

# VOICES OF THE LMT

## BECOME A TRAIL KEEPER 1 KM FOR \$1K

### THE BEIRUT RELIEF INITIATIVE

### THE LMT: A VEHICLE FOR RESPONSIBLE TOURISM

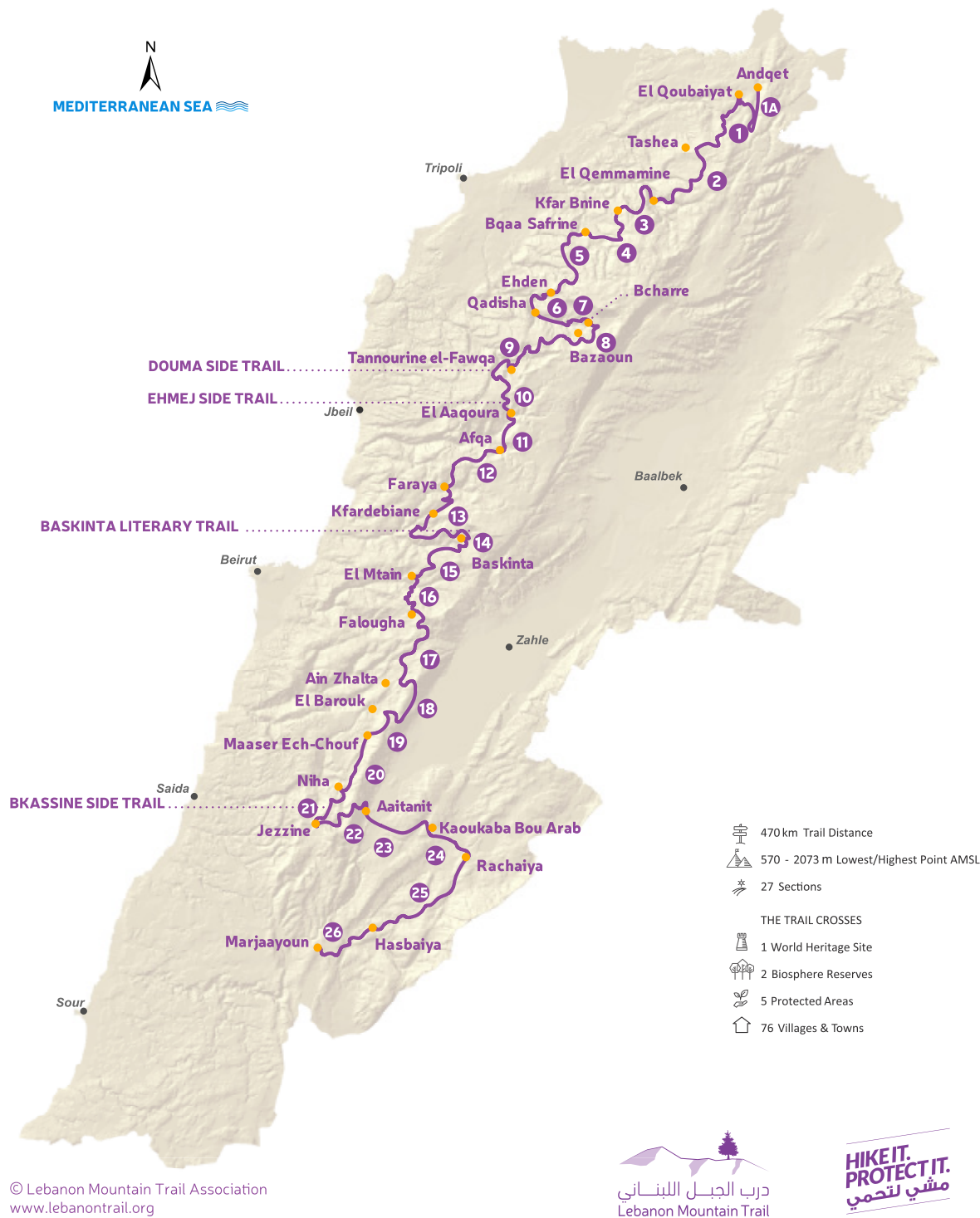
### THE DANNIEH CASH FOR WORK PROJECT

### LA SUISSE ET LE LMT, PARTENAIRES EN RANDONNÉE

### درب الجبل اللبناني الضيعة مشروع السياحة البيئية



# THE LEBANON MOUNTAIN TRAIL



# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

**A year to remember...**  
This year has been, without doubt, one of the most challenging ever that Lebanon has gone through. Unpredictable, difficult, and at times just sad, these last months have certainly had an effect on the LMTA team and members as well as communities along the LMT. Between raging wildfires, civic unrest, protests, roadblocks, Covid-19 lockdowns, economic stagnation & financial collapse, our team has had to navigate its way through countless challenges! On top of that, there was the tragic and shocking Beirut blast in August...

Despite these overwhelming events, we have stayed strong. We have kept up our morale and become more united in our work. Offering solidarity and support whenever we can, we have continued our work on the ground all along the trail. Trail maintenance, environmental advocacy, and community building have remained at the heart of our mission, as well as the development of concrete action plans with some municipalities in order to preserve the trail itself.

Upholding our call for responsible tourism, we have collaborated with USEIL, the first Union of Sustainable and Ecotourism Institutions in Lebanon. In parallel, we have developed guidelines for "Hiking Safely" in these coronavirus times and conducted a variety of online training sessions for local guides.

Our main funded project in Dannieh, supported namely by GIZ the German development agency, has allowed us to temporarily employ 42 vulnerable people who have, in turn, helped us make significant enhancements along the trail in this region making it easier to follow and more fun to walk. We have also launched the Beirut Relief Initiative "min el darb lal madineh" in response to the disastrous explosion, thereby supporting both impoverished

communities along the trail as well as vulnerable people and traumatized kids in the capital. Last but not least, with a dash of creativity we have turned our Fall Trek into a Virtual Hike, which 63 hikers and 153 supporters from around the world have participated in, allowing them to discover or re-discover the LMT with enthusiasm and passion!

Your continuous support is needed now more than ever. It is thanks to you, our cherished members and supporters, that our association continues to flourish and to have a positive impact on our beloved Lebanon. On behalf of the whole LMTA team, I thank you for the trust you have placed in us.

**Maya Karkour**  
President of the LMTA

#HikeItProtectIt

التنمية الألمانية GIZ في الضنية، بتوظيف ٤ شخصاً بشكل مؤقت ساعدونا بدورهم في إجراء تحسينات كبيرة على طول الدرب في هذه المنطقة، ممّا جعل الدرب أسهل وأكثر متعة. أطلقنا أيضاً مبادرة بيروت للإغاثة "من الدرب إلى مدينة" كردّ على الانفجار الكارثي، وبالتالي دعم كل من المجتمعات الفقيرة على طول الدرب، الأشخاص المستضعفين، والأطفال المصدمين نفسياً في العاصمة. أخيراً وليس آخراً، حولنا رحلة "المشي الخريفية" بالقليل من الإبداع إلى رحلة افتراضية شارك فيها ٦٣ متنزّهة ومتنزّه و ١٥٠ مؤيدي من جميع أنحاء العالم، ممّا سمح لهم باكتشاف أو إعادة اكتشاف درب الجبل اللبناني بحماس وشغف! دعمك المستمر مطلوب الآن أكثر من أي وقت مضى. بفضلكم، أعضائنا الأعزاء وداعمينا، تستمر جمعيتنا في الازدهار وستؤثر إيجابياً على لبنان الحبيب. بالنيابة عن فريق جمعية درب الجبل اللبناني، أشكركم جميعاً على ثقتكم بنا .

**مايا كركور**  
رئيسة جمعية درب الجبل اللبناني  
#مشي\_لتحمي

# كلمة الرئيسة



Maya Karkour

**عام لن يُنسى ...**  
كان هذا العام، بلا شك، أحد الأعوام الأكثر تحدياً التي مرّ بها لبنان. إنّ هذه السنة غير متوقّعة، صعبة وأحياناً حزينة. أما الأشهر الأخيرة، فقد كان لها بالتأكيد تأثير على فريق وأعضاء جمعية درب الجبل اللبناني، والمجتمعات على طول الدرب أيضاً. بين حرائق الغابات المستعرة، الاضطرابات المدنية، الاحتجاجات، حواجز الطرق، الإغلاق بسبب كوفيد-١٩، الركود الاقتصادي، والانهيار المالي، إضطرّ فريقنا على شقّ طريقه من خلال تحديات لا حصر لها! علاوة على ذلك، حصل انفجار بيروت المأساوي والصادم في آب ... على الرغم من هذه الأحداث الساحقة، بقينا أقوياء. حافظنا على معنوياتنا وأصبحنا أكثر اتحاداً في عملنا. واصلنا عملنا على الأرض على طول الدرب عبر تقديم التضامن والدعم كلما استطعنا. تبقى الصيانة، المناصرة بيئية، وبناء المجتمع في صميم مهمتنا بالإضافة إلى تطوير خطط عمل ملموسة مع بعض البلديات من أجل الحفاظ على الدرب. دعماً لدعوتنا للسياحة المسؤولة، عقدنا تعاون مع USEIL، وهو أول اتحاد لمؤسسات السياحة البيئية المستدامة في لبنان. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، قمنا بتطوير إرشادات حول "المشي بأمان" خلال فترة وباء كورونا هذه، وأجرينا عدة دورات تدريبية للمرشدين المحليين عبر الانترنت. سمح لنا مشروعنا الرئيسي الممول من وكالة



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Follow us on Social Media and stay up to date on all our activities *#HikeItProtectIt*

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# HIKE IT. PROTECT IT. مشي لتحمي

## رؤيتنا

أن يصبح درب الجبل اللبناني وجهة عالمية للسياحة في الهواء الطلق وللسياحة المسؤولة. أن يتمتع الدرب بالحماية من قبل الدولة اللبنانية والبلديات والمجتمعات المحلية، وأن يُعترف به من قبل المنظمات الدولية.

## OUR VISION

For the Lebanon Mountain Trail to become a world-class destination for outdoor and responsible tourism, to become protected by the Government of Lebanon, Municipalities, and local communities, and to be recognized by international organizations.

