



Amman, 25 September 2017 — FCA presented today the outcomes of the project TAREEQI (My Way), dedicated to improving employment and small-scale entrepreneurship opportunities for marginalized refugees and host community members in Jordan. The 18-month program ran in partnership with the Vocational Training Corporation (VTC), a semi-governmental vocational training provider, and the Finnish-based Mercuria Business College and particularly focused on inclusivity, by pro-actively targeting women and persons with disability (PWD).

“FCA’s work is rights-based, which means that our operations are guided by equality, non-discrimination and responsibility. It has been encouraging to work alongside women and persons with disabilities through this project.” – Ashraf Yacoub, FCA Regional Director, Middle East

Based on an initial market assessment, VTC trained Jordanians, Syrians, and other refugees from Mafrqa, Zarqa, and East Amman in demand-driven skills. In all, 424 participants graduated with improved skills and knowledge; more than half of graduates were female. To support and boost women’s participation in the training, FCA provided and upgraded childcare services near each institute in cooperation with Fida International, a Finnish-based NGO operating in Jordan. FCA also rehabilitated the training institutes to improve accessibility for PWD, resulting in over 10% of graduates being PWD. So far, over 84 people have been employed after the training, mainly in industrial and service sectors, and 116 graduates have received additional training to start a business with their new skills.

In parallel, Mercuria Business College and FCA also developed an intensive entrepreneurship program. This program, which utilizes innovative training techniques with oversight from Finland, included coaching and small grants and achieved inspiring results. Graduates of the training established 49 businesses, which are posting significant monthly revenue. Over half of the businesses are female-led, and over 10% are run by persons with disabilities. Syrians comprised 30% of the participants. Under current legislation, formalization of ownership of a business is challenging for Syrian refugees; some Syrian entrepreneurs were able to form joint ventures with Jordanians, a solution championed by the Government of Jordan.. However, this approach is not without challenges.

“It is good to build a business with a Jordanian partner. Unfortunately, there is no law or official paper that conveys my right to own a company. And I’m always concerned about losing ownership of my own company,” reports a Syrian entrepreneur funded by the program. Based on the experiences gained during the project, FCA is working in coordination with other INGOs to advocates for the need for developing a clear legal framework for joint ventures. This will allow Syrians to operate businesses with Jordanians in a way that protects the rights of Syrian business co-owners and benefits the Jordanian economy.

Wazirah, a Syrian widow who participated in the program, highlights the importance of developing legal pathways for business registration. Through her training with FCA, she gained the confidence, knowledge and resources needed provide for her son and secure his education. *“This project was one step out of my comfort zone; I feel I am stronger now,” she said.*

TAREEQI was funded by the European Regional Development and Protection Programme for the Middle East (RDPP) - a multi-donor initiative supported by the European Union, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.



About FCA (finnchurchaid.fi)

Finn Church Aid (FCA) is the largest Finnish development cooperation organisation and the second largest provider of humanitarian assistance. FCA operates in 14 countries, where the needs are most dire. We work with the poorest people, regardless of their religious beliefs, ethnic background or political convictions. Our work is based on rights, which means that our operations are guided by equality, non-discrimination and responsibility.

About RDPP (rdpp-me.org)

The European Regional Development and Protection Programme for the Middle East (RDPP) is a multi-donor initiative supported by the European Union, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. The objective is to support Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq to better understand, plan, and mitigate the impact of forced displacement. In partnership with governments, civil society, NGOs, and UN agencies the programme seeks to enhance protection and create socio-economic development opportunities for refugees and host communities. In Jordan the RDPP supports 12 partnerships with more than 10 million Euro. A new phase of the programme will be launched later in 2018 and continue to support partners in Jordan until 2021.