



ANNUAL REPORT
2020

**A good start in life for the deaf ...
for a better future**

Dr. Hussein Ismail
Director



The Learning Center for the Deaf (LCD)

Baabda - Lebanon

The Annual Report 2020

Prepared by Hussein Ismail, Ed.D.
Director

Mission Statement

The LCD is a non-profit Charitable Service Organization, non-secretarian, and non-governmental Association established to promote, facilitate, and empower Deaf men and women through education throughout Lebanon.

Motto of the LCD

“

*Do for others as
you would like them to do for you*

Matthew 7:12

”



The Annual Report 2020

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Learning Center for the Deaf مركز التعلم للصم

1. The Mission Statement of the LCD

The purpose of the “Learning Center for the Deaf” (LCD), which is a non-profit, non-political, and non-sectarian association, located in Baabda-Brasilia, Lebanon, is to provide quality services to respond to the urgent needs of deaf persons in Lebanon, with emphasis on education, in its broad meaning, as a tool for change and advancement of the deaf community.

The team (management and teachers) of the LCD fervently believes in the empowerment of the Deaf in general, including the family of the deaf person, and reaches out to the world of the hearing with information that helps spread awareness about deafness and how to deal with the deaf.

Therefore the LCD has initiated challenging services and programs which were not available in the country before, in order to complement the existing programs and provide better possibilities and opportunities for the Deaf and their family members.

The LCD today presents many important services to the deaf community in relation to the Disabled Persons Law 2000/220 and Advocacy, to the development of Lebanese Sign Language, and other services. These were added to the two major and unique programs which were consecutively initiated by the LCD in 2001 and 2003, being the family based Early Intervention Program and the High School Program. The High School aims at providing the deaf young people the choice of passing the official Baccalaureate (High School) exams and heading to University, like their hearing peers. The Early Intervention Program which is a rich comprehensive program prior to school-age, is a stepping stone that empowers the family and provides them the tools to surround the child with a rich environment supportive to his/her general development, with a greater emphasis on language. This stepping stone preeminently determines the quality of the future life of many Deaf children.

For the further details of the LCD's programs and activities, please go to the website page: www.lcd-lebanon.org

and for the continuous updated information, please visit to our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/Learning.Center.Deaf.Lebanon

2. The Programs Offered at the LCD

To respond the needs of the Deaf, there are programs offered at the LCD, which are incorporating as follows:

1. The Early Intervention Program (birth to six years), which assists families of deaf children from babyhood, to prevent delay in development and mainly language, and especially to restore the relationship between the child and parents, as well as to empower the family to provide the child a healthy, nurturing and loving environment.

Other components of the Early Intervention Program are incorporated as follows:

- a. the **Support Group** for parents of deaf children
- b. the **Course** related to deafness for parents of deaf children
- c. the **Integrated Nursery** for deaf and hearing children
- d. the **Resource Room** for parents, students, and professionals
- e. the **John Tracy Clinic** sequential lessons for parents of deaf children

2. The High School Education for the Deaf, which provides the only secondary program in Lebanon, and allows the deaf to have the same right to enter University of their choice, thus promoting the image of the Deaf.

3. The Preschool Section (3 to six years), which is a regular school setting from KG 1 till KG 3, in preparation to enter the first grade level. This program that has been initiated beginning of October 2017 incorporate for deaf and hearing children.

4. Educational Activities for the Deaf, which designs to promote adult deaf people to learn and improve specific subject matters, such as English language and computer literacy, as well as socialization and a chance to empower the deaf. Also, Sign Language courses for all interested concerned are provided in this program.

5. Technical School for the Deaf (New Program), which provides technical education such as accounting, computer sciences (graphic designs, AutoCAD, Architecture, etc.) allowing the deaf to have a choice other than academic education. This program lasts for 3 years and leading for Baccalaureate Technique issued by the Lebanese Ministry of Education.

6. Advocacy, which involves in pursuing with the stakeholders to provide the minimum rights of Deaf persons across different domains.

7. Awareness programs about deafness and deaf people, which has as an objective to promote the image of deaf people incorporates activities through media, brochures, and books. Activities in regular nursery settings as well as activities in school and university settings (experiment, telling a story interacting with a deaf puppet and introducing a deaf adult teaching some signs) are provided.

