

Subject: Country Story: A Sustainable "Train-the-Trainer" Model for Strengthening the Pediatric Oncology Nursing Workforce in Syria

Summary:

This story highlights a successful partnership between the World Health Organization (WHO) EMRO and country office, Childhood Cancer International (CCI), and the local member foundation BASMA to implement a specialized pediatric oncology nurse training in Syria, a Global Initiative for Childhood Cancer (GICC) focus country since July 2024, demonstrated its commitment to childhood cancer care. The initiative, which trained 4 senior nurses as master trainers, has created an immediate impact on patient care and a sustainable "train-the-trainer" model. This approach generates a powerful ripple effect, building a self-sustaining, skilled workforce and serving as a practical model for advancing GICC objectives, even in fragile health systems.

Details:

This collaborative achievement was made possible through the dedicated partnership of BASMA, with funding from Childhood Cancer International (CCI) and the essential technical and operational support of the WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean (EMRO) and the WHO Syria country office.

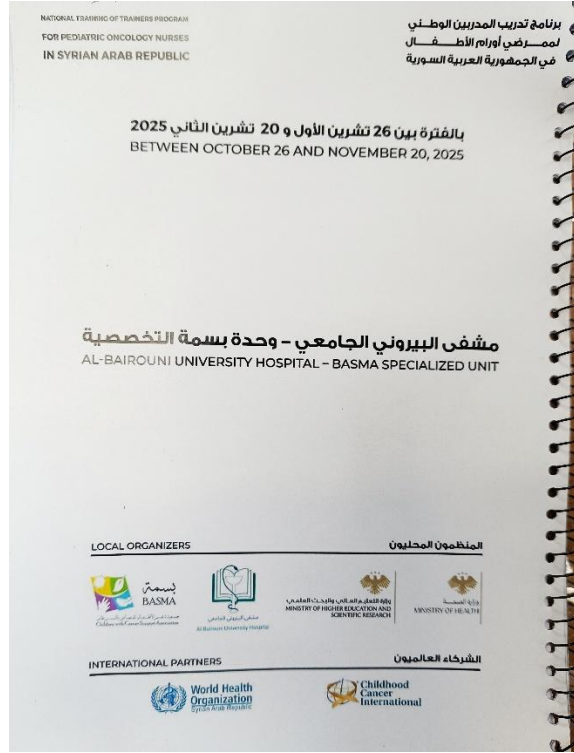
The initiative was conducted from October 26 to November 26, 2025, at the Al-Bairouni University Hospital's BASMA Specialized Unit in Damascus. It focused on enhancing the capabilities of 4 senior nurses through a comprehensive pediatric oncology training program. The curriculum comprised a rigorous total of 100 hours of training, blending 20 hours of theoretical training with 80 hours of hands-on, clinical skill development. This significant emphasis on practical application in a real-world hospital setting was critical for building advanced competence and confidence in complex procedures like central line care, chemotherapy administration, and managing side effects.

This program is a direct contribution to the GICC's strategic objective of strengthening the childhood cancer workforce. Its success is twofold:

- **Immediate Impact:** The newly trained nurses have immediately begun applying their advanced skills in patient management, leading to observable improvements in direct patient care, including enhanced supportive care and more effective symptom management.
- **Long-Term Systemic Impact:** A core component of the design is the creation of a sustainable "ripple effect." The 4 nurses are now equipped to act as national trainers, disseminating their critical skills to other peers across the country. This cascade model is fundamental to building a self-sustaining, high-quality nursing workforce, a key pillar of the WHO CureAll framework.

The project's success in a fragile setting underscores the power of an integrated partnership model—leveraging WHO's technical leadership, CCI's global advocacy and funding, and the invaluable on-the-ground implementation of a local member organization.

We share this story hoping it offers practical insights and encouragement to other countries beginning their GICC implementation journey. It stands as a testament to what can be accomplished through shared commitment, providing a replicable example of how to build sustainable capacity and bring us closer to the goals of the Global Initiative for Childhood Cancer.





Advanced Skills- Preparation for port-a-cath access



Basic Skills - Aspiration of secretions and dealing with drainages



Advanced skills - Preparation to port-a-cath access



Advanced Skills- Preparing the Chemotherapy

