Chapter 2

Partner organizations in the Lebanon Project

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As the Lebanon Project has consolidated itself over the years, a network including both Lebanese and Norwegian organizations has gradually evolved. All the partners are important for the project's goals as well as the various organizations' potential to succeed in their fields of interest. This network constitutes diverse and comprehensive experience and knowledge in the project, whether the organization's focus is mainly on cultural exchange, teaching, health-related services, solidarity-building activities, and providing humanitarian and financial aid. In this chapter, we provide a more thorough overview of this network by describing the various organizations involved and explaining their affiliation with and role in the Lebanon Project.

Beit Atfal Assumoud (BAS)

The National Institution of Social Care and Vocational Training (NISCVT), better known as Beit Atfal Assumoud (BAS), which translates to "House of the Proud Children" in English, is a humanitarian NGO that works in refugee camps and other Palestinian communities in Lebanon. This organization was founded by Kassem Aina in the aftermath of a massacre at the Tal El-Zaatar Refugee Camp in 1976 to help children who lost one or both parents in the massacre. In 1982, after the second Israeli invasion of Lebanon, the Sabra and Chatila refugee camps were struck by two new horrendous massacres, this time targeting women and children as well as men. This resulted in a serious social crisis, affecting the entire local community. To help residents cope with extremely challenging living conditions, BAS extended its scope of services to include the whole family. Today, BAS helps Palestinian refugees and people of other disadvantaged nationalities living inside or near the camps.

The aim of BAS is assisting and developing Lebanon's Palestinian society through various services and projects. The organization administers 3 types of programs in all 12 of the country's Palestinian refugee camps: education, society and economy, and health and culture. Services provided include the following:

- sponsorship programs to improve each family's socio-economic situation
- special programs directed at women, children, and youth to develop families' economic and professional potential
- venues for dialogue with young people from other countries to provide them with a platform for self-expression
- maintenance of the Palestinian cultural heritage to strengthen national identity
- kindergartens, homework assistance, and other measures designed to encourage school completion
- dental clinics
- · family guidance
- cultural activities such as scouting, sports, music, and art, in addition to libraries and Internet cafes¹

At the Rashidieh refugee camp, our collaboration project contributed to establishing weekly music-related lessons and activities at the BAS's culture centre. Four teacher-musicians, Chadi Ibrahim, Haider Najeeb Shohrour, Nabil Alachkar and Yasser Wakkal, were involved in teaching and leading the music activities in the initial phase. Some of these are still involved and active in the project. Approximately 55 children and youth have received music training yearly since 2004. This "music school" has been closely monitored, both professionally and financially, by several of our partners in Norway, and presently serves as a motivational model for other centres. Furthermore, student music teachers from the Norwegian Academy of Music (NMH) have their annual professional placement at this cultural centre. Members of a Palestinian music and dance group that visited Norway during this project period were recruited primarily from this "music school" in Rashidieh.

We started equivalent projects at the Tripoli-area Nahr el-Barred and Beddawi camps in 2006. This was halted, however, when the Nahr el-Barred camp was obliterated by acts of war during fighting between the Lebanese army and the radical Islamist group Fatah al-Islam in 2007. Some music activities have been restarted at the Beddawi camp since then, run by locals.

Social workers and kindergarten teachers from BAS have participated in the X-art program.³ Drawing, dance, literature, drama, and music activities are now frequently provided to kindergarten groups. In 2011, BAS also initiated a new music project at

¹ http://www.socialcare.org

² Ref. Chapter 3 for further details on this professional placement.

³ More on the X-art educational program in Chapter 4.

their centre in the Burj el-Shemali camp. The remaining nine centres located throughout Lebanon desire similar projects.

