

Syria

Trauma Healing

Overview

The purpose of this project is to provide Trauma Healing Seminars to equip local churches to run their own Trauma Healing Centres. These churches will in turn be able to reach out to their communities and support people dealing with the experience of trauma. This project, which began in 2016, will use a new improved curriculum based on their experience with trauma counselling, which is suitable for different kinds of trauma as well as different age groups.

The Need

More than eleven years of war have inflicted immense suffering on the Syrian people. Most people in Syria are suffering from some form of trauma, Christian Syrians in particular. Due to violence and conflict in the country as well as increasing Islamic fundamentalism, the number of Christians in Syria has decreased from around two million before the war began in 2011 (10% of Syria's population) to less than 1 million. There is a high demand for trauma-healing programs in communities, both among Christian and non-Christians. The aim of this project is to act as a catalyst and an encouragement to all groups, regardless of religious background or political affinity.

In the past three years the humanitarian crisis has been compounded by an unprecedented economic downturn, triggered by a number of factors, including the COVID-19 pandemic. It is hoped that the trauma-healing training program will equip people and promote individual and family restoration.

On February 6, 2023, towns in northwest Syria were close to the epicentre of a 7.8 Richter earthquake in southern Turkey and witnessed massive devastation. Other areas of Syria including the cities of Aleppo, Lattakia and Hama recorded significant impacts, including lives lost and building collapses. Before the earthquake, north-western Syria already had more than 4 million people relying on humanitarian assistance.



<1m

Christians in Syria (From around 2 million in 2011 before the war began).

90%

of families in the country live in poverty, while more than 50 per cent are food insecure.

6.9m

people are internally displaced within Syria.

2.4m

children were out of school (late 2022), and 1.6 million at risk of dropping out.

Goals

The main goal of Bible Society in Syria is to reach out to people with a message of hope and life.

This project began in 2015 with the goal of creating a network of 500 trained personnel, who would impact 6,000 family members in all parts of Syria over the nine years of the project. The Trauma Training Seminars are run in cooperation with specialists to train personnel in various types of trauma therapy for diverse age groups. Once trained, the specialists work with various organisations and monastic orders in the field of trauma in different parts of Syria.

This project aims to see rehabilitation, healing and developing mental health in Syria. It will aim to be a continuous investment in good spiritual and mental health among those born just before the war and during the war. It aims to see the churches turned into places where people come for healing. The highest goal is to reconnect people with God through his healing power and his healing word.

In 2023 the program will:

- select, train, equip and empower highly motivated specialists,
- follow-up with the newly trained

- specialists and help them use their newly acquired skills,
- developing psycho-social manuals for the different kinds of trauma which arise as a result of the Syrian war, and the devastating earthquake in February,
- continue supporting the Trauma Centres based in churches around Syria,
- continue to look for more people within the church in slightly neglected areas of the country to be trained in the Trauma Healing Seminars, and support the many existing volunteers.

Impact

The impact of this project will be seen in how it 1) equips leaders in the trauma healing field; 2) brings about changed behaviour in traumatised families; and 3) changes the atmosphere of communities and encourages hope for the future.

Over the years of the project, it has been proved beyond doubt that those receiving training have increased hope and confidence, not only through the material they learn from, but also from the healing and comforting word of God that Bible Society distribute to all trainees in the training seminars. Another identifiable impact is the resulting network of relationships between Bible Society and the various institutions inside and outside Syria.

In 2023, the aim is to have at least 200 new committed trainers to equip others to facilitate trauma-healing therapies. Through this project 300 Children will be reached through trauma-healing group camps, while another 200 individuals will receive trauma-healing sessions with trained psychologists. The total number of people this project aims to impact is 6,000.

Testimonies

"As we started up our Trauma Healing Ministry we didn't know where it would take us. It's been a tearful experience going through the deepest of valleys together with the most precious people who have suffered so much....we want to thank Jesus with all our hearts for having been with us and the many who have been with us in "the darkness of the valley"....We couldn't have continued for (seven) intensive years without Jesus being there in all our seminars giving strength to us all and giving healing to us all."

Nabil, a former Bible Society Syria staff member.

Prayer Needs

- Pray for the trainers, trainees, and participating families.
- Pray for the leaders to facilitate this program with wisdom.
- Pray for some political stability to enable us to complete the program successfully.

