

BASMEH & ZEITOONEH RELIEF & DEVELOPMENT

Basmeh & Zeitooneh Annual Report 2023



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Basmeh & Zeitooneh Annual Report 2023

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About Basmeh & Zeitooneh

Vision

A Constructive Society that Lives with Dignity.

Mission

Basmeh & Zeitooneh is a refugee-led relief and development organization responding to the acute needs of displaced and host communities to help people reclaim dignity and agency over their lives.

We've aligned our efforts under five programmatic pillars: education, protection, food security and livelihood, and civil society enablement. While each pillar offers distinct impact for both individuals and communities, they are intimately connected.

About B&Z

Basmeh & Zeitooneh started as a grassroots organization in 2012 when a group of volunteers in Lebanon – driven by the plight of Syrian refugees – began a small relief operation. Today, Basmeh & Zeitooneh has grown into one of the largest and most established refugee-led relief organizations in the world, responding to the acute needs of both the displaced and their host communities.

We're proud to be founded by refugees, for refugees. It's what sets us and our work apart, and gives us a deeper understanding of the community we serve. As part of the community, we understand its unique, ever-evolving, needs and challenges. We're also positioned close enough to respond swiftly when new challenges arise. Our interventions are co-designed alongside participants and adapted with their input. And the trust and credibility we've built over eleven years gives us access few others have.

Our Impact

Impact to date

Since 2015	7611 Students Education Program
2018 till 2023	100 CSOs Since 2018
2018 till 2023	410 SMEs supported Food Security and Livelihoods Program
2019 end of 2023	527 Cash for Work Participants Food Security and Livelihoods Program
Till end of 2023	27320 People Reached Legal Protection Services
Till end of 2023	29700 Households Reached Basic Needs Assistance

We Work In Lebanon

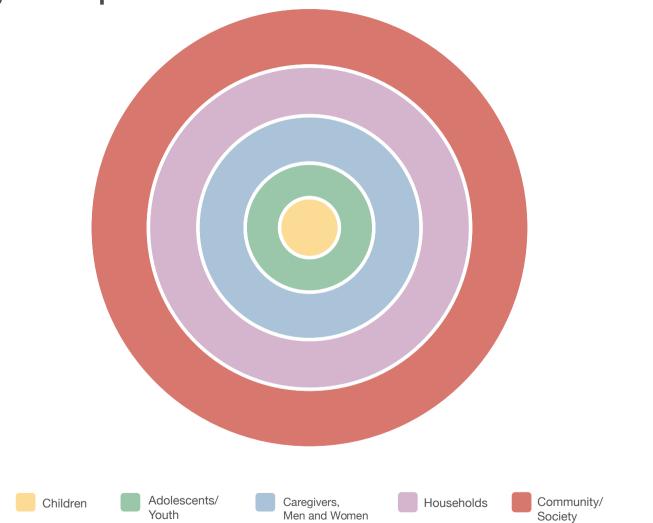


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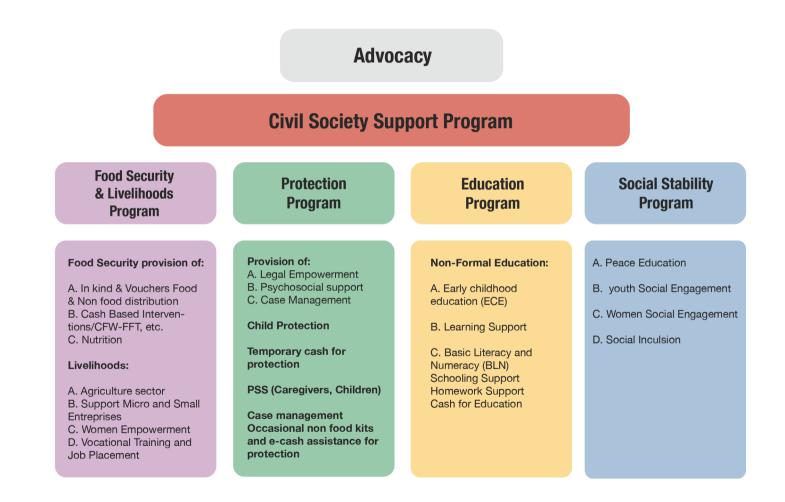
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Our Target Groups



Our Programmatic Structure



Our Team

In 2023, the substantial decision made by the HR unit centered around the implementation of a comprehensive HR system, aimed at enhancing efficiency and effectiveness across both the unit and the entire organization. Jointly, efforts were dedicated to ongoing capacity building and staff reinforcement initiatives. A significant aspect of our strategy involved the introduction of new policies related to employee wellness, underscoring our commitment to the holistic well-being of our workforce. Additionally, we undertook a thorough review and update of all internal policies, procedures, rules, and regulations, integrating advanced tools to enhance our perspective through a protection lens. This collective approach shapes our commitment to maintaining high standards and adapting to the evolving needs of our dynamic organizational environment.

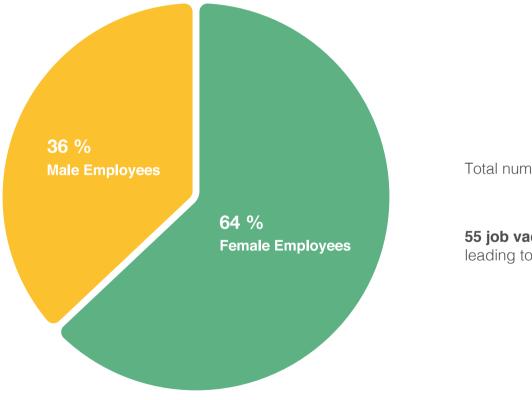
In the face of challenges throughout 2023, the HR unit demonstrated resilience and adaptability. The unexpected trials, particularly the earthquake emergency in February, tested our capabilities. However, the team displayed remarkable responsiveness, actively contributing to emergency response efforts

Furthermore, through determination, dedication, and hard work, the HR unit played an essential role in supporting the successful establishment of two new B&Z centers—FSL in Akkar and an education center in Hermel. This achievement not only underscores the team's commitment and ability to navigate complexities but also reinforces our constant ownership of organizational growth and meaningful community impact.

It is worth mentioning the vital role the volunteers played in delivering added value through their dedicated support, contributing significantly to various projects such as emergency response, winterization initiatives, needs assessments, Ramadan campaign, and research projects. Their outstanding contributions had an extensive impact on the success of these projects.

Amidst the backdrop of soaring food and energy prices and an ongoing financial crisis in Lebanon, we take pride in creating job opportunities that have had a positive impact on the lives of the country's residents. Through providing meaningful employment, we have helped individuals and their families alleviate the financial burden they face and supported their livelihoods during these challenging times. Despite the economic instability of the country, our HR team has worked proactively to attract and select candidates who were well-suited for the available vacancies. We remain steadfast in our

commitment to invest in Lebanon's future and support our fellow residents in building a stronger and more resilient community. We firmly believe that our efforts will contribute to the long-term sustainability of Lebanon, and we eagerly look forward to continuing to make a positive impact in the years ahead.



