



Facility for Refugees, Migrants, Forced Displacement and Rural Stability (FARMS)

Addressing forced displacement:
Investing in agriculture and rural people

In recent years, forced displacement has become a global problem of unprecedented scale, driven by conflict, violence, persecution and human rights violations. While the total number of displaced people reached an all-time high of nearly 60 million people in 2015, global attention has focused on the Near East and North Africa (NENA) region, where continued conflict and violence most acutely affect Iraq, Syria, Yemen and neighbouring countries. The total population of concern in the region is estimated at around 22 million people.

According to the Stockholm Declaration, “At the root of conflict and fragility lie injustice, human rights violations, inequality, exclusion, poverty, poor management of natural resources and the absence of inclusive political settlements and capable institutions.” Therefore, people in crisis need not only relief and emergency services; people, communities and countries in crisis also need development strategies that solve underlying problems over the long term.

What is often not recognized is that forced displacement has a strong rural dimension, with large numbers of displaced people originating in rural areas, and now living in rural host communities within or outside their home countries. This leads to degradation of agricultural land and collapse of food production in the areas left behind, and increased pressure on natural resources, food security and agricultural systems in the host communities.

Why IFAD

Investing in agriculture and rural people is critical to sustainably addressing forced displacement, poverty and food security. It helps to increase the self-reliance of displaced persons, and strengthens the resilience of host communities. It also contributes to providing durable solutions to situations of protracted displacement and assists rural returnees to re-establish their livelihoods and agricultural production.

With almost half of IFAD’s ongoing operations in countries with fragile and conflict-affected situations, IFAD has decades of experience working with displaced persons, host communities, and returnees. IFAD is well positioned to be a key partner in bridging the gap between humanitarian and sustainable development responses in rural areas, and is already actively engaged in many of the most-affected regions. The 2015 Addis Ababa Action Agenda recognized IFAD as a major investor in poor rural people and affirmed that rural development could achieve “rich payoffs across the SDGs.”



One in four youth in the Near East and North Africa (NENA) region would like to emigrate.



Village chief and children plant sorghum, millet and beans after a brief rainfall in Dyer Al-Nibba, Yemen.
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IFAD's response

Significant concentrations of refugees in the NENA region are in rural areas, particularly in areas close to the Syrian border, and often in important agricultural zones where casual employment is available and costs of living are lower than in the cities. Overall, only around 10 per cent of Syrian refugees are living in formal camps, with the remainder living in host communities, many of which are in rural areas where agriculture is the primary source of livelihood.

To respond to the ongoing crisis, IFAD is establishing a **Facility for Refugees, Migrants, Forced Displacement and Rural Stability (FARMS)**. Forcibly displaced people are of particular concern because they have specific vulnerabilities that affect their ability to seize economic opportunities, and which often result in a poverty trap. Because such vulnerabilities are specific to them, traditional poverty reduction efforts may not suffice. Therefore, special interventions are needed, and this is where IFAD has a comparative advantage.

IFAD has a broad network of partnerships, including governments, NGOs, regional and international organizations, the private sector, communities and community-based institutions. IFAD is a trusted partner, recognized as politically neutral and effective at delivering results, and for staying engaged in complex situations.

While immediate, often life-saving, humanitarian support is urgently needed in affected NENA countries, the long-term solution to reducing the frequency of such crises is to promote actions that balance the needs of the individuals and households that have been displaced with those of host communities.

IFAD in Jordan

The influx of an estimated 1.4 million Syrian refugees into neighbouring Jordan has placed increased demands on food, natural resources and services, with both Syrian refugees and vulnerable Jordanian host communities feeling the pressure. In response, IFAD is partnering with the Jordan River Foundation, established and chaired by Her Majesty Queen Rania Al Abdullah, to help build resilience in Mafraq, a border area marked by persistent unemployment and poverty. Thanks to affordable revolving loans, 140 host families were able to revive their farming activities and livestock breeding. An additional 265 host families benefited from three community-led, income-generating projects for raising sheep and growing greenhouse vegetables. The project has enabled 2,000 rural host families to produce nutritious food for their households and earn income through the sale of surplus. Mafraq also hosts the Zaatari refugee camp, the largest in Jordan. IFAD has supported training for some 600 host persons and Syrian refugees in and around the camp on home gardening, greenhouse cultivation, poultry and sheep farming, financial management and marketing. The IFAD grant also helped strengthen the capacity of community-based organizations to participate fully in local decision-making. These efforts, in line with the Jordan Response Plan for the Syria Crisis 2015, are helping to promote cooperation between host communities and refugees.



