



The Health Impact

PROJECT OVERVIEW

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# Our story

## History

Our organization began in early 2020, after our founders returned to Spain after having spent several months working with an NGO focused on education for refugees in Lebanon. While working daily with families that had spent years in informal settlements, it was easy to see the negative impact that limited healthcare resources and lack of healthcare knowledge had on the population.

We decided to specifically address the preventable disease and injuries that were causing the most distress for families in the settlements. We discovered that the most effective way to address these concerns both now and into the future is through health education.

In the spring of 2020 we began our work advocating for international action, and long term change. We will continue this advocacy alongside our health education sessions in order to build international awareness and longterm solutions for families.

### SEE OUR WORK



[www.TheHealthImpact.org/en](http://www.TheHealthImpact.org/en)



[www.instagram.com/thehealthimpacten](https://www.instagram.com/thehealthimpacten)



[www.twitter.com/thehealthimpact](https://www.twitter.com/thehealthimpact)

## Mission

At TheHealthImpact, our mission is to ensure that all refugees have the knowledge and the ability to keep themselves and their families healthy.

Illness or injury can bring with it severe financial strain, stress, worry, and cause permanent disability or death. We work to provide preventive health measures for families who previously have never had this resource.

By providing education, community resources, daily hygiene supplies, and becoming their partners in health, we can help families avoid illness and the need for emergency intervention. Maintaining good health brings dignity, less worry, and a chance to focus on the future, rather than on daily survival.

## Objectives

- Decrease the occurrence of preventable infections and illness through at home interventions.
- Foster a feeling of security and dignity by relieving the stress families face when forced to live without vital hygiene and health items.
- Prepare communities to face emergency situations quickly and safely, preventing serious consequences from a delay in care.
- Build an international community of volunteers and supporters to share and humanize the stories of refugees and migrants worldwide.

# Health Promotion

Our health promotion project focuses on our belief that health is a human right. We work to ensure that refugees living in informal settlements have consistent access to the information and resources to keep themselves healthy. The current focus on emergency intervention is not sustainable, and is exhausting for families who are forced to wait until the situation is dire in order to receive help. Through our preventative health approach we can help families stay well and avoid the need for expensive and stressing emergency treatment.

We hold small classes in settlements teaching families how to treat small injuries and wounds with first aid, how to prevent infection, what the signs and symptoms are for common versus more serious illnesses, and promoting the importance of making health and hygiene a daily priority. We will also stress the importance for safety in the camp environment, and train community members how to react in case of an emergency. With training in CPR, rescue breathing, treating burns, and choking, we can empower people to intervene and save the lives of their neighbors should an emergency occur.

Additional classes, that are divided by age and gender, will address health concerns that are faced by different populations within the community. Women's health sessions will focus on reproductive health, pregnancy, menstrual health and wellness, safety, mental health, and other concerns for women in each settlement.

With our classes specifically for kids, we will provide spaces for children to enjoy structured activities, while learning basics about health and hygiene. For children we can instill healthy habits early and prevent future health complications for children growing up in refugee settlements. From receiving toothbrushes and hearing how important it is to brush their teeth, to practicing hand washing, playing new games and learning about germs that can live in cuts and scrapes.

Finally, we will be distributing health items and supplies during our classes. By sustainably ensuring that communities have access to things like first aid kits, toothbrushes and toothpaste, infant diapers, reusable feminine hygiene products, and soap, we can foster communities that not only have the knowledge to keep themselves healthy, but the supplies and resources to do so.



# Who we work with

## Families in Lebanon

Our work focuses on Syrian refugee families living in the Zahle and Bar Elias areas of the Bekaa Valley, Lebanon. According to the UNHCR Lebanon, as of 31 August 2020, the total number of registered Syrian refugees in the Bekaa Valley stood at 339,473 people, with Zahle and Bar Elias hosting about 30,000 refugees each, the majority of whom are women and children. Many families living in the Bekaa Valley, arrived more than 6 years ago, and have spent years living in unofficial tent settlements, with permanent structures being restricted by the government. Since the onset of the financial crisis in Lebanon as well as the Corona Virus and the aftermath of the 4 August explosion in Beirut, many Syrian families are left without an income, or NGO aid, and are facing increased hostility from their host country. We hope to reach several full settlements, providing aid to 300 people monthly.

Through our work in several settlements around Zahle and Bar Elias, we can identify communities with the greatest health risks and intervene with vital materials, health information, resources, and community connections.

## Current situation

With the Syrian conflict entering its tenth year, the victims of this war are still left dealing with the impact of conflict. Syrian families in Lebanon are facing increasingly hostile treatment from the government and in communities, as well as a decrease in resources and funding from larger NGOs in the area. With the current crisis in Lebanon, many Syrians are afraid to try to get treatment for COVID-19, or other illnesses, as they might attract the attention of security authorities, as 73% of Syrians in Lebanon lack residency permits, according to Human Rights Watch, and authorities forcibly deported more than 2,500 refugees in 2019. Syrians are also facing unprecedented unemployment and poverty levels.

Now more than ever it is vital to provide extra support and resources for the health of families. Many parents are currently having to choose between diapers or food for their child. They have no where to turn with questions about Covid-19, and are losing access to essential medications and services. Our work not only will provide material supplies to help maintain healthy families, but also provide education, support, resources and advocacy to those who are now more marginalized than ever. If we can step in and support communities in their health, we can help to avoid serious illness and hospitalizations for hundreds of people, saving them money, stress, fear, and pain.

