

White Paper Offers Development Ideas for Jordan in Light of Refugee Surge

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DAI's latest white paper, "[From Resilience to Growth: Realizing Jordan's Development Vision](#)," outlines a development path for the Kingdom designed to generate economic development in the context of the Syrian refugee crisis.

The white paper "is intended as a survey of DAI's learning and, more broadly, an invitation to draw from these [experiences](#) to enrich the design of new [assistance] programs," write its authors, who include leaders and advisors from DAI's Jordan-based programs funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and other partners.

The document describes the challenges facing the Kingdom, chief among them an unprecedented influx of refugees from neighboring Syria that has [increased](#) Jordan's population from 7.5 million in 2011 to 9.4 million in 2016. It offers recommendations for turning the crisis—which is stressing Jordan's ability to provide local services such as healthcare, education, and transport—into opportunities for sustainable economic growth.



USAID Jordan Workforce Development Project

DAI's recommendations cover:

- The natural environment, including developing energy and managing scarce water resources;
- The policy environment, including measures to promote job growth and e-government initiatives such as online citizen services (license renewals, utility payments, business registrations, tax forms, and so on);
- Workforce development and entrepreneurship, including employment services and business incubators;
- Health and service delivery, including optimization of Jordan's excellent but strained health care system;
- Firm-level technical assistance to Jordanian businesses; and
- Reconstruction and rural economic development, including in transport and warehousing.

Taken together, these interventions align with recent policy recommendations by the World Bank, which has worked with the Jordanian government to find practical ways for implementing the Kingdom's new five-year economic growth plan. The wide-ranging strategy aims to ensure that international support allocated for the Syria crisis meets the immediate humanitarian needs of refugees and host communities as well as contributing to Jordan's long-term economic stability.

"From Resilience to Growth" argues that although the Syria crisis has galvanized the Jordanian government, private sector, and international donor community around common activities, "ensuring that these activities are part of a robust plan for economic growth will require specific development interventions."



USAID Jordan Competitiveness Program

For example, recent DAI-led interventions include:

- **Developing** three Employment Promotion Units (EPUs) that placed more than 5,000 new hires; German development agency GIZ has pledged to fund further assistance to the EPUs to become fee-based and self-sustaining;
- **Supporting 18 development zones** to facilitate local business participation in the Jordan-European Union Trade Agreement in sectors such as garment manufacture and agriculture; and
- Assisting in **preparing bond issuances** totaling \$3.75 billion that saved the Government of Jordan millions of dollars in interest while creating fiscal space for domestic expenditure.

The document recommends that donors allocate funds to develop the EPUs and encourage them to seek further collaboration with government-subsidized programs that benefit citizens and cities, which bear the brunt of the refugee influx. Jordan, the authors note, could also benefit from “bootcamps” that sharpen the technical knowledge of fresh graduates and improve the “soft skills”—such as teamwork, punctuality, and communication—they need for employability.

DAI is planning a series of outreach events to share its recommendations with a range of donors.