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Restoring Livelihoods UNDP Response in Syria

As the crisis deepens in Syria, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in partnership with other UN and humanitarian agencies, are scaling up their humanitarian and early recovery interventions to reach areas where people are most affected and in need of help. The crisis has left more than 9.3 million people in dire need of humanitarian assistance. It has also exacerbated pre-existing levels of poverty and unemployment. Sixty-five per cent of the Syrian population lives in poverty, with around 7.9 million people becoming poor since the beginning of the crisis. It is estimated that 4.4 million people live in extreme poverty as savings and coping strategies have been exhausted.

Thousands are fleeing across borders every day or moving to safer areas within Syria. Approximately 6.5 million people have been internally displaced and are taking shelter in public buildings, community shelters or with host families. It has been reported that the lack of security is not the only significant reason for displacement. A relatively large number of refugees has fled due to the scarcity of livelihoods, income, and access to basic services in their home towns and villages. Whether living in formal or informal shelters or hosted by the community, internally displaced people are suffering from disrupted livelihoods, and loss of income and productive means. Support mechanisms are extremely strained due to limited resources and depleting savings of both internally displaced people and host communities. Moreover, women-headed households are on the rise.

UNDP Response

As an immediate response to the emerging needs of the affected Syrian population, and in line with the Syria Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan (SHARP), UNDP mobilized approximately US\$16 million to kick-start its Humanitarian Livelihoods Programme. Rapid assessments were conducted in Aleppo, Damascus, Deir Ezzor, Hama, Hassakeh, Homs, Latakia, Raqqqa, Rural Damascus

and Tartous to identify needs, priorities and potential stakeholders and partners. Accordingly, initiatives were launched to generate quick income through emergency employment for improved service delivery and repair of basic community infrastructure, as well as provision of emergency support for the restoration and stabilization of disrupted livelihoods. Special focus is put on vulnerable groups such as internally displaced people, youth, women-headed households and people with disabilities. The programme also promotes resilience in local communities. This is done through capacity development of local non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations for engaging in early recovery efforts, and community activities for enhancing social cohesion and reconciliation.

UNDP will increase the number and scope of its activities to alleviate suffering and promote a resilience-based approach. In addition to its field presence, UNDP has maintained its network of local partners in various governorates, which expands its reach and access. Based on its global experience in crisis-affected areas, UNDP will implement early recovery and self-reliance initiatives that would also create an enabling environment for humanitarian work, reduce the demand for relief, and enhance the resilience of affected communities.

BASIC FACTS

Population: 23 million
People in need of urgent help and protection: 9.3 million
Internally displaced people: 6.5 million
Lost jobs: 2.33 million
People living in extreme poverty: 4.4 million

Data (2013)

Funding Required for UNDP Early Recovery and Livelihoods Programming: US\$ 53 million

