



By Gillian Southey, CWS communications coordinator.

The women find new friends at a Life Skills Programme run by DSPR.

Bringing People Together

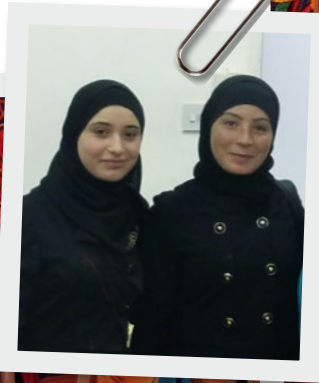
A group of Syrian refugee women cluster around a kitchen table making pickles. Glad of the company, they are keen to do something useful and get out of their cramped rooms. Learning to make pickles is easy for these women who have lived through so much. Listening to their stories, Trish Murray International Programmes Coordinator found it hard to comprehend the choices they have had to make.

One is named Sana. She is 24 years old and lives in Jordan's Talibeh camp. She has been married for four years, but her husband has been in prison for the last three. He is accused of being a terrorist. He has never met his son.

Sana has been to see him once. The dangerous trip took her back into Syria from where she had fled with her son and in-laws. It was hard to leave her son, but someone had to go. She does not talk about what happened. Enough to say she could see the torture marks on her husband's body. Coming back was difficult too. The Jordanian authorities would not let her cross at the border with Syria so she used the last of her money to get to Lebanon and re-enter that way.



Above : DSPR's children's forums are popular with refugees who want their children to keep learning. Many are unable to attend school.



Above right: Sana (on right) with Asma.

Reunited with her son and in-laws she has to find work to support them. She tries not to think about the past – her husband had a good job and they lived well. Now she has to support her family. UNHCR pays them US\$35 and a food coupon each month. There is nothing to spare. Selling pickles at the local bazaar will help but so does meeting other women– something that would not have happened back home on the outskirts of Damascus where she worked in her home.

It is the Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees that makes hope possible. Refugees helping refugees know when to probe or when to comfort. Setting up committees of refugees to manage their own needs knits networks of support and gives the women something practical to do.

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Rebecca lives half a world away in the Philippines. She too has a harrowing story to tell. At 48 she has always worked very hard. She and her husband grew coconuts and rice. They sent their two oldest children aged 16 and 19 to work in Manila to help pay for the schooling of the younger two and pay for a better house. Now the house is gone and the farm completely damaged.

Typhoon Haiyan pushed them to the very edge. "Never in my entire life had I experienced a typhoon as strong and frightening as this," she said. The family was inside when the roof and the sidewalls toppled. They could not move. Debris flew everywhere and rain soaked everything. "Everyone in my family felt so nervous and afraid. We cried and prayed for the storm to stop. We felt that it was already the end of the world for us," she said.

And then the next day they saw everything they had worked for was ruined - home, trees and gardens. Even as it continued to rain they salvaged what they could to make temporary shelter and find enough to eat. Grateful for food relief and some tarpaulins, they kept going. "The best relief assistance was the [corrugated iron] sheets from Developers Foundation and Christian World Service because they last longer and motivated us to rebuild our house," she added. With a new house, they now need a little more to help them replant their lands. Eight months later many Filipinos need help to rebuild.



Typhoon Yolanda survivor, Rebecca, recounts her family's harrowing ordeal.

Please support the Winter Appeal so our partners can bring people together to help each other get through the traumas they have experienced. In Jordan and Lebanon, DSPR runs life skills and health programmes for groups made up of half each of locals and refugees. When over one fifth of Lebanon's population has come from Syria and tensions are very high, this is peace making work. In the Philippines, Developers has organised the cheapest roofing iron with strong local government support. Their work is successful because it brings people together to do what needs to be done. Your help means they can do much more than they could by themselves.

Want to give regularly?

More people are finding it easier to make a regular gift to CWS rather than respond to each appeal. You can set up an automatic payment and know that you are giving women like Sana and Rebecca help when they need it. Download a form from our website or write to Emma at cws@cws.org.nz. Thank you.

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Winter 2014

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