbourhoods.



2. Access to basic services

Basic social services and infrastructure are restored, improved and sustained.



179 km of basic services networks repaired



25 schools rehabilitated



10 health centres rehabilitated



A total of 162 local projects were implemented, benefitting more than 3.6 million Syrians

In addition to interventions aimed at socioeconomic recovery and access to basic services, social cohesion initiatives are designed and implemented to reduce tensions, improve security in communities and enhance understanding and solidarity within and among the most affected populations. For instance, community-based initiatives designed and implemented by local communities – who take part in identifying the issues that affect social fabric and lead

to more fragmentation in their communities – contributed to strengthening social cohesion.

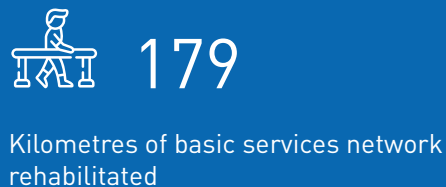
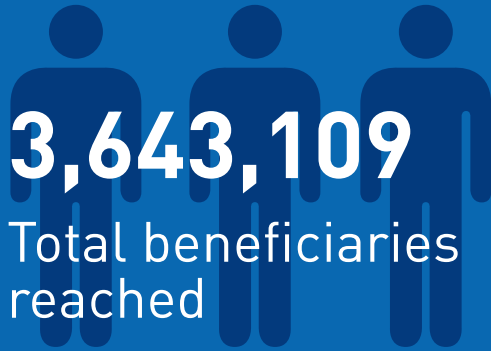
A total of 162 local projects were implemented, benefitting more than 3.6 million Syrians. UNDP's interventions aimed at reaching a minimum of 4 percent of persons with disabilities (PwDs) and 39 percent of women, as part of its inclusive approach towards vulnerable groups.

UNDP also works through the Syria Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) and leads the Early Recovery and Livelihoods (ER&L) cluster, with programming focused on livelihood support, basic services and local-level infrastructure rehabilitation projects.

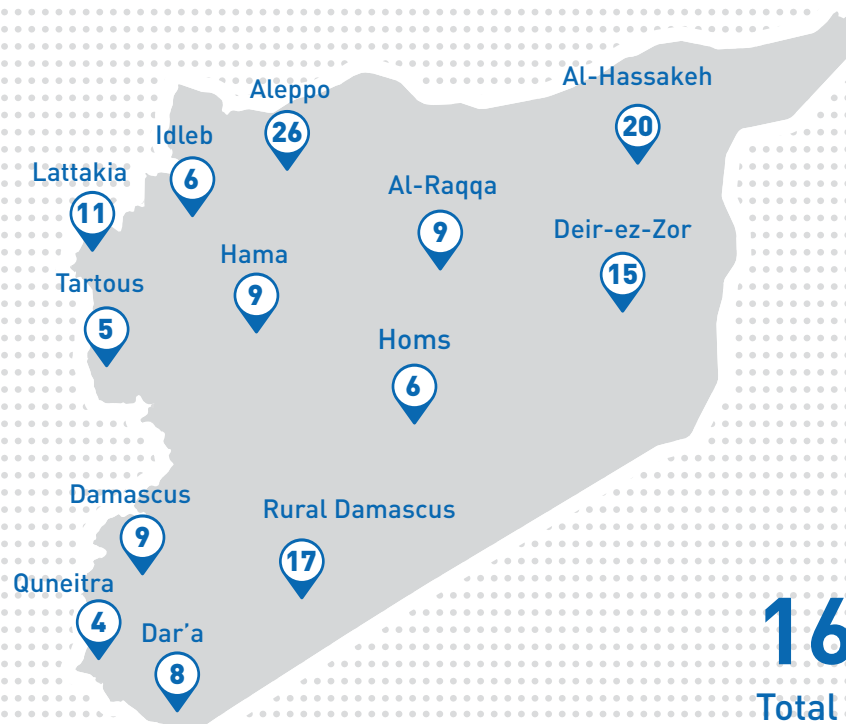


Vocational Training in Al-Hassakeh Governorate ©UNDP SYRIA

KEY RESULTS ACHIEVED IN 2019



Local Projects/Governorate

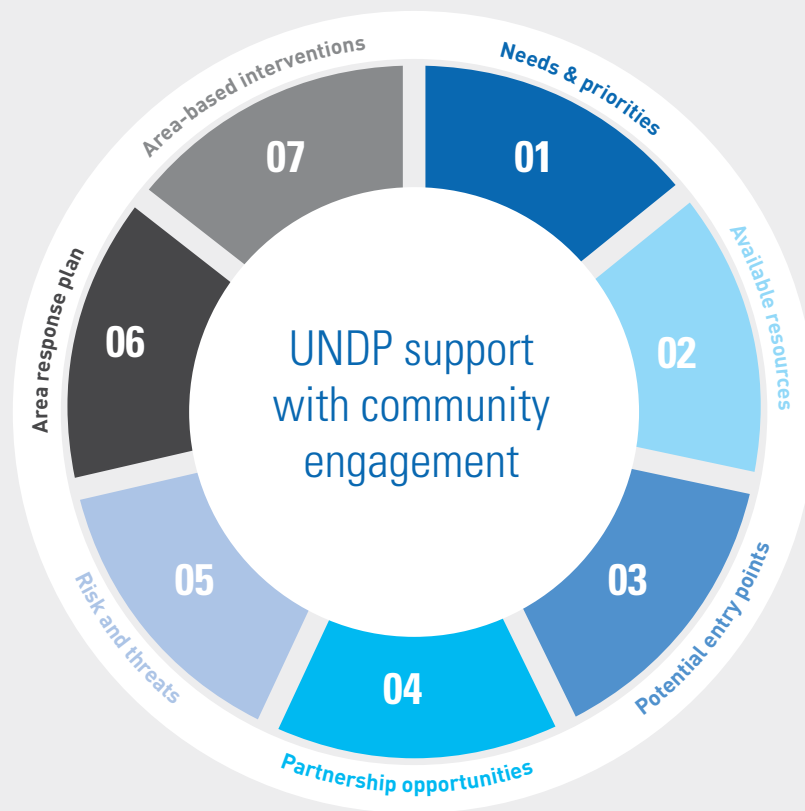


162

Total number
of local projects



Area-based Approach



Since the onset of the crisis, UNDP Syria has been piloting an area-based approach throughout its programmes, initiatives and projects, whereby a specific area is targeted with diversified but complementary interventions. This approach allows to identify and respond to the location's needs and potential, enhancing impact and capitalizing on the available human and economic resources to support a viable recovery strategy.

