

The Edith M Ellis 1985 Charitable Trust

The Free Shop

#SDBDVV8DPJ submitted on 20 November 2023

1.1 Please summarise what you are seeking from us

This project is led by Syrian refugees, founded by British aid workers, and benefits Palestinian, Syrian and Lebanese families living under the poverty line. We are seeking funds to provide training, buy food ingredients, menstrual health products and some rent our free shop space which has been open since 2021. We are asking your help to strengthen communities in the Bekaa Valley, Lebanon, and assist families who also urgently need humanitarian relief support.

1.2 Tell us more about your project, the impact it will have on those it aims to help, and why you consider the proposed approach to be innovative

This work is centered around three smaller projects:

- The Free Shop is a physical space where people browse and "buy" clothes, shoes, bedding, hygiene items, toys and more with freedom of choice. This results in families gaining aid with dignity.
- Menstrual health awareness is our training and distribution of sustainable menstrual pads to women and girls. They take back control over their periods with confidence.
- Individual case work is giving tailored support as per our grants policy. This might be paying medical bills, giving a food pack, new heater, or fixing a home after a flood.

The impact

- We empower locally-based solutions. We are trusted by local families in need because we are community-led by refugees. We work in Arabic and truly understand families' needs.
- We build a community. Our team brings together families from different countries in the same space, helping them to see and understand similarities between each other and reducing inter-cultural tensions.
- We are low cost, high impact as we only spend £65,000 a year and support 3,100 families. That's a huge 24,000 individuals. For less than £3, every person gets 4-5 items of aid each.
- Families have freedom of choice and gain items they truly need. They enjoy "shopping" with us and this improves their mental health. We stock a huge range of items, from toothpaste to welly boots to big duvets and kids clothes. New underwear, menstrual pads, shampoo and much much more. We also give all families free return transport in our tuk tuk.
- We give women and girls long-term menstrual support. In the last 12 months, we've given over 5,000 women and girls sustainable menstrual products with training. This is thanks to our consistent, weekly work. They can use and wash these pads for up to 5 years!
- We save lives through responding to floods, fires, distributing food packs and taking on medical cases. We are adaptable and can respond quickly. We are well-known in the area and give and receive beneficiary referrals. We also crowdfund in emergency situations.

The innovation

We are inspired by the community-based approach, and even as 4 British founders who would enjoy doing this work ourselves, we have handed the key project work over to Syrian refugees so that they can lead changes in their own community. Our innovation comes from the hosted community being the source of aid for the hosts. In other areas of Lebanon, Syrian refugees lie completely reliant on Lebanese aid and charities to live, yet in our charity the Syrians are stepping up and assisting Lebanese families who have fallen into great poverty in recent years. Lebanese volunteers also join our work, alongside Palestinian and Kurds too. We have built a real community in a region where tension often reigns. We are also innovative through our use of technology. Even though four of our team do

not speak English, two never had a job before and all six never owned a computer before, our team is using technology in smart ways, guided and supported by the UK trustees. We use an open-source web-app to track all of our warehouse stock, ship containers of aid from the UK (we have sent 5 so far), safely store beneficiary details and collect data of distributed aid items and services. Through harnessing technology our team become very smart, and are able to plan upcoming distributions, reach out to more invisible families and gain the trust of large partners even as a small charity.

1.3 Which grant-giving categories does your project fulfil?

B - Peace-building and conflict resolution

E - Work with forced migrants, including internally displaced people

1.3b Peace-building and conflict resolution

We bring together refugees and host communities in the same physical space. We host health awareness sessions that bring together women of different background who face similar challenges. We build a space for dialogue between Lebanese, Syrian and Palestinian families which is otherwise hard to find.

1.3e Work with forced migrants, including internally displaced people

We assist a huge number of Lebanese families who live in Syrian tented settlements: they moved out of their homes because rent in tents is much cheaper. In October 2023 assisted 180 families from south Lebanon who fled due to danger on the border with Israel. We offer working opportunities for migrants so they can help others as well as themselves.