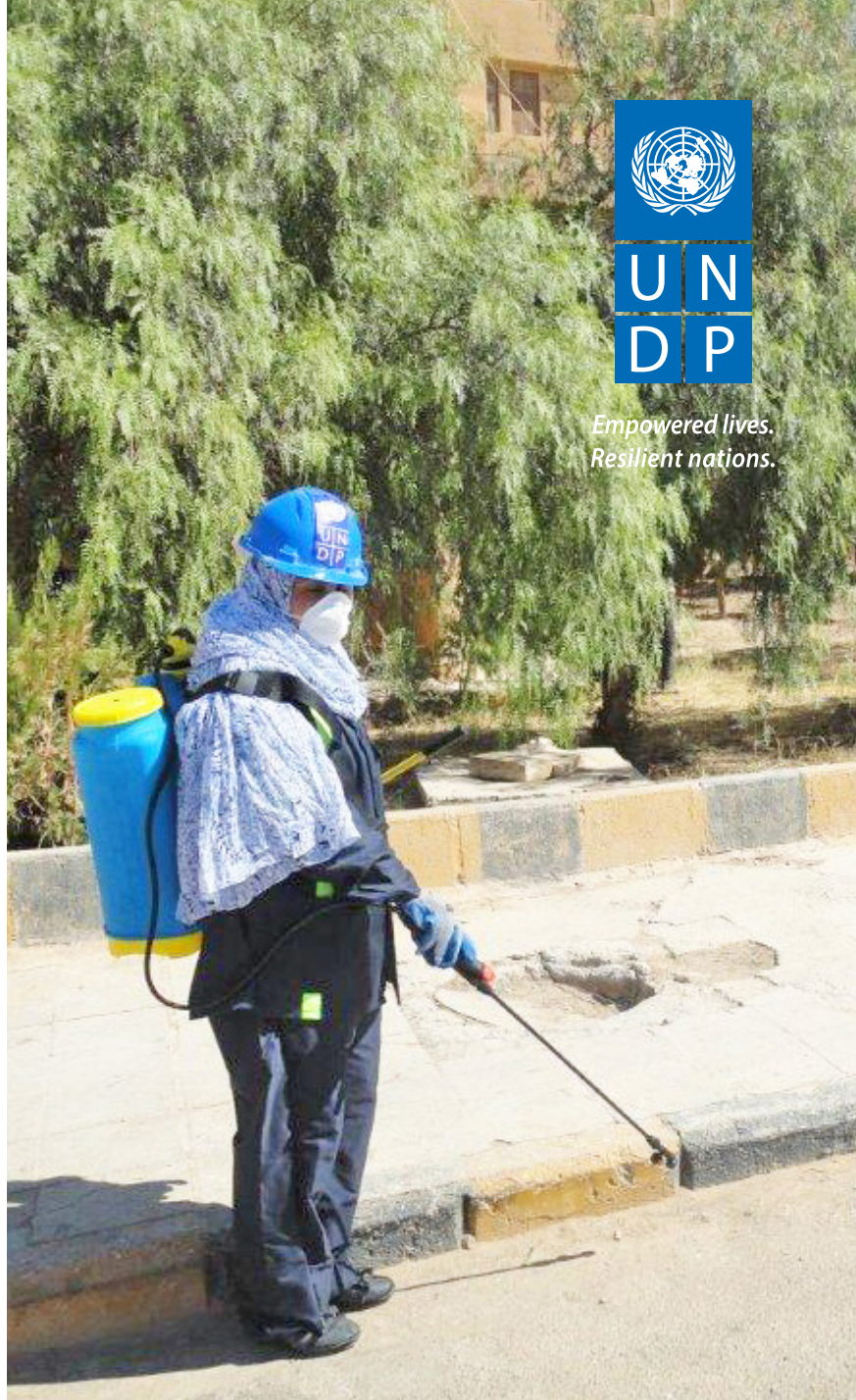
Approach

Resilience is a transformative process that builds upon the innate capacities and knowledge of people, communities and countries to anticipate, manage, and recover from shocks minimizing their impact and maximizing their (transformative) potential to promote and sustain human development gains. UNDP accordingly gears its interventions to enhance the coping, recovery and transformation potential of affected communities through:

Emergency Employment for Improved Service Delivery

The aim is to enhance spontaneous and early recovery of the population through providing emergency employment opportunities for the rehabilitation of community infrastructure and access to basic services. This is achieved through cash-for-work and labor-intensive schemes for rubble removal, garbage collection and disposal, rapid repairs of infrastructure and houses.

Solid waste removal and disposal projects are implemented in Aleppo, Deir Ezzor, Homs and Tartous. They provide emergency employment opportunities and improve the living conditions in shelters and host communities. Needed tools, equipment and pesticides are procured locally to assist the local economy.



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Emergency Support for Restoration of Disrupted Livelihoods

Assets replacement cash grants and vocational trainings are provided for small businesses, producers and craftsmen. In Homs, this type of support is provided to revive micro-to-small businesses prioritized by the communities, such as the establishment of cold storage rooms to preserve meat and vegetables, ice production for refrigeration to offset extended electricity cuts, sewing workshop, building blocks production, rooftop gardening for the production of home-grown vegetables, replacement of damaged equipment in a sweet factory, rehabilitation of a local market place, in addition to mechanics and electronics workshops.

Essential non-food items are also made available to affected communities and displaced people living outside shelters. 10,000 displaced families received kitchen sets in complement to food distribution by the World Food Programme. UNDP also partnered with 12 national NGOs to distribute clothes and quilts to more than 50,000 affected families in all 14 governorates in Syria. Some breakthroughs were possible in highly volatile governorates such as Daraa, Deir Ezzor, and Raqqqa that have been out-of-reach for months now.





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Support Women Headed Households and Persons with Disabilities

Income generation opportunities are availed to affected women and persons with disabilities. Tailored emergency employment schemes, cash transfer, vocational training and start-up kits are provided. In Hassakeh, a sewing workshop was established to produce clothes that are later distributed through local NGOs to IDPs living in communities. Also a tailored vocational training programme was launched for displaced women living in shelters in Damascus and Rural Damascus. Sewing, hairdressing and other home-based crafts were prioritized by the beneficiaries.

In line with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, UNDP is promoting a comprehensive rehabilitation approach including the provision of disability and medical aids (such as prosthetics, artificial limbs, crutches, and wheelchairs, among others), physiotherapy treatments, psycho-social support, vocational training and start-up kits for quick income generating activities. This approach is currently implemented in Aleppo in partnership with a local NGO specialized in medical and rehabilitation services.

Developing Capacities for Community Resilience

UNDP is currently focusing on developing the capacities of people and institutions to cope and recover from the consequences of the ongoing crisis and actively engage in the response with particular focus on socio-economic recovery, social cohesion and reconciliation. Significant emphasis is put on local level interventions implemented by non-governmental and community-based organizations. To date, 85 NGOs were assessed. This is a dynamic exercise aiming to devise a comprehensive capacity development package for empowering local actors to assume their roles and responsibilities in the recovery and reconciliation process.



Early Recovery and Livelihoods Coordination

UNDP is leading the Early Recovery and Livelihoods Sector Working Group, which comprises 14 partners from UN agencies, international organizations and local NGOs. The key objective of the Working Group is to ensure coherence in early recovery planning and optimize the use of resources. It also ensures mainstreaming Early Recovery and Livelihoods in humanitarian response, making available technical support on relevant programmatic matters. In addition to area-based livelihood and damage assessments, UNDP in partnership with the Syrian Centre for Policy Research is publishing quarterly updates on the socio-economic impacts of the crisis.



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'I used to be a housewife before being displaced. I knew nothing about cutting and sewing but this didn't stop me from running to register for this workshop. It feels great to earn money from my own work instead of receiving charity.'



Restoring Disrupted Livelihoods in Al-Hassakeh

"I feel this workshop is my home now. I really miss it during weekends" said Abir Al Hazaa' a women who is working in a sewing workshop set up by UNDP in Al-Hassakeh (North eastern of Syria) in partnership with a local NGO. "I have heard about the sewing workshop from one of the volunteers distributing humanitarian aid. This was good news as I lost my husband and I am taking care of my 5 children". Abir is from Deir Ezzor; she is one of many others who have been forced to flee to neighboring governorates and are struggling to secure basic needs.

UNDP partners with people at all levels of society to help build nations that can withstand crisis, and drive and sustain the kind of growth that improves the quality of life for everyone. On the ground in 177 countries and territories, we offer global perspective and local insight to help empower lives and build resilient nations.

United Nations Development Programme - Syria

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February 2014