



SAMS

2023 Annual Report





Message From **SAMS** President

Many years ago, our very capable members came together to establish a foundation of medical expertise with the capacity to aid hundreds of thousands of daughters, sons, fathers, and mothers who did not know the next time they would be able to receive the medical support they needed. To see what has been accomplished by this commitment is nothing short of a miracle. Thankfully, we have successfully built a network of diverse providers, life-changing programs, and millions of beneficiaries. Previously we discussed our new shifts toward medical education, mental health, and psycho-social services that chart a new path toward sustainability for our beneficiaries. The shift has paid dividends, the fruits of which include the new opportunities made possible by providing occupational therapy to many who want to head into the workforce as well as many new projects being maintained by dedicated staff.

With your help, a new avenue of aid and services has been introduced. Now for the first time in years, the future looks bright and full of hope. Your help in alleviating their concerns allows them the opportunity to see past their current conditions and focus on things like caring for loved ones, pursuing careers, and getting an education.

As advocates for the vulnerable and voiceless, your efforts have solidified border-openings and access for aid to reach those in dire need. SAMS is now recognized not only as an aid provider, but also as a champion of change.

Our tomorrow is brighter than ever because of your support and for that we extend our warmest appreciation and congratulations for being at the forefront of life-changing service.

Dr. Amjad Rass | SAMS President



Message From **SAMS** Foundation Chair

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Dr. Basel Termanini | SAMS Foundation Chair

Northern Syria's Earthquake

In February 2023, a severe earthquake and subsequent aftershocks marked the start of new challenges for humanitarian and medical relief actors that significantly affected SAMS, sparking a global mobilization of its staff and volunteers. Despite personal losses, responders in Syria and Türkiye provided uninterrupted, essential services, with SAMS facilitating 177,690 earthquake related interventions throughout the year.

SAMS faced unprecedented challenges, including severe damage to healthcare facilities and equipment, urgent surgical and dialysis needs, staff trauma, logistical hurdles in addressing the surge in supply chain demands, patient transportation, and restricted access to advanced procedures in Türkiye amidst escalating mental health concerns.

Immediately after the disaster, SAMS-supported hospitals were critical points of care for victims brought in by the local search and rescue teams as they managed 3,887 trauma cases and performed 1,690 surgeries. SAMS established eight mobile clinics in temporary settlements for the tens of thousands made homeless by the earthquake, providing over 27,895 services. In Türkiye, these clinics also offered mental health support to 580 individuals in Hatay.

Within a couple of weeks SAMS started dispatching US medical volunteers, reaching over 70, thus bringing much needed expertise to support exhausted local medical providers in north-west Syria. This was backed with 157 aid shipments worth over \$26 million. .

Specialists in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and Türkiye provided psychosocial support, focusing on children and adolescents. Damaged facilities were quickly repaired, enhancing services like adult and pediatric ICU capacity, expanding specialized treatments such as oncology, and establishing new units for physical rehabilitation and mental health at Idleb Central Hospital, including adding seven new ambulances.

In collaboration with organizations like the Syrian Forum, Big Heart Foundation, Ghiras Alnahda, Saed, and Ihsan Relief, SAMS established emergency shelters and distributed essential non-medical aid, including food, hygiene kits, and clothing, to hundreds of families in Syria and Türkiye.



Northern Syria's Earthquake



Our Programs:

Primary Care & Outreach

Primary healthcare is essential for early diagnosis, patient empowerment, and disease prevention and management. It also provides access to broader services, including mental health support, higher-level care, and referrals for nutrition and protection.

In 2023, SAMS delivered crucial healthcare and education in Greece, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria through static facilities, mobile medical teams, and community outreach. The organization conducted 16,451 consultations using 11 mobile units. Outreach teams also distributed numerous health education messages on key topics such as infant feeding, mental health awareness, chronic disease management, and hygiene promotion, enhancing community health literacy and well-being.

Meet Bilasan

Bilasan, an 8-year-old girl from the town of Salwa in the countryside of Idlib, was experiencing pain in her lower back with frequent urination, so her mother took her to SAMS' Salwa Primary Healthcare Center.

Bilasan was diagnosed with a severe urinary tract infection and given an appropriate treatment plan. After a period of treatment, Bilasan's condition improved, and new tests confirmed her recovery.

Bilasan's mother was overjoyed and shared, "Thanks to the treatment, Bilasan is back to her usual energetic self! We are so grateful for the healthcare professionals at SAMS' Salwa Primary Healthcare Center for their exceptional care and support."





Our Programs: Secondary & Tertiary Care

SAMS remains a pivotal secondary and tertiary medical care source, offering essential services to internally displaced Syrians, refugees, and host communities in neighboring countries. Syrian physicians employed at specialized hospitals in Syria provide critical procedures such as dialysis, cardiac catheterization, chemotherapy, and advanced surgeries.

Additionally, SAMS coordinates medical missions in Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon with volunteer specialists and establishes partnerships with a network of hospitals in Lebanon to further enhance the availability of specialized care.

Resilient Abu As'ad

Meet the resilient Abu As'ad, a 41-year-old man originally from the southern outskirts of Aleppo with a history of #cardiac issues.

Six years ago, he underwent a life-saving procedure in Lebanon, receiving two heart stents. However, he recently experienced intense pain in his left arm and slight chest discomfort, prompting a quick visit to SAMS-sponsored Al Shifa Hospital in northwest Syria.

Dr. Khaled Al Hajji, our skilled cardiologist, said: "Given his history of heart issues and previous stent placements, we swiftly conducted an emergency catheterization, uncovering a severe injury in the artery." Further treatment and more surgery may be necessary, Dr. Al Hajji said.

Abu As'ad expressed his genuine relief for having access to free cardiac care by saying, "Without the support of SAMS, I would have been lost. Bless you all for your help."

Such a sense of relief is what keeps us going. Thank you for all your support and donations.

Our Programs:

Maternal & Newborn Care

Hello, Baby Laith!

“Thank God, my son has come back to me. I feared I might lose him and that I would never be able to hold him in my arms again.”

