



CIRCLE OF WELLBEING

Annual Report 2023





ABOUT US

Circle of Wellbeing is a Norwegian NGO based in the Bekaa that focuses on supporting the well-being of Syrian refugees and Lebanese/Palestinian women living in the Bekaa.

Circle of Wellbeing strives to empower and support women in the Bekaa Valley in a safe environment despite what background, sexual orientation, beliefs, or religion they might have. Through yoga, meditation, art and awareness sessions, the women can become more aware of their own body, mind, rights, and mental and physical wellbeing.

Mission Statement:

Support and empower women by providing the tools to manage stress, facilitating creative skills and delivering information about women's health and parenting.

Organization #: 930 303 186



A MESSAGE FROM OUR FOUNDER:

I founded Circle of Wellbeing in November 2022 after experiencing and witnessing how it is to be a woman in Lebanon. Facing a lack in Women's Rights and with knowledge about women's mental and physical health in Lebanon, I decided to start a Women Center to support vulnerable women and children in Bekaa, Lebanon.

Lebanon has been my home for 3 years now and in that time, the Circle of Wellbeing's team in Lebanon and people around the world have shown a great deal of support for our vision and the community we work in. This organization would not exist without the help from our initial supporters and our team has expanded with volunteers and staff around the globe.

I am very humble, grateful, and proud of everything we've done and accomplished together in just one year. Thank you to everyone who supported us with time, knowledge, and donations.

Thank you!

THEA MUNKEYB
FOUNDER AND DIRECTOR

Founder's future plans for Circle of Wellbeing:

- Expand to several towns in Lebanon and start new collaborations
- Apply for grants to support more women and children
- Grow our team in Lebanon and internationally with focus on preventing violence and abuse
- Support a higher number of pregnant women and newborns
- Start a new project to combat child marriage



introduction of **OUR TEAM**

2023



Michelle Reece

Social media/Administration



Manar Kattan

Center Manager in Bekaa



Thea Munkeby

Founder and CEO



**Amanda Helland
Spjeldnæs**

Board Member and
Volunteer



Mohamad Shaer

Financial Manager



Reem Alzoury

Yoga Teacher



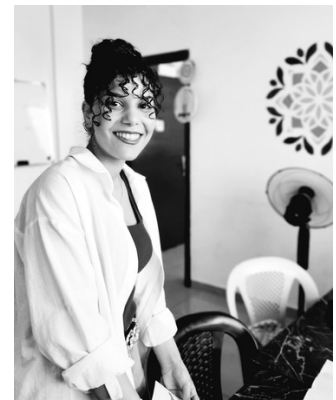
Narjes Assed

Facilitator at the Women
Center



Mathilde Bandiera

Social Media Coordinator



Fatema Debyan

Facilitator at the Women
Center

From Canada,
Switzerland,
Denmark, Norway,
Syria, Palestine,
Germany, Lebanon



VOLUNTEERS

During our first year, we've had volunteers from all over the world leading sessions at our center and working remotely. In 2023 we've had around 25 long term (over 3 months) volunteers in addition to our local staff. Circle of Wellbeing has volunteers with the right motives and motivation and are open minded and respectful. They contribute to sessions, fundraising, and administrative work at our Women's Center, We are grateful for all the work, time, and contribution they have put into our humanitarian work.

WHY LEBANON AND A WOMEN'S CENTER IN BEKAA?



Over the last five years, Lebanon has faced several humanitarian emergencies including the harsh economic crisis exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the recent Cholera outbreak. These circumstances significantly impact the lives of both Lebanese and non-Lebanese, taking a toll on their physical and psychological well-being and leading to a reduction in their purchasing power. This has resulted in the deprivation of basic necessities.

Some of the most affected people in Lebanon are the vulnerable women and their children, mainly those who live in rural areas like Bekaa. There is a lack of knowledge and awareness about the woman's body and its needs in these settings, and women's health is often neglected.

Issues impacting these women include :

- Violence and physical attacks
- Early marriage and sexual abuse
- The isolation of unmarried women
- Low standard of healthcare
- Psychological crises and social insecurity
- Food deprivation resulting in children dropping out of school
- Honor crimes and identity loss

As an act of humanity, and a dedication to inspire, protect, heal and rehabilitate, the Circle of Wellbeing launched several projects to provide support to women living in the Bekaa.





