

Fratelli Project

An educational project by the Brothers of the Christian Schools – La Salle (FSC) and the Marist Brothers of the Schools (FMS) for refugee children and youths in Lebanon

August 2017

Fratelli

SUMMARY

August 2017

- **Graphics and layout** by Marco Amato
- **Photo** by Marco Amato
- **Text** by Sara Pancirolì



**Fratelli
Project**



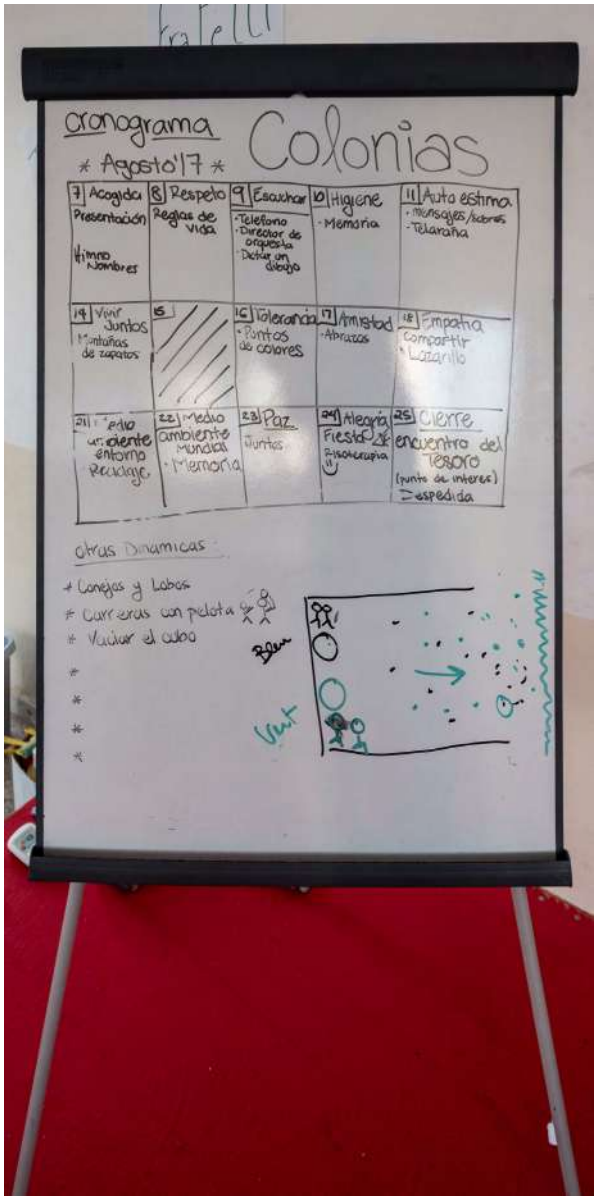
**Fratelli delle Scuole
Cristiane – La Salle
(FSC)**



**Fratelli Maristi
delle Scuole (FMS)**



De La Salle Solidarietà Internazionale ONLUS



3 - The Family of Hidayah

**5 - Description of the Fratelli
Project in Rmeileh**

11 - The Family of Ibtiyah

12 - Dalia

13 - The Abra Shelter

15 - Fadia

17 - Nouri and Bashar

**19 - Noura, Noha and
Maha**

21 - Sara

23 - Hannan Almasri

**24 - Description of the Fratelli
Project
in Bourj Hamoud**

26 - Ayden, Aysen and Oneil

28 - Samira, Joseph and Josetta

**37 - Fratelli Project
Technical Data and
Acknowledgements**

Fratelli Project

The Family of Hidaya

Hidaya participates in the 'Fratelli Project'. Hidaya lives in the Abra shelter, and at present her family is made up of her maternal grandparents, her father, two brothers and a little sister. Her mother, unfortunately, died in Syria because of the war. Hidaya's grandmother tells us the story of this unlucky family, because she relies very much on the Brothers. Several NGOs have come to the shelter, but the most welcome visits are those by Miquel and the other men religious. As she talks to her guests, Hidaya's grandmother serves them coffee while showing the photographs of her daughters, the one who died, the one who stayed in Idlib and the one who took refuge in Turkey. Hidaya's mother was fleeing Idlib to reach Cham with her four children when a missile hit the vehicle they were traveling on: she was killed, but the little girl, only a few months' old, she held in her arms was miraculously saved along

