



Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation

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UN Joint Support to the Jordanian National Response to the Syria Crisis Programme.

LIVES REIMAGINED

A collection of success stories from the implementation
of the Jordan Response Plan 2015



www.jrpssc.org





TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD HE Minister of Planning Imad Fakhoury	3
INTRODUCTION UN Joint Support to the Jordanian National Response to the Syrian Crisis Programme.	4
SOCIAL CHANGE FROM THE BOTTOM UP UNDP	5
I'M SAFE, I PLAY, I CONNECT Save The Children	9
A DESIRE FOR DIGNITY World Food Programme	13
A NEW PROSTHESIS FOR SAFA Handicap International	15
THE POWER OF EDUCATION Middle East Children's Institute	17
FINDING SOLACE IN FRIENDSHIP AND SOLAR LIGHTS OXFAM	21
HERITAGE AND CRAFTS AS A SOURCE OF RESILIENCE IN MAFRAQ UNESCO and UN Women	23
SPACE TO LEARN NRC	25
PLANTING SEEDS FOR HER SONS' FUTURES Jordan River Foundation	29
A DESERT OASIS UN Women	31
WHAT REGISTRATION MEANS FOR ME UNHCR	35

FOREWORD FROM

H.E. MINISTER OF PLANNING AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION



The Jordan Response Plan is an ambitious undertaking. In the face of a protracted crisis, we reimagined the traditional modes of response into an approach that is more inclusive, efficient, and ultimately, sustainable. It is a move away from “business as usual” and towards a new paradigm in which the needs of all people inside the Kingdom who are affected by the Syria crisis are addressed within a comprehensive nationally-led framework.

International donors have committed USD 1.07 billion towards the JRP2015, of which USD 499 million has been allocated towards the refugee and resilience projects of the JRP. Despite this support, around 65 percent of the USD 2.99 billion funding requirement remains unmet. It is clear that to fully realize the promise of the JRP, additional support will be required, but to focus exclusively on what is still needed would be to ignore the tremendous achievements of our partners who have been working tirelessly under severe funding constraints to provide assistance to people and communities affected by the crisis.

As the end of the year draws near, we are presented with an opportunity to reflect on what has been achieved, not only in terms of what can be objectively measured, but also, and perhaps more importantly, on the impact that the JRP’s interventions have had on people’s lives.

This collection of stories attempts to do just that. It provides a snapshot of our progress through the stories of communities and individuals, Syrians and Jordanians, whose lives have been affected in ways big and small by the assistance provided through the JRP. Just as we have endeavored to “reimagine” how we respond to this unprecedented crisis, “Lives Reimagined” aims to bring into focus the impact of this effort on the lives of people whose everyday has been transformed by its effects.

The success stories featured in these pages would not have been possible were it not for the generous support of donors and the dedication and hard work of our partners. I would therefore like to take this opportunity to extend the Government of Jordan’s appreciation to all those who have contributed to the development and implementation of this groundbreaking initiative, particularly line ministries, UN agencies, the donor community and non-governmental organisations.

I look forward to another year of continued cooperation together with our partners as we embark upon the next phase of this collaborative effort: the Jordan Response Plan 2016-2018.

IMAD FAKHOURY

Minister of Planning and International Cooperation

re·im·ag·ine

To imagine again or anew; especially: to form a new conception of; re-create

What began as an exclusively humanitarian response focused on providing emergency life-saving assistance to Syrian refugees fleeing a conflict that many believed would be resolved in a matter of months, has evolved into a protracted refugee crisis with no visible prospect of a political resolution in the near future. Five years on, there are nearly 630,000 registered Syrian refugees in Jordan, who together with the Syrian population already in the country before 2011, number nearly 1.4 million.

The Syria crisis is not only a humanitarian issue, but a national resilience issue. With around 85 per cent of refugees living outside of camps, some areas in the north of the country have experienced a doubling of their population as a result. In the most affected governorates, public infrastructure and services threaten to buckle under the weight of escalating demand. At the same time refugees are experiencing ever-increasing vulnerability as their savings run out. Many find that the only way to cope is to take actions that enable them to survive in the short-term, but will have serious negative effects in the long term, like taking children out of school in order to send them to work, or arranging marriages for their children.

To address these disparate but interconnected aspects of the crisis, the Government of Jordan developed the Jordan Response Plan, the first nationally-led effort of its kind, joining refugee and development responses in one comprehensive plan. By interlinking short-term assistance to Syrian refugees and Jordanian households with medium term investments to expand institutional and community capacities and infrastructure, the JRP aims to address immediate needs while at the same time creating more resilient systems that can absorb stresses and cushion the impact of future shocks.

“Lives Reimagined” is a selection of stories from the implementation of the JRP in 2015. The title of the book reflects the reconceptualization of a country struggling under the weight of the demands placed upon it, into a prosperous, resilient nation made even stronger by the resilience of its people. It is also the theme that carries through all of the stories, of people who, when presented with an opportunity, have reimagined aspects of their own lives, emerging stronger, empowered, and more resilient.

The stories were identified and developed by JRP partner agencies working in host communities and refugee camps, and curated by the JRPSC Secretariat. Though not all stories that were submitted could be included in this collection, they can be viewed on the JRPSC website: www.jrpssc.org

SOCIAL CHANGE FROM THE BOTTOM UP

HANINE

Standing among the ruins of what is claimed to be the site of the world’s oldest church, 22 year old Hanine reflects on the many challenges she has had to overcome to get to this point. She is one of around 25 Jordanian women and men working tirelessly to restore this archeological treasure in what is the first of a three phase UNDP project that aims to create sustainable livelihoods in the beleaguered governorate of Mafraq. First, there were the many objections from her parents.