Collecting the day's tomato pickings, Jordan.
Rural jobs can help stem migration.
©IFAD/Lana Slezić



Bedouin woman with child in Aleppo region,
northern Syria.
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IFAD in Syria

IFAD's community-driven approach has proven itself as a tool to increase stability and enhance resilience to conflict. In Syria's north-eastern, central, coastal and southern provinces, microfinance revolving funds – called *sanadiq*, or “savings boxes” – were established by three IFAD-supported rural development projects. The projects allowed farmers to bypass moneylenders, and gave entrepreneurs and others much easier access to microloans. By 2014, the projects had reached more than 24,250 beneficiaries, including 10,500 rural women, with a loan repayment rate of 100 per cent.

Today, much of the nearly 130 *sanadiq* network is still operational, and small farmers and their families continue to benefit. The recent Integrated Livestock Development Project succeeded in creating job opportunities and increasing food security, especially for families headed by rural women – gains that have not been undone by the conflict raging in much of the country.

Short-term crises call for long-term solutions

The goal of the FARMS facility is to ensure that poor rural people overcome poverty through remunerative, sustainable and resilient livelihoods. Looking at the crisis holistically, FARMS' objectives cover both host areas and origin or sending areas. In host areas, the local communities will be supported in coping with the influx of displaced people by making their agriculture more productive and sustainable. The displaced, in turn, will be better able to contribute to their host communities, and better prepared to return home when the situation improves. In sending areas, economic opportunities will be created so that people who have left have something to return to, and those who remain have a chance to build their livelihoods.

The Facility will aim to have an initial envelope of US\$100 million and the priority countries will be Djibouti, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Somalia, Sudan, Tunisia, Turkey and Yemen. In the first phase, the facility will focus on the NENA region where the current crisis is most acute, with the possibility of scaling up globally in the future.

FARMS will take a three-pronged approach encompassing cofinancing for IFAD projects, regional and country-specific grants, and policy engagement, communications and knowledge management.



A women's group in West Kordofan, Sudan provides access to finance that is key to improving household productivity and livelihoods in remote rural areas.
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IFAD and its partners have already invested a total of **US\$1.2 billion** in development projects in the region, with a further **US\$600 million** to be committed over the 2016-2018 period.

Its objectives are to:

- Implement at least 500 community infrastructure projects
- Create at least 1 million days of temporary work and at least 20,000 employment opportunities, primarily for youth
- Increase social resilience by building community and local government capacity to manage their development, resolve conflicts, and address the needs of refugees
- Improve governance and management of natural resources, particularly land and water
- Improve the policy and regulatory frameworks to address the needs of rural host and sending communities.

IFAD recognizes that sustainable development cannot be achieved without addressing the closely interlinked issues of forced displacement, migration and stability, particularly in communities where more than 10 per cent of the population is made up of displaced persons, or more than 25 per cent of the young people plan to emigrate. FARMS will be a powerful tool for IFAD and committed partners to address these needs.

IFAD invests in rural people, empowering them to reduce poverty, increase food security, improve nutrition and strengthen resilience. Since 1978, we have provided US\$17.7 billion in grants and low-interest loans to projects that have reached about 459 million people. IFAD is an international financial institution and a specialized United Nations agency based in Rome – the UN's food and agriculture hub.

Contact:
Khalida Bouzar
Director
Near East, North Africa and Europe
Tel: +39 06 5459 2878
k.bouzar@ifad.org



International Fund for Agricultural Development
Via Paolo di Dono, 44 - 00142 Rome, Italy
Tel: +39 06 54591 - Fax: +39 06 5043463
E-mail: ifad@ifad.org
www.ifad.org
www.ruralpovertyportal.org

 ifad-un.blogspot.com
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COVER: A Somali girl uses the water provided by a sand storage dam.
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Ahlam Ali Muftah runs a pigeon farm in Egypt on land that was reclaimed from desert.
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