

Annual Report 2015

Municipal Public Libraries of Beirut

Operation–Visitors–Activities–Events



ASSABIL| Friends of Public Libraries Association
Bachoura-Geitawi-Monot

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The Public Libraries in numbers

During 2015 the three Municipal Public Libraries offered their services to over 26,496 visitors from different ages. These services included:



More than 18,040 books were lent

373 new library subscribers

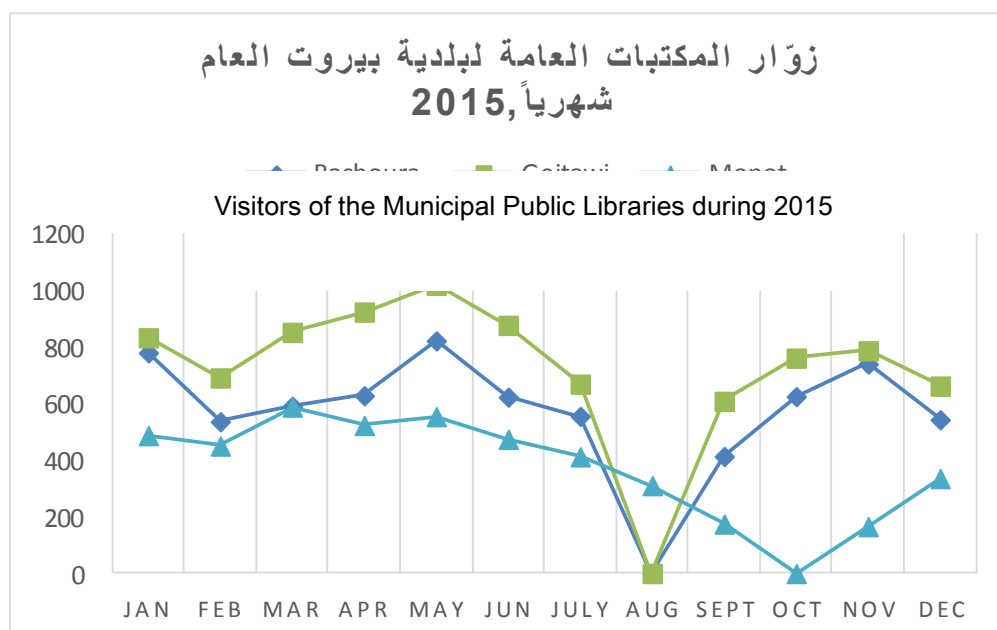
More than 30 creative & educational workshops

44774 documents, the majority of which are available for external lending

All the documents from the three Municipal Public Libraries are available via online catalogue. It's possible to search these documents through the link: Search.assabil.com

Visitors of the Public Libraries

The Public Libraries attract visitors from different ages, social and cultural backgrounds through various free activities all year long. They also serves as open spaces for reading and using the available resources, including computers and internet for research. Below is a chart that shows the variance in the number of visitors during 2015. (Please note that during August Bachoura and Geitawi Public Libraries were closed).



Public Libraries—Spaces for Learning

ASSABIL seeks to attract public schools' students in Beirut to the Public Libraries. Through the support of the Ministry of Education, ASSABIL was able to receive students during the school year to introduce them to the concept of Public Libraries and the importance of reading in building and developing their personalities, as well as widening their horizons.

