



Photo: Nour Wahid/Save the Children

# **Lebanon After the Beirut Blast:** **How Your Support Fuels** **Our Humanitarian Response**

## Three-Month Update

## Responding to the Beirut Blast Amidst an Economic Crisis

The massive explosion that leveled the port of Beirut, Lebanon and damaged neighborhoods across the city on August 4 was shocking in its power – and the speed with which it immediately deepened crisis conditions in the country.

Our teams based in Beirut and the surrounding area mobilized within hours to ensure that the countless children who were affected were not forgotten in the smoke and chaos. With your compassion and support, we have been addressing food, shelter, education and child protection needs in and around shattered neighborhoods.

### WHAT WE ARE DOING, THANKS TO YOU

#### HEALTH PROTECTION

Our support for vulnerable and displaced families includes distributing essential hygiene items. We also provided infection prevention and control kits to the municipality of Beirut to replace materials lost after the explosion.

#### FOOD & SHELTER

We provided 16,800 hot meals and distributed 2,100 shelter kits to help families weatherproof their damaged homes. In close collaboration with the Lebanese Red Cross, we worked to support minor repairs to damaged homes, distributing 4,640 debris removal equipment and protection kits - including goggles, helmets, etc. We are now allocating multi-purpose cash assistance so families can decide for themselves which supplies they require for their recovery.

#### CHILD PROTECTION

During the initial aftermath, we followed up on the care of children separated from their families or unaccompanied by an adult to ensure that they were protected from harm. We are supporting 140 Child Friendly Spaces, which offer children a safe space to play and cope with the stress of their experiences, while following recommended international COVID-19 precaution guidelines. We are continuing to serve children overwhelmed by the event and the losses of homes and loved ones with psychological first aid to ease their stress and fears.

#### FAMILIES' LONG-TIME RECOVERY

To improve food security and economic resilience for families, we have conducted 171 rapid needs assessments of damaged small businesses to provide small- to medium-size cash grants to help them reopen and restore much needed income.

**Supporters like you are the reason Save the Children has been able to play a vital role in responding immediately to the needs of children and their families after the Beirut blast.**



Photo: Tom Nicholson/Save the Children

**Karim\*, 58, was driving his taxi when the explosion hit. He rushed home to find his family safe, but his house damaged. Save the Children provided his family with a shelter kit to help weatherproof and repair his home.**

**\*Name changed for privacy.**



Lama, 11, shares her drawing with Miss Hanna, a Save the Children case worker. Photo: Walid Khoury/Save the Children

## Protecting Children and Rushing Aid to Families After the Blast

The economic downturn and the coronavirus pandemic had already had a huge impact on Lama, 11, and her family when the Beirut explosion occurred in August 2020. Inflation rates have skyrocketed, causing her family to struggle to buy groceries. Her mother, Marie Helene, worked at her school as a cleaner, but with the school closures, she lost her job. It now seems unlikely that Lama and her brother will be able to re-enroll at that school because of the cost.

**“After the coronavirus came the revolution, and following that was the explosion. That's when the situation became intolerable.”**

When the explosion occurred, their house was damaged and Lama, Jad, 14, and their parents were all psychologically affected. We provided them with emergency cash assistance to buy urgently needed household items. We also provided both children with psychosocial support to lessen the anguish and trauma caused by the multiple emergencies the family is experiencing. Such support involves one-on-one sessions with each child and the case worker so the case worker can work closely with the children giving them the comforting and safe space to express their feelings by talking, drawing, and other activities conducted during home visits or remotely.

Says Marie Helene, “Miss Hanaa comes once every week to check on my children, talks to them, and educates them. My children are beyond happy because of her. If they see Hanaa, it's odd; it is as if they see a family member, like a cousin.”



# A Triple Emergency: COVID-19 and an Economic Crisis During the Blast

## COVID-19

The first confirmed case of COVID-19 in Lebanon was reported in February 2020, resulting in lockdowns, accelerated mass unemployment and closing of small and medium businesses, all of which escalated the economic collapse. According to the World Health Organization, there were 116,476 confirmed cases in Lebanon as of November 22.

