

بسمه و Zeitooneh

**BASMEH & ZEITOONEH**  
RELIEF & DEVELOPMENT

**Basmeh & Zeitooneh**  
Annual Report 2020



**Basmeh & Zeitooneh**  
Annual Report 2020

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# Statement By CEO

Dear friends and partners,

Reporting on the activities of Basmeh & Zeitooneh for the year 2020 was not an easy task. The emotional baggage we had to carry with us all the way into 2021 made rehashing the year's events and milestones a painful exercise to undertake. As much as we wish to wipe away 2020 and its atrocities, we marched on, found solutions, and built stamina for what's to come. We owe it to the people we serve and to the heroes in our organization, who despite all the obstacles the year had unleashed, were up to the challenge and achieved incredible results.

As a pandemic year, 2020 will be remembered for generations to come, even more so by those who navigated through it while in Lebanon. The bitterness of the events that befell the country, though the past tense shouldn't be used just yet, is a taste no one can shake off. This small Levantine nation had to battle unprecedented financial collapse and inflation that left no sector untouched. Life's most basic necessities are till this day a luxury more than half the population can't afford. The pandemic that ravaged the country left people more vulnerable, with months-long lockdowns that forced everyone into a standstill. With the arrival of summer, a hope for a breather was witnessed by the reopening of businesses and tourist attractions, until the Beirut Port explosion left the world speechless.

Looking back at the year, I kept wondering where the heroes of Basmeh & Zeitooneh got their energy and determination from. Throughout the pages of this report, you will read about the boundless Covid-19 campaign that supported households of all nationalities, whose livelihood was affected by the lockdowns. By the end of the year, with immense gratitude to our donors and staff, who despite everything hit the ground running during lockdowns and when Beirut was destroyed, more than 14,000 families received basic food and cash assistance.

You will also read about the unbelievable efforts of our education team, both in Shatila camp and Bar Elias, who refused to surrender to the lockdowns and rushed to learn how to use an online platform to create educational material for their students. Each of the 1,150 households we supported received a tablet and free internet connection to facilitate their connectivity so that the scholastic year wouldn't be halted.

When the Beirut Port blast hit, I was once again overwhelmed with the steadfastness and generosity of Basmeh & Zeitooneh staff and volunteers, who rushed to help in any way possible. For two weeks, we had a station in Mar Mikhael through which we organized the activities of the volunteers who wished to help.

Your unprecedented response to our online fundraiser allowed us to support affected families as well as distribute food, water, and cleaning tools to hundreds of volunteers who worked relentlessly to remove glass and debris from the streets and homes. While staff and volunteers were coming in from Bekaa, Tripoli, and Shatila to work on the ground, our dedicated team back at the office managed to raise more than \$2 million. With this sum, we launched an impactful initiative to repair flats, provided psychosocial support to the victims, aided affected small businesses, as well as food and cash distribution to the most vulnerable who were touched by the blast.

Sure, looking back at the extensive efforts of 2020 allows us some moments of pride, but it's not the time yet to pat ourselves on the back. The Basmeh & Zeitooneh team in Lebanon managed to do all of the aforementioned in a single year, on top of all its regular programs, and I'm filled with pride thinking about it. They forged ahead, undeterred by the multitude of stress and anxiety forced on them because of Lebanon's situation. And yet, more is to be done. With your continuous support and belief in what we do, we are sure that 2021 will be even busier for Basmeh & Zeitooneh, and we look forward to it.

Sincerely,

Fadi Hallisso  
Co-founder and CEO

## Our Vision

A constructive society that lives with dignity.

## Our Mission

To empower individuals through working among the most vulnerable and marginalized groups to fill the gaps in development assistance and respond to the most urgent relief and developmental needs that contribute to the advancement of society.

## History & Approach

Basmeh & Zeitooneh (B&Z) is a registered non-governmental organization dedicated to serving Syrian refugees and vulnerable populations living in Lebanon and Erbil, Iraq. It began in 2012 as a small group of volunteers responding to the needs of refugees in Lebanon. Since then, we have been working on providing these communities with education, protection, livelihood and relief services. In addition, we have expanded our reach to include vulnerable host communities while working in areas with the highest concentration of refugees.

Despite the rapid development of the organization, we maintain a grassroots and participatory approach through which participants' input and feedback are sought throughout projects' designs and implementations. Our aim is to provide accessible, holistic solutions that empower and build the capacity of marginalized communities. We utilize our community centers to serve as focal points for the local neighborhood and transfer the knowledge to the affected communities where B&Z believes vulnerable people should have the power, knowledge, and ownership to lead their chosen dignified lives.

Our range of programs follows an approach that upholds human dignity and reduces the need to navigate through a complex international humanitarian aid system to meet basic needs. Thus, the programs are aimed at building and developing skills, enhancing psychological well-being, and increasing individual and communal capacity in order to increase the agency and independence of those who have been marginalized from both host and refugee communities.