“They forbid me from joining” she says. They were opposed to the idea of their unmarried daughter working alongside single men, outside, for long hours. What would people think?
“I had to work hard to convince them that this was important, that it was a good opportunity for me.”
Then there was the criticism that she and the team received from the wider community. During their first week working at the archeological site, she recalls neighbors shouting abuse and throwing trash over the fence.
“It is against our traditions to have men and women working like this together” she explains. **“But, things are different now.”**

After witnessing the hard work and dedication of the young men and women who show up every day, logging long hours under the hot desert sun to unearth the beautiful stone mosaics and meticulously restore the ancient “cave chapel”, members of the community now greet team members when they arrive, and regularly bring them tea and water. And her parents have come around too.

The church rehabilitation project is one of eight similar community-led projects that are a part of UNDP’s Emergency Employment Initiative being implemented across Mafraq Governorate. In a country where women face marginalization in many aspects of socio-economic life because of traditional attitudes about gender roles - they suffer disproportionately from the effects of poverty, face higher levels of unemployment than men, receive lower wages for the same work, and are less well protected by social security - the incremental changes in attitudes spearheaded by women like Hanine are key to unlocking the full potential of women to participate in and contribute to their country’s economic development. There is ample evidence showing that when women are able to develop their full labor market potential, there can be significant macroeconomic gains.

Of 100 participants in Rehab, 69 are women.

“I have a place in society now” says Aisha, who works at the clothes bank, another UNDP phase 1 initiative titled **“Together for a better life for poor people”**, that collects clothing donations and distributes them to families in need.

The programme’s three consecutive phases are designed to link emergency employment to more sustainable livelihoods creation, acting as a “starting point” for long term sustainable development.

First, unemployed young men and women sign up to participate in voluntary community service projects that are responsive to local immediate needs, such as the restoration of archaeological sites, or the refurbishment of an all but forgotten community library. During this period, they receive a monthly incentive, part of which is saved in their own savings accounts, accruing the start-up capital necessary to establish their own business later on.



“I HAD TO WORK HARD TO CONVINCE THEM THAT THIS WAS A GOOD OPPORTUNITY FOR ME.” HANINE

In phase two, participants are mentored on entrepreneurship and receive training on how to establish and run a small business. Each participant or group of participants submits a business plan, and the total amount of capital that the individual or group has saved is then multiplied by UNDP.

Lastly, the project provides advisory and mentoring services (accounting, legal, marketing, etc.), as well as market development (value chain development, cooperative development and cooperative support etc.) to ensure the sustainability of the established microbusinesses.

The approach builds on traditional elements of socio-economic reintegration interventions – putting people to work and injecting money into local economy – and introduces innovative dimensions: promoting individual savings; enhancing social cohesion by encouraging community members to organise to realise economic activities collectively; and engaging other actors in joint economic ventures based on collective savings, outside investment, and risk sharing. In the wake of the Syria crisis which has seen over 75,000 registered refugees move into Mafraq’s cities and villages, the governorate is struggling under a double burden of poverty and high unemployment. Mafraq lies within one of Jordan’s poverty pockets, with a poverty rate of nearly 32 per cent against the national average of 14 per cent. Added to this is the stress of increasing unemployment. A 2015 found that unemployment among Jordanians in Mafraq, Irbid and Amman, three areas with high concentrations of Syrian refugees, rose from 14.5 per cent to 22.1 per cent between 2011 and 2014. A total of 200 men and women in Rehab and Hosha have started the three-month community voluntary initiatives with an incentive of 208 JD per month and a savings ratio of 50 per cent, increasing their household income by an average of almost 54 per cent.

For participants like Abdul Rahman, who comes from a family of 15 in Rehab, the initial incentive is what attracted him, but the project turned out to be a life changing experience.

“What I have learnt is one should not sit and wait for a job. It is up to us to create positive changes and our own opportunities. Indeed, we are making changes with our own hands,” he explains.

Abdul enrolled in the church rehabilitation programme entitled “Our history reflects our civilization” – the same initiative as Hanine. As soon as they began making tangible progress in renovating the church grounds, he was surprised to discover the extent of his own commitment to the project. It also made him reflect on his role within his own community. **“The project helped me believe in myself that I am able to represent my area in a positive way”** he says.

He eventually became a team leader, and under his direction his team managed to secure a building to be the visitors’ centre, in the vicinity of the archaeological site, which is owned by the department of antiquities in Mafraq.

“My dream is to start my own business that specializes in interior decoration,” he says, and with the skills he’s acquired as team leader, he’s confident that he’ll succeed. And so are we.



"MY DREAM IS TO START MY OWN BUSINESS." ABDUL RAHMAN

Sector: Livelihoods and Food Security
Project Name: Emergency Employment 3X6
JRP Specific Objective: RES 1: More and better job opportunities created for vulnerable women, and young men and women
JRP Project Title: RES 1.1 Create short-term employment opportunities for vulnerable Jordanian households in host communities
Total Financing: USD 1.1 million
Project Duration: 12 months
Financing Agency: Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA)
Implementing Partner: UNDP





"IF WE TRY OUR BEST, AND MAKE SURE WE WORK TOGETHER, WE CAN WIN." OMAR

Photo credit: JRPSC/Alice Whitby/Aug2015

I AM SAFE, I PLAY, I CONNECT

OMAR

There is a football championship happening at Za'atari refugee camp, and Omar (1) has his eye on the prize. The key to his team's impending success? Teamwork. **"If we try our best, and make sure we work together, we can win,"** he says.

Behind him, another team plays one of the first matches on the astroturf pitch located in the Makani drop in centre. Makani means "my space", and the initiative is a holistic programme that provides alternative education, psychosocial support and life skills training all in one place.

Teaching life skills through sport is just one of the ways that the Makani approach aims to empower adolescents and youth to become assets to their community while also imparting important life skills in the process – the very skills that Omar aims to leverage to take the championship: self-awareness, communication, leadership, and critically, cooperation.