- Leith's mother

Leith was born prematurely at just 30 weeks in SAMS' Al Dana Maternity Hospital in northwest Syria with a bluish tint to his skin. The pediatrician on duty diagnosed him with a severe case of Respiratory Distress Syndrome (RDS). He was immediately taken into the neonatal intensive care unit where the medical team worked tirelessly to save his life.

By the second day, Leith's condition worsened, and he developed exaggerated acute respiratory distress. The team performed a bilateral chest decompression, which thankfully regulated his heartbeat and oxygen levels. Regular blood gas tests showed that his condition had stabilized.

The following day, Leith experienced a critical electrolyte imbalance and renal failure. A CT scan also revealed cerebral edema. The medical team addressed the blood infection, the renal failure, and, fortunately, Leith pulled through this critical phase.

After 25 days of intensive care, he was discharged in good health, much to everyone's relief.

In 2023, SAMS' robust network of maternal and child healthcare facilities, including Al Dana Hospital, Qah Maternity Hospital, Raju Hospital, Al Shifa Hospital in Afrin, and the Specialized Maternity Hospital in Idlib, celebrated the arrival of 20,934 newborns.

These facilities focus on childbirth and deliver comprehensive antenatal and postnatal care across northwest Syria. Additionally, following the devastating earthquake, SAMS facilities in northwest Syria provided vital support to new mothers and infants, distributing thousands of postpartum kits to aid their recovery during this challenging period.

In Greece, SAMS mobile medical team continued providing maternal care to refugees and migrant women in camps and clinics in the Atica region, and in Lebanon, SAMS launched a financial assistance project to help cover the cost of hospital care for infants and newborn from the refugee communities.



Our Programs:

Rehab Medicine & Services

In 2023, SAMS broadened its healthcare outreach by integrating various rehabilitative services, including cochlear implants, physical therapy, prosthetics, and speech therapy in Syria, Jordan, and Turkiye. Nearly 58,000 services were delivered across five specialized facilities, enhancing the lives of those with disabilities.

In response to the earthquake in northwest Syria, a new physical rehabilitation center was opened at Idlib Central Hospital in June, while services expanded at Termanin Physical Rehabilitation Center.

Super Firas

Sixteen-year-old Firas' life changed drastically when a bomb exploded at a market in Aleppo, Syria, severely injuring his right hand and foot. Forced to move to Afrin with his family due to the conflict, Firas faced limited job opportunities and the loss of his older brother.

Firas began physical therapy and was transferred to SAMS-supported Al Shifa Hospital for mental health support. Hooraa Atoura, a mental-health supervisor, noted his severe depression and social difficulties. The team created a treatment plan, and after 2.5 months of counseling and medication, Firas showed significant improvement.

His mother observed, "He was isolated and used a crutch to walk. Now, he walks unaided and has made new friends at a sports club. He has returned to his normal life."

Winterization Response

In Lebanon, our teams partnered with local authorities and organizations to prepare families for winter, distributing essential winterization kits—including LED lights, blankets, and hygiene products—to 6,665 individuals. Meanwhile, starting in January 2023 in Syria, we collaborated with Ghiras Al Nahda to provide heating fuel to 574 displaced families in Azaz. Subsequent partnerships with Saed for Relief and Development expanded our aid, reaching vulnerable families across three IDP camps and heating educational and residential facilities in Jandarisi, benefiting over 12,250 people during the harsh winter months.



Duty of Care for Health Workers

In 2023, SAMS solidified its commitment to supporting health workers amid challenging circumstances. Efforts included financial and psychological aid to staff in Syria and Türkiye following a devastating earthquake, helping those displaced or suffering losses.

Moreover, SAMS enhanced its advocacy for protecting health workers in conflict zones. In a significant collaboration in Ukraine, SAMS joined forces with the Revival Institute for Future to establish mental health break rooms in 27 front-line hospitals, providing much-needed respite for health professionals.

Specialized Care: Cath Labs

Abu Mohammed's Heart

Abu Mohammed recently suffered chest pain and difficulty breathing. He went to the SAMS-supported Bab Al Hawa Hospital, where he was diagnosed with acute coronary syndrome. He was then transferred to the cardiac catheterization unit at Al Shifa Hospital in Afrin, also supported by SAMS.

Dr. Nader Rahmun said that upon arrival, Abu Mohammed received immediate care. "We quickly performed a diagnostic cardiac catheterization with favorable results. By God's grace, he was discharged in excellent condition," he noted.

Grateful, Abu Mohammed expressed his relief. "In Idlib, there are no affordable cardiac catheterization facilities, only expensive private hospitals. The procedure gave me peace of mind, and now my condition is excellent. I hope more cardiac catheterization centers are established in Idlib to help locals."

In Syria, our teams operate three cath labs at Al Bab, Afrin, and Al Ziraa Hospital, equipped with advanced medical devices for comprehensive cardiac and vascular care. These centers provide critical services, including diagnostic and interventional catheterization and pacemaker programming, accommodating emergencies, and routine procedures.

Addressing numerous cardiac needs, Afrin Hospital recorded 629 consultations, treated 590 unique beneficiaries, and conducted 322 cardiac catheterizations last year. Al Bab Hospital also played a crucial role, with 2,494 consultations, benefiting 2,270 individuals and completing 342 cardiac catheterizations. These efforts are vital for managing conditions like angina and myocardial infarction, ensuring timely and essential care for those affected.



A photograph of a woman lying in a hospital bed. She is wearing a patterned grey dress and a black headscarf. A blood pressure cuff is wrapped around her left arm. The bed has white linens and a metal frame. The background is slightly blurred, showing a hospital setting.

Specialized Care: Stroke Unit

In Idleb Central Hospital, our specialized stroke unit manages acute ischemic and hemorrhagic strokes, prioritizing rapid admission and critical assessment. With 15 ward beds, 6 ICU beds, and CT capabilities, it offers comprehensive care, including thrombolysis, rehabilitation, and physiotherapy tailored to individual needs.

A dedicated clinic within the unit supports continuous diagnosis and monitoring, along with an intensive care area for emergency transfers. In 2023, the unit recorded 3,581 consultations and 644 hospitalizations.

