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Section 1: About Us

1.1 Our Mission

Insan Association is an independent, non-profit human rights organization serving marginalized individuals in Lebanon, most of whom are refugees, asylum seekers, migrant workers, stateless individuals and their children. Insan pursues its mission using a holistic approach that includes offering educational, legal, and psycho-social services, as well as running an advocacy and research department.

1.2 Our Approach

Insan believes that respect for human rights can create lasting changes in people’s lives and allow them to reach their full potential, by addressing the causes of poverty and injustice.

We offer a variety of services to our beneficiaries, ranging from education and life skills training to social, psychological, and legal support. These departments complement and facilitate each other, ensuring that beneficiaries’ needs are being addressed from all sides. Insan takes a holistic approach, working with the entire family – both children and parents – to help improve their situation. These services are tailored to individuals’ and families’ specific needs.

Our team of social workers use the outreach model, including home visits, to assess the situation and define beneficiaries’ needs. Beneficiaries do not need to make their way to Insan’s center to ask for assistance, which might be difficult for them.

1.3 Our Beneficiaries

Most of Insan’s beneficiaries are migrant workers, refugees, asylum seekers, and Lebanese who lack ID papers. Members of these groups are often deprived of their basic rights due to severe poverty, lack of legal status, isolation, racism, and discrimination.

Insan works with all individuals, making no distinctions concerning their race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, religion, socioeconomic status, political affiliation, or other affiliations. Beneficiaries come from a wide range of nationalities, cultures, and religious and social backgrounds. Among our beneficiaries are Iraqis, Egyptians, Jordanians, Syrians, Kurdish Syrians, Filipinos, Ethiopians, Indians, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, Nepalese, Sri Lankans, Sudanese, Nigerians, Ghanaians, Cameroonian, Malagasy, Togolese, Kenyans, Guineans, Mauritians, Burkinabe, and Ivorians, as well as Lebanese who are not registered as citizens with the government, and lack ID papers.
Countries of origin of Insan’s beneficiaries

We work towards the realization of the following rights for all people:

- The right of every person to liberty and security, as stated in Article 2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- The right to be free from arbitrary arrest and detention, to receive a fair trial and to be treated with humanity during detention, as stated in Articles 9 and 10 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.
- The right of every person to be equal before the law and to be entitled to equal protection and against any discrimination, as stated in Article 7 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- The right to be registered after birth and to acquire a nationality, as stated in Article 24 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.
- The right to alternative care and protection, as mentioned in Article 20 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- The right to play, to have recreational activities, and to participate in cultural and artistic life, as in Article 31 of the Convention of the Rights of the Child.
- The right of every child to have, without any discrimination, such measures of protection as are required by his status as a minor, on the part of his family, society and the state, as stipulated in Article 24 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.
1.4 Our Partners

To achieve our goals, Insan Association has partnered with a wide variety of organizations, including: Open Society Foundations, Christian Aid, The Global Fund for Children, Fondazione Giovanni Pado II, Schools for Syria, the Norwegian Refugee Council, the Danish Refugee Council, Terre des Hommes International Federation, AECID, the Swiss Embassy in Lebanon, the Norwegian Embassy in Lebanon, Fondation Resonnance, the Philippe Hatem Foundation, Petits Freres de Jesus, CIELO, AIDA, Les Amis du Liban, Delegation Catholique pour la Cooperation, Cooperation International, Australian Volunteers International, the International Labour Organization, Universite La Sagesse, College des Freres Unis, College Protestant Francais, Samsung, One World, Wise Foundation, Sesam, Global Giving and Stars Foundation, the Principality of Monaco, the Arab Network for Migrants’ Rights, the Migrant Domestic Workers Coordination Consortium (MDWCC), the Destination Unknown Campaign, and the International Detention Coalition. Insan also participates in a number of networks, including the Arab Network for Migrants’ Rights, Migrant Forum in Asia, the Migrant Domestic Workers Coordination Consortium (MDWCC), the Destination Unknown Campaign, and the International Detention Coalition.

1.5 Our History

Throughout the years, Insan’s programs for the most underprivileged communities in Lebanon have been adapted and expanded based on beneficiaries’ needs. Through its close contact with the communities, Insan is always directly informed of the situation and problems of the people we care for. Today we can be confident in saying that we provide access to nearly all services that are demanded by our beneficiaries – either by Insan directly, or by a network of partner organizations.

1998: Our first efforts

A group of human rights activists working with Amnesty International in Lebanon became aware of the precarious and vulnerable situation that many refugees and migrants face in this country. The specific case of a Sudanese family touched them deeply and convinced them to take concrete actions. From its beginnings in 1998 until the year 2003, Insan organized summer school programs for children of refugees who had no access to education because of their lack of legal papers. The summer school opened its doors for two months every summer, and welcomed up to 150 children each year. This program continues today. In addition, language courses and workshops about hygiene and health issues were organized for adults. Each year three sessions took place, including between 15-20 adults each time.