## أهدافنا

- الحفاظ على درب الجبل اللبناني والدروب المتفرقة وصونها وتطويرها.
- تعزيز درب الجبل اللبناني كمنتج سياحي ريفي.
- الحفاظ على الموارد الطبيعية وحماية الإرث الثقافي المتأخمة لدرب الجبل اللبناني.
- تعزيز الفرص الإقتصادية على درب الجبل اللبناني من خلال السياحة المسؤولة.
- البحث على تغيير السلوكيات من خلال نشاطات تربوية وتوعوية

## OUR PURPOSE

- To maintain, protect and develop the LMT and its side trails.
- To promote the LMT as a destination for rural tourism and well-being.
- To conserve the natural resources and protect the cultural heritage on the LMT.
- To advance economic opportunities on the LMT through responsible tourism.
- To encourage responsible behavior through targeted education, community mobilization, and outreach.

## قيمتنا

- الالتزام
- التنوع
- الضيافة
- النزاهة
- العمل الجماعي
- التطوع

## OUR VALUES

- Commitment
- Diversity
- Hospitality
- Integrity
- Teamwork
- Voluntarism



# THE BEIRUT RELIEF INITIATIVE

## LINKING OUR LMT COMMUNITIES TO THE CITY

In the wake of the tragic events of August 4th, the LMTA family worked hard at putting together a meaningful fundraising campaign to support the victims of the Beirut explosion. On September 15th, we launched the Beirut Relief Initiative, a fundraising campaign aimed at helping the families whose lives have been shattered by the explosion.

The Beirut Relief Initiative also aimed at connecting Lebanese communities from our mountains to those in the city, as a symbol of much-needed unity and solidarity towards one another during these challenging times.

Our Impact Goals:



Help the **families impacted** by the Beirut explosion



Support the livelihoods of households in rural areas



Provide **psychological support** to children and youngsters



Our team was truly overwhelmed by the heartwarming response and reaction from our communities all around the world, including messages of love and hope for Lebanon, generous donations, and words of support and encouragement.

Thanks to their generosity and support, we were able to raise **\$19,850 in total.**

The funds raised went towards:

Funding our Mouneh program 'Min el Darb lal Madineh', which commissioned women from our LMT communities to produce traditional Lebanese food products with long shelf lives for the winter.



The LMTA tapped into our network of Lebanese 'mouneh' (winter provisions) producers across the trail's villages, to source basic necessities. These were gathered by the LMTA team and distributed in the form of food aid boxes to vulnerable families affected by the Beirut explosion.



OUR IMPACT SO FAR

Up to December December 15th, 2020



**200 mouneh boxes** distributed in collaboration with **Beit el Baraka**

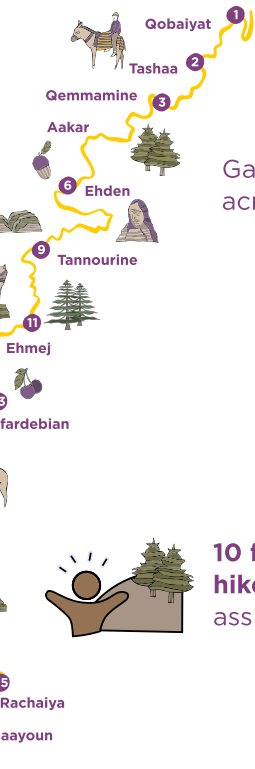


Our 1<sup>st</sup> **mouneh boxes** contained olive oil, kishik, tomato paste, jam, and vinegar

This ongoing effort helps us provide economic relief and work opportunities to our communities while securing the basic food necessities to hundreds of families in need.

The LMTA team is also organizing hikes for children and youth from Beirut, to help them rejuvenate and recover from the trauma caused by the tragic events of August 4th. We are working in collaboration with trained counselors from the Rosaire Missionary Group, who are also assisting the families cope with the post-blast trauma.

We aim to help children escape the city and disconnect from the environment and triggers that can cause anxiety, fear, and depression. These hikes also allow children to reconnect with their country in a positive manner, highlighting what it still has to offer and what is worth protecting.



Gathered from **20 producers** across **15 sections** of the LMT



**10 families** reached & **1 therapeutic hike** organized with kids, with social assistants of **Rosaire Missionary Group**

The LMT will continue to bring communities together, promoting our rural and traditional heritage, in the good times and the bad; and supporting those in need through our networks and capabilities.





# THE LMTA VIRTUAL HIKE

Despite the difficult times Lebanon has gone through in the past year, the LMTA family has remained strongly committed to its mission of preserving our national trail and assisting the trail-side communities in the face of an enduring economic crisis.

However, due to the Covid-19 pandemic and all ensuing travel restrictions that affected most of 2020, we were unable to organize our annual events which also happen to be the major sources of fundraising for the association: the Spring ThruWalk, the Fall Trek, and our October fundraising dinner.

We had to do things differently and decided to adopt the global trend of remote, virtual events; a concept that is certainly not easy to fathom for a community of nature lovers and outdoor adventurers.

We launched the LMTA Virtual Hike from November 5th to November 22nd, 2020, by bringing together our communities around the world and inviting them to join in, from wherever they are, while we hiked 8 sections of the Lebanon Mountain Trail over a total of 12 days.



A private Whatsapp group was created for this purpose, bringing together 63 hikers from around the world who joined the challenge.

Hikers experienced the LMT through daily online stories, videos, scenic pictures, and the live feeds of our volunteer hikers on the trail and hiked alongside us virtually sharing their own stories and photos.

The much-needed funds raised went to finance the association's operations for the coming year, helping us overcome a period of economic and financial turmoil in Lebanon.

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who participated in our fundraising challenge for your generosity and support!

## THE LMTA VIRTUAL HIKE IN NUMBERS

(Up to December 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2020)



12 Hiking Days Completed



8 Sections Hiked



120Km in Trail Distance Covered



\$59,898 of Funds Raised from 153 Donors & 9 Fundraisers



63 Participants Joined our Whatsapp Group to Hike Alongside us



50+ Hikes Organized Around the World in Support of the LMT



350+ Km Hiked Virtually Alongside us, On or Off the LMT

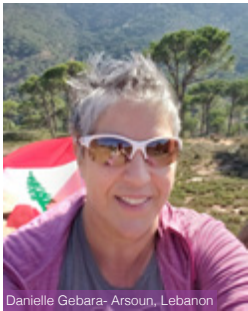


11 Volunteer Hikers Live from the Trail



12 Countries Around the World (Lebanon, Australia, UK, Germany, US, Switzerland, UAE, France, Iceland, The Netherlands, Hungary, & Canada)

Here's a sneak peek into the heartwarming inpour of photos & messages from our Virtual Hike participants organizing their own hikes around the world!



"You have made me feel homesick and I am not even Lebanese!" - Tree

"You guys are an inspiration! Hope to see Lebanon and the LMT someday. Can't wait to look through all your photos tonight" - Joy

"Thank you, LMTA and everyone for sharing those hikes that anchor us to the country we love" - Ibrahim

"Thank you for taking us along with you. How special it has been watching the lovely countryside of Lebanon, I hope to join you after the lockdown in Melbourne" - Doni

"Thank you for this virtual hike! Waking up in San Francisco to see all these beautiful pictures & videos are soothing! Hoping one day I'll be doing the LMT" - Sarah

"What a beautiful way to wake up in NY with all these stunning depictions of the LMT" - Sabine

"Oh, how we miss the cedars and the mountains of Lebanon ... and of course the people and the food. Thanks for sharing and reviving amazing memories of our hikes on the LMT"- Suzi

"Bonjour de France. C'est avec plaisir que je vais parcourir virtuellement ces étapes du LMT où j'ai marché en vrai en 2010 et 2011" - Helena



# THE LEBANON MOUNTAIN TRAIL:

## A VEHICLE FOR SUPPORTING OTHER INITIATIVES

by Fadi Baaklini

The power of humanity has always been its ability to adapt to any situation. In the past year, the world has changed in ways we could have never imagined, especially for the people of Lebanon who have been through not just the COVID-19 pandemic, but also the most difficult year in the country's modern history.

It is within this highly challenging context that we launched the LMT's first-ever Virtual hike. This project brought together two NGOs whom I value and had been involved with.

The first is Gulf for Food (G4G) Dubai, which I was introduced to during my stay in the UAE, and found to be highly professional and dynamic. I joined G4G in 2011 to raise funds for underprivileged children in Nepal by completing the Everest base camp challenge in 13 days. This was followed by humanitarian challenges in Mongolia in 2013 and Machu Picchu Inca Trail in Peru in 2014.

Upon coming back to Lebanon, I was introduced to the second NGO: the LMTA, and its dynamic and passionate team who works tirelessly to preserve the longest trail in the Middle East. As an LMTA board member, I am always on the lookout for new possibilities and ideas that can add value to the association's work. This time, the challenges was about what could be done at such a difficult time.

Virtual experiences will never replace human contact that much I am convinced of. But G4G's idea of a virtual hike in partnership with the LMTA to raise funds for the Lebanese Red Cross was tremendously exciting to me and the team. The LMTA/G4G virtual challenge, therefore, came to life in the fall of 2020.

The people of G4G and the LMTA are compassionate, dedicated change-makers, who have created communities around them who think and act just the same, and thanks to whom this world will be a better place.

by Tazmin Walkers



Gulf for Good is a non-profit association that organizes international adventure challenges in support of children's charities. With the arrival of Covid-19, our world changed overnight. It forced us into thinking outside the box and we came up with our Virtual Challenge offering during the height of lockdown.

Since then, we have offered a number of virtual challenges and events giving people all around the globe an opportunity to take part in anything from stair running the Burj Khalifa to climbing Mt Kilimanjaro, some people doing it in their living room!

The world was further shocked and saddened by the Beirut explosion on August 4th. We decided to run a challenge to support those families who were suffering, by raising funds for the Lebanese Red Cross. We were somewhat familiar with the LMT, having run challenges there previously. So we decided to run another one – this time virtually. With huge support from 3 of our long-standing Gulf for Good followers, who are originally from Lebanon, together we came up with an itinerary crossing 5 sections of the trail and covering 59.2km in total.

