



# REFUGEE PROTECTION INTERNATIONAL

## Education and Health Program

**The Need:** War in Syria is taking a catastrophic toll on health and education. Yet, fleeing is not an option for 4 million civilians in northwest Syria. Here, expectant mothers lack critical obstetric care and children face the highest rates of chronic malnutrition since the start of the conflict (UN HNO, 2020). COVID-19 is spreading in overcrowded camps. Infrastructure is devastated with 595 attacks on 350 medical facilities in Syria (Physicians for Human Rights, 2020).



Host countries cannot keep pace with the refugee crisis. A review of 32 health studies found that Syrian refugees in the Middle East face staggering gaps in general healthcare, followed by women's health, mental health, and vaccinations (El Arnaout et al. 2019).

Refugees cite high costs and lack of documentation, professionals, and awareness. As a result, alarming rates are recorded of preterm birth, infant morbidity, chronic malnutrition, PTSD, and untreated chronic diseases.

Across the Middle East, 43% of school-aged Syrian refugee children and youth remain out of school (KidsRights Foundation). Far too many are unable to pay for the needed civil status documentation, supplies, or transportation to access primary school. Others struggle with the language of instruction, school capacity limitations, and harassment. Refugee access to secondary education is even more limited at just 1.4% in Lebanon (El Ghali et al. 2019). Years of missed education can only hinder refugee prospects for self-reliance.

**Programming Focus:** We support our refugee-led nonprofit partners with project design, grants, monitoring, and technical support, as needed, to carry out the following activities:

- Provide regulated non-formal primary school education and vocational training
- Rehabilitate, equip, and stock key hospitals and mobile clinics in areas of armed conflict
- Provide health screenings, awareness sessions, case management and coverage of medical expenses

**Impact:** RPI and its partners have met 304,666 education and health care needs among refugees and internally displaced persons in Syria and Lebanon. Supported services have included: non-formal primary and early childhood education in informal settlements in Lebanon; screening, treating and referring families of students and staff for health care; medical care and COVID-19 symptom screening in Syria; hygiene kits distribution and COVID-19 awareness-raising in Lebanon and Turkey; case management and medical expense coverage in Lebanon; and equipping and finalizing the rehabilitation of the largest pediatric hospital in Idlib, Syria.

For health and education, our featured local charity partners registered in Turkey (operating also in Syria) and/or Lebanon include: Multi Aid Programs (MAPS), Sustainable International Medical Relief Organization (SIMRO), and Basmeh and Zeitooneh.

*Refugee Protection International, Inc is a 501(c)(3) public charity with EIN # 47-5417614 based in Greater Boston*

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*Hear directly from refugee participants in our joint video:*  
<https://refugeeprotection.org/portfolio/non-formal-education/>

**www.refugeeprotection.org**

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**Our Approach:** We strive for locally-driven and efficient aid, by supporting and raising the visibility of remarkable refugee-led nonprofits on the frontlines. Our joint project designs integrate gender and vulnerability analysis, a rights-based approach, and urban focus.

Our partners train and hire refugee professionals and strive toward participatory project design. Empowering refugees to serve one another and to include the most vulnerable women and children is central to all we do. We also prioritize activities coordinated with civilian health and education authorities.



**Personal Impact Stories:** After fleeing her village in Syria, Sidra K. missed 2 years of school and dreaded the impact on her future. With RPI's support, Sidra is now enrolled in 6<sup>th</sup> grade at a non-formal school operated by our partner MAPS in **Lebanon**. Despite living in a 20 square meter tent, Sidra is ranked first in her grade.

In Shatila, Lebanon, a 43 year-old refugee and sole breadwinner for his 3 children required urgent treatment for debilitating psoriasis. Under an RPI-supported medical case management project, local NGO Basmeh and Zeitoneh secured and financially covered his treatment, allowing him to resume work and feed his children.

By 2017, there was an urgent need for safe underground maternal and child health care in northwestern **Syria**. Forensic Architecture had verified the repeated bombing of the M2 Hospital with the only pediatric ward in Aleppo and the Ma'arat Al Numan Hospital in Idlib. At least 4 other hospitals had been damaged in Idlib.

RPI moved in to fund and help equip the final rehabilitation of the largest maternal and child health hospital in Idlib, which now sees up to 120,000 pediatric visits a year. Rehabilitation was done by our Turkey-based nonprofit partner the Sustainable International Medical Relief Organization (SIMRO) with the hospital moved underground for protection from aerial attacks. The Avicenna Pediatric Hospital, which also received 3 infant incubators through RPI, is now operated by the nonprofit SAMS with the Idlib Health Directorate.

Since 2019, Syria's armed conflict has intensified over Idlib province, internally displacing another million civilians. With many taking refuge in the open air, RPI hastened to cover medicine supplies for 8,317 patients. In 2020, we covered nursing salaries and equipment for 155,467 screenings for COVID-19 symptoms at the Internal Medicine Specialty Hospital in Idlib run by our partner SIMRO. This project's referrals for testing have identified 16% of all confirmed COVID-19 cases in northwest Syria as of November 15, 2020. RPI is grateful for the bravery and dedication of its frontline partners and the generosity of its giving partners.



*MAPS NGO educating Syrian refugee children in Lebanon with RPI's support*



*SIMRO NGO unpacking infant incubators in Syria donated by RPI's giving partners (c)*