Playing sports also serves another purpose: it helps restore a sense of normalcy in the lives of children whose worlds have been turned upside down by war and displacement. It's a gathering place to hang out with friends, enabling children to support one another. **"Before, there wasn't much to do"** says Omar, **"but now we come here, and it's better."**

Elsewhere on compound children who for a variety of reasons aren't eligible to enrol in school take part in an informal education class. Next door, a group of half a dozen boys are guided through an exercise designed to help them identify and manage their emotions. They are making woven bracelets, and each piece of yarn represents a different feeling or memory. The end result will be unique to the individual, and the process provides an opportunity to discuss issues that the children might otherwise never get the chance to talk about.

Across the compound, older adolescent boys and youth are working out in the gym. The men are free to come and go so long as the compound is open. It's a place to be among friends, and to blow off some steam if the need arises. On the back wall of the gym is a nearly life-sized image of a body builder in peak physical condition photoshopped against the dusty backdrop of the camp itself. **"Because it doesn't matter where you come from, or where you are, you should always strive to be the best that you can be,"** informs a young man in track pants, **"even if that place is a refugee camp in the middle of the desert."**

Self-improvement is also at the top of Omar's list. As soon as we finish talking he's heading to football practice!

Special thanks to UNICEF and Save the Children for organizing a site visit for this story.
(1) names have been changed

Sector: Social Protection
Project name: Promoting a Protective and Stimulating Environment for Displaced Syrian Children in Za'atari, King Omar Park and Cyber City Camp, 2015
JRP Specific Objective: REF 4: Equitable access to quality child protection interventions increased for girls and boys affected by the Syria crisis
JRP Project Title: REF 4.4 Provision of specialized child protection services
Total Financing: USD 4.5 million
Project duration: 12 months
Financing Agency: UNICEF
Implementing Partner: Save the Children International



A DESIRE FOR DIGNITY

IBRAHIM

Ibrahim is eighteen years old and lives in Mafrqa with his parents and five younger siblings. His father is retired, meaning that Ibrahim must work to support his family. But finding work is no easy task in Jordan, where the unemployment rate for youth aged 15-19 stands at 36 per cent. Also, Ibrahim suffers from a congenital deformity that has left him with no fingers on one hand. Determined not to let his circumstances stand in the way of his desire to take care of his family Ibrahim jumped at the chance to participate in WFP's Food for Training initiative, part of the Jordan Response Plan 2015.

As part of the project, he receiving a one month training as an electrician's assistant at the vocational training center, after which he was placed under the supervision of a senior electrician where he received an on the job training and a daily allowance. Over the course of three months, Ibrahim completed 80 days of training and received USD 800 in return.

The business owner was so impressed with Ibrahim's hard work and talent that when the training was over, he employed him as his own assistant. **"Now I work with dignity, I support my family and I can afford to pay the rent,"** says Ibrahim.

Sector: Livelihoods and Food Security

Project name: Assistance to food-insecure and vulnerable Jordanians affected by the protracted economic crisis aggravated by the Syrian conflict

JRP Objective: RES 1: More and better job opportunities created for vulnerable women, and young men and women

JRP Specific Objective: RES 1.1 Create short-term employment opportunities for vulnerable Jordanian households in host communities

Project description: The relief and rehabilitation operation aims to address the short-term food needs of targeted vulnerable populations, and enhance their resilience through the creation of sustainable household livelihoods as well as community assets to complement the national social protection and safety net systems. The modalities include both cash and food, bringing a flexible set of tools to a very dynamic situation.

Total Financing: USD 1.2 million

Financing Agency: Japan, USAID, Multilateral

Implementing Partner: WFP



"NOW I WORK WITH DIGNITY, I SUPPORT MY FAMILY AND I CAN AFFORD TO PAY THE RENT." IBRAHIM

A NEW PROSTHESIS FOR SAFA

In June 2013, five year old Safa was seriously injured in a bombing raid in Syria which resulted in the amputation of her right leg, prompting her family to flee the fighting and take refuge in Jordan. Once safely in Za'atari Camp, Safa was able to take part in rehabilitation sessions provided by Handicap International (HI), which helped to strengthen her muscles and improve her balance. She also received a wheelchair to help her get around. But the biggest change of all came in December 2013 when HI fitted Safa, who loves to dance, for a prosthetic leg. With fierce determination and the help and support of her family, she learned to walk using her prosthesis. And if she could walk, she could dance!

The family eventually moved out of Za'atari Camp into a small apartment. Ahmed has found work in a local grocery shop, but he barely earns enough to pay the rent and feed his family. **"I make 200 dinars a month and the rent alone is 150 dinars,"** he explains. Living so close to the margins means that was it not for HI's assistance, it is very unlikely that Safa's family would be able to afford for her to see a doctor, much less afford the expensive prosthetics and specialist care she needs.

Earlier this year, Ahmed got back in touch with HI. Safa was using her prosthesis less and less as it had become uncomfortable. Amer Al Dakkak, a Handicap International physiotherapist specialized in prosthesis and orthotics explains, **"This is inevitable in children at Safa's age who have been fitted when they were very young. Their bodies grow and the prosthesis needs to be adjusted to avoid causing pain or having any long-term impact on how they walk."**

Today Safa is attending a new appointment with the team, **"We have already made some adjustments to the socket for the prosthesis into which the amputated limb is fitted. We want to see how Safa is getting on with these modifications"** says Amer.

