



# SALAM LADC

## VOLUNTEER INFORMATION PACKET

### CONTACT

Taanayel  
Bekaa Valley, Lebanon  
info@salamladc.org

### DEAR INTERESTED VOLUNTEER,

Lebanon has about 1.2 million Syrian refugees and almost 500,000 Palestinian refugees. It has the highest concentration of refugees per capita in the world: Lebanon has 232 refugees per 1,000 inhabitants. The next closest country is Jordan, with nearly one-third of this number.

Our work is predominately in the Bekaa Valley, one-hour east of Beirut. Most of our projects are well within a 15 min radius of our Volunteer Headquarters. The projects are planned and prepared for in our office and warehouse and are implemented in the field, usually within one of the informal settlements that we have close relations with. Our regular projects take place in around 20 informal settlements, some projects such as Aid distribution are based on the needs assessment made by our local staff. Our Aid program is targeted and works in areas that are not covered by the mandate of other NGOs and local partners. (Examples: new arrivals, coverage gaps)

Most of our projects are developmental and educational based, as the situation currently in Lebanon for most people is stabilized and our beneficiaries are in need of sustainable solutions. We also aim to provide, psychosocial programs that meet needs beyond shelter, food provision and sanitation (something that is mostly covered by larger iNGOs, within a highly coordinated effort here in Lebanon)





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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Salam LADC is a Lebanese non-profit, apolitical association launched right after the 2006 July war in Lebanon. Salam aims at strengthening inter-community dialogue in villages and assisting the most vulnerable persons, with a big focus on building bridges between the Lebanese and Syrian communities.

Our main goal at Salam LADC is to provide support and comfort to the vulnerable populations here in Lebanon. We strive to make it possible and safe for the many volunteers around the world who come to assist and help Salam in its efforts.

In Lebanon, volunteering is different from a lot of the work that has been done in Europe. There are not many international volunteers. The UN programs and NGOs on the ground do a lot of good, but the numbers are vast and the needs are simply too big. There is extreme poverty amongst the refugees. Some have been here since 1948. There are Palestinians that have lived their entire lives in refugee camps in Syria, only to have to flee again. Syrian refugees live mostly in tents, in so called informal tented settlements which serve as their homes.

Many also live in small rooms in different buildings. In the Bekaa Valley alone there are around 356,000 registered Syrian refugees. The Palestinians are concentrated in 12 bigger settlements around the country. The security in these settlements is quite poor and in some there are active militias inside. Because of the vast numbers, a system is needed to make sure that everyone gets access to aid.

*The take away message: if you want to volunteer in Lebanon please do so through the proper channels, one of which is through reading this document and submitting an application.*

### A. Substantial changes for prior volunteers

1. Due to the long term sustainability aspect of our projects, Salam has decided to only accept volunteers who can commit to at least 2 weeks and highly encourage those who can stay 2 months or more, to help facilitate and strengthen our current projects.
2. We will be accepting newly arriving volunteers only on Monday morning now, to ensure that people are properly inducted and that it doesn't interrupt running projects.
3. You will now be consulted on your skills and preferences and our volunteer coordinator will place you into a weekly rotary to ensure that all projects are staffed.



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4. All donations will need to enter into our Salam bank accounts due to legal and transparency reasons (please see donation section for further details)
5. All new activities and projects need pre-approval from the coordinators and/or the Salam Board. (please see proposal section for further details)
6. Our photo policy is changing, certain activities during the week will have a photographer present and photos will be made available to all volunteers. Volunteers will not be allowed to take their own photos of frontline activities.
7. Though substantial changes have been made please feel free to ask us more about the changes and have an open mind. As these changes will allow us to be more sustainable on the ground and allow us to better assist our beneficiaries!

## 2. LOGISTICS

### A. Getting to Lebanon

- ❖ Fly to Beirut – there's only one airport. For transfers from the airport, we recommend White Taxi Service or Allo Taxi (Google it). The going rate from the airport to the Bekaa is \$40-\$60, and from the airport to Beirut is \$15.
- ❖ Getting to the volunteer HQ in Bekaa: Our base in the Bekaa Valley is in Taanayel, which is approximately a 1 hour drive from Beirut.

