



THE BUSINESS OF INDEPENDENT & INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

plus



HOME LATEST TOURS & TRAVEL FEATURES INTERNATIONAL VIDEO CAREERS



ABOUT ISMP

Home > Development & Fundraising

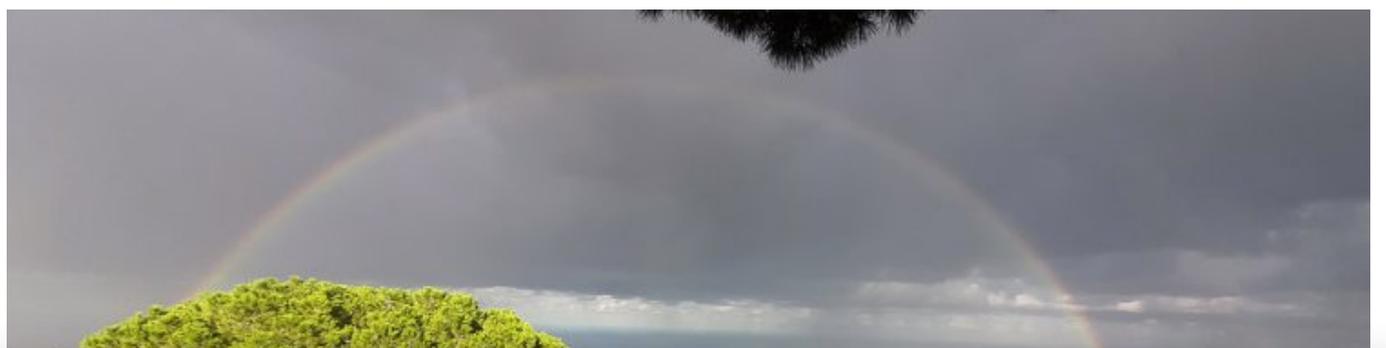
# How fundraising after the Lebanon blast kept children in school

## Staff and students at Brummana High School in Lebanon heard the explosion then rushed to help, writes Richard Bampfylde

by **Richard Bampfylde** — March 12, 2021

3 0 AA 0

in **Development & Fundraising, Features** Reading Time: 4min read





A rainbow over Brummana High School, Lebanon

 [Linked In](#)

 [Share on Facebook](#)

 [Share on Twitter](#)

 [Pin This](#)



Richard Bampfylde

For those in Lebanon on August 4 last year, the haunting memories will remain forever.

Preparing some food for dinner just after 6:00pm, in Brummana 25-minutes' drive above Beirut, we heard an almighty sound. It could have been lightning, a car bomb or a bomb dropped by a jet flying over (our biggest fear until now). The sheer magnitude of the sound was incredible and my whole four-storey building shook.

As it turned out, **it was the explosion of nearly 3,000 tonnes of ammonium nitrate**, the equivalent to 1,155 tonnes of TNT, that had been sitting in Beirut port. It had caught fire and exploded into a huge white cloud of smoke. The explosion reminded us of the terrible imagery of a nuclear bomb.

Rushing to the scene to support friends in the city, it's hard to describe the images we all saw as people, young, middle-aged and old, were carted off on scooters to hospitals across the city.

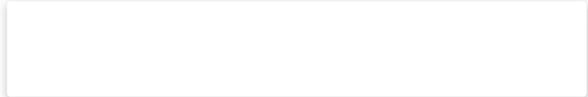
Scooters were the only realistic form of transportation then, with shattered glass from the destroyed buildings literally everywhere.

## “Students, staff and old scholars were there

This website uses cookies. By continuing to use this website you are giving consent to cookies being used. Visit

[our Privacy and Cookie Policy.](#)

[I Agree](#)



In the aftermath of the devastating explosion, the tragic death toll rose to over 200, 7,500 injured, 300,000 people made homeless and \$15 billion of property damage.

The blast only exacerbated present crises of a crippled economy, including a devaluation of the Lebanese Lira, rampant inflation, unemployment at near-50 per cent and a poverty rate even higher. Social and political unrest since October 2019 continues and this is all before we mention Covid-19 rife in the country.

Students, staff and old scholars (alumni) from Brummana High School (BHS) were there immediately on the Beirut streets to clean-up and distribute food and clothing. As our principal David Gray wrote at the time:

“Lots of our older students went into Beirut to help with the rescue and clean-up operations. Girls and boys became women and men overnight.

“At school, the student council turned the playground into a massive centre for donations of food, clothing and other essentials for those who had been made homeless or impoverished by the blast. They worked tirelessly and learned just how much can be done for others in a time of crisis. This is a lesson which those who participated in will carry throughout their lives.”

**“The school launched the Beirut Fund emergency appeal to support those families with tuition fee payments for their children.”**

Though the school did not suffer any physical damage, the BHS community was severely affected with many school families losing their homes or their businesses. The school launched the Beirut Fund emergency appeal to support those families with tuition fee payments for their children, so that they could at least guarantee the continuation of a quality education for their children. The fund ran for over four months and attracted

There have been many stories of inspiring fundraising campaigns, not least from the [Quaker schools](#) responded to the call for help as well as the current BHS Student Council.

One of the most enchanting fundraising stories was from Sarah Barrett in the UK, whose great-grandfather was amongst the earliest pupils at BHS. Sarah was able to raise over £2,000 by cycling many hundreds of miles across the East of England.

[Another comes from Sidcot School](#) which used the recent “random acts of kindness week” and half-term break to undertake fundraising activities. The Sidcot community has been raising money through walking, running and cycling over 4,715km – the exact distance between Sidcot in the UK and Brummana High School.

“Due to the continuing multiple crises in the country, the school is going to need more generous support in the coming months and years.”

Over the ten days of our fundraising campaign “BHS Gives” in December, the goal of \$50,000 was exceeded thanks to wonderfully generous support. Indeed, a total of \$130,000 from 175 donors has been raised since August. The Beirut Fund, specifically supporting families affected by the blast, attracted over \$70,000. The school is delighted to say that all school families who needed it have received substantial support, ensuring no student is left behind.

One parent I bumped into recently expressed his thanks to the school and the community for providing his whole family with a lifeline and such optimism at such a tragic time.

Due to the continuing multiple crises in the country, there is little doubt the school is going to need more generous support in the coming months and years. As principal Gray consistently reminds the community:

~~“We live in hope however and shall not give up. Lebanon is in a state of collapse; our job~~

This website uses cookies. By continuing to use this website you are giving consent to cookies being used. Visit

[our Privacy and Cookie Policy.](#)  **I Agree**

For now we would like to sincerely thank all those who have been able to support us at a

**Tags:** Beirut  Share 1   british schools  Share 3   fundraising   hero   international schools  Tweet 2   Lebanon  Pin 1 



### Richard Bampfylde

Richard Bampfylde is marketing manager for Brummana High School in Lebanon and responsible for BHS Gives campaign.

 **Video**

ALL VIDEO