

# TRASH TALK

## Turning waste into work in Jordan's Za'atari refugee camp



A cash for work volunteer in Za'atari camp delivers materials to Oxfam's recycling centre. Photo: Alix Buck/Oxfam

**Syrian refugees have the capacity to provide key support for service delivery and the expertise to contribute to the expansion of new productive economic sectors. This paper highlights an innovative approach to solid waste management and income generation, and aims to promote further dialogue on the role that Syrians can play in the Jordanian economy.**

### Oxfam Discussion Papers

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

*'Adapting to life as a refugee here was extremely difficult for us at first. We weren't used to living in tents, to the unforgiving environment. In those days there was garbage everywhere – along with the insects and other pests that come with it. It was not easy.'*

Jasem Al-Wrewir, Team Leader in Oxfam's cash for work recycling project in Za'atari camp.

When people began to flee the violence in Syria in 2011, hundreds of thousands arrived in neighbouring Jordan, with many finding safety in Za'atari refugee camp. Uncertain about their future, and with no prospect of returning home, refugees had very limited opportunities to support themselves.

Back then, rubbish was everywhere. While waste facilities in the form of mobile 'dumpsters' were present throughout the camp, they overflowed to the point that there was nowhere but the ground to throw rubbish. The regular aid distributions of food and essential items, while crucial to meeting refugees' immediate needs, were in part causing the waste problem. Local landfill managers in the nearby town of Mafraq informed Oxfam that the amount of waste transferred to their landfill sites had tripled.<sup>1</sup> Despite the fact that the recycling business in Jordan is growing, it is estimated that only 10 percent of recyclables are actually collected.<sup>2</sup>

Oxfam – by working with the local community – sought to turn waste management into an opportunity to address pressing social, environmental and economic needs. In 2015, Oxfam began piloting an innovative recycling project with the aim of mitigating the waste management issues in the camp while providing livelihood opportunities to refugees.

The development of the pilot was very much a process of learning and adapting. Drawing on the know-how of both Syrian refugees and Jordanian host communities, and reaching out to the camp community, Oxfam persisted. As of 2017, the project has expanded to collecting, sorting and processing waste from across the whole camp.

Today, close to 80,000 Syrian refugees make their home in Za'atari camp and rows of caravans now stand in place of the tents where families first sheltered. Jordan provides safe haven to over 660,000 Syrians registered as refugees with UNHCR across the country.<sup>3</sup> This has added pressure to services and the job market.

While the Jordanian government has committed to providing work permits for some refugees, practical opportunities to work and support their families remain limited. This project demonstrates how the collective expertise of Syrians and Jordanians can be used to expand new productive sectors within Jordan's economy – creating new jobs rather than displacing people from existing ones.

It is essential that work continues to support longer-term job opportunities for refugees who live in Za'atari camp. There are signs that steps are being taken to ease restrictions on economic activities between camp residents and those in neighbouring towns and communities. This is essential to ensuring that refugees can lift themselves out of poverty and become more self-reliant.<sup>4</sup>

## 2 THE PILOT PHASE

Between August 2015 and June 2016, Oxfam initiated a recycling project as a pilot in District 7 of Za'atari (one of the 12 administrative districts that the camp is divided into). The concept was simple: families sort their waste and refugee cash for work volunteers collect it from each household and deliver it to the transfer area, where it is further separated and processed.<sup>5</sup> It is then sold to companies who trade in reusable materials, with profits reinvested back into the project. Towards the end of 2016 and early 2017, Oxfam began to collaborate with the aid agencies Japanese Emergency NGO (JEN) and the Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED) on these collecting and sorting activities. This was also done in close coordination with UNHCR and UNICEF.

It is important to remember that when Oxfam started this work, it was not legal for Syrian refugees to work in Jordan. As well as improving their environment, the project therefore provided a much-needed means of income and sense of purpose for participating camp residents.



