“Solidarity with Beirut”

6 years of Mission of Domus Orientalis and Caritas of Łódź in Lebanon

On the 4th of August, 2020, a tragic explosion hit the city of Beirut. Being there, we decided to organise an immediate help. In St. Michael’s Church (Port Area), we met f. Elia, who helped us to create a wonderful Team. People like Sumar or Chadi, whom we met that time, now are the pillars of our Team in Lebanon. Just few days later we’ve started to work.

In 2021 we also created **“YBTE” Young Team Of Domus Orientalis** and launched a project called **“The First Step”**. With time YBTE grew and started to implement cultural and educational activities, in Mar Mkhayel Cultural Center and in Ain el Remmaneh area.

In 2023 we started to support communities from the South of Lebanon, we called the project “Solidarity with Nabatieh”. When the war begun we were trying to provide help to internal refugees and after ceasefire was announced we started to restore damaged apartments in the suburbs of Beirut and the CND School in Nabatieh. Since March 2026 war escalated again and we are still helping to its victims.

During those 6 years, we helped to restore/supply **147 apartments (including 38 after the war)** and **12 other places**, we provided support to **42 workplaces,** distributed and delivered **food packages, medicine, heaters, baby milk** etc. We also installed over 150 lamps with a solar panels to a needy families, provided support for a winter and helped to the **families of firemen who died in the port.**

Total costs for all projects: ***388 000 USD*** **and** ***19 000 EUR*** (including part of administrative costs) with **additional 22 000 USD** (estimated value of baby milk donation) and **23 000 USD** (grant from Polish MFA for solar system for Mar Mkhayel Cultural Centre).

So far, we have been working in the **4 main fields**:

1. Restoration of damaged apartments and other places / mainly replacement of glass, windows, doors, reconstruction of broken walls, provision with equipment and furniture, so people can return their homes.

After the explosion:
a) Port area, Mar Mkhayel and surroundings: works were carried out in 88 (+5 recurring) apartments
b) Ain el Remmenneh estate: 21 apartments and installing elevator.
c) 10 other places (restorations/other support/ 1 recurring)**:** sports club in Burj Hammoud, schools: in Clemenceau, in Ain el Remmaneh, in Nabaa, in Ashrafiyeh, works at the st. Michel's Church, solar panels and Book Corner for the Mar Mkhayel Cultural Center, support for "Beit Marina" in Ashout, Chiyah Park, and by dispensary in Asharifieh.

40 places after the war:

- 19 apartments in Beirut's suburbs- Chiyah, Ain el Remmaneh Hadath an 1 in Ain Saadeh
- South of Lebanon: 18 houses in Kfour and a benches for church and CND School in Nabatieh,

2. „Give a Job!" project

Assistance in the reactivation / opening of **42 workplaces (3 recurring)**, including the renovation works and the purchase of the necessary equipment.

3. **Emergency help**

1st Phase – just after the blast:

- In collaboration with other NGO's: support for the **field kitchen** in 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, single mothers (baby formula, diapers), **medical and financial support** to the families of those who died in the port.

- Organising the **financial support for all 10 families of the firemen who died in the port**. Project was carried with Polish Firemen Brigade.

2nd Phase – providing support according to the changing needs:

- We continued **distribution of food packages** (190 in both phases), f**ace masks** (1000), **cloths** (4 distributions trough a social shop in Ain el Remmaneh), 100 electrical heaters.

- We continued **financial support** (in both phases we've helped 9 families, workers of St Michel's Church and to the "Little Sisters") and **medical** (6 medical treatments/surgeries, medical examination for one girl and we provided medicines for 2 other people).

- We continued **support for the firemen families**: additional financial support for Khaki, Hawa and Qartaba's families, psychological support to one person and help in opening of 2 shops to a Malachee family ("Give a Job!").

- **"Warmth for Beirut"** - suppport for 33 families (including living in the South of Lebanon) with diesel, gas, heaters, wood or generator subscription.

- **"Milk for Beirut"** - 3048 boxes of baby formula was distributed by us.

- **"Light for Beirut"**- installation of 166 lamps with a solar panel: 111 in Beirut area, 50 in the South (Homsiye and Kfour), 5 in Tripoli.

3rd Phase – support for the war victims/ continuation of previous support

- Financial support for 120 families displaced or affected by the war from the donation which came from Vatican.
- From other donation support for other 5 families displaced during the war.
- Support for the FightLife Lebanon sport's club which was providing free trainnings for the people affected by the war.
- Support for 11 families not affected by the war but struggling financially.
- Installation of 12 gas boilers as a part of "Warmth For".

4th Phase – war escalation since March 2026

- 140 packages for people from Beirut, the Suburbs, and South Lebanon, and 405 sweet parcels for children.
- In cooperation with the Nunciature, dispatch of a truckload of food and other supplies to the South (Rmeish/Debel)
- Support for the Hadath field kitchen: covering the cost of feeding 100 people.
- Diapers, powdered milk, and medicines for displaced persons from the Hamra center and others from Beirut and South Lebanon.
- Financial support for 14 families and a theological seminar

4. *„YBTE"* *(„Cause Young people are the Hope!")*

YBTE (YoungBestTeamEver) was created to promote other aspects of our Mission, such as ecological projects, cultural and educational activities and inter-religious dialogue.

