



# SAMS

## ANNUAL REPORT 2020



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# MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT AND FOUNDATION CHAIR

Dear Supporters,

This past year was undoubtedly the most challenging for healthcare workers around the globe in their fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, yet it brought us together in ways we couldn't even imagine and showed us the best of humanity.

We, at SAMS, tackled this unprecedented crisis head-on and got to expand our operations to relieve the suffering of vulnerable populations in Syria and beyond, all while supporting and sending aid to countries struggling to cope with an influx of COVID-19 cases.

Like many humanitarian organizations around the world, SAMS launched a global COVID-19 response, procuring personal protective equipment (PPE) for hospitals, establishing four COVID-19 centers in northern Syria, and conducting ongoing training for medical staff abroad to help curtail the spread of the coronavirus.

We admit that it wasn't easy. But in many ways, we are very fortunate to have an extensive network of members across the United States who have gone beyond the call of duty to help save lives here at home, as well as in Syria and beyond. In 2020, SAMS provided nearly 2 million services, including mental health and psychosocial support, while also responding to the COVID-19 pandemic in the United States, Syria, neighbouring countries, and beyond.

The global health crisis wasn't the only challenge we faced in 2020. Systematic attacks on healthcare continued with impunity. Massive waves of civilian displacement have plunged millions of internally displaced persons into an even more dire situation amid COVID-19 and a worsening economic crisis. This includes a steep rise in hunger across the whole of Syria, with an estimated 6 million children going without food and 12.4 million people at risk of food insecurity. Despite these unfathomable and unprecedented challenges, SAMS has continued to expand its operations, increasing access to healthcare, along with other humanitarian necessities for those in need amid displacement, strife, and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ten years of loss of life, displacement, and violence-- a stark reminder of the failure of the international community to intervene and put an end to the worst humanitarian crisis of our time, but also, a testimony to the enduring bravery and selflessness of medical workers in Syria.

We continue to advocate wholeheartedly for unfettered humanitarian access and the renewal of border crossings that have become a lifeline for the millions of vulnerable people in northwest Syria. We continue to address mental health and trauma for those who have been impacted by the conflict and feel they have been forgotten.

While we are proud of our resilience during one of the most difficult challenges our organization has faced in the past decade, we continue to remain focused on the organization itself as well, building capacity, restructuring its governance, and refreshing our infrastructure to support the growth of our services and meet the toughest international standards. This is all done to propel SAMS into the next phase, aligning with our vision to become one of the most impactful international relief organizations.

SAMS endurance and growth is a testimony to the adherence to our core values with the help of our donors and partners in the U.S. and across the world who continue to provide the most valuable guidance and support.

Again, we would like to thank all of our members, donors, volunteers, and staff who have always stood by our side as we continue to save lives and strengthen our shared altruism in the face of humanitarian crisis.

Sincerely,

**Dr. Mufaddal Hamadeh**  
SAMS President

**Dr. Maher Azzouz**  
SAMS Foundation Chair



## REBUILDING LIVES. RESTORING HEALTH.

The Syrian American Medical Society (SAMS) was founded in 1998 as a professional society to provide networking and educational opportunities to medical professionals of Syrian descent across the United States. The charitable arm of SAMS, SAMS Foundation, was launched in 2007. With the eruption of the conflict in Syria, SAMS Foundation has become one of the most active medical relief organizations working on the frontlines of crisis relief in Syria, neighboring countries, and beyond.

### OUR MISSION...

is dedicated to delivering life-saving services, revitalizing health systems during crisis, and promoting medical education via a network of humanitarians in Syria, the US, and beyond.

### OUR VISION...

is to strengthen the future of Syria's healthcare, delivering dignified medical relief where needed, fortified by a dedicated medical community.

## OUR CORE VALUES

### SERVING WITH COMPASSION

We serve those in need with compassion, kindness, and dignity, regardless of background or religious affiliations. Our purpose is to ensure that no one in need of medical care is left untreated in the face of crisis.

### ACTING NOW

We pursue excellence in care by acting promptly, effectively, and efficiently to respond to crises whether in Syria, in neighboring countries, in the US, or beyond.

### LEVERAGING PARTNERSHIPS

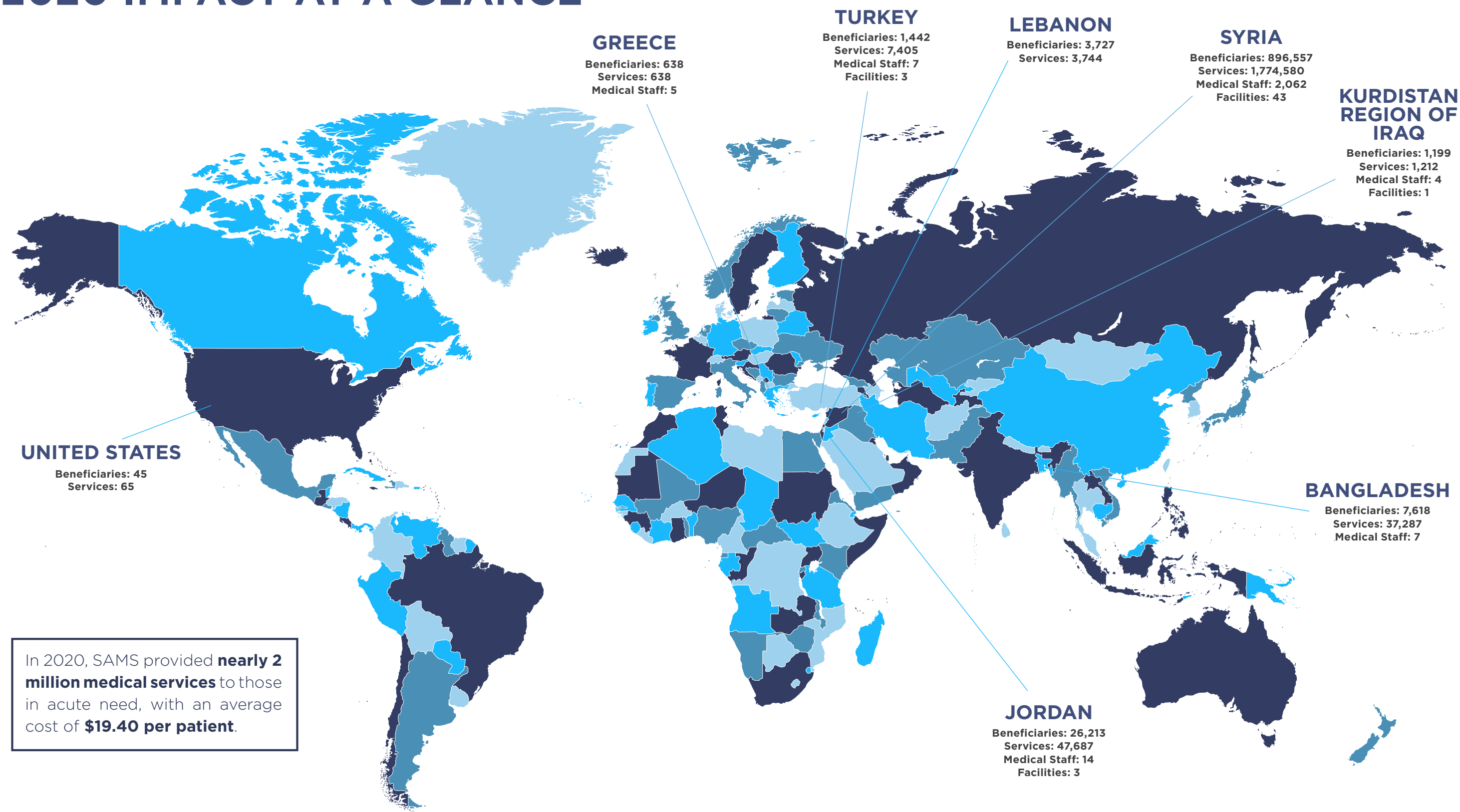
We believe in the power of partnering with other like-minded organizations to support our cause and best serve populations in need. We leverage partnerships for sustainable and long-lasting impact to ensure that the most vulnerable are able to access dignified care.

### MOBILIZING

We face challenges head-on thanks to our extensive network of members and medical professionals in the U.S. and abroad. We work together to come up with innovative solutions to effectively deliver medical services to those caught in conflict, and to advocate in support of their needs before the international community.



# 2020 IMPACT AT A GLANCE





**NEARLY 2 MIL**  
MEDICAL SERVICES



**NEARLY 1 MIL**  
BENEFICIARIES



**52,821**  
SURGERIES IN NW SYRIA



**50**  
FACILITIES



**2,099**  
MEDICAL WORKERS



**19,724**  
DELIVERIES IN NW SYRIA



**724**  
COVID-19 PATIENTS TREATED





# MEDICAL RELIEF WORK: SYRIA

In 2020, SAMS supported 43 healthcare facilities, including 16 fully-equipped hospitals in four Syrian governorates: Aleppo, Idlib, Ar Raqqa, and Al Hasakah.

**SAMS reached 896,557 unique beneficiaries in northwest Syria in 2020, providing a total of 1,774,580 medical services** - including 1,242,781 consultations, 19,724 deliveries, 52,821 surgical procedures, 8,376 dialysis sessions, and 1,178 cancer treatments - and employing 2,062 medical workers.

