

INDEX

01 The Syrian Crisis – 13 years on	3
02 We Are World Vision	5
03 Our Impact: an overview	7
04 Our People	8
05 Our Strategic Partnerships	9
06 Child Protection	10
07 Education	11
08 Livelihoods	12
09 Health and Nutrition	13
10 Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)	14
11 Advocacy	15
12 Financial Resources	17

The Syrian Crisis - 13 years on

Now in its 13th year, the Syrian conflict continues to present one of the most intricate humanitarian and protection emergencies globally. The country has been reeling under many challenges: the ongoing conflict, economic downturn, COVID-19, a cholera outbreak, and the recent devastating earthquake in February, each of which has compounded the Syria's struggles, plunging it deeper into despair. The situation, already dire, has now reached catastrophic levels.

According to the United Nations, out of Syria's 22.1 million population, 15.3 million people are in need, with 4 million of them facing extreme hardships. ²The humanitarian and security situation, particularly in the northwest of the country, has deteriorated further due to escalating violence and the aftermath of the earthquake.³

These overlapping crises have led to a drastic increase in poverty. Current estimates suggest that up to 90 percent of Syrians now live below the poverty line.

⁴The country continues to have the largest number of internally displaced people worldwide, totaling 6.8 million, and faces the highest level of need since the crisis began. Economic and humanitarian conditions are rapidly worsening; basic services are on the brink of collapse, and environmental challenges are exacerbating the situation.⁵

Every day, Syrians struggle with failing basic services and crumbling infrastructure. Frequent power outages have forced over half the population to depend on candles for lighting.⁶ While healthcare

systems are near collapse, with a severe shortage of operational hospitals leaving many without access to necessary medical care. The economy, plagued by high inflation and currency devaluation, has seen the cost of basic goods almost double, triggering new displacements and heightened reliance on humanitarian aid.⁷

The crisis has hit children particularly hard. Of the 6.4 million children in Syria, 50% are girls needing educational assistance. With 2 million children out of school, the education sector is in a state of emergency, exacerbated by the conflict's long duration.⁸ The situation is even more acute in Northwest Syria due to continuous insecurity with 1 million school-aged children out of school and many facing disrupted education due to hostilities, teachers' strikes, persisting economic hardships, and the disruptions caused by earthquake.⁹

Child protection in Syria is a critical issue. The prevalence of child labor and child marriage, coupled with the lack of child-friendly and gender-sensitive justice systems, exacerbates the vulnerability of children. A significant number of children lack basic civil documentation, such as birth registration, impeding their access to essential services and assistance. ¹⁰

In Northwest Syria, the protection of civilians is a pressing concern. The aftermath of the recent earthquake has heightened risks, leading to forced evictions, homelessness, and exploitation. ¹¹ This situation has forced many to resort to harmful coping

¹ Syrian Arab Republic: 2023 Humanitarian Needs Overview (December 2022) [EN/AR] | OCHA (unocha.org)

² <u>Humanitarian Update Syrian Arab Republic - Issue 16 / September 2023 | OCHA (unocha.org)</u>

³ Briefers Stress to Security Council Syria's Worsening Situation Needs Fully Funded Humanitarian Response Plan, 12-Month Extension of Cross-Border Aid Mechanism | UN Press

⁴ Briefers Stress to Security Council Syria's Worsening Situation Needs Fully Funded Humanitarian Response Plan, 12-Month Extension of Cross-Border Aid Mechanism | UN Press

⁵ Syrian Arab Republic: 2023 Humanitarian Needs Overview (December 2022) [EN/AR] | OCHA (unocha.org)

⁶ Syrian Arab Republic: 2023 Humanitarian Needs Overview (December 2022) [EN/AR] | OCHA (unocha.org)

⁷ Syrian Arab Republic: 2023 Humanitarian Needs Overview (December 2022) [EN/AR] | OCHA (unocha.org) Humanitarian Update Syrian Arab Republic - Issue 16 / September 2023 | OCHA (unocha.org) UNHCR-Syria-Factsheet-June-2023-1.pdf

