

JIBAL.ORG

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Annual Activity Report

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In **2024**, Jibal advanced food sovereignty to support social and environmental justice in Lebanon.

In 2024, Jibal responded to Lebanon's evolving challenges with a focus on strengthening food sovereignty for advancing social and environmental justice. In face of the escalation of Israeli aggressions, Jibal's work remained rooted in solidarity and resilience, in collaboration with local partners and initiatives. The year saw the continuation of key projects, including territorial food strategies, the promotion of agroecology practices among farmers, the development of models for social enterprises like social groceries, and mobilizing collective work. Jibal also adapted to urgent needs by supporting the establishment of community kitchens in shelters, ensuring displaced individuals could regain a sense of agency over their food, and worked on changing narratives. This report outlines the organization's diverse initiatives, collaborations, and responses, demonstrating a steadfast commitment to building more just communities and systems in Lebanon.

Table of Contents

1. SOLIDARITY WORK IN RESPONSE TO THE ESCALATION OF THE ISRAELI AGGRESSION ON LEBANON	8
A. Implementing Community Kitchens in Shelters	
B. Sharing the Experience with Others: Publication	
C. Post-war Support of Community Kitchens	
2. TERRITORIAL FOOD STRATEGIES AND PLANS	12
A. Majdel Meouch Food Plan	
B. Zgharta Food Strategy	
3. TRANSITION INTO SUSTAINABLE FOOD PRODUCTION	16
4. SOCIAL AND SOLIDARITY ECONOMY	20
A. Social Grocery Manual	
B. Dikken El Mazraa	
C. Nation Station	
D. Majdel Meouch Cooperative	
5. PARTICIPATORY GUARANTEE SYSTEM (PGS) FOR AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION	26
6. MORE DEVELOPMENT OF LEARNING GARDENS	30
7. AWARENESS AND CHANGING NARRATIVES	32
A. Consumer Visits to Farms	
B. Land Stories	
C. Talks	
8. COLLABORATIONS AND JIBAL'S COMMUNITY	36
A. The Agroecology Coalition in Lebanon (ACL)	
B. Crowdfunding Campaigns	
ALL PUBLICATIONS	38
PARTNERS AND FUNDERS	42

1. Solidarity Work in Response to the Escalation of the Israeli Aggression on Lebanon:

After the war escalated in mid-September 2024, approximately 1.2 million individuals of various nationalities were displaced, with the majority left without a safe place to go. In response, grassroots initiatives and organizations quickly mobilized, opening centers to provide shelter.

Displaced individuals in these shelters received daily meals prepared by central kitchens.

Members of the Jibal team were actively volunteering on the ground, helping to source and distribute essential items such as mattresses, blankets, clothing, toiletries, and food. Through direct engagement and observations on the ground, it became evident that people needed more agency over their food choices, needed elements in their daily lives that resembled normalcy, such as cooking and

preparing their own meals; the meals provided were often insufficient, perishable, or did not meet cultural and nutritional needs.

Guided by the principles of food sovereignty, it became essential to build an aid system that prioritized dignity and autonomy, even within such a challenging context.

➤ A. Implementing Community Kitchens in Shelters

Recognizing this, efforts were shifted toward establishing community kitchens within shelter centers, providing people with the tools and spaces to prepare meals that reflect their traditions and nutritional needs, reinforcing their sense of agency. These in-shelter kitchens, referred to as community kitchens, were designed to serve the residents of each center. Four shelter centers, in Hammana, Broummana, Bikfaya, and Mazraat Yachouh, were equipped with functional kitchens with support from Jibal staff members. The goal was to create a space where people could cook collectively, whether in small groups

or for the entire shelter community. In some cases, smaller kitchen setups were also installed on each floor to facilitate greater access and participation. sector.

➤ B. Sharing the Experience with Others: Publication

It became clear that a practical guide would be highly beneficial for other shelters looking to establish central or community kitchens. In response, the team developed a Community Kitchen Guideline, outlining the essential steps for setting up a kitchen within a shelter center. The guide includes a comprehensive list of required equipment with estimated costs, suggested menus with quantities, and a dedicated section on safety and hygiene practices.

