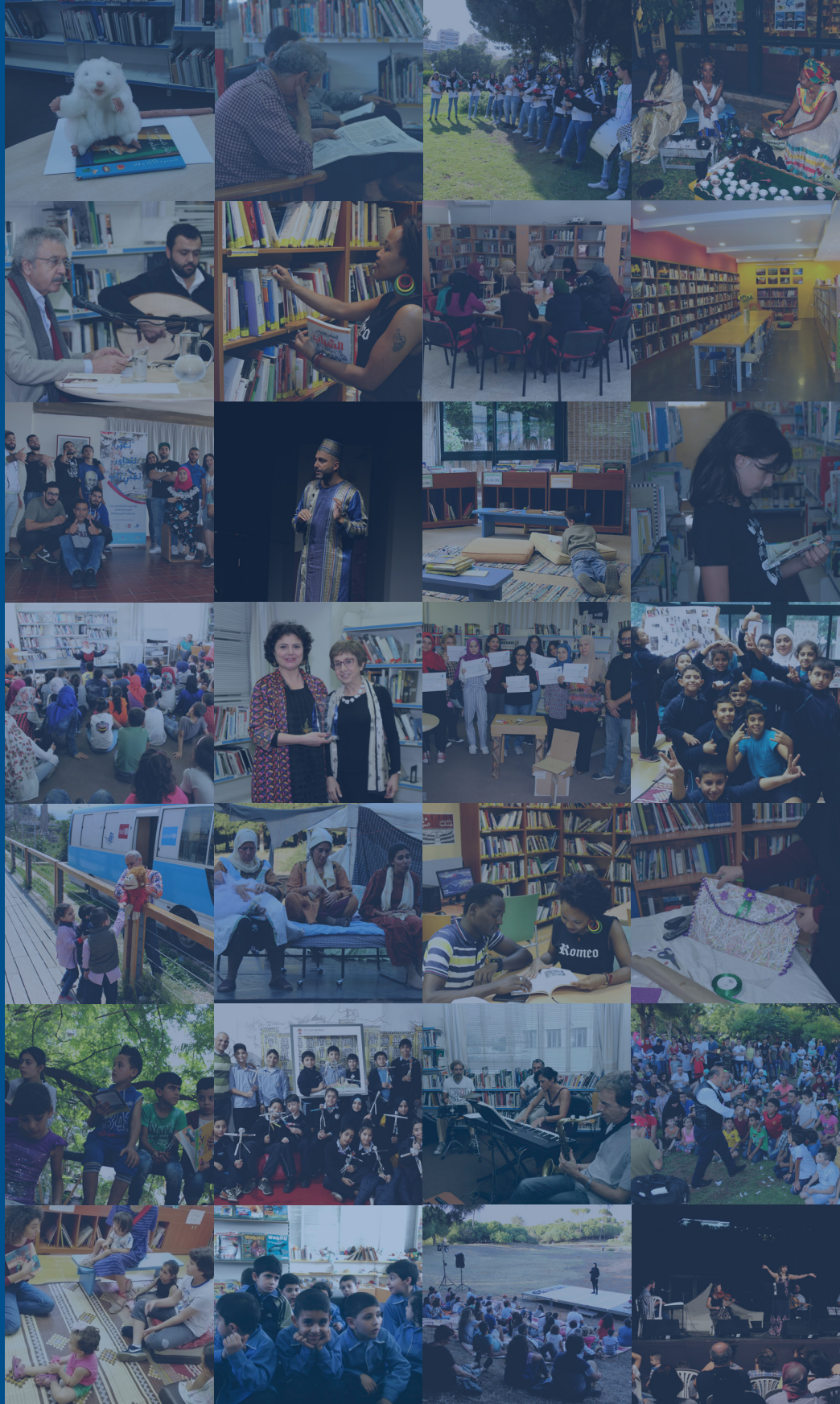


ANNUAL REPORT 2018



MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

2018 was a pivotal year for ASSABIL, both for the association itself and for the various activities it organizes. In 2018, we committed ourselves to restructuring our activities in light of the objectives we have set ourselves over the years, our accumulated experience, and recent transformations in the social, cultural, and technological environments, in order to develop a strategy for the next five years.