# We Work In Lebanon

## Mount Lebanon

- Nabaa
- Shatila

## North Lebanon

- El-Qobbeh

## Bekaa

- Bar Elias



**We Work In**

**Kurdistan region of Iraq**

**Erbil**



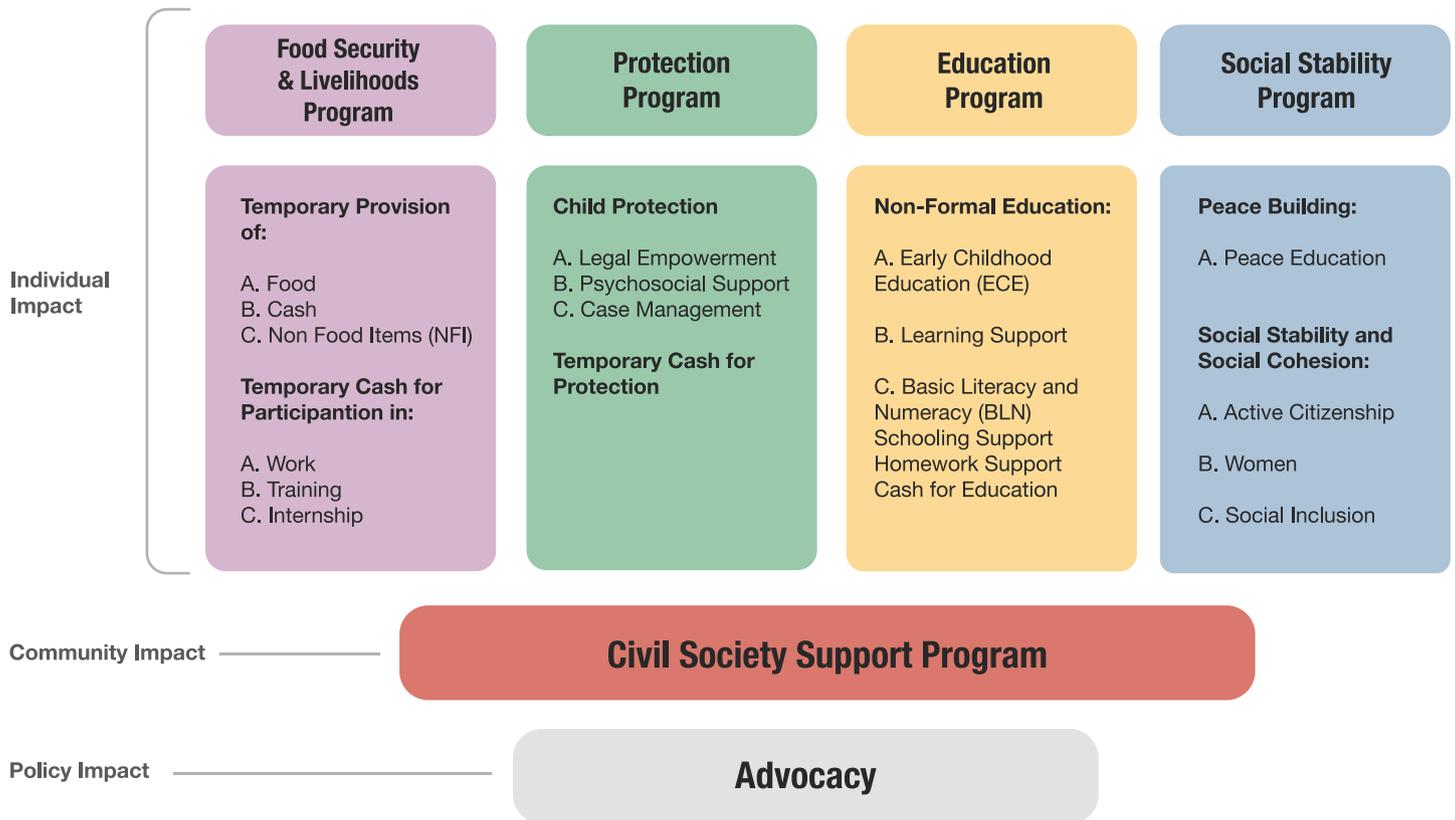
## We Work In Turkey

- Gaziantep

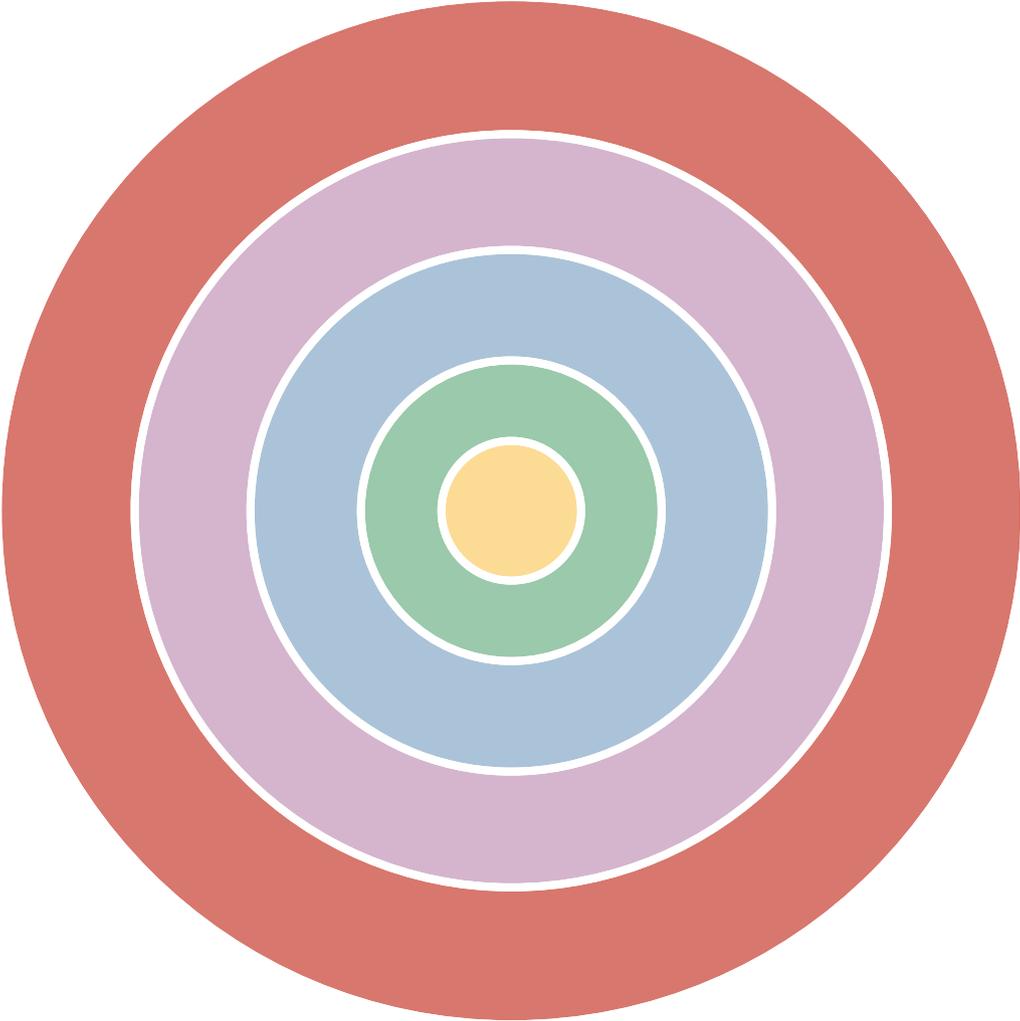


In Turkey, we are registered under the new name GÜLÜMSEME VE ZEYTİN, and it has its separate Annual Report.

# Our Programmatic Structure



# Our Target Groups



Children

Adolescents/  
Youth

Caregivers,  
Men and Women

Households

Community/  
Society

# Organogram B&Z ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE 2020



# Our Funds

**\$2,147,358**  
**Education Program**  
**26.27%**

**\$151,120**  
**Peace Building Program**  
**1.85%**

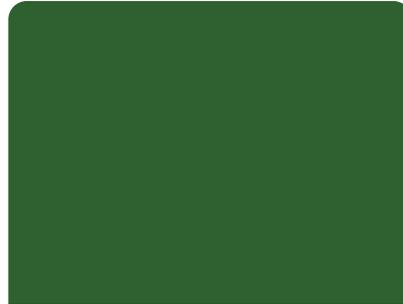
**\$390,747**  
**Civil Society Support Program**  
**4.78%**



**\$334,215**  
**Food Security & Livelihoods Program**  
**4.09%**



**\$543,596**  
**Protection Program**  
**6.65%**



**\$3,587,772**  
**Emergency Response & Basic Assistance**  
**30.04%**



**\$1,131,804**  
**COVID-19 Response**  
**13.84%**



**\$840,309**  
**Beirut Explosion Response**  
**10.28%**



**\$74,784**  
**Advocacy**  
**0.91%**



**\$105,037**  
**Capacity Building & Admin Support**  
**1.28%**



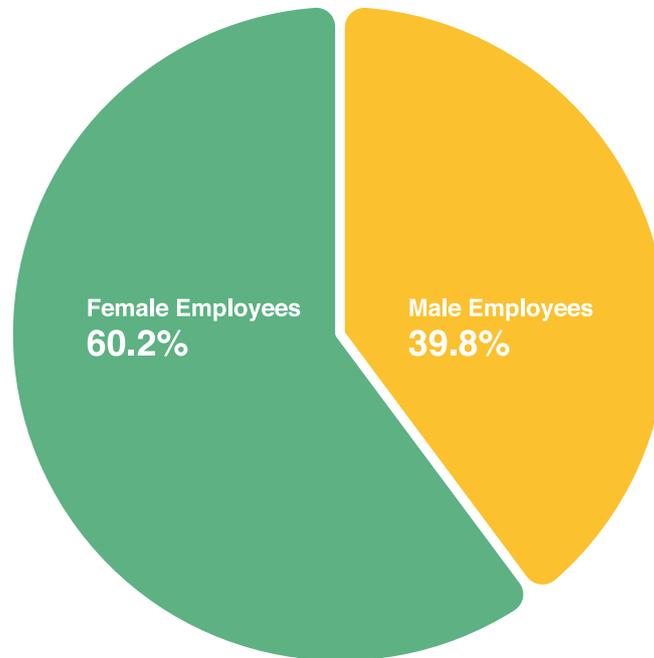
**\$8,174,938**

## Our Team

Basmeh & Zeitooneh values the diversity of its employees and recognizes that our work is best accomplished through the collaboration of individuals from a myriad of cultures. Our organization is committed to sustaining an equal opportunity recruitment process by selecting successful applicants based on competency, integrity, and passion for B&Z's mission.

B&Z's approach relies on open communication, transparency, and honesty between the staff to maintain a friendly and welcoming environment. We invest our efforts in offering flexible working hours, staff-care weekends, retreats, and two long holidays per year.

**By the end of December 2020, our organization consisted of 256 employees and volunteers, of which 102 were men and 154 were women.**



The unprecedented year of 2020 was distinctive for Basmeh & Zeitooneh on all levels, especially for the Human Resources unit. After the spread of Covid-19, enormous challenges started manifesting. The main one for the HR unit was to adapt to the new online module for each procedure; it took some time for all processes related to the unit to be in place.

- **Recruitment Process**

Come March 2020, all recruitments shifted online, starting with the induction and onboarding announcements. It was challenging given all restrictions related to social distancing, lockdowns, and working from home. A significant milestone for the HR team was recruiting 36 individuals in just two months to respond to the Beirut explosion crisis.

- **Employee Attendance**

Monitoring was complex during lockdowns and remote work. The HR unit had to ensure that all staff followed the online process, submitted their timesheets correctly and on time, and reflected accurate working hours. From April 2020, all documents are submitted online using the e-signature.

- **Capacity Building and Awareness Sessions**

Given all the sudden changes that were happening, new skills and needs emerged to support the staff in smoothly continuing their work while achieving the same goals, objectives, and productivity levels. However, our staff's psychological well-being was highly affected by the country's political unrest, economic and financial crises, the effects of Covid-19, and the Beirut explosion. Ongoing self-care and Covid-19 awareness sessions were delivered to new and old staff to help them maintain their psychological health, with the new staff receiving additional child protection and safeguarding sessions.