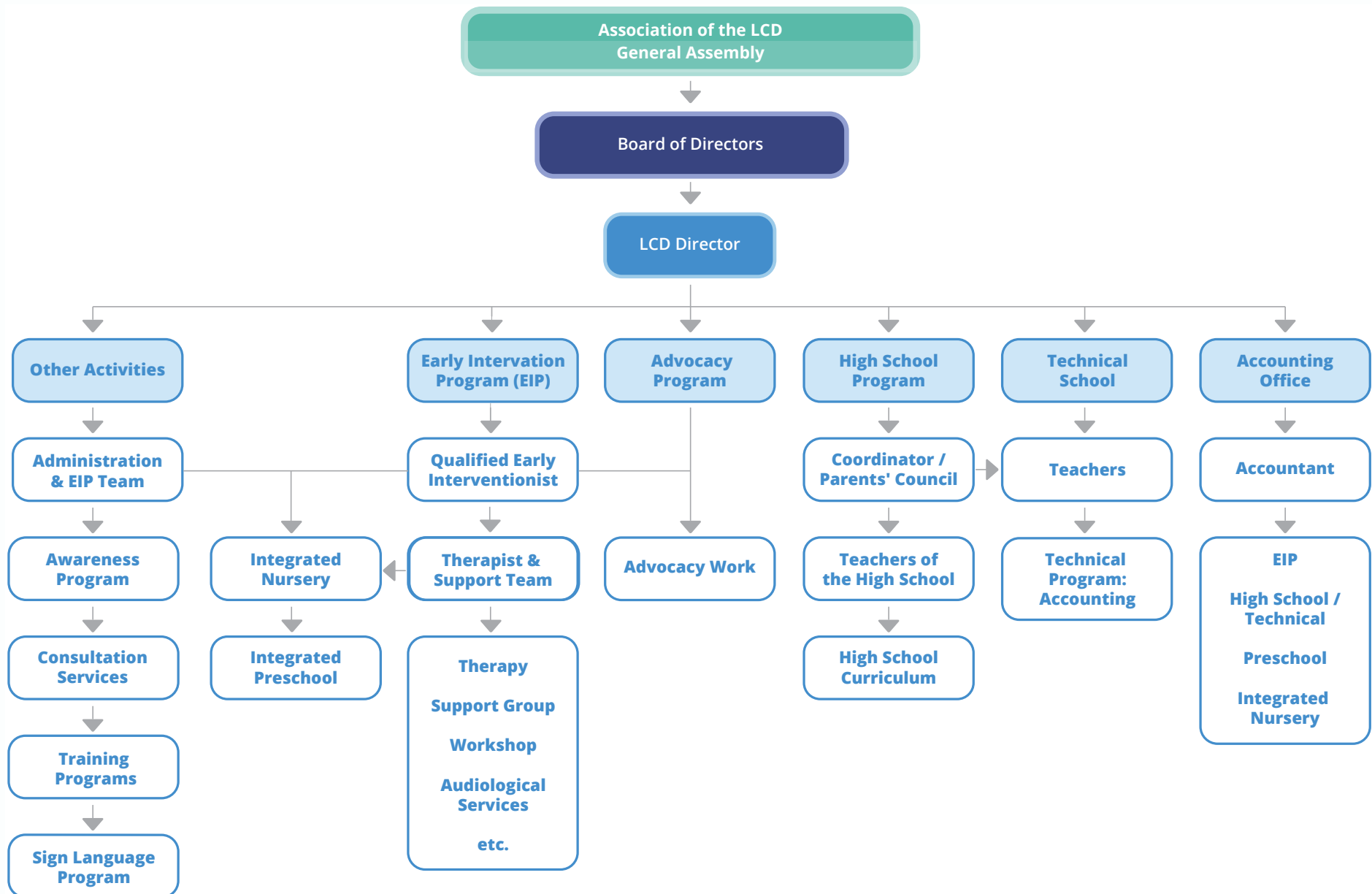
8. Consultation, which provides consultations and advice for families of deaf children, as well as to deaf adults.

9. Sign Language Courses, which provide courses for teachers of the deaf, specialists, students of the universities, interested persons, among others, mainly for communication access for deaf persons.

3. The Basic Data about the LCD

Name	The Learning Center for the Deaf (LCD)
Date established	January 2002
Legal status	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Charity Registration Number: AD 89, established 2002 with the Lebanese Government 2. Presidential Decree No.: 15798, established 2005 3. License # 2/294, 2020 (the Integrated Nursery)
Visiting address	Sacre Coeur Hospital Crossing, Presidential Palace Road, Near Evangelical Church, Brasilia – Baabda
Contact person	Hussein Ismail, Ed.D. <i>Director</i>
Telephone numbers	00961-3-700584 / 00961-5-954584
Fax number	00961-5-954584
E-mail address	lcd@lcd-lebanon.org
Website	www.lcd-lebanon.org
Facebook	www.facebook.com/Learning.Center.Deaf.Lebanon
Type of organization	The LCD is a non-profit Charitable Service Organization, non-secretarian, and non-governmental association established to promote, facilitate, and empower Deaf men and women through education throughout Lebanon
LCD's Motto	<p>Based on the Lord Jesus's essential statement:</p> <p><i>"Do for others what you would like them to do for you".</i> Matthew 7:12</p>
Main areas of activity	Education, Rehabilitation, Consultations, and Advocacy

4. The Organization Chart of the Learning Center for the Deaf (LCD)



5. The Structure of the Learning Center for the Deaf (2020)

Board of Administration

Chairman of the Board	Ms. Caroline Haykal (deaf)
Treasurer	Ms. Najah El Hamad (deaf)
Secretary	Dr. Hussein Ismail (deaf)
Accountant	Dr. Raed Mohsen
Members of the Board	Mrs. Charlotte Khalil Mr. Habib Fawaz (deaf) Mrs. Nadine Badreddine

Staff List

1. Director / Instructor	Dr. Hussein Ismail (deaf)
2. Head of the Early Intervention Program	Mrs. Nadine Badreddine
3. Accountant / Auditing Office	Mr. Antoine Faddoul
4. Office Manager / Secretary	Mrs. Arzeh Lteif
5. Speech Therapist / Early Interventionist	Ms. Wafa Nawar
6. Assistant Early Interventionist	Mrs. Karine Momdjian
7. Occupational Therapist	Ms. Hiba Saad
8. Domestic Helper / House Father	Mr. Elias Bou Mansour (deaf)
9. Nursery Teacher for Deaf Children	Mrs. Waddad Daher
10. Nursery Teacher Assistant Teacher	Mrs. Josephine Momdjian
11. Nursery Teacher	Ms. Cosette Melko
12. Preschool Teacher – English	Mrs. Sarine Simonian
13. Preschool Teacher – Arabic	Mrs. Darine Nakour
14. Preschool Assistant Teacher	Mrs. Roula Jammous
15. Preschool Teacher	Mrs. Carole Ayoub (deaf)
16. Specialist/Teacher for the Deaf	Ms. Hanna Tahan
17. Cook	Mrs. Sabine Nakour
18. Biology & Chemistry Teacher	Ms. Zeinab Al Zarief
19. Socials, Arabic Literature Teacher	Mrs. Rozana Zaklit
20. English Teacher	Mr. Habib Fawaz (deaf)
21. Math and Physics Teacher	Mr. Hrag Hagopian
22. Accountant subjects Teachers	Mrs. Lena Zammar
23. Computer Sciences Teacher	Mr. Habib Fawaz (deaf)
24. P.E. Teacher	Ms. Nour Zgheib (deaf)