This was also an opportunity for those of us involved with ASSABIL to share our vision for the association, our experiences, and also our reflections about the values that guide the association: freedom of thought and expression, diversity and inclusion, active citizenship, human rights, and promoting the cultural participation of everyone.

It was beneficial for the association as well since it enabled us to clarify its objectives and better define its priorities. Our foremost priority is to ensure that everyone has access to culture and to information and knowledge. Reading and other cultural activities promote individual development. Libraries are important public spaces where groups can meet, a place of integration and sharing, where active citizenship and freedom of speech can be exercised.

This conception of the role of ASSABIL is not new, but it was implicit and expressed only indirectly in the multiple activities and projects that the association has organized to date. It is now explicit thereby enabling us to better position the association and define a plan of action for the years to come.

ASSABIL's projects and activities currently focus on social integration within libraries, on citizen action in local communities, and on a long-term advocacy campaign geared toward the involvement and commitment of local public authorities and the development of a sustainable public cultural policy. We continue to promote free and creative expression and the sharing of experiences and cultural practices as we have done in the past and in a way that is appropriate to the Lebanese context.

Maud Stephan
President of the Board

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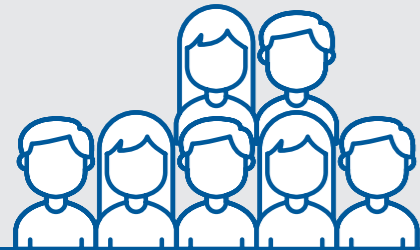
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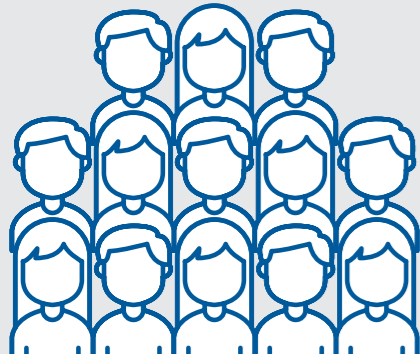
I come to the library every day, it is so-to-say my “daily bread”; a place where I rest. I first read the newspaper, then I visit some websites and facebook. I knew about the library from Josiane, the librarian, and because I live in the neighborhood

Library User
Retired architect from Geitawi

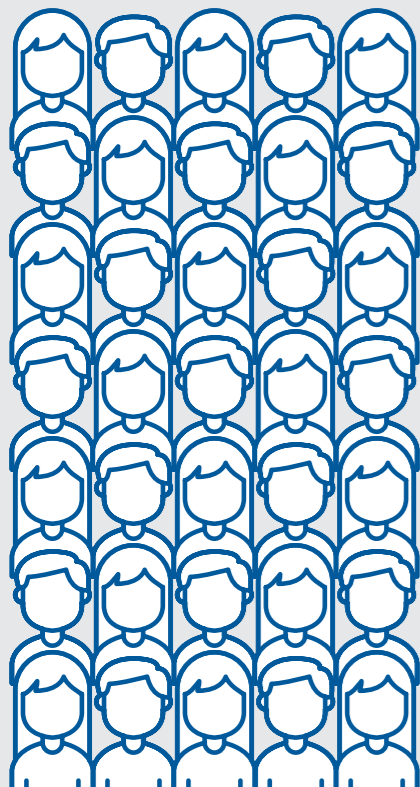




7 board members



13 full-time & part-time employees



35 members of General Assembly

ASSABIL AT A GLANCE

Our Vision

ASSABIL envisions an inclusive world where culture and knowledge promote individual development and social transformation.