Imam Sadr Foundation (ISF)

The Imam Sadr Foundation (ISF) is a volunteer organization originating from the Amal movement in Lebanon. This is a political party founded by the Shia Imam Musa al-Sadr. Like most parties and movements in Lebanon, Amal organized a militia during the civil war. After the war ended, most of these militias were abolished, and the parties began focusing on political and social activities. This type of movement usually has NGOs taking care of healthcare, education, and other types of social services, and this also applies to the Amal movement. The movement still wields considerable political influence in Lebanon, and many of its members are elected to parliament.

The Imam Sadr Foundation claims its goal is creating social equality and justice through providing people with opportunities to improve their lives. They also promote social equality so more people will feel capable of making good decisions in their lives and changing their environment. The institution cooperates closely with local communities in southern Lebanon, working to reach the following objectives:

- improving the living conditions of specific groups in Lebanon such as orphaned children, disadvantaged women, some local communities in the districts and poor urban areas, and assisting them by providing educational and job training opportunities and developing the competence needed to take advantage of economic and social opportunities
- meeting the basic needs of those who are marginalized and victims of armed conflict, as well as boys and girls with special needs, to increase their self-confidence and enable better integration within the local community and society in general.
- encouraging a culture of openness, dialogue, and reconciliation to build a
 just society with equal opportunities, participation, and responsibility for all,
 regardless of faith, skin color, or gender.

The ISF has initiated and implemented several programs to create a stronger society. This includes kindergarten, primary, and vocational education for girls, in addition to educational opportunities for disabled children and programs for health, empowerment, and community development. ISF members believe education is crucial for social progress, and that only a comprehensive approach addressing poverty, social

exclusion, and social, cultural and political conflicts can create an environment where children can blossom academically.⁴

NMHs cooperation with the ISF began in 2002 at their special education department established and developed in cooperation with the Norwegian Aid Committee (NORWAC). At that time, they did not have any experience with using music in teaching, and some of the leaders and employees were sceptical that any benefits would result from incorporating it into the curriculum. We perceived contradictory religious attitudes concerning this issue among the school staff and board. This was addressed and solved via intensive effort from Norwegian and local music instructors. Diana Mostafa, educated at the music conservatory in Lebanon, was employed as a music teacher at the school. Through this work, she gained valuable experience that was important for her professional development. Teaching special classes was inspiring, and the project grew steadily. The school later bought guitars, xylophones, and percussion instruments. Music and dance workshops were held for dozens of teachers, and eventually, the school designated a room for the purpose of teaching music. Currently, all primary-level classes at the school have weekly music lessons, two full-time music teachers are employed, and a youth choir has been established. The choir participates annually in national school competitions at American University in Beirut (UAB) and achieve increasingly higher rankings. NMH student teachers perform at annual school concerts and present performances they've prepared themselves. Furthermore, a tradition of conducting workshops in Arabic singing for NMH student teachers lead by the school's music teachers, Diana Mustafa and Raji Mustafa, has been established.

Through participation in the X-art project and training their colleagues, many of the teachers at ISF have encountered art-related disciplines and gained an understanding of their potential use in teaching. The school's leadership claims their eyes are now opened to additional art forms and that art has become an integral part of many subjects taught there.

Maarouf Saad Social and Cultural Foundation (MSSCF)5

The Maarouf Saad Social and Cultural Foundation (MSSCF) was founded in the city of Saida, Lebanon in 1980. This NGO also began as a political party – the Popular Nasserist Organization (PNO) – that had its own militia during the Lebanese Civil War.

⁴ http://www.imamsadr.net/News/newsphp?NewsID=6885

⁵ https://www.facebook.com/MaaroufSaadFoundation

To recruit members and supporters, most parties had to give something back to the people. The PNO has collaborating with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and is mainly associated with Sunni groups. The PNO's present leader, Osama Saad, was a member of Parliament in Lebanon until the 2009 election.

Osama's sister Mona Saad is the Maarouf Saad Social and Cultural Foundation's current leader. In their preamble, we find that they aim to offer education as well as health and social services to underprivileged people in the local community. They focus mainly on vulnerable groups, and they intend to contribute towards spreading awareness of human rights and public services available in the community. In addition to running two primary schools, three centres for primary health care, and their own projects for struggling people, the MSSCF is also engaged in social development programs in collaboration with other local organizations. These include, for example, healthcare, social assistance programs, and summer activities for children.