2004: Establishment and consolidation of our core activities

In 2004 Insan started its first regular educational program, Insan School, which today is at the heart of Insan’s activities. Since then, hundreds of children between the ages of 4 and 17 have received education at the school. From the start, Insan was conscious of the fact that these
children needed more than just education. Accordingly, Insan’s social workers provided support and guidance to the children and their families. In the past decade, Insan’s team of social workers have assisted individuals by assessing their needs and helping them to deal with the daily challenges they face.

The often unstable environment in which children of refugees and migrants grow up can be a great risk for them. As a result, in 2005 Insan created Insan House, a temporary shelter where children can stay until they can safely return to their families.

In 2006, Insan launched an integration program, following up with the students who had attended Insan School and helping them to integrate into the Lebanese school system or a vocational training center.

2008: Extension and diversification of our programs

In 2008 Insan began offering psycho-social support services after realizing that there is an immense need for psychological support among beneficiaries. Between 2008 and 2012, more than 900 individuals, both children and adults, received psychological assistance in the form of individual or group sessions.

Insan also began offering legal advice and counselling services in 2008, since many beneficiaries do not have legal residence status in Lebanon. Individuals receive support in regularizing their legal situation, and refugees detained for illegally entering or staying in Lebanon have also received support.

In 2009 Insan launched a program for street children, to give them an alternative to selling goods or begging in the streets of Beirut. Every year, a group of 30 to 50 children benefit every day from basic education and recreational activities conducted at Insan. The same year, Insan also started a recreational program for children from the neighborhood. The “Ludoteque” (a games library) has so far welcomed 350 children to come and play at Insan twice a week. Furthermore, in 2010 music, art and theatre classes were offered to the children at Insan School and from outside. The “Insan School of Arts” provided 68 children over the course of one school year with intensive and professional art classes in music, theatre and crafts.

2012: Forming a new pillar

Insan Association has always been engaged in raising awareness and advocating for the rights of its beneficiaries through organizing conferences and awareness sessions on crucial human rights issues. Since 2010 Insan has started to expand these activities by creating an advocacy strategy and declaring advocacy as one of its three main pillars. An advocacy campaign was launched, with the goal of raising awareness among the Lebanese public of the situation faced by migrant domestic workers and their children. To spread this information, Insan has taken part in nationwide and international awareness-raising campaigns, organized conferences, distributed brochures and reports, and been active on social media networks.
2014: Further developments

The previous two years have seen big developments for Insan. In September 2013, the Insan School moved from Sin el-Fil to a building in Sid el-Bouchrieh, which was renovated and converted into a building appropriate for schoolchildren.

The makeup of the school’s student body has changed markedly as well. In 2014, the Islamic State group’s advance in northern Iraq displaced thousands of Iraqi Christians and other religious minorities, many of whom have since moved to Beirut. Since then, Iraqi refugees have made up the majority of Insan School’s students.

In the 2014-15 school year, the Insan School added a new class for 9-to-11-year-olds, aimed at helping them integrate into Lebanese schools. Unfortunately, few Insan School students were able to integrate in 2014, because of a government decision forbidding non-Lebanese from enrolling in public schools.

Meanwhile, advocacy for the rights of migrant workers and other vulnerable groups continues to form a central pillar of Insan’s work. From 2012 onwards, Insan has been developing the research base of its work. In the past two years, Insan conducted two large research projects, whose findings have been used to set Insan’s advocacy agenda and to lobby decision-makers for legal and regulatory changes.

Furthermore, Insan has developed a new, case-centered approach to advocacy. This approach centers around advocating and raising awareness on existing cases, with the aim of sensitizing the general public and decision-makers and positively influencing outcomes. In parallel, Insan has also been working on building partnerships with the public and private sector to improve protection and coordinate responses to human rights violations.

Insan’s social work programme has also developed over the past few years. Our approach to social work relies on patience and empathy, an essential ingredient that helps us to enter the experiences of other people and better understand them. Insan’s long experience in this field has enabled its social work programme to become more flexible, effective, and productive in recent years. Insan has also recently begun coordinating with the Philippines’ embassy in Lebanon, and has been working with domestic workers living at the embassy’s shelter.

1.6 Organizational Structure
1.7 Our Location

The Insan School is located in Sid el Bouchrieh, in the eastern suburbs of Beirut. This area is home to many migrant workers and refugees, and Insan School’s location helps us to be more aware of the issues faced by our beneficiaries.

Insan Association’s back office is located in Ashrafieh, next to the Alexandre Hotel, near Sassine Square.
Section 2: Educational Programs

Insan offers schooling and other types of support to underprivileged children who are neglected by society and suffer from discrimination, extreme poverty or the lack of legal papers. In addition to education, Insan also provides psycho-social support to children and their families, as part of its holistic approach. Insan pays special attention to girls to ensure that they have access to education, one of their fundamental rights.