In 2020, SAMS expanded its operations in Syria to two new governorates (Ar Raqqa and Al Hasakah). In Ar Raqqa, SAMS launched a new medical facility in Ein Issa sub-district in the Ar-Raqqa governorate, providing primary and reproductive health care services to the targeted population, many of whom are internally displaced persons (IDPs). The center provides a range of services, including general health consultations for communicable and non-communicable diseases, reproductive health (including antenatal care, postnatal care, and family planning), pediatrics, and dental services. In Al Hasakah, SAMS launched a new healthcare facility in Ras Al-Ain, Makhtalah, providing primary and reproductive healthcare services to a population of about 10,000 people that previously did not have access to care.

With the support of WWE Superstar Sami Zayn in June 2020, SAMS launched a new Sami For Syria mobile medical clinic, a specially modified vehicle, fully equipped with examination rooms and medical equipment, and staffed by medical personnel and a pharmacy assistant. Sami's mobile clinic is traveling to several internal displacement camps per week to ensure displaced individuals in northwest Syria receive regular, consistent access to basic medical care and essential medications. Furthermore, through the implementation of partners on the ground, SAMS supported a total of 19 Women and Girls

Safe Space (WGSS) centers, and 10 vaccination centers as part of the Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI). SAMS continued its efforts to uphold the human rights of one of the most marginalized segments of the population in Syria by spotlighting the status of victims of torture and detainees. This project was launched in 2020 and will continue through 2021 as SAMS and partners continue to mobilize their efforts into documenting violations of international humanitarian law and human rights. Additional milestones in 2020 include:

- 23 SAMS facilities provided psychosocial support activities to patients
- 10 SAMS facilities provided nutrition activities
- 19 facilities were integrated with gender-based violence awareness (GBV) activities
- 10 facilities implemented noncommunicable diseases (NCD) protocols
- 24.8% of deliveries provided were C-sections, with about 5% improvement from the previous year.

## Cancer Treatment

In 2020, SAMS continued to support the oncology center at Idlib Central Hospital and launched a new oncology center in Al Bab. These two centers are the only facilities in northwest Syria that provide treatment free of charge for colon cancer, Hodgkin and non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, pediatric leukemia, and breast cancer. **In 2020, SAMS provided vital care to 5,814 cancer patients who otherwise wouldn't have access to these life-saving services.**

## Pathology Services

In November 2020, SAMS established a specialized type of testing at the pathology department in Al-Rai Hospital. This testing is essential for advanced diagnosis of cancer subtypes and planning proper therapy.









This center is the only one of its kind in northwest Syria, providing free pathology services to communities in need. In less than two months, the pathology department achieved immunohistochemical (IHC) stains for 93 cases, including 29 males and 64 females, with the patient age averaging 45 years old.

## SAMS Emergency and Winterization Response

In 2020, SAMS continued to support mobile medical clinics in northwest Syria to ensure that dignified, quality care was delivered to those most in need. Our mobile clinics fall under the SAMS emergency response campaign which strives to meet growing medical needs of IDPs in northwest Syria who struggle to access basic healthcare. Each mobile clinic consisted of a general physician, a nurse, a midwife, a pharmacist, and a member of our health community team. **In 2020, these mobile clinics provided 76,152 services to IDPs living in ill-equipped camps and informal settlements across the Turkish border.**

In an attempt to reach the most vulnerable during the winter season, SAMS partnered with local organizations to deliver winterization kits and humanitarian aid to IDPs. This included heating fuel, blankets, hygiene kits, and heaters. The first batch of winterization kits reached 2,000 IDPs in Al-Atareb and Al Dana sub-districts. The second batch of heaters and heating fuel was distributed to 170 vulnerable households living in informal settlements or unfinished buildings in Sarmada and Al-Dana.

In response to the unprecedented economic crisis across Syria, SAMS partnered with Ihsan Relief and Development to distribute one million loaves of bread to vulnerable civilians struggling to make ends meet. Through these efforts, SAMS reached a total of 3,391 households, equivalent to 16,575 individuals in Idlib and Aleppo.

As part of our ongoing efforts to support IDPs, SAMS provided 154 shelter units to vulnerable displaced households in Azaz. These shelter units were completed by mid-2020 and occupied by displaced families shortly thereafter.

## Medical Education and Training

As part of our ongoing efforts to support the already-fragile healthcare system in Syria, SAMS continued to support the professional development of healthcare workers through the sponsorship of midwifery and nursing schools in northwest Syria. SAMS also conducted training and workshops for medical workers on the ground.

In 2020, 24 students graduated from both midwifery institutes in Termanin and Idlib after completing their third phase of the 18-month program designed for certified nurses to become midwives. SAMS' ongoing support for the two-year nursing program at the Termanin Nursing School in Idlib continued in 2020, with 39 students in both their first and second year and 23 newly enrolled students. In 2020, 16 students successfully graduated from this program.

Additionally, as part of SAMS' strategic goal to increase the capacity for reproductive health care professionals in northwest Syria, SAMS launched the Midwives Fellowship Program, employing 33 midwives who graduated from SAMS' midwifery schools in 2019. As part of this program, these midwives underwent thorough, hands-on training at SAMS health facilities in northwest Syria to ensure the quality of services.

For medical students whose education was interrupted due to the crisis, SAMS launched the Resident Doctors Program in 2020 to provide financial support and training to medical residents to begin or resume their specialties. In 2020, SAMS supported 20 medical residents in 12 specializations within 11 hospitals. The specializations included OB/GYN, ENT, ophthalmology, vascular surgery, general surgery, orthopedics, pediatrics, gastroenterology, internal medicine, pulmonology, neurology, and cardiology. Moreover, during the course of this program, SAMS continued to supervise the quality of implementation through the provision of both technical and scientific consultancies. This was overseen by both the SAMS advisory and technical committees in Turkey and abroad.



# JORDAN

In 2020, the Jordan team continued to implement a range of services to support vulnerable, displaced populations, as well as underserved host communities who struggled to access the much-needed care amid the COVID-19 pandemic and displacement. **In Jordan, SAMS reached 26,213 unique beneficiaries in 2020, providing 47,687 medical and MHPSS services.**

## Mental Health & Psychosocial Support

With generous support from the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Near-Eastern Affairs' START Program and the Schooner Foundation, SAMS led mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) programs, youth empowerment, and gender-based violence (GBV) outreach and awareness activities in Amman and Irbid in 2020. These activities were designed to encourage positive coping mechanisms among youths and their families, especially among displaced communities. Amid recurring lockdowns due to the pandemic, SAMS was able to adapt its MHPSS and GBV programming to minimize disruption through remote implementation modalities, in addition to other COVID-19 mitigation measures. This was particularly significant because many MHPSS and GBV concerns have been exacerbated by the pandemic.

## In-Home & Remote Assessment

Prior to the announcement of the pandemic by the WHO in March 2020, the MHPSS team in Jordan conducted in-home assessments in three locations (Irbid, Amman, and Al-Zaatari Refugee Camp). Due to the advent of the pandemic, the team began conducting these assessments remotely. During these outreach efforts, our team identified a number of mental health issues experienced by our beneficiaries, including

stress, anxiety, sleep disorders, depression, obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), and bedwetting in children. Our MHPSS team devised treatment plans and referrals for each of the patients following needs assessments.

## Individual Therapy and Medication Management

Individual therapy sessions were conducted in Irbid and Amman for patients experiencing moderate and severe psychological disorders, such as depression, PTSD, and anxiety. The length of treatment varied depending on the complexity of the patient's needs from eight sessions per week to several months of ongoing care. The cases were identified based on previous in-home visits, followed by beneficiary assessments, case management, and referrals.

## Group Support Therapy

Group support therapy sessions were designed to target displaced youth and their family members in order to provide a community-based support network for those who may otherwise feel isolated in the face of negative experiences. These sessions included cognitive-behavioral techniques to enable mothers to support and communicate effectively with their children. This program treated memory disorders among adults and aggression, anti-violence, anxiety and depression among children and adolescents. They also taught coping strategies for children and child protection and safety.

## Psychoeducation Workshops

The MHPSS team in Jordan provided psychoeducation workshops in cooperation with local community-based organizations to beneficiaries from a range of different age groups. Topics were chosen based on the beneficiaries' needs, including stress, sleep disorders, and emotional and thought management. Participants were able to access these psychoeducation workshops through referrals from SAMS' in-home assessments and local partners. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, these workshops were held remotely.





## Gender-Based Violence Awareness

Through multiple workshops that were convened at local community centers, SAMS conducted a number of GBV awareness sessions throughout the year. These workshops were led by SAMS' certified social workers and psychiatrists to support survivors by providing coping mechanisms and tools.

In addition, these workshops were designed to promote gender equality and women's empowerment, establishing self-sustaining support networks for women and adolescent girls in Jordan who had been subjected to exploitation amid displacement and difficult circumstances surrounding the conflict. Due to COVID-19, these workshops were conducted remotely and included various topics, such as cyber violence, violence against women and teenagers, sexual abuse, and postpartum depression. SAMS partnered with both Al-Yarmouk University and Jordan University to participate in the UN's 16 Days of Activism campaign to raise awareness about GBV, the different types of violence, the psychological impact of conflict, and how to address GBV cases.