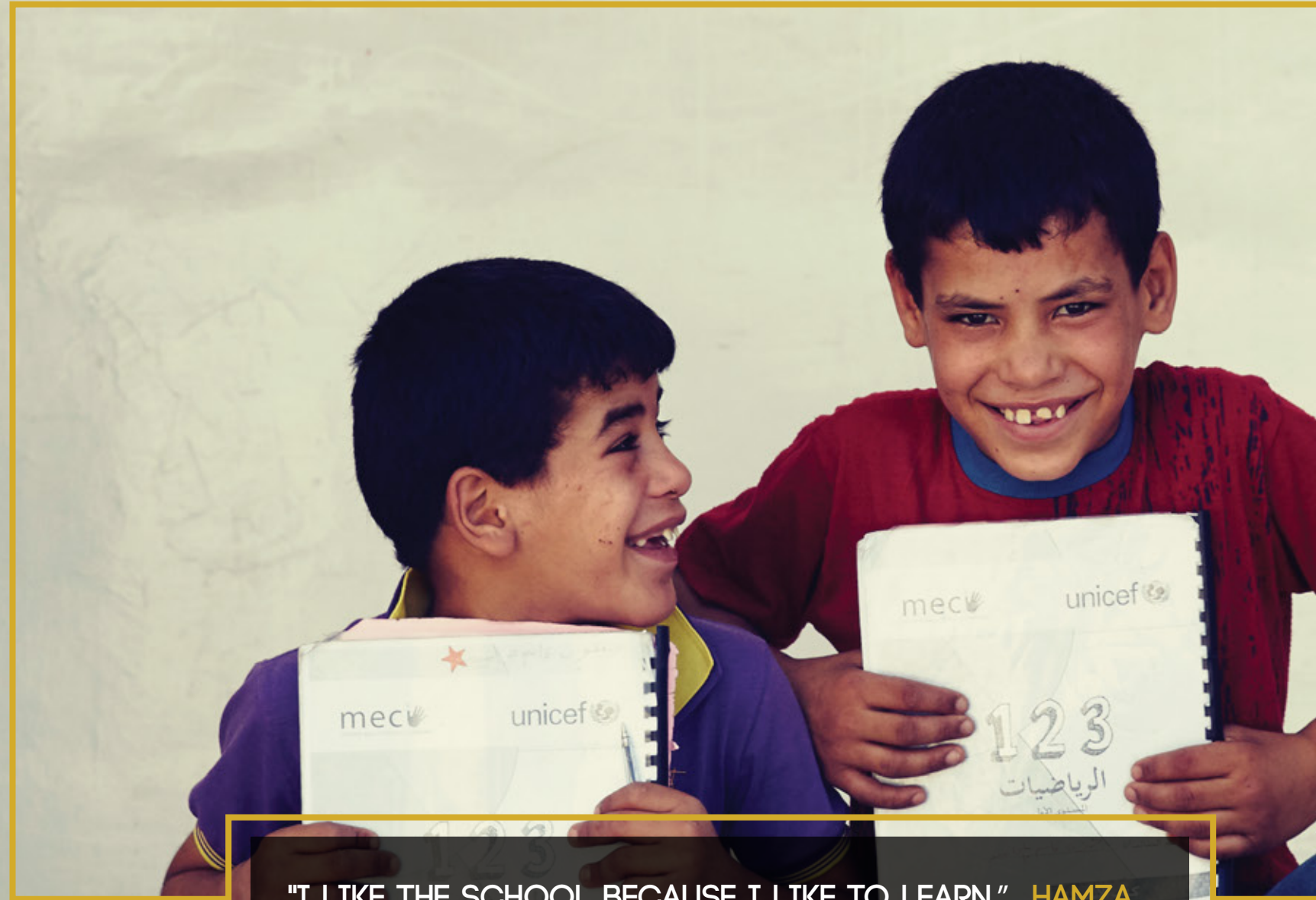
After watching Safa take a few steps with her prosthesis, Amer and the prosthetic technician agree that she will need a new prosthesis. **"We are going to take some measurements. In order to do this we make a plaster cast which is used as the model to make the new prosthesis. It will be ready in two weeks, in time for the next orthopedic workshop,"** explains Amer. **"We will continue Safa's follow up for another three to six months. We will keep adjusting her prosthesis as required. There are no set deadlines. We do not adapt a prosthesis because we have reached a specific date. We change it because it is no longer fit for purpose,"** he concludes.

Safa and Ahmed are delighted with the news, **"Safa loves Indian music, but most of all she likes to dance to Indian music!"** reveals her father who dreams that his children might one day be able to play without a care in the world, in a country that is at peace.

Until that day, thanks to HI, Safa will keep dancing.

Photo credit: December 2013 ©Molly Feltner/Handicap International

Sector: Health
Project Name: Emergency intervention for the most vulnerable people affected by the Syrian crisis in Jordan- DFID 2015 – Phase 4
JRP Specific Objective: REF 1: Equitable access, uptake and quality of primary healthcare for Syrian women, girls, boys and men as well as vulnerable Jordanian populations in highly impacted areas
Project budget: USD 1.6 million
Project duration: 6 months
Financing agency: DFID
Implementing partner: Handicap International



"I LIKE THE SCHOOL BECAUSE I LIKE TO LEARN." **HAMZA**

THE POWER OF EDUCATION

HAMZA

Hamza carries himself with a stoicism that you would likely associate with someone older. Even though he is only 11 years old, he has had to grow up fast. The violence in Syria forced his family to flee. He arrived in Jordan with his mother and younger brother Yacob; their father had stayed behind. Earlier this year, they found out he had been killed.

Hamza's young face is serious, his smiles sporadic. But, when one erupts the transformation is instantaneous, and his grin is contagious. You can't help but smile along with him.

And he smiles a lot more these days. The brothers attend an informal education programme operated by the Middle East Children's Center MECC at the Asma'a Bint Omais School in Ramtha. It's the first time either of the boys has ever been to school, and they love it.

"I like the school because I like to learn" says Hamza, and he doesn't have a favorite class, because **"they're all are my favorite, I don't ever want school to finish."**

Alongside other Syrian and Jordanian children ages 6-12, the boys take three classes a day in subjects like Arabic, English, math, life skills, and art. The programme is designed to help kids who have fallen behind catch-up, whether that means Jordanian children who are struggling in school, or Syrian children who cannot rejoin the regular curriculum. Neither of the boys had received any type of formal schooling before arriving in Jordan, meaning that they weren't eligible to enroll in regular classes at a Jordanian public school.

