More than three decades at the service of the most vulnerable in Syria

Welcome to Terre des Hommes Syria / Ousrat al-Ikha' al-Souria

- Terre des Hommes Syria (TDHSY) was registered with the Syrian Ministry of Social Affairs in 1977 as an NGO under the Arabic name of Ousrat al-Ikha’ al-Souria (اﺳــﺮﺓﺍﻟـﺴـــﻮﺭﻳﺔ الإﺧــاء).

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TDHSY’s international affiliation (1)

Terre des Hommes Syria is also a member of the Terre des Hommes International Federation (TDHIF), a network of eleven national organisations,

- working for the rights of children and
- promoting equitable development without racial, religious, political, cultural or gender-based discrimination.
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TDHSY’s international affiliation (2)

The TDH network is represented in the following countries:

Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Spain, Switzerland (comprising two organisations, the Terre des Hommes Foundation in Geneva and TDH Lausanne) and Syria.
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TDHSY’s mission statement and objectives

Terre des Hommes Syria is a non-governmental organisation at the service of

- children with physical and mental disabilities
- vulnerable refugees and Syrian families in need who are not in a position to help themselves nor claim their rights.

TDHSY provides assistance without regard to

- ethnicity
- religion
- race
- ideology
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TDHSY’s services

TDHSY provides

✓ psychosocial and medical care for handicapped people in Syria
✓ functional rehabilitation of handicapped people through physiotherapy and the provision of orthopaedic devices (prostheses, orthoses, corsets, medical shoes, crutches, wheelchairs, etc.)
✓ access to surgical treatment of handicapped people in Syria (e.g. scoliosis)
✓ logistics for children needing medical treatment abroad (e.g. open heart surgeries and corneal transplantations in France)
✓ vocational training for disabled people in view of their reintegration into society
✓ emergency relief to vulnerable refugees living in Syria
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TDHSY’s structure

GENERAL ASSEMBLY
composed by the active members of the three Associations (~150 persons)

elects the Executive Committee of the associations which is appointed for 2 years on a renewable basis

1st Association
TERRE DES HOMMES DAMASCUS
directed by an Executive Committee of 7 members

2nd Association
TERRE DES HOMMES ALEPPO
directed by an Executive Committee of 7 members

3rd Association
TERRE DES HOMMES LATAKIA
directed by an Executive Committee of 7 members

Working group
RAQQΑ

Working group
SAYDNAYA

Working group
KFARSETA

Working group
PALMYRA

EACH WORKING GROUP
consists of
• 5-7 persons

EACH ASSOCIATION
consists of approx.
• 50 active members &
• 120 coopted members

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Terre des Hommes Syria - the beginnings

TDHSY's origins date from the Six-Day War in 1967, when Father Paul Sleiman, a Lazarist, organised humanitarian aid to refugees fleeing the hostilities in the Golan Heights.

Together with countless volunteers (Syrian Scouts & Marian Brotherhood), Fr. Paul assisted:

- 1,160 refugee families living in tents in Barzeh (Northern Damascus) and
- 260 families settled in the suburbs of Damascus
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Terre des Hommes Syria – shift of strategy

Having completed its response to this humanitarian crisis, TDHSY shifted its focus of assistance from refugees towards people with disabilities.

This strategic decision was taken against the background of polio ravaging the country, leaving thousands of children severely affected.

It was also driven by the fact that handicapped children / people had no voice to claim their rights such as decent medical care, equal opportunities, participation and social integration. Today, the handicapped are often still stigmatised, hidden and not given the chance to develop their abilities in order to become self-reliant and lead a life in dignity.
Terre des Hommes Syria (TDHSY)

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TDHSY branches out

From 1967 until 1977, a series of camps and campaigns targeting people with disabilities were organised. The varying nature of handicaps and the complexity of their interventions required the launching of a structure able to provide a technical response in terms of expertise in treatment and therapy.

Therefore, Terre des Hommes, in the years after TDHSY's formal registration with the Ministry of Social Affairs (1977), opened branches in Syria's major cities, where both children and adults could receive medical and orthopaedic assistance tailored to their particular needs.