This approach supports local markets and the economy by advocating for local production and local employment schemes, in close collaboration with local actors and stakeholders at all stages – that is, planning, implementation and monitoring.

This area-based approach has been effective in achieving long-term impact in many locations, with a focus on the most damaged and newly accessible areas.

The area-based approach has been effective in achieving long-term impact in many locations, with a focus on the most damaged and newly accessible areas

Harasta... back to life

Harasta, a small town in east Ghouta, in Damascus' countryside, was severely damaged in the battles that took place from the onset of the Syrian crisis in 2011. When the area became accessible in 2018, UNDP was quick to respond, building on its experience and technical capacities to carry out an integrated intervention.

To get Harasta back on track, UNDP's intervention was designed to help both those who remained in Harasta and those who voluntarily returned to access essential services and restart their livelihoods and income generating activities.

In a first phase, to facilitate access to basic services, UNDP supported the collection and removal of debris and solid waste and rehabilitation 3 km of sewage networks.

Forty solar lighting units were installed in the town's main streets, encouraging shopkeepers to remain open after sunset and people to walk around and buy goods after dark.

UNDP supported the rehabilitation of seven schools, allowing 4,000 students to go back to school in Harasta.

UNDP also started the rehabilitation of Harasta Hospital, which will improve access to health care once the hospital is operational by the end of 2020.

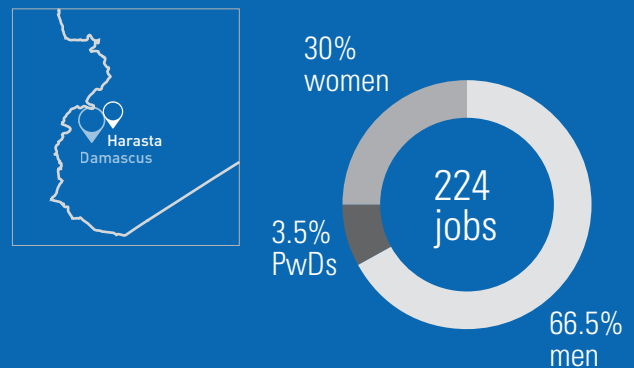
In a second phase, UNDP helped shop owners and skilled workers to resume their businesses, supporting the rehabilitation of their shops and providing them with productive assets. UNDP also offered skills and vocational training to jobseekers, and provided start-up toolkits for those trying to establish their own businesses. In total, UNDP supported the revival of 34 businesses and the reactivation of 85 workshops; it also provided on-the-job training to 170 beneficiaries. Furthermore, nine nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in Harasta and

adjacent rural areas benefitted from capacity building training workshops to enhance the quality and timeliness of their project implementation.

Social cohesion was also targeted, with safe social spaces made available through the rehabilitation of a sports centre, a public park and a care centre for the elderly.

A legal counselling centre was established to raise the residents' awareness on legal issues and to offer legal consultations. UNDP organized training sessions for fresh graduate lawyers on how to counsel on personal status laws, real estate ownership, women's rights and gender equality, children's rights and rights of people with disabilities (PwDs). To encourage amicable settlements in local communities, UNDP trained 10 local leaders and influencers in alternative methods of conflict resolution.

The intervention in Harasta has created 224 jobs (67 of which for women, and eight for PwDs).



link to video

With the training and productive assets received from UNDP, Mouhammad was able to start a mechanical repair business in his hometown, Harasta





A bakery established in Harasta with the support of UNDP, Rural Damascus © UNDP- Syria

01 SOCIOECONOMIC RECOVERY

SUPPORTING SOCIOECONOMIC RECOVERY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION



45,496

people benefited from
socio-economic support

Syrians face unprecedented socio-economic challenges. In response, UNDP has supported the creation of decent and long-term employment and more sustainable livelihoods by boosting income generating activities, particularly for those most vulnerable, including women, female-headed households, PwDs and youth.

Supporting agricultural livelihoods

Agricultural livelihoods have been particularly hard-hit by the crisis. Many smallholder farmers have farming skills and experience, but were not able to buy seeds and other farming inputs to resume their farming activities, particularly during the crisis, with women harder hit because their work is often invisible or unpaid. UNDP supported the most vulnerable farmers, with a particular focus on women and female-headed households, by providing them with seeds, pesticides, fodder, beehives, livestock and other farming inputs to help them restart farming, dairy production and husbandry. A total of 6,356 farmers (men and women) received UNDP's support and regained their sources of livelihood, producing and supplying food to their families and to the market.

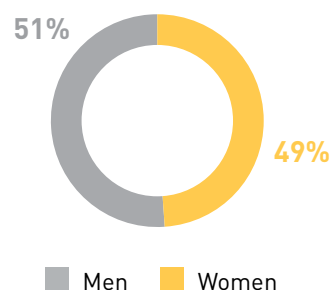
In Al-Al-Hassakeh, farmers were supported with beekeeping inputs as well as training, so they could produce honey. In Ar-Raqqa and Deir-ez-Zor, and in Harasta town in Rural Damascus, UNDP distributed sheep to 2,343 farmers (including 1,592 women).

UNDP provided tailored training to farmers in dairy and honey production, as well as in fertilization, with a special focus on organic fertilizers such as through composting. UNDP's interventions to support farmers were implemented in the most affected areas, with a special focus on the newly accessible areas.



In Ar-Raqqa, UNDP supports women to access farming inputs so they generate income ©UNDP Syria

6,356 farmers received agricultural support



Zero-till machines distributed to farmers as part of UNDP's support of conservation agriculture, Al-Hassakeh Governorate © UNDP- Syria

Supporting farmers to adopt climate-smart agriculture

Following the pilot project of supporting climate-smart agriculture, which started in 2018, a conservation agriculture approach was adopted to mitigate the consequences of climate change, through combating frequent drought and improving crop management, therefore enhancing livelihoods sustainability. Conservation agriculture is based on soil building and improvement through zero-tillage and soil cover, in addition to diversified crop rotations. In 2019, eight seeders were manufactured and deployed to fields where technical partners, including the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas and the Arab Center for the Studies of Arid Zones and Dry Lands, provided needed inputs and implemented zero-tillage agriculture to more than 100 farmers in Aleppo, Hama, Dar'a, Latakia and Al-Hassakeh.



