

Crisis in Syria:

Save the Children Providing Aid for Children and Families Displaced by Conflict

January 2016

The Emergency

As fighting in Syria continues with no sign of ending, the conflict has created a massive humanitarian crisis that has impacted the Middle East, Eurasia and Europe. As of late December 2015, there were 4.3 million Syrians who had been officially registered as refugees by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Over 2 million refugees were living in Turkey, with 1.1 million others in Lebanon.

Inside Syria, the United Nations estimates there are 6.5 million displaced people in besieged or hard-to-reach areas. Many live in dire need in abandoned buildings, open spaces and in informal camps mainly in the north near the border with Turkey, where there are few or no services available.

In early January there was significant media attention on the plight of nearly 400,000 people besieged by parties to the conflict in locations such as Deir Ez- Zor city, Daraya, Foah and Kafraya, as well as besieged areas of East Ghouta. In the last year, only 10 percent of all requests for UN inter-agency convoys to hard-to-reach and besieged areas were approved and delivered.

Many Syrian refugees have joined the exodus of refugees to Europe. In 2015, Syrians made up just over half of the 1 million people who had arrived in Europe seeking asylum and a better life. This year has seen no evidence of a letup; as of late January Syrians comprised almost half of the 46,100 people who had arrived in Greece and Italy after an incredibly



A displaced Syrian girl peers over her mother's shoulder at a health center run by Save the Children.

Photo: Ahmad Baroudi for Save the Children

risky winter crossing of the Mediterranean Sea. Those who remain in the Middle East face bleak conditions, lack of access to critical services and the right to work. Some families are resorting to such negative coping strategies as eating less, marrying off girl children and sending children to work in exploitative labor.

The Impact on Children

It's estimated that 7.5 million children in Syria have grown up knowing nothing but war. From the very start of the conflict, children have been profoundly affected. Thousands of girls and boys are believed to have been killed or injured; others face severe deprivations brought about by food shortages and lack of

access to health care and basic services. Children are leaving school to engage in hazardous labor or are becoming involved with armed groups. One in four Syrian schools has been damaged, destroyed or occupied, which has disrupted the education of over 2 million children.

Save the Children's Response

We have been responding to the Syrian refugee crisis since it began. We are currently working inside Syria, and with Syrian refugees in Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Egypt, Turkey and Armenia. We have also begun programs inside Libya. Our work in the region is one pillar of our ongoing humanitarian relief for Syrian refugees; we are also supporting children and families on the move in Europe and in the countries where they are settling.

We continue to seek generous support for the breadth of our work for children who remain inside Syria, and for girls and boys who are in camps and host communities in surrounding countries.

Here are recent highlights of our work:

SYRIA

Over the past two years, Save the Children's partners in besieged and hard-to-reach areas provided lifesaving aid to over 750,000 individuals, including nearly 500,000 children. We support partners in the distribution of food, water, clothing, blankets, winter materials and kits of infant care items. Partners also promote good hygiene and repair water networks. We also support students through non-formal education, as well as setting up safe spaces that offer children a place to play and receive education activities and a respite from the conflict.



Refugee children stand by their family's tent in Lebanon. After a strong winter storm last month, we provided families with lumber and tarps to repair their shelters.

Photo: Nour Wahid for Save the Children

EGYPT

- Educational materials and computers were provided to schools, and 2,100 students received school supplies. We also continued to train teachers from schools for Syrian and African refugee children, and will be rolling out our Healing and Education through the Arts (HEART) program to help children express feelings and emotions.
- We launched activities to educate children and their parents about children's rights, how to protect children from abuse, and the use of positive discipline instead of corporal punishment.
- Nearly 1,300 children and mothers attended health promotion sessions at which they learned about nutrition, diseases, personal hygiene and first aid. The children included African, Syrian, Sudanese, Yemeni and Libyan migrants and refugees and those from host communities.

- New activities are helping Somali, Sudanese and Egyptian youth develop livelihoods skills and create small businesses.