Volunteers

25. LCD's legal advisor	Mt. Rayan Kouatly
26. Psychologist – Family Counselor	Mrs. Charlotte Khalil
27. Hearing-Aid Technician	Mr. Joseph Zeidan / Mr. H. Hourri
28. Family Counselor	Dr. Raed Mohsen

6. Statistical Data of the number of beneficiaries during 2020

Programs offered at the LCD	Number of Beneficiaries
Early Intervention Program	
Rehabilitation for Deaf Children with their Parents	27 (average - in house children)
The Support Group	55 approx.
Integrated Nursery	6 - 9 families
The Preschool Section	22 (average)
The Outreach Program	19 (average)
The Resource Room	Unspecified
	Unspecified; open for all professionals
Advocacy	National Level
Educational Activities for the Deaf	
Sign Language Class	49 participants
High School Education for the Deaf	
Second Year	6 students
Third Year	
Graduated	
Technical School	
Second Year - Accounting	3 students
Awareness Programs about Deafness	Unspecified; National level

The Learning Center for the Deaf (LCD)

Baabda – Lebanon



News & Activities of the LCD during 2020



Introduction

Like the rest of the world, especially in Lebanon, 2020 was not a good year for us for many reasons.

Beside the pandemic virus, Lebanon has faced several challenges which was generally, in brief, going from bad to worse. For the first time over 40% of the Lebanese people are below the level of poverty, as many have lost their jobs due to the economical situations. Many factories, shops, businesses, restaurants, etc., have permanently shut down. The international chain shops have also shut down. High percentages of hotels and business sectors have also permanently shut down. This has resulted in thousands of people losing their jobs. Economically it has only worsened. The exchange rate of the US\$ reached at one point, nearly LL10,000, whereas in the previous year it was only LL1,500 against \$1. The Lebanese currency has lost at least 85% of its value. Imagine that one loses his/her income by that percentage and only survives with 15%. Lebanese people, including the staff members of the LCD, found it quite challenging as they still received their income/salary in the Lebanese currency. The prices of the basic needs in the groceries have tripled, and sometimes more. The pharmacies did not sell the medicines because they wanted to hold them back until the prices go up and then sell them. That was a big challenge for low-income people who are in need of the medicines.

We have also faced shortages of fuel, as the provisions were hardly enough to cover the needs. The Lebanese Government, which officially resigned are only doing the basic administration work, and didn't do much with these problems, especially with the

corruption. The politicians were still fighting with each other on which ministry they wanted to have, especially the ministry of interior and the ministry of finance. These politicians/deputies have the voting power, and they unfortunately work for their own benefits, not for the Lebanese people in general. To change this, we need to change the system; and to change the system, we need to change the Laws and the constitution. The politicians didn't want these changes to happen, and only gave invalid excuses. Even until the end of 2020, the new government was not formulated.

As a result there was not much hope in the country, and many Lebanese people, especially young ones, have left Lebanon for good. During that year, many people noticed that the number of the people in the departure hall of the Beirut airport outweigh than the number of those in the arrival hall. And that didn't just happen for few days, but for months.

To give an example, on a personal note, our daughter Jade had no job for more than 2 months, as her working place was destroyed due to the massive explosion. She then decided to go to Scotland in order to continue her education towards a Master's degree. The university in Edinburgh accepted her and required her to pay the first payment. Our bank refused to give us the money which we have in our account in order to pay for Jade's tuitions. Banks in Lebanon were also part of the corruption. So, Jade sadly lost the opportunity. Jade had looked for alternatives, but no luck. During mid-October, the owner of the place where Jade used to work has a cousin who also owns a restaurant/bar in Zurich, Switzerland, called Jade and offered her a job. In few days' time, Jade left for Switzerland. She said that she would save some money in order to pay for her university's tuition in the following scholastic year. Because of the bad experiences she had in Lebanon, Jade said that she wouldn't like to come back. Those feelings of Jade also applied to many young Lebanese people, who were looking ways to leave Lebanon and to settle in a country where there is security, peace, etc.

Many people encouraged Nadine and I to leave the country as well. It was not that easy as we have the mission in our hearts. Our aim was and still is to serve the needy people, and we can't imagine turning our backs on them. God has placed this mission and purpose in our lives.

The Economic Situation

Before the Beirut explosion, the economic situation was already aggravated due to Covid-19. To make the image more tangible about the economic situation, we would like to share a passage from an article, which states as follows:

"From mundane to insane, grocery shops in Lebanon have become a microcosm of the country's escalating economic crisis in recent weeks. An unstable currency has led to sudden price hikes. With the prices of some items tripling or even quadrupling, panic-ridden shoppers have rushed to stock up on items, fearing they might not be able to afford them anymore. Abdel-Rahman al-Zein, a 24-year-old architect-

ture graduate in the southern town of Saida, tells MEE that empty supermarket shelves are no longer an anomaly. "Prices in grocery stores have become extremely high," a concerned Zein said. "Everyone is suffering in one way or another." Zein said that many Lebanese can't afford to buy meat anymore, and don't buy fruits like they used to, as it is now considered a luxury item."

This article was written even before the explosion took place.

Lockdown incurred several times during 2020

Sometimes, LCD tried to keep its doors open, serving the beneficiaries despite of the lockdown periods. The other times, it was not possible to open as the number of the cases of the pandemic virus was so high, we had to close

During the lockdowns, the nursery teachers prepared some video clips to be given to parents of the children to do the interventions at home. The teachers instructed the parents on what to do with the activities at home. The Preschool teachers also did the same, but did some online sessions with the children as well, which was not easy. For the high school students, they had the online sessions, on a full-time basis, 6 sessions a day, and didn't miss a single day. Some of the students did miss some sessions due to the electricity and/ or Internet problems.



