

# PROGRAMME REPORT

July 2024



**Action  
Syria**

Action Syria is the operating name of the Hands Up Foundation, Charity no. 1156491



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# Our Impact:

So far in **2024**, Action Syria has helped  
over **13,800** Syrians.

We've empowered **four** local organisations to continue their work  
by providing:

Over **9,000** medical consultations

Education for **200** children

Salaries for **24** medical staff, **13** education staff, and **32** support  
staff

Vital support, including psychological, physio therapy, and  
protection services, for over **6,500** earthquake survivors

**2** playgrounds for children affected by earthquakes, displacement  
and conflict

**56%** of those reached were women and girls





# Introduction

**2024** marks **10** years of our work and commitment to Syrian communities. Today, that commitment remains, and the impact we have achieved during the first half of this year reflects this. While our work and reach have grown throughout the years, so has the need for humanitarian aid. In **2014**, approximately **9 million** people needed humanitarian aid **[1]**. In 2024, it is **16.7 million [2]** - the needs have never been greater.

We work with local partners to make sure Syrian communities have the medical care and education they need, every day and when emergencies strike. Over the first half of **2024**, this meant continuing our long-term health and education programmes, as well as ongoing support for people affected by the **2023** earthquakes.

Our programmes are designed to deliver aid quickly and effectively to those who need it most. Whether that's basic, but life-saving, health services like cholera treatment and prevention, or education for Syrian refugee children across the border in Lebanon, we are committed to doing all we can to help. For these children, life is often no better than for their counterparts who have remained in Syria. Lebanon is currently facing a severe economic crisis, and racism and violence against refugees is on the rise. In recent months, **hundreds** of Syrians have been deported and **hundreds of thousands** more threatened with deportation **[3]**.

While the situation on the ground remains bleak, our local partners and you, our supporters, give us hope. Thank you for your part in helping thousands of Syrians so far this year.

*This report covers the period from 01 January to 30 June 2024 and reflects on the situation on the ground during this period.*

# Our Programmes

## Health



# Our Programmes

## Health



### Primary Health Clinic

#### Syria - SAMS

Over the past few months, a lack of funding has forced the closure of **77** health facilities in north-west Syria **[4]**. This is a distressing development in a country where the health service network has already been shattered by over a decade of conflict and **15 million** people need health assistance **[5]**.

With our partner, SAMS Foundation, we have been working to ensure the people of Tel Abyad continue to have access to healthcare. From **01 January 2024** to **29 February 2024** the team of **22** helped **6,981** people, providing **9,124** consultations. These offered a life-line for patients with both communicable and non-communicable diseases, as well as paediatric, dental services, and reproductive care.

In Syria, the cost of transport to medical centres prevents people from getting the medical care they need. To address this, the team of Community Health Workers based at the clinic conduct outreach sessions in the community, travelling to them rather than the other way around. These sessions are designed to raise health awareness, refer cases and combat malnutrition - an issue more and more people are facing. The team work tirelessly to ensure their community has access to the medical care they need. We are so grateful to you, our supporters, for helping us ensure they receive a stable salary in return for their expertise and work.

We aim to work with communities who are the most vulnerable, and the hardest to reach. That includes funding programmes which are harder to find finance for. After several years funding the clinic in Tel Abyad, and providing medical care to thousands of Syrians each year, we are delighted that another donor has come forward to provide sustainable funding to the clinic until **March 2025**. Our partnership with SAMS is not ending, and since **June** this year, we have been funding one of their clinics in Jandairis, north-west Syria, providing the same services to a community of **47,900**. The impact of this programme will be reported on in our next Programme Report. While the location has changed, the nature of the work has not.



## Prosthetics

### Syrian Turkish Border - PAC

**3 million** Syrians have been injured during the conflict, including **86,000** people whose injuries have led to amputations [6]. In reality, this number is likely far higher. We have been working with our partner, PAC, since **2022**, to provide the support patients need to enhance their living conditions and regain the independence to pursue employment, education, and sporting activities - opportunities limb difference often strips away.

With PAC, we are providing the rehabilitation services these people need, through prosthetics, physiotherapy and psychological support. We are covering the salaries of **6** medical professionals and contributing to those of **6** support staff. We are so proud to ensure the Hope Step Centre (the only one of its kind providing these services for free in Azaz, north-west Syria) can continue its work, while supporting the livelihoods of the staff who run it.

Our prosthetics programme has evolved through the years, adapting to meet the needs on the ground. The latest iteration of the programme started in **March 2024** and includes orthotic services (supporting the function of limbs / torso). Through the programme, we hope to reach over **1,700** people, making a positive impact on their lives. We look forward to reporting on progress made in our next programme report.