Total number of staff in 2023 is around 250

55 job vacancies were announced leading to recruiting around **85 candidates**

Our Work

Advocacy Unit

The advocacy efforts were primarily centered around monitoring the UNHCR's accountability mechanisms and protection thresholds related to Syrian refugees and returns, as well as advocating for localization of aid, accessible funding mechanisms for donors, and emphasis on RLOs' role.

The advocacy interventions consisted of :

-Joint advocacy to hold UNHCR accountable on protection thresholds and AAP (with RPW coalition members) through joint research and meetings with the UNHCR.

-Bi-lateral meetings with high-level stakeholders such as EU delegation, UNHCR, UNCOI, EU Delegation and informing them about our work and priorities and key advocacy messages from recent reports and advocating for localization.

-Regional advocacy meetings with coalition partners in Jordan (3RP, DSP, RDSWG) to foster and support regional advocacy efforts.

-Attending UN SDGs summit weekend and Global People's Assembly in UNHQ in New York and participating in SDGs advocacy.

-Contributing to revising and rewriting the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) in Amman, Jordan.

-Expanding partnerships with IFI at AUB through attending several research and durable solutions workshops and presenting our work.

-Taking on participation in the Women Deliver gender equality conference in July 2023 advocating for women's refugee rights and adding visibility to our work

Main projects: RPW, NRC, UNHCR AAP.

Research Unit

The PDE research project successfully concluded its fieldwork in 2023, exceeding the initial August deadline, demonstrating a strong commitment to thoroughness and impact. Key achievements in 2023 included finalizing essential components, such as the second round of the survey (constituting 14% of the initial survey) and completing the second and third rounds of oral history interviews (totaling around 252). Additionally, an extra round of focus group discussions was conducted, and the preliminary phases of data analysis were initiated.

Furthermore, strategic initiatives, including the annual meeting in Ethiopia, the engagement with stakeholders at Peshawar University, and active participation in the RGB-IGS conference in London, served as effective platforms for disseminating research findings to a diverse global audience.

Significant stakeholder meetings, in collaboration with the SAWA organization in Lebanon, specifically in the Beqaa region and Beirut, highlighted our commitment to transparency. During these sessions, initial findings were shared with local stakeholders, fostering discussions to determine effective strategies to address challenges faced by refugee communities.

Our research unit, integrated within the development department, remains dedicated to conducting comprehensive and impactful research. This commitment enhances our understanding of challenges faced by refugees, facilitating evidence-based advocacy and informed decision-making for the betterment of refugee well-being and rights.

Research Highlight Protracted Displacement Economies - 2023 Updates

Basmeh & Zeitooneh is actively participating in a collaborative research project on the Protracted Displacement Economy (PDE). The project was initiated in 2020 by the Center for Migration Research at the University of Sussex. It is set to continue for three years, concluding in August 2023. The research spans five countries concurrently: the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Lebanon, Myanmar, and Pakistan.

The main objective of this research project is to examine the developmental trajectory of the economy and support systems for refugees and host communities. This will be accomplished through a longitudinal study incorporating quantitative and qualitative research methods. The research design includes group discussions, key informant interviews, and oral history interviews to comprehensively understand the economic circumstances, support systems, and perspectives of refugees. To collect accurate data, a survey was conducted in three regions: Nabaa, Tripoli, and Bar Elias. The survey involved 4,500 participants and was implemented after conducting a thorough literature review to establish the research objectives.

In 2023, the project focused on the creation of three films that portray the day-to-day experiences of refugees. These films were developed, filmed, and directed by three teams of young refugees who received guidance from academic experts. The films, which showcased remarkable quality, were submitted to various competitions. By participating in this project, these aspiring filmmakers gained valuable skills in the field of film production, opening doors for potential career development opportunities in the future.

Furthermore, the project conducted approximately 150 oral history interviews, which refugee volunteers carried out. These volunteers received training from B&Z to become field researchers. This endeavor not only enabled the researchers to gather authentic data and real-life stories but also equipped the interviewers with valuable research and communication skills.

Click here to check our video.

Education Program

We aim to serve refugee children in a safe and inclusive learning environment where their well-being is of utmost importance. To this end, our Education Program is structured to provide:

- Early childhood education
- Basic literacy & numeracy
- Remedial & homework support

We understand the challenges and hurdles faced by families and their children. We help by removing obstacles to education platform access by providing cash for education, transportation, CP, and extracurricular activities.

Our first learning center was in Shatila Camp. Beirut. The second in Bekaa. From 2022 to 2023, 1,019 girls and 968 boys were enrolled, Syrian students. Our other learning centers in Tripoli and Nabaa from 2022 to 2023, 145 Girls and 153 boys were enrolled, syrian students

Our education system is non-violent and interactive. Subjects include Arabic, English, Maths, Science, Sports, and Music. We also teach Geography and Civic Education for some classes. And there is a public library.

In Lebanon, we follow the Lebanese Curriculum to help children continue their education. We are also accredited by the Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education (LMEHE).



Project Highlight Non-Formal Education for Syrian Refugees in Lebanon

At Basmeh & Zeitooneh, we are committed to providing non-formal education to Syrian refugees in Lebanon who face significant challenges in accessing formal education. Our education program in the Shatila and Bekaa Learning Centers aims to offer a second chance for education to vulnerable refugee children. Our program is aligned with the national curriculum and is designed to provide a pathway towards formal education.

Focused on student development and transitioning, our education program comprises four components: Early Childhood Education (ECE) for out-of-school children aged 4-5, emphasizing foundational skills; Basic Literacy and Numeracy (BLN) targeting out-of-school children aged 8 to 14, providing fundamental literacy and numeracy skills; Learning Support classes offering assistance to students at risk of dropping out or those who have discontinued formal education; and remedial support ensuring that all students receive the necessary guidance to succeed in their educational journey.

In the academic year 2022-2023, our educational program successfully reached a total of 2,655 students across all Basmeh & Zeitooneh centers. We diligently implemented a comprehensive education program that adhered to the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) curricula, prioritizing ensuring safe and secure environments within our centers and fostering an atmosphere where students felt empowered to express their thoughts and emotions freely. Moreover, we integrated better learning sessions and social-emotional sessions into the curriculum. Better Learning sessions aim to enhance the academic experience by fostering improved comprehension and critical thinking skills. Concurrently, social-emotional sessions were incorporated to nurture emotional intelligence, interpersonal skills, and self-awareness among our students.

At the culmination of the academic cycle, we are pleased to report that 65% of our students successfully secured placements in public or semi-private schools. We remain dedicated to further refining and expanding our initiatives to ensure that each student receives a high-quality education that equips them for future academic and personal achievements, and we are continually working to increase the number of successful transitions through service mapping, collaborations with active organizations in the educational sector, and the Ministry of Education and Higher Education.