As part of its community outreach efforts, Oxfam produced easy-to-read and highly visual explanations of the recycling process for camp residents. Photo: Oxfam

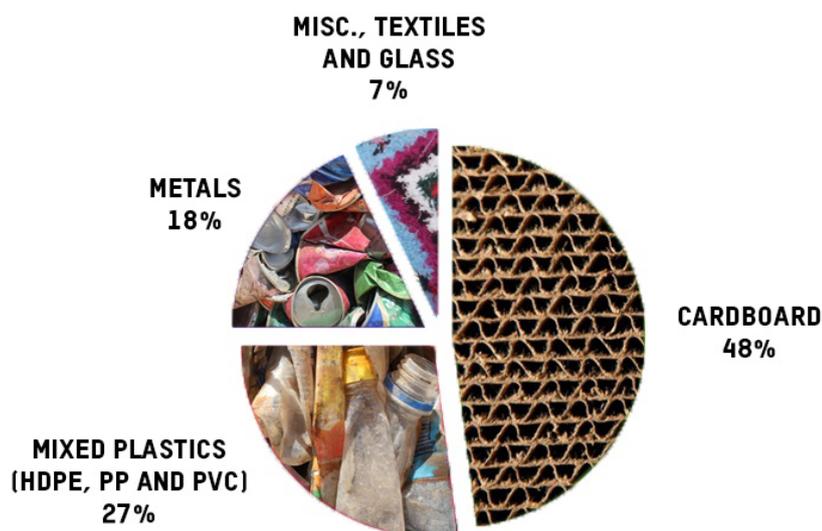
The recycling programme's success was entirely reliant on the participation and buy-in of the Za'atari camp community. The team adopted a public outreach campaign, encouraging households to separate their dry waste (such as cartons and cans) from their wet waste (like vegetable scraps), and more and more community members began to get involved. If people didn't sort their rubbish in their homes, then the team would have received polluted recyclables which could not be sold. Every day, trolley workers engaged through cash for work collected dry recyclable waste from homes, a school and two supermarkets and took it to the Oxfam recycling centre. Collection only ever stopped when flooding made it impossible for the trolleys to pass. At the recycling centre, separation specialists (also engaged through cash for work) then sorted materials into more specific groupings, with plastics requiring the most attention given the various types and colours.<sup>6</sup>

The role of women engaging camp residents in community outreach and men working with trolleys in door-to-door household collection proved to be very effective. It allowed broad-based community participation in the project, provided an income to refugees, and increased the percentage of recyclables separated and collected at household level.

Usually, the role of cash for work programmes in refugee camps is to provide a supply of cash and liquidity that contributes to short-term resilience and improved functioning of markets.<sup>7</sup> However, many of the cash for work volunteers told Oxfam that their work came to be about more than just the income – it was also important to them to be able to protect the camp and act as stewards of the local environment. The Oxfam team reflected that if it had used other means of separation and collection (i.e. if it had not involved the community to this extent) the recycling centre would not have received as many recyclables as it did.

The pilot phase ran for a total of 40 weeks and diverted over 80 tonnes of recycled materials from landfill from one district. The volume of waste collected by the contractor for disposal in landfill in 2016 was lower than it had been the previous year. This can partly be attributed to the shift away from in-kind aid distributions to cash transfer programmes in the camp, but it is also due to the fact that, starting from January 2016, Oxfam's recycling project was up and running.<sup>8</sup>

## FIGURE 1. MOST COMMON RECYCLABLE MATERIALS COLLECTED



Over time, and thanks to combined Syrian and Jordan expertise, Oxfam's team improved processing methods and began to engage with potential buyers outside the camp. For instance, Oxfam purchased a shredder which meant that discarded bottles and containers could be processed into a recycled product with 50 percent higher value than unprocessed materials.<sup>9</sup>

Given the interest that neighbouring traders had in buying the recycled plastics and cardboard, Oxfam also purchased a compressor to bundle the material into ready-to-transport bales. At this

stage, the pilot was very much a process of testing, learning and adapting, while steadily gaining in efficiency.

Despite the challenges, the team could already see the change in the district: there was little rubbish in the streets and the recycling centre started to fill up with recyclables.<sup>10</sup> The trolley workers and community mobilizers conveyed to Oxfam staff how they felt that they were engaging people in a meaningful way, and appreciated regaining their productivity and ability to provide for their families. Given the combination of these factors, Oxfam realized the potential for scale-up.



The poster reads *dawerha wa estafeed* in Arabic, meaning 'recycle and see the benefits'. Photo: Oxfam

### Box 1: The power of combined Syrian and Jordanian know-how

Jasem Al-Wrewir fled from Syria to Za'atari camp in Jordan in 2013, leaving behind his waste disposal business in Damascus where he managed six landfill sites and 200 employees. Since early 2015, Jasem has been a Team Leader in Oxfam's cash for work recycling project, working alongside Wissam Al-Sharafat, a Jordanian engineer and Recycling Officer with Oxfam.

Jasem's 15 years of experience in waste management and his collaboration with Wissam have been instrumental to the success of the pilot and the subsequent expansion. 'I can't imagine the recycling centre without Jasem in it,' says Wissam. 'We would definitely face challenges in running the recycling project without him, particularly given his skills and years of experience in recycling back in Syria. Jasem means a lot to me, I see him as my older brother.'