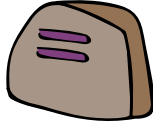
Participants made a donation and were tasked with walking the distance over a period of 8 days, averaging 7.5km per day. We had people from America to Australia, all linked via a WhatsApp group, it became a truly international event. LMTA Board member Fadi Baaklini even managed to arrange for live video footage from LMT local guides. It felt like we were there with them on the trail!

In total, we not only raised almost AED30,000 we also raised awareness of the reality on the ground. Our hearts remain with the people of Lebanon.




# A YEAR IN REVIEW


## CELEBRATING OUR SHARED HERITAGE. BRINGING COMMUNITIES CLOSER TOGETHER




**345 Km cleaned and waymarked**  
out of the 470-km Lebanon Mountain Trail



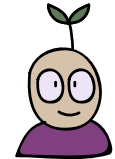
**40 men & women employed**  
to work on the trail, under the Cash for Work project, in partnership with GLZ on Sections 2 to 5 in Dannieh



**19 Local Guides from different regions virtually trained**  
on flora, edible plants, meteorology, hiking safely during Covid-19, value chain pricing and traditional architecture in Lebanon



**4 municipalities assisted**  
(Kfarbnine, Bqaa Safrine, Bazoun, and Falougha)



**445 children benefited from environmental awareness and education**

”””

”Despite the challenging year we have been through, and although we haven’t had the opportunity to hike together, I hope that the coming year will allow us to resume all activities with the LMTA. During this difficult period, I want to encourage everyone, hiker or not, to support the LMTA so that we’ll be able to see each other again next year and make sure that more people discover this trail and its 27 sections that cross Lebanon from the north to the south. The LMT links more than 75 Lebanese villages, each one with its own history, traditions, local food, diverse nature, and landscapes. That is what makes it truly different and unique, more so than any trail in the world”

**Jackie Khairallah, Local Guide, Section 16 of the LMT**

”””

”درب الجبل له الفضل الأول والأخير في تعزيز السياحة في هذه المنطقة.

درب الجبل اللبناني يمثل الشعلة التي أضاءت ضيعتنا. الدرب سمح للناس أن تأتي وتمشي في هذه الضيعة”

**محمود إبراهيم، بلدية كفرنين**

”””

”The Lebanon Mountain Trail passes by our village. The trail extends from the north to the south of Lebanon, and we’re lucky to be a part of it.

The LMTA not only works on preserving the trail and its surrounding communities, but also adds value to our local economy, by assisting guesthouses, local guides and tourism operators, and producers. We all support the LMTA and aspire to contribute to its beautiful mission, including our village’s youth. My sons are in fact volunteering on the LMT.

In the aftermath of the Beirut Explosion, we were approached by the LMTA to contribute to the Mouneh program ‘min el darb la madineh’, to send food aid boxes to the victims of the explosion. It is with our full hearts that we participated in this initiative, which I believe unites Lebanese communities from the mountains to the city”.

**Maya Akl, Section 12, Contributor to our Mouneh program with jars of pickled cucumbers and jam.**

”””

”اسمي أنجي وعمرى ٨ سنين. انا ساكنة ببيروت محل ما صار الانفجار الكبير كل جمعة بيجي لعنا شباب وبنات بلعيونا ومترسم نحنا وإياهن كرمال. ما بقا نخاف من بيروت وننسى الانفجار واليوم رحنا مشيينا نحنا وتقلنا عدرج الجبل اللبناني. هيك خبرتنا اسمه وانو نحنا على القسم ١٢ من هيدا الدرب يلّي كتير كتير كثير حلو. فيه كتير طبيعة وحيوانات برية التقينا فيها وحملناها بايدينا انا وخيي بيتر مثل الضيفضع والاتوط والنحلة والصرصور الاسود والبراقة واكلنا اعشاب برية تقلا قالتلنا انو بسموها سليقة والغريب انو كتير طبييين. من اليوم ورايح اذا حدا يبسألني شو هوي احلا نهار بحياتي يقلن هيدا النهار عالدرب لانو طلعتنا من بيروت عالطبيعة وحي كان كتير هوا نظيف وحسيت بالحرية انا وعم إمشي والاحلى انو سجلت اسمي بابطل البيئة مع درب الجبل. ”

**أنجي، ٨ سنين**

”””

”مشروع درب الجبل اللبناني هو مشروع جميل جداً، فهو مفيد لجميع اللبنانيين ومفيد أيضاً لضيعتنا. تعرفنا على الدرب وعلى مناطق في ضيعتنا لم تكن نعرفها. الدرب يعزز السياحة وكل الشعب اللبناني يمكنه أن يستفيد منه.”

**يوسف، أحد المشاركين في مبادرة النقد مقابل العمل في إطار برنامج التنمية المحلية للمناطق الحضرية في شمال لبنان (UDP.NL#)**



# TRAIL KEEPERS GATHERING 2019

TRAIL KEEPERS, COME TOGETHER!



Thanks to the generous support of the Trail Keepers who attended the Trail Keepers' Gathering dinner in October 2019, the Lebanon Mountain Trail Association was able to raise over \$80,000 allowing the LMTA to resume the essential maintenance work on various sections including trailblazing, delineating, and pruning.

The donations of the Trail Keepers also provided critical support for conservation and advocacy efforts throughout 2020 to address the urgent need to protect the trail, our mountains, and shared heritage. Such donations are ever more important to us at a time of change and uncertainty during which NGOs are faced with increased challenges.

## Meet our Trail Keepers Peter & Natalie Hrechdakian!



- What made you become a Trail Keeper?**  
Becoming a trail keeper is a way for us to share our love for the Lebanese mountains with our friends by bringing awareness to the added value of the LMTA and by being part of their pool of supporters who make this venture such a successful and incredible one.  
We discovered the LMT on Sections 9 and 10 and the Douma side trail three years ago. Since then, we have learned more about the association's work, and have wanted to support it because we believe in what the LMTA stands for.
- Why do you support the LMTA's mission?**  
We believe in the holistic approach of the LMTA; the interrelation of its environmental, economic, educational, and social missions.  
Not only does the LMT protect nature and the trail itself, but it also works with local communities living alongside the trail, to support their livelihoods and socio-economic development.
- In your opinion, how does the LMT contribute to Lebanon?**  
The LMTA is placing Lebanon on the world map of rural and community-based tourism, in addition to creating a real sense of community along the LMT and supporting the people that form this community.  
It does so by engaging in conservation and awareness efforts and in the promotion of ecotourism and rural tourism towards Lebanese nationals, expatriates, and international tourists.



We took an oath to protect Lebanon's longest distance hiking trail, and preserve our endangered mountains.

All these years of diligent and passionate work, and countless contributions that we are forever grateful for, have brought us this far.  
The LMT requires ongoing maintenance and protection, its communities need support and empowerment. That is why we will always continue our mission, one kilometer at a time...

Thanks to our Trail Keepers, we're closer to our goal of \$470K to protect the 470 km of the LMT.  
You can support us in our mission to maintain the Lebanon Mountain Trail by becoming a Trail Keeper.

[Click here](#) to read more about the campaign.

# TRAIL KEEPERS

## 104 KM\* SPONSORED SO FAR, 366 TO GO!

\*up to September 2020

### INDIVIDUALS

Danijel, Julijan, & Adrian Djurovic	10 km
Nour & Albert Khoury	10 km
Fadi Baaklini	5 km
Salam Khalife & Alfred Farwagi	4 km
Samir Rached	3 km
Peter & Nathalie Hrechdakian	2 km
Ali Cheaito	1 km
Anonymous	1 km
Claudine Abdel Massih	1 km
Dany, Nadia, Ray, & Marc Njeim	1 km
Fadi Jreissati	1 km
Ghassan & Eugenie Sayegh	1 km
Karine Hrechdakian	1 km
Mona Saleh	1 km
Neddy & Riwan	1 km
Simon Hamra	1 km
Zephyr Hrechdakian	1 km
Ziad Bayoud	1 km
Elise Salem	1 km
Ramzi Tarazi	1 km
Ali Abdelatif	1 km
Rana Hanna	1 km
George Stephan	1 km
Nadim Nasrallah	1 km
Joumana Abou Jaoude	1 km
Rabih Abdelqader & Bassam Khanji	1 km
Ziad Abi Tayeh	1 km
Constantin Salameh	1 km
Chafic Halati	1 km
Joumana Brihi	0.5 km
Christine Codsi	0.5 km
Natalie Hadechian	0.5 km
Adib Dada	0.5 km

### COMPANIES

ECODIT - AFLMT	10 km
Société Générale de Banque au Liban	5 km
Bank Audi	3 km
Colonel Brewery and Distillery	*in-kind 3 km
EU Delegation	3 km
La Libanaise des Jeux	3 km
RN Chemicals	3 km
Überhaus	*in-kind 3 km
Abi Nakhle Holding	1 km
Banque Bemo	1 km
Casino du Liban	1 km
Em Nazih Catering	1 km
Holdal Group	1 km
Iris Domain	*in-kind 1 km
Kawkaba House of Retreat	1 km
Living Lebanon	1 km
Matisse Events	1 km
Socrate Catering	1 km
Tinol Paints	1 km



# TRAIL & CONSERVATION



# UPDATE YOUR NOTES

by Christian Akhrass

Whether you're new to the trail, or a committed hiker, always check our Trail Updates section on our website to read about the latest developments on the trail.

Every year, as we organize our annual ThruWalk and hike the full 470 km of the Lebanon Mountain Trail, the Trail Maintenance team takes the opportunity to assess the trail, in order to estimate the work that needs to be done throughout the year. Because of Thru-Walk's cancellation, the assessment could not take place at the usual time.

Once we were able to begin our work, we started the maintenance at the northern end of the trail. I was surprised to discover that many hikers had already beaten us to the trail, and realized that many had been spending time hiking during the lockdown. It seems the Covid-19 pandemic has prompted many Lebanese to reconnect with their roots, spend more time in their villages and enjoy the outstanding nature that this country is blessed with.