A Journey of Hope: Youseph's Path to Education

Youseph, an earnest 11-year-old from Aleppo, Syria, resides with his family of five in Shatila Camp. Despite the challenges of displacement and adjusting to a new environment, Youseph's family recognizes the pivotal role of education in shaping his future.

Reflecting on their journey, his father expresses gratitude for the supportive environment provided by our education program: "The teaching staff here is very wonderful. They follow up on his studies and his daily work and communicate with us periodically."

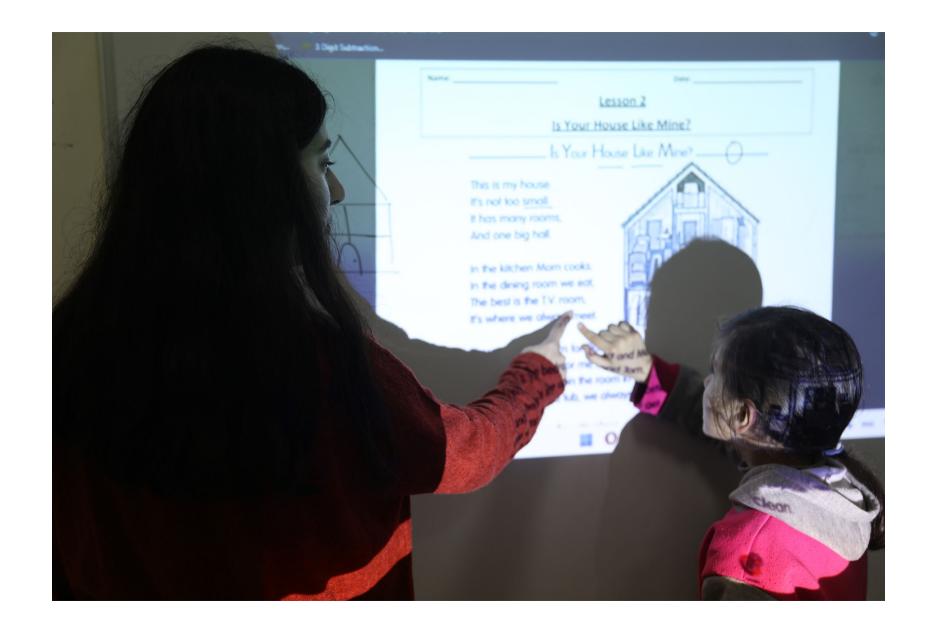
Youseph, fueled by a passion for mathematics, shares his enthusiasm for learning: "I love my math teacher, as I find joy in multiplication table calculations and can learn the answers very quickly." His aspirations shine brightly as he declares, "I want to become a cardiologist when I grow up."

Despite facing challenges like power outages during online lessons, Youseph's determination remains unwavering. "Teaching on the tablet was difficult at first, especially in English language lessons," he recalls. "But with time, the subject became easier as the teachers allocated groups for students via WhatsApp, and I began to enjoy learning again." Under the framework of Basic Literacy and Numeracy in our education program, students receive math, science, life skills, English, and Arabic lessons in addition to recreational activities. Youseph's growth extends beyond academics. Through sports lessons and activities, he channels his energy positively, demonstrating greater consistency and organization. His father observes, "Today he has become more organized and puts his energy into the appropriate channels in sports lessons and activities."

In our comprehensive program, Youseph not only hones his academic skills but also learns vital life skills. As he reflects, "In life skills lessons, we learn how to organize our time and how to deal with anger, and this benefits us every day."

Youseph's journey epitomizes the transformative power of education, illustrating how, with the right support and resources, every child can aspire to a brighter future.

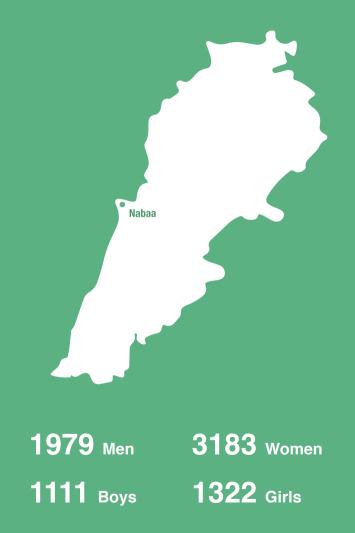




Protection Program

Since 2015, we have focused on strengthening the resilience of vulnerable women and children by increasing their awareness of gender-based violence and child protection. We deliver comprehensive awareness sessions on crucial topics such as gender-based violence, child protection, sexual and reproductive health, internet safety, and inclusive education. These sessions empower communities by establishing and reinforcing structures that ensure homes, schools, and neighborhoods are safe spaces for women and children.

Our empowerment strategies include parenting sessions that equip caregivers with essential skills for children's well-being, psychosocial support to address emotional and mental health needs, tailored case management for individuals and families, and streamlined referrals to essential services. Moreover, we reinforced health promoters in all implementation areas, as we refer cases that need special care to external stakeholders. We also prioritize medical follow-ups to ensure the well-being of our community members.



Project Highlight Stronger Together

B&Z's Girls Support Program stands as a beacon of empowerment for Syrian refugee adolescent girls in Lebanon. Through meticulous targeting and rapid household assessments, B&Z identifies and uplifts the most vulnerable, often unseen, girls within high-risk communities. Led by dedicated refugee mentors, the program's weekly sessions provide a nurturing space for learning and growth, covering essential topics such as financial literacy, rights advocacy, and personal empowerment. Beyond education, the Girls Support Program serves as a catalyst for community resilience and stability, ensuring that B&Z's impact reverberates far beyond its participants.

Program Overview

Targeted intervention for at-risk adolescent girls, with a focus on Syrian refugee girls in Lebanon. Key Elements:

Rapid household assessments to identify "invisible" girls in high-risk communities. Weekly learning sessions are held in protected, all-female spaces and led by refugee mentors. Tailored content covering health, nutrition, financial literacy, self-esteem, and rights. Engagement of boys in sessions addressing communication, self-respect, and gender roles. Establishment of a community access channel via WhatsApp for health inquiries. Identification and training of junior mentors from among participating girls.

Results

Reached 212 adolescent girls (ages 10-14) with weekly sessions. Engaged 76 early-married girls in sessions focusing on negotiation and safety. Reached 80 mothers and mothers-in-law with sessions addressing stress management and relationship issues. Engaged 94 boys (ages 11-13) in sessions covering communication and gender roles. Received anonymous health-related calls, including 80 from boys. Identified 5 potential future mentors (ages 10-15).



Empowering Adolescent Girls in Refugee Camps in Lebanon

The Girls Roster project implemented by Basmeh & Zeitooneh, in partnership with Population Council, aims to empower adolescent girls between the ages of 10 and 15 years old who are at risk of child marriage, as well as married girls between the ages of 13 and 17 years old, in the Shatila and Burj Barajneh refugee camps in Beirut and Mount Lebanon area in Lebanon. Through psychosocial support (PSS) and life skills awareness sessions, the project equips girls with the skills to make informed decisions about their future, negotiate their rights, and access sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR) and equal opportunities for education and services.

