

## PROMOTING INCLUSIVE DIALOGUE IN LEBANON

Collaboration among charitable associations with different religious affiliations

### WHO ARE WE?



The Cordoba Foundation of Geneva (CFG) is an **independent** non-profit organisation working on peace promotion. We focus on tensions and polarisations in all societies where Muslims live, and aim to enhance theoretical and practical conflict transformation resources in Muslim majority countries. Founded in 2002, we promote a **methodology of conflict transformation** adapted to and accepted by local peace actors, parties to conflict and communities. With **15 years of experience**, the CFG is well-established in Geneva, Switzerland, and has developed unique access and networks in the Muslim-majority world. **Our multi-cultural, diverse team** of dedicated professionals has enabled us to build relations in both the Western policy and Muslim-majority worlds, guided by our core values of **Non-violence, Inclusiveness, Impartiality, Empathy** and **Independence**.



Signing of the MoU by members of the Forum of Humanitarian Associations (FHA), Beirut, August 2018

### CONTEXT

Regarded for a time as a social and political model due to its sectarian power-sharing system, Lebanon has experienced **increasing tensions** since 2011. The socio-economic implications of the **Syrian refugee crisis** are severe, particularly in the context of a widening political divide between the two main political currents, led by Hezbollah and the movement of Saad Hariri. From disagreements on internal politics to diametrically opposing stances on regional developments, their positions reflect their divergent geopolitical calculations, but have also taken the form of **sectarian divisions** that threaten the cohesion of the Lebanese social fabric. These divisions are reflected in the humanitarian field by the lack of cooperation between organisations with different references. This situation hinders effective work in this field, with negative impacts on refugees and marginalized Lebanese communities.

## THE PROJECT

Our project in Lebanon consists of initiating a **collaboration** between several humanitarian organisations with different references as a path for **conflict transformation**.



*Food distribution, Hikma Refugee Camp Bar Elias, Lebanon, November 2017*

## GOALS

- ✓ **to promote peaceful coexistence** within the national space, based on the principles of citizenship and respect for pluralism;
- ✓ **to foster joint actions** on issues of common interest;
- ✓ **to build trust** among different communities within society.

## APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

Humanitarian issues are an area of common concern for the whole of Lebanese society. Therefore, our project supports a joint initiative by several charitable NGOs of different backgrounds. The **combination of their respective assets and skills brings significant advantages** to their work in favour of Syrian, Palestinian and Lebanese communities in need, regardless of their confessional or ethnic background. Moreover, such **collaboration contributes to strengthening the social fabric** through developing shared methodologies and goals.

The **Diapraxis** methodology (combining dialogue and common initiatives) is an integral part of the CFG's methodology and contributes to the success of its projects.

## RESULTS

**Six humanitarian organisations** with different references signed a **Memorandum of Understanding** with the objective of providing equal and impartial support to vulnerable populations in Lebanon, regardless of their political, religious, sectarian or ethnic affiliation.

Creation of the **Forum of Humanitarian Associations** (FHA), in which representatives of these organisations meet every month to dialogue and coordinate joint projects in the humanitarian and cultural fields.

The project has **brought together** actors whose worldviews diverge significantly. The fundamental premises of this peace-building project are therefore very relevant and can be **adapted to other contexts** in order to bring together deeply divided people living in the same space.

**To support us and for further information, please contact:**

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