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Emergency restoration and stabilization of livelihoods in affected Syrian communities

Final Report

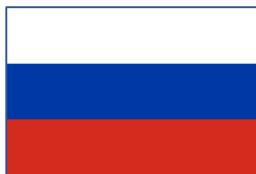
01 January to 31 December 2014



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Acronyms and abbreviations

GDP	Gross Domestic Product.
IDP	Internally Displaced Person.
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East.
CBO	Community-based organizations.
FBO	Faith-Based Organization.
IMS	Information Management System.
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization.
PWD	People With Disability.
SHARP	Syria Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan.
SCPR	Syrian Center for Policy Research.
UNDP	United Nation Development Programme.
USD	United States Dollar.



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Project description

Title of the Action	Emergency restoration and stabilization of livelihoods in affected Syrian communities.
Beneficiaries	Affected population in Syria especially IDPs and their host community members with special attention to vulnerable groups.
Report period	01/01/2014 to 31/12/2014
Target country	Syria

Executive summary and situation update

The Syrian crisis has continued unabated in its fifth year and the conflict dynamics have evolved and grown ever more complex. The severity of the humanitarian disaster in Syria has forced over half of the population (52.8 per cent) to leave their homes looking for safer places to live or better living conditions elsewhere, inside the country or abroad. Some 6.8 million persons of the population continue to live in Syria as Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) while another 3.3 million persons have fled out of Syria taking refuge in neighboring countries and constituting the second largest refugee population in the world.

In March 2015, UNDP, UNRWA and the Syrian Centre for Policy Research have produced the macroeconomic report entitled “Violence and Alienation: Impact of the Syria Crisis Report for 2014” revealing a drastic situation in almost all Syrian governorates. According to this report, the Syrian economy has lost USD 202.6 billion, which is equivalent to 383 percent of the GDP of 2010 in constant prices. The total volume of GDP loss is estimated at USD 119.7 billion. The human development is rapidly regressing, with the UN Human Development Index (HDI) highlighting the appalling deterioration of Syria’s human development record as it tumbled from the medium human develop group into the low human develop group during the course of the conflict as the key education, health and income indicators withered. Thus, the HDI of Syria is estimated to have lost 32.6 percent of its pre-conflict value, while falling in global ranking from 113th to 173rd out of 187 countries.

At the end of 2014, four out of five Syrians live in poverty due to the crisis; almost two thirds of the population (64.7 per cent) lived in extreme poverty where they were unable to secure their basic food and non-food needs necessary for the survival of the household. Thirty percent of the population fell into abject poverty where they were unable to meet the basic food needs of their households, with many facing hunger, malnutrition and even starvation in extreme cases. The country is plagued with joblessness and unemployment as the unemployment rate surged from 14.9 per cent in 2011 to 57.7



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percent by the end of 2014, where there were 3.72 million unemployed persons. Some 2.96 million of these people lost their jobs during the conflict, with the loss of income impacting on the welfare of 12.22 million dependents.

Moreover, half of all school children have not attended school for the past three years, creating a human development debit of 7.4 million lost years of schooling, while many schoolchildren have been forced to work or reduced to scavenging and begging to help their families survive.

As a response to the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Syria and to enhance the resilience of the affected Syrian population and prevent negative coping mechanisms, UNDP expanded its early recovery and resilience interventions relying on its area-based approach for planning and implementation at local level. These interventions were boosted by the support of the generous Russia contribution, targeting **nine highly affected governorates** in Syria: Aleppo, Dar'a, Al-Hassakeh, Deir-Ez-Zor, Hama, Homs, Idleb, Rural Damascus and Tartous.

To ensure inclusive participatory response planning and as part of its programming toolkit, UNDP develops Governorate Profiles capturing the main socio-economic characteristics in the target governorate, priorities and needs of affected groups, partnership opportunities and potential entry points for livelihoods and resilience programming. As such, the profiles facilitate the recognition of local strengths and weaknesses, threats and risks, programmatic and operational opportunities, endogenous potential and available resources in the governorate, and the identification of major bottlenecks for early recovery and livelihoods interventions in close collaboration with local stakeholders. The stakeholders mapping and analysis, which is an integral part, is crucial to better understand the socio-economic dynamics in the target governorate and ensure the inclusiveness of all concerned - including affected groups - in the local response plan.

