

Building self-reliance and resilience in Jordan



When I attended my very first session I was able to tell that everyone around me was suffering the same way I am, each boy had a story to tell and I was scared to share mine. However, when I saw that I was not going through this alone and that everyone was very cooperative, I started speaking out and sharing what I have been through so everyone would know that our pain is unified and for them to be prepared for any challenges that they might face in the future. My Jordanian peers that attended the sessions were very nice and through them, we have gained strength, patience and learned ways to overcome all the possible challenges.

- 13 year old Miriam*, CARE's peer support sessions in CARE's Irbid Safe Space

Context

The Civil War in Syria started in 2011 and shows no sign of resolution. Millions of Syrians have fled their homes, finding refuge elsewhere in Syria and outside its borders. Jordan, like Syria's other neighbours, has taken in many of those refugees. As of 5 November 2017, there were 654,877 registered refugees in Jordan, most (close to 80%) of them living in urban areas among Jordanians rather than in the country's three refugee camps.¹ This number of refugees is approximately equivalent to ten per cent of Jordan's population.

At the same time, humanitarian support is dwindling as competing needs emerge and already limited resources are further stretched. The movement of refugees highlights the importance of building the

¹ See UNHCR website, <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/country.php?id=107>, last accessed 15 November 2017.

*pseudonym used for child protection purposes

self-reliance and resilience of refugees where they are situated, so that they are better able to cope and can contribute to the local community.

What is CARE doing?

As part of CARE's broader long term response to the refugee crisis, CARE is working in Jordan from 2016 to 2018 with support from the Australian Government, to provide emergency cash assistance to Syrian refugees, and members of the host community to help them meet their basic needs such as shelter, food, and health care. Without this assistance families face difficulties in paying high rents, reduce the number of meals they have per day and/or purchase of food on credit, and stop sending their children to school.

CARE and its partners are also helping refugees cope with the negative experience of war and displacement through recreational and educational activities. Structured group activities and safe spaces have been provided for children, adolescents, women and families where they can escape often crowded and unhealthy housing conditions and find a physical outlet for built-up stress. CARE is also working to link refugees to legal, health and education services and provides information on laws and policies, obtaining work permits, child protection and gender based violence. Case management is also offered. These supports enable refugees to break their isolation, build new networks and strengthen social cohesion with host community members.

CARE is supporting women to build their skills so that they can earn a living at home in activities such as sewing, cooking and accessory making. Restrictions on entering the formal labour market mean that it is difficult for refugees to support themselves and opportunities for sustainable informal employment are scarce. The chance to set up a business or produce something for sale could enable refugees to be more self-reliant.

What has CARE achieved?

Up to June 2017:

- **Improved access to information** - 9,202 Syrian households (3,479 female-headed, 5,723 male-headed) were provided with information on essential health education, legal and community services.
- **Social and psychological support** – CARE has supported 6,761 beneficiaries (3,973 female, 2,788 male, 45 living with a disability) to participate in peer support groups, in-depth counselling groups, and community events. These activities help participants to cope with trauma and the challenge of coexisting with locals.
- **Emergency assistance** - Emergency Cash Assistance (ECA) was distributed to 822 households (369 females, 453 males) to help them meet basic needs such as shelter, food and medical care.
- **Families were linked to services** - 494 households (149 female headed, 345 male-headed) underwent in-depth case management assessments and were referred to services such as cash assistance, vocational training, psychosocial support, health care, education, and legal advice.
- **Skills training** - 300 Syrian and Jordanian women were trained in cooking, sewing and accessory making and were provided with start-up kits to help them set up their own home-based businesses. Two bazaars were held where they could sell their products. Over 20 participants

presented their handmade items in 20 stalls that offered products as varied as clothes and textiles, jewellery, soaps, perfume, wooden handicrafts and embroideries. Fourteen Syrian and Jordanian women (including one person with disability) also participated in Small Business Development Training to enable to set up their own enterprises.

- **Local community organisations were supported** - 59 Community Based Organisation staff members (46 female, 13 male), responsible for delivering the project activities, were trained in leadership, communication, stress management and child protection. This builds their capacity to deliver activities beyond the project implementation period.

How did we get there?

Taught women new skills - women were invited to participate in training delivered through private sector training centres and Community Based Organisations. The training focussed on needs identified by the community and a market assessment. Training included vocational training, life skills such as budgeting and negotiating techniques, and how to start a home business. Women were provided with start-up kits such as sewing kits. Linkages were also made with shops and markets where women could sell their products.

Organised psychosocial activities - activities were held on stress management, communication skills, household budgeting, parenting skills, effect of social media and technology, and physical exercises to manage stress. Peer support groups were also formed for female-headed households, people living with disabilities, the elderly, and youth and children.

Created safe spaces - CARE supervised play at their existing community centres. Children had a safe space to read, colour and paint, play with blocks, clay and puzzles. Community events were also held to promote mutual understanding and acceptance between refugees and locals through cultural, sport and art activities.

Provided essential information – refugees were given information on their rights and services through leaflets, posters, SMS messages and in special information sessions.

Who is CARE working with?

CARE Jordan engages with a wide variety of organisations at different levels, including local and international non-government organisations; grassroots local organisations, women networks and coalitions, universities, government actors, the private sector and donors. Operational and strategic partnerships exist with various organisations, where each of these actors has a critical and complementary role to play in CARE's ambition to create a social movement to combat poverty and social injustice:

- Australian Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP)
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) – UN refugee agency
- Vocational Training Institute
- Jordanian Hashemite Charity Organisation (JHCO) - coordinates humanitarian response efforts and provides direct humanitarian aid to affected countries during and/or after conflict and natural disasters.
- Government of Jordan