The programme also offers an important opportunity to socialize and build relationships children from different backgrounds, something that the brothers would be missing out on otherwise.

His teachers tell us that what is especially striking is the progress the brothers have made in the relatively short time they have been enrolled in the programme.

When they first started, Hamza stuttered when he spoke and Yacob barely spoke at all. They kept to themselves, and struggled to interact with their peers.

This kind of behavior is not unique among MECI's students, many of whom have experienced severe psychological and emotional trauma. But this programme is a lifeline for the brothers and the more than 90,000 Syrian refugee children who remain outside of any type of formal education.

On the day we visit, Hamza is eager to show us what he is working on in class. He opens his notebook, turning the pages and reading out loud the comments his teacher has made in red ink: "Jayid jidan" (good job), "mumtaz!" (excellent!). He smiles. And we can't help but smile too.

Special thanks to MECI for organizing a site visit for this story.

Sector: Education

Project name: MECI's non-curricular educational clubs in Salt and Ramtha

JRP Specific Objective: REF 2: Access to education sustained for all vulnerable boys and girls (children, adolescents and youth) affected by the Syria crisis

JRP Project Title: REF 2.1 Equal access to education opportunities

Project duration: 10 months

Project Budget: USD 323,067

Financing Agency: UNICEF

Implementing Partner: Middle East Children's Institute



FINDING SOLACE IN FRIENDSHIP AND SOLAR LIGHTS

UMM ADI AND UMM HASSAN

Umm Adi and Umm Hassan are neighbors and best friends; they met in Za’atari Camp more than a year ago. Both women fled Syria with their young families, arriving in Jordan traumatized by the violence and bloodshed they had witnessed.

“Za’atari was our escape” says Umm Hassan, whose son was injured by a bomb blast in Syria. But while the camp provided physical security, it could not provide respite from the memories of war. The children had nightmares, often refusing to be left alone in the dark. The women were sometimes fearful too, afraid of the unknown that seemed to permeate nearly every facet of their new lives. And it was worse at night, in the shadowy darkness of the mostly unlit camp.

“I didn’t like to go out alone in the nighttime. I would try to make sure I didn’t have to” explains Umm Adi, who lives in Za’atari with her five children – her husband is still in Syria. There is the risk of hurting yourself while walking blind in the dark, and the threat of being accosted by strangers you can’t see, especially inside the concrete WASH blocks.

“Violence” says Umm Hassan by way of explanation, and both women shake their heads.

But because the caravans are not connected to running water and don’t have toilets, sometimes going out in night is inevitable.

“Alhamdulillah for the lights!” exclaims Umm Adi, and again both women agree, only this time they keep talking, one over the other, explaining how such a small change has made such a big impact on their everyday lives.

In 2015, as part of a wider initiative to improve water and sanitation facilities in Za’atari Camp – one that will see the construction of a piped water network for the Camp - OXFAM installed solar-powered lighting both inside and in the area surrounding some of the WASH blocks in District 8, where both families live. The lights are on from sunset to sunup, and what was once a shadowy and foreboding excursion to the facilities has been made routine again. And there is an element of comfort in knowing what to expect.

“Before the children were afraid to go, but now, they feel safer” says Umm Hassan.

Life in the camp still isn’t easy, but the women have found some measure of solace in their friendship, and the solar lights have helped too. But “of course” says Umm Adi “more would be better!”

Special thanks to Oxfam GB for organizing a site visit for this story.



JRP Sector: WASH
Project Name: Provision of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene promotion assistance to the displaced Syrian population in Jordan
JRP Specific Objective: REF 1: Culturally and gender appropriate, safe and equitable access to water for drinking, cooking, and personal and domestic hygiene ensured
JRP Project Title: REF 1.1 Water Supply in Camps
Project Budget: USD 1.7 million
Project duration: 24 months
Financing Agency: UNICEF
Implementing Partner: Oxfam Great Britain

Photo credit: JRPSC/Alice Whitby/Aug 2015

HERITAGE AND CRAFTS AS A SOURCE OF RESILIENCE IN MAFRAQ

UMM SULTAN

Life has always been challenging for the people of Mafraq but, since the Syria crisis began, day-to-day life has gotten tougher for the Bedouin families from the northern governorates.

“In the past months, I started making some income and I hope that this work will help me in supporting my husband and family” says Umm Sultan, a 52 years old trainee with 6 children from Um el Jimal, Mafraq.

Umm el Jimal is a unique archaeological site included on the Tentative List of UNESCO World Heritage Sites. The Joint UNESCO and UN Women programme entitled ‘Empowering rural women in Mafraq Governorate’, builds on this potential, intertwining culture and women’s empowerment as a source of resilience. The initiative supports the creation of a range of cultural tourism services on site, including handicrafts production, hospitality services and heritage information and education activities. The goal is to encourage tourism and bring much needed income to the local community.

