



# 2021 ANNUAL REPORT



**Against Wind and Waves:  
Challenging the challenges**

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# WELCOME LETTER

## **Against Wind and Waves: Challenging the challenges**



It seems that every new year that dawns on the Middle East-as well as on Lebanon too as it is part and parcel of it- is destined to be worse than its predecessors at all levels, political, safety-wise, economic, social and environmental, all of which reflect mounting despair among people constantly living a decline in their standard of life as well as in a decline in the extent of their aspirations and in the prospects to their future.

Therefore, whenever we bid farewell to a year, we wonder to what extent the next year will be worse and at what level.

The year 2021 was just one of the lean years that passed over the greater part of the Middle East, as it was subject for decades to attempts at destruction, dismantling, impoverishment, displacement, and emigration. A geopolitical view of the events in the region over a long timeline makes one feel that there is a systematic plan programmed to eliminate civilization and human presence in part of this region. Moreover, maintaining a state of the lack of awareness of this ongoing process in the region among large segments of its people may be a main element in this plan.

Faced with this reality, the Middle East Council of Churches, which is the body that groups all the church communities rooted in the various societies in this region, had but one main choice, namely to continue to perform the role it has played since its establishment, at all levels.

All dimensions are present in the work of the Council.

The relief-development dimension through which the Council ministers to the urgent needs of the affected and displaced groups, be it in terms of the provision foodstuffs, medications and health protection services, educational services, vocational rehabilitation services as well as in terms of other areas of basic support for a better life for people.

The theological dimension through which the following events and ventures have been planned and carried out are the following: a Day of Prayer for Unity is held on a regular basis each year, events pertaining to ecumenical relations as well as to Muslim-Christian relations are developed and implemented at regional level, in addition to consultations between the various ecclesiastical groups on their respective future aspirations, as well as events pertaining to religious nurture that aim at making the voice of youth heard, and at strengthening the theological-ecumenical dimension of the relations that exist between the institutes and colleges of theological education of the member churches.

The media and communication dimension covers the activities of the Council as well as the activities of the churches and all that relates to the concerns that the Council considers as top of priorities in its work. The Council's weekly newsletter communicates its voice and activities to its wide audience, and the Council's social media pages ensure interaction with an ecumenical and interested community that is constantly increasing in size and diversity.

On the other hand, the institutional set ups that support the work of the Council's various departments are constantly being upgraded in order to keep pace with the growth witnessed in their activities, as there is no growth without development, as well as with the aim of enhancing organizational-administrative performance in order to conform to internationally established standards.

Moreover, the financial management department is constantly developing its methods in-keeping with ongoing developments in the world of money management, accounting, and auditing.

From its side, the General Secretariat sustained all the above-mentioned aspects of the Council's work through a package of activities and measures that aimed at supporting and consolidating the evolving development of the various departments as well as in providing them with a boost in order to push them forward in achieving maximal productivity and results.

In this context, internal work policies and procedures were developed, and the functions of procurement coordination as well as human resources coordination were created. In addition to this, and in order to support programs in developing projects and formulating texts based on scientific data, a research commissioner post has been created, entrusted with the function of providing the General Secretariat as well as the various departments with the necessary data for project-writing, in addition to providing local and international partners with data that makes them form a realistic picture of the state of the region at economic, social, demographic and environmental levels.

In parallel, and due to the difficulties resulting from the confinement as well as from the energy problems in Lebanon, we have adopted administrative measures that increase the flexibility of the work team and raise its ability to deal with ensuing obstacles and challenges as they appeared.

On the other hand, as meetings constitute the best means of interaction between team members, as well as provide a guarantee that decision-making comes as the outcome of ongoing consultations that further participation at all levels, the General Secretariat has convened meetings at all levels, for teams of departments, directors of departments, staff of the various country offices of the Council, as well as specialized technical teams whenever deemed necessary. All meetings took on a regional character, especially the weekly meetings of directors of departments. The assistant secretaries-general attended many meetings with the various working groups and were convened to sit in with the Secretary-General whenever deemed necessary thus participating in the interaction and decision-making processes.

Moreover, the task that took a large part of the Council's work and efforts is related to conveying our standpoint as a consultative body of the churches in the Middle East and making the voice of the Middle Eastern Ecumenical Movement heard to the world in terms of analyzing on-going events and developments and expressing the stance of the Church in them in their human, social and cultural dimensions based on the teachings of Christ as well as on the writings of the apostles and on the heritage of the Fathers.

The Council's standpoint was voiced out through the Secretary-General's weekly articles published in Momentum, the Council's Weekly Bulletin that was launched just before the start of the present year. In addition, the Secretary-General had a substantive media appearance in line with work necessities, in addition to the sizable number of public lectures he gave, locally and internationally as well.

All of the above-mentioned activities are duly expounded in detail in the Annual Report which highlights the fundamental fact that this Council is a living interactive body with its surroundings, well aware of the issues they face and responding to them with challenges as well. This Council is an institution that has its own community of churches and partner institutions internationally and locally and is able to perform its key role and complete the tasks entrusted to it even if amid winds and storms.

In accomplishing its calling, it expresses the life and teachings of the Savior.

### **Dr. Michel E. Abs**

Secretary General | Middle East Council of Churches

*The Activities of the MECC Secretary General Dr. Michel Abs During 2021*

*You can find below a QR Code including links to all the activities of the MECC Secretary General Dr. Michel Abs during 2021, such as the Weekly messages, Media interviews, Meetings, Webinars, Lectures, Gatherings, other Activities..., Visits, Statements and Press Releases.*



# ABOUT MECC

The Middle East Council of Churches (MECC) brings together the four families of churches in the region — the Orthodox, the Oriental Orthodox, the Protestant and the Catholic — to deepen spiritual fellowship among its constituency and to unite them in word and deed. It strives to achieve and maintain Christian unity, presence and witness throughout the region, by bearing a living witness and spreading the gospel of salvation, reconciliation, love, and justice.

## VISION

The Council envisions a Middle East which is diverse and vibrant in its spiritual and social dimensions; where churches are united in their commitment to ecumenical Christian witness and Diakonia; where compassion, justice and peace are the founding elements of nations, communities and institutions; and where all can fully exercise their human rights and live in dignity

## VALUES

- Love and Compassion
- Justice
- Participation
- Integrity of Creation
- Peace

## APPROACHES

- Partnership
- Sustainability
- Advocacy
- Empowerment
- Professionalism



## MISSION

The Council's mission is to work towards the unification of visions, perspectives and attitudes among Eastern churches, especially on issues related to Christian presence and witness in the Middle East.

The Council's mission is seen today as being a bridge: A bridge between Eastern Christians: to remove prejudices and barriers between churches, the MECC brings together most Christians and churches in the Middle East. It provides them the adequate space to come together, pray, reflect, analyze, speak with a common voice, and act and witness together.

A bridge between Christians and peoples of other religions in the region: to reinforce and develop organized dialogue and partnerships with people of good will aimed at strengthening and deepening friendship and peace for the good of humanity.

A bridge between the Middle Eastern churches and churches around the world: to connect Christians and churches in the region and their brothers and sisters in Christ elsewhere.

# MEMBER CHURCHES

## WE ARE PRESENT IN:



LEBANON



SYRIA



JORDAN



IRAQ



PALESTINE



CYPRUS



EGYPT



IRAN

## Oriental Orthodox Churches (3):

- Coptic Orthodox Church
- Syriac Orthodox Church of Antioch and all the East
- Armenian Apostolic Church - Catholicosate of Cilicia

## Orthodox (chalcedonian) churches (4):

- Greek Orthodox Church of Alexandria and All Africa
- Greek Orthodox Church of Antioch and All the East
- Greek Orthodox Church of Jerusalem
- Greek Orthodox Church of Cyprus

## Evangelical churches (13):

- Evangelical Synod of the Nile
- Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East
- National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon
- National Evangelical Union of Lebanon
- Episcopal Church in Jerusalem and the Middle East
- Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land
- National Evangelical Church in Kuwait
- The Synod of the Evangelical Church in Iran
- Evangelical Church in Sudan
- Episcopal Church in Sudan
- Presbyterian Church in Sudan
- Protestant Church in Algeria
- Methodist Church in Tunisia

## Catholic churches (7):

- Maronite Syriac Church of Antioch
- Greek Catholic Melkite Church
- Chaldean Catholic Church of Babylon
- Syrian Catholic Church of Antioch
- Coptic Catholic Church
- Armenian Catholic Church
- Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem





# Secretary General Activities

The year 2021 witnessed major developments in the activities of the MECC, as set forth in the respective Departmental reports. The role of the Secretary General of the MECC could be described as a leader/enhancer role, as well as that of an enabler and catalyst for the good functioning of the MECC operations.

