



Investing in rural people

Small Ruminants Investment and Graduating Households in Transition Project



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The Small Ruminants Investment and Graduating Households in Transition Project (SIGHT) aims to reduce poverty and improve national food security among Syrian refugees and host communities in Jordan by providing a package of support to boost small-ruminant productivity.

Water scarcity, feed shortage and rangelands degradation are just a few of the challenges that Jordan's small-ruminant sector faces. Many communities in this sector are also hosting Syrian refugees. Both the host communities and the refugee populations frequently struggle with poverty – yet many have the potential to escape it.

The project's activities are organized into two components:

- Investing in farmer services to strengthen the complementarity of public and private services offered to small ruminants producers.
- Providing smallholder farmers with grant-based income-generating packages for on- and off-farm enterprises in order to improve livelihoods and access to financial services.

The project is implemented in the six northern and central governorates of Ajloun, Irbid, Jerash, Madaba, Mafraq and Amman. The primary target groups include some 11,920 households (or 44,822 people) among vulnerable smallholder farmers. Additionally, the project supports 1,415 Syrian refugee households and 1,135 households from vulnerable host communities.



Having arrived from Syria in 2012, Insaf Refai, 43, had a lot to worry about. The challenges of leaving her home and trying to adapt to a new one were coupled with her situation as a single mother. She had four young children to take care of.

Although she felt welcomed by the generosity of her new Jordanian neighbours in the city of Ar-Ramtha, she needed to find a source of income to provide for her family. She decided to turn her childhood sewing hobby into a business – but first, she needed to bring her sewing machine from Syria.

A few supportive relatives managed to bring her the sewing machine in pieces. She reassembled it and started sewing at her house. She earned just enough to meet her children's needs, but these grew along with her children.

Insaf applied for a grant from SIGHT in 2022, proposing to expand her sewing business. She received a total of JOD 1,000 and now is running her own sewing workshop. She also benefited from training on how to manage her business and market her products and services on social media. She hired a skilled Syrian neighbour and occasionally hires others on a freelance basis. She is now renowned in her neighbourhood as a reliable tailor who produces colourful dresses and fixes old ones. Her customer base is growing, and she is able to earn a secure income each month. Insaf's profits grew fivefold after she received the grant.





“I felt that I should stand up and be strong for my children. I got up and coped with the new life, and people’s love was with me and helped me a lot. Even though we were poor, a strong woman doesn’t ask others for money and has to prove herself,” Insaf said.

Nadia Hammad is a 42-year-old mother of two boys and three girls who lives in Al Mafraq city. Nadia and her husband are suffering from several debilitating illnesses. While struggling with chronic disease, she has to provide for her family as her husband is unable to work.

Nadia, a Jordanian national, receives JOD 149 per month from the National Aid Fund. However, the government funds are not enough to meet her family's needs.

Last year, Nadia received JOD 818 from the SIGHT project, which she used to buy an egg hatchery. She also received an additional JOD 100 per month for six months, which enabled her to purchase eggs to put in the hatching machine and food for the newly born chickens.

Nadia was able to sell the chickens to her neighbours and with the help of her husband and her oldest son, she also sold them in a bird market near her house.

“It made me happy that I can provide an income for my children and that I am doing something,” Nadia said.





Khalaf Refaee, whose right leg was injured by a bullet in Syria, came to Jordan with his son Ahmed. A SIGHT grant of JOD 749 enabled Khalaf and Ahmed to purchase an egg hatchery and fertilized eggs. Their plan is to become self-sufficient by breeding the chickens they raise to produce future eggs.





“I just bought a fridge from the profit we made. It was used but in a very good condition. I hope that I will grow enough mother hens and secure a small piece of land to cultivate poultry fodder to minimize costs and expand my business,” Ahmad said.



In addition to providing poor rural people and people facing extreme poverty with graduation grants, the rural finance component of SIGHT helps smallholder farmers and producers access sources of finance. More than 550 beneficiaries received loans averaging JOD 5,000 for breeding or dairy production projects.

Fatma Ahmed Abdelrahman is a Jordanian national from Amman. She received a loan from SIGHT in 2021. Fatma used the JOD 5,000 to improve her dairy-processing workplace. She expanded the rooms and built a much-needed storage space to preserve her products. In the past, she used to keep them outside in the garden as she did not have enough space inside. This was not ideal as her products were exposed to the heat and cold.

The quality of her products attracted many customers to her house, where she sells the products, and increased her ambitions for the future.

“I want to expand my business because I think that I make a good product. My plan is to get a new loan and open a shop so that it’s easier for the customers to come,” Fatma said.







Ahmed Youssef was a young student when he was forced to flee Syria in 2012. Arriving in Irbid, Jordan, Ahmed struggled to continue his degree and earn a living.

Ahmed and his brothers had no stable income. He had to quit his education because he could not afford to attend university in Jordan. In 2022, he successfully applied for a JOD 1,030 grant from SIGHT to set up a business using mosaic skills he learned as a child in his home country.