Due to a lack of efficient public services in Lebanon, grassroots NGOs such as the MSSCF have played a crucial role in helping people secure their social rights. When the Lebanese Civil War was raging between 1975 and 1990, volunteer organizations mainly mobilized and provided aid and assistance. Post-war times generated expectations that these organizations' efforts would be redirected towards developmental work, but they have been met only minimally. Ongoing inadequacies in government-provided public healthcare services coupled with chronic political instability have forced Lebanese voluntary organizations to continue their aid and assistance work. Having so few resources left over to invest in developmental projects and creates massive frustration for the organization itself and for the people they serve.

The MSSCF runs two schools which annually provides up to 700 Lebanese and Palestinian children with kindergarten and primary school education. These are mainly children from deprived local communities in Saida and in the Palestinian refugee camp Ain al-Hilweh. The schools are based on an integrated holistic approach to develop the children's social, emotional, psychomotor, intellectual, psychological, and artistic capabilities. Children's rights, their right to participate, and the inclusion of children with special needs are focused on in the curriculum and in all the schools' activities. Efforts contributing to cooperation between children, their parents, and the community are emphasized.

Through facilitating learning and social growth in a physically and socially friendly environment, the MSSCF strives to combat illiteracy, early school dropout, and child

labor and generally increase opportunities for children and parents to participate in the development of society. The present leader of MSSCF, Mona Saad, has been interested in incorporating cultural activities into the education curriculum for a long time, and she has had many worthwhile experiences concerning drawing and visual arts expression in school. The inspiration arose while she was working and living in Denmark and became acquainted with Anna Kanafani's projects and methods related to art in education. The art teacher at MSSCF has acquired this method for use in the schools. During the Lebanon Project's initial years, we continually received requests from Mona to coordinate with her schools on music education. NORWAC was already engaged in a health-based project educating mothers through the MSSCF, and through this project, she learned about our work. Mona had already made a few attempts to employ music teachers, but they did not have the competence level or the type of classroom teaching approach she had envisioned.

Our cooperation began with NMH bachelor students holding a concert at one of the schools in 2007. These concerts have become an annual tradition, and the students of the MSSCF schools have always played an active part both on stage and in the audience. Raji Mostafa is presently employed as a music teacher at these schools, combined with an equivalent job at the Imam Sadr Foundation. When we later started the X-art project, MSSCF joined on equal footing with two other local institutions and participated with 12 teachers in the supplementary education program. Today, all students at the schools are taught music weekly by a music teacher, and several other teachers apply music in their approach to teaching other subjects.

Shohour Public High School (SPHS)

The Shohour Public High School (SPHS) was established in 2003 and is situated in the Shohour village in southern Lebanon, approximately 20 km inland from Tyre. This school has 250 students recruited from the 20 nearest villages. The facilities have been relatively limited and run-down, but they are now in the process of moving into a new location that will allow for an increased number of students in the future. Languages used in the school are French, English, and Arabic.

There are no practical aesthetic subjects at the school, and the activities in music, dance, drama, and sports were not well received initially. This part of Lebanon is governed by Shia culture, strongly dominated by the Amal and Hezbollah⁶ movements. This

⁶ Hezbollah is a Shia political party still having their own militia in Lebanon.