2.1 Insan School

Insan School is a transitional education program aiming to meet the needs of refugee and migrant children, as well as Lebanese children without identity documents, who are unable or unprepared to enrol in a Lebanese public school. In 2014, 93 children were enrolled in Insan School, which is located in Sid al-Bauchrie in the eastern suburbs of Beirut. This neighbourhood is home to a large number of migrant workers and refugees.

The aim of the school is to help children integrate into society and empower them to pursue further education at a Lebanese school. When combined with psycho-social support to children and their families, the Insan School program helps to overcome the educational inequalities between children from different nationalities in Lebanon.

Children at the Insan School come from a diverse range of backgrounds. Most are the children of migrant domestic workers, the children of refugees (mostly from Iraq and Syria), or the children of unregistered migrants. These children’s inability or unpreparedness to enrol in Lebanese public schools is often the result of poverty, discrimination, lack of psychosocial adjustment, insufficient knowledge of Arabic or English, or the lack of appropriate documentation.

Since its founding, Insan School has worked with hundreds of disadvantaged children from ages four to 17, with a focus on girls. In 2014, 54% of the school’s students were female, and Insan planned to boost this to 60% in 2015. Insan School provides its students with quality education, psychosocial support, and the skills needed to integrate into the Lebanese public school system.

In recent years, Insan School has faced an increased
demand for enrolment as a result of the Syrian and Iraqi refugee crises, and the Lebanese Ministry of Education’s subsequent decision to limit the enrolment of non-Lebanese students in the public school system.

Insan School is also used as a community center and as a site for workshops, conferences, cultural and social events for children, adults and families. Beneficiaries and friends as well as everyone living in the neighborhood are invited to take part and contribute to build community spirit. The center is also available to underprivileged communities in need of a space to organize their own meetings and events.

2.2 Summer School

Our annual summer school program, one of our core activities since Insan was founded, offers educational and extracurricular activities. In 2014, 36 children participated in the summer school program, which is held at the Insan School in Sid al-Bouchrieh.

Playing at Insan’s summer school program

2.3 Integration Program

Integrating marginalized children into Lebanese society is one of our main priorities. We work towards this goal by organizing activities outside of the Insan School, exposing its students to Lebanese society through a wide variety of activities. In 2014, 250 youth were involved in the integration program.
After finishing the Insan School program, Insan Association provides financial, moral and psycho-social support to help them enrol in regular schools in Lebanon. Insan then follows up with the students and supports them according to their needs, helping them to succeed in their classes.

2.4 Tutoring Program

Insan’s tutoring program supports former Insan School students who are now enrolled in regular schools, in order to help them with their homework and further assist in their educational development. In 2014, 43 youth benefited from the tutoring program.
Section 3: Protection Programs

Insan’s beneficiaries come from marginalized groups, and suffer from a wide range of needs. To address these needs, Insan offers a variety of services and programs including social, psychological, and legal support. Regular case management meetings ensure that the Insan team is properly responding to the needs of the beneficiaries, and that feedback and reporting on their interventions are well-documented.

3.1 Psycho-Social Support

Needy families are visited by social workers and psychologists as part of Insan’s Psycho-Social Support Program, to assess the family’s psychological, health, social, and economic needs, and to guide them to services offering the appropriate support. In 2014, 347 individuals benefited from these services.

3.2 Legal Assistance

The Legal Counseling Program is dedicated to serving migrants, refugees, stateless people and Lebanese nationals whose rights have been violated, and who lack the resources to hire legal assistance themselves. These beneficiaries are helped on a case-by-case basis, depending on their needs. In 2014, Insan provided legal assistance to 186 people.

3.3 Mediation Services

In addition to legal assistance, Insan also offers mediation services to resolve disputes between employers and employees, especially domestic workers and their employers. Mediation is often a quicker and more cost-effective solution than taking a case to the legal system. In 2014, Insan provided mediation services to 161 people.

3.4 Insan House

Insan House is a temporary shelter that has been operated by Insan since 2005. The shelter offers children who have been abused or are at risk of being abused a safe place to stay until they can return to their families. The children stay at the shelter based on protection orders given to Insan by the juvenile court system. In 2014, eight children lived at Insan House.
Section 4: Advocacy and Research

Insan’s Advocacy and Research Department runs awareness and advocacy campaigns supporting the rights of domestic migrant workers in Lebanon, as well as the rights of refugees and children. It also conducts research projects on subjects relating to human rights in Lebanon, and aims to influence and change the systems that deny people their human rights.