Zero-till seeders conservation agriculture, Al-Hassakeh Governorate
© UNDP- Syria

Enhancing youth's employability

To advance young people's economic participation and empowerment so they can become active peace- and resilience-builders, UNDP's intervention in 2019 sought to enhance the technical skills of young women and men and their understanding of entrepreneurship. This intervention is closely linked to the sustainable development goal (SDG) 8, that is, to promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.

UNDP assisted 40 new graduates of engineering faculties to turn their graduation projects and research into business plans



Vocational training in Al-Hassakeh Governorate © UNDP- Syria

UNDP supported the employment cycle of around 7,000 people, including around 2,000 women, through providing skills and vocational training, job placement, business development and marketing.

UNDP also assisted 40 new graduates of engineering faculties to turn their graduation projects and research into business plans, through business management and entrepreneurship training enhanced with mentorship. The mentors also supported the selected successful project creators to start establishing their own businesses.

UNDP also facilitated the establishment of eight economic empowerment centres to facilitate youth's access to different employment services in Damascus, As-Sweida, Hama, Tartous, Lattakia, Aleppo, Deir-ez-Zor and Al-Hassakeh. Services include career counselling, job

research assessment, employability skills, life skills, vocational and skills training, continuous education services, entrepreneurship support and networking with private sector employers.

UNDP supported the
employment cycle of around
7,000 people

Around 2,000 women received
skills and vocational training to
support their livelihoods

Al-Hassakeh Governorate ©UNDP - Syria



To revive the disrupted business in Harasta and Kafar Batna in Rural Damascus and Ar-Raqqa, workshop owners who voluntarily returned to the area were provided with productive assets to restart their businesses. Trainees also received accounting and finance training to facilitate their incorporation into the labour market with the necessary practical working skills.

UNDP facilitated the establishment of eight economic empowerment centres to facilitate youth's access to different employment services in several governorates



UNDP supported the establishment of a bakery in Rural Damascus © UNDP- Syria

Business development support

Supporting small businesses and shop owners, providing job opportunities and offering coaching and mentoring to increase employability are activities that UNDP is carrying out to revive businesses and enhance resilience.

Ma'adan, one of the most affected areas in Ar-Raqqa Governorate, needed a bakery. Residents had to walk to neighbouring villages to buy bread, adding to their hardship. In response, UNDP supported a local bakery with equipment and raw materials. The bakery has provided long-term jobs for five people who had previously received training on running a bakery.

Workshops in Katerji's industrial zone in east Aleppo have stopped their production activities because of damage

suffered during the crisis. UNDP supported 120 owners of textile, blacksmithing, steel and plastic factories as well as food processing businesses, to rehabilitate their shops and buy raw materials, so they could resume their activities.

Moreover, business dialogue sessions among private sector networks were conducted to encourage the private sector's involvement in business development and reactivation.

Local institutions that provide technical support to Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) were supported to develop an MSME strategy to stimulate economic growth, business revival, and income generation in local communities.



Reviving business in the markets of Old Aleppo

Shop owners in Aleppo's old market were happy to see their shops and markets renovated, after their businesses were severely damaged in the battles that raged between 2013 and 2016.

In several of Aleppo's old markets, such as Al-Muhammas, Al-Khabieh, Al-Nahaseen, and Al Cham, UNDP renovated roofs, repaired damaged basic infrastructure and supported shop owners to rehabilitate their stalls, providing them with productive assets so they could quickly resume their business activities. The original architectural design was preserved.

This shop owner in Al-Mahmas market in Old Aleppo was able to resume his business after receiving support from UNDP to rehabilitate his shop and buy goods.

Check the below video to learn more about how UNDP supported shop owners in the old markets of Aleppo to restart their businesses



link to video



Integrated support for people with disabilities

In its endeavour to improve the health, access and participation of PwDs, UNDP provided services including assistive devices and products, physiotherapy and psychosocial support, as well as vocational training and jobs, to 4,706 PwDs.

UNDP also helped develop the capacities of more than 151 service providers in several sectors, to respond to the increasing rate of impairment and disability in Syria, and ultimately enhance the autonomy and inclusion of PwDs in Syria.



915 PwDs
received mobility aids

UNDP provided services including assistive devices and products, physiotherapy and psychosocial support, as well as vocational training and jobs, to **4,706 PwDs**





Vocational Training for PwDs in Lattakia Governorate © UNDP- Syria

Moreover, UNDP contributed to enhancing institutional capacity to address the deterioration of prosthetic services by installing computer-aided design and manufacturing systems in a national prosthetic centre.

As part of its initiative to empower PwDs, UNDP supported paralympic activities, by rehabilitating a community centre to create a safe space for PwDs to practice inclusive sports and physical activities, contributing to their psychological well-being. In this centre, UNDP carried out a pilot activity in para-dancing for people who use wheelchairs.

In Aleppo, UNDP contributed to enhancing the resilience of 500 persons living with severe disabilities such as spinal cord injuries and traumatic brain injuries through a direct cash assistance intervention – conditional on the beneficiaries following a rehabilitation treatment programme.

In Aleppo, UNDP contributed to enhancing the resilience of 500 persons living with severe disabilities

In 2019, UNDP expanded its coverage of disability by including visual impairment in its programme. The rehabilitation and academic capacities of national institutions catering for persons with visual disabilities was reinforced with the provision of braille embossers to print school curricula, therefore enhancing the academic attainment of children and adolescents with visual disabilities.

Stigma and discrimination were addressed through a Communication for Development intervention that mobilized and developed the capacity of 20 young people, who became empowered and active change agents. Participants came out with their project ideas in a pioneering inclusive online platform that will contribute to promoting the rights of PwDs in Syria.

UNDP has adopted a comprehensive integrated approach that encompasses medical rehabilitation, livelihood support and empowerment, and facilitates access of PwDs to medical and social services, helping to maximize the impact of interventions. Such an integrated programme calls for a long-term, coordinated approach.



Vocational Training for PwDs in Damascus ©UNDP SYRIA

Dancing with Hope

For the first time in Syria, led by Italian dancing instructor Guisepe Masciello, people in wheelchairs learned how to ballroom dance with partners who dance on their feet.

Wheelchair dancing is a Paralympic sport where at least one of the dancers uses a wheelchair, and partners have to interact with one another. Wheelchair dancing has been shown to improve the physical and mental state of PwDs.

