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Digital Impact, Technology and
Innovation Department (DITID)

DITID ANNUAL REPORT

Progress Report for the Digital Transformation Strategy

2023

ANNUAL REPORT 2023



CONTENTS

DIRECTOR'S LETTER	4
IN LOVING MEMORY: HONOURING OUR DEPARTED TEAM MEMBERS	6
KHALIL AHMED	6
MOHAMMED HUSSEIN	6
MAI IBAID	7
GAZA WAR RESPONSE	8
CONNECTIVITY	9
IT OPERATIONS IN GAZA	9
SECURITY	10
APPLICATIONS FOR GAZA	11
RESPONSE COORDINATION	11
FIVE EMPLOYEE STORIES	12
ABOUT DITID	14
OUR VISION	15
OUR MISSION	15
OUR VALUES	15
DITID STRATEGIC OVERVIEW	16

DIGITAL IMPACT	18
GAZA IT SERVICE CENTRE	20
LEBANON DIGITAL HUB	24
INTERNET ACCESS AS A HUMAN RIGHT	26
DIGITAL ACCELERATION	28
DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION STRATEGY	29
KFW BANK/BMZ PARTNERSHIP	31
2023 PROGRESS	32
DIGITAL WORKPLACE	36
ENHANCING SYSTEMS AND OPERATIONS	38
SERVICE DELIVERY AND COLLABORATION PLATFORMS	43
INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT	45
DIGITAL RISK	46
CYBERSECURITY FORTIFICATION: STRENGTHENING OUR DIGITAL DEFENCES	47
FIELD OFFICES	52
LEBANON	54
WEST BANK	55
JORDAN	55
SYRIA	56
GAZA	57
DITID 2024 OUTLOOK	58
DIGITAL IMPACT	59
DIGITAL ACCELERATION	59
DIGITAL WORKPLACE	59
DIGITAL RISK AND CYBERSECURITY	59
DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATION	59

DIRECTOR'S LETTER

Dear valued Colleagues, Partners, and Stakeholders

I would like to start my letter by acknowledging the profound impact of the recent conflict in Gaza on our operations and staff. The loss of colleagues and the displacement of others have deeply affected us all, and our thoughts remain with those enduring the hardships of war. Despite these challenges, the dedication and resilience displayed by our team in Gaza and across the region have been remarkable. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to every member of our department for their unwavering commitment and the extra efforts exerted during these trying times.

We find ourselves mourning the loss of Khalil Ahmed, Mohammad Hussein, and Mai Ibaid, esteemed members of the DITID family. Their commitment, professionalism, and resilience were exemplary, leaving an indelible mark on our organization. As we honour their memory, let us draw strength from their remarkable legacies and extend our deepest condolences to their families and loved ones. Though they may be gone, their spirit lives on in the meaningful contributions they made to our collective mission.



In 2023, following a presentation to the Executive Advisory Group (EAG) and the approval of the Commissioner General (CG), our department embarked upon a significant evolution, transitioning from the Information Management and Technology Department (IMTD) to the Digital Impact, Technology and Innovation Department (DITID). This change reflects our programmatic focus on delivering impactful solutions to Palestine refugees, with our efforts translating into tangible livelihood opportunities.

DITID operates on three main pillars: Digital Impact, Digital Acceleration, and Digital Workplace, which encompass our diverse portfolio of initiatives aimed at enhancing the digital experiences of staff and Palestine refugees. Additionally, we prioritize four cross-cutting themes: Cybersecurity, Innovation, Data Action, and Data Protection, ensuring the security, quality, and value of our digital assets and processes.

As we look back on the past year, I am humbled by the resilience and dedication demonstrated by the Digital Impact, Technology, and Innovation Department (DITID) at UNRWA amidst unprecedented challenges. The journey of transformation commenced by our department in partnership with all field offices, programs, and departments, has been marked by significant achievements and notable progress toward our vision and mission.

Looking ahead, DITID remains steadfast in our commitment to leveraging digitalization as a transformative force in fulfilling UNRWA's mandate. Our focus on the transformative power of digital innovation for Palestine refugees remains steadfast, guided by our values of Accountability, Transparency, Equity, Participation, Empowerment, Resilience, and Inclusion. As we navigate the uncertainties of the future, I am confident that our collective efforts will continue to drive positive change and improve the lives of Palestine refugees.

I extend my sincere appreciation to our staff, stakeholders, partners, and donors for their continued support and collaboration. Together, we will navigate the challenges ahead and create a future where innovative digital solutions empower Palestine refugees and foster greater resilience and inclusion.

Sincerely,

Kaan Cetinturk
Director, Digital Impact,
Technology and Innovation Department
UNRWA



In Loving Memory: Honouring Our Departed Team Members

We join together in mourning the loss of our exceptional colleagues. May their souls find eternal peace.



Khalil Ahmed

With heavy hearts, we bid farewell to our esteemed colleague, Khalil Ahmed, who tragically lost his life along with two daughters and a son during hostile activities in Gaza. Khalil served diligently in the Central Records Unit at HQ-Gaza throughout his 28 years with UNRWA.

Renowned for his steadfast commitment to the organization's mission and exceptional knowledge of organizational records, Khalil leaves behind an irreplaceable legacy. His sudden and tragic passing has deeply affected us all, and his absence will be keenly felt. Our thoughts and condolences are with his family, friends, and all who had the privilege of working alongside him.



Mohammed Hussein

In a tragic turn of events, our colleague, Mohammad Hussein, along with his wife and child, lost their lives during the bombardment in the Nuseirat area after being displaced from Gaza City. Mohammad, a dedicated Software Developer, diligently worked on the development of the new premises module in EMIS. His exemplary work ethic and proficiency were a model of tact, earning him respect among his peers.

Mohammad's commitment and dedication have undoubtedly left an indelible mark on us all. Our thoughts and heartfelt condolences go out to his family. We will forever remember and honour his contributions to our team and the meaningful projects he undertook.



Mai Ibaid

Despite facing the formidable challenge of muscular dystrophy since the age of 12, Mai Ibaid, our cherished colleague, overcame mobility difficulties and educational hurdles to achieve a remarkable milestone – earning a university degree in software engineering. She joined UNRWA as a software developer through a partnership with United Nations International Computing Centre (UNICC).

Mai's life story is truly inspiring, marked by unwavering determination and resilience. Her commitment and talent extended beyond personal challenges into her professional life, where she made significant contributions during her two-year tenure with UNRWA. Mai's exceptional performance on numerous UN projects was a testament to her skills and dedication.

Tragically, Mai, along with her entire family, lost their lives during a hostile activity in Jabalia camp. The untimely and heart-breaking end to Mai's promising journey occurred just as she was pursuing a master's degree in data science, all while nurturing dreams of exploring the world.

Her legacy, both personally and professionally, serves as a beacon of inspiration, reminding us of the extraordinary impact one can make despite facing immense challenges. Mai will be remembered not only for her accomplishments but also for the indomitable spirit she brought to every aspect of her life.



In response to the escalating crisis in Gaza, the Digital Impact, Technology, and Innovation Department (DITID) has actively engaged in a series of critical initiatives to ensure effective telecommunication, operational continuity, and security for the organization.

Connectivity

The outbreak of war severely disrupted the connectivity infrastructure in Gaza, posing significant obstacles for UNRWA staff's ability to connect with the rest of the organization. In response, DITID swiftly implemented a range of operational measures to mitigate these challenges and ensure uninterrupted communication channels. These initiatives included:

- Activation of a satellite network connection between the Gaza Field Office and Headquarters Amman to ensure communication and remote control over the infrastructure in the event all other means of communication fail.
- Identification of a vendor and Installation of backup internet lines and procurement of a 4G solution to safeguard against potential internet outages.
- Facilitation of upgrades to satellite phone services, enabling staff to maintain limited internet access even during local network disruptions.
- Expansion of internet bandwidth at Amman Head Quarter to accommodate increased demand resulting from heightened monitoring activities.
- Discussions with SpaceX's Starlink initiative to explore the feasibility of deploying necessary equipment for enhanced connectivity.

IT Operations in Gaza

With the evacuation of UNRWA staff from Gaza offices due to the escalating conflict, DITID prioritized the preservation and security of critical data assets. To mitigate potential risks associated with the physical evacuation, the department undertook meticulous planning and execution of controlled shutdown procedures of the Gaza data centre. Key initiatives included:

- Transferring all essential data backups from the Gaza Field Office to the Amman Head Quarter, ensuring data integrity and accessibility.
- Methodical decommissioning of IT systems to minimize adverse impacts on integrated systems across other data centres.
- Secure relocation of storage media to a designated safe location, mitigating the risk of data compromise or loss.

Digital Impact, Technology
and Innovation Department

GAZA WAR RESPONSE

Security

Amidst the backdrop of the conflict, DITID remained vigilant in safeguarding UNRWA's digital infrastructure against evolving cybersecurity threats. In response to the recent conflict, UNRWA faced a series of severe cyberattacks, including Denial of Service (DoS) attacks. These attacks inundated our systems with traffic, surpassing normal levels by more than 40-fold. Furthermore, our cybersecurity infrastructure detected malicious activities such as malware and exploits targeting approximately 50 systems accessible via the public internet.

The DITID adopted both reactive and proactive stances, implementing a range of measures to fortify defensive capabilities and protect sensitive information assets. Key initiatives included:

1. Strengthening Protective Controls

Implementing enhanced protective measures and expanding coverage to effectively thwart denial-of-service attacks targeting both UNRWA's primary and donation websites. This proactive approach ensures uninterrupted access to vital resources despite malicious attempts to disrupt services.

2. Enhancing Security Controls and Issuing Advisories

Proactively identifying and addressing vulnerabilities by enhancing security controls and promptly issuing advisories to mitigate risks associated with targeted attacks by hostile entities. This proactive stance empowers UNRWA to stay ahead of potential threats and safeguard critical information assets.

3. Migration to Microsoft Azure Cloud Data Centre

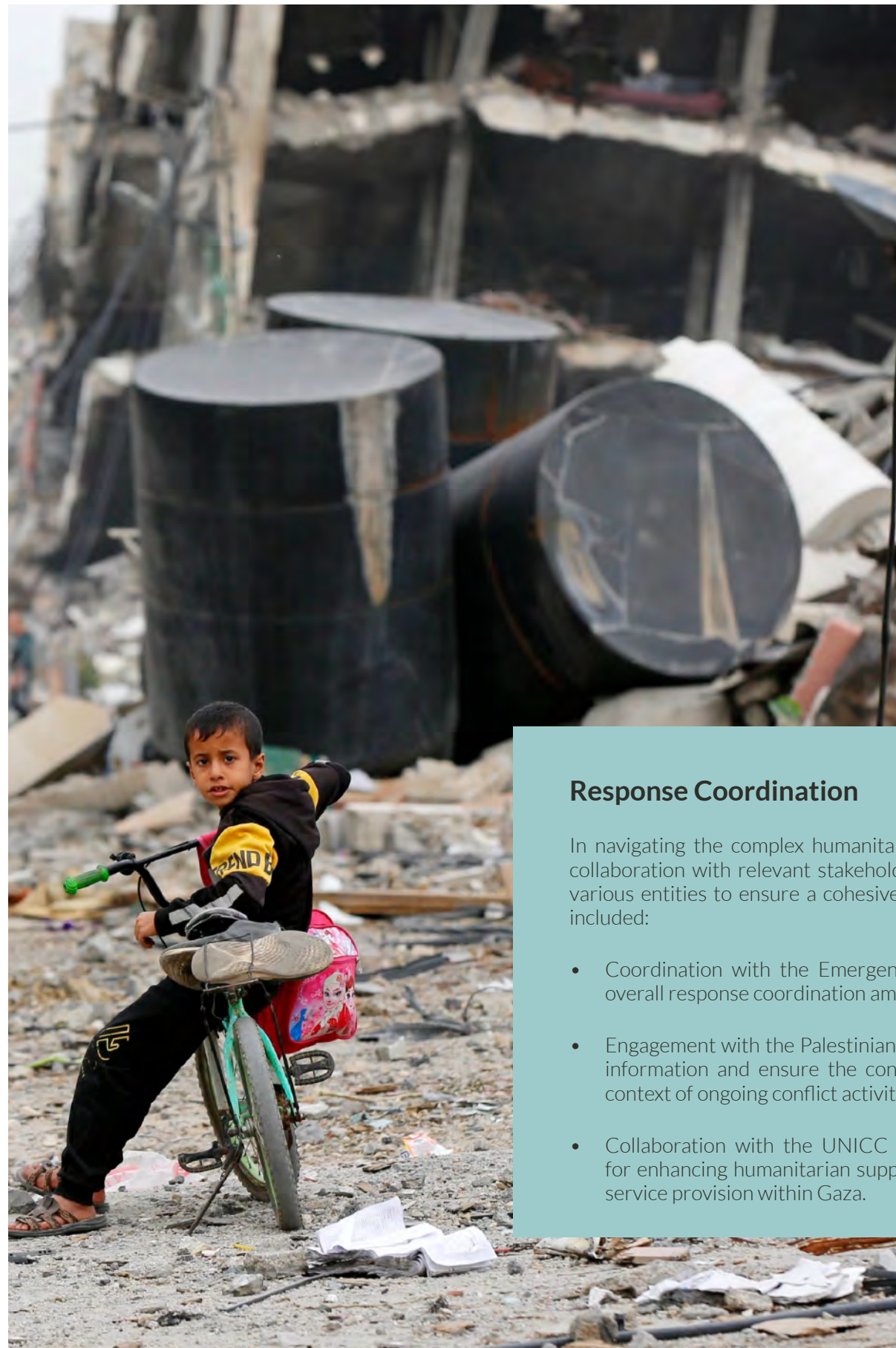
Recognizing the importance of resilience and robust defences, the DITID undertook the migration of all production systems to the Microsoft Azure cloud data centre. This strategic move not only enhances resilience but also fortifies defences against potential intrusions, leveraging the advanced security features offered by cloud infrastructure.