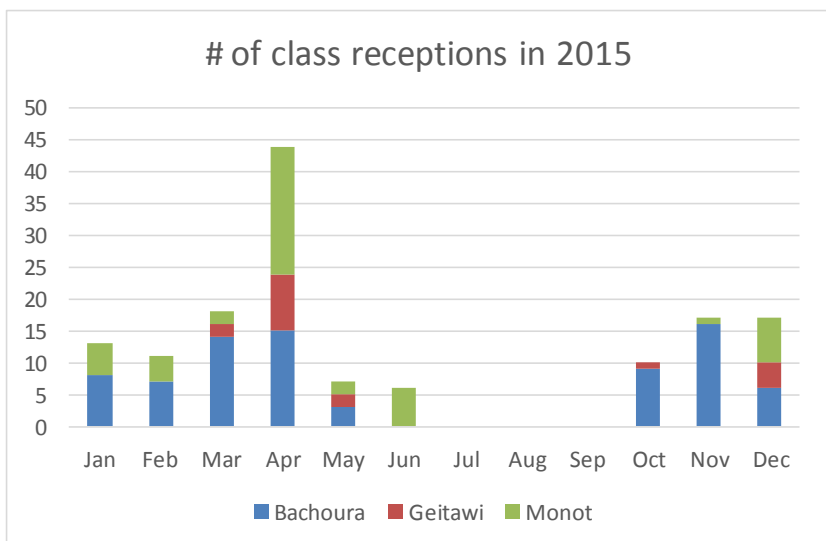


In coordination with the public schools, our librarians welcomed 2,765 students during 143 class receptions during 2015:

78 classes to the Public Library of Bachoura

18 classes to the Public Library of Geitawi

78 classes to the Public Library of Monot

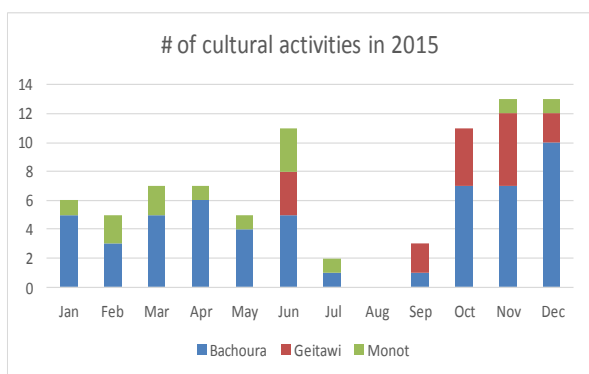
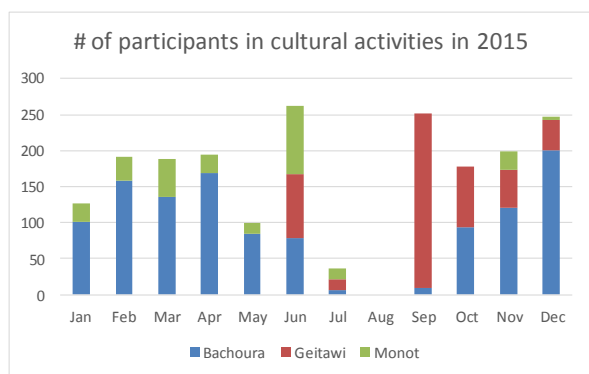


The Public Libraries—Spaces for Cultural Activities



The Municipal Public Libraries are vital and open spaces for everyone to interact and dialogue. Therefore, the cultural activities served as opportunities to promote the public libraries and attract a wider audience. Through the various cultural activities we were able to introduce the available books and resources from the three libraries. We made it our priority to exhibit and promote them in all the activities. During 2015, the

Municipal Public Libraries welcomed 3,165 people of all ages in 181 cultural activities. The cultural activities included storytelling, the book club, film club, and various discussions with authors, directors and musicians.