➤ C. Post-war Support of Community Kitchens

Building on the work around establishing community kitchens, the next phase focused on sourcing food supplies for the newly set-up kitchens. This included both dry goods and fresh produce. In collaboration with Mada NGO, support was extended to six community kitchens located within shelter centers, as well as three independent central kitchens operating outside shelters, with a total number of residents of roughly 1750 displaced people.

Food supplies were sourced through a mix of partnerships: grains, pulses, and flour came from Buzuruna Juzuruna, a regenerative organic farm; fresh produce was

procured directly from trusted local farmers; and additional items were obtained through bulk local suppliers.

A weekly voucher system was introduced, with which kitchen teams could choose their preferred fresh produce using vouchers redeemable at Souk el Mawsam farmer's market or Dikken el Mazraa social grocery. This model not only ensured greater agency for kitchens but also supported small-scale producers and alternative fair markets.

2. Territorial Food Strategies and Plans

Governance is a key aspect to food sovereignty. Developing territorial food plans and strategies can allow local food chain actors to take part in shaping a fairer, efficient, and climate resilient system. Jibal started this work in 2021 in two different areas: the caza of Zgharta, and the town of Majdel Meouch (Chouf).



➤ A. Majdel Meouch Food Plan

The territorial food plan of Majdel Meouch, an agricultural town in the Chouf, was published in 2024. Informed by collaborative assessments and consultations with local authorities (municipality) and the revived Meouch Cooperative which was reactivated as part of Jibal's work with the local community, the food plan was co-developed including detailed action plans and recommendations. The action plan aims to ensure a sustainable and strategic approach to local food system development, engaging various stakeholders in creating a resilient, fair and sustainable food environment. In addition, it serves as a reference

for the municipality, guiding local authorities in integrating food and farming considerations into their planning and budgeting decisions.

➤ B. Zgharta Food Strategy

In previous years, Jibal conducted research on the food system in Zgharta, a Caza in North Lebanon. Following this research, a local committee was formed to collectively build a tailored local food strategy, the "Zgharta Food Strategy" with support from Jibal, and to later prioritise their objectives and start implementing the strategy.

In 2024, the Zgharta Food Committee was supported in the implementation of some of

these prioritised activities such as training sessions for local Cooperatives on reactivation, training sessions for Committee members on Mobilization, as well as Awareness events for the community.

A training program on Agroecology for farmers in Zgharta was also implemented, followed by continued coaching sessions for key farmers on their lands (more details in the section on farmer transition). This work is ongoing, and both Jibal and the committee plan to benefit from the coming elections to collaborate with municipalities and pursue the application of more elements of the local food strategy.

3. Transition into Sustainable Food Production

Jibal has been working with farmers to transition to agroecology since 2021. In 2023 and 2024, the methodology focused on targeting agroecology model farms to become more resilient and financially viable, aiming for these farms to serve as viable prototypes that can inspire others and be replicated in different areas. Four geographical clusters were selected (South, Chouf, Keserwan,

North), supporting 2 to 5 farmers in each cluster. The farmers received collective training sessions, bi-weekly coaching, regular follow up by expert agroecology farmers, and in-kind support of tools or inputs required for the transition. Examples of success stories of this training program are:



Photo Credit: Jenny Gustafsson



Tony Khalil

A greenhouse vegetable farmer in Meouch, who has worked with Jibal for three years. He transitioned to polyculture and regenerative practices, reducing input costs, improving soil health, increasing productivity, and inspiring nearby farmers.



Ghassan Samia

Mayor of Kfarsghab Zgharta, and a farmer across various altitudes, was selected by the Zgharta Food Sovereignty Committee to participate in this training program. He began converting large-scale olive and apple orchards to regenerative farming, introduced cover

cropping, and supported farmers from his town in following suit.



