



LEBANON CRISIS RESPONSE

HUMANITARIAN
COALITION 

SPRING 2021

Credit : World Vision

CRISIS

On August 4th, 2020 the eyes of the world turned to Beirut, Lebanon where an explosion in the port killed **210** people and injured more than **7,500**. The disaster caused widespread devastation to the city of 900,000 people and surrounding areas, damaging the houses of **300,000** people, destroying the port and wreaking havoc in residential and commercial areas.

Lebanon was already facing several challenges before the blast: an economic and financial crisis, a political and legitimacy crisis, difficult access to water, healthcare and education, and the COVID-19 pandemic. The country is also host to the highest percentage of refugees per capita in the world, putting immense pressure on its already fragile infrastructure and basic services. Before the blast, it was estimated that one-third of the population lived below the poverty line.

In the wake of the blast, hundreds of thousands of people were in need of immediate assistance, as well as longer-term support to rebuild their lives.

APPEAL

The Humanitarian Coalition, with support from the Government of Canada, the Canadian Lebanese community, and corporate and media partners, mobilized Canadians to respond to the crisis.

Thanks to the outpouring of generosity from Canadians, the Humanitarian Coalition and its member agencies raised

\$19 million including an \$8 million matching contribution from the Canadian government.

The funds were distributed to the 12 members of the Humanitarian Coalition, all leading international aid organizations with a presence in Lebanon and the capacity to provide emergency assistance to the people who need it most.



Credit : World Vision



Credit : Save the Children

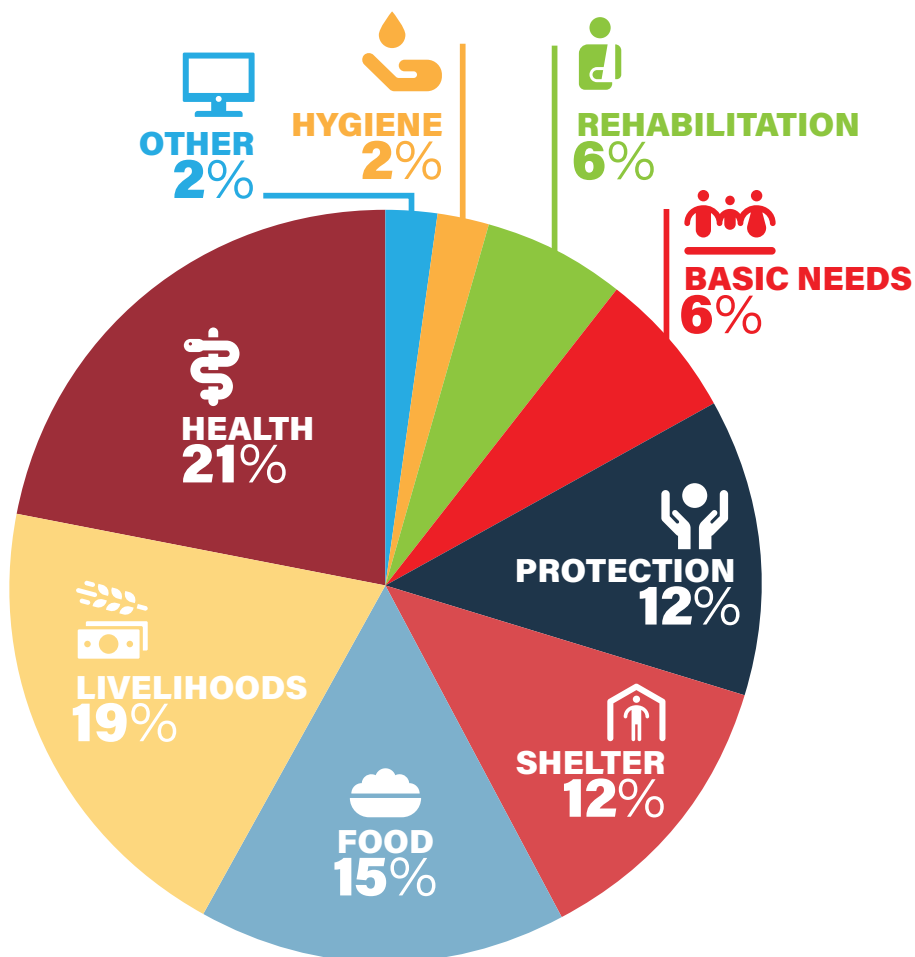
Credit : Humanity & Inclusion

OUR RESPONSE

Humanitarian Coalition members moved quickly to respond to the immediate needs of people affected by the explosion in Beirut, and its repercussions on health care, food security and employment.

