

Dear Educator,

This week, **Operation Change** takes you and your students on a humanitarian adventure to Lebanon, where the team works with local community activists to build a skate park for Beirut's skateboarders and a rooftop garden for kids and seniors, bringing recreational space into a city scarred by decades of violence.

Your students can view this episode for free at OperationChange.com, where they can also sign up for an Operation Change Passport and earn points for exploring and sharing the rich digital content on the site.

We have provided a student activity sheet to help you make this episode of **Operation Change** part of your class plans. Have students complete the "Fact Check" quiz on the activity sheet to learn more about Lebanon. Then use the discussion questions to examine some of the issues brought to life in this episode, and to brainstorm with students how they can help address similar issues in their own community.

Operation Change offers you a unique opportunity to add a service learning dimension to your social studies curriculum. We encourage you to share this opportunity with other social studies teachers at your school, and we look forward to receiving your comments on this learning program through our feedback form at ymiclassroom.com/operationchange.

Sincerely,



Dr. Dominic Kinsley
Editor in Chief
Young Minds Inspired



OPERATION CHANGE

TARGET AUDIENCE

This program is designed to supplement the social studies curriculum for students in grades 9-12.

PROGRAM COMPONENTS

- This one-page teacher's guide.
- A reproducible student activity sheet for the Lebanon episode of **Operation Change**.
- YMI microsite at ymiclassroom.com/operationchange, for additional resources and to send feedback on this program.

TOUR THE OPERATIONCHANGE.COM WEBSITE

Begin your **Operation Change** humanitarian adventure by introducing students to the OperationChange.com website:

1. Click the green "Get Started" button on the homepage to show students how to sign up for an Operation Change Passport, so they can earn points for exploring and sharing content on the site. As you tour the site, have students notice how points are awarded for watching videos, viewing photo galleries, and clicking links to learn more. Also show students the "Top Explorers" leaderboard on the homepage, and explain that they can climb the ranks to become a Top Explorer every time they visit the site. (You may want to create your own in-class leaderboard to encourage student exploration of the site and reward top explorers.)
2. Click "About Us" for a video that explains the **Operation Change** mission and profiles of the **Operation Change** team members.
3. Click "The Series" to give students a preview of the places they can visit with the **Operation Change** team as they explore the website.
4. Click one of the buttons under the description of the Lebanon episode to launch the "Story Mode" content panels. Pause the video to show students how they can click the Story Mode tabs for background on the history and geography of this region (globe tab), information about the people and organizations featured in the episode (people tab), videos that provide an in-depth or behind-the-scenes look at topics presented in the episode (play-button tab), **Operation Change** team member blogs about their experience in Lebanon (dialogue tab), and multimedia content on Lebanon's culture (masks tab).

5. Explain to students that additional Story Mode content will appear alongside the video player on this page as they watch the episode, providing them with background facts and commentary.
6. Click "Causes" to show students a roster of some of the non-profit organizations that **Operation Change** has worked with in countries across the globe. Students can click the "Learn More" link to view multimedia content on the work of each organization, or use the "Click Here" link to visit the organization's website.
7. Complete your tour of the website by clicking "Exclusive Videos" to show students a quick way to browse the Story Mode videos for different featured episodes.

HOW TO USE THIS PROGRAM

1. Distribute photocopies of the student activity sheet to your class. Point out that the URL for viewing the Lebanon episode of **Operation Change** is provided at the top of the sheet. Then review the activity to help prepare students for this learning experience.
2. Students will complete Part 1, "Fact Check," at home after they have watched the episode and explored the Story Mode content. Review the answers to this quiz in class the next day, and provide time for students to challenge one another with the Fact Check questions they have developed on their own.
3. Part 2, "Mission Assessment," guides students through some of the issues presented in the episode. These discussion questions are designed to prompt critical thinking by encouraging students to consider the broader implications of specific incidents within the episode. Encourage students to expand the discussion by citing additional incidents as well as facts they have gathered from the Story Mode content. Also provide time for students to pose their own questions for discussion.
4. Students will complete Part 3, "Change Your Perspective," by working in small groups to brainstorm ways they can build on what they have learned from **Operation Change** to empower people in their own community and help them overcome challenges in their lives. Encourage students to start with ideas for taking action in small ways that can be multiplied by working together. Remind them of the **Operation Change** slogan, "Alone we can't do much, together we can change the world." Have students share their group's ideas in a class discussion.



OPERATION CHANGE



OPERATION CHANGE MISSION TO LEBANON

PART 1: FACT CHECK

Review the answers to the Fact Check quiz, asking students to

cite where in the episode or the Story Mode content they found each fact.

- 1-b Approximately **2,579,000** Lebanese now live in North America to escape the violence in their home country. (This fact can be found in the "Lebanese Community Worldwide" article and graphic under the Location tab in the Story Mode content.)
- 2-a Kahlil Gibran is a famous Lebanese **poet** who settled in New York and died there in 1931. (This fact can be found in the "Kahlil Gibran" article under the Culture tab in the Story Mode content.)
- 3-c Traditional Muslim women wear a veil to protect themselves from **men**. (Ameena Barakeh provides this fact during the episode at 13:30-35.)
- 4-b *Kibbeh*, the national dish of Lebanon, is made with **ground lamb**. (This fact can be found in the Learn More section of the "Food" article under the Culture tab in the Story Mode content.)
- 5-c Hearing loss can be caused by the sound of **a child's toy**. (This fact appears in the Story Mode content that displays alongside the episode at 19:22.)

PART 2: MISSION ASSESSMENT

Use these talking points to

guide your students' discussion of the Lebanon episode. Allow time for students to share their own discussion questions.

