



ANNUAL REPORT

2023

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A WORLD FROM HIMAYA'S EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Despite the multifaceted crisis affecting our country in 2023, himaya remained persistent in its commitment to championing the cause of Child Protection. Our standards and expertise remained unmatched, preserving our national positioning in the field.

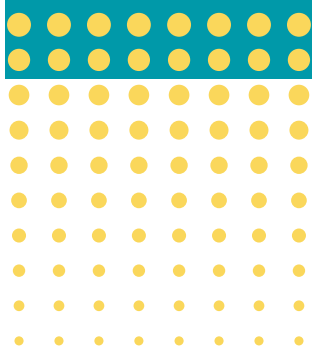
Our dedicated workforce played a crucial role in our success. Their untiring commitment and exceptional efforts have been instrumental in driving us to where we stand today.

Moreover, the continuous support from our community, donors and partners has served as a profound source of gratitude and motivation. It has reinforced our belief in the value of our work and empowered us to persevere in achieving our mission.

Serge Saad, Executive Director



WHO WE ARE



In 2008, a group of individuals came together with a shared concern: the alarming prevalence of child abuse in their country Lebanon. Motivated by a study revealing that 1 out of 6 children in Lebanon was a victim of some form of sexual violence, they resolved to take action. Thus, himaya was born in 2009—with the objective of safeguarding the innocence and wellbeing of Lebanon's children.

From its inception, himaya's primary goal has been clear: to shield children from all forms of abuse, including physical, psychological, sexual, and neglect. The vision extended beyond protection; it aspired to cultivate a society where every child's right to safety and security was upheld.

Over the past 15 years, himaya has evolved and expanded, fueled by the commitment to its mission. Today, it stands as a force in Lebanon's landscape, with a multidisciplinary team of professionals covering five key regions: North Lebanon, South Lebanon, Beirut and Mount Lebanon, North Bekaa, and Central West Bekaa. This distribution ensures himaya's services are accessible to children across the nation, regardless of their location or circumstances.

Central to himaya's approach is its holistic perspective on child protection. Recognizing that safeguarding children necessitates collaboration and intervention at multiple levels, the organization engages with various stakeholders. This includes the children themselves, their families, local communities, governmental institutions, and society as a whole.

In 2018, the organization joined the ranks of the International Social Service (ISS), that gave it the capacity to respond to cross-border cases of child abuse involving at least one Lebanese parent. Furthermore, himaya's dedication and expertise were recognized by the Ministry of Justice, leading to a mandate to handle legal protection cases in the North Governorate, North Bekaa and Central West Bekaa.

WHO WE ARE



As himaya continues to evolve, each chapter of its journey is characterized by dedication, advocacy, and tangible impact. It is through this ongoing narrative that we invite you to dive deeper into the following pages of this report.

Our Mission

To promote a safe environment for children and ensure their protection through holistic intervention and community empowerment.

Our Values

Equity: We are non-discriminative; providing equal opportunities to all.

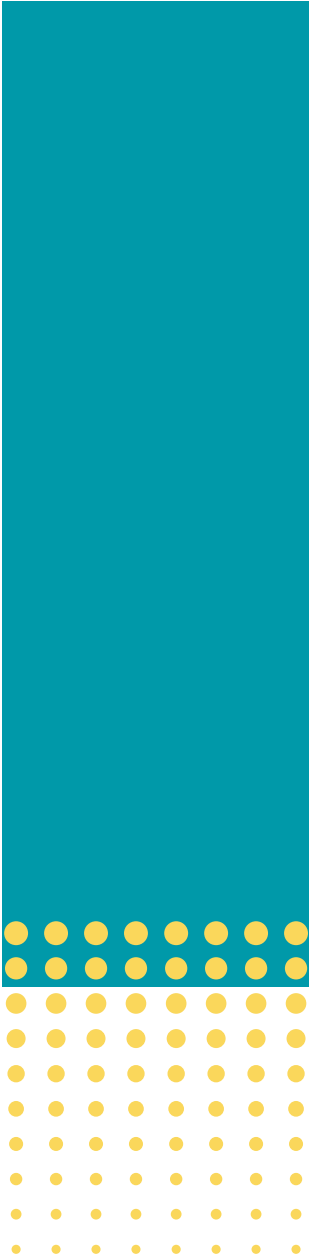
Diversity: We are multicultural; embracing different backgrounds.