1.4 Which country is the project based in?

Lebanon (LB)

1.5 Will the project continue after initial funding has ended?

Yes

1.5b Please give details of how you plan to continue after initial funding has ended

We are currently working on a project period reaching until end of 2025. We will continue thanks to core funding (salaries and rent only) from Choose Love. Yet we must find all project costs ourselves. The motivation from our team to continue is very strong, and so is the need in the community. We also gain donations from the UK from the public, sell t-shirts to raise funds and gain in-kind in donations to save money.

1.6 How will the project be monitored and evaluated?

We have three different questionnaires which families complete, depending on if they visited our free shop, gained menstrual health training, or received emergency support from us. We review this feedback every six months, and make project developments accordingly.

We also collect quantified data, and class success as;

Reaching 24,000 individual people each year

Distributing an average 5,000 items of aid per month

Spending an average £3 per person supported

And more.

2.1 Expenditure

EXPENDITURE ITEM	AMOUNT	NOTES
Stipends and living costs	£25,000	Six full-time team members including transport
Rent of spaces	£7,000	One shop space, three warehouses
Administration	£3,000	Technology used to collect data, store

		beneficiary details, lawyer, phone costs
Purchases (clothing, underwear, shoes, personal hygiene items, menstrual health products)	£30,000	100% direct aid for vulnerable families
Food purchases + heating fuel to distribute	£18,000	100% direct aid for vulnerable families
Paying medical bills	£4,000	100% direct aid for vulnerable families
TOTALS	£87,000	

2.2 Income

INCOME SOURCE	TARGET AMOUNT	AMOUNT RAISED	NOTES
Choose Love	£40,000	£4,000	year 3
Crowdfunding - income from general public	£22,000	£4,000	ongoing
EleanorRathboneCharitable Trust	£2,000	£2,000	
Travers Smith Foundation	£2,000	£2,000	
UNHCR - refugee-led innovation programme	£31,000	£0	Answer 2024. Restricted to new food project - funding dependent.
Stichting Haella	£4,000	£0	Women's health project. Answer 2024
TOTALS	£101,000	£12,000	

2.3 What is the total amount (in £ sterling) your organisation is requesting from The Edith M Ellis Trust?

£4,500

2.4 Has your organisation made an application to The Edith M Ellis Trust before?

No

2.5 Please state your organisation's annual turnover (in £ sterling)

£105,000

2.6 Do you wish to upload your audited accounts or financial statement?

No

2.7 Please tell us where payment should be made if your application is successful

The Free Shop
24126580
231470

3.1 Your name

Alice Corrigan

3.2 Your contact telephone number

00447208522050

3.3 Your position within the organisation

Trustee, co-founder

3.4 Your email address

operations@thefreeshoplebanon.org

3.5 Organisation name

The Free Shop

3.6 Please state the status of your organisation

UK CIO 119436. Please note our year 2 annual accounts are in progress.

3.7 Please summarise what your organisation does

We empower community-building in the Bekaa Valley Lebanon, by bringing together refugees and Lebanese families who are all in need of humanitarian support. We build safe and healthy spaces, especially for children. We host a clothing and material aid store where everything is free, health awareness sessions for women and girls, and respond in emergencies to deliver food, pay medical bills, evacuate families and distribute heating fuel in winter.

3.8 UK correspondence address for organisation

7 Carline Road

Lincoln

LN1 1HL

3.9 UK telephone number

00447308522050

3.10 UK charity number (if applicable)

1194346

3.11 Year established

2021

3.12 Website (if applicable)

<https://thefreeshopl.org/>

3.13 Social media accounts (if applicable)

<https://www.instagram.com/thefreeshoplebanon/>

<https://www.facebook.com/thefreeshoplebanon/>

4.1 How did you hear about The Edith M Ellis Trust?

Directory of Social Change/Funds Online

Directory of Quaker & Quaker-related grant-making trusts