resulted in the school being characterized by religious activities from the start. Our contact at the school was Abed Rashid, who was employed as headmaster in 2007. He belongs to an independent and non-religious tradition, and he thought the religious influence was too prominent, leading to exclusion and one-sided dominance in the student environment. Therefore, it was decided that religious activities outside the religious discipline should take place off school premises and after school hours. The headmaster had contacts in many different environments, in Lebanon as well as in Norway and other countries, and showed great interest in the Lebanon Project. He was present when NMH student teachers held concerts in Lebanon on several occasions. Arguing that art, culture, and aesthetic experiences, as well as contact with an international environment, could give the students a wider platform for knowledge and personal growth, NMH student teachers were invited to hold a concert at the school. Applications were sent to the central school authorities and discussions were held with colleagues and local political and religious leaders to obtain permission to cooperate with NMH, which they received. Thus, in April of 2007, a historical breakthrough took place: school concerts in this part of Lebanon. Since then, NMH student teachers continued performing annual concerts at this school in Shohour. Interest among the teachers for this type of activity was further strengthened by a visit from Norwegian music, dance, and drama students from Jessheim High School (JHS) the same year. They held workshops with the students on music, dance, and drama, which piqued the curiosity of several students who later expressed a wish to become more involved in these activities.

The public schools' budget in Lebanon does not appear to cover the more non-traditional disciplines, and it is hard to establish new subjects. The curricula for public schools includes aesthetic disciplines, but they are rarely implemented, primarily due to a lack of qualified teachers in these subjects. Furthermore, the Lebanese system entrusts individual schools with obtaining funding for additional needs such as equipment, teaching material, and social activities for students and teachers. Recruiting sponsors is an important part of headmasters' duties. To initiate music, dance, and drama classes, the high school has applied and received initial funding from the Forum for Culture and International Cooperation (FORUM). It has been difficult to recruit qualified teachers, but occasionally this has worked for a small group of students that have chosen to participate in music activities after school. Recently, this has mainly entailed teaching students that are going to represent SPHS during exchange visits to JHS. As part of the cooperation and exchange agreement made between these high schools in 2008, SPHS has a need to demonstrate and impart Lebanese cultural traditions. This activity is expanding, and before the annual exchange visits, they rehearse

diligently. The Lebanon Project network often contributes teachers, especially through the collaboration with teachers from Beit Atfal Assumoud.

Cultural and international activities at the high school have garnered attention within the local community among politicians, religious leaders, other schools, and residents. Local and national competitions in various subjects between schools, failure rate comparisons, grade averages, and increased numbers of student applicants are all indicators of the strong influence these activities have on the schools' economic situation in Lebanon. The SPHS's headmaster thinks the cooperative efforts with Norwegian educational institutions have had positive effects on several subjects taught, and thus strengthened its reputation, including the attention it receives when students from SPHS perform at various award and other ceremonies. School authorities have also awarded honours to the school for its achievements and development.

Lebanese National Higher Conservatory of Music (LNHCM)⁷

The Lebanese conservatory of Music (LNHCM) originates from a music school founded in 1930 by Wadie Sabra, also known as the composer of the Lebanese national anthem. His supporters at this school comprised a small group of musicians and artists whose objectives were to promote classical music through concerts and teaching.

In 1953, the then Lebanese President, Camille Chamoun, assigned the Minister of Education the task of establishing a state music conservatory based on the LNHCM. The pianist, composer, and conductor Anis Fuleihan was assigned the responsibility of running the conservatory, and a board was appointed consisting of both artists and politicians. Simultaneously, an association called *Les Amis de la Music* (The Friends of Music) was established to find economic support for the conservatory. Later, in 1959, the conservatory was officially established as a national institution under the minister of education. Its mandate was to teach, hold concerts, and manage a professional chamber orchestra.

During the Lebanese Civil War (1975—1991), all activity stopped at the conservatory, and its buildings were badly damaged. All the instruments, documents, and library were looted and burned. In 1991, teaching resumed and was later upgraded as part of the national institutions for higher education. Composer Dr. Walid Gholmieh was

⁷ http://www.conservatory.gov.lb

president of the conservatory from 1992 to 2011, and the activities and cultural diversity expanded considerably under his leadership.

The LNHCM has around 5,000 students today and has hired more than 2,000 teachers. They are now teaching both music theory and instrumental lessons. They operate an oriental Arabic orchestra and a Western-style symphony orchestra on a professional level. At several of their branches in Beirut, Saida, and Tripoli, they also offer lessons for children and amateur musicians at all levels. According to the current president, Hanna El Amil, additional branches are planned for several different locations in Lebanon.