The Effect of the Pandemic Virus

During the year, 2 nursery teachers were affected with the COVID-19. Luckily, they were not in a serious health condition, which also applied to their family members. Because they had contracted the virus, most staff members of the LCD had to perform the PCR tests, twice within 1 week, making sure they were clear of the virus. Thank God that they were not infected, as the result turned out to be neg-

ative.

We followed up with the parents of the children, and found that none had any COVID19 after they had the PCR tests. That was a great relief for us.

During the summer time, an uncle of one of the high school students, sadly died due to this virus.

Pandemic Virus and the Financial Issues of the LCD

During the several lockdowns imposed by the Lebanese Government, the LCD had to close. At one point, it was closed for nearly 2 months, which has affected us in many different ways, especially financially. The LCD depends on the income generated by the Nursery and the Preschool, which covers over 49% of the total revenues. Some parents of these sections refused to pay, giving justifications that the children were at home. Some parents considered the salaries of the teachers and contributed some. Generally speaking, it was a challenging experience.

Our friends, especially in Holland, were alarmed by this, and they did an excellent job by collecting funds to support the LCD. At one point, they contacted the Royal Family of the Netherlands, who in turn asked the Embassy of the Netherlands in Beirut to visit the LCD. We were extremely touched by the efforts of our friends in Holland. With great enthusiasm, our Swiss friends from Switzerland (FK-LCD) who are very devoted in their support to the LCD and the people it serves, showed extra efforts to help us get out of the crisis. Our faithful guardian angel and her family members, the Scheele family, contributed a substantial amount of money. Contributions made by the friends in Holland and Switzerland (part of which is through the generous donation of the Evangelical-Reformed Church of the Canton of St. Gallen and the Corymbo Foundation) are seen in the Masters Accounts below. As the result of this, our friends contacted the Wilde Ganzen organization, (who supported us in purchasing the LCD's premises), and in turn they were interested to help. They have managed to raise the required amount of money to cover the balance deficit of the LCD, and will give this fund during the beginning of 2021.

Also, our Deaf friend in UK has made a campaign to raise money to support the LCD and the deaf community in Lebanon. He walked 100 miles in 4 separate days, and the campaign was successful.



The LCD Team

Despite of the several challenges, especially during economical and the pandemic virus, the LCD team (across different programs) were really faithful, wonderful and were really committed to do the services for the Deaf and the children. They were ready to do any tasks or assignments when asked of them. We were and are still blessed to have such a team as we share the same purpose and goals.

Beirut's Massive Explosion

The massive explosion happened on August 4th at around 6pm, when Hussein and Elias were setting up a new office for Nadine, and whilst Habib was conducting a sign language course for the beginners. We heard a loud explosion and felt the earth shake strongly. A strong wind blew us, and we thought that the explosion was near the LCD. We ran out and saw a big reddish smoke escalating over Beirut. Signs of panic were seen on the faces of the sign language participants, calling their family members if they were ok. But the phone lines were over-jammed and the panic worsened. Fortunately, we learned afterwards that none of their family members were affected.

There was slight damage at the LCD. Some rolling curtains were torn down and some accessories for the glass curtains were broken. Educational material from the shelves in the preschool classes were scattered on

the floors.

We thank God that nothing serious happened to the LCD, especially that none of the LCD's staff members, children, students or their family members were hurt from that explosion.

We got several phone calls, WhatsApp and email messages from the friends of different parts of the world, asking how we were doing and whether we have been affected. We were so grateful for the care and thoughts of our friends.

It was a sad day for Lebanon, as the casualties were so enormous and nearly 300 people were killed and thousands injured. 300,000 homes were damaged. It was also sad for us to learn that one young deaf man, who lived near the harbor was killed in his bedroom.

Hearing Aids and Batteries

Besides the financial support, our friends in Switzerland (FK-LCD), have done a remarkable effort collecting good conditioned secondhand hearing aids to be given to the LCD besides the traveling to deliver them and posting. In turn, the LCD gives these hearing aids to persons with hearing loss, including refugees, who couldn't afford costs of the hearing aids. The FK-LCD has sent hundreds of hearing aids during that year.

Due the economic situation, especially after the Beirut's explosion, batteries of hearing aids were in shortage of supply and therefore the demands of these were in high need. We have asked the friends of the FK-LCD to provide the batteries as well, in which they accepted and have provided hundreds of packets of batteries, with different types of batteries. There was an issue on how to transport these hearing aids and batteries to Lebanon. We were fortunate that from time to time, a Swiss person or a family would come to



Lebanon and would bring the boxes over. Every time we received these boxes, we took photos and sent them to our friends in Switzerland. As the result, the beneficiaries were so pleased with both hearing aids and batteries.

We are so pleased as well, and filled our hearts with joy when we receive the hearing aids and batteries; being able to see the joy on the faces of the people who receive them, who would otherwise have a great difficulty buying them.

The priority of donations of hearing aids for profound hearing loss usually goes to young children because they are at an age where they are developing language and because these hearing aids for profound hearing loss are in short supply; we have plenty hearing aids for moderate hearing loss. As for batteries, we give all persons with hearing loss equally.

We are so grateful for the wonderful support of our friends in Switzerland, who understood the need and who acted promptly on the campaign to raise these hearing aids and batteries. We have learned that some boxes of batteries were paid from their own pockets.

We are so grateful for the wonderful support of our friends in Switzerland, who understood the need and who acted promptly on the campaign to raise these hearing aids and batteries. We have learned that some boxes of batteries were paid from their own pockets.

Refugees

Thousands of refugees, primarily Syrians, have returned back from where they come from, but there are still refugees living in Lebanon for many reasons. Some said that they have lost their homes, others say they have jobs in Lebanon, and some are afraid to go back for security reasons and remain in Lebanon for asylum. Many of them are living in Lebanon in poor conditions.

