



## THE RCRT FOUNDATION 2017 ANNUAL LETTER

### ALL PROJECTS SUPPORTED BY THE RCRT FOUNDATION HAVE PROGRESSED STEADILY IN 2017

- Our new 2017 project, the Butterfly Effect Centre, allowed displaced Syrian children living in the Bekaa Valley (Lebanon) to receive support and education services in order to re-enter the public education system
- At the same time, we continued to support the SAMS medical relief and polio vaccination programme in Syria, providing medical support to children and their families at the heart of a desperate humanitarian crisis
- The 2017 RCRT Gala has been our largest single fundraising event to date, raising approximately \$120,000 net of all costs
- To date, the portfolio of RCRT funded projects exceeds \$550,000 across 8 projects to date

### *The RCRT Foundation – Mission and Vision*

The RCRT Foundation (“RCRT”) was created in 2014 with the mission to select impactful and inspiring projects and to offer them to donors who value transparency and believe in our hands-on, asset-management-like approach. Our focus is to support children’s health and education by raising and allocating funds to carefully selected projects throughout the world. We only work with registered foundations and charities who are operationally lean and financially transparent – principles we apply to ourselves.

All of RCRT’s costs are covered by the trustees so that 100% of donations are allocated to the selected projects and therefore the ultimate beneficiaries. Beyond the funding, we work closely with the sponsor charities to help guide the projects toward successful outcomes, and we routinely collect information and track performance to evaluate the progress of each initiative and compare these with our original expectations.

### *Projects*

Through 2017, the RCRT Foundation focused its efforts in supporting two projects:

1. After 12 months of operations, our initiative with **Syrian American Medical Society (SAMS)** to support a paediatric clinic and polio vaccination program in Idlib was successfully completed;
2. Starting in June 2017, the RCRT initiated a new project, focused on providing education to displaced Syrian children in the Bekaa Valley (Lebanon), preparing them to re-enter the public education system through the **Butterfly Effect Centre (BEC)**.



### ***The Syrian American Medical Society (SAMS) project (June '16 – July '17)***

The SAMS Foundation is a non-profit, non-political, medical and humanitarian relief organization that is working on the front lines of crisis relief in Syria and in neighbouring countries to alleviate suffering and save lives.

In Syria, SAMS operates over 100 medical facilities that provide general and specialized medical care for Syrians in need. Programs include primary care, specialized treatments and vaccination campaigns.

#### *The Situation*

Prior to the conflict in Syria, the Syrian healthcare system was equivalent in quality to other middle-income nations. Unfortunately, this healthcare system has dramatically declined over the past 5-6 years in line with the political situation. It has suffered from the targeting of healthcare workers, doctors, and hospitals, the fleeing of nurses, physicians and qualified technicians and the sharp deterioration in educational and training programs.

It became essential to help create a safe environment to provide care for civilians, and very important to support those willing to stay who remain in harm's way. In the midst of this conflict, civilians, especially children, lost access to medical care they need for acute illnesses, management of chronic conditions, and preventive measures that protect them from serious communicable diseases.

#### *Our Project*

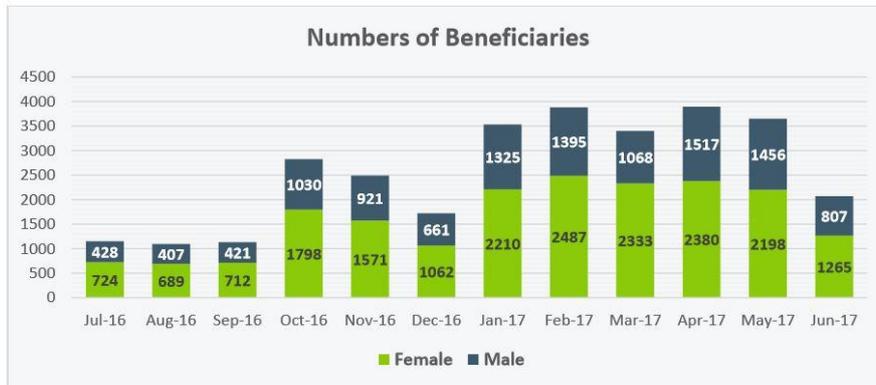
In order to combat the depleted services of the healthcare system, the RCRT partnered with SAMS to provide the necessary funding to support a primary care facility that focuses on paediatric care in the hospital situated in the village of Kurin, Idlib. This facility serves the local population of 17,000 people. The closest city with a hospital and primary health care provision is Ariha (approximately 10 km away), though the direct transport routes to Ariha are often closed.