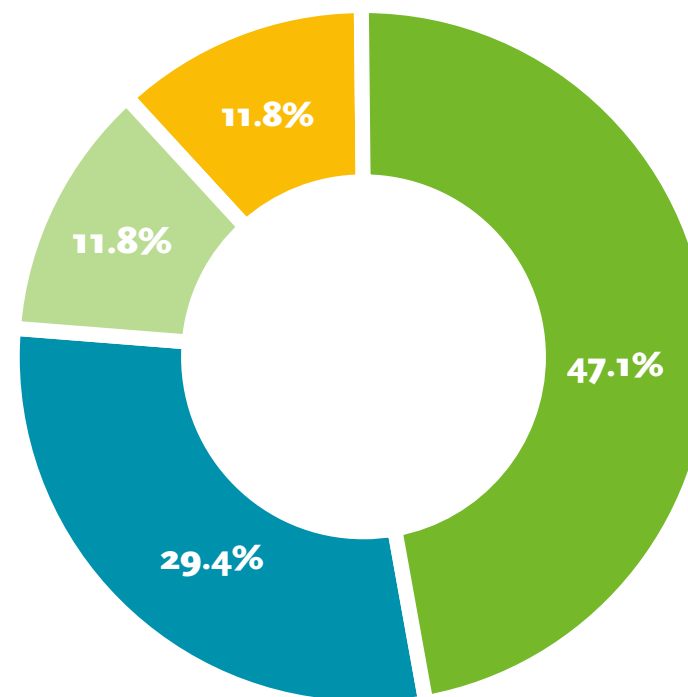
Antonio and Sibelle Doueihy

Siblings running a dairy farm in Zgharta, were also selected by the Zgharta Food Sovereignty Committee for this program.

They significantly improved productivity through crop rotation and organic inputs, eliminated chemical fertilizers using compost and vermicompost, and began transforming their operation into a model regenerative farm.

Key outcomes included the emergence of valuable collaborations among farmers such as mentorships from experienced agroecology farmers, partnerships for market access, and cooperative

use of land resources (e.g., sharing space for beekeeping). Below are the patterns in transition from conventional to sustainable farming practice through Jibal's extension services with farmers:



- Sustainable farmers that improved production and reduced cost
- Farmers that transitioned
- Farmers still in transition
- Farmers that did not transition

4. Social and Solidarity Economy

In 2024, Jibal's efforts focused on empowering social enterprises aimed at strengthening fair and sustainable food access models. Through research, experimentation, and strategic planning, collaboration with Dikken El Mazraa and Nation Station helped refine their business models, enhance operational efficiency, and maximize their social impact. A key outcome of these efforts was the development of the Social Grocery Manual, outlined below.



Photo Credit: Jenny Gustafsson

➤ A. Social Grocery Manual

After engaging with various members and founders of social groceries in Lebanon, it became evident that such initiatives play a vital role in the country. To support their growth and encourage the establishment of new social groceries, Jibal decided to create a manual. The manual dissects the definition and different models of social groceries abroad and in Lebanon. It entails all knowledge that was gathered on social groceries. It acts as an awareness tool and a comprehensive guide for anyone interested in setting up their own social grocery.

➤ B. Dikken El Mazraa

After three years of research and experimentation on the business and financial models to be adopted within Dikken el Mazraa, a business plan was developed with the objective of scaling the social grocery and its impact. This included adapting a technological model that fits the different metrics of the business model including the membership system, cross-subsidy pricing model and others. The implementation (of the ERP) led to a clearer internal structure and organizational chart for the business which were also part of the business plan. Finally, the legal aspect of registering Dikken within the legal framework that suits it was addressed as well and the implementation started early 2025.

➤ C. Nation Station

Recognizing the potential for growth and increased impact at Nation Station, Jibal worked on optimizing the community kitchen's business model. By aligning with Souk el Mawsam farmer's market, this partnership aimed to enhance both social and financial outcomes. However, it became clear that structural reforms were needed within Souk el Mawsam to ensure harmonious collaboration, as its management was currently independent of Nation Station.

The next steps for Nation Station include ongoing financial assessments and adjustments to the business model, supporting the implementation of structural reforms, and aligning the values, goals and vision of both entities (Nation Station and Souk el Mawsam) sharing the same space,

so that there could be impactful collaboration and smoother management.

➤ D. Majdel Meouch Cooperative

In line with the principles of solidarity economy, Jibal supports the development of cooperatives in Lebanon. In 2023, work with the farmers of Majdel Meouch was initiated, to reactivate their dormant cooperative, this work continued in 2024 where the members were supported through the process of structuring their internal organization, defining roles and responsibilities, as well as cultivating a cooperative culture. Meetings were organised with the General Directorate of Cooperatives in Lebanon where a presentation on coop culture, regulations, internal law, and financial commitments was provided.



5. Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) for Agricultural Production

Building on the challenges of fairer opportunities of access to market for farmers, Jibal engaged in exploring if a “Participatory Guarantee System” (PGS) could be a better sales solution for farmers.

PGSs are locally oriented quality assurance systems that provide certification based on the active participation of stakeholders; farmers, experts, consumers and retailers. These systems build on trust, networks, and knowledge exchange,

offering an alternative to third-party certifications. This approach addresses recurrent concerns from farmers and consumers about verifying the “sustainable/organic” quality of agricultural products.

In 2024, Jibal conducted research on how PGS models are applied in different countries, and designed a methodology to identify if the local community of farmers, consumers and retailers have interest in developing a similar

system in Lebanon. Focus group discussions were organised to identify needs, and interests, and later collective design sessions brought together more actors from the food system to discuss the charter of specifications, the governance and the concrete certification steps. Finally the system was piloted in three different farms and showed first successful results. The development of the PGS will continue in 2025.

The SOIL FOOD web

سلسلة غذاء التربة



290

حضرت شمس الدین

الأزوت
نظريات
عواء بنية
1:10 - 1:40 - 1:50

6. More Development of Learning Gardens

Step Together is an organisation and school for children and adults with special needs, which follows the methods inspired by Rudolph Steiner's holistic approach with great focus on nature. This focus drove them to develop their outdoor spaces into sustainable productive green spaces. In order to achieve this, they sought the expertise and support of organisations such as SOILS and Jibal. Jibal's expert agroecologist designed and guided the implementation of an aromatic and citrus tree garden, producing a wide variety of aromatics such as rosemary, lavender, thyme, lemongrass, passion fruit, orange, and lemon trees. Training sessions on cultural emergence for community building among the team at Step Together, as well as herbalism, were postponed to 2025 due to the cessation of sessions during the escalation.



Photo Credit: Jenny Gustafsson

7. Awareness and Changing Narratives

➤ A. Consumer Visits to Farms

After realising the detrimental impact of the growing disconnect between consumers and their food producers, Jibal started planning activities to bridge that gap. In May and June 2024, consumer farm visits were organized, visiting farms and alternative markets.

The participants varied from being consumers interested in learning about agroecology, to amateur farmers, entrepreneurs in the F&B industry, photographers, students, and researchers. Participants were very engaged and appreciative of the agroecology approach farming and made new connections with farmers.

➤ B. Land Stories

Land Stories is a storytelling initiative that highlights the lives of farmers and the crops they grow—ranging from wheat and apples to citrus and aubergines—on lands that have played a historic role in the origins of agriculture. Over the past two years, Jibal has produced eight stories, each centered on a single grower. These narratives explore the regenerative techniques being practiced, the cultural and historical significance of the crops, and the broader agricultural context in Lebanon.

A bilingual website “Land-stories.org” was developed to house the full collection, and a thoughtfully designed print publication was produced, offering a more personal and tactile way to engage with the stories.

This publication is a tribute to

farmers who, despite immense challenges, continue to cultivate the land and nourish their communities. Through their resilience and dedication, they not only sustain themselves but also safeguard our agricultural heritage and contribute to a more sustainable future. They represent those who build soil, reproduce seeds, transform produce, feed communities, and above all, nurture life itself.

➤ C. Talks

In 2024, Jibal team members delivered several talks for large audiences telling about the situation in Lebanon, be it in the field of agroecology or in general. Team members spoke at events in different countries:

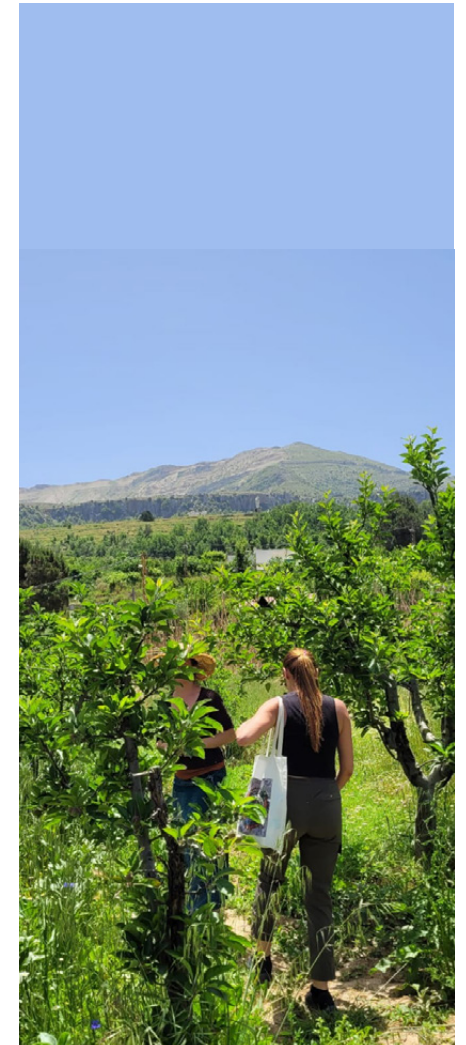
- A talk about Agroecology in Lebanon during the Berlin Alternative Green Week which