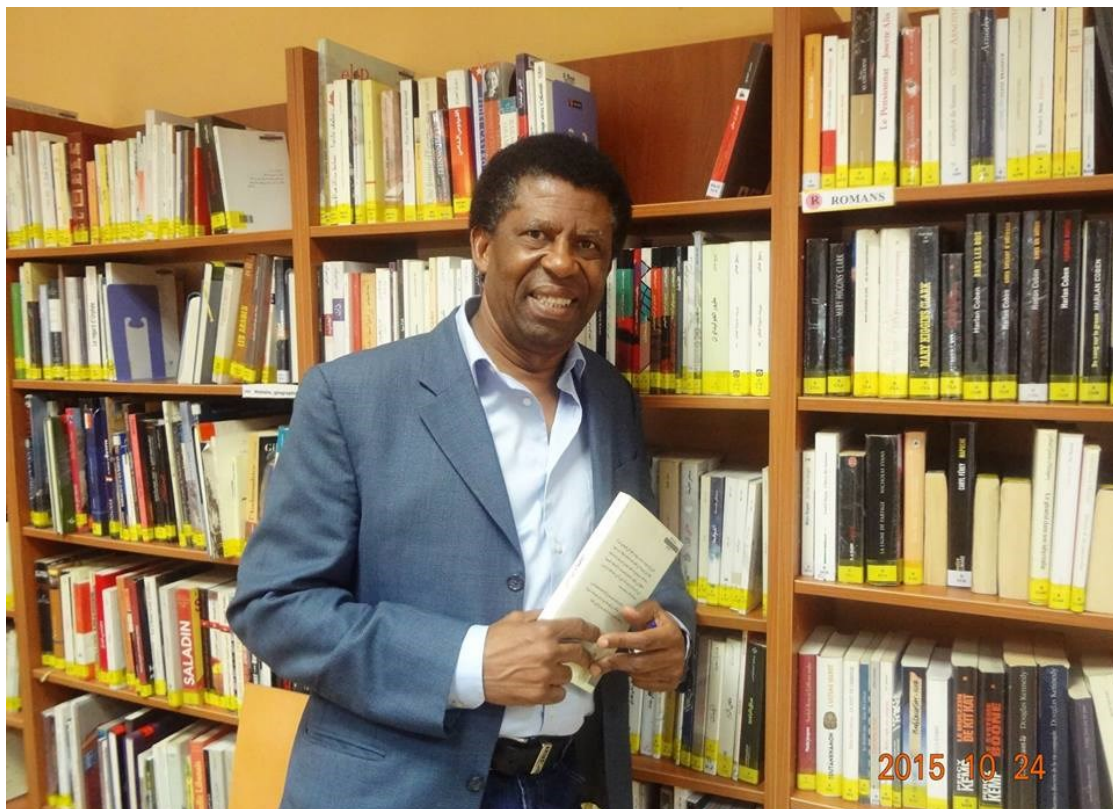


The storytelling hours are presented by professional storytellers in all three libraries are an ongoing cultural activity. In addition to reading stories in three languages (Arabic- English- French), the storytelling hour includes an arts and crafts component. The Municipal Library of Bachoura screen films for children once a month, this activity please both the children and the parents, especially those who are unable to visit the cinemas.



Storytelling Hours:
 Bachoura: Friday at 4:00pm
 Monot: Friday at 4:30pm
 Geitawi: Saturday at 11:30am

ASSABIL invites authors, artists and animators to meet children and youth. In 2015, we welcomed storytellers from Lebanon: Randa Abu Alhosn, Rana Khalil, Nassim Elwan, and Khaled Na'na'. Also we welcomed the Algerian storyteller Mahi Sadiq, the Congolese storytellers Juros Mabyla, Hassana Furjo, Samah Idriss, Fatima Sharafeddine, Samar Mahfouz Barraaj, Bassam Rbeiz, Ali Sabbagh, Sarah Atallah, Cathy Khattar, and Amina Saghir. And also the French author and poet Pierre Parlant and the author Eva Cozma, Mona Yaqazan, Sinan Hallak, and Eliana Younes. The Lebanese poet Salim Alaadine. Also the children enjoyed their time with the animators: Nada Abboudi, Sofie Eddeh, and Les Amis des Marionnettes.



During 2015, the Municipal Public Libraries organized discussions with authors about their latest releases. These authors included the French Academy Member Dany Laferrière, Girard Bejabi, Christian Taoutel, John Lambert, Azza Shrara Baydoun, Iskandar Najjar, Salma Koujk, Zeina Kayyali, and Nazek Saba Yared.