Impartiality: We are unbiased; continuously honouring the child's best interest.

Accountability: We are accountable; taking responsibility for our actions and decisions.

Commitment: We are committed to our cause; striving to protect the integrity of every child.

Partnerships: We are community-centric; fostering trustworthy collaborations and partnerships.



This impact report follows our socio-ecological framework, demonstrating our efforts across four levels:

1 Empowering Children:
Equipping them with knowledge and skills to protect themselves.

2 Supporting Caregivers:
Providing families with tools to create nurturing environments.

3 Strengthening Communities:
Enhancing institutions' and communities' child protection capacities.

4 Advocating for Change:
Shaping national and international policies for a safer environment.

1

EMPOWERING CHILDREN

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Children are at the heart of himaya’s mission to promote safety and empowerment.

Through tailored activities and initiatives, himaya equips children with the knowledge, skills, and confidence they need to protect themselves, navigate their surroundings safely, and assert their rights.

Skills Development

Selected carefully to meet the specific needs of the communities we serve, our prevention and awareness services, aim to support children through various interventions, including community-based activities, focused non-psychosocial support activities, and awareness sessions, with the goal of making a positive impact on children's lives and promoting long-term positive outcomes for the communities



KEY NUMBERS



2,029

Children reached through focused psychosocial support.

3,529

Children engaged in community-based activities.

2,955

Children attended awareness sessions in schools.



IMPACT



KNOWLEDGE INCREASE

92%

Ages 6–11

86%

Ages 12–17

WELL-BEING IMPROVEMENT

53.74%

Ages 6–11

51.52%

Ages 12–17

Youth Empowerment



himaya, in collaboration with UNICEF, established the Qudwa Network for Child Protection, aiming at strengthening Lebanon's child protection network and involving more youth in the decision-making processes.

This sustainable initiative formed a structured committee comprising active volunteers from various regions to advocate for child rights and address child abuse issues nationwide.

The network's objectives include empowering youth volunteers, establishing an independent advocacy entity, developing initiatives addressing child protection issues, implementing a safe reporting system, and representing the committee in national and international forums.

Currently, the network has 100 active volunteers overseen by a core group of 15 elected members, who are crafting an action plan with himaya's support.

Additionally, himaya collaborates with the Child Municipal Council (CMC) initiative, implemented across six municipalities in Lebanon, to capacitate children on child protection concepts and promote child rights advocacy. In 2023, himaya launched the CMC in Jounieh Municipality with plans to expand the initiative to more municipalities in 2024, empowering children to voice their opinions, learn about their rights, and ensure inclusivity for all.



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ACCOMPANYING CAREGIVERS

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Caregivers play a foundational role in fostering safe, nurturing environments for children. Recognizing this, himaya focuses on empowering parents and families through training, emotional support, and specialized psychosocial assistance.

Parenting Skills Training



Objective

Equip caregivers with tools to strengthen relationships with their children and prevent abuse.



Reach

121 caregivers participated in a 12-session program.



Results

76% reported significant knowledge improvement.

Well-being improved by **55.81%**.

Emotional Support Programs



Objective

Address caregiver stress and promote self-care to enhance their ability to nurture children effectively.



Reach

536 parents and caregivers completed a 12-session program.



Results

93.42% reported increased well-being.

76% noted improved knowledge about child protection and emotional resilience.

Specialized Family Support

1,376

Families received specialized psychosocial support.

77%

Demonstrated improved parenting competencies, fostering healthier relationships with their children.

Judicial Protection and Response

In 2023, himaya ensured legal representation for families to support the legal prosecution of abusers, highlighting the organization's commitment to safeguarding children.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Worst Forms of Child Labor Cases:

Through the efforts of the multidisciplinary team, juvenile justice issued 17 protection decisions in the Bekaa Governorate and 7 decisions in the North Governorate, marking a significant step forward in child protection within the Lebanese judicial system.

Child Marriage Cases:

Secured 6 protection files for children at risk of early marriage, leading to 5 protection decisions in the Bekaa Governorate and 1 decision in North Lebanon.

These rulings represent a positive precedent in Lebanon's judiciary for addressing early marriage as a child protection issue.

