



Programme Report

April 2021

INTRODUCTION

March this year marked ten years since the start of Syria's conflict, a painful reminder. One of the most frightening thoughts is that a fractured Syria, where people risk being bombed, killed or pushed to the edge by poverty has become the norm. Few are surprised by the images we see there now, they are accepted as 'the way it is'. We do not believe that this should be accepted – indeed it must not – because it does a great disservice to millions of people who deserve so much more.

Since 2012, we have been working to support some of the most vulnerable in this crisis. This report covers the calendar year 2020, during which **we provided education and health care for over 34,000 Syrians**. These people, and the thousands like them, are the reason why we cannot accept Syria's status quo.

Funding this type of work in Syria and Lebanon isn't straightforward but it is necessary and possible. We are extremely proud to be able to do it.





Providing **Primary Healthcare**
in north east Syria

 **HANDS UP**
FOUNDATION
Charity no. 1156491

HEALTH CARE INTRODUCTION

At 8am on 21st March this year, people were queuing to enter Al Atareb hospital, north west Syria. At that moment a missile hit the entrance, killing seven people; one a child, and injuring a further 17. There are no appropriate words to sum up the cruelty of this attack. The hospital is now out of service, denying the surrounding community access to healthcare.

There have been 598 attacks on at least 350 separate healthcare facilities in Syria since March 2011.* This systematic targeting of civilian healthcare facilities is a brutal tactic that reduces the number of health resources for an overcrowded and under-resourced area. With our partner [SAMS](#), we are proud to support a Primary Health Clinic in the district of Tal Abyad, east of Aleppo, which opened in March 2020. Previously the clinic was located further west but had to be moved in early 2020 because of the conflict.

Primary healthcare can be lifesaving in this part of Syria and we're delighted to be able to provide it for the local community of **10,000 people**.

*CBS News: <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/syria-war-bomb-atareb-hospital-aleppo-assad-and-russia-attacks-medical-facilities/>



PRIMARY HEALTHCARE CLINIC PROGRESS & IMPACT

Following the move from Al Zarah, which had simply become too dangerous for the team to safely operate, the new clinic opened in Tal Abyad in March 2020. The clinic has continued operating despite the spread of COVID, although the virus did affect consultation numbers in the autumn, as social distancing resulted in fewer patients visiting the clinic.

In 2020, the team helped **19,006 patients** through **26,425 consultations**:

- **9,343** for women, 35%
- **3,475** for men, 13%
- **6,950** for boys, 26%
- **6,657** for girls, 25%

From March, **pediatric services** were the most sought after consultations (38%), followed by **reproductive services** (18%).

One of the most important things we do is provide **livelihoods for qualified Syrian professionals** whose skills are so desperately needed. By some estimates, 70% of health professionals have left the country.* Since March, **we have covered the salaries of 19 staff at the clinic**, including a GP, Pediatrician and Midwife. This is so important because salaries don't only enable people to earn a living and care for their families, they also enable access to professional health services for the local community.

COVID-19

Since the start of the pandemic, the team have put measures in place to protect staff and patients, including supplying PPE and training staff to take swabs for COVID. In January 2021, there were a reported 8,100 cases in north east Syria,** but given the limited capacity to test, the actual number is most likely far greater.

*Relief Web: <https://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/regional-director-remarks-brussels-syria-side-event-24-march-2021>

** Relief Web: <https://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/north-west-syria-shortages-oxygen-water-coronavirus-cases-quadruple-two>

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SUPPLIES

Late 2019 and early 2020 saw an influx of almost 1 million people* into north west Syria as increased fighting forced them to flee their homes once again. We launched an appeal in response, raising £24,000 for emergency medical supplies to hospitals and clinics run by our partner SAMS.

This appeal supported **12,110 people**, through **13,035 consultations**:

- **6,236** for women, 48%
- **1,681** for men, 13%
- **2,712** for boys, 21%
- **2,406** for girls, 18%

*The Guardian: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/dec/24/thousands-flee-north-west-syria-amid-airstrikes>

MAHMOUD'S STORY



Mahmoud is 8 years old and one of the patients at our PHC. He suffers from chronic asthma. His family was displaced and they now reside in the town of Ali Bajliyah in the countryside of Raqqa, Syria. “In addition to monitoring Mahmoud’s condition on a regular basis, we provide all the necessary medication and medical supplies he needs,” said Dr. Abdulhamid Al-Hawijah, Mahmoud’s pediatrician at the centre.