- 1977: establishment of TDH’s office in Damascus and its branch in Sednaya
- 1978: establishment of offices in Lattakia and Aleppo and services in Raqqa and Hassaké
- 1991: establishment of Kfarseta, a holiday resort near Tartous, for receiving handicapped persons seeking adequate treatment
- 2005: establishment of services in Palmyra
The establishment of Kfarseta, a seaside resort for people with disabilities located in a village 16 km north of Tartous, marks another milestone in TDHSY’s success story.

After 14 years of preparation (planning, fundraising and construction), the Centre was inaugurated on August 16th, 1991, thanks to the support of TDH International Federation and 261 sponsors.

The centre aims to provide physically and mentally handicapped people with:

- thalassotherapy
- heliotherapy
- recreational opportunities

Kfarseta is now considered a unique facility in the Middle East.
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Kfarseta (2)

Since the inauguration of Kfarseta in 1991, TDHSY has received approximately 10,000 persons (from Syria and abroad) every year. The demand of associations and groups serving people with disabilities and extremely vulnerable individuals has been constantly increasing.

As a result, the facilities - the accommodation capacity is 250 persons - are constantly booked out. Reservations have to be fixed one year in advance.
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Kfarseta (3) - from a holiday resort to a transit camp for displaced migrant workers

In July 2006, the war in Lebanon triggered a wave of departure of thousands of migrant workers mainly based in Beirut. TDHSY, responded to the appeals for assistance launched by its long-standing partner Caritas Salzburg by making its facilities in Kfarseta available as transit camp for desperate people fleeing the hostilities. From July to September 2006, TDHSY hosted a total of 12,000 migrant workers and provided them with:

- accommodation until their repatriation to their respective home country (mainly Ethiopia, Sri Lanka and the Philippines)
- distribution of 3 meals a day
- medical assistance

The funds for this operation were advanced by Caritas Salzburg. The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and an Italian NGO (GUS) stepped in for the follow-up and facilitated with Caritas Lebanon - Migrant Center the transit of the migrant workers to the departure airport of Damascus.
TDHSY’s facilities in Bab Touma

TDHSY’s centre in Damascus comprises:

1. **Orthopaedic Workshop**: Manufacturing orthopaedic devices (orthoses, prostheses, corsets, medical shoes, etc.)

2. **Handicrafts Workshop**: Promoting self-sufficiency of disabled women through the production and selling of handicrafts

3. **Cerebral Palsy (CP) Centre**: Offering physiotherapy, ergo therapy, speech therapy, psychomotricity and special education to CP-affected children

4. **Youth Recreational Club**: Offering education and leisure activities aiming at strengthening the self-esteem and communication skills of the disabled
TDHSY’s orthopaedic workshop (1)

Historical overview

Since its inception, TDHSY has been providing disabled persons with orthopaedic devices. The first orthopaedic workshop was located in Beirut, Lebanon. Due to the outbreak of the Civil War and following TDHSY’s registration in 1977, however, activities were shifted to Damascus.

Thanks to substantial funding from its partners, TDHSY established, in 1977, a workshop in the heart of Damascus serving handicapped people mainly suffering from poliomyelitis. In the following years, several thousands of persons benefited from devices which considerably improved their mobility.

As a result of the eradication of polio in Syria achieved in 2000 (to which TDHSY had contributed in 1985 by organising a vaccination campaign in the Raqqa region acknowledged by the Syrian Government), TDHSY redefined the objectives of its facility and decided to set up a modern workshop ensuring the production of prostheses, orthoses and corsets meeting international quality standards.
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TDHSY’s orthopaedic workshop (2)

A new facility meeting international requirements and standards

The modernisation of the existing orthopaedic workshop occurred in 3 stages:

The first stage involved building the capacity of local staff. Through the commitment and dedication of Mr. Jean-Louis Neut and his wife Elke, leading manufacturers of orthopaedic devices in France, Syrian staff members received intense training (through internships in Paris).

The second stage comprised the refurbishment of the existing facilities, an effort which was jointly funded by Misereor and Caritas Salzburg.

