

SYRIA



Programme Portfolio

- SPr1** Solid waste and debris management in crisis time to enhance community resilience and improve living conditions
- SPr2** Comprehensive rehabilitation project for persons with disabilities
- SPr3** Rehabilitation of basic and social infrastructure
- SPr4** Restoration of disrupted livelihoods of the affected population including female-headed households through the provision of micro grants, tools, assets and vocational training
- SPr5** Capacity development of NGOs, CBOs and local actors in the field of early recovery and livelihoods: Promoting social cohesion and reconciliation through youth-led community based activities



UNDP Response in Syria

For over five years, Syria has been witnessing a protracted conflict that has directly resulted in losses of human lives, significant displacement and migration, weakened social services, destruction of basic social infrastructure and significant loss of livelihoods, destruction of homes and property and the deterioration of the rule of law and security. The crisis in Syria has caused rising prices for goods and services, job loss and growing unemployment, and damage to the production sectors and infrastructure. This, combined with a stinging economic recession, has exacerbated poverty levels throughout the country and swollen the numbers of Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) who lost their property and assets. More than 80 percent of the Syrian population live in poverty, while 58 percent face the challenges of unemployment.

Vulnerability increased at higher rates due to the deterioration of many socio-economic factors, including loss of lives, sudden disability, deterioration of normal living conditions and disruption of social and rehabilitation services. Hundreds of thousands of Syrians continue to live in areas of active conflict in Deir Ezzor, Raqqa, Deraa, among other governorates. Many of these communities live in profound vulnerability, with civilian communities frequently overwhelmed by armed engagements and exposed to life-threatening deprivation. Towards the end of 2014, many Syrians were not able to leave the country due to blocks on the border with Lebanon; a fact that left this already vulnerable population with nowhere to flee. The number of people with disabilities is increasing, mainly in areas of severe conflict. Women, youth, the elderly and children are caught in the conflict, which is increasing their pre-existing vulnerabilities.

UNDP is implementing a unique resilience programme in Syria that supports Syrian people in their hour of need by means of employment and small business support. The programme goes beyond humanitarian assistance in the sense that it builds resilience; it shows that Syria and Syrians do not have to rely only on humanitarian handouts for survival. The Programme is meant to decrease undesired dependencies and also incentivizes Syrians to stay in Syria and not to flee across the border.

The implementation modalities for this programme are innovative and specially tailored for the situation in Syria. Implementation is done through NGOs, community and faith-based organizations while coordinated with authorities at national and local levels. Contracting and monitoring is done by UNDP field teams present in 10 of the 14 governorates of Syria.

Implementation of the projects with local partners increases the durability of the interventions because they are operated by local organizations who have a long-term future in Syria. This strategy also is more cost effective. We are bolstering sustainability of the programmes by building capacity of local partners to plan, manage and implement new initiatives.

The programmes provide livelihoods, rehabilitate persons with disabilities, help women create businesses, rehabilitate social infrastructure and strengthen social cohesion. Most importantly, these programmes provide hope and inspiration to individuals and communities facing very difficult challenges.

The Project

To address the difficult issue of debris and solid waste and to help citizens cope to meet basic needs UNDP is establishing, with NGO partners, a waste management programme. Key elements of the project include:

- Assessing the need for solid waste and debris management in high-risk areas
- Identifying local partners
- Working with local NGO partners to create a sustainable solid waste programme in each targeted neighborhood

The project results in local capacity to manage the influx of debris and solid waste. The project has many long-term benefits including improved living conditions, empowered community organizations and increased social cohesion.

Budget 15,012,000 USD

The Issue

Solid waste management systems in Syria are overstrained with the high influx of internally displaced persons and destruction and/or damages of basic infrastructure (including sewage systems, secondary networks and cesspits). Equipment and heavy machinery normally used for solid waste management are often looted, destroyed, and not functioning due to the need of new spare parts and maintenance. This contributes to large amounts of garbage piled up in the streets, deteriorating the health and environmental situation and further exacerbating difficult living conditions.

Strategy

UNDP has initiated the waste management programme and is training NGO partners to manage and operate the programme. The objectives are to build capacity of basic services and to bolster livelihoods of the most vulnerable.

The strategy is to embed the programme in the local economy so waste issues can be addressed and provide jobs for local citizens. In the long term, this programme can be the basis for future work, continuing to address waste and pollution issues as the crisis subsides.

Partnership Framework

Since the beginning of 2014, UNDP scaled up its early recovery and resilience interventions targeting twelve highly affected governorates in Syria. Debris removal and solid waste management was a high priority in both recovery efforts. It also helped individuals cope financially by providing emergency employment. Relying on its local approach in planning and programming, UNDP is currently implementing 47 recovery, resilience and livelihoods projects, in partnership with local NGOs, CBOs and faith-based organizations. As of July 2014, a total of 1,527,977 crisis affected people across Syria benefitted from UNDP's support.