#### *What have we achieved?*

The supported facility has provided a variety of healthcare-related services during the project period to beneficiaries in the catchment area. The quality and quantity of services provided were successfully improved as the project advanced. The facility started with eight personnel (a GP, a dentist, a midwife, a pharmacy technician, two nurses, a security guard and a Janitor). Later, additional staff were added through the hiring of a paediatrician, additional nurses dedicated to women and child care, and a financial officer. As the support with medication and medical consumables began to increase, and adequate inventory was maintained, the number of consultations rose, and the facility was being visited by communities from around the region.



The following chart shows the numbers of beneficiaries divided by months and gender:



During the grant period, the clinic provided a total of 36,941 consultations. The monthly consultations started as low as 1,554 per month in July 2016 and reached its peak in April 2017 at the number of 4,662 consultations (+ 300%).

During the project life, there were some fluctuation in numbers of consultations (as well as beneficiaries) due to many reasons. In the first quarter of the project, the medical staff was not completely hired and procurement and delivery of medications to the facility took time. The area around the facility was targeted by airstrikes many times (one of them, 50 meters away from the facility!). All these factors played a prominent role in initially limiting the number of beneficiaries. In December 2016, the security situation deteriorated once again and an airstrike with phosphorus bombs led to big displacement of the population who fled to nearby areas for fear of further attacks. Since the beginning of 2017 – and for the first five months – the security situation became relatively stable in the area and the medications and medical consumables were fully available at the facility. Therefore, it was visited by people who had already fled from the area and came back, in addition to many beneficiaries who came from nearby villages. In June, the numbers slightly decreased due to the fasting days of Ramadan.





The vast majority of services provided related to children – primarily paediatric and OBS/GYN – as the below tables shows:

	Jul-16	Aug-16	Sep-16	Oct-16	Nov-16	Dec-16	Jan-17	Feb-17	Mar-17	Apr-17	May-17	Jun-17	Total
Emergency	94	90	93	221	202	171	216	252	264	348	399	227	2577
Pediatric	373	356	367	794	705	477	1313	1555	1334	1513	896	985	10668
Internal	423	402	415	728	568	432	922	842	832	1042	1361	762	8729
Dental	203	194	200	416	381	255	413	439	453	468	441	332	4195
OB-GYN	461	439	453	886	800	528	1047	1301	1305	1291	1337	924	10772
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1554</b>	<b>1480</b>	<b>1528</b>	<b>3045</b>	<b>2656</b>	<b>1863</b>	<b>3911</b>	<b>4389</b>	<b>4188</b>	<b>4662</b>	<b>4434</b>	<b>3230</b>	<b>36941</b>

Finally, the facility provided a total of 13,104 childhood vaccination doses for children under the age of five through vaccination campaigns. The vaccines were: Penta (DTP, HepB, Hib) IPV/OPV, Measles.