The workshop is part of UNDP's disability integration programme, which seeks to promote the inclusion of PwDs.



link to video





Residents of rural areas in Deir-ez-Zor happy to see water flowing out of pumps rehabilitated by UNDP ©UNDP SYRIA

02 ACCESS TO BASIC SERVICES

BASIC AND SOCIAL SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE ARE RESTORED, IMPROVED AND SUSTAINED



3,573,985

people were able to better access jobs, education, health care, water and electricity

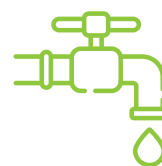
UNDP's interventions in 2019 have supported 3,573,985 million people who were able to better access jobs, education, health care, and water and electricity; in addition, targeted communities benefitted from improved environmental health - thanks to UNDP's interventions in water, sewage and electricity networks maintenance and solid waste and debris management.

In the framework of its livelihood support interventions, UNDP aims to improve access to basic services through the rehabilitation of damaged basic infrastructure. The rehabilitation of shops, schools and health facilities is understood as an integral part of infrastructure sustainability, accessibility and social cohesion.

The conflict has exacerbated the need for better access to water, electricity and sanitation services; maintenance of water, sewage and electricity networks is key to provide a healthier and cleaner environment for people to resume their livelihood activities. To this end, UNDP supported the rehabilitation of 179 km of water, sewage and electricity networks, allowing 795,700 people in seven governorates to access clean water, adequate sanitation and more hours of electricity supply.

Al-Hassakeh residents were able to access drinking water after UNDP repaired the electricity line feeding Alouk's water pumping station. Before the intervention, the station could not pump water because the electricity network connected to the station was damaged.

UNDP has also started implementing a pilot project in Hama Governorate to improve the supply of drinking water to the population in Souran city, where 45,000 people do not have access to drinking water. The project will provide eight hours of water supply to the village's residents.



“UNDP supported the rehabilitation of **179 km** of water, sewage and electricity networks”

People were able to access improved basic services, health care, and better jobs thanks to UNDP's interventions in water, sewage and electricity networks maintenance and solid waste and debris management.





From a water well in her neighbour's house, Amira, 74, used to fill some 50 small buckets to take home every day. Now that the water network is fixed, she accesses water from the single tap in her one-room house in the old city of Aleppo. Despite all the difficulties, Amira is happy to be back in her neighborhood, after many years of multiple displacements. She lives with her son Safwan, 53, a leg amputee, his wife and three children. When they first returned home, Safwan had to walk on his crutches through the rubble-cluttered alleys. Amira and her family do not have an easy life, but critical interventions support their resilience and facilitate a more dignified life.

Over 300,000 people in Aleppo now have clean drinking water in their houses thanks to UNDP's rehabilitation of the water network.

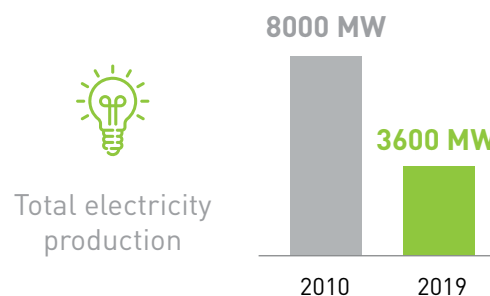
Electricity supply for local communities

Severe electricity shortages affect most of the population in Syria, with power outages lasting for as long as 17 hours per day in 2019, and total electricity production plunging to 3,600 MW in 2019, compared to 8,000 MW in 2010. These shortages have an immediate and long-term impact on access to heating during winter and to water-pumping—especially critical during summers. To respond to this need, UNDP implemented interventions to enhance crossline power supply to affected local communities, alleviate their hardship and increase resilience.

Technical and financial support to three power stations was provided: Zara, Baniyas and Jandar power stations in Hama, in Tartous and Homs governorates respectively. In addition, UNDP provided spare parts and power production inputs to the Euphrates hydroelectric power plant in Al-Tabqa. The spare parts have been already procured and once installed, electricity generation will increase and will positively affect the daily lives of 5 million Syrians living in Aleppo, rural Aleppo, rural Al Al-Hassakeh and Ar-Raqqa governorates.

To enhance the technical capacity of operating staff in the stations, UNDP supported advanced technical training for eight engineers working in Zara and Baniyas power stations. Thanks to the training, the engineers were able to carry out an overall in-house maintenance of the two power plants for the first time ever, saving time and money and rapidly increasing power generation in these plants. UNDP also provided a rotor and its accessories to Jandar power station, which will produce 130 MW, contributing to

3.2 percent of the national electricity production in 2019 (which overall reached 4075 MW).



UNDP supported the rehabilitation of Zara Power station in Baniyas by providing spare parts © UNDP-Syria



Renewable energy solutions for heating water supported by UNDP, Aleppo © UNDP- Syria

Renewable energy solutions for local communities

With the support of UNDP, 106,500 people living in Old Aleppo, Sinjar in Idleb, and Harasta in Rural Damascus Governorate now feel safer, as streets are lit after sunset, allowing shopkeepers to have their shops open until late. Residents, particularly women and children, can now walk through their neighbourhoods feeling more secure. Moreover, these local projects have provided a source of livelihood to 160 individuals through the jobs created.

106,500
people living in Old Aleppo,
Sinjar and Harasta now feel
safer, as streets are lit after
sunset



Solar lighting units installed to light affected neighbourhoods in Aleppo city ©UNDP-Syria



Solid waste management project in Deir-ez-Zor Governorate © UNDP-Syria

Cleaner neighbourhoods and a healthier environment

In 2019, UNDP removed 515,128 tons of solid waste and 219,609 m3 of debris from newly accessible areas such as Ar-Raqqa, Quneitra, Sinjar in Idlib Governorate and Dar'a, all severely damaged during battles. Thanks to this intervention, 2,225,3158 people are able to have better living conditions and safer surroundings.

UNDP was one of the first agencies to implement a debris and solid waste management project in Quneitra. Residents quickly felt the project's results, and many benefitted from the project's job-creation scheme.



2,253,158 people enjoyed cleaner and safer neighbourhoods



233,000 people benefited from improved health services



35,540 students are back to the rehabilitated schools



To keep neighbourhoods clean, UNDP distributed bins in targeted areas of Ar-Raqqa Governorate ©UNDP- Syria

"After many months of looking for a job, I finally found decent work; I am happy that I am earning an income, even if only for a few months."