The project also targets girls' gatekeepers, including their mothers, mother-in-law, and brothers, and aims to increase awareness about the risks of child marriage and early pregnancy, and encourage them to advocate for girls' rights. The project adopts a community leadership approach, where female community members (mentors) between the ages of 18 and 35 are trained on mentoring and PSS provision skills to lead and deliver the sessions. The female mentors are recruited from the same communities where girls are targeted and aim to create a mentoring structure based in the same community, thereby creating a female-centered safer space in the community. This project has had a significant impact on the girls who have engaged in it. Pre- and post assessments conducted on 500 girls who participated in the project showed an increase in SRHR knowledge, access to SRHR, family planning, nutrition, self-efficacy, access to safe and social networks, and a shift in gender attitudes. For example, the participants reported feeling able to focus on their aims and accomplish their goals, believing they have a greater chance of protecting their own interests, having friends in the camp and a female friend in their community with whom they can discuss their problems, and saving money for emergencies.

Success stories and highlights from the Girls Roster project include a 13-year-old girl who gained the knowledge and confidence to refuse her engagement to be married and is now back in school and advocating for other girls in her community to have the same opportunities. Another success story is of a 14-year-old girl who became a peer leader after gaining the skills to build strong relationships with her peers and mentors, and supports other girls who were struggling with similar challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Girls Roster project has demonstrated the importance of empowering adolescent girls and providing them with the knowledge, skills, and resources to make informed decisions about their lives. By adopting a community leadership approach and engaging gatekeepers, the project has successfully created safer spaces for girls and encouraged positive social change.

Although the project officially ended in March 2023, its impact will continue to be felt in the lives of the girls and communities it served.

Food Security & Livelihoods Program

Providing hope for a future within a refugee community begins with getting the basics right. We know that without meeting basic human needs, even the best developmental programs can't take root and flourish.

Our Food Security and Livelihoods program provides temporary provision of food, cash, and non-food items. Since inception, it has grown into an integrated approach, delivering components such as cash for work, asset replacement, and access to capital, as well as support for people to find employment and develop their skills.

These are all designed to provide the training, skills, and knowledge for our communities to grow independently. Plus the opportunity to sustain themselves and their families now and into the future. All aspects of the program ensure the inclusion and empowerment of women and other vulnerable groups.

Our activities encompass a range of initiatives. In Tripoli, we engage in vertical farming with 25 participants. In the Bekaa region, we collaborate with 200 farmers. We support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) with tens of owners. Additionally, we implement cash-for-work activities with hundreds of workers. Lastly, we work with 30 women involved in dairy production.



Project Highlight Promoting women entrepreneurs in agriculture (PWEA)

Project Summary

To promote and strengthen the resilience of the agricultural sector in Central and West Bekaa through supporting 3 women cooperatives led by Lebanese women and 40 Syrian and Lebanese women workers by providing them with the needed technical and in-kind support to enhance their productive capacities and their well-being.

Achievements

"Technical and Financial Support for Women's Cooperatives in Al-Karak and Al-Khiyarah, in addition to the local Kitchen in Majdal Anjar".

"Providing Employment Opportunities for 40 Women from the Local Community and Refugees for 30 Days under the Cashfor-Work Program, Along with Providing In-kind Grants".

"Distribution of Safety Equipment and Agricultural Tools to 46 Female Workers".

"Agricultural and Food Processing Training, Along with Business Management Training for 61 Women, Including Workers and Cooperative Members, by Specialized Trainers".

"Provision of Agricultural Workers for 20 Farms in Majdal Anjar, Along with Providing In-kind Grants".

"Food Manufacturing and Business Management Training for 12 Women from Barelias and El Marj Engaged in Homebased Food Manufacturing, Along with Providing In-kind Grants for Them".



Linda's Journey: From Adversity to Entrepreneurial Success

Linda is a 64-year-old woman from Zawtar El Charqiyeh, lives in the Bekaa, and is a mother of four. She's a determined entrepreneur who embarked on her business journey due to challenging economic circumstances plaguing her and her family.

Linda's story begins with the establishment of her production cooperative, a partnership she shared with her husband in the food pantry industry. Together, they thrived for many years, driven by a shared vision. However, tragedy struck when Linda's husband passed away.

Starting the business was no easy feat. Linda rented the locale from her cousin, as she faced financial challenges in convincing the family to invest in the venture. She resorted to loans to renovate the locale. Gradually, she paid off her debts by selling her products, expanding her operations, and investing in new machinery.

Linda's path intersected with Basmeh & Zeitooneh when we reached out to her – under the Food Security and Livelihood program and in partnership with Porticus, within the framework of the "Supporting women entrepreneurs in agriculture In Central and West Bekaa" project. Initially, she hesitated, but her reservations dissolved when Basmeh & Zeitooneh offered her individuals who would help her work through the cash-for-work initiative embedded in the project. They also provided her with the tools and aterials necessary to boost her production capabilities. This support reinvigorated her business and bolstered her confidence.

The project's goal was to strengthen Lebanon's agricultural sector. It supports women-led agricultural cooperatives with technical assistance and in-kind support while also assisting vulnerable Syrian and Lebanese workers. Furthermore, the project fosters networking among agriculture stakeholders, cooperatives, and workers to exchange experiences, offer mutual support, and facilitate market access and workforce opportunities, and reduce social tensions.

With this support from B&Z, Linda's cooperative flourished, attracting new customers and retaining loyal patrons. Beyond tangible benefits, the project offered vital psychosocial support. Linda, initially burdened by accumulating debts, found solace and strength in these support sessions. They cleared her mind and empowered her to move forward. In her words, "I felt stronger, I stood on my feet, and I will continue to do so. I find comfort in work." The psychosocial support provided financial stability as well as the mental fortitude needed to overcome adversity. on her community.

From her modest beginnings, Linda ventured into entrepreneurship, navigated challenges, and achieved success. Her participation in the project played a pivotal role in her journey, providing the resources and emotional support necessary for her to thrive in her chosen field. Today, Linda's cooperative thrives, attracting new customers and making a positive impact on her community.

Project Highlight My Career My Choice

Project Summary

The project aims to empower young women by providing them with the necessary skills and opportunities to take control of their career choices. This will be accomplished by offering high-quality career services, life skills training, and suitable job placement and/or vocational training. Considering the difficult economic conditions that businesses are facing, the project will also focus on strengthening the capacity and resilience of micro and small enterprises (MSEs) to navigate the current crises. This will increase the likelihood that women remain employed even after job placement.

Achievements

156 young women were able to make informed life choices thanks to high-quality career services and life skills training.

The employability of **124** young women was improved through suitable job placement and/or vocational training.

39 micro and small enterprises were stabilized and coached to do business recovery plans and provide job opportunities to young women.