The interventions of the MECC Secretary General could be divided according to the following categories:

## I- Organizational and Work Processes Development

As stated in the MECC Strategic Quadrennial Framework, the MECC organizational development is considered as a top priority both for the sustainability of the Council as well as for its capacity to deal with fast on-going growth in a turbulent environment. In this respect, all measures and actions undertaken were done in harmony with what was foreseen in the Strategic Quadrennial Framework according to the following areas

### A- Information sharing, decision-making and team flexibility development

In order to develop the communication and decision-making process, as well as the flexibility of the team's action in the light of the unstable situation in Lebanon, we first reconsidered the classification of Staff Group Work, namely Staff Meetings and the Decision-making-making process. The following categories were defined, and the team proceeded on the basis of the following classification:

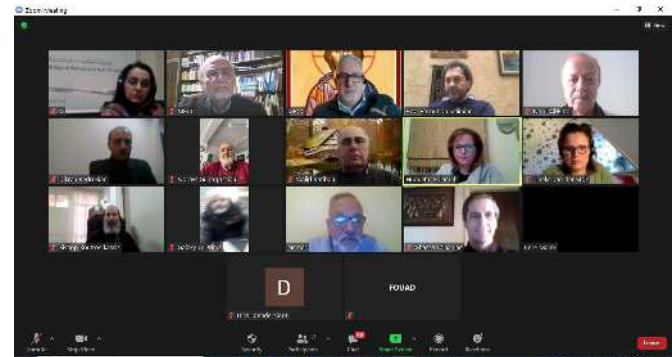
#### 1. Meetings of the Extended General Secretariat Bylaws - Article Seven: The General Secretariat

a- The Extended General Secretariat shall consist of the General Secretary and the Associate General Secretaries, as well as of the directors of units, departments, and programs. The Secretary General may invite whoever is deemed appropriate to attend meetings.

b- The Extended General Secretariat meets periodically, at least four times a year, at the invitation of the General Secretary or upon the suggestion of at least three members of the Expanded General Secretariat.

#### 2. Staff Meetings:

Include the directors of departments, directors of programs, directors of projects, Countries' directors as well as country officers. Such meetings are held to take decisions and expedite the day-to-day work of the MECC.



#### 3. Staff Gatherings:

includes the MECC staff of all ranks and responsibilities. It could be held either at the central level or by country office depending on need. These gatherings aim at discussing issues of common interest, mainly as related to managerial or logistical connotations.

#### 4. Staff Retreats:

Include all MECC staff in any given country or at the regional level for a day of spiritual reflection over a defined theme of the Christian Faith or over issues related to social values.







## 5. Staff Conventions:

Include all MECC staff called to come together in order to reflect on strategic topics related to the future of the MECC.

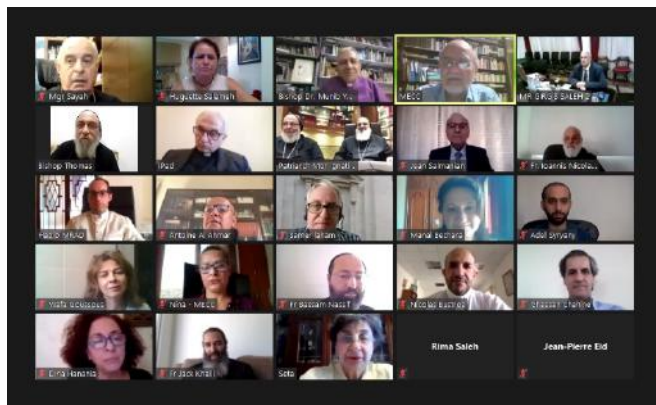
## 6. Workplace Staff Meetings:

Include all the staff operating in one specific workplace. This meeting is convened in order to deal with matters related to the same workplace such as logistics, the coordination of office hours, or any other issue limited to a specific workplace

In this respect, the meetings held at the MECC included Staff Meetings of different categories: Extended General Secretariat Meetings, Staff meetings, Departmental meetings and Staff retreats.

In parallel, representatives of churches met in their respective committees in the presence of the Secretary General as ex-officio and as convener in some cases. The meetings included the Theological Committee and Ecumenical Relations, the DSPR Central Committee, the JCC/DSPR, the Constitution and Bylaws amendment Committee and the General Assembly Preparatory Committee.

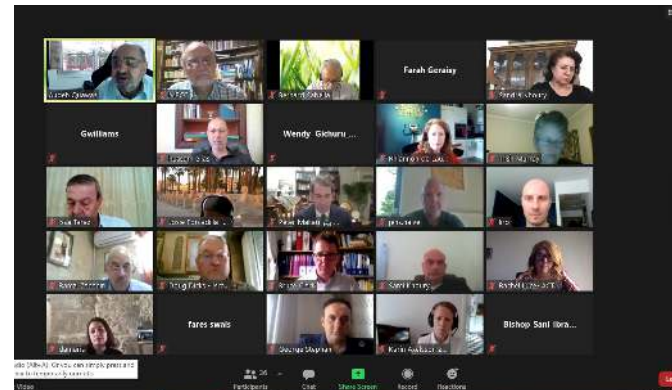
It is worth mentioning in this respect that the MECC Executive Committee held three meetings and the MECC Presidium held two meetings during the year 2021.



## B- Organizational Consolidation and Development Measrest

In order to cope with the foreseen eventual increase of its operation, as well as in order to comply with the international modern management standards, the MECC proceeded in implementing a series of measures, geared to reinforce its organizational structure and improve the general managerial processes.

These measures included the Development and revision of the MECC Policies and Procedures, the follow-up and discussion with DSPR concerning its internal regulations, the follow-up on the appointment of members of the Theological and Ecumenical Department Committee, the creation of an Ad-hoc Group for Eco-justice and the follow-up on the ATIME developments in order to succeed with the process of revitalizing the association and helping it reach its aims.



## **C- Human Capital Integration and Development**

In the light of the deep belief that human capital is the real capital of any organization, and in order the MECC to reintegrate its historic role in the Middle East after a deep crisis, which affected its human capital, the Council focused on the renewal and development of its human capital.

In this respect, the MECC appointed and integrated new colleagues, conducted a training session on project proposal development performed by the Regional Diakonia Director, as well as another training Session on finance and budgeting performed by the Finance Manager. Moreover, we are at present in the process of preparing training sessions on work relations and management to be delivered by the Secretary General.



In parallel with the above, the MECC staff attended two Spiritual Retreats for the development of the understanding of the Christian Faith. This will help the team members better perform their respective tasks by linking it to the Christian faith and to a deep understanding of Christianity. Such sessions will be conducted on a quarterly basis.

## **D- Emergency measures to respond to crises**

The unstable situation in Lebanon, and the continuously emerging unexpected crises at all levels, added more burden to MECC staff in the fulfilling of their duties.

In this respect, special managerial measures were undertaken during the confinement, and after the three-months confinement period, namely strict measures for the protection of the team in the premises.

In parallel, well-designed measures were taken during the gasoline and electricity crises such as rotating teams and work from home. The effects of these crises were minimal on productivity as it will be shown in the departmental reports, and this is due to the high level of capacity of adaptation and taking appropriate initiatives which the staff team showed.