⁸ <u>Humanitarian response snapshots January to September 2023 | UNICEF Syrian Arab Republic</u>

⁹ Humanitarian response snapshots January to September 2023 | UNICEF Syrian Arab Republic

North-west Syria | Situation Reports (unocha.org)

North-west Syria | Situation Reports (unocha.org)

Humanitarian response snapshots January to September 2023 | UNICEF Syrian Arab Republic

¹¹ North-west Syria | Situation Reports (unocha.org)

mechanisms, increasing the cost and complexity of humanitarian response. Economic decline further hinders access to basic services and livelihood opportunities, especially for the most vulnerable and marginalized groups.

Moreover, the ongoing conflict in various parts of the country continues to instill fear of attacks and the risk of new displacements among the population. These challenges create a cycle of hardship and displacement as people move in search of better living conditions and safety.¹²

Health and nutrition are in a state of profound crisis. With half the primary healthcare system non-functional and a significant decrease in medical professionals, child mortality rates have seen a worrying increase. Amid this context, malnutrition rates are at an all-time high, with one in four pregnant and nursing mothers acutely malnourished, and one in four children stunted in some areas of the country.¹³

The Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) sector is also in a dire state, with a large portion of the population relying on unsafe water sources, and significant damage to water infrastructure.¹⁴

Amidst this, the recent escalation in hostilities from October 5 has inflicted further devastation. Over 70 people, many of them children, have been killed, with 349 injured, leading to the displacement of over 120,000 people and impacting vital facilities like health centres and schools.¹⁵

Adding to the complexities of the Syrian crisis is the growing pressure in neighboring countries for refugees to return. This geopolitical shift has created a climate of fear among millions of Syrians, for whom conflict and displacement have been the only constants. Many refugees, already grappling with the trauma of displacement, now face the prospect of returning to a country still mired in conflict and instability. This pressure exacerbates the challenges they face, further complicating the already dire humanitarian situation and adding another layer of uncertainty to the lives of these individuals and families.

As Syria marks its 13th year of conflict, the urgent need for sustained and increased international support and aid is more critical than ever. This support is vital to address the deepening crisis and its extensive impact on millions of lives, underscoring the essential role of global attention and assistance in these challenging times. Alongside the pressing humanitarian concerns, a political solution is paramount to achieving lasting peace in Syria and the urgency for a diplomatic resolution cannot be overstated. This solution should prioritize the needs and voices of the Syrian people, allowing for the rebuilding of Syria and the healing of its people. The international community must remain committed to supporting a peace process that leads to an enduring resolution, bringing hope and stability back to Syria.



¹² Syrian Arab Republic: 2023 Humanitarian Needs Overview (December 2022) [EN/AR] | OCHA (unocha.org)

¹³ WFP forced to scale down operations in Syria, as donors gather in Brussels ahead of a major conference | World Food Programme Humanitarian response snapshots January to September 2023 | UNICEF Syrian Arab Republic

¹⁴ Humanitarian response snapshots January to September 2023 | UNICEF Syrian Arab Republic

North-west Syria | Situation Reports (unocha.org)

We Are World Vision

Since the onset of the Syrian crisis in 2011, World Vision Syria Response has been at the forefront of humanitarian efforts across Syria, Türkiye, and Jordan. In the fiscal year 2023, our commitment and actions have directly impacted over 2,398,938 individuals, including 1,375,413 children. Our advocacy work has additionally influenced the lives of more than 1,375,413 children affected by the crisis in these regions. Our multifaceted operations encompass a wide range of sectors such as health and nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), protection, mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), education, and livelihoods, demonstrating our holistic approach to addressing the myriad challenges of this crisis.

