

# Dorcas *Lebanon*

Meeting basic needs in  
the face of multiple crises



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# We are Dorcas

Dorcas is a faith-based organisation that provides humanitarian assistance and facilitates development cooperation. We invest in sustainable change in the lives of people who are marginalised. In the event of poverty, exclusion or a crisis, we create opportunities for them to flourish.

#### What we believe

We believe in the value and God-given potential of every single person. We are called to demonstrate God's love for those in need.

#### What we see

We see a world where poverty, exclusion and crisis marginalise people. We also see the potential of these people and their communities to flourish despite their difficult circumstances.

#### How we work

**Accountable:** We do what we say, work transparently and use resources wisely.

**Compassionate:** We see those in need and stand next to them.

**Determined:** We have an entrepreneurial spirit and do not give up.

**Locally led:** We work through local leadership, staff and partners.

#### What we do

We empower people who are marginalised to develop their talents. And we enable disadvantaged communities to flourish. We equip individuals and communities to promote and ensure participation of all.

We create hope and long-term perspectives in volatile and complex situations. We meet people's basic needs in times of crisis and increase their ability to

overcome poverty and exclusion. We persist despite frequent setbacks and invest in durable relationships to realise sustainable change.

We are part of a global movement of individuals and organisations working for a just and fair world. We recognise and appreciate everybody who supports our work. And we actively partner with others to create synergy and amplify our impact.

# Theory of Change

Dorcas views poverty as a condition in which people cannot realise their intellectual, material, physical, social and spiritual needs and capacities. This kind of poverty is often related to exclusion mechanisms and barriers within society. We want to contribute to the protection, inclusion and resilience of people living in poverty, experiencing exclusion or caught in a crisis. Our Theory of Change recognises that transformation is needed at the individual, community and societal levels. We seek to realise a six-fold impact that results in flourishing people and communities.

Dorcas works towards change on three levels:

### 1. Individual

We create opportunities for people and, if necessary, we also provide for their basic needs.

### 2. Community

We invest in resilient, self-organising communities; we strengthen the position of certain groups, such as older people, people with disabilities and minority groups, and we encourage community members to support each other and stand up for themselves.

### 3. Society

We cooperate with local authorities and partners and motivate them to take their responsibilities. We tackle taboos by ensuring that everyone has a voice and that everyone is included.

The Dorcas Theory of Change is translated into programme concepts that create impact,

demonstrate our added value and inform the programmatic priorities set by each Country Office.

The three programme concepts are:

### Humanitarian Assistance and Recovery

Humanitarian Assistance and Recovery focuses on saving people’s lives and preserving their dignity during disasters or crises. People’s immediate needs are met, communities are enabled to become resilient to shocks and governments are actively involved in contributing to safer and more peaceful communities.

### Social Empowerment and Protection

Social Empowerment and Protection seeks to ensure that the poorest and most marginalised have access to basic services, like health and education, and are empowered in their social development. This is realised by organising and mobilising communities to solve their own problems and work on opportunities through asset-based community development processes.

### Inclusive Entrepreneurship

Inclusive Entrepreneurship enables disadvantaged people and groups to acquire the attitudes, competences and skills they need to earn an income and build their dreams. This is realised by creating social and economic value through entrepreneurial livelihoods and applying it to self-employment, small businesses, member-based entities or social enterprises.



# Dorcas in Lebanon



Dorcas first worked in Lebanon in the 1990s, supporting reconstruction programmes after the civil war. In 2014, Dorcas returned to Lebanon permanently and shifted the emphasis of its work to humanitarian and development activities. It operates in the country as an international NGO and as a local NGO “Tabitha for Relief and Development”.

Dorcas Lebanon seeks to meet the needs of communities affected by multiple crises, such as low-income households, people with special needs and older people. We support vulnerable women by offering protection services and life skills through community centres. Our work with vulnerable children is realised through school feeding, child development and protection. Last but not least, we strengthen the position of young people through peacebuilding activities and teaching them transferable life skills.