OUR PROJECTS 2023

Pregnancy Project

The center has been running a first-of-its-kind pregnancy project. We work with 30 women in 3 month cycles throughout their pregnancy journey. In 2023 we had three groups, with 90 women in total.

The pregnant women are with us for 8 weeks, during which they practice prenatal Yoga to prepare for birth. We have a specialized coach who provides them with mental health support, breast feeding, and parenting sessions.

They also receive free check ups with doctors from Endless Medical Advantage (EMA) who provide them with medication and pre-natal vitamins.

The women receive a dignity kit with necessities for themselves and their babies.

Our logistic manager pays for part of their hospital bill and we continue to follow up with the mothers and their babies. This relationship resulted in our Newborn Project.

ONE PREGNANT WOMAN
STATED:
"YOGA GAVE ME PHYSICAL AND
PSYCHOLOGICAL RELIEF,
AND THE MENTAL HEALTH
SESSIONS ENABLED ME TO
SPEAK WITHOUT FEAR"



Newborn Project

MENTAL HEALTH AND CHILD DEVELOPEMENT:

The wellness of mothers during the first months of having a newborn is critical. Circle of Wellbeing strives to incorporate meaningful practices that enhance and strengthen mother's awareness, confidence and comfort with their newborns.

Our experienced and trained staff in mother-baby care will lead our classes every week. They will facilitate breastfeeding practises, walking through the development stages of babies and what to be prepared for, ways to hold the baby properly, and connecting the mom and babies through appropriate baby massage techniques.

At the end of the project, the women will partake in a distribution, including hygiene items for the women and items needed to care for a baby.

"THE TIME WE SPENT AT THE CENTER AND AWAY FROM HOME, GIVES US STRENGHT AND A SENSE OF JOY"

Every session has a safe place for women to chat, share experiences, and relax.






410 WOMEN

We have 30 women in three different groups who attend our cycle every week. Women in each session attend yoga, art and awareness for three months.


3 MONTHS

All the women and their children attend sessions at our Women Center for at least 8 weeks, most of them three months. This is really important for us, so we can follow up their challenges and really get to know them and find out how to help them.



310 CHILDREN

Everytime we have sessions for the women, we have Child Care. This is so the mothers can relax, and still come have time for themselves even though they have children they need to take care of. Many of them have up to 8 children

Awareness sessions

Circle of Wellbeing has been leading awareness sessions concerning violence, stress management, mother and child relationships and other psycho-social topics. In 2023, therapists, coaches, doctors, and nurses led our awareness sessions, including both local and international trainers.

Topics Include:

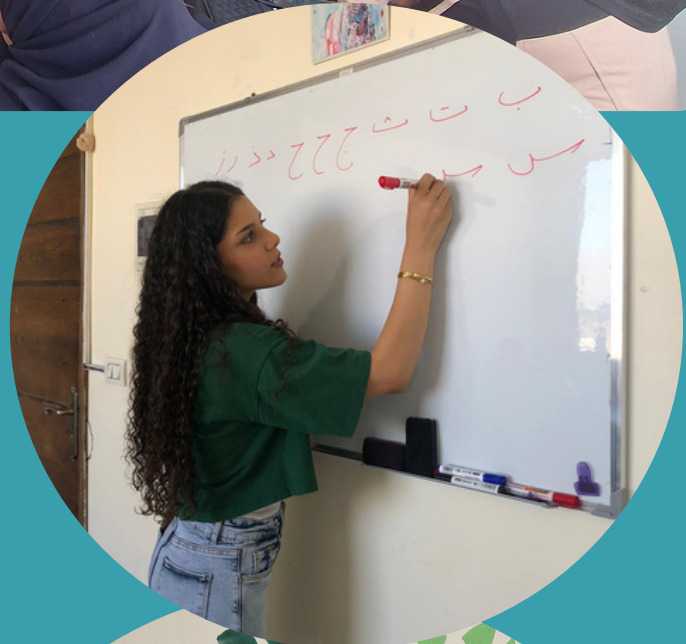
- Women's body and hygiene
- Women's diseases
- Breast feeding
- Pregnancy
- Parenting
- Sexual abuse
- Regulating emotions
- Menstrual health
- Violence against women
- Children's development
- Women's rights





NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

In 2023 we've had women attending Arabic and English Literacy at our Women Center led by volunteers from The American University of Beirut, and international volunteers. Empowerment through learning how to read and write has been successful. The women feel confident, independent, and a feeling of mastery. Women at the center also want to learn English, so they can teach their own children at home.