Governorate response plans are then developed; they define the scope of interventions within the framework of the UNDP mandate and the strategic objectives of the 2015 Syria Strategic Response Plan. The response plans are then translated into area-based interventions by field teams in participation with local stakeholders, including Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs) and local technical directorates. This approach ensures that interventions are demand driven and locally owned as they are defined by local communities in affected areas, i.e. IDPs and their host communities who exhausted their coping mechanisms due to the protracted crisis.

Major Results and Achievements

The Russia funding helped improving the living conditions of **808,215 affected persons** and creating an enabling environment for humanitarian assistance, reducing the demand for humanitarian relief, and enhancing the resilience of affected communities. This was achieved through providing emergency



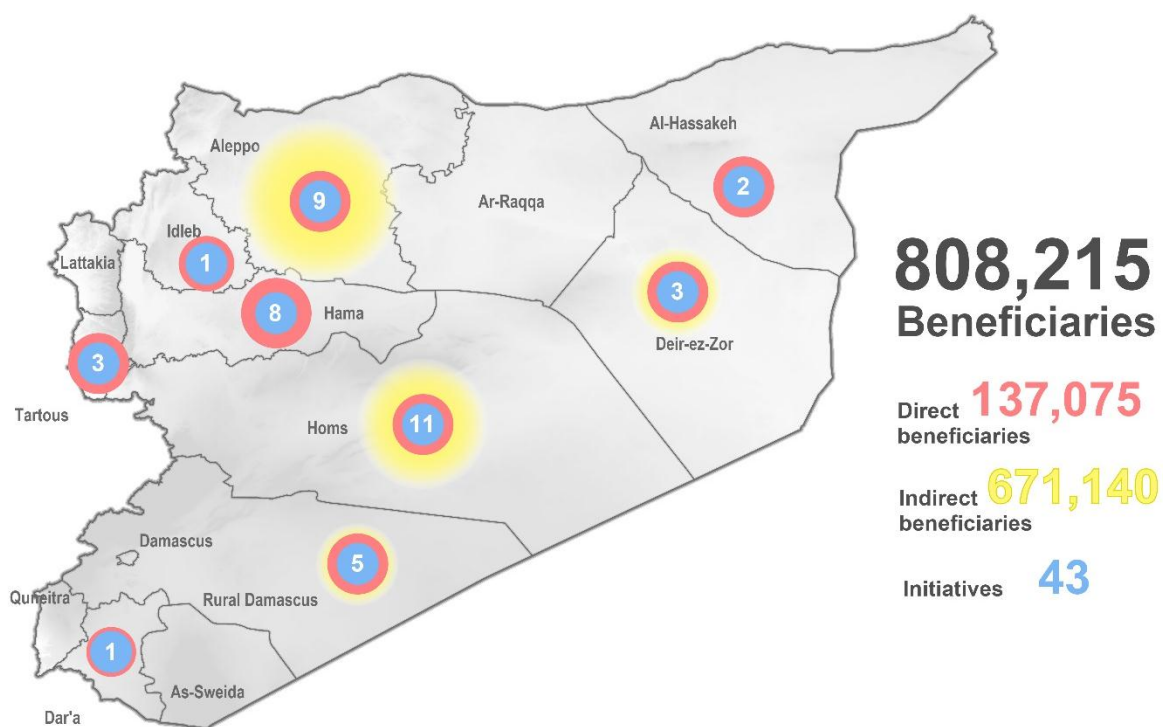
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employment opportunities to enhance service delivery and rehabilitate basic community infrastructure in addition to create/stabilize basic livelihoods by reviving local micro and small businesses and distribution of tool kits and productive assets to enable those whose livelihoods were severely disrupted to recover and rebuild their lives.