The LCD has supported refugee deaf children and their family members in different ways. A father of a deaf child got killed in Syria, the child and her mother lives in the suburb of Beirut in a very distressing situation. We have collected some money through our friends to support this little family. Also, another Syrian family of a deaf child who has no father as well has similar challenges. During the beginning of December, the Preschool children had made some Christmas decoration, ornaments, and candles and had made a small bazar to sell these ornaments. The purpose of this was to support the Syrian family. The result was successful, and the children themselves present the envelop with money to the mother of the child.



Beside these supports, we also provide hearing aids and batteries for the refugees.

We are grateful to the Lord for the opportunity that we can give help as much as we do to make a little change in the lives of these refugees.

Report from Wafa, (Early Interventionist)

I am Wafa, the Early Interventionist and Speech Therapist of the Early Intervention Program (EIP) at the Learning Center for the Deaf (LCD). I have been part of the LCD team since 2010. I have completed the Professional Education Program in Auditory-Verbal Practice in 2012. I enjoy every day working with deaf children and their family members, having opportunity to become more and more skilled and experienced in hearing loss and the early intervention approach. I have a great passion to work with children and consider my job as a mission. Every child and session is unique which makes my work more exciting.



I am the mother of two boys, aged one and four. I know the bliss for any parents to communicate and get along with their children. Hence, my biggest pleasure is to help any deaf child to have this opportunity with his family.

Throughout these past years, I have been lucky to help and support many deaf children improve and acquire effective communication methods.

During the year 2020, I felt really proud to see one of my first early intervention children, Ali Zaiter, joining the LCD's high school program.

As for that year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Early Intervention Program encountered several changes. However, despite all the challenges we managed to carry on our program and support all our families through different approaches. So, during lockdowns, EIP sessions were switched to Digital Therapy (Zoom, WhatsApp video call).

In addition, individualized home targets and activities for each child and family are delivered through phone calls. The sessions are updated based on parental feedback and recorded videos of the child. The children were really excited to have a video call do some activities together. Sometimes they invited their siblings, neighbors or friends to participate in these sessions. Overall, therapy sessions are taking place in the LCD with all the necessary precautions.

Over the last few months we had numerous consultation sessions and we donated a significant number of secondhand hearing aids since the majority of families are not able to obtain them due to the Lebanese economic crisis.



During one of our consultation sessions, two deaf brothers shared with us their uplifting story. Since they did not have the financial means, they were sharing only one hearing aid. Each sibling will wear it when needed. They were very thrilled to receive both two from our second-hand hearing aids.

Being able to serve others is a big blessing. I hope the coming year will be better and pray to have the strength to continue this mission.

A new LCD's member: Carole, the KG Deaf Teacher

To have on board, a deaf teacher in our Preschool has been one of our great wishes. Finally, a qualified deaf teacher has joined our team—Carole. Carole has proven to be a hard worker and good in organizing her program and collaborating with the Preschool team. Her speech is not quite intelligible and with the use of mask this has created a bigger challenge than we anticipated; whether when communicating with deaf children or the hearing children who are especially not used to communicating with deaf adults.

From the start, children of the KG3 complained for not wanting to be with Carole and parents expressed these complaints as well. On the other hand, Carole was also struggling to understand the children, and struggled more with the children who do not articulate.

Of course, it is something we anticipated even if the Covid19 related challenges made it harder. We explained the impact of hearing loss for the children and explained to parents that it takes some time to be on the same wave in communication and we also encouraged Carole and asked her to add fun activities that require less communication and more work in the beginning.



Fortunately, we were not disappointed when we started to see the improvement and to hear good feedback from parents.

One of the parents even said that her daughter was so proud to explain to her friends what Carole is saying.

Another child said to her class-mate in French: “Hausse ta voix, elle peut pas t’écouter”, meaning “raise your voice, she cannot hear you”. We teach in English and Arabic in the Preschool, but French is used by some of the children.

Another child is now using sign language, knowing that her classmate who has hearing loss is near. Carole is teaching Sign Language to all the children, both hearing and Deaf, and we are very happy to see this taking place.

Jip & Janneke Preschool: Written by Sarine, the Preschool Teacher

Jip & Janneke is a Montessori-oriented preschool. By following the Montessori Method all children are respected according to their readiness, abilities and differences at all levels. We emphasize the student-centered method, where individual differences are taken into consideration; thus, children are not pressured, while they learn according to their readiness. Consequently a large

portion of the time is dedicated to individual work, where children choose a material and work at it by themselves; meanwhile the teachers’ role is to observe the children and guide them if they need any help. The children learn life skills such as: buttoning, zipping, pouring, and wrapping their own sandwiches, which aims at helping children gain more autonomy

and thus more self-confidence. The preschool is inclusive especially for children with hearing loss but also for children with different challenges.

The academic year 2020 was a tough one from several aspects; first, the invasion of the COVID19 changed everything, as we had to stay at home for about two complete months because of the lockdown. It

was so hard to find an exchange as our approach is Montessori and we believe in the importance of hands-on activities, so switching to complete online system was almost impossible. We tried to send activities that children could do with their parents, along with some worksheets that they could work on at home and also having few online meetings to interact with each other and have some crafts.



Later on, we tried to compensate whatever the children had missed by having individual sessions with the children; where each child would come to school for about two hours whereupon we would work with them individually and assign some homework that they could apply at home. But it wasn't easy at all to set a schedule that would suit all the parents with their work schedule. Second, the economic crisis that we had in Lebanon influenced everybody. Everyone around was stressed as we had a tremendous rise in prices which affected everything directly or indirectly. Third, the explosion of the Beirut's Harbor on August 4, 2020 was a big disaster; as many families lost their houses or even their loved ones. We felt that the change of system was difficult for the children as it was unexpected.