### B. Accommodation

- ❖ In Beirut, we recommend The Grand Meshmush Hotel, Saifi Garden or Hostel Beirut.
- ❖ If interested we have 4 beds within our Beirut office, located in Sin El Fil neighborhood. Please email [volunteering@salamladc.org](mailto:volunteering@salamladc.org) for further details.
  - Cost is 10,000LL/night
- ❖ In The Bekaa Valley, there is DeLora suites or Massabki Hotel (in Chtaura) or the EcoLodge located in Taanayel. <http://www.ecolodge-arcenciel.org/>
- ❖ We have a volunteer house in Taanayel. Prioritized for long term volunteers but open for short term volunteers based on availability:
  - ❖ There are 22 beds available.
  - ❖ Each volunteer is expected to participate in the weekly cleaning schedule.
  - ❖ Cost: House Rent is due each week right after the Monday Team Meeting
    - Cost= \$35 a week
      - \*cost is subject to change

### C. On or before arrival

- ❖ Save all emergency numbers (found in the security section)



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- ❖ Buy a local sim card with data (~\$50 for the SIM card and then different deals for data and SMS/calls) – **MUST** get package with either data or one which specifically accommodates **Whats App** as it is the primary form of communication. MTC Touch is the best choice for our area, if you go to a certified store (not a cell phone store, then it's much cheaper!
- ❖ See Health Insurance info below (under subheading Costs)

## D. Planning your arrival to Salam

- ❖ Please note that we will be accepting new volunteers on Monday morning for the 8:30am meeting, to be followed by volunteer induction with our volunteer coordinator.
  - If you happen to fly in on another date, there is plenty to see in Beirut and Lebanon in general. We can provide you with some tips of what to see and do until Monday.
  - This change, enables our staff to be more productive during the week, and ensures our programs can run efficiently.
- ❖ Majority of projects are run Monday-Friday. Weekends are generally free; however, some projects may happen on the weekends but are not rostered by our staff.

## 3. SECURITY

We stress that Lebanon is **NOT** Europe. We advise that volunteers who wish to apply are familiar with being in the Middle East and check travel information provided by their government.

Our volunteers only work in the field during daylight hours unless a project has received pre-approval

Always carry your passport with you and emergency cash.

### A. Precautions traveling to Lebanon

You will most likely be **refused** entry at customs if you have travelled to Israel and have an Israeli stamp in your passport. More information on visas here:

<http://www.lebanontourism.com/TravelerTools/visa.asp>

- ❖ At passport control in the airport, please be clear that you are entering as a tourist.
- ❖ You will be required to list an address in Lebanon: please write down the address of whatever hotel or hostel you are staying in during your initial night.

### B. Security Check Points

- ❖ There are military checkpoints all over Lebanon. Their purpose is to maintain safety and stability in a country all too familiar with war. The officers are in 99.9% of the



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cases are very nice. They will sometimes check your identity, so **always have your passport with you when driving around. It is the only valid ID for foreigners in Lebanon.**

- ❖ When driving past slow down, roll down your window and say Marhaba. They might wave you by or ask where you are going. Be friendly and polite, at night make sure to turn on the lights inside the car, and always turn down the music.
- ❖ They are always very friendly, maybe just surprised to see Westerners.
  - Cooperate and be respectful AT ALL TIMES.

## C. Taking pictures and videos

- ❖ Do not take pictures of the military, military checkpoints and bases, governmental or municipal buildings and staff.
- ❖ Be cautious of taking photos and videos, assess if it is appropriate to do so. Generally it is advised to ask for permission before doing so.
- ❖ In Palestinian settlements political factions are housed in civilian areas. They will not be happy with any pictures taken.

## D. Driving

- ❖ To be fully insured you **MUST have an IDP** (International Drivers Permit) which must be obtained in your home country, prior to departure.
- ❖ The traffic rules you know do not apply, you must adapt.
- ❖ Don't be afraid to use the horn.

## E. When traveling in Lebanon

- ❖ If traveling to the South or Baalbek, you **will** need permission from the military (general security office in Tyre). If you need to go for any reason, please speak to the Salam Coordinators upon arrival. If traveling to the North, you should do so in coordination with someone from the project as it is deemed unsafe. Again, check the information provided by your local government.
- ❖ Also note that certain areas in Beirut are considered red zones and are not suitable for tourism. Feel free to consult with us if you have any questions.
- ❖ **Stay away from the Syrian border and you are NOT ALLOWED TO ENTER Syria if you want to volunteer with Salam!**
- ❖ **Areas of concern:**
  - **DO NOT GO INTO ARSAL.**
  - **The North Bekaa area and some areas in north Lebanon is pretty much no-go zone as well.** If you must go, coordinate with us! **Tripoli** should be done in coordination as well, we will link you with coordinators or NGOs present.