Child Care



DURING 2023 WE'VE HAD 310 CHILDREN AT OUR CENTER PARTICIPATING IN OUR CHILD CARE SESSIONS. THEY LEARN LETTERS AND NUMERACY IN ADDITION TO FOCUS ON PLAYFULLNESS AND BEING IN A SAFE PLACE.

MANY OF THE CHILDREN SUFFERS FROM ABUSE, DO NOT ATTEND SCHOOL AND ARE VICTIMS OF CHILD LABOUR. OUR TRAINED STAFF CONTINUESLY WORK ON PREVENTING THIS FROM HAPPENING THROUGH COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS AND OTHER NGOS

Distributions



155

Dignity Kits



30

Pregnancy Kits



30

Newborn Kits



190

Food Parcels



5400

Liters of Water



300

KG of Fruit
Baskets



1200

Liters of Fuel



1800

Pieces of Clothing

100%

of these numbers are from Circle of Wellbeing's and individuals crowd funding through GoFundme, Spleis and Vipps. In addition to these numbers we've been part of other big distributions of reusable pads, food and hygiene items with other NGOs.

Distributions through photos



PARTNERSHIPS



Challenges we faced in 2023



- As a new NGO in Lebanon we were faced by a handful of logistic and bureaucratic challenges from finding a suitable location for our women center, applying for the necessary permits, hiring a qualified staff, to establishing channels for cooperation with different NGO's. By hiring qualified trustworthy team members and emphasizing good communication we managed to get started and secure our operations in the Bekaa valley.
- Due to the economic crisis and hyperinflation in Lebanon, our budget was under strain and had to be continuously adjusted for our goals to be met and this in turn posed a challenge for our fundraising efforts. Luckily our donors were there to support us and we managed to form a fundraising team to improve our financial stability on the long run.
- The security situation in the region and the war in the south of Lebanon hampered our operations, as international volunteers became reluctant to traveling to Lebanon to take part in Circle of Wellbeing's projects. As a consequence, we postponed some of our projects till 2024 and build up our local staff to keep our center running.