SAMS is expanding these services to launch a stroke unit at Al Shifa Hospital in Afrin with 4 ICUs and six ward beds. The unit will follow four essential thrombolysis protocols to provide personalized care across diverse locations.

Um Abdullah's New Life

I was feeling unwell and sensed something was seriously wrong. My son, Abdullah, came rushing home the moment he heard about my critical condition. Without a second thought, he quickly got me to the SAMS-supported Idleb Central Hospital in NW Syria.

As we reached the emergency department, I started experiencing numbness and a tingling sensation on my left side, along with difficulty speaking. Fear and uncertainty gripped me, but knowing I was already at the hospital brought some relief.

The medical staff acted swiftly and professionally, providing me with the urgent care I needed. Thanks to their prompt attention and expertise, my life was saved that day.

Specialized Care: Oncology

In 2023, SAMS provided over 39,000 oncology services to patients in northern Syria and Lebanon.

In northern Syria, SAMS has been the sole NGO offering free comprehensive cancer services since 2018, including diagnostics, surgeries, medications, chemotherapy, and management of complications for various cancers such as breast cancer, lymphoma, colon cancer, and pediatric leukemia. Following the February 2023 earthquakes many Syrian cancer patients lost access to treatment in Türkiye including radiation therapy and immunotherapy and SAMS expanded its services by providing 1,000 cancer consultations monthly across four Hematology and Oncology Clinics: Idlib Oncology Center, Al-Bab Oncology Center, Jarablus Oncology Center, and Bab Al-Hawa Oncology Center. SAMS is also committed to training future oncologists, having graduated seven fellows and with three more expected to graduate in August 2024.

In Lebanon, SAMS supported Syrian refugee cancer patients by funding surgeries, diagnostics, chemotherapy, radiotherapy, and medications. Patient selection was based on cancer type and stage, age, treatment prognosis, availability of treatments, and cost.

SAMS' dedicated members, including oncologists and pathologists, provided remote and in-person support throughout 2023, leading training sessions and collaborating with colleagues in Syria and Lebanon to deliver essential cancer care.

Hanan's Smart Decision

A year ago, I discovered a painful lump in my breast. Initially, I didn't think it could be serious. That changed when I decided to visit the SAMS Oncology Center at Idlib Central Hospital. After necessary tests and imaging, I was diagnosed with breast cancer.

Now, I am undergoing treatment with a dedicated oncology team closely monitoring my progress. My journey highlights the critical importance of early detection, which enhances recovery chances, reduces treatment doses, and minimizes complications.

Despite the challenges, I remain hopeful. With the support of my medical team and loved ones, I am determined to beat this and emerge stronger than ever.

Special Focus Care for Children



Special Focus: Cochlear Implants

In 2023, SAMS successfully completed two cochlear implant missions, resulting in 28 children receiving life-changing cochlear implants. With this new accomplishment, the program has achieved significant milestones since its start in 2022 : 79 children were equipped with cochlear implants, and 1,071 follow-up speech therapy sessions were conducted to ensure optimal post-operative care. Plans are underway to extend this initiative to perform an additional 50 surgeries in 2024.

Each child's journey is supported by a dedicated team focused on personalized auditory rehabilitation, demonstrating our commitment to enhancing hearing and communication abilities for those with severe auditory impairments.

Mohammed's First Hearing Moments

Five-year-old Mohamed's life, along with his family's, was deeply affected by his hearing loss. However, hope blossomed when he joined SAMS' Cochlear Implant Program for hearing-impaired children in northern Syria.

After undergoing a Cochlear implant surgery, Mohamed is now in the third stage of his treatment journey where he undergoes extensive hearing and speech therapy.

This heartwarming photo captures the magical moment when Mohamed heard sounds for the very first time.





Special Focus: Center for Autism Spectrum Disorder

In Istanbul, SAMS partner Take My Hand/ focuses on providing exceptional, tailored support to children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders. In 2023, we assisted 220 children, 182 in-person and 38 remotely with tele consultation, through 38,357 individual lessons, 5,910 group activities, and 3,909 sensory-motor sessions, all aimed at enhancing cognitive and physical development.

The center also ensures a seamless transition into mainstream education, with 16 children successfully enrolling in public schools last year. This highlights our dedication to preparing children for broader educational settings through personalized developmental programs.

Marah's New Joy

When Marah was 10 months old, her parents noticed she wasn't meeting typical developmental milestones. Concerned, they took her to a specialist who diagnosed her with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

For five years, the family searched for specialized care and eventually found the SAMS' Take My Hand Center in Istanbul, Türkiye. Our specialists created a personalized plan for Marah to improve her social skills and self-confidence.

After months of dedicated care, Marah has made remarkable progress. She can now walk on her own and communicate with those around her, bring-

Special Focus:

The Helping Hand

Since 2020, SAMS has partnered with Dr. Solfrid Raknes and Attensi to implement and expand “The Helping Hand,” an engaging model of psychosocial support program for adolescents.

The helping Hand helps develop problem solving and coping skills that can be applied throughout all life stages. It includes a digital mental health game specifically designed for teenagers in the Middle East, featuring playable scenarios that address relatable topics such as bullying, traumatic memories, social anxiety, and suicidal ideation. Adolescents gather in peer groups each week to play the game and engage in activities and discussions led by SAMS facilitators.

In 2023, the program reached over 1,100 teenagers in Lebanon and Jordan, underscoring our commitment to providing crucial mental health support to youth in the region. SAMS also developed a training- of-trainers manual and conducted the first training of future Arabic-speaking trainers in the region.