The agencies began providing life-saving aid in the form of cash assistance, food baskets, shelter reconstruction, water and hygiene supplies, and primary health care, including mental health.

Among the longer-term investments, several members are helping micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) get back on their feet. This will enable owners and employees to earn a living and boost the local economy.



MAIN ACTIVITIES

Health

Two of our member agencies specializing in health-related services provided both physical and mental health care following the blast.

Doctors of the World (Mdm) provided essential medicines and medical supplies to primary healthcare centers and hospitals to cover the needs caused by damage to health facilities. Awareness sessions on COVID-19 prevention

measures were rolled out in group activities and individual visits. Sessions were also organized to help children adopt COVID-19 prevention behaviors when going back to school. And Mdm also set up consultation rooms in its walk-in clinic to serve individuals and families with psychological needs following the disaster.

Humanity and Inclusion (HI) provided wound kits and physical

rehabilitation for people who were injured by the blast and people with pre-existing disabilities. They offered training for caretakers, and provided mobility and orthotic devices where needed. They also provided psychological care to persons with injuries or disabilities and the elderly. HI also distributed hygiene and dignity kits with personal care items designed to ensure healthy hygiene practices.

Livelihoods

When a local business is forced to close, the livelihoods of the owners and all the employees are impacted, along with the economic fabric of the community. Many of our members are working to rehabilitate micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), investing in the autonomy of families and the well-being of the community.

For example, **Action Against Hunger (ACF)** and **Oxfam** have assessed the needs of local MSMEs and provided support for repairs where businesses were damaged. They are providing grants and offering tailored business coaching on topics such as procurement, finance, organization, marketing and safety and hygiene, including COVID-19 protection measures.

Food

With the support given to **Canadian Foodgrains Bank**, its member agency Mennonite Central Committee worked with their local partner to identify 1,000 households to receive monthly food assistance for 12 months beginning in October 2020. Two sizes of food parcels

were distributed, depending on the number of family members.

Canadian Lutheran World Relief, through its partner Norwegian Church Aid, set up a food kitchen to cook and distribute thousands of meals to households with food needs. Food kits have also been provided to families who have the capacity to cook their own meals.

Shelter

Homes up to 10 km away were damaged or destroyed by the explosion in the port of Beirut and 300,000 were left homeless. To provide immediate assistance to people who lost their homes, Humanitarian Coalition members provided cash to cover the rental of alternative lodgings. Cash was also provided to certain families to pay for smaller repairs, and to replace damaged appliances.

Where there has been structural damage, **Islamic Relief** and **World Vision** have hired local contractors to carry out evaluations and begin repairing homes.

Protection

Protection efforts include such diverse activities as awareness

and prevention of gender-based violence as well as post-disaster trauma support for children and adolescents.

For example, **CARE** has recruited and trained a protection team, including social workers and case workers who are raising awareness about gender-based violence and child protection issues, identifying cases and providing psychological support and referral where necessary.

Plan has trained child protection facilitators to help disaster-affected children build their coping skills while addressing different protection risks, including child labour and child marriage. Psychological well-being activities include drama, crafts, traditional storytelling, sports and sessions with key child protection messages.

Save the Children has identified needs among Syrian refugee communities, and is especially targeting households with adolescent girls for support. Save is providing life skills and employability training for this group, including financial literacy, English language, reproductive health, digital skills and one-on-one livelihoods counseling.