Our Mission

As a non-sectarian NGO, we facilitate cultural participation and knowledge-sharing through public libraries and public spaces. We promote reading, unlock imaginations, and nurture critical thinking thereby promoting the development of well-informed communities.

We develop capacities, strengthen networks, and share expertise with public libraries, cultural actors, and educational institutions throughout Lebanon. We also organize inclusive programming to ensure that all individuals are afforded access to knowledge and to encourage their active participation in society.

Our Objectives

Through the creation and operation of public libraries, ASSABIL seeks to contribute to the development of a well-informed and engaged citizenry and the formation of a secular and inclusive society in Lebanon.

Our activities fall within these areas:

Creating & Operating Public Libraries

Reading Promotion

Cultural Participation

Community Outreach

Capacity-building

Advocacy & Lobbying



The public libraries operated by ASSABIL are special places where authors can meet their public. By the quality of their writing, they contribute to enrich the Arabic language, make it appreciated and loved and contribute to develop the love of reading in the young generation.

*Maud Stephan from Beirut
President of ASSABIL*





OUR LIBRARIES IN 2018

ASSABIL is commissioned by the Municipality of Beirut to manage and operate the municipal public libraries in the neighborhoods of Bachoura, Geitawi and Monnot. We also operate a mobile library – the Kotobus – visiting public schools and child care centers in marginalized areas, including the Palestinian Camps.