## II- The Quadrennial Strategic Framework -MECC Strategic Objectives

During the year 2021, the MECC elaborated its Quadrennial Strategic Framework, which was approved by the MECC Executive Committee and presented and discussed at the Partners' meeting held online on April 14.

This framework, the outcome of long sessions of discussions within the team and with church representatives, dealt with the following objectives:

### **A- Strategic Objective 1: The Cornerstone: Reinforcing MECC's Organizational Setting, Processes and Culture - Towards a robust and sustainable council**

This objective aims at laying the cornerstone for a solid and sustainable council. Its target is to reinforce MECC Organizational Setting Processes and Culture towards a robust and sustainable council. It therefore includes Revision and update of Constitution and Bylaws, Managerial and Leadership Development, Internal and External Human Capital Development, Strategic Watch, Monitoring of Needs and Program Development and Organizational Culture Renewal and Development.

### **B- Strategic Objective 2: Rehabilitation of Social Capital and the Value System- Restore Human Dignity**

This objective includes the Rehabilitation of Social Capital and the Value System and Human Dignity Restoration and Exploration.

### **C- Strategic Objective 3: Consolidation and Development of Christian presence in the Middle East**

This objective aims at the Consolidation and Development of Christian presence in the Middle East. Its dimensions include Institutional Development, Housing, Medical Care, Education and Occupational Development.

### **D- Strategic Objective 4: Support for vulnerable and at-risk groups**

This objective deals with vulnerable groups as well as groups at-risk by providing support for them. These groups, as defined by the team are Youth, Women, people in rural remote and neglected area and migrant and refugees.

Moreover, it is worth noting that all MECC actions during the year 2021 were implemented in accordance with this strategic framework. Needless to say, not all the above-mentioned objectives were dealt with according to the same concentration and this is due mainly to the difficulties we encountered during this unprecedented year, not only in terms of difficulties, but more so in terms of the non-availability of support.

### III- Project Development

The Secretary General followed-up on the development of projects outside the framework of the MECC Departments and as a prelude either to start a new project or in preparation for the creation of a new department.

The methodological process adopted by the Council's approach consisted in the Secretary General performing the role of a catalyst or enabler or, in some cases, the initiator of a new field of involvement.

In addition to contributing to the smooth operational aspects of the different departments of the Council, the Secretary General facilitated the launching of the following projects:

#### Human Dignity: Restoration and Exploration

This project was developed by a team of four academicians, experts in the field of development. The team was convened and coordinated by the Council's Secretary General.

It includes the three dimensions of Awareness on Human Dignity at the level of youth as well as at community level, a survey about Human Dignity at the grassroots level, and the creation of an indicator of Human Dignity to be used as a benchmark for assessing the status of Human Dignity in the Arab World. The project proposal covered these areas to be investigated and was forwarded to the Council's partners.



#### A- Women and Family

This program area, initially written as a Woman Empowerment Program, is being revised by a social work expert in coordination with the Secretary General and is to deal with women and family issues. Negotiations are under way with universities in order to secure cooperation in this task area.



#### B- Ecojustice Projects

Following the success of the Season of Creation Project, the unit on Ecojustice is studying at present new dimensions of intervention in the environmental field.

Its action is to be coordinated with the Theological and Ecumenical Relations Department as well as with the foreseen Agricultural Program.



### **C- Agricultural Projects**

MECC has a large compiled portfolio of agricultural project proposals, including feasibility studies, submitted or developed by church related and secular experts, . Negotiations are being done with agronomists in view of entrusting them with the implementation or supervision of the projects as MECC project staff. These activities will be implemented in coordination with the Ecojustice Unit. Moreover, several dimensions are included in these projects in the field of the use of Church-owned land for development.

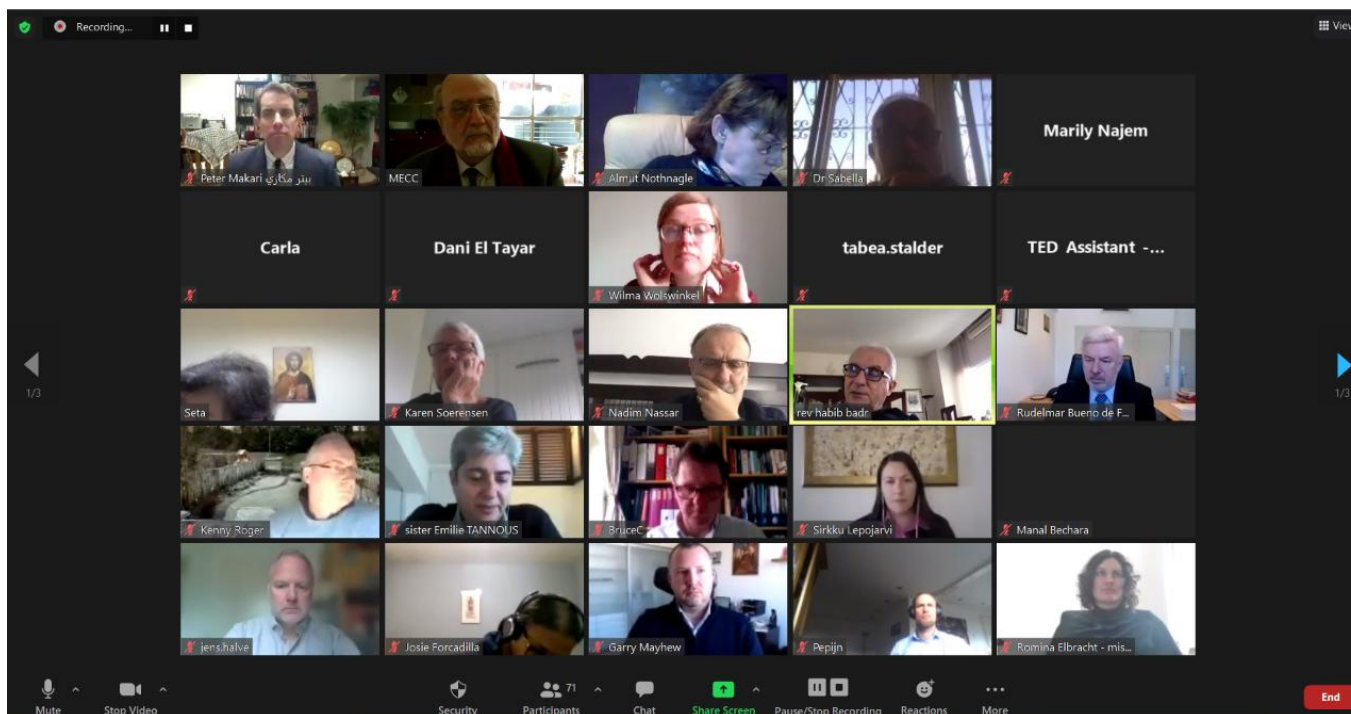
### **D- Migrant Workers Projects**

A project dealing with Migrant Workers is being elaborated by a team of colleagues and experts but still needs more thorough preparation to be implemented. The project text is being converted into a partners' template model to be submitted for support. This project will deal essentially with advocacy and campaigning. The human resources for the project are available and what is needed is the securing of funding for the launching out phase.

### **E- The Hermel Center**

This center for children with special needs in the remote and neglected area of Hermel was closed for a long period of time. Now the MECC is in negotiation with the Government Center for Educational Research and Development (CERD) to reopen it as a training center for children with special needs. The terms of partnership with CERD are at present being elaborated by lawyers.

## IV- Meetings with International Partners



International Partners are considered as the voice and support of the Middle Eastern as well as the worldwide Ecumenical Movement. As such the activities of the Secretary General included meetings with MECC's international partners.