Obaida, 35, joined a debris management project supported by UNDP in Cinema Fouad neighbourhood in Deir-ez-Zor. He is the sole bread winner of his family of eight.

"I am proud of my job, I see shop owners waiting for their neighbourhood to be cleaned, so they can reopen their shops."



Health-care services support at the community level

More than 233,000 people received health care services at the newly rehabilitated health centres. UNDP rehabilitated affected health facilities in Ar-Raqqa, Tartous, Deir-ez-Zor, Rural Damascus and Dar'a, which were partially damaged during the crisis, while the World Health Organization provided necessary equipment. These facilities are now operational and have resumed health care delivery.



More than **233,000** people received health care

Back to school

UNDP helped 35,540 students to go back to their schools by undertaking light rehabilitation of 25 schools in Harasta, Rural Damascus, Al-Hassakeh, Al-Qamishli, Lattakia, Quneitra and Dar'a governorates.



UNDP helped **35,540** students to go back to their schools



To ensure the inclusion of PwDs in the educational system and give them equal opportunities, UNDP rehabilitated eight schools in Al-Hassakeh Governorate and improved their accessibility



Social cohesion activities in Al-Hassakeh Governorate © UNDP- Syria

03 ENHANCING SOCIAL COHESION AMONG LOCAL COMMUNITIES

COMMUNITY-BASED INITIATIVES

UNDP promotes social cohesion between internally displaced persons (IDPs) and host community members, as well as among local communities with different ethno-religious backgrounds, as a standalone component in the resilience programme and as a crosscutting approach in all its projects. Various socio-cultural group activities such

as workshops, cultural and dialogue sessions, and social events were conducted to rebuild inter- and intra-communal trust. Social cohesion activities and other livelihood support interventions provided opportunities for beneficiaries to interact and break the barriers of mistrust.

Context analyses for more informed context-sensitive programming

The UNDP Syria Country Office has continued to produce and update context analyses of local areas and thematic issues, in addition to sharing knowledge with other United Nations (UN) agencies and partners, and building capacities of UNDP staff on context analysis and context sensitivity.

In 2019, 12 local context analyses and a summary report were produced, covering different locations in the rural and urban areas of Deir-ez-Zor, Ar-Raqqa, Al-Hassakeh, Homs, Hama, Lattakia, Rural Damascus, Aleppo, Tartous and Dar'a.

These analyses provided a comprehensive picture of each and every location's underlying dynamics, stakeholders and respective areas of influence, and geographic, demographic, historical, administrative and socioeconomic context. Based on various scenarios, the analyses identified threats and opportunities as well as considerations for context-sensitive programming.

Furthermore, UNDP conducted four thematic researches covering four major issues that affect Syrian communities such as:

1) conditions of return and reintegration, 2) connectors and dividers, 3) access to justice, 4) prevention of violent extremism from women's perspective.



Field visits to conduct context analyses, Ar-Raqqa Governorate
© UNDP-Syria

To make sure that the findings and recommendations of these analyses can be used across the UN agencies in Syria, UNDP conducted capacity building and knowledge-sharing sessions for 202 staff from UNDP and other UN agencies to introduce the concept and methodology of the analyses, with a special focus on context-sensitive programming across UN interventions in Syria.



field visits to conduct context analyses, Al-Hassakeh Governorate © UNDP- Syria



Reducing social barriers through arts, sports and community participation

More than 15,875 community members, including women and PwDs, proposed 58 community-based initiatives aimed at fostering community trust and enhancing participatory and innovative forms of communication such as through arts, music and theatre. One of these initiatives was a project called “theatre for change,” introduced as a tool that youth can use to discuss issues affecting their communities in a participatory, open and transparent way. Participants, who were not professional writers, wrote the play and touched on issues such as early marriage, girls’ education, weapons and gender, and counted on the community’s participation and interaction to come up with common solutions.

More than 100 participants from the local community’s leaders from different backgrounds received training in team building and community organization/participation, civic engagement, communication skills, self-awareness, the value of respect, and conflict and stress management, so they can become stronger peace agents in their communities.



15,875 community members proposed 58 community-based initiatives for fostering community trust and innovative forms of communication



youth participating in innovation lab in Damascus © UNDP- Syria

Innovation Lab to address social cohesion challenges

UNDP supported the establishment of an “Innovation Lab” at Damascus University to address social cohesion challenges in Syria through new competencies and innovative integration processes that can contribute to improving individual and community resilience.

The lab brought together team members with diverse academic, professional and socioeconomic backgrounds.

At the end of the six-week training in design thinking and innovative approaches, participants were able to design solutions to issues and challenges in their communities through 18 projects. UNDP will support the implementation of these projects and will replicate the same Innovation Lab experience across Syria.

Harmony for all

More than 80 singers and 10 coaches are singing together to reach “Harmony,” the name of a UNDP initiative aimed at supporting social cohesion and promoting positive interaction among participants. The choir’s members are not musicians but ordinary people from different backgrounds; youth, IDPs and host community members who live in the town of Sahnaya, Rural Damascus Governorate sing together to feel connected. Sahnaya has received tens of thousands of IDPs in recent years, especially from Darayya and eastern Ghouta.

The choir is supervised by Gardenia Group, the first women’s professional choir in Syria. The group was established in 2016 under the slogan “Yes, music can bring people together and play a role in building peace.”





Women benefiting from awareness sessions on legal rights in Al-Hassakeh Governorate © UNDP- Syria

Supporting community safety and social justice

Women and girls, PwDs and youth are usually amongst the hardest hit by crises, and become at serious risk of sexual and gender-based violence, including assault, rape and abduction, as well as being vulnerable to legal rights violations. To protect these vulnerable groups and support safety and social justice in the community, UNDP conducted awareness sessions on the rights of women in marriage, their civic rights, as well as gender issues. UNDP also provided legal consultations on civil documentation, personal laws and Housing & Land Properties in Aleppo, Damascus, Rural Damascus, Dar'a, Ar-Raqqa, Deir-ez-Zor and Al-Hassakeh. UNDP also supported the establishment of safe spaces in Lattakia and Hama in collaboration with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, which addressed gender-based violence cases, while UNDP supported the survivors' livelihoods. Community leaders were also trained to engage in informal collaborative dispute resolution.

A total of 12,766 participants, including 4,723 women, have benefited from these awareness sessions.