## Peer-to-Peer Project

The Peer-to-Peer project was designed to engage adolescents and help them become peer educators. SAMS MHPSS teams in Irbid and Amman conducted interviews with a large group of adolescents in order to select participants for the training of trainers (ToT) program. The team used a set of criteria to select the right candidates. In total, 28 volunteers, including 11 Syrians and 17 Jordanians, participated in intensive training on effective communication skills, public speaking, conflict management, stress management, and preventing violence against women and teenagers. Once the training was completed, volunteers were split into groups to provide additional hands-on training. These sessions were also held remotely and in-person under strict guidelines due to the pandemic.



## Capacity Building Training for Ministry of Health

The SAMS MHPSS team conducted a four-day training for the Jordanian Ministry of Health focusing on Psychological First Aid (PFA) for those affected by crises. The dignity and cultural sensitivity of patients was taken into careful consideration for this training.

## Medical Center in Al-Zaatari Camp

Throughout 2020, SAMS continued to operate a medical center in Al-Zaatari Refugee Camp, home to nearly 80,000 Syrian refugees. The center provides general medicine, emergency, lab and radiology services, dental, family planning, vaccinations, and medications. **In total, SAMS provided 24,087 services to 6,780 Syrian refugee patients residing in the camp throughout 2020.**

In March 2020, following the stay-at-home order nationwide, the medical center remained open under strict guidelines as part of the camp's health system response to the pandemic, mainly providing emergency, radiology, and lab services. To respond to the growing needs, the facility operated 24/7, implemented triage and screening protocols, and established a patient hotline. The pharmacy also remained open for operation.

In Al-Zaatari, SAMS continued to support a 13-year-old thalassemia patient with blood transfusions and medications.

## Medical Missions

In January 2020, SAMS conducted a 10-day medical mission to Jordan in which all services were provided free of charge. Fifty-four medical and non-medical volunteers from around the world came together to serve Syrian refugees and underserved locals. During the mission, volunteers provided a range of services, including neurology, dental, oncology, dermatology, cardiology, ophthalmology, pediatrics, nephrology, endocrinology, orthopedic, internal

medicine, and pulmonology. In total, SAMS Volunteers served 3,623 beneficiaries who otherwise wouldn't have access to much-needed, life-saving care.

Due to the pandemic, SAMS' missions to the region were halted. As a result, SAMS partnered with local medical professionals and partners to support those in most need in order to ensure that displaced populations in Jordan continued to receive care, especially in terms of secondary and tertiary healthcare provision. Through these partnerships, SAMS provided cataract and urology surgeries. Treatment and follow-up services for diabetic retinopathy were also provided for patients every three months by administering Avastin injections and performing laser surgeries.

SAMS also organized free clinics for adults with chronic diseases and dispensed proper NCD medications. Beneficiaries were referred to SAMS by UNHCR and other relief organizations. These missions were possible thanks to cooperation with the Ministry of Social Development and other charitable organizations. In 2020, SAMS supported 37 patients who underwent kidney transplants and needed medications.

**“ I am so grateful for SAMS for helping my son to be able to hear again. If it weren't for the support we get from SAMS, I wouldn't be able to afford his treatment.**

*- A Beneficiary's Parent in Jordan*

## Medical Residency Project

In 2020, SAMS continued to support three Syrian medical residents at the Islamic Hospital and one resident at the Jordan Hospital as part of our ongoing efforts to support Syrian medical graduates whose education was interrupted due to the conflict in Syria. One of the resident physicians, an internist, finalized his residency in 2020 at the Islamic Hospital.







# TURKEY

In 2020, SAMS supported 1,442 beneficiaries in Turkey, providing 7,405 medical and MHPSS services. SAMS supported three centers, a MHPSS center in Gaziantep, an autism center in Istanbul, and a youth center in Reyhanli.

## Mental Health & Psychosocial Support

Throughout 2020, SAMS continued to operate the MHPSS Center in Gaziantep, providing individual and group counseling sessions, group activities, and workshops to vulnerable displaced Syrians who endured various traumatic experiences caused by conflict, including displacement, lack of essential resources, and desperate living conditions. The center is supported by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM).

SAMS also provided specialized behavioral support services to Syrian refugee children living in Istanbul suffering from autism spectrum disorder (ASD). The program served a total of 52 children, providing development and learning sessions tailored specifically to meet their needs. When the sessions started, there were only 20 children enrolled; the number of students was more than doubled with our support.

Depending on their learning plan, these sessions included developing expressive speech, self-care, play, gross motor skills, fine motor skills such as drawing and coloring, literacy, and imitation as well as other social skills. The program also included group sessions for caregivers (which were awareness sessions focused on self-care and issues relevant to children with ASD).

## Migrant Health Clinics Support

In addition, SAMS procured and distributed essential medical equipment and supplies to the Directorates of Health in southern Turkey for their Migrant Health Centers, indirectly benefiting 152,300 Syrian refugees who frequent these centers every month.

In 2020, SAMS sponsored a community center in Reyhanli for Syrian youth to equip them with tools to better process trauma caused by conflict and displacement. The center held workshops based on the participants' interests and needs, including group studio workshops, a STEM virtual exchange program, psychoeducation workshops, group support activities, GBV awareness sessions, unstructured psychosocial activities, mentorship, and college preparedness sessions.

## Medical Scholarship Program

As part of our efforts to expand educational programs in Turkey, SAMS supported 28 Syrian medical students in continuation of our scholarship program. Recipients of these competitive awards were students who started their medical studies in accredited universities in Syria but were forced to halt their studies as a result of the ongoing crisis. In addition to academic achievements, these students participated in medical relief and humanitarian efforts in Idlib, Aleppo, East Ghouta, Dara'a, northern Homs, southern Damascus, and Daraya.



Between January 2016 and December 2020, 12 students completed their studies and obtained their bachelor's degree, seven of whom graduated in 2020. Twenty-three students are still receiving tuition support from SAMS.

## Healthcare Cluster Coordination

In Turkey, SAMS is an active member of the following clusters: Health, Nutrition, Protection and GBV, Mine Action sub-clusters, and Technical Working Groups. SAMS is also a leading member of the COVID-19 Task Force in Turkey, and the focal point for the case management pillar.

In addition, SAMS participates in the NGO Forum, Syri Crossborder Humanitarian Fund (SCHF) Advisory Board, and the Syrian NGOs Alliance. SAMS also coordinates regularly with the Turkish government, including the Turkish

Health Directorates and the Turkish Task Forces responsible for coordination in Afrin, Azaz, AlBab, Tell Abiad, and Ras Alain areas.

SAMS is in constant communication with key governmental and NGO stakeholders through the Health Sector Working Group, as well as the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Family Labor and Social Services, the Health Directorates, and different municipalities in Turkey.

**“ Before receiving help from SAMS, I was constantly worn out and my life was in disarray. I had no confidence in myself. I fixated on all the traumatic and negative events I experienced in Syria and it seemed like there was nothing I could do to change how I felt. I'm very grateful for your support. It's only made me more determined to try and get better.**

- Beneficiary, SAMS MHPSS Center in Gaziantep



# LEBANON

In 2020, SAMS continued to lead a number of medical relief programs in Lebanon, in addition to responding to the explosions that rocked Beirut on August 4, 2020, and the COVID-19 pandemic. **SAMS reached 3,727 unique beneficiaries in 2020, providing 3,744 medical services across Lebanon.**

## Support for Urgent Hospitalization

In 2020, SAMS launched a 12-month program to provide financial subsidies to displaced and underserved populations in Lebanon, who struggled to access specialized care due to the prohibitively high cost of treatment. This program was funded by the Lebanon Humanitarian Fund (LHF), in partnership with United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Under this program, SAMS provided financial support to Syrians and Lebanese under the age of 18 in need of urgent hospitalization. SAMS also continues to support Palestinian patients over the age of 60 and under the age of 18 in need of cardiovascular interventions.

“It was fast and reliable; this is how I would describe my experience with SAMS. They are not only paying for Hisham’s medical bills, but they were also very cooperative. I am forever grateful for their support.

- Nabil, a Beneficiary’s Parent in Lebanon

## Psychosocial Support

In 2020, with support from the Center for Disaster Philanthropy, SAMS continued its psychosocial support (PSS) programming in Lebanon.

## Helping Hands Program for Children

In 2020, SAMS continued the implementation of the Helping Hands program, our ongoing psychosocial support program in Lebanon designed for children between the ages of 5 to 12. This project aimed to introduce emotional management and help children acquire new skills such as problem-solving and coping mechanisms for social rejection. This project helped children learn how to express their feelings, share their thoughts in a safe environment, and connect with one another. The project’s facilitators provided beneficiaries with mechanisms to reconstruct negative thoughts into positive ones. These mechanisms helped guide beneficiaries to find concrete solutions for the problems that they were experiencing. **In 2020, 519 beneficiaries participated in this program.**

## STEP Program for Adolescents

In 2020, SAMS launched the STEP Program which is designed to increase awareness among adolescents between the age of 13 and 18. During these awareness sessions, beneficiaries discussed topics related to the physical, psychosocial, and traumatic experiences they had endured amid ongoing conflict and displacement. Additionally, these sessions raised issues related to chronic anxiety and depression.