- Here is a summary of this year's trail maintenance work:
- Complete maintenance (clearing and waymarking, fixing and minor deviation) end to end of Sections 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 20, 21, 23, 24, & 25
  - Major deviation, clearing, and waymarking of Section 1
  - Major deviation, partial clearing and waymarking of Section 2
  - Undergoing maintenance of Section 3
  - Partial maintenance of Section 16
  - Partial maintenance and minor deviation on Section 22



# GIVING BACK TO THE COMMUNITY

by Talar Mouradikian

Establishing mountain trails, like the Lebanon Mountain Trail, has various environmental and socio-economic benefits, especially for a country like Lebanon that is rich in natural and cultural heritage.

Such trails will encourage eco-tourism by showcasing and promoting the pristine natural environments of Lebanon to foreign visitors and guests, while also building cultural and environmental awareness within the country and its communities.

Moreover, such opportunities will boost the Lebanese rural economy by promoting local businesses, supporting livelihoods, and opening new job opportunities in tours, marketing, production, etc., and by providing low or no-cost recreational activities for all.

Best of all, these economic and social benefits will be achieved by preserving existing natural environments and ecosystems and by enhancing the quality of life in rural Lebanon.

# AU SERVICE D'UNE BONNE CAUSE

## UNE JOURNÉE DE NETTOYAGE DE MONTAGNE

by Magali Koyess

La Délégation de L'Union Européenne est depuis longtemps impliquée dans le soutien d'activités en faveur de la protection de l'environnement au Liban, en partenariat avec des institutions gouvernementales et des associations œuvrant dans le secteur.

En Octobre 2019, le sentier LMT a reçu le soutien de la Délégation de l'Union Européenne lors d'un nettoyage de la section 15, entre Baskinta et Mtein, une initiative organisée conjointement avec la LMTA et Live Love Lebanon.

Des adultes et enfants (libanais et européens) ont participé à l'activité qui incluait un volet ludique et éducatif pour les enfants (25 au total), avec une "chasse aux déchets" et l'identification de plantes comestibles sur le sentier. Cette activité fut encadrée par Takla Khoueiry du département Éducation de la LMTA.

En plus du nettoyage, les participants ont pu effectuer, durant la journée, une excursion dans la région de Mtein, ayant pour but de découvrir les sites historiques et archéologiques sur le sentier, comme l'ancienne magnanerie de Mtein.

Les déchets ramassés et triés ont été acheminés au centre de recyclage géré par Live Love Recycle, situé à Bourj Hammoud.



Le message principal de la journée était le suivant :

Avec un simple geste et un sens de responsabilité, chaque personne est capable de contribuer à la préservation de nos montagnes, de notre environnement et de notre planète.



Project funded by the European Union



LIVE LOVE RECYCLE

Scan the QR code to download the app!





# LA SUISSE ET LE LMT

## PARTENAIRES EN RANDONNÉE

by Monika Schmutz Kirgöz

**La Suisse est une terre de randonnées et une destination très prisée par les randonneurs de partout. Que de lacs, montagnes, glaciers, forêts et terres cultivées à découvrir en parcourant les sentiers helvètes. C’est l’une des raisons pour laquelle l’Ambassade de Suisse au Liban a voulu être partenaire de la LMTA, l’association qui gère le sentier libanais de Grande Randonnée longeant les coins et recoins du Liban, un vrai paradis pour les randonneurs.**

Les sentiers du Lebanon Mountain Trail (LMT) dévoilent de superbes paysages et sont d’ailleurs tout aussi parcourus par des libanaises et des libanais que par les employé(e)s des représentations diplomatiques et les délégué(e)s d’organisations internationales au Liban ainsi que leurs ami(e)s de l’étranger en séjour au Liban.

En septembre 2019, l’ambassade de Suisse a inauguré un jumelage de sentiers entre la section 16 du LMT (Mtein - Falougha) et le Colombire-Leukerbad au Crans Montana (Canton Valais). Ce jumelage, symbole d’amitié, permet des échanges et une promotion mutuelle de sentiers entre les deux pays.

Nous avons posé quelques questions à Mme Monika Schmutz Kirgöz, l’Ambassadrice de Suisse au Liban, sur ce partenariat entre l’Ambassade de Suisse et la LMTA.



Mme Monika Schmutz Kirgöz, Ambassadrice de Suisse au Liban

**Qu’est ce qui a motivé votre choix de travailler avec notre Association ?**

Nous travaillons avec la LMTA depuis plusieurs années. L’association est une des organisations les plus importantes qui œuvrent pour le développement du tourisme durable et pour la protection des montagnes au Liban. Ce dernier thème me tient particulièrement à cœur.

En effet, je retrouve la liberté et le bien-être quand je marche dans les montagnes. J’ai effectué le parcours du LMT en entier et je ne peux imaginer un seul été sans randonner dans les montagnes en Suisse.

En Suisse, le tourisme de randonnée est déjà bien développé. Aujourd’hui, la Suisse compte environ 2.7 millions de randonneuses et de randonneurs!

Cette richesse est principalement le résultat d’efforts conjoints de l’association « Suisse Rando » et de ses 26 associations cantonales, grâce au financement de bailleurs de fonds privés et d’institutions publiques.

Nous considérons la LMTA comme le pendant de « Suisse Rando » au Liban. C’est donc naturel pour nous de vouloir travailler avec cette association pour soutenir la randonnée et contribuer à la protection des chemins et sentiers de randonnée au Liban.



Inauguration du Sentier Amitié avec la Suisse à Crans Montana, en la présence de Mme Elisabeth Gilgen, Première collaboratrice de l’ambassade de Suisse

**Quelles sont vos impressions sur la section du sentier que vous soutenez (Section 16: Mtein-Falougha) ?**

L’adoption de la Section 16 par l’ambassade de Suisse est le résultat d’un jumelage entre la commune de Crans-Montana (canton du Valais) et la LMTA. En Suisse, le sentier de l’amitié joint le village francophone de Colombire au village germanophone de Leukerbad. Chacun de ces deux sentiers en Suisse et au Liban relie des régions de langues ou de religions différentes.

Ils représentent l’amitié et la coopération entre nos deux pays pluriculturels.

**Quelle est votre vision sur l’importance de la présence d’un sentier de Grande Randonnée au Liban (la LMT en l’occurrence) et de l’importance d’obtenir une reconnaissance officielle pour une meilleure protection et mise en valeur ?**

C’est la reconnaissance par les institutions officielles des sentiers qui permet d’assurer leur protection. La Constitution suisse et la loi fédérale sur les chemins pour piétons et les chemins de randonnée pédestre (LCPR) garantissent juridiquement la préservation de la qualité du réseau des chemins de randonnée. Cette protection est unique au monde et fait partie des grandes réussites de « Suisse Rando » et de ses 26 associations cantonales. Pour cette raison spécifique, nous nous engageons avec la LMTA sur la section 16.

En effet, les municipalités sur la section 16 se sont montrées ouvertes à reconnaître et à protéger le chemin. Nous veillons ainsi à ce que ce travail tripartite effectué par la LMTA avec les municipalités en partenariat avec l’ambassade de Suisse soit durable.



LMT SECTIONS

\*ST: Side Trail  
\*\* LT: Literary Trail

Moderate  
Challenging

Difficult  
Very Difficult

Section #	From	To	Distance in Km	North to South		South to North	
				Elevation	Difficulty Level	Elevation	Difficulty Level
1A	Andqet	El Qoubaiyat	17	+663	-720	-663	+720
1	El Qoubaiyat	Tashea	18.5	+1216	-642	-1216	+642
2	Tashea	el Qemmamine	23	+1022	-1511	-1022	+1511
3	el Qemmamine	Kfar Bnine	9.3	+922	-587	-922	+587
4	Kfar Bnine	Bqaa Safrine	14.7	+1060	-1027	-1060	+1027
5	Bqaa Safrine	Ehden	18	+1143	-897	-1143	+897
6	Ehden	Qozhaya/Qadisha valley	10.4	+484	-959	-484	+959
7	Qozhaya/Qadisha valley	Bcharre	13.7	+1277	-797	-1277	+797
8	Bcharre	Bazaoun	19.3	+897	-912	-897	+912
9	Bazaoun	Tannourine el-Fauqa	19.7	+1210	-1109	-1210	+1109
Douma ST* p1	Baatara (via Sikket el Sham)	Douma	6.3	+213	-691	-213	+691
Douma ST p2	Baatara (via Foghri Mountain)	Douma	7.5	+704	-216	-704	+216
10	Tannourine el-Fauqa	El Aaqoura	17.2	+980	-1068	-980	+1068
Ehmej ST p1	Ehmej	Baatara Sinkhole	8.7	+508	-667	-508	+667
Ehmej ST p1	Ehmej	El Aaqoura	15.8	+1057	-777	-1057	+777
11	El Aaqoura	Afqa	20	+932	-958	-932	+958
12	Afqa	Faraya	18.2	+946	-803	-946	+803
13	Faraya	Kfardebiane	12.5	+357	-753	-357	+753
14	Kfardebiane	Baskinta	21.3	+947	-1004	-947	+1004
Baskinta LT**	Saydet Nih Convent	Mikhael Naime Mausoleum	24	+1200	-850	-1200	+850
15	Baskinta	El Mtain	17.5	+1004	-1099	-1004	+1099
16	El Mtain	Falougha	14.7	+1072	-607	-1072	+607
17	Falougha	Ain Zhalta	18	+560	-936	-560	+936
18	Ain Zhalta	El Barouk	22	+1093	-1221	-1093	+1221
19	El Barouk	Maaser ech-Chouf	14	+1067	-668	-1067	+668
20	Maaser ech-Chouf	Niha	14	+518	-629	-518	+629
21	Niha	Jezzine	16	+852	-918	-852	+918
Bkassine ST p1	Niha Fort	Bkassine	7.5	+298	-678	-298	+678
Bkassine ST p2	Bkassine	Jezzine	15	+615	-433	-615	+433
22	Jezzine	Aaitanit	15	+951	-881	-951	+881
23	Aaitanit	Kaoukaba Bou Arab	15.3	+716	-624	-716	+624
24	Kaoukaba Bou Arab	Rachaiya	8.7	+458	-246	-458	+246
25	Rachaiya	Hasbaiya	24.5	+829	-1311	-829	+1311
26	Hasbaiya	Marjaayoun	16	+626	-601	-626	+601



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KNOW YOUR WAYMARKS

	GO STRAIGHT	TURN LEFT	TURN RIGHT	WRONG DIRECTION	END/BEGINNING OF TRAIL
SIGN ON THE LMT					
SIGN ON SIDE TRAILS					
SIGN ON CONNECTING TRAILS					

6 EASY STEPS TO HIKE THE LMT

Consider your level of exercise

Hiking is suitable for people of all ages and levels of fitness.