with her three siblings, Hidaya, Abdel Kader and Mohamed. Hidaya and her family managed to reach Beirut in 2013 and then settled in the shelter, but they have to cope with countless problems. The youngest child seems serene (perhaps she is the one who suffered less during those tragic events), but once – recall the Fratelli Project educators – she cried for a whole day for no apparent reason. During that terrible journey from Idlib to Cham, Abdel Kader was wounded, with serious consequences for his back, which never healed despite the various surgical operations he underwent. **Abdel Kader is 17**, has attended English language and IT courses at the 'Fratelli Project' and **Ali**, his IT teacher, says he is an **intelligent boy** and he wants to study. So far, he has learned to use Word but he wants to go on and learn other things. The next step will be to learn to use Excel, although what he wants to do for a living when he grows up has nothing to do with this: Abdel Kader





The family of Hidayah.

wants to become a taxi driver. In the meantime, he is **enthusiastic about the ‘Fratelli Project’**, where he can fulfil his desire to learn new things.

Mohamed, also known as Hamudi, has serious mental problems. His grandmother shows the evident scar on his chest, at the level of his heart. Hamudi unfortunately also has heart problems, he was operated and follows a therapy, but his grandmother is afraid that in Lebanon there are no adequate treatment and

Hidayah now wants to live in Lebanon and become a doctor, so when she grows up she can cure her brothers.

health-care facilities and she hopes that some NGOs will help her find assistance in Europe.

Hidayah is a beautiful and shy little girl. She was not left unscathed either by the tragic events she witnessed, which every night visit her in the form of nightmares. She likes the ‘Fratelli Project’ very much. Here she is learning English and French, her favourite language. Hidayah can say in French the names of animals and a few sentences, but she can also answer some questions in English. The

other thing she likes so much about the ‘Fratelli Project’ is hands-on activities, and she has also learned to make scobidoos (bracelets). She misses many things about her life in Syria, school, and particularly toys, but **Hidayah now wants to live in Lebanon and become a medical doctor, so when she grows up she can cure her brothers.** “Inshallah,” says her grandmother. And then there are financial worries because there are so many expenses, and the family’s only income is Hidayah’s father’s job. Since January, the UN agency has no longer issued the

card that allowed them to take free medicines from the pharmacy. The medicines they need are many and expensive: those for Hamudi and those that grandfather, quite old and no longer clear-minded, must take every three hours. When she thinks of the future, her grandmother shakes her head in desolation. “We’re like a boat in the middle of the sea, tossed by the waves,” she says, spreading out her arms. Perhaps the only hope is Europe, but for that we need NGOs’ intervention.” It is a clear request for help.



Hidayah, in the front row, participates in one of the many activities of the Fratelli Project

Rmeileh

It has been just over a year since its launch in March 2016, and the 'Fratelli Project' has already grown considerably. Every day, 50 children are welcomed to the educational centre of Bourj Hamoud, a working-class neighbourhood on the outskirts of Beirut, and over 400 attend the centre set up in the old Marist school of Notre Dame de Fatima in Rmeileh, near Saida, locally known as 'Fratelli'.

The children and youths who attend the Rmeileh Centre are almost all Syrians who fled their country after the start of the internal conflict, but there are also Lebanese children. The centre of Bourj Hamoud is mainly attended by Iraqi refugees, who also escaped from Daesh's violence and threat.

To them, 'Fratelli' means the opportunity to go to school - even though it is not a formal school - and learn what is needed to access the Lebanese educational system. This is in fact the aim of the project: offering an alternative to a whole generation of children and youths who, having abandoned their countries because of the war, run the risk of staying out of school for years due to bureaucratic difficulties, disparities in school curricula, and family instability.

However, since this year 'Fratelli' has also set up a summer camp: after the end of school, and following the distribution of attendance certificates, the Rmeileh Centre reopened its doors to accommodate over 200 children and youths in the morning, and over 200 in the afternoon. Divided into age groups, from 8.00 am to 12.00 pm and then again from 2.00 pm to 6.00 pm, children carry out some classroom-based activities and then sing, dance, play football and basketball, entertain themselves with hands-on activities, have fun with playground games and table soccer, scream when an educator disguised as a pirate pops up for the treasure hunt, and - at least the youngest - splash about inside two small inflatable pools.

