



No one in Syria has escaped the impact of four years of conflict. The country has almost lost four decades of human development. Today, four out of five Syrians live in poverty, misery, and deprivation. People live in overcrowded conditions with poor protection mechanisms. More than half of the hospitals have closed down or lost services. The number of health professionals has dropped by more than half. Unemployment has risen to over 50 percent. Life expectancy has declined by 20 years. Gender-based violence has become widespread and is sometime being perpetrated in a systematic and sophisticated manner. More than half of the Syrian population is estimated to be in need of humanitarian assistance. A total of 6.5 million people have been displaced within Syria, and 3 to 4 million are living as refugees in neighbouring states. About 4 million of the total affected population are women and girls of reproductive age. More than half a million pregnant women need urgent assistance within and outside the country.

Neighbouring countries are struggling to handle the exodus. There are around 1.2 million Syrian refugees in Lebanon, more than 600,000 in Jordan, 135,000 in Egypt, and some 1.8 million living in camps or surrounding communities in Turkey. Iraq is now facing two crises at the same time: in addition to accommodating 250,000 Syrian refugees, it is also struggling to assist more than 2.5 million Iraqis who have been displaced since early 2014 as a result of acts by the so-called Islamic State within the country and in Syria.

The situation is fragile. Women and girls, who are a binding agent in a broken society, face a daily struggle to find enough money to pay the rent, buy food and basic items and to access services such as healthcare. They need protection, support, and a life of dignity.

SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC

UNFPA delivered 132,800 reproductive health and gender-based violence services to affected people in Damascus, Aleppo, Sweida, Latakia, Tartous, Homs, Hasakah, and Hama. The Fund provided gender-based violence screening services to around 7,000 women residing in the affected governorates.

LEBANON

UNFPA organized six awareness sessions on early marriage to 90 women leaders from both the Syrian and Lebanese communities and distributed 200 pamphlets on early marriage and reproductive health. UNFPA assessed the outcomes of the livelihood programme conducted in partnership with INTERSOS and finalized an assessment on the UNFPA-supported women safe spaces across the country. UNFPA also completed an assessment of the effectiveness of integrating awareness-raising on reproductive health and gender-based violence with 'Cash for Work' programme.

JORDAN

UNFPA provided around 24,000 reproductive health services. UNFPA reached around 10,000 beneficiaries with reproductive health-related messages. UNFPA also expanded the UNFPA-UN Women women's centre in District 3 in Zaatari camp. UNFPA conducted 188 community-based awareness sessions on gender-based violence issues during the reporting period. Around 700 gender-based violence survivors access UNFPA-supported safe and confidential case management services.

IRAQ

UNFPA reached 3,574 women and girls and sensitized them on gender-based violence, reproductive health and youth issues in camps and in host communities. Around 1,500 youth participated in different activities in the youth safe spaces inside the camps. Around 3,000 women participated in recreational activities in women safe spaces in the seven camps. UNFPA provided 6,876 reproductive health services to Syrian women in one month.

TURKEY

UNFPA provided gender-based and reproductive health services to 3,485 Syrian women and conducted reproductive health awareness

sessions targeting 333 Syrian women in Urfa and Mersin.

EGYPT

UNFPA supported 12 sessions on health education, human rights, psychology and recreational activities for 67 Syrian girls in the UNFPA-supported safe space in the 6th October city. Over 270 women and girls attended group sessions on early marriage, gender-based violence, mental and child health and other relevant health issues. UNFPA supported 43 home visits by community health workers and distributed 2,800 copies of awareness brochures on reproductive health and gender-based violence. UNFPA organized a Sports Day for 300 Syrian youth.

Cross-border operation:

A total of 7,018 women and girls of reproductive age benefited from the cross-border interventions in northern Syria. Of the total, 384 women received pre-natal and post-natal care, 500 women had safe deliveries with the support of UNFPA, and 283 opted for Caesarean-sections.

UNFPA is working to support women and girls' safe spaces. Two new spaces will be established in Latakia and Idlib, and one in Aleppo will be strengthened.



"I want to become a journalist, I want to show the reality of our lives to the entire world", Nasrin says. Credit: Shayda Hessami | UNFPA, 2015

UNFPA: A borrowed camera changes the life of Syrian refugee youth in Iraq



Hassan, 17 years old, in the workshop classroom in Kawergosk camp, with two young girls, Kawroj and Nasrin, checking the photos that they want to present to the trainer.

Credit: Shayda Hessami | UNFPA, 2015

"I want to become a journalist. I want to show the reality of our lives to the entire world," said Nasrin, an enthusiastic 16 year-old from Qamishli. Happily holding a borrowed camera, Nasrin was hopping between the tents in Kawergosk camp because she could now capture the real life stories of Syrian refugees.

Nasrin is one of the 22 youth (aged 15-16 years) who participated in the START NGO UNFPA-supported photography workshops in the Kawergosk and Darashakran refugee camps in Erbil, Iraq. "We want to empower young people to tell their stories in the camps, and to improve the skills of those having a passion for photography. In the

long run, these young people could help document events in the camp, with a focus on the daily life of the refugees, the manner in which the conflict has affected the lives of women and girls, and some of the overall challenges that they face," Sazan, UNFPA youth associate at Iraq country office, said.

Aral Kalk, a professional photographer and trainer working with the young photographers, was elated: "It has been a joy working with youth in the camp. It is absolutely the greatest experience I have ever had. It has become a personal dream to see these talented young photographers becoming international photographers one day." With a broad smile and a sense of satisfaction, Aral presented the studio in the camp. "The training process starts with a theoretical class, followed by field work for preparation of photo stories. A jury discussion is then held for evaluation of the work," he explained.

Nasrin was really excited about learning photography skills; she was eager to present the best she could. "I cannot describe how my daughter's eyes twinkled as she entered the tent with her camera. I am even noticing a change in her personality with every passing day; she is no longer the shy, silent girl who would sit in the corner. She is now more open to the world, and is able to express her ideas freely," Nasrin's 39 year-old mother Shahnaz stated.

Seventeen year-old Hassan became a UNFPA-center field photography trainer for other young Syrians at the Kawergosk camp. He was one of the first to have participated in the photography workshop in Domiz camp last year. "It is a very, very, very amazing experience for me to teach friends in the camp. I feel useful to them, as well as to my family. I can at least cover my own expenses now," he said.

Bushra, the mother of Kawroj (another participant of the photography workshop), said her daughter thought it was a great learning opportunity. "I am so glad; at least she is now learning a skill," the 46 year-old

mother added. Kawroj's father Jalal, aged 47 years, said, "I accepted my daughter to go outside the tent to participate in the youth centre's activities. She is intelligent and brilliant, and the centre will give her support and shape her future, which is something I am unable to give to my daughter."

The United Nations Population Fund is mandated to empower youth and support them with programmes addressing their needs, especially in crisis contexts. UNFPA supported START NGO with two cameras for each youth space in the camps. Youth can borrow these cameras to take pictures for their stories and can use the computers at the centre at anytime to download and edit pictures for their projects.

UNFPA provides hope and opportunity for youth (whose lives have been disturbed by a conflict beyond their control) to invest in their hobbies and to further build their skills in areas they are passionate about, such as photography, music and drawing. At the same time, the programmes raise their awareness on life-skills to enable them to make healthy choices no matter how vulnerable they are in such settings.

