Renewed escalation of hostilities in the Syrian Arab Republic is forcing thousands away from their homes. As host communities and Syrian refugees across the region continue to face challenges to their food security, a coordinated humanitarian and development response is critical.

Objectives

FAO is working with partners in the Food Security and Livelihoods and Social Cohesion Sectors to:

- link emergency assistance to meet basic needs with actions to increase self-reliance and self sufficiency of vulnerable populations through market-based skills training and employability, income generation opportunities and entrepreneurship programs;
- work together with government, national and local institutions to strengthen existing service delivery systems, to identify vulnerabilities and address needs and risks, including social tensions associated with increased demand for services, and improve capacities to manage future shocks; and
- provide conductive platforms to mobilize humanitarian and development partners to employ shared, holistic analysis of vulnerabilities and collective, context-specific resilience-building outcomes across affected populations, areas, sectors and institutions.

Activities

**Turkey** – USD 49 million
- greenhouse crop production
- small-scale agricultural production
- income-generating activities (agriculture, forestry and agro-forestry)
- technical/vocational training
- access and preparation of unused state lands
- agricultural extension
- rehabilitation of infrastructure
- capacity building
- studies and assessments

**Lebanon** – USD 57 million
- enhanced information on food security, coordination of agricultural activities and supporting national institutions
- animal health
- small-scale production, nutrition and food safety and quality
- capacity building
- child protection

**Jordan** – USD 31.5 million
- green infrastructure
- sustainable agricultural development
- intensive agricultural work for agricultural labour
- natural fertilizer and biomass production
- engagement of cooperatives in saving and loans
- market access
- enhanced quality of food products

**Iraq** – USD 20 million
- cash for work
- enhanced food production including agri-food processing and farmer field schools

Despite the generosity of host countries, both local communities and Syrian refugees continue to face high levels of economic insecurity, unemployment and vulnerability.
Impact on food security

The conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic continues to drive the largest refugee crisis in the world. In addition to violence, people face widespread unemployment, lack of formal livelihood opportunities and natural resources degradation that undermine food security. Consequently, large numbers of Syrians have fled their homes to 127 countries around the world, with the majority seeking refuge in neighbouring Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey.

Economic opportunities for refugees are hindered by legal uncertainty, limited mobility and negative perceptions, which in turn thwart purchasing power and perpetuate food insecurity and malnutrition. The outlook remains dire, and without sustained support would deteriorate further still with the livelihoods of the most vulnerable still at risk. In 2019, the close management of borders and admission practices prevented a major influx of refugees into neighbouring countries. While there were no substantial decreases in registered Syrians, some countries experienced modest net increases, primarily due to new registrations, particularly newborns. Both refugees and their host communities continue to contend with a range of socio-economic challenges. The generosity of host countries has exacerbated pre-existing vulnerabilities, overstretched basic social services and reversed years of hard-won development gains. Economic growth remains slow in some countries and unemployment is a constant concern, reaching 25 percent in Lebanon for host communities and hovering above 10 percent in other host countries. Poverty rates are worryingly high, with one-third of the population living in poverty in some countries. As the situation becomes entrenched for refugees, protection risks such as early marriage, sexual and gender-based violence, child labour and exploitation are likely to worsen, leading to a rise in the use of negative coping mechanisms, such as limiting daily food consumption and removing children from school.

Establishing and safeguarding the resilience of host communities and refugees calls for a concerted, consistent, conflict-sensitive approach along the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. Building national and regional capacities to absorb, recover from and adapt to current and potential crises will be crucial to protect the lives, livelihoods and food security of the most vulnerable across the region.

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