Umm Sultan, together with 20 other women is producing Basalt objects carved from the native stone of the Haurani Plateau using traditional techniques. The first item she learned to carve was a half-moon shape, and she quickly discovered she had a natural talent for the finicky work. **“I was so happy when I finished it. Then I started making all kinds of shapes and accessories.”**

The project has also strengthened women’s involvement in their community through an activity that they very much enjoy: **“I like carving Basalt very much because it’s a beautiful and unique art and craft”.**

The programme has raised engagement among the communities on the value and potential of the Um el Jimal archaeological site. Umm Sultan is now aware of the importance of the site and wants to use this local heritage for the benefit of her community: **“I believe we can present our culture and heritage better, therefore, we believe that Um el Jimal can receive and welcome many tourists to learn more about our history”.**



Sector: Livelihoods and Food Security

Project Name: PHASE II-Empowering rural women in Mafraq Governorate through the management and preservation of the Umm el-Jimal’s archaeological site in Jordan as income-generating activities

JRP Specific Objective: RES 2: The local economies of the most-affected areas revived for sustainable employment and income generation

JRP Project Title: RES 2.1 Support establishment and growth of sustainable micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) targeting vulnerable Jordanian households

Total Financing: USD 482,486

Project duration: 30 months

Financing Agency: Government of the Netherlands

Implementing Partner: UNESCO and UN Women

Photo credit: UNESCO

SPACE TO LEARN

SUHAIR ABDULHADI

When Suhair Abdulhadi, principal of Al Taibeh Primary School for Girls in Al Taibeh, Irbid, had to inform a parent that their child could not be enrolled because the overcrowded school could not accommodate any more students, they weren't deterred: **"If there are no desks in the classroom, no problem, I'll buy her a chair!"**

But it wasn't desks, or the lack thereof, that was the problem. Al Taibeh Primary School for Girls, like 47 per cent of schools nationwide, is struggling to cope with the large numbers of Syrian refugee students. The Syria crisis has had a profound impact on the education sector. A drastic increase in demand - particularly in the governorates of Amman, Irbid, Mafrqa, and Zarqa, where over 70 per cent of registered refugees reside - has put tremendous pressure on education resources and infrastructure, especially space in public schools and human resource capacity.

At the beginning of the school year in 2014, **"many Syrians were on the waiting list, more than 200 children risked missing out on the school year"** Abdulhadi explains, **"so I pushed as much as I could."** But there simply wasn't enough space or enough teachers, and many children remained on the waiting list.

Al Taibeh Primary School for Girls is one of nearly one hundred public schools that have adopted a second shift to accommodate the rising number of students. But even doubling the school's capacity isn't sufficient, and some classes have up to 40 students; the national standard is 27.

"It is very difficult for teachers to control their classrooms" says Abdulhadi, owing not only to their size, but also because of the special psychosocial needs of some of the children who have experienced trauma.

This has very real implications for the quality of education children receive. Not only are classes oversubscribed, meaning that teachers have less time to dedicate to individual students, but even class times have been reduced from 45 minutes to 35 minutes to accommodate two shifts in one day.



"I WILL BE HERE UNTIL THERE ARE ENOUGH SCHOOLS FOR ALL STUDENTS" SUHAIR

Low quality of education has lasting implications, particularly as boys and girls progress through school without mastering important foundational skills. This is a particular concern as students enter secondary level ill-prepared and with limited opportunity for additional support.

It is estimated that 300 new schools would be needed to ensure there are sufficient facilities for all school-age children – Syrian refugees and Jordanians – using the national standard of 19 classes per school.

“Education is definitely the most important thing for a child’s future, especially during formative years” said Abdulhadi. “I will be here until there are enough schools for all students.”

The dedicated principal has been working at the school for 16 years, seven of which she served as a teacher before taking up her current role. As the 2015/2016 school year begins, Abdulhadi is one step closer to her goal.

Al Taibeh Primary School is one of nine schools in Jordan that will benefit from the construction of 59 classrooms and nine WASH facilities, as well as the renovation of nine playgrounds through a project being implemented by the Norwegian Refugee Council under the umbrella of the Jordan Response Plan 2015.

For Abdulhadi, that means being able to accept 360 additional students each year. Nationwide across all nine schools, the figure is 2,500 additional students. And over the entire life span of the school (estimated at 30 years), it means 75,000 students who may not have otherwise had a chance to attend school, will. And no one will need to bring their own chair.

Sector: Education

Project name: Increased access to quality education in the host community

JRP Specific Objective: RES 2: Capacity of education service providers increased to deliver quality inclusive education and training for all boys and girls (children and youth) – particularly the most vulnerable

JRP Project Title: RES 2.1 Increasing school absorptive capacity and utilization

Project Budget: USD 3.2 million

Project Duration: 13 months

Financing Agency: Government of Norway

Implementing Partner: Norwegian Refugee Council



Photo credit: JRPSC/Alice Whitby/Aug 2015

PLANTING SEEDS FOR HER SONS' FUTURES

AISHA

"I WANT TO GUARANTEE A DECENT LIFE FOR MY CHILDREN" AISHA

Sector: Livelihoods and Food Security
Project name: Enhancing food security in Mafrag
JRP Specific Objective: RES 2: The local economies of the most-affected areas revived for sustainable employment and income generation
JRP Project Title: RES 2.1 Support establishment and growth of sustainable micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) targeting vulnerable Jordanian households
Total Financing: USD 500,000
Financing Agency: International Fund for Agriculture and Development
Implementing Partner: Jordan River Foundation



When Aisha's husband retired from the military, the responsibility of providing for their family of 14 fell on her shoulders. Her sons were starting university, and this would mean extra expenses to pay for their fees.

"I want to guarantee a decent life for my children" she explained, echoing the universal desire of parents everywhere. But finding a job was not as easy as Aisha and her husband had anticipated, **"especially because of the Syria situation"** she said. The crisis has exacerbated structural challenges in livelihoods and food security in Jordan, including persistent high unemployment and deficiencies related to private sector growth.

Ever since she was a little girl, Aisha has loved to make things grow. She used to plant Okra and Molokhia in her garden, and even had a brief stint breeding sheep, but a difficult financial period forced the family to sell the herd soon after they had acquired them.

An important dimension of the poverty profile in Jordan is that the majority of poor are clustered just above and below the national poverty line, with only a small proportion of the poor significantly and chronically below it. In this majority cluster many could be 'transitorily poor' or 'transitorily vulnerable' and may be sensitive to fluctuating economic conditions. So while 14 per cent of Jordan's population is considered poor, 19 per cent of the population, classified as non-poor, experience transient poverty, including some lower-middle and middle-income households – households like Aisha's.