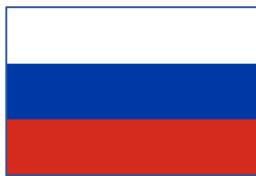
The implemented initiatives included solid waste management and infrastructure rehabilitation activities including rehabilitation of a commercial market; agricultural and food production and processing including Arabic sweets, bakeries and rooftop gardening; in addition to sewing, laundry, shoe-making, garbage bins production, ice-making and concrete block manufacturing workshops. Pest control substances were also locally procured and sprayed as an integral part of solid waste management activities to improve the public health situation in affected neighbourhoods.

Using the **Russian contribution**, UNDP succeeded in implementing **43 recovery and livelihoods interventions**, using different implementation modalities. 26 of these projects were implemented in partnership with local NGOs, community and faith-based organisations.

A total of **808,215 affected people**, including **137,075 direct** and **671,140 indirect beneficiaries** in various communities benefitted from UNDP-Russia livelihoods stabilization project (Map 1).



Map 1 Russia-UNDP's total initiatives and beneficiaries



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A total of **137,075 people** among the most affected population **benefited directly** from emergency employment opportunities and small businesses restoration. The workers and their dependent family members were able to improve their living conditions and fulfill their basic needs thanks to the generated income (wages). Activities targeted the governorates of Aleppo, Al-Hassakeh, Deir-Ez-Zor, Hama, Homs, Idleb, Rural Damascus and Tartous.

Russia-UNDP initiatives succeeded to reach **a total of 671,140 people indirectly**. Indirect beneficiaries are the residents of the neighborhoods where initiatives were implemented. They enjoy cleaner neighbourhoods, better access to basic and social services, as well as to more goods and products produced by the established workshops at reasonable prices.

A total of **664,120** people out of the total indirect beneficiaries enjoy better health and environmental conditions after the removal and disposal of **10,433 tons of solid waste in more than 21 neighborhoods and five collective shelters** in Aleppo, Deir-Ez-Zor, Homs and Tartous. Another **7,020 indirect beneficiaries** were reached through the **revival of local micro and small businesses**, allowing affected communities a better access to basic survival products and services.

The gender considerations were observed in all Russia-UNDP's livelihoods activities, where **a total of 1,037 women** benefited directly from job opportunities provided mainly in the field of sewing and food production and processing in Al-Hassakeh, Deir-Ez-Zor, Hama, Homs, Rural Damascus and Tartous governorates.

Results per outputs: January 2014 – December 2014

Russia funding contributed to enhance the resilience of the affected Syrian population and increase their ability to cope with the consequences of the ongoing crisis. To ensure optimum response, UNDP compiled governorate profiles and resorted to a comprehensive livelihoods damage assessment methodology developed by UNDP in 2014 for identifying priorities and needs in affected communities taking into consideration severity, magnitude and extent of damage in each targeted location. The progress of implemented initiatives is monitored against pre-agreed targets and indicators. The achieved results are then recorded from the field on bi-monthly basis in a dedicated Information Management System (IMS).

The following sections summarize the results achieved since January 2014 until the end of December 2014:

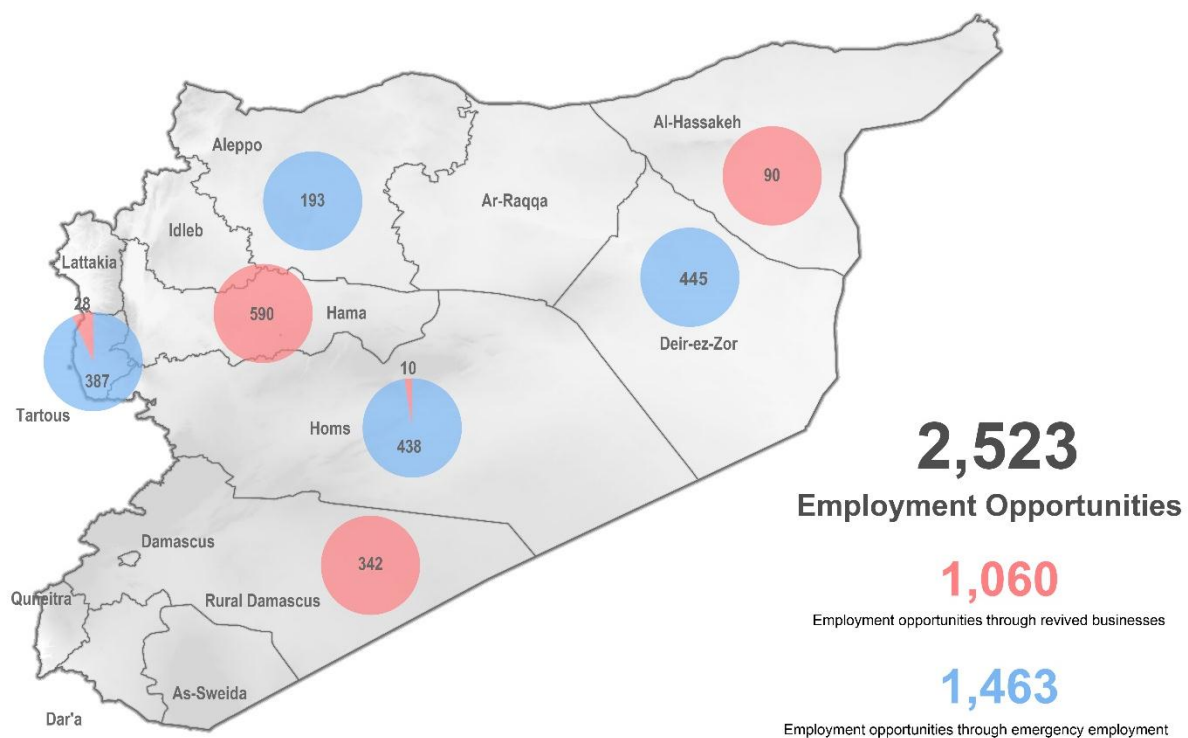


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Output 1: Emergency employment for basic local service delivery:

The protracted crisis has caused massive damage and destruction to every aspect of life. A large number of families were forced to leave their homes with no significant assets or belongings looking for safer havens in neighboring governorates and adding more pressure on available resources in their host communities. Basic social and municipal services were negatively affected by both high influx of IDPs and ongoing hostilities causing further deterioration in the socio-economic situation. Large amounts of rubbles and garbage are piling on the streets jeopardizing public health due to unsanitary conditions and environmental pollution, which can in turn lead to outbreaks of vector-borne disease (i.e. diseases spread by rodents and insects).

As a response to this situation and in order to reduce adverse impacts on the environment and improve the quality of life, 18 initiatives were implemented in the field of solid waste management including spraying of pest control substances and infrastructure rehabilitation. These initiatives took place in five highly affected governorates; Dar'a, Homs, Deir-Ez-Zor, Aleppo and Tartous, and succeeded to provide **1,463 employment opportunities** for IDPs and their host communities. Another **1,060 employment opportunities** were provided through restoring and stabilizing of disrupted livelihoods initiatives. Thus leading to a **total of 2,523 employment opportunities** provided through Russia-UNDP's support during the implementation period (Maps 2).



Map 2 Employment opportunities through Russia funding



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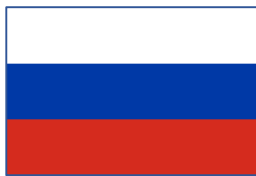
During the reporting period, a total of 130 necessary tools and equipment were provided to workers within the framework of the various initiatives. They succeeded to remove and dispose of 10,433 tons of accumulated solid waste from 26 neighborhoods and collective shelters, which ultimately allowed 664,120 residents to enjoy better health and environmental conditions.

The solid waste management initiative in Deir-Ez-Zor took further innovative dimension, where women volunteered and organized a team of female volunteers from different backgrounds (i.e. college students, female heading their households, IDPs, affected host community etc.) contributing to cleaning schools and shelters in selected areas. This introduced a cultural change that became accepted by the conservative community of Deir-Ez-Zor.