It is important not to push yourself beyond your limits when starting to hike. Take frequent breaks and don't force your pace.

Prepare your hiking gear

Depending on the length and remoteness of your hike, make sure you have made the necessary arrangements when packing.

[Check out our full checklist](#) of items to pack when preparing for a hiking trip.

Choose the right trail

You can either hike the whole trail or choose to hike a specific section, depending on your level of experience. The Lebanon Mountain Trail is generally a difficult path.

Hiking it from end to end is a challenging venture. In summary, a real adventure awaits you!

Check the weather

Check the weather before you leave to make sure you know what to pack! That said if you are going on a long trip (more than just a few days) always be equipped for good and bad weather, cold or warm. You could experience the 4 seasons during your trip.

Consider joining a group event or activity

If you're hiking alone, take the time to notify us via social media or email, to make sure that you have access to the necessary resources. We also recommend you join a group activity or hike with the help of LMT local guides or tour operators.

Leave No Trace

It's up to all of us to preserve the LMT by following the Leave no Trace principles:  
Plan ahead | Travel on durable surfaces | Dispose of your waste properly | Leave what you find | Minimize campfire impacts | Respect wildlife | Be considerate of other hikers.





# 3 QUESTIONS FOR A TRAIL ADOPTER

## Roy Mehanna

Adopter of Section 26 (Hasbaiya - Marjaayoun)

**What made you become an LMT Trail Adopter?**

When the idea of adopting a trail was first launched by the LMTA, I knew I wanted to be a part of it. It made me feel involved and happy to help in the conservation of this unique long trail distance, which brings together hikers from different nationalities and backgrounds irrespective of their social status; while protecting and preserving our mountains, and our rural communities.

**What is so unique about your adopted section?**

Section 26, from Hasbaiya to Marjaayoun, provides thru-hikers with either a fore-taste of the trail if they start from the South or a closure to their journey when coming from the North, making this section very special. It is either your entry point or the end of your journey!



Roy Mehanna

**As an adopter, how are you making a difference to the LMT?**

As an adopter of the trail, we ensure that the section is clean, cleared, easy to navigate, and in a natural state for it to be enjoyed by all.

## Sami Mitri

Adopter of Section 21 (Niha - Jezzine)

**What made you become an LMT Trail Adopter?**

The LMT is a long dynamic trail that needs constant attention and maintenance to adapt to the ever-changing conditions and cope with the new developments that are affecting it and its surroundings.

The terrain is very diverse (pinewoods, open fields, artificial lake, water cascade, etc.), and rich in culture, as this section passes through the “Holy Shrine of Job” in Niha, and passes beside the famous “Niha Fortress”.

**As an adopter, how are you making a difference to the LMT?**

My tasks as an adopter are not only to clear, clean, and mark the waymarks of the trail. It is to ADOPT, care, love, promote, and frequently visit that section. It also includes involving the local community in my actions. People are hiking and enjoying Section 21 freely, and the locals are embracing this trail going through their villages.



Sami Mitri

Every section is unique. Walking from Niha to Jezzine is a diverse and rich experience.

## Dany Njeim

Adopter of Section 14 (Kfardebian - Baskinta)

**What made you become an LMT Trail Adopter?**

My passion for Lebanon, its nature, and the magic of the trail itself.

**What is so unique about your adopted section?**

The mutual "relationship" between the Trail and myself.

**As an adopter, how are you making a difference to the LMT?**

To be passionate about preserving and maintaining a section of the trail makes a lot of difference. Projecting love into nature will reciprocate the same.



Dany Njeim

# SECTION ADOPTERS 2020

Section #	Adopter	Co-Adopter	Section #	Adopter	Co-Adopter
<b>Ehmej ST</b>	Samira Matta	Tarcisio Alvarez	<b>15</b>	Jacky Khairallah	
<b>1</b>	Soha Yammine	Gilbert Moukheiber	<b>16</b>	Carla Karam	Joseph Lteif
<b>3</b>	33 North	Sayed Morkos	<b>17</b>	Zeina Haddad	Joseph Lteif
<b>5</b>	Paul Khawaja		<b>18</b>	Shouf Biosphere Reserve	
<b>6</b>	Paul Khawaja		<b>19</b>	Shouf Biosphere Reserve	
<b>7</b>	Walid Khoury		<b>20</b>	Dory Renno	Fadi Baaklini
<b>8</b>	Pascal Abdallah	Laurent Gelinet	<b>21</b>	Sami Mitri	Melkart School
<b>9</b>	Tammar Hadechian	Imad Haddad	<b>22</b>	Assaad Najem	
<b>10</b>	Avedis Kalpaklian	Beatrice LeBon Chami	<b>23</b>	Jamal Nasser	Mohamad Hamdan
<b>11</b>	Philippe Germanos	Lieza Brusse	<b>24</b>	Jamal Nasser	Mohamad Hamdan
<b>12</b>	Hedwig Waltmans	Kamal Rizk	<b>25</b>	Eddy Fayad	Joseph Lteif
<b>13</b>	Fadi Baaklini	Naim Mhanna	<b>26</b>	Roy Mehanna	Zeina Boustany
<b>14</b>	Dany Njeim				



© Beatrice LeBon Chami



# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



# ONLINE TRAINING OF LMT LOCAL GUIDES

by Serge Soued



In 2016 the local guides operating on the LMT were invited to attend a 6-month training to enhance their skills and become better guides on their sections. This created a strong bond among them resulting in a Whatsapp group still active today.

Further to a follow-up assessment, two additional trainings were organized in 2018, featuring interpersonal Communication (including body language), map reading, and GPS usability.

After the Covid-19 multiple lockdowns, we were all confined and deprived of our natural environment and the outdoors. Taking advantage of the extra time on our hands and thanks to technology, the community development committee met via zoom and decided to continue the ongoing trainings remotely.

Twice a week, the committee met to choose various useful topics and locate people to address those subjects. It took time and a lot of effort but finally, they managed to work out all details and were ready for the first online session, in the hope of attracting a consistent and committed audience.

43 guides and LMTA staff were invited to join 8 online sessions, and were trained virtually on:

- Flora, a much-needed subject for local guides, given by Pascal Abdallah who shared his expertise and experience with the attendees, and facilitated by Omar Sakr.

- Edible plants, a very informative session given by Takla Khoury and facilitated by Zeinab Jeambey. This interactive session allowed the local guides to learn how to recognize these plants and pick them. Many were

surprised to learn that some plants have different names depending on which region they are found.

- Lebanon's weather, with Joe Kareh from Weather Lebanon, who gave 2 sessions and unveiled in detail his expertise on Lebanon's weather and its meteorological patterns. These sessions were facilitated by Martine Btaich.

- "Hiking safely and responsibly", a much-needed subject during a pandemic, led by Martine Btaich and Serge Soued. The virus contamination and its process were explained in full and many recommendations were provided in accordance with international health, and safety standards, in an effort to keep both guides and hikers safe and healthy.

- Traditional architecture in Lebanon, a cultural subject led by Pascal Abdallah, who gave 2 sessions facilitated by Josephine Chaar.

- Pricing, a sensitive issue the committee felt compelled to cover following the devaluation of the Lebanese currency. The session was led by Pascal Abdallah and Serge Soued and facilitated by Zeinab Jeambey.

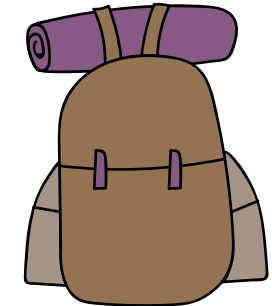
Our speakers made sure to deliver highly engaging and interesting sessions that brought new knowledge and information to our guides and staff and created much enthusiasm and excitement about coming back to our trail soon!

# HIKING & ORGANIZING HIKES

## RESPONSIBLY DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The LMTA takes the Covid-19 pandemic very seriously and is fully aware of the need to respect safety and security measures, even outdoors. Knowing that infected individuals may be asymptomatic and yet still contagious, one cannot be careful enough. The World Health Organization has come up with a series of simple recommendations that can help avoid contagion. Read them below!

When you are hiking on the Lebanon Mountain Trail, please do so responsibly



Here are some of the major tips for your reference:

- The number of hikers should not exceed six to eight in order to avoid the risk of contamination.

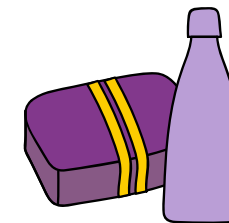
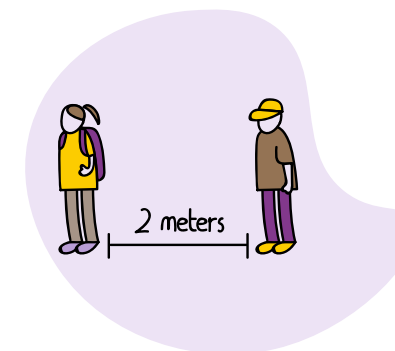
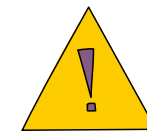
- Avoid crowded trails

- Avoid gathering places (reserve's visitor center, head of trails)

- Avoid borrowing items from other hikers (ex. Hiking poles)

- During pauses or rests, keep at least a 2-meter distance between you and other hikers.

Above all, please take the pandemic threat seriously!



The LMTA Community Development Committee has also developed a set of guidelines for hiking based on the WHO guidelines.

[Click here to download](#) our eBook "Hiking & Organizing Hikes Responsibly during the Covid-19 Pandemic".



# WILL NATURE-BASED TOURISM ACTIVITIES CONTRIBUTE TO THE TOURISM SECTOR'S RECOVERY?

by Jad Abou Arrage & Socrat Ghadban

Lebanon has been experiencing a multilayered crisis that began in October 2019, as well as the worst economic downturn in its modern history, which was compounded by the Covid-19 pandemic.