was organised by Heinrich Böll Stiftung in January 2024, advocating for funding of grassroot movements and farmers instead of conventional farming.

- Talks on the israeli aggression against Lebanon and how it impacts both environmental and social justice (in Basel for the Movement for Socialism (link), in Paris for La France Insoumise, in Geneva for the Institut des cultures arabes et méditerranéennes (ICAM, Link).

- A contribution to a roundtable on food sovereignty organised by Arab Reform Initiative, discussing what would be the ingredients of a just environmental transition.

- An awareness session about the production and financial benefits of agroecology organized by Mada NGO, in Tripoli.



8. Collaborations and Jibal's Community

► A. The Agroecology Coalition in Lebanon (ACL)

The Agroecology Coalition is an initiative that has been in development for several years. It is a network of organisations and experts dedicated to promoting agroecology in Lebanon as both an agricultural practice and a movement, with the goal of enhancing Food Sovereignty. This group, which organically connected through years of frequent collaborations and mutual support, established this coalition to further organise these collective efforts and amplify their impact. For two years, regular monthly meetings provided a space for reflection and the creation of a solid shared vision, which was further energized during

8. Collaborations and Jibal's Community

the israeli escalation of aggression. This war made the importance of food sovereignty ever more evident and tangible, reinforcing the conviction in the necessity of this pursuit. ACL started the process of developing its strategy, creating a manifesto that would communicate its identity and goals, and inviting new members who share these goals and would contribute to their realisation.

► B. Crowdfunding Campaigns

Jibal contributed to several crowdfunding campaigns aimed at funding solidarity kitchens and solidarity actions in general, and organised its own crowdfunding in collaboration with Zaher Grow To Learn NGO, in order specifically to work on cofounding community kitchens. (See above the actions done during the war)

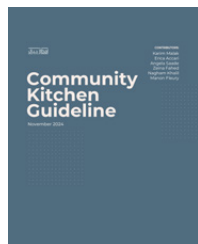


9. Publications



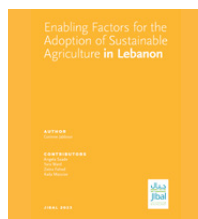
Majd El Meouch Food Plan 2024

This publication outlines the development and implementation of a territorial food plan in Majd El Meouch, Lebanon. Informed by collaborative assessments and consultations with local authorities and the community, the resulting comprehensive report details action plans and recommendations. The action plan aims to ensure a sustainable and strategic approach to local food system development, engaging various stakeholders in creating a resilient and sustainable food environment. In addition, it serves as a reference for the municipality, guiding local authorities in integrating food and farming considerations into their planning and budgeting decisions.



Jibal's Community Kitchen Guideline 2024

The Community Kitchen Guideline was developed based on experiences and lessons learned from supporting and setting up 5 community kitchens in different shelters (Furn El Chebbak, Broumana, Bikfaya, Mtain and Baalbek – Hermel). Each shelter has adopted slightly different models that are ever changing. It aims to guide and assist individuals or initiatives working on establishing community kitchens in shelters. This version of the guideline will be continuously updated, and we welcome feedback from hands-on experiences to collaboratively work toward the best possible version.



Enabling Factors for the Adoption of Sustainable Agriculture in Lebanon

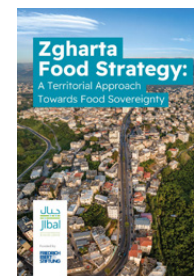
The Enabling Factors study examines the shift towards sustainable agriculture in Lebanon, exploring key factors influencing farmers' decisions through interviews and observations. It highlights the roles of economic, social, and environmental considerations and

proposes a framework to enhance sustainable practices and policy interventions within the agricultural sector.