What began as a small pilot project in one district has grown and developed, and now collects waste from all 12 districts of Za'atari camp. Oxfam's cash for work team of nearly 200 women and men educate the community on recycling, collect recyclable materials from households, and process the waste into materials that can be sold to traders.

There are many other Syrian refugees who, like Jasem, have brought considerable skills and experience with them to Jordan. However, Syrians are only able to work legally in certain sectors in Jordan, such as agriculture, cleaning and construction. Despite being a vital member of the recycling team, Jasem has to date only been able to work as a cash for work volunteer rather than as a member of staff.



Jasem and Wissam at Oxfam's recycling facility in Za'atari camp. Photo: Alix Buck/Oxfam

## FROM DISTRICT TO DISTRICT

A number of steps had to be taken to prepare the recycling centre for scale-up. Firstly, there was an urgent need to increase storage capacity and improve storage to ensure that the recyclables were not affected by the extreme weather conditions. Moving from the pilot phase to scale-up meant that Jordanian and Syrian team members had to work closely together and draw on their collective experience to improve waste separation and processing.

The team understood that expanding the recycling business would lead to economies of scale and new markets. Covering more districts in the camp meant accumulating larger amounts of recyclables, and this would be advantageous when negotiating their sale. Expansion also meant the facility could collect a broader range of materials, including scrap metal from old and damaged school desks and from various decommissioned facilities in the camp.

However, working in the context of Za'atari presented new challenges that the team had not previously encountered. Given the closed and complex permit system of the camp, ensuring access for trucks took time and increased transaction and transport costs. The team was able to overcome these challenges by negotiating with the authorities managing the camp, giving traders better access and reducing their costs. What is more, the team was able to advocate for access from a position of legitimacy; the value of the recycling project was clearly evident from the improvements in the environmental health of the camp.

The project was no small achievement, being the first to achieve household waste separation and recycling in Jordan, using a refugee team – reducing the camp's environmental impact and creating new jobs that could potentially be formalized over the longer term. This success was largely thanks to the professional experience of Syrian team members and others, in addition to the high level of buy-in from the community.

## ALIGNMENT WITH JORDANIAN STRATEGY

The challenge of managing solid waste is nothing new to the Government of Jordan; numerous national strategies and plans have been devised to engage and grow the recycling sector. Oxfam's recycling project aims to align with these national-led efforts. In new municipal laws and by-laws introduced in 2016, municipal authorities were given greater clarity as to their roles and responsibilities on solid waste management at the local level. However, due to a lack of local implementation of national-level policies, a high level of informality persists within the sector, making it challenging to map out the relevant regulation, actors involved and their operational methods.<sup>11</sup>

Exploring growth in the nascent recycling sector is also in line with the government's efforts within the comprehensive national strategy, *Jordan 2025*. This commits the Government of Jordan to developing a system for the sorting, reuse and recycling of solid waste. It notes the need to invest and create new jobs in six target sectors for the green economy, including solid waste management.<sup>12</sup> Targets include reducing the percentage of solid waste that is disposed of in landfill sites and increasing the percentage of solid waste that is treated and reused in Jordan.

The strategy outlines the need to promote growth in sectors with high potential for creating jobs for Jordanians. However, in Oxfam's experience, utilizing the latent skills and experience of the Syrian refugee community in addition to that of the Jordanian community has resulted in a successful recycling initiative. Increasing opportunities for Syrians to work in this sector through the work permit system could result in a development dividend for Jordan through increased productivity in a sector targeted for growth.<sup>13</sup> Such an approach would also be in line with the *Jordan Compact*, which aims to turn 'the Syrian refugee crisis into a development opportunity'.<sup>14</sup>

### 3 GROWING PROSPECTS

Based on this learning, and with the support of both the German and Australian governments, Oxfam was able to expand the recycling project to gather waste from the entire camp, creating more opportunities for some of the camp's residents to earn an income and participate in making the camp environment more liveable. With a second recycling facility, the team realized its aspirations to see the work grow to its full potential. The impact of the scale-up was felt instantly. During April and May 2017, around 250 tonnes of recyclable materials were collected and the project was also able to engage almost all of the camp's 80,000 residents in separating their recyclable household waste for collection. Based on a survey conducted by Oxfam of over 400 people, a 96 percent participation rate is estimated for the entire camp.<sup>15</sup>

By working within, but also challenging the restrictive nature of camp settings, the project has catalysed more sustainable job opportunities with linkages to host communities. With cash for work opportunities likely to decline in the near future, given the costliness of the intervention and due to anticipated cuts to aid, Syrian refugees need more innovative approaches to job creation. Solid waste management is just one sector where job opportunities for both Syrian refugees and Jordanians can be created.

