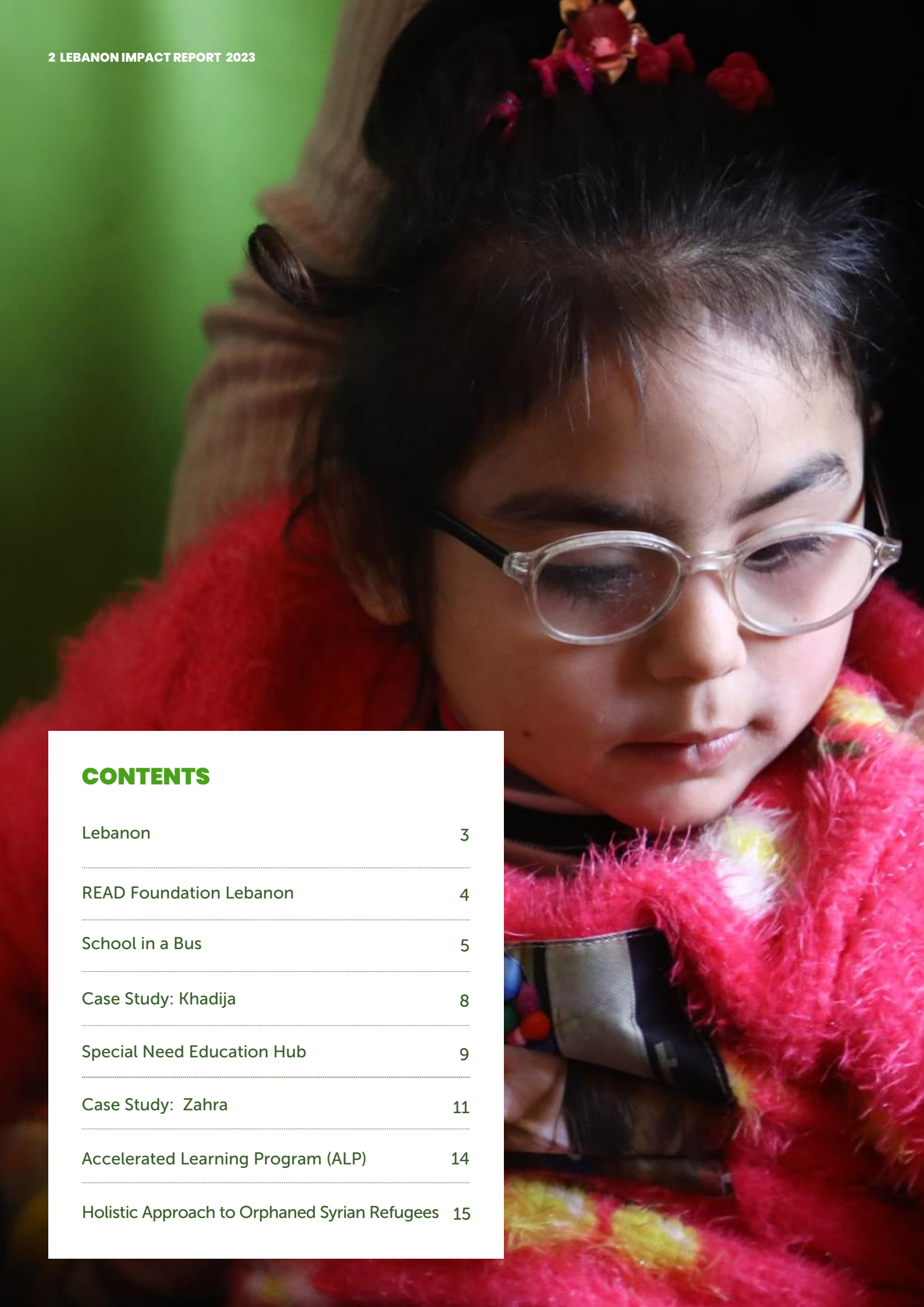


# LEBANON IMPACT REPORT



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# LEBANON

**Lebanon has been facing multiple challenges since the onset of the Syrian war and the Beirut explosion.**

Today, the country is grappling with a complex economic and political crisis which has led to a drastic increase in the cost of living and rendered the most basic necessities inaccessible for many, especially the vulnerable population. In April 2023, Lebanon recorded the highest nominal food price inflation rate in the world at 350% as reported by the World Bank, resulting in reduced spending on education, health treatment, and food. Repercussions include an increase on gender disparity, stress induced violence and a severe toll on children's mental health. Lebanon hosts the world's largest number of refugees per capita.