Still motivated by her childhood desire to become a farmer, and driven by her ambition to provide for her family, Aisha set out to start her own agricultural business. She started out by contacting charities that provide financial support, and learned from one of her friends about the affordable loans being provided to local communities by the Al Rahma Charitable Association and the Jordan River Foundation.

She rushed to apply and was approved. She was thrilled! **"Planting started in the beginning of April. I planted pumpkin, okra, molokhia, tomato, parsley and cucumbers to feed my family. To sell in the market, I planted thyme & sage because they use less water"** she explained while giving a tour of her garden.

Aisha farms the land adjacent to her house. The loan she received has enabled her to invest in appropriate tools and technology to increase her production; she uses a combination of drip irrigation and mulch for soil moisture conservation in order to rationalize water consumption and reduce her costs.

"Now I am able to pay my sons' university fees" she proudly exclaimed. But ever the entrepreneurial business woman, she already has plans for expansion: **"My ambition is to grow my business and establish many, many more."**

A DESERT OASIS

When Fatima first arrived in Za’atari Camp, she felt that she was carrying a sadness that she could not escape. Even spending time with her friends couldn’t bring relief. They would reminisce about life in Syria, but these memories only filled her heart with grief. It was affecting every aspect of her life, even the time she spent with her children.

But today, Fatima isn’t dwelling on the past. Rather, she shares her story to help illustrate the difference between where she was two years ago, and where she is now.

Standing behind a large cutting table in one of the three tailoring caravans located in the Women and Girls Oasis in Za’atari Camp, Fatima holds up a tiny blue sweater adorned with a bright red collar. It is one of the 21 pieces of clothing included in the “baby kits” that the women produce in the workshop and which are then distributed to women who give birth in the camp; and it’s her favourite. In addition to clothing, the kits include other essentials like warm blankets, and even an insulated baby basinet. To date, they have produced over such 4000 baby kits.

“I visit the women in the hospital and I see the happiness on their faces. Seeing that, it makes me happy,” says Fatima. **“We are meeting a very real need for these women.”**



"I AM NO LONGER BURDENED BY THE SADNESS" FATIMA

Across the Oasis in another caravan, this one fitted out as a hairdressing salon, a young woman also named Fatima is diligently applying henna to a repeat customer, Isra. The women are friends from Syria, and Isra can't help but praise her friend's talents: "She was the best in Syria, now, she's the best in Za'atari!"

The tailoring workshop and the salon are but two of the many cash-for-work projects that the Oasis operates in the camp – which is also Za'atari's largest female-focused such programme – alongside other initiatives that aim to empower Syrian women refugees through increased access to economic opportunities and meaningful engagement in community life. Other offerings of the Oasis include language classes, information and protection referrals on key issues such as registration, hygiene, health, and sexual and gender-based violence. There is also a day care centre in each Oasis to allow women working at the Oasis to stay with their kids throughout the day, and to provide after school support to children enrolled in education.

Back in the tailoring workshop, Fatima is explaining how her life has changed since getting involved with the Oasis: "I am so busy now, I see my children less," she says "but the time I spend with them is of better quality, because I am no longer burdened by the sadness."



Sector: Social Protection

Project Name: Enhancing the well-being of Syrian women refugees in Za'atari Camp

JRP Specific Objective: REF 2: Families and communities are strengthened, engaged and empowered in order to contribute to their own protection solutions, while the most vulnerable women, girls, boys and men are identified and their needs addressed through appropriate services and interventions.

JRP Project Title: REF 2.2 Support to community participation and self-management

Project Budget: USD 1 million

Project Duration: 12 months

Financing Agency: Government of Finland, Government of Italy, and the Government of Japan

