



IN BRIEF



Resilience and Empowerment of Vulnerable Women: The Future of Jordan's Growth and Stability

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From where I stand: “It is not a shame for women to go out and work”

Amid the pandemic, 60-year-old Nawal Saed Mohammed, a Syrian refugee and family's sole provider, now shares her 45-year tailoring expertise at the UN Women Oasis Centre in Za'atari, aiding women's skill-building and independence with EU's Madad Fund support.

“I first arrived in the Za'atari refugee camp in 2012 with four of my children, one boy and three girls. My husband passed away in 2010. Since the beginning of the conflict in Syria, I lost one son and another one was severely injured. When I began feeling unsafe, I decided to cross the border. One of my sons later reunited with us in the camp, but three of my children are still in Syria. While we came to Jordan hoping for a better future, life was not easy at the beginning. None of us was able to find a job and I needed financial support for my family.

Like most women in our community, I used to be a housewife. My husband did not want me to work. I secretly set up a small business, doing some tailoring work while he was away. I wanted to be able to help with the expenses and I managed to gain good experience over the years. However, this seemed not to be enough to secure an income once in Jordan.

One day, I heard from other women in the camp that gaining a training certificate would increase my chances of securing a job opportunity. I enrolled in one of the programmes, and I even received a small grant and a tailoring machine. I started to collaborate with other women to produce traditional clothes like the 'abaya' and 'kaftan'. However, this was not sufficient to make ends meet. Then COVID-19 hit. My sons and I were again jobless.

Incentive-based volunteer opportunities in the camp are limited and I had been turned down before. People wondered if I would



Photo: UN Women/ Ye Ji Lee

Nawal Saed Mohammed, 60, sewing baby outfits as master cutter at the UN Women Oasis centre in the Za'atari camp.

be able to work full-time, as it might be a big pressure considering my age. I do not consider my age as a barrier. On the contrary, I have 45 years of experience in tailoring and I was convinced that my experience and skills make me an excellent candidate for the positions I saw advertised.

When I applied at the Oasis Centre, I had no expectations, but I had to try. Thankfully, I was accepted and enrolled as a master cutter, which gave me a chance to share my knowledge with other women in the centre. Most tailors use a traditional style of tracing. I taught others to make calculations to draw new patterns in making any piece of the baby kit we are producing. Acquiring new skills can translate into another opportunity. I am very passionate about the work that I'm doing and being able to share my expertise so other women can benefit from it as well.

After all these years, I believe women are the foundation of each family and they are fully capable of supporting themselves and their families, working shoulder-to-shoulder. It shouldn't be a shame for women to go out and work, and I am proud I can work until this age.”

UN Women and ARDD's Partnership: Fostering Civic Engagement and Empowerment in Camps and Host Communities



Photo: UN Women

UN Women's commitment to enhancing civic engagement and leadership among women, as well as promoting dialogues on women's rights and empowerment among men, is set to materialize with the initiation of new activities in the first quarter of 2023. Through a partnership with the ARDD, the organization is poised to make significant strides in these areas, as indicated by the progress on their outputs for the European Union Trust Fund 'Madad'.

UN Women aims to directly benefit 400 women annually, providing them with vital civic engagement and leadership services in both camp and non-camp settings. The Jordan Response Information System for the Syria Crisis (JORISS) approval was granted in the third quarter of 2022, and the preparatory work, including a comprehensive desk review and needs assessment, has been completed by ARDD. These efforts are essential in laying the groundwork for the initiative that will target women's active participation in civic matters and enhance their leadership capabilities.

Similarly, the ambition to engage 200 men annually, with an equal split between Syrian and Jordanian community members, in dialogues aimed at promoting women's rights and empowerment. This initiative is particularly noteworthy as it involves men in the conversation, fostering an inclusive approach to gender equality and empowerment.

UN Women and ARDD have completed the necessary preliminary assessments and are ready to begin this activity as well in the upcoming year. This strategic partnership underscores the importance of selecting implementing partners with the expertise necessary to navigate and overcome cultural and social barriers to program success.

Empowering Women Through Employment: Milestones and Successes



Photo: UN Women

The UN Women Oasis program, supported by the EU Trust Fund 'Madad', continues to be a beacon of empowerment and opportunity for women, with a noteworthy achievement in supporting their transition into the workforce.

In the last quarter of 2022, an impressive count of 354 women gained employment or started their own ventures within one year after graduating from the Oasis centres. Notably, 87 of these were assisted through job placement services and were all Jordanian citizens. A significant number, 267 women, are estimated to have initiated their projects, a venture sparked by their own entrepreneurial spirit and an assessment by the partner, Education for Employment.

These successful job placements span a variety of sectors, including customer services, data analytics, wholesale, retail, tailoring, security, and social media, reflecting the diverse skill sets and interests of the women involved. The governorates where these placements occurred—Ajloun, Jerash, Karak, Ma'an, Amman, Tafileh, Irbid, and Mafraq—highlight the geographic reach and inclusivity of the program.

As we celebrate the total of 378 women who have been accessed income-generating activities since the beginning of the project, we also acknowledge the 45% of beneficiaries reached during Madad Phase II. Our ongoing assessments, including perception surveys and evaluation reports, continue to guide and refine our strategies to ensure we are meeting the needs and maximizing the potential of every woman we serve.

We are inspired by the stories of these women who have turned opportunities into tangible success and thank our partners and supporters who make these life-changing achievements possible. Together, we are building a more inclusive and equitable future, one job at a time.