

GROWING FOOD GROWING HOME GROWING DIGNITY



Home Garden, Deniz © Lemon Tree Trust

At Lemon Tree Trust, we believe that trees, gardens and farms don't just have enormous human and environmental benefits, but can make a unique contribution to creating sustainable livelihoods for displaced communities. We pilot creative, innovative solutions to producing fresh food and tackling waste water, while creating green spaces and shade.

In Syrian culture, lemon trees represent home and community. In a refugee camp, a lemon tree is not only something physical to be nurtured, but a symbol of what trees and gardens can offer: beauty, shelter, food and economic security. Our projects begin with the distribution of lemon trees to build trust in new areas. Every day, refugees are using ingenuity, creativity and determination to redefine their futures. **We invite you to join us as we help them rebuild their lives – one tree, one garden, one life at a time.**

OUR ORGANISATION

Lemon Tree Trust (LTT) is a community-centred organisation operating through a core team in the US and the UK. We work directly with refugees in situations of forced displacement to identify, co-design and pilot urban agriculture projects through which they can achieve dignity, empowerment and food sovereignty. For the past two years we have focused our activities within Domiz refugee camp, in Kurdistan Iraq, establishing our core practices of home and commercial food production. We also work with refugees who are resident in host communities in neighbouring areas. Our projects are small in scale, but can have a huge impact on well-being, food production, and community development.

Our model centres on piloting innovative approaches, building capacity, monitoring effectiveness, disseminating good practice and sharing knowledge, with the goal of ultimately transferring management of specific projects to partner organisations for expansion. We aim to stimulate research, influence policy and improve the lives and livelihoods of people recovering from the trauma of forced displacement. By the time they reach Domiz, many refugees have already suffered enormously, and now face the challenge of rebuilding their lives in often cramped shelters, with poor sanitation, limited or poor quality food and few opportunities to earn a living. Our work in enabling refugees to improve their well-being, health and nutrition, and earn an income, helps them keep their dignity and invest in their future. We also advocate for the therapeutic nature of green spaces in trauma recovery.

Our projects also offer environmentally sound options for economic development and livelihoods strategies. Refugees

can harness their creativity and resourcefulness, and use their existing knowledge and skills to work as agricultural experts, translators, and project managers. As well as creating jobs, our projects provide refugees with opportunities to develop skills in new areas that will help them to develop new livelihoods. We also provide start-up funding for sustainable businesses based on local needs and resources; for example, we've supported the setting up of garden centres, and nurseries, which now operate as businesses within the camps in their own right.

While many men are able to work in local towns, women face restrictions on where they can work outside the camp. Inside the camp, too, work opportunities for women are limited. From setting up seed and tree distribution networks to developing small agri-businesses or training others in new skills like propagation, our projects offer women valuable opportunities to earn an income, develop leadership skills and take on a public role in their community.

Getting involved with our organisation means becoming part of something that is groundbreaking in its focus. Of the 200 organisations represented at the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul, we were the only one working specifically on agricultural interventions in refugee camps.

We have a long-standing practice of working in collaboration and forming partnerships with:



LOCAL AND NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS

We seek to influence local, regional, and national policy, and collaborate with governments to improve infrastructure within refugee camps.



NGOs

We work with NGOs on the joint execution of our programmes.



UNIVERSITIES

We bring together different forms of technical and practical knowledge and mobilise local expertise.



CORPORATIONS

We build partnerships with private companies interested in funding programmes such as community gardens, cooperative farming, orchards or solar energy.



SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS AND INDIVIDUAL FUNDERS

We collaborate with and welcome the support of scholars, individual donors and entrepreneurs to co-fund our activities, work with us or disseminate our findings through publications, exhibitions, film and media.

OUR WORK

Our work involves transforming refugee settlements through urban agriculture and greening innovation.



URBAN AGRICULTURE

is the production, processing and distribution of food in an urban context, such as an intentional or accidental city, like a refugee camp. It includes animal husbandry, aquaculture, forestry, beekeeping and horticulture.



GREENING INNOVATION

is a holistic approach to disaster risk, land and watershed management, linking relief, recovery and development through the planting of trees and gardens and the support of small agri-businesses. It can enable environmental sustainability through, for example, waste water recycling and composting.