This project helped adolescents to understand the changes that occurred during this pivotal phase in their young lives. The project also helped them find the necessary tools to deal with these changes and provided them with new adaptive skills and coping mechanisms. **In 2020, 98 adolescents participated in this newly-established STEP program.**







## Winterization Response

SAMS launched its annual winterization campaign in order to reach vulnerable displaced families and underserved Lebanese struggling to survive amid freezing temperatures. SAMS targeted displaced Syrian families residing in informal settlements in Al Marj in the Beka'a Valley, as well as vulnerable Lebanese families in Beirut who were affected by the explosions on August 4, 2020. SAMS' winterization support included the distribution of fuel specifically for families in the Beka'a Valley, blankets, rechargeable lights, diapers, sanitizers, feminine hygiene, and waterproof boots for children. **In total, 145 vulnerable individuals benefited from these efforts in 2020.**

## KURDISTAN REGION OF IRAQ

After years of conflict, financial collapse, and an influx of refugees and IDPs, medical infrastructure in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq has been placed under considerable pressure. As a result, SAMS continues to operate in the area to help alleviate suffering and support those in need access healthcare.

## Dental Project for Syrian Refugees in Dohuk

**In September 2020, SAMS launched dental services in Bardarash Refugee Camp for Syrian refugees, providing 1,212 services from September to December 2020.** As part of SAMS' efforts to improve access to quality care for displaced populations, SAMS established a robust monitoring system that consisted of daily needs assessment and an ongoing monitoring mechanism to ensure the quality of services provided. Additionally, SAMS distributed dental supplies for refugees, while providing ongoing awareness sessions about the importance of oral hygiene.





# GREECE

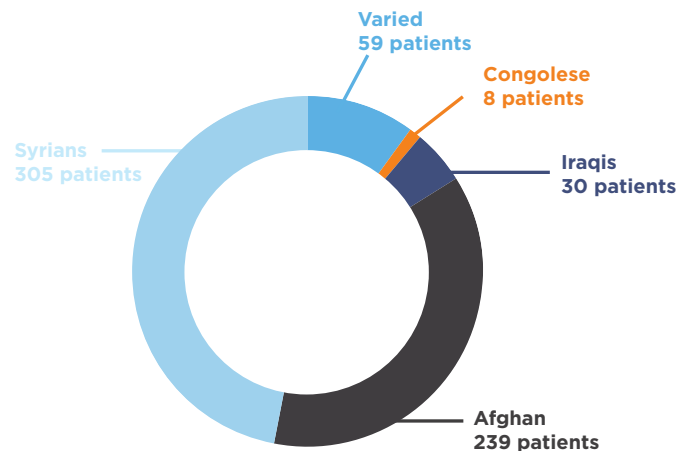
SAMS resumed its operations in Greece in October 2020. Thanks to a grant from the Center for Disaster Philanthropy, SAMS launched mobile clinics to support refugees and migrants in Greece providing a range of services, including routine vaccinations, primary healthcare, reproductive health, and pediatrics. These medical mobile units deployed a team of two pediatricians, an OB/GYN doctor, a midwife, a nurse, and Arabic and Farsi/ Dari interpreters.

SAMS operated one center in Metaxourgeio, Athens that provided pediatrics, OB/GYN, and reproductive health services. In addition, SAMS medical teams were deployed in five refugee camps (Schisto, Skaramagkas, Ritsona, Malakasa 1.0 and Elefsina), where access to care was limited or non-existent.

This project allowed SAMS to develop a presence at these sites and respond to the urgent medical needs of unaccompanied minors and pregnant women. The SAMS team in Greece, embodying medical professionals with abundant experience in the humanitarian field, identified the gaps and promptly responded to growing medical needs, liaising with both state and local actors in order to achieve the best possible outcome of delivering dignified medical care to those who need it most.

In partnership with the National Public Health Organization (EODY) and the Ministry of Migration & Asylum, SAMS operated in IOM accommodation centers for refugees and asylum-seekers to provide much-needed medical assistance to displaced families, single parents and single adults. SAMS also forged partnerships with active and local partners operating in camps, including Seeds of Humanity, IOM, Terre des Hommes, and Arsis NGO, while cooperating with all the other NGOs in the field.

In the first quarter of 2020, SAMS organized dental and ophthalmology missions to Greece that were halted due to the pandemic. **In total, SAMS provided services to 638 patients, including 279 pediatrics patients, 152 OB/GYN patients, 97 dental patients, 71 optometry patients, and 39 patients from November-December 2020.**



Patients included 305 (~47%) Syrians, 239 (~37%) Afghans, 30 (~5%) were Iraqis, 8 (~1%) Congolese, and the remaining 59 (~10%) were from a variety of other countries, including Pakistan, Bangladesh, Yemen, Palestine, Morocco, and Kuwait. Of these patients, 313 (~49%) were children.







# SAMS RESPONSE TO COVID-19

On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) characterized COVID-19 as a global pandemic. SAMS was uniquely positioned to respond to this global health emergency through its extensive networks of healthcare providers in the United States, Syria, and neighboring countries. SAMS' immediate response to the crisis was led by a newly-established SAMS COVID-19 Advisory Group composed of SAMS Members who specialize in medical fields essential to the management of COVID-19 disease and its spread. As a result, the SAMS COVID-19 Advisory Group implemented the following measures:

- Improved surveillance, communication, and reporting among its facilities and project stakeholders;
- Conducted risk assessments to prioritize the location of response activities and identify the required resources needed;
- Contributed to community awareness campaigns about the virus and how to prevent its spread;
- Prepared training for medical and non-medical staff on prevention, detection, response, and treatment;
- Bolstered existing infection, prevention, and control (IPC) measures in SAMS facilities;
- Procured and distributed appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) for frontline medical workers in Syria and beyond;
- Added triage areas and screening protocols within SAMS health facilities; and
- Established, operated and supervised inpatient COVID-19 units in northwest and northeast Syria.

## Syria COVID-19 Response

As part of SAMS' preparedness and response plan for COVID-19, SAMS established an internal

COVID-19 task force on 11 March, 2020 and became a part of the northwest Syria COVID-19 task force. In July 2020 with the emergence of the first confirmed case of COVID-19 in Syria, SAMS established three isolation and specialized centers for the treatment and management of moderate to severe cases for patients with critical symptoms and underlying chronic conditions.

SAMS Hospital-Based Isolation Units (HBIUs) constituted 65% of case management capacity to receive critically ill COVID-19 patients in the area and provided almost 70% of the dedicated ventilator capacity. In collaboration with the team on the ground, SAMS Members conducted daily telemedicine consultations for COVID-19 patients in our three isolation facilities. This approach enhanced the capacity of the isolation hospital staff and improved the quality of services provided. SAMS was a key member of the COVID-19 Task Force and served as a focal point for the case management pillar while coordinating closely with the Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) unit.

SAMS designed and issued information, education, and communication (IEC) material which was distributed to each health facility, including distribution to community health workers and PSS teams to conduct ongoing awareness sessions and workshops to help mitigate the spread of the coronavirus. SAMS followed the COVID-19 Task Force recommendations to reduce the number of visits to health facilities and to avoid overcrowding by limiting its operations to only urgent and life-threatening cases.

SAMS healthcare facilities set up triage and observation tents outside the building; the staff were trained on triage questionnaires, case definition and IPC measures. The IPC core team underwent rigorous training for staff. SAMS coordinated closely with EWARN and other referral focal points to facilitate the diagnosis through testing conducted by the former.





SAMS participated in the development of all case management protocols, including triage, patient pathway protocol, and COVID-19 suspected cases and the admission criteria of confirmed patients. Additionally, SAMS conducted case management training for health staff working in all isolation hospitals, including online training sessions. **SAMS Members volunteered more than 51 hours of their time to provide 11 training sessions, reaching 774 participants.**

SAMS also implemented the recommended infection prevention and control (IPC) measures, developed the required standard operating procedure (SOP), participated in developing the IPC materials to train all healthcare workers, and distributed PPE to all of its healthcare facilities and SOPs to promote correct usage. In addition, SAMS formed IPC committees in each facility to provide technical support for implementing IPC measures.

SAMS participated in strengthening the surveillance system in coordination with EWARN by training all SAMS staff and reporting SOPs. Additionally, SAMS dedicated five ambulances equipped with ventilators and 24-hour working staff to transfer suspected and confirmed COVID-19 cases.

In December 2020, SAMS launched a 6-month project, establishing a COVID-19 Center in Deir ez-Zor with 10 ICU beds and 30 hospital beds. The hospital served a population of nearly 1.4 million people.

**“ The medical workers at this hospital work like a beehive. I couldn’t help but marvel at the extensive care they provide to every patient all throughout the day. Thanks to their efforts, I’m now fully recovered. This has given hope to others who are still suffering from this dangerous disease.**

*- Amin, 44, COVID patient at Al-Amal Hospital*





## Jordan COVID-19 Response

In response to the COVID-19 outbreak in Jordan, SAMS:

- Provided financial support and medical supplies to both the Ministry of Social Development and the Ministry of Health (MoH) to curtail the spread of the coronavirus;
- Launched a campaign to raise awareness and ensure that residents follow the MoH guidelines to prevent and contain the spread of COVID-19 in Al-Zaatari Refugee Camp;
- Established hotlines to respond to the needs of beneficiaries by providing ongoing virtual counseling and psychiatric services; and
- Organized a series of MHPSS webinars in Arabic offering useful tools and coping mechanisms to help individuals manage stress and anxiety during challenging and unprecedented times.