Activities

The project follows an eleven-step process where UNDP helps build local capacity to address immediate waste management issues, establish recovery, reuse and recycling systems that reduce environmental impact, and generate short-term employment opportunities. The process is as follows:

- Assess the need for solid waste/debris management in targeted neighborhoods and shelters
- Identify local partners by mapping all stakeholders

- Recruit national and international experts in debris management
- Implement cash-for-work programmes/emergency employment programmes for solid waste/debris management (removal, sorting and recycling)
- Work with NGO partner(s) to oversee collecting and sorting solid waste/debris from targeted neighborhoods
- Identify possibilities for recovery, reuse and, recycling options
- Establish a “waste bank” to recycle debris so it can be re-used in reconstruction work
- Produce biogas and fuel briquettes by removing debris from main roads and main buildings
- Compost organic solid waste to be used in fertilizing by demolishing buildings which are considered unstable and might be hazardous
- Identify and procure necessary tools, equipment and machineries for the recycling process

The projects/activities create an enabling environment where local communities set up waste management programs; learn how to remove, sort, and reuse waste; and are empowered to continue the programme after UNDP exits. These programmes enhance the municipalities’ capacity to deliver effective public services and as a result, improve the local environment. Removal of tons of rubble from the main and secondary roads is making it easier for internally displaced persons to return to their houses. More specifically, the programme has resulted in:

- More than 7,700 jobs created in solid waste and debris management
- Solid waste and debris removal from shelters and neighborhoods and its proper disposal
- Long-term sustainability through:
 - The availability of tools and equipment for solid waste and debris management in targeted communities
 - The establishment of a local NGO in each target area

And at least five training sessions have been conducted in each target area for 7,700 workers, including 885 women. These sessions have covered:

- Solid Waste Management techniques to improve hygiene and environmental conditions
- Debris Management techniques to improve living conditions and promote the return of internally displaced persons to the crisis-affected areas
- Hygiene promotion and awareness

Impact

Tartous: Overcoming the trauma



Picture 1 Hussein during the interview, Tartous © UNDP

Hussein, a 27-year-old young man was living happily with his parents in the Al-Ashrafia area in Aleppo before ongoing hostilities reached their neighborhood and destroyed their lives. The tragic death of his mother had a profound impact on his life and aggravated his mental illness; he fears people and rarely talks or communicates with anyone. He slept next to his mother's grave for four months looking for the peace he lost in her absence. Soon after, the escalating violence and unbearable conditions in Aleppo forced him and his father to flee to the Tartous governorate, where they found a safe haven in the Social Affairs' shelter.

At the shelter, Hussein stayed in his room all day for four months. He was terrified of talking to anyone or going anywhere. His condition was made worse due to poor hearing. "I can't hear or understand people very well," said Hussein, adding, "I need a hearing aid, but it's very expensive and I can't afford it."

Due to his health situation, it was very difficult for Hussein to find a job especially when considering the high unemployment rate as a result of the ongoing crisis. His father was the sole breadwinner for the family but the wage he was receiving from collecting garbage was not enough to fulfil their basic needs.

To supplement their income, Hussein joined the solid waste collection project, which is being implemented by UNDP in partnership with local NGOs in Tartous. This programme provides emergency employment opportunities for IDPs and their host community members. The idea of this project is to alleviate the accumulation of solid waste piles in the neighborhoods that result from increasing pressure on the basic service facilities due to the large influx of IDPs to Tartous governorate.

"I am very thankful for this opportunity. I wake up every morning feeling happy that I will go to work and join my colleagues in cleaning the streets, public kitchens, bathrooms, hallways and windows. I am also saving my wage to buy a hearing aid," said Hussein.

A few weeks after working in this project, Hussein gained more confidence in himself and started to reintegrate in the community and interact with other people. "I sometimes see him talking with children and asking them not to throw garbage in the street," said his father, adding "I feel very happy. I hope that someday he will overcome his trauma."

In addition to Hussein, another 682 workers benefited from the employment opportunities created through this project. The wage they received helped to boost their purchasing power and enabled them to meet their needs. Moreover, the project succeeded in removing 30,949 tons of solid waste; this helped support healthy environment for the residents.



Picture 2 Hussein while cleaning public bathroom in the shelter, Tartous © UNDP



The Project

UNDP uses a twin-track approach to ensure achievement of results and impact:

- Societal track: Mainstreaming disability issues in all sectors of early recovery and livelihoods responses by ensuring that services are inclusive and accessible to persons with disabilities. It includes advocacy of protection, provision of emergency assistance, and expansion of early recovery efforts. This involves identifying and overcoming barriers within society that exclude persons with disabilities (PWD). These barriers may be physical, attitudinal, legal etc.
- Disability-specific track: Empowering PWDs and their families along with supporting NGOs and community-based organizations to address their specific needs.

