

ANNUAL REPORT 2020

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Chairman's letter

Help others, protect yourself

In 1993, when I co-founded ALPHA I had in mind social solidarity as a scope of programs aimed to respond to the needs of socially excluded groups.



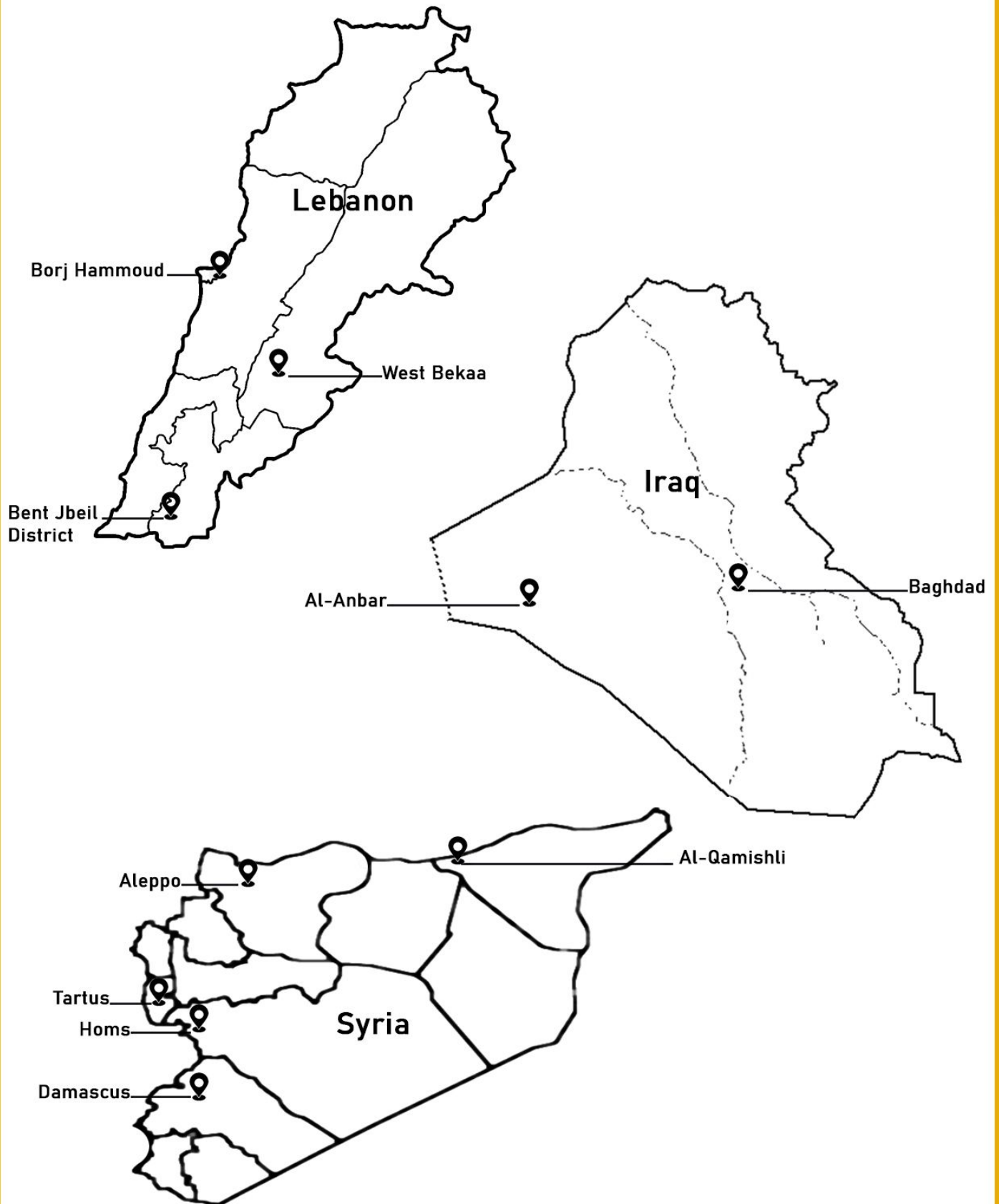
In 2020, amid the corona pandemic, and the August 4th Beirut harbor blast, ensuring extra funds was vital to respond to the urgent needs of socially vulnerable groups and refugees.

Private and institutional donors responded promptly to our calls. Thanks to their donations we were able to distribute food and hygiene kits to the benefit of 650 families, and to repair 409 houses and 31 shops damaged by the blast. Faced with this proven wave of solidarity, I thought of a slogan emphasizing interdependency "*Help others, protect yourself*".