In response to the catastrophic earthquake on February 6th, which devastated parts of Northwest Syria and Southern Türkiye, World Vision Syria

Response rose as a pillar of hope and support. Backed by the generous contributions of our donors and private sponsors, amounting to approximately US 73.96 million, we have significantly expanded our aid initiatives. Our dedication is vividly reflected in the implementation of 50 diverse projects in the earthquake-affected areas. Our extensive efforts cover protection, MHPSS, WASH, livelihoods, health, nutrition, and education, reaching nearly 1.8 million individuals. This pivotal intervention during a critical time underscores our steadfast commitment to alleviating the suffering and rebuilding the lives of those affected by the earthquake and the ongoing Syrian crisis.

We extend our gratitude to our donors for their unwavering support, making these vital interventions possible...

STER:





































- Italy
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- Austria New Zealand
- Finland
- France
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- Canada Mexico
- Taiwan Japan
- Hong Kong
- Singapore
- Korea
- US Malaysia
- Australia Germany
- Spain
- Switzerland and Lichtenstein
- WVUK

REGULAR PROGRAMMING:





































- KoreaSingapore
- UK
- US

Our Impact: an overview

Since 2011, World Vision Syria Response has been actively responding to the Syria crisis, with our efforts spanning across Syria, Türkiye, and Jordan. The escalating needs are evident with millions of Syrian refugees displaced in neighboring countries, including an estimated 6.8 million internally displaced within Syria, over 3.65 million Syrian refugees in Türkiye, and 673,238 in Jordan. The situation, marred by a lack of accountability, limited resources, and political complexities, continues to affect vulnerable children and their families the most.

Our response prioritizes the well-being of children and families impacted by the crisis, including refugees, the displaced, and those in vulnerable host communities. For the fiscal year 2023, our efforts have reached 2,834,481 people, including 1,645,522 of children, through both direct and indirect project implementations across various sectors.

In response to the February 6 earthquake affecting Northwest Syria and southern Türkiye, World Vision Syria Response stepped up as a beacon of hope. We launched over 50 projects in the aftermath, impacting nearly 1.8 million individuals across sectors like protection, WASH, livelihoods, health, nutrition, and education.

Protection of the vulnerable is at the forefront of our work, addressing the heightened vulnerability of women and children in conflict situations. In FY23, World Vision Syria Response led 19 protection-focused projects, benefiting 101,103 individuals. Our child protection efforts are robust, including psychosocial support and awareness raising on protection risks and positive coping mechanisms, dealing with distress, and providing case management to affected children. In Türkiye, our LIFT (Life in Fullness Together) project is an integrated approach that combines psychosocial support, education, and child protection to promote child well-being. This implementation aligns with a global initiative to develop a comprehensive strategy under the same name, LIFT (Life in Fullness Together), which focuses on creating child-friendly spaces in emergency situations. In Jordan and Syria, we address violence's root causes, working with faith communities through initiatives like Channels of Hope and Celebrating Families.

Our interventions in the Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) sector have been crucial, particularly during challenges like the 2022 cholera outbreak and the 2023 Syria-Türkiye earthquake. These comprehensive efforts, ranging from providing clean water to implementing extensive hygiene initiatives, have catered to the needs of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and addressed various health crises. Our beneficiaries benefited from a broad spectrum of WASH services, including providing clean water, sanitation facilities, latrine construction, installation of water and sewer networks, solid waste management, support for WASH services in schools and health centers. comprehensive hygiene promotion initiatives, and behavior change programs.

In livelihoods, our aim is to empower the most vulnerable through sustainable pathways. This includes technical training, cash-for-work programs, and a Cash and Voucher Program, fostering family and community resilience.

Health and nutrition have been another key focus, with World Vision Syria Response significantly expanding its services in FY23, especially in Northwest Syria and Northeast Syria. We've reached 1,117,080 beneficiaries, supporting health facilities, nutrition programs, and health education.