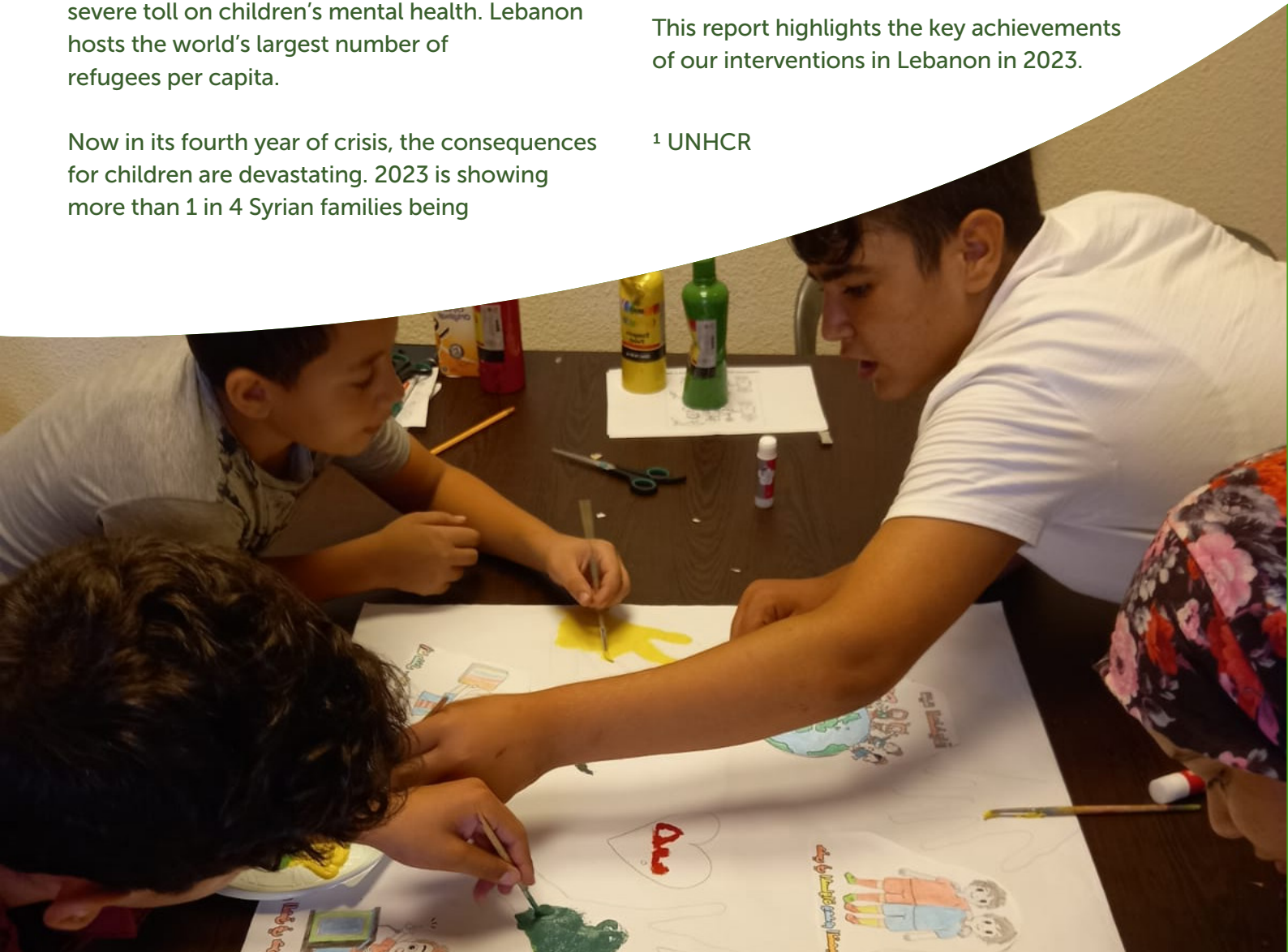
Now in its fourth year of crisis, the consequences for children are devastating. 2023 is showing more than 1 in 4 Syrian families being