Our contact with the LNHCM has so far been limited to visiting and observing rehearsals of the oriental Arabic orchestra. In 2005, we discussed the possibility of cooperating with the president on issues related to the organization's wish to establish an education program for music teaching. This was not followed up on because communication problems developed during and after the new acts of war in Lebanon in 2006 and later due to limited time and resources. However, in 2013 we reconnected to cooperate on workshops presented for our student musicians in February of 2014. Also, agreements have been made to discuss the potential for cooperation on a future music teacher education program at this conservatory.

Algarheim Primary School

Students at the Algarheim Primary School in the Ullensaker municipality of Norway have been in contact with children from refugee camps in Lebanon since approximately 1994. Following an initiative from two parents who had worked for NORWAC in Lebanon, a so-called Lebanon group was appointed, consisting of parents of first-grade students. In the beginning, letter writing and dispatching of toys and clothes constituted the contact.

In the fall of 1997, some of the fifth graders visited their pen pals in the camps in Lebanon accompanied by their siblings and parents. This turned out to be an intense and unique experience for both the Norwegian guests and the Palestinian children. In 1998, the Lebanon group merged with the school's parent council, and in the following year, reciprocal contact with the Palestinian refugee children became more formalized through a friendship agreement entered into by the Parent Council of Algarheim and the Beit Atfal Assumoud organization.

In April of 2002, the Algarheim Primary School was visited by 16 Palestinian refugees (10 dancers, 4 musicians, and 2 adult escorts) who contributed to a cultural exchange of dance, music, and cooking. After this first visit in 2002, contact and commitment have been ongoing. Parents and teachers sum up the experiences as professionally and socially important and useful in addition to promoting increased interpersonal understanding. Several groups of teachers, parents, and students from the school have later visited their friends in the refugee camps. Musicians, social workers, and children from the camps in Lebanon have visited Algarheim Primary School on several occasions. One example of the results of this cooperation is a live performance at the Jostein Gaarder's Sophie Prize award ceremony in 2003. Prior to this event, a group of children at the Algarheim Primary School participated in workshops for several days with Palestinian musicians where they collectively prepared an act that included Norwegian children and the Palestinians presented traditional dance and music from Palestine.

This school also played an important role when the organizations currently collaborating in the Lebanon Project invited Palestinians to accompany them on a cultural exchange trip to Norway in May of 2008. A comprehensive program had been organized and was ready to proceed when the airport in Beirut was occupied and closed a few days before departure due to internal conflicts in Lebanon. Extensive organizing had been carried out, mostly by a group of parents at the school. The host families in the school's district were prepared, the program at the school was finalized, and important elements of the program had been announced. For example, the local 17th May committee⁸ in the municipality of Ullensaker had relied heavily on this visit in their festivities. Of course, the most negatively impacted was the Palestinian youth, who had been anticipating spending a couple of weeks away from the miserable camps to experience what was possibly their first visit abroad. The memories, fears, and traumas from the summer of 2006, when Israel occupied and bombed southern Lebanon, were obviously awakened. It all had to be cancelled, however, this conflict happened to be resolved quite quickly, and new preparations were made both in Norway and Lebanon. It is amazing how efficiently a planning process can be carried out when all resources are mobilized. Importantly, we saw how a strong commitment from the school parent group was. In September of 2008, the Palestinian group was there, and a comprehensive culture exchange project was carried out. Approximately 170 Norwegian school children encountered Palestinian children and culture, and

 $^{8\,}$ 17th May is the Independence Day of Norway. It is celebrated with an extensive program in the municipalities.

their siblings and neighbours also got a glimpse through various local performances. The group performed at the NMH's Lindeman Hall and was also invited to take part in Oslo's Mela Festival (see YouTube: Palestinian roots II)9.

