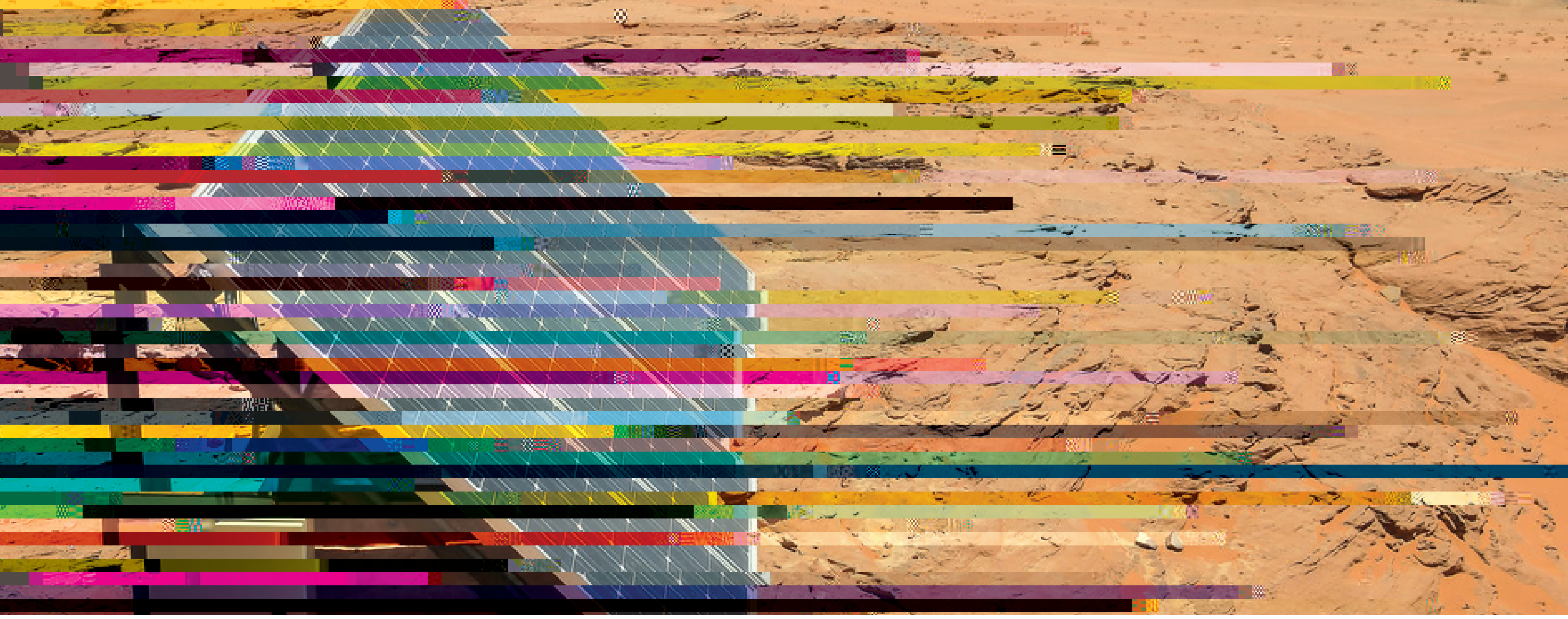

There is a frantic period every day in Damascus:

This essay addresses the issue of energy security in Syria, with a particular focus on the electricity sector. Syria's electricity sector has faced significant challenges as a result of the war, with far-reaching implications for people's daily lives, livelihoods, the economy, humanitarian aid operations, and overall security. The scarcity of oil and natural gas also has severely limited the capacity to meet the electricity demand required by households, the economy, and service sectors.

These difficulties underscore the necessity of adopting renewable energy sources and enhancing energy efficiency. The alternative energy source offered by solar panels initially appeared to be a potential solution. However, the high expenses that accompany obtaining and using solar panels put them beyond the financial capabilities of individuals with limited incomes, particularly in the midst of ongoing economic and present life challenges they are enduring.[2]

Trade dynamics have further exacerbated this energy security situation. Imbalanced power dynamics favor traders who exploit high demand and import low-quality equipment. They also continuously manipulate prices, leaving the most vulnerable populations in Syria behind.

While the desire for renewable energy resources emerged from a necessity for survival, increased demand and utilization of these resources can also play a pivotal role in driving the much-needed transition towards a greener future. This transition cannot happen through only raising awareness alone; it is also acquired via first-hand experiences. (And one also cannot overlook the role of climate change in the outbreak of the 2011 war in Syria.)