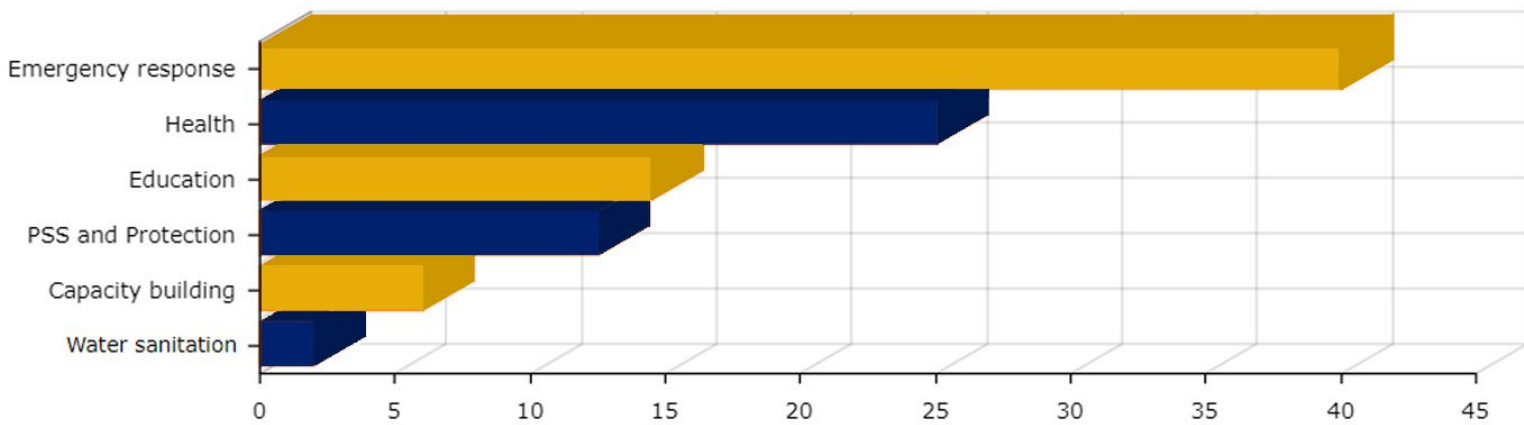
The Corona pandemic has taught us that the shortest way to protect oneself is to help others protect themselves.

This applies to all aspects of solidarity.

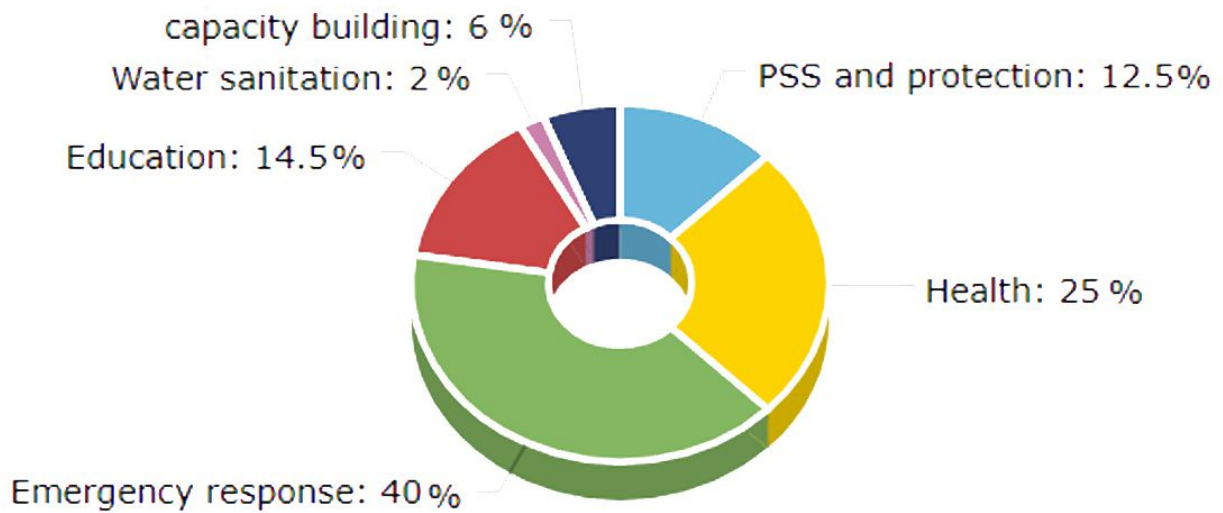
Areas of project implementation



Programs



Budget 2,543,298.57 USD



Total number of beneficiaries

45,229

Stories and challenges



Putting it right

Since in Syria social work is not taught in universities, ALPHA capacity building team is offering remote training sessions to several groups of Syrian university graduates in related disciplines, engaged in social work activities with children and women which have been affected by the war.



