



MD 104 NORWAY
Lions Aid Norway

PROJECT TRIP REPORT - LEBANON November 2021

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PID Svein Berntsen and PDG Morten Singaas, MD 104 completed a project trip to Lebanon in week 45 2021.

Due to covid – 19 we have not followed up our projects with a physical presence since the autumn of 2019, and there was great excitement associated with the visit.

The following projects were visited: • SafeCenter - Bekaa • Khraybet al Jundi School - NSR project • Vocational Training at SafeCenter.

In addition to this, Lions Norway has been a contributor to the many challenges associated with both Covid-19 and the result of the bomb blast in Beirut on 4 August 2020, directly and through LCIF.

All these Norwegian and NSR projects in Lebanon are under the local project leadership of the Beyond Association, a Lebanese NGO.

A smaller 17' USD direct grant from MD 104 to equip kitchens at the Lions Center in Beirut to distribute food to needy families was realized with Lions of MD 351 as project leader. This project was also visited.

All in all, since 2014 Norwegian Lions as project initiators and project leaders, with assistance from the other Nordic countries, UK, Ireland and LCIF, have invested approximately 1,6 million USD in aid programs in Lebanon.

Of this amount around 70% are Norwegian donations.

The rest (30%) is a split between LCIF and the other donor countries.

Short description of the program (see attached detailed program).

SUNDAY 31.10.21 - Travel

We traveled via Paris, arriving in Beirut at 10.20pm and were met and picked up at the airport by Joseph Awad, president at Beyond Association, then driven to Zahle and Grand Kadri Hotel.

MONDAY 01.11.21 – SAFE CENTER.

MD 351 and District Governor Aida Kawar from Jordan were invited and participated in our entire official program.

DG Aida Kawar was accompanied by District Secretary Joe Taoutel. None of these were familiar with the projects of Lions Norway in Bekaa Valley, which was a bit surprising, but they really were impressed. Initially, we received an update of the activities at the center before we received a review with visits to all classrooms. Then we had a meeting with the teachers, where we heard a little about both challenges and experiences, not least during the pandemic. The teachers feel grateful to be able to work at the center, and that their work is valued by the authorities. They are especially grateful to Lions of Norway, which gives them the opportunity to work and develop as teachers in these very special circumstances. In our view, they have a very rare dedication to their work.



The center has become a model for "pre-school teaching" and to an even greater extent for the pedagogical approach and methodology in the work against child labor, not least at the international labor organization ILO. 2021 is the international year in the fight against child labor and what we do is very important. There are 150 million children globally who are exposed to child labor of the worst kind. Attached a study of this where our work and comprehensive curriculum is mentioned as a model.



In the afternoon we met the teachers responsible for Vocational Training. This program has been developed in recent years, where the goal has been to provide offers to the children's parents, so that they can acquire knowledge and experience that the whole family can benefit from. In addition, there is an opportunity for an approach to working life in order to raise money for the family. The offer was also given to the locals. Take a closer look at Tuesday's program.

TUESDAY 02.11.21 – SAFE CENTER/ CHILD PROTECTION CENTER

It was important to us that DG Kawar, head of the Lions MD351, received in-depth information and knowledge of the center. We first received a review of various measures and pedagogical tools in the work with young people with psycho-social challenges. For example, we met a girl who was blind, but who had developed good violin skills. Furthermore, we met other young people who through music found their arenas to work well in. The staff at the center has very high competence, many with master's degrees from various fields in pedagogy, psychology, and not least specialization in trauma treatment and the fight against child labor. Simply impressive.

