



EVALUATION BRIEF



STRENGTHENING THE RESILIENCE OF SYRIAN WOMEN AND GIRLS AND HOST COMMUNITIES PROGRAMME: FINAL EVALUATION



Funded by the European Union

The Madad programme was a regional programme implemented in Iraq, Jordan and Turkey. Its multi-dimensional strategy aimed to:

- **enable women's empowerment:** addressing economic vulnerability and violence by increased access to recovery and livelihood opportunities, comprehensive protection services and support to national justice structures to promote accountability for violence against women.
- **promote a culture of peace and co-existence:** supporting women to lead and engage in peacebuilding and conflict prevention. Bearing in mind the importance of involving men in work on gender equality and women's empowerment, engaging men as partners, champions and advocates for women's increased empowerment, including their engagement in the labour market.

The programme was funded by the European Union Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis (EUTF) and was implemented in multiple locations in three countries through a range of partnerships. Key to programme delivery was the provision of livelihoods skills and income-generation activities coupled with comprehensive essential services to refugee and host community women (as well as internally displaced women in Iraq) through 15 women empowerment hubs (or women-only centres) across the three countries.

What did the evaluation conclude?

The UN Women Madad programme was highly relevant to regional and national priorities for supporting Syrian refugees and host communities. It responded in a context-sensitive manner to the basic needs of targeted beneficiary groups and was successful at reaching hard-to-reach and vulnerable women with comprehensive, including GBV, services through careful selection of locations and national partners, working with women's

grassroots organisations and conducting community outreach activities.

The programme contributed to improving beneficiaries' shorter-term coping mechanisms and economic situation, allowing spending on essential needs such as healthcare and children's schooling, and getting through the difficult months of Covid-19 lockdown and restrictions. The programme's model of combining protection and psychosocial support services, livelihoods training and job opportunities, workshops on life skills and women's rights, and women's solidarity and social cohesion activities, all within a safe and supportive women-only environment, has had a sustainable impact on beneficiaries' personal and relational empowerment.

How can UN Women improve?

The evaluation team made **11 programme-wide recommendations** to build on strengths and lessons from the Madad programme.

Recommendation 1: UN Women should continue to play a leading role in the advocacy work to gender mainstream the Syria crisis response at a regional and national level.

Recommendation 2: UN Women should continue to work strategically for longer-term international donor commitment to, and prioritisation of, comprehensive services in women-only safe spaces. This could be a central aspect of UN Women's contribution to the response to the Syria refugee situations.

Recommendation 3: The EUTF should support, through advocacy and funding, efforts to encourage national governments in the region to adopt comprehensive women-only service centres as appropriate and effective responses to women's equality and economic

empowerment in a regional context of structural and cultural barriers to women’s economic participation.

Recommendation 4: Part of UN Women’s strategic drive could be an in-depth comparative investigation of the pros and cons of the Oasis and SADA models of women-only centres, and work towards streamlining a model that balances quality and depth of service, and operational cost and availability to a larger number of beneficiaries.

Recommendation 5: For programmes with complex objectives, UN Women and EUTF (whether funding UN Women or other organisations) should design strong mechanisms for outcome-level monitoring and results reporting, in order to better track the results of programme interventions and understand their relationship with other factors influencing outcomes.

Recommendation 6: UN Women should continue to develop and refine the gender-sensitive RIMA and Resilience Capacity Index. This work can become a significant contribution of UN Women and FAO to filling gender-sensitive data and evidence gaps and further the understanding of drivers and barriers to resilience.

Recommendation 7: UN Women should develop a robust learning framework for such programmes and facilitate regular structured learning exchanges between the countries, such as by undertaking country-specific

thematic meetings for the purpose of conducting ‘deep dives’ on thematic issues (such as GBV, cash for work, and social cohesion), collecting best practices and challenges on specific thematic issues to share with other country offices.

Recommendation 8: UN Women should ensure that it has core staff at regional and country level (i.e. M&E staff) available from the outset of programmes.

Recommendation 9: Greater investment of efforts to create sustainable and decent income-generating opportunities across beneficiary groups – Syrian refugees, IDPs and vulnerable host communities.

Recommendation 10: Continue working on initiatives that support behaviour/attitudinal changes among men and boys and ensure these are carefully integrated into programme design, theories of change and the development of monitoring indicators. Consider developing long-term strategies for initiatives on changing gender norms.

Recommendation 11: EUTF could consider funding independent monitoring contracts for communication and visibility strategies, to better understand the impact and effectiveness of C&V activities and to enable iterative changes based on learning during programme lifespan.

EVALUATION APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

EVALUATION APPROACH

- **Feminist theoretical lens:** grounding the evaluation in an understanding of gender roles, systemic power imbalances and obstacles to women’s empowerment
- **Contribution analysis** and triangulation with **mixed methods**
- Evaluation questions following **OECD DAC criteria**



A FULLY VIRTUAL EVALUATION

Due to Covid-19 restrictions, site visits were not possible. Individual interviews with beneficiaries were reduced and focus group sizes made smaller to fit a virtual format.

DATA COLLECTED FOR THIS EVALUATION

		# of stakeholders interviewed			
		Women interviewed	Men interviewed	TOTAL	
	3 countries	Iraq, Jordan and Turkey			
	229 Programme documents reviewed	Iraq	12	8	20
	199 Literature reviewed - Protection and women’s economic empowerment - Women, peace and security	Jordan	19	8	27
	14 Focus Group Discussions with beneficiaries	Turkey	25	5	30
	6 extended interviews with beneficiaries	Regional	4	0	4
		TOTAL	60	21	81