### THE PLANET AND THE PEOPLE

As a result of the project outreach, camp residents have conveyed to the Oxfam team that they have an increased awareness of the impact of their consumption on the environmental health of Za'atari camp and neighbouring areas. The daily waste production of Syrian refugee households in Za'atari is estimated at an average of 0.4kg a day, while it is estimated that Jordanian households in the area produce 0.8kg a day. Of course, these amounts pale in comparison to waste produced per day in wealthy countries such as Kuwait (5.72kg) or New Zealand (3.68kg).<sup>16</sup>

Changing behaviours and attitudes was and remains essential to the success of the recycling project. Within the home, promoting waste separation was made easier by the previous experience that many refugees had of recycling schemes in their homes in various towns across Syria. Outreach is particularly important with children, many of whom have spent the majority of their lives in Za'atari camp. The campaign to increase awareness of waste and recycling was a powerful addition to Oxfam's public health promotion work with children in the camp; this included a competition to make toys out of recycled materials. The team also took school children on a tour of the recycling facility to give them first-hand experience of how the recycling process works.



Syrian refugee Waheed Deeb Deeb, an artist, shows young visitors how he uses recycled materials to create art.  
Photo: Alix Buck/Oxfam

## Box 2: Opportunities for women to work

The recycling project provides cash for work opportunities for women as community mobilizers and men as trolley workers and waste sorters. However, overcoming social norms about what women should and should not do has proven challenging. In general, cash for work volunteer opportunities are mostly accessed by men, with women comprising 30 percent of participants.<sup>17</sup>

Syrian women worked in waste management before the conflict, and often face less stigma than Jordanian women in working with waste and the recycling process. However, Syrian women were less comfortable working with men at the recycling plant, and were also constrained by the expectation that they stay at home to manage household tasks and look after children.

Oxfam spoke with Fatima, who fled the violence in Syria in 2013. She is using her skills to create a better future for herself and contribute to new creative industries in Jordan. Fatima and other women formed a cooperative, and share the revenue from upcycling old UNHCR tents into fashionable tote bags for the local market. She explains: 'These bags are special and different from any other bags. They are made of tents – our first shelter in Za'atari camp – they reflect the suffering Syrian refugees endured here in the burning hot summer and the bitter cold winter.'

This approach seeks to build resilience and self-reliance. Plans include support to grow agricultural products and to produce pickles, such as the Syrian speciality *makdous* (stuffed and cured aubergine). These products can be linked to markets beyond the camp, in coordination with local actors.



Fatima earns an income by making upcycled goods for sale, including handbags made from refugee tents. Photo: Alix Buck/Oxfam

# NEW POINTS FOR WASTE COLLECTION

The expansion of the recycling project has also created opportunities to link with other actors to explore new waste collection points.

For example, the World Food Programme's daily distribution of bread reaches 20,000 families at four distribution centres, offering significant opportunities for recycling: Oxfam's recycling project could potentially collect 16kg of plastic bags every day.<sup>18</sup> There is also significant potential to collect recyclable materials from schools: for example, 16,000 paper bags are used to wrap school meals<sup>19</sup> and around 600 cardboard boxes of biscuits are delivered to the camp's schools each day.<sup>20</sup> Taking advantage of these additional three sources of recyclable materials could enable Oxfam's recycling project to generate additional **annual revenue of approximately 5,256 JOD (\$7,400) per year.**

This may seem like a small sum, but it would enable the project to recoup some of the costs of paying for the work of the volunteers. The official set rates which cash for work volunteers in Za'atari can be paid are 1 JOD per hour for semi-skilled labour, 1.5 JOD per hour for skilled labour, 2 JOD per hour for highly skilled labour and 2.5 JOD per hour for technical labour.<sup>21</sup> Rates are set according to the determined 'skill level', and remain lower than similar wage levels for equal jobs in the Jordanian labour market.<sup>22</sup>

Aid agencies have agreed to work together on recycling. The World Food Programme is willing to sort cardboard and plastics into separate containers at their distribution centres managed by ACTED. There are numerous other opportunities to explore, such as the waste generated by private donations made through distribution centres during festive occasions like Ramadan and Eid-al-Fitr. In addition, many international organizations operating in the camp do not currently recycle their waste, and could start to do so. According to recent research, capturing recyclables from market areas in the camp could potentially **increase the project's income by just over 30,000 JOD (\$42,000) per year.**<sup>23</sup>



Oxfam is exploring the possibility of collecting recyclable materials generated in Za'atari markets. This street is known locally as the 'Shams Elysee'. Photo: Alix Buck/Oxfam

The UN Food and Agricultural Organization's planned Material Recover Facility (MRF) within the camp also represents an opportunity for Oxfam's recycling project. The proposed MRF will have the capacity to process organic waste (wet waste) to produce biogas and compost for soil conditioning.

