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UN Volunteer Teacher Sanaa Hussein, during her Arabic lesson, interacting with her students of grade 3 at Jefnah School in Taalabaya, located in the Bekaa Valley. Sanaa is a refugee from the State of Palestine, and teaches Palestinian student refugees twice displaced to Lebanon from Syria.

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## Refugees serving as UN Volunteer Teachers educate fellow refugees displaced from Syria to Lebanon

In Lebanon, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) approached UNV seeking a way to recruit teachers to support the learning needs of Palestinian refugee children arriving from Syria — refugees twice-displaced due to conflict in the region. UNRWA wanted to assure that education could be provided to these children to help them recover from the shocks of conflict and to give them future opportunities to succeed in life despite their circumstances. The solution brokered by UNV was the recruitment of Palestinian refugees to serve as UN Volunteer Teachers, a strategy that both reinforces the skills of Palestinian refugees and answers the needs of their communities in Lebanon.

In total, around 206 UN Volunteer teachers were deployed over the course of 3 school years, to provide quality, inclusive and equitable education services to both 31,231 Palestinian refugee children already living in Lebanon and 5,318 Palestinian refugee children who newly arrived from Syria.

The support of UN Volunteer teachers was extended to UNRWA schools for the academic years 2016-2017 and 2017-2018.

The newly arrived refugee children from Syria, alongside the Palestine refugee children already in Lebanon, received additional support and specific coaching to support their transition from the Syrian to the Lebanese curriculum.

The UNV-UNRWA partnership helped Palestinian refugee children from Syria to recover from conflict while at the same time contributing to the education of Palestinian refugees already in Lebanon. It provided opportunities for professionals from the Palestinian refugee community to support and inspire hope in the Palestinian refugee children.

The awareness of approximately 609 mothers of first-grader students and 660 students (grade 7 to 12) was raised on life and study skills, as well as other topics relevant to the Palestinian refugee community.

### **Results achieved**

In 2015, UNV conducted the selection and recruitment process for over one hundred Palestinian refugees to serve as national UN Volunteer teachers for UNRWA schools for refugees throughout Lebanon.

UNRWA's Education System professionally qualified the national UN Volunteer teachers to provide quality, inclusive and equitable education services to both 31,231 Palestinian refugee children originally living in Lebanon and 5,318 newly arrived Palestinian refugee children from Syria during the school year 2015-2016. The successful support of UN Volunteer teachers was extended to UNRWA schools for the academic years 2016-2017 and 2017-2018. At the beginning of their assignments, UN Volunteer teachers received induction training on volunteering, and mentoring from education specialists, while a few were enrolled in diploma courses for teachers to improve their technical skills.

Activities also included a UNV-UNRWA joint summer community-based initiatives in five Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon during 2016. A total of 20 Palestinian refugees serving with UNRWA as national UN Volunteer teachers raised the awareness of around 609 mothers (of first-grader students) and 660 students (grade 7 to 12) on life and study skills, as well as other topics relevant to the Palestinian refugee community.

### **Challenges and how they were addressed**

During the recruitment phase, a number of challenges arose in ensuring the timely deployment of the teachers on the school start date:

Delays were experienced in receiving UNRWA recruitment requests, which depended on the finalization of the class formation exercise to determine the exact number of teachers


needed per school, cycle and course;

Difficulties were faced in reaching out to selected teachers who lived in refugee camps where access to the internet and the mobile network coverage were limited.

The UNV Field Unit managed these challenges and ensured that all teachers were deployed in due time by getting additional capacity from UNDP Country Office and organizing meetings with teachers in groups to support the completion of recruitment documents and their timely submission.

The partnership came to a close in 2018. One of the main factors was the difficult financial situation that UNRWA faced at that time. In addition, the influx of Palestinian refugee children from Syria decreased.

 <https://www.unv.org/news/refugees-turned-un-volunteers-educate-fellow-refugees>

 <https://www.unv.org/news/un-volunteer-teachers-enable-unrwa-provide-education-palestinian-refugees-syria>

 Arab States

• UNRWA • Lebanon • State of Palestine • refugees • teachers

Sustainable Development Goal: [SDG 10: Reduced inequalities](#) [SDG 17: Partnerships for the goals](#)