



Literacy for Refugees and Underprivileged

Overview

This project aims to provide children in refugee communities in Lebanon — and in the underprivileged communities who host them — with a Bible-based literacy course designed to help them back into the formal education system.

The Need

The number of Syrian and Iraqi refugees in Lebanon is now well above two million people. More than 50 per cent of these refugees are aged 17 or younger. Integrating these children into Lebanon's school system is a challenge, as they face social, economic and bureaucratic obstacles, as well as language difficulties, particularly in science and math. Many don't go back to formal education, because of these difficulties.

Education exclusion has negative implications for social wellbeing and exposes already vulnerable children to greater risks. This lack of education can reverberate for generations; these children will have more difficulty in meeting the physical, economic, social and political demands for reconstructing their countries. According to a study by Human Rights Watch in 2016, more than half of the nearly 500,000 school-aged Syrian children registered in Lebanon are not enrolled in formal education. Some of these children have never stepped inside a classroom.



50%

of Syrian and Iraqi refugees in Lebanon are aged 17 years old or younger

500,000

school-aged Syrian children registered in Lebanon are not enrolled in formal education

45%

of project participants can read or write in Arabic

2%

of project participants can read or write in a language other than Arabic

"Until I come, give attention to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation and teaching"

Timothy 4:13, NASB

Goals

Bible Society Lebanon is seeking to provide these children a safe and loving environment where they can take a literacy course based on Bible stories, to help them get back to the formal education system.

The project involves a three-month program of two classes per week, in Arabic (level 1 to 3) and English (level 1 and 2) curriculums. Each new student receives a free Arabic Scripture containing 365 stories and an English Scripture, along with an accompanying audio CD. Necessary learning materials like clay, pencil, notebooks are also provided.

In the last three months of 2023, and continuing in 2024, an English Level 1 curriculum was introduced, in response to high demand from partners, parents of the children, and teachers' recommendations. An English Level 2 course is planned for the second half of 2024.

The goal is to benefit 4,000 Syrian and Iraqi refugees in 2024 (2,000 in the Arabic course and 2,000 in the English course).

Impact

In the first nine months of 2023, 1,745 children benefitted from this project. The impact is seen in the improvement in literacy of the children, and in their incentive to read more. It is also seen by the fact that the major Bible stories are common knowledge amongst the students.

A number of participating churches have requested that the program be increased in their local community, demonstrating a strong appetite for these materials and training which enable disadvantaged children to learn more about God's message.

Testimonies

"... students are benefiting a lot from the lessons, but I want to emphasise also on the spiritual benefit that they are grasping. Mariam, 8-year-old girl. She recently lost her dad. When in class, I can clearly notice her sadness and disappointment in life ... She showed me her drawing: a small silhouette crying (representing herself) and a giant silhouette telling her 'Don't be afraid, I am with you' (representing God obviously). It was her first time to ask to share her story in front of her classmates. She told them about her sadness, her daily cries, and how she now knows that Jesus is with her, he will comfort her, and make her stronger at the right time. Her words were full of wisdom ... She touched my heart and even made me question my own attitude towards my problems.' — Nivine, literacy facilitator

Prayer Needs

- Pray that Bible Society will be able to show God's love to children who have come from desperate situations.
- Pray that more children will be encouraged and enabled to integrate into the formal education system.
- Pray for those refugees and underprivileged children whose suffering and lack of resources have been dramatically increased by the economic and financial crisis in Lebanon since 2020.