With the tourism sector suffering the most, two researchers from the Lebanese University – Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality Management conducted an online survey in June 2020, aiming at analyzing the Lebanese tourism domestic market dynamics from a demand perspective in light of the economic crisis and COVID-19 pandemic.

The survey questionnaire explored market changes related to:

- Previous Outbound Travel patterns
- Future Willingness to Travel
- Domestic Tourism patterns (Budget, Pull and Push factors, Preferences for different types of Accommodation and F&B services),
- Willingness to Pay for tourism services
- Preferred Destinations in Lebanon vs. Areas to avoid.

The results of 348 valid responses showed a deterioration in residents' purchasing power, which led to a drop in the willingness to travel abroad by more than 33%.

This significant decrease in willingness to travel abroad was accompanied by an important demand for domestic tourism with 70% of respondents expressing interest to travel inside Lebanon in the next 6 to 18 months, with the most popular duration being a one-day trip followed by two days' weekend.



According to the survey results, hiking represents the most popular activity among domestic travelers in Lebanon. However, with the absence of a specific legal framework for nature-based tourism services and activities, the increasing demand for such type of tourism is threatening the already fragile and sensitive ecosystems of Lebanon.

Therefore, concerned stakeholders should work on regulating nature-based services and activities, especially guiding and alternative accommodation,

in a way to ensure sustainability through unlocking their economic potential, minimizing their negative impacts on ecosystems and biodiversity, and guaranteeing local communities' participation and social inclusion.

From a destination perspective, the Shouf area ranked first among trendy destinations for domestic travelers, followed by Batroun and Akkar. This could be explained by the fact that these areas represent a convenient place to practice the top three activities selected by respondents: hiking, sightseeing, and camping.

The push factors (what encourages people to take a trip) showed that the majority of respondents are seeking to enjoy nature, discover, and relax.

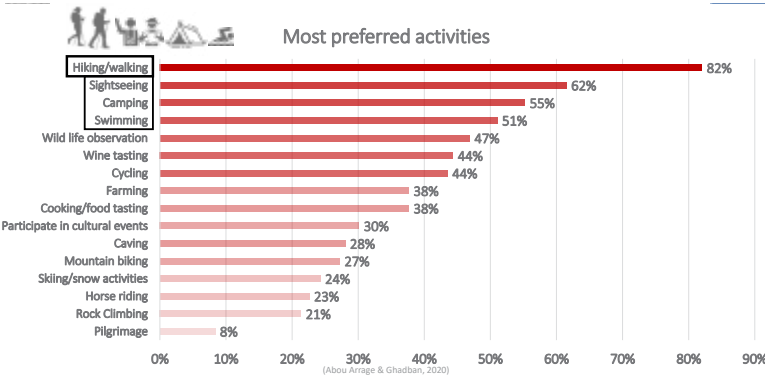
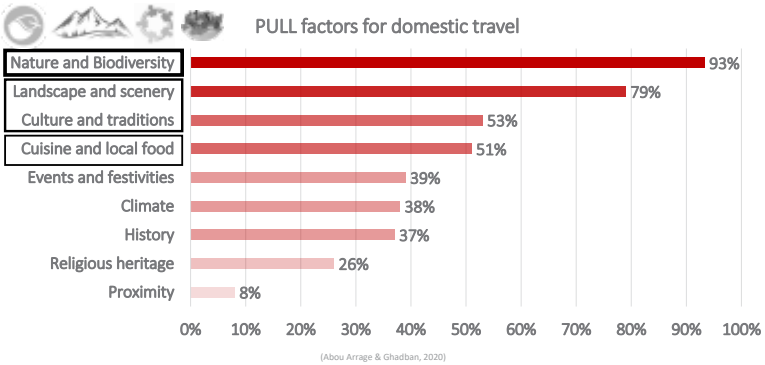
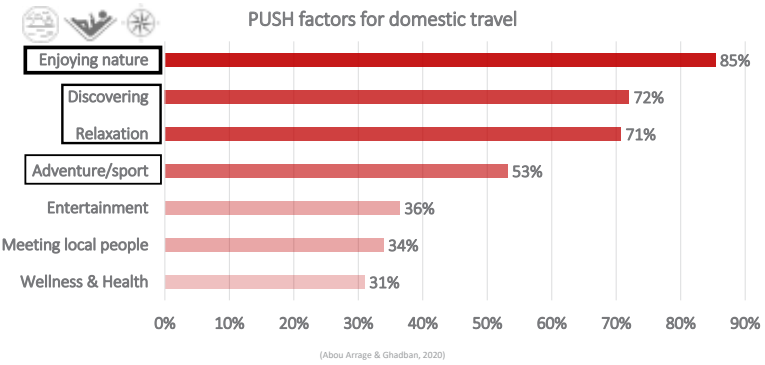
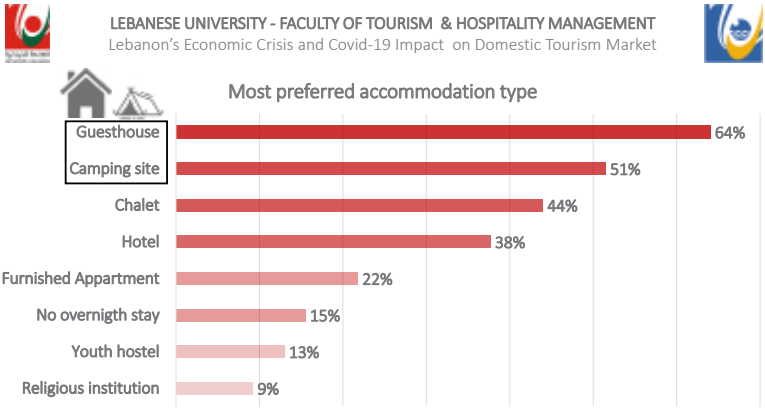
The pull factors (what attracts travelers to a particular destination) were nature, biodiversity, landscape, and sceneries.

Based on the above, sustainable and responsible nature-based tourism services and activities, including hiking and other trail-related activities, will in the future, represent a catalyst for tourism recovery.

**Jad Abou Arrage,**  
LMTA member & Community development committee  
Assistant professor at the Faculty of Tourism & Hospitality management - Lebanese University  
**Socrat Ghadban,**  
Assistant professor at the Faculty of Tourism & Hospitality management - Lebanese University

Full results available [on this link](#).

Reference: Abou Arrage, J. & Ghadban, S. (2020). Lebanon's Economic Crisis and Covid-19 Impact on Domestic Tourism Market. DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.15738.93127





# THE DANNIEH CASH FOR WORK PROJECT

by Stephanie Audi

**The 470 Km of the Lebanon Mountain Trail undergo weekly maintenance over the course of a year to provide hikers and explorers with a safe and unique experience throughout the various terrains and mountain ridges encountered.**

In its quest to build partnerships with and among municipalities and local villages, the Local Development Programme for Urban Areas in North Lebanon (UDP\_NL) launched the Dannieh Trail and Ecotourism Project. UDP\_NL is implemented by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH in partnership with LMTA and the Ministry of Social Affairs and is co-funded by the European Union and Germany.

The LMT Dannieh Trails and Ecotourism Project aims at improving the sustainability of the trail and bringing economic benefits to the local communities.

The project focused on sections 2, 3, and 4 between the villages of El Qemmamine, Kfarbnine, and Beqaa Safrine, passing by the villages of Sfire, Qorsayta, Nemrine, Bqarsouna, and Sir El Dannieh.

As part of the project, a total of 42 men and women were employed following the Cash for Work approach, mostly inhabitants of the region all year long. Cash for Work is the creation of short-term job opportunities with 40 days of work over up to three months that provide participants with income opportunities as well as valuable practical experience.

The experience between the LMTA trail maintenance team and the workers was exceptionally unique and positive. Good practices and a lot of trust and happy

vibes were built along the way. Another big step towards sustainable conservation and expansion of responsible tourism was achieved through this social and communal collaboration between LMTA, UDP\_NL, and the local municipalities.



**As our Trail Manager Christian put it, "this work is a dream come true for us. The trails we've worked on are some of the hardest to maintain, as they are still wild and remote. All of this would not have happened without this initiative and the help of the Cash for Work team".**



# درب الجبل اللبناني الضنيّة مشروع السياحة البيئيّة

**جمعية درب الجبل اللبناني - لجنة تنمية المجتمعات المحلية**

جوزفين الشعار

تكون أول مهام هذه اللجنة صياغة وتطبيق خطة العمل مع جمعية درب الجبل اللبناني. بعد ذلك يكون عليها الإهتمام بشؤون البيئة و السياحة في البلدة بمساعدة الجمعية عند الحاجة.

- حماية البيئة
- الحفاظ على الإرث الطبيعي في البلدة
- نشر الوعي البيئي في البلدة
- تعزيز و تطوير السياحة المسؤولة في البلدة
- تسويق البلدة سياحياً
- المساعدة في حماية درب الجبل اللبناني و الحفاظ عليه.

تهدف خطة العمل إلى تعزيز الشراكة بين بلديات الدرب والجمعية بحيث يصبح درب الجبل اللبناني وصيانته وتطويره جزء لا يتجزأ من الخطط البلدية المستقبلية، كما ان دعم التنمية المحلية في البلدات يكون من مهام جمعية درب الجبل اللبناني من خلال تطوير السياحة المسؤولة والترويج للموارد والمهارات المحلية.

ضمن إطار مشروع دروب الضنية والسياحة البيئية الممول من قبل الوكالة الألمانية للتعاون، تم العمل مع بلديتي بقاعصفرين وكفرننين بمساعدة خبراء واستشاريين في التنمية المحلية على وضع خطة عمل تشاركية بين البلدية وجمعية درب الجبل اللبناني للحفاظ على قسم الدرب الذي يمر في البلدة وتطويره.

كما تم العمل مع بلدية بزعون (ضمن مشروع Gargill) وبلدية فالوغا (ضمن مشروع السفارة Swiss).

وكان ذلك بعد لقاء مع مجلس البلدي، وتشكيل لجنة سميت بلجنة البيئة و السياحة المسؤولة في كلا البلديتين. تتضمن أعضاء من المجلس البلدي وأعضاء من المجتمع المحلي ناشطين في مجال البيئة، السياحة أو قراءة الخرائط...