3

STRENGTHENING THE SYSTEM

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Institutions and communities play a crucial role in creating safe and supportive environments for children. Recognizing this, himaya collaborates with key stakeholders to strengthen their capacities, enhance their ability to protect children, and foster a culture of collective action for child protection.

Institutional Collaborations

COORDINATION WITH GENERAL PROSECUTORS ● ● ●

A robust coordination framework was established with general prosecutors to conduct social assessments in tandem with investigations into crimes against children, including cases of homicide and sexual abuse. This approach aimed to ensure comprehensive support for affected children and expedite legal proceedings against perpetrators.

PARTNERSHIP WITH MOPH AND JUDICIAL INTERVENTION IN NURSERIES ● ● ●

Collaborating with the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) and judicial authorities, interventions were undertaken in multiple cases of abuse within nurseries nationwide. Some nurseries were compelled to close, while others underwent restructuring or staff capacity-building initiatives to enhance child protection measures and prevent future abuses.

Addressing Institutional Abuse

REINTEGRATION EFFORTS FOR RESIDENTIAL CARE CENTER RESIDENTS ● ● ●

Following instances of abuse within residential care centers, extensive efforts were made to reintegrate affected children with their core and extended families, under the guidance of juvenile judges. These efforts aimed to provide a supportive environment for children's rehabilitation and well-being.

MULTI-FACETED INTERVENTIONS ● ● ●

Institutional abuse extended beyond residential care centers to schools, nurseries, and child welfare centers. Interventions were multi-faceted, encompassing judicial proceedings, psycho-social support, and prevention activities targeting beneficiaries from diverse social backgrounds. Notably, judicial interventions resulted in the prosecution of abusers, serving as a deterrent against future abuses.

Key Achievements at a Glance

CAPACITY BUILDING FOR PROFESSIONALS



Trained 190 frontline professionals to identify and report child abuse effectively.



Enhanced skills of 114 social workers to address high-risk cases, focusing on judicial pathways and alternative care solutions.



Supported psychologists across all governorates with monthly support groups addressing trauma and transgenerational challenges.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



Formed employer committees in Saida and Mina to combat child labor, each with 10 proactive members.



Partnered with Save the Children to train 50 members of the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) in child safeguarding, improving practices across military institutions.



Trained 60 lawyers on child protection, with measurable shifts in their approach to prioritizing the best interests of children in family disputes.

COLLABORATING WITH KEY INSTITUTIONS

Hospitals referred numerous cases of abuse to himaya, resulting in psycho-social interventions and judicial protection measures.



I have become more aware of the issue of child protection and have started shedding light on this issue whenever necessary, especially during my pleadings, particularly in cases of disputes between parents.

I have started considering the best interest of the child during my pleadings, even when these interests conflict with the interests of my clients.

Feedback from Trained Lawyers



Child Protection and Education



Integrating Child Protection in Non-Formal Education for Dropout Reintegration – DIRASA Project:

In partnership with UNICEF, himaya integrated child protection into non-formal education programs for drop-out children, ensuring a safe learning environment. Through a training-of-trainers initiative, child protection experts (Alpha, AVSI, IRC, LOST, and WAR CHILD) were empowered to train educators in identifying and referring child abuse cases. In collaboration with Alpha, himaya trained 41 educators in South Lebanon and provided ongoing technical support to enhance child protection case management, strengthening efforts to safeguard vulnerable children.

Training on Music for Development:

himaya conducted a music for development training for 14 frontliners at Terre des Homme Italy, focusing on using music as a tool in psychosocial support (PSS) activities.

Addressing Child Labor



Our team, supported by UNICEF and UN-OCHA LHF fund, initiated a social and behavioral change initiative in Saida Al Balad and Mina regions to combat child labor.

Through engagement with employers, two committees of 10 proactive employers were formed in each region, comprising proactive members committed to preventing child labor and referring cases to Himaya for assistance.

Child Protection Policies Development

In 2023, himaya supported 8 schools and associations in developing or reviewing their Child Protection Policies (CPPs), including:

- Establishing 2 new CPPs for Beirut Evangelical School and Heritage School.
- Reviewing policies for the American Community School, International College, and Wellspring.
- Integrating CPPs for Siren Association, Fratelli Association, and Scout Saint Jean Okaybeh.

himaya also trained staff and child protection officers to strengthen their capacity to uphold child safety standards.