Success Story

14 participants, hailing from different backgrounds, found a new sense of hope through employment opportunities offered by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). This diverse group consisted of six Lebanese and eight Syrians, each with their own unique aspirations and dreams.





Unlocking Potential: Munira's Path with 'My Career, My Choice'

Meet Munira, a 29-year-old single resident of Beirut, Lebanon, where the pursuit of a livelihood often meets daunting challenges. In the face of a fiercely competitive job market and limited employability prospects, Munira's life took a transformative turn when she learned about the "My Career, My Choice" project through friends who had participated in it.

The essence of the "My Career, My Choice" project lies in its mission to empower women. It commences with a comprehensive life skills course, paving the way for vocational training and internships. Graduates receive certifications endorsed by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education in Lebanon, positioning them for success in the job market.

For Munira, this project was a lifeline. She eagerly enrolled and embarked on the Life Skills course, enhancing her proficiency in business English and computer skills. What stood out most for her was the warmth and kindness she received from the project's staff and leaders. "The most special thing when you are trying to explore something new is having kind people to support you," she expressed.

Munira's journey illuminated the stark contrast between classroom knowledge and real-world business dynamics.

"I discovered a whole new world when it came to business—things you don't get to learn in school," she reflected. However, under the project's guidance, she not only acquired practical skills but also nurtured her self-assurance.

In the beginning, self-doubt clouded Munira's path as she grappled with the intimidating job market. Yet, "My Career, My Choice" played a pivotal role in helping her conquer these fears, one step at a time, enabling her to make informed decisions and life choices. Today, Munira thrives as a data entry clerk for a restaurant supply company—a role she once considered beyond her grasp. "Today I am a data entry clerk, and I enjoy my job, eagerly anticipating what the future holds," she proudly declares.

Munira's story is a compelling testament to the profound impact of the "My Career, My Choice" project. It serves as a straightforward yet powerful reminder that with support and the right opportunities, individuals like Munira can carve out their path in the world and overcome the challenges of a harsh reality.

Project Highlight Shabake support for a better community in Shatila

The 12-month Shabake 2 project's main aim is to contribute to the vulnerability reduction of the most socio-economically vulnerable people affected by the crisis in Shatila, where people are suffering from a lack of job opportunities, low income, poor hazardous infrastructure, tensions, & lack of safety due to drug dealers and the presence of armed gangs in the camp. This deteriorated socio-economic situation is caused by the isolation of the camp & the neglect of the local government.

The Shabake 2 project adopts 2 modalities:

1) Cash Based Programming (CFW) through minor fixing and cleaning of common infrastructure.

2) Support local businesses by supporting nano, small, micro, & social enterprises with technical training & in-kind grants. The project reached the global objective through the following specific objectives:

4 small & micro enterprises in Shatila camp can retain and/or create jobs, focusing on improved job opportunities by improving the overall business turnover.

42 family-based nanobusinesses are able to sustain & stabilize themselves through technical & financial support.

Promote the social business concept by offering support (financial, technical, & networking) to 5 social enterprises in Shatila.

Through cash-for-work activities in the camp (400 participants, 390 workers, and 10 team leaders), the project aims to improve the social resilience & living conditions of communities through minor fixing and cleaning of shared public infrastructure.

The intervention helped reduce gender inequalities in the camp by actively encouraging women's participation in the cash-for-work & SMEs' support pillars, the project took into account the root obstacles, that are preventing women from accessing services & participating in the camp life, through offering the necessary gender sensitive support through ensuring nursery services, female staff to ensure women safe place, offering works, in cash for work activity, that are suitable & safe for women, in addition supporting men through CFW & businesses pillars will help them restore their role as households providers hence will affect positively the households dynamic & will contribute to the decrease of GBV cases against women where one of the reasons of GBV is the inability of men to fulfill their roles leading to tensions & negative coping mechanisms that include violence.



Project Highlight Hydroponic Continuity

Phase 2 (2023-2024) of the project aimed to Promote and provide access to diversified and quality food and income generation opportunities, and improve the livelihoods of vulnerable landless households through hydroponic farming to improve the well-being of vulnerable host community and refugees through the following:

- Create a local agriculture producer group (9 farmers: 5 syrians, 4 Lebanese, 3 males, 6 females), and provide them with business and agriculture training in order to be able to manage and run the farm, where their livelihoods and food security are improved.

- During the 2023-2024 ,the producer group produced several crops and sold them in the markets through the linkage markets that created for them.

- Provided TOT training on home-based hydroponic technique for 13 participants (4 Lebanese, 9 Syrians, 7 males, 6 female), and provided them with Food for training.

- The 13 participants outreached and identified 75 community members (38 Lebanese, 37 Syrians, 12 males, 63 females) and provided them with an awareness-raising sessions on the importance of home-based hydroponic techniques.

- The group also received social cohesion sessions to ensure they can work seamlessly together despite their diverse backgrounds.

Click here to check our video.





Project Highlight Improving the Livelihoods of Refugees and Host Community in Central and West Bekaa

The main objective of this project was to fulfil the short-term needs for food for the most food insecure population and improve income generation for small-scale farmers The project included two components:

Cash for Work component:

- Improvement and cleaning of existing irrigation network systems (sub-canals)
- Improvement and cleaning of rainwater channels
- On-the-job training on environment (sorting)

Agricultural component:

- Theoretical and Practical Field Training on Integrated Crop Management
- Distribution of Agricultural Inputs
- Market linkages directly with retailers

Achievements:

- 482 vulnerable persons within targeted communities were supported through cash-for-work opportunities, which consisted of cleaning irrigation sub-canals and rainwater drainage canals. Cash generated through these activities improved the participants' food security and short-term income opportunities.

- 299 small-scale farmers received theoretical and practical field training on integrated crop management and agricultural input vouchers that consisted of fertilizers, drip irrigation systems, and seeds. This has helped in improving the living conditions of small-scale farmers by strengthening their practical knowledge of integrated crop management and through the provision of agricultural inputs, thus increasing income generation and responding to the most critical gap within the local agriculture value chain.



Project Highlight Women Dairy producers

Since 2021, we've been working with Expertise France and Development & Peace Caritas Canada to support Syrian refugees and Lebanese women impacted by the Beirut port blast in Karantina and Bourj Hammoud. The goal over the last three years has been to help the participants, strengthen the sustainability of the dairy women producers group in target areas, boost their income, and empower them economically and socially.

With two dairy plants in Karantina and one point-of-sale shop in Bourj Hammoud, we aim to show how dairy contributes to global food systems, promoting healthy diets and sustainable livelihoods.

The Project aims to:

Strengthen the Dairy Women Producers Group:

The project focuses on enhancing the sustainability of the dairy women producers group in Karantina and Bourj Hammoud. This involves providing training on best dairy production practices, introducing new technologies, and improving product quality. The group has been equipped with the necessary skills and tools to ensure the consistent production of high-quality dairy products, thereby making their operations more sustainable and competitive.