The center has been realized solely with financial assistance from Norwegian lions and it has become an international model. We also got to meet parents / guardians of children at the center. Everyone expresses gratitude that their kids are being "taken care of" by BEYOND. Their biggest challenge, however, is that the Lebanese authorities cannot guarantee school places in the public school. There are simply too many children and too few student places in the public school, and the economy has radically deteriorated. The conditions can be compared with what we experience in Africa in our projects there. The afternoon was marked by ceremonies for the awarding of Graduation Certifications to the 146 adults who had completed Vocational Training. The mayor of Saadnayel was also present and active. The

project «Vocational Training means the development of knowledge and skills in • Language training (English) • Data • Sewing • Haircuts • Body care. The courses have run over 14 weeks, - 3 x 2 hours / week, - a total of 84 hours. Of the 367 who expressed their interest, 146 completed and passed, 90% young women, many mothers - both single and married. There is undoubtedly a great need for further measures of this kind. Ahead of the ceremony, we experienced strong testimonies from the stage. Four different stories from students of the course was shared with the large congregation, - where everyone thanked Beyond and Lions for the opportunity they were given, and that they were taken care of. They pointed out that the most important thing for them was education, and all expressed hope that the offer of vocational training continued. Finally, it made a strong impression to see the gratitude when the 39 women on the sewing course, and about the same number on "hair dressing / makeup", were each given their new Singer sewing machine with equipment and resp. suitcases with hairdresser and makeup equipment to start their own small business. Many are already underway - often at home.



WDNESDAY 03.11.21 – NSR - SCHOOL

We checked out and left Zahle after breakfast. The day was entirely dedicated to the "opening" of the Khraybet al Jundi school in northern Lebanon. Since the school had already been taken into use, and all considerations of our common safety had been taken care of, the visit and ceremony at the school were no longer and more pompous than strictly necessary. Present were the new and old principal at the school, a representative of local school authorities, parent representative, construction manager, as well as DG Kawar, and several leaders from MD351. After a review and inspection of the extension to the school, there was a nice gathering in the school's meeting room, with simple serving. Gratitude was expressed from all concerned, and both Lions and Beyond each received a plaque as a symbol of this. The importance of the school for the local area was emphasized. PID Svein emphasized in his speech that the school was not only a gift from Lions in the Nordic countries, but that the project through the contribution from LCIF had received financial funding from Lions Clubs

International. Then all the lions that were present, the school management and the municipality confirmed that the extension to the school appeared to be completed in accordance with the agreement, and the project was then confirmed as approved and completed. Reference is made to the previous final report. We then drove back to Beirut. Travel time Zahle-Akkar-Beirut is around 6 hours.



THURSDAY 04.11.21 - FRIDAY 05.11.21 BEIRUT

Thursday was a day off to start discussing the report and any proposals for MD 104. By appointment with PIS Salim Moussan, we had lunch with him and the incoming DG. We also had separate inspections of Beirut city center and Beirut harbor to get a glimpse of the explosion and rebuilding now just over a year later. The dimensions of this were frightening. PID Svein visited the kitchen that MD351 had built after of the bombing on 4 August 2020 and inspected the kitchen project that came about as a result of financial contributions from MD104 as well as some of the work that LCIF allocated to the work via lions in Lebanon.



Morten left Beirut late that night and flew home at night via Paris and Amsterdam. Svein had discussions and a dinner in the evening with Lions leaders in Lebanon and left Beirut on Friday 5 November via Copenhagen to Bergen.

SUMMARY •

The journey was in every way very successful.

- The NSR school project was inspected, approved, and formally completed
- We were able to confirm and strengthen our perception of the importance of the work we started as an ad hoc project and have concluded that for several reasons it is too early to withdraw from this. The need has changed in nature, but is, if possible, even greater and has more long-term global dimensions in it. MD 104's efforts are more important and larger dimensions in themselves than we have been aware of and the situation in Lebanon has radically deteriorated in the last year.
- During the visit of DG Kawar and several talks with leaders in Lebanon, we have laid the foundation for future more constructive cooperation with MD 351.

Lebanon 05.11.21 PDG Morten Singsaas / PID Svein Berntsen

Attachments.

1. Description of developments in Lebanon
2. Sak. Toolkit Child Labour in humanitarian Action