It includes:

- Rehabilitation services (e.g. disability aids, mobility aids and assistive devices)
- Socio-economic support to PWDs or their families in the form of employment in specialized workshops that include counseling, health services and social support
- Capacity development program for health workers in the field of disability

Budget 6,912,000 USD

The Issue

All persons who are impacted by the crisis face challenges. However, PWDs are amongst the most vulnerable groups and are at particular risk of being neglected and discriminated against. This is especially true in developing countries where they have been in a disadvantaged situation even before any crisis.

In Syria, PWDs have inadequate access to basic needs (food, water, shelter, health provisions, etc.) resulting in higher rates of poverty, lower educational attainment, inequitable health outcomes in addition to social exclusion and unemployment.

During armed conflicts the rate of impairment and disability exponentially increase. For every case of a person dying from armed conflict there are, on average, 3-5 cases of injuries². The latest documented death toll of the Syrian crisis was 190,000³, with an estimated number of injured people totaling somewhere between 570,000 and 1,000,000 cases. So far, according to the Syria humanitarian needs overview (2015), major disability issues are observed in areas experiencing severe armed conflicts such as in Ar-Raqqa, Aleppo, Homs, Hama, Deir-ez-Zor and rural Damascus.

Based on an evaluation of the situation of PWDs in Syria, using the available data collected through field staff, local partners, and official reports from national authorities, we have identified the following main issues:

- According to the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) records, 80,529 persons are officially registered as physically disabled. The MoSA registration system is not inclusive of all cases of PWDs due to, in part, to the invisibility and accessibility of this population.

2. Supporting people with disabilities in emergencies <http://www.sphereproject.org/blog/supporting-people-with-disabilities-in-emergencies/>

3. WHO and health partners responding to the Syrian Arab Republic health tragedy <http://www.who.int/features/2014/syria-health-tragedy/en/>

- The absence of inclusive policies and actions directed towards PWDs is well-documented. Scattered interventions that deal with the needs of PWDs have been implemented throughout the country; however, these interventions lack appropriate pre-assessment, planning and professional capacities. They also rarely use systems that utilize comprehensive approaches.
- There are shortages in quantity and quality of services. Physical rehabilitation centers, Prosthetic & Orthotic centers and other related services that empower PWDs (i.e. Vocational training, educational institutes, Psychosocial support centers, etc.) were not meeting citizens' needs even before the crisis. The deterioration in infrastructure has also taken its toll on these services. Moreover the capacity of qualified skilled personnel to work with the disabled is also lacking.

Understanding the link between disability, poverty, and the positive impact of supporting this significant portion of society on social development stream justifies the efforts and resources necessary to support and empower PWDs. This project responds to these issues through a comprehensive programme addressing the need and priorities of PWDs.

The project intends to build resilience among persons with disabilities to help accelerate their emotional recovery and to help restore their disrupted livelihoods. The project will also strengthen support systems for people with disabilities by:

- Including persons with disabilities in all areas of humanitarian response and development with provision of disability rehabilitation services to improve quality of life and the provision of socio economic support of PWDs
- Encourage advocates for PWDs in the private sector and in NGOs and partner organizations in order to ensure that high service levels and positive attitudes towards people with disabilities continue post-crises
- Develop capacity of service providers to address the needs of people with disabilities

Strategy

The project will be implemented in close partnership and cooperation with i) local entities; ii) NGOs/CBOs; iii) the private sector; iv) UN agencies, v) donors, and vi) target groups and affected populations. This will promote a wider engagement of all concerned stakeholders in: identifying needs, planning, decision-making, consultation, community mobilization, resource mobilization, implementation, monitoring, feedback and supervision.

In addition, coordination and synergy will be sought with bilateral and multilateral partners (donors, international NGOs, UN partners), through existing and appropriate coordination mechanisms. This will align with their respective comparative advantages and technical expertise. Moreover, the project will seek to harmonize practices (project selection, priority interventions wages, etc.) and to consider knowledge management and information sharing with all partners will be considered involving the beneficiaries/target groups as well.

Partnership Framework

Activities

- Mainstream disability issues in all areas of early recovery and livelihoods response
- Provide disability-related health care and rehabilitation services to PWDs to reach their maximum health and functional potential
- Develop the capacity of active health/social workers in the field of disabilities such as occupational therapists, physiotherapists, and prosthetic technicians
- Provide livelihoods support for PWDs
- Revive two “workshops” where persons with disabilities can work in a supervised setting manufacturing shoes

Impact

The major benefit of successful project implementation will be to help support neglected and excluded PWDs to cope with and recover from trauma. Given the increasing number of persons suffering from disabilities caused by war and accidents, this project will have a tangible and immediate impact by increasing basic rehabilitative equipment, provision of prosthetic and orthotic devices, and supporting livelihoods.