Visitors



26,000 visits to Beirut's Municipal Public Libraries



95 visits per day on average



49% of visitors are female

Subscribers

ASSABIL witnessed 441 new subscribers in 2018



15% Children



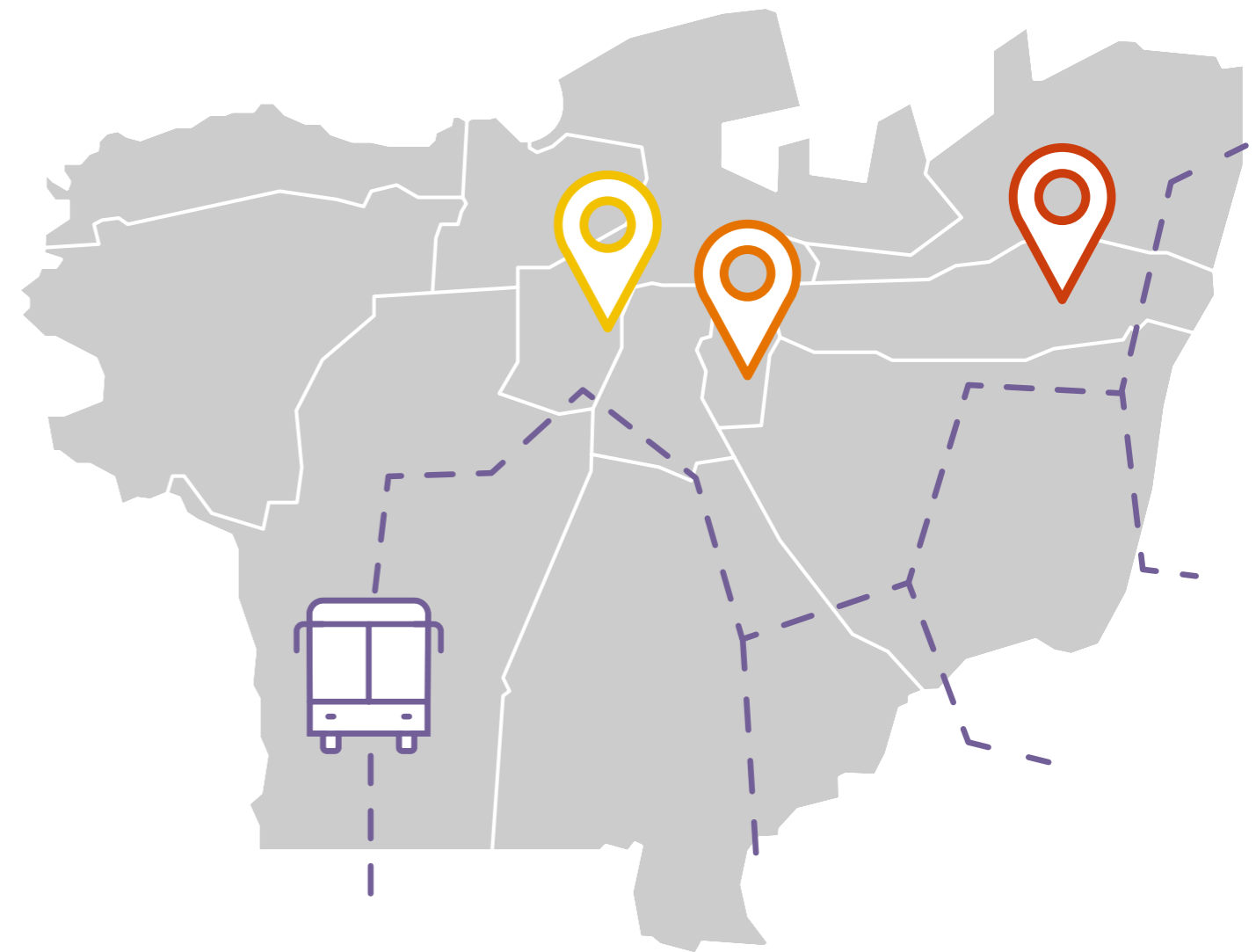
24% Youth



61% Adults



70% Women



Bachoura

17,800 titles
Opened in 2000
11,000 visitors

Monnot

7,800 titles
Opened in 2004
9,400 visitors

Geitawi

8,300 titles
Opened in 2008
5,600 visitors

Kotobus

Mobile library
4,000 titles
On the road since 2008

Introducing digital reading:

Thanks to the CMA CGM Foundation obtained in 2018, ASSABIL will be able to add digital reading devices to the libraries' collections. Starting in 2019, library users will be able to read and borrow e-books and access e-learning tools and educational games.



5,907 visits to online catalogue
21,741 pages viewed



19,584 books & documents borrowed



37,100 documents in catalogue



READING PROMOTION

Working with Marginalized Children

Our libraries and mobile library regularly welcome pupils from public and semi-private schools, as well as childcare and educational centers in Palestinian camps. Our activities focus on sparking a love of reading in students and raising awareness about different topics and problems in society. In fall 2018 our class reception program focused on the topic of "living together."

4,349 pupils

Reading is Fun

Promoting a love of reading is one of the primary goals of our library programs. Our activities include weekly storytelling sessions, an intensive program during National Reading Week, during which visitors and school students get the chance to meet various authors and illustrators in person as well as monthly book clubs in Arabic and French.

**1,942 children
261 adults**

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Engaging the Community & Improving Social Cohesion

Public libraries as shared community spaces are at the center of our efforts to create bridges and linkages between different population groups and strengthen social cohesion. Our initiatives in 2018 included creative workshops around recyclables funded by the Fund for Local Initiatives / Canadian Embassy, and community events featuring different cultures and traditions from various groups living together in Lebanon, funded by the Heinrich Boell Stiftung.

**402 community event participants
64 workshops participants**

Public Libraries for Active Citizenship

In 2018 ASSABIL launched a new program promoting active citizenship and encouraging youth and women to appropriate their neighborhoods libraries and surrounding public spaces. During this two-year project, we are bringing together and building the capacities of community groups to implement joint initiatives in the Bachoura, Geitawi, and Monnot neighborhoods.

**> 20 civil society organizations invited
46 participants**

CULTURAL PARTICIPATION

Encouraging Free Creative Expression

Offering free creative workshops for all is one of the primary ways that we promote cultural participation. In 2018 Antoine Boulad facilitated regular creative writing workshops throughout Beirut. In Summer 2018, ASSABIL organized a one-week Rap workshop for young artists with rapper Osloob followed by concerts and creative writing workshops for youth at various libraries.

