



Fashion lovers send much-loved items of clothing to the studio for upcycling | Photo source Larissa von Planta/Alasidair Harriss

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FEMALE REFUGEE ARTISANS HAND-EMBROIDER OLD CLOTHES FOR NEW LOOKS

 FASHION & BEAUTY

Each upcycled piece is unique, and customers can collaborate on their designs

Spotted: Alsama Studio is a social enterprise run in the Bourj al-Barajneh refugee camp in Beirut, Lebanon. The director of the studio is herself a refugee, and a recent partnership with Larissa von Planta, who was trained at Central Saint Martins, has resulted in the LVP x Alsama Project. Fashion lovers send much-loved items of clothing to the studio for upcycling, with hand stitched embroidery patterns.

There are three yearly collections in February, May and October. Clients book a certain collection date, print off the delivery form and receive the drop-off address to which to ship their item. Embroidery colours can be chosen by the clients or left up to the artisans. Gift cards are available, and the Studio runs a small online shop selling accessories.

All the artisans have fled war-torn areas, and many have minimal levels of education. The income the women earn through their studio work is often the only funds available to their families. The studio team plans to add literacy and language classes to their training and education programme that currently includes yoga.

The needs of refugees can be an incredibly complex mix of basic requirements, with very specific locale and situation-based challenges. Projects that Springwise has spotted that are working to help improve the lives of those affected by conflict include [supply boxes](#) for food and medicines that, when emptied, transform into toys for children. [Blockchain](#) is also being used to create digital identities to unlock financial services and other benefits for people unable to access traditional forms and documents.

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Takeaway:

In the 2019 UN Refugee Agency Global Trends report into **forced displacement**, Filippo Grandi, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees said, “Forced displacement nowadays is not only vastly more widespread but is simply no longer a short-term and temporary phenomenon”. Creating long-term solutions is therefore a social imperative for many communities around the world. Artisans, policy-makers, and experts in almost every field must find ways to work together to make small changes that result in meaningful improvements.