



FOOD SECURITY
CLUSTER

Suzanne ALFARES, head of programme and sub-national food security sector coordinator, we shares her story on UN Day

1. Tell us about yourself, your title, your age, and your origins.

Suzanne ALFARES, 33 years old, I work as head of programme originally and double hatting the sub-national food security sector coordinator. I am from Homs, never left during the crisis.

2. Share a personal memory of your childhood, something which influenced your choice to become humanitarian personnel - or on the opposite, if you had a completely different perspective at the time.

I saw donations appeal for SOS and UNICEF Africa. It showed vulnerable children during famine. At that time, I felt so sad that other children don't have access to nutritious and healthy food like me, and decided I want to go and help. Unfortunately, I never expected that severity might reach Syria and will be in the UN, in Syria.

3. Share your professional history and how you made your way to your current position.

I joined SARC in 2006 to help in Lebanese and Iraqi crisis and continued in Syrian crisis. I participated in inter-agency convoys and the famous Homs evacuation. At that time, I met UN colleagues and unintentionally that helped to get personal access to opportunities like joining the UN. By incident, I heard about the website that advertises UN Job and joined as OIM assistant and in less than a year, I was nominated to co-lead the sub-sector in central Syria.

4. How do you believe the Food Security Sector's work complements the work the UN is doing in Syria? And how crucial do you believe that work is to the people of Syria and Why?

The food security sector is like the helicopter with a mirror that helps to reflect the overall picture of the actors and thus enriches evidence-based decision making. It is the power to advocate for balanced response and the voice for equal chances and capacity building.

Food sector is crucial because food has always been in the top prioritized sector to help saving lives.

5. State 3 things which you find most interesting in your work for the UN, and one challenge.

It is interesting to work in an international community and:

1. I see the outcomes of months of hard work towards helping the beneficiaries.

2. When the partners are empowered and work in a professional way, but they consult you as an expert.

3. When I get honest feedback about my performance because I am also a human who wants to grow.

The challenge is always when people have different approaches and mandates, and how we can get a closer coordinated and harmonized approach for all responses in a timely, yet professional manner.

6. Working as a UN staff, tell us about one moment which made you feel proud.

I feel proud when people speak positively about their experience in the humanitarian response before knowing that I am part of it. I feel more confident to say I am a humanitarian worker when I prove it through actions rather than visibility and titles.