4. Timely Data Migration from Gaza Data Centre Backup Server

Ensuring the timely migration of data from the Backup server located in the Gaza data centre to safeguard refugees' data. This proactive measure mitigates the risk of data loss or compromise, safeguarding the privacy and security of sensitive information entrusted to UNRWA.

5. Staff Training and Awareness

Recognizing the crucial role of employees in maintaining a robust security posture, the DITID provided additional training and awareness programs. These initiatives empower staff members with the knowledge and skills necessary to identify and respond effectively to security threats, thereby strengthening the overall security posture of UNRWA.



Applications for Gaza

Recognizing the urgent need for enhanced operational capabilities to support relief efforts in Gaza, DITID developed and implemented innovative digital solutions tailored to address specific humanitarian challenges. These solutions included:

- Flour Distribution System:** A robust system designed to streamline the management and facilitation of essential resource distribution, particularly for items such as wheat flour to affected families across the region. The system's features included support for distribution cycles, delivery scheduling, and status tracking, enabling efficient allocation and distribution of vital resources.
- SCAAN application:** A comprehensive digital platform and mobile application designed to facilitate real-time communication and assistance for field staff, particularly during emergencies or crises. The application provided critical functionalities such as geolocalized advisories, instant alerts, and expedited headcounts, thereby enhancing situational awareness and response coordination.

Response Coordination

In navigating the complex humanitarian landscape of Gaza, effective coordination and collaboration with relevant stakeholders were paramount. DITID actively engaged with various entities to ensure a cohesive and coordinated response effort. Key interactions included:

- Coordination with the Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) to facilitate overall response coordination among humanitarian organizations operating in Gaza.
- Engagement with the Palestinian Ministry of Telecommunications to gather essential information and ensure the continuity of network connectivity, particularly in the context of ongoing conflict activities.
- Collaboration with the UNICC Management Committee to explore opportunities for enhancing humanitarian support and coordination, particularly in the realm of IT service provision within Gaza.

Five employee stories

Through the stories of employees, we witness the remarkable efforts and commitment of the DITID team in navigating the complexities of the conflict and ensuring the continuity of essential services. While we spotlight just five individuals, our gratitude extends to every member of the DITID team who tirelessly contributed during these challenging times. Their collective efforts embody the spirit of dedication and resilience that defines our department's response to the Gaza War.



Mohammad Ammar

Mohammad Ammar's steadfast leadership and technical expertise were instrumental in ensuring the continuity of UNRWA's network and internet services amidst disruptions in local telecommunication networks. He never hesitated to help, even in dangerous situations, such as fixing the satellite dish located outdoors in GFO compound during the first days of the war. Mohammad's proactive approach and professionalism ensured seamless operations for UNRWA, its sister organizations, and newly established locations, proving indispensable in crisis management efforts.



Mohammad Lafi

Mohammad Lafi's leadership at the IT service desk in Rafah has been exemplary. Despite facing resource constraints, he navigated challenges adeptly while ensuring that service standards remained uncompromised. In collaboration with the Procurement and Logistics Department, Mohammad Lafi led the procurement of 60 laptops from the local market to address urgent IT needs. This proactive initiative seamlessly integrated centralized and decentralized support systems, ensuring uninterrupted technical assistance across affected areas.



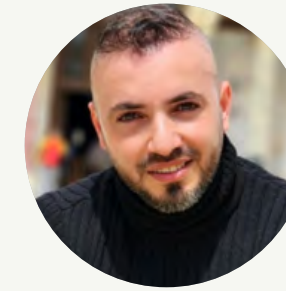
Karam Al-Sharif

Despite enduring the profound loss of his entire family (wife and 5 children), Karam AlSharif's commitment to supporting IT services in UNRWA clinics and distribution centres remained unparalleled. His strength in the face of personal tragedy is a testament to his dedication to the organization's mission. Karam's steadfastness and perseverance serve as an inspiration to all.



Mohammad Sobeh

Mohammad Sobeh in collaboration with Baher Heriz exemplify innovation and agility, having developed a ground-breaking system for managing flour distribution in record time. Their collaborative efforts resulted in the creation of a robust platform that serves as the backbone of UNRWA's Relief program in Gaza. The system's automated features have significantly enhanced operational efficiency across all distribution centres, playing a pivotal role in meeting the urgent needs of affected communities.



Baher Heriz

Baher Heriz in collaboration with Mohammad Sobeh exemplify innovation and agility, having developed a ground-breaking system for managing flour distribution in record time. Their collaborative efforts resulted in the creation of a robust platform that serves as the backbone of UNRWA's Relief program in Gaza. The system's automated features have significantly enhanced operational efficiency across all distribution centres, playing a pivotal role in meeting the urgent needs of affected communities.





Digital Impact, Technology
and Innovation Department

ABOUT DITID



OUR VISION

We envision a world where the transformative power of digital innovation propels human development forward, fostering ethical practices and equal access to opportunities in an increasingly interconnected global community. In this future, Palestine refugees are empowered by digital technology, gaining the skills, tools and resources necessary for self-reliance and equitable participation in the digital society, thus ensuring their inclusion, livelihood and advancement in the modern world.



OUR MISSION

Our mission is to spearhead digital empowerment and transformation for Palestine refugees through strategic investments in human development, equitable internet access, and the cultivation of an innovative culture grounded in digital ethics. Additionally, we are dedicated to creating a digital workplace that is agile, efficient, and secure for all UNRWA staff members, ensuring their seamless integration into our digital initiatives and maximizing their potential to contribute to our mission's success.



OUR VALUES

Inclusion, empowerment, equity, accountability, transparency, ethics, security, agility, resilience, and innovation

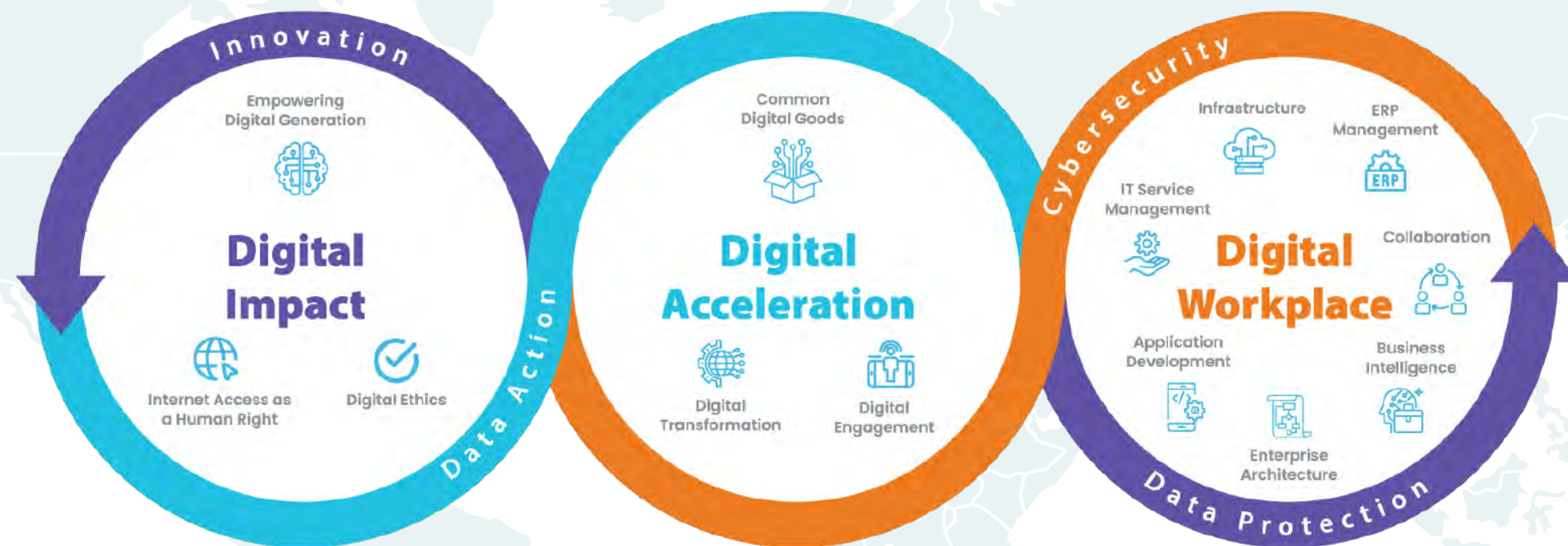
DITID Strategic overview

Digital Impact, Technology and Innovation Department (DITID) is the transformation of the former Information Management and Technology Department (IMTD), which was renamed in 2023 following the approval of the Commissioner General (CG) after the recommendation of the Executive Advisory Group (EAG).

The rationale for the transformation was to reflect the programmatic nature of the department, which has been delivering livelihood opportunities to Palestine refugees, especially in Gaza. One of the key achievements of the department was the establishment of the IT Service Centre in Gaza, which became the biggest tech employer in Gaza and provided quality IT services to UNRWA and other UN Organizations.

DITID is structured around three main pillars: Digital Impact, Digital Acceleration, and Digital Workplace. These categories encompass the different aspects of the department's work, such as creating livelihood opportunities for refugees (Digital Impact), developing digital products and services for refugees (Digital Acceleration), and enabling digital collaboration and communication (Digital Workplace).

In addition, DITID also covers four cross-cutting themes: Cybersecurity, Innovation, Data Action, and Data Protection. These themes are essential for ensuring the security, quality, and value of the digital assets and processes of the department and the agency.





Digital Impact, Technology
and Innovation Department

DIGITAL IMPACT

Digital Impact encompasses our ambition to empower the digital generation of Palestine refugees with more direct as well as indirect investment in human development, helping them compete with their peers elsewhere and shed light on the need to move from dependency and relief to a self-reliance and development approach.

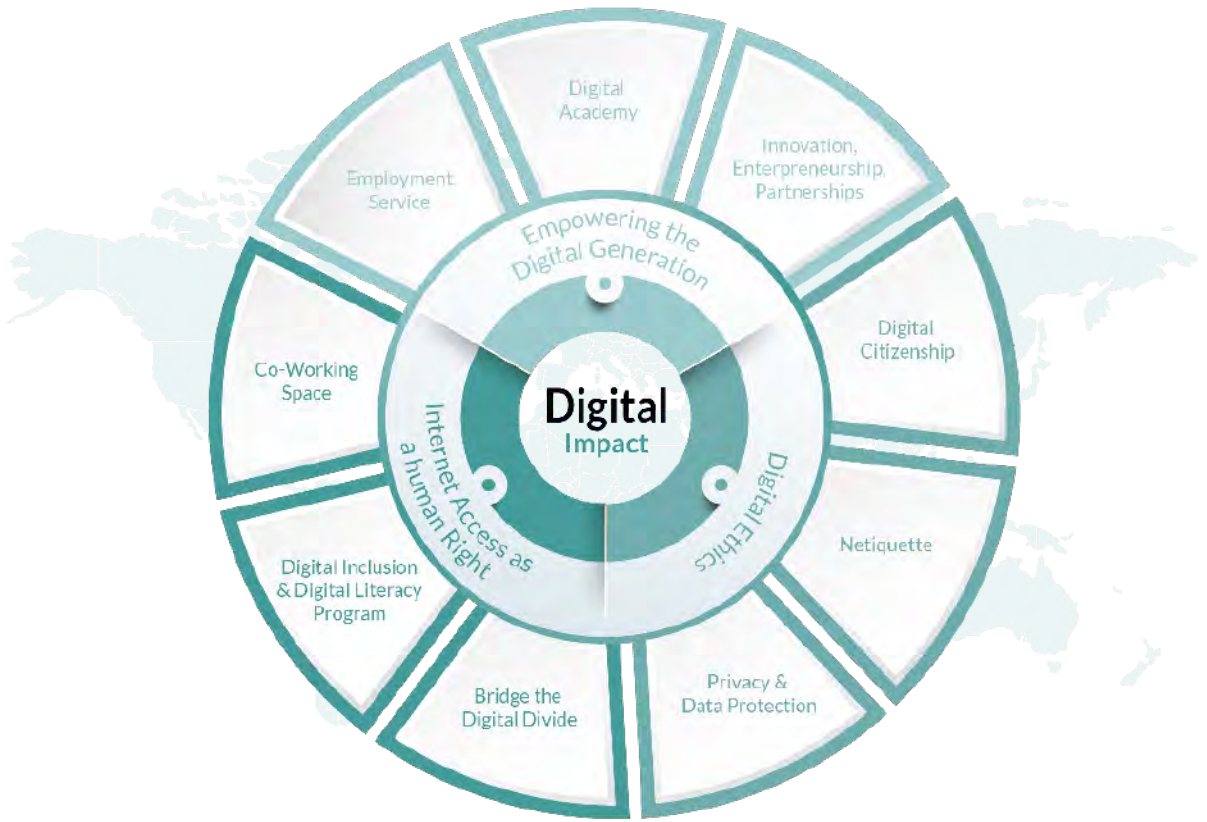
Additionally, in line with the ambitions of providing universal internet access as a human right stipulated in the UN Common Agenda, DITID will work on initiatives to provide internet access to all refugees not only as a digital accelerator but also as a human right.

According to the United Nations Secretary General, Antonio Guterres;



“the internet has become an indispensable tool for realizing a range of human rights, combating inequality, and accelerating development and human progress. Access to the internet is a fundamental human right in today’s digital age.”

Finally, DITID, in collaboration with the Ethics Office, will initiate actions on “Digital Ethics” that refers to the ethical principles and values that govern the use of digital technologies and the behaviour of individuals, organizations, and society in the online world. These actions will help ensure that technology is used in a way that is respectful of human rights, promotes social justice, and protects the common good.



Gaza IT Service Centre

In the domain of digital impact our biggest and first success was the IT Service Centre in Gaza (ITSC). The project was a model of innovation and sustainability, and it established a strategic partnership with UNICC, the UN's IT service provider. However, due to the outbreak of war in Gaza, the IT Service Centre had to cease its operations. Upon cease fire in Gaza, the program will find ways to sustain and scale up the IT Service Centre. In addition, DITID is working to replicate its model in other field office contexts starting with Lebanon.

Pre-War Highlights

Gaza IT Service Centre Achievements - 2023

The Gaza IT Service Centre (ITSC) has continued its mission of empowering the digital generation, fostering innovation, and nurturing talent in Gaza. Through a series of impactful initiatives and collaborative efforts, the ITSC has made significant strides in advancing digital literacy, promoting gender equality, and supporting staff wellbeing.

Cultivating Gaza's Digital Generation: UNRWA IT Service Centre's Internship Program

In 2023, the UNRWA ITSC's summer training program targeted over 20 students from leading universities in Gaza, including the Islamic University (IUG) and Al-Azhar University (AUG). Participants received comprehensive training in cutting-edge technologies such as business intelligence, data engineering, artificial intelligence, web development, and DevOps. This initiative equipped interns with essential skills and practical experience, preparing them for the demands of the international labor market.



Nurturing Tomorrow's Digital Innovators: Tech Exploration Day at IT Service Centre during Summer Fun Weeks

The ITSC hosted over 100 students as part of the UNRWA Summer Fun Weeks project, aiming to ignite curiosity and foster technological literacy among young minds. By introducing students to digital tools and concepts in a fun and engaging manner, the event aimed to inspire a passion for learning and innovation.



"ITSC's objective goes beyond empowering graduates and IT professionals. We aim to nurture the next generation of innovators, introducing them to the world of IT in a fun and engaging way. By exposing students to digital tools, we enable self-guided exploration and inspire a passion for learning that leads them towards a future filled with innovation and knowledge."

- Islam Abu Salem, Quality Assurance Expert at ITSC

IT Service Centre Portal Launch

On August 7, 2023, UNRWA DITID announced the launch of the ITSC portal, a significant milestone in strengthening the centre's digital presence and creating opportunities for IT professionals in the Palestine Refugee community. The portal serves as a hub for tech enthusiasts, offering career opportunities, training programs, internship opportunities, and tech talks on cutting-edge technologies. The innovative "Talent Network" connects IT experts with job openings, providing a platform for career advancement and growth.

The launch of the portal was made possible through the support of External Relation and Communication Dept. (ERDC), reflecting a collaborative effort to empower Palestine refugees through technology.

UNRWA ITSC Hosts Wellbeing Event for Staff in Gaza

Recognizing the importance of staff wellbeing, the ITSC organized a wellbeing event in Gaza to promote a healthy work environment and address the challenges faced by staff. The event served as a platform for staff engagement, collaboration, and personal growth.

By prioritizing employee wellbeing and fostering a supportive work environment, UNRWA DITID ensures that its team is equipped to make a meaningful impact in the community.





Missions of Ireland, Estonia, and Malaysia Spotlight ITSC as a Success Story in achieving Gender Equality

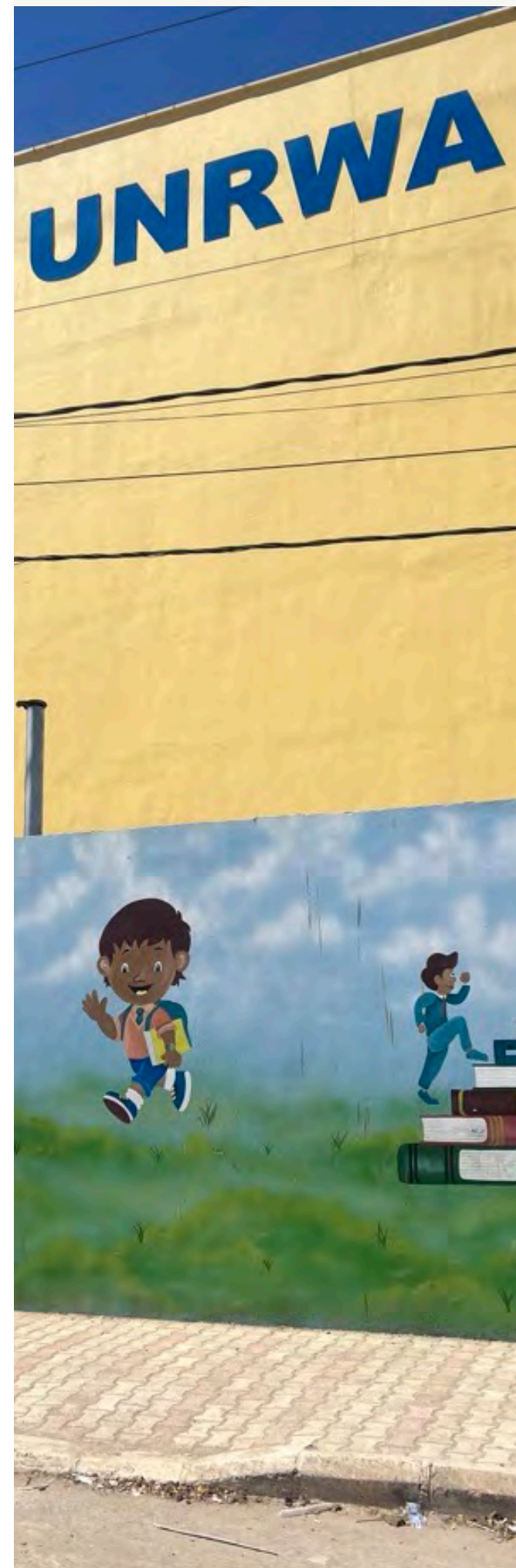
The success of UNRWA's ITSC in promoting gender equality and empowering women in the tech sector was recognized by the Missions of Ireland, Estonia, and Malaysia. With over 40% of its staff being female, the ITSC has become a beacon of empowerment for young women in Gaza. Hala Shaheen, IMTD Communications Aide, showcased the centre's achievements and highlighted its contribution to employment opportunities and livelihoods for women in Gaza.



UNRWA Commissioner-General Meets with Representatives from IT Service Centre

Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini engaged in a panel discussion with Gaza youth from the ITSC, highlighting the role of technology in shaping their future and fostering economic growth in Gaza. The panel discussion underscored the resilience and potential of Gaza's youth, with Mr. Lazzarini encouraging them to pursue their aspirations and contribute to Gaza's development.

The visit of various delegations and dignitaries, including those from Japan, France, and the UK, reaffirms the ITSC's status as a key player in Gaza's technological landscape. Through continued collaboration and support, the ITSC is poised to empower Palestine refugees and drive digital transformation in the region.



Enhancing Cybersecurity Education and Career Opportunities

We conducted a comprehensive review of the cybersecurity curriculum at the University of Palestine, aimed at aligning it with the latest trends observed in Western countries. Through meticulous analysis and strategic guidance, we ensured that the curriculum remained dynamic and responsive to the evolving landscape of cybersecurity. Additionally, we hosted an open session focusing on career paths in cybersecurity, showcasing inspiring success stories of Palestinian colleagues who have forged remarkable careers in this domain.

Hani Kurdiya Receives Commissioner-General Gender Equality Champion Award

Hani Kurdiya, the head of the IT Service centre in Gaza, has been honored with the Commissioner-General Gender Equality Champion Award for 2023. Hani's exemplary leadership in fostering inclusivity within our IT Service Centre (ITSC) has earned him this prestigious recognition in the Leadership category.

Despite prevailing norms, Hani has ensured equal representation by maintaining a team where 40% are women—a rarity in the tech industry. Through initiatives like the Female Empowerment Committee and the innovative FemTech project, he has provided invaluable opportunities for women in technology in Gaza.

Hani's achievement reflects his outstanding commitment to diversity and inclusion, making him a role model for leaders across our agency. We extend our heartfelt congratulations to Hani and are confident his success will inspire others to continue championing inclusivity in the workplace.

Lebanon Digital Hub

The joint Digital Hub initiative of Lebanon Field Office and DITID aims to create a positive digital impact for Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon by fostering a culture of innovation, collaboration, and excellence within the agency and with its external partners.

In 2023, the director of Lebanon Field Office and the director of DITID through multiple visits, workshops and meetings have made a holistic assessment of the work that has been done by the UNRWA Innovation Labs in Lebanon and the ongoing work of the DITID, particularly at the IT Service Centre in Gaza. The assessment revealed a clear alignment between the goals of these entities, as well as the envisioned Digital Impact initiative within the DITID. Consequently, it was recognized that Lebanon holds the potential to naturally extend from the Gaza IT Service Centre and emerge as a new Digital Hub.

Objectives and Offerings

The determination of activates and courses will be, to the greatest extent possible, designed from strong labor market research and evidence in partnership with UNICEF. Understanding emerging market trends and employer demands in the fields of innovation and technology allows the digital hub to tailor courses to meet these needs, boosting the human capital of its students, an in turn equipping them for a future driven by technological advancements. This proactive approach allows UNRWA to provide cutting edge services, making Palestinian refugee youth competitive and desirable in the ever evolving and digitalized workplace.



Provides upskilling training opportunities

The digital hub provides modern, market relevant and sought-after hard skills, equipped with international certifications that cover ever-evolving tech skills.



Creates livelihoods through employment and internship opportunities

The digital hub enhances sustainable livelihoods for professional Palestine refugees, mainly youth, by offering a range of employment, training, and internship opportunities in the digital domain.



Provides a modern workplace environment

The digital hub fosters a dynamic and supportive community for Palestine refugees by providing state-of-the-art facilities and a cutting-edge workplace.



Offers IT services for UNRWA and other institutions

The digital hub provides a large-scale of IT services, including Systems Development, Data Analytics, Information Security, Service Desk, and others.

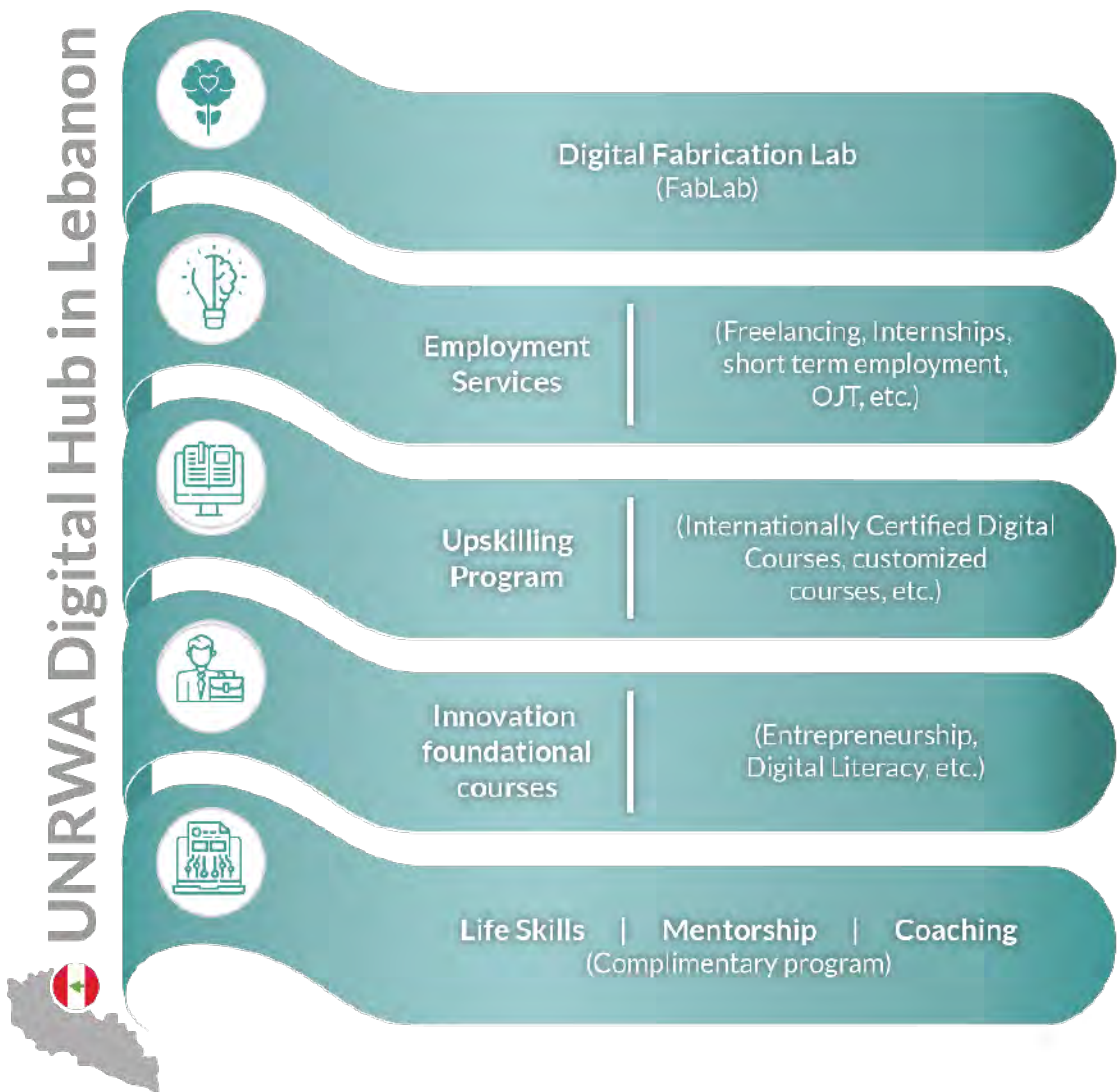
Impact and Benefits

Through the envisioned Digital Hub in Lebanon field, UNRWA can ensure equitable access to skills-building opportunities within the digital economy and Palestine refugee youth, particularly females, can overcome the constraints of limited access. Empowered with digital literacy and expertise, they can contribute actively to the digital workforce, drive innovation, and harness the potential of technology to generate decent income and uplift their lives and their communities.

This transformational shift will not only pave the way for gender equality and youth empowerment, but also positions the region, particularly the north regions, on a trajectory of sustainable progress in an increasingly digitized world.

Program Components

The Lebanon Digital Hub will be comprised of the following components:



The determination of activates and courses held at the Lebanon Digital Hub will be designed from strong labor market research and evidence in partnership with UNICEF. Understanding emerging market trends and employer demands in the fields of innovation and technology allows the digital hub to tailor courses to meet these needs, boosting the human capital of its students, an in turn equipping them for a future driven by technological advancements. This proactive approach allows UNRWA to provide cutting edge services, and make Palestinian refugee youth competitive and desirable in the ever evolving and digitalized workplace.



Internet Access as a Human Right

Bridging the Digital Divide

In alignment with our commitment to the principles of Internet Access as a Human Right, UNRWA has taken significant strides in providing free Wi-Fi internet access across our field locations. Spearheaded by the Relief and Social Services Department and supported by DITID, this initiative ensures seamless registration on eUNRWA for individuals visiting our Refugee Registration offices.

Moreover, recognizing the importance of internet connectivity in education and healthcare, UNRWA is currently implementing Wi-Fi as a Service (WaaS) internet access in our Schools and Health Centres. With funding from KfW, DITID has successfully negotiated WaaS contracts for Gaza, West Bank, and Jordan, covering a significant number of facilities. In the West Bank, internet connectivity will be extended to 20 Health Centres and 73 schools, while in Jordan, 14 Health Centres and 19 schools will benefit from this initiative.

By providing internet connectivity in our facilities, UNRWA is not only enhancing access to information and services but also directly contributing to the principles of Internet Access as a Human Right. This initiative underscores our commitment to bridging the digital divide and ensuring that all individuals, regardless of their circumstances, have access to the opportunities afforded by the digital age.





Digital Impact, Technology
and Innovation Department

DIGITAL ACCELERATION

DIGITAL ACCELERATION

DITID acts as the “Digital Accelerator” by Partnering with all other UNRWA departments and programs to implement the Digital Transformation initiatives. DITID provides common digital goods and platforms to deliver UNRWA services to refugees and other stakeholders with the aim of more inclusion, accountability, transparency, equity, and participation as the Digital Transformation Strategy stipulates.

Digital Transformation Strategy

Improving service delivery through digitalization is key to UNRWA's modernization. For this to succeed, it must be accompanied by a wider effort to harness and manage the associated potential and risks across the Agency. Led and coordinated by DITID, this wider effort focuses on several dimensions.

Providing digital services to beneficiaries is identified as the core pillar of the digital transformation strategy. Through this pillar, UNRWA implements digital services to achieve “Accountability”, “Transparency”, “Participation”, “Equity”, “Empowerment”, “Inclusion” and “Resilience”.

For digitalization on the front lines (in our programs) to succeed, it must be accompanied by a wider effort to harness and manage the potential of digitalization across the agency, from its engine room to its culture.

Four pillars of strategy:



1. Digital Services

This pillar undertakes to strengthen the quality of “service delivery” for Palestine Refugees by ensuring greater integration between programmes, faster delivery of services, and increased access of refugees to information. It implements initiatives to ensure greater inclusion of vulnerable Palestine Refugees in UNRWA services, enabled by digital tools, and ensuring no one is left behind.

2. Operational excellence

We are committed to the digital transformation of UNRWA's internal processes. By digitalizing several business processes, with special attention to the areas of human resources and financial reporting, and by modernizing the obsolete Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system, UNRWA will become more efficient, increase its accountability, and promote transparency.

3. Digital Partnerships & Advocacy

Our strategy also supports the External Relations Department and the Strategic Communications department to increase partnerships and strengthen advocacy in the digital era.

UNRWA is already working with several partners to realize this ambition. Within the UN this includes UNICEF with whom we run innovation labs in Lebanon which are part of the bigger Digital Hub concept, and the UN International Computing Centre (UNICC) that provide digital business services, from security tools to hosting platforms.. Beyond that, UNRWA continues partnering with digital market leaders, such as Microsoft, Gartner, Netskope, etc. to provide more efficient and secure digital services.

4. Championing and managing change

Throughout, a culture shift needs to be supported, to ensure that innovative digital solutions are identified, tested, related anxieties addressed, and obstacles overcome in a spirit of inclusion and participation.

5. Risk Management

The introduction and expansion of digital solutions engenders additional risks, such as security breaches and an increasing digital divide. This is particularly relevant in UNRWA, due to its political mandate. As explained below in the “Digital Risk” section of this annual report, these are matters of cybersecurity addressed comprehensively by DITID.

KfW Bank/BMZ Partnership

On 22 July 2022, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) entered into a significant financing agreement with KfW Development Bank, facilitated by the Federal Republic of Germany (BMZ). This collaboration aims to propel the digital transformation of UNRWA's health and education programs, with a primary focus on enhancing access, quality, and efficiency in service delivery to Palestine refugees.

Under this initiative, key objectives include the implementation of an innovative Electronic Medical Records (EMR) system to streamline healthcare processes and improve patient care. Additionally, efforts will be directed towards developing an Agency-wide online learning management system tailored for basic education students. As part of this partnership, UNRWA will provide essential devices for learners in selected UNRWA schools across Jordan, West Bank, Lebanon and Syria, coupled with expanding internet access for Palestine refugee students. These initiatives will transform UNRWA's service delivery in Education and Health.

The evolving partnership between UNRWA and KfW/BMZ reflects a collaborative approach to advancing UNRWA's digitalization agenda. Beyond financial support, KfW/BMZ's contributions extend to addressing broader challenges such as financial sustainability, change management, and data protection within the digital transformation efforts in Health and Education. Through such initiatives, we aim to foster a culture of innovation and effective implementation of the Digital Transformation Strategy.



UNRWA Director of External Relations Tamara Alrifai (centre) is joined by Rahel Kroeker (left) and Dilara Fuchs (right) of KfW for the signing of three agreements totaling EUR 28 million in Amman on 20 July 2023.

2023 Progress

Health

In 2023, our efforts in the health sector have set the foundation for advancing healthcare services for Palestine refugees. Through a vigorous procurement process involving meticulous analysis of various solutions against UNRWA's requirements for an Electronic Medical Records (EMR) system, we aim to ensure that we select an EMR that will revolutionize patient care, streamline administrative processes, and enhance overall healthcare delivery. This procurement process concludes over two years of prior Business Analytics where DITID led the extensive collation and review of the business and functional requirements of the new EMR.

We undertook a cost optimisation review of the eHealth System in 2023. This technical review involved coordinating across the DITID teams and consulting with UNICC to identify changes that can be made to the eHealth System to reduce its hosting, support and maintenance costs. Changes implemented from this review included consolidating the eMCH and eNCD web servers, reducing the number of frontend web servers, optimizing backup retention among others. Although additional efforts will continue into 2024, these current changes will help reduce the overall cost of eHealth hosting and maintenance for future years.

Education

In the Education sector, our focus has been on enhancing digital resources and infrastructure in schools serving Palestine refugees. DITID partnered with the Education Department to procure IT devices for 33 schools in Jordan. This included 3,341 tablets for students; 439 tablets for teachers; 48 laptops for administrative purposes; 33 charging carts; 57 interactive board panels; and 153 TV screens. These resources were procured as per DITID's approved standards, to ensure suitability and compliance. These devices will not only enrich the learning experience but also empower educators to deliver high-quality education in a digital age.

Moreover, our commitment to providing comprehensive support for educational initiatives is evident in the initiation of Wi-Fi installation projects under the KfW Projects. In West Bank, the tendering for the provision of Wi-Fi as a Service (WaaS) for 68 schools in West Bank was completed. Following an evaluation process, the contract was awarded to PalTel, with the plan that the implementation will commence in the second quarter of 2024. In Jordan, DITID negotiated a contract for the provision of Wi-Fi as a Service (WaaS) to cover 19 schools over a period of 5 years. This is a significant step in the Digital Acceleration in the Education portfolio, by providing financially sustainable access to internet for schools in JFO.

DITID undertook the recruitment of technical support staff both in HQA and field locations to augment the KfW Project Team to ensure the successful delivery of the varied IT initiatives under this Program. By building a robust support system, we aim to ensure the seamless integration of technology into educational settings, enabling students and teachers to harness its full potential.

As part of our Change Management initiatives, in September 2023, DITID carried out the first Training of Trainers (ToT) for teachers on Microsoft 365 and the appropriate use of devices. Following that, JFO organised additional trainings, where the IT focal point of each school delivered training to other teachers. A total of 40 teachers were trained on the use of tablets and 684 were trained on the use of MS 365 applications.

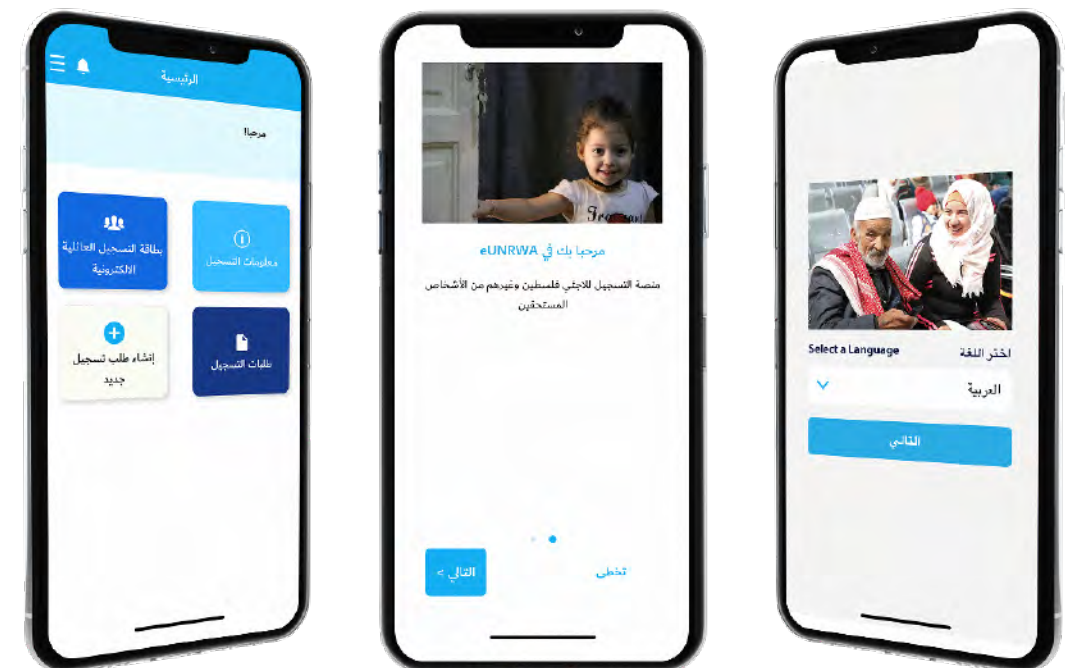
Relief

eUNRWA - Self-Service Platform

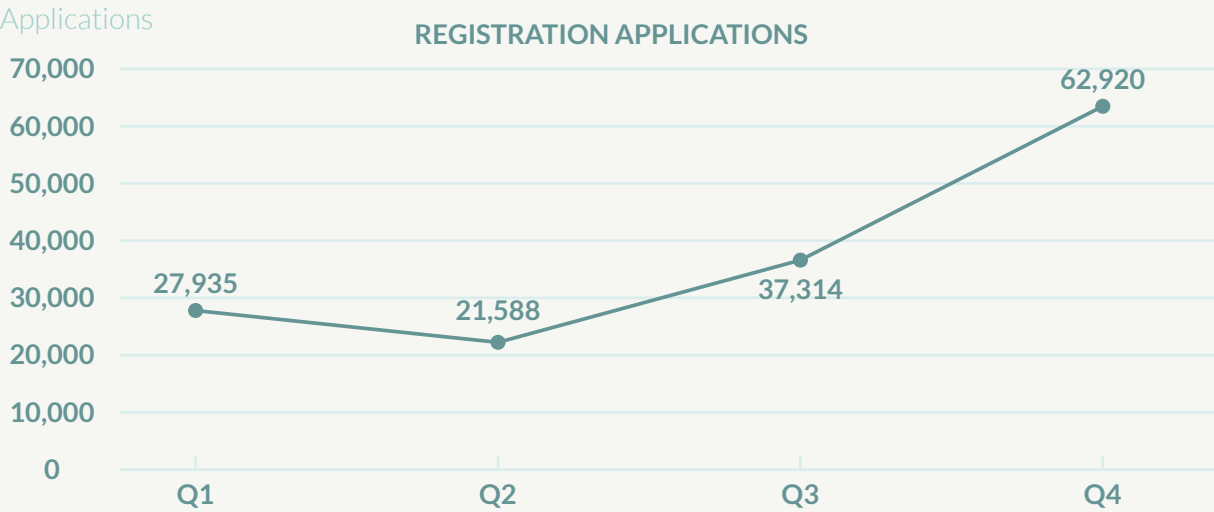
The introduction of the eUNRWA Self-Service Platform marks a pivotal shift in how services are delivered to refugees, particularly in the realm of documentation submission and identity authentication. This innovative application provides refugees with a secure online channel to complete essential tasks using digital identity verification, eliminating the need for physical visits to registration offices.

By embracing digitalization, eUNRWA not only saves both staff and refugees valuable time and effort but also minimizes the occurrence of human errors, ensuring the accuracy and consistency of refugee data. Moreover, digital records are less prone to errors and manipulation, providing a more reliable basis for decision-making and resource allocation. This heightened precision enhances UNRWA's accountability and ensures that resources are allocated effectively to those in need.

Since its inception in February 2023, the eUNRWA implementation has seen over 200,000 refugees successfully create eUNRWA accounts. Presently, approximately 90% of refugee registration applications are processed through the eUNRWA platform, marking a significant shift away from in-person registrations.



The Lebanon Field Office achieved a milestone by being the first to complete Digital Identity Verification. By the end of 2023, 98% of the 150,000 registrations of life-events applications in Lebanon were submitted through the eUNRWA application. Additionally, the Lebanon Field Office has observed an overall increase in refugee registration applications since the launch of eUNRWA.



Furthermore, the deployment of Digital Identity Verification in Lebanon has yielded tangible results for the RSS department. Notably, there has been a commendable 24% reduction in the number of cash assistance recipients among Palestine Refugees from Syria (PRS). This reduction has empowered the RSS department to reallocate resources effectively, thereby enhancing assistance provision to existing beneficiaries.

RRIS - Refugee Registration Information System

As a cornerstone of UNRWA's digital infrastructure, the Refugee Registration Information System (RRIS) underwent significant enhancements to complement the eUNRWA platform. Integration efforts focused on seamless data exchange between RRIS and eUNRWA, facilitating streamlined registration processes and improving operational efficiency. Additionally, the migration of RRIS to Azure, accompanied by the implementation of Azure Active Directory, enhanced scalability, security, and accessibility of the system.

To further augment the performance of eUNRWA, we undertook a Request for Procurement (RfP) process for the provision of Bulk SMS service for the eUNRWA mobile platform. This process ensured that we put in place a contract to provide seamless, financially sustainable, and reliable mode of communication with our refugee community through the eUNRWA app, regardless of their location across the globe. The RfP resulted in a five-year contract with Twilio; an industry leader in SMS services, which will ensure continuous provision of SMS capabilities for eUNRWA current and future needs.



The Digital Workplace pillar of DITID plays a crucial operational support role at UNRWA by ensuring that all technological tools and infrastructure are effectively aligned to support and enhance the Agency's operational capabilities. This section is responsible for the security, reliability, and performance of the IT infrastructure, such as servers, databases, networks, internet, and WiFi. Additionally, the digital workplace section provides service desk support and end user laptop/desktop management to help staff with their IT issues and needs.

Here's an overview of its functions and why it's pivotal for UNRWA:

Application Development

Focuses on creating, deploying, and maintaining custom applications that support specific business processes or objectives. This can include internal tools for employee productivity, refugee-facing applications, or mobile apps that extend our reach and capabilities.

Business Engagement and ERP Maintenance

Partnering with all UNRWA support departments to understand their needs and put digital transformation programmes in place for each department. This involves managing the organization's ERP system (SAP), which integrates various functions such as finance, payroll, HR, procurement, and supply chain into a single system. This ensures that information flows seamlessly across departments, supporting real-time decision-making and efficiency.

Enterprise Architecture and Data Analytics

We provide oversight of projects and technical solutions to ensure optimal investment, technological alignment and integration. This include building an enterprise data warehouse with interactive dashboards for departmental operational reporting.

Infrastructure and Network Management

Ensuring reliable, scalable, and secure IT foundations by maintaining and administering critical infrastructure such as communication channels, servers, databases, data centres, and the "cloud".

Service Desk and End-User Computing Support

Provides first-line support to staff members for IT-related issues, managing everything from troubleshooting software problems to hardware maintenance for laptops and desktops. This function is essential for maintaining high levels of staff productivity and satisfaction with IT services.

Digital Impact, Technology
and Innovation Department

DIGITAL WORKPLACE

Enhancing Systems and Operations

Migration of Business Services and Applications to Azure Cloud

Our commitment to migrating business services to the cloud has yielded tangible results. In 2023, we migrated all the enterprise systems from the Headquarters Amman data centre to the cloud. This allowed us to improve scalability, reliability, security and performance, positioning our organization for sustained success in the digital era.

Noteworthy Migrations

Several critical applications have been successfully transitioned to the Azure cloud. Notable migrations include:

- Loan Management Information System (LMIS)
- Refugee Registration Information System (RRIS)
- Barcode System (Barcode)
- Vehicle Asset Lifecycle Management System (Fleetwave)
- International Electronic Leave System (International eLeave)
- SharePoint Portal (SharePoint)
- Facilities Management Information System (FMIS)
- Electronic Performance Evaluation Report System (ePer)
- Moodle Learning Management System (Moodle)
- Student Registration System (SRS)
- Placement and Career Guidance (PCG)
- Vehicle Booking System (eBooking)

Benefits of Cloud Solutions

Operational Efficiencies and Cost Transparency

The adoption of the Cloud has been instrumental in improving efficiency and transparency in the IT spending. In 2023, through the consolidation, centralisation and optimisation activities we reduced the number of servers and virtual machines that UNRWA manages by 25% (100 servers), while improving and expanding the IT services offered.

Enhanced Collaboration, Communication, and Innovation

Microsoft Office 365 tools such as MS Teams, Outlook, One Drive, and SharePoint Online have facilitated increased collaboration and communication across the agency. Moreover, the availability of user-friendly applications encourages innovation, thereby delivering better value for the expenditure.

Availability and Resilience of IT Services

Hosting services in the cloud has improved the accessibility and resilience of IT services, catering to both remote and in-office workers seamlessly. In 2023, UNRWA fully embraced the work-from anywhere concept, providing equivalent capabilities and security regardless of whether users are in the office, at home or travel.

Data Protection and Security

The Cloud is built with security as a central component. By switching to cloud services and migrating our systems to the Cloud we outsource a large part of security responsibilities and get access to security services that are unachievable in-house.

Data-driven decision making

We have set up dynamic dashboards for better decision-making. They give real-time insights and are easy to use, helping stakeholders make faster, accurate decisions.

Cloud Resource Management and Cost Prediction

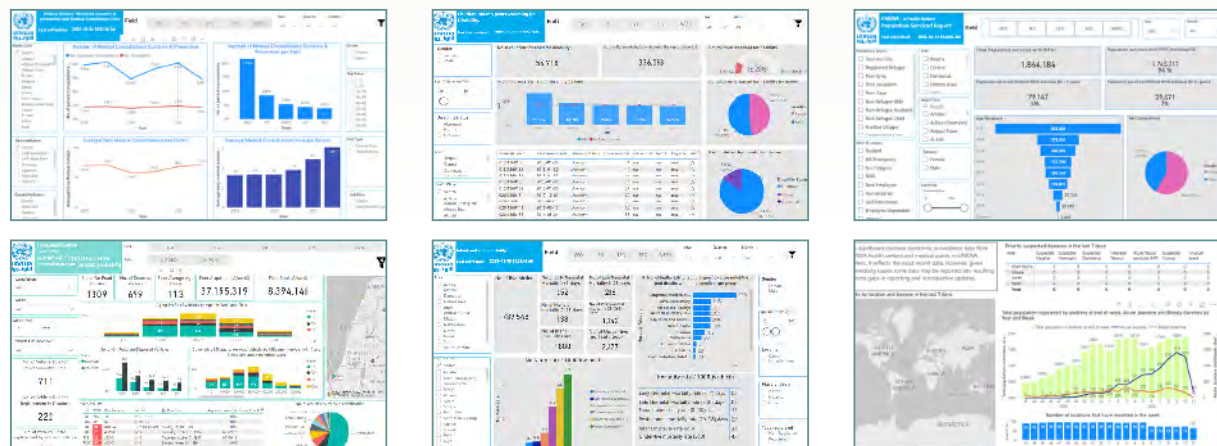
To facilitate efficient resource management and accurate cost prediction, an online cost dashboard has been developed. This dashboard provides real-time reports on cloud resources and associated costs, empowering stakeholders to monitor budget consumption and make informed decisions. Weekly email updates are automatically generated for budget owners, providing insights into budget and resource utilization rates. This proactive communication fosters greater awareness and enables stakeholders to take timely corrective actions as needed.

Power BI Dashboard Reports for Disputes Tribunal (DT) Cases

We are proud to announce the successful completion of the Power BI Dashboard Reports for DT Cases, also known as the Administration Of Justice (AOJ) Dashboard project. This endeavour marks a significant milestone in our department's commitment to enhancing operational efficiency and decision-making processes. The AOJ Dashboard provides a comprehensive overview of critical data within our department, offering insights and indicator data for legal cases. By harnessing the power of data visualization, we aim to improve AOJ services and drive positive outcomes for our stakeholders at both Agency and Field levels.

Introducing Enterprise Business Intelligence (EBI) New Dashboards

We have expanded our data analytics capabilities by integrating various data sources into the UNRWA data warehouse, laying the foundation for the development of new dashboards on the EBI platform. These dashboards cater to multiple departments, including Health, HR, Finance, and Central Support Services Division (CSSD), providing stakeholders with actionable insights to support strategic decision-making. By centralizing data and providing intuitive visualization tools, these dashboards empower our teams to monitor performance, identify trends, and drive continuous improvement initiatives across the organization.



Loan Management Information System (LMIS) Payment Interface Implementation

In collaboration with the Microfinance Department, we successfully implemented interfaces within our integration hub platform to facilitate electronic payments through the eFawateerCom payment gateway for LMIS system customers. This milestone achievement not only modernizes payment procedures but also aligns with the strategic objective of reducing in-person transactions at our offices. By enabling electronic payments, we have not only improved efficiency but also reduced the workload for our dedicated employees, allowing them to focus on delivering high-quality services.



Vetting Automation Project

The successful completion of the Vetting Automation Project, in collaboration with the Protection and Neutrality Program, marks a significant milestone in our ongoing dedication to upholding UNRWA policy on vetting. Through the adoption of the Vetting Robotic Process Automation (RPA) solution provided by LexisNexis Risk Solutions, we have streamlined the screening process for beneficiaries, vendors, staff, private donors, and partners agency-wide.

This innovative tool not only enhances efficiency but also ensures accuracy and transparency in our vetting procedures. By automating these processes, we have significantly reduced manual workload and mitigated the risk of errors. The successful implementation of the Vetting Automation Project reaffirms UNRWA's commitment to excellence and underscores our adherence to the highest standards of accountability and integrity.

Infrastructure Improvements

Significant strides were made in infrastructure enhancement, particularly with the timely replacement of outdated UPS units in the Amman Head Quarter (HQA) telecommunication rooms. These Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS) units play a critical role in ensuring the continuous operation of telecommunication devices during power outages by providing consistent electrical power supply.



By proactively upgrading these UPS units, we have bolstered the reliability and resilience of our telecommunication infrastructure, aligning with the department's commitment to meeting the Agency's uptime requirement for telecommunication services. This achievement not only mitigates the risk of service disruptions but also reinforces our capacity to maintain seamless communication channels essential for fulfilling our organizational objectives.

Additionally, all 250 UNRWA servers were onboarded in Azure Arc for improved vulnerability management, anti-malware protection, standard configuration, and management. Azure Arc enabled the Information Security Office to manage servers across multiple environments, including on-premises, and cloud, from a single control panel. This allowed for streamlined server management, improved security posture, and enhanced visibility into the server environment.

Successful Disaster Recovery Exercise Demonstrates Resilience of

REACH System



Business Continuity

DITID have played a crucial role in orchestrating disaster recovery testing for the REACH system. This labour intensive test not only evaluated the effectiveness of our Agency's continuity strategies but also served as an invaluable opportunity to pinpoint and rectify any vulnerabilities that could hinder the prompt restoration of business-critical applications in a disaster scenario. Through careful planning and execution this has fortified our organization's resilience against unforeseen adversities, thereby enhancing our capability for seamless service delivery and operational optimisation.

Service Delivery and Collaboration Platforms

IT Service Management

In the past year, our focus on optimizing IT Service Management processes has led to significant improvements in service delivery at Amman Head Quarters (HQA). We're proud to highlight the following achievements:

- **Reduced Request Resolution Times:** Through streamlined processes, we've reduced the time it takes to resolve requests, ensuring timely support for our clients.
- **Efficient Ticket Assignment:** Faster ticket assignment procedures have been implemented, ensuring tasks are promptly directed to the right teams for resolution.
- **No SLA Violations:** Our commitment to service excellence has resulted in an unprecedented zero Service-level Agreement (SLA) violations, showcasing our dedication to meeting client expectations.
- **First-Call Resolutions (FCRs) Implemented:** Introducing first-call resolutions has improved efficiency and customer satisfaction by resolving issues at the initial point of contact.
- **Improved Service Delivery:** By redistributing tasks from Tier 2 to Tier 1, we've enhanced the capabilities of our Service Desk, ensuring frontline support teams can address a wider range of issues effectively.
- **Implemented a Key Performance Indicator (KPI) dashboard** to drive informed decision-making and enhance performance evaluation in service delivery.
- **Launch of Modernized ICT Service Desk Centre:** Our new ICT Service Desk Centre, equipped with the latest technology and staffed by skilled professionals, enhances our ability to provide seamless IT support.

These achievements reflect our ongoing commitment to delivering quality IT services. We remain dedicated to continuous improvement and exceeding expectations in the year ahead.

Microsoft Enrolment Education Solution (ESS)

Throughout the past year, our team spearheaded the renewal and migration process for our Microsoft Enrolment Education Solution (ESS), achieving notable success through pragmatic and collaborative efforts. Key achievements include:

- **Negotiation and Discount:** Successful renewal and migration of licenses, securing an exceptional discount from Microsoft that maximized our investment value.
- **Enrolment of A5 Licenses:** Successful enrolment of A5 licenses for 8000 users. This comprehensive license includes Office 365 for the web, featuring essential web apps such as Outlook, Word, PowerPoint, Excel, and OneNote, alongside full access to the Office desktop apps. This integration facilitates seamless collaboration and communication among staff members, strengthening our organization's technological capabilities.

These achievements reflect our commitment to optimizing technology resources and maximizing the value of our partnerships to support our organization's success.

ITSM Portal Achievements

Throughout the year, the focus on enhancing the functionality and efficiency of the IT Service Management (ITSM) Portal has resulted in several key achievements:

UNRWA Service Portal

By automating requests for the Central Support Services Division (CSSD) and the Department of Security and Risk Management (DSRM) through the UNRWA service portal, we streamlined processes, reduced administrative burdens, and fostered greater accessibility for our staff members. This initiative not only enhances operational efficiency but also reinforces our commitment to providing timely and effective support to meet the diverse needs of our workforce.

Integration with IT Asset Management

A significant milestone was reached through the integration of the IT asset management system with Microsoft Intune. This integration streamlined processes and improved asset tracking, enabling better management and optimization of IT resources.

Web Application Availability Monitoring:

An automated process was implemented to proactively detect web application availability issues.. This measure enhances user experience, by identifying issues when they occur rather than when they get reported, leading to improved issue resolution timelines.



Innovation and Continuous Improvement.....

In 2023 we achieved significant milestones in revolutionizing the learning landscape, driving innovation, and enhancing accessibility through strategic initiatives and technology integration.

Leveraging Moodle for Employee Development and Operational Excellence

Moodle a versatile learning platform that offers a myriad of features tailored for educational advancement and operational enhancement. In the dynamic and intricate operational environment of UNRWA, fostering continuous learning and improvement is imperative for both employees and organizational effectiveness. In 2023 our main objective has been to optimize UNRWA Moodle as an accessible learning environment with customizable learning paths, rich multimedia resources, collaborative learning communities, and performance tracking capabilities.

Delivery of Training Courses:

We successfully delivered a diverse range of training courses on the iLearn/ Moodle platform, catering to various organizational needs:

- Offered specialized courses addressing critical skill development requirements:
 - » *Humanitarian Principles*
 - » *Human Rights, Conflict Resolution, and Tolerance*
 - » *Fleet Manager's Training*
 - » *Training for Drivers*
- Delivered **"Harmonious Workplace"** courses in both English and Arabic, fostering positive workplace dynamics and inclusivity.
- Updated the **"United to Respect"** course using Articulate 360, ensuring content relevance and effectiveness while embracing modern technology.

Integration Proof-of-Concepts (PoCs):

Conducted PoCs for integrating Moodle with Microsoft Learn and LinkedIn Learning, exploring new opportunities to enrich the learning ecosystem and expand course offerings.



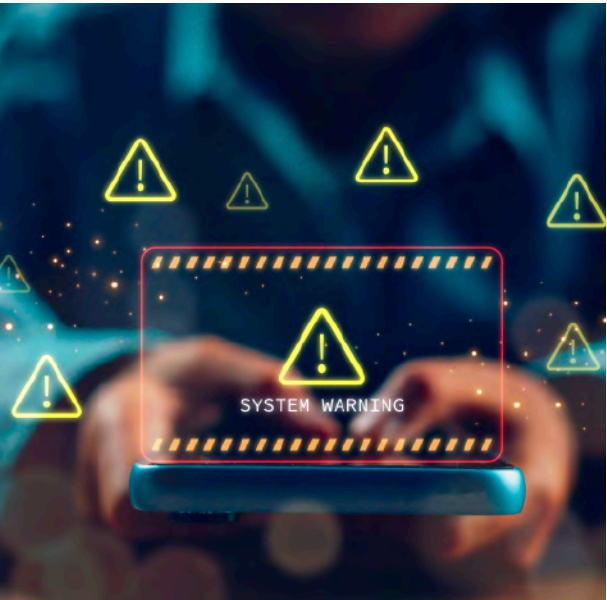
Digital Impact, Technology
and Innovation Department

DIGITAL RISK

Cybersecurity Fortification: Strengthening Our Digital Defences

In an era where digital threats loom large, safeguarding our organization's data and systems is paramount. Throughout the reporting period, our dedicated team of Field Information Security Engineers has been at the forefront of our cybersecurity efforts, working tirelessly to fortify our defences and ensure the integrity of our digital assets.

The following overview highlights our strategic initiatives in 2023 aimed at enhancing cybersecurity resilience in UNWRA operations.



Capacity Building

Information Security Engineers have been appointed in each field and are fully dedicated to cybersecurity. These engineers work tirelessly to ensure the safety and security of the organisation's data and systems. They are responsible for implementing and maintaining security measures, responding to security incidents, and keeping up to date with the latest threats and vulnerabilities. In addition to their Field-specific duties, all Information Security Engineers contribute to UNRWA-wide projects, collaborating with their colleagues to enhance the organisation's overall security posture.

In addition, DITID provided security training to its software developers to educate them on common vulnerabilities and how to resolve them. The training covered topics such as secure coding practices, input validation, and error handling. Developers were taught how to identify and mitigate common vulnerabilities such as SQL injection, cross-site scripting, and buffer overflows. This training helped to improve the security of UNRWA's software development process, reducing the risk of vulnerabilities and improving the overall security posture of the organisation.

Phishing Exercise

A phishing exercise was conducted to evaluate the security posture of our staff. This exercise involved sending simulated phishing emails to staff members to test their ability to identify and respond to phishing attempts. The results of the exercise were used to identify areas where additional training and awareness were needed. We phished 3.5% of our users, all of which were required to complete a dedicated cybersecurity training program to improve their ability to recognize and respond to phishing attempts in the future.

Anti-Malware for Servers and Workstations

UNRWA servers and workstations were onboarded in Microsoft Defender, which brings the best Microsoft anti-malware technology to all our devices. This allowed for integration with other Microsoft tools we are already using, providing a comprehensive and streamlined approach to security. Microsoft Defender provides real-time protection against malware, viruses, and other threats, helping to keep our systems and data safe and secure.

Mobile Device Management

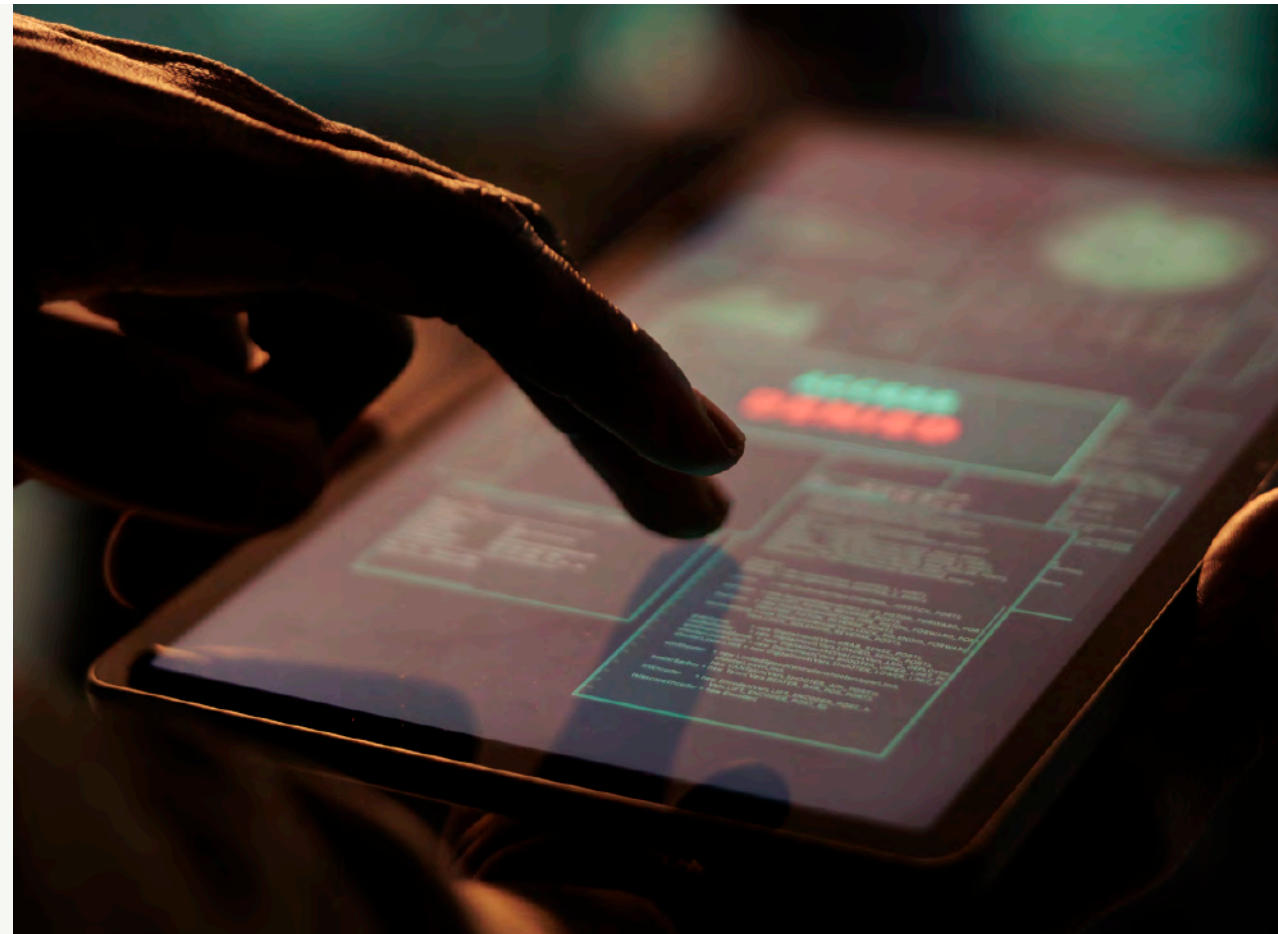
All UNRWA workstations were onboarded in Microsoft Intune, a Mobile Device Management solution, to ensure manageability, uniform configuration, security, patching, and simplified software deployment. This allowed for streamlined management of workstations, improved security posture, and enhanced visibility into the workstation environment.

Automated Vulnerability Management for Servers

UNRWA has automated the vulnerability management process. This has enabled the Information Security Office to have complete real-time visibility into the security of our server environment. Server administrators receive tickets whenever their action is needed. Regular reporting has also been implemented.

Replaced Legacy Digital Signature Solution with DocuSign

UNRWA has replaced its legacy digital signature solution with DocuSign. This move has allowed the organisation to take advantage of the latest technology in digital signatures, providing a more secure, efficient, and user-friendly solution for signing and managing documents. The legacy solution was decommissioned, and all users were migrated to the new platform, ensuring a smooth transition and uninterrupted service.



Migrate the DNS Service to Azure

DNS, or Domain Name System, translates domain names into IP addresses for internet communication. DITID migrated UNRWA's DNS service to Azure DNS. This move allowed the organization to take advantage of the scalability, reliability, and security of Azure's cloud-based DNS service. Azure DNS provides a global network of name servers, ensuring fast and responsive DNS resolution for UNRWA's users and systems.

Improved Security of Microsoft 365

An assessment of the Microsoft 365 configuration was conducted to identify areas for improvement in the organisation's security posture. The most important recommendations were implemented, resulting in a 30% increase in the security score. The successful implementation of these recommendations helped to strengthen the security of the organisation's Microsoft 365 environment, protecting against potential threats and vulnerabilities.

Passwordless Authentication

UNRWA has made passwordless authentication available as an opt-in for all staff. Passwordless authentication provides a more secure and user-friendly alternative to traditional password-based authentication, reducing the risk of password-related security incidents and improving the user experience.

Zero Trust: Secure Access Service Edge for Network Security

Netskope Secure Access Service Edge (SASE) was implemented to protect the network connectivity of all laptops within the organisation. This move allowed the organisation to take advantage of the advanced security features of Netskope SASE, providing comprehensive protection against threats and vulnerabilities. Netskope SASE integrates with existing security infrastructure, providing real-time visibility and control over user network traffic and ensuring secure and compliant access to cloud services and applications. The successful implementation of Netskope SASE helped stop attacks when the Gaza War started.

Improvements to Security Operations Centre

UNRWA piloted and started the implementation of Azure Sentinel, a cloud-native Security Information and Event Management (SIEM) solution. This move allowed the organisation to take advantage of the advanced security features of Azure Sentinel, providing comprehensive protection against threats and vulnerabilities. Azure Sentinel integrates with existing security infrastructure, providing real-time visibility and control over user network traffic and ensuring secure and compliant access to cloud services and applications.

Automated Asset Management

UNRWA automated server asset management by integrating with Azure Arc. All UNRWA servers were onboarded in Azure Arc for improved vulnerability management, anti-malware protection, standard configuration, and management. Azure Arc enabled the Information Security Office to manage servers across multiple environments, including on-premises and cloud, from a single control plane. This allowed for streamlined server management, improved security posture, and enhanced visibility into the server environment.

System Availability Monitoring

UNRWA implemented a system availability monitoring system to ensure the uptime and availability of its web systems. The system continuously monitors the availability of web systems and automatically creates tickets for administrators when a system becomes unavailable. This allows administrators to respond to and resolve any issues quickly, minimising downtime and ensuring the continued availability of critical systems. The system availability monitoring system is an essential tool for maintaining the reliability and performance of UNRWA's web systems.

Modernisation of Identity Infrastructure

UNRWA continued its efforts to move to Azure Active Directory (AD), making significant progress in modernising its identity infrastructure. During the year, 40% of on-premise Active Directory servers were shut. This move allowed UNRWA to take advantage of the scalability, reliability, and security of Azure AD, providing a more robust and flexible identity management solution.

Web Application Firewall

UNRWA has implemented a Web Application Firewall (WAF) to protect all its public web systems. The WAF is designed to monitor and filter incoming traffic to web applications, blocking malicious requests and preventing common web based. By implementing a WAF, UNRWA has added an additional layer of security to its web systems, helping to protect against threats and vulnerabilities and ensuring the safety and security of the organisation's data and systems.

End-of-life software license upgrade

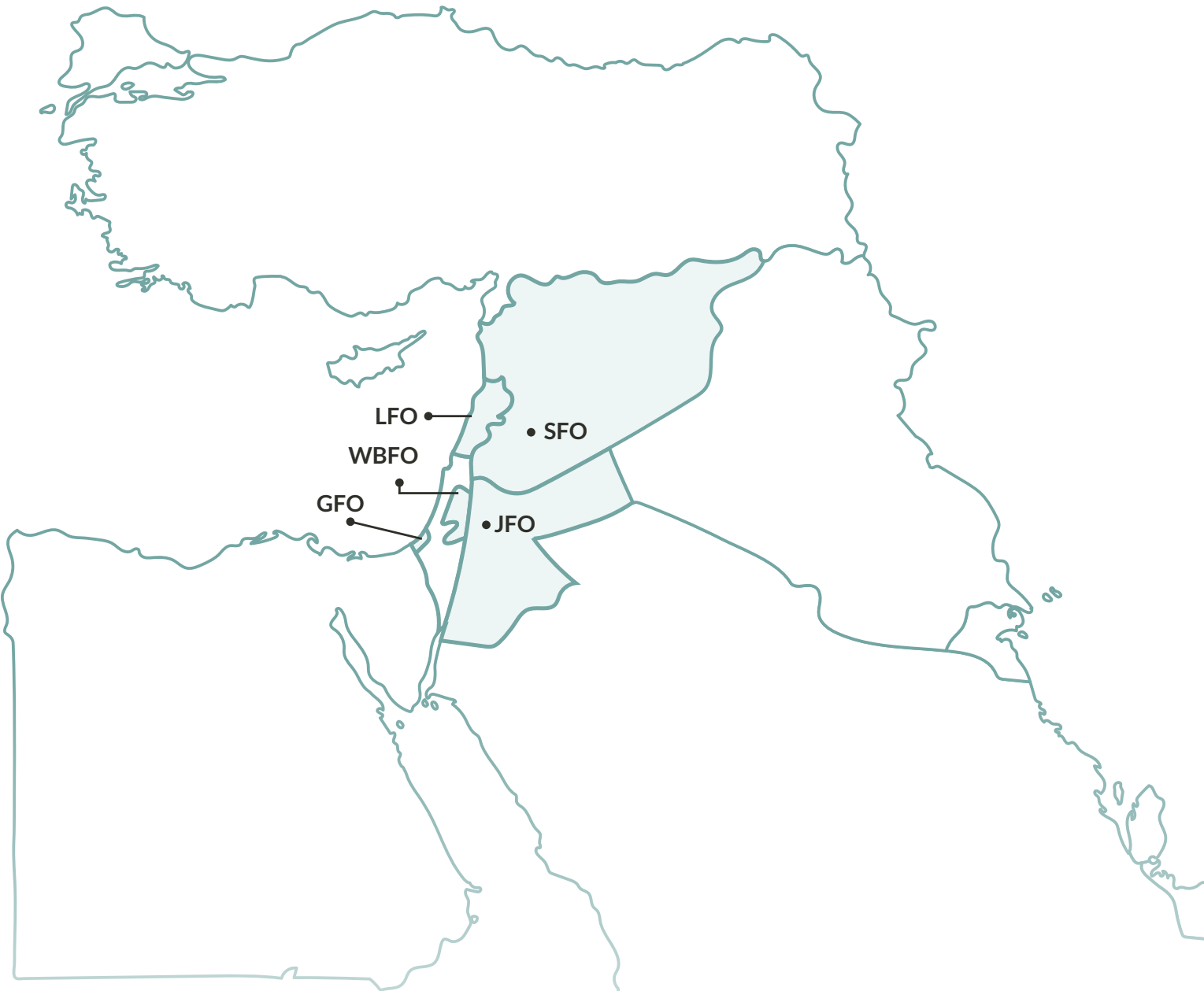
With focus on bolstering our organization's defence mechanisms against evolving digital threats, a key initiative undertaken in 2023 was the upgrade of end-of-life software licenses, including the Windows operating system and SQL. This strategic upgrade not only ensures compliance with the latest security standards but also serves as a proactive measure to mitigate potential vulnerabilities that could be exploited by cyber attackers. By investing in these upgrades, we have fortified our digital infrastructure, reducing the risk of cyberattacks and safeguarding sensitive data and systems against unauthorized access or compromise.

Our effort and achievements in 2023 underscore our commitment to prioritizing cybersecurity as a fundamental aspect of our organizational resilience strategy. Moving forward, we remain vigilant in monitoring emerging threats and implementing robust cybersecurity measures to uphold the integrity, confidentiality, and availability of our digital assets.



Digital Impact, Technology
and Innovation Department

FIELD OFFICES



FIELD OFFICES

- Lebanon (LFO)
- West Bank (WBFO)
- Jordan (JFO)
- Syria (SFO)
- Gaza (GFO)

Lebanon (LFO)

In Lebanon, our focus remained on enhancing operational efficiency and fortifying information security measures. We embarked on several initiatives to streamline processes and ensure secure access to vital resources. The development of an Employment Certificate Application marked a significant milestone, allowing staff to conveniently access and verify their work certificates online. Furthermore, integrating Lebanon Field Office (LFO) applications with Active Directory enhanced information security standards, ensuring robust access controls and user authentication protocols.

Our adoption of DevOps practices for LFO applications ushered in a new era of software development and deployment. By establishing a secure source code repository in a cloud environment, we aligned with DITID standards while fostering collaboration and efficiency among our development teams.

Additionally, our efforts culminated in the successful development of the Generic Document Management System. This customizable solution promises to revolutionize document archiving across various departments. Lebanon Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) started using this application as Proof of Concept. They have accomplished and archived more than 10000 documents up to this time, and they have been in the process of archiving all the TVET documents since 1960. Using such a flexible system will make it easy for Field Information Management Technology Offices (FIMTO) to configure and implement it in any department aiming to archive its documents.



West Bank (WBFO)

The West Bank Field Office (WBFO) witnessed a transformative year, marked by significant infrastructure upgrades, information system enhancements, and fortified security measures. Our commitment to modernizing operations and bolstering resilience across our network infrastructure was evident in our various achievements.