The environmentally friendly business uses rock waste to make the mosaics, which Ahmed and his brothers sell to tourists as souvenirs.

Beyond selling the art pieces in touristic bazaars in Jordan, Ahmed and his brothers are also being commissioned to work on houses, churches and restaurants. Their customers include a Yemeni restaurant that asked them to replicate the Bab Al-Yemen gate using mosaic pieces.

Not only does Ahmed's workshop provide a stable source of income for him and his four brothers, but he also hires freelance Syrian students who want to earn money to support their education.



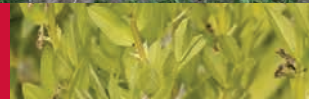
“Our project has different aspects. It’s a cultural project because we preserve a Jordanian tradition. It’s a touristic project as we showcase Arabic and Jordanian monuments in our mosaics. It’s also environmental, because of the upcycling aspect,” Ahmed said.

Muneira, 43, lives with her three children in Khalediaha village in Al Mafraq. She is the family breadwinner.

A year ago, she saw a post on Facebook promoting the SIGHT loan programme. She then decided to apply for the loan and replicate her mother's old profitable business: goat breeding. She obtained JOD 5,000 and bought 12 heads of goat.

Muneira started to benefit from the goat's milk production to meet her family's needs for milk and dairy products. She hopes that, in the near future, she will be able to breed more goats and sell them to start paying off her loans and provide for her family.

“I have been divorced for six years, but I always provided for my children, even when I was living with my husband. I started from ground zero. I used to work in farms, but then the idea of the project came to me, and I thought it's good to have something of my own that I can teach them in the future,” Muneira said.









Ahmed Jaradat, 33, lives with his parents and sibling in Irbid governorate. He breeds livestock and has a successful project.

He was chosen by the Ministry of Agriculture as a breeding partner and received support from Al Khanasrah Breeding Station to increase his livestock production. The station provided him with artificial insemination services using a good breed of sheep.

The technology improved the quality of Ahmed's own sheep and enhanced their reproductive process.

“I sell them back to Al Khanasrah station. They buy my sheep because they are a good breed, the result of their insemination project,” said Ahmed.

Hashem Al Khaza'lah, a 56-year-old Jordanian national, is one of the oldest breeding partners with SIGHT. Like many people, he used to have sheep with low productivity. Since he participated in the project and was supported with artificial insemination from Al Khanasrah station, he started having better breeds with better milk productivity. The percentage of twins and triplets also increased.

Hashem used to have 450 heads of sheep, but their milk productivity was very low. Each sheep only produced 300-500 grams of milk. Now, some of his sheep can produce up to 1.5 kilograms. The percentage of twins also increased from 2-3 per cent to 10-16 per cent.

“I isolated the ones that had low productivity and sold them. I decreased the number of sheep that I have, and the milk productivity is even higher than before. I have 300 sheep now. I decreased the number of sheep by 150, but in return the milk productivity increased,” said Hashem.







To improve the breeding of sheep and goats, SIGHT bought a herd of Awassi sheep for the centres of Khanasrah and Fujeir and imported a herd of Shami goats for the Walla station. These are Jordan's main three stations for breeding Awassi sheep and Shami goats. The project started applying artificial insemination techniques by collecting sperm from livestock with high production capacity. Applying the artificial insemination techniques on the livestock of farmers and breeding partners improved livestock productivity, increasing the number of offspring and the quantity of milk.

SIGHT chose around 26 breeding partners who had suitable infrastructure to apply the genetic improvement programme. They are a starting point to be able to reach the rest of the farmers. The project offered genetically improved livestock from one of the breeding stations at 50-60 per cent off market price and bought the resulting offspring for double what other farmers would pay. In addition, SIGHT offered a package of incentives such as treatments, vaccines and vitamins.

The project also conducted several rehabilitation activities to enhance the infrastructure of the breeding stations. This included building new sheds, paving roads around the barns, enhancing feeders and drinkers, establishing a rain-drainage system, purchasing an automatic milking machine and constructing the infrastructure needed to assemble the milking parlour.



The project also built a vet clinic and training centre fully equipped to transfer new technologies in small-ruminant breeding to the local communities near the station. In addition, several station staff members received special training to properly implement the project activities.

Khanasrah station is the hub for transferring the genetically improved semen of Awassi rams for almost 144 small-ruminant herders. This artificial insemination programme will continue until the last year of the project's field implementation. The staff also cooperates with the Walla station team to perform the artificial insemination programme for Shami goats.

Al-Walla Station, in Madaba city, is the hub for transferring the genetically improved semen of Shami bucks to goat farmers. The artificial insemination programme will continue until the last year of the project's field implementation.










Fayez Al-Edwan, 55, owns a sheep farm in the Al Ghabawi area of Jordan. He is one of the pioneer herders performing artificial insemination for his sheep through SIGHT.

“The milk production increased significantly with the new breeds of sheep. This was very good for me and my business,” Fayez said.

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