Together, urban agriculture and greening innovation can demonstrate innovative techniques, create sustainable economies in refugee camps, and help to build resilience. We believe they must be central to the design and management of the accidental city that camps invariably become. We aim to scale up work on greening innovation and urban agriculture to transform thinking about refugees regarding food security, landscape ecology and waste recycling.



Arven head of garden development for Lemon Tree Trust, Domiz camp © Dirk Jan Visser

LEMON TREE TRUST 1



THE PROBLEM



In 2017, there were **over 65.5 million** displaced people worldwide.



22.5 million of them are refugees.



This is the **highest level of displacement in history**, surpassing even post-World War II figures.

In the face of this unprecedented challenge, we need ambitious, sustainable solutions. However, forced displacement is often addressed through immediate but temporary solutions, such as the erection of tented cities, water trucking, emergency drainage and large-scale food aid. Such solutions are crucial to keeping people alive and safe, but take little account of refugees' skills, talents and needs.

While the majority of those forced to leave their homelands intend to return, the minimum amount of time spent in exile tends to be around five years, with some camps existing for 40 years or more (World Bank Statistics 2016). Many refugees find themselves in a state of limbo for years on end. With restricted movement and limited work opportunities it can be difficult to build livelihoods or self-reliance. The struggle to meet basic needs – food, shelter, education, good health – can take a heavy toll. Refugees deserve better.

If camps are to become long-term homes, and grow into cities where generations of children spend large parts of their lives, then making sure people have the opportunity to help create or improve that environment is crucial to their quality of life.



OUR VISION: A BETTER SOLUTION

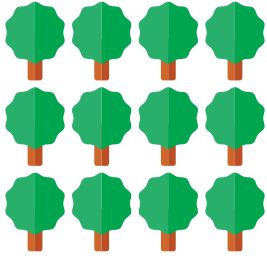
Currently, food security in crisis situations is largely the preserve of agencies who provide calories and nutrients to stabilise food security and prevent malnutrition, mainly through food assistance. At Lemon Tree Trust, we know that urban agriculture – the tangible manifestation of ecology, greening and cultivation – really works. As well as securing food, managing waste water and enabling people to rebuild their lives, it can also make refugee camps healthier, greener and more productive spaces.

Based on simple technology and waste recovery, urban agriculture is cost effective and easily adapted to different settings, making it key to a sustainable response to the refugee crisis. And on a human level, it represents much of what's important in all our lives: an attractive, clean environment; fresh, nutritious food; the chance to become self-reliant; and creating a place that feels like home.

Even in crisis, refugees often improve their homes and livelihoods through gardening or agriculture, from home gardens and

composting to keeping rabbits or chickens. Lemon Tree Trust doesn't impose a solution, but taps into and builds on this resourcefulness, developing home and community gardens, farms and other means of food production in emergency and protracted refugee situations. Trees and gardens provide food, shelter, beauty, meeting places and security as well as potential livelihoods. Our vision is for camps where residents can engage in small-scale, sustainable agricultural practices, with immediate benefits, while developing longer-term agricultural, economic, and infrastructure solutions.

OUR CORE PRACTICES



DISTRIBUTING AND PLANTING TREES

Distributing fruit trees gives us a way to open up conversations about the importance of trees and gardens in people's

lives and enables us to identify local workers, experts and enthusiasts. It also provides a way to build trust. We have distributed thousands of fruit tree seedlings – lemon, fig, grape, apricot, pomegranate and olive, as well as trees for shade and flowering bushes. Planted in large numbers these trees can soften the harsh environment of a camp.



ESTABLISHING HOME GARDENS

We encourage the development of home gardens and tree planting, providing individuals with advice on using waste water,

and gifting vegetable and flower seeds. Home gardens are often the cornerstones to camp greening initiatives and serve as personal spaces for growth and innovation.



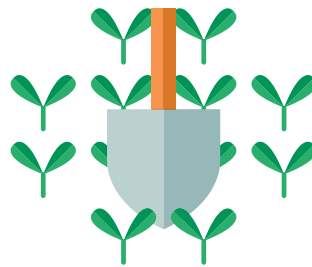
Our Crisis Response Garden staff, Dornia, Lemon Tree Trust



WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES

By offering tools and financial support to schools, neighbourhood areas and community groups, we

contribute to social cohesion, larger-scale food production and the development of spaces and activities that enable trauma recovery. We support gardens in women's and children's centres, creating safe havens where children can play amid the often hectic environment of the camp, and we have opened up communal spaces where neighbours can meet and spend time together. Community events like our popular garden competitions also help build relationships among displaced communities.