We are proud to be able to support Mahmoud, relieving his family from the burden of securing care for their son.



Providing **Education**
in the Bekaa Valley, Lebanon



Charity no. 1156491

EDUCATION INTRODUCTION

Children aged 3 to 18 make up 54% of registered Syrian refugees in Lebanon and the vast majority live in informal tented settlements. Children in these camps risk losing out on education entirely. Having had little opportunity for schooling, the levels required by formal Lebanese schools are beyond their reach. Add to that Lebanon's civil unrest since 2019, the devastating Beirut blast in August 2020, a lack of political leadership, and increasing cases of COVID and you begin to get a picture of the challenges faced, particularly by those already on the margins of society.

With our partner [SAWA](#), we fund a school in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley. This project aims to give 300 children the basic literacy and numeracy skills required for formal education, providing hope for a brighter future.

We believe that education is the key to protecting the future of this young generation of Syrians, each of whom under ten has only ever known Syria as a country in conflict, if they know it at all.



EDUCATION PROGRESS & IMPACT

The school operated across the two academic years in 2020, providing lessons in core subjects: **Maths, English, Science** and **Arabic**. Lessons had to be taken online in May 2020, when COVID made teaching in the classroom impossible. It is no substitute for teaching in person, but it does mean that these children were able to continue their education.

301 children were taught during the year, aged 6-13; **148 boys** and **153 girls**. In the summer review, 76% of those taught achieved a grade of 60% or higher (75% of the boys, 78% of the girls).

Following lockdown in March 2020, the school closed as per government guidance. The team were quick to set up **remote learning**, delivering work to students weekly, and collecting for marking the following week, with lessons delivered via WhatsApp. Despite the disruption, teachers are confident that students reached the expected level by the end of the academic year in June 2020. The new academic year had a delayed start owing to more lockdowns, but teaching has continued since December, with a new intake of 300 students.

One of the most important things we do is provide **livelihoods for qualified Syrian professionals**. In 2020, **we contributed to the salaries of 18 staff**, the majority are Syrian and all come from the local community. We believe salaries are so important because they don't only enable staff to earn a living, they also enable the provision of a vital service. These services, in turn, foster hope and stability.

COVID-19

Lebanon has been hit hard by COVID and, to date, has reported almost 500,000 cases.* There have been intermittent lockdowns further hindering the delivery of education to the young Syrian refugees we support. The team are keen to get back into the classroom, but will only do so once it is safe for children and teachers.

*Reuters: <https://graphics.reuters.com/world-coronavirus-tracker-and-maps/countries-and-territories/lebanon/>



RAWAN'S STORY

“Though she is given a week to solve the handouts, she finishes them within a day or two after receiving them. The handouts are good and clear to understand. I don’t even help her with her homework unless she approaches me for a challenging exercise...” says Rawan’s mother with a proud smile.

Rawan is 6 years old and lives in a refugee camp in the Bekaa Valley with her mother. She was excited to enrol in the Lebanese Official School, but after its closure in March 2020 to protect children from the rapid spread of the pandemic, she fell out of the education system.

This did not deter her ambitions! Rawan noticed SAWA's education team distributing handouts in her camp and was determined to participate. She asked for some worksheets of her own that she could complete. From then on, she was included in the weekly distribution cycle.

Education is crucial for the next generation of Syrian children. We must protect their future by ensuring they receive a solid education.

THANK YOU

None of this work would have been possible without the support of our donors. As the ten year marker of Syria's conflict passes, this support means more than ever. Thank you for continuing to think of us.

We are always happy to hear from you, please get in touch if you have any questions.

Email: contact@handsupfoundation.org

Post: Kemp House, 160 City Road, London, EC1V 2NX

www.handsupfoundation.org | Charity no. 1156491