Land Stories – حكايات الأرض



Land Stories is a storytelling project centered on Lebanon and the nearby region. All stories portray people and the crops they grow, from wheat and apples to citrus and aubergine, on land that was central to the beginnings of world agricultural history.



Zgharta Food Strategy: A Territorial Approach Towards Food Sovereignty

This publication outlines the development and implementation of a food strategy in the Zgharta region of Lebanon. The report emphasizes the urgent need for a sustainable and resilient food system due to hyperinflation, increasing food insecurity, and heavy reliance on imports. The territorial food strategy aims to unite various stakeholders, including producers, policymakers, NGOs, and local communities, to create environmentally and economically sustainable food systems that prioritize food sovereignty, promote agroecology, and ensure access to affordable and nutritious food for all.



Learning Garden Activities

A series of 33 workshops for children aged 7 to 14 offering a nature-based, experiential, and child-centered approach to education. These workshops utilize engaging tools such as theater, crafts, sensory experiences, and practical skills to reconnect children with nature, promote food sovereignty, and instill a sense of environmental justice. This curriculum will help nurture children's relationships with nature, each other, their community, their food, and their food producers, inspiring the next generation of environmental stewards for a sustainable future.



Agroecology In Lebanon: Analyzing the current scene and exploring upscaling potentials.

Since 2019, Lebanon has been passing through a tremendous economic crisis which has caused significant social and environmental damage, highlighting issues in the conventional food system model driven by agroindustry. This publication is built on the understanding that agroecology– an alternative food system vision– can be a tool to build a more equitable food system. This research is interested in how agroecology as a framework (specifically one that considers food sovereignty) is being applied in Lebanon, with an underlying question: how can it be upscaled from scattered, isolated initiatives into a more cohesive, cross-country approach which influences the agricultural and food practices and policies in Lebanon? A documentary following agroecology through its historical progress in Lebanon was also developed as part of this project under the name “Agroecology, from Past to Future”.



Assessment of Learning Gardens in Lebanon

A number of alternative educational initiatives have emerged in Lebanon, many of which have begun addressing connection to nature and land, place-based immersion, food justice, and sustainability more generally. These initiatives fall within the category of ‘learning garden’, which can be broadly understood as a dynamic space outside of the traditional classroom where experiential learning takes place. This study identifies the social and well-being components of LGs to help to gain a baseline idea of their various uses, challenges, and needs.



Exploring Alternative Food Initiatives in Lebanon

While the system of the wholesale market in Lebanon for farmers is most of the times unfair and nontransparent to farmers, many alternatives have been developing during the last decade. From

farmer’s markets, to grocery cooperatives, this report explores these different options, with the aim of spreading these models and learning more from their success and challenges.



Report: Environmental Justice in Lebanon

The report explores environmental movements and mobilizations that have taken place in Lebanon over the last two decades. The multiplicity of cases explored often reveal connections between claims for preserving the environment and claims for social justice. Social injustice relates not only to the redistribution of wealth, but also to recognizing the voices of the less powerful and allowing them to take part in the decision-making process.



Environmental Justice Workshops

Four Workshops on Environmental Justice: Public Spaces, Water, Waste, and Food, using activities that aim not only to transmit information and engage with participants on the cognitive level, but also encourage a change in attitudes and behavior.



New Routes to Narrating Migration

The publication builds on interviews made with journalists, researchers, civil society activists and other storytellers working in Lebanon and elsewhere, all of whom at some point participated in a Switch Perspective workshop. It profits from knowledge created in our trainings and workshops on the topic of migration, including takeaways from numerous discussions, reflections and shared experiences. It follows the storytelling process from beginning to end, starting from questions about the journalists or storytellers themselves and ending with the publication of the finalized story

10. Partners and Funders

MAIN PARTNERS



Step Together
Since 2024



Mada NGO
Since 2020



Buzuruna Juzuruna
Since 2017



Dikken El Mazraa
Since 2021



Eedama
Since 2017



Zaher Grow To Learn
Since 2019



Alternative Tour Beirut
Since 2018



Nation Station

MAIN FUNDERS



Majalat
Since 2024



HBS Heinrich Böll Stiftung
Since 2022



Porticus
Since 2023



Friedrich Ebert Stiftung FES
Since 2019



Fondation de France
Since 2020



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