On a busy corner in Mar Mikhael, less than five minutes’ walk from St. Michael’s Maronite parish and just down the street from the hustle and bustle of Armenia street, sits a small corner store. A few weeks ago, the shop was buzzing with life as neighbors passed by to pick up anything they might need – fresh vegetables and fruits, bread, oil and sugar, chips and Pepsi, toilet paper and hand sanitizer.

The owner, Ammo Samir, has owned this shop for over 10 years, and has quietly supported his community from behind the counter since then. If families were in need of something but couldn’t pay, it was never a problem – Samir would give them what they needed, and they would come back to pay later (or not pay, if they weren’t able). Samir’s corner store was the center of life in this corner of the neighborhood.

Today, the shop is a shell of its former self – the glass forming the walls of the corner store is blown out, and the inside of the store has been gutted. But despite the destruction, there is still life all around. Builders hard at work beginning repairs to the doors and fixtures, and volunteers collecting water and napkins left in the attic, to be donated to St. Michael’s church.

Continued on next page....
SAMIR’S STORY

Samir was working at his shop as usual on August 4. At around 6, his wife left to get something from their apartment. At 6:08, the explosion happened. “Everything was dark, you couldn’t even see your hand in front of your face,” remembers Ammo Samir. After the initial shock of the blast, Samir ran to check on his wife. His home was destroyed, but his wife was safe. Outside, he saw one neighbor covered in blood, yelling for help. Ambulances were trying to get through but couldn’t. Samir wasn’t sure how he would be able to help his neighbors amidst the chaos, but he ran downstairs to do whatever he could.

For a few years now, Samir has been just barely getting by. With the influx of larger supermarkets and the economic crisis in Lebanon, business isn’t what it used to be. Samir and his wife make just enough money to pay for medicine and basic necessities. But after the explosion, Samir began to give away anything of his shop that could be of use. Three weeks later, amidst workers beginning to repair doors and take measurements for glass, a group of volunteers who had come from Bekaa to help with relief efforts were hard at work in the upstairs storage area of the shop, collecting bottles of water and napkins and tossing them down to other volunteers below. Samir told us that these volunteers would bring these materials to St. Michael’s to be distributed to the poor and anyone who needs them.

Samir says he isn’t doing any of this for notoriety. “Praise God I am safe. I don’t ask for much, or talk about what I’m doing, but I’m proud to help the families here, because I know what I am doing, and God knows what I am doing.”

PROGRESS REPORT

• 17 families have received support to rebuild their homes
• 9 businesses have received support
• 20+ homes and businesses in progress

HEALING TOGETHER

FDCD is offering:
• One-on-one PSS sessions for children
• Small workshops for youth and adults
• Online consultations

In collaboration with Marie-Adele Salem (MHPSS consultant), FDCD is offering psychosocial support sessions and workshops aiming at supporting individuals and families in better managing the weight of the August 4th explosion and its consequences.

HELP US REBUILD!

Your generous support allows FDCD to continue to rebuild Beirut. You can donate to FDCD directly with either of these accounts:

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