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Strengthening inclusive local governance to promote recovery of Syrian communities

Effective local governance is key for improving the quality of people's life, reducing inequality and enhancing relations between people and public institutions.

UNDP organized a technical discussion on local governance and community participation. Around 100 participants attended the workshop, representing several sub-national

and local administrations, including three governors, 67 local council representatives, and four nongovernmental / faith-based organizations, local governance international experts and UN representatives. The workshop recognized the critical role of local governance in meeting the SDGs and addressing the crisis-related challenges in Syria.

UNDP workshop on local governance: expanding community participation

Based on the outcomes of the workshop and the results of the capacity needs assessment conducted in eight governorates, UNDP supported a capacity development programme for 928 local council representatives, key civil society organizations, private sector, academia and youth platforms in eight governorates. This programme allowed participants to gain a common understanding of the concept and main principles of local governance, community engagement in planning processes (bottom-up approach to planning and service delivery), regulatory frameworks, roles and functions of the various stakeholders, and resource and financial management at the local level.

Furthermore, UNDP invested in creating spaces for dialogue between local actors and stakeholders where common needs and priorities could be identified and solutions proposed, through mapping of risks, resources, opportunities and priorities. Participatory mechanisms were put in place to ensure inclusion and trust building among community members and between social groups and public institutions.

Dialogue and discussions were also held between community members, the private sector and representatives of local authorities on common needs and priorities, to develop a local recovery plan for Lattakia city.



The rehabilitated citizen- service centre in Dara'a Governorate ready to provide services © UNDP- Syria

UNDP also improved access to services through supporting a citizen service centre in Izra'a city, Dar'a Governorate. The activity identified a list of priority services and documentations - such as a national ID and birth, marriage and death certificates - these are a prerequisite for accessing assistance and other basic services. The estimated number of indirect beneficiaries may reach 225,000 as this centre serves all of Dar'a eastern rural areas as well as Izra'a city, and will ensure that female-headed households and other vulnerable groups have easy access to this facility.

Safeguarding Syrian cultural heritage

The protracted conflict in Syria not only affected the lives of Syrians but also significantly damaged Syrian cultural heritage. The widespread destruction of the archaeological sites across Syria, such as Palmyra and the old cities of Aleppo and Homs, point to the need to restore this heritage. In response, UNDP in partnership with the Kashiwara Institute, a Japanese archaeological institute, started a capacity development programme in 2017 to enhance the technical capacities of the Directorate General of Antiquities and Museums in Syria. The directorate has been tirelessly striving to protect the valuable Syrian cultural heritage despite the crisis.

In 2019, UNDP continued this support and provided training for Syrian experts in cultural heritage, covering various thematic areas such as the documentation of artefacts, their delicate restoration processes and the analysis of their materials and structural components, in addition to professional methods of transporting artefacts. UNDP also provided needed equipment to increase the project's sustainability and ensure that staff benefiting from the training have the necessary tools to apply their skills.

To advocate for the importance of preserving cultural heritage and increase public interest in, and engagement with Syria's rich history, UNDP supported the rehabilitation of parts of the Aleppo National Museum, one of the most important museums in the region for its archaeological collections, especially those dating back to the Aramaic period. With the support extended by UNDP and the generous contribution of the Government of Japan, the museum opened its doors to the public in 2019, to resume its role as one of the landmarks of Aleppo city and a centre of cultural heritage for all Syrians.



Aleppo Museum after rehabilitation, Aleppo Governorate © UNDP- Syria



CROSSCUTTING INTERVENTIONS

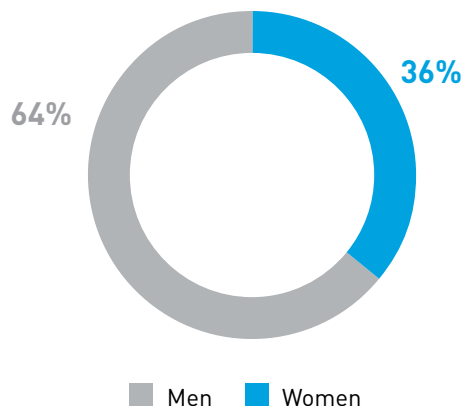
Strengthening gender equality and empowering women

Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls are central to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and all its SDGs.

UNDP prioritizes women's inclusion across interventions, to support their livelihoods and enhance their participation in their communities.

Gender equality at the workplace: all staffing processes consider gender balance – in the main office and in field offices. While gender pay gap does not exist at UNDP, other areas for reaching gender balance in staffing remain a challenge, particularly in field offices, where cultural, social and other challenges hamper women's employment in all areas.

Gender balance in UNDP Syria country office



Breaking gender stereotypes and earning a living

In traditional communities, women are only seen as mothers and housewives, or at most, as help in farming activities. These stereotypes have been challenged by Alia, a 23-year-old woman from Ar-Raqqa.

Alia started working in motor maintenance, a trade usually dominated by men.

Alia was left alone, with no source of income or support, after divorcing, but she was determined to find a job and earn her living.

When Alia read UNDP's advertisement for a vocational training project, she immediately enrolled in the engine repair training courses. She acquired the necessary skills and became the first woman in her community to work as a motor repair specialist, improving her work experience as months went by.

"UNDP gave me the opportunity to achieve my goal, I feel much stronger to face social and economic challenges"

Alia wants to save money to open her own workshop, and dreams of providing training to other women so they can enter this male-dominated sector. With the support of UNDP, Alia is breaking gender stereotypes on her own terms.



Beneficiary selection: UNDP ensures the inclusion of women and female-headed households through its standard selection criteria. In 2019, women represented 32 percent of all beneficiaries reached. Furthermore, UNDP encouraged women to take on jobs usually associated to men, such as in debris and solid waste management projects, engine maintenance and others.

Women with disabilities are among the most vulnerable groups in society; UNDP seeks to support their livelihoods to decrease their vulnerability by providing them with productive assets to start their own income generating activities.

To contribute to eradicating harmful practices towards women, it is crucial to end gender-based violence. UNDP

joined the 16-day "End of violence against women" campaign in December 2019, during which UNDP held awareness sessions, including a community dialogue workshop. The workshop followed a "survivor-centered" approach, with 33 men and women from different cultural, economic and social backgrounds engaging in a lively dialogue around gender justice and women's empowerment, laying the foundation of a local informal network concerned with these issues.