Our teams across the country are working to support families affected by the pandemic, addressing a range of needs from reducing transmission of the coronavirus, and child protection, to shelters for isolating those suspected of being infected.

In Beirut and in the north, our teams distributed disinfection kits to municipalities and hundreds of households.

In the north, we erected two isolation tents in the Kherbet Daoud area to isolate any positive cases that may be identified following a testing campaign run by the UN. Our team in Bekaa have also completed the conversion of a school into an isolation center.

## Economic Crisis

The collapsing economy has pushed more than half a million children in Beirut into a struggle for survival and deepened their hunger. Hyperinflation is rising and families cannot afford the basics of food, water, electricity, cooking fuel and hygiene supplies. We provide the most vulnerable families with cash grants that help them respond to the immediate and urgent basic needs of their children. We are also distributing food parcels to Syrian, Lebanese, and Palestinian families. The parcels cover 80% of the nutritional needs of a family of five for one month.

Increasing poverty levels and the prices of basic goods and services will likely worsen needs during winter time. Of particular concern is the growing fuel shortage and increase in fuel prices above what households can afford, as very few households in Lebanon have access to electricity and instead rely on generators for heat. As the crisis worsens and families become more food insecure, we will continue to improve their food security, economic resilience and living conditions, and provide humanitarian aid to the most vulnerable families.

Save the Children staff with children, playing in the pop-up Child Friendly Space in the Ghabi district of Beirut. Photo: Tom Nicholson/Save the Children





## Ensuring Education Continues for Lebanon's Most Vulnerable Children

Save the Children is responding to disruptions in education by providing learning activities with pre-school children, school-attending students, and out-of-school children. This includes distributing remote learning kits and training teachers and staff members on remote-teaching practices to ensure learning for children continues. We have also established WhatsApp groups for caregivers and students to get regular messages and tips on home schooling.

Syrian and Palestinian children living in Lebanon have had their education disrupted for months if not for years prior to the pandemic. Lebanon is home to 1.5 million Syrian refugees – half of whom are children – and 270,000 Palestinian refugees. We are addressing the education needs of tens of thousands out-of-school Syrian children in the Bekaa region and supporting vulnerable Syrian refugee children to access quality, inclusive education through non-formal education across Lebanon, with a focus on engaging parents and the community in children's education and protection.

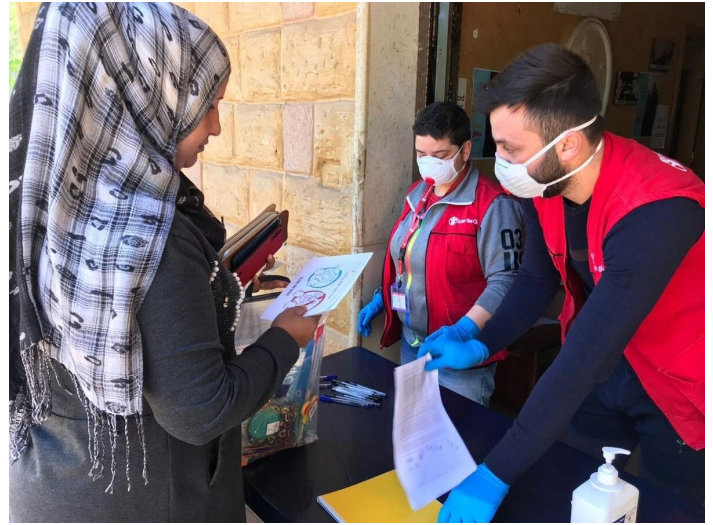


Photo: Save the Children Lebanon

**Save the children's teams in Bekaa distribute learning kits to ensure children have access to basic learning materials during this crisis.**

Photo: Tom Nicholson/Save the Children