80 participants

A Varied Program of Cultural Activities

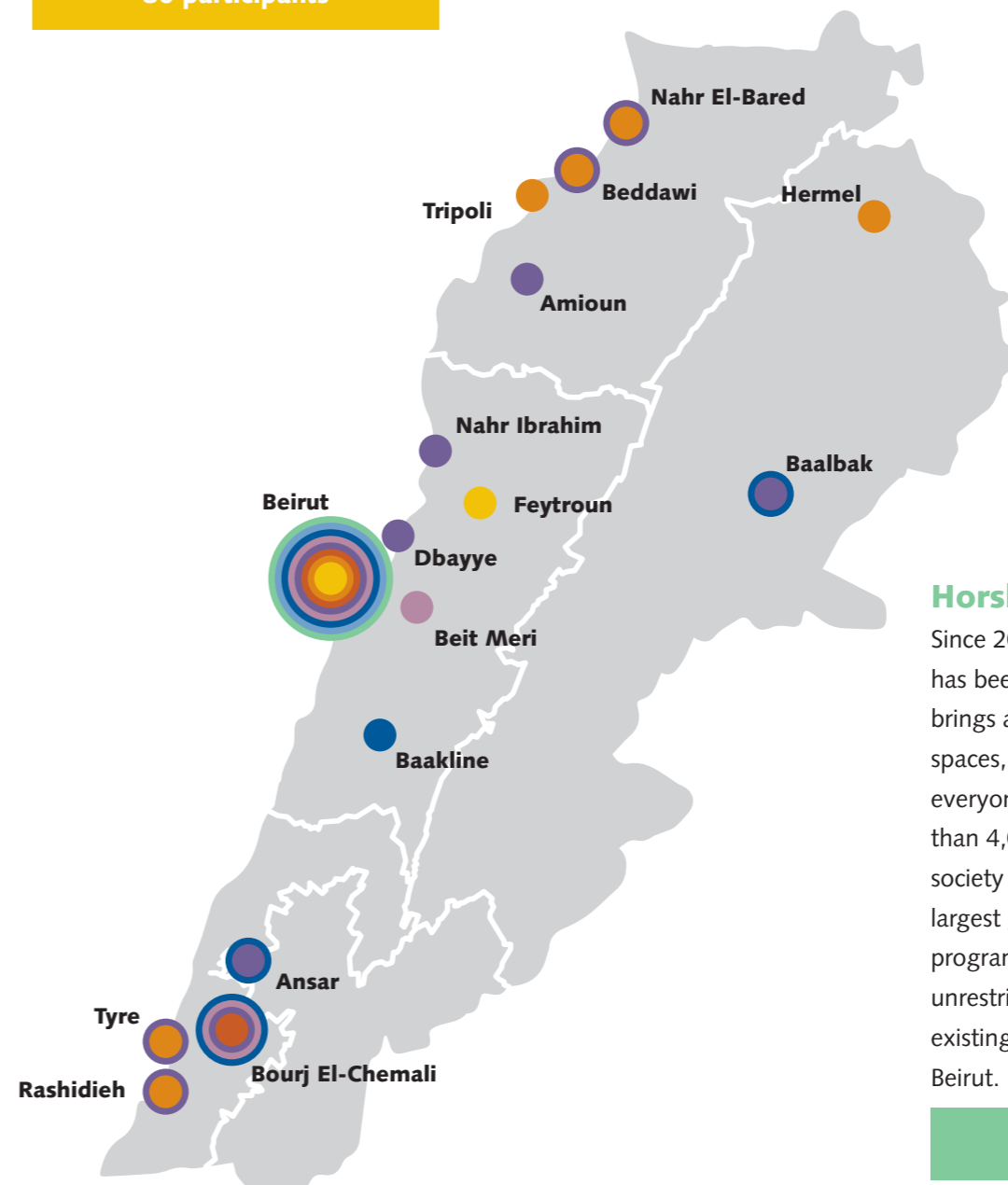
The municipal public libraries of Beirut organize weekly cultural activities that are open to everyone and free of charge. In cooperation with local partner institutions and experts, we organize regular screenings of Lebanese movies, musical evenings, debates and meetings with authors, concerts and roundtables, etc.