The project will have a more sustainable impact by developing the capacity of local institutions through a combination of short- and long-term capacity programmes. The main areas targeted are: physical rehabilitation skills such as Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy in addition to urgent needs in prosthetic technology capacity development.

By the end of 2015, the project will reach 5,000 persons with disability who will receive disability aid. Additionally, 10,000 persons with disabilities will benefit from rehabilitation sessions/services and 2,000 PWDs will benefit from livelihoods support. Of those receiving services 6,000 are women; and special attention is given to the different needs of men and women. The project will also help 500 Health workers in the field of disability build their capacity to better deliver services.



Success story from an ongoing project

Case Study

Al-Qutayfah: Determination to work in spite of disability

Al-Qutayfah district is located in Rural Damascus, approximately 40 km east of Damascus. It has been considered a relatively stable area during the Syrian crisis, making it a safe haven for a large number of displaced people who fled their original areas of residence as a result of the ongoing hostilities.

Many of those IDPs left their homes without significant assets or personal belongings. They were struggling to fulfil their basic needs, such as food and clothing, and they were in dire need for humanitarian and livelihoods assistance. Additionally, price inflation and ongoing violence affected the entire Syrian population, many shops were forced to close and many factories were disrupted which ultimately increased the unemployment rate.

In response to this situation, UNDP in partnership with a local NGO, established a shoe-manufacturing workshop in the Al-Qutayfah area to provide IDPs job opportunities and new skills that allow them to start their own businesses after the end of the project.



Abed Al-Kareem while going to the workshop
© UNDP

Abed Al-Kareem: a 28-year-old man who was able to join the workshop and work with his colleagues in manufacturing shoes in spite of his disability. "I used to work as driver of a food distribution car. I worked for many hours trying to save up money to be able to get married," said Abed Al-Kareem, adding "I fell once from the second floor and lost the ability to use my legs again. Since that day my dreams collapsed and I was depressed."

It was difficult for Abed Al-Kareem to cope with his new health condition, especially after the disruption of his only source of livelihood. Nevertheless, he was determined to find a new source of income to support his father who suffers from heart ischemia and diabetes in providing the needs of their family.

Early this year, he succeeded in joining the shoe-manufacturing workshop in Al-Qutayfah where he learned new skills and techniques that allowed him to manufacture shoes with colleagues. "I remember my first day at work when my colleagues helped me in climbing the stairs, I received a lot of care and attention and I was very happy," he said, adding, "It was a big challenge for me to learn this career.

However, I was full of hope and determined to become skilled in this field."

After working in the workshop for a couple of months, Abed Al-Kareem started to be more positive and self-confident. Additionally, the monthly wage he received improved his living conditions and helped him to fulfil the basic needs of his family.

The workshop succeeded in providing a total of 70 employment opportunities for IDPs and their host community members in Al-Qutayfah and its many citizens restore their source of livelihoods.



Abed Al-Kareem while manufacturing shoes © UNDP

The Project

UNDP is working with local NGOs and communities to help rehabilitate basic services and recover from the crisis. It strengthens the electric, education, sanitation and healthcare systems. It also helps internally displaced persons cope financially by providing emergency employment and by improving access to basic health and educational services. In the long-term it will promote the use of renewable energy sources (wind, solar and biogas) as Syria transforms itself.

Budget 14,450,400 USD

The Issue

Based on the 2015 humanitarian needs overview, basic and social infrastructure systems (i.e. electricity, education, sanitation, healthcare, etc.) have been partially damaged or destroyed or over-stretched due to the crisis.

- Syria's electricity infrastructure is severely damaged and a lack of fuel has caused insufficient and unstable electricity supply. This has had critical impact across all sectors and poses serious threats to human security. Renewable energy sources, particularly water heating and street lighting, are paramount to improve the living conditions of the affected population
- Education is teetering. For example, by end of 2013, more than one half of all school age children (51.8%) no longer attended school. This reached above 90% in Ar-Raqqa and Aleppo and 68% in Rural Damascus. Also by the end of 2013, 4,000 schools were out of service because they were destroyed, damaged or housing IDPs
- The healthcare system is compromised by the damage to medical facilities, the flight of healthcare professionals, the death and injury of medical staff, and the collapse of the pharmaceutical industry. Some 61 of 91 public hospitals were damaged with almost half (45%) out of service, while 53 private hospitals were also affected

Strategy

The strategy is to work with local partners to assess necessary rubble removal, basic repairs, and infrastructure rehabilitation. UNDP and partners then assess the skills of internally displaced persons and local organizations that can help with the rehabilitation. By building partnerships and understanding local needs, the project creates an infrastructure for solid recovery from the crisis.