Boost Income and Economic Empowerment:

By emphasizing income-generating activities, the project aims to increase the earnings of Syrian refugees and Lebanese women involved in dairy production. The initiative offers financial literacy training, business management courses, and market access support. The income from dairy sales not only benefits the women and their families but also strengthens the local economy.

Social Empowerment and Community Building:

The project has fostered a supportive environment where women can connect, share experiences, and collaborate. Through capacity-building workshops and community engagement activities, participants have gained confidence and leadership skills, empowering them to take on active roles in their communities.

Click here to check our video.



Peacebuilding Program

Our peace education curriculum targets children and youths to help improve their wellbeing and provide them with the skills to resolve conflict in peaceful ways, as well as accept and befriend others who are from different backgrounds. This program has been implemented since 2015 and has proven over and over again, despite changing contexts and diverse areas, that it has a strong impact on the participants (96% of participants have shown a good wellbeing and positive coping capacities after the end of the cycles).

The youths and women empowerment program ensures that community committees build the necessary skills and conduct conflict and context analysis in order to better understand the root causes of tensions within their communities and find the entry point to implement social initiatives that would help alleviate those tensions.

In 2023, we implemented peacebuilding activities within projects ensuring host and refugee community participants work closely together in a safe and accepting environment.



Peacebuilding Activities in Livelihoods Projects and related actions

Through the hydroponics vertical farming project that is being implemented in Tripoli, peacebuilding sessions were conducted with the committee members who will be managing and leading the project independently after the end of B&Z's support. This is crucial as the group is diverse and includes members from the host and refugee communities. The 8 sessions offered to the groups ensured cohesion between the members over a shared objective and awareness of power dynamics, with a focus on challenging stereotypes, ensuring marginalized groups have a clear space and place to express themselves and their concerns and have leadership roles, and building cohesive group dynamics.

Through the support of women-led cooperatives in Bekaa, social cohesion sessions were also conducted with the different cooperative members who are both from the refugee and host communities to ensure inclusion in decision-making processes, respect and friendliness in the workspace, and building a strong team spirit that is based on mutual benefit, acceptance of diversity, and common purpose and goals.

Through our efforts in continuing support to committees beyond the scope of projects and ensuring the sustainability of their work and impact, B&Z continued supporting the active committees that were targeted in the previous year in our peacebuilding project in Bekaa, through close coordination with them and some financial support to alleviate some of the logistical burdens on them and ensure their activities can continue despite the economic situation.

B&Z has also incorporated conflict-sensitive approaches in all of its mainstream programs to ensure that the interventions do not cause any tensions or exacerbate existing ones, but, on the contrary, try to contribute to peace and coexistence in its projects, from the design phases to the implementation, to the evaluation stages.

Civil Society Enablement Program

We have the knowledge. We have the experience. That's why we can help support other initiatives, grassroots NGOs, and CSOs that share our journey.

In 2018, we initiated a Civil Society Enablement program – stemming from our belief in the crucial role of civil society in the advancement of communities in all social, economic, political, and environmental aspects.

We develop partnerships with local civil society organizations, based on our core values: non-violence, citizenship, and gender equality.

Our capacity-strengthening projects target local civil society organizations and small community-based organizations, equipping them with the skills and knowledge needed to develop and ensure a sustainable future. We do this through tailored training, coaching, and financial support.

We co-create learning journeys - mentoring our participants to design and implement projects that focus on human rights and democratization. We continuously improve our CSE program based on the lessons learned from these journeys for increased impact.



Project Highlight Fostering Refugee Leadership

The Fostering Refugee Leadership Project in Lebanon, in partnership with the Resourcing Refugee Leadership Initiative (rrli), aims to enhance the preparedness and sustainability of Refugee-Led Organizations (RLOs) by nurturing leadership skills within their community. It does so by providing tailored technical and financial support, enabling them to become effective agents of change within their communities. The project's inclusive framework prioritizes refugee leadership in addressing community needs, implementing interventions, and improving social impact for both refugees and host communities.

This cycle culminated with 39 RLO pitching their written project proposal, ideas of social interventions, and budget to an expert jury, and showcasing their initiatives in front of a large audience.

Following the evaluation process, 17 RLOs in Lebanon (Beqaa, North, South, Beirut, and Mount Lebanon) were selected to benefit from sub-granting support of up to \$20,000. Additionally, they received customized coaching and mentoring support. The sub-granting component enables the RLOs to design and implement interventions that bring their vision to life, contribute to their mission, and generate meaningful impact.

Click here to check our video.







SHABABIC THEATER

Shababic Theater aims to create interactive theater performances and awareness videos, providing a safe space for the community to express their feelings and emotions. Their project focuses on implementing an interactive theater intervention with underserved women and youth in North Lebanon.

Ana Hon

Ana Hon is a media platform operating in North Lebanon. They are set to implement digital media training courses and create daily news content specifically aimed at youth. The objective is to provide young individuals with a platform to share their accomplishments and showcase stories from underrepresented areas.

Roaya cultural Corner center - RCCC

Roaya Corner Cultural Center, located in Nahr Al-Bared camp, focuses on working with children and young people in the area. Their project involves organizing regular lectures, courses, and workshops aimed at nurturing artistic and creative talents. Additionally, they provide psychological support sessions utilizing art therapy techniques.







Telescope

Telescope works towards a society that is aware of and enjoys its economic and social rights and is an active participant in the development and environmental issues for society in all its categories. Telescope's project will support human rights for the advancement of society, through training courses and activities.

Naltaqi Wa Nubadir

Naltaqi Wa Nubadir will be implementing training courses for political awareness. They will train and empower youth with ideas within politics and strengthen their capacities.

Our strength is our work

Our Strength is Our Work is a Tripoli-based initiative that provides training sessions on dessert-making, sewing, and clothes upcycling. Their project targets girls and women in North Lebanon in order to make environment-friendly products and support their livelihoods.



همة شباب





Hemmet Shabab

Hemmat Shabab is an initiative that will be implementing a recycling plan within Bourj Hammoud in order to make the area environmentally friendly.

Witness

Witness is a Palestinian Association for Human Rights in Beirut, which is concerned with the conditions of the Palestinian people throughout Lebanon. The association will be implementing training, education, and legal assistance to Palestinian refugees in the field of research and advocacy.

OXYGEN

Oxygen works with Syrian refugee children in the Shatila refugee camp in Beirut. With their project they will continue their education journey, reducing illiteracy and teaching children of the camps.







A Knitted Story

A Knitted Story is an initiative that was established and works in Bekaa. They will be targeting women and girls from the refugee and host communities in the region. By making knitted dolls and ornaments they aim at providing job opportunities and empowering the role of women.

Damnoon

Damnoon is a legal support team that works in the central Bekaa region (Saadnayel, Bar Elias, and Marj). They will be implementing their project supporting Syrian refugees by providing legal assistance, consultations, and awareness through their team of lawyers and their mobile phone application.