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**ADVOCATING
FOR A SAFER
ENVIRONMENT**

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himaya's advocacy efforts extend to national and international forums, shaping policies and driving systemic change for child protection.

National Participation

- Contributed to workshops with the Ministry of Justice on combating human trafficking and sexual harassment.
- Active in the Child Protection Case Management Taskforce (CMTF) and the National Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Taskforce (MHPSS).

International Engagement

- Presented at the annual Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action meeting, showcasing 15 years of advocacy and impact.
- Participated in the International Social Service (ISS) annual caseworkers' meeting, sharing cross-border child protection insights.

himaya in Numbers

QUANTIFYING THE TANGIBLE OUTCOMES OF OUR 2023 INTERVENTIONS

979
Cases Closed
with Positive
Outcomes

356
Legal Cases
Closed with
Positive
Outcomes

4,188
Children and Caregivers
Benefiting from
Capacity Building and
Psychosocial Support

350
Professionals
Trained

SUPPORT FOR MALTREATED CHILDREN

TOTAL BENEFICIARIES
2,240
Children received case
management and
family psychosocial
support.

28%
Suffered
physical
abuse.

26%
Endured
neglect.

16%
Were victims
of exploitation.

11%
Faced sexual
abuse.

CROSS-BORDER ASSISTANCE

Cases Managed: Supported **26** children and their caregivers (**17** families) under the "International Social Services" framework.

QUALITY SERVICE PROVISION

- Specialized Psychosocial Support Success:** Of the **1,778** cases closed, **1,376** were resolved successfully, reflecting a **77%** success rate in case management.



COMMUNITY TRUST AND COLLABORATION REFERRALS CAME FROM A WIDE RANGE OF SOURCES



62%

From citizens,
community
actors, and
donors
(national and
international).

19%

Through
the 7/24
national
hotline.

13%

Directly
from
families.

9%

From
prevention
team
activities.

4%

From judges
and
prosecutors.

2023 Highlights

Let's shift our focus to qualitative impact, highlighting impactful events, actions, or achievements that have made a meaningful difference in the lives of children and families served by Himaya.



Media Campaign with Maguy Bou Ghosn:

A media campaign was launched by himaya, with Maguy Bou Ghosn as its ambassador, aimed at instigating a significant national change to improve the lives of children in Lebanon. This campaign positioned Maguy as a vital connection between the public and children who are victims of abuse, providing a platform for these children to share their experiences and feelings. Through the use of anonymous storytelling, the campaign highlighted the struggles and abuse faced by children, ultimately fostering a deeper understanding among the public of the challenges they encounter in their lives.

Art Gallery

The CP Art Gallery held in Tripoli on July 14th, 2023, marked the culmination of a year-long project with UN-OCHA LHF. Showcasing artworks by working children from the Focused Psycho-social program, the event celebrated community creativity and resilience. Alongside the exhibition, a community theater play titled "الحمات الك والعصمات الننا" performed by Himaya volunteers addressed significant community issues, fostering reflection and dialogue among attendees.



Here's a real story that not only inspires but also fuels our commitment to effecting positive change. For privacy and confidentiality, the name mentioned is fictitious, ensuring the safety and anonymity of the persons involved.

STORY OF KAMEL

Through clay play and modelling, Kamel, a resilient 9-year-old born without fingers, found strength amidst adversity. Enduring both physical and psychological abuse, including bullying and hurtful labels, Kamel struggled with feelings of isolation. However, during a transformative five-month intervention with Himaya team, he discovered a powerful outlet for self-expression through clay.

As he moulded and shaped the clay, Kamel's perception shifted, and he began to focus on his abilities and his capacity to create and shape things despite the absence of four fingers. As the intervention progressed, Kamel developed a more positive self-image and a heightened sense of his capabilities. He no longer felt limited by his condition and was able to compile a list of activities and achievements he could pursue confidently.

- Notably, he began expressing himself during sessions using gestures and his hands without reservation, signifying a remarkable increase in self-assurance and acceptance.

OUR PARTNERS

We express our gratitude to the partners who have stood alongside Himaya in our mission to protect and empower children. Their generosity and trust have been instrumental in our journey.



CONNECT WITH US