Finally, the third stage involved acquiring the necessary equipment for the production of modern and sophisticated orthopaedic devices. The provision of material was equally funded by Misereor and Caritas Salzburg and facilitated by Mr. Neut and his wife.

Upon completion of these activities, the inauguration of the new facility was celebrated on April 7th 2005. The importance of this event was highlighted through the attendance of eminent stakeholders from the Syrian Government, and donors and benefactors who had provided noteworthy contributions to this project.
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TDHSY’s orthopaedic workshop (3)

Provision of orthopaedic devices tailored to the needs of disabled people

Since its inauguration on April 7th 2005, the orthopaedic workshop has constantly increased its production of orthopaedic devices such as

- prostheses
- orthoses
- corsets
- medical shoes

and has generated a very positive reputation for TDHSY. As a result of the quality of its work, which is ensured by continuous technical follow-up and training provided by Mr. Jean-Louis Neut, TDHSY has become an implementing partner for several prestigious institutional donors and aid organisations.
The workshop’s manufacturing capacities at a glance

- The workshop produces artificial limbs of different types depending on the degree of handicap of its patients, with costs varying between 80,000 and 240,000 SYP per limb.

- For the treatment of spinal deformities, corsets are being used. The production cost of a corset with changeable size (6 models according to the patient’s status) is from 50,000 to 170,000 SYP.

- Regarding the production of medical shoes, TDHSY largely depends on French know-how and material which translates in comparatively higher production costs amounting to 45,000 SYP for one pair of shoes of top level quality.

Currently, the production of devices is ensured by 4 orthopaedic technicians.

The production capacity is of 6-8 devices per week, according to the complexity of manufacturing required. In 2009, production rates stood at 182 for prostheses and orthoses and 182 for medical shoes and corsets. In 2010, these rates rose to 422 for prostheses, orthoses, and corsets while 132 medical shoes were produced.
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TDHSY’s Centre for children with Cerebral Palsy (CP) (1)

Background
Cerebral Palsy (CP) is caused by damage to the motor control centres of the young developing brain and can occur during pregnancy (about 75%), during childbirth (about 5%) or after birth (about 15%) up to the age of three. Once the brain damage has occurred, it does not get worse even though the symptoms may change as the child grows and matures.

There are no exact figures available on the number of persons affected by CP in Syria. However, based on a population of 18,016,874 in Syria* and an extrapolation of an annual incidence rate of 2 to 2.5 per 1,000 births in the United States, Australia and Great Britain, the number of new cases of Cerebral Palsy diagnosed every year would be 3,600 - 4,500.

For more than 30 years, TDHSY had run a physiotherapy centre offering treatment for children affected by Polio and spina-bifida. With the eradication of Polio in Syria (2000), the facilities – as in the case of the orthopaedic workshop – lost their original purpose.

Inspired by the successful development of services rendered by the workshop, TDHSY decided to rehabilitate the existing facilities and adapt them to the particular needs of children with CP.

* Source: www.cureresearch.com/c/cerebral_palsy/stats-country.htm
TDHSY’s Centre for children with CP (2)

**A modern facility responding to the particular needs of children with CP**

With the aim of creating a conducive learning environment for approximately 60 CP-affected children and fostering their integration into society, TDHSY carried out the physical rehabilitation of the former Physiotherapy Centre within the shortest period possible (April 1st to July 31st 2008).

In order to provide adequate treatment within the 5 units of the Centre

- physiotherapy
- ergo therapy
- speech therapy
- psychomotricity
- special education

the Centre was extended by one room, partitions were erected, new central heating and AC systems were put in place and the sanitation facilities were replaced by new ones adapted to the needs of CP affected children.

This milestone in TDHSY’s history would not have been reached without the support provided by Caritas Salzburg who covered the costs of the refurbishment and the equipment of the Centre as well as of the training of staff held in Lattakia in July 2008.
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TDHSY’s Centre for children with CP (3)

**Professional health care starts with sound know-how**

- Professional health care increases the independence and self-esteem of CP affected children and greatly reduces the burden for family members or other caregivers and
- professional health care is based on a sound knowledge of CP (diagnosis, symptoms and treatment) by therapists.

