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Lebanon, Poverty
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Lebanon: Ending Poverty for the Greater Good

Imagine waking up in the morning to see a beautiful bright day out with sparkly clean streets, fresh non-polluted air, a perfect family in the kitchen eating a nutritious breakfast, and living in a non-problematic country. Although this may sound pleasing, this is not the reality of citizens in Lebanon. This is because of the continuum of poverty due to a tragic economic crisis within the decade, and several conflict issues within the last two decades. Lebanon has the ability to modify and improve their population while resolving the remaining issues of poverty that continue to harm citizens. This country is a small narrow strip of land that lies on the Eastern side of the Mediterranean Sea. It has a population of roughly five million people, and is a very small mountainous country in the Middle East. Its neighboring countries are Syria and Israel (Lebanon: “Backround”). The country of Lebanon has been struggling with poverty within the decade causing food insecurity across the nation that can now be resolved with various solutions and recommendations.

To understand the effect of poverty in Lebanon it is crucial to know facts about average families and the country.According to Britannica, eighty-nine percent of the five million population lives in urban areas and cities while the other eleven percent live rurally (Ochsenwald Par. 4&5). Climate is affected by the sea with wet winters, and hot dry summers. According to Culture Grams, that wrote "Lebanon Land & Climate” Roughly sixteen percent of the land is currently cultivated and average farms are typically small, staying around 2.5-7.5 acres which can also be compared to 2-6 full sized football fields. (Lebanon : “Land and Climate” Par. 1 & 2). To show how small they truly are we can compare to farms in the United States averaging roughly four hundred acres or 303 football fields (“How Many Acres Is a Football Field?”). Lebanon has an area of four thousand and fifteen square miles. Some major crops for the country are fruits,grain, tobacco, olives, onions, and potatoes. (Lebanon : “Land and Climate” Par. 1 & 2). According to “The importance of marginalized in Lebanon” the governance in Lebanon is primarily a parliamentary democratic republic and the president is Joseph Aoun, who was elected in January of 2025 as the fourteenth president of their country. The average jobs available for a family are in trades, retail, healthcare, and the average wages are $500 a month. The average family member count is 4-5 members. Typical families consume Mediterranean foods along with grains, fruit, vegetables, and some other meats like lamb which keeps their diet fairly healthy. They obtain these foods from markets, and grilling is a common way of cooking these foods because it tends to turn into a social event (Hall Par. 2&3). According to the World Bank, infrastructures are severely restricted to families due to economic decline, many families only have access to water a few hours a day. Children have access to limited education, private education is expensive however it gives better experiences and the same goes along with healthcare because the more someone pays the better care they're provided with (“Lebanon: Poverty” Par. 1&2).

Everyday people in Lebanon are impacted and challenged by poverty and continue to push through. Poverty means to not have the financial capability to access everyday essential needs or afford necessities (Webster). Within the decade Lebanon has been faced with an immense economic crisis that has forced people to financially struggle and face starvation (“Lebanon: Poverty” Par. 3&4). In addition to this citizens are more recently being affected due to the current conflict issues with Israel and the lack of a

peace treaty between the two. To go along with this many people have ended up homeless and cannot afford housing standards. Lower life expectancy, and mental health issues also come with this as citizens are not able to afford the funding to prevent illnesses or get proper physical and mental health care. According to "What's Happening in Lebanon?"All of these conditions shown are everyday battles that the poverty-stricken community faces. Many people began to lose jobs and their sources of income after the economic crisis because employers could not afford to keep businesses open and compensate employees properly (What Is Happening in Lebanon?" Par. 1 &4). This mainly affected urban populations, however it also has affected farms and rural populations as farms cannot afford to stay open forcing many to sell their companies. I read the article "Lebanon Lifestyle" and found poverty is so extreme in Lebanon that it affects 44% of the population, and every one in three people struggle everyday with it, causing tremendous food insecurity. Poverty has also been caused by conflict and reaches 90% of refugees, most of them have sadly lost their income and that has driven them to homelessness as an alternative to living in battle sites ("Lebanon : Housing" Par. 2 & 3). Furthermore poverty stretches across all demographic groups in the country however most the affected group is women. This leads to uncomfortable environments for these women and not enough access to personal hygiene products due to the expensive prices of these items ("What Is Happening in Lebanon?" Par. 5).