forced to remove their children from school and send them out to work as an attempt to survive Lebanon's socio-economic crisis. According to a UNHCR report, 30% of school-aged refugee children (ages 6-17) have never been to school, while only 11% of youth (aged 15 to 24 years) were enrolled in education.<sup>1</sup>

READ Foundation looks to address the needs of the most vulnerable and disproportionately affected, including children from Syrian families, orphaned children, and unsupported children living with a disability. We provide early childhood development, education, psychosocial support, and security, aiming to bridge the educational gap and improve access to education in hard-to-reach areas in Lebanon.

This report highlights the key achievements of our interventions in Lebanon in 2023.

<sup>1</sup> UNHCR



# READ FOUNDATION LEBANON



- We have supported around **700 vulnerable refugee children** access quality education in 2023.



- We have empowered over 400 young girls and women through our projects this year.



# SCHOOL IN A BUS



- **Over 90%** of our School In A Bus graduates transition into formal education.



- So far, we have provided access to education to **594 refugee children** and young women.



- We currently operate **3 buses** in Aakar, Bekaa and Katermaya refugee camps.

**With 9 out of 10 Syrian refugees living in extreme poverty and rural environments, education quickly became a luxury most are unable to afford.**

Our School In A Bus (SIAB) project is geared towards addressing the challenges faced by refugee children in accessing education. The project bridges the gap between formal and informal education by providing easy access to learning as the buses are stationed around the refugee camps. School In A Bus has been supporting hard-to-reach refugee children since its inception in 2021.

With an expansion in 2023, we are now running three buses that provide access to education, life skills, psychosocial and trauma support to 594 children and young women. Our School In