All started with a beach cleaning, but today YBTE is not only implementing projects created in Poland but also has it's own initiatives, which will be copied in the other areas, where Domus Orientalis is present.

YBTE
Domus Orientalis

Implementation of the projects created in Poland:

a) "Wojtek Helps":

- Our volunteer, Magda, used Wojtek the Bear to lead artistic and educational workshops, with the added benefit of supporting our projects charitably.

- The author introduced the project to Beirut, training YBTE, which then conducted workshops at Cultural Center Mar Mkhayel, "Beit al Fatat," Chiyah Park, and the NDA Badaro school.

b) "Gardens of Lebanon"

- 3 Editions: "Fiber, Fabric, Bond" (2022, 14 Polish artists, 23 works), "Water, Source, Life" (2023, 33 works by 14 artists), "Wood, Home,Preasence" (2024–2026, 13 artists, 34 works)

- In Lebanon, "Gardens" was shown in Beirut: Chiyah Park CK Mar Mkhayel, La Sagesse University, NDA Badaroo School, and in the south at CND Nabatieh School.

- The project also included "Young Gardens of Lebanon" – workshops for children from Poland and Lebanon.

c) "First Step":

- Scholarship's adoption which was first introduced in Aleppo in 2019 (currently 320 children in the Project), and than in Beirut in the NDA school in Badaroo (77 children so far) and in CND Nabatieh (30 kids).

- YBTE runs various workshops at the school, including two Easter's and Christma's workshops.

Projects inictiated by YBTE:

a) **Green Projects**:

- We started by cleaning the city beach and streets. Then our volunteer, Dany, made souvenirs, flower pots, stands, and boards for the "Gardens of Lebanon" using wood from the damaged apartments we were renovating. We used some of these products for workshops with the children.

b) The Book Corner:

- An unique place created by YBTE in Mar Mkhayel Cultural Center. It is a corner where you can relax, work or read books.
- However, what makes this place special are our monthly meetings, during which we discuss books, invite speakers, or simply discuss selected topics.

c) Paths of the Pheonix

- Topic walks around Beirut for Lebanese and, ultimately, also for Polish tourists.
- Till now, YBTE has developed four paths showcasing history, street art, and architecture, supported by legends and stories.

d) Other projects and activities

- Psychological support: individual therapy for 5 people led by volunteer Hiba, two series of war trauma workshops for children from South Lebanon, initiation of sessions on emotional intelligence;
- CC Mar Mkhayel, Chiyah Park, "Beit al Fatat" - conducting games, activities, and workshops for children, organizing visits to Beirut / visits to Cherfe, distributing pencil cases, sweets, and other items for holidays, fairs, and other occasions / supporting Women's Day and "Senior Week."

- FigthLife Lebanon Sports Club: supporting training costs for 3 children; joint organization of self-defense classes for children in Chiyah Park and displaced children from the center in Hamra.
- Training: 3 coaching sessions for YBTE led by Mona / a first aid and evacuation course / completion of a photography course by volunteer Marie Benoit.
- Media: Anthony, Chloe and Benoit have created a number of amazing videos promoting YBTE;

Partners in Poland and funds

It wouldn't be possible to do such work without a great material support obtained from ordinary Polish donors and through our partners and friends from **Caritas of the Archdiocese of Łódź**, **Caritas Poznań** and **Pracownia Ikon Eleusa**.

It's also worth to mention the baby formula's donation from the Mead Johnson Nutrition Trading Poland Spółka z.o.o, grant from Polish Aid, support form the "Life Rosary" or "Orszak Trzech Króli" for the "Light for Beirut" and "Mandi" Foundation

Partners in Lebanon:

- All above activities were carried out under the umbrella of **St. Michael's Paris in Mar Mkhayel**, with the support of **Redemptoris Mater Liban.** We are constantly collaborating in cost's sharing with **the Sisters of St Augustine in Pennabili, Italy**, who organized a fundraise to help the affected people
- Other partners in the past phases were: **Shift, Arcensiel, WPF, FDCD and TFTF.**

Further actions:

- *"To give them shelter"* - continuation of renovations, especially after the war,
- *"To give them tools to rebuild a decent life"* - development of "Give a Job!"
- *"Because it is important to be with them"* - accompaniment is the essence of our mission. It is based on returning families who received help and being with them in times of crisis or war. That's why visits to the suburbs of Beirut or the south of Lebanon are so important to us. That's why it's so important to respond to their needs and provide emergency help tailored to the situation.
- *"Because Young people are the hope"* - YBTE's activities will, in the long run, help young Lebanese promote their own culture and history. Through its activities, YBTE will also become one of the bridges between Poland and Lebanon.

We are ready for the Further Mission! Walk with us! SIŁA! (STRENGTH)!

Please donate trough our page: www.domwschodni.pl (switch for English and check cathegory: Foreign Missions: Lebanon)