Raghad's Journey of Hope

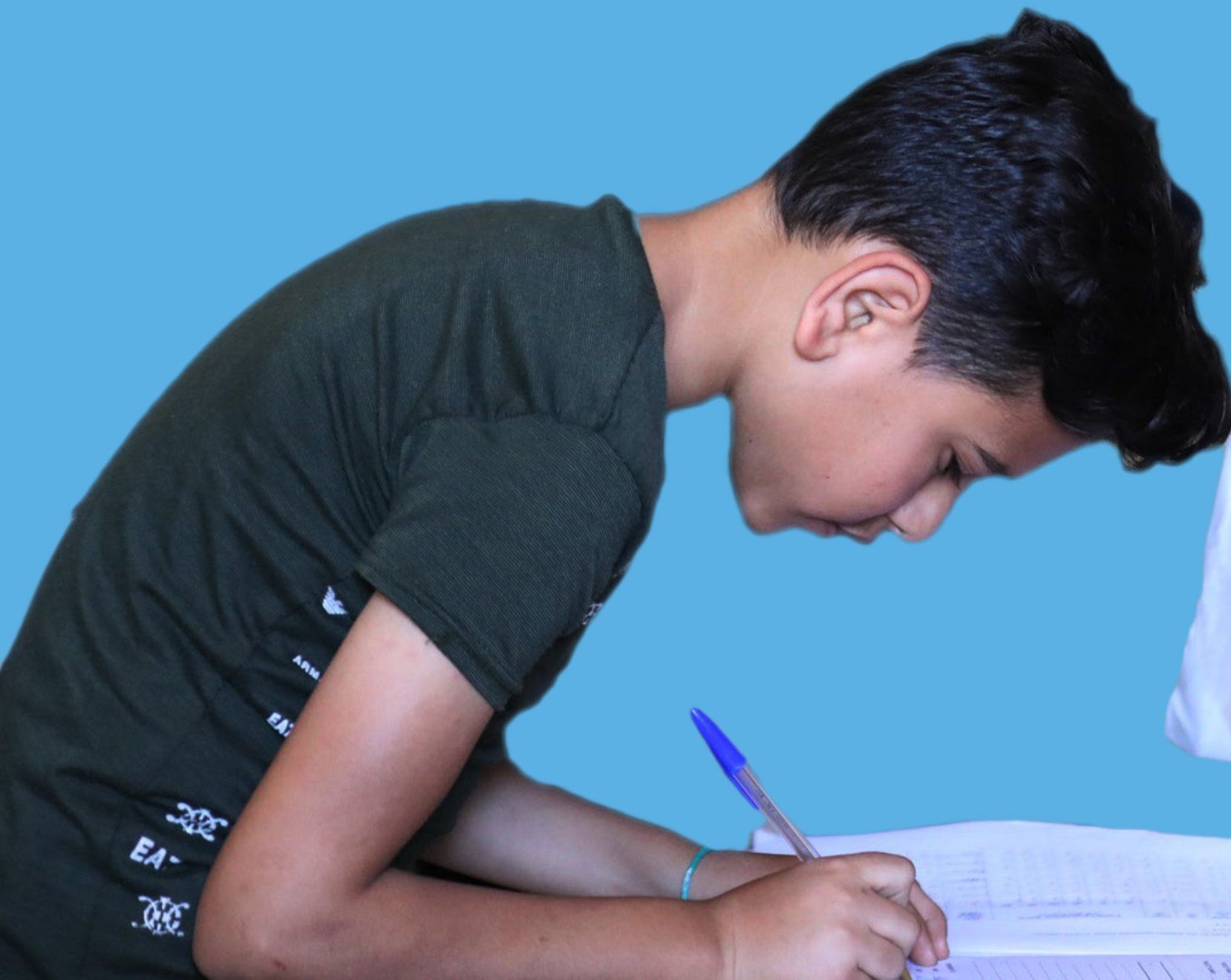
My name is Raghad, a 14-year-old student from Lebanon. I used to feel very lonely and was often bullied, even contemplating suicide. Everything changed when I joined the Helping Hand program with SAMS.

Through their sessions, I rediscovered my love for life and built up my self-confidence. SAMS helped me break free from social isolation, and I started participating in group activities, which empowered me to engage more with my classmates.

My story shows the power of resilience and personal growth. I hope my journey inspires others to overcome their challenges. Please share my transformation and help spread hope. Together, we can make a difference.



Special Focus: Support for Young People with Diabetes



In partnership with Life For A Child, SAMS designed and implemented an educational and training program for youth and children living with type 1 diabetes, and their caregivers in Lebanon, Jordan, and Iraq.

Through this project, xxx patients received a diabetes home management kit, including one year supply of lancets and strips, and educational materials. They also participated in workshops on blood glucose self monitoring, attended presentations on the importance of nutrition, lifestyle and correct use of insulin for their well being, and learned the signs and symptoms of complications caused by the disease or by incorrect management practices.

Yazan is In Control

Yazan, a young Syrian boy living in Lebanon, faced the challenges of type 1 diabetes with resilience.

Thanks to a partnership between SAMS and Life For A Child, Yazan and his mother joined an educational and training program designed to empower youth with diabetes. He received a diabetes home management kit, complete with a year's supply of lancets, strips, and educational materials.

Through engaging workshops, Yazan learned how to monitor his blood glucose, the importance of proper nutrition and lifestyle, and the correct use of insulin. This comprehensive support helped Yazan understand and manage his condition, ensuring a healthier and more confident future.

Country Programs: Syria

In Syria, our dedicated teams have significantly advanced health-care delivery, managing 48 inpatient and outpatient facilities across five governorates in northern Syria . These facilities offer emergency consultations for acute conditions, appointments for ongoing care for chronic diseases, laboratory and imaging tests to help in diagnosis, and pharmacies that dispense essential medications.

Last year, we reached over 1.4 million beneficiaries with more than 3.4 million services, marking an increase from the previous year. Our staff of 3,145 healthcare, administration, and management professionals has been instrumental in this expansion. Our mobile clinics have been especially crucial, providing over 135,188 services to remote areas.



Country Programs: Syria

Our ongoing initiatives, including expanded program on immunization in partnership with WHO, cholera outbreak case management and response, emergency interventional cardiac care, standards for adult and pediatric critical care units, nutritional assessment of vulnerable populations, and subspecialties like ENT, ophthalmology, neurosurgery and pediatric surgery, continue to improve the well-being of countless individuals.

SAMS intervention extended beyond direct medical services to include community health awareness and education sessions, mental health screening and referral for psychosocial support, empowerment of survivors of violence and detention, and winterization assistance for displaced families in the camps.

