



EUROPEAN UNION



The EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis

الصندوق الاستئماني الأوروبي 'مدد'

Project Factsheet

Advancing Child Protection and Gender-Based Violence system strengthening

OBJECTIVE

Contribute to the improvement of the lives of children and victims of gender-based violence living in Lebanon through the continuation of preventative and remedial protection activities under the National Plan to Safeguard Children and Women in Lebanon in 2019-2020.

BUDGET
EUR 18 million

START DATE
01/12/2019

DURATION
24 months

EXPECTED RESULTS

- The capacities of the Ministry of Social Affairs to prevent and respond to violence, exploitation and abuse of children, women and girls in Lebanon are strengthened.
- The quality, accessibility and sustainability of protection services offered by social development centres and civil society in Lebanon are enhanced, while social awareness is promoted.

BENEFICIARIES*

28,951 children
12,275 women & girls
8,642 caregivers
330 individuals
(government, NGOs, & other institutions) in Lebanon
(*both Syrian refugees & local communities)

IMPLEMENTING PARTNER



PROJECT LOCATION



IMPACT

Forced from her home in Syria by local militia and already psychologically scarred, Marwa (we've changed her name) arrived as a ten-year-old to a Lebanon thrown into turmoil by a massive influx of refugees fleeing neighboring Syria's civil war.

"When we first arrived, they'd follow us down the street, they didn't want us in their town," she recalls. Like so many others of Marwa's generation, this wasn't her first experience of fear and threats. She cites an earlier occurrence at her home in Syria. "The missiles were falling, and my father told me to shelter underground along with my brothers and sisters. He told us not to leave until it all stopped. I felt it would never stop. We sat in the dark, terrified as the fighting continued around us."

This was to be a defining event for young Marwa, one that would live with her and be further compounded by other incidents that would happen in her life; incidents of bullying, psychological abuse and sexual abuse.

Marwa is just one of the many juvenile Syrian refugees who have been supported through UNICEF Lebanon's EU Regional Trust Fund "MADAD"-funded community-based psycho-social support programme with Lebanese NGO Himaya.

Children exposed to chronic and pervasive trauma are especially vulnerable to the impact of subsequent trauma. Functioning in the family, peer group, or at school may be impaired as a result of such symptoms.

By drawing on existing strengths and resources of the child, family, and community, Himaya's mental health professionals help to reduce stress and foster the use of existing adaptive coping strategies by children and parents.

Mariam, a psychologist with Lebanese NGO Himaya, remembers the challenges that faced her when she began working with Marwa and her father in March 2018. "The fear Marwa felt was mostly that which she had absorbed from her father. We needed to work with both father and daughter. The support we receive through UNICEF from the European Union enables us to work with such complex cases."

Funding provided through UNICEF enables the involvement of ground-breaking treatments for children in Marwa's situation. Although children are shaped by their life experiences, most recover from traumatic events and PTSD. Some even report finding new strengths and skills for coping.

"We met once a week," reports Mariam, "each time for sessions of 90-minutes. It took seven weeks to work through the first cause of Marwa's trauma. Continuing weekly throughout the year, we were able to help her and her family navigate these real-life challenges."

After nine-months of sessions with Mariam, the 15-year-old Marwa we meet today, in her own words, is "a totally new girl."

Marwa's father is proud of her development and equally impressed by the commitment UNICEF and Himaya have shown to her. "Today, she sleeps alone, goes to another room alone, goes out alone. Her academic performance has grown too, she's able to make an extra effort, and this is seen in her school results. She has friends at school now too. Within just a few months I've watched her go from being a lost girl to a girl with bright hopes for the future."

The transformation is not lost on Marwa either. She's keen to help others she feels are suffering the same way she used to. "If I meet another girl living the way I used to, I would help them. Be a friend to them. I'd encourage them to seek professional help too and want them to know that even if they can't turn the fear off, it is within their power to control it. "I still feel the fear," Marwa says, "but I'm able to control it, and I've learned to seek positive things in my life. Hope has returned".

The collaboration between UNICEF and Himaya ensures that today in Lebanon, vulnerable children and survivors of abuse are being successfully supported through professional therapeutic processes and, through acceptance and understanding, communities are being brought together.