



Highlights & Goals

Our teams have been significantly engaged in emergency response, shelter, relief, and Education sectors over the past few months. In Lebanon, we anticipate a harsh winter, exacerbated by the country's deteriorating infrastructure and complex political and economic circumstances. The recent Gaza-Israel war which is still unfolding has led to a substantial internal displacement, placing immense stress on families, and causing rent and basic food item prices to rise. In response, URDA has finalised its emergency response plan which it lodged with the Shelter Working Group as well as a winterisation plan with both international and local partners, major internal stakeholders include our Education and Sponsorship teams. Our Livelihoods team is tackling the issue of mounting rubbish on the streets of Lebanon through a cash for work scheme and plastic bag recycling aimed at host communities. Our education team is continuing to have a stronger track-record this year and is seeking to open up its innovative projects for more than one entity to collaborate with, and is so far seeing positive responses from Japanese and UK based entities. This newsletter will delve into the stories that underlie these projects, shining a light on the resilience and strength of the communities we are privileged to serve.

Emergencies

The Gaza-Israel War, which began in the second week of October, has slowly spilled over into southern Lebanon. Israeli airstrikes were reported in the town of Adaisseh, as well as helicopters and intense shelling on the outskirts of Naqoura, and the towns of Aytash Shab and Beit Leif. URDA is a key component of Lebanon's emergency response plan, and our teams have been part of many coordinating groups led by the Shelter Working Group and Danish Church Aid. Our Emergency Response Plan, which accounts for up to 600,000 potential internally displaced people, has been published and shared with relevant stakeholders. Our teams have also met to reassess our capacity, resources, and division of labor plans in anticipation of any mass evacuations. On the 24th of October, our teams underwent external Emergency Response training as part of our readiness plan, which included lessons learned from our recent interventions in Syria, Morocco, and Libya, most recently. Our interventions are based on needs identified in the areas of emergency food security and various non-food items (NFIs).



War in Gaza

Over the past few months, our teams have been significantly engaged in emergency response, shelter, relief, and education sectors. In Lebanon, we are anticipating a harsh winter, worsened by the country's deteriorating infrastructure and complex political and economic circumstances. The recent Gaza-Israel war, which is still unfolding, has led to substantial internal displacement, placing immense stress on families and causing rent and basic food prices to rise. In response, URDA has finalized its emergency response plan, which has been submitted to the Shelter Working Group, along with a winterization plan involving both international and local partners. Major internal stakeholders include our Education and Sponsorship teams. Our Livelihoods team is addressing the issue of mounting street rubbish in Lebanon through a cash-for-work scheme and plastic bag recycling initiatives aimed at host communities. Our education team is having a stronger track record this year and is seeking collaborations with multiple entities. So far, we have received positive responses from Japanese and UK-based entities. This newsletter will delve into the stories that underlie these projects, shedding light on the resilience and strength of the communities we are privileged to serve.



Seasonal Projects

This year, we anticipate a severe winter, with the economic and political climate in Lebanon showing no signs of improvement, and the situation expected to deteriorate as the war in Gaza intensifies and spills over the border. URDA is preparing for a harsh winter in the Aarsal, Akkar, Beqaa, and the Southern regions of Lebanon, where both Lebanese host communities and Syrian refugees will be in dire need of heavy fuel, winter clothing, and shelter rehabilitation. Our Shelter and Relief teams are taking an emergency response preparation and prevention approach to secure these essential items in their planning.

URDA's education team has also planned to distribute winter clothing vouchers to orphaned children in our schools and informal education centers. This year, our Ramadan food security campaign will involve collaborations with various social media influencers. We will work with them to identify talent in cooking, singing, art, and other creative hobbies. We have a strong track record of working with young talent, many of whom come from a refugee child background, and we see a lot of value in replicating similar success stories.

Project Updates

Education & Protection: In the Beqaa region, Aman School in Bar Elias has successfully commenced the academic year, serving 1,150 children from the Bekaa Valley and Syrian refugee camps in the district, while Al Nour School in Aarsal is accommodating 350 children. At the beginning of this year, we enrolled 33 special needs children in formal education programs in Beqaa. Furthermore, the education sector serves 480 children in the School in a Bus project which is a mobile education initiative that acts as a bridge between informal and formal education, and it operates in Akkar, Beqaa and Mount Lebanon.