CONSTRUCTING DEMONSTRATION GARDENS

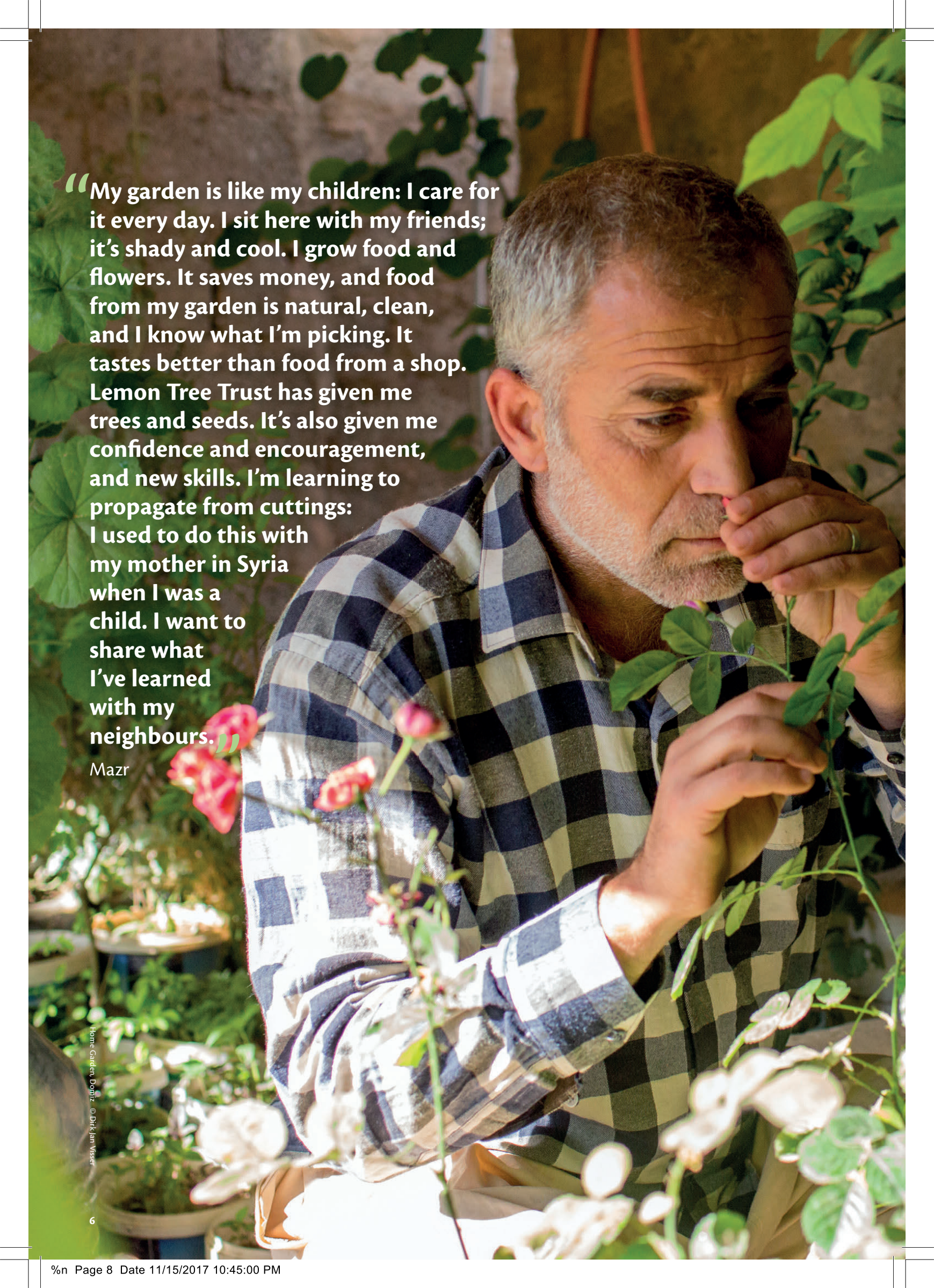
By creating areas dedicated to training and demonstration, we can innovate and educate,

while empowering those who emerge as leaders in agriculture. Our demonstration gardens show how to cultivate within the constraints of a camp environment. This invariably involves recycling grey water, composting, planting in small spaces, breeding rabbits and chickens for meat, and growing under plastic. We run these on a declining subsidy model, supporting refugees to grow and sell vegetables in order to become self-funding.