RoboGeex Academy

Robogeex Academy is a team of professional engineers that will be implementing training sessions and courses on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Their goal is to enhance the skills of young people and all who are interested in the area of Bekaa in order to share knowledge and work on research and development in the science field.







War Made Me Strong

War Made Me Strong is an initiative that works in the Bekaa region targeting all people affected by war. The project they will be engaging in will include varied workshops on montage, graphic design, and film screening, in addition to wool knitting and waste recycling.

Basmt Amal (Smile of Hope)

Basmt Amal (Smile of Hope) is an initiative that works in Bar Elias and Deir Zenoun in the Bekaa Valley. Their main objective is to empower girls and women with knowledge, reduce the gender gap, and change the stereotypical role.

With their project, they will provide recreational activities such as dancing lessons and drawing and painting sessions to deliver psychosocial support and raise awareness on different issues.

Together for Justice

Together for Justice is an initiative that targets women in Zahle. They are aiming to enable women's effective and influential role in society. Their project consists of providing them with literacy sessions and raising awareness on topics such as gender-based violence, women's health, and women's rights.



Pathways School

athways School is an initiative that targets refugees and Lebanese children, between the ages of 5-15 years. With their project, they will continue improving the school and enhancing its education.



Sawa Rabina Team

Sawa Rabina team operates in Arsal in Bekaa Valley. They will be working on spreading volunteerism culture among people in the region from all nationalities and ages through training and dialogue sessions.

Closing Ceremonies

Seventeen RLOs (Refugee-led Organizations) carried out different projects covering a wide range of focus areas, including education, recycling, content creation, human rights advocacy, legal support, knitting, psychosocial support (PSS), and empowerment for women. They wrapped up their projects with two final closing ceremonies.

At these ceremonies, held in the North and Beqaa, the RLOs displayed their community contributions. They showcased the products made by participants during the projects, such as knitted items, sewing projects, upcycled clothing, and ornaments. These products were also available for sale, providing an extra source of income for the participants.

During the ceremonies, each RLO shared their journey, from the beginning of their projects to where they are now, and how this journey has positively affected them. They presented their projects, experiences, and success stories, giving insight into their learning experiences and how it changed their lives.

Additionally, all RLOs developed important policies on finance, protection, MEAL (monitoring, evaluation, accountability, learning) and codes of conduct. They also gained skills in administration, finance, and program management, with some receiving new funding from different donors.



FRL Project - Second Cycle

We're excited to announce the launch of the second round of the Fostering Refugee Leadership Project by the end of 2023. Building on the achievements of the first cycle, this new phase aims to keep making a positive impact on both the host and refugee communities in Lebanon.

The first cycle of the project brought about significant change by offering technical and financial aid to various initiatives and organizations, strengthening their leadership roles. This assistance resulted in the successful completion of multiple projects, contributing to the empowerment of both society and individuals in the region.

As we begin the second cycle, we're dedicated to advancing our efforts in nurturing refugee leadership and boosting the resilience and capabilities of both refugee and host communities. Through ongoing cooperation and assistance, our goal is to develop sustainable solutions that address the challenges faced by refugees and their host communities.

We're thankful for the support and commitment of all our partners and stakeholders who have played a part in the project's success so far. Together, we've made a real difference in the lives of many individuals and communities, and we're eager to continue this vital work in the upcoming cycle.





Stitching Hope: Empowering Resilience and Creativity in a Refugee's Journey

Elham lives in the bustling city of Tripoli in North Lebanon. At the age of 35, she had already endured more challenges than most people experience in a lifetime. She arrived in Lebanon from Syria in 2011, seeking refuge from the devastating war that had torn her homeland apart.

Elham was not alone; she was a mother of six children, all of whom relied on her strength and determination to provide for them. Life as a refugee was far from easy, but Elham refused to let her circumstances define her.

One day, Elham came across an initiative called 'Kowetna B 3amalna,' which was supported by the Fostering Refugee Leadership project. 'Kowetna B 3amalna' is a grantee initiative by Basmeh & Zeitooneh and specifically focuses on empowering refugee women. The project was implemented in Lebanon in partnership with the Resourcing Refugee Leadership Initiative (RRLI) under the umbrella of the Civil Society Enablement unit housed at Basmeh & Zeitooneh and it aims to enhance the preparedness and sustainability of Refugee-Led Organizations (RLOs). The initiative provides participants with training and resources to upcycle clothes and create unique designs for sale.

Though Elham had no prior experience in sewing or design, she saw this as an opportunity to learn something

new and possibly create a source of income for her family, and she then joined the initiative.

Initially, Elham found herself overwhelmed by the complexities of sewing and designing. The fire that had ravaged her house in Syria had left her vocal cords damaged, posing communication and learning challenges. However, the nurturing environment of the initiative and the constant encouragement from the project's mentors fueled her determination to persevere.

She learned how to create beautiful designs on paper and then translate them into real clothes.

In addition to the technical skills, the initiative also offered psychosocial support sessions for the participants. These sessions proved to be a crucial part of Elham's healing process. She found a safe space to express her feelings and fears. It was a place where she could begin to heal emotionally and regain control of her life. As Elham participated in the training, she slowly started gaining confidence.

With newfound skills and a renewed spirit, Elham completed her first set of five beautifully upcycled garments. Her eyes sparkled with joy as she held them up, proud of what she had achieved. "I felt that I can produce," she expressed with heartfelt enthusiasm.

As Elham's journey with the "Kowetna B 3amalna" initiative continued, she faced moments of self-doubt. The challenges of balancing work, motherhood, and her health often made her question whether she could continue. However, as Elham observed the results of her hard work, her confidence soared, she witnessed how the efforts of her and her brought positive change to the community.

Earthquake Response

In the early hours of 6 February, multiple earthquakes, the strongest being of 7.8 magnitude on the Richter scale, struck southern Turkey and northern Syria. The epicenter was identified as Gaziantep, near the Turkish-Syrian border. At least 1,206 aftershocks have been confirmed as of the date of publication.

The earthquakes have created a disaster of colossal proportions; casualty numbers keep climbing. The disaster has destroyed many homes, basic service infrastructure, and installations, leaving many people without food, water, and shelter and in urgent need of emergency medical and psychosocial assistance.

As of 14 February, at least 5,791 people have reportedly been killed and 10,041 injured. This includes 4,377 reported deaths and 7,692 reported injured in northwest Syria, with many still missing. These numbers likely under represent the true scale of needs. The humanitarian community estimates that 8.8 million people in Syria have been affected by the earthquake. Several factors are influencing and exacerbating the severity of humanitarian needs, including pre-existing extensive humanitarian needs, logistical and access constraints to certain areas, winter conditions, and an ongoing cholera outbreak. In Northwest Syria, 2,968,380 people were impacted across 148 cities and towns.