Our students have been provided with learning materials, and our teachers have undergone training in delivering subject matter and addressing behavioral and administrative issues at the school. We are eager to offer more of these modules in the coming year.

For the upcoming year, we have planned several projects, including the introduction of Edu-tents, a mobile library, a training center, and a special needs center. These initiatives are designed to expand access to education, promote literacy, and cater to the specific needs of individuals within the community.

Livelihoods

In a recent initiative, URDA employed 20 women from various nationalities in the food processing facility. They received training in the production of tomato paste, pickles, and jams, which were then distributed to 1,225 families living in camps in the Beqaa region. This year, we established the Ebdaa vocational training center in the Beqaa Valley, offering a wide range of training programs, including sewing, mobile phone repair, mosaic art, makeup application, hairdressing, life skills training, and many other skill development opportunities.

We have also completed an important project that targets underprivileged youth from the Lebanese, Syrian, and Palestinian communities residing in Lebanon. Its main goal is to purchase and hand over tuk-tuks to the heads of households for their use as a means of income through the transportation service they will provide.

Furthermore, we have finalized plans for upcoming projects related to the management of agricultural activities, which will put our beneficiary partners in a strong position to collectively achieve environmental protection goals. We are also working with a number of stakeholders and seeking new ones for an ongoing program centered around the recycling of household plastic bags, saving them from rubbish dumps and focusing on recycling and reuse.

Public Relations

We extend our deepest condolences to His Excellency Mr. Salman Athar, the Ambassador of Pakistan to Lebanon, for the heinous attacks that occurred in Baluchistan during the celebrations of a religious event. URDA also conveyed its heartfelt condolences to His Excellency Mr. Amin Al-Nasrawi, the Ambassador of Iraq to Lebanon, for the unfortunate accident that took place during a wedding event in Nineveh. We emphasized the readiness of our emergency response team to assist should the need arise.

Shelter and Relief

URDA's Relief sector provided support to families affected by the fire in the Yasmine Camp in the Bekaa region. Rapid response teams have been providing daily hot meals in the past period. During the past week, 338 hot meals were provided to needy families in the camp in general. In support of the most affected groups due to the recent fire in the camp, an additional 48 meals were provided to the particularly affected families. One of the beneficiaries of the hot meals expressed his gratitude to the URDA team, saying, "These meals have helped us greatly. We lost all our essential belongings due to this fire. The team did not just provide food but also repaired our tents and provided the most essential needs for each affected family."



In a remarkable humanitarian initiative, the Shelter Sector in Lebanon, through URDA, has implemented a "Solar Energy" project in the Abu Ibrahim camp in the Akkar region of northern Lebanon. This project aims to improve the living conditions for vulnerable Syrian families residing in the camp.

The key aspects of the project included the installation of 10 solar panels specifically designed to operate the primary water pump in the camp and fill approximately 70 water tanks. This contributes to providing a steady water supply to 111 families in the camp. This initiative serves as a positive example of collective efforts to assist those in dire need and improve their quality of life amid the challenging circumstances they face.

Events

URDA's Executive Director, Ms. Jihan Kaisi, attended AIDex in Geneva, where she presented poster sessions on our activities. She emphasized the importance of coordination, cooperation, and planning to address potential crises that may arise from conflicts in the occupied territories. Additionally, Ms. Kaisi participated in the 3rd Family Life Forum in Istanbul. This event holds significant importance for URDA as it provided an opportunity for us to share our experience as a local and regional NGO. We also had the chance to network with like-minded organizations and individuals in our collective efforts to address pressing issues. URDA recently conducted a series of capacity-building workshops. These workshops encompass a diverse range of skills and knowledge, from crisis management training to comprehensive first aid instruction. Looking ahead, we will conduct training sessions focusing on social media management. Additionally, we are preparing for safeguarding training, further emphasizing our dedication to maintaining the safety and well-being of our community.