# Our Programmes

## Education



# Our Programmes

## Education



### Education for Syrian Refugees

#### Lebanon - SAWA

**1.5 million** Syrian refugees live in Lebanon [7]. Having fled their home country, they now face severe economic crisis here, as well as growing fears of conflict as relations between Hezbollah and Israel threaten to escalate [8].

**44%** of Syrian school-age refugees in Lebanon do not attend school [9]. This leaves them vulnerable to child labour and child marriage, significantly limiting the horizons of their future. Working with our partner, SAWA, we are changing this, providing a school for **200** Syrian refugee children in the Bekaa Valley. Each day, the children arrive from neighbouring camps to learn Arabic, English, science and maths. Without this centre, many of these children would have no access to education and before enrolling, had never stepped foot in a classroom.

Many of our students have experienced conflict, forced displacement, and do not know life outside of the camps. The majority of their **13** teachers are from the same community and have lived through similar experiences. Action Syria funds their salaries to support their efforts to provide a safe, supportive environment and the education these children need for a brighter future.

The economic crisis in Lebanon means there are not enough spaces in schools and, even if they can find a space, many are unable to afford transport or school stationery. We are doing all we can to address these barriers, providing buses to get our students safely to and from school, as well as the materials they need to study.



## Kefaa's Story

**Kefaa**, age **10**, is one of the **200** children attending Action Syria's school for Syrian refugee children. Located in the Bekaa Valley, Lebanon, the school provides education for those who would otherwise have been forgotten by the system - many have never stepped foot in a classroom before joining. Having rarely ventured from her parents' sides, Kefaa struggled with extreme anxiety at the thought of interacting with strangers and children her own age.

Her first week at the school was challenging. She spent it crying and refused to enter the classrooms with the other children. However, with the continuous support and care of her teacher, Ms. Souad, things soon turned around for Kefaa. She had individual psychosocial support sessions to begin, to help her overcome her fears and anxieties. Teaching children who have experienced traumatic events, from conflict to forced displacement, is something the teachers know how to deal with. With many employed from the community in which the children live, they know and understand how to respond with empathy and compassion, while making a safe and supportive place for the children to learn and come to terms with their experiences.

We are delighted Kefaa is now a dedicated and happy student. She loves school and her favourite subject is English. Kefaa's journey would not have been possible without your support, thank you.

### Kefaa at school, Lebanon

**44%** of school-aged Syrian refugee children in Lebanon don't go to school [9].

**Our school is changing that statistic.**



# Our Programmes

## Emergency Response



# Our Programmes

## Emergency Response



### Earthquake Response

The **February 2023** earthquakes left a trail of destruction, both mental and physical. Many were caught in the rubble, losing homes and loved ones; a recent report revealed more than **one third** of people included in the assessment had lost a family member [\[10\]](#). While the devastation has faded from the news, the emergency is not over. Aid is needed to help communities rebuild and address the “ticking time bomb” [\[11\]](#) of the psychological impact. Pages **11 - 13** outline our ongoing work to bring stability. Please refer to our [2023 Report](#) for details of our immediate response [\[12\]](#).



# Gender Based Violence & Protection Programme

## Syria - Maram

"Hardest to reach, most at risk." This is how a recent [World Vision report](#) described people living in Syria's widow camps [\[13\]](#). Characterised by extreme violence - physical, verbal, and sexual - these camps in north-west Syria hold **tens of thousands** of widows and children whose families have been torn apart by conflict.

In these camps, even before the earthquakes, **95%** of women felt depressed or hopeless [\[13\]](#). They are not allowed to freely leave and are unable to work to provide an income. This often gives them no choice but to resort to 'survival sex' to support themselves and their families. Daughters are forced into child marriage and sons recruited by armed groups. These systemic issues have been made all the more pressing, because following natural disasters, like the earthquakes, women and girls are disproportionately impacted, facing greater risk of violence [\[14\]](#). This project aims to address that risk.

Working with our partner, Maram Foundation, we have been working to provide child protection and Gender Based Violence (GBV) services in **12** widow camps in Idlib. The team of **16** - whose salaries are provided by Action Syria - have reached over **6,290** people with sessions on topics such as the importance of education, child labour, nutrition and rights, including referring cases for medical and mental health needs. **98%** of people surveyed rated these sessions as 'good' or 'excellent', showing their ability to respond effectively to participants' needs. The project also gave **413** people access to safe spaces, a respite vital for ensuring their physical and mental health.