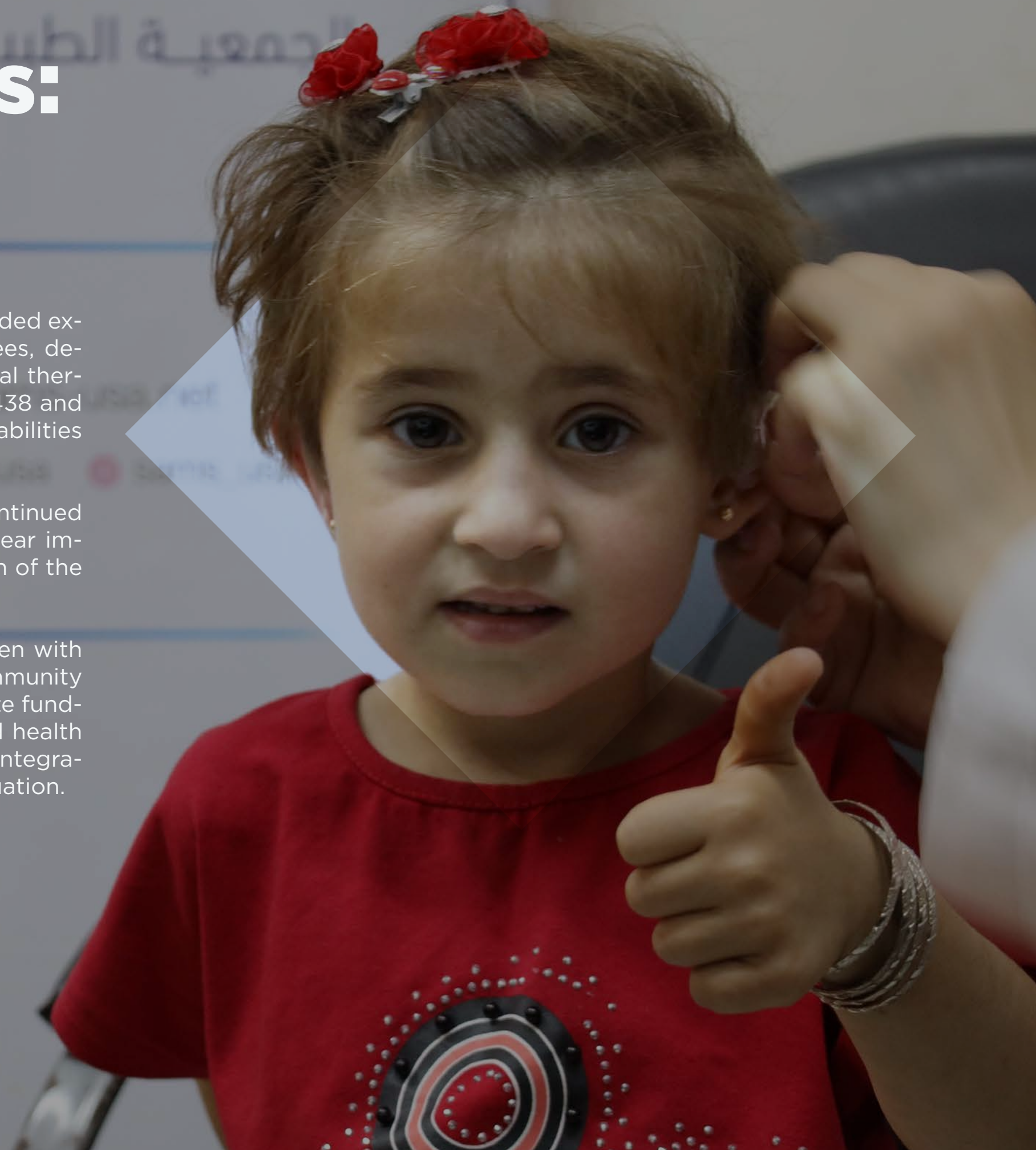


Country Programs: Türkiye

In Türkiye, our dedicated teams across six facilities provided exemplary healthcare and support to over 14,000 refugees, delivering more than 91,000 services. Our flagship physical therapy and psychosocial support programs have seen 24,438 and 67,451 services rendered catering to individuals with disabilities and those affected by recent earthquakes.

Our specialized audiologists and speech therapists continued to support the children in SAMS hearing aid and cochlear implant program, offering follow up testing and calibration of the devices and 1,071 specialized rehabilitation sessions.

Additionally, we support an education center for children with autism spectrum disorders, enhancing family and community well-being. This year, with added US Department of State funding, we awarded scholarships to 86 Syrian medical and health sciences students, in preparation for facilitating their integration through internships and job placements after graduation.



A medical professional, a woman wearing a black hijab and a light blue surgical mask, is administering a vaccine to a patient. She is wearing a white vest with a logo that reads "SAMS MEDICAL SOCIETY" and "JORDAN". She is also wearing blue gloves. The patient is lying down, and the background shows a clinical setting with other medical staff and equipment.

Country Programs: Jordan

Our dedicated team of 56 staff members in Jordan has provided over 49,216 services to 29,415 beneficiaries, including 20,500 psychosocial services that significantly enhanced mental well-being. Our experienced MHPSS team designed a new program focusing on parental skills and techniques to offer guidance for parents on setting boundaries, teaching values, creating a safe and nurturing environment, encouraging positive behavior, and providing emotional support, while navigating the challenges refugee families face.

SAMS medical center in Zaatari camp, including medical, vaccination, and dental clinics, alongside the Wadi-Seer rehab center, have filled crucial gaps in the public health system, especially in physiotherapy and psychosocial support, serving 4,909 individuals.

In 2023, SAMS continued to host major multi-specialty medical missions in Jordan, offering treatments like pediatric dental surgeries, cardiac catheterizations, endoscopy services and ophthalmology interventions. Our comprehensive approach underscores our commitment to delivering essential healthcare and making a lasting impact on the communities we serve.

Country Programs: Lebanon

In Lebanon, SAMS delivered over 25,471 services to 32,100 beneficiaries, leveraging 32 staff members and 53 partner locations. We ensured inclusive healthcare access, particularly focusing on vulnerable groups like individuals with disabilities, women, and children.