1,293 attendees

Hakawati Festival

2018 was the first celebration of what we hope will become an annual Arabic folktale festival. It was organized in cooperation with Taawon and Dar el-Nimr and with participation of several public libraries in Lebanon. Aiming to revive and promote the traditional Arabic art of storytelling, the festival featured roundtables and performances by local and Arab artists.

1,600 participants



Horsh Beirut Festival

Since 2011, the Horsh Beirut Festival has been the occasion when ASSABIL brings art and culture to public spaces, open and freely accessible to everyone. Bringing together more than 4,000 participants and civil society organizations in the city's largest green space to enjoy a varied program is our way to lobby for the unrestricted opening and free use of existing parks and public spaces in Beirut.

4,000 participants

CAPACITY-BUILDING AND ADVOCACY

Training Programs

Building the capacity of library professionals throughout Lebanon is one of the primary goals of ASSABIL. In 2018 we offered 3 trainings targeting library professionals as well as storytellers:

Two-day training on Inclusive Cultural Programming for Public Libraries with trainer Zeina Daccache (12 librarians; 10 women, 2 men), funded by Heinrich Boell Stiftung

One-day training on Hands-on activities with books on the topic of "living together" with trainer Nada Abboudi (11 librarians; 10 women, 1 men), funded by Heinrich Boell Stiftung

Five-day training for up-and-coming storytellers: Art of Hakawati, Body Language and Vocals, with trainers Jihad Darwich, Naji Sourati, and Khaled Al-Abdallah (11 storytellers; 3 men, 8 women), funded by Taawon and Kamel Lazaar Foundation

Expertise for Municipalities

In 2018 ASSABIL was approached by the municipalities of Chiah and Ghobeiry (in the southern suburbs of Beirut) and asked to provide expertise and assist in setting up their new municipal libraries. ASSABIL also reached out to other interested municipalities at the Exchange Workshop for Actors of Local Development organized by United Cities of Lebanon/Technical Office of Lebanese Municipalities on September 17 and 18 at the Municipality of Sin El-Fil.

Promoting Arabic Youth Literature

In cooperation with the Boghossian Foundation, ASSABIL awards the Boghossian/ASSABIL Prize for Children Literature to Lebanese publishers and authors of Arabic youth literature. In 2018, the jury recognized Nassim Alwan and Mohamad Ismail for their manuscripts Hashtag Namrud and Thaer.

Representing Public Libraries At Beirut's International Book Fairs



Trainer Jihad Darwich has greatly contributed to my development as a storyteller. The Folktales Festival and the training workshop I attended this year have opened additional horizons for me and enabled me to get to where I am now: sharing my stories in Europe during the coming summer with the support of Taawon and ASSABIL. Thanks to the regular trainings and workshops in recent years, many storytellers are now able to earn additional income with their newly-gained skills and to travel to places they've never visited before.