As of 28th February, more than 10,000 buildings have been completely or partially destroyed in Syria. Many people living in the affected areas in Syria were already living in tents prior to the quakes; they have needed shelters equipped for winter and harsh weather conditions. Thousands of families have been without shelter in open areas or seeking refuge in damaged buildings, existing internally displaced people's (IDP) sites, reception centers, collective centers, or being temporarily hosted by other families. At least 454 schools were reported to have been destroyed and/or damaged during the earthquake. Education activities are temporarily suspended in areas declared as disaster zones. Limited access to WASH services in earthquake-affected areas puts people at risk of waterborne diseases, with 64% of those affected having WASH needs and over 80% requiring hygiene kits according to initial estimates from WASH partners. Top WASH needs of persons displaced by the earthquakes include water, water tanks, latrines, hygiene items, and sewage infrastructure. The remaining 3.2 million people have been affected indirectly and in host communities, including affected farmers and agriculture in urban areas.

Our partners coordinated and identified needs rapidly because of their long-standing presence. They worked through five

community centers and provided various activities to the affected communities, from IDPs to host communities.

Basmeh & Zeitooneh responded to the affected populations in Turkey (Maraach and Gazi Antib), and our partners responded in Syria through five components: 1. MPCA; 2. WASH services; 3. Food security and livelihood activities; 4. Shelter and NFI; 5. Protection services.



Response Activities Immediate Response

These activities were aimed at addressing the immediate needs and challenges posed by the situation to minimize harm, mitigate risks, and restore stability:

Support Civil Defence: Provided support to a volunteer organization known for their efforts in emergency response and disaster relief. This included aiding their operations in rubble removal, search and rescue, and other critical tasks to restore normalcy.

Support Local Initiatives: Provided support to a volunteer organization for their emergency response efforts. This included assisting their operations as part of their response to the affected people.

Medical Support: Delivered primary medical equipment and medicines to a local hospital. This aimed to enhance their capacity to treat injuries and provide medical care to the affected population.

Ready-to-Eat Meals Distribution: Distributed ready-to-eat meals containing items such as croissants, drinking water, natural juice, dates, mortadella, and bread.

Daily Hot Meals Distribution: Established a field kitchen to distribute daily hot meals to households in collective shelters. Ready-to-Eat Kits Distribution: Distributed ready-to-eat kits to ensure affected individuals had access to nourishing food without the need for complex preparation.

Baby Kits Distribution: Distributed baby kits containing essential items for infants to families with young children in the affected areas.

Clothes Vouchers Distribution: Distributed clothes vouchers to affected households, allowing participants to choose clothing from stores. Transportation was provided to ensure their safety.

Duty of Care: Ensured the safety and well-being of affected field employees by providing necessary accommodations, safety training, and support.

Non-Food Item (NFI) Kits Distribution: Distributed kits containing blankets, mattresses, pillows, tent covers, heaters, heating materials, and solar kits for lighting.



Response Activities Short & Medium Term Recovery

These activities were implemented after the disaster to facilitate the transition from emergency relief to long-term recovery and resilience-building efforts. The following activities aim to address the root causes of vulnerability, restore essential services and infrastructure, and promote sustainable development in affected communities:

Food Baskets Distribution: Distributed food baskets providing essential nutritional items.

Dignity Kit Distribution: Distributed dignity kits consisting of women's underwear, sanitary packs, and hand cream.

Hygiene Kits Distribution: Distributed hygiene kits containing essential items for personal and household hygiene.

Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance: Supported selected households with cash assistance to cover a range of diverse needs and strengthen the local market.

WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene): Provided essential hygiene and sanitation services, maintained established WASH units, and established new units in the newly created camp.

Non-Formal/Remedial Education Activities: Carried out educational activities, including lessons in various subjects, and distributed stationary kits to children.

Orphanages Support: Provided technical training and in-kind support to selected orphanages. Training sessions included Psychological First Aid, Psychosocial Support, Child Protection Standards, Communication Skills with Children, Child Safeguarding Policy, and Referral Pathways.

Cash for Work: Identified community needs and supported recipients in rehabilitating public areas, common spaces, and infrastructure, or providing agricultural support.

Rental Support: Secured housing for families who lost their homes, covered rental fees for six months, and provided cash support for immediate basic needs.

Respond to Displacement Emergencies: Provided vital support to displaced households, facilitated their movement, distributed essential non-food items and food baskets, and disbursed emergency cash assistance.

Winterization Response: Distributed heating materials, non-food item kits, and emergency cash to individuals and households affected by floods and storms, aiming to alleviate the immediate impact of natural disasters.

Protection services: As part of the emergency response to the populations affected by the earthquake in Turkey and Syria during 2023, a comprehensive range of protection activities was implemented. These included psychosocial support sessions aimed at addressing the emotional and psychological needs of individuals and groups.

Additionally, individual and group counseling sessions were conducted to provide tailored support and guidance. Recognizing the importance of specialized services, referrals to external service providers were facilitated for those requiring further assistance.

Moreover, vocational training programs were organized to enhance the skills and employability of the affected population. For orphanages specifically, capacity-building training sessions were provided to improve the care and support delivered to orphaned children.

Furthermore, individual and group counseling sessions within orphanage settings were offered to address the unique needs of these vulnerable children. The initiatives also encompassed mental health and psychosocial support interventions, as well as awareness sessions on gender-based violence (GBV) to promote safety and well-being within the communities served. A total of 5565 individuals benefited from the protection services.



El- Far3i Event

Chit-Chat with El far3i:

Prior to the event featuring the artist "El Far3i" at "Riwak Beirut" on Thursday, September 28th, a chit-chat gathering convened, drawing an attendance of 50 individuals, including the commissioners from Shatila Camp. Facilitator Zeina Shahla guided the discussion, alongside mediator Boushra Adi, delving into various aspects of the artist's life and works. The conversations touched upon the significance of places and spaces for both the artist and the community. The active participation of the audience vividly illuminated their unique perspectives.

Music, Song, and Video Production:

Through the creation of a song that delves into the restricted spatial conditions within the camp, accompanied by an evocative visual production that abstracts the lyrics and introduces the camp's essence, the project aims to extend its message to a broader audience, transcending the physical confines of the camp and the nation. This audio-visual endeavor enhances the narrative's emotional resonance and aesthetic allure, offering an intimate portrayal of the community's reality.

Click here to check our video.



The composition grapples with the multifaceted challenges arising from the scarcity of public spaces within the camp. The project encompasses several key components:

Collaboration with a renowned hip-hop artist for the production

The conception of the song's theme, lyrics, and musical arrangement, informed by the insights of the community members Engaging musicians and budding talents within the camp to explore the opportunities and obstacles in music production, with a focus on the camp's unique context

Complete song production, including recording, editing, mixing, and mastering

Release of the song on the artist's social media platform

Presentation of the song at a music event during the B&Z festival held on September 30 at Metro el Madina

The concert attracted an audience of over 600 attendees, resulting in an estimated income of around \$9,000.



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