

JICA Jordan Office



Sawsan Haddad

Program Officer

Shereen Abu Hweij

Program Officer

Tamer Abu Mariam

Program Officer

As refugees continue to leave Syria, Jordan is taking in more of them than most of its neighbors in the Middle East. Three Jordanian nationals on the staff of JICA Jordan office are making special efforts to improve the lives of refugees there.

Shereen Abu Hweij strongly believes that women are equal partners in making a better society. She is working on a project to help Palestinian and Syrian refugees earn a better livelihood.

She trains refugees, particularly women, in making and marketing products that they can sell to earn income – eventually, they hope, enough to sustain businesses that can support them and their families. This form of economic independence spreads awareness throughout the camp society of the importance of empowering women. Shereen also uses it as an opportunity to teach men to be supportive of women.

For Shereen, working on refugee issues has been an enriching experience, as it helped shape her understanding of the difference between humanitarian response and developmental planning.

Tamer Abu Mariam is an IT expert who is also in charge of a volunteer program. In cooperation with UNRWA, he applied his technical expertise to developing a smartphone application for mothers in Palestinian refugee camps.

The app is an electronic mother-and-child health handbook that functions as a portable medical record. The app also sends appointment notifications for health centers and child vaccinations, providing better quality health services.

“The number of mothers who use this app is estimated at 100,000 in Jordan within the first year alone, and similar numbers are expected once the system is installed at UNRWA health centers in surrounding countries and areas,” Tamer says. “This is one way to start making a change to make the world a better place.”

Sawsan Haddad is in charge of the volunteers who work in refugee camps as teachers of art, music, physical education, youth activities, and environment. One of her priorities is to build bridges of good communication among the volunteers, the schools, and society as she conducts workshops and other activities. The workshops directly involve teachers, students, and parents with the broader goal of encouraging good manners and positive behavior throughout society by involving regular people. “Change is difficult,” Sawsan says, “But volunteers are able to make the change. Volunteers are role models in our society.” She adds proudly, “That is why their program is one of the most successful in the world.”