Localizing and advancing renewable energy technology through research and manufacturing holds significant importance for both current and future energy security and sustainability in Syria. Moreover, this endeavor will open fresh employment prospects for both experts and young workers.

Refugee and Resilience Plan in Response to the Syria Crisis (referred to as 3RP). Within the 3RP countries, a substantial population of approximately 7.1 million comprises refugees, asylum seekers, and stateless individuals. Crucially, an observable connection exists between ecological degradation and the refugee crisis in these nations, impacting displaced populations and host communities relying on natural resources for their livelihoods. As a result, enhancing resilience, mobilizing new financial resources, building capacity, and promoting environmental protection have assumed essential importance in addressing the complex challenges posed by this crisis.[10]

Further demand for renewable energy solutions—and particularly solar energy equipment—is evident through the ambitious goals outlined in the Syrian Ministry of Electricity's 2021 report, which lays out a vision that exfor solar panels will increase—not only at the household level but also on larger levels: governmental and non-governmental organizations, the private sector, as well as in humanitarian and development agencies.

Can Solar Panels Be the Solution?

This research suggests that a proposal to establish the manufacture of solar panels in Syria might help meet present and future energy demands. This project would focus on producing parts for the panels or creating factories where the finished panels would be produced from imported parts and materials.

One factor that might portend success for such a project is Syria's recent reinstatement to the Arab League. Another element that might bring success is that many manufacturers and wholesalers in the MENA region can provide various kinds of solar panels. A.R.E. Group in Egypt,[12] Aurasol in Tunisia,[13] Cleanergy Morocco,[14] and DuSol Industries in Dubai, UAE,[15] are just a few examples.

In this context, there are two pathways to create solar panel manufacturing in Syria. One is through the direct importation of materials and parts, which might be facilitated by the easing of restrictions among the Arab countries and Syria. Manufacturers in these countries could constitute a regional supply chain that incorporates a Syrian solar panel manufacturer. There is also the possibility of cooperation via lesson-drawing and providing the know-how to support a solar panel project.

Any such project should also aim to be nonpolitical and serve all Syrian areas and citizens without discrimination. Indeed, the project should be funded with humanitarian and development aid in the short run.

How Would the Project Work?

Ownership is one key element. According to the Evaluation of the Paris Declaration, development aid should support country ownership in order to strengthen national autonomy and to eliminate dependency on the aid in the future.

Another approach is for donors to keep direct control over themselves, assuming this strategy will reduce risk. Yet both the evaluation and other careful assessments find that this assumption is actually an illusion. Excessive donor control is no safer, costs more, and undermines long-term development benefits.[16]

contract with the manufacturer at cost. These organizations can also identify those with the greatest humanitarian need and ensure they receive panels.

The cooperation would run even deeper. Based on previous projects and experience,[19] manufacturers associated with the project would collaborate with the UNDP to design training programs in renewable energy. These courses incorporate training in the manufacture, installation and maintenance of solar power systems and encourage gender equality and the participation of women in all areas of the programs. The collaborations should also ensure that projects are aimed at rehabilitating the grid and allowing solar power plants to feed into the grid.

What Would Success Look Like?

The proposed solar panel project has the potential to make a significant impact on various fronts.

First, it would address the pressing issue of electricity scarcity in individual households by offering high-quality electricity at cost prices. It also would strive for inclusivity by providing free access to clean energy for the poorest segments of the population. Additionally, the project could play a crucial role in assisting humanitarian aid operations.

It also would have other pervasive effects. It could act as a catalyst for market improvement, particularly given recent developments like the Syrian Investment Agency's approval of a solar panel manufacturing project in Adra Industrial

But beyond its socioeconomic contributions, the solar panel project is poised to bolster the overall economy and combat ecological degradation in the 3RP countries. Promoting renewable energy usage will also contribute to the global fight against climate change, which, in turn, can help alleviate climate-induced conflicts.

[redacted] iew-
Public
he Sustain-
es to combat
stitute of Dramatic
Pharmacy at Damas-
DGs, refugee, and migration
at post-conflict peacebuilding.

Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars
One Woodrow Wilson Plaza
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20004-3027

wilsoncenter.org
facebook.com/WoodrowWilsonCenter
@TheWilsonCenter
[redacted]

wilsoncenter.org/program/middle-east-program
mep@wilsoncenter.org
facebook.com/WilsonCenterMEP
@WilsonCenterMEP
202.691.4160