The meetings had different themes and are detailed on the MECC site. The partners with whom meetings occurred are the following: Church of Sweden; North American Middle East Ecumenical Forum - Global Ministries UCC Disciples; ACT ALLIANCE; DANMISSION; Kirk In Actie; Core Partners Meeting - Preparatory Meeting of MECC with 10 MECC International partners; WCC - REOs General Secretaries Meeting of the Regional Ecumenical Organizations General Secretaries; North American Middle East Ecumenical Forum; Churches for Middle East Peace; Wilton Park and the organization of the Inclusive Citizenship Forum; International Organization for Migration; UN Agencies; MECC Global Consultation with Partners - 64 participants; Presbyterian World Mission; Mennonite Central Committee; Tear fund; CARE International; SAT- 7; Gulf Churches Fellowship; WCC central committee; ACTED and Embrace the Middle East.



## V- Meetings with Main Local Partners

The meeting with local partners were minimal since field partners usually meet with specific MECC departments. However, in some cases, these local partners demand to meet the Secretary General for him to introduce the organization or to discuss long-term perspectives of cooperation. The organizations with which the Secretary General held meetings are the following: INSAN Association, Bible Society, World Student Christian Federation, and the Center for Educational research and Development (CERD).

## VI- Participation to International Events



The Secretary General attended a series of online international events, most of them are church related. These events are: Contemporary Martyrs Day - Commemoration of the Copts Martyrs in Libya; Webinar- Workshop - Religious Communities & Sustainable Development In the Middle East, Humboldt University, Berlin; Webinar -Global Ministries - Disciples of Christ -What is the fate of Christianity –Christians in the Middle East and Their Role; Webinar on Covid 19 in the ME: Covid 19 challenges in the Middle East, WCC/MECC; WCC/MECC Consultation on Inter Faith Dialogue – Iraq.

## VII- Participation to Local Events



The MECC Secretary General, in view of the central place that MECC occupies in the sociocultural life of the area, is solicited to attend all sorts of events. Among the huge quantity of invitations, only the most related ones to MECC's objectives are selected. The list of events attended by the Secretary General includes: Film Shooting - Interview MECC SG on the kidnapping of the two Archbishops-Télé- Lumière; Celebration, Télé- Lumière's Foundation – Attendance and Interview with Dr. Abs; Celebration of the Consecration of Archbishop Roger Youssef Akhrass, Archbishop Cyril Babi and Archbishop Joseph Bali; Announcing environmental activities for the Middle Eastern Churches and their Council, June 5th, Season of Creation; Day of Peace for the East – Visit to MECC by the Icon of the Holy Family and the delegation; Deir Al Cherfeh Syrian Catholic Church – The Golden Priesthood and Silver Episcopal Jubilee of Mar Ignatius Youssef III Younan; Monastery Saydet Al Bir Bkennaya - One Voice Foundation Consultation; Armenian Catholic St Gregory the Illuminator , St Elias Cathedral - Enthronement of His Beatitude Raphael Bedros XXI Menassian; Book Signing of Me. Ibrahim Traboulsi - Beirut , Justice Palace; Bejeh Afforestation day – Season of Creation



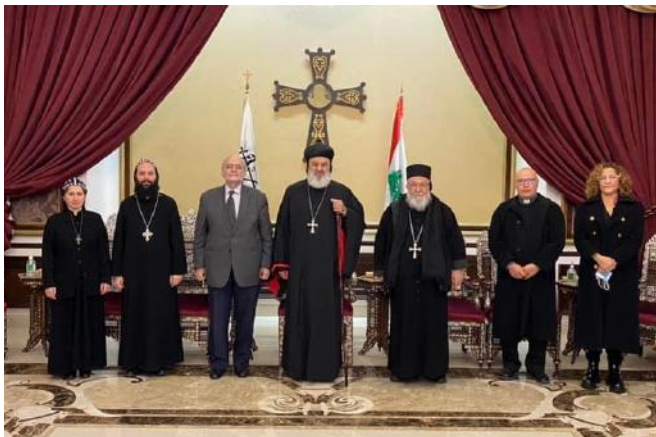




## VIII- Local Visits to Church Leaders

The Secretary General accompanied by Associate General secretaries as well as by MECC team members paid visits to local church leaderships. These visits included:

HE Archbishop Paul Abdel Al Sater of the Maronite Diocese of Beirut; HB Patriarch Youssef Al-Absi of the Catholic Melkite Church; HE Reverent Dr. Habib Badr President of the National Evangelical Union in Lebanon and Head of the National Evangelical Church of Beirut; HE Archbishop Georges Saliba of the Syrian Orthodox Diocese of Mount and North Lebanon; HE Archbishop Daniel Kourieh of the Syrian Orthodox Diocese of Beirut; HB Patriarch Raphaël Minassian of the Armenian Catholic Church of Cilicia, and HH Patriarch Mar Ignatius Aphram II of the Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch.



## IX- Mission to Egypt

An eight-day mission to Egypt took place from November 28 to December 5, in preparation for the MECC General Assembly, which will be held in the Logos Papal Center, by the gracious invitation of His Holiness Pope Tawadros II of the Coptic Orthodox Church. Preparatory visits were inaugurated by coordination meetings with HH Pope Tawadros II and the Right Reverent Andrea Zaki, Head of the Synod of the Nile, as heads of the two Churches providing their generous financial support to the Assembly. Visits included consultation with all faith community leaders in Egypt including the following:

- Meeting with HH Patriarch Theodoros II of the Orthodox Church of Alexandria and all Africa
- Attendance of a graduation ceremony of the Coptic Orthodox Church,
- Prayers with HB Patriarch Youssef II Younan of the Syrian Catholic Church,
- Meeting with HB Patriarch Ibrahim Ishac Sedrak of the Coptic Catholic Church,
- Meeting with HE Archbishop Sami Chehata Fawzi of the Anglican Church,
- Meeting with HE Archbishop Nicolas Antoniou of Tanta,
- Meeting with HE Bishop George Chihan of the Maronite Church,
- Meeting with Anba Aramia, director of the Coptic Cultural Center,





- Meeting with Anba Julius, head of the Coptic Bishopric for Social Services,
- Meeting with Sheikh Mohamad Al Amir Abou Zeid from Al Azhar,
- Visit to the Evangelical Center for the Dialogue of Religions,
- Meeting with the leadership of the Evangelical Hospital,
- Meeting with the Logos Center team in which the Assembly will be held,
- Visit to Anaphora Ecological Center,
- Meeting with Fr. Damaskinos, Secretary General of the Egypt Council of Churches,

## **In addition to visits to faith community leaders, the mission to Egypt included:**

- Visit to the cave where the Holy Family took refuge in Old Egypt
- Interview on Al Karazah Evangelical Television with its director Rev. Refaat Fikri, MECC Associate General Secretary
- Conference at the Coptic Orthodox Cultural Center on Ecumenism in the Middle East
- Interview on the Coptic Orthodox Cultural Center television
- Participation in a celebration of the Hope Organization for the Handicapped
- Press conference

This mission benefited of the close follow-up of the Honorary General Secretary Dr Gergis Saleh and the Associate General Secretary Rev. Refaat Fikri.

## **X- Articles, Conferences and Media Appearances**

The Secretary General accompanied by Associate General secretaries as well as by MECC team members paid visits to local church leaderships. These visits included:

HE Archbishop Paul Abdel Al Sater of the Maronite Diocese of Beirut; HB Patriarch Youssef Al-Absi of the Catholic Melkite Church; HE Reverent Dr. Habib Badr President of the National Evangelical Union in Lebanon and Head of the National Evangelical Church of Beirut; HE Archbishop Georges Saliba of the Syrian Orthodox Diocese of Mount and North Lebanon; HE Archbishop Daniel Kourieh of the Syrian Orthodox Diocese of Beirut; HB Patriarch Raphaël Minassian of the Armenian Catholic Church of Cilicia, and HH Patriarch Mar Ignatius Aphram II of the Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch.

### **1- Weekly Articles**

The Secretary General writes the editorial of the Momentum MECC weekly publication.

This publication is based on the necessity for the MECC to share ideas, thoughts and interact with its community, which includes its church leaderships and parishioners, its partners as well as its public. The total of these articles is forty-eight in total.