Moreover, we could feel how the children were affected by all the stress around them.

In summary, 2020 was not easy at all because of all the many expected events.

I want to talk about my personal experience at Jip & Janneke; I joined the team at the LCD in 2017 and I fell in love with this place. I loved the family atmosphere and also the teamwork that it has where each employee complements the other. Moreover, I have a great respect to the director of the LCD Dr. Hussein Ismail and his wife Nadine who is the head of the Early Intervention Program; they are people of faith, they take their decisions not according to the circumstances but according to their faith in God; furthermore, they are very thoughtful and understanding; they try to understand our circumstances and difficulties and try to support us in every way they can.



Two of my students that have touched my heart are actually twins who are German but live in Lebanon. They are so sweet and respectful. They have a great relationship and respect for with their family who surround them with a well-structured and nurturing environment. One day when we were in the playground, the children were discussing about the weather and predicted that it would rain since they saw gray clouds. Suddenly one of the twins started crying saying she wants to go up to the classroom. So, we went upstairs and tried to comfort her; she fell asleep in one of our teachers' lap. I tried to ask her why she was crying, she told me: "When we see dark clouds, we should go inside." When their mom arrived, I tried to

explain what happened; she told me that it was related to the explosion, as their house was so close and they had seen the dark clouds. So, she was relating the gray clouds with the explosion event. We discussed together some possible ways that we could use in order to help her overcome her fear.

What touched my heart was seeing the smile on their mom's face when she saw her daughter sleeping in the teacher's lap. She was so thankful that her daughters were feeling so comfortable in their new school. I was so happy that we are able to create a safe environment for the children.

The growth and solidarity of the LCD

In Lebanon, it is hard to solely stand out based on expertise and outstanding performance of essential services if one does not have the support of the system and sufficient finances.

The system is based on the political, religious, influential party, or group connections, which affects the financial support too.

The LCD lacked such a support system, even if lucky to have the support of foreign NGOs that believed in its role and helped it remain in existence.

The LCD started its services with the main goal of the Early Intervention Program because of the long-term effect on the life of the deaf person, especially in relation to his/her family, but also affecting one's relation with the community and society and quality of life.



We hoped to spread the concept of family based early intervention all over Lebanon but were shocked by the fact that instead of being supported in this greatly needed role of coordination, we faced obstacles that we did not expect and simply based on the fact that there are other early intervention programs. This reaction is based on the fear of having to face complaints in relation to the Ministry's partnership with us. Despite explaining our intention to build on what exists by networking and to make such services accessible and clear for all families across Lebanon; despite explaining that the LCD is not a school but rather an objective center in a central region in Lebanon, being founded with the purpose of supporting existing services (which are mostly schools for the Deaf in Lebanon); we still faced resistance to the idea of the LCD being a reference organisation in partnership with the Ministry of Social Affairs because there are other schools that have early intervention (though only a couple of them which is more of early therapy with little guidance to the family).

Saying this, helps clarify the value of the accomplishments that the LCD has made through years.

The LCD has become today the main reference to issues related to the Deaf, especially when it comes to advocacy and awareness in relation to the Deaf, as well as consultation. We hope to continue getting the support needed in order to grow to the level of expectations which are becoming beyond our capacity and growing fast, on a national level.

The Cash Assistance and the Lebanese Army

With all the responsibilities that we have on our shoulders, and with no support from the Government or other national sectors, we sometimes need to think hard on how to provide information to the Deaf through the Lebanese Federation of the Deaf (the Federation which the LCD helped) without triggering a larger expectations from us.

An example is the last experience in relation to the cash support provided to the Deaf by the Lebanese Army, we heard several deaf persons complain that they did not get the support; probably due to difficulty communicating with the Deaf when the Army calls them.

After a thorough inquiry and having assured that a solution would work, being then, the best possible solution, we informed the Deaf through the social media by Sign Language with Arabic text, that the assistance section at the Ministry of defense is ready to assist any deaf persons, when a hearing person on their behalf calls at a specific time and transfers their complaints. At the end of the post, we added that they could contact us if any problems were not solved, at the specified times.



We were not surprised to receive phone calls which were out of the specified times, but the number of calls was even beyond our expectations to the point where for 2 full days when we hung up the phone another one was immediately after, hardly giving any chance to note down the main information. Knowing that many deaf persons would have difficulty communicating, we could not refuse supporting the calls.

It could be that it was easier for the Deaf to contact us than the Lebanese Army; mostly hearing persons called on behalf of the Deaf who thought we were the Army which shows the gap in communication.

It was in fact an interesting experience, where even a few persons with physical disability called as well as persons with other criteria. The funny experience was when an army officer called asking about the support, thinking we're from the Army as referred by someone from the Army by mistake. We also received calls for social assistance which could be to this initiative or due to the fact that the LCD is being more and more known as a social assistance reference; we always try to help the people who reach us and we know would not find help without our assistance.

What we did was mainly instruct persons on calling the Ministry of Defense because it was the right destination to support them, and to come back to us only if they really tried and did not succeed in order to help them be heard. We discovered several reasons of why this was not succeeding; mostly related to who was calling on behalf of the Deaf and faced difficulty applying the right steps (an older person, a child or someone not willing to spend time calling the help center which was busy most of the time or the fact that many deaf persons had no landline and wasted all their units on these calls).