A young girl plays with markers during an event organized by Save the Children in Egypt to raise awareness of the impact of violence. Children and teens participated in theatre, storytelling, meditation and drawing activities

Photo: Hannah Hames for Save the Children

IRAQ

- We operate child-friendly spaces and youth-friendly spaces in camps and urban locations. We focus on building children's resilience and providing them with psychosocial support. Over the past month, some 7,300 children and youth have attended activities at these spaces.
- Our non-formal education and early childhood development programs engaged 3,490 children in camps and host communities in Erbil and Dohuk.
- 25 adolescent girls ages 15-18 completed a youth resiliency-building workshop; we also reached 160 children with awareness messages about violence.

- Psychological first aid training for children was provided to 23 volunteers in the Kawrgosk camp.

JORDAN

- We conducted a door-to-door outreach campaign that encouraged 15,600 households to enroll children in school. We renovated education spaces in Irbid, Mafraq and Zarqa and rented space for two more centers in Mafraq.
- We trained midwives, nurses and doctors at a hospital in Zarqa on proper feeding practices for infants and young children. At our supplementary feeding program in the Za'atari and Azraq refugee camps, 37 children who had been diagnosed with severe malnutrition were discharged after achieving great progress in their nutritional standing.
- We have mattresses, blankets and plastic sheeting available for immediate distribution if bad weather strikes.

LEBANON

- When a major snowstorm occurred on the last day of 2015, our shelter teams quickly distributed weatherproofing kits to refugee families whose shelters were damaged.
- Over the past month, we have continued to provide thousands of families living in camps, abandoned buildings and other drafty, leaky structures with cash vouchers redeemable for winterization kits. Blankets and sleeping mattresses are also being distributed.
- Water and sanitation teams have distributed over 5,000 vouchers for families to purchase clean water. They also worked on latrine and water storage projects.
- Hygiene sessions that teach participants about good hygiene and disease prevention were held in Barelías and Al Marj for nearly 700 households.

- Our water and sanitary work may be expanded soon to include infrastructure projects in 11 municipalities.
- In education, we provided tuition and materials that enabled 108 Syrian children to attend classes at technical schools. We also supported activities at two learning centers that enrolled 280 children.

LIBYA

Our staff in Egypt also coordinates relief for vulnerable migrant families in Libya through local partners.

- 1,000 hygiene kits were distributed to internally displaced people in Benghazi and Shaat in December 2015.
- We trained partners on child safeguarding policies and are planning to introduce emergency education programs for displaced children.

TURKEY

In Hatay Province, we are addressing the barriers to education for Syrian children, in coordination with national and local government entities. We are working in four schools to train teachers in looking out for children's well-being; rehabilitating and furnishing the schools; providing educational materials for children and classrooms; providing extracurricular and social activities for Syrian and Turkish children; and addressing the transportation needs for the most vulnerable children.

We aim to provide 2,000 Syrian children with learning opportunities and child protection services. We are opening two youth centers for vulnerable refugee adolescents, which will serve as safe havens for youth, provide language classes, life skills workshops and psychosocial support.

Why Save the Children?

Save the Children has worked in the Middle East for decades. We had trained staff and an established presence inside Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt and Iraq when the war in Syria began and the first refugees arrived in neighboring countries. We have strong links to communities, civil society organizations and local and national governments. Inside Syria, we are working through experienced partners and have developed verification and monitoring mechanisms to ensure we are effectively providing aid to vulnerable displaced children and families.

Our on-ground presence in refugee camps and host communities gives us first-hand knowledge of conditions and the ability to adapt our responses as needs change. In Lebanon, for example, Save the Children has taken a lead role in developing alternative care solutions for refugee children and is working with the Ministry of Social Affairs to develop minimum standards for protecting children. In Egypt, we have addressed the discrimination of refugees using public health care facilities.

Nobody knows when the next crisis will strike. That's why 10 percent of your generous gift goes to helping our emergency team prepare for and provide critical assistance when and where children need us the most.