Picture 1 Female team, solid waste removal, Deir-Ez-Zor @UNDP

To act comprehensively, UNDP conducted 511 local hygiene awareness sessions that were attended by 5,912 beneficiaries in three governorates of Deir-Ez-Zor, Homs and Tartous. The sessions promoted good hygiene practices among the population, especially children. They also emphasized the importance of maintaining a clean environment to limit the spread of epidemics and diseases.



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Picture 2 a worker removing waste in Aleppo © UNDP

Within the framework of emergency employment for solid waste removal, UNDP utilized the Russia funding to locally **procure and distribute 3,400 Liter of pest control substances** in Deir-Ez-Zor. The spraying of pest control substance helped in controlling insects and rodents that can spread harmful diseases like yellow fever or malaria.

Additionally, in order to secure the health needs of IDPs and host community members, UNDP rehabilitated a maternal center that provides basic medical services to approximately 29,600 women in six neighborhoods in Dar'a.

These initiatives complemented other activities implemented by other UN agencies in the area of good hygiene practices. Field teams closely liaise with UNHCR, UNICEF and other active partners at the local level to ensure harmony and coordination in the area of hygiene promotion.

Output 2: Emergency support for disrupted livelihoods

Many of the local residents have suffered tremendous losses in their livelihoods as a consequence of the crisis, namely, destruction, looting and vandalism of factories and businesses in the various governorates. This has further exacerbated the unemployment rate and increased poverty levels.

In order to respond to the emerging needs of the affected communities, UNDP implemented in partnership with local NGOs a total of 25 initiatives to provide income generating opportunities, either

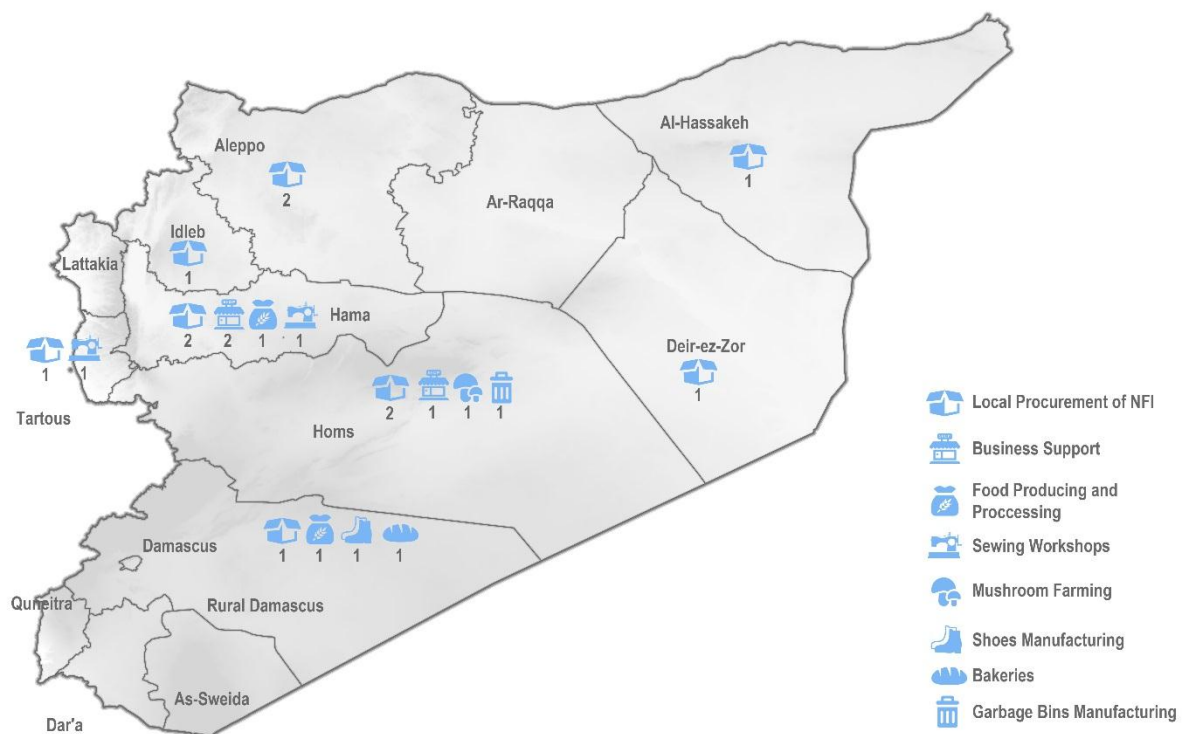


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by restoring/reviving their disrupted businesses or by teaching them new skills and crafts to start their own businesses and earn income.