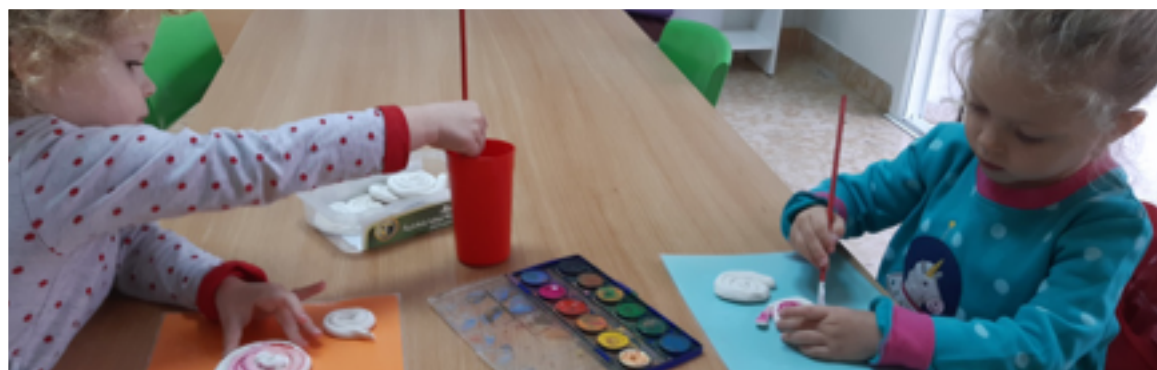
Finally, and with the help of friends, we convinced the right contact from the Lebanese Army, that there must be some kind of facilitation regarding the Deaf and expressed our readiness to assist in any manner suitable for them.

They agreed that we provide them information in relation to the deaf persons which we worked on. This took weeks; while it was very easy to communicate with some of the Deaf whether directly or through a family member, it was sometimes very difficult to communicate with others.

Also, whilst many were transparent and honest regarding personal information, we also experienced at least a couple trying to trick us not to register them as husband and wife since each home gets only one support.

But we finally succeeded in providing the list to the Lebanese Army representative with whom there was a great collaboration and where needed, an appointment was given to the deaf persons to facilitate communication, and the Deaf got the help they needed.

The Preschool Twin



A twin of 4-year-old girls has joined the Preschool this year

The mother has warned us about the fact that they need a great deal of support due to several factors such as moving countries and houses, and especially the trauma from the explosion which happened in their home when it got damaged due to the explosion.

Indeed, especially one of the twins was even more sensitive to anything new or noises. One day, in the playground the children noticed a cloud and spoke about it. She kept crying until her mother came to pick her up. We realized that the cloud reminded her of the explosion; she connected them and was filled with fear.

We noticed her fear from noise, especially coming from machines.

We decided to work on the matter as a team and with the home. We helped her distinguish between sounds, also between clouds and the smoke from the explosion, whilst still respected her fear and helping her start dealing with it and discern among things that make noises which could be disturbing but not scary.

We were pleased to see the improvement and how both, as well as other children have learned to enjoy their presence at the school and how they have an environment that gives them a space to grow, to mingle joyfully and to heal as well. The twins are not the only ones who needed a supportive environment; all the children do.

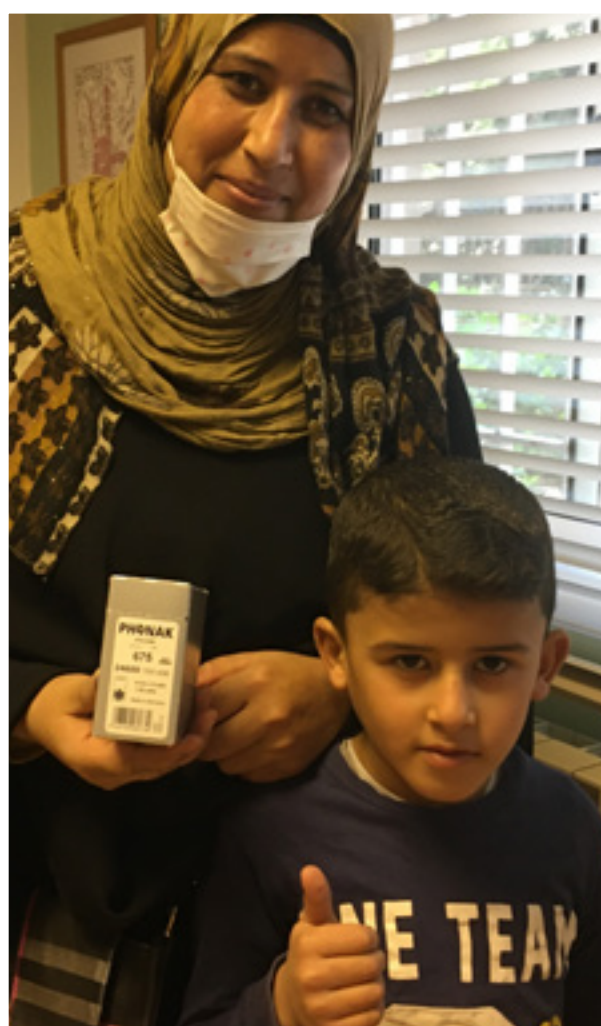
Mother of Radwan

One of the Early Intervention families that amazed us with their devotion is the family of Radwan. Radwan is deaf and came to us with his family a couple of years ago; then being about ten years old. He did not go to school before but was helped by his uncle to do some learning. We were very pleased when we found a school that had initiated a program for older children and was ready to receive him the following year. Radwan entered school in the beginning of last year and he was doing great.

Unfortunately, Radwan's father passed away and his mother had to return to Syria. She resumed contact with us after a while and sent us pictures of her and Radwan farming.

By the end of the summer, we were not surprised to hear from the mother that she wants to try to come back to Lebanon for Radwan's sake. For the Syrian culture, it is not unusual for children to work at a certain age and help their families. For the mother of a deaf boy, who is a widow, and who has extreme difficulty finding the way to come back, for the sake of her deaf boy, was extremely touching.

It sure was not an easy and it took time, but the mother and her children came



back. During late November, it was Radwan's first week in the school.

While the mother never asked us to find financial assistance, she has expressed great difficulty not being to cover transportation for Radwan, among other challenges, especially considering the economic challenges in Lebanon.