In addition, SAMS extended the hours of operations of SAMS Medical Center in Al-Zaatari Refugee Camp in order to respond to COVID-19 by taking the following actions:

- Created a new isolation room to examine patients with respiratory infection or suspected cases;
- Limited the services provided to avoid overcrowding and maintain social distancing precautions by only offering urgent care services;
- Raised awareness about COVID-19 and how to prevent its spread;
- Provided hand sanitizers and masks to patients; and
- Created a hotline to receive calls from patients regarding questions about the coronavirus, general medical consultations, and follow-ups.



The MHPSS team took several prevention measures as well, including:

- Modified training materials to fit remote settings;
- Started the implementation of awareness sessions remotely and according to patient's needs;
- Provided individual sessions remotely and the provision of psychological medication via home delivery; and
- Conducted webinar sessions to raise awareness of the psychological effects of the coronavirus and provide members of the community with mechanisms to cope with the spread of COVID-19.

**“I’d like to express my sincere gratitude to SAMS. They helped me get back on my feet. Before joining, I was going through a lot of personal problems. If it weren’t for SAMS, I would have quit. I’ve become stronger and more resilient. SAMS was the beginning of the end.”**

- Ammar Abu Azza, one of our Training of Trainers volunteers in Jordan







## Turkey COVID-19 Response

SAMS procured and delivered psychosocial support and hygiene kits to 766 households through a grant from PRM. These households were also receiving services at the SAMS MHPSS Center in Gaziantep. Moreover, SAMS prepared five Arabic TV episodes on COVID-19 awareness for social media, targeting refugee communities in Turkey to help raise awareness and mitigate the spread of the virus.

The episodes covered the following topics:

- COVID-19 prevention and mitigation;
- The immune system and fighting infectious diseases like COVID-19;
- The negative effects of obesity and inactivity, especially during quarantine;

- Pregnancy and COVID-19; and
- Integration of preventative measures into daily life.

SAMS also distributed over \$175,000 worth of medical and non-medical supplies, including PPE to 41 medical health centers in Gaziantep, Hatay, and Kilis to respond to growing needs reported by Health Directorates. These centers served mainly Syrian refugees.

SAMS partnered with Direct Relief to deliver hygiene and COVID-19 prevention kits, as well as psychosocial support kits to Syrian refugees and underserved local communities living in Gaziantep. In total, 2,204 hygiene kits and 4,408 PSS kits were distributed to Syrian refugees and underserved Turkish families.



## Lebanon COVID-19 Response

In Lebanon, SAMS implemented the following response to the COVID-19 pandemic:

- Supported local hospitals across Lebanon that faced supply shortages due to the pandemic, an unprecedented economic crisis, and the Beirut blast;
- Supported frontline medical workers as they continued to cope with a steady surge in COVID-19 cases across the country in partnership with Heart to Heart International. In addition, SAMS distributed medical supplies, equipment, and PPE to more than 10 hospitals across the country;
- Raised awareness about the COVID-19 pandemic and how to help curtail its spread as the number of cases continued to increase while distributing masks and hand sanitizers to vulnerable civilians in neighborhoods across Beirut;
- Promoted awareness and prevention information sessions and distributed more than 4,000 masks and hand sanitizers from August 2020 until December 2020; and
- Distributed 370 hygiene boxes to displaced families in collaboration with Child International and local organizations. The hygiene kits contained household cleaners, personal and feminine hygiene products, hand sanitizers, and masks.

In light of the COVID-19 situation in Lebanon and during the stay-at-home order, SAMS launched a virtual project, entitled “Tamnouna Ankom” (In English: Let Us Know How You Are Coping), using phone and group video conferences to reach families in informal settlements in the Beka’a Valley.

The team checked on the physical and psychological well-being of these families during the lockdown nationwide and reinforced positive coping mechanisms, such as how to establish a daily routine, how to develop a positive outlook, and how to productively spend time with your children.





These virtual workshops created a safe space for refugees and members of the host community and helped provide coping tools during these difficult times. The Tamnouna Ankom project included the following sessions:

#### **COVID-19 Mitigation and Psychosocial Support for Refugees in the Beka'a Valley and Aarsal:**

Funded by the Center for Disaster Philanthropy, SAMS launched a new program in September 2020 to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in refugee populations in eight informal and underserved settlements in the Beka'a Valley and one informal settlement in Aarsal. This project's activities included:

- The provision of health education sessions to communities residing in these settlements including specific topics about COVID-19 symptoms and prevention measures;

- The provision of specialized psychosocial support; and
- The distribution of PPE.

The primary goal of this project was to deliver essential services to more than 1,500 refugees residing in the Beka'a Valley in light of the COVID-19 outbreak in Lebanon. These sessions were conducted by 14 peer-to-peer educators and specialized PSS team members.

#### **Psychological Support:**

SAMS conducted remote PSS workshops. These workshops aimed to identify psychological pressure, symptoms, and issues. Also, these workshops helped beneficiaries discover the extent of their condition and its impact on their day-to-day lives while offering new techniques to mitigate the effects of trauma.







## Bangladesh COVID-19 Response

The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the already-strained health system in Bangladesh's Cox's Bazar, home to millions of Rohingya refugees struggling to access care amid COVID-19 outbreaks, displacement, and movement restrictions. Recognizing the gap in health services, SAMS partnered with Relief International (RI) to launch the COVID-19 Preparation and Mitigation project in Cox's Bazar.

The program aimed to provide specialized medical care, including reproductive health and mental health for those residing in refugee camps by deploying a well-equipped mobile medical unit. This project played an important role in effectively supporting the underserved population in Cox's Bazar and reducing coronavirus-related morbidity and mortality rates by expanding access to quality, vital health services.

From July 2020 until its completion in December 2020, SAMS reached 7,618 patients, mainly displaced individuals in four communities (Dorgahbil, Patabari, Gucchogram, Lombaguna) through the mobile clinic unit, and community health workers providing COVID-19 awareness, education and emergency medical services. This filled the existing and growing gaps in healthcare provision among impoverished and overcrowded communities living in hard-to-reach areas. In order to enhance the community-based surveillance and monitoring mechanisms in refugee communities, the mobile clinic team introduced counseling and patient referrals in isolation facilities and trained 71 community health workers.

In total, SAMS and RI conducted 78,517 household visits and referred 48 people with COVID-19 symptoms to the RI Severe Acute Respiratory Infection Isolation and Treatment Center (SARI-ITC), reached 130 community beneficiaries that had other health-related issues who were then referred to specialized medical

centers, provided awareness-raising sessions to 59,543 community members, and delivered medical care to 14,838 patients through the mobile clinic unit.

## KRI COVID-19 Response

In November 2020, SAMS distributed PPE and other essential medical supplies to the Directorate of Health (DoH) in Dohuk to support the governorate's COVID-19 response to help support facilities and mitigate the spread of the coronavirus. **In total, SAMS provided 500 KN95 masks, 400 protective safety gown isolation bodysuits, 100 packs of latex gloves, 100 packs of surgical masks, and 600 face shields.**

Once SAMS distributed PPE to the DoH, it was then dispersed among three COVID-19 centers across Duhok that were struggling to cope with soaring COVID-19 cases and acute shortages of protective gear for medical staff. Through these efforts, SAMS served 1.4 million individuals in Duhok. This support was made possible thanks to the generosity of our partner organization Give to The World.







## The United States COVID-19 Response

When the pandemic started, SAMS Members across the United States stepped up to the plate in response to this global health crisis. Several members went beyond their call to action working on the frontlines of the coronavirus here at home to volunteer their time and skills to raise awareness about how to mitigate its spread. They also provided training and conducted webinars with their counterparts in Syria and neighboring countries.

In 2020, SAMS launched virtual medical rounds for physicians working at its COVID-19 facilities in northern Syria. Twelve US-based Syrian-American specialists among SAMS Members were available for daily virtual medical rounds with physicians in northwest and northeast Syria, with a multi-specialty team assigned to each facility.

Specialists developed clinical protocols for management of complex cases in limited-resource settings, including critical care pulmonologists, pediatric ICU specialists, internists, cardiologists, nephrologists, hematologists, and radiologists. A total of 415 virtual rounds were conducted over a 6-month period, with at least 50 physicians inside Syria. In addition to these virtual medical rounds, SAMS convened over 95 webinars on specialty subjects between March 2020 and February 2021, which totaled over 80 hours of high-quality educational content.

A total of 1,810 individuals attended these live webinars, with attendees spanning from 39 other countries. The recordings of these webinars

gathered another 140,167 views when shared on SAMS social media platforms.