1. Discuss the two recreational spaces created in this episode separately. First, help students catalog some of the benefits of the skate park. For example, it provides: a safe alternative to skateboarding on the street; a pastime for young men who might otherwise become involved in criminal behavior; an outlet for pent up emotions; an escape from anxieties; a meeting place where differences of sect and sex don't matter; a measure of public acceptance for a sport that has been marginalized as offensive or dangerous. Discuss how these benefits of recreation help those who enjoy the skate park "re-create" their lives, at least for a little while, and help them see how it might be possible to re-create Lebanese society.

To help students assess the impact of the rooftop garden, remind them of Maya Najjar's description of this neighborhood as a place where "children just look through windows into a street that is full of garbage." How does this compare to what they can see in the garden and from the rooftop? How does the open space of the garden compare to the boxed-in view through a window? Discuss how this recreational space provides children with a new perspective on their world and what they can do in it. To what extent is it a protective space sheltering them from reality? To what extent is it a growing space preparing them to re-create that world they see through their windows?

2. Gender equality is an issue explored in several episodes of **Operation Change**. As in this episode, the issue is often complicated by cultural or religious traditions that assign separate roles to men and women which seem clearly discriminatory against women from the perspective of American society. Use the scene with Ameena's family to help students recognize that there are many perspectives on this issue. Ameena's grandmother, for example, believes that Muslim women should not be restricted by tradition, yet she wears the veil and performs the traditional role of cook for her family. Ameena's brother Omar believes that Muslim women should obey Islamic law, yet he does not think this means his sister must stop skateboarding. Have students discuss Ameena's perspective on this issue. How is she attempting to balance the demands of tradition against her own impulse to break free of stereotypes and be herself? Is it possible to maintain a balance between these two social forces? Or, as Snejana Daily seems to believe, must the old ways be abandoned in today's world?
3. The scene in which Steven Sawalich manages to save the Ayadina community center from the wrecking ball offers an opportunity to help students recognize the importance of negotiation in creating social change. If appropriate in your class, have students role play the conversation they imagine between Steven and the church officials touring the community center in order to compare different persuasive strategies. How does the scene play out if Steven begins by criticizing the church's plans? How does it play out if he begins by asking about those plans? How could he use the evidence of the rooftop garden to help make his case? How would he suggest the idea of changing the church's timetable — as a solution? a compromise? an opportunity for the church to show generosity? Explore these different dynamics of the scene, then ask students how they could apply negotiating skills to create change among their peers and within the school community. What divisions or differences of opinion among students might a good negotiator be able to resolve?

PART 3: CHANGE YOUR PERSPECTIVE

Have students work in small groups to brainstorm ways they can build on what they have learned to launch a humanitarian adventure in their own community. To get started, students might focus on improving local recreational spaces — parks, playgrounds, plantings, gardens — or volunteering to help out with local recreational programs. Have students share the results of their brainstorming in a class discussion.



OPERATION CHANGE MISSION TO LEBANON

JOIN THE MISSION AT OPERATIONCHANGE.COM/EPISODE/LEBANON

The **Operation Change** team travels to Beirut, Lebanon, an ancient city deeply scarred by decades of political violence, where they find local activists working to create recreational spaces where people can forget their differences and have fun together. The team helps one local group build a skate park for Beirut's growing number of young skateboarders, and they partner with a local community center to create a rooftop garden for kids and senior citizens, providing an oasis amidst the tight-packed buildings of a struggling neighborhood.

PART 1: FACT CHECK

As you watch this episode of **Operation Change**, keep an eye on the Story Mode content that displays alongside the video player. Then, after watching the episode, explore the Story Mode content in depth. Use what you learn to answer these questions about the region and its people.

- How many Lebanese live in North America to escape the violence in their home country?
 - 435,000
 - 2,579,000
 - 8,584,000
- Kahlil Gibran is a famous Lebanese _____ who settled in New York.
 - poet
 - graffiti artist
 - musician
- Traditional Muslim women wear a veil to protect themselves from _____.
 - the sun
 - dust
 - men
- Kibbeh*, the national dish of Lebanon, is made with _____.
 - ground chickpeas
 - ground lamb
 - grape leaves
- Hearing loss can be caused by the sound of _____.
 - a water fountain
 - a mosquito
 - a child's toy

Now come up with your own question to test your classmates' knowledge of Lebanon.

PART 2: MISSION ASSESSMENT

Use these discussion questions to reflect on what happens during the **Operation Change** mission to Lebanon. Add a question of your own in the space provided.

- In this episode, you can see how recreation space provides a catalyst for change in an urban community. How does the skate park improve life for teens and young adults in Beirut? How does the rooftop garden improve life for the children and senior citizens who come to the Ayadina Association community center? How can the benefits of these recreational spaces help promote change in the 'real' world of Lebanese society?
- When Snejana Daily shares a meal with Ameena Barakeh's family, she learns that Ameena's grandmother supports her efforts to break out of the traditional role assigned to women in Muslim culture, while her younger brother Omar believes she should follow the rules of Islam. What is your opinion in this debate? Are there benefits for Ameena and her family on both sides? Do you agree with Snejana that Omar's way of thinking is out of date in today's world?
- At the climax of this episode, Steven Sawalich talks with a group of church officials about their plans to evict the Ayadina community center so that they can begin construction of a new building on the site. What do you imagine Steven said to persuade these officials to change their plans? How would you negotiate for change in this situation? How did the decision to change the timetable for construction satisfy everyone's needs?

Your question:

PART 3: CHANGE YOUR PERSPECTIVE

You've seen how the **Operation Change** team helped improve life for two very different communities in Beirut. Now take a look at your own community. Are there places where a recreation space could help bring people together? Are there recreation programs you could work with as a volunteer? Talk with your classmates about ways you could follow the example of **Operation Change**. Use this space to brainstorm your own ideas.