- **Units and Departments Internal Coordination**

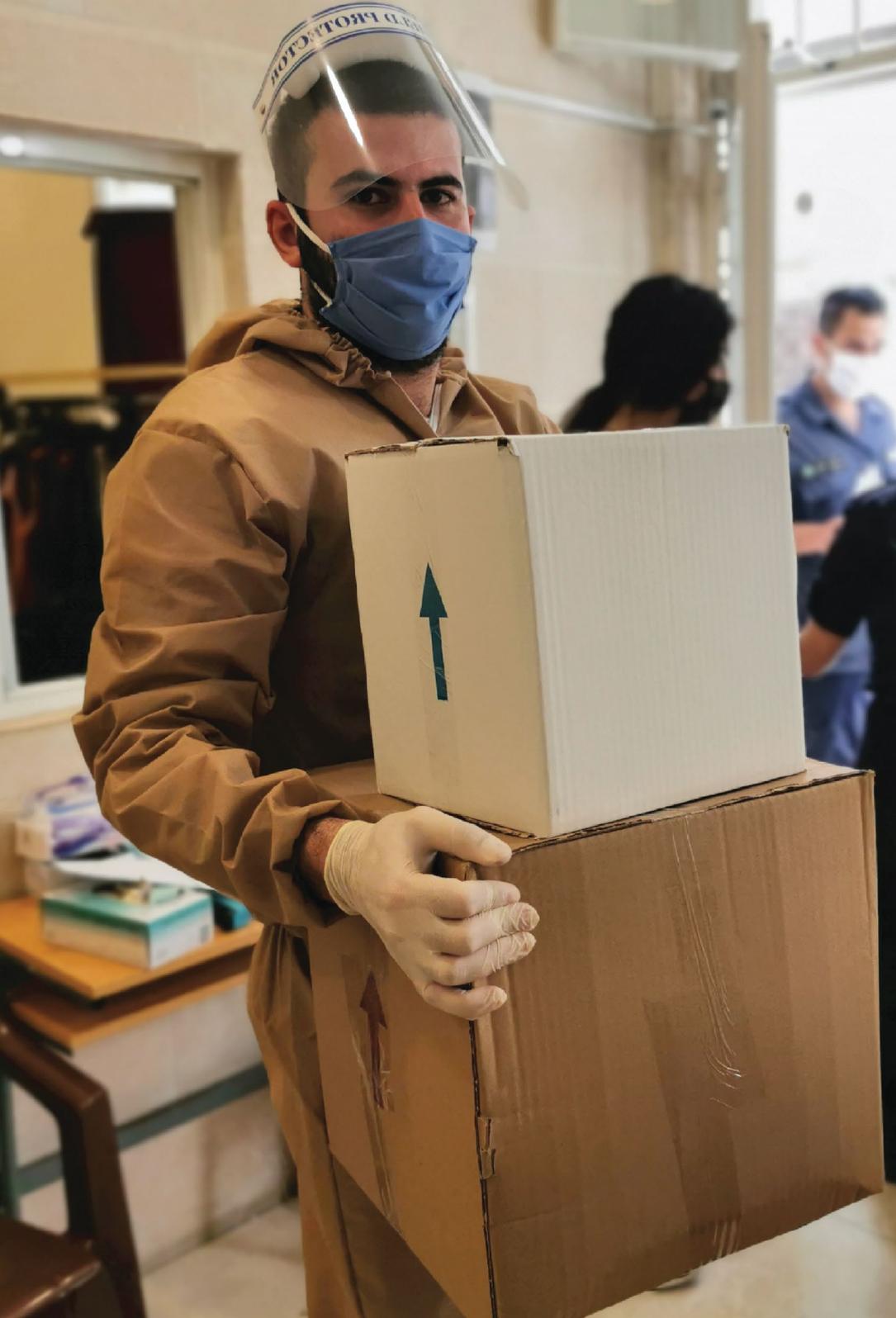
One of the challenging points was coordinating between departments/units and achieving all the goals and objectives using the new online communication method. Some delays are still in place but, in general, we have achieved significant improvements.

- **Payroll**

Preparing and paying the salaries amid lockdowns and the ongoing banking crisis in Lebanon was complicated. To mitigate, the HR and finance units began the salary payment process early each month to make sure all salaries are received on time.



**Programs**



## Emergency Response & Basic Assistance

### COVID-19 Response

**14,299**

Households Reached

**71,500**

Individuals Reached



The Covid-19 crisis comes on the heels of grave economic and political crises that have hit Lebanon at the end of 2019. The Covid-19 pandemic has had a devastating economic cost, given the country's very fragile and deteriorating economic environment. It is hard to estimate the direct marginal economic impact of Covid-19. Even before the pandemic hit, there were massive business closures in reaction to the financial crisis that had exploded in September 2019, leading to catastrophic increases in unemployment and poverty. Businesses had, in a matter of a few months, lost access to foreign exchange and imports. Households (HHs) faced limitations in accessing their bank accounts and began losing their income, leading to severe negative coping strategies.

Basmeh & Zeitooneh was one of the first NGOs to respond to the triple crisis. In March 2020, we launched an online campaign to raise funds and support the most marginalized communities whose livelihoods were severely disrupted by the lockdowns. Thanks to our generous partners, donors, and supporters, we have secured 84,637 USD from individual donors and 937,562 USD from institutional donors, allowing us to launch distributions of Food Baskets, Hygiene Kits, and Cash Assistance for 14,299 HHs by the end of 2020.

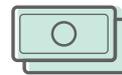
Such an effective and efficient distribution covered the most vulnerable areas in Lebanon like Mount Lebanon, central and west Bekaa, Tripoli, Akkar, and the south. It was coordinated with UNICEF and WFP to avoid any duplications. B&Z also accepted referrals from UN organizations and other INGOs, and provided remote awareness sessions and counseling about Covid-19 for around 3,414 people.



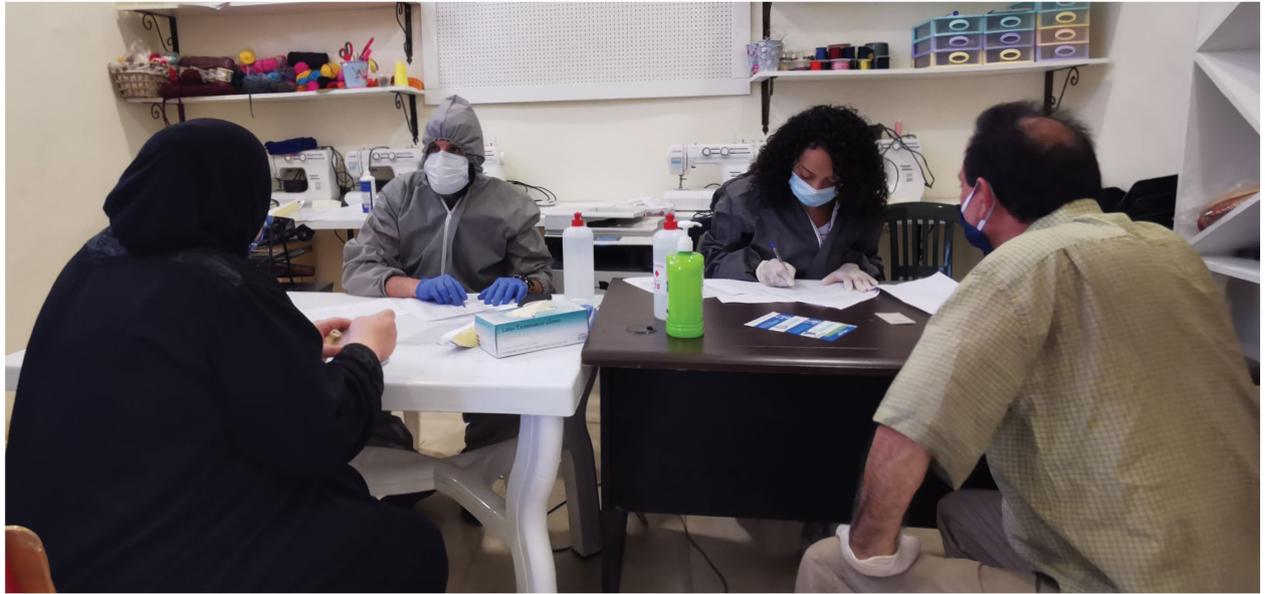
**14,299**  
Food Parcels



**14,299**  
Hygiene Kits



**14,049**  
Cash Assistance





**Emergency Response  
& Basic Assistance**

**Beirut Explosion Response**

**1,967**  
Households Reached

**9,800**  
Individuals Reached



On August 4, 2020, a massive explosion at a warehouse at the Beirut Port sent a shockwave through east and downtown Beirut at about 6 p.m. local time. Nearly 200 people were killed and more than 6,000 injuries were reported, and at least 300,000 people lost their homes. The third biggest explosion in history occurred when a fire at a warehouse ignited a cache of ammonium nitrate, which had been stored at the site for more than six years. The blast caused massive destruction to the infrastructure and thousands of residences; private and public facilities in the neighborhoods close to the explosion were heavily damaged, collapsed, or destroyed. This explosion was the latest in a series of debilitating hits to the country - corruption, demonstrations, hyperinflation, political tensions, pandemic, and banking crisis - that left the Lebanese people and the world in shock.

From day one after the explosion, B&Z staff and volunteers took to the streets. They started helping in cleaning the rubbles and debris, providing hot meals, water, and emergency medical referrals. We simultaneously launched an online fundraising campaign to help the victims. We started reaching out to our donors and partners for support, while coordinating with other local and international NGOs working on the ground to avoid duplication and benefit from each other's expertise. Our response targeted the most vulnerable Lebanese households, including the elderly, those who have lost heads of household, migrant workers, and refugees.

By the end of 2020, we collected 248,208 USD from individual donations and 1,751,224 USD in institutional funds from donors and partners.



## ● **Legal Aid for Victims' Families**

The legal team made great efforts to reach out to the Syrian families affected by the blast to assess their needs and provide them with both medical and relief assistance.