- **Some of the Palestinian settlements are safer than others. But none is considered safe.** There are two in Beirut which can be accessed with specific NGOs or in agreement with local security; ask in the group. The Palestinian settlements are self run, there is no Lebanese military or security presence. In some of the camps there are armed groups and active militias.

## F. Emergency numbers

- ❖ Civil Defense: 125
- ❖ Ambulance (Red Cross): 140
- ❖ Fire department: 175
- ❖ Internal Security (Police): 112
- ❖ Embassy: The numbers will vary according to your origin. Find the number and save it on your phone

**DISCLAIMER: This security advice is for your own safety and protection. Follow them and stay safe. Get travel insurance. We cannot guarantee anyone's safety. We do not take any responsibility for anything that may occur. You will travel on your own risk. Let your embassy know you are here and what you are doing.**

## 4. COSTS

Lebanon is EXPENSIVE...

### A. Currency

- ❖ Lebanese Pounds or USD: Both are accepted (It is predominantly a cash country)
  - Current exchange rates can be found here:  
<http://www.xe.com/currencyconverter/>

### B. Flight

- ❖ Check online, sometimes it is better to buy flights separately. For example, to Istanbul and then from Istanbul to Beirut.

### C. Car Rental

- ❖ Rental cars should be between \$25-30 a day (check online for deals). If you are coming short term, please consider renting a car!

### D. Food

- ❖ House Food:
  - Common food bought for the house for everyone to use (this will cover a majority but **NOT ALL** meals)



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- Pasta, cheese, (some meat), fruit, veggies, drinks, etc.
- Cost: \$10 per week (paid after Monday Team Meeting)
- \*Cost may change
- ❖ When eating out food varies but a small breakfast will usually amount to \$5. Dinner should not be much more than \$10 per meal.

## E. Health Insurance

- ❖ MUST HAVE HEALTH INSURANCE
- ❖ Check to see if your current travel insurance covers Lebanon (most do not, especially within Bekka Valley).
- ❖ If interested/in need of health insurance Email: hananimi63@gmail.com Subject: Health Insurance. In the email attach a photocopy of your passport photo and indicate that you are volunteering with Salam LADC.
- **BEFORE ARRIVING IN LEBANON**
- Cost: \$48-70 for 92 days

## 5. GENERAL INFORMATION:

### A. DONATIONS

\*We work with MOSA, UNHCR, NGOs and trusted local contacts to provide an understanding of where aid is truly needed.

Prior to your arrival you can transfer your funds to the Salam bank account (ideally needs to be done **2-3 weeks before you arrive**). If unable to transfer directly to our Lebanese account, you can use our PayPal account or Salam Norway account. Once you are on the ground in Lebanon you can meet with the coordination team and determine which department(s) you would like the funds to support. If you arrive with cash donations (US dollars, please!) that will also need to be deposited into the NGOs account and the same process applies for using those funds. This helps us comply with the local law and the requirements of the Ministry of Interior and Finance, as well as allowing us to be more transparent as an NGO.

-Send any donation inquiries to: [donation@salamladc.org](mailto:donation@salamladc.org)

**\*Please be aware: do not use the words "refugees," "Syria," or anything similar when noting the transfers as it will be flagged and transfers may be delayed or denied.**



## B. VOLUNTEERS

We have ongoing projects in which volunteers are needed to ensure the integrity of the program. These include supplemental education, children's activities, construction, medical advice, organizational skills, creative ideas. etc... As everything else, it's a work in progress!

We will allocate you to a project within Salam LADC, according to your skills, duration of stay and preference. Our volunteer coordinator will work with you to determine where you can be best used and everyone will be placed into the weekly rotary to ensure that all projects are appropriately staffed. Please take a look at our document listing our current projects within Salam LADC.

Volunteering here covers a lot of areas: Distributions, referrals, construction, information gathering, organizing, fundraising, WASH assistance, development projects, education projects, children's activities and lots of behind the scene coordination to ensure that all the frontline projects can endure!