**SAMS held a total of 85 COVID-19 webinars hosted in both English and Arabic with 103,596 views across social media platforms.**

From the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in the United States, SAMS Community Outreach (SCO) has been committed to supporting frontline healthcare workers across the country. SCO identified health facilities in dire need of personal protective equipment and support for staff working under extreme conditions. SCO procured PPE for hospitals, provided meals for COVID and intensive care units staff, and awarded cash appreciation awards for nurses working in some of the hardest-hit hospitals. Several SAMS Members supported these efforts, many of whom had transitioned to providing care to COVID-19 patients in ICUs and COVID units.

From April to December 2020, SCO distributed 54,268 items of PPE, provided 5,530 meals for frontline healthcare workers, and gave appreciation awards to 315 COVID-19 and ICU nursing staff. Notably, SCO not only supported impacted urban centers, but also worked with multiple Native American tribes and communities in rural areas, experiencing chronically under-resourced health systems and severe COVID outbreaks.

**In total, SCO supported 44 healthcare facilities in 18 cities and four Native American Reservations.**



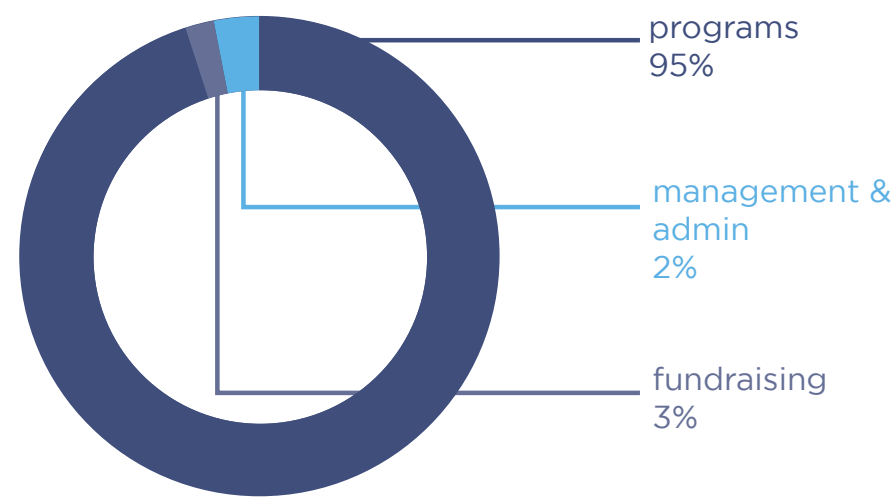


# FINANCIAL REPORT

SUPPORT AND OTHER CONTRIBUTIONS	2019	2020
Contributions	\$7,844,969	\$7,348,466
Grants	\$22,083,941	\$30,594,621
Gifts in Kind	\$11,533,958	\$4,687,191
TOTAL	\$41,462,868	\$42,630,278
NET ASSETS	\$9,654,234	\$13,361,278

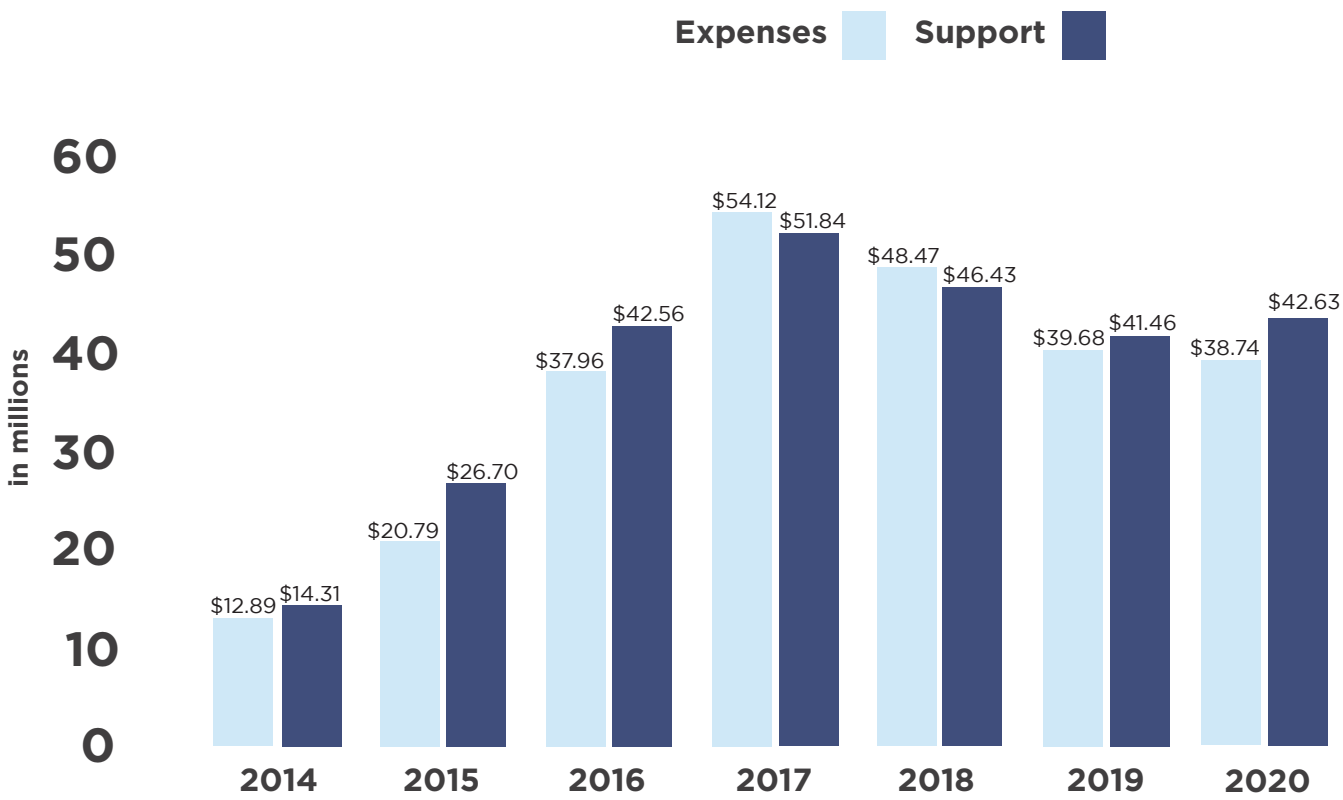
EXPENSES	2019	2020
Program Services		
Medical Relief Program	\$37,961,408	\$36,807,189
Supporting Services		
Management and General	\$865,215	\$774,888
Fundraising	\$848,488	\$1,162,332
TOTAL	\$39,675,111	\$38,744,410

2020 DISTRIBUTION OF EXPENSES

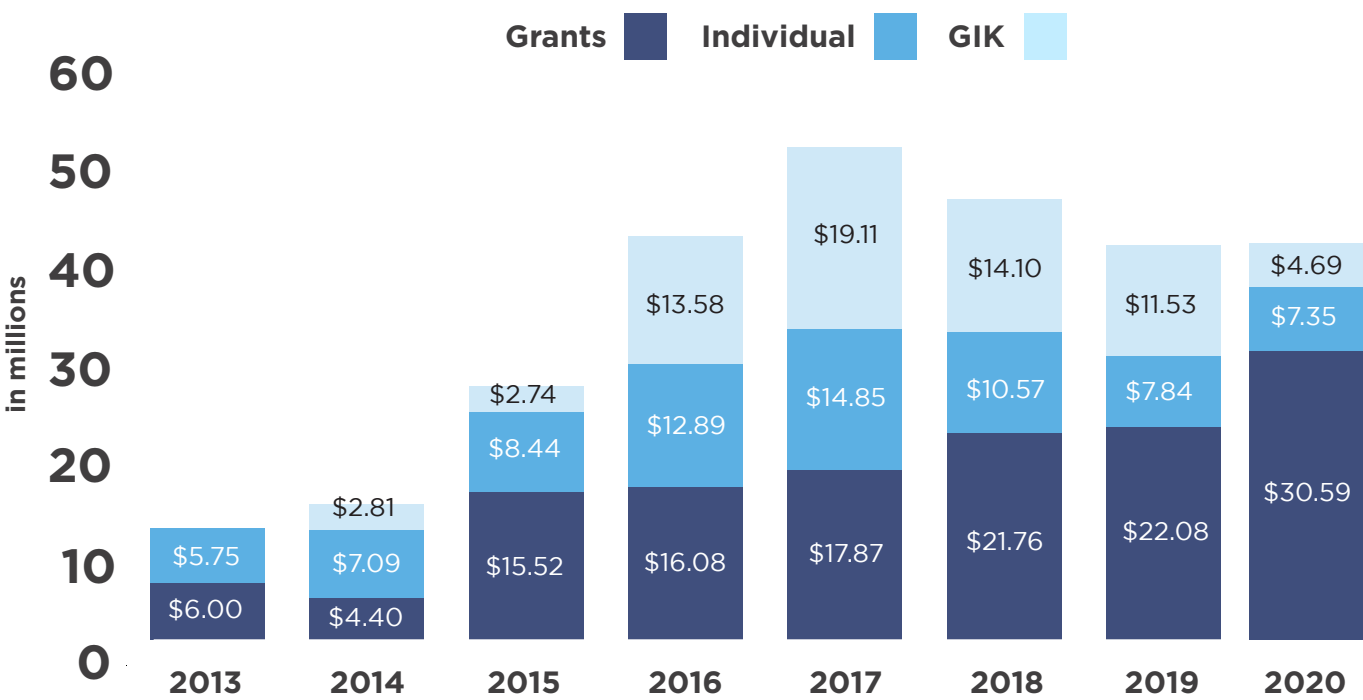


\* Numbers for FY 2020 are still preliminary.