Partnership Framework

UNDP in cooperation with local NGO and private-sector partners provided 5,921 emergency employment opportunities for the restoration of basic services, of which 5,791 persons were employed in the area of solid waste management and 130 persons were employed for infrastructure rehabilitation activities. This benefitted 29,605 individuals including dependent family members, employing 900 women and 234 persons with disability.

UNDP, together with local partners, has developed, planned, and implemented a strategy for infrastructure rehabilitation in each local area.

Water

- Rehabilitation of potable water networks
- Provision of potable water in some specific neighborhoods and shelters
- Rehabilitation and drilling of water wells in areas where the water network is not functioning

Energy

- Rehabilitation of electrical supply for plants and networks
- Utilization of renewable energy sources such as wind, solar and biomass in schools and collective shelters or hospitals and public buildings

Waste

- Treatment of sewage water and wastewater from some industrial zones that fulfill environmental requirements to be used in irrigation for agricultural production
- Harvesting rainwater and separating it from the sewage network to be used for irrigation and agricultural production

Schools and health

- Rehabilitation of public health centers, schools and culture centers to enhance resilience of communities in affected areas

Activities

UNDP in cooperation with local NGO and private-sector partners provided 14,013 emergency employment opportunities for the restoration of basic services. This benefitted 70,065 individuals including dependent family members, employing 1,064 women and 234 persons with disabilities. This helped internally displaced persons meet their basic survival needs and build their skills for future employment.

The project creates safer access to basic services such as water supply, sanitation, and renewable energy facilities, in parallel with supporting recovery of social services such as education and health facilities. This has helped to accelerate the return of internally displaced persons to their hometowns.

Impact



Success story from an ongoing project

Dar'a: Rehabilitation of polyclinic premises



Samer while working in the project © UNDP

Situated in the south of Syria, Dar'a Governorate is bordered by As-Sweida to the east, Quneitra to the west, Rural Damascus to the north, and Jordan to the South. The Governorate has experienced heavy fighting over the last three years. Consequently, large portions of the population have been driven from their homes seeking refuge within Syria or in neighboring countries. In April 2014, around 266 thousand people were displaced within Dar'a, which is equivalent to about one-third of the pre-crisis population.⁴

The residents in Dar'a were suffering from lack of medical care and necessary first aid in addition to lack of access to medications, medical equipment and spare parts. Thus, rehabilitating hospitals and health centers in Dar'a was a priority to secure the health needs of IDPs and host community members. As a response to this situation, UNDP implemented in partnership with local NGOs, a project to rehabilitate a multi-purpose clinic in Dar'a that includes a child and thalassemia clinic, kidney dialysis center, dental center, diabetes clinic, radiology department, laboratory, and nursing school.

Samer, a 38 year-old man who was forced, like many others, to leave his home in the Refugee Camp area in Dar'a due to the ongoing hostilities and take refuge in Al-Dahyia neighborhood. "I used to work as a chief electric technician and I was suffering from cervical disk prolapse," Samer said, adding "after displacement I was jobless. I depended on all sorts of humanitarian aids but that was not enough to secure a stable life for my family. I was searching for a decent job but I couldn't find any available opportunities."

In early February 2015, Samer succeeded in joining UNDP's project in Dar'a. He was delighted to join the team and work eight hours per day in rehabilitating the clinic premises. Moreover, the monthly wage he receives significantly improved his living conditions and helped him to fulfil the needs of his family.

"The first thing I did when I received my first wage was purchase roast chicken for my children. I can't describe how happy I was to see my children eating this meal after such a long time," said Samer with a smile on his face.

The clinic rehabilitation project provided employment opportunities to 77 people. The clinic will also secure medical services to approximately 117,000 residents including ambulatory cases, pregnant women, post-operative care and mental illnesses.

4. OCHA, Governorates profile report, 2014



Access to clean water,
Roman wells rehabilitation,
Hama @ UNDP Syria

Restoration of disrupted livelihoods of the affected population including female-headed households through the provision of micro grants, tools, assets and vocational training

The project helps individuals with disrupted livelihoods by:

- Strengthening individuals' coping mechanisms
- Reviving markets by injecting cash into the local economy
- Restoring micro -and small- businesses, availing emergency economic relief to economically vulnerable populations through grants
- Providing asset replacement through business start-up kits

Female-headed households are the primary group who benefit from this project to address their immediate survival needs in a sustainable way. This group was chosen because an increased number of female-headed households was observed in shelters and host communities. The project:

- Empowers women by helping them start or revive their businesses
- Provides vocational training and emergency employment opportunities in areas of their expertise
- Offers micro-grants that enable women-owned businesses

This will help women and others to generate quick earnings to support their families and build their capacity for the future. Women in both IDP and host communities will benefit from rapid cash-for-work schemes in small businesses such as manufacturing (i.e. of blankets or other items of clothing) and food processing activities (i.e. farming, livestock). Women will also benefit from start-up kits, tools and asset replacement where applicable. The project will focus aid returnees in female-headed households.