*Khaled Nana
Storyteller from Beirut*

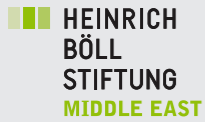




MUNICIPALITE DE BEYROUTH
بلدية بيروت



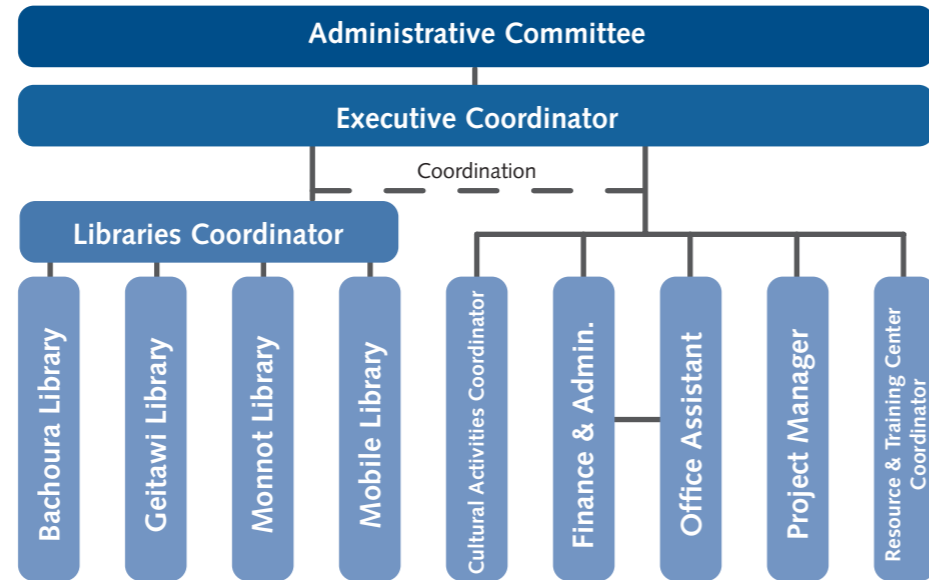
وزارة الثقافة
Ministère de la Culture



Prince Claus Fund for
Culture and Development

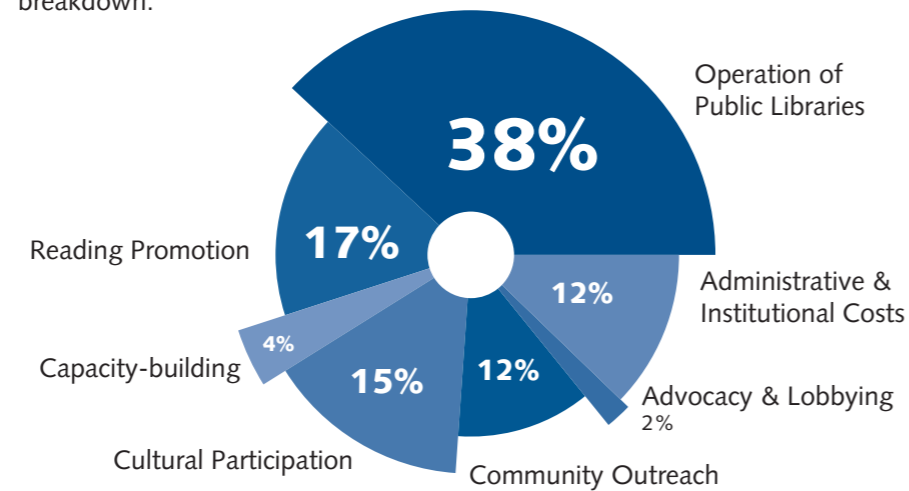


ORGANIZATION AND FINANCES



Annual Budget

The total annual budget of 2018 was 440,000 USD. The following is the breakdown:



Funding Partners

Boghossian Foundation, CMA CGM Foundation, Fund for Local Initiatives/ Canadian Embassy, Heinrich Boell Stiftung, Institut Francais, Kamel Lazaar Foundation, Ministry of Culture, Municipality of Beirut, Secours Catholique – Caritas France, Selat Program supported by Qattan Foundation and the Prince Claus Fund, Taawon.

Operative Partners

Goethe Institut, Nadi Iekol Nas.



My kids and us look forward to come to the Horsh every year. The atmosphere of this festival is so joyful and relaxed. It is great to see this park filled with people and activities. My daughter loves the clowns and puppet shows, my son is happy playing in the Kotobus and the whole family has a great time enjoying the evening concerts.

Anne



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