The team also provided the necessary legal support through consultations and obtaining the required legal papers for the victims' death certificates, starting from the forensic doctors' reports to that of the police and local mayor, in addition to registering these documents in the relevant civil affairs departments in Lebanon and certifying the forms at the Lebanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The team provided further assistance to those in need of psychological support, as well as mediations or referrals to organizations offering different services than those of the Protection Program at B&Z. Eighteen HHs with special cases received protection cash support.

## ● **Households Rehabilitation and Refurbishment**

After conducting rapid shelter assessments in the afflicted areas to map damaged houses, our rehabilitation and refurbishment efforts in 2020 have covered 72 affected houses with the following: windows; doors; electricity; plumbing and sanitary; painting; necessary household equipment like oven, washing machine, and refrigerators; any items related to privacy or security like curtains. Our rehabilitation team will continue its efforts in 2021 to reach out to more than 200 HHs on the waiting list.

## ● **Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises Support**

Hundreds of small and medium businesses were affected by the Beirut explosion. The shops and equipment were partially or completely destroyed, while most of these businesses were already suffering from the economic crisis. Under our Food Security and Livelihoods Program, B&Z took the initiative to approach MSMEs that needed support to recover or restart their operations by rehabilitating their material and capital damages, purchasing new equipment and supplies, and helping them pay late wages for employees. By the end of 2020, we assessed a total of 37 businesses to benefit from this project starting 2021.



## ● Protection Activities

B&Z recruited a team of caseworkers and psychologists to respond to the needs of children, caregivers, and individuals who had a traumatizing experience after the blast. After conducting assessments for child protection cases and prioritizing them according to risk level, the protection team developed a case management plan. It referred the children and caregivers to Psychosocial support (PSS) or Individual Mental Health Psychosocial Support (MHPSS). The main goal of these focused activities is to build the resilience of the most vulnerable and at-risk children, adolescents, and caregivers. The activities include games, expressive drawing, educational talks, and positive parenting.

The team also conducted one-on-one sessions on the most severe cases. The caseworkers worked together to help the chosen beneficiaries to overcome the traumatic experience they lived and acknowledge their feelings. We also distributed kits containing fun and educational stories, paint, papers, and many other items for children.

These activities started in September 2020 and will continue through 2021.

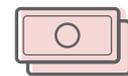
The team provided self-care sessions for the emergency team members working on the ground and for all field staff of B&Z.



**1,967**  
Food Parcels



**1,967**  
Hygiene Kits



**1,967**  
Cash Assistance



**70**  
Rehabilitated Houses





# Education Program

**2,048** Children  
1049 Girls & 999 Boys  
Enrolled in our Education Program  
2019 - 2020



Basmeh & Zeitooneh launched the Shatila Learning Center in 2014 and the Bekaa Learning Center in 2017, with their main objective being to meet the needs of school-age children living in camps and informal settlements in the Mount Lebanon and Bekaa regions. Children living in such settings face many obstacles and are increasingly at a multitude of levels, whether it be academically, physically, psychologically, or socially.

The primitive, fragile infrastructure of the camps creates a hostile environment that burdens children's mental and physical well-being as the camps are usually crowded and confined in space. In such situations, children's mental well-being is often negatively impacted by exposure to age-inappropriate materials such as harmful behaviors like violence and abuse in different forms. Children's financial situation is also usually dire, with some having to carry their families' financial burdens, which can drive them into criminal activities such as street violence, gang culture, and gun use. The deprivation of their fundamental rights such as access to education, a healthy living environment, clothing, and food often compounds many of the above problems.

B&Z aims to serve refugee children in a safe and inclusive learning environment where their well-being is of utmost importance. That's why we have an incredible support team for psychosocial aid that includes a nurse, social worker, psychologist, and caseworker. We also involve the parents in the learning center and their children's education by conducting awareness sessions and parent-teacher meetings.

At the beginning of the scholastic year 2019-2020, B&Z enrolled 524 students in Bekaa and 1,289 students in Shatila within its Education Program. Refugee children were able to enroll in one of the three different programs B&Z provides within its Non-Formal Education program. Each component is based on the students' age and educational background.

B&Z is accredited by the Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education (LMEHE) to implement the following non-formal education programs:

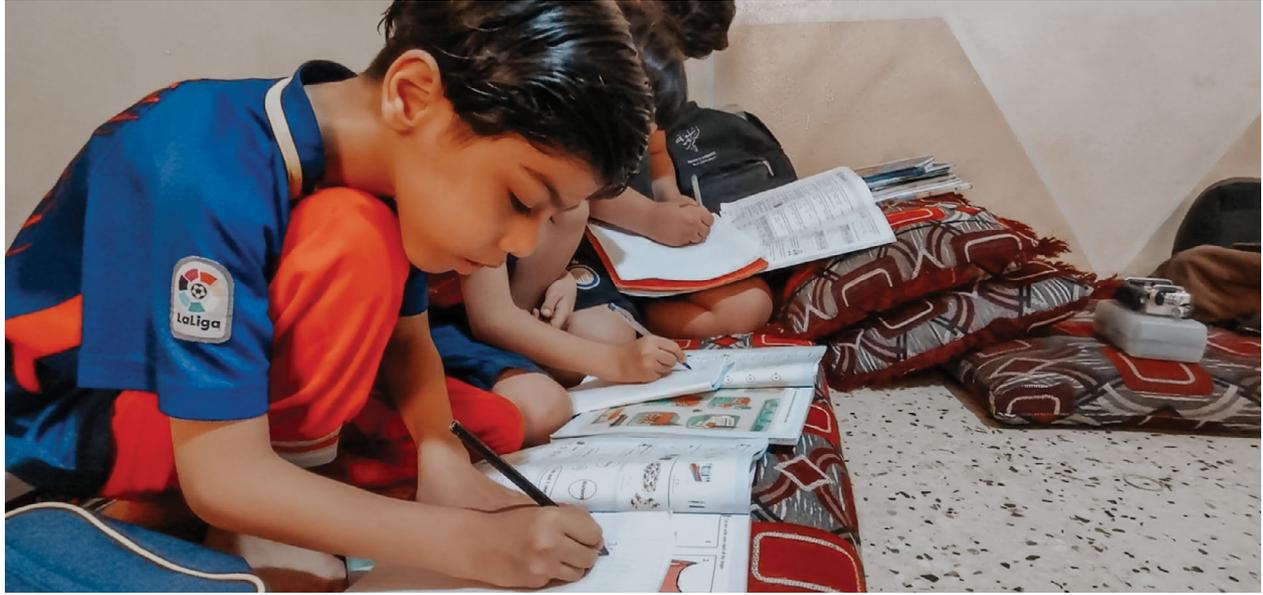
- **Basic Literacy and Numeracy – BLN**
- **Retention and Recreation**
- **Community Based Early Childhood Education – CBECE**
- **Special Needs Education**

The year 2019-2020 was challenging and dramatic on different levels in Lebanon and the world. Shortly after the scholastic year had begun in our centers, with 1,945 girls and boys, the October 17 demonstrations in 2019 erupted on the streets, bringing with them political and civil unrest for months on end. For the safety of both our students and teachers, we closed the learning centers for several days during the following months. On February 21, Lebanon announced the first case of Covid-19 (novel coronavirus). A state of medical emergency was announced countrywide, resulting in a complete lockdown. The Covid-19 restrictions limited students' access to both Bar Elias and Shatila learning centers due to continuous closing.

The ongoing global spread of the virus meant things would need time to go back to normal. We needed a second plan, and that was to shift completely to online education. As a result, B&Z decided to run a small pilot study in April 2020 with a group of 200 students to assess the ability to move its educational program towards distant learning. After studying the outcome of the pilot phase and carefully reviewing the students and parents' feedback, the B&Z education team went ahead with the process through WhatsApp, offering lessons for all grades. As a technology-reliant method, with lessons shared as video and audio files, the challenge touched everyone. Teachers, who invested tremendous effort into creating application-friendly lessons that can be shared via WhatsApp, had to follow up with students and assist them in case they were facing technological difficulties. This approach was a temporary solution. By year's end, 1,313 children were able to complete their education through our online learning program, while 632 had to drop out due to no access to phones or internet connection.

As the academic year 2019-2020 ended in June, B&Z began seeking long-term solutions, which resulted in an agreement with the non-profit organisation Lebanese Alternative Learning (LAL) to create an online learning platform specific to B&Z, called "Tabshoura." This interactive platform granted students online access to Arabic, English, math, and science lessons, found under their individual profiles. Students were allowed to study at their own pace, with instant corrections made to their answers and immediate responses by their teachers to their questions.

With the generous support of our donors and partners, along with a fundraiser organized by Smile and Olive USA, we were able to secure 1,650 tablets to be used by our students in the scholastic year 2020-2021.



The B&Z educational staff designed, planned, and created lessons in Fall 2020 that comply with LMEHE's main educational goals and components in order to integrate them within the Tabshoura platform in an interactive and learner-friendly way.

Our remedial and BLN classes in Nabaa, which are in their third year and encompass 105 students, provide educational assistance through two mechanisms to vulnerable children and adolescents, specifically Syrians. The first one targets out-of-school children and helps them partly compensate for the skills and information required in English, Arabic, and math, while the second takes the shape of a remedial class for children already attending schools but are in need of support in specific concentrations.

