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Belgian development agency Enabel opens office in Jordan

Yesterday, Enabel signed the official agreement with Jordan to start activities in the country. These activities are part of a European Union regional programme, which aims to strengthen the resilience of Syrian refugees as well as the host communities in four countries in the region.



"I am very pleased with Enabel's commitment to giving Syrian refugees a perspective and strengthening their position in society", says Minister for Development Cooperation Meryame Kitir. "The Syrian crisis has been going on for far too long. People should not remain dependent on humanitarian aid alone."

Jordan has been bearing the consequences of the Syrian conflict for years: It is among the countries in the region that have taken in most of the refugees. This weighs on Jordan's education system and public services. Many refugees are untrained and find no work, and their integration is difficult. In cooperation with small and medium-sized enterprises, refugees and disadvantaged young people are offered specific vocational training, which meets the needs of the local labour market. In this way, the chance that they will find work afterwards increases.

"We are very pleased with this new partnership," says Jean Van Wetter, Managing director of Enabel, from Amman. "We have set up similar projects in Uganda and Palestine. We will use the same success formula here. In Uganda we have already trained 12,000 people in that way. Sixty-five percent of them found a job afterwards. We also received much positive feedback about better integration and contacts between refugees and the host communities because underlying tensions are being removed. We are confident that

this will also create a positive dynamic here.”

With European funding and in collaboration with local institutes and NGOs, 2000 Syrian refugees and disadvantaged Jordan youths will be trained, mainly in the north of Jordan (Irbid, Marfaq and Amman), for instance in the Zaatari refugee camp.

The focus is on work-based learning, with refugees and young people gaining real practical experience in the workplace, in businesses. The approach creates a partnership between training institutions and the business community. The quality and relevance of training is improving and the chances of finding a job after training are increasing. The training courses are intended for workers in the construction sector, tourism, mechanical engineering, electricity and the bakery industry.

Enabel wants to train a thousand refugees and a thousand Jordan youths, most of them between 15 and 35 years old. Seventy percent of them are women.

The project also provides for the training of the participating companies, so that they prepare their employees to assist the young people in the best conditions.

This action of the Belgian development agency is part of a three-year regional European support programme launched in Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq and Turkey. It is implemented with four other European development agencies. By pooling European expertise the EU aims to respond to the ongoing crisis in the region.

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Jean Van Wetter
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