“Fish cannot live without water – I cannot live without my garden. I’ve always had a garden: in Syria I grew vegetables and flowers; here in Domiz, I’ve created a garden with grass, trees, flowers and vegetables.”

Haula

A photograph of a middle-aged man with grey hair and a beard, wearing a blue and white plaid shirt. He is focused on a rose bush, with his hands near a small pink rose. The garden is lush with green leaves and several other roses in various stages of bloom, including some red ones. The background is slightly blurred, showing more foliage and a stone wall.

“My garden is like my children: I care for it every day. I sit here with my friends; it’s shady and cool. I grow food and flowers. It saves money, and food from my garden is natural, clean, and I know what I’m picking. It tastes better than food from a shop. Lemon Tree Trust has given me trees and seeds. It’s also given me confidence and encouragement, and new skills. I’m learning to propagate from cuttings: I used to do this with my mother in Syria when I was a child. I want to share what I’ve learned with my neighbours.”

Mazr



OUR KEY PROJECTS

CRISIS RESPONSE GARDENS

This programme entails the creation of a packaged garden starter kit, ranging in size from a domestic garden to a small farm. These kits are being distributed to recently liberated Northern Iraq and Syria and we plan to expand within the region. This innovative project provides refugees with most of the equipment and supplies – seeds, tools and buckets, for example – which they need to start growing food from day one. It also supports a small refugee-run women's cooperative in Domiz which produces and assembles the kits.

SMALL COMMERCIAL FARMS

Through the establishment of small commercial farms within the camp, we are uniquely placed to expand the agricultural reach of our work both environmentally and economically. We have secured larger spaces within Domiz camp and established community farms, which use waste water runoff and are developed as commercial businesses. It is this continuum of home and community gardens and small and medium-scale farms that make up the practice of urban agriculture.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF SMALL BUSINESSES

By employing refugees in all of these areas and encouraging entrepreneurship, we have supported new agri-businesses and provided work, training and economic benefits to displaced people. For example, we have supported and developed three refugee-owned nurseries in Domiz camp. By encouraging residents to develop gardens, and distributing vouchers which enabled people to buy seeds, seedlings and tools at these nurseries, we helped them become viable businesses. We plan to set up a seed fund to further support refugees in sustainable micro enterprises that may eventually support their transition home.

“I am an old man, and in the garden old men can sit and talk, we can speak about the war.”

Mahmoud



Our new bore well, Domiz © Lemon Tree Trust



Vegetables growing in our greenhouse, Domiz © Lemon Tree Trust

“I had a beautiful garden in Syria, with trees, apricots, beans, cabbage, cucumber. I ate mostly from my garden. Food is available here in Kurdistan, but doesn’t taste as good: my own food tastes better! The garden is like my son. I love growing plants and vegetables: different food for different seasons. I sit in my garden every night, even in winter.”

Mohammed



Harvest time, Liberation Garden, Deniz © Lemon Tree Trust

“In the afternoon, I can go sit in the garden, and it is a treasure for me. When I smell the fresh mint, the smell is good for my soul. It makes me happy. A garden is like having a friend for me. It’s good for the soul: if I don’t have a garden, I feel like something is missing. It is better for humans to have a garden.”

Nama

GET INVOLVED

Lemon Tree Trust is launching a campaign to bring urban agriculture to newly displaced communities in Greece, Iraq, Uganda, and in other parts of Europe, the Middle East and Africa. Together we can cultivate land and grow dignity by bringing trees, farms and gardens to bleak environments and open up new opportunities for people to generate income.

Our ground-breaking approach of putting agricultural outreach at the heart of everything we do ensures your donation will bring real change.

- Establish and sustain an urban agriculture project in a new area or camp
- Transform larger unused plots into commercial orchards
- Award prizes for garden competitions to encourage home planting of flowers or food
- Sponsor Crisis Response Garden kits in emergency settings
- Create new jobs for refugees
- Plant trees changing the environment for the better for the whole community

“Yes, we are in a camp, but we garden for culture and change. If we garden, this camp will be like a village.”

Resident of Domiz Refugee Camp

donate at www.lemontreetrust.org

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Thank you to all of our many partners, including:

