

"Because it's important to be with them" - distributions and other emergency help as a part of „Solidarity with Beirut” project

Emergency aid is not one of our priorities, as we try to focus mainly on the reconstruction of the destroyed places and on the cultural and educational sphere. However, in the face of such great tragedies as war, a catastrophe (an explosion in a port) or an economic crisis, we cannot remain passive to such needs.

Our response to the disaster

Immediately after the explosion in the port of Beirut on 4th of August 2020, we reacted very dynamically. Everything was a big chaos and it took us some time to prioritize. We supported hastily created field kitchens, the purchase of basic supplies, medicines, and the relocation of people, including African migrant women, who found themselves on the street, as the explosion also wiped out the poorest settlements inhabited by migrants.



Later, the help became more purposeful. As in the case of rebuilding the damage, it was important for us to spend time together, help and come back. Create a bond. It was amazing to experience the power of being together. Often more important than providing with some packages or other type of humanitarian aid.



What we did so far as an emergency aid?

- Distribution of 190 food packages, 100 heaters, 1000 face masks, 648 boxes of baby milk;
- Support for the field kitchen in financing the distribution of min. 100 meals.
- Help to the 30 African migrant women including payment for rent, purchase of vitamins, food and hygiene products, arrangement of medical visits.
- Purchase of medicines for Syrian refugees and elderly, payment for two surgeries (eye and abdominal) and two medical treatment for a child.
- Help for single mothers (powdered milk and diapers).
- 2 distributions of the clothes for the poor people in Ain el Remmaneh/Chiyeh.
- Financial support for 6 families, including the widow of warehouse worker who died in the explosion of the port, Little Sisters of Nazareth and the workers of St Michel Church.

Costs: 11 608,24 USD + 800 EUR with a milk donation valued 10 000 USD



Where is Lebanon Heading?

Since the explosion in the Beirut port, we have witnessed a total collapse of all sectors of the economy, education, and a dramatic drop in the level of security:

- The price of a liter of gasoline has increased 25 times! Similarly, the price of electricity, although we must remember that if someone is not able to pay for the generator, he has electricity for 1-2 hours a day.
- There is a shortage of drugs - if we are able to get one in a pharmacy, its price will be 20 times higher than before the crisis.
- Hospitalization is no longer covered by social insurance, even in the case of diseases such as cancer.
- There is a shortage of food, including bread, for which we will pay 30 times more today. Powdered milk for children is available almost exclusively on the black market (one can is the equivalent of approx. 20% of the average monthly salary).
- Internet / telephone is 10 times more expensive.
- The costs of education increased about 5 times.

And all of this might be bearable, but the worst part is that the average salary has dropped from around \$ 1,200 to \$ 70! To illustrate the dramatic times the Lebanese are living in today, let's try to

imagine that we will fill up 20 liters of gasoline, buy bread and some basic items in the store, milk for a child, pay for a power generator for a household of several people, and we are left with nothing from our monthly salary.

The above is combined with the intimidating wave of emigration - especially of young people - there has been an increase in tensions, thefts and attacks. We hear more and more often: "even during the civil war, we were not so bad."

In all of this, starving people still often refuse to accept a food package from us. Their dignity does not allow them to do so. We have to explain to them that the package is not a charity, it is temporary need! Because we still believe that Lebanon will become as beautiful a place to live as its troubled inhabitants deserve!