## C. Project Proposals

All new projects need approval from the coordination team and/or Salam Board. If you would like to start something new with Salam LADC please submit a proposal to our volunteer coordinator at [volunteering@salamladc.org](mailto:volunteering@salamladc.org) Please have these in at least 2 weeks before you arrive so our team can meet and determine any questions, alterations and whether the project meets the needs on the ground. **Please ask our volunteer coordinator for a template as all projects need to be submitted in the same format.**

## D. Duration of Stay

Due to our current projects, we require a certain amount of long term volunteers to contribute to the sustainability of our projects. Currently the need is around 10 long term volunteers/month and we can take around 10 short term volunteers at any one time to help supplement our set projects.

For long term volunteers we are especially looking for people to help facilitate our projects. Focal Points are volunteers that take a lead and are the main contact for some of our set projects. They assist with liaising with the local community, organize volunteers placed on their project and brief new volunteers interested in those projects. They also collaborate with the volunteer coordinator and other FPs and coordinators to ensure projects are running smoothly and efficiently.



## E. Special Skills

For the projects that we are running, some skills are particularly useful for the maintenance and success of the projects. Please select all that apply, noting that your response may place you on set projects for the best utilization of volunteers' skills within Salam. Note that the skills indicated on the application form, reflects the needs of our current projects. Please clearly indicate those which apply to you.

## F. Medical Skills

Foreigners are by Lebanese law not allowed to practice medicine on patients here without being registered with a working visa, which in case of medicine practice is very expensive. What you can do if you want to do hands on medical care is contact PCRf and SAMS who host medical missions within the country throughout the year, or SAWA who has a clinic that can accept International Medical Volunteers.

## 6. CODE OF CONDUCT AND TIPS

The culture in Lebanon is very diverse, please be aware of your social conduct and their social norms.

We are hosted as guests in Lebanon and in their culture. We are not here to develop or fight for equal rights. We are here to help the truly vulnerable by working within the culture not by pressing our culture onto them.

Please remember, everybody deserves the same amount of respect, whether you are a politician, a volunteer, a refugee, poor or rich. We are here as humans to help other humans.

### A. Lebanese Culture

- ❖ If somebody offers you tea, a gift or just a seat, it is considered impolite not to accept (bear in mind there may be security implications, dependent on context)
- ❖ If you learn a few Arabic phrases and show interest in the culture by saying “hello, how are you?” in Arabic or “Shukran” instead of “thank you” it goes a long way.

### B. As a woman

- ❖ Be aware that women dress more conservatively in Lebanese culture. When working within settlements we dress similarly:
  - Keep your shoulders covered, if it's hot wear a scarf around them
  - Wear loose pants/skirts/dresses well past the knee
- ❖ In some cases, wearing a ring will make things easier.
- ❖ More conservative men will not shake your hand. Just place a hand over your heart, instead of shaking their hand.



## C. Social Media

- ❖ Please be cautious when posting on social media, you never know what it will imply to those who may see it, a Syrian or Palestinian refugee, a local NGO, or the police/military.
- ❖ In Lebanon, there are precautions and warnings for a reason, but don't post overly-dramatized or exaggerated versions of reality. If one follows the security measures and acts respectfully it is most likely that danger will not come to a volunteer, however one must be very vigilant and aware.
- ❖ A photographer will be assigned to certain projects during the week and photos will be made available for all volunteers afterwards. We ask that no phones be out during the activities/projects as the focus should be on the work at hand.
  - Those wishing to help as photographers will need to sign a photo policy and understand the consent rules.
- ❖ Facebook Live is not allowed.

**\*\*To preserve Salam's vision and standing it is essential that all volunteers of Salam comply with all Code of Conduct and Security measures, as described above and disclosed by Salam Coordinators upon arrival. In the case of non-compliance, Salam reserves the right to withdraw all association with any/all volunteer involved.**

## 7. What to do Now

- ❖ Have you read the whole document?
- ❖ Do you understand all the security risks?
- ❖ Would you like to come volunteer in Lebanon?

To be able to plan and facilitate in the best possible way, please fill in the online application form

Please use the following link: <https://goo.gl/forms/g9WTdC5UIFTGgEQ42>

If you have a question that was not covered, please email us!

At [volunteering@salamladc.org](mailto:volunteering@salamladc.org)

Thank you all for your interest. We hope this information is useful and provides some answers.

~**Together we will make a change**~