Budget 24,624,000 USD

After four years of the crisis, 12.2 million Syrians are in need of humanitarian assistance, 7.6 million are IDPs. The recent report on the Socio-economic Impact of the Crisis prepared by the Syrian Centre for Policy Research (SCPR) in collaboration with UNDP states that four out of five Syrians live in poverty. Moreover, the unemployment rate reached 57% with the collapse of Syrian economic productive sectors. This dramatic collapse in human development has been accompanied by destabilization of security and a dramatic deterioration in equity and equality.

The Syrian economy experienced massive de-industrialization as a result of business closure and bankruptcy, capital flight, looting and destruction. As the formal economy has imploded, there has been a growth in informality, rent-seeking activities, criminal enterprise and economies of violence that will plague post-conflict economic regulation, reform, equity and development.

The dire economic situation, coupled with constant displacement and high levels of poverty, have a negative impact on the most vulnerable population groups: vulnerable youth, disabled people, and female-headed households. These groups are increasingly marginalized in the crisis. For example, Syrian female-headed households have increased dramatically and because of cultural norms have limited access to income.

The Project

The Issue

The overall objective of the project is to strengthen the resilience of women and those in other vulnerable groups to cope with the effects of the crisis and help them rebuild their lives.

The project takes an area-based approach where UNDP field teams and partners work in targeted geographic areas to:

- Understand the needs of women and other vulnerable groups in that area
- Tailor specific programs and activities that help them meet basic needs in the short term and create income in the medium term
- Establish local committees and develop clear criteria for participation to ensure transparency
- Coordinate with local and international partners to prioritize interventions and find ways to enhance impact

Strategy

The project is implemented in close partnership, collaborating with local entities, NGOs/CBOs, local businesses, UN agencies, donors, and target groups and affected populations. This will promote a wider engagement of all concerned stakeholders in identification of needs, planning, decision-making, consultation, community mobilization, resource mobilization, implementation, monitoring, feedback and supervision. As the project progresses, knowledge management and information sharing with all partners will be considered, involving the beneficiaries as well.

Partnership Framework

Conduct relevant quick assessments to:

- Identify beneficiaries according to vulnerability criteria
- Identify needs per household or family (depending if in shelters or hosted at relatives or renting houses or returnee)
- Identify potential recipients of grants, vocational training, employment and income generating activities
- Assess their capacities and skills and provide identified support

Design and implement employment and income generating programmes as well as vocational training based on identified needs and capacities, which will involve:

- Finalizing agreement with relevant partners in addition to local actors
- Procuring and replace tools and assets based on identified needs and capacities
- Replacing damaged and lost tools for people managing small-scale businesses
- Providing necessary materials for emergency income generating activities based on identified needs
- Providing cash for work for people employed in available production sectors (as per their capacities and skills)

Activities

Impact

In the first phase, jobs and income generation opportunities were provided for 1,046 women-headed households in Al- Hasakeh (Qamishli), Hama (Salamieh) and Tartous benefiting 3,399 persons including dependent family members.

The second phase will include 19,200 individuals including 9,400 female-headed households and 9,800 men (including person with disabilities and vulnerable youth). They will benefit from:

- Grants: 3,500 recipients
- Vocational training: 3,500 recipients
- Small-business generation: 10,000 recipients
- Tools and asset replacement: 6,400 recipients

The livelihoods support includes the revival of disrupted businesses; tailored vocational training matching emerging market needs; and providing essential tools and lost assets which directly contribute to the generation of income.

The restoration of businesses, and provision of productive tools, as well as vocational training contributes to longer-term sustainable benefits for individuals and their communities. It helps them transform from passively receiving support to actively producing income and livelihoods in a dignified way. The resulting businesses will create employment and help restore local markets.

Additional benefits include:

- Preserving the traditional heritage and knowledge of local crafts and transmission of this expertise to the new generation through on-the-job training
- Engaging youth to discourage them from resorting to negative coping mechanisms
- Empowering the increasing number of females heading their households.
- Allow women and men to provide health and education services to their children, once they are able to afford it; thus enhancing the standard of their living and keeping their children away from negative practices

Finally, implementation of the project through local partners and committees will enhance the capacities of local actors, building their ability to strengthen livelihoods and take the lead on reviving their communities.



Success story from an ongoing project

Al-Hassakeh: Baking bread to earn bread

"Four years passed since we fled out of our home in Damascus taking refuge in Al-Hassakeh", said Nadia. "We saved nothing. Fifteen years of our life are totally erased".