Our initiatives included covering critical hospitalization costs for Lebanese in need, migrant workers and Syrian refugee children, offering 2,215 mental health services in Central Bekaa, and providing community and school based screening and preventive dental care to 15,941 patients through our “Miles for Smiles” project, while our support to Ghiras Alkhair clinics extended restorative and dental and oral infections treatments. Additionally, SAMS partnered with Al Midan association and Multi Aid Programs to provide diabetes self care kits and diabetes management training to children and families in 16 primary care centers in northern Lebanon and Bekaa.

SAMS also partnered with a local medical facility to screen 100 vulnerable persons diagnosed with cataract and provide vision restoration surgeries to 74 medically indicated cases, thus addressing unmet ophthalmology care needs among refugees. Our annual winterization project distributed specially designed kits that address essential seasonal needs to 10,860 individuals in the Bekaa Valley, underlining our dedication to enhancing community well-being.

Country Programs:

Iraq

In Iraq, SAMS supports Syrian refugees, internally displaced Iraqis, and other vulnerable groups. Our dental program in Bardarash refugee camp provided over 2,300 services, including extractions, restorative treatments, preventative care, and oral hygiene instructions. The program was extended to Gwailan and Domiz refugee camps later in the year.

In 2023, SAMS also strengthened women's health services by training 60 midwives in the Nineva Governorate in collaboration with the Public Health department, addressing standards in basic and emergency obstetric and newborn care and identifying and managing high risk pregnancies. This program was followed by training 100 community health promoters on community engagement and health awareness, , infection prevention, disease control, risk communication , and promoting healthy lifestyles.

In collaboration with the Health Directorate, SAMS provided diabetes testing kits and conducted awareness-raising sessions for diabetes management to over 900 children and youth at Laila Qassem Specialized Center for Diabetic Patients in Erbil



Country Programs: Greece

In Greece, SAMS delivered 12,627 services to 4,773 beneficiaries in 2023 amid a significant rise in refugee arrivals. Our dedicated mobile medical team services including obstetrics and gynecology, pediatrics, childhood vaccination, nursing, and Arabic and Farsi/Deri interpretation, operated across 7 refugee camps in the Attica Region and 3 clinics and community centers in Athens, providing services for over 50 nationalities. This reflects our commitment to ensuring accessible healthcare for all vulnerable populations.

SAMS also distributed donated clothing items to new arrivals, and procured and donated equipment, consumables and essential items for the front line responders from the Hellenic Fire Brigade of Boeotia to contribute to the huge needs that arose during the devastating fires in the summer of 2023.

As one of the main medical relief organizations with access to vulnerable displaced populations in Greece, SAMS participated in the ITHACA Project on preserving the narrative of the refugee population and delivered a presentation at the Panhellenic Conference on Health Economics and Policy on Solutions for Inequalities in Access to Health Services.

Country Programs: Ukraine

Throughout 2023, SAMS robustly supported Ukrainian health workers amidst the ongoing conflict, expanding its hospital preparedness program to 39 facilities across eight frontline regions.

SAMS enhanced emergency response capabilities through WHO-standard Mass Casualty Management courses in collaboration with the Ukrainian Health Union and Revival Institute for Future. Additionally, SAMS launched a Mental Health and Psychosocial Support initiative to combat healthcare worker burn-out, introducing well-being rooms in hospitals for therapeutic activities.

We also continued supporting volunteer physicians plan and conduct cancer and general surgery and training missions to fill gaps in tertiary care while local doctors are consumed by the demands of caring for war related trauma, demonstrating our commitment to delivering vital healthcare services during challenging times.



Country Programs: Libya

In response to severe flooding in eastern Libya, SAMS partnered with the Sheikh Al-Taher Al-Zawi Charitable Foundation (STACO) to swiftly deliver crucial aid. Together, we distributed 110 essential family size food baskets in Derna and provided hygiene kits, cookware, clean water, and basic clothing to improve the lives of those affected.

Additionally, our collaboration with the Ayadi Al Khair Foundation (AKS) enabled the provision of necessary household supplies at reduced prices, significantly easing the financial burden on 481 families. This effort reflects our commitment to delivering comprehensive humanitarian aid during unprecedented emergencies.



Country Programs: Morocco

In response to the earthquake in Morocco, SAMS, in partnership with the High Atlas Foundation, delivered critical aid to 37 villages, reaching 13,986 individuals, including 5,595 children. The aid included 22,797 food and essential items.

Restoration efforts in Tamguist involved rebuilding water infrastructure crucial for the community's agriculture. Additionally, 110 baskets with treats for children and 360 water bottles were provided. In Taroudant's remote villages, essential supplies and non-food items were distributed to 141 families, benefiting over 400 residents.

This comprehensive aid reflects our commitment to supporting communities through immediate relief and sustainable recovery efforts.



Country Programs: Gaza

SAMS response to the Gaza crisis was immediate by contributing to the local response through sponsoring the procurement and distribution of medical supplies to facilities receiving victims of the armed conflict. SAMS joined a coalition of international organizations in Egypt to share information, logistics support, need assessment and cross border shipments information, while establishing alternative ways to deliver aid through partners in Jordan.

As the humanitarian needs escalated, SAMS collaborated with the United Palestinian Appeal, reaching vulnerable and displaced communities, distributing essential food and non-food items. In East Jabaliya, 500 winter clothing items were provided, benefiting 2,850 individuals, while in Deir al Balah, Middle Gaza, 1,110 food parcels supported the same number of families, impacting over 6,300 people.

Furthermore, SAMS offered financial assistance to 129 Palestinian students in Türkiye, reinforcing its commitment to immediate relief and sustained support for affected communities through impactful humanitarian efforts.



Medical Missions Syria

In 2023, SAMS implemented a comprehensive series of 12 medical missions across Syria, involving 73 physicians who delivered specialized healthcare consultations and services to 2,733 individuals. Based on an immediate need assessment by SAMS leadership and Turkey and regional offices staff, the first mission was deployed 2 weeks after the first earthquake on February 6 .

The missions spanned a variety of services, including advanced cardiac, orthopedic, oncology and neurosurgical treatments and procedures, among 22 different medical and surgical interventions.

