



Primary health care centre at Al-Mouaddamiyeh being rehabilitated with WHO support. WHO Syria 201828 February 2018 – WHO has participated in an inter-agency mission to assess health needs in Al-Mouaddamiyeh (Rural Damascus). This area, which recently became accessible following years of siege, is home to over a hundred thousand people. According to the local mayor, the numbers are likely to increase given the new-found stability in the city.

The assessment team, which included representatives of the Syrian Arab Red Crescent, found that years of conflict had taken a toll on the city. Its main primary health care (PHC) centre had been damaged and its water supply network was no longer functioning, leaving people dependent on water tankers. The team also found that thousands of children under 5 years of age had not been vaccinated and that around 6000 students from 7 to 18 years of age had no access to PHC or mental health services in schools.

In response, WHO is supporting the rehabilitation of Al-Mouaddamiyeh's main PHC centre. The work, which began in December 2017, is expected to be completed by mid-March 2018. Once the centre is up and running again, it will provide vaccination and dental services, antenatal care, treatments for people with chronic diseases, and other essential health care services.

Given the rising numbers of Syrians with mental health issues as a result of prolonged exposure to violence, WHO is training health care staff in the centre on how to diagnose and treat people with mental health disorders. In addition, WHO and UNICEF are supporting childhood vaccination efforts: thus far in 2018, more than 2600 children under 5 years of age in Al-Mouaddamiyeh have been vaccinated against the 11 diseases covered by Syria's routine immunization programme*.

Lastly, WHO plans to enroll counsellors and teachers in Al-Mouaddamiyeh in the recently launched national school mental health programme, with a view to increasing their understanding of mental health issues and thus helping them to develop age-appropriate strategies to manage disruptive behaviour in schools and provide tailored counselling.

*In 2017, 100% of children were vaccinated against BCG, 84% were vaccinated against DPT-Hib3, 89% received MMR vaccine and OPV3 booster, and 75% received DPT-Hib4 booster.

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