Our trainings are interactive; we listen to the needs of the field workers and help them in acquiring a range of tools and techniques. During an evaluation session via WhatsApp with the trainees, we realized that some of the participants were crying. **H.** said, “I am crying because the trainings have allowed me to discover myself. I didn't know that I was able to change the children's behaviors, that I could ever change the negative impact of the war and devastation on their state of being and make them move ahead”. **M.** who was in charge to follow up a case of a cerebral palsy child with an underweight problem said: “The diagnosis showed a malnutrition problem because of the difficulty of the mother to provide her child with the adequate quality of food. I explained to her the meaning of malnutrition without letting her feel guilty. I also referred her to a specialized center where she found medical information and psychological support, and above all the food she couldn't afford to buy to feed her child properly”.

Slowly but steadily social work practices are building up in Syria. What we do is not only a matter of capacity building, but we are also offering counselling to individuals affected by the war to connect them with social work practices responding to the needs of war affected children and their families.

Janine Naufal- Capacity Building team

Either Relief or Photography

On the second day after the August 4th blast, our group went to the port to support the Russian and French civil defense teams in searching for limbs.



We, the Lebanese civil defense teams went to the explosion site equipped with our hands instead of electronic devices to search the rubble. Our heads are protective helmets, and our sense of smell do not need dogs. We are naked teams compared to foreign teams. We volunteer for free; we collect money from each other to buy car fuel, gear and basic equipment.

After a week of work, I went back home, took a shower, and sat down recalling the events and scenes of this terrible week. Suddenly, I realized that I was in a restricted area for photographers, and I had not taken a single picture. I know myself, when I am volunteering in the civil defense, I do not think of taking pictures, *either relief or photography*. Nonetheless, I am a professional photographer this is my main profession. Why did I miss this opportunity? If I had taken photos they would have been sold at exorbitant prices to foreign and local agencies...

Did I abstain from taking pictures because I was unable to face what I saw?

The question still haunts me.

Serge Bou Chrouch friend of Alpha.

Perseverance pays off

When the Covid-19 pandemic broke out in Iraq, the populations living in the rural areas of al Anbar province had been left without material support or adequate health information. To fill the gap, ALPHA Iraq team conducted an awareness campaign in three villages adjacent to the city of Fallujah. Financed by the Secours Catholique Caritas France, the campaign included hygiene kits and food baskets distribution.

Iraqi rural communities are known to be traditional and distrustful of government health authorities.

Fathers forbid their daughters to volunteer with our mix gender teams. Female volunteers succeeded in convincing their parents that the volunteering was of a humanitarian nature and beneficial to the village. Some families refused to listen to a non-wearing hijab female GP from our medical team. The doctor insisted and convinced the women that the necessity of preventing the risk of Covid-19 spreading trumps "the looks and the gender of the person giving a medical advice". Each time we entered a village, people got scared of the PPE we were wearing. They thought that "the blue masked ones" were coming to quarantine them by force, or "shame their daughters in case they were found to be infected". Luckily, children's curiosity broke the barrier of fear as they welcomed the medical team with their innocent joy and insisted on distributing the instructions leaflet to their parents.

7 months after our campaign, while people living in rural areas are still waiting to be vaccinated, the girls and children are watching over the health of their families. They are also encouraging their peers to participate in similar campaigns and urging them to change the mentality of their parents.



Motivating challenges

Before 1998, kindergartens classrooms in Lebanon were exclusive to the private sector. However, since they were introduced in the Lebanese public schools' system, preference has been given to Lebanese

nationality holders. Therefore, ALPHA established KG classes for the Syrian refugees children with the support of UNICEF and Kindernohtilfe. Since the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, KG classes have been closed and children have been receiving remote home learning. I teach the letters and numbers of the Arabic language to 55 Syrian children, level KG2 and 3, residing in the villages of Tyre and Bint Jbail, South Lebanon. Distance learning for the youngest is a real challenge that forced me to call in new physical and intellectual resources to overcome its difficulties and complexities.

I Wake up at 6 am to produce virtual lessons. At 8, the video is sent to the parents' mobile phones. None of them owns a computer, zoom group class is unthinkable, each child must receive the lesson individually over the phone of his mother or father. From 8 to 10 am I watch my phone to see which parent opened the message and who did not. At 10, I start calling the daily ones, I listen to their problems and encourage them to persevere. From 2pm until 6pm, I communicate with the children teaching them how to hold the pen and write. This only if the Internet is working properly, and if the parents' phones are suitable for receiving the videos. Otherwise, I am seeking with the Alpha team to secure tablets for the children. In a previous life, I was an about-to retire teacher, a mother to children who live abroad, and a grandmother for grandchildren growing away from me. Today, I am a "video producer", a "supportive counsellor", a "stimulator of children's cognitive potential", and a "problem solver". My home has become a virtual KG classroom for 55 Syrian children and a "moral support clinic" for their mothers or fathers.

My husband is annoyed with my constant bustling, but I am very happy.



Donors and partners



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