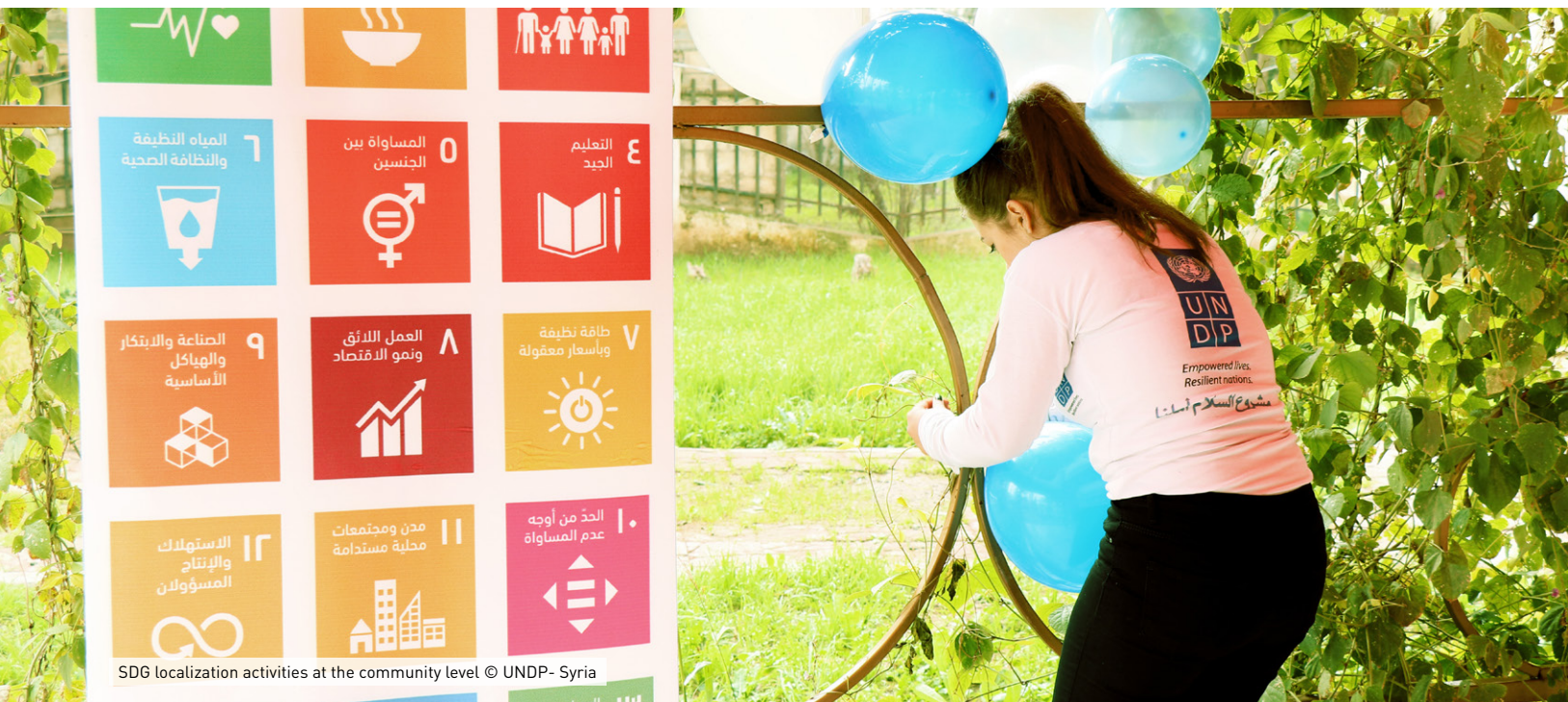
At the community level, gender justice awareness sessions were provided to more than 200 men and 180 women who benefit from UNDP's local projects, including social cohesion/ theatre for change, livelihood, PwDs and basic infrastructure interventions.

UNDP provided job opportunities to women, even in jobs that usually are performed by men

Around **2,600 women** have benefited from cash-for-work, as well as from long-term jobs in 2019



women working in debris management projects in Aleppo Governorate
© UNDP- Syria



SDG localization activities at the community level © UNDP- Syria

Localizing the SDGs at the community level

In 2019, localizing the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda has been integrated across all UNDP's Syria interventions, while providing more opportunities for better engagement of key stakeholders in SDGs implementation at the local level. UNDP supported the first National SDG Report launch in early 2019, co-led the UNSDGs Task Force, and facilitated access to quality data through the UNDP Arab Development Portal Regional Programme, which tracks the progress of SDGs in Syria.

Furthermore, UNDP's interventions focused on youth, digital education and learning platforms to ensure the active engagement of civil society in SDG implementation at the local level. To this end, six youth initiatives on SDG localization and community engagement were implemented and were made available in a social media platform. UNDP Syria also facilitated four technical missions and 10 training of trainers workshops, reaching more than 500 youth leaders and activists, and more than 250 public and private media professionals.

Moreover, UNDP encouraged private sector engagement in one of the SDG initiatives "SEAK to Learn," the first business model co-financed by a private sector company established after a UNDP national workshop conducted in 2018 and aimed at enhancing the role of the Syrian private sector in localizing the SDGs.



UNDP Syria also facilitated four technical missions and 10 training of trainers workshops, reaching more than **500 youth leaders and activists**, and more than 250 public and private media professionals

Capacity development for implementing partners

UNDP developed a strategy to enhance the capacities of civil society organizations (CSOs) to ensure their active and effective engagement in restoring livelihoods in affected communities and improving the living conditions of their population. The strategy has three interrelated pillars: i) addressing skills and knowledge of CSOs members and volunteers, ii) developing institutional capacity, iii) advocating for an enabling environment.

UNDP conducted 63 interactive training workshops attended by 1,329 staff members from 221 Syrian NGOs. Participants thoroughly reviewed training manuals to ensure that gender responsiveness is mainstreamed across interventions, and that accountability is enhanced.

NGOs in Syria are uniquely positioned as first respondents and have had a direct reach to local communities during the crisis; therefore, most of the HRP funding was channelled through NGOs, stretching their capacities to the limit and shifting their priorities to emergency humanitarian response. UNDP offered coaching and mentoring services to 10 NGOs, facilitating strategic revisions, communications support, sustainability and others. This support provided a window of opportunity to promote a more gender-balanced approach in these NGOs.

