

UNFPA JORDAN Scales Up Emergency Support to Syrians

UNFPA Role in Emergencies

“When a crisis strikes, humanitarian response must be swift and adaptable to the needs of affected populations. Women and young people may especially require targeted support, and aid must be sustained from the onset of an emergency until recovery and reconstruction.” **Dr Babatunde Osotemehin, UNFPA Executive Director**

A Continuously Worsening Crisis

Jordan continues to receive a steady influx of Syrians crossing into Jordan through official and unofficial borders. This has started in March 2011 and continues to date causing considerable strain on the stretched infrastructure and economy of the country, especially in the northern governorates where a large number of the Syrians is settling.

Syrian refugees who enter Jordan through official border points are mostly residing in urban areas, either with host families, or in rented accommodation. Those who enter the country through unofficial border crossings are hosted in the refugee camps (Cyber City, King Abdullah Park and Al Za’atri) but most refugees are residing in the northern governorate of Irbid (in particular in Al-Ramtha); the rest are mainly in Amman and Mafrqa, Zarqa and the South of Jordan.

Priorities

The provision of quality respectful health services and in particular reproductive health services remain a priority for the Syrians in Jordan. The high birth rate and early pregnancies among Syrian women have a serious effect on their health and impacts the wellbeing of their children and that of their families.

Furthermore, refugee women and girls specifically, but also men and boys, were exposed and are at risk of different forms of Gender Based Violence (GBV) both in their country of origin and in Jordan. Refugees reported during assessments that prevention of sexual violence was one of the main motivations for them to leave their country.

In addition, and as it is often the case in humanitarian crises, women and girls also face increased risk of all forms of violence including sexual violence and domestic violence, partially due to the level of stress families experience and the changes in traditional roles that often occur with displacement.

In fact, men are often unable to find employment and fulfill their traditional bread-winner role. Particular risks are connected specifically with camp settings, where living spaces are confined, infrastructures are weak and there are limited activities for both men and women to make them feel productive and worthy.

Moreover in this crisis situation, young women and adolescents are facing heightened risks of early and forced marriage as families attempt to lessen their economic burden, and provide what is often perceived as protection.

The reproductive health of adolescents and young people and their health life styles are another priority area of concern that should be addressed in a culturally appropriate way, and with an approach adapted to the young people’s local context.

Humanitarian Response

UNFPA Jordan has been active from the onset of the crisis in Jordan to respond to the needs of the Syrians both in the communities and in the established camps.

UNFPA Jordan has focused on:

* Coordination

UNFPA plays an important role in coordinating the work of different national and international actors working in reproductive health, and in the prevention and response to GBV. **UNFPA** chairs the Reproductive Health sub-working group, co-chairs the Child Protection and Gender Based Violence sub-working group and co-chairs the Youth Task Force in Za'atri camp. **UNFPA** takes the lead in assessing the situation and identifying the gaps related to its mandate and works closely with other partners to address the emerging needs.

Moreover, **UNFPA** is actively participating in other coordination groups such as the health, camp management, non-food item distribution, protection and security working groups to ensure the specific needs of women and young people are taken into consideration by other stakeholders and working groups.

* Capacity Building

The Jordanian Government and national non-governmental organizations have played an important and supportive role in responding to the increasing needs of Syrian refugees. To ensure the provision of quality services, **UNFPA** provides continuous technical support and capacity building to service providers working with Syrian in camps and in the host community.

Accordingly, **UNFPA** and its implementing partners conduct trainings for service providers from different governmental and nongovernmental partners on topics related to its mandate. These include reproductive health, standard operating procedures for the prevention and response to all forms of violence against women and girls, and the code of conduct with a focus on prevention of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse.

* Provision of Supplies

UNFPA works in covering gaps in supplies that are needed to ensure the provision of quality reproductive health and protection services and preserving the dignity of women and girls.

At the onset of the Syrian crisis, **UNFPA** distributed dignity kits to all tents in the Zaatri camp, and to women in need in the host communities. In addition to health and hygiene items sensitive to the hygiene and reproductive health of women, the dignity kits included modest Islamic wear, and flash lights for improved protection of women at night.

UNFPA also provides emergency reproductive health kits and contraceptives to the Ministry of Health and all non-governmental partners providing reproductive health services in Jordan.

* Service Provision

Since early 2012, **UNFPA** started its emergency program in Jordan to respond to the reproductive health needs of women and girls and to ensure high quality life-saving protection services.

UNFPA works with national and international partners to provide Syrian refugees with services in three specific areas of intervention:

- 1) Providing reproductive health services and promoting reproductive rights
- 2) Gender based violence prevention and response
- 3) Promoting healthy life styles and involving and responding to the needs of Young People