بتمويل مشترك من الاتحاد الأوروبي



التعاون الألماني  
DEUTSCHE ZUSAMMENARBEIT

implemented by

**giz** Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH



الجمهورية اللبنانية  
وزارة الشؤون الاجتماعية



درب الجبل اللبناني  
Lebanon Mountain Trail





**EDUCATION**



# CONTINUING EDUCATION

## IN SCHOOLS ON THE LMT

While the LMTA education team continues working with students in schools alongside the Lebanon Mountain Trail villages and communities, we were prompted by the Covid-19 pandemic to attempt a transition to online environmental educational activities during the lock-down.

This however proved to be challenging because of the weak internet infrastructure, low access to connectivity, or a proper internet connection, in most rural areas in which we work.

Our education impact in the past year:

- Reaching out to 445 students
- Age span from 9 to 16 y.o.a.
- Working in 8 public schools
- Collaborating with 24 teachers

The topics covered were:

- Importance of trails and forests
- Sorting recyclables and composting
- Planting
- Water awareness, using the Water Awareness guidebook published by the LMTA
- Mouneh
- Cultural heritage
- Thematic photo exhibition
- Introducing the Mountain Explorers virtual educational gaming platform, [available online to everyone.](#)



All of this work was made possible thanks to the sponsorship of LMTA's supporters, who clearly believe in the LMTA values, in terms of conservation and educating future generations about responsible behavior towards our environment.

- Aidamoun Public School in Andqet, sponsored by **SGBL**
- Fnaydek el Gharbiyi Public School in Fnaydek, sponsored by **Cargill**
- Rachel Edde Public School in Sebeal, sponsored by **Cargill**
- Tannourine Public School in Tannourine, sponsored by **Cargill**
- Falougha Public School in Falougha, sponsored by **Swiss Embassy**
- Niha Public School in Niha, sponsored by **GEF**
- Batloun Ain Zhalta Public School in Batloun, sponsored by **GEF**
- Saghbine Public School in Saghbine, sponsored by **Dar**



حميد شديد

# حميد شديد

## مدير مدرسة تنورين

إنّ وجود جمعية "جمعية درب الجبل اللبناني" هو من العلامات المضيئة القليلة في لبنان اليوم. وضعت هذه الجمعية الانسان بفراذته والبيئة بتنوعها هدفا لورشة الانماء واعادة البناء. فاذا بها. وبعد خبرتي معها. كمدير لثانوية تنورين الرسمية. تتفاعل مع الطلاب. وتعيد صياغة قناعاتهم. ليعودوا الى تراثهم المجيد. فيحافظوا عليه. وينطلقوا منه لبناء مجتمع يحافظ على البيئة المحلية. ويسعى لتنميتها ورقّيها.

بالفعل. لجمعية درب الجبل اللبناني اباد بيضاء في الحفاظ على البيئة. وتشجيع السياحة البيئية. وتطوير المجتمعات المحلية. فليبارك الله كل ما تقوم به لتبقى الداعم المميز الذي يسعى ابدأ لتطوير الانسان ورقّي المجتمعات وتقدمها. وليبارك الله ايضا اعضاء الجمعية الذين يعلمون الناس. رغم عملهم العظيم الذي يؤدونه. دروسا في اللطف ودماثة الاخلاق ونقاوة الروح.





# HANDS ON ARCHEOLOGY IN BQAATOUTA

## ON SECTION 14 OF THE LMT!

by Alia Fares

2000 years ago, the Roman empire spread its military power and ruled over the entire Mediterranean Sea, the so-called Mare Nostrum.

Starting in the 1st c. BC up until the end of the 4th c. A.D, the Romans established 400 years of military control over most of the coastal regions from the western bays of southern France to the eastern harbors of Yemen. During that period, roman architecture, language, artifacts, economy, and social traditions prevailed and were turned into symbols of a wealthier status quo for local inhabitants.

Today, tangible evidence of this roman historic heritage “turned local”, is attested for in the architectural legacy revealed along with Lebanon’s western mountain range. Roman roads, bridges, aqueducts, temples, villa rusticae, rock-cut tombs, and ancient settlements, just to name a few, build an enormous corpus of cultural heritage sites which can still be visited today, hidden in far-away villages, in between large ancient oak trees and strategically on top of mountain cliffs.

One of these antique sites is found between Kfardeblian and Baskinta, along section 14 of the Lebanon Mountain Trail below Mount Sannine. Known as the “Blata” (rocky flat plateau), the site is made up of 3 horizontal rock-cut burial parallel aligned tombs and 2 adjacent wine press installation basins, all carved into the natural limestone surface from the rugged

upper hills of Bkaatouta overlooking the scenic landscape with a breathtaking view down to Beirut. The site is part of the survey of the Lebanon Mountain Trail Cultural Heritage Project, which aims to document and highlight all heritage sites located on the 470km of the LMT.

The LMT trail leads further towards another hiking path between Bqaatouta and Baskinta, which lately has become rather popular, leading down towards el-Assi, the water source of the dog river and continues towards Baskinta. Spectacular waterfalls, stunning picturesque mountain vistas, and very dense vegetation surround the trekker from every side of this newly discovered path.

Uncontrolled and harmful touristic activity in the summer of 2020 led Baskinta to close the trail from their

side. To protect and preserve both the cultural and natural heritage, and still allow tourists to visit the area, a hands-on archaeological training (with pre-obtained approval from the Lebanese General Directorate of Antiquities) and a proper mountain guiding educational tutorial were developed with the purpose of training new local guides from the region to maintain the flow of tourists and learn about their heritage.

**6 young boys and girls aged between 13 and 20 years old participated in 3 consecutive days of preliminary archaeological site cleaning works, historical educational sessions, and cultural heritage values.**



Fig. 1- Google Maps image of the Darjeh site, close to Bqaatouta village



Fig.2- Site rocky plateau with a view towards southwest



Fig.3- General view towards the west with 3 burial sites on the left, and 2 winepress basins to the right. Notice the Beqaata dam in the background

This training was accompanied by a second session in Mazraat Kfardeblian, in collaboration with Auberge Beity and the German Friedrich Ebert Stiftung on local mountain guiding techniques, flora, and fauna of the region, as well as historical and archaeological presentations. The local youth of Bqaatouta, Kfardeblian, and Faraya were given the knowledge and the opportunity to appreciate and better explain their own heritage to all future visitors. The Bqaatouta trail was also labeled as “Darb el-Tourath” or Heritage trail and awaits the inauguration of informative panels in the coming weeks. The youth of Bqaatouta have become proud ambassadors, protectors, and promoters of their own ancient cultural and natural legacy.



Fig.4- Site cleaning with the municipality, youth and village workers

The archaeological training at the Blata site and in Mazraat Kfardeblian has been achieved thanks to the support and aid of: Josephine Zgheib (Beity Association), Serge Soued (Lebanese Adventure), George Jeha (Flora and Fauna), the Red Cross Branch of Kfardeblian, Rachid Moubarak (Bqaatouta Municipality consultant), Alia Fares (archaeologist: [www.aliafares.webnode.com](http://www.aliafares.webnode.com)) and the dedicated enthusiasm and energy of the youth of Bqaatouta, Mazraat Kfardeblian, and Faraya.



Fig.5- Youth doing preliminary archaeological site cleaning tasks



Fig.7- General view from the site towards the east with Mount Sannine in the background



Fig.6- General view from the site towards the south and lower el-Assi river waterfalls





# LMTA OVERSEAS



# WHEN YOU'RE AN LMT AMBASSADOR

## Hisham Saab, Canada

After I hiked the LMT for 10 days back in April 2018 with my wife and son, I came back to Canada determined to do something in support of the LMT and the LMTA mission and vision.

I became a Canadian ambassador of the LMT in 2019. Alongside my colleague, LMT ambassador Wafaa El Osta, I am focused on officially creating the Canadian Friends of The Lebanon Mountain Trail (CFLMT) association as a non-profit organization, which hosts two major events annually in support of the LMT.

One is a public event, in February, with a presentation, to promote the yearly LMTA thru-walk. The second event is a joint hike with the Bruce Trail Association, which takes place in

June- July, during which we hike the LMT section of the Bruce Trail, which is a part of the joint Friendship Trail.

Protecting and maintaining our natural, stunningly beautiful sites and sceneries is a responsibility that we take very seriously. We are also committed to supporting the LMT's effort in preserving our diverse heritage and unique cultures along with the trail communities. It is a must for future generations. Empowering these communities and providing them with tools for economic development will help root them in their respective communities and create a space for social and economic equity.

I will be very happy if I can make modest contributions to these goals! Lebanon is calling on all of us to help and support keeping the country afloat in these very hard times.



Hisham Saab

# HEALING CHILDREN THROUGH LEBANON'S NATURE

by Cathy Laird & Loubna Haikal

We first met on the 2019 Thru Walk. Though we come from different states in Australia we quickly bonded and felt like family. Indeed, the whole Trail family became our family.

When we heard about the tragedy of the August 4 blast, we were desperate to help. What could we do? Where will the healing begin?

We had experienced first-hand the healing effect of walking in nature; the serenity and hope nature provides and thought that there is something we could do with that in mind.

Later on, we saw that the LMTA had started the Beirut Relief Initiative which includes hikes for children and young people in association with trained counselors, and thought this was the perfect project for us to adopt.

We launched a Gofundme campaign '*Healing the children through Lebanon's nature*' on October 27 asking our family, friends to help with this immensely important initiative. We ended up raising \$ AUD 6,770 (5,190 USD) thanks to the support of our community!

# ON THE IMPORTANCE OF THE LMT FOR LEBANON

## IN THE GENERAL CONTEXT & CURRENT CRISIS

by Rend Haffar

When I first hiked on the Lebanon Mountain Trail, back in 2012, I was not yet aware of the full scope of the LMTA.

I was truly charmed by the trail itself and realized that it offered the Lebanese people an opportunity to appreciate how beautiful a country they have, and how much it is worth preserving and protecting it.

It took me a little time and many discussions to realize that the goals of the Lebanon Mountain Trail Association (LMTA), were not limited to the trail's maintenance and the protection of its natural, cultural, and architectural heritage and landmarks. The LMTA also aims at developing environmentally and socially responsible rural tourism, and raising awareness about nature conservation, fauna, and flora, particularly by addressing the younger generations through education.