### **2- Circumstantial Messages**

Moreover, the MECC community extends messages on specific social and religious. These messages were eight in total.



### **3- Media Interviews**

The MECC Secretary General is continuously solicited for interviews and media appearances concerning different themes and topics. For the present year the total of such activities were sixteen.



#### 4- Meetings, Webinars, Lectures, and similar activities 28

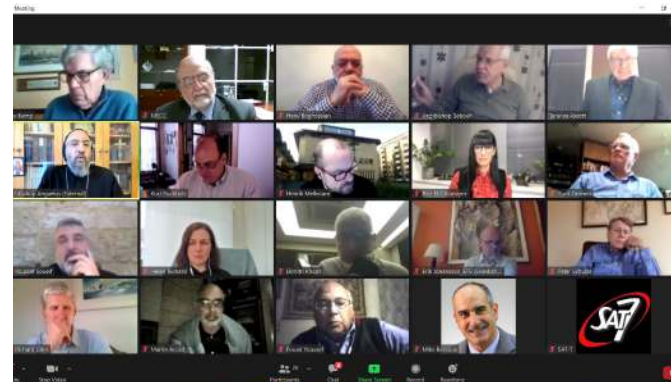
Despite the pandemic, the confinement and the shortage in fuel and electricity, the MECC activities at the cultural and intellectual level carried-on in different forms. The Secretary General attended webinars and gave several lectures on different topics, sharing the MECC vision and values, future perspectives and programs. These activities reached twenty-eight for the year 2021.sixteen.

#### 5- Statements 10

In some situations, the MECC is expected to make a statement related to this specific situation or event. In general, when the situation can be dealt with through an article to be published in Momentum, we do it this way; otherwise, we issue a statement. For the year 2021 MECC issued ten statements.

#### 6- Press Releases 4

Press releases are issued in very specific cases. Four such releases were issued in the year 2021.



# THEOLOGICAL AND ECUMENICAL DEPARTMENT

## Towards Unity

“

The Theological and Ecumenical Department (TED) serves the main mission of the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC), that is “Unity” among the churches of the region to promote Christian witness, dialogue, and communication with religions. At the theological level, TED is concerned with meetings and studies that contribute to strengthening the ecumenical spirit. At the formation level, it ensures the progress of work of the Association of Theological Institutes in the Middle East (ATIME). Whereas, at the pastoral level, it seeks to provide programs that encourage ecumenical work among parish servants and activists, especially the youth.

TED is supported in achieving its mission and performing its tasks by an ecumenical committee composed of theologians representing the four ecclesiastical families that make up the MECC. It was managed during the last quarter of 2021 by Father Antoine Al Ahmar, assisted by Dr. Rima Saleh and Mr. Jean Paul Eid.

”



## The Spiritual Life



The MECC's General Secretariat performs administrative work, but it belongs to an ecclesiastical body. It was evident, then, to watch over the spiritual life, so all work would be based on the Christian faith, in harmony with the mission of the Church, all for the glory of God. The department worked to create a spiritual atmosphere for the workers at the Council's headquarter through holding prayers on different occasions as well as two spiritual retreats. The first retreat took place in November 2021 at the Archdiocese of Achkout, during which a lecture was provided by Archbishop Boulos Rouhana on the synodal procession undertaken by the Catholic Church. The second retreat went along Christmas Eve, in the Visitation Monastery in Aintoura, during which Archimandrite Jacques Khalil gave a talk about the Nativity narrative in the Bible. The retreat was concluded with an ecumenical worship service and prayer for the unity of Christians.

## Prayer for Christian Unity



Prayers and reflections for the Week of Unity this year were prepared by a designated committee affiliated with the Theological and Ecumenical Department (TED). The department followed by issuing the Arabic version of the prayer week material that was published on social media platforms and printing the brochure and distributing it to churches in Lebanon and the Middle East.

Cooperation was ongoing with the Episcopal Commission for Ecumenical relations of APECL in Lebanon for the organization of the main celebrations in the capital and the regions, and with the Council's Communication and Public Relations Department for the media coverage of the event





# Trauma Healing and Spiritual Counseling Program



This program was launched to support priests and parish servants who have personally experienced crises, or who have accompanied believers who have suffered trauma as a result of wars, violence and successive crises that the countries of the Middle East are witnessing since decades.

The program relies on group participation, support sessions, and individual spiritual and psychological counseling sessions, in addition to training hours on some leadership skills and crisis management. It includes individual and group prayer times, relaxation sessions, guided exercise, pilgrimage trips, visits to churches and their leaders, and organized group meetings.

Four workshops have been completed till date in Iraq, and one in each of Syria and Egypt. 65 people have participated, including priests, nuns, and lay-servants in the parish. Two new workshops are being prepared to be held in Jordan and Iraq, as well as a training for trainers workshop that includes participants from previous workshops from the different countries.

After the Beirut port explosion on August 4, 2020, the department prepared two days of listening and training for the youth who were traumatized either because they participated in removing the rubble of neighborhoods and in relief work for the victims, and/or because they were present or living in the place of the disaster. Two other workshops were dedicated for the families of the martyrs of the explosion.



50 young participants joined these workshops, in addition to 52 from the martyrs' families.

The department has also begun preparing workshops targeting 90 students to help them recover from the trauma upon Beirut blast. The added value of this ecumenical program is that it brings together participants from churches. It is highly professional and specialized because of the trained psychotherapists and spiritual fathers, and the secured personal encounters with them, as well as ensuring follow-ups after the courses for those in need. The program includes activities suitable for the target groups, such as discussion sessions for families, hiking and climbing trips for the youth, in and joyful activities for children.



## Celebrations of the “Season of Creation”



The Season of Creation is the time when Churches throughout the world pray and work to preserve creation, our common home. It runs from September 1st till October 4th of each year. The first of September is the day declared by the Ecumenical Patriarch, in 1989, to pray for creation; The fourth of October is the feast of Saint Francis of Assisi, the author of the Canticle of the Creatures and the inspirer of those who care for God's creation, especially Pope Francis, who issued in 2015 his famous encyclical on caring for the common home under the title “Laudato si”, which are the first words of Saint Francis’ Canticle of the Creatures. This year’s Season of Creation was entitled “A home for all? Renewing the Oikos of God”. It was celebrated by the Middle East Council of Churches, and the Theological Department participated in a special committee that carried out many initiatives, including ecumenical prayers, awareness campaigns about the environment, and activities to clean nature and restore its beauty.



The activities were concluded with an afforestation campaign in the town of Bejeh in the Byblos, Lebanon. The village youth and officials participated in the campaign under the title “Youth Renew the Beauty of the Land”. This environmental day began with an opening prayer in the Parish Church, interspersed with speeches about caring for nature and preserving creation, and concluded with a meeting with the youth who planted trees in the vicinity of the church and the village and organized the distribution of seedlings of fruitful trees to the people as a special initiative to help renew their crops.

# DIAKONIA DEPARTMENT & ECUMENICAL RELIEF

## Service in Dignity A year in success and lesson learned

“ When do you know you are lost? When you stand in your country with your eyes looking at other countries, when you stand in a country where you did not grow up, and your eyes look to your country, when you stay in your country and your eyes are on the future you see it impossible, when you remain in your country and your eyes are on the past, but it will not return. ”

Amin Maloouf



The well-known Lebanese novelist Amin Maloof has described profoundly the situation of all IDPs, refugees, and host communities in countries that witnessed protracted crises over the last eleven years. The recent political and economic crises that had already hit more than 90% of inhabitants and put them under the below line of poverty reflect what Amin Maloof described for each one of affected victims as the true lost people even if they are still living in their home countries or elsewhere.

MECC through its different humanitarian and early recovery interventions in 2021, tried to fill that gap and bring a different approach of hope and resiliency to make beneficiaries retain the hope that tomorrow could be different and better.

The year 2021 witnessed numerous economic and political challenges along with the negative impact of COVID-19 which remains a big challenge on the wellbeing of people. The delay in finding political solution of the crises in Syria and its indirect impact on the remaining displaced people in neighboring countries still represent one of the major issues today that can ease the economic burden on hosting countries.