Migrant domestic workers are a particularly vulnerable population whose rights are systematically violated in Lebanon. The sponsorship or kafala system that operates in Lebanon requires all domestic workers to be sponsored by their employer. This frequently leads to human rights abuses, as employers often interpret their “responsibility” to sponsor a domestic worker as meaning that they have ownership of the worker in Lebanon. Insan’s position is that the reform of the kafala system will provide domestic workers more individual freedoms, afford them more dignity, and grant them greater legal protection.

To achieve its goals, Insan actively seeks out opportunities to influence key decision-makers within Lebanese society. We believe that awareness-raising activities are a fundamental first step in shifting attitudes, fostering behavioral changes, and creating political will. Insan’s awareness-raising activities are directed at the general public, decision-makers, and beneficiaries themselves.

Insan has coordinated and contributed to several national campaigns intended to engage the Lebanese public in a discussion regarding the unjust nature of the kafala system. For example, in February 2012, a national campaign called "Fi Shi Ghalat" was organized in collaboration with other NGOs to raise awareness of the negative consequences of the current kafala system for both employers and migrant domestic workers.


“Unprotected Childhood” is the first report to study child protection risks among migrants in Lebanon
Section 5: Special Events

In addition to Insan’s regular programs, we also participated in several campaigns, activities, festivals, and book launches in 2014. Read more below about what we did last year:

February-May: Voice Behind the Voice campaign

Insan’s “Voice Behind the Voice” campaign aimed to involve youth in our struggle to respect human rights in Lebanon. Youth were invited to design T-shirts with messages supporting migrant domestic workers’ rights, with cash prizes for the best and second-best designs. The T-shirts’ messages were supposed to touch on issues pertaining to migrant domestic workers’ rights.

During the campaign, which ran from February 10 to May 1, Insan held a special meeting with migrant domestic workers and students. Students listened to the testimony of migrant domestic workers to get a better idea about their situation and the difficulties they face in everyday life.

In all, 20 T-shirt designs were submitted, and 70 people attended the event. The winning design was chosen at Insan’s annual fashion show (see below), in which migrant domestic workers modeled the designs, along with other items.

May: “Celebrating Colors” Fashion Show

To celebrate Workers’ Day on May 1, Insan Association held its second annual fashion show to support migrant domestic workers’ rights. Held at Yukunkun Club in Gemmayzeh, domestic workers as well as Lebanese and non-Lebanese friends of Insan modeled the latest fashion trends, wearing clothes made by Lebanese designers and by migrant workers themselves.

On June 27, under the patronage and presence of H.E. the Minister of Labor Mr. Sejaan Azzi, Insan Association launched its book entitled “The Kafala System: When Employers Shared Their Perspective,” at a press conference at the Rotana Hotel in Hazmieh.

The book explored employers’ and migrant domestic workers’ perspectives on the kafala system and potential alternatives to it.

In addition to Minister Azzi, the panel at the press conference consisted of Judge Rita Ghantous, a representative of the ministry of justice; Mrs. Gemma Justo, a representative of migrant domestic workers; Mrs. Myra Abdullah, a representative of employers; and staff from Insan Association. Mr. Charles Nasrallah, director of Insan Association, emphasized the importance of passing legislation on domestic work, which would reinforce the rule of law in Lebanon.

October: International Labour Organization Technical Working Level Meeting, New York

Insan Association participated in a panel discussion held by the International Labour Organization’s Global Migration Group in New York City on October 16-17. The event was a Technical Working Level Meeting focusing on aspirations for migrants and migration after 2015, when the deadline for the Millennium Development Goals expires. Insan was invited as experts in the field to share our experiences on incorporating migration into national development strategies.

November: Beirut Marathon

Insan, along with a number of domestic migrant workers and other Lebanese NGOs, participated in the annual Beirut Marathon to raise awareness of domestic workers’ rights.
December: International Migrants Day

Insan took part in celebrating and organizing activities for International Migrants Day. This included a party featuring speeches, music, and dancing at Nasawiya Café in Beirut.

December: Launch of the report “Unprotected Childhood”

Under the patronage of H.E. the Minister of Social Affairs, Mr. Rashid Derbas, Insan Association organized a launch of its report entitled “Unprotected Childhood: The Experiences of Lebanese and Non-Lebanese Children in Abuse, Maltreatment & Discrimination in Lebanon.”

The report explored child abuse, maltreatment, and parental disciplinary approaches among Lebanese children, documented children of migrants, and undocumented children of migrants. This was the first report to focus on child protection risks among migrants in Lebanon.

December: Christmas at Insan School

A Christmas celebration with the children at Insan School was organized by the students of the Collège Protestant Français.
Additionally, Insan Association participated in several exhibitions throughout 2014: the American University of Beirut Civic and Volunteering Fair (April), the Lebanese American University NGO Exhibition (May), Universite Saint-Joseph Political Science Institute’s NGO Day (November), and Universite Saint-Joseph Medical Campus’ International Volunteer Day (December).