When RCRT and SAMS initially finalized the grant scope, the expectations were as follows:

- 12,000 children to receive paediatric care and maternal support
- 2,400 children under 5 years to receive polio vaccination

**Obviously, the Syrian civil war situation dramatically deteriorated the conditions of the local communities since July '16 and, as a result, the beneficiaries of the supported facility were in the 3x-4x range of the initial expectations.**

**The RCRT is immensely proud to have supported this critical project, alongside SAMS and its extraordinary volunteers who, still today, risk their lives to provide highly qualified and often life-saving healthcare services to the local communities strained beyond their survival limits, following 7 years of civil war.**



### ***The Butterfly Effect Centre (since June '17)***

The BEC was started by an American organisation active in Lebanon (“**Humanwire**”) and subsequently passed under the management of the Lebanese Association for Development and Communication (“**Salam LADC**”), a Lebanese registered charity committed to support vulnerable population in Lebanon. Salam was founded in response to the civil war in Lebanon in 2006 and is also supporting Syrian refugees with a focus on families and children. Salam runs several education, community-based, aid and medical projects across Lebanon.

### *The Situation*

Syrian refugees account for 30 percent of Lebanon’s population, the highest concentration per capita of refugees in the world. 70 percent live below the poverty line compared to 40 percent of the Lebanese population. Few camps exist for Syrian refugees and most live in unofficial settlements; half of all refugees are children aged 17 and under, most of which have lost family members, their home, school and friends.

In 2013, the Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) and UNICEF implemented a program to address their educational needs: Lebanese children would attend school during the day as they have always done, and then open up their schools to Syrians in the evening for the “Second Shift”.

MEHE and UNICEF developed the Second Shift accelerated curriculum for grades 1-9, with the aim of enabling children to complete each annual grade level in four months and thus, to complete each cycle (three grades) within a single year. In other words, displaced Syrians children in Lebanon are receiving a Lebanese education, in a condensed, modified form, which might prove challenging in general and in particular for children who accumulated a learning gap.

The majority of the children enrolled in the Butterfly Effect Program (ages 7-14) are unable to read or write in their native Arabic language and reside in the Bekaa Valley where resources are the most limited (of all displaced children from Syria in Lebanon, 70% in the Bekaa Valley region are out of schools vs. 30% in most of other regions in Lebanon<sup>1</sup>). Furthermore, many refugee children work to help sustain their families and this makes it more difficult to keep them (and their families) engaged and in school.

### *Our Project*

The Butterfly Effect Program is an education programme carried out at the Butterfly Effect Center in Bekaa Valley providing education and assistance to Syrian refugee children who have become educationally disengaged due, in particular, to social and financial barriers.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: UNICEF’s Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon Education 2016 report



RCRT has funded the program, with the objective to help around 300 children to catch up with the lost curriculum, to “learn-to-learn”, to enrol in the public education system and thereafter to support them during the school-year in order to overcome the gaps in their educational experience. The method for achieving such non-compulsory enrolment has been threefold: 1) prepare the children to get ahead of the Lebanese Second Shift curriculum, 2) assure the children learn-to-learn and parents learn the importance of learning, 3) advocate and provide ongoing support for each child when entering the Lebanese educational system.

To achieve this, the Butterfly Effect Program started five months ahead of the targeted Autumn entry date, established a daily routine for children, with a 4-to-6 hour-per-day schedule, five days per week, where there are computer programming, Math, English, Arabic, logic, English, recreation and extracurricular classes, including music and social/health awareness. Once enrolled in the Second Shift, students continue to attend certain Butterfly Effect Program classes for supplemental/school support programs. Those students who were not enrolled into the Second Shift on the first try, mainly for age and family reasons, also continued to attend the Butterfly Effect Program classes.

*What have we achieved?*

April, 2017: Classroom Setup, Surveys, Organization, interviews and enrollment of 300 students.

May, 2017: Butterfly Effect Program for 300 new students funded by RCRT Foundation started

October, 2017: 244 children were successfully enrolled in the Second Shift of the Lebanese Public School. The remainder of the children either relocated or could not be enrolled into school as they had to go to work instead.

July, 2018: out of the 244 enrolled children: (i) 202 successfully passed their year-end school exam and will therefore start their second school year in October 2018; (ii) 12 failed the exam; (iii) the rest of the children were either forced into child marriage or forced to abandon the school to work.

