

EC Partner

Syrian Ministry of Health

Facts and Figures

- EC contribution: €39 million
- Duration: 2002-2010



EUROPEAN
COMMISSION

Health care and training

Improving the equity, efficiency and quality of the health system in Syria

Health Sector Modernisation Programme (HSMP)

We now have the skills to improve the system. With the support of others, we will be able to change it.

Dr. Abyad, Dr. Tayseer, Dr. Sajer & Dr. Kamen, graduates of the Center for Strategic Health Studies



Context

The Syrian health system - traditionally free of charge - faces big challenges. With new and growing needs of the population, the Syrian government now has to tackle issues such as the financing of social protection, the provision of quality services to the poorest segment of the population, and the large influx of Iraqi refugees.

Objectives

- Modernise primary and secondary health care facilities
- Strengthen the capacities of the Ministry of Health in policy, planning, regulation and legislation
- Develop the health financing system and statistical and financial data
- Build the capacity of current and future health system leaders.

Impact

- 110 health care centres and 11 hospitals received new or upgraded equipment, including 60 haemodialysis machines, 12 ultrasound scanners, 20 ambulances, 30 minibuses, 12 cool vans and 20 cool rooms.
- Three pilot hospitals in Damascus and Lattakia have received the Hospital Management Information System (MIS) for patient care, hospital administration and critical financial accounting.
- Reviews and proposals have been made addressing the main pillars of health care system reform.
- A new Centre for Strategic Health Studies offers four MA Degrees in Hospital Management, Health Systems Management, Health Economics & Public Health. In 2009, the first 19 students graduated.

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EuropeAid

Building capacity, experience and vision

Dr Abyad is a gynaecologist, Dr Taysseer a paediatrician. They both work for UNRWA, the UN agency providing assistance to Palestinian refugees. For several years, they have been working with various Palestinian groups living in Syria.

In 2007, UNRWA and the Ministry of Health gave them the opportunity to attend the newly opened Centre of Strategic Health Studies in Damascus. From September 2007 to August 2009, Dr. Abyad and Dr. Taysseer developed their health care capacities through the Centre's Masters in Public Health programme.

"Through the courses we got in touch with foreign specialists. I learnt a lot from this contact with external experience and knowledge," Dr. Abyad describes her experience at the Centre of Strategic Health Studies. During the two-year programme, students write a Masters dissertation. To support the Syrian Health policy-making process and deepen their own specialisation, they chose subjects among priorities defined by the Ministry of Health. *"The trainers and lecturers were very much involved in the courses and they helped us a lot in writing our Masters dissertations",* Dr. Taysseer added. *"I am usually in contact with international experts at UNRWA, but those from the Centre were academic and taught us a way to be more precise and detailed in our work".*

During the second year of their course, students return to the field with part time positions giving them time to finish their Masters. Dr. Taysseer described their newly won perspectives: *"When we went back to work with UNRWA, we saw the difference with our colleagues who did not have the chance to participate in the programme".*

Beyond their academic achievements, they improved their practical skills. *"We gained many additional competencies related to computer, English, and how to train",* says Dr Abyad. *"It used to be difficult to share our knowledge with our colleagues, but in the Centre I learned an interactive method to train them,"* explains Dr. Taysseer, *"I can now be a trainer myself".*

After presenting their dissertation, Dr. Abyad and Dr. Taysseer returned to work full time with Palestinian refugees, with new-found capacities, experiences and a vision to contribute to the Syria's health care system.