## OUT-OF-CAMP OPPORTUNITIES

In January 2017, it was announced that refugees in Za'atari would be able to access 'work permits'. However, it is still unclear whether work permits will be available for skilled or semi-skilled Syrian workers in the integrated waste management sector beyond the camp. If they are, it has the potential to provide a big boost to the sector as well as to increase out-of-camp employment opportunities for Syrian refugees.

Oxfam's emerging host community project is an opportunity to build a direct link between the recycling process in Za'atari and the integrated waste management of municipalities. In turn, this can create ties with recycling companies in Mafraq and provide more opportunities for Syrian refugees to work and use their skills. Refugees in the camp have already provided their expertise and input, and advised partner organizations on recycling work in the Jordanian host community. Through the project, Oxfam has come to realize the latent potential and skills of Syrian know-how in the camp, and it is clear that Syrians with this capacity reside in host communities throughout Jordan.

This approach could be expanded to include paper remanufacturing or plastic recycling. There is potential to engage women in integrated solid waste management, for instance in sorting facilities or in broader management functions across the process. Expansion in this industry could provide employment opportunities for Syrian refugees and vulnerable Jordanian host communities alike, creating new jobs rather than merely formalizing existing informal work.

## 4 JOBS FOR THE FUTURE?

As the conflict in Syria continues, safe return for the hundreds of thousands of Syrians who have sought refuge in neighbouring Jordan seems unlikely in the near future. Aid agencies like Oxfam are juggling the need to provide basic life-saving support to a large refugee population with the cost-effectiveness of a prolonged operation amidst a protracted crisis. It is necessary to find viable solutions and pathways to self-reliance over the medium and long term.

Oxfam's recycling project has relied heavily on cash for work volunteer opportunities. However, there must be immediate consideration of what opportunities can be created beyond cash for work as a short-term solution. Cash for work covers about 18 percent of the working age population in Za'atari. However, it is difficult to measure the economic impact on the lives of those engaged.

There are numerous opportunities to incorporate refugees into the labour market in Jordan. While there are varying levels of education, what is common to many Syrians is strong entrepreneurial and trade skills, particularly in services and construction.<sup>24</sup> Further, while migrant workers send their earnings home, Syrian refugee wages are spent in Jordan, creating a multiplier effect.

## DO THE NUMBERS ADD UP?

Given the limited earning and consumption patterns of refugees and the amount of waste generated at the camp, it is not possible for recycling to become a profitable activity within the current parameters and market constraints of the camp settings. Cost-effectiveness is not the only consideration: the project continues to reduce the camp's environmental impact and also actively reduces the amount of waste going to neighbouring landfill sites. However, there is potential for Syrian refugees like Jasem to provide their specialization to the recycling sector more broadly in Jordan. By taking a strategic approach, Syrian refugees can act and be seen as drivers of growth in new productive sectors which can also benefit host communities.

Oxfam has engaged in a 'break-even analysis' outlining the feasibility of the recycling project expansion along different scenarios, as outlined below:

**Table 1: Break-even analysis**

	Scenario	Estimated revenue
<i>Option 1: Business as usual</i>	Based on the assumption that the project processes the same waste streams in the next phase as it did in the pilot phase (household waste + supermarkets + schools)	<b>106,034 JOD per year (\$149,344)<sup>25</sup></b>
<i>Option 2: Expanding to include new sources of waste</i>	Based on the assumption that the project processes additional waste streams as outlined above, including greater collaboration with other large-scale aid efforts and existing market activities	<b>141,955 JOD per year (\$199,937)<sup>26</sup></b>
<i>Fixed operational costs</i>	Oxfam's total operational costs to scale up its recycling in the camp, including personnel, maintenance and rentals	<b>377,582 JOD per year (\$531,806)<sup>27</sup></b>