Behind these numbers there are real stories, that confirm that the project is having a life-changing impact; for instance, Ayse’s<sup>2</sup> story:

*Ayse is the oldest of six siblings, who have no father and live with just their mum. Ayse is 9 years old, a very bright child who started learning how to write and read only last year; the Butterfly Effect Program helped her catch-up with her studies and Ayse is currently top of her class in the Second Shift of the Lebanese Public School.*

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<sup>2</sup> Not her real name – name has been changed to protect her privacy



## 2017 Fundraising initiatives and results

2017 has been another year of strong growth in terms of funds deployed and project beneficiaries. Thanks to the enormous success of the RCRT Gala, which took place at the Royal Chelsea Hospital in October 2017, RCRT was able to raise in excess of \$250k, which allowed us to increase our available funds by ca. \$120k, once all costs and all project funding commitments were covered.

By the end of the year, after all costs, RCRT has cumulated own funds, available for next years' project, of ca. \$137k. The below table illustrates RCRT's (unaudited) sources and uses for the past three years.

<b>Historic Summary (\$)</b>			
<b><u>Inflows</u></b>	<b><u>2015</u></b>	<b><u>2016</u></b>	<b><u>2017</u></b>
Fund raising initiatives	\$124,236	\$19,130	\$199,422
Gift Aid	\$14,688	\$1,542	\$4,342
Matching Programs		\$87,332	\$23,506
Other income	\$27,447	\$17,206	\$23,761
<b>Total Inflows</b>	<b>\$166,371</b>	<b>\$125,210</b>	<b>\$251,031</b>
<b><u>Outflows</u></b>			
Fund raising related costs	\$44,437	\$1,040	\$82,467
Admin & other costs	\$3,612	\$2,527	\$4,951
Project-related fundings	\$92,491	\$129,900	\$44,332
<b>Total Outflows</b>	<b>\$140,539</b>	<b>\$133,467</b>	<b>\$131,751</b>
<b>Net Result / Net Cash Flow</b>	<b>\$25,833</b>	<b>-\$8,257</b>	<b>\$119,280</b>
<b>Net Cash at year-end</b>	<b>\$28,464</b>	<b>\$20,207</b>	<b>\$137,015</b>

***Important note:** as a reminder, all of the running/admin costs are covered by the Trustees annual donations, so that all money raised can be deployed to our new and ongoing projects.*



## Outlook

2017 has been another very positive year for the RCRT Foundation, which has been able to initiate and deliver a new, inspiring project, focused on the education of children which have suffered from incredibly difficult life conditions brought by years of civil conflict. The opportunity to bring our modest but impactful contribution to these unfortunate children makes us eager to do more, and better, in the years to come.

But 2017 has also been a challenging year: the SAMS project experienced the most dramatic, life-threatening moments. The tragic war circumstances resulted in the facility providing 3x-4x services than what was initially estimated. On a different scale, the BEC Program also required some difficult decision making during the partnership transition from Humanwire to Salam. We are glad to report the project eventually exceeded the initial targets, but, as our portfolio of supported projects expands, so is our awareness of the difficulties in managing all of them efficiently.

As we write this letter, we are well on the way in the implementation of our exciting 2018 project with United World Schools in Nepal. More details will become available soon, but we are in the process of building and activating three schools that will give first-time educational access to up to 600 children in very remote communities.

Finally, we are continuing to work on the internal debate around a question we consider strategic: how to develop a methodology to measure the impact of charitable projects? We are pleased to announce that we have implemented a first version of a proprietary methodology to support the selection of the 2018 project.

We always welcome ideas in all areas (e.g. fund-raising opportunities, interesting projects, etc.), so please feel free to contact us directly on our dedicated email address: [idea@rcrt.org.uk](mailto:idea@rcrt.org.uk).

**The RCRT Foundation thanks all its friends, partners, donors and Ambassadors for the amazing support, without which the results described in this report, would not have been possible.**

## The RCRT Foundation Trustees

*Ben Barnett, Patrick Chautard, Alberto Garrone, Lorenzo Guidi, Sonja Laud, Fabio Osta, Manila Rainò and Joost Schellens*