With the aim of making this knowledge accessible to a large number of future therapists, TDHSY organised a workshop in Lattakia from July 14th -19th 2008.

The training was facilitated by a group of 6 experts from Lebanon, 5 of them working in the CP Centre in Bhannes. A total of 38 persons, including participants from TDH's day care centres in Aleppo (6), Lattakia (16) and Raqqa (8), attended the workshop. The whole group - including the trainers and the Project Coordinator - comprised 45 persons.
International expertise

Thanks to the expertise of Mr. Jean-Marie Schmitt, a French physiotherapist with 28 years of working experience in the Medical Centre in Bhannes/Lebanon and the involvement of three volunteers from France (psychomotrician, speech therapist and an expert in special education) who were deputed by the Catholic Delegation for Cooperation (CDC) for a period of 2 years, activities in the Centre were launched according to international standards.

On November 4th, 2008, TDHSY’s Centre officially started receiving children with CP. Every year, the number of children with CP attending the centre increases. In 2010, 75 children received therapy through the internal (5 days a week) and external (2-3 days a week) system.

In addition, the therapists focus on closely working with parents and caregivers, showing them how best to help their child with daily activities such as feeding and eating, using the toilet, and safety procedures, since children with CP are prone to accidents, especially if affected by seizures.
Open heart surgeries for children

8 children out of 1,000 throughout the world are born with cardiac malformations. Whatever their origins, infectious or congenital, these diseases generate serious disabilities and can lead to death. Very often only surgical treatment can save these children.

For this reason, TDHSY, established a partnership with the French Institution MÉCÉNAT CHIRURGIE CARDIAQUE ENFANTS DU MONDE specialised in performing heart surgeries for children who cannot not receive appropriate medical assistance in Syria (for technical or financial reasons).

Since an open heart surgery is a stressful event for affected families, TDHSY provides a maximum of information to parents who usually do not know what to expect before, during and after their child’s surgical procedure. This preparation significantly helps them to deal with the difficulty of the circumstances.

Further services include:

- coverage of travel expenses and visa fees.
- coverage of medical diagnostic and operation costs.
- coverage of stay in France with host families.

After a stay of approx. 8 weeks, the children go back home cured.

- Since 1996, approximately 180 children from Syria were sent to Paris and underwent the life-saving operations.
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Back to the roots: assistance to refugees

As a result of the experience of serving thousands of displaced migrant workers in Kfarseta in summer 2006, TDHSY decided to enlarge its focus of assistance and to incorporate aid programmes targeting Iraqi refugees.

Reasons for THDSY’s strategic reorientation

- The displacement of Iraqis constitutes the largest shift of population in the Middle East since the displacement of Palestinians in 1948: according to estimates of the UNHCR, the number of Iraqis who have fled their homes has reached 4.7 million.
- Syria hosts the largest population outside Iraq (estimates place the figure between the high hundreds of thousands to around 1.2 million).
- 36% of the Iraqi refugees have special needs and are considered as particularly vulnerable.
- Less than 15% of school-aged Iraqi children are enrolled in Syrian schools (i.e. 35,000 out of 250,000).

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TDHSY partners in its support to Iraqi refugees

More than seven years after the US-led invasion of Iraq, the conflict which continues to rage in the country has not only caused countless thousands of deaths and injuries, but has provoked a continuing and increasing exodus of Iraqis displaced from their homes. TDHSY entered into partnership with various international organisations and institutional donors in order to provide a maximum of needs-oriented assistance to the displaced Iraqis.

Projects targeting Iraqi refugees

- **TDH Lausanne & UNICEF** (Psycho-social assistance, provision of play kits for children)
- **ICMC** (Emergency relief, education and medical assistance)
- **UNHCR** (Providing orthopaedic devices, assistance to children with CP & home based care)
- **SECOURS CATHOLIQUE** (Home based care & assistance to children with CP)
- **CARITAS** (Home based care, surgeries)