Source: Group Urgence Réhabilitation Développement report<sup>28</sup>

With a massive expansion of the project to collect 4,237 tonnes of recyclables per year – over three times as much as is collected now – the project will come closer to covering its running costs. However, this much waste is not produced within the confines of the camp. At present the project is able to recover around one-quarter of its running costs; with new sources of waste integrated this could rise to over one-third. While efforts have been made to improve the efficiency of the collection system, it is important to keep in mind that the payment of community

outreach and trolley workers in Oxfam's recycling project only represents 11 percent of total waste management costs in Za'atari, while diverting up to 20 percent of the camp's solid waste from landfill.<sup>29</sup>

Solid waste removal is seen as a public service in many countries and is generally subsidized by local or national governments. In terms of municipal services in Jordan, solid waste management was identified in 2014 as the top priority in municipalities in the northern governorates of Mafraq and Irbid, followed by water, sanitation and infrastructure.<sup>30</sup>

Oxfam's approach has enabled it to provide this public service at the same time as creating an income stream for Syrian refugees. Oxfam's recycling project provides work opportunities for around 200 refugees each month through waste collection, sorting, team management and community mobilization.

It is also important to recognize the project's value in restoring people's sense of autonomy, productivity and usefulness in an otherwise constrained humanitarian setting. By harnessing this human potential, new and productive sectors in the struggling Jordanian economy can be built from the ground up. Za'atari's recycling project could inform broader approaches throughout Jordan.

## 5 WHERE NEXT?

When Syrian refugees like Jasem first arrived in Za'atari, the dumpsters were overflowing and there was rubbish everywhere. Since the launch of Oxfam's recycling project, hundreds of tonnes of waste have been redirected away from these dumpsters to the recycling centre.<sup>31</sup> Local landfill managers have reported a reduction of around 20 percent of the waste they previously collected from Za'atari, reducing the camp's impact on neighbouring communities. Community members have conveyed to Oxfam that children are able to play outside freely in a healthier camp environment, and people now understand the importance of separating their waste in the home. It is also important to note that Oxfam's efforts are aligned with the Government of Jordan's efforts to strengthen solid waste management and the country's recycling sector.

More broadly, Oxfam notes the importance of moving away from a purely humanitarian approach to serving refugees, towards enabling them to achieve sustainable livelihoods. However, unless residents of Za'atari have opportunities beyond the camp's borders, it will be difficult to realize this ambition. Oxfam therefore seeks to challenge the closed nature of the camp.

With no end to the Syrian crisis in sight, it is likely that many will remain in Za'atari refugee camp and in numerous host communities across Jordan. Efforts to promote job opportunities must serve both Syrian refugees and vulnerable Jordanian host communities. Refugee communities have already devised highly innovative and creative ways to support themselves and their families, and over the coming years aid agencies must assist them to find livelihoods activities that harness their skills and aspirations.<sup>32</sup>

This is an urgent need. While direct assistance has protected refugees from destitution, many families engage in damaging coping mechanisms, from skipping meals to working in exploitative conditions (including child labour).

The recycling project at Za'atari camp, created by Oxfam together with the community, is one example of what this positive collaboration can achieve.

Oxfam urges key stakeholders, including national and local authorities, to consider the following when shaping work opportunities for Syrian refugees and vulnerable Jordanians:

### **Expand work opportunities for refugees**

The Government of Jordan should allow skilled Syrian labour, particularly in sectors targeted for growth. In addition, there should be further commitment to ease restrictions on economic activities between camp-based refugees and host communities and markets. In particular, it would be advantageous to consider providing work permits for semi-skilled Syrian refugees in the integrated solid waste management sector. Easing the permit system and trading access to the camp will also create a more enabling environment for job creation.

### **Increase support to innovative livelihood pilots**

There needs to be donor, NGO, UN and governmental support for projects which work 'outside the box' and in sectors geared up for growth and with a medium- to long-term approach. Work opportunities for Syrian refugees should mean providing them with support to engage in new jobs in emerging industries rather than just displacing other workers from their current occupations.

## **Bring refugees into the livelihood response**

The Government of Jordan should ease hiring quotas and restrictions that prevent NGOs and the private sector from hiring Syrian staff in refugee livelihood programmes. Refugees' skills and know-how can help shape interventions that can promote job growth for both Syrian refugees and vulnerable Jordanians in host communities.

## **Align aid with national strategy**

Donors and international financing institutions should ensure long-term aid is allocated and aligned with national development plans and priorities. For instance, in Jordan, future livelihood programming guided by the *Jordan Compact* should also be aligned to *Jordan 2025* and to regional plans and strategies supporting a decentralized enabling environment for job growth. The implementation of these strategies must engage and be inclusive of the priorities of local communities, authorities and the private sector.