The collapse of the Lebanese economy and internal political dynamic during the last two years has pushed more than the two third of Lebanese population to live under the line of poverty with acceleration of deteriorated services at all levels. Although Jordan enjoys stability on a political level, it has also been suffering from many economic challenges due to hosting many refugees with the limited national resources it has today.

Despite many complicated unprecedented problems, we envisaged during program implementation, the Diakonia team succeeded in meeting a variety of people' needs during most difficult times that they passed through and met the end result objectives of each activity for our service towards every suffering person comes from our belief in the Council's mission.

The trust of partners, member churches, and all stakeholders and the tireless work of Diakonia staff contributed to the success of our programs irrespective of the impact of the pandemic in delaying achieving many activities. Our thanks are likewise to the MECC General Secretariat and other MECC departments for facilitating and supporting the implementation of programs.

Lastly, our last thanks go to each beneficiary who allowed us to experiment the joy of service and to be worthy to be the steward of our Lord whose face is manifested in each suffering person nowadays.

Through this annual 2021 report, MECC partners and friends acknowledge how MECC had invested efficiently every penny it received and the achieved impact on targeted beneficiaries.



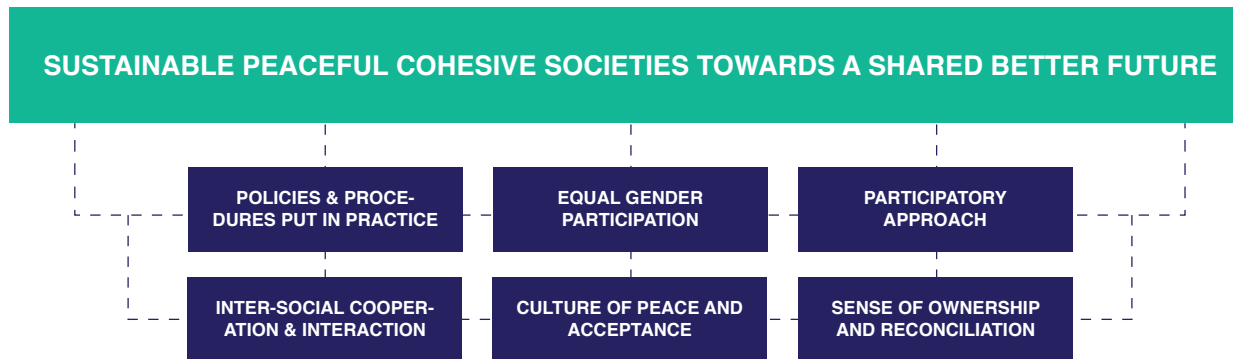
## Diakonia Objectives and Guiding Approach

Diakonia Department is abided with the following strategic objectives of the Middle East Council of Churches

1. Rehabilitation of Social Capital and the Value System – Restore Human Dignity
2. Support for vulnerable and at-risk groups: Youth, Women, Rural people, Migrants, and Refugees.



# Diakonia Guiding approach:



## Principles and values

SERVICE IN DIGNITY

POSITIVE IMPACT

TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

TIMELY AND EQUAL SERVICE TO ALL

NO-DISCRIMINATION

IMPARTIALITY

ZERO CORRUPTION

CLIMATE RESPONSIBILITY

DO NO HARM

GENDER EQUALITY

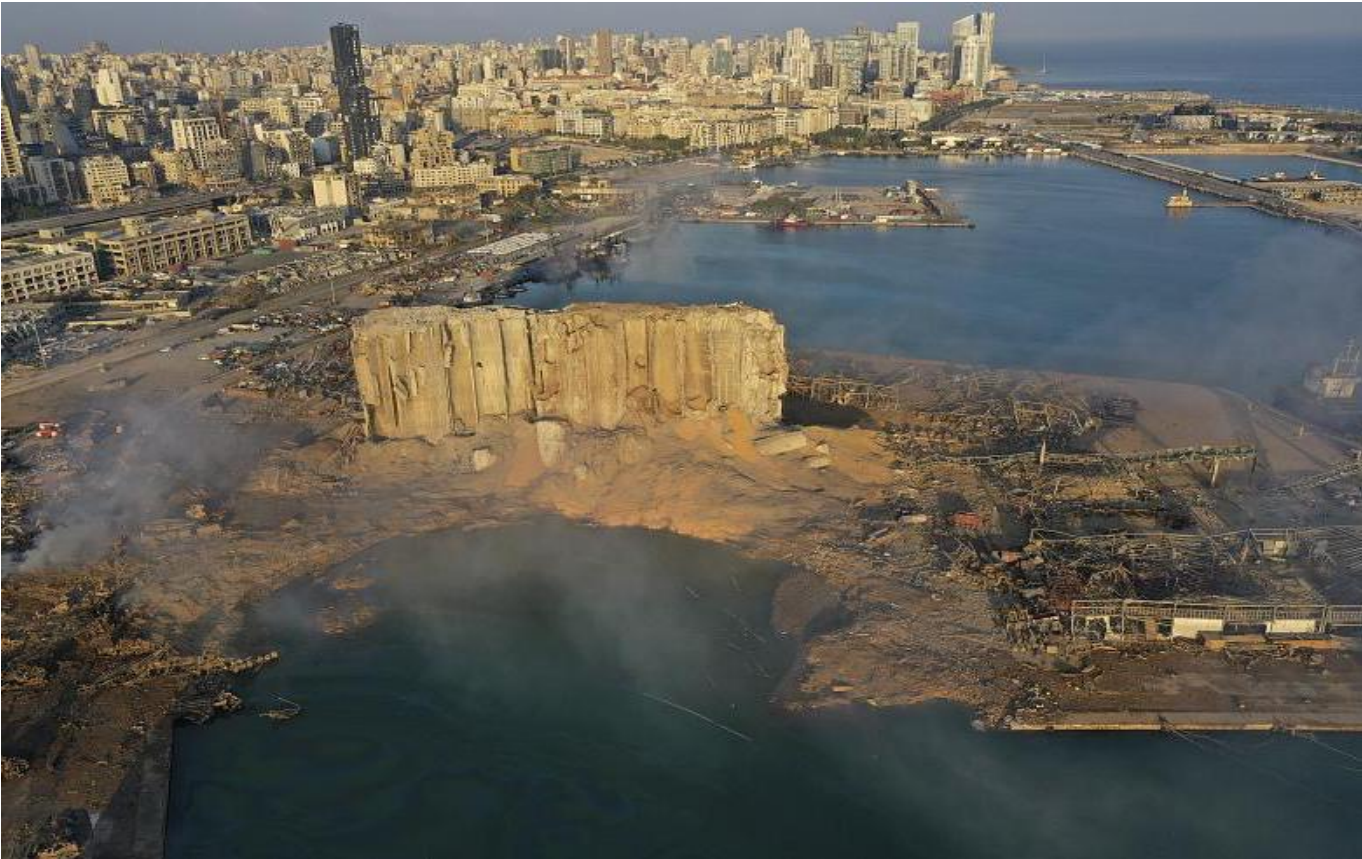


## Situation Update on Different Contexts

### Syria

The conflict in Syria has become and remains one of the world's largest and deadliest humanitarian crisis, with extensive deaths, displacement, and destruction along with multidimensional impacts. Its worsening economic situation has exacerbated the country's already difficult food crisis. Given the deadlock of political negotiations between parties to the conflict, it appears that there is almost no prospect for a negotiated solution to facilitate the safe return of Syrian refugees to their homes. Negotiations are no longer an intra-Syrian affair, the status quo of the shared domination of Syria is likely to continue in the short and medium terms. The humanitarian situation has deteriorated to levels not previously seen in the country's recent history: Protracted displacement, soaring food and fuel prices, stagnant salaries, loss of livelihoods, and reduced food production which have led to widespread food insecurity. Further economic contraction is expected affecting both IDPs, host communities, and potential returnees.