Children of the Integrated Nursery and the Preschool



The children in the Integrated Nursery and the Preschool bring a lot of joy to the LCD; having them around is a blessing experience. Despite of the pandemic virus, these children still come to the LCD and that they can benefit from our services. Parents expressed their joy and satisfaction about these programs.

High School and the Technical School

Despite of the pandemic virus, the high school and the technical school have continued to operate. Sometimes, they had to do the online lessons, given by teachers, which cover 100% of the schedules assigned for these programs. Students need to study at least 6 sessions a day, whether in class or performing through the online sessions.

Some teachers of these programs were not really satisfied with the idea of doing the lessons through the Internet, as the interactions between the students are limited. Some students did well but others found it difficult to understand the lessons through the online sessions. Their weaknesses had to be compensated when they returned to the classes in April and stayed on until mid-July 2020. Fortunately, they all passed the final examinations.



Sign Language Courses

The LCD has provided a number of sign language courses across beginner and intermediate levels. These courses were given based on the demands of persons who were interested to learn this language in order to communicate with the Deaf. Also, these courses were offered for the teachers of the Deaf and others who are from different professions.

Sign language classes are also given to the Preschool children. It was indeed a fun experience for the children.



Advocacy Works

The LCD, in collaboration with the Lebanese Federation of the Deaf (LFD), was still working on advocacy program, which have been carried on from the previous years. Due to the pandemic virus, we couldn't hold any lectures and workshops for the Deaf and we had hoped that the pandemic would ease and therefore we could resume the work.

Beside this, the LCD and the LFD were still lobbying with the stakeholders at the Government level to provide the minimum rights for the Deaf. During the pandemic period, the LCD and the LFD have worked on the awareness of this virus through the social media for the Deaf. We fought with the Lebanese Government to provide the interpreters for sign language on TV for the Deaf people to understand what is going on regarding the pandemic virus. Unfortunately, it was in vain so we contacted the World Federa-

tion of the Deaf (WFD) explaining the problem. The WFD in turn wrote letters to the Ministry of Information, Ministry of Interior, and the Lebanese Army. The Ministries didn't even react, after we phoned them several times. But the Lebanese Army responded positively, and we worked together with the Army on awareness of the virus for the Deaf, which was an interesting experience. Awareness with sign language was put several times on the local TVs.

Collaboration of the LCD with other Organizations

Beside the advocacy works for the Deaf, the LCD also collaborated with other organizations that support advocacy work for people with disability, namely the ProAble (for providing job opportunities for the Deaf). Also, the LCD works with Union for the Physical Handicapped for the joint mission in advocacy works.

Conclusion



Despite of many challenges as described in the introduction above, the LCD has stood on its feet, to serve its best to the beneficiaries and the refugees. As in many previous years, the LCD is like an island of peace, solidarity, sharing and care, amid the chaos that Lebanon has experienced during the year. We are grateful to the Almighty, as it is in our wish to serve all within our capacity, and for them to receive better quality services and program, thus leading them to a better future.

We are also grateful for so many friends believing and supporting us in many different ways. Special thanks go to organizations that support our work, such as Friends of the LCD-Switzerland, Embrace the Middle East-UK, AMT-NL, and Wilde Ganzen-NL, for without their support, we wouldn't know how we could continue our services.

May God bless you all.

The background of the entire page is a photograph of graduation caps and gowns. Several blue caps with gold tassels are seen from below, floating against a clear blue sky. Green leaves of a tree are visible in the upper left corner. The lower half of the page is covered by a semi-transparent blue overlay.

8. Master Account 2020

The Master Accounts are prepared by the Certified Auditors, which include:

- Income / Expenditures
- Balance Sheet
- Financial Summary Sheet with the Pie Figures

Please see the following pages, depicting scanned copies of the accounts, with Auditors' stamp and signature

The Learning Center for the Deaf
Baabda – Lebanon

Photos during 2020



COVID19 testing before admitting



Art work in the Preschool



High School Students



Nadine teaching Preschool children



Potato Barbeque



Meeting in the garden

The Learning Center for the Deaf
Baabda – Lebanon

Photos during 2020



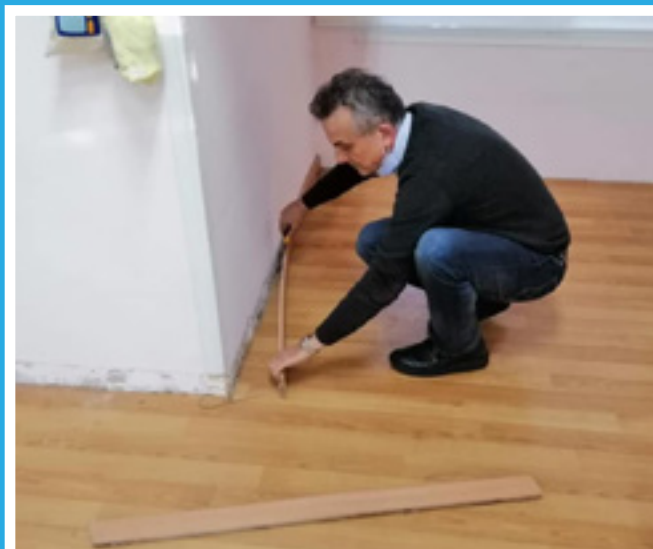
Online sessions with the children



Technical School Students



Audiology Center



Hussein's usual Maintenance Work on Saturdays



Training Session through Online



Educational Material in the Classes

The Learning Center for the Deaf
Baabda – Lebanon

Photos during 2020



A session at the Early Intervention Program



Montessori Lesson at the Preschool



Battery and Hearing Aids Project Supported by FK-LCD Switzerland



Please visit us at the www.lcd-lebanon.org, for detailed information about our services and activities.

**Thank you for your continuous prayers and support !!
God bless you.**

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