

Empowering Refugees as Agents of Change



Supported by UNHCR and its partners, community support committees organize a wide range of activities and events for refugees of different ages, countries and backgrounds. ©UNHCR

Protection lies at the heart of UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency. Considering the protracted refugee situation in Jordan, UNHCR has expanded community engagement and supports refugee representation in decision-making and community-led structures. UNHCR also strengthened outreach to refugees who may be outside of its and partners' networks to ensure nobody is left behind. Through these efforts, UNHCR envisions refugees as **agents of change and social transformation** who bring forward longer-term, sustainable protection solutions.

Outreach and communication with community.

As a core UNHCR activity, protection counselling offers refugees a chance to address key issues they face. In addition to counselling in UNHCR premises, UNHCR conducts regular mobile helpdesks in urban and remote areas and organizes town hall meetings with a multi-functional team to listen and address the concerns of refugees. UNHCR also facilitates other forms of **two-way communication with refugees** through various channels including the Facebook page of UNHCR in Jordan, the largest page for refugees in

the region, with more than 240,000 followers and the Helpline, which receives an average of 200,000 calls every month. UNHCR also shares information with refugees in a timely manner through WhatsApp groups and a dedicated chatbot.

UNHCR and its partners run 22 **Community Support Committees (CSC)** in urban areas and nine **community centres** in Azraq and Zaatari refugee camps. As part of UNHCR's '**One-Refugee Approach**', the CSCs in urban areas are comprised of both Jordanians and refugees of different nationalities. The CSCs and the community centres function as a bridge between UNHCR and the refugee communities, playing an important role in identifying and referring cases with heightened protection risks, sharing information with UNHCR about community needs, challenges, and trends, and disseminating UNHCR information to refugees. CSCs also organize various cultural, educational, skills-building and recreational activities in community centres, promoting cohesion amongst different refugee groups and Jordanians and strengthen their sense of belonging.

I have seen real change in people's lives because of what we do here.



Hiyyam, a Syrian member of a CSC in Amman ©UNHCR/Lilly Carlisle

Engagement and participation of refugees. UNHCR sees refugees as partners and agents who can **take on active roles as advocates for their own protection and solutions** and contribute to processes that affect their lives and communities. Actively engaging refugees also informs UNHCR’s programming and decision-making. Building on the experience of engaging refugees as volunteers during the COVID-19 vaccination campaigns, UNHCR consulted refugees with disabilities to assess the accessibility of the registration centre in Amman. UNHCR also listened to refugees before updating the Interactive Voice Response system of its Helpline to ensure their needs and concerns were reflected. Recognizing that grassroots community-led structures have deep understanding of and connections in the community, UNHCR supports these organizations technically and financially. In addition, UNHCR hands over its own and/or partner activities to them for **localization**.

Key components of community-based protection



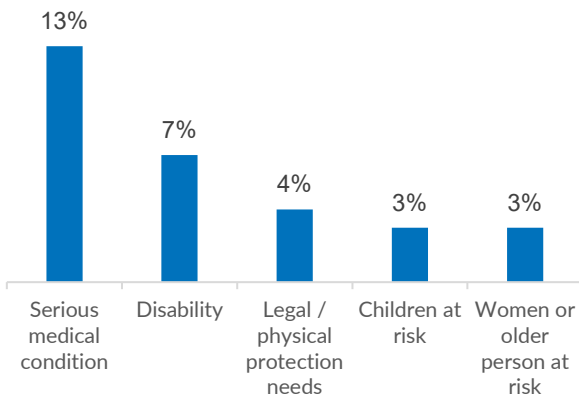
Strengthen community-based protection in all sectors

Accountability to affected population

Community empowerment

Inclusive approach

Refugees with specific needs



* 23 per cent of the refugee population have specific needs

** Some refugees have more than one specific need.

Inclusion. In line with the principle of “**Leave No One Behind**” of the 2030 Agenda and the [UNHCR Policy on Age, Gender and Diversity \(AGD\) Accountability 2018](#), UNHCR promotes an inclusive approach to protection to ensure vulnerable populations such as the elderly, people with disabilities and women have access to basic rights and services. UNHCR has been enhancing data gathering and analysis on disability and included disability-aggregated information in the [Vulnerability Assessment Framework \(VAF\)](#) for the first time in 2021. UNHCR conducts awareness raising sessions to enhance understanding of specific needs of people with disabilities and the elderly. UNHCR also works to empower women and promote leadership amongst refugee women through vocational and livelihood trainings. UNHCR also

trains its workforce and of partners on AGD and Accountability to Affected Population to ensure these concepts are mainstreamed in all protection activities.

Looking Ahead. UNHCR works closely with the Government, development actors and community-based organizations to ensure that national responses and development processes are inclusive of refugees. The empowerment of refugee women, girls, men, and boys with and without disabilities, and involvement of all relevant actors remain paramount to generate a more effective and sustainable protection environment.



**\$7.2 MIL
NEEDED**

UNHCR is committed to supporting and empowering refugees and host communities through **inclusive and participatory approach**. These involve facilitating effective two-way communication with refugees, supporting community engagement initiatives, ensuring protection for the most vulnerable including those with special needs, women at risk and elderly. For this, **we need \$7.2 million in 2024**.

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