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Qudra 2 Resilience Dialogues

# INVESTING IN BASIC SERVICES: FROM CRISIS TO OPPORTUNITY?

August 5th 2021

## Summary report

“Investing in basic services: from crisis to opportunity?” is the second of a six-part series of web dialogues, hosted by the Qudra 2 Programme, that bring together practitioners from local and international implementing partners as well as donor representatives to share good practices in the protracted Syrian and Iraqi crises.

### Introduction

The crises in Syria and Iraq have displaced millions from their homes and severely affected

Not only are basic services essential for a life in dignity (by providing water for drinking and cleaning for example), they also form the basis for education, thriving local economies as well as for social cohesion and stability in the communities hosting displaced persons.

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Moderator



Sami HOURANI

Founding CEO of FORSA online portal. Member of board of trustees of the National Center for Human Rights and the National Commission for Women

Speaker



Hasan AL JBOUR

Deputy Governor of Al-Mafraq governorate, Jordan

Speaker



Dr Wasim DAHER

Director General of the South Lebanon Water Establishment

Speaker



Hoshang MOHAMMED

Director General of the Joint Crisis Coordination Centre of the Kurdistan Regional Government, Iraq

Speaker



Juliana TURJMAN

Component Manager, Supporting Participatory Resource Management to Stabilise the Situation in Host Communities, GIZ Jordan

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### Objectives

#### Identifying what works, what does not and why?

- Are we providing enough support to countries affected by the crises in Syria and Iraq in providing basic services?
- Is it the kind of support that is needed?
- What progress is being made?
- Can these crises be considered as opportunity to provide more high-quality and inclusive services to host communities?

### Outcomes

#### Result of audience polls conducted during the web-dialogue

Statement	Participants agreeing
Crises in the region have led to a systemic shift to more inclusive and higher quality services.	<b>5%</b>
Some projects lead to progress, but there is no systemic improvement.	<b>74%</b>
International support is preventing the worst, but no more.	<b>16%</b>
International support for basic services in the region has had largely no effect on peoples' lives.	<b>5%</b>

Which is the biggest single obstacle to a systemic improvement in basic services?	Participants' choice
Available funding.	<b>30%</b>
Technical and managerial knowledge and skills.	<b>17%</b>
Lack of political will and bureaucratic inertia.	<b>53%</b>

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### Challenges hindering the delivery of quality basic services

- The sheer number of refugees and IDPs are stretching basic services to their limits and, in several instances, beyond.
- Lack of political will and grinding bureaucracy can hinder progress – though partners on the ground disagree that this is a major obstacle.
- Funding has been declining and the economic downturn caused by the COVID19- pandemic has decreased public revenues.
- Technical capacity is lacking for designing and implementing strategies to address the current situation.
- Current drought is a problem for protecting water flow and sanitation.
- Local contexts such as the devaluation of local currency, lack of hard currency and political instability can compound all other challenges.

### Recommendations for developing quality and sustainable basic services

- For transformative impact, donor support should align with locally developed strategies and invest in local structures. Where those strategies do not exist, donors need to help partners to develop these. Partnerships with local authorities are crucial for success.
- To effectively support partners as they address local challenges, planning horizons of international support programmes need to be extended, as they currently often do not go beyond one year.
- As many services are interdependent, there needs to be a holistic view of all basic services, including “soft interventions” such as awareness raising. Innovation, including digitalisation and sustainable energy solutions, should be promoted.
- Dialogue between all stakeholders should be strengthened in order to bridge the divide between service providers and users. Adopting a participatory approach to the challenges can help provide solutions as well as increase awareness and ownership of development projects. CSOs and citizen’s initiatives must be supported and included into the discussion because they are crucial to fill gaps where service providers cannot.
- To preserve social cohesion, funding from international organisations must not discriminate and favor refugees but consider all people living in the area: both refugees and host communities.

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### The Situation in Jordan Hasan AL JBOUR



#### How do basic services affect the economic and social situation in the Al-Mafraq governorate in Jordan?

The population of Al-Mafraq is about 600,000, including 230,000 Syrian people. The large number of immigrants has created a burden on all services provided to local citizens, which in turn weakens social cohesion and stability in the community. Hospitals and primary care units are congested, which has negatively affected the quality of the medical services to all. The quality of our children's education is also at risk as the massive presence of immigrants has overcrowded classrooms.

#### How can international funding be better spent?

First of all, funding has been directed primarily towards the immigrant population. This has led some Jordanian citizens to feel unjustly treated and has sometimes created tensions between both groups. Jordanian citizens are also suffering because of the situation and so we should not discriminate between the Jordanian citizen and immigrants regarding basic services. Also, when aid is received, a structured partnership should be set up between the organisation and both the municipality and governate to craft a solution based on realities in the field and not on pre-assumptions.