Every day is devoted to a theme: friendship, reception, respect, etc., - while the teaching of rules always underlies to every activity because *"it is fundamental - says Br. Miquel, co-ordinator and project initiator with Br. Andrés - to convey the principles of coexistence to children and youths who have suffered traumas and must be integrated into a new society"*.

Attention to the person has always been a priority in the Lasallian and Marist educational philosophies, and psycho-social support is the focus of the 'Fratelli Project'.





“We primarily focus our work on the individual - says Reem, a Lebanese educator - and this is one of the strengths of the project. All the educational and social work carried out here helps to lighten the tasks of the local institutions: we select the children ready to enrol in state school and grant educational support to others, but above all we try to normalize stress situations, providing a safe place to have fun and socialize, and giving healthy stimuli to children and youths who would otherwise be on the streets with nothing to do: a high-risk situation from a social standpoint.” The positive impacts of this type of work on a country sorely tried by the presence of 1,500,000

refugees - this is the official figure, but there could be many more - are obvious to many Lebanese people, and this is why the ‘Fratelli Project’ has been welcomed both at Rmeileh and in Beirut. And not just from the local community: the ‘Fratelli’ educational and social programmes are in line with the guidelines provided by the relevant ministerial authorities and Unicef, even though at the moment they have no formal recognition. An effective educational project must also provide supports to families and training opportunities as an alternative to school. This is why the ‘Fratelli Project’ has developed IT and

cutting-sewing courses for adults. Thanks to the project, young people and mothers have acquired vocational skills allowing them to financially support their families, but they also found a place to socialize, both with each other and with their teachers. A few months after its launch ‘Fratelli’ grew far beyond the initial expectations, and we are already thinking of further developments. In the next course, curricula for young people, sports activities, environmental and children’s rights education will be increased. New challenges for which more resources and more people are needed. Today, the community of Rmeileh is made up of

three men religious and a laywoman: Miquel and Andrés have joined Br. Isaac, a Spanish Marist, and Sara, a Mexican volunteer who has decided to devote a year of her life to ‘Fratelli’. Soon, another young woman volunteer and another man religious will join in, making this community an increasingly inter-congregational and mixed reality (religious and lay members). Then, in the Summer, the camp will be animated by volunteers of various nationalities coming from the Lasallian and Marist groups, as well as Taizé’s youths, demonstrating that ‘Fratelli’ really is a place of aggregation for everyone.









The Family of Ibtihaj

Ibtihaj participates in the ‘Fratelli Project’. Her father Zaher Chabana tells us their story. They are Lebanese but they come from [Daraa](#), Southern Syria. Problems began in 2011 and the family moved to the north of the country, from Daraa to Cham in Latakia, and from here to Turkey where they stayed for one year and a half. At that point the family broke up: Ibtihaj’s two elder sisters went to Germany, while the rest of the family headed for the Lebanon and arrived in Tripoli, and from here to Beirut. From Beirut, Ibtihaj’s family settled near Saida, in the *Abra shelter*. Here, Ibtihaj’s father, who was among the first to arrive, enjoys privileged status. He is in fact the authority of the *shelter*, a sort of chief. His home is well furnished and welcoming. In Syria Zaher worked in the construction industry. Here he has not lost the habit of doing a bit of sports and, in a corner of the house, he has a bench and weights to work out. Zaher knows the ‘Fratelli Project’ very well not only because Ibtihaj takes part in it, but also because he is the driver of the mini-bus that every day takes the *shelter*’s children to the educational centre. He is very happy about the ‘Fratelli Project’. **“The Brothers** - he tells us - do not just help those who need it, **they really show regard for people and their rights**. And then, women in the *shelter* talk all day long, while at the ‘Fratelli Project’ they learn new things, so it’s very good that there are courses for them too”. It is definitely a very use-

ful project for refugees, and, according to Zaher, it should be extended to meet the demands of the many families on a waiting lists who wish to enrol their children in the ‘Fratelli Project’. Zaher jokingly tells us that his mini-bus, of all the school buses he sees on the roads, is always

the most crowded. The educational centres of the other NGOs in the area are not as popular! Zaher hopes to come back to Syria one day, when the situation is safer... Meanwhile he is ready to go anywhere he can get a job and good health-care coverage, whether in Lebanon or in

Europe, also because his wife is pregnant with another daughter whose name will be Zara.



Zaher Chabana, after hosting us in his home, shares his story and talks about the importance of the Fratelli Project



Dalia

“I like Lebanon – says Dalia – but I like Syria more”. Dalia had to leave Syria because of the war, and there she left her home, friends and part of her family. Today she lives in the Abra *shelter*. Seated in the *shelter’s* yard, Dalia tells us what has happened to her dreams and projects since last year, when, for the first time, she shared her story and her experience in the ‘Fratelli Project’. From a door that opens onto the courtyard, her mother occasionally looks out smiling. Dalia enrolled in state school in Lebanon, but then she dropped out: she was not happy because she had been included in a class of pupils much younger than her. So she left school, but she does not want to give up studying. Her dream is still to become an Arabic teacher, perhaps by continuing her studies in Germany, where her father is now. Of course it will not be easy. Good for her there is the ‘Fratelli Project’, and Dalia continues to participate in it every Saturday, when she takes part in the club’s activities and where she has attended vocational training courses. Meanwhile, the nightmare of war is still looming. “*What scares you?*”, we ask. “*The military*”. “*What is your hope for the future?*”. “*Seeing my family finally reunited*”.



Front view of the Abra shelter where many Syrians live with their families

The Abra Shelter

The *shelter* is in a valley just off Abra, near Saida. It is a shabby L-shaped building with a couple of buildings in front, one of which is a small mosque. The rest is made up of dwellings. There are about 30 Syrian families living there, a total of 150 people. On the walls, children have painted murals: some co-

lourful drawings, the names of their favourite soccer teams and especially the word 'Fratelli'. From the roof of the main building you can see the surrounding houses of Abra, on one side the Christian district, on the other, the Muslim one. The *shelter's* inhabitants live in peace with the Lebanese residents of the

area. Their problems - they explain - rather come from a Muslim NGO that would want Syrian refugees to go away and leave their places to homeless Lebanese families. The *shelter's* inhabitants have arrived at different times, after the outbreak of the war in Syria, and have settled whenever a family left,

leaving a room premise. Then, because this had to become their new home, they got organized: in the building there is a ladies' hairdresser and a small grocer's shop. Children play in the sunny courtyard, veiled women chat sitting in a circle and they hang the laundry to dry up.



- View of the shelter from above (top left)
- In the shelter courtyard (bottom left)
- A child inside the shelter (top)

Fadia

Fadia lives in a rather modest home not far from the Rmeileh educational centre, in the midst of tomato greenhouses. Although it is made up only of one room and a veranda, Fadia's home is very welcoming. The red and gold pillows scattered on the carpet and Arab-style mats give it a well-tended appearance. There are artificial flowers, a fan, a TV set, but the thing you may notice the most is a small picture on the wall depicting Father Champagnat and De La Salle with the symbol of 'Fratelli'. **For Fadia and her family, the 'Fratelli Project' means a lot.** In 2011 Fadia and her husband fled from Idlib with their two young daughters. But the journey was difficult and dangerous, fraught with the fear of war and terrorist attacks. Fadia and her family arrived first in Tripoli, Northern Lebanon, and then settled in Rmeileh, south of Beirut. But once in Lebanon, Fadia's husband abandoned his family and returned to Syria where he was killed because of the war. Fadia was left alone and without help for herself and her little girls, until she found out that for the 'Fratelli Project' operators were looking for a cleaner, and she applied. Since October 2016, she has started working at the centre. "Before we had nothing, now we can make a living", says Fadia. Her eldest daughter, Hiyam, aged 5, takes part in the project and every day she returns home enthusiastic and tells her everything she has learned.

For Fadia and her family, the 'Fratelli Project' means a lot.
"Before we had nothing, now we can make a living"

Then Fadia met Ali, a young Syrian refugee who fled from Hamah, and three months ago she married him. Ali works as a bricklayer. They pay 200 USD a month for rent and they do not receive any help. Their hope is to return to Syria one day when there is no danger. They will only go when they are sure the country is safe. The things they are missing most about Syria are its scents, a certain atmo-



The greenhouses in the middle of which there are many houses of the Syrians, including the house of Fadia and her family

sphere, and then their friends, their home ... Today Fadia and Ali would no longer find anything of what they left: their houses have been destroyed, their savings are finished, and, in the case of Ali, all his family members have died. They have chosen this house because it is close to 'Fratelli' and Ali does not want Fadia to make long journeys alone on the streets. Fadia used to work in the agricultural sector seven

days a week, but now that she works with the Brothers she is much happier, and she is also planning of attending a computer science course to learn new things, when she has time Fadia and Ali think that 'Fratelli' is a beautiful project, and they hope that it may soon issue official certificates to those who take part in it.



A picture of Father Champagnat and Brother De La Salle next to the symbol of the Fratelli Project, on a wall of Fadia's house



Nouri and Bashar

Nouri and Bashar have attended the courses for adults of the ‘Fratelli Project’. Both fled Syria in 2011 when the conflict began. They arrived in Lebanon through the [Beqaa Valley](#); Nouri went directly to Beirut, while Bashar first went to Tripoli and then from there to Beirut. Bashar is 20 years old, he has come to Lebanon from Idlib with his family. Nouri is 22 years old, he comes from [Deir ez-Zor](#) and in Lebanon he is alone, because his family remained in Syria. This is the real problem for Nouri, the separation from his family. “As to the rest - he says - life here in Lebanon is not too difficult.” He also found a good job. Bashar, instead, works in a resort. The language and cultural openness found in Lebanon have made it easier for Nouri and Bashar to become integrated into this new country. Undoubtedly, says Nouri, in Europe would have been very different - but there are difficulties here too. The ‘Fratelli Project’ helped them by offering them training opportunities that they would not otherwise have had. They attended English courses (their preferred language because it is the world’s most spoken language), Arabic, and IT. Nouri and Bashar are educated

The ‘Fratelli Project’ helped them by offering them training opportunities

youths, both of them have a high-school degree in their country. Their hope is to be able to take further advantage of the ‘Fratelli’ courses, and, above all, that soon the Project receives further recognition and may issue official certifications.



Nouri’s written witness

Some years ago I was looking for ways to complete my education or at least learn English, but living conditions were not good. One day a friend of mine told me that a new school was to be opened to teach computer science, Arabic and English to people like us. I was very happy and went straight to enrol.

The days we came here to learn and to get to know new people have passed. Unfortunately, the last day arrived and the school year ended. We learnt very well, but unfortunately good times pass quickly, while sad ones are very slow to pass.

We thank God for this association (‘Fratelli’) that has helped us and provided us with everything we needed, from books to pens and rubbers, and above all, in this country where education is very expensive, it also provided us with transport.

Thank you Br. Miquel for doing all you could to ensure our happiness; thank you Br. Andrés and Br. Isaac; thank you William, Ali, Hayat, Rana and Reem; thanks to all the staff of ‘Fratelli’.

I apologise for anything I may have done that may have displeased anyone, and I thank the country in which we live.

- Nouri and Bashar talking about their previous experience in the ‘Fratelli Project’ (top).
- Close up of young Nouri (bottom)

Br. Isaac, Br. Miquel, and Br. Andrés, project coordinators, while discussing some organizational details



Noura, Noha and Maha

Simple and elegant in their traditional clothes, Noura and her daughters Noha and Maha sit at the work table and show us how they use the sewing machine. Then they show what they have sewn during the two-month course at 'Fratelli': kitchen linens, children's clothes, and the curtains we see at the windows. Noura, Noha and Maha are among the ten women who this year attended the cutting and sewing course organized by the 'Fratelli Project'. They come from Damascus, they fled for fear of the war and now they live in Rmeileh, near the educational centre. At home, they owned a sewing machine but did not need to work, they were well-off. Here in Lebanon working is a necessity, thanks to the course they have learned a skill, and maybe one day they will also be able to buy their own sewing machine. For the moment they have borrowed one from the 'Project' that they use to work for themselves and to do alterations for others and contribute to the family income. Their experience with 'Fratelli' was very positive, **they hope the project continues to grow, to gain further access to training opportunities.** For example they attend computer science, Arabic and English courses. Noura and her daughters would like to return to Syria, but as long as they stay in Lebanon, or should they move to Europe, they will need programmes such as these for themselves and their children. The children of Noha and Maha are in state school, but they also attend the summer camp of 'Fratelli' because, as Noha and Maha say "here they carry out a very important educational work."



Noura and her daughters Noha and Maha while working on a sewing machine after attending a two-month cutting and sewing course in the framework of the 'Fratelli Project'



Sara

Sara is 25 years old. She is from Sonora, a city in Northern Mexico near the US border, and she works in the marketing and advertising industry. Sara has completed her studies at the Lasallian schools, attending it since the age of 9, and at the Lasallian School in Sonora, where she worked with children as a volunteer, she learnt about the 'Fratelli Project.' Br. Andrés, one of the Project leaders, a Mexican man religious, presented the project in Sara's school. On the same day, after the presentation, Sara decided to leave for Lebanon and she volunteered. "Br. Andrés talked with such enthusiasm of those children ... their joy won me over instantly", says Sara. "I thought that if, despite the war, death, and destruction, these children can live and convey their joy, there is still hope for the world. I felt the desire to participate. For me, this project is a symbol of hope in the world." After only a month with 'Fratelli,' Sarah already seems to see changes in the children. Of course, some of them have problems, but they become more confident day by day. "This is their happy place." The beneficial effects of 'Fratelli' become visible very quickly. Moreover, a positive feedback also come from mothers, those who attend the sewing

Sara, 25, a volunteer for the 'Fratelli Project', attended the whole educational cycle at the Lasallian schools in Sonora, Northern Mexico, where she was born

workshop, for example. Or from the families who were present, numerous and attentive, on the day the diplomas were conferred, at the end of the school year. Even when you go on the street, children and parents who recognize the Brothers or the educators are very keen on greeting them. Sara went to Lebanon to take part in the 'Fratelli



Sara interfacing with Syrian children during one of the many organized recreational activities

Project' for one year, living in Rmeileh with the community made up of three Marist and Lasallian men religious and the volunteers who from time to time join them for more or less lengthy periods.

"Being here for me is an enrichment - says Sara - an experience that I will not easily forget, which I will have to somehow assimilate and make a part of my life when I return to Mexico." But surely it is also an enrichment for the children to see people coming from different parts of the world (as Sarah gives this witness, along with her in the community there are young Spanish Marist and Lasallian volunteers, a Brother from Burkina Faso, three German and two Italian volunteers), an exercise that opens up the mind and fosters adaptation, a fundamental skill for those who have to integrate into a new

"For me this project is a symbol of hope in the world".

community, whether in Lebanon or elsewhere. And then, the other important tool, the true strength of the 'Project', is education. Education promotes a change in mentality and there-

fore integration, both for refugees and volunteers, as well as for the host community. Sara believes in the power of cultural and social transformation of the 'Fratelli Project,' which has also raised interest in her home, with her family and friends, in a country where the issue of migrants is very topical but people, unfortunately, seem to be almost used to it.



Hanan Almasri

The most beautiful thing? The ‘Fratelli Project’! “It’s very difficult when you lose everything. We fled Syria in 2013 because of the war, my parents, my brother, my sister, and I. My older brother is in Jordan. I miss him very much”. Hanan is 14 years old and she comes from Cham. She left her country when she was in fourth grade and she likes going to school, she finds it easy. When she grows up she would like to teach English, a language she loves and can speak already. Hanan has been taking part in the ‘Fratelli Project’ since 2016 when she heard about it from friends and neighbours. During the year, in the afternoon she attends a state school, and in the morning she goes to the ‘Fratelli’ centre, where they help her with homework and to prepare for the tests she takes in school. In the summer she participates in the activities of the summer camp. The ‘Fratelli Project’ helps me a lot,” she continues. “Here we have fun, we dance, we do sports... They teach us many useful things. Help with homework is the most important thing of all, for sure, but then there are leisure activities, friends, a beautiful and open climate, educators, teachers ... and Brothers Miquel and Andrés!”. Of course there are things that can be improved, according to Hanan. For example, if there were more people, more resources, the project could grow even more to the benefit of other children and youths. Hanan misses everything about her country: her home, her friends, her neighbours... she was able to take with herself only her family. What she fears most is war. We ask her: “And what is the most beautiful thing for you, Hanan? She thinks about it and then exclaims: “the ‘Fratelli Project’!”.



- Hanan Almasri is joking with her friends in the morning before the start of recreational activities (top)
- Hanan Almasri shares her story and talks about what the ‘Progetto Fratelli’ means for her (bottom)



Bourj Hamoud

In Bourj Hamoud, a suburban neighbourhood in Beirut traditionally inhabited by Armenians, the 'Fratelli Project' has its headquarters on the fourth floor of a building belonging to the Society of St Vincent De Paul: a long corridor decorated with colourful drawings and recently-painted luminous classrooms. Here, during the school year, the 'Fratelli Project' received 50 children and youths, mostly Iraqis who fled their country.

When 'Fratelli' was launched, explained Bahjat, who is responsible for the project at Bourj Hamoud, information was spread through the representatives of the Iraqi community – very numerous in this area of the city – and the parishes. Among those who applied, priority was given to children and youths left out of state schools. By the end of June, the activities stopped, but the families of the beneficiaries hope they will resume in September after the summer break because there are no other study and leisure alternatives for those who cannot access state schools.





- Bahjat, project manager at Bourj Hamoud (top left)
- Lightful classrooms and colorful drawings on the walls of Bourj Hamoud's Center (bottom; top right)



Ayden, Aysen and Oneil

Oneil is 14 years old and he came from Mosul with his family in 2014. In the same year, the twins Ayden and Aysen arrived in Erbil, where they had to wait three months before they could catch the flight that would take them to Beirut. We met them at the 'Fratelli' centre of Bourj Hamoud, where they came to share with us their experience with the project. Oneil does not

like to be in Lebanon at all, but Ayden and Aysen think differently, they like everything about this new country, but there is one thing the three youths agree on: the **'FratelliProject' is beautiful** and they have great fun in it. In the morning there is an opening prayer, every Monday there are art activities, and then there are all the subjects taught at school: science, English, French, maths, Arabic, Spanish... You learn and socialize with your friends. And, in addition, psycho-social support is provided when needed. The project is really good and the three youths hope it can grow, because people like them really have many needs. Oneil, Ayden, and Aysen have grand desires for their future, they would like to go to Canada, Australia, or the United States ... but not to re-

turn to their homes in Iraq, there is nothing left to return to. And then they dream of being engineers or the medical doctors, when they grow up. Hearing them talk and knowing all the difficulties they need to face even just to enrol in state school, makes you realize they will have to work really hard to make their dreams come true.



- Ayden, Aysen, and Oneil while sharing their previous experience in the 'Fratelli Project' (top left)
- The long corridor full of colors and drawings at Bourj Hamoud's Center (top and bottom right)



In the morning, children and teens involved in the 'Fratelli Project', waiting for the mini-bus that will take them to the Rmeileh Center

Samira, Joseph, and Josetta

Joseph is an 11 year-old boy with a diligent look; he speaks English because he learnt it in Australia, where his family lived for two years before coming to Beirut after fleeing from Duhok, Kurdistan. Next to him, his sister Josetta draws on a sheet of paper with coloured pencils and then shows us her work: three small figures representing herself, her friend, and Bahjat in the ‘Fratelli’ centre of Bourj Hamoud. “I like to study English, French, and maths,” says Joseph, “but not Arabic, I do not like it; this is why I didn’t like the Lebanese school.” Joseph attended a private school, immediately after his family settled in Beirut, but it was very expensive. In state school, on the other hand, he felt discriminated against, his difficulties with the new language were not taken into consideration, and he constantly received written warnings

“We were afraid of Daesh, and we feared that the Muslims around us would join Daesh and become a threat to Christian women.”

for no reason. Joseph is now studying at home, alone, and he went to the ‘Fratelli’ centre to receive help to study and participate in recreational activities. “Fratelli is a beautiful project - he continues – it helps us keep our minds active.” Joseph and Josetta’s mother, Samira, is one of the women who attended the ‘Fratelli Project’ beautician course. She tells us that in Duhok, in Iraqi Kurdistan, they had problems with the Muslims, and when Samira’s husband found a job in Australia, the family moved there.

After two years in 2015, they had to go back to Duhok, where the situation was even worse: Daesh was drawing near and the local Imam openly incited Muslims against Christians. “We were afraid of Daesh,” remembers Samira, “and we feared that the Muslims around us would join Daesh and become a threat to Christian women.”



- Works performed by children and teens participating in the ‘Fratelli Project’ at the Bourj Hamoud Center (top)
- Samira, Joseph, and Josetta in a classroom of the Bourj Hamoud Center (bottom)

Samira’s family, leaving Erbil by plane, fled the country and settled in Beirut. Samira’s husband, however, had to return to Iraq where he is a government official, and from there he supports his family. But problems are many: the distance, first of all, and then the cost of living in Lebanon is too high - we have to give up buying certain kinds of foods, Samira says, - the health-care system is difficult to access, the children’s school, and the feeling that refugees like them should not cause too much trouble. Samira feels an outsider in this city, she even had to move to escape the hostility of some neighbours. Fortunately, she now has a neighbour, a female pharmacist, who helps her with the children, and then there is the ‘Fratelli Project’ that gives them more opportunities. Samira attended the beautician course because of her own personal interest, but also to socialize with other people. In addition, the professional skills she acquired could help her find a job, as it was the case with two of her course colleagues who now work as beauticians.



