



October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2024

## Background

In 2018, Robert Ayoub launched an initiative to support vulnerable individuals in Tripoli-El Mina, Lebanon. Although not registered under an NGO, he began by providing hot meals to those who collect recyclables from garbage bins in the area. The goal was to offer a free, homemade nutritious lunch to anyone in need.

In 2019, the organization was officially registered, *Fakir Bi Ghayrak* (meaning "Think of the Other"), under registration number 568/2019. The non-profit is governed by a board of nine members, elected annually, and currently led by Robert Ayoub. *Maidat Al Mahaba* (the soup kitchen) is one of the primary initiatives carried out by the organization.

Initially, we served around 45 people each day. However, following Lebanon's economic crisis in 2019, that number rose significantly to 185 individuals. During the COVID-19 pandemic, for health and safety reasons, we adapted our operations to provide meals for families through designated representatives, ultimately serving 500 people daily (about 130-140 families, with an average of four members per family), five days a week, throughout the year. Currently, approximately 60% of our guests are men, while 40% are women. In addition to providing meals, we also collect donated used clothes, sort and clean them, and redistribute them to members of the community as needed. No questions are asked on the door, everyone is welcome, anytime.

Our support primarily comes from donations by community members in Tripoli, with additional aid from international partners like ShuarHands and the Lebanese Food Bank. These contributions have been instrumental in keeping our doors open. While civil society frequently contributes in-kind donations, economic instability often reduces this support, occasionally forcing us to close the kitchen for short periods (2-3 weeks) until essential supplies are secured.

Currently, the war on Lebanon resulted in the displacement of families from the south, we adapted our services to meet these urgent needs by providing 500 meals daily to two schools that sheltered displaced families.

With the funds we hope to secure, we plan to acquire essential kitchen equipment, including a larger refrigerator, a bigger freezer, and expanded solar panels. These upgrades will enable us to sustain our services and expand our capacity to meet the growing need in the city, allowing us to continue serving the community without interruption and providing a reliable source of nutrition and care to those who rely on us.



*Our guests enjoying their lunch at the Soup Kitchen*



*Clothes donations and distributions*





*Donations received from the Lebanese Food Bank, distributed to our guests*



*Donations received from the Lebanese Food Bank, distributed around Christmas time*



*During the visit of Ms. Najat Rochdi, United Nations Coordinator in Lebanon*



*During the visit of Mr. Olivier de Schutter, United Nations' special rapporteur on extreme poverty, to Tripoli<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> <https://today.lorientlejour.com/article/1281078/feature-portrait-of-poverty-as-un-visits-poorest-place-on-med-.html>



Volunteers at the Soup Kitchen



*Local Scouts volunteering at the Soup Kitchen*





*Sources of livelihood of some of our guests*





*Sources of livelihood of some of our guests*





*Sources of livelihood of some of our guests*