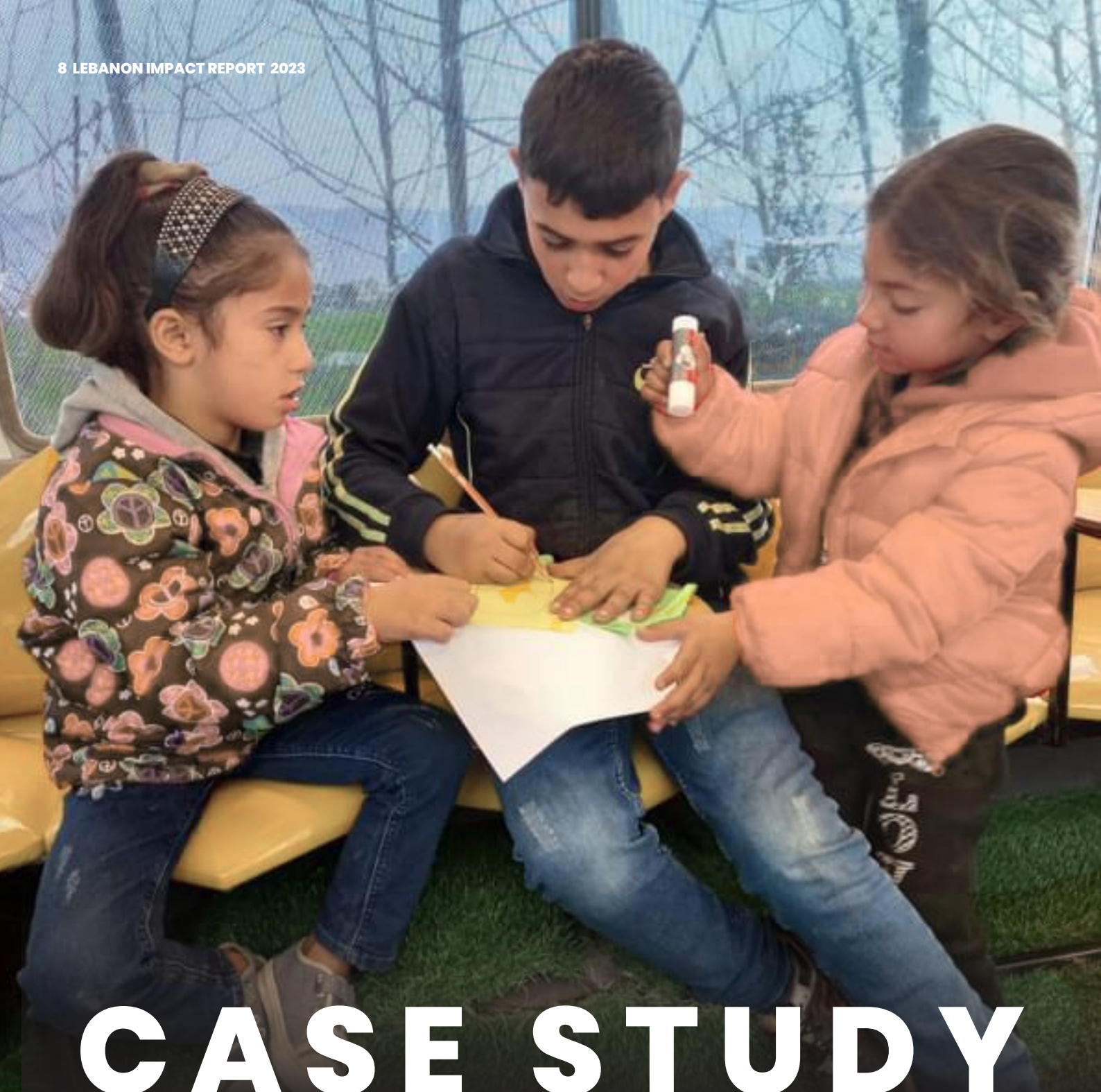
A Bus supports children from preschool to post school, starting with early childhood education (ECE) at 3 all the way up to offering remedial and skills classes to young women aged 16-26. This year 68 children between the ages of 3-5 years were members of our ECE classes, developing foundational skills so they can transition into grade 1 in a formal school. 400 children aged 6-14 attended our classes in basic numeracy and literacy, bridging the gaps in their knowledge so they can graduate into formal education. 126 young women aged 16-26 attending our life skills classes, improving their basic literacy and life skills such as cooking and sewing.

All the students in the project were offered psychosocial support to help them process the psychological trauma of leaving behind their homes and escaping a conflict zone whilst all our teachers are trained in how to teach in conflict settings.

# SIAB PHOTOS







# CASE STUDY

**Khadija\* is a School In A Bus student whose family had to flee Syria due to the devastation of the conflict.**

At first, Khadija struggled to hold a pencil, and during class, instead of tracing and writing the letters, she would scribble on the paper. Trying to hide her undeveloped motor skills considerably affected her confidence and, ultimately, her desire to learn.

Our School In A Bus teachers have described the transformation in Khadija as nothing short of extraordinary. With sheer determination, she began actively engaging in the tasks given. It was as if a spark had been ignited within her, propelling her towards newfound confidence and success.

\*name changed for confidentiality.



# SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION HUB

2023 marks the third year of our Special Needs Education Hub.



• **33 children** with special needs have shown significant improvement in their learning outcomes.



• **18 children** have been registered with the Ministry of Education in Lebanon so they are able to transition into formal schools.



• **30 children** with special needs have just started their learning journey in our hub.

## OUR WORK WITH CHILDREN IN REFUGEE CAMPS IN LEBANON LED US TO IDENTIFY GLARING GAPS IN ACCESS TO EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS AND LEARNING DIFFICULTIES.

