



SCOUTS[®]
Creating a Better World

World Organization of the Scout Movement
Organisation Mondiale du Mouvement Scout
Всемирная Организация Скаутского Движения
Organización Mundial del Movimiento Scout
المنظمة العالمية للحركة الكشفية

World Scout Bureau, Central Office
Bureau Mondial du Scoutisme, Siège

Rue du Pré-Jérôme 5
P.O. Box 91
1211 Geneva 4 Plainpalais
SWITZERLAND

Phone (+41 22) 705 10 10
Fax (+41 22) 705 10 20
Email worldbureau@scout.org
Web scout.org

PRESS RELEASE

Scouts join humanitarian operation for Syrian refugees Funding from Saudi King supports young "Messengers of Peace"

14th January 2014, Beirut: Today, the Scouts in Lebanon were praised for their work to improve the well-being and support the integration of thousands of Syrian refugees in Lebanon. Working closely with the national authorities and local communities, Lebanese Scouts have focussed on the basic needs of families fleeing the war in neighbouring Syria, providing winter supplies, warm clothing and helping the children in particular to feel at home in their new communities.

Dr. Atif Abdelmageed Abdulrahman, Regional Director of the World Organization of the Scout Movement said: "Scouts are not the Red Crescent or Red Cross, nor are they the UN, but they live in the host communities, and cannot stand by when vulnerable families and children arrive. They are trained to take leadership, and so they have taken action."

Dr. Atif brings a World Scout team to visit two communities in the Nabatieh and Akkar regions on 14th and 15th January. With him are representatives of the World Scout Foundation which oversees the funding for local projects like this. The team includes businessmen Siegfried Weiser (WSF Chairman) and John Sutin (WSF Board Member), and WSF Director John Geoghegan.

Thanks to the funding from Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah, extra resources have been made available to help Scouts do even more such work, and to offer better training to young leaders.

Weiser added: "These Scouts are amazing – they reach out to the most vulnerable communities, giving thousand of hours of volunteer service, helping to make these families feel welcome in a strange land, and providing support like warm winter clothing. They are truly "Messengers of Peace"! Thanks to the support from King Abdullah, they also have winter kits to offer for these families, complimenting what is being provided by the local communities, and the Government of Lebanon"

The Prime Minister of Lebanon, his Excellency Najib Mikati will meet with the World Scouting team to discuss how this assistance is targeted. His Excellency is the Patron of one of the Scout associations in the Lebanese Scout Federation.

"With more than 2 million refugees from Syria – 840,000 in Lebanon, 576,000 in Jordan, 540,000 in Turkey, 210,000 in Iraq and 130,000 in Egypt – the work the scouts are doing throughout the region is really impressive", said Weiser. "Being able to witness this first hand is a privilege. In Europe, we hear in the press of how refugees are being hosted by neighbouring countries, but it is only when we see the reality of how a country like Lebanon is affected do we see the true scale. And no government can cope alone. So local Scout volunteers are vital in this programme. Working alongside national authorities this local volunteer force is truly impressive. It is not the first time the Lebanese Scouts have worked in this way – they have had their own troubles at home in recent years and have served their communities selflessly throughout. Now they are continuing this service. "

This week, the Scouts in Lebanon will provide over 100 families with winterised tents, and family winter kits. Warm winter clothes will also be distributed as part of their ongoing support to these vulnerable families.

Scott Teare, Secretary General of the World Organization of the Scout Movement said: "We are not a relief or humanitarian agency. However, these small efforts at a community level throughout the region all add up to an impressive impact. These Scouts cross ethnic, religious, political and

cultural boundaries to make sure their new neighbours can feel welcome. They truly are Messengers of Peace!”

Scouts were first recognised as “Messengers of Peace” by Saudi Arabia’s King Abdullah and the Swedish King because of their service to local communities in projects such as support to street gangs in San Salvador, street kids in Manila or building schools and houses for people in Columbia or dealing with bullying in schools in the United Kingdom. Since its inception in October 2012, the online community of “Messengers of Peace” has so far registered over 21 million service hours on www.scout.org from Scouts around the world towards 135,000 local community projects.

For media enquiries, please contact:

Atif Abdulrahman – atif@scout.org (+201006006262);

John Geoghegan – jgeoghegan@worldscoutfoundation.org (+41796392501);

Srinath – srinath@scout.org (+41793216849)

For images from World Scouting visit www.flickr.com/worldscouting