Furthermore, UNDP facilitated more robust coordination among NGOs through the "UNION of Charities in Damascus", with an NGO training centre established at the Union's premises. More than 100 members have benefited from training programmes offered in this centre. Moreover, 85 NGOs were offered training in an accounting software,

helping them to easily transfer their ledgers into digital records. The centre has also been used as a platform where any issues of concern can be discussed with stakeholders and partners.

Last, guidelines (in Arabic) on UNDP's partnership modalities were developed, and orientation sessions on these modalities were held with national partners, to enhance and consolidate national partnerships.

UNDP is committed to transparency and accountability to its beneficiaries, and to ensuring that no form of abuse is perpetrated against beneficiaries by either UNDP or its implementing partners. In 2019 UNDP Syria country office conducted awareness sessions to more than 28 partners from different governorates who were implementing UNDP's livelihoods and PwDs support interventions.

**UNDP conducted 63
interactive training
workshops attended by
1,329 staff members from
221 Syrian NGOs**



Content management system training for NGOs, Damascus ©UNDP-Syria



Technical staff of Syrian institutions receiving high technical training © UNDP- Syria

Capacity development of technical personnel - “Training for All” Project

Syrian institutions suffer from a chronic capacity deficiency due to massive brain drain, migration and displacement. Sustaining and strengthening human and institutional capacity is one of the means to enhance people’s resilience and adaptability and to ensure that human capital is preserved, all key to facilitate recovery. This joint UN project aims to maintain and improve Syrian human capital in various fields by providing multisectoral training opportunities, ultimately contributing to resilience building.

In 2019, UNDP supported a training for 580 technical staff, including 305 women, in water treatment, electricity generation, transmission and distribution, rehabilitation services for PwDs, journalism and sustainable approaches for enhancing agriculture-based livelihoods and preserving cultural heritage. UNDP also facilitated comprehensive capacity development opportunities to 30 NGOs, through the “Training for All” project.



UNDP supported
580 technical staff, including
305 women, with high
technical training



Youth Leadership Programme in Syria

The Syria team of Youth Leadership Programme (YLP), which is one of the most dynamic networks of young people in the Arab region, started activities in 2019 with the aim of investing in young women and men in Syria and build their capacities to become social innovators, leaders, thinkers and a powerful force for change in their communities.

To this end, UNDP targeted 200 young men and women who were provided with training to accelerate progress on SDGs.

On the occasion of international youth day on 12 August 2019, UNDP Syria Country Office marked this important event through holding three sessions on SDG promotion and design thinking. UNDP also celebrated the "Ten" Boot Camp, aimed at encouraging inclusion and empathy between persons with, and without, disabilities.



200 young men and women have benefited from training to accelerate progress on SDGs

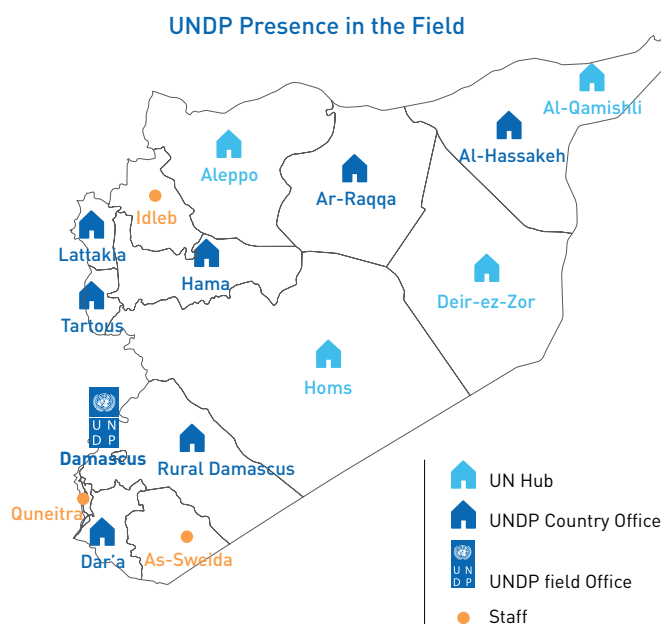


Our presence on the ground

Field staff is a key component of the UNDP Syria country office, as they are the “front liners” on the ground, engaged in projects from the design stage. Field staff is the primary source of information that feeds into area profiling, needs assessments, planning and monitoring and evaluation.

UNDP has either area offices, hub offices (that is, shared with other UN agencies) or staff members deployed (not necessarily within an office structure), to ensure presence on the ground with technical support provided by the Damascus Main Office.

In 2019, UNDP enhanced its field presence by expanding its presence to 11 governorates. Technical and operational capacities on the ground have been strengthened, including through hiring of over 300 third-party staff members to support activities and training workshops that have taken place throughout the year. This scaling up has allowed for more cost-effective and timely interventions.



Funding received 2018-2019

Donors	Sum of Amount in US\$
Denmark	4,895,215
European Union	6,090,681
Finland	2,986,858
Germany	28,015,466
Italy	1,137,656
Japan	28,426,662
Russia	5,767,300
Sweden	834,168
Switzerland	3,700,000
SHF	3,485,628
TOTAL	85,339,634

Social Media and Outreach



www.sy.undp.org

Thanks to the financial support of our donors, UNDP reached around 3.7 million beneficiaries in Syria in 2019

Way forward

UNDP Syria is focused on the pursuit of the SDGs through implementation of development responses to a humanitarian context, while trying to address the root causes of the crisis.

In Syria, UNDP has been the lead agency for promoting resilience across the humanitarian response, particularly through the ER&L sector. The three main thematic areas of focus have been Restoration of Access to Essential Services and Infrastructure; Livelihoods and Economic Recovery, and fostering Social Cohesion. UNDP Syria aims to integrate Resilience interventions into a Durable Solutions Framework to address the internal displacement and emigration of Syrians and the subsequent potential returns.

While continuing to consolidate these areas of intervention, for the next years the UNDP Syria Country Office plans to expand the thematic focus of its activities in Local Governance and Environment/Climate Change and focus on mainstreaming gender equality and youth empowerment in all its resilience interventions. Additionally, UNDP Syria will

consolidate its work on strengthening Syrian CSOs. While some geographical areas still need early recovery interventions, UNDP is planning more impactful support to affected communities through longer-term resilience planning. UNDP Syria will capitalize on area-based and conflict-sensitive programming, with the ultimate goal of enhancing the resilience of Syrians: people, always at the core of UNDP's programming, should come first.





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