Education remains a cornerstone of our efforts, with innovative approaches in non-formal and informal education across Jordan and Syria. Our education programs ensure equitable learning opportunities for all children.

Additionally, within our advocacy efforts, World Vision Syria Response has also been proactively addressing the challenges posed by climate change through anticipatory action and targeted studies. We are committed to establishing anticipatory action protocols in areas prone to disasters, aiming

¹⁶ Document - SUMMARY: 3RP Regional Strategic Overview 2023 (unhcr.org)

to enhance community-level readiness and capacity for pre-disaster action. In Jordan and Syria, our focus extends to mitigating the impacts of flash floods and drought. This includes conducting feasibility studies for anticipatory action, engaging in consultations and coordination within the community of practice on anticipatory action, and collaborating with

stakeholders to identify risks, hazards, and specific locations that would benefit most from anticipatory action focus. These initiatives are part of our broader strategy to strengthen community resilience and adaptability in the face of evolving environmental challenges.



04

Our People

In fiscal year FY23, the World Vision Syria Response team expanded from 151 to 244 staff members, including 11 internationals, in response to the earthquake crisis in Türkiye and Syria. This increase occurred while continuing to implement regular projects and providing assistance to refugees and internally displaced people in Jordan, Türkiye, and

Syria. To meet the extended operational needs across the Syria response, we were assisted by around 1,000 volunteers and casual workers who supported protection, education, WASH, health and nutrition, and livelihoods projects in our areas of implementation.

Our Strategic Partnerships

A partnership strategy enables the response program to identify essential objectives and the corresponding actions required to develop and nurture partnerships with local humanitarian actors. This approach aids the program in achieving its humanitarian goals by strategically collaborating with local organizations.

1.1 Background

World Vision Syria Response's global strategy is a promise commits to relentlessly pursuing a vision for every child to have a full life and a prayer for every heart to have the will to make it so. As a Christian organisation, it focuses on helping the world's most vulnerable children. The unique combination of World Vision Syria Response's identity, integrated focus (Christian, child-focused, community-empowering), and global scale distinguishes it from other NGOs, enabling it to fulfill its calling and work towards the desired outcome of child well-being through transformed and empowered relationships.

World Vision Syria Response adheres to the Grand Bargain, emphasising increased funding and scaling up partnerships with local partners, moving from 'implementing' and 'transactional partnerships' to more strategic ones aligned with its policy on 'Transformational Development'.

In the Syria Response, World Vision will emphasize engaging local actors to remain relevant and fulfill its promise. This aligns with the grand bargain and donor expectations for localizing aid by supporting local organisations and workers in Syria. This strategy enhances protection for local humanitarian

workers, reduces overreliance on the United Nations, and builds upon local capacities. World Vision Syria Response will continue to expand its partnerships, especially with faith actors, following the Principles of Partnership (PoP).

1.2 How? Transformational Development

World Vision Syria Response's partnership approach is rooted in its transformational development policy, which is Christ-centered, child-focused, community-based, value-based, sustainable, and holistic. Transformational development is driven by the people, with actions that empower communities. World Vision Syria Response adheres to the Principles of Partnership (PoP), including Equality, Transparency, Results-Oriented Approach, and Responsibility.

1.3 World Vision Syria Response Partnerships Objectives

In early 2019, the World Vision Syria Response established its Partnerships Unit to provide the response office with policies, processes, guidance, and tools to foster effective relationships with partners, meeting both World Vision Syria Response and donors' requirements for optimal beneficiary outcomes.

Current partners: 29

Child Protection

In line with our primary goal of protecting the most vulnerable girls, boys, women, and men, and fostering an empowering environment for all, regardless of gender, ability, or social status, World Vision Syria Response's programming focuses on both Child Protection and Gender-Based Violence. Recognizing that women and girls are particularly vulnerable due to escalating violence and natural disasters, World Vision Syria Response is committed to an integrated programmatic approach. This includes multiple interventions for at-risk children, such as the establishment of Child-Friendly Spaces (CFSs) and Women and Girls Safe Spaces (WGSS), which offer psychosocial support (PSS) sessions and specialised protection services like case management. In response to the earthquake, we added Emergency Child-Friendly Spaces (ECFs) to our services. Additionally, we have commenced specialised mental

health support for the affected population, provided by clinical psychologists.