The first two months of 2020 were focused on physical attendance, with each group allocated two hours per day at the center. By the end of February, classes were completely halted at the Nabaa Center due to the pandemic and total lockdown, and were shifted to WhatsApp education, similar to our Bekaa and Shatila learning centers. We also distributed 20 tablets to 20 families who lacked an internet connection or smart phones to keep up with the online education.

B&Z continued to provide Basic Literacy and Numeracy (BLN) sessions for interested women who are illiterate and had no chance to attend school. In 2020, 67 women received English and Arabic classes that have had a positive impact on them, increasing their independence and self-esteem, as well as enabling them to be involved in their children's education. Also, 57 girls and 9 boys attended English classes.



## Feedback on Education Program

A post-monitoring survey was undertaken to measure the quality of the service delivery in Bekaa and Shatila. The learning staff contacted 142 caregivers, whose feedback was very positive, with a satisfaction average of 80-85%. The majority reported a good improvement in their children's knowledge and well-being.



## Success Story

“Before the Covid-19 crisis, my children used to get ready, grab their bags and lunches, and go to school. They had classes, and a very normal scholastic setup, with lessons, homework, and everything,” Sola Alhassan, Student Supervisor at Basmeh & Zeitoneh learning center in Shatila, said while comparing the situation before and after the spread of Covid-19.

The Syrian mother and her husband reside in the Shatila camp with their three children, Abdulkader (10), Hanin (9), and Sahar (7), who are enrolled in the center where their mother works.

“When Covid began, the learning center closed. We looked for alternatives to continue the educational process, so we created WhatsApp groups for each class with the students and teachers, who would share videos of themselves explaining the lessons, in addition to sharing homework,” Sola explained.

Given that her family has only one mobile phone, it was tricky for her three children to share it for their lessons. The slow internet connection in Shatila Camp was another issue since it made it difficult to download all the videos on time.

“The phone would get filled with videos, and we had to keep on deleting and emptying the phone to be able to receive more videos. However, given all the difficulties, WhatsApp learning was a better solution than stopping education completely. It kept my children connected with their studies and teachers,” she added.

“I think with the Tabshoura platform that we have been working on and the tablets we will be securing for all the families for the scholastic year 2020-2021, things will change drastically; I’m looking forward to it,” the mother of three continued.

Sola hopes that her children can go back to the center at some point next year as they miss their friends and school. She’s also thankful that the learning process has not stopped all throughout the difficulties.





# Protection Program

**9,038**

Women, Men & Children  
Benefited from our Protection  
and Legal Services



B&Z has been working since 2015 on strengthening the resilience of vulnerable women and children by increasing their awareness around Gender-Based Violence and Child Protection. Our Protection Program enhances and influences protection systems, as well as tackles the causes of abuse, exploitation, and violence against caregivers, with a main focus on women and children. We work to establish and support protection mechanisms that make homes, schools, and communities safer places for children and women and raise awareness on laws and policies that protect them from violence and exploitation within the communities we work with.

The B&Z protection team has refined the outreach and identification strategy in 2020 and expanded the scope of targeting beneficiaries to more locations, especially after the Beirut explosion. The team has committed to the contextualized beneficiaries vulnerability criteria for the program:

- Adolescents living in poor conditions and lacking basic needs; out-of-school adolescents or those at risk of dropping out;
- Women living within communities with high violence or conflict rates; female-headed household;
- Individuals with special needs; children survivors of abuse, exploitation, and neglect;
- Women and children survivors of emotional, physical, and sexual abuse and violence, including domestic violence and high psychosocial distress levels.

On a local and international level during the unprecedented year of 2020, the B&Z protection team responded to the most urgent needs of vulnerable households and people of concern. It identified needs; referred cases; informed them about available services; and provided case management, cash for protection, psychological first aid, and psychosocial support.

The pandemic's spread and accompanying lockdowns had us switch all protection activities to remote and virtual services, which extended our reach into areas of higher severity of needs and persons with reduced mobility, including the elderly and persons with disabilities. Switching to virtual sessions also helped us reach women

who could previously not attend the sessions in person due to distance, time, or household responsibilities.

The deteriorating economic situation in Lebanon resulted in an increase in domestic violence, child abuse, and discrimination against refugees in host communities. It also tightened the opportunities of medication and food security. The dire situation highlighted the crucial role of our holistic protection services in the lives of vulnerable people.

In 2020, the B&Z child protection team provided 680 girls and boys along with their caregivers with psychosocial support and parenting programming. More than 7,104 men and women between parents and individuals received group and individual support psychosocial sessions, and 1,254 elderly women and men received PSS and case management. These programs continue to be critical for reducing vulnerabilities, strengthening individual and community resilience, and supporting children and women at risk as well as survivors of abuse, neglect, exploitation, and violence.

The protection team was able to carry on with the main components of the project and adapt it to address upcoming urgent needs. The B&Z staff has shown increased capacity, enthusiasm, willingness, and commitment to reach out to beneficiaries and address their needs remotely.

## **Basic Needs Assistance**

In 2020, thousands of daily workers either lost their jobs or had to stop working because of lockdowns, or were laid off due to business shutdowns or downsizing. Thus, many families lost their daily income and could no longer secure basic needs such as food and medication, especially in Shatila Camp. The protection program addressed this situation by distributing Food Vouchers and In-Kind Food to 675 households. These distributions helped secure many families affected by the economic crisis and who are subject to experiencing life-threatening conditions such as hunger or house evictions.

## Psychosocial Support

Psychosocial Support (PSS) activities were conducted using different methodologies identified as per group assessment, in which the curricula were designed to target women, men, and children.

The PSS activities with children and caregivers followed a tailored PSS curriculum and were initiated after the launch of the remote modality, which uses different online platforms. Children and caregivers continued to have the appropriate support from protection facilitators.

It was challenging at first due to the lack of phone availability with caregivers, device shortage within one household, and often absence of privacy. The PSS team alleviated these concerns by being flexible and allowing interactions to take place after working hours as well as setting adjustable schedules with the beneficiaries.

## Case Management

An increase in high-risk cases reported in the country as a result of the pandemic was observed, indicating an increase in threat and protection risk for women in their household. The B&Z Case Management service continued remotely with follow-ups done by case workers over the phone. Remote case management including emotional support and referrals (via telephone) were provided to all open cases, ensuring service provision to vulnerable women continues throughout the emergency. Remote case management to distribute cash for protection included daily follow-ups over the phone and field visits only for high-risk emergency cases.

## Awareness Raising

Awareness activities during 2020 were protection- and Covid-oriented. The protection staff disseminated information on available services at B&Z and other protection actors in the community. The protection team also received training on Covid-19 awareness, provided by the University of Balamand, which was then turned into sessions that covered symptoms, precautionary measures, contagion and reporting processes, and quarantine basics. There was also a focus on stigmatization and coping mechanisms, especially when it comes to those at risk of being infected.

The outcome of those sessions was an increased awareness among adults, with a concentration on preventive measures and adequate response mechanisms.



### Feedback on the Psychosocial Support Sessions

A random sample of men and women who participated in PSS group sessions underwent a satisfaction survey, where the satisfaction average was 3.5 over 4. The beneficiaries agreed that the received care met their needs and preferences, and were satisfied with the received support. They reported increased positivity, confidence and self-esteem, enhanced coping mechanisms and ability to care for children, along with lowered stress levels.

## Legal Project

Due to the lack of legal assistance and clear information available to Syrian refugees, B&Z implemented a legal project in Tripoli and Beirut to empower vulnerable persons at risk and protect their fundamental rights, safety, and dignity through awareness sessions and support in legal paperwork and procedures. The proposed project's long-term impact is to enhance the protective environment for vulnerable refugees and individuals at risk through community-based legal empowerment initiatives and advocacy. B&Z also aims to improve their access to essential services and their socio-economic well-being through information provision and case referral. The project was first implemented in 2019 in the Nabaa neighborhood before being extended in 2020 to cover Beirut and Tripoli.

### **The legal program focuses on three thematic areas:**

- Legal identity, including obtaining the civil and identification documentation necessary to access rights and services such as birth and marriage certificates.
- Immigration and refugee laws and procedures, including refugee status determination and legal residency.
- Government legal procedures and policies for the registration of Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) when access to rights and services is dependent on such registration.

After the Beirut Port blast on August 4, the legal team made a priority to reach out to the Syrian families affected by the blast to assess their needs and provide them with both medical and relief assistance. The team also provided the necessary legal support through consultations and obtaining the required legal papers for the victims' death certificates, starting from the forensic doctors' reports to that of the police and local mayor, in addition to registering these documents in the relevant civil affairs departments in Lebanon and certifying the forms at the Lebanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The B&Z team provided further assistance to the survivors in need of psychological support, as well as mediations or referrals to organizations offering different services than those of the Protection Program at B&Z.



## Feedback on Legal Project

The impact of the legal empowerment program was noticed by the pre and post surveys and one-on-one interviews with a sample of the participants. The results show an increase in the ability of the participants to take action regarding access to legal services and justice. The results also show an increase in the awareness of the beneficiaries regarding registering their civil status and residency rights. This program helped the most vulnerable people with their legal issues, where 74% of those targeted were provided with the needed information; 66% of those people have now successfully solved their legal issues.