During the Lebanon Project, teachers, headmaster, parent council, and students at the school have been replaced. Despite this, the project has survived and continued. The teachers pass on their knowledge of Palestinian dancing and drumming as part of the curriculum, and photo collages from the visits are still hanging on walls in the school. Some of the school's students re-encountered the Lebanon Project when they entered high school at Jessheim and experienced a new facet of the project.

In 2002, yet another visit occurred, this time with especially motivated teachers, parents, and the school leadership following an educational trip to Lebanon. A lot of voluntary work lies behind these visits. Furthermore, inviting a group like this requires a relatively large sum of money. The first visit in 2002 was funded mainly by NORWAC, while FORUM was the main sponsor in 2008. The third visit was planned in cooperation with Friendship North/South, a part of NORAD¹¹o, and the costs were split between Friendship North/South and FORUM, with minor contributions from the Ullensaker municipality and private sponsors. And thus, yet another adventurous project for some Palestinian refugees and a lot of involved Norwegians could be realized, and once again the visit was considered exceptionally valuable for all the participants. This contact creates great interest in cultural exchange, and attitudes towards other cultures and ethnic groups are challenged in a very positive way. It will be interesting to see if this contact will continue and if this school community is afforded new opportunities to carry on with the project.

Norwegian Aid Committee AS (NORWAC)

Norwegian Aid Committee AS (NORWAC) is a humanitarian organization running health-related projects through local partners in Lebanon. Their work is based on the principle of solidarity and equality regardless of religion, race, or ethnicity. Supported by the ministry of education, NORWAC was established in Lebanon after the invasion in 1982. The initiators wanted to continue the work that was being carried out and is still being done by the Norwegian solidarity movement for the Palestinians. In Lebanon, NORWAC supports health-related projects of great benefit to refugees and

⁹ http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hfoUjZAU0ZI

¹⁰ NORAD: Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation

poor Lebanese. NORWAC has worked uninterruptedly in Lebanon since it was established, including periods of war and internal conflicts.

In recent years, NORWAC has collaborated with local partners to increase awareness of and services for mental health issues locally in Lebanon. The project has also contributed to cooperation among local partners, across cultural and political divisions. NORWAC has contributed via Norwegians with specific competence on mental health. The mental health programs focus on preventive measures for the main target group: Palestinian children and youth in the refugee camps. An important measure to prevent and manage psychological problems and suffering among Palestinian youngsters is supporting cultural exchange between Norway and Lebanon. In 2002, the first group of Palestinian children and youth from the refugee camps was invited to Norway on a stay hosted by the Ullensaker municipality's Algarheim Primary School. Since then, the Palestinian children and students at Algarheim Primary School have visited each other on several occasions. This exchange has strengthened NORWAC's belief in the value of using culture actively in improving mental health. NORWAC and the NMH have cooperated to develop and implement cultural and music-related projects since 2003. NMH has been able to benefit from NORWAC's well-established network in Lebanon. NORWAC believes this cooperation has strengthened their potential for success in their mental health-related projects with local partners in Lebanon.

FORUM for Culture and International Cooperation (FORUM)

The forum for culture and international cooperation, known simply as "FORUM" is a Norwegian humanitarian NGO established in 2004. It is organized as a foundation and run by a board of four members. FORUM works primarily within three art forms: music, visual art, and literature. They focus on providing services in countries and regions where either war or poverty have created difficult living conditions and art activities can contribute to better quality of life and cause synergistic effects in the local community. This foundation has run projects in Lebanon and Uganda, and it emphasizes a reciprocal exchange of culture and knowledge across geographical borders and cultures.

In Lebanon, FORUM and the NMH cooperate on projects targeting children and youth in the Palestinian refugee camps, on the exchange between Norway and Lebanon, and on networking between institutions, voluntary organizations, and schools. FORUM has arranged many cultural activities in several Palestinian refugee camps and Lebanese schools since 2004. This organization has organized workshops for numerous children

on visual art, drama, literature, and music as well as library activities. Several groups of Palestinian and Lebanese youth have had the opportunity to visit Norway through cooperation with and economic support from FORUM. Since 2005, this foundation has given substantial support to the everyday operating costs of the cultural activities in BAS and travel grants to more than 100 NMH student teachers who have participated in the project.