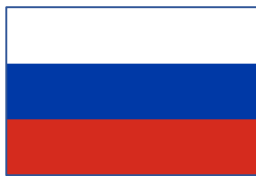
The initiatives were implemented **in eight highly affected governorates**; Hama, Al-Hassakeh, Rural Damascus, Aleppo, Deir-Ez-Zor, Idleb, Homs and Tartous, and succeeded to **create 346 job opportunities** for IDPs and their host community members, mainly in the field of food production and processing, sewing workshops, laundry, sweets and bakery shops, rooftop gardening, and concrete blocks and ice manufacturing. Additionally, emergency employment opportunities were provided for unskilled laborers in local workshops and a restored market (Map 3).

The implemented initiatives have revived and sustained **a total of 89 local businesses** contributing to the local economic dynamics. This progress reflected directly on the welfare of 128,678 people and allowed another 7,020 people who are living in targeted locations to enjoy better access to basic goods at reasonable prices.



Map 3 Distribution of the initiatives under business revival output over the Syrian governorates

During the reporting period, UNDP utilized the Russia funding to establish **four sewing workshops** in Rural Damascus, Homs, Hama and Tartous. The workshops succeeded to provide job opportunities for 44 women and enabled them to become economically active and earn income to support their families. Through these workshops, women learned new skills such as sewing, knitting and needlework



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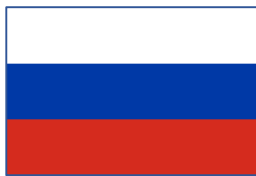
and were able to produce various types of clothing items. Part of the manufactured clothing was sold in local market at reasonable prices while the remaining was distributed to newly displaced people in the area.



Picture 3 Sewing workshop in Tartous © UNDP

UNDP also implemented **four food production and processing** initiatives in the three governorates of Hama, Rural Damascus and Al-Hassakeh. Through these initiatives, UNDP succeeded to provide 160 job opportunities for women and enabled them to use their traditional knowledge in food preservation to process seasonal crops, extend their shelf-life (preserved/packaged units) and ensure their availability in the local market all year round, which will contribute to supporting the local economy.

Additionally, to stabilize the prices of bread and other pastries in the local market, UNDP established a **bakery store** in Rural Damascus, which succeeded to provide 15 job opportunities for IDPs and their host community members and made bread available for around 3,000 families in dire need of bread assistance each month.



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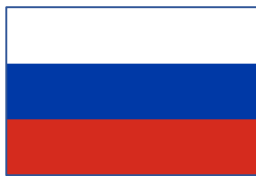


Picture 1 Women in Al-Hassakeh while making the traditional thyme © UNDP

Moreover, UNDP established a **shoe manufacturing workshop** in Quteifeh, Rural Damascus which created 70 job opportunities for IDPs and their host community members. It relied on skilled workers with experience in this traditional industry but have lost their livelihoods during the crisis, as well as others who want to learn a new craft and earn income for enhancing their living conditions. The workshop succeeded to supply the local market with good quality shoes at reasonable prices and benefited directly around 350 beneficiaries. Some of the manufactured shoes were distributed to newly displaced families in the target area.

In order to support the production of fast yielding crop and a reliable source of income, UNDP supported **mushroom growing and beekeeping** in Homs.

In Hama governorate, UNDP provided **six-month employment opportunities** for 67 IDPs in different local workshops, such as aluminum workshops, bakeries, upholstery workshops, men's barber and welding workshops. Special attention was paid to residents in shelters, especially women. The project brought IDPs and host communities closer, and provided a decent income for workers and an opportunity to learn a new craft to capitalize on to start up their own businesses. In return, workshop



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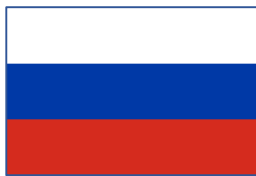
owners benefitted from “free labour” to support their daily workload. The initiative ultimately benefited 335 direct beneficiaries, including dependent family members.