Our focus on gender equality, safeguarding, and the prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment (PSEAH) is comprehensive. Through thorough needs assessments, research, and surveys, World Vision Syria Response has strengthened evidence-based planning and design for child protection initiatives. In 2022/2023, the child protection sector played a crucial role in supporting advocacy efforts, raising awareness through evidence-based humanitarian reports. This complements our protection programs, which include awareness-raising sessions, case management, emergency cash assistance, psychosocial support, and capacity building.



Education

With the primary objective of ensuring that girls and boys have access to educational opportunities, World Vision Syria Response focuses on Education in Emergencies across Syria and Jordan. In Jordan, non-formal education is provided in formal schools operating in shifts, particularly in the northern region where there is a high concentration of refugees. Our efforts are dedicated to promoting inclusive access to schools, enhancing practical English language skills, and increasing awareness of the harms of violence. A key area of focus is Early Childhood Education and Development, where we support

pre-school aged children and their caregivers in Azraq camp. This includes providing the caregivers with training in positive parenting skills to aid the children's learning and development.

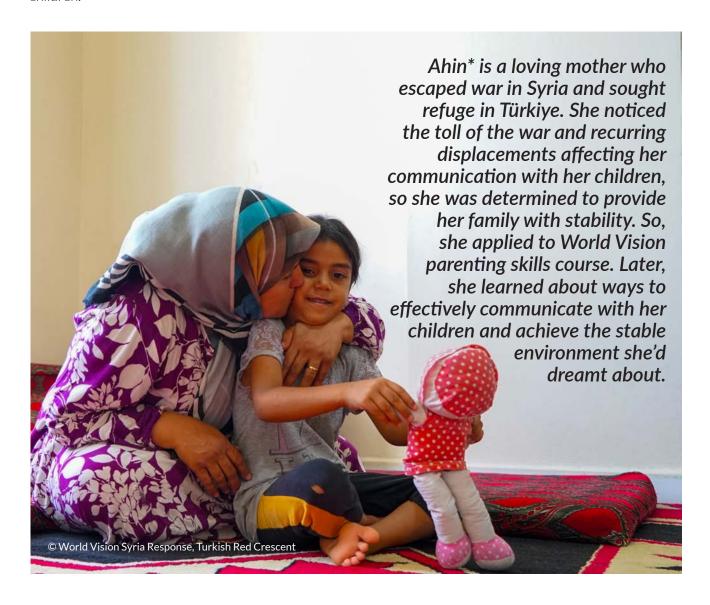
In Syria, we adopt a holistic approach to both formal and non-formal education for girls and boys. This encompasses education in schools and learning centres, both within and outside IDP camps, ensuring a comprehensive educational support system for children in these challenging environments.



Livelihoods

With the primary objective of improving the economic resilience of the most vulnerable households through income generation and cash assistance, World Vision Syria Response focuses on livelihood interventions. We aim to empower these households by leveraging resources and implementing strategies that positively impact household economics. Our goal is to connect beneficiaries with livelihood opportunities, enabling extremely vulnerable individuals to meet both the basic and developmental needs of their families and children.

We facilitate skill enhancement through Technical Vocational Educational Training (TVET), small enterprise development, and cash-for-work schemes. These initiatives are designed to help families achieve one or more critical outcomes: ensuring their children have the necessary resources to attend school, securing adequate household income, and fostering a sense of hope for a productive future for their children.