Due to Lebanon's poverty issues being so extreme there are several ways people are through various solutions. One of the ways people are attempting to do this is by giving electronic food vouchers to citizens that were poverty-stricken. These cards have around $27 U.S. dollars on them that are used for citizens to spend at local stores. These cards are given out monthly in order to ensure people are being provided with their specific needs ("What Is Happening in Lebanon?" Par. 2&3). This system can be compared to the EBT cards used in America. Although these cards are a huge help to citizens they do have some limitations. These cards typically have restrictions as to what someone can purchase, typically limiting non-food items that are also very essential. Due to these cards having limitations some citizens decide to sell them in order to afford other essentials like clothing, medicine, and rent ("Lebanon - Human Development Fund" Par. 6). This is possible due to donations from numerous charities and World Food Program donations. Another way Lebanese citizens are being helped through poverty is being provided with medical aid. This is possible due to other varied programs that have come together in order to help refugees and poverty-stricken citizens. Most of these programs include healthcare, mental care, and psychological care, and include services for specifically girls and women that have been hurt through violence. Many of these organizations were placed after the beginning of major war conflicts that started a few decades ago, however they have been expanded since then due to more refugees and to also help poverty-stricken after the economic decline. These organizations help people receive the care they need and deserve even if they cannot afford it. Although this majorly benefits citizens, the care they are receiving is not always the highest quality. Organizations are using resources and care that people donate toward or that are accessible to them therefore not always having the highest technology and best care given.

Poverty also affects Lebanon's neighboring countries. Many countries like Syria which is a neighbor to Lebanon have resorted to installing homeless shelters for their refugees and other citizens that cannot afford housing. There are nearly 1500 of these camps and shelters in Syria housing millions of citizens as they fight through conflict leaving their citizens in poverty ("Syria Relief" Par. 1). These organizations have majorly impacted citizens as they allow citizens to feel a sense of security and have a home. These shelters also allow people to receive food and be less likely to face starvation and malnutrition as they most likely would if not accessed to said camps ("Syria | Shelter Cluster" Par. 3). One other brilliant outcome of these camps is keeping people out of extreme weather conditions as previously mentioned the Mediterranean can majorly impact this. Although these camps help the less fortunate out very positively

they also have some concerning issues. Many of these shelters tend to deal with overcrowding because so many people have to face poverty. Due to overcrowding the proper sanitation is not always provided which often spreads germs and illnesses fast (Toth Par. 4&5). Another unfortunate action that takes place in shelters are high rates of sexual and physical abuse. These physically and mentally abused people may not feel secure or safe in these homes after these events which would eliminate one of the main benefits. One of the last issues with this solution is that most people in shelters or homes live in a constant cycle of it and do not get out. This just leaves the poverty rate to stay at a constant and not ever decline which is an issue.

I personally recommend that a sustainable way for poverty to be ended in Lebanon is by job creation. The previous examples on how people are attempting to end poverty in Lebanon all specifically focus on a certain issue and do not necessarily eliminate all of their struggles. Job creation can entirely give money back to citizens to afford necessities they aren't given access to even with these helpful organizations. As previously mentioned farms in Lebanon are typically small, however if there were an organization to invest in these farms for a percentage it could help small farmers gain more access to needed materials and gain more profits. This corporation could then hire poverty-stricken citizens to work for the farms. Also as previously mentioned, during the economic crisis many Lebanese lost jobs, however this would grant them an opportunity to gain a steady income. Lebanese women typically don't dominate the workforce for cultural reasons, however they are the ones stricken by poverty most (“Lebanon: Poverty” Par. 6). After the corporation begins to gain money from the farm income they would then hire some poverty stricken women to help make advertisements for resorts and tourist attractions in other counties to begin and once war conflicts slowly decline implement these in Lebanon as it is known for their beautiful sites once repaired post war. A portion of the profits then made from tourists coming in due to advertisements would be paid back to the corporation which would then be used to slowly expand farms, pay workers better, and create higher quality advertisements. This would eventually create a money cycle specifically for poverty stricken citizens and ending poverty as the end goal. This corporation would also positively affect the government as they would be able to gain money from taxes. In order for this project to be successful we would need to have several million dollars to start the expansion and investments. I know from prior knowledge China is the richest farming country in the world so in order to achieve this funding Lebanon could make an alliance with this country to create this corporation because they have the financial resources and knowledge on farming (“Top 5 Agricultural Producing Countries in World” Par. 4). The Lebanese government and one CEO overseeing their decisions would have the access to lead this project after the correct legalities are formed. A huge advantage to Lebanon with this particular recommendation is the accessibility to import and export goods as they are near the water, therefore bringing a higher income faster. This project is feasible and sustainable because it gives money back to the poverty stricken and raises the world food production.

All in all, Lebanon is a beautiful country that can be changed for the better of all citizens by implementing and forming a way for the poor to gain a new lifestyle. Families and culture can remain lively and strong if citizens are willing to put the work and effort in for a positive impact across their nation. Solutions already in place helping citizens wonderfully as tragedies continue to impact individuals and families on a daily basis. Furthermore these other recommendations can help eliminate the remaining issues of poverty that are not already being enforced. Lebron James once said, "I'm going to use all my tools, my God-given ability and make the best of life I can with it” (Brainy Quote Par. 1). My personal recommendation has the capability to ensure happier, healthier, and stronger citizens if they use these recommendations as their tools to benefit like James. At the end of the day we should fight to make the world a better place little by little starting here.

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