Music Appreciation

The Municipal Public Libraries periodically organizes activities honoring Arabic and World Music. Every first Monday of the month in the Municipal Library of Bachoura, the Musical Critic and Historian Mr. Elias Sahhab is invited to share his insight. These meetings highlight the lives and works of famous musicians, artists and composers from the golden era of Arabic music:

*Heritage of the late artists Wadih Assafi, Zaki Nassif and Tawfiq Basha
Falyfel Brothers' Music • Magnificent songs of Farid Alatrash
Alakhtal Assaghir's poems sang and composed by Mohamed Abdulwahhab
Oum Kalthoum in her late stages • Farouz songs composed by Zaki Nassif
"Taqatiq" of the golden era of Mohamed Abdulwahhab
Fayrouz songs composed by Mohamed Abdulwahhab*



Every last Friday of the month in the Municipal Library of Monot invites composer Mrs. Joelle Khoury is invited to share her insights regarding the Western Classical Music :

*Duke Ellington, the most recorded jazz composer & band leader
Robert Schumann and Romanticism
Dmitri Shostakovich: Lady Macbeth extracts from the film
Igor Stravinsky: Histoire de Soldat, film discussion
Bela Bartok: The Miraculous Mandarin...When scandal & music mingle
BB King of the Blues
The Hippies and the 3: Joplin, Hendrix & Morrison
Joelle Khoury presents her journey as a composer
Christmas music as seen by 20th century composers with Rita Mahfouz*

ASSABIL Clubs

Cinema Club

In order to ensure the spread of films we collaborate with Nadi Li Kol Alnas once in a month in the Municipal Public Library of Bachoura to host a film screening for films screened in festivals, or films that are not screened enough on TV. The library also gives the directors a space to discuss their films with the public.



During 2015, we screened the following films:

My Father is Still a Communist, by Ahmad Ghossein
Bitter Day, Sweet Day, by Khairy Bchara
Guevara Died in Lebanon, by Christina Forch Saab
Beirut, the Generation of War, by John Chamoun and Mai Almassri
The Three Disappearances of Souad Hosni, by Rania Estfan
Wadih Assafi Remembered, by Marcel Jabbour
Yezidis of Iraq - Genocide number 73, by Nabila Ghossein
I'm Blue, by Mohamed Nour Ahmad
Lebanon's Electricity - When the Darkness Comes, by Cynthia Shokeir

Book Club

The Arabic book club started at the Municipal Library of Bachoura in March 2014. The club gathers passionate readers every month to choose and discuss a book. During 2015, the club discussed:

Story Heritage by Nissma Joelly • *Grasses Nights* by Patrick Modiano
Jamila by Chinghiz Aitmatov • *Londonstan Virgins* by Hanan Elsheikh
Ebola 76 by Amir Taj Assir • *With Borges* by Alberto Manguel
Azazil by Youssef Zeidan • *The Beaver* by Mohamed Alwan
The Laughter Stone by Houda Barakat

With great excitement the French Book Club was launched again in January 2016.

Chess Club

The Municipal Library of Bachoura launched a chess club for teenagers with volunteer trainers from Bank Audi. This activity attracted a new audience from the neighborhood. Bank Audi offered all the needed equipment for the club.



Within the framework of cooperating with Bank Audi the Library of Bachoura initiated to open its doors every first Sunday of the month. This step gave more people a chance to benefit from the services on their day off. Starting from November 2013, the volunteers from Bank Audi started to offer their services which were welcomed by the visitors, especially the “Virtual Traveling” activity that introduce various countries and their cultures.

Workshops for Librarians and Children



ASSABIL organizes workshops for adults and children to strengthen the role of the Public Libraries in developing individual skills. These workshops take place in the three Municipal Public Libraries in Bachoura, Geitwai and Monot, as well as the Mobile Library – Kotobus, and other partner public libraries.

Librarians continue offering computer literacy classes to any interested visitors.