A cooperation on establishing the X-art program for teachers and social workers in Lebanon began in 2009 between FORUM, NORWAC and NMH began. These three partners have also formalized future cooperation through a letter of intent. The main objective of this cooperation is reaching more children and for a longer period by educating those who are directly involved with the children daily. We also consider this program an important arena for cultural and professional exchange between different groups within Lebanon, and between Scandinavians, Palestinians, and Lebanese.

Jessheim High School (JHS)

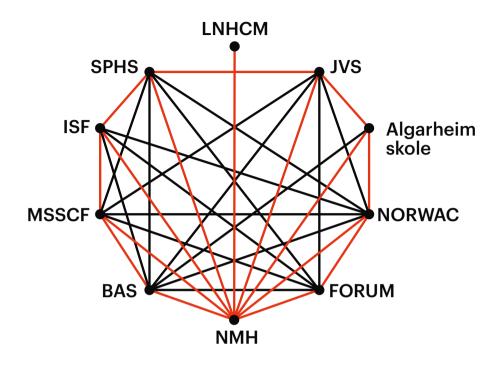
The seed of engagement for the Lebanon project at Jessheim High Scool (JHS) in Jessheim, Norway was sown during a lecture at the school in 2002, held by one of the visiting Palestinians at Algarheim Primary School. Later, sporadic contact and the participation of music teachers from the school in the first music trials under the auspices of NORWAC contributed to increasing the awareness of and interest in this project at the school. Engagement increased considerably following new acts of war in Lebanon in the spring of 2006 when the school sought experience in alternative fundraising relating to ODW for projects in Lebanon. These funds have supported the endeavours of Beit Atfal Assumoud and the Abu Jihad al-Wazir Rehabilitation Centre in the Palestinian refugee camps. In later years, the funds have also supported the Marouf Saad Foundation's efforts in Saida for rehabilitating youth who have dropped out of school or are unemployed.

Additionally, the JHS has had an exchange agreement with the Shohour High School in southern Lebanon since 2008. Teachers and students have visited each other's schools in alternating years, focusing on different disciplines. On their homepage on the Lebanon Project's website, JHS writes:

[...] this is to promote friendship and understanding between people from two completely different worlds. Religion, culture, language, upraising, habits, political systems, climate nine and traditions are keywords for describing the differences and similarities of our countries. The fundraising for Palestinian refugees and the work with our friendships school in Shohour provides us with a fantastic opportunity to experience and acquire knowledge about others' cultures. Knowledge is the best way to combat racism and prejudice. This unique opportunity to visit Lebanon, and for Lebanese and Palestinians to visit Norway, enhances mutual understanding, and maybe we have more in common than we thought? We also have the pleasure to see results of, and can report directly on, the effect of the money from the fundraising, the school stresses.¹¹

The engagement of JHS in Lebanon contributes greatly to the overall project and cooperation between the described partners in Norway as well as in Lebanon. NMH has no formalized cooperation with JHS, but we do derive great pleasure from the network, both when they visit Norway and when we work in Lebanon. On several occasions, teachers from the high school's music, dance, and drama programs have taught X-art courses and the music group in Rashidieh.

¹¹ http://www.jessheim.vgs.no/sok/?q=Libanon



Partner network of the Lebanon Project

Abbreviations:

NMH: Norwegian Academy of Music

BAS: Beit Atfal Assumoud

MSSCF: Maarouf Saad Social and Cultural Foundation

ISF: Imam Sadr Foundation

SPHS: Shohour Public High School

LNHCM: Lebanese National Higher Conservatory of Music

JVS: Jessheim High School

NORWAC: Norwegian Aid Committee AS

FORUM: FORUM for Culture and International Cooperation