## Success Story

When the economic crisis in Lebanon hit, Issam, a 51-year-old Syrian father of four, found himself unemployed and unable to attend to the needs of one of his daughters, Lama, who's diagnosed with Down's syndrome, let alone those of the rest of his family. A household of six and no income, Issam felt the pressure of food insecurity and possible eviction from his Shatila Camp rented house.

His anger, stress, and anxiety were lashed out on Lama, which led one of his close acquaintances to advise him to reach out to B&Z. There, he was assessed by Hiba, a B&Z caseworker, who referred him to PSS sessions so he could receive stress and anger management sessions. Further assessment by Hiba saw the need for the family to receive In-Kind Food assistance as part of B&Z's Protection Program, and emergency money for rent payment. Hiba kept on supporting the father with other service providers in the area until he could find a job to secure his needs. Luckily, one of the local NGOs had a cash-for-work project that fit Issam's qualifications perfectly. Having experience in working at restaurants, the father of four soon enough found himself with a small home-business, from which he and his wife cook and deliver homemade food within Beirut.

Five months into continued support and income generation, Issam's mental health improved exponentially as he became more relaxed, patient, and understanding with his family. His attitude and communication methods with Lama were also completely changed for the better. Issam now thinks outside of the box, acknowledges his family's needs, and works towards fulfilling them all while providing care and support. "Issam showed great resilience and openness to work on his mental health and his relationship with his children and wife. It's usually very difficult for men to engage in such activities," commented Hiba.





# Food Security & Livelihoods Program

**675** Households

**307** Individuals

Benefited from our FSL Program



B&Z has continued to prioritize its food security and livelihoods sectors since the early stages of its establishment in Lebanon. In 2014, it began supporting micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) through its community centers by providing vocational and technical training that are essential to their success.

The consequences of the economic crisis, Covid-19 pandemic, and Beirut explosion severely interrupted Lebanon's main and crucial sectors. In light of the absence of immediate, transparent intervention from the local government, thousands of Lebanese, displaced Syrians, Palestinians, and many other vulnerable and marginalized groups were directly affected by the situation and pushed way below the poverty line.

Economically and socially crippling factors took over Lebanon, including but not limited to the systemic macro-financial failures, impairment of the banking sector, exchange rate collapse, default on sovereign debt, triple-digit inflation rates, and severe economic contraction. The devastating blast that destroyed the main seaport in Lebanon, through which most Lebanese value chains and trade operations pass on the daily, along with the pandemic and continuous lockdowns took a massive toll on the country. All of these factors further exacerbated the economic and financial crises.

B&Z has accelerated its Food Security and Livelihoods Program at the start of the first Covid-19 lockdown in March 2020, and continued to update the program's components throughout the year to match the rapidly changing situation in Lebanon.

The Program had three objectives:

- **Objective 1:** Stabilizing the livelihoods and meeting the urgent needs of vulnerable crisis-affected groups through emergency employment, short-term income generation, and local enterprise empowerment.
- **Objective 2:** Local economic recovery through increasing access to medium- and long-term employment opportunities through partnerships with the private sector by supporting MSMEs and offering vocational training, along with building necessary skills based on market needs.

- **Objective 3:** Adopting and prioritizing digital livelihood technologies, shifting from in-person to digital technologies services and sales.

Our integrated approach covers all capitals of livelihoods and includes many components such as cash for work, asset replacement and access to capital, employment opportunities, as well as support for people to find jobs and develop their skills. All aspects of the Food Security and Livelihoods Program ensure the inclusion and empowerment of women in addition to other vulnerable groups.

## Cash for Work

B&Z adopts World Food Program (WFP) standards for Cash for Work (CFW) projects. The dual objectives set by WFP for CFW projects are:

- Provide income support to poor, vulnerable men and women through short-term, intensive jobs for unskilled and skilled workers to meet their essential needs.
- Build or rehabilitate public/community assets and infrastructure vital for sustaining the livelihoods of a community and restoring agricultural activities.

In collaboration with Norwegian People's Aid and in coordination with the local authorities and municipalities, B&Z has since 2019 implemented a cash-for-work project in central and west Bekaa.

The project recruits people from both host and refugee communities to clean and rehabilitate the Litani River irrigation sub-canals and rain water drainage network. This helps provide a stable water supply to farmers to increase their production, and short-term income for workers to improve their financial situation.

In response to the Beirut Port explosion, with the support of the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD) and the Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund (SCIAF), and in coordination with Bourj Hammoud Municipality and the Lebanese Army Crisis Committee, B&Z launched a cash-for-work intervention to rehabilitate public infrastructures damaged by the blast. This provided short-term income generation opportunities to unemployed people from the host and refugee communities residing within the areas and themselves affected by the explosion, prioritizing women's engagement in the intervention and providing them with equal opportunities.



## Hydroponic Farming Project

In partnership with CAFOD and in coordination with the local authorities, B&Z has launched a Hydroponic Farming pilot project in Tripoli to increase crop production and introduce alternative farming techniques that need to be used to solve limited access to land irrigation water in cities. The project is still in the preparation phase due to lengthy lockdowns in the country.

Tripoli, a neglected city in northern Lebanon, has been suffering for years from poor infrastructure, no access to services or job opportunities, and a high population density of locals and refugees. The city is witnessing an increase in child labor due to the urgent need for food and cash.

Hydroponic Farming is a climate-smart, innovative, efficient, and effective technology that produces more quality food with at least 80% less water and farming land.

This pilot project contributes to the substantial improvement and impact in the long-term well-being and living standards of 30 direct and 150 indirect refugee beneficiaries in Tripoli, allowing them to become financially independent. B&Z plans to adjust this project to replicate it on a larger scale and in different areas.

The lockdowns also affected the implementation timeline of the agriculture project in Tripoli. However, B&Z staff drafted a new work plan to recover the delay and continue the project in 2021.

## Upcycling and Sewing Laboratory

In 2019, B&Z launched a project supported by Arcs Culture Solidali in Nabaa, Beirut. The sewing laboratory provided 30 women with a two-phase project that included skill-focused training on crochet and sewing, and practices of upcycling clothes, with all tools supplied. In the end, each participant received a sewing machine as an opportunity to fill the gap of their families' clothing needs and work as a freelance tailor within their neighborhood.

The project's impact on the participants was very positive and went beyond only strengthening their technical skills. The training also increased their self-esteem and gave them something to look forward to by hoping to have a sustainable income after completing the training and receiving small grants. That's why we have decided to continue the project in 2020 by training the women participants on micro-entrepreneurship, which includes the development of business plans and basic accounting.

After Covid-19 and the multiple lockdowns, our community center in Nabaa closed, and the training had to stop until further notice. A couple of months later, we needed a second plan to save the project, and there was a shift from offline to online delivery model. The participants were consulted to select the best online platform that's convenient for them to take sessions. They selected WhatsApp since most of them do not have laptops and have limited digital skills.

The business trainer prepared short tutorial videos sent via the WhatsApp group. In the beginning, there were some difficulties in adapting to the online sessions and committing to the session, along with internet problems. Yet, with continued follow-ups and more elaborated videos and explaining to the participants how the online and e-learning processes can also have positive results and outcomes, the participants picked up and adapted to the new situation. There was positive interaction from the participants; they asked for some guidance and the trainer followed up individually to provide them with feedback and recommendations.



## OLLAY: Online Learning Lab Approach for Youth

The project's main objective is to deliver entrepreneurship education and build youth's capacity to generate ideas that contribute to the social developments in their community through small projects. The project targeted motivated female and male youth between the age of 18 and 25, residing in Shatila and Borj Al Barajneh.

Initially, the project was to be carried out in B&Z Shatila Center with face-to-face instructors; however, during mid-April 2020 and after the pandemic had reached its first peak in Lebanon leading to a lockdown, significant changes took place. The team decided to shift to online classes over mobile phones through educational platforms led by the implementation partners. Most of the participants had no previous experience in online education platforms, and the internet connection and poor electricity feeding in the camps were also key challenges.

The B&Z team and partners helped the participants familiarize themselves with the platform, and provided briefs and tips to ensure every participant had a basic knowledge of using the simple online platform. We also secured 3G internet cards to be distributed to the participants to continue their educational sessions over their mobile phones in order to avoid electricity and wifi problems. The participants submitted 17 social entrepreneurship project ideas to B&Z based on skills they learned.

Most of the ideas are very applicable and can be incubated to make a difference in the Shatila and Borj areas. Funded by Asfari Foundation, B&Z and OLLAY's partners (Maksense, Kiron, and Dot Lebanon) are planning to extend project activities over 2021 through OLLAY II social entrepreneurship education cycles, aiming for more successful business ideas that can be incubated and applied.

B&Z is also seeking the opportunities to link the applicable ideas to incubators who are interested in empowering the social MSMEs in Shatila and Borj area.



## Feedback on FSL Program

The outcome and the impact of the FSL component was measured through several tools such as pre and post surveys, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), baseline and endline assessments. The results showed that the women, men and youth that participated in B&Z's FSL activities have increased their self-confidence, wellbeing and have increased their income generation and their level of safety and their ability to secure most of their basic needs.