Nadia, a 43 year old woman from Rural Damascus and one of the millions affected by the Syrian crisis, found herself the sole breadwinner of her family after the stroke that prevented her husband from working. Living with five dependent children, of whom one is suffering from kidney bleeding and need to be monitored continuously in a hospital, Nadia struggled to find a job with a proper salary, which was nearly impossible.



Nadia baking breads, Al-Hassakeh © UNDP

"Before the crisis I used to work as janitor with my husband", said Nadia. "After the devastating conditions in Rural Damascus we fled heading nowhere then we chose to return to our hometown, Al-Hassakeh, where I only managed to work as a servant in a local institute. I neither had skills nor experience to find a better opportunity. The income was insufficient; it was less than enough to buy food for my family."

Al-Hassakeh governorate is home to half a million persons, of whom 258,000 are IDPs from neighboring Deir-Ez-Zor, Ar-Raqqa and Aleppo, who are in critical need for livelihood support. Most of the displaced families left their hometowns without any assets or belongings and were suffering from lack of services and job opportunities as a result of ongoing hostilities that stopped many businesses from work leading to an increased unemployment rate.

As a response to this situation, UNDP was the first UN agency to implement a livelihoods initiative in Al-Hassakeh city. It succeeded in establishing three bakeries to provide job opportunities to IDPs and their host community. Additionally, reviving the bakery profession and alleviating the need for traditional bread that emerged during the crisis as a result of lack of raw materials and transportation difficulties.

Nadia was one of the beneficiaries from this project. At the beginning she received training on the essential skills of baking and kneading, then she started to work eight hours a day with her colleagues to provide traditional bread to customers.



Mushroom cultivation - Homs © UNDP

"I love this job, I learned new skills and I earn enough wages that allows me to fulfill the needs of my family. Now, I can buy clothes and medicine and we no longer need to borrow from anyone", said Nadia with a smile on her face.

Capacity development of NGOs, CBOs and local actors in the field of early recovery and livelihoods: Promoting social cohesion and reconciliation through youth-led community based activities

This is a two-part project that addresses high-priority early recovery issues. Part I strengthens community partner organizations (NGOs/CBOs) who are delivering services in Syria in order to build capacity for effective management. The second part addresses the urgent situation with youth who have faced traumatic experiences and who are at risk of being recruited to engage in armed conflict.

Our capacity-building programme for partner organizations includes strengthening internal management skills, assessment skills (to identify emerging issues more quickly and accurately), project management (including planning, implementation and monitoring) and collaboration skills to work more effectively in a multi-stakeholder environment with international organizations and local communities. In the medium term, the capacity building programme will support coherent and coordinated service delivery, increase effectiveness and reduce costs.

To address vulnerable youth, we have created an innovative programme to help recover from the trauma they've experienced and strengthen their self-esteem and sense of support and inclusion in the community. The programme identifies and mobilizes at-risk youth, provides psycho-social support from health professionals and engages them in participative community-based activities (including drama therapy, sports, social activities, etc.). The programme takes an integrated approach to best meet the needs of at-risk youth.

Budget 2,310,120 USD

The humanitarian situation in Syria continues to deteriorate at a rapid pace since the beginning of the crisis in March 2011. Based on the Human Needs Overview, The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) estimates that 12.2 million Syrians now require humanitarian assistance, including more than 7.6 million displaced. The dynamic nature of the conflict and its acceleration in several governorates is putting a huge burden on the local actors responding to the emerging and increasing needs of the affected population. The early recovery team has identified two high-priority issues: strengthening partner organizations who are delivering recovery services and supporting vulnerable youth who are at risk of being recruited into armed conflict.

Strengthening NGOs and CBOs

Among those organizations delivering recovery services, are the local NGOs and CBOs that have demonstrated a high sense of responsibility and have taken immediate action to address local needs, ensuring access to basic commodities such as food and non-food items (blankets, buckets, soap). Syrian NGOs play a vital role in connecting humanitarian actors with affected communities, establishing the necessary delivery channels, mobilizing volunteers, and developing solutions that address the persisting needs of affected people.

As we work with NGOs in Syria, (historically focused on charity and philanthropic approaches), we recognize their challenges, taking a more engaged role in project management, early recovery and livelihoods generation. Challenges include lack of specialized technical capacity, weak internal management and structures, limited capacity for executing large-scale projects, difficult legal environment, and complex operational and security contexts. We're helping these NGOs improve management skills, strengthen capacity to cooperate with one another, and enhance ability to actively engage with local communities in planning and implementing interventions.

The Project

The Issue

Social Cohesion and Reconciliation

Syria was known for its unique social cohesion and high level of tolerance among its inhabitants who have different religious affiliations. The dramatic effects of the crisis have undermined social harmony. Exposure to violence is contributing to the breakdown of the social system; and, according to the humanitarian needs overview, there is an increase in the number of people seeking assistance and psychosocial support because of rising violence. This is raising the alarm for further deterioration of the social cohesion in the society.

