

Spring shows growth across Lebanon and Iraq

Supporting those in Lebanon and Iraq affected by displacement

In our third update, we hear how our partners have opened six new centres across Lebanon thanks to your support, meaning another 500 children's lives have changed for the better. In Iraq, nearly 300 young people have completed a business skills course, giving them the skills they need to thrive.

Spring graduation

In our last update, we heard how the Foundation of United for Relief and Sustainable Development (FUAD) had changed Mahmood's life, teaching him the skills he needed to set up his own business in barbering. Now, like many other young people helped by the project, he is a successful barber in Kirkuk, able to support his family.

Thanks to your continued support, our partner has been able to run another business skills course to support unemployed 18 to 35-year-olds, teaching them the skills and training they need to set up their own small business and earn a living. This is the fourth time FUAD has run the course, this time reaching 49 young people in Kirkuk and 44 in Tikrit. Their graduation in May 2019 means a total of nearly 300 young people have now been helped by FUAD, with nearly one-third of them coming from internally displaced communities.

The dedication of our staff has an amazing impact on the children and their caregivers - the children in our centre learn to be proud of themselves and are empowered by their education.' Mouvement Social Lebanon

New centres across Lebanon

The past few months have been particularly busy for our partner in Lebanon. Mouvement Social Lebanon (MSL) works with children from impoverished socio-economic backgrounds, particularly the families of Syrian refugees. These children often lack access to primary education, or have missed out on school due to displacement.

Thanks to your support, MSL has been able to open six new centres across Lebanon, extending their project to reach even more vulnerable communities. These new centres host a total of 493 children, giving them access to better education in the form of extra support from trained teachers, as well as more holistic services, such as grief counselling and advice, and a range of activities for children and caregivers.

Cooperation and collaboration

Many of the children who come to the centres have experienced trauma - something the centres are keen to work through with them. Since our last update, MSL has been focusing particularly on teaching cooperation and collaboration - working with the children to build awareness and teaching them to support one another as a way to work through trauma.

MSL staff have been tackling the subject of violence, in particular through theatre classes, putting on a short play with the children in which they learned about the effects of violence and what they could do to help each other. Staff reported that



Children enjoy a dance class at one of the new centres

'The best thing about living here is to have the chance to go to school. I have been away from school for a few years and it means so much to be able to attend the classes at the MSL centre.' Mayada Toutounji

children who had taken part showed improved behaviour and stronger bonds with their families. It shows the importance of having a safe space to work through these difficult subjects.

The chance to go to school

Mayada Toutounji is 15 years old. She has lived in Bourj Hammoud, on the outskirts of Beirut, since her family fled the war in Syria. Since arriving in the country, her father has struggled to find work, meaning her whole family has struggled. She spent many years not being able to go to school at all.

Mayada heard about the MSL centres from one of her classmates at school - and particularly how they were able to help families like Mayada's, offering support to displaced people across Lebanon.

Mayada comes to the centre in Bourj Hammoud every day after school. She spends some time with a teacher who helps her with her English, and teaches her maths and science in English and Arabic. She also loves to take part in the other activities that are held at the centre, like drawing, drama and life skills.



Mayada (left) completes her English homework with one of the centre's teachers



Children at the Tripoli centre celebrate the birthdays of the month

Being able to go to the centre has completely changed Mayada's life - she has had an opportunity to meet new friends who have also experienced hardship, allowing her to learn to build relationships in a safe environment. Thanks to her English classes at the centre, she has gone from being behind to being at the same level as those in the year above her. Now, she dreams of being an engineer.

Please join us in our prayers for the project:

- Pray for all those displaced across Iraq and Lebanon, many of whom, like Mayada, have had to leave their homes due to war. Pray that they have the strength to keep building a safe place to call home.
- Pray for the young people supported by the project, that they continue to be able to make the most of the training provided by our partner; that they too are able to learn the skills to start their own businesses, offering them a stable income in a country strained by instability.
- Pray for all the parents in Lebanon who lack a secure income to provide for their children, and are doing everything they can to build the best possible future for their families.
- Pray for the teachers in MSL's centres, who work tirelessly to provide life skills to disadvantaged children across Lebanon, allowing them the tools they need to adapt to a new place, and build strong relationships, learning to support each other.



If there's any way we can help your group, please contact your local Christian Aid office. Email cpartnership@christian-aid.org or visit caid.org.uk/partnerships