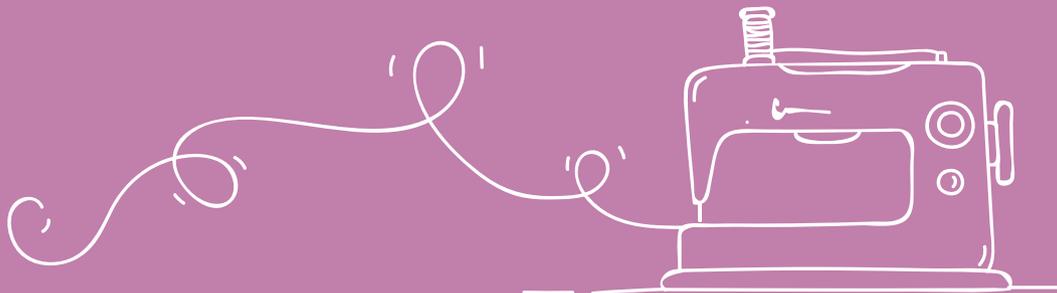
## Success Story

“I was attending Arabic and English language courses at the center when I heard about the sewing workshop,” said 31-year-old Aaeda. “I registered because I needed to learn something that I can work in,” she added. Looking for a money-generating skill to gain in order to support her family, Aaeda registered in the sewing and upcycling workshop where she learned hand sewing techniques and ways to alter clothing items.

“The trainers were empowering and they helped me gain confidence in my skills [...] I really liked sewing.”

**Aaeda’s** husband was injured during the Beirut explosion in August 2020, adding to previous injuries he had sustained during the war in Syria, which rendered him unfit to work. With two children and an unemployed husband to support, Aaeda took on sewing as a career path, becoming a seamstress with her house as an atelier. “Now I have a machine, I do alterations and sometimes I upcycle an item into something else. I also crochet small items and baby clothes, but I do not have the capital to take orders that require expensive materials. I spend the money I make on food and basic supplies for my family,” she explained.

As she continues to receive training remotely over WhatsApp due to the Covid-19 pandemic, she persists on following up and watching the training videos on her husband’s phone. She hopes to go back to in-person training soon as she likes going to the center where she’s made good friends. “The women I met in this workshop were also from Syria, but from different places and we all became friends. I also became more organized when I started coming to the workshop regularly and then working from home, and I will also teach sewing to my daughter when she is older,” Aaeda added.





## Social Stability Program

**358** Children  
Enrolled in the  
Peace Education project

**47** Youth  
Participated in our  
Social Cohesion project



B&Z founded its Social Stability unit in 2015, under which the Peace Education curriculum was developed with the support of experts in peacebuilding, playback theatre, and PSS fields. This curriculum was first adapted to respond to the emerging intra- and inter-conflicts that affected the well-being, protection, and coping mechanisms of children, youths, and their parents. The sessions within the curriculum targeted the different communities within the areas we operate in.

These sessions focused on a child's internal struggles and difficulties, interaction with others, and the community at a wider level. The Peace Education program tackled subjects such as resolving conflict in peaceful ways; acceptance and tolerance regardless of nationality, religion, and political divides; and sensitive topics such as early marriage, child labor, and children's rights, to only name a few.

In 2018, this initiative became B&Z's peacebuilding unit that encompasses a wide range of projects such as community initiatives, youth engagement and leadership, and conflict analysis within the community. B&Z established this unit to bridge peace, cohesion, and acceptance between contentious communities by utilizing a conflict-sensitive approach.

## Peace Building - Peace Education

The project aims at improving children and youths' psychosocial well-being by strengthening their relationships with themselves, others, and their surrounding environment. This curriculum helped them further develop their cognitive, behavioral, and emotional skills through a process of interventions that moved from an individual level to a relational and then community-based one. The sessions ended with a social initiative created by each group of participants to tackle via artistic means of expression (i.e. drawing and exhibitions, playback theatre and performances, and music), one of the acquired protection and peace messages they had learned.

After the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic, we had to switch the project's activities from physical to remote, with some modifications to suit the situation. In the first cycle, we faced many challenges. Online sessions were difficult for the parents since there was no electricity and internet most of the time, especially for those who cannot afford either given their economic situation, hence, the adjustment in the duration of the session. We decreased the number of sessions from 16 to 10, and the time became 30 to 45 minutes while it used to be a 2.5-hour session. We also chose new topics to fit the online sessions to keep the space and privacy for the child. We also limited the number of participants to 10-12 children to deliver the information in a more effective way.

To support the caregivers in such a stressful situation in Lebanon and keep them interested and involved, we distributed hygiene kits and food baskets to all families. We also held many awareness sessions for the parents on Covid-19 and how to take precautions to keep them safe.

In cycle two, the interaction became way better now that the parents knew that the situation is going to remain difficult for a longer period, and online teaching and services have become the mainstream approach. We added interactive activities, which made the interaction increase dramatically during the sessions. At the end of each cycle, we took the lesson learned to improve the upcoming cycle.



## Feedback on Peace Education Project

The pre- and post-surveys conducted with a sample of children and youths show the strong impact that the program has intended to achieve. Regarding the acceptance of others, 91-95% of children aged between 6 and 11 years and 96%-98% of youths between 12 and 17 years old (Lebanese, Syrian and Palestinian) would accept participating in activities with other children from different backgrounds.

Regarding developing and using peaceful means to resolve conflict, 82%-92% of children aged between 6 and 11 years, and 82% as well of youths aged between 12 and 17 years (Lebanese, Syrian and Palestinian) have developed mechanisms to resolve conflict in peaceful ways.

## Social Stability and Social Cohesion

B&Z, in collaboration with the British Council, started implementing a new project across the Bekaa and the Nabaa area in Beirut.

The Strengthening Resilience - MENA II (SR2) programme aims at building young people's resilience, their ability to "survive and thrive" whatever pressures and hazards they confront, and increase the number of positive social, political, and economic pathways for youth who are susceptible to Violent Extremism (VE).

Interventions include the following main points:

- The engagement of young people in marginalized communities through activities that interest them, such as active citizens, sports, education, local governance, culture, and social enterprise.
- The support of young people to identify problems within their communities and train them to develop the networks and skills to respond and deliver social initiatives to enhance community life.

Hence, in 2020, B&Z targeted 47 youths from Nabaa and Bar Elias, and followed up with them with extensive training sessions. These sessions, which are to be concluded in 2021, will be done through social action projects relevant to the current situation in Lebanon, as a means for the youths to feel responsible, and to respond to people's needs given the Beirut explosion and the Covid-19 situation.



## Success Story

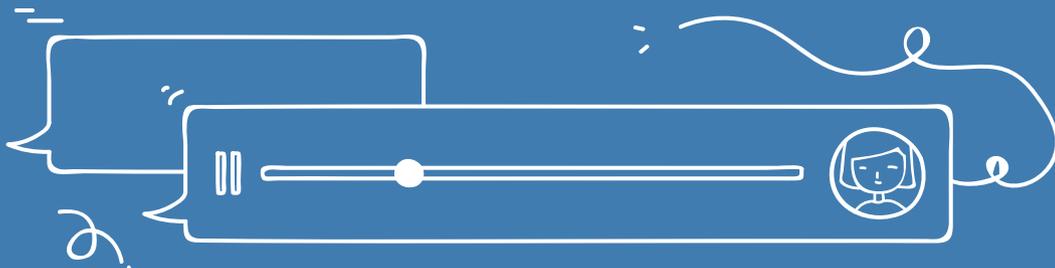
Half Syrian, half Lebanese, 8-year-old Dana lives with her mother and sisters in El-Qobbeh in Tripoli, north of Lebanon, and receives a small income from her divorced father. She suffers from stuttering and subsequent bullying, which have led her mother to seek help by the side of B&Z after discovering our Peace Education sessions. Dana was enrolled by our social worker in the sessions happening online in the hopes of helping her engage in activities that would see her interact more with people in order to lessen her stuttering.

To provide the family with tailored support, several sessions were appointed with the mother to better understand the situation at home. Dana's mother shared her embarrassment and worry when it came to her daughter's stuttering and bullying by other children, which the social worker advised her to substitute with support and understanding towards Dana.

As the 8-year-old remained shy throughout the sessions, avoiding participation by writing or speaking, the social worker encouraged her to use art to express herself. Three months in, as kids were sharing their feelings regarding the session on the WhatsApp group, Dana participated by sharing a brief voice note.

This was a significant milestone for the child as she had refrained herself from speaking for almost a year. The social worker was just "so happy to hear her voice finally."

After several parenting sessions, Dana's mother became more understanding and much less embarrassed of her daughter's speech issue. The facilitator complemented the successful process by giving her tips on talking to Dana in ways that would help her speak slowly and clearly with time.





B&Z launched the Civil Society Support Program in 2018 to build the capacity of grassroots and community-based organizations (CBOs) to enhance their skills in order to manage and implement projects. B&Z has built on its own experience, growing from a small group of volunteers to a well-established organization serving thousands of people in all its countries of operations. In light of this experience, skills and knowledge are acquired through learning and practice. B&Z designed and implemented projects to support CBOs by providing tailored training and coaching sessions that fit each organization's specific needs. A coaching phase was incorporated to ensure that a guidance stage follows the training phase to turn knowledge into skills and practices.