### CENTRALISED PLANNING IN LEBANON WASIM DAHER



#### What are your main challenges for providing water to the people of Lebanon?

The presence of refugees, the COVID19- crisis as well as Lebanon's economic problems have dramatically affected our ability to provide utilities to the people. Energy is one of our main challenges. Our supply of both electricity from the utility company or diesel to fuel our generators is not reliable. We also struggle with our supply of hard currency needed to pay for many of our maintenance costs. Donors have become more hesitant to provide this much needed hard currency because of the difficult political situation in Lebanon.

#### How does the South Lebanon Water Establishment face these challenges?

In 2019, we devised a **strategy** to make our establishment sustainable and make sure it does not rely on donors in the future. All of the decision-making for our projects is oriented towards this strategy and now NGOs and donors support us on short-term as well as long-term needs. Among our projects: sustainable energy sources and the digitization of our workflows.

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### THE ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS IN IRAQ HOSHANG MOHAMMED



#### How can international organisations help build resiliency for basic services in Kurdistan?

First, we need to design a tailored exit strategy out of the current situation.

Second, we may already have a unified humanitarian and development policy as well as a structured coordination between partners across the region, but we lack funding. The solution would be to increase funding and provide technical capacity to help us develop an exit strategy.

#### What are the strengths that international organisations can bring to tackle these challenges?

The Qudra programme, for example, has bridged the gap between emergency or humanitarian response and the development phase by increasing, expanding, and improving basic services like health services, water, electricity, education, and sanitation. Not only for IDPs but also host communities and refugee camps across the region. During the COVID19- crisis for example, with support from the Qudra programme, we provided training to young graduates of medical schools which helped counter the shortage of qualified personnel in hospitals. We managed to expand the medical services provided to the population and provided practical training to these young graduates who will now have an easier time finding jobs in the healthcare sector.

### INVOLVING LOCAL COMMUNITIES IN JORDAN JULIANA TURJMAN



#### How can interventions at the household level contribute to better basic services?

GIZ Jordan's Participatory Resource Management programme works, among others, on a participatory approach to the challenges. By fostering dialogue and bridging the gap between water providers and water users - local community members and refugees -,we improve their relations and the overall quality of the service. As water users meet with water providers, they can discuss the obstacles they face and find solutions together. Local input has for instance been found to be very valuable for technicians designing the water network.

#### How can this approach help make providing basic services more sustainable?

Involving the local communities in a participatory approach increases the feeling of responsibility and ownership. This ensures sustainability of all aspects of our projects: general infrastructure as well as rooftop water tanks. By enhancing communication between users and providers, we are increasing awareness and engagement, which will have a long-term impact, well beyond the duration of the project.

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**Santiago Moran Medina**, Head of the Spanish cooperation in Jordan, praised the solidarity and efforts deployed by host countries to provide basic and essential services to IDPs and Syrian refugees. He also noted that successes in providing basic services is often uneven: Especially when it comes to providing to the poorest - those groups for which access is limited because of structural inequalities through distribution, geographic location, socio-economic contexts, disparities of gender or education. He underlined that municipalities, the public entities with direct contact to the population, are key front-line providers and their capacities must be reinforced and supported.

### RESILIENCE DIALOGUES SERIES

#### JOINT LEARNING FOR A BETTER RESPONSE TO THE SYRIAN & IRAQI CRISES

Qudra 2 is organising six web-based “Resilience Dialogues” that will bring together practitioners from local and international implementing partners as well as donor representatives in order to share good practices in the protracted Syrian and Iraqi crises.

#### What works? What does not? And why?

In line with its objective of strengthening the resilience of refugees, IDPs, returnees and host communities, the Qudra 2 Programme has always underlined the need for the practical sharing of experience among its wide network of international and regional partners.

#### Exchange leads to innovation.

These online discussion panels will underline practical solutions and exchange on best practices that could be scaled up in specific locations in the region. By providing concrete proposals and recommendations to inform future actions of donors, implementing partners and other stakeholders, Qudra 2’s Resilience Dialogues will help ensure that the European Union and its member states provide the best possible support to the countries and communities affected by the Syrian and Iraqi crises.

**5.6 million Syrian refugees** are registered in Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey and Iraq, straining resources and the social fabric of host countries. source: UNHCR, 2021

This report is produced with the financial support of the European Union, the German Government and Spanish Cooperation. Its contents are the sole responsibility of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH/Qudra Programme and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Commissioning Parties.

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