

Aleimar

Insieme ai bambini del mondo

MEALS FOR ALL

Free canteen for Lebanese families and refugees in Damour



THE PROJECT IN BRIEF

TITLE Meals for all

Applicant group Gruppo Aleimar Onlus (**Aleimar**), Via Curiel 21 / D - 20066 Melzo (MI)

LOCAL RESPONSIBLE « OUI POUR LA VIE » Ngo , Lebanon, Chouf, Damour

PROJECT COORDINATORS

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BENEFICIARIES 250 people (including about 180 children)

TOTAL AMOUNT 82.860 euro

AMOUNT TO BE SEARCHED 10.000 euro

TIME OF COMPLETION 12 months

Planned start: January 2017 - Completion: December 2017

1. Geographical Region:

Damour is a small village in Lebanon not far from Beirut, the capital. In the past this country was scene of violent clashes, both during the civil war, in the 70s and during the Israeli-Lebanese conflict, in the '80s. The chain of violent actions and difficult periods has led to a situation of serious poverty of the population. Moreover, the political instability of the country and the inability to establish a welfare state to meet the needs of the lowest stratum of the population, had, as a result, the marginalization of these people.

2. PROBLEM

In addition to the already existing poverty for decades, the population of the area in recent years has had to deal with considerable increases in the prices of essential goods such as flour, bread, milk, fruit and vegetables, following the numerous waves of refugees coming from Syria and Iraq, fleeing the conflict in their own countries. As a result the poor neighborhoods in the outskirts of Beirut are overcrowded, as well as the homes where these people live, arriving even at 20 per apartment, sleeping on the floor, without heating and in unhealthy conditions. Because of this complicated situation many Lebanese families, as well as all those of the Syrian and Iraqi refugees, can't no longer do their daily shopping to buy food for their children and for themselves, and for this reason to feed in a balanced manner.

3. GOALS

The goal of this project is to support the Lebanese and Syrian families residing in the Damour area, where operates our local representative OUI POUR LA VIE, providing them with balanced meals from the nutritional point of view, twice a week (Mondays and Thursdays), so that at least in these occasions they have the chance to have for themselves and for their children a full meal. The meal consists of vegetables, rice, a main course of meat or fish and fruit.

4. BENEFICIARIES

The families helped by the kitchen project are about 40, for a total of 250 people per day. The families are selected to join the project, after their initial request, based on an interview and a home visit, to evaluate the real need to receive the service. OPV is committed to helping people both native of Damour and foreign and refugees in this country, without distinction, but basing its choice solely on the actual condition of need verified.

5. METHODS

The local contact OPV has initiated this project in February 2016, after having made usable a garage placed next to the headquarters of the group, in which has been installed a kitchen, composed partly by used appliances that were donated to them and partly by others purchased with donations received. The staff working during the days of activity of the kitchen (for the moment on Monday and on Thursday, but hopefully soon to extend the

initiative to reach other families in difficulty) is entirely voluntary, except for four people who receive a small fee, they too coming from difficult economic situations. The salaried staff consists of a cook, two helpers in the kitchen and a delivery man. Volunteers are numerous: 4 permanent volunteers and other numerous young volunteers who, alternating with homework, deal with grocery shopping in advance, to prepare food for cooking and finally to pack in airtight containers the portions that will be distributed and, in some cases, delivered at home, if deemed necessary.

Families receive a coupon to be presented when picking up the meal at the headquarters of OPV. Whenever the coupon is withdrawn, the family receives the one for the next deal. The costs are limited almost exclusively to the pure cost of food as well as the airtight containers are reusable and marked with a number that identifies the family, so that are they themselves to bring them back to get them filled. The portions are also calibrated to the number of family members.

Besides supply of food deal, the OPV operators seek to support the families 360°, offering them psychological support, help in finding a job and, if necessary, a school support to children.

6. QUOTATION

The daily cost to buy food to cook a meal for 250 people is about 600 Euros, i.e. about 2.40 euro per person. The cost may seem high, but we must consider exactly what is in this country the huge gap that since a long period people are facing between the average income pro capite, about 360 euro per month, and the cost of food goods, comparable to the Italian prices, to understand how a large family is not able to do its daily shopping.

The cost of utilities is divided as follows: electricity around 120/130 € per month and gas around 80/90 € per month. And we must consider that electricity in Lebanon it is a big problem: even in Beirut, although a fairly modern city, the Government organizes black out for a few hours as they do not manage to have a stable system of supply of electricity. For this reason, those who can afford it, equip itself with generators that can compensate the power failure for a few hours. Even the headquarters of the OPV group did it, thus ensuring the functioning of the kitchen. The cost therefore includes both types of electricity. The second entry in the utilities is the gas that is approximately 80/90 € per month for the filling of two large tanks that serve to have gas in the kitchen. All these expenses are charged to the OPV group.

The cost for cleaning is \$ 175 (157 euro) per month: who is in charge of cleaning takes an hourly wage after each day of activity of the canteen and then does a general cleaning day extra every week. It's very important to maintain hygiene and cleanliness standards rather high because there are often unannounced visits by the Ministry of Health.

7. SUSTAINABILITY

The funds to support the project come from different sources:

- prosperous Lebanese donors native of Damour;
- Italian donors who personally know the work of OPV;
- the OPV group.

Instead people who are helped by the kitchen project, both Lebanese and refugees, they live permanently in Damour, so they can be followed and monitored directly and on a daily basis, by the girls.

The project, during these months when the kitchen has operated, has already enjoyed considerable success and more and more families arrive in the headquarters of OPV to make the request to participate. The acceptance criteria are always the same, but people in general understand the reasons for any refusal. The kitchen is next to the headquarters of OPV and closely controlled by our local representatives, participating directly in the preparation and distribution of meals. The project has a huge potential because now that the kitchen is installed it is only a question of managing it and there are always volunteers willing to help. You could also get, by operating more days during the week, to help many other families in need, giving them an important practical help because, we stress it again, spending on groceries is disproportionate in this country for everyone and even more inaccessible for families in poverty.

8. ANNEXES
PHOTOS OF CANTEEN



LETTER OF LOCAL CONTACT



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OPV Food bank project overview

OPV Food bank project started in February 2016. In view of the very quick increase in the number of refugees in Damour, the situation was becoming much harder on both Lebanese and refugee families. Many children were not receiving anymore the minimum nutrition needed for their healthy development.

Today, the food bank project serves around 40 Lebanese and refugee families. Approximately 250 individual meals are distributed twice per week, Monday and Thursday. Files are regularly reviewed to give priority to families who are most in need, this is why numbers are always subject to change.

The distributed meals consist of bread, salad, fruit and a main dish rich in protein (containing meat or chicken or fish). The cost per day is currently around 600 euros. To reduce the cost, we are currently considering stopping the salad (around 50 euros per day) and/or the fruit (around 100 euros per day), which will limit the distributed package to the main dish and bread.

The food bank also serves as a source of living for four team members: The chef, two assistants and a delivery man. The four of them are from families in need. The average salary in Lebanon is 400 US Dollars (360 euros), which is too low compared to the cost of living. For comparison purposes, note that a two-room house, which in our case sometimes serves as a home for several refugee families is being rented for around 400 US Dollars, in Damour, which is a suburb not very close to the capital.

