

► Factsheet – ILO in Syria

Early recovery through community resilience in earthquake-hit areas (February – December 2023)

February 2024

Introduction

In response to multiple earthquakes that devastated Northern governorates of Syria, the International Labour Organization (ILO) mobilized internal crisis response funds to embark on employment-intensive infrastructure and livelihoods recovery initiatives in Aleppo, one of the worst-hit areas. Collaborating closely with UN and other humanitarian entities, the ILO's multifaceted response aims to address the staggering impact on employment, livelihoods, and infrastructure, ushering in a phase of resilience building across the region through the world of work.

► Project

Restoration of community health and safety conditions in the most affected neighborhoods through community contracting and emergency employment

Debris removal, sidewalk rehabilitation and sewage network repair

ILO initiated its livelihood support response through restoration of community safety in Aleppo's most affected neighbourhoods. Phase 1, initiated in May until July 2023, cleared 29 sites in urban neighbourhoods, removed 5,400 cubic meters of debris, and created 114 job opportunities. Phase 2, which started in September until end of November 2023, created 239 job opportunities to continue the remaining debris and rubble removal to reopen roads, maintain sewage system and rain drainage points, and repair and rehabilitate damaged road cracks and sidewalks to enhance community safety and mobility.



Before



During



After

Achievements

► 353

Decent Jobs created
(each job for over 2 months)

► 17,013

Workdays created

► 8,993

Cubic meters of debris
removed

► The idea of recruiting workers with daily wages other than cash-for-work was new in Aleppo. With a complete package of OSH, security and work injury insurance, the ILO set the bar higher, demonstrating how decent jobs should be."

► **Early Recovery and Livelihoods Sector Member** / UN Hub Aleppo, Syrian Arab Republic

► 569

Rain drainage inlets cleaned

► 485

Manholes and connected
pipes repaired

► 1,157

Square meters of asphalts
paved

Work-Based Learning (WBL) and job formalization

In order to improve skills and employability with the ultimate objective of job formalization, work-based learning (WBL) apprenticeship programme was rolled-out. WBL aims to transition temporary workers into permanent roles by matching their skills and aspirations with local enterprises' needs, in partnership with the local TVET institutions and the Aleppo Chamber of Industry. Total of 105 trainees were selected and matched with 16 enterprises. Identified high-demand occupations are weaving/textile, food processing, blacksmithing, mechanics and carpentry. The program started with theoretical training by TVET whose curriculum was tailor-made for each occupation with support of the ILO. It included both occupation-specific technical training and general labour rights awareness raising lectures including key principles of occupational safety and health (OSH). The practical training at each enterprise emphasizes project implementation and hands-on exercises under supervisors' guidance to develop technical expertise. At the end of the project, 24 trainees were retained by the local enterprises with an employment contract.



► 105

Trainees

► 16

Enterprises

► 24 (23%)

Retained

Damage assessment capacity development of Engineers' Syndicate in Aleppo

A training program, conducted by the ILO in November 2023, equipped 24 engineers from Aleppo's Syndicate with essential skills and modern structural damage assessment equipment for post-earthquake rehabilitation. The training focused on using advanced testing tools to assess earthquake damage. The engineers gained expertise in operating devices like ultrasonic concrete testers, rebound concrete test (Schmidt) hammers, and ultrasonic rebar testers, which were provided by the ILO in May 2023. This effort reflects ILO's commitment to empowering Syrian engineers and aiding in the recovery of infrastructure after the earthquake.



School rehabilitation

ILO rehabilitated five schools damaged by the earthquakes. 310 workers were engaged generating 7,442 working days; train contractors in employment-intensive engineering alternatives; and create a safe learning environment for approximately 5,000 school children with 50 renovated and equipped classrooms. The work entailed light rehabilitation of damaged school facilities including plastering, painting and cleaning that were most labour-intensive.



► 310

Workers

► 7,442

Workdays

► 5,000

Children

Enhanced compliance with Occupational safety and health (OSH) standards Training on occupational safety and health (OSH) practices

The ILO conducted Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) training programs in March and September, primarily targeting the post-earthquake rehabilitation workers. The training aimed to equip various stakeholders, including labour inspectors, engineers, and trade unions, with expertise in identifying and preventing workplace risks and hazards.

Topics covered included hazard identification, risk assessment, international standards, and practical applications. The goal is to establish a safer work environment, especially in the post-earthquake scheme. Additionally, plans are underway to set up an OSH Centre in Damascus in partnership with the Damascus Chamber of Industry, serving as a hub for employers and trainers, with a focus on sustainability and ongoing capacity building in OSH.



Articles:

- [Jobs that help neighbourhoods recover from the earthquakes \(ilo.org\)](https://www.ilo.org/)
- [Rehabilitating Dreams: The Human Voices behind Aleppo's School Rehabilitation Project \(ilo.org\)](https://www.ilo.org/)

Videos:



“When I got this opportunity, I felt a mix of happiness and fear. I was happy because I was about to start my first job and get experience for the future, and this will help me with future job opportunities. My fears firstly concerned safety, because we were operating in area with the debris of an earthquake, which could be dangerous. But on the ground, I found that there were full safety precautions for the workers and for me, and this gave a sense of security for me and the workers.

My other worry related to my being a female at my first job. I had fears about me being a female (working in a situation of) hardship. But when I got to the site of work, I found that there was flexibility, and cooperation between the teams. This is also our city, we are residents of one neighbourhood, so we found acceptance from the community.”

► **Latifa Al-Mouhammad (Ms.)** / Safety Assistant at an NGO / Aleppo, Syrian Arab Republic

► **Ahmad Rukbi (Mr.)** is a beneficiary with disability.

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