This successive flow of medical teams brought highly needed expertise to address the survivors of earthquake injuries and subsequent complications, hand deliver donated and much needed medical supplies, and extend support to exhausted medical providers, who, once again, lost members of their families and had their own lives shattered.

The missions became a way to compensate for the interruption in the referral system of advanced and critical cases to Turkiye.

Additionally, SAMS conducted 28 training sessions, enhancing local healthcare capabilities through hands-on activities and multidisciplinary rounds, benefiting 925 healthcare participants.

This strategic integration of direct medical care and educational initiatives maximized the immediate impact and sustainability of healthcare services in the region, ensuring significant advancements in medical practice amidst challenging circumstances.



Medical Missions

Jordan

Lebanon



In 2023, SAMS executed four medical missions across Jordan, impacting thousands of vulnerable Jordanians and Syrian refugees from camps and urban settings. Throughout the missions' weeks, , specialized teams conducted over 1,200 surgeries and engaged in countless secondary consultations, benefiting over 10,000 individuals.

These missions, supported by over 150 international volunteers, covered various medical specialties, including endoscopy, interventional cardiology, ophthalmology, dentistry and oral surgery, endoscopy, and pediatric care.

Alongside clinical services, SAMS strengthened local healthcare capabilities through extensive training programs and health awareness campaigns in partnership with local health ministries, academic institutions, and international organizations. SAMS affirmed its commitment to providing immediate relief and sustainable health development in Jordan.

In 2023, SAMS executed two crucial medical missions in Lebanon. The first, a multispecialty mission in March, featured 15 physicians across ten specialties, aiding 588 individuals with 117 interventions in the Bekaa and Akkar regions.

The second mission in May focused on dental and cranio-maxillofacial (CMF) services, involving 24 physicians and benefiting 2,473 people through 460 interventions in Bekaa. It highlighted Lebanon's first utilization of advanced innovations such as surgical virtual reality and 3D printing to treat complex conditions including temporomandibular joint replacement (TMJ), post traumatic facial reconstruction, selected congenital deformities, and a variety of tumor excisions. .

Effective data management through the JotForm (HIPAA) database significantly boosted the mission's organization and impact.



Medical Missions

Greece

Pakistan



In 2023, SAMS conducted three medical and dental missions in Greece. Our dental mission in March 2023 brought together seven volunteers from 3 countries, who provided 506 preventative, restorative, and curative dental procedures for refugees and asylum seekers residing in central Athens.

Notably, the team coordinated with shelters for unaccompanied minors to provide care for particularly vulnerable youth who have no family support system in Greece. SAMS' mission model in Greece also includes longer-term volunteer placements where individual volunteers deploy to augment the work of our Greek-based mobile medical team, sometimes for longer periods.

This included a one-month deployment for an American pediatric dentist and an American pediatrician in September 2023.

In October 2023, SAMS partnered with Indus Teaching Hospital to conduct a focused cardiology mission in Karachi, Pakistan. Over five days, three cardiologists performed 20 cardiac catheterizations, placed 27 stents, and conducted eight electrophysiology studies with pacemaker insertions, providing life-saving treatments for advanced coronary artery disease and arrhythmias.

Local cardiology fellows actively participated, benefiting from SAMS volunteers' expertise through hands-on learning and multidisciplinary rounds. This strategic blend of direct medical care and educational initiatives ensured significant advancements in medical practice and enhanced healthcare sustainability in the region.



Mental Health

Over recent years, SAMS has developed extensive mental health, psychosocial, educational, and training programs across Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, and Türkiye. Collaborating with Syrian NGOs, SAMS offers specialized services for individuals, including children with autism and those suffering from severe disorders. The team comprises specialized psychiatrists, psychologists, and counselors and provides diverse care, such as therapy for trauma and depression, empowerment programs, and specialized support for gender-based violence survivors. In 2023, SAMS delivered nearly 220,000 services in MHPSS and physical rehabilitation, alongside training for healthcare workers in conflict-impacted regions.

Syria

In recent years, SAMS has significantly advanced mental health and educational programs in Northern Syria, supported by the European Union. We've developed a master's program in clinical psychology, diplomas in psychiatric nursing and psychosocial support, and specialized training in trauma therapy, aiming for 180 graduates by 2026. Our partners include Free Aleppo University, Hashemite University, and PoMA Global, with efforts focused on strengthening the mental health workforce and sustainable education.

Our Child CETA Counselor Training utilizes approaches developed by Johns Hopkins University and has enhanced our capacity to provide mental health services for children and adolescents, particularly after the 2023 earthquake. We plan to expand this training further.

SAMS operates the sole specialized outpatient MHPSS center in Al-Dana, offering comprehensive services and telepsychiatry. In 2023, we integrated mental health services into 48 health facilities in Idlib and western Aleppo and supported seven safe spaces, enhancing protection and empowerment for vulnerable groups.

SAMS delivered nearly 220,000 services in 2023, demonstrating our commitment to improving health and education in conflict-affected regions.



Mental Health

Jordan, Lebanon & Turkiye



Since 2020, The Helping Hand program, backed by Grand Challenges Canada and the Clinton Global Initiative, has empowered Syrian refugee youth in Jordan and Lebanon through psychosocial support.

Integrating cognitive techniques with learning technology, it features a digital mental health game tailored for Lebanese youth, accessible through a free app. This game fosters socio-emotional support and reduces mental health stigma.

Nearly 3,000 participants have engaged with this initiative through group sessions and digital interactions, enhancing community-led mental health advocacy.

In Jordan, SAMS has delivered comprehensive MHPSS services since 2019, including individual and group therapy, medication management, support to survivors of gender-based violence, parenting skills workshops, and specialized trainings for students, government officials, and community organizations.

In 2023, through 20,500 services, over 11,000 individuals benefited. Community and capacity-building efforts focus on sustainable support across non-camp areas.

Supported by the U.S. Department of State, SAMS extends robust MHPSS services across Turkiye through specialized mental health centers and mobile units. In Istanbul, partnerships expand services to include mental health support, counseling, and integration assistance for children with Autism. These initiatives underscore SAMS' commitment to improving mental health and fostering resilience among refugees and host communities.