Unemployed youth and youth not attending school are becoming involved in the armed conflict. Youth require engagement in constructive, community-based activities to help them feel included and create a positive, social environment (thwarting their recruitment into armed conflict).

The overall objective of the project is twofold:

- To strengthen the planning, internal management and project implementation and monitoring capacities of NGOs/CBOs
- To engage youth in constructive, community-based activities to help them feel included and create a positive, cohesive social environment
- To address reconciliation needs of affected youth through psychosocial support and involvement in community-based activities and drama therapy in target governorates

Strategy

The project will be implemented in close cooperation with national and local partners. Local authorities include municipal councils, technical directorates in target governorates and mayors, NGOs and CBOs (in particular for community mobilization, participatory monitoring, implementation, evaluation, knowledge transfer, etc.). Partnerships with other UN agencies will be enhanced to ensure complementarity and achieve the ultimate benefit of the programme.

Partnership Framework

Empower NGOs, CBOs and local level working groups and build their capacity to engage in emergency response and reconciliation efforts by:

- Understanding the capacity needs of local organizations, based on their development strategy
- Designing and implement a capacity building programme
- Piloting programme in selected areas
- Implementing at the national level, in areas of highest need

Activities

Mobilize youth in difficult areas and engage them in a social cohesion programme that includes participatory community activities by:

- Conducting a quick assessment of the potential entry points for youth led community based activities that involves:
 - Identifying local partners (NGOs, CBOs)
 - Conducting field visits, meet affected youth and assess the needs and available environment
 - Selecting target neighborhoods and shelters to be supported based on assessment
 - Identifying beneficiaries based on assessment
- Implementing a youth-led social cohesion programme through community based activities that:
 - Designed based on results of the assessment and potential entry points
 - Incorporates other arts and community activities as necessary (i.e. music, food, sport, etc.)
 - Involves the training of trainers and building of capacity amongst local partners
 - Is piloted and amended based on feedback

Impact

The NGO/CBO capacity development programme will strengthen implementation capacities, thus contributing directly to better planning, project management and monitoring of interventions. It will take the work of the NGOs/CBOs to another strategic level that will positively impact the local response to the crisis and build the resilience of the affected population.

The youth activities will address the social impact of the crisis on the most vulnerable youth and will rebuild the social structure of the community, preparing the affected population for a participatory approach towards early recovery. About 50,000 youth (boys and girls) will engage in social community-based activities. To do so, UNDP will partner with 150 NGOs/CBOs in the targeted areas.



Success story from an ongoing project

Developing the capacities of a local NGO in Homs: "Child Care association"

Child Care association has contributed to relief and humanitarian works since the beginning of the Syrian crisis, as are many other local NGOs in Homs. Its main work was to provide food, clothes and other basic needs to displaced families and people in need (especially children and women) within its limited capabilities. When UNDP started to implement its early recovery and livelihoods initiatives in Homs Governorate, it was essential to cooperate with local NGOs and develop their capacities to meet the growing needs of the local population. Child Care association was one of the local NGOs that caught the attention of UNDP due to its transparency and dedication to its work.



Hosam; Member of the Board of Directors in Child Care association, Homs © UNDP

During their cooperation, UNDP studied the internal structure of the association and suggested several actions that significantly helped to improve the efficiency of its work. It also provided the necessary logistical support that helped the association to establish branch offices with various specialties such as engineering, medicine, education, law and relief works. These branches are connected to the main office and work in continuous harmony. Consequently, the association was able to expand its work covering more sectors and cooperating with other international organizations.

Child Care association acquired new skills by working with UNDP, mainly in preparing project documents and various reports that recorded implementation mechanisms and monitoring of the ongoing projects. Moreover, the engineering office of the association developed a strategy that aims to implement small development projects based on an analysis of the current situation in the governorate and identifies needs and priorities. For example, they established the mushroom growing project, which was implemented in early January 2015 and achieved many positive results in terms of providing employment opportunities to IDPs and their host community members and supplying local markets with mushrooms at reasonable prices.

Child Care association, in partnership with UNDP, has gained additional skills through implementing service projects that focus on improving the hygiene and health conditions in Homs Governorate. Currently, the association is preparing a study to implement new projects such as rehabilitating housing buildings to facilitate the return of displaced people to their homes.

UNDP has also helped the association to draw the necessary mechanisms to ensure the sustainability of its projects in addition to providing methods to develop these projects and expand them.

Child Care association has also transferred its expertise that it has learned from UNDP to the other local NGOs through conducting many training courses in different subjects such as mushroom cultivation course. It has also expanded its staff by providing job opportunities to at least 290 employees.