Since the beginning of this program, Basmeh & Zeitooneh provided sub-grants to all targeted CBOs to ensure that those organizations have the necessary financial support to design and implement projects in their target areas. We later updated the projects under this program based on lessons learned throughout the years as well as the evaluation results and feedback collected from participating CBOs. One of the major changes was the timing of the sub-granting phase, which was previously provided after the completion of both the training and coaching phases. Now, the sub-grants have become part of the learning process, where CBOs receive them and get the training and coaching sessions simultaneously.

## Incubator Project

The Civil Society Incubators Project falls under the Civil Society Support Program of B&Z and includes the training, coaching, and sub-granting of local and grassroots CBOs for them to be able to build their capacities, manage their organizations, and implement needs-based projects in their target areas. The project starts with an open call for participation, inviting interested CBOs to submit applications to be reviewed by the project team. Selected CBOs will undergo an Organizational Capacity Assessment to identify gaps and dictate the training plan to cover the needs of each. To make sure organizations benefit from the training workshops, B&Z provides continuous coaching sessions where the team and trainers work closely with the organizations to ensure that knowledge gained through training is turned into practical skills. After receiving several training and coaching sessions, organizations are invited to submit project proposals based on their scope of work and the needs of their target community. During this phase, the B&Z project team supports the organizations in planning their projects as part of the learning process. CBOs are then provided with subgrants to have the financial capacity necessary to implement their proposed projects.

The training workshops have reached more than 110 staff members in the 23 targeted organizations, and we were able to individually build their capacity through coaching sessions.

Each of the incubated CBOs receives a sub-grant to support their practical and executive capacities, along with theoretical knowledge acquired during training. To this date, B&Z and the incubated CBOs have implemented 16 community-based projects in the organizations' locations, with seven more projects in the design and proposal writing stages. Through these projects, B&Z and the partner CBOs reached more than 1,900 beneficiaries. The projects aimed at empowering community engagement in democracy and decision-making, empowering women, and raising awareness on the issues related to women's rights, human rights, constitution, and gender-based violence. Opportunely, B&Z has been developing an online platform as part of the Incubators Project to serve as a safe shared space for CBOs to meet, receive training sessions, and access material. The platform has proven to be very useful for the CBOs to continue their learning journey, especially after the Covid-19 lockdowns.



## Advocacy and Research Unit

The Advocacy and Research Unit conducts desk and field research, using the found evidence to raise awareness and exert influence on power holders (i.e. lawmakers, policymakers, and decision-makers) with direct ability to make changes. The unit also builds relationships with both the power holders and actors in their sphere of influence in the fields of refugee protection, education, humanitarian access, and localization.

In March 2020, we moved the unit's initiatives and lobbying efforts online. B&Z participated in regional and global conferences and networking events, such as the UNHCR Regional Durable Solutions Working Group (created to gain input from local civil society organizations regarding durable solutions), and the annual Brussels Conference on the Future of Syria and the Region.

Although online lobbying cannot be compared to in-person conversations, the move online created new opportunities for B&Z such as holding more regular meetings with stakeholders and donors, and gaining further reach in advocacy around durable solutions by including stakeholders and practitioners from various geographical locations. In a way, moving our activities online has helped streamline our advocacy and lobbying activities.

With Covid-19 sweeping the globe, the protection situation of displaced Syrians and vulnerable host communities in B&Z's countries of operation was worsening. The Advocacy unit aimed to keep its work relevant to changing conditions and assessed the initial humanitarian and human rights impact of the crisis on vulnerable communities in Lebanon, both through consultations with people from the field and large-scale surveying.

Together with partners, B&Z shared in April a brief with INGOs, donors, EU and UN representatives, and governments shortly after the outbreak of the pandemic, with the most urgent findings and a set of policy recommendations related to humanitarian response and funding, civic space, the role for civil society and aid localization, and human rights. The Head of the Unit also participated in a series of public webinars on the impact Covid-19 has on fragile and protracted displacement situations, particularly

the Syrian displacement crisis. In addition, concretizing efforts and holding accountable donors and other stakeholders to further localization and risk-sharing were already on the agenda of the Advocacy and Research unit, with the Covid-19 crisis providing an opportune moment to reiterate this position.

Similarly, the unit quickly shifted its attention to the newly arisen needs after the catastrophic Beirut blast on August 4. It had several media appearances on radio stations, newspapers, and magazines, and participated in meetings with donors to fundraise for the victims of the blast, draw international attention to the consequences of the explosion and the need for continuous and direct support to civil society organizations, non-discriminatory support to all nationalities affected by the blast, and the need for an impartial investigation into the explosion. It also developed and circulated a well-received document with partner organizations that included policy recommendations.

## **The Advocacy unit was involved in the following programs in 2020**

- **Refugee Protection Watch**

It began to ensure that Syrian refugees are entitled to durable solutions when it came to their outcomes, and part of that was to see whether a return to Syria is a safe option. We have mapped rural Damascus and Homs for returnees in two cycles, now initiating the third, and will begin mapping areas in Northern Syria to develop a holistic analysis of the return situation in high-return areas.

- **Coordinator of the sub-group against the Deportation of Syrians from Lebanon, falling under the PASC (Persons Affected by the Syrian Displacement Crisis) Working Group**

The deportations sub-group under PASC is in charge of monitoring and producing research on forced deportations of Syrian persons by the Lebanese government. While deportations have decreased, the focus of this sub-group has shifted to include general activities relating to the return of refugees to Syria. B&Z has been an active member of the PASC network since its foundation.

- **Research on the Consequences of Military Conscription in Syria**

The research looks into the changing role of the Syrian Arab Army (SAA) after 2011 and consequently how the law on military conscription was used to advance specific goals after 2011. The resulting research report focused on interviews conducted with persons who served in and/or deserted the SAA along with those who evaded/chose not to fill in the SAA, as well as a few of their family members. The report aimed at collecting this data to show the consequences of military conscription on the interviewees' lives and later show that military conscription is a significant impediment to return, and should be taken into more consideration in conversations regarding access of Syrian refugees to durable solutions.

- **Bridg-e Program: A Digital Educational Support Program In Math, Physics, Chemistry, and Biology for Middle School Students**

The idea of this program was born out of the need to adopt a more pragmatic approach towards preventing drop-outs from grades 7, 8, and 9. There is a lack of attention for intermediate students as most NGOs focus on younger children. At the same time, it is essential to keep the youth at this level in school as they may never come back once they drop out, and a lot of them require support that is lacking in the public school system. The support program that we are implementing is digital, more interactive, and specifically developed to address the gaps and needs of these students. Moreover, due to Covid-19, the Bridg-e Program was in many cases the only education the youth had access to.

Our forward plan is to branch out into other parts of Syria and conduct more in-depth research on (barriers to) resettlement of Syrian refugees in Europe and North America. We plan on finishing up PASC activities with an artistic event that will be the culmination of the Half of Syria visual campaign. Moreover, B&Z will lead a three-year research project in coordination with Sussex University into displacement economies in Lebanon. In contrast, partners across other contexts of protracted displacement in the world will produce comparable research findings.

# Crowdfunding Campaigns

## ● COVID-19

**27,339 British Pounds** were raised by the Smile & Olive foundation in the UK in response to the Covid-19 pandemic in Lebanon and its consequences on the most vulnerable communities, who were provided with Hygiene and Food Baskets to overcome the long lockdowns.



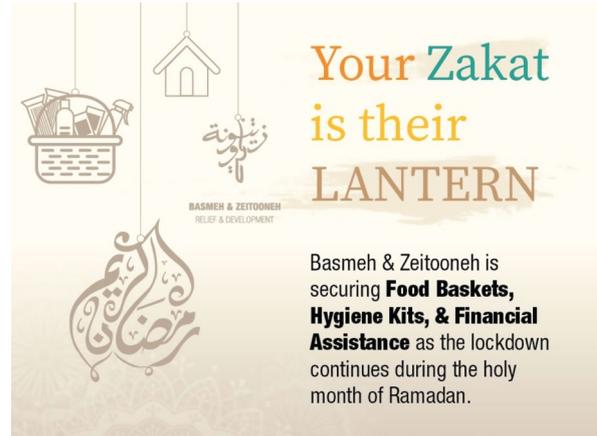
## ● Beirut Explosion

**115,630 British Pounds** were raised by the Smile & Olive foundation in the UK to support the families of victims and injured by the Beirut Port explosion. The most affected were provided with emergency cash, medical assistance, and legal help.



## ● Ramadan 2020

**10,000 USD** were raised by Basmeh & Zeitooneh through direct cash donations, which was poured into our Covid- 19 Response reaching out to more families in need during lockdown.



## ● Online Education

**23,115 USD** were raised by the Smile & Olive foundation in the U.S. to purchase extra tablets and SIM cards for B&Z students, so they are able to continue their online education during the pandemic.



# Our Donors & Partners



A **big thanks** to all our campaign supporters and those who donated clothes, blankets, funds and time - it is hugely appreciated by the whole team!



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