The partnership between ASSABIL and Welfare Association (also known as Taawon – Lebanon), which supervises 7 public libraries in the Palestinian refugee camps, continues for the third year on the row. This partnership with Welfare Association is funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. In this framework our Kotobus team organized 6 visits monthly to the Palestinian camps and gatherings. Also ASSABIL offered all the needed consultancy to further develop the services of the 7 Public Libraries supervised by Welfare, including trainings, furniture and books purchase, and employment criteria.

ASSABIL's Projects during 2015

On 28 February, 2015 ASSABIL launched the “*Public Libraries Promoting Mutual Understanding between Syrian & Lebanese Communities*” project, funded by the Canadian Embassy. This project included 7 creative workshops with 7 participating public libraries: Municipal Public Libraries of Bachoura, Geitwai and Monot, Nahr Ibrahim Library, ASSABIL's mobile library, and the public libraries in Beddawi and Nahr El Bared refugee camps administrated by Welfare



Association. Through this project ASSABIL aimed to include Syrian children in the activities of the public libraries, and to foster an environment of tolerance between the Lebanese and Palestinian children. At the final event, the participating children performed the skills they learned in the creative workshops (puppet show, photography, dabke, choral, drums, hand crafts, and drawing). The event took place at the Municipal Library of Bachoura, in the presence of the Canadian Ambassador Michelle Cameron, the representative of the Ministry of Culture Dr. Imad Hashim, in addition to the librarians and the families.



Also in February, ASSABIL launched its “*Developing Multimedia Activities in the Network of Public Libraries in Lebanon*” project funded by the European Union in the Collectif de bibliothécaires et d'intervenants en action culturelle (COBIAC) and the

Lebanese Ministry of Culture, with two introductory workshops by trainer Cyril Balzay. 24 librarians from 20 public libraries around Lebanon participated in the workshops entitled “*Teenagers and Multimedia*”. Librarians worked with groups of youth in each public library. And the libraries worked in pairs with basic materials to produce 16 films. These films were mainly filmed by mobile phones and with basic editing. The final event took place on 29 November 2015 in Monot Theatre, during which all 16 of the films were screened in front of EU representatives, the librarians, and the children's friends and families.

ASSABIL celebrated the National Reading Week from 20-30 April, by organizing over 40 activities in the three Municipal Public Libraries. Around 1,000 persons from all ages attended these activities. The week included activities for all ages: discussions with writers and artists, storytelling sessions, puppet shows, films screenings, music nights, a book



fair, and readings from Ethiopian books about peace and homeland. Also there was a round table discussion about using the non-formal language in children's books, facilitated by Mrs. Najla Juraisaty Khoury. The week was sponsored by the Governor of Beirut, Judge Ziad Shbib, represented by his Public Relations Manager Maha Malki. The week was closed by honoring the best reader in 2015, animators and writers who participated in ASSABIL's activities. The closing event was sponsored and attended by the Minister of Culture, Roni Arajy and the Municipality's representative Bushra Itani.



ASSABIL launched "*Mobile Library Service for Vulnerable Populations*" project in August 2015; this project is funded by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), managed by Country Based Pooled Fund (CBPF). The project aimed to offer the assistance to approximately 15 public schools and non formal education centers through monthly visits from ASSABIL's mobile library and its team of experienced librarians and animators. The librarians and animators are responsible for promoting reading and implement activities that integrate with the services offered by these institutions.

Arabic Language Week

ASSABIL organized an entire week of activities for the Arabic Language Week for the second year in a row between 15th and 20th of December. This week aimed to exhibit the beauty of the language through calligraphy, letters, riddles, popular stories, etc.

At the end of the week Mrs. Nazik Saba Yared was honored for her accomplishments in literature and education, as well as her passion and dedication to teaching the Arabic Language. Yared was honored in a ceremony opened by a speech from our board member Dr. Maud Estfan, who assured that honoring pioneers will be a yearly tradition. Also there were testimonies from Fadia Hoteit, member of Researchers Coalition, and the writer Samar Mahfouz Barraaj. Finally a discussion took place between Mrs. Yared and students from Sobhi Mahmasani Public High School, who presented readings from her books.