Health and Nutrition

With the primary objective of supporting partners to provide critical, life-saving health services for vulnerable communities, World Vision Syria Response collaborates with its partners to enhance health indicators among affected communities in Syria. This is achieved by improving access to quality and equitable essential primary and secondary health and nutrition services. These services include access to diagnostic and curative services for communicable diseases like Cholera, as well as non-communicable diseases, sexual and reproductive health, and mental health. We also support inpatient services for a variety of specialized internal and surgical specialties. In Northwest and Northcentral Syria, World Vision Syria Response supports a surveillance program capable of sensitively and promptly identifying outbreaks of diseases with pandemic and epidemic potential.

Additionally, World Vision Syria Response emphasizes child and women's health by supporting child and maternity facilities. These facilities provide outpatient and inpatient specialized care for pregnant women, infants, and children, along with Basic and Comprehensive Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Care (BEMONC, CEMONC).

In response to the recent earthquake in Northern Syria and Southern Türkiye, World Vision Syria Response, through its partners, provided lifesaving health and nutrition services. These services included running surgical hospitainers, mobile clinics, rehabilitation services, and Rapid Response Teams (RRTs). We also distributed various kits, including hygiene and baby kits, to assist the affected vulnerable communities.



Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

With the objective of ensuring access to appropriate and resilient water and sanitation facilities, World Vision Syria Response is committed to providing these essential services to vulnerable Syrian internally displaced persons (IDPs), refugees, and the host communities. Our WASH programs respond to the humanitarian needs arising from various crises, including the prolonged conflict in Syria, climate change, and other global crisis impacts that have resulted in a lack of basic WASH services and infrastructure.

In response to the 2022 cholera outbreak and the 2023 Syria-Turkiye earthquake, World Vision Syria Response designed and implemented numerous WASH interventions and activities. These included

enhancing water supply, providing sanitation services, constructing latrines, installing water and sewer networks, managing solid waste, supporting WASH services and facilities in schools and health centers, promoting hygiene and behavior change, and distributing hygiene kits across various operational areas.

During FY23, World Vision Syria Response's WASH program successfully reached 2,461,594 beneficiaries through these activities, meeting their urgent WASH needs and ensuring safe access to water, sanitation, and hygiene services. Furthermore, our initiatives have contributed to long-term sustainable solutions, service improvements, and resilience building within the WASH sector.



1 1 Advocacy

World Vision Syria Response has been a driving force in advocacy efforts, particularly in response to the Syrian crisis. A pivotal achievement in our advocacy was influencing the decision to continue life-saving aid for over 4 million vulnerable individuals, especially children, through a joint correspondence among INGOs with key UN officials. This effort ensured the continuation of cross-border humanitarian access, a lifeline for delivering crucial aid to children and communities in Northwest Syria.

In alignment with the No Lost Generation (NLG) initiative, World Vision Syria Response, serving as a co-chair, played a crucial role in establishing the Youth Advisory Group (YAG). Formed with NLG members, including UN agencies and INGOs, the YAG united over 25 Syrian youths, ensuring their views were prominently represented in international forums like the Brussels Conference. The YAG's direct interactions with EU donors during the NLG's Brussels side-event amplified the voices of affected Syrian youth and their communities. We, in collaboration with UNICEF, recognizing the importance of effective representation, provided comprehensive advocacy training to the YAG. This empowered them to effectively articulate concerns of Syrian youth, especially during the development of the NLG advocacy brief for the conference and in preparation for the side-event, which included participation from YAG members. The advocacy brief, along with additional details about the NLG's 7th Brussels Conference side-event are available through the provided links here [Brussels Vii - No Lost Generation Advocacy Brief | No Lost Generation and [No Lost Generation (NLG) side event Brussels VII: Uplifting young Syrian voices from the region. - YouTube], demonstrating our commitment to ensuring that the needs and voices of affected communities, particularly children and youth, are addressed in international dialogues and response strategies.