## Lebanon

In Lebanon, a country enduring a humanitarian catastrophe created by a financial meltdown, high levels of inflation, layoffs, pay cuts, and currency devaluation exacerbated by COVID-19 and the Beirut explosion are threatening the livelihoods and well-being of the most vulnerable people including Lebanese, displaced, and migrant workers.

The World Bank has called it one of the worst financial crises in centuries. Lebanon's GDP plummeted from about US\$55 billion in 2018 to a projected US\$20.5 billion in 2021, while real GDP per capita fell by 37.1 percent.

A recent poll found that 63% of Lebanese would leave the country permanently if they could, demonstrating how close this scenario could be. The Lebanese Lira (LBP) continues to lose value as inflation rates remain in the triple digits. The social impact, already dire, could become catastrophic. More than half the country's population is likely below the poverty line as unemployment is on the rise. Lebanon has witnessed a dramatic collapse in its basic services, driven by depleting foreign exchange (FX) reserves and the high cost of the FX import subsidies on food, fuel, and medication. Acute shortages of fuel have led to severe electricity blackouts across the country, affecting health and public services.



## Jordan

Jordan currently hosts the second largest proportion of refugees in the world compared to the number of citizens after Lebanon, as one out of 3 of Jordan's population is a refugee. The increasing demands put an additional pressure on the public services that Jordan cannot bear alone. The short fall in funding continue to deepen the vulnerability of Syrian refugees and Jordanians alike who face long-term poverty and deteriorating dwelling conditions.

The year 2021 marked remarkable qualitative achievements as well as outreaching more people through different planned activities with MECC partners. Acknowledging the reality of increased needs, especially with the ongoing impact of COVID-19 and its unseen repercussions in short and midterm, MECC answered the needs by investing its resources with utmost efficiency through constant realistic needs assessment based on involving beneficiaries in the process as main potential stockholders.

Statistics of COVID-19 cases over 2021 per country		
Country	Registered cases	Death
Syria	38844	2186
Lebanon	546427	7651
Jordan	753459	8538

## Achievements:

MECC looks always to impactful intervention rather than to quantitative achievements. All targeted indicators were met in Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan without major problems, while no activities were implemented in Iraq as MECC is still in the process to open its liaison office in coordination with local churches. MECC will continue its endeavors to have activities in places that are housing displaced and refugee people. The following tables show the number of beneficiaries targeted by each activity.



## Syria

In Syria, MECC achieved the following activities in Damascus, Damascus rural, Homs, Hama, Aleppo, Darra, Hassakeh, kamishly Tartous, Hama, and Lattakia :

Sector	Beneficiaries Activities	Beneficiaries types	Number of beneficiaries
Health	Distribution of cancerpatient medication	Patient	130
	Rehabilitation of health center	Center	4
	Awareness health sessions for women	Woman	3916
Education	Rehabilitation of six public and private schools	School	4300
	Hygiene promotion for students	Student	4300
	Distribution of School kit	Student	4300
	Hygiene promotion for students	Student	4300
	Distribution of School kit	Student	2825
	Remedial classes for students in need to pass their final exam	Student	600
	Tuition fees support for poor students in private schools	Student	367
Protection	Training program on Child protection for teachers	Teacher	45
	Training Positive parenting session	Parent	152
	Summer school club for children including PSS and different educational activities	Student	250
WASH	Cash for work activities	Worker	160
	Two Waste management campaign	Campaign	1000
Basic needs	Distribution of Food basket	Kit	2015
	Distribution Hygiene kit	Kit	6466
Livelihood	Systematic Vocational training	Beneficiary	252
	Financial Grant to initiate small private investment	Beneficiary	31
	Distribution of Summer or winter seeds with water tank to returnee farmers and vulnerable HHS	Family	180
	Distribution of Laying hens, fodder and vet services to returnee farmers and vulnerable HHS	Family	180
	Training on Home caretaker	Beneficiary	20
Rehabilitaion and renovation of Diaconal church services	Eleven buildings were rehabilitated across the country	Building	20000
<b>Total Targeted beneficiaries</b>			<b>55793</b>

## Lebanon

In Lebanon, MECC achieved the following activities in Greater Beirut, Mount Lebanon, Tripoli, Akkar, Bekka, and the South:

Sector	Beneficiaries Activities	Beneficiaries types	Number of beneficiaries
Health	Providing Medication to chronic patients	Patient	2,144
	Supporting Cancer patients with cycles and medications	Patient	5
	Medical visitations & consultation in MECC dispensary	Patient	372
	Children's vaccination in MECC dispensary	Patient	262
	Health Awareness session for women	Beneficiary	96
Education	Tuition fees support to poor students in private schools	Student	492
Basic needs	Distribution Food basket	Kit	1,025
	Distribution Food Voucher	voucher	747
	Unrestricted Cash assistance	HH	4,688
	Unrestricted vouchers	voucher	840
	Distribution Hygiene kit	Kit	2,027
	Distribution of Hygiene Voucher	voucher	750
	Distribution of Dignity kit	Kit	1225
	Distribution of Diapers for Elderly	elderly	324
	Distribution of Kitchen Utensils	Kit	300
	Distribution of Bedding sets	Kit	175
Protection / Psychosocial support	MHPSS services	Beneficiary	466
	GBV Awareness	Beneficiary	600
Livelihood	Vocational training for women	Beneficiary	393
	Vocational training kits	Beneficiary	189
	Business Rehabilitation	Business	27
	Home caretaker	Beneficiary	60
<b>Total Targeted beneficiaries</b>			<b>17207</b>

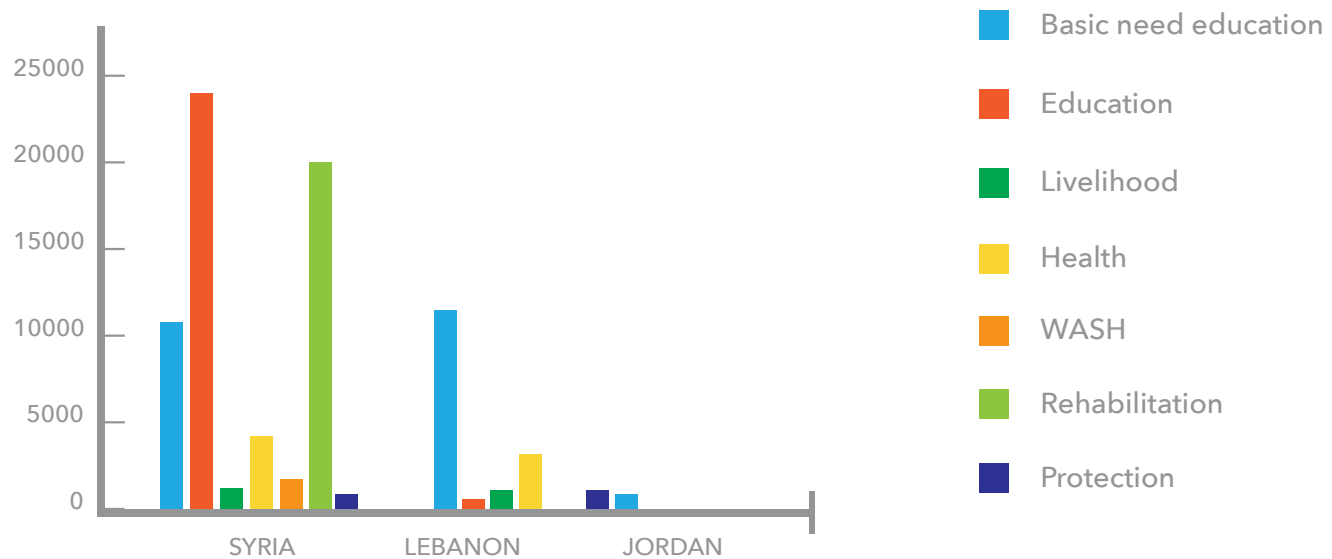


## Jordan

In Jordan MECC achieved the following activities in Al Badia and Amman:

Sector	Beneficiaries Activities	Beneficiaries types	Number of beneficiaries
Basic needs	Food basket	Kit (Voucher)	393
	Hygiene kit	Kit (Voucher)	335
	Clothing for adult	Kit (Voucher)	363
	Blankets	Kit	131
<b>Total Targeted beneficiaries</b>			<b>1022</b>

## Overall achieved targets per country and sector



**IN 2021 OUT OF 74052 DIRECT BENEFICIARIES.  
THE DIAKONIA DEPARTMENT TARGETED  
THE FOLLOWING SECTORS:**





**6929**

PEOPLE RECEIVED  
HEALTH SERVICES.

**8834**

STUDENTS RECEIVED  
EDUCATION SUPPORT.

**1160**

DIRECT BENEFICIARIES  
RECEIVED WASH SUPPORT.

**34723**

HHS RECEIVED FOOD AND  
NONFOOD ITEMS

**1332**

DIRECT BENEFICIARIES RECEIVED  
LIVELIHOOD SUPPORT INCLUDING  
FINANCIAL GRANTS.

**1263**

DIRECT BENEFICIARIES'  
PROTECTION SERVICES

**20000**

BENEFITED FROM REHABILITATED  
OF DIACONAL SERVICE BUILDINGS







“ TESTIMONIES FROM THE HEART! ”



# FROM THE HEART!

## Testimonials from beneficiaries

Diakonia Department is abided with the following strategic objectives of the Middle East Council of Churches

“

**Sara**

*Syrian widow and a mother of 8*

“We are a big family that depends on the pension of my father-in-law. Therefore, we cannot afford a lot of food and our nutrition is limited to burgle and few vegetables. You cannot imagine how important these food portions are for me and my family. Finally, my children will have tuna, mortadella, and olive oil.”

”

“

**Khaled**

*Syrian Refugee in Jordan*

lives in tents at the make- Shift camps in Northern Badia, in Jordan since 2013, a father of six children who works at nearby farms for some income depending on the season and work availability: “when we received food and detergent vouchers and went to the Civil Service Consumer Cooperation CSCC, we experienced the freedom to choose what we wanted and needed.”

”

“

**Tharwat**

*a Jordanian woman working as a cleaner at a sport club in Amman*

Her husband and two children lost their jobs during the pandemic as a result of the shutdown of movie theaters and Restaurants where they use to work. Upon receiving her vouchers she could not contain her happiness and said that giving them to her husband and boys lifted their moral now that they are able to shop and get what they need from the Sameh Mall.

”

“

We would like to thank MECC. The unrestricted voucher was so needed in this hard economic and social situation. We thank MECC team for their efforts and kind treatment with beneficiaries.

*a Beneficiary of food voucher in Lebanon said.*

”

“

“You don’t know how grateful we are. It helped me close my hospital pending bills and even buy some additional medication. May the Lord bless those who help the needy people in Lebanon. We survive, we fight thanks to these little glimmers of charity.”

*a Beneficiary of food voucher in Lebanon said.*

”



## Access to health services and covid-19 response



Health services were badly affected in Syria. More than 50% of health services became out of service as health treatment became very expensive compared with an average 40 US\$ /month salary per worker in addition to the increased cost of local medicines which officially increased more than 30% recently. Many cancer patients have no access to their medications and cycles on time which put the lives of many at risk. In Lebanon, after the social revolution in October 19 2019, health services witnessed numerous challenges due to the devaluation of hard currency to import medicines and spare parts for hospitals along with scarcity of electricity due to the increased cost of fuel no longer supported by the central bank of Lebanon. The COVID-19 added more pressure on the poor who cannot afford the cost of hygienic items and follow appropriate behavior to protect themselves and their families. MECC continued to provide health awareness program for women whose topics covered good practices to encounter COVID-19 in addition to providing medicines for people with chronic illnesses and cancer patients along with vaccination and medical counseling in MECC dispensary in Lebanon.

## Access to Education Services

The council is still committed to not losing a generation and offers all possible support to students either through providing acceleration learning opportunities, supporting tuition fees, or distribution of education materials. And for students to enjoy a safe learning space, the Council rehabilitated many schools that had been damaged during the crises including WASH sections and providing safe access to student with special needs. Education interventions included training sessions to students to encounter COVID-19 through special hygiene promotion sessions along with training teachers on the application of child protection policy.

The special hygiene promotion program that MECC launched in public schools in Syria contributed to develop the hygienic best practice in schools and homes as well providing children with tools and accessories to encounter the spread of COVID-19. The program outreached about 4000 students especially in rehabilitee schools.

# Promoting sustainable opportunities for employment and growth in the agricultural sector



Being livelihood is in the center of MECC humanitarian interventions, Diakonia department implemented many systematic vocational trainings for youth and unemployed people, soft training for women, reactivation agriculture investment for affected farmers, internship program for graduates from Vocational courses, as well as financial grants to beneficiaries to initiate small investments based on what they learned.

Additionally, MECC supported financially many skilled people whose businesses were damaged during the crises or the Beirut port explosion to reactivate their businesses and create job opportunities.

All above programs were accompanied by technical training on business startup, market research and feasibility study.



“

**Rima***a 34 year old Syrian women from the financial grant program*

managed to reinitiate her small kitchen by providing “Tannour” bread for the inhabitants in her village in Tartous: “Through MECC support and guidance, I managed to re-established my small kitchen and I already feel improvement in the workload. Our neighbors, Al Yazdiey residents, and restaurant owners are asking me to prepare Tannour bread. This will enable me to provide a stable life to my children so they can continue their education.”

”

“

**Souad***mother of two, and the only breadwinner of the family*

“My income is very small, my purchases are limited to some kinds of food and I always try to buy the cheapest items next to bread. I am unable to buy eggs for my children despite knowing that it is essential for their growth. My children now eat eggs, and the hens are healthy thanks to the vitamins, fodder, medications, and necessary vaccines that were provided by MECC in addition to the periodic veterinary visits to check on the hens.”

”

“

**Ali***a 70 year old man from Dar'a region who benefited from Laying hens, fodder, and vet services program .*

“We now eat eggs every day thanks to the laying hens. This was not possible for we could not purchase eggs before. We are very poor and economize on everything; we try to save money on what we eat. I am waiting for the warmer season. The egg production will improve and we will be able to sell eggs and get income.”

”

The protracted crises in Syria affecting neighboring countries hosting Syria displaced people has left many aged people, injured victims, newly disabled people, and lonely women behind. The need of having trained people to serve aged people in homes, hospitals, or in elderly centers increased in recent years. MECC /Diakonia programs launched professional training on home care in order to provide needed manpower in this domain. The program provided technical training to many beneficiaries most of whom are working now in different services.



## Access to psychological and mental health service

The protracted nature of any crisis creates complex and inter-connected protection issues and needs that affect all population groups in an ever-evolving environment. Girls and boys of all ages are subject to face violence in many life situations, while adolescent girls are particularly at risk of child marriage and other forms of gender-based violence, including sexual violence. Widowed and divorced women, girls, and those with disabilities continue to face stigmatisation, discrimination, sexual violence, and forced marriages.





“

### Lebanese woman

*a beneficiary in Lebanon*

“every time I come to Our Lady Dispensary, I leave happy because PSS provided a safe place where I was able to talk honestly with people who understand the challenges I am facing. We feel comfortable sharing our stories. We cry, sing, dance, and the team encourages us to share our pain.”

”

“

### Mothers from Syria

*who benefited from the home care training in partnership with Balamand University in Lebanon*

“I am a mother of two children of 7 and 11 years old. I benefited a lot from the PSS sessions. My behavior has changed by 99%. I became calmer after I used to scream, cry, and get angry at my children. I hope I can take part once again in similar courses as, I became more relaxed and able to help my family and myself.”

”

“

### Lebanese woman

*from South of Lebanon*

“The GBV program allowed me to build my capacity to raise awareness in my community. