

SUPPORTING REFUGEES THROUGH GREENING INNOVATION AND URBAN AGRICULTURE



LEMON TREE TRUST

CULTIVATING FOOD
SOVEREIGNTY ONE GARDEN
AT A TIME

Biannual report • Issue number 1 • May 2017



PLANTING HOPE IN REFUGEE COMMUNITIES

At the Lemon Tree Trust, we consider greening innovation and urban agriculture to be key practices in making refugee camps healthier, greener and more productive places to live. Rather than viewing camps only as temporary spaces that confine, control or deny opportunity, we believe they can become spaces of hope and reconstitution that offer dignity drawn from culturally relevant skills. From years of working with refugees across the world, we know that camp greening and food production enhance refugee lives as well as support the overall sustainability of camp planning. Specifically, they are able to link aspects of crisis response and recovery, such as shelter, water, and future sustainable development.

TRANSFORMING THE LANDSCAPE OF REFUGEE CAMPS

In order to further our focus on greening innovation and urban agriculture, we have developed a large scale home garden initiative. This has two components; one helps families create and extend home food gardens through the provision of seeds, tools, and trees, and secondly, by running a yearly best home garden competition. The former helps refugee families develop small scale domestic food gardens in and around their dwellings. The latter brings an element of public festivity to the gardens, where residents mix with local government offices and camp officials and share their homes and domestic spaces during a day of celebration. Together we have seen a substantial rise in food production, community cohesion and improved public and private spaces around the camp.



LOCAL ENGAGEMENT

Through the work of dedicated staff on the ground, several community-building initiatives and partnerships have begun.

Details on page 2 >>>



TREE AND SEEDS

Initiatives to facilitate the growth of urban agriculture within Domiz are growing at a rapid pace.

Details on page 3 >>>



LOOKING FORWARD

Several projects are currently in the concept and development phase for 2017-2018.

Details on page 4 >>>



LOCAL ENGAGEMENT

Domiz Camp is situated in the north of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, between Mosul and Dohuk. It was opened in 2012 to accommodate approximately 30,000 Syrian refugees and by 2015 was home to over 40,000 refugees. In 2015 the Lemon Tree Trust initiated an urban agriculture project that aimed to connect food production, tree planting, waste recovery and broader environmental practices to residents.

While our initial goals were centered on these primary functions, the project has grown to incorporate many community-building initiatives as well. Over the past 2 years, the Lemon Tree Trust has cultivated a team of 10 professionals both within Domiz Camp and abroad who

have worked to reach out to community organizations, schools and local governments. Over the past 6 months, the Lemon Tree Trust has cultivated relationships with a local school inside Domiz (Jiyan School), a community centre (Jaker Khouain Center), the Local Dohuk University and local camp and government management. Internationally, we have strong links with Coventry University who are bringing expertise in agroecology and landscape architecture to aid garden designs, as well as the Solar Electric Light Fund (<http://self.org>) with regards to solar pumping grey water for agriculture. Further to this, the Lemon Tree Trust has received 3 applications from local institutions asking for our help in planting and re-foresting. Additional community building work has centered on interviewing camp residents to understand what is working and what isn't. Using this feedback to shape future work is key to our operational goals.



▲ Local school children in Domiz receive flowers, trees and seeds to plant at a local school



▲ Aveen hands out informational flyers to potential entrants to the annual Lemon Tree Trust Garden Competition



▲ Aveen interviews a recipient of seeds and trees about home gardening



▲ Members of the community give their feedback about building a new demonstration and training garden



TREE AND SEED DISTRIBUTION

November 2016 – April 2017

Since 2015, the Lemon Tree Trust has been assisting with garden development, seed distribution, agroforestry training and the planting of hundreds of fruit and shade trees. Below is a summary from November 2016 – April 2017. In this period, over 2,000 trees have been distributed, 420 rose bushes and potted flowers, 450 bags of fertilizer and numerous packets of seeds. We have also funded two greenhouses in order to help with the production of seeds and seedlings, as well as supported the development of a commercial garden nursery within the camp.

**NOVEMBER
2016**

Local LTT staff began handing out seed packets and brochures about the upcoming garden competition in May 2017. The first batch of olive trees were also distributed among the camp.

**DECEMBER
2016**

Lemon and Grape trees were distributed and the LTT local employees began to gain permissions from camp management for a refugee film maker to make short documentary clips about their gardening and tree planting within the camp.

**JANUARY
2017**

Our first batch of fig and pomegranate trees were distributed among the camp. Also, the LTT team from the UK visited to help gain permission for a dedicated bore well and the development of a 6,000 square meter demonstration garden. The UK staff also spent time collecting in-depth interviews about local gardening practices, access to fresh food and ideas for future engagements in order to aid future funding.

**FEBRUARY
2017**

A plan was developed to distribute shade trees and reforest a large park for recreation and food production. Apricot and Peach trees were also distributed among camp residents. UK staff returned to run a participatory workshop for the design of the demonstration garden. This garden will contain a greenhouse, livestock and function as an educational hub aiding the development of home gardens.

**MARCH
2017**

Trees were planted around the camp to increase access to shade and improve air quality. Additional bags of fertilizer, roses and potted flowers were distributed in beautification efforts. In the UK and US, staff prepared to visit Domiz to help implement sustainable drainage in the camp, meaning grey water could be reused for large scale agriculture.

**APRIL
2017**

The LTT staff continued to register entrants for the May garden competition and finished up planting ornamental trees in the camp. LTT also met with the Jiyan School about future agricultural engagement with school children in Domiz and also received an application from Jaker Khouain Center asking for our assistance in planting a garden and trees.

We also attended the Migration and Displacement conference in Erbil (April 19-21) in order to help mainstream our goal of the wide spread implementation of greening innovation and urban agriculture.

PLANTS IN NUMBERS



Over

2000

Trees Planted



300

Olive Trees



170

Lemon and
Grape Trees



250

Fig Trees



200

Pomegranate Trees



200

Apricot Trees



150

Peach Trees



400

Shade Trees
(Cyprus and Acacia)



420

Rose Bushes
& Flowers



LOOKING FORWARD

The Lemon Tree Trust is gearing up for a productive and exciting second half of 2017. In May 2017 we will be running our second annual refugee garden competition with over 150 entrants. The competition is a big day of celebration in the camp, where local officials tour home gardens, and we organise an award ceremony and prize giving. Each home garden is photographed and we also fund an exhibition of the winning entrants.

One of our potentially largest impacts will come from the construction of a large demonstration and training garden within Domiz camp. We are excited to work with both camp management and local residents who have offered their expertise on construction, irrigation and design. This demonstration and training garden will be the first of its kind within the context of a refugee camp in Iraq, and we are honoured to lead the way in redefining what it means to truly provide shelter for those forced to flee from conflict around the globe.

In order to help create awareness we have commissioned a documentary made by and for the refugees within Domiz Camp. Our local refugee crew have been filming and conducting interviews throughout the year. The film will explore in greater depth what gardening means to the residents of Domiz Camp as well as what impact the Lemon Tree Trust has had on the community. Additionally, we are thrilled to announce we have commissioned Martijn Van Tol and Dirk van Visser who previously created the award-winning “Refugee Republic” interactive web documentary about Domiz Camp¹. The documentary has featured at the New York Museum of Modern Art and won international recognition. They will be spending a week

in Domiz in May creating a new project looking at the greening innovation, urban agriculture with a specific focus on the home garden competition.

At the moment, greening innovation and urban agriculture are often the work of individuals, unsupported by UN agencies, NGOs and government bodies, or, at worst, are discouraged and eradicated because they contradict water use or land planning policies. We must aim higher: greening innovation and urban agriculture should be central to designing, implementing and sustaining the accidental city that is the refugee camp or tomorrow’s overcrowded urban areas.

At the Lemon Tree Trust, we aim to transform twenty-first century thinking around refugees with regard to food security, landscape ecology and waste recycling. We also want to give a voice to the refugees themselves who are making these ‘accidental cities’ their home, so they can tell their stories and share their dreams of transforming the world around them. We hope we can do them justice. Every day, refugees use ingenuity, creativity and determination to rebuild their lives and define their futures. We want to be part of this – we hope that you will too.

¹ <http://scrollytelling.com/> and <http://refugeerepublic.submarinechannel.com/>

FURTHER READING:

LTT in the Spotlight

Adam-Bradford, A. (2016) Agroforestry for Refugee Camps. *Agriculture for Development*, 28: 29-31. Available at LemonTreeTrust.org

Adam-Bradford, A., Tomkins, M., Perkins, C., van Veenhuizen, R., Binago, L., Hunt, S. and Belton, J. (2016) *Transforming Land, Transforming Lives: Greening Innovation and Urban Agriculture in the Context of Forced Displacement*. Lemon Tree Trust, Dallas, USA. Available at LemonTreeTrust.org

Borra, B., van Veenhuizen, R., Schut, M. and Adam-Bradford, A. (2016) Linking Urban Farming and Urban Planning in Times of Crisis. *Urban Agriculture Magazine*, 31: 38-40. Available here: <http://www.ruaf.org/linking-urban-farming-and-urban-planning-times-crisis>



LEMON TREE TRUST

CONNECT WITH US:

LemonTreeTrust.org
info@lemontreetrust.org