Implementing Partner: UN Women

Local Partner: Arab Renaissance for Democracy and Development – Legal Aid



ABU KHALED

WHAT REGISTRATION MEANS FOR ME

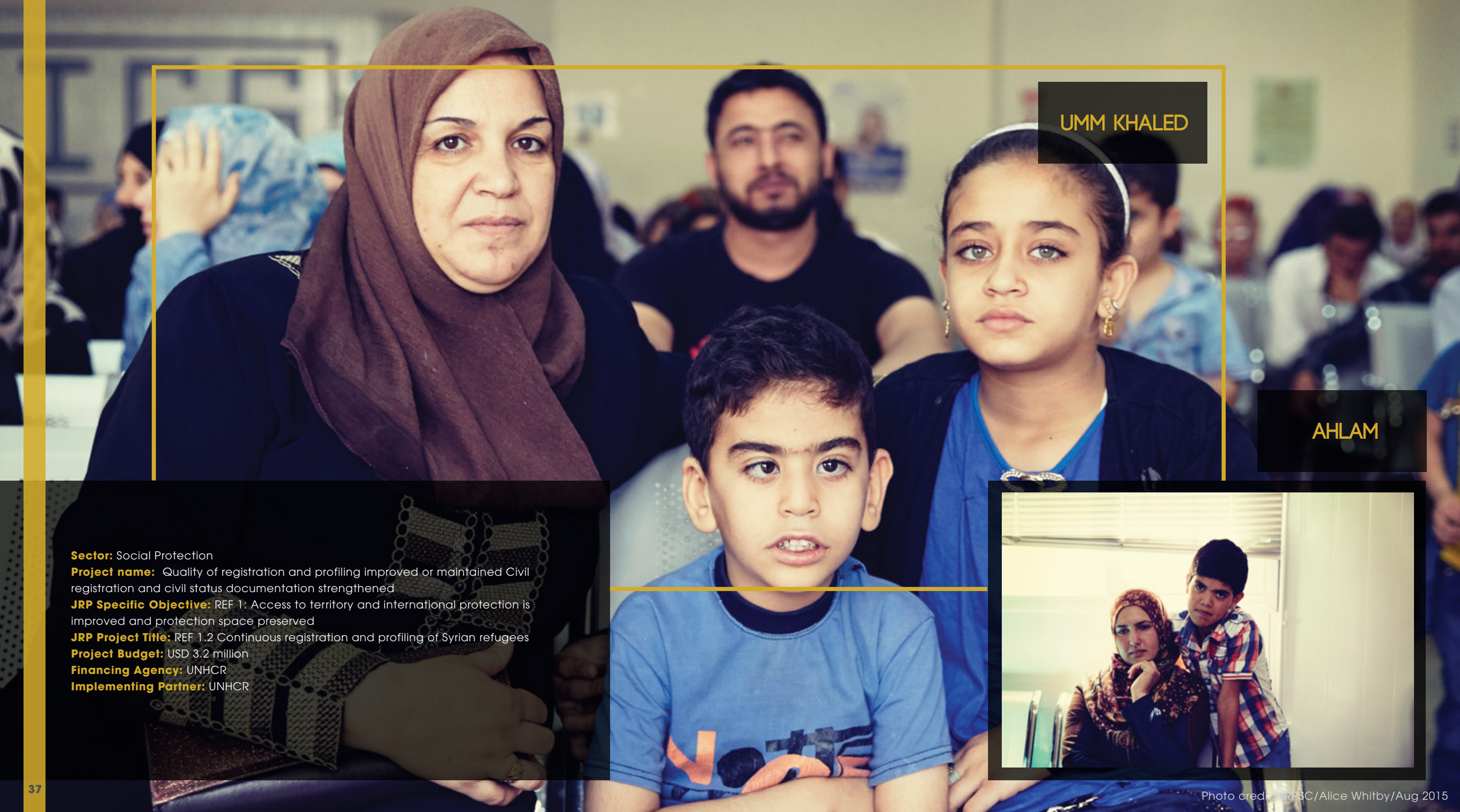
The UNHCR registration center in Khaldi is capable of carrying out up to 2,500 interviews in a single day. Today however, on a hot Monday in August 2015, there is no queue of people snaking back and forth in front of the center in West Amman. This is partly the result of the low number of new registrants, unlike at the beginning of the crisis when up to 3000 Syrian refugees flowed over the country's border every day, today most of those visiting the center do so to renew their Asylum Seekers Certificate. But it is also the result of an efficient and compassionate system that takes into consideration the harrowing and difficult journey that has landed people here. It is a system that is designed to limit inconveniences – same day registration and on-site referrals mean that very rarely does anyone have to make a return journey to the center, something that can be prohibitively expensive for some – and that aims to humanize the bureaucratic process of documenting human beings. But registration achieves more than a mere headcount. "Registration may not be the first step in the refugee journey" explains Aioife McDonnell, External Relations Officer with UNHRC, "but it is the first step in accessing assistance."

In the pages that follow, three families explain the importance of registration in their own words.

ABU KHALED

Abu Khaled is originally from Dara'a in Syria, where he used to work as a farmer and merchant. He is sitting in the waiting room with his wife, surrounded by nine of his 12 children. He is here to renew his Asylum Seekers Certificate, the vital piece of paper that enables him and his family to access critical support, like the monthly cash assistance of JOD150 which they use to cover their monthly rent of JOD170. Since their savings ran out, they make-up the remaining JOD30 by selling personal items like jewelry, or borrowing from a money lender, driving the family further into debt. But for Abu Khaled and his family, having been forced their home because of insecurity, and facing an uncertain future, the most important "service", as he describes it, that the certificate provides is security. **"It is peace of mind for me to know that if I ever have a problem, UNHCR will stand by me."**

Photo credit: JRPSC/Alice Whitby/Aug 2015



UMM KHALED

AHLAM

Sector: Social Protection
Project name: Quality of registration and profiling improved or maintained Civil registration and civil status documentation strengthened
JRP Specific Objective: REF 1: Access to territory and international protection is improved and protection space preserved
JRP Project Title: REF 1.2 Continuous registration and profiling of Syrian refugees
Project Budget: USD 3.2 million
Financing Agency: UNHCR
Implementing Partner: UNHCR



UMM KHALED

Umm Khaled and her two children, Khaled and Hind, crossed into Jordan in May 2015, and are among the minority at the Khaldi Center: they are registering with UNHCR for the first time. Khaled is sitting patiently between his older sister and his mum, staring out into the middle distance. Unlike the other young children who scurry around the waiting room or venture outside into the heat to scale the playground equipment, Khaled stays seated, quiet. It is not clear if he could join in with the other kids, even if he wanted to, as both his legs are encased in casts that extend from just below the knee all the way down to, and even in between, his toes. Umm Khaled explains that his physical and intellectual impairments are the result of a lack of oxygen to his brain when he was younger, though she doesn't elaborate further. She explained that back in Syria he wasn't able to see a specialist for more than three years because of the fighting. **"It was very hard for me, as his mother, because there was nothing I could do to help him"** she said. **"But not now, we have a solution. We are in Jordan."**

AHLAM

When Talal, his wife Ahlam, and their four children Houda (13), Abdullah (11), Mohammad (7) and Aham (5) entered Jordan over two years ago, they were transferred directly to Za'atari. But life in the camp was difficult. Back then there was no electricity, services were scarce, and the family's tent provided little respite from the hot desert sun. Eventually, Talal and his family were able to join their extended family living in Jordanian cities, where over 80 per cent of Syrian refugees reside. The entire family is registered with UNHCR, meaning that Abdullah and his younger brothers can go to school, and the family is eligible to receive assistance from NGOs and other charity organisations.

But the memory of home is a visceral one. "Ahlam" means "dreams" in Arabic, and when asked about her dreams, without hesitation Ahlam replies **"to return to Syria."**