## **Increase collaboration between aid agencies**

Collaboration between aid agencies is essential to developing an ecosystem for job growth. Where possible, organizations should support each other in the development of job opportunities which cut across sectors. In this way, it is possible to maximize the comparative advantages of different actors for the benefit of the communities they serve.

## **Support the transition from cash for work to job opportunities**

In Za'atari camp, cash for work has come to form an integral part of people's survival and livelihoods strategy, with few viable alternatives at scale. Given the lack of rights afforded to Syrian refugees in such programming, and its current use as the principal formal livelihood strategy for low-income households in refugee camps, there needs to be immediate consideration as to what opportunities can be created beyond cash for work as a short-term solution to livelihoods programming in the camp. Furthermore, strategies must be developed to increase women's participation as cash for work volunteers and in sustainable livelihood programming, including by taking into account barriers to participation.

# NOTES

All links last accessed in August 2017 unless otherwise specified.

1 Key informant interview with a landfill manager in Mafraq, Jordan, January 2017.

2 Figure developed using *Waste Atlas*. <http://www.atlas.d-waste.com/>

3 The Government of Jordan estimates that there are over 1.3 million Syrians in the country (including the over 660,000 Syrians registered as refugees with UNHCR). Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan (2015) *Jordan Response Plan for the Syria Crisis 2016-2018*. Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation. 14 January 2016.

4 The vast majority of Syrian refugees in Jordan live below the poverty line, rising to 93 percent of Syrians living outside of formal camp settings. UNHCR (2017) Jordan: *UNHCR Operational Update*. June 2017.

5 Cash for work (CfW) is an initiative in which refugees are remunerated for supporting partner programming in the camp. As per the Cash Learning Partnership definition, 'Cash payments provided on the condition of undertaking designated work. This is generally paid according to time worked (e.g. number of days, daily rate), but may also be quantified in terms of outputs (e.g. number of items produced, cubic metres dug). CfW interventions are usually in public or community work programmes, but can also include home-based and other forms of work.' CaLP (2017) Glossary of Cash Transfer Programming. Technical Advisor Committee. Cash Learning Partnership. July 2017. <http://www.cashlearning.org/resources/glossary>

6 PP (polypropylene) black, PP white, PP mixed colours, HDPE (high density polyethylene) yellow, HDPE white, PET (polyethylene terephthalate), etc.

7 Noting it is an effective tool when it does not disrupt 'people's own survival and livelihood recovery strategies as they deal with the impact of a shock'. From G. Poisson (2010) *Cash transfer programming in Emergencies*. [http://www.cashlearning.org/downloads/resources/calp/Cash%20Transfer%20Mechanisms%20in%20the%20Philippines\\_web.pdf](http://www.cashlearning.org/downloads/resources/calp/Cash%20Transfer%20Mechanisms%20in%20the%20Philippines_web.pdf)

8 In part, this was due to the challenges of non-food item (NFI) and food distributions. The challenges confronted by refugees included distance to distribution points and extended waiting periods, security concerns associated with crowds or harassment, and the lack of sufficient food, female sanitary items and diapers. Caravan distributions in particular were seen as unjust and over-reliant on street leaders for beneficiary selection. This was a finding in Oxfam's 2014 study: B. Serrato (2014) *Refugee Perceptions Study*. <https://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/rr-refugee-perceptions-study-syria-jordan-020614-en.pdf>

9 HDPE market prices are relatively stable, although highly dependent on oil market prices. A detailed separation and shredding scheme for plastics according to type and colour increases value for resale, but the chemicals required to clean shredded plastics are not allowed on Za'atari camp premises as per UNHCR regulations. This limits the possibility of additional value-added activities beyond shredding.

10 Approximately 5,400 individuals in District 7.

11 At the time of writing, national-level master plans for solid waste management for northern and central regions of Jordan were expected to be approved – the *Waste Management Strategy 2015–2035* of the Government of Jordan. Plans include activities relating both to camps and host communities.

12 Government of Jordan (2015) *Jordan 2025*. p. 89. <http://inform.gov.jo/Portals/0/Report%20PDFs/0.%20General/jo2025part2.pdf>

13 Since agreements reached at the London Conference in February 2016, the Government of Jordan has committed to making up to 200,000 work permits available to Syrians and removed many of the hurdles Syrians previously faced in accessing work permits. Syrians are only able to apply for work permits within the construction, agriculture and manufacturing sectors. The number of work permits granted to Syrian refugees has gradually increased – as of June 2017, around 54,000 had been issued.