# Playgrounds

## Syria - PAC

Syrian children under the age of **13** have never known their country in peacetime. They have never had the luxury to just play and simply be children. When we asked them what they wanted most, they told us 'somewhere to play'. The importance of these spaces cannot be underestimated. Research shows children process traumatic experiences through play, leaving them vulnerable if they do not have the space to do this **[15]**. Having lived through conflict, the **2023** earthquakes, and for many, displacement and poverty, this is vital. This is why we have been working with our partner, PAC, to build **two** playgrounds in Idlib and Aleppo, two areas affected by the earthquakes and home to many displaced people, with swings, slides, trampolines and more. With extensive experience in child protection and mental health services, PAC are the perfect partner to work with on this innovative project.

## Doaa's Story

**"My friends and I do not have toys... I dream of swinging on swings."** Doaa is a **10** year-old girl living in a camp near our Idlib playground. Before the playgrounds were built, she told us she and her friends would **"spend our time playing with stones and dirt."** With the arrival of the playgrounds she said **"I am very happy because we can play with toys whenever we want."** The smile on her face speaks a thousand words.



Doaa,  
Idlib playground

# Psychological Support & Physiotherapy Services

## Turkey - SAMS

The **February 2023** earthquakes caused a significant increase in demand for mental health and psychological support services, as well as physical rehabilitation services. In Gaziantep, Turkey, host to approximately **462,000** Syrian refugees **[16]**, these needs have become particularly pronounced due to an influx of displaced people. To address these needs, we have been working with our partner, SAMS, on the refurbishment of their Mental Health & Psychosocial Support centre in Gaziantep, as well as repairing out-of-service physiotherapy equipment, procuring additional furniture and equipment, and distributing hearing devices for **27** patients with hearing impairments. Hearing devices might sound mundane, but they actually change lives. For adults, they can support the return to work, and for children the opportunity to return to school after long periods of absence.

Through this programme we have reached **268** people with mental health and physical therapy services, as well as ensuring the Mental Health & Psychosocial Support centre can continue providing its services for the long-term. Making a sustainable difference is a key part of our work and we are so proud that with SAMS we have been able to do this, ensuring support for years to come by refurbishing this centre and providing vital equipment.





## Thank You

The work outlined in these pages would not have been possible without you. When giving a donation or time, it can be hard to quantify what that really means. For us, it is so much more than a line on a bank statement and, even the feeling of having done something good; it means a Syrian refugee child who had never before stepped foot in a classroom is now in school; a young mother whose life was turned upside down by the **2023** earthquakes has access to a midwife; a young man who lost his arm to a gunshot wound now has a prosthetic. Thank you to all of you who have taken action and supported us. Together, we are changing lives.

True change occurs when we stand together and take action. While we dream of a world in which our services are no longer required, we are here for as long as we are needed. We cannot do that alone, but thanks to you, we know we are not.

With thanks from us all,

The Action Syria Team





# FURTHER READING

[1] '2014 Syrian Arab Republic Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan (SHARP)' [\[Available here\]](#).

[2] 'Unprecedented 16.7 Million Syrians Need Life-Saving Aid, Secretary-General Tells Brussels Conference, Urging International Community to Supply \$9 Billion Needed' [\[Available here\]](#).

[3] 'Fear grips Syrian communities as violence surges in Lebanon' [\[Available here\]](#).

[4] 'Syrians suffer from more funding cuts despite severe medical needs' [\[Available here\]](#).

[5] 'Unprecedented number of Syrians in need of aid after 13 years of war' [\[Available here\]](#).

[6] 'Nine years of war and internal conflicts in Syria: a call for physical rehabilitation services' [\[Available here\]](#).

[7] 'Lebanon' [\[Available here\]](#).

[8] 'Fear and defiance in Lebanon as the threat of new war opens old wounds' [\[Available here\]](#).

[9] 'Education' [\[Available here\]](#).

[10] 'Dealing with the psychological aftershocks of the Türkiye earthquakes: why mental health and psychosocial support are so desperately needed' [\[Available here\]](#).

[11] 'A year on from the Türkiye-Syria earthquake, and mental health is a 'ticking time bomb' [\[Available here\]](#).

[12] 'Trustees' Annual Report & Financial Statements, For the year ending March 2023' [\[Available here\]](#).

[13] 'THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN OF SYRIA'S WIDOW CAMPS' [\[Available here\]](#).

[14] 'DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT BRIEF ' [\[Available here\]](#).

[15] 'The psychological impact of the Turkey-Syria earthquake on children: addressing the need for ongoing mental health support and global humanitarian response' [\[Available here\]](#).

[16] 'Syrian Refugees in Istanbul and Gaziantep: Comparative Findings on Settlement, Livelihood and Support' [\[Available here\]](#).



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