Picture 5 On-the-job training for a worker in an electricity workshop in Hama © UNDP

Moreover, UNDP supported the **revival of eight businesses** in Homs governorates. The targeted businesses include establishing an ice production workshop to help local communities off-set electricity cuts and preserve food, concrete blocks production to help rebuild and repair houses and shelters, rooftop gardening, sweets and bakeries to boost food production and help providing essential food items such as bread in the local markets at reasonable prices. UNDP also rehabilitated two local markets and supported a small laundry facility and sewing workshop for repairing and cleaning old clothing intended for distribution to newly displaced people.

UNDP adopted **local procurement as an effective way to revive local markets and vital economic cycles through local production**, which in turn employs a significant number of local labor. Local production and local procurement would support import substitution of humanitarian assistance and revitalize local production sectors, where feasible, contributing as such to a more resilient local economy. Using this approach, UNDP utilized the Russia funding to procure 450 locally manufactured garbage bins in



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Homs, in addition to 126,250 pieces of women, men and children clothing that were distributed in nine affected governorates; Aleppo, Al-Hassakeh, Deir-Ez-Zor, Hama, Homs, Idlib, Rural Damascus and Tartous.



Picture 6 Distribution of NFIs, Homs @UNDP



Picture 7 Distribution of NFIs, Hama @UNDP

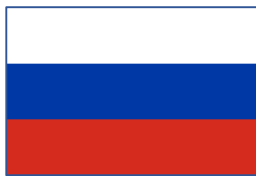
UNDP continues through the generous Russia funding its coordination and technical assistance efforts in the field of Early Recovery and Livelihoods allowing for a larger engagement with local, national and international partners. UNDP is the sector lead of Early Recovery and Livelihoods in Syria, engaging with more than **19 partners from UN agencies, international organizations and local NGOs**.

For the implementation of its Russia funded project, UNDP is collaborating with **nine local NGOs and CBOs in eight governorates in Syria** with the aim of developing their capacities for the implementation of early recovery interventions. 26 such initiatives are being implemented.

Challenges and lessons learned

Given the highly diverse context in affected communities in terms of security, impact of the crisis, displacement dynamics, variety and extent of needs, damage to infrastructure, limited resources and absorption capacity of local actors, UNDP faced various operational and programmatic challenges. These were overcome through resorting to **localized innovative solutions**, made possible by the area-based approach adopted for project planning and implementation.

The **area-based approach** has proven very efficient in capturing real needs in communities, and identifying the most appropriate implementation modality that promotes inclusiveness, ownership and sustainability. While UNDP is working under the umbrella of the Syria Strategic Response Plan

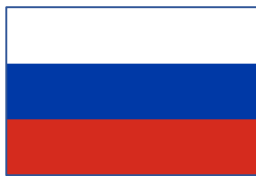


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(formerly known as SHARP) that identifies strategic objectives; the importance of the area-based approach lies in addressing differences among communities, which is an element that can not be captured in a strategic plan developed at the national level. An area based plan and approach ensures the engagement of different local partners, and social groups in planning, implementing and monitoring “their own community” activities. This contributes also to re-creating a sense of “unity” in affected communities and ensures constructive feedback from affected people and beneficiaries. Moreover, the area-based approach is critical to respond to sudden shifts and priorities within governorates in a timely manner.

While mass procurement is relatively easier and often cheaper from international sources, constraints on movement between governorates due to security risks and difficulty of access to certain hard to reach areas have encouraged UNDP to adopt **local procurement** both to overcome logistical and transportation risks and as enabling tool to promote business and employment sustainability. Indeed, it became evident that local procurement, where possible, is not only critical for economic recovery but also as a logistical mitigation measure. Its positive impact is through job creation, skills development, and business revival.

