

Helping in Lebanon

Dear friends,

Lenka's 18-year-old niece and ADH member, Tereza, for a long time wanted to have a hands-on experience in a needy country. Since going to the Congo didn't work out due to Wolfgang's hernia operation we were looking for another place where she could help.

Having quite a few good Lebanese friends in the Congo and hearing about the heart-breaking current situation in Lebanon we contacted André and Crystal, whom we heard have been assisting with many humanitarian projects there for 25 years. Lenka was able to accompany Tereza and together they did some volunteer work there.



Tereza and Lenka with our wonderful hosts and long-time hum. aid workers Crystal and André



Many shop windows are still gone after the explosion in the harbour of Beirut in 2020

financial elite and much meddling from other nations which is stalling the formation of a government. Three-quarters of the population of over 6 million now lives in poverty and inflation is soaring.

To give you a better understanding of the situation, here are a few facts: *Lebanon which used to be called Switzerland of the Middle East is now exhausted and in great disarray after several wars, starting around 1975. In late 2019, Lebanese banks imposed informal capital controls, restricting cash withdrawals from accounts to avoid folding amid currency shortages. There have been decades of rampant corruption and mismanagement by the country's political and*



Monument expressing Lebanese people's sentiment

When we arrived there, we were touched by the warmth of the people despite their deteriorating



Art project with Lebanese and Palestinian children in a refugee camp



Skit about the Sun and the Wind, performed by Lenka, Crystal and Tereza

conditions. However, it took us some time to adjust to the country that seemed a bit chaotic with all the different cultures, religions, diverse types of buildings – from mansions and fancy malls to broken down and dilapidating houses.

Our first program was for underprivileged children – Lebanese and refugees from Palestine. We acted out a skit of the Aesop fable about the Wind and the Sun, when they argued who is stronger and who can make an old man take off his coat



'Hay El Gharbeh' slum with no running water or canalization. Tires on the roof to keep it from flying away

faster. With the lesson that the wind with violence and force does not get as good results as the sun with its warmth and love. The children got the point right away! We had an interpreter for Arabic, but most children spoke enough English for us to be able to interact with them and help them with an art craft project we prepared and which they could take home afterwards to play with.

Another visit led us to a school called 'Tahaddi' in the 'Hay El Gharbeh' slum, led by a Swiss lady, Catherine. She started from nothing and in the process even adopted a two-year-old abandoned child from there.

When we arrived, the children were leaving for a few days for a special religious holiday so we brought bags of food supplies that should last their families about two months.

At another occasion, our hosts, André and Crystal, brought material for a sewing center for mothers from the slum area. They make beautiful things such as handbags, toiletry bags, key chains and even jackets.



Catherine - principal of the 'Tahaddi' school in the slum



Mothers in the sewing center in Tahaddi



Food bags with supplies for about 2 months

Tahaddi works closely with the 'Bedayati' center, located in the same slum. This whole area is extremely run down, with no running water, resulting in an unforgettable stench. In Bedayati, they impart different skills to the young people from this area and teach them how to do educational programs for children who don't visit the Tahaddi school.

We organized another program for about 20 of those especially needy children. Our art project was coloring and folding papers into a finger game. We soon realized that some of those children never did anything like this before and needed more assistance from us than in the other center. They thoroughly enjoyed playing with their product afterwards.

Even though the space was small, we were able to play some lively games. We ended up giving a cup of popcorn to each one of them, a small set of crayons and a little notebook they can continue to draw in at home.

Tereza and I were very touched by the thankfulness of the children, that someone took time to do something with them. When leaving, Rhea – the manager of this center – told us that it was the best program they've ever had there! At the end, she asked us to take time with the young people to teach them and help them take notes of what we did with the children to



Children from the 'Bedayati' center in the slum enjoying the games



Farewell after the handicraft project and games – with a cup of popcorn and a gift of coloring pencils to take home



Teaching young people at Bedayati how to conduct educational programs with the children

helped her to survive, i.e. how He led her take another street and then she saw how a bomb exploded in the one she was about to take.

Another fascinating fact for us was how the different religions live peacefully next to each other. You find many churches and mosques, some even right next to each other. It showed us that in reality behind all the fighting are greed and power struggles which misuse

give them some ideas for the future.

Besides Catherine and Rhea, we met another of our hosts' special friends, Joelle. She wrote a book about her time during the 15-year-long civil war (1975-1990), covering her kidnapping, witnessing horrible atrocities, her resulting drug addiction and arrest, followed by 5 years in prison and her personal change. She told us amazing stories of how often during this time God



With Joelle, a war survivor and author

things like religion for their purposes.



Many mosques and churches some even right next to each other like here in the center of Beirut

Though we cannot compare the need in Lebanon to a place like the Congo, people's struggles there are nevertheless very tangible and heart breaking, and they deserve to have a chance for a better life as well. We pray that God will keep those wonderful people and take care of them and their country.



Bible in Arabic - the language spoken there by Moslems and Christians alike

Greetings with our best wishes,

Lenka, Tereza, Wolfgang and team