Credit : Médecins du Monde





COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

In responding to the needs of people affected by the explosion, Humanitarian Coalition agencies have made community consultation and participation a priority.

They have communicated regularly with communities on their priorities and activities, organized focus group discussions, and collaborated with local groups to avoid duplication and ensure complementarity of services. In at least one instance, a women's committee has been established to guide the roll-out of the relief activities.

Agencies are making adjustments to their programs according to feedback received. For example, the contents of hygiene kits were modified based on beneficiary suggestions, meal distribution was replaced by food vouchers where it was requested, and shelter repairs for vulnerable people were carried out by a contractor rather than simply through a cash grant.

All members have also set up Complaints Response Mechanisms so that community members and project beneficiaries can report all concerns, complaints, or any incidents of exploitation or abuse they might encounter.



SAMIRA GETS THE BOOST SHE NEEDS

Samira, 74, works in a laundry at a nearby hospital where she is paid about \$75 per month. She lives alone as her husband passed away 20 years ago and they didn't have any children.

"During the explosion, everything was broken," she says. "My relatives fixed the door of the kitchen and the bathroom because I couldn't."

"I still work because I don't want to beg for money or even get a loan. I survive on how much I can spend. I basically buy the cheapest food such as pasta or potato," she says.

World Vision chose Samira to receive a grant of \$315 per month for three months to help get her through a difficult period.

"This money will help me meet my basic needs," she says. "I am very grateful for World Vision."

"I AM STILL WORKING BECAUSE I NEED TO SURVIVE. I HAVE RENT AND FOOD TO PAY FOR."





COORDINATION WITH LOCAL PARTNERS

While many Humanitarian Coalition members operate through their own local offices in Lebanon, the majority are implementing their response in collaboration with other local partner organizations, and all are in regular communication and consultation with a wide range of players.

All of our member agencies are coordinating with community-based organizations, the Municipality of Beirut and the mayors of local neighbourhoods, the Lebanese Army, the disaster management unit, and other humanitarian agencies. These connections have had a positive effect on identifying and targeting those most in need, decreasing duplication of services, increasing awareness of response activities, and improving the sustainability of rehabilitation efforts.

By establishing operational and strategic partnerships with local organizations who were already operating in the area, our members benefit from their local partners' experience, knowledge and connections – connections that are often the entry point for the most vulnerable members of a community to access vital services. In return, Humanitarian Coalition members provide training and tools, and help to strengthen their partners' skills in other areas of work, contributing to the sustainability of results after the projects are completed.

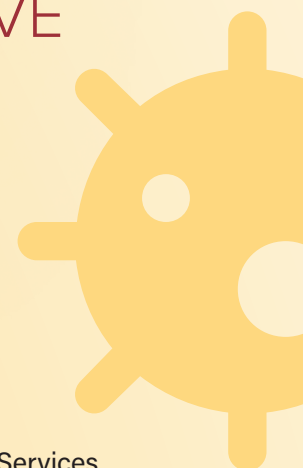
The following organizations in Lebanon are carrying out the response activities:

- Action Contre la Faim Lebanon
- Arc-en-Ciel
- Alfannar
- AMEL
- CARE International Lebanon
- Humanity and Inclusion Lebanon
- Islamic Relief Lebanon
- Médecins du Monde France
- Mennonite Central Committee
- Mousawat
- Norwegian Church Aid
- Oxfam Lebanon
- Plan International Lebanon
- Popular Aid for Relief and Development
- Save the Children Lebanon
- SHIFT Social Innovation Hub
- Tabitha for Relief and Development
- World Vision Lebanon

“...OUR MEMBERS BENEFIT FROM THEIR LOCAL PARTNERS' EXPERIENCE, KNOWLEDGE AND CONNECTIONS...”



“...THE PROJECTS HAVE CONTINUED TO MEET THEIR OBJECTIVES OF BRINGING RELIEF AND SUPPORT TO THE PEOPLE OF LEBANON, OFTEN IN INNOVATIVE WAYS...”