With all these objectives in mind, the task at hand is huge, and the means are limited. All of this within the very challenging Lebanese context.



© Rend Haffar

This is why the role of the LMTA has been pivotal since its inception in 2007. The association has gained a solid reputation and recognition for its work overtime. It has been able to benefit from high-quality permanent staff and very committed and competent volunteers.

But the situation in Lebanon has never been easy when it comes to the preservation of natural resources. And since the turmoil that culminated in October 2019, and of course the devastating explosions of August 4th, 2020, the LMTA and many other NGOs have taken an even greater role

as the State weakened further and further, and are facing new pressures and tremendous challenges.

Now, more than ever, the role of the Lebanon Mountain Trail and its Association is fundamental, and it is essential to keep on supporting the mission. In the present difficult circumstances, it allows the citizens to breathe and enjoy nature while hiking, and thus find, by a simple way, a much-needed energy.

From Belgium, we will continue to support the LMTA, and wish our family in Lebanon the best of luck.



# WTN TRAILS & SUSTAINABILITY TASK TEAM IN COSTA RICA

by Nat Scrimshaw

Selected members from the World Trails Network (WTN) Trails & Sustainability Task Team, including LMTA president Maya Karkour, traveled to Costa Rica and during a week-long field trip walked for around 60 km from Monteverde to Costa de Pajaros on the Sendero Pacifico.

This included traversing the new Friendship Trail between the LMT and the Sendero Pacifico, a section between San Luis and Santa Rosa. A delegation from the LMTA joined Task team members for the hike and other expedition activities.

The Costa Rica expedition was in part designed to field test concepts used for a proposed “Sustainable Trails Toolbox.” This central project of the task team is designed to be an interactive online resource that will allow trail organizations, agencies, and individual stewards to find the information needed to realize trail projects at different scales and across the three "pillars" of sustainability: society, environment, and economy.

Our approach to sustainability mirrors the United Nations approach and supports the UN's 17 Sustainable

Development Goals. The expedition was also an opportunity to field test methods for rapid trail assessment. An overview of the expedition and its methodology can be found in the task team's final report, *A Sustainable Sendero Pacifico: Trail Making Rapid Assessment (Tramp)*.

If you are interested in the work of the WTN Trails & Sustainability Task Team, we invite you to subscribe to the monthly Sustainable Trails News. Contact us at [www.worldtrailsnetwork.org](http://www.worldtrailsnetwork.org)



# NEW FRIENDSHIP TRAIL:

LMT & SENDERO PACIFICO, COSTA RICA

by Nat Scrimshaw

The World Trails Network - Hub for the Americas (WTN Americas) facilitated a new WTN Friendship Trail between The LMT and Sendero Pacifico de Costa Rica.

The Friendship Trail section starts in San Luis, near the famous Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve, and ends in the mountain village of Santa Rosa. It also passes through the smaller communities of Veracruz and San Antonio.

A delegation from the LMTA joined a WTN Trails & Sustainability Task Team expedition for six days and five nights, walking the entire 60 km Sendero Pacifico from the continental divide in Monteverde to the coastal community of Costa de Pajaros, celebrating the new WTN Friendship Trail in Santa Rosa along the way.

The LMTA representatives joined task team members in reviewing the trail and advising Sendero Pacifico community members (see WTN Task team article). This opens up new opportunities for cultural and informational exchange for both Lebanon and Costa Rica.



Here are a few testimonials on the Costa Rica field expedition:

"I was amazed by the beautiful nature of Costa Rica and the enthusiasm of the local people to create hiking trails. I was very glad to share and exchange knowledge and insights and to participate in this unique initiative." - Andr s J. Moln r

"The expedition was an amazing opportunity to experience the landscapes and biodiversity of Costa Rica from cloud forest to coast. However, the highlights were the warm welcome from local communities along the trail and sharing the experience with fellow members of the Sustainability Task Team and delegation from the LMTA - an absolute delight!" - Julian Gray, UK

"Each kilometer was uniting us and making our group a team. We shared snacks, laughter, and trail concerns in our countries. Fresh fruit, loud monkeys, and mysterious hiding sloths resembled the wonders of local nature. Each community greeted us with festivities at the end of the day. But in the morning I wanted to grab them all and take them with us to the trail so they could celebrate the beauty of their land and make it even more precious through hiking." - Natasha Luzhkova, Russia



# OUR SUPPORTERS



THANK YOU TO ALL OUR DONORS AND PARTNERS  
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Agency, UDP\_NL project

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\$5,000 - \$10,000

Swiss Embassy in Lebanon



# BECOME A MEMBER OF THE LMTA!

Discover the LMTA Membership Program, a new way for you to support the Lebanon Mountain Trail, a national trail crossing the whole country!

You will also benefit from many discounts at carefully selected sports outlets, guesthouses, restaurants, organic produce retailers, health providers, LMTA hiking events, and much more.

- You can choose to become a:
- Supportive Member: \$100 yearly fee
  - Adrian Life Member: \$750 one-time fee

*Kindly note that we accept payments in LBP at the set bank withdrawal rate-currently at LBP 3,900.*

## BENEFITS FOR SUPPORTIVE MEMBERS:

### LMTA DISCOUNTS

- 10% discount on all hikes organized by the LMTA
- 10% discount on selected items in the LMTA store or online store
- 10% discount on LMTA publications

### GUESTHOUSES & ACCOMMODATIONS

- 20% discount on weekdays & 10% on week-ends at Guita Bed&Bloom in El Aaqoura
- 20% discount on weekdays & 10% on week-ends at Soha Village in Falougha
- 15% discount at Hotel Karam in Bazaoun
- 15% discount at Hadath El Jebbeh Guesthouse, in Hadath El Jebbeh
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- 10% discount at el'Hotel, éBoutique, and Cabanas.

### RESTAURANTS & FOOD

- 15% discount at Tawlet Beirut; Tawlet Ammiq; Tawlet Biomass
- 15% discount on organic olive oil, organic honey, and organic produce from Bassatine Banoub
- 10% discount on organic vegetables, fruits, and produce from Ibrahim's Farm
- 15% discount on selected Taqa products

### SPORTS SHOPS, EQUIPMENT & ACTIVITIES

- Up to 30% discount at Sports Experts
- 20% discount at ProShop
- 30% discount at La Maison Du Ski
- 20% discount on outdoor brands & 15% on other brands available in the store at Sports4ever (N/A on discounted items & in sales periods and fidelity cards)
- 10% discount on SUF Beanies Co. products
- 20% on Phoenus' made-in-Lebanon products: children balance bikes & tricycles, playgrounds, and wooden cabins & domes

### HEALTH & WELLBEING

- 15% discount from Batroun Water Sports on the surf, windsurf & SUP classes, and rental
- 10% discount from Eddé Sands' Tropical Spa, Alice Eddé Boutique, Gibran's Lebanon and éBoutique in the souks of Byblos
- 15% at Native Nursery in the Chouf on native plants & 15% on agro-ecology advice
- 25% discount at Bonsai Flowers on all flower arrangements, flower bouquets, or plants

- 15% discount on Savvy Element products, available through direct orders through their social media pages, and fairs (not available at retail stores)

### LMTA PRIVILEGES

- Email invitations to LMTA events and gatherings
- Priority notice & advance booking on Fall Trek, Thru-Walk & the LMT Friendship Trail

Please note that the above list may change from time to time with new partners and benefits. Pleas consult our website for the latest updates.

*\*Annual memberships are automatically renewable. An automatic notification email will be sent to members prior to renewal. Members are entitled to cancel their membership renewal at any time, by contacting directly the LMTA office. Memberships are non-transferable and non-refundable. Rates indicated above are net rates and include tax.*

HOW TO JOIN?  
[Click here](#)  
to read more on how to  
become an LMTA member!

# ADRIAN LIFE MEMBERS UNTIL DECEMBER 2020

Adrian Cazalet  
Alfred Farwagi  
Ali Hoballah  
Bassem Hibri  
Béatrice LeBon Chami  
Carol Feghali  
Christian Akhrass  
Dany Njeim  
Desmond Astley-Cooper  
Diana Fakhry  
Dory Renno  
Elie Akl  
Elise Salem  
Eric Francke  
Fadi Baaklini  
Fadia Mansour  
Fareed Al-Fouzan  
Fatme Darwich  
Fawzi Karam  
Faysal Assi  
Firas Assi  
Georgette Abdi  
Gisele Karam  
Greg McGiplin Jr.  
Hana Hibri  
Hani Helou  
Huda Saigh  
Imane El Rayess  
Ina Rihani  
Irene Bark

Jean-Pierre Cressot  
Jessica Yaacoub  
Jihan Khattar  
Joseph Karam  
Joseph Lteif  
Joumana El Brihi  
Karim El-Jisr  
Karim Sinno  
Layya Fakhry  
Lilian Yarak  
Lina Fakhry  
Loubna Hijazi  
Margaret Novotny  
Martin Roos  
Martine Allouche  
Martine Btaich  
May Karkour  
Maya Karkour  
May Khalife  
May Nasser Fakhry  
Michael Papaeraclous  
Michelle Moucarade  
Monique Bassila  
Zaarour  
Nadim Saad  
Nadine Chehade  
Nadine Weber  
Najwa Fakhry  
Namir Kanaan

Olivier Zuber  
Patrick Abi Nader  
Paul Khawaja  
Paul Tannous  
Peter Hrechdakian  
Ramez Shehadeh  
Rana Hanna  
Rania Bou Mosleh  
Rend Haffar  
Ric Francke  
Rindala Taleb  
Roger Cazalet  
Rola Chamas  
Rudy Farwagi  
Saad Khalife  
Salam Khalife  
Sami Khouri  
Sandro Allouche  
Sawsan Fadlallah  
Steven Fakhry  
Tamar Hadichian  
Tania Khalaf  
Tariq Al-Ahmadi  
Toufic Berbari  
Walid Abou Habib  
Wim Balvert  
Youssef Abillama  
Zeynab Khalif





**THANK YOU FOR  
BEING PART OF  
OUR COMMUNITY!**

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