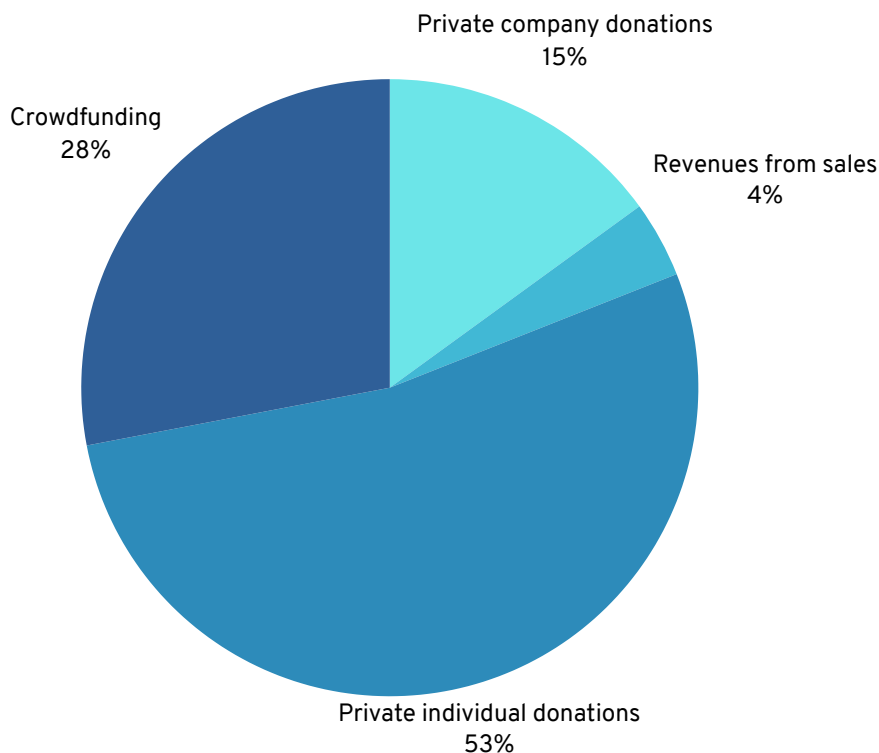
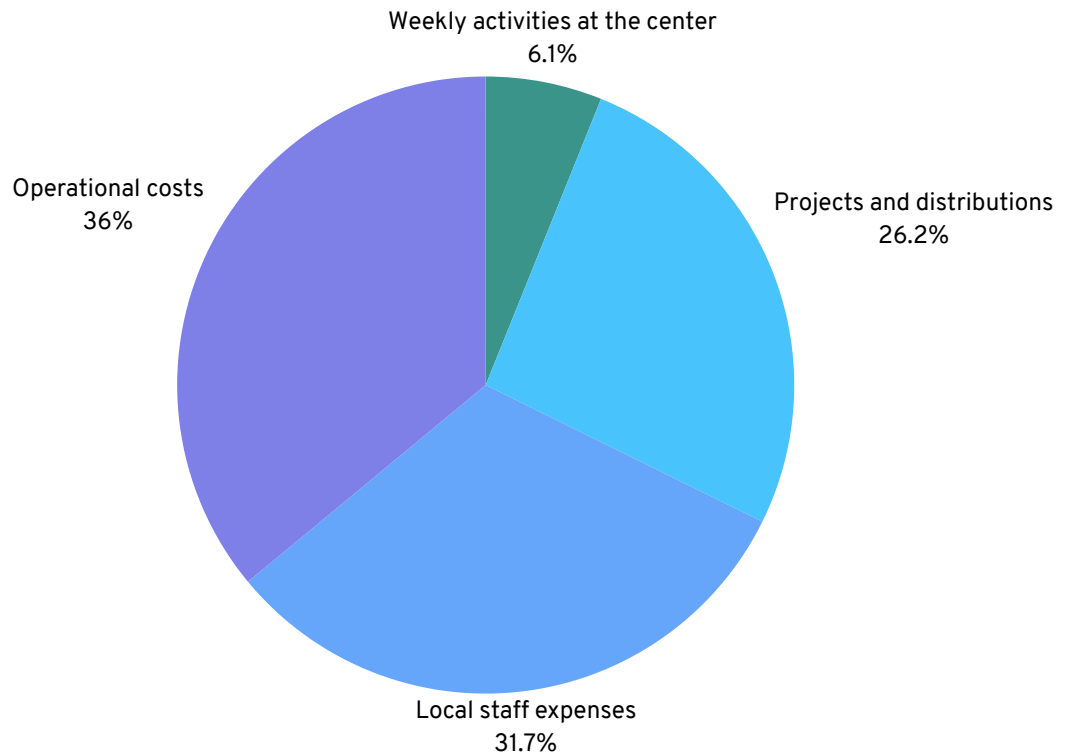


Financial Summary 2023

Total expenditure: **\$15,422**

Annual expenses

- Operational costs include rent, utilities, furniture and equipment, maintenance, fleet and transportation.
- The expenses for the weekly activities at the center include variable costs for refreshments and snacks for the attendees and material costs for art and craft sessions.
- The local staff expenses include stipends for our staff running and working at the women center.
- For a better overview of Projects and distributions check page 14.



Total income: **NOK 251,250 = \$23.691***

Sources of funding

- It is worth mentioning that in 2023 most of our funds have been private individual donations collected in Norway via VIPPS in response to our fundraising campaigns on social media.
- Some companies in Norway were very supportive of our cause, Solidaritetspotten from Svartlamon Borettslag in Trondheim for example supported us with \$2,500 for the rent of our center in the Bekaa valley.
- Crowdfunding has been carried out by our volunteers through international and Norwegian fundraising platforms like GofundMe and Spleis.
- Revenues from sales include the profits earned through sales of items created by our beneficiaries or donated to our center by Norwegian artists.

*: exchange rate according to Google search from 3.2.24



Thank For Your Support You



Contact Information



+4795013733



circleofwellbeing1@gmail.com



www.circleofwellbeing.net

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