COVID-19 AND THE ECONOMIC CRISIS

Over the fall and winter months, a surge in the number of cases of COVID-19 in Lebanon compounded by the already limited health-care capacity led to a series of lockdowns, including a 24-hour stay-at-home order from January 14 to February 28, 2021. The lockdowns restricted all movement, including the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

Our member agencies have therefore adapted their programs to continue to work as much as possible remotely. Operations have been modified to compensate for delays incurred due to the lockdown, the disruption of banking and supplier services, and the challenges in the recruitment of

staff. Needs assessments are taking place remotely; staff have set up tents in communal areas where they can carry out consultations with people seeking support; and teams are meeting and coordinating online. Daily activities have been tailored to respect COVID prevention measures and reduce risks of contamination for both staff and project participants.

Protests in response to rising inflation and devaluation of the Lebanese currency have also restricted movement of humanitarian agencies in some areas, and further disrupted in-person activities.

The economic crisis has caused the prices of basic goods and

services to skyrocket. Services like electricity and internet are becoming increasingly costly, making it hard to shift to remote methods of providing assistance. Things like food and household items are also affected, and the cost of school supplies has gone up 500%, making them unaffordable for many families. Lack of access to technology and affordable services means it is more difficult to reach people in need with humanitarian aid.

Despite the challenges and adaptations, the projects have continued to meet their objectives of bringing relief and support to the people of Lebanon, often in innovative ways.



SUPPORT FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS

In times of crisis, inequalities between genders are often accentuated, increasing the vulnerabilities of women and girls.

Humanitarian Coalition agencies have therefore integrated gender considerations throughout their programming in Lebanon, beginning with ensuring a gender balance in the staff who are providing the services to the population, involving local women in project design, and prioritizing female-headed households in the distribution of aid.

Because domestic and gender-based violence often increase in the aftermath of a disaster, and may be compounded by a lockdown, our agencies are ensuring safeguarding mechanisms are in place to help deal with cases of domestic violence. Gender-based violence awareness and training sessions are offered to staff, to male and female faith leaders, as well as community members. Support and therapy are available to survivors and financial aid is offered where appropriate for women who are particularly vulnerable or at-risk.

To improve future prospects for women following the blast, some agencies are offering training to enhance the employability of women and providing cash grants to support female-owned businesses.



HYGIENE KITS HELP PROTECT FAMILIES FROM COVID-19

"I lived through various conflicts in Lebanon but what happened to us from this explosion is more catastrophic," said Walid Chandin Al-Sa'id.

After the blast, Al-Sa'id found his 4-year-old daughter Yara lying completely unresponsive. At the hospital, there were delays before Yara could be treated for her neck and face injuries. It would be another 10 days until she could walk again.

Al-Sa'id has been struggling to support his family since the explosion. He used to work full-time as a driver for a medical company.

Between COVID-19, the Beirut explosion and the recession, the company has drastically cut his hours and his pay.

As a part of the Humanitarian Coalition, Islamic Relief Canada has distributed personal care kits so families have what they need to maintain good hygiene practices.

"We received this hygiene kit from Islamic Relief which will help us, especially with the COVID pandemic in Lebanon these days," said Al-Sa'id.





Credit : CFGB/MCC/PARD



ZAKARIA'S TUK-TUK IS BACK

Every morning, Zakaria Amsheh would go out into the city streets of Beirut, Lebanon and sell coffee and tea from his tuk-tuk, a small, three-wheeled motorized vehicle. After a full day's work, he would come home to his wife and three young children.

The explosion in the port of Beirut changed his life completely.

All of his family members suffered minor injuries in the blast. His windows were blown out and his doors were destroyed. His tuk-tuk was damaged and his livelihood came to a halt.

The Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) – member of the Canadian Foodgrains Bank – distributed food boxes to families like Zakaria's.

"It is so big that it is fully able to support my family for a whole month", says Zakaria, who describes the food parcel as a blessing, and a relief.

Slowly, Zakaria's life is coming back together, for him and his family. He has even taken his tuk-tuk back out into the streets of Karantina to sell coffee once more.

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**HUMANITARIAN
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Together saving more lives



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