

# BibleLands

## Overseas Partner Fact Sheet.....

### Al Kafa'at Foundation

#### How it all started

Over 4,500 children and young adults, with varying disabilities, attend the Al Kafa'at Foundation in Beirut. The Foundation's name translates to 'Capabilities' and comes from the fact that the Foundation concentrates not on the disabilities but on the capabilities of each student.

The centre was started in 1957 by Mr Nadeem Shwayri as a catering school for destitute girls, and has now grown into a comprehensive rehabilitation complex.

Today the centre enables both disabled and disadvantaged Lebanese people of all ages and beliefs to contribute to society, following Nadeem's principle that everyone has great potential, whatever their disability.

#### Current Activities

The Cedars Capabilities Centre boasts a working team of over 800 employees, and offers a comprehensive variety of programmes across its seven separate sites:

- The Lily Shwayri Centre (named after Nadeem's wife) offers programmes and medical services for people with disabilities, including a school for children with cerebral palsy and an Early Intervention Unit, along with workshops that produce support equipment. This centre is built on the "Green Line" which divided Beirut during the civil war, and was robbed, occupied and damaged on several occasions.
- The main school is at Our Lady's Hall, where able-bodied and disabled children learn together. Programmes for those with learning disabilities or hearing impairments are run alongside.
- The Myriam Centre (named after Nadeem's daughter) provides a specialised programme for children with learning disabilities, including a section for children with Down syndrome. Here, the children are taught skills that encourage them to achieve their potential and to integrate into society.



#### Key facts

Founded: 1957  
 Location: Beirut, Lebanon  
 First Grant from BibleLands: 1967  
 BibleLands' Grant: £350,000 p.a.

- At the age of 15, beneficiaries of the Myriam Centre can move on to The Village, where sheltered employment for adults with learning difficulties and/or physical disabilities is offered. People can choose from a variety of work such as paper recycling, sewing, pottery, wood carving, cheese production or hairdressing. This centre, too, suffered damage during the civil war, due to its location on the Green Line.
- The Beit el Adra Home offers boarding facilities for up to 450 residents. This location is also the base for the centre's medical team and the location for the outpatients' clinic, with its specialised medical services.



- The first of the two vocational training centres is a catering school, with its own restaurant, which is open to the public. This centre, which is run by Nadeem's second son, Ramzi, a famous Lebanese chef, provides training for waiters and chefs, as well as providing all the catering services to the other centres. This centre provided 1,100 daily meals for refugees staying locally during the 2006 war with Israel.
- The second vocational training campus, Ain Saadeh, offers technical, practical and business training, with an emphasis on integration into employment. Students can choose from a variety of fields, such as education, care for the elderly, accounting, business management, interior design, and multimedia. It also offers a range of practical courses, such as car mechanics, carpentry, industrial sewing, electrical engineering, electronics, and beauty therapy, amongst others.

*Above left: a student at the Catering School*

*Below: beneficiaries at The Village*

Children and young adults of all faiths and nationalities are welcomed at the centre and it is one of the few places in Lebanon where Christians, Muslims and Druze live and learn together peacefully.

The centre gives a new lease of life to those who would otherwise not be able to attend school or learn how to make a living for themselves. The beneficiaries who attend know that they are safe under the loving care of the members of staff who make this work possible.



Lebanon's recent history has been deeply unsettled. Just as the country was emerging from civil war, she was plunged into renewed turmoil by the assassination of Prime Minister Hariri in 2005 and war with Israel in 2006. However, successful parliamentary elections in 2009 led to the formation of a coalition government which, it is hoped, will usher in a period of stability, unity and co-operation.

The latest news, prayer points, and other information are all available from *BibleLands*.

*Left: Al-Kafa'at Director Raif Shwayri, eldest son of founder Nadeem Shwayri*

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