## FINANCIALS OVER 7 YEARS INCLUDING GIFTS IN KIND



## SOURCES OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT





# SAMS COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

Through its extensive network of members across the United States, SAMS Community Outreach (SCO) launched a number of projects in 2020, providing free medical care for individuals and communities in need. In an attempt to reduce barriers to healthcare, SAMS developed and utilized high-quality, culturally-appropriate, sustainable models of free healthcare.

## SAMS Midwest Free Specialty Clinic

Founded in April 2019 by members of the SAMS Midwest Chapter, the SAMS Midwest Free Specialty Clinic provides free outpatient subspecialty consultations, including cardiology, pulmonology, obstetrics, gynecology, and endocrinology, as well as medication management. Chronic disease screenings were also provided in the western suburbs of Chicago in DuPage County. The clinic is located within a local elementary school and shares space with a primary healthcare center, partnering to provide needed specialty and primary health care services to the community. Patients receive discounted prescriptions, free lab services and assistance through local partners. The clinic is staffed and managed entirely by volunteers, the majority of whom are members of the SAMS Midwest Chapter.

The clinic is a member of the National Association of Free and Charitable Clinics and the Illinois Association for Free and Charitable Clinics. It also partners with the Compassionate Care Network and other local charitable clinics for referrals to services not currently offered by the clinic.

In the first quarter of 2020, the clinic provided in-person services as part of its regular operations. With the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, the clinic temporarily suspended in-person services and launched telehealth services for both existing and new patients, which allowed the continuity of care, including clinical consultations and

management of chronic diseases. This was the first time SAMS had conducted free telehealth services to beneficiaries in the United States. In coordination with local health authorities, SAMS re-opened the clinic for in-person consultations in August 2020, equipping medical staff with PPE, implementing social distancing, following CDC guidelines and other CDC-recommended coronavirus prevention measures.

In Q4, the clinic resumed in-person visits, increasing its capacity to provide specialized testing and care for diabetes patients and those at risk of developing the disease through a partnership with the Middle Eastern Pharmacist Association, a student pharmacist association at Midwestern University.

SAMS also responded to Hurricane Laura, providing direct cash assistance to 50 families to cover medications, medical supplies, and hygiene items in heavily impacted areas of East Texas and South Louisiana. We also provided 1,000 cloth masks to families impacted by the Hurricane.

## Education Committee

Through its network across the United States and beyond, SAMS Education Committee spearheads collaborative educational programs that seek to support Syrian medical professionals and students by providing opportunities to expand their knowledge and experiences.

SAMS Education Committee members are volunteers who dedicate a considerable amount of their time to meet and study the target audience’s needs and create specific educational programs accordingly. The committee consists of 21 dedicated SAMS Members who meet on a monthly basis and lead major educational projects.

# Residency and Training Program

## Applicant Support Program

In 2020, the SAMS Education Committee launched the Applicant Support Program for the 2021 Match to connect Syrian physicians applying for residency positions in the United States with Syrian residents and faculty members. In total, 48 applicants submitted their documents and registration forms; 49 residents and faculty members participated in this program. The committee established 30 connections, bringing together applicants to residents and faculty members in various specialties, including internal medicine, pediatrics, radiology, neurology, and anesthesiology. Through these connections, applicants received the support they needed to improve their residency applications.

## Web-Based Interview Skills Workshop

In 2020, the SAMS Education Committee hosted a new edition of the SAMS Annual Interview Skills Workshop that took place in October 2020 and was adapted to the post-pandemic phase of virtual interviews for US medical residency applications. Targeting an audience consisting predominantly of the International Medical Groups (IMG), this 15th edition helped applicants practice and conduct mock interview experiences starting with submitting applications, assigning applicants to volunteer interviewers, performing an average of three to four interviews per applicant, and lastly receiving individualized feedback. The committee kicked-off the event by hosting a webinar to provide initial guidance to applicants. The most important factors of a successful interview were highlighted during this webinar, with an emphasis on teaching skills essential for acing virtual interviews. The event was concluded with a Q&A session led by the interviewers. In total, there were 142 interviews conducted by 34 interviewers.

## Application Review Program

The SAMS Application Review program was launched to connect NRMP Match applicants

with physicians interested in volunteering to review and edit ERAS applications and personal statements. All reviewers were recent graduates of residency and/or fellowship programs with impeccable language and communication skills. The reviewers were provided with the applications, then turned over anonymously to the applicant through one of the committee members. In total, there were 26 applicants from July 1, 2020 through October 14, 2020. In total, 24 physicians, students, and administrative volunteers donated 385 hours in 2020 to SAMS Midwest Free Specialty Clinic.

SAMS Midwest Free Specialty Clinic Services Provided by Specialty	
Specialty	Services
OB/GYN	22
Cardiology	20
Endocrinology	21
Pulmonology	2
Total Patient Visits	65

# Avicenna Journal of Medicine

In 2020, SAMS continued to support the Avicenna Journal of Medicine, a quarterly, peer-reviewed, open access and Pubmed-indexed medical journal. The journal promotes excellence in medicine and covers all aspects of comprehensive healthcare including preventive, curative, and rehabilitative care along with medical education topics. The journal focuses on promoting research and editorial skills among Syrian researchers.

Since its launch in 2011, the journal has received over 2,100 submissions and published 271 articles from these submissions. Publications were distributed in 37 issues, including 121 original articles and brief reports, 80 case reports, 39 review articles, and 31 editorials. The published articles were submitted by authors from 29 different countries.



# ADVOCACY

**“This was not fiction. This is happening every day, every moment in Idlib. It happened in Ghouta, in Aleppo, in Dara’a. It’s easier not to watch The Cave, but it’s more difficult to watch it.”** - Dr. Mufaddal Hamadeh, SAMS President

SAMS advocacy efforts seek to provide a voice for health workers and civilians in Syria, highlight humanitarian needs on the ground, seek new policy commitments related to the protection of humanitarian workers, and provide more dignified care and support for Syrian refugees around the world. These efforts involve meetings with senior UN officials, travel to capitals around the world to meet with government ministers and key policymakers, significant engagement with US Government Officials and Members of Congress, and collaboration with leading NGOs to amplify our voice. These efforts resulted in additional financial commitments from governments for the humanitarian response in Syria, renewed attention from UN officials on the protection of humanitarian workers, and made positive contributions to the UN Security Council’s renewal of the cross-border resolution.

## UN Advocacy

SAMS engages in extensive advocacy activities before the UN on the issues of humanitarian assistance, protection of humanitarian workers, and accountability for violations of international humanitarian law. This has involved regular meetings and events with UN Member States, UN agencies, and UN accountability mechanisms. SAMS is also a member of NGO working groups and task forces involved in the Syria cross-border mechanism and protection of civilians in conflict.

In January, SAMS played a leading role in successfully advocating for renewal of the Security Council’s cross-border resolution, which serves as a vital lifeline for the nearly 4 million civilians living in northwest Syria. We met with

Security Council members, UN Secretariat staff, and partnered with other NGOs to make a strong case for renewing the resolution.

In February, SAMS partnered with Dr. Amani Ballour on a series of high-level meetings, including with the Ambassadors of the US, UK, Germany, Spain, Vatican, and Turkey. These meetings focused on the need for increased support for the humanitarian response in Syria, dignified treatment for Syrian refugees, and the protection of humanitarian workers. SAMS and Dr. Ballour also met with Mark Lowcock, the UN Under-Secretary-General and Emergency Relief Coordinator. In this meeting, the humanitarian situation in Syria and ideas for how best to deliver aid to populations in need were discussed. In addition, there was also discussion surrounding the need for greater accountability of attacks on health, and for the UN to scale up its support for children in Syria.

Later in February, Dr. Mazen Kewara, SAMS Turkey Country Director, visited New York and met with UN officials and members of the Security Council to discuss the cross-border operation in northern Syria, the UN cluster system, and the growing health needs on the ground.

In June, as part of advocacy efforts around the next renewal of the cross-border resolution, SAMS partnered with IRC, Save the Children, and World Vision on joint initiatives directed towards the non-permanent members of the Security Council. SAMS worked collaboratively on organizing expert briefings, sending a formal letter to the Security Council with sign-on from the NGO community, and arranging media interviews to discuss the importance of renewing the resolution. SAMS also joined thirteen other NGOs in releasing a new report on the humanitarian situation in Northwest Syria entitled “Don’t Leave Them Alone: The Future of the Cross-Border Response in Northwest Syria.”





US Government and Congressional Advocacy

SAMS continues to build and maintain strong working relationships with US Government officials and Members of Congress. SAMS leadership, members, and staff hold regular meetings in Washington, DC, including with officials from the White House, State Department, and US Agency for International Development.

SAMS has provided expert advice to Congressional committee staff as well as to Administration policy makers on key issues such as humanitarian assistance, protection of humanitarian workers, and accountability. SAMS has also conducted joint advocacy activities with other NGOs as part of its membership in the InterAction working groups on Syria, Iraq, Protection, and GBV.

