



UNRWA
الأونروا

Employment & Vocational Education Project

مشروع التوظيف والتعليم المهني.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Background

Palestine refugees living in Syria face a high level of poverty (25% of the camp population live with less than US\$2 per day) and are particularly affected by unemployment (25-30%).

Enhancing the economic development of the Palestine refugee community requires support to help refugees identify and access suitable employment. One crucial action to tackle this issue is to increase and provide expansion opportunities in vocational training, thus providing refugees with relevant and marketable skills. Another critical venue is the establishment of services supporting the development and management of small-scale businesses. The EC and UNRWA are joining efforts to increase the employability of Palestine refugees in Syria, thus actively targeting the impoverished state of the refugees.

The Damascus Training Centre (DTC) was established in 1961 and has since provided Vocational and Educational Training (VET) for Palestine refugees who have completed either preparatory school or secondary school. At the DTC young refugees can study two-year trade or semi-professional courses. The DTC has an excellent reputation amongst the refugee community and throughout Syria. Graduates have a high percentage of gainful employment upon graduation and the centre undertakes active and continuous research on employment needs and updates training curricula accordingly.

In November 2006, the European Union contributed **2,5 million EUROS** for a four-year programme to be carried out in partnership with UNRWA, the implementing Agency, with the aim of alleviating the poverty among Palestine refugees in Syria by increasing the employment opportunities for Palestine refugees. UNRWA will absorb the permanent costs generated by the Project at the end of the Project period.

UNRWA, together with EU, has agreed on a 4-year plan that will substantially and durably enlarge the UNRWA VET system, not only through the introduction of new courses at the DTC, but also through the diversification of its beneficiaries and the decentralisation of its facilities, through the establishment of employment units and the development of labour market information systems.

The project is also expected to have a high impact in promoting gender equity with the construction of a girl's dormitory at the DTC, and systematic gender mainstreaming in all activities of the project.

The key objective of this project is to improve the employability of young, unemployed and underemployed Palestine refugees.

Considering the urgent need in Syria for skilled workers and acknowledging the need for vocational training, the EC-UNRWA VET Program will target this objective through the following actions:

- **New courses** in graphic design and mechatronics to meet market needs offered at DTC;

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- Duplicate four already-existing courses in Clothing and Computer Technology, Assistant Pharmacist and Assistant Lab. Technician that have a high employability rate;
- Upgrade and modernize DTC learning facilities through the renovations of 5 workshops;
- Establish **boarding facilities for girls**;
- Implement a new programme of **short term training courses** – addressing the needs of the underemployed and unemployed and those who do not meet the specific requirements for admission to regular DTC courses;
- Implement a new component at DTC for expansion to Aleppo to offer short term training courses offered for the underemployed and unemployed;
- Develop **Employment Guidance** Units. The lack of guidance in finding suitable employment, career and business development will be tackled by establishing employment units in the geographic areas with highest concentration of Palestine refugees living in camps - Damascus (at the DTC), Homs, Aleppo, Dera and Latakia. The current lack of information on market needs will be addressed and the units will constitute an effective mediation mechanism that will facilitate the matching of job seekers with existing or potential job openings. Furthermore, beneficiaries will be assisted in career opportunities and job placement.
- Establish Pilot Centres dedicated to **business development** and employment guidance in Aleppo. In order to support and facilitate community members in their seeking and upgrading of employment and business opportunities, two Employment and Business Advice Centres will be established in the two Aleppo camps – one in Ein el Tal and another in Neirab. The Centres will undertake a series of activities in order to create a service for those seeking employment and for new and existing entrepreneurs in search of advice on business development and management. Such activities include developing networks and relationships with employers in order to ascertain employment opportunities and support refugees in overcoming barriers to employment such as lack of knowledge regarding opportunities, lack of ability to seek and apply for work and lack of appropriate training and skills. The Business Advice Centres will develop an understanding of the local business environment and assist beneficiaries in sourcing and attaining business information, training and credit opportunities.

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