Medical Education

SAMS recognizes the urgent need in northern Syria to enhance the quality of medical education, boost local healthcare capacity, and advance sustainably. The 2023 established SAMS Institute, an executive committee and members consultants, fosters educational excellence among health professionals affected by conflict and addresses the significant gap left due to the exodus of senior healthcare professionals. The Institute offers scholarships and advanced educational programs, including residencies, fellowships, and specialized training that extend to doctors, dentists, students and allied health professionals.

Below are key educational initiatives supported by the SAMS Institute, each contributing to the strategic development of healthcare in the region.

Scholarship Programs for Future Healthcare Leaders

Started in 2015, SAMS Scholarship program rigorously selects healthcare students based on academic merit, financial need, and commitment to medical relief. In 2023, SAMS supported over 85 medical and health sciences students in Türkiye and expanded its assistance to Jordan and Lebanon through collaboration with Women for Humanity (WFH).

Midwifery and Nursing Education Initiatives

SAMS has established midwifery and nursing programs in response to regional needs, aligned with international standards. These programs have filled critical gaps in healthcare staffing, with initiatives like the specialized Adult ICU Nursing Diploma adapting to the changing community needs.



Medical Education

Postgraduate Medical Training

SAMS manages robust fellowship and residency programs, fostering the development of specialists in critical areas like ICU care, adult and pediatric oncology, pathology, and neurology. These initiatives are vital for developing skilled medical professionals in conflict-affected regions.

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Health Research

Over the past year, SAMS continued to address critical health issues affecting vulnerable populations. This summary outlines SAMS's pivotal research and collaborations, emphasizing their influence on health policy and practice.

SAMS' 21st International Conference: Research in Hybrid Crisis

SAMS's 21st International Conference in Vancouver convened members, researchers, and humanitarians, focusing on "Research in Hybrid Crisis." It highlighted innovative solutions to complex healthcare challenges and recognized significant contributions in the field, offering valuable perspectives from medical students involved in conflict zone healthcare.

Health in Conflict: Challenges of Providing Oncology Care

SAMS explored the oncological challenges in Northwest Syria, publishing findings on the dire circumstances for cancer patients and collaborating on a report detailing the barriers faced by women seeking breast cancer treatment. These efforts underscore the urgent need for enhanced cancer care infrastructure in conflict settings.

Health in Conflict: Impact on Respiratory Health

A SAMS study in BMJ Open Respiratory Research analyzed consultations across 48 facilities, uncovering a high incidence of respiratory diseases, particularly among children. The research highlights the healthcare access challenges in conflict zones, aiding in developing targeted health strategies.

Attacks on Health: Impact on Health Workforce and Services

SAMS, in collaboration with the University of California, Berkeley, highlighted the impacts of attacks on healthcare through studies focusing on the psychological and service access challenges faced by healthcare workers. These findings have informed advocacy and policy discussions at various international forums, emphasizing the critical need for protective measures for health services in conflict zones.

Additionally, SAMS partnered with the International Rescue Committee (IRC), SPHR, and SRD to issue a report on sexual and reproductive health in Northwest Syria, revealing concerning data about the increase in C-sections among displaced women due to ongoing hostilities.

Advocacy

US Government Collaboration

SAMS has intensified its advocacy with U.S. government partners. Maintaining strong ties with its major supporter, the Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance at USAID, SAMS, has also engaged closely with the State Department and Congress. Regular interactions, including meetings and events with policy committees and the National Security Council, facilitated by staff and returning doctors, have helped communicate the critical humanitarian needs of the region. This effort underscores SAMS' commitment to advocating for Syrians amid broader crises, aligning with its global humanitarian mission.

European Collaboration

SAMS has enhanced its European and UN advocacy, conducting three tours of European capitals in 2023 to strengthen ties with funding agencies and parliamentary overseers. At the Brussels conference, SAMS focused on accountability and actively participating with its staff. Leveraging its ECOSOC advisory status, SAMS contributed testimonies to the UN and engaged with WHO leaders, reinforcing its commitment to global humanitarian missions and intensifying its international advocacy efforts.

Research and Communications

In 2023, SAMS refocused its advocacy to tackle declining donor budgets in the West, launching a significant research project on sustainable and alternative financing in healthcare. This effort collaborates with USAID and other partners and aims to develop pilot projects for sustainable finance. As 2024 begins, SAMS continues to champion the Syrian people's voices, relying on the invaluable insights of our members and staff to influence global policy. We look forward to enhanced collaboration in the coming year.



SAMS Society & Members

Throughout 2023, SAMS organized influential events, including the 7th National Symposium in Clearwater, FL, focused on “Innovations & Transformations in Healthcare,” the 21st International Conference in Vancouver, which addressed “Research in Armed Conflict: Evidence into Practice,” and the 12th National Conference in Dearborn, Michigan, addressing “Medical Practice in the US: Paradigm Shifts and Arising Challenges. These conferences were pivotal in advancing professional development, strategic healthcare planning, and providing platforms for networking and members engagement.

SAMS also provides ongoing virtual lectures and webinars on critical health topics. In the past year, significant sessions included “How to Survive in Private Practice: Reality Vs. Expectations” and updates on earthquake response in Türkiye and Syria, demonstrating SAMS’s commitment to timely and relevant medical education.

Internationally, SAMS enhances healthcare inside Syria by offering advanced training and support across various specialties, significantly impacting local healthcare capabilities. Additionally, SAMS organizes medical missions in neighboring countries, focusing on comprehensive patient care, volunteer recruitment, and community partnerships to ensure integrated health services.



Moreover, the organization supports emerging medical professionals through its SAMS Young Professional Committee, aimed at fostering future leadership, and continues to support Syrian graduates who relocated to the United States in their search for postgraduate residency programs by offering mentorship and applications support, in addition to small interest free loans. SAMS continues to publish four volumes annually of its

open access, peer reviewed, online scientific journal, Avicenna Journal of medicine, introducing a vast variety of articles addressing topics like cholera outbreak in Syria, nursing services gaps in the US, and COVID vaccine hesitancy and effectiveness, as few examples.