The deteriorating security situation and the difficult access to critical areas in need of support reinforced the importance of local partnerships with NGOs, CBOs, FBOs, local committees, local institutions, etc.. Working with local partners, developing their capacity, acknowledging and enhancing their role as active actors in their communities; are key factors in achieving tangible results and reaching desirable impact. Having this network of partners facilitated the application of the “do no harm” principle through ensuring conflict sensitive planning in affected communities, bringing people together on non-threatening issues, and nurturing their sense of ownership. Accordingly, UNDP conducted targeted capacity development sessions as an integral part of its response. This has proven essential to shift the role of local NGOs from mere charity and aid distribution to gradually become actual contributors to local resilience, namely through assisting people to cope with the impact of the crisis and enhance their positive coping mechanisms.



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ANNEX I: Human Interest Stories

Tartous: A journey of resilience:



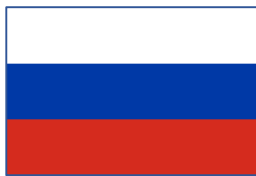
Picture 2 Seham Al-Ali, Solid waste removal, Tartous ©UNDP

“Hunger and siege have suffocated us,” said Seham Al-Ali; a mother of five children who was forced to flee twice in a row from the devastating conditions in Aleppo, first to Menbej then to Tartous governorate where she found in Al-Karnak shelter the safe haven for her family.

Due to the recurrent influx of IDPs in Tartous governorate and the pressure of the existing IDP population, the resources of the governorate were completely overstretched and reportedly reached breaking point, which resulted in continuous shortage in job opportunities and increase of unemployment rate. These conditions have increased the difficulty of finding a decent work for Seham who did not have adequate skills to suit the job market. As the sole breadwinner of her family, she went through a difficult situation where she couldn’t even buy food or clothes for her children.

“Once a woman stopped me and asked me: why your children are wearing tattered clothes? I answered they don’t have clothes and I don’t have a job to afford anything for them” she said, adding *“After few days the woman came to me again with new clothes for my children and suggested that I work in the solid waste removal project to ensure a source a living”*. She was the representative of the NGO implementing the UNDP-Russia project.

The solid waste removal project in Tartous was implemented by UNDP in partnership with a local NGO to enhance the early recovery and restoration of disturbed livelihoods by providing job opportunities



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to the crisis-affected population and host community members. Additionally, the project supports the local social services which have been dramatically weakened as a result of increasing the number of the governorate's residents.

"Thanks to this job I can now sleep with peace of mind knowing that I don't have to beg for money next morning." She said while smiling, adding "It saved me from resorting to illegal work and saved my dignity".

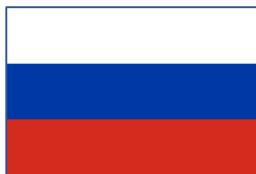
The solid waste removal project has significantly enhanced Seham's livelihoods and other workers from IDPs, where it provided 155 job opportunities, benefiting directly 775 beneficiaries including family members.

Hama: A mother's efforts to support her children:



Picture 3 Najwa, Food production and processing, Hama

Hama was amongst the governorates that were affected since the early days of the crisis. Given its proximity to highly contested areas in the north and central regions, Hama received at least 60,589 IDPs seeking refuge from the conflict. They are nonetheless adding significant pressure on limited available resources. This has led to an increase in unemployment and overstretching in the social services. UNDP in partnership with a local NGO initiated a project in Hama to provide job opportunities in the field of food preserving to a number of IDPs and host community members, particularly women.



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“At first, it was impossible for me to find a job,” said **Najwa**; a mother for a family of four children who had to flee from the devastating conditions in Harasta and took refuge in Hama. From a housewife with no previous job experience to the sole breadwinner of her family, Najwa lived difficult days in dire conditions until she finally managed to find a job in UNDP supported “Beit Al-Mouna” for food-preserving project.

“Thanks to this project I learned a new skill that helped me to survive with my children in this crisis” She said. Najwa was finally able to provide the necessary needs for her children as she is now earning her income from this project.

The project has succeeded in significantly improving the IDPs livelihoods in Hama, where it is currently being supported by most of the retail stores in the governorate, which are regularly buying its products and selling them to the residents at reasonable prices.