Nearly 18% of the children living in Beqaa, Aarsal and Mount Lebanon camps have special needs and require a unique and holistic approach to learning that is tailored to their requirements, including any need for physical therapy and counselling.

These children suffer from physical and speech disabilities due to which they are unable to enrol in formal schools and end up staying out-of-school. Addressing the challenge of high food insecurity amongst refugees, snacks are provided during the classes to incentivise

the children to attend classes and to ensure that they receive adequate nutrition to help them focus in school.

Established in 2021, the second year of our Special Needs Education Hub finished this year, seeing 33 students provided with basic numeracy and literacy skills, alongside life skills such as eating etiquette and maintaining personal hygiene in addition to subjects that are taught in line with the Lebanese curriculum.

A new cycle started in October, with 30 students enrolling in the hub, hoping to follow in the footsteps of our previous graduates who have demonstrated remarkable improvements in their academic and personal development with a higher level of self-confidence, better social skills and an increased willingness to learn.





# CASE STUDY

**Zahra's\* family were forced to flee Syria due to the conflict, walking through the mountains to the relative safety of Lebanon after both her brothers with disabilities were injured in an air raid.**

Zahra is blind, although she has never been officially registered due to the lack of access to doctors. Her eyesight makes learning difficult in a mainstream school, as there are few accessibility options for students like Zahra. Zahra and all her siblings have problems with sight or mental disabilities, that doctors say is due to malnutrition during pregnancy.

Thanks to the Special Needs Education Hub, Zahra is now able to access education and is excited to be learning something new every day. She now has access to a speech therapist and physiotherapist and gets a nutritious snack every day in school. She also receives a food basket to take home to her family, helping to ease the burden of food insecurity.

\*name changed for confidentiality

# SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION HUB PHOTOS





# ACCELERATED LEARNING PROGRAM (ALP)

Education suffered a huge setback post-COVID and the situation has been exacerbated by the Lebanese financial crisis which led to an increase in cases of mental health issues amongst children.

A UNESCO survey discovered 7 in 10 caregivers said their children seemed anxious and worried, with over 50% showing clear signs of depression. As a result, children's academic performance deteriorated, and they were in dire need of remedial classes to help them with their coursework and to support them psychologically through therapy and counselling sessions.

This year we introduced an Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP) aimed at improving the academic performance of 25 orphaned children through additional support in the form of after school classes. These children have also been provided with one-to-one counselling to improve their psychological wellbeing. The children who participated in the project have shown improvement in their class performance, scored better and were more eager to learn.

Location: South of Lebanon, Saïda



- 91% of the participants demonstrated a significant improvement in their grades and overall academic performance



# A Holistic Approach To Support Orphaned Syrian refugees

2022-2023



## **HOLISTIC** APPROACH TO ORPHANED SYRIAN REFUGEES

Nearly 60% of Syrian refugee children have not enrolled in school in recent years leading to a high number of out-of-school children in Lebanon. Unfavourable policies that deter refugee children from registering in schools have made the situation worse. The high transportation cost and tuition fee have compelled children to drop out of schools.

In our pursuit of making education accessible and leaving no one behind, we introduced the Holistic Approach to Orphaned Syrian Refugees

in 2023. The project supports orphaned refugee children by providing them with assistance to register in schools and covering their educational expenses, so they are relieved of the burden of purchasing books, uniforms and other school supplies. The children are also offered critical psychosocial support to help them recover from the trauma of leaving behind their homes and losing their loved ones.

In 2023, through this project, 50 orphaned children were able to continue learning.



## GET IN TOUCH

☎ 03000 121 121

✉ [INFO@READFOUNDATION.ORG.UK](mailto:INFO@READFOUNDATION.ORG.UK)

🖱 [READFOUNDATION.ORG.UK](http://READFOUNDATION.ORG.UK)

READ Foundation, Victoria Court, 376 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M14 6AX  
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If you have any further enquiries about the organisation please call 0161 224 3334