- Josetta with volunteer Dalia (top)
- Josetta while drawing (bottom)





- Children while drawing in their classroom (top)
- Some children's drawings (bottom)







مدرسة القلب الأقدس فرير - الجميزة
Collège du Sacré-Cœur Frères - Gemmayzé
www.sacrecoeur-gemmayze.org

La  Salle
Sacré-Cœur
Gemmayzé - Beyrouth













Fratelli Project - Technical Data and Acknowledgements

The Fratelli Project was strongly advocated by the two Congregations involved, first of all by their respective Superior Generals. At first it seemed a difficult dream to fulfil, because the hardship seemed greater than the possibility of taking action in such a complex context.

Eventually, the Project took off thanks to the gradual and ever-growing commitment of all the actors involved: the local Brothers, the Lasallian and Marist educational communities in Lebanon, the international solidarity network of both Congregations, the organizations that believed in the project and supported it financially and through volunteering staff, dissemination, and promotion initiatives...

From day one to the present, the Fratelli Project has raised hope and joy. This photo reportage gives an overview of the climate full of life at Rmeileh and Bourj Hammoud.

We wish to thank all those who have contributed - each with their own talents and means - to implementing what the following list describes:

Ongoing programmes:

- *Preschool*
 - *Study help and after-school activities*
 - *Basic literacy and numeracy*
 - *Accelerated Learning Program (ALP)*
 - *NADI ATFAL: Club for children*
 - *MULTAKA ATFAL: Meeting point*
 - *Vocational training for young women*
 - *MULTAKA CHABAB / MULTAKA SABAYA: Meeting point for youths*
 - *Summer study help*
 - *Summer camp*
 - *Psycho-social support and children protection programme*
-

Beneficiaries (figures referring to school year 2016/17):

- *> 500 boys and girls*
 - *> 60 youths*
 - *their families*
-

Volunteers involved in the project:

- *2 international volunteers on a long-term basis*
 - *16 international volunteers on a short-term basis*
 - *4 local volunteers on a permanent basis*
 - *12 local volunteers on specific initiatives or short-term basis*
 -
-

Total funds used for the project to the present day:

- *721.382 USD*
-

Funds used for the project during school year 2016/17:

- *499.139 USD*
-

Fratelli Project - Technical Data and Acknowledgements

We hereby warmly thank all the organizations, groups and individuals who have made this project possible, and continue to support it. Although the list below only includes legally registered agencies or institutions, we wish to strongly acknowledge that the joint efforts of individual donors and families from all over the world have been and are still a major part of the support provided to the Project. To all of them we address our warmest

THANKS.

NOME	PAESE
A.V.S.I.	Italy
Associazione Girovolley	Italy
Ayuntamiento de Huesca	Spain
Ayuntamiento de San Sebastián	Spain
Ayuntamiento de Zarautz	Spain
Benevity Fund - Microsoft	U.S.A.
Bethlehem University	Holy Land
Caritas San Sebastián	Spain
Central Catholic HS	U.S.A.
CNEWA Pontifical Mission	U.S.A.
Comunidad Vedrunas	Spain
CONFER	Spain
COR UNUM	The Vatican
Diputación General de Aragón (Comité de Emergencias)	Spain
F.M.S.I.	Italy
Fundación Champagnat	Spain
I.E.C.D.	France
International Foundation I.F.	Switzerland
La Salle College HS	U.S.A.
Manos Unidas	Spain
Mercy Corps	Ireland
Misean Cara	Ireland
Obispado de Mondoñedo-Ferrol	Spain
Proega	Spain
PROIDE	Spain
Provincia del Medio Oriente FSC	Lebanon
Provincia La Salle Messico Sud Antille	Mexico
Provincia Mediterranea FMS	Spain
Proyde	Spain
Saint Laurent-La Paix Notre Dame	France
Schools for Syria	Ireland
Scuola e Comunità La Salle Jaffa	Israel
Scuole Mariste e Lasalle	Lebanon
Sed	Spain
St John Paul II School	U.S.A.
The Loyola Foundation	U.S.A.
V.L.P.	Belgium