14 EU, Government of Jordan (2016) *The Jordan Compact*. Supporting Syria and the Region Conference, London, 4 February 2016. [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/498021/Supporting\\_Syria\\_the\\_Region\\_London\\_2016\\_-\\_Jordan\\_Statement.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/498021/Supporting_Syria_the_Region_London_2016_-_Jordan_Statement.pdf)

15 Do you currently separate waste – why/why not? 16 said no, 412 said yes. Questions were asked of 428 people across all 12 districts in the camp between 25 April and 7 May. *Za'atari Interagency WASH KAP survey*. April–May 2017.

16 P. Muggeridge (2015) *Which countries produce the most waste?* World Economic Forum. 20 August 2015. <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2015/08/which-countries-produce-the-most-waste/>

17 UNHCR (2017) *Cash for Work in Za'atari Camp*. Basic Needs and Livelihoods Working Group. April 2017. <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/April2017CfWfactsheet.pdf>

- 18 Waste estimation for white nylon bags, assuming 16kg collected each day equalling 480kg per month, generating 72 JOD per month (based on average price of 150 JOD per tonne).
- 19 Waste estimation for paper bags. Assuming the average weight of each paper bag is 50g, the potential collected per school month would be 16 tonnes and the potential income 2,880 JOD per year (based on average price of 20 JOD per tonne).
- 20 Waste estimation for cardboard. Assuming that each cardboard box weighs 400g, the daily weight produced during school days would be 240kg, which would raise 168 JOD per month (based on an average 35 JOD per tonne).
- 21 BNLWG (2015) *Cash For Work – Standard Operating Procedures for Zaatari Camp*. Basic Needs and Livelihoods Working Group. July 2015. <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/download.php?id=9652>
- 22 In addition, CfW volunteers have no labour rights under Jordanian labour law, CfW volunteers cannot form associations or cooperatives and CfW opportunities are fully donor dependent.
- 23 Composition of cardboard, nylon and metals at 20 percent, 14 percent and 7 percent respectively. Waste estimation based on assumption of 88m<sup>3</sup> as the volume of waste generated from market activities on a daily basis with More Than Shelters (MTS) waste composition analysis, as noted above. Cardboard: 13,306 JOD per year (based on average price of 35 JOD per tonne). Nylon: 2,661 JOD per year (based on average price of 150 JOD per tonne). Metal: 14,414 JOD a year (based on average price of 130 JOD per tonne).
- 24 ILO (2017) *A challenging market becomes more challenging: Jordanian workers, migrant workers and refugees in the Jordanian labour market*. International Labour Organization – Beirut: ILO, 2017. p. 13
- 25 Based on an estimated amount of recyclables collected for the year at 1,312 tonnes per year.
- 26 Based on an estimated amount of recyclables collected for the year at 2,205 tonnes per year.
- 27 Donor dependant. (1) Personnel (estimated at 355,440 JOD per year), (2) maintenance (estimated at 4,142 per year), (3) rentals (estimated at 18,000 JOD per year).
- 28 Group Urgence Réhabilitation Développement (2017). Unpublished report.
- 29 In total, over 738,000 JOD (\$1,039,437) is spent each year on the waste management system of Za'atari camp. This includes 220 street cleaners at 225,600 JOD per year (ACTED), 14 waste collectors and one contractor (ACTED) at 242,982 JOD per year, and the 144 trolley workers (Oxfam's recycling project) at 269,567 JOD per year.
- 30 UNDP (2014) *Municipal Needs Assessment Report: Mitigating the Impact of the Syrian Refugee Crisis on Jordanian Vulnerable Host Communities*. <http://www.alnap.org/pool/files/118-undpreportmunicipality.pdf>
- 31 S. Brangeon and M. Kucharski (2017) *Recycling Desk Research and Feasibility Study of Za'atari Camp, Jordan*. February 2017.
- 32 P. Collier and A. Betts (2017) *Why denying refugees the right to work is a catastrophic error*. *The Guardian*. March. [https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/mar/22/why-denying-refugees-the-right-to-work-is-a-catastrophic-error?CMP=Share\\_AndroidApp\\_Email](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/mar/22/why-denying-refugees-the-right-to-work-is-a-catastrophic-error?CMP=Share_AndroidApp_Email)

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The information in this publication is correct at the time of going to press.

Published by Oxfam GB for Oxfam International under ISBN 978-1-78748-038-4 in August 2017.

DOI: 10.21201/2017.0384

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