Our engagement in various advocacy platforms and forums, alongside humanitarian and development

partners addressing the Syria crisis, such as the Syria International NGO Regional Forum (SIRF) and the Regional Refugee & Resilience Plan (3RP), has been vital. Within the SIRF, we contributed to a briefing note for the Senior Officials Meeting in May 2023. We also contributed to the Northwest Syria NGO Forum's public briefing note, highlighting the recent earthquake's impact on Syria's humanitarian crisis and underscoring the need for improved humanitarian responses. These efforts have been instrumental in shaping the understanding and approach among operational partners regarding the Syrian crisis.

Our collaborative submission with the UK-Syria advocacy working group represents our joint advocacy efforts to influence the UK's International Development White Paper. This document will set out a vision for global development that delivers on the SDGs, poverty reduction, economic growth and tackling climate change aiming to inform the government's approach to international development to 2030.

As co-chairs of the Northwest Syria Child Protection Area of Responsibility alongside UNICEF, we have coordinated 54 active partner organizations, significantly influencing policy decisions and humanitarian interventions. We advocated for higher wages for workers in protection roles under the 'cash for work' program, for the internally displaced Syrians in Northwest Syria, leading to salary increases across various organizations. Additionally, we played a key role in establishing task forces under the Child Protection Area of Responsibility, significantly enhancing the response to child protection needs in Northwest Syria, including streamlined case management, monitoring child protection concerns, and raising awareness.

In the WASH sector, we played a pivotal role in establishing a humanitarian-development nexus sub-working group within the Jordan WASH working group. Our expertise in WASH influenced sector guidelines, SOPs, and strategies, ensuring



a cohesive approach between humanitarian and development efforts. Following the 2023 earthquake in Northwest Syria, we led a task force to design emergency latrines, influencing sanitation standards. Additionally, we established technical standards for private latrines in Azraq Refugee Camp in Jordan, significantly influencing sanitation situation.

Our significant influence in the WASH sector is further evidenced by co-chairing the Northwest Syria WASH Cluster with UNICEF for the next two years. Our advocacy within the WASH cluster led to the adoption of cash-based interventions in WASH activities in Northwest Syria, enhancing the effectiveness and flexibility of aid for beneficiaries.

Furthermore, our recent joint study with Action For Humanity, "Hard Lessons: An inquiry into children with disabilities' exposure to protection risks in Lebanon and Northwest Syria." delved into the exposure of Syrian children with disabilities

to protection risks in Lebanon and Northwest Syria. This comprehensive inquiry, conducted between October 2022 and January 2023, has been a catalyst for advocating immediate action and mobilizing international support, particularly in the aftermath of the Syria-Türkiye earthquake, the study can be accessed here [Hard Lessons | Syria Crisis Response | World Vision International (wvi. org)].

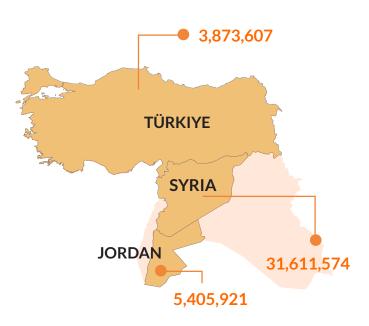
Lastly, our response to the Syria-Türkiye earthquake demonstrates our commitment to scaling up humanitarian assistance in crisis situations, advocating for urgent responses to the needs of earthquake-affected regions.

In summary, as World Vision Syria Response, our commitment to advocacy has not only influenced policies and response strategies but has also ensured that the voices of the most vulnerable, especially children and youth, are represented and heard in the global arena.

Financial Resources

FY23 spending by sector, FY23 spending by country, and the total spending in US\$.

Spending by country



TOTAL: 40,891,102

Spending by sector



PROTECTION **17,398,913**



WASH **10,259,485**



917,956



EDUCATION **4,231,767**



HEALTH/NUTRITION **8,082,980**

Spending by programme

Regular 23,046,729

STER 17,844,374

TOTAL: 40,891,102