In March, Kelly Craft, the US Ambassador to the UN, made her first visit to Turkey. While there, she met with SAMS’ Dr. Farida to discuss the health situation in Syria, particularly for women and girls.

In April, SAMS leadership met with Ambassador Jim Jeffrey, the US Special Envoy for Syria, where they discussed the humanitarian situation in Syria, the need for increased US financial support for the crisis, as well as continued US leadership on the protection of humanitarian workers and accountability. They also discussed the growing threat posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, in addition to tangible ways in which the US Government could support the delivery of health services to civilians in Syria.

In May, Ambassador Craft joined SAMS Ramadan virtual event, where she delivered a message of hope following her visit to the Turkey-Syria border in March 2020 where she met SAMS doctors working under precarious conditions. In June, as part of ongoing advocacy efforts

“I personally want to express my gratitude to those individuals, those women and men, especially the medical professionals who have chosen to provide life-saving aid and comfort to the Syrian people. We are all touched by the bravery of medical workers who put themselves in harm’s way to save the lives of others. This work is vital. It is honourable and I know that Syrian people will not forget it.”

- Ambassador Kelly Craft, March 2020

around the renewal of the cross-border resolution, SAMS briefed staff experts from the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and House Foreign Affairs Committee.

Later that month, Dr. Farida participated in a panel hosted by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee as part of the release of their new report on global forced migration. In this event, which was hosted by Senator Robert Menendez, she spoke alongside Former US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and Former Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs Lloyd Axworthy. Dr. Farida spoke about her own experience of forced displacement, and the need for the international community to prevent the continuation of forced migration. She also talked about the worsening humanitarian situation in Syria, as well as ongoing threats to humanitarian workers safety.

“After the bombardment of Aleppo, the bombardment of my hospital, I lost my house, my clinic, and my medical devices in the city. I left my memories, my photographs, everything. It is not simple for anyone to lose [their] home. It is not simple. It is not that easy and not just about money... It is about a piece of you, a piece of your family.”

- Dr. Farida,  
Senate Foreign Relations Committee  
Event on Global Forced Migration, June 18, 2020



In July, SAMS planned and led a roundtable at InterAction on stigma surrounding COVID-19 in refugee and displaced populations, which was attended by US Government officials and Congressional staff. The event helped to shine a light on the challenges which COVID-19 had caused for these populations, and offered solutions to mitigate the challenges.

In August, SAMS partnered with the US Institute of Peace to hold a webinar event on the impact of COVID-19, entitled “Coronavirus and the Conflict in Syria: Battling COVID-19 in Syria and Among Syrian Displaced Populations.” SAMS Executive Director, David Lillie, and SAMS Northern Syria Relief Committee Chairman, Dr. Amjad Rass, were among the participants in this event, which explored challenges faced on the ground as a result of the pandemic, as well as ideas for how the US government can support the efforts of humanitarian workers to respond to the growing crisis.

Following the tragic explosion at the Port of Beirut in early August, SAMS undertook extensive advocacy efforts in support of the affected communities. We held multiple meetings with the State Department, USAID, and National Security Council staff, and also participated in expert briefings with staff from the House Foreign Affairs Committee. In addition, we contributed to joint NGO statements and papers calling for more international support for humanitarian assistance and the recovery efforts.





## EU Advocacy

In 2020, SAMS undertook extensive, high-level advocacy efforts in EU capitals on key issues including humanitarian funding, protection of humanitarian workers, and accountability.

These involved meetings in countries including France, Germany, Belgium, UK, Italy, Ireland, Luxembourg, Greece, Hungary, Poland, Switzerland, Spain, Portugal, and The Netherlands.

In March, SAMS partnered with Dr. Amani Ballour on a media and advocacy tour through key European countries. SAMS leadership met with senior EU Commission officials, members of the European Parliament, the Foreign Ministers of France and The Netherlands, and major foundations including the King Baudouin Foundation and IKEA Foundation in Brussels, Paris, Geneva, and The Hague. These engagements resulted in new financial commitments for the Syrian crisis, increased public awareness of the worsening humanitarian situation in Syria, and strengthened government policies on protection of civilians and humanitarian workers.

In June, SAMS participated in the EU's Fourth Brussels Conference on Supporting the Future of Syria and the Region. Dr. Mazen Kewara participated in a US-sponsored side-event on "Ensuring Accountability and Civilian Protection in Syria," in which he discussed the need for greater support from the international community for efforts to hold perpetrators of attacks on health accountable. SAMS also partnered with ARCS and SRD to host a side event on the humanitarian situation on the ground, titled "A Call to Action: Supporting Healthcare in Northwest Syria in Light of the COVID-19 Pandemic."

In December, SAMS participated in the 5th French National Humanitarian Conference, taking part in sessions on the humanitarian-development-peace nexus and international humanitarian law.



## Regional Advocacy

SAMS regional advocacy work includes supporting more protection and access to health for refugees, providing opportunities for refugees to study medicine and health sciences, and facilitating access to mental health and psychosocial support. We also advocate for increased international support for host governments, and to ensure that refugees receive dignified treatment by host communities. SAMS also works extensively with UN agencies, International NGOs, and local NGOs in support of refugee populations.

In Lebanon, SAMS is a member of the Lebanon Humanitarian INGO Forum (LHIF), and works with OCHA and UNHCR on increased protection and humanitarian assistance for Syrian refugees. SAMS also worked with local Lebanese NGOs in order to serve both refugees and local Lebanese, which demonstrates our commitment to the accessibility of dignified, quality healthcare.

In Jordan, SAMS is a member of the Jordan INGO Forum (JIF) and Syria International NGO Forum (SIRF), where we contribute to collective NGO efforts to provide high-quality papers, fact sheets, and humanitarian needs overviews to policymakers and donors. We also work closely with UNHCR to advocate for increased support for Syrian refugees in Jordan, and we partner with the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation on humanitarian work in the country.



In Turkey, SAMS continued extensive engagement with Turkish authorities and humanitarian organizations.

This past year included a significant amount of advocacy in support of continuing humanitarian operations amidst the pandemic, as well as securing essential items such as oxygen and PPE. SAMS also successfully advocated for access to medical referrals into Turkey that were suspended due to the pandemic, which resulted in cancer patients' resumption of treatment.

In addition, we improved coordination with local health authorities in Southern Turkey, as well as Turkish humanitarian agencies, including AFAD and the Turkish Red Crescent. We also undertook regular, high-level engagements with officials in the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Labor, and Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

SAMS leadership also undertook several visits to Turkey and northern Syria. In January, SAMS President, Dr. Mufaddal Hamadeh, visited a number of SAMS-supported medical facilities in northwest Syria. This included several IDP settlements stranded near the Turkish border to assess the situation on the ground and ensure that beneficiaries have access to quality care in the face of ongoing humanitarian crisis.

**“ Seeing firsthand the profound impacts of the 10-year conflict, we are committed now more than ever to continuing our life-saving mission and extending our reach to as many beneficiaries as possible.**

*- Dr. Mufaddal Hamadeh,  
SAMS President, following his trip to Idlib  
in January 2020*

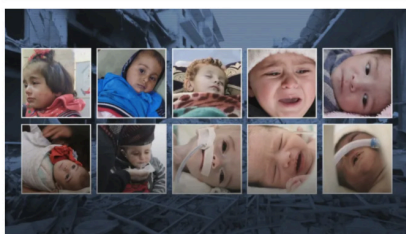


# SAMS IN THE NEWS

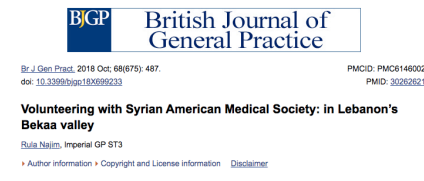


Babies dying in Idlib hospital and child admissions from camps triple after another brutal week in Syrian conflict

WORLD | SYRIA | IDLIB | Friday 28 February 2020, 10:00pm



SAMS Aids Those Deeply Impacted by Syria's Civil War



"If you truly believe that all humans are created equal, you can't sit back and watch people live lives of utter desperation and suffering, for no reason but the circumstance of their birth."

# LEADERSHIP

## Foundation Board of Directors - 2020

- Dr. Maher Azzouz (Chair)
- Dr. Mufaddal Hamadeh (Society President)
- Dr. Tarek Zetoune (Treasurer)
- Dr. Mohamad Al-Hosni (Secretary)
- Dr. Basel Termanini
- Dr. Abdulfattah Elshaar
- Dr. Jihad Alharash
- Dr. Ammar Ghanem
- Mr. Ismaail Aajoukah
- Dr. Mohammad Saleh

## Society Board of Directors - 2020

- Dr. Mufaddal Hamadeh (President)
- Dr. Maysoun Alhariri (Vice President)
- Dr. Tarek Zetoune (Treasurer)
- Dr. Adeeb Alshahrour (Secretary)
- Dr. Ahmad Tarakji
- Dr. Mazen Issa
- RPh. Lara Zakaria

## Senior Staff

- David Lillie, Executive Director
- Dr. Randa Loutfi, Director of Programs
- Safaa Aladham, Director of Finance









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