Infrastructure enhancements, including the implementation of fiber links and WiFi coverage in pilot schools, underscored our dedication to fostering digital connectivity and inclusivity. Moreover, bandwidth upgrades and the migration of on-premises applications to the cloud not only optimized performance but also streamlined resource utilization and management.

Our office spearheaded impactful initiatives aimed at enhancing efficiency, security, and accessibility for WBFO users. The successful implementation of SharePoint replaced outdated file servers, paving the way for seamless document management and collaboration. Additionally, the reduction of generic accounts and personalized access provision to UNRWA applications exemplified our commitment to data security and user-centric service delivery.

In tandem with these efforts, the Security Division made significant strides in fortifying our cybersecurity posture. Key projects, such as transitioning to Microsoft Intune for device management and deploying Netskope agents for network traffic monitoring, contributed to a more resilient and secure IT environment. Furthermore, the adoption of Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) across various applications ensured enhanced protection of sensitive data and critical systems.

The Application Division led transformative projects aimed at revolutionizing procurement processes, crisis intervention data management, and hospitalization data handling within the WBFO. The implementation of the Procurement Excellence Performance and Cloud Innovation (PEPCI) solution marked a paradigm shift in procurement operations, enhancing efficiency and transparency. Additionally, the development and deployment of applications for crisis intervention data management and hospitalization data loading streamlined processes and improved data accuracy.

Jordan (JFO)

The Jordan Field Office (JFO) embarked on a journey of digital transformation, focusing on infrastructure enhancement and service delivery optimization. Our concerted efforts aimed to empower staff, improve beneficiary experiences, and strengthen community support through innovative technological solutions.

Our endeavours encompassed a wide array of initiatives, including the development of tailored procedures to ensure secure access to educational resources for our educator staff. The implementation of an Asset Management System provided us with centralized control over thousands of computers and monitors, streamlining tracking and reporting processes.

Standardizing computer naming conventions across schools and labs brought consistency and clarity to our IT environment, facilitating seamless management and troubleshooting. Introducing MS Intune for Education simplified device management at administrative sites and schools, with comprehensive training ensuring smooth integration for all users.

Under our ICT4E program, we embarked on initiatives to enhance digital learning experiences and educational infrastructure across schools. Upgrading internet connectivity and providing essential technological resources to schools underscored our commitment to fostering inclusive and impactful educational environments.

In the healthcare domain, our efforts focused on revamping services and infrastructure by replacing

outdated computers at health centres and integrating them into Microsoft Azure. Similarly, outdated computers in school labs were upgraded, providing students with access to up-to-date technology and resources.

We conducted comprehensive user orientation sessions and provided instructions for new tools, ensuring that all staff members could leverage our technology offerings effectively. Our ticketing system facilitated prompt resolution of user requests, meeting defined performance goals, and ensuring a seamless user experience.

The installation of a new queuing system at health centres enhanced service efficiency and customer satisfaction, while the deployment of MS Defender to workstations bolstered endpoint security, safeguarding our systems against evolving threats. With Netskope's SASE solution, we tightened access control policies, ensuring robust security measures across our network infrastructure. Furthermore, our proactive approach to managing policies and firmware updates for Unified Threat Management (UTM) devices, coupled with server patching and vulnerability remediation efforts, reflects our commitment to maintaining the integrity and security of our systems.

Completing development phases for new applications has enhanced our operational effectiveness and efficiency, while the creation of Microsoft forms, workflows, and Power BI reports has streamlined processes and improved data analysis capabilities. Server reduction and network renovation projects have optimized infrastructure, improving efficiency and reliability.

Reducing downtime and upgrading internet connections ensures reliable connectivity for our operations. Upgrading our Nagios system has improved monitoring capabilities, ensuring timely alerts for potential issues. SharePoint migration and signing fiber provision contracts have enhanced productivity and efficiency across operations.

These achievements reflect our commitment to leveraging technology to enhance service delivery and support the communities we serve.

Syria (SFO)

The Syria Field Office (SFO) played a pivotal role in providing essential support services to a significant number of users and installations throughout 2023. Our commitment to ensuring the smooth operation of various systems and facilities across operational areas was evident in the volume of support services rendered and installations facilitated.

The extensive support services provided by SFO catered to a diverse user base across multiple systems, including administrative email accounts, E-Health systems, RRIS, Reach, EMIS, and mobile users. Additionally, the installation efforts spanned a wide spectrum of facilities, including field offices, area offices, clinics, schools, CPOs, and VTC training centres, highlighting the office's comprehensive reach and impact.

In line with our commitment to continuous improvement and operational excellence, SFO identified key priorities aimed at enhancing operations and service delivery. These priorities encompassed a wide array of initiatives, ranging from increasing innovation and enhancing end-user satisfaction to improving infrastructure performance and establishing a secure IT environment.

Under the priority of increasing innovation, SFO embarked on several initiatives aimed at addressing operational gaps and improving efficiency. Notable achievements included the development of a health maintenance request workflow, a shipment document tracking system, a queue management system, and the implementation of single sign-on via MS Azure Active Directory.

Gaza (GFO)

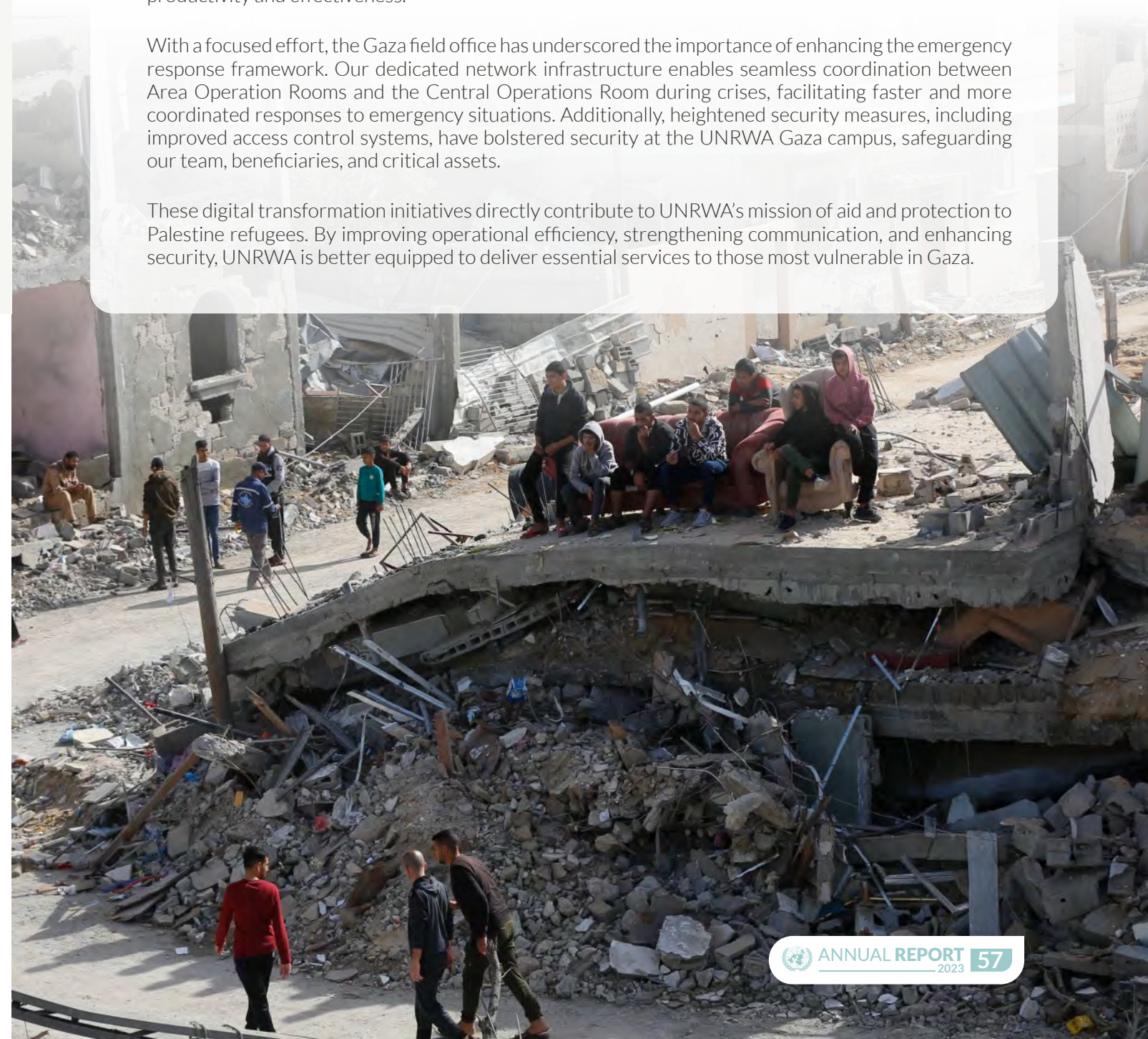
In 2023, prior to the Gaza War, the Gaza Field Office (GFO) made significant strides towards digital transformation, demonstrating our commitment to serving Palestine refugees in Gaza. Our focus on enhancing services and improving operational efficiency has yielded remarkable achievements.

Through the implementation of a modernized public portal, beneficiaries enjoyed streamlined access to UNRWA services, resulting in faster processing times and reduced hassle for those seeking assistance. Furthermore, upgrades to systems governing flagship programs such as Job Creation and Food Distribution have revolutionized program management, ensuring smoother delivery and more efficient support distribution to those in need.

Internally, our staff have witnessed a transformation in workflow processes, thanks to modernized technology platforms for systems like the Camp Improvement Information Management system and the Mental Health and Psychosocial Support System. This optimization has enabled our team to allocate more time towards directly supporting beneficiaries. Additionally, the upgrade of WiFi infrastructure across our campus has fostered better collaboration and communication among staff, enhancing overall productivity and effectiveness.

With a focused effort, the Gaza field office has underscored the importance of enhancing the emergency response framework. Our dedicated network infrastructure enables seamless coordination between Area Operation Rooms and the Central Operations Room during crises, facilitating faster and more coordinated responses to emergency situations. Additionally, heightened security measures, including improved access control systems, have bolstered security at the UNRWA Gaza campus, safeguarding our team, beneficiaries, and critical assets.

These digital transformation initiatives directly contribute to UNRWA's mission of aid and protection to Palestine refugees. By improving operational efficiency, strengthening communication, and enhancing security, UNRWA is better equipped to deliver essential services to those most vulnerable in Gaza.





Digital Impact, Technology
and Innovation Department

DITID 2024 OUTLOOK

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As we conclude the 2023 Annual Report, we are pleased to share the scheduled undertakings and strategic initiatives outlined in the DITID 2024 Workplan. These initiatives encompass a range of projects focused on promoting digital empowerment, accelerating innovation, improving digital services, and mitigating digital risks throughout UNRWA operations.

Digital Impact

Our focus on digital impact continues with the development of the Lebanon Digital Hub Strategy, which will pave the way for impactful solutions tailored to the needs of Palestine refugees in Lebanon. Additionally, the Digital Impact Strategy Development will set the stage for our comprehensive approach to driving positive change through digitalization.

Digital Acceleration

Initiatives such as the eUNRWA Web Portal Project and the Modernization of the Refugee Registration Information System architecture will enhance accessibility and efficiency in accessing essential services. Furthermore, the implementation of the new Electronic Medical Records system will revolutionize healthcare management within UNRWA, ensuring better patient care and operational excellence. In tandem with these technological advancements we are working on a comprehensive data strategy to maximize the utilization of data and facilitate seamless integration of diverse data sources.

Digital Workplace

We are committed to modernizing our infrastructure and improving digital collaboration with projects like RP Modernization / Transformation / Replacement and Unified Communications. Additionally, the development of the Staff Portal and the implementation of a centralized call centre will streamline internal processes, fostering greater efficiency and productivity.

Digital Risk and Cybersecurity

As we navigate the digital landscape, managing digital risks and fortifying cybersecurity remain paramount. Initiatives such as the Migration of laptops and desktops to Azure Active Directory and the Development and Implementation of a Ransomware Strategy will bolster our defences against evolving threats, safeguarding UNRWA's digital assets and operations.

Development and Innovation

Innovation lies at the heart of our endeavours as we strive to pioneer new solutions and approaches. The development of a Digital Innovation Strategy will not only foster a culture of creativity and ingenuity but also facilitate the seamless integration of cutting-edge technologies into our operations. Through this strategy, we aim to unlock new possibilities and drive transformative change, ensuring that we remain agile and responsive to the evolving needs of Palestine refugees and stakeholders.

In conclusion, the Digital Impact, Technology, and Innovation Department (DITID) remains committed to leveraging digitalization as a catalyst for positive change within UNRWA. With a strategic focus on enhancing services, accelerating innovation, fortifying cybersecurity, and managing digital risks, we are poised to make significant strides toward fulfilling UNRWA's mandate and improving the lives of Palestine refugees.



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