Dorcas Lebanon uses three programme concepts: Humanitarian Aid and Recovery (HAR), Inclusive

Entrepreneurship (IE) and Social Empowerment and Protection (SEP). With HAR, we aim to save and restore extremely vulnerable people’s lives through cash and protection activities, legal services, shelter for female victims of gender-based violence and Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS). Under recovery, we focus on Food Security and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH). In IE, we provide people with the tools and skills they need to start their own business. Finally, the community centres we run as part of our SEP programme concept promote and support protection and safety nets.



#### Food Security and Livelihoods

Lebanon struggles with an ongoing economic and political crisis. The 2020 Beirut explosion also had a significant impact on the country, which reverberates to this day. Food security remains a challenge for many people in Lebanon and is one of the key focus points of Dorcas Lebanon's programming.

#### Nutritional meals for children

Dorcas Lebanon has provided healthy and nutritional meals for more than 1,300 children daily through Mary's Meals foundation for several years. The aim is to support the education of Syrian refugees, Palestinian refugees, and Lebanese children by providing a healthy meal on each school day. The programme is realised in Antelias Public School, Dorcas community centres in Aley and Batroun, and Bourj El Barajneh Palestinian camp, where it is implemented with the partner PWHO (Palestinian Women's Humanitarian Organisation).

#### Hot meals for older persons and people with a disability

Since the Beirut blast in August 2020, a hot meals programme has operated at the community centre in Achrafieh in close collaboration with our partner MSD (Migration Services and Development). A different meal is prepared each day in take-away packaging. Older persons and people with disabilities can have the meal picked up or delivered to their homes.

#### Boosting livelihoods

Socioeconomic crises and political dysfunction have hit businesses in Lebanon hard. This has led to rising job losses and deteriorating livelihood conditions. Dorcas Lebanon is implementing the Livelihood project to support the immediate recovery of vulnerable people and businesses impacted by these crises. The aim is to provide nano and micro businesses with in-kind support to improve their business development and to help youths find work that will provide them with a decent livelihood.

#### Food parcels for families

In the Food Distribution programme, large food parcels are provided that contain a family's basic needs in accordance with the food security and basic assistance sectors' recommendations. Even the total lockdown in Lebanon during COVID-19 did not stop the Dorcas team: it worked really hard to respond to people's needs and demands when they were not permitted to go outside. Many food parcels and hygiene kits were distributed to families in need, also in the most vulnerable areas.

#### Protection

Protection of vulnerable people from Lebanese, Syrian and migrant communities is at the heart of the Dorcas Lebanon strategy and is mainstreamed in each humanitarian intervention. Where possible and needed, we provide direct protection services and our protection specialists offer psychosocial support, legal counselling, and follow-up for female victims of abuse and gender-based violence. This is done from a central place, such as a community centre or from a mobile unit, where a safe space and environment is created. Dorcas staff identify referral pathways and refer targeted people according to existing services in accordance with their needs. At the community level, we aim to raise awareness of protection issues and link affected people to existing (informal) safety nets. We also use asset-based community development to enhance self-help capacity and social cohesion.



**Gender-based violence protection services**

This project provides gender-based violence (GBV) protection services for the most critically vulnerable Lebanese, refugee and migrant populations living in Baabda and El Metn districts. Based on an individual assessment, GBV survivors receive protection cash assistance and dignity kits. In partnership with MSD, the project supports legal counselling, legal support and representation for GBV cases. At a local level, the services are provided in collaboration with local community-based organisations. A network of outreach workers facilitates trust and access to isolated groups. Dorcas Lebanon uses nationally recognised referral pathways to ensure cases that require specialised follow-up are referred to specialist service providers.

**Supporting the most critically vulnerable in Ghazir**

This project targets the most critically vulnerable in the region. It addresses protection needs by providing response and prevention services and strengthening the Social Development Centre (SDC). The activities realised include:

- Provision of case management services for GBV and persons with special needs including older persons.
- Provision of psychosocial support sessions and individual counselling.
- Provision of emergency cash assistance.
- Implementation of arts and crafts activities through the SDC or a mobile unit.
- Organisation of recreational events and awareness sessions.
- Referral to specialised services and other services that are not available within Dorcas Lebanon and the SDC.

Impact Story



Dalal’s journey to dignity

Illustrative photo of Dorcas community center in Lebanon.

In 2019, a Syrian woman called Dalal (pseudonym), came to a Dorcas community centre. She felt marginalised and was facing mental health issues. Her husband, who also happens to be her cousin, had decided to marry another woman and celebrated his second wedding in front of the entire family without any thought for their feelings or the consequences of his actions. And if that was not bad enough, he came to live in their house. Dalal could not live with that and left immediately with her children. They became homeless and started reaching out to organisations for help.

Dalal was very anxious about her children and how she would provide for their basic needs. She feared other men would try to approach her now that she was alone and her husband had left her. She used to support her husband by cultivating the land. However, after his second marriage he took all the money that she earned and she was left with nothing.

She asked to talk to the community centre’s lawyer in confidence. She stated that her husband continuously asked to work in prostitution but she had firmly refused his requests. After hearing this, the lawyer filed an alimony suit, a spousal

home insurance suit, and worked on the children’s custody. Her husband responded by filing multiple suits. However, the judge ruled that Dalal be given custody of the children and that the father had to pay alimony. This was upheld when the divorce was granted.

‘Thank God I was not deprived of my children; they are my world!’

Dalal’s journey to dignity started in 2019 and when the divorce was granted in 2022, she was at last released from her husband’s abusive behaviour. Now she is happier and feels at ease.

Sustainable Development Goals: Leave no one behind

Our programmes in Libanon are directly linked to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, most notably:



# Dorcas in the Middle East

Dorcas is active in Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Syria and Yemen. These Middle East countries share several contextual and cultural similarities and face the common concerns posed by climate change and water security. Protracted conflict and crisis in the region have led to social and economic decline and high numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons in need of assistance. People struggle with rising food prices and high inflation, and the migration of skilled workers has resulted in a chronic brain drain.



### Our work

In the Middle East, Dorcas operates on the Triple Nexus of humanitarian aid, development, and peace and reconciliation. We respond to urgent needs and work on longer-term challenges, such as access to basic and public services. Our strategy is to restore trust, strengthen human capital, reinforce social protection systems and advance gender equity. We address fragility by supporting refugees and host communities in the supply of basic needs and protection, and we provide perspective through opportunities for improved livelihoods and entrepreneurship.

# Partners in Lebanon

### Our Programme Partners:

- Tabitha
- Palestinian Women Humanitarian Organisation (PWHO)
- Migration for Services and Development (MSD)
- Druze Women Association
- Daughters of Charity/Saint Vincent de Paul Center
- MOSA – through the SDCs in Choueifat, Bayssour, Chehim, Ghazir and Ain el Remaneh
- Messages de Paix
- LSB (Lebanese school for the blind and deaf)
- Rotary club of Baabda

### Our Strategic Partners and Donors:

- UNFPA
- UNOCHA
- Mary’s Meals Foundation
- Social Development Centers of Ministry of Social Affairs
- Mission East (Mission East with DANIDA funding)
- Dutch Relief Alliance
- Christian Emergency Aid Cluster (Christelijk Noodhulp Cluster)
- TDH – Italy (Terre Des Hommes)
- World Vision
- Expertise France
- WFP - World Food Programme
- Netherlands Red Cross
- International rescue committee
- IOM

### Local networks we participate in:

- Lebanon Humanitarian & Development NGOs Forum (LHDF)
- Working Group for Persons Affected by the Syrian Displacement Crisis in Lebanon (PASC)

### International network we participate in:

- Caram Asia Network

### Partner with us!

I am Najla Chahda, Country Director of Dorcas Lebanon. I enjoy working with both (inter)national and local partners. Are you interested in a possible collaboration or wondering what contribution your organisation could make? Then please get in touch with me. I look forward to exploring the opportunities for a partnership with you.



Do you have any other questions about Dorcas’ work in Lebanon or would you like more information about a specific topic? Then please visit [www.dorcas.org/lebanon](http://www.dorcas.org/lebanon) or contact us.

Partner with us! Together we can realise lasting changes in the lives of people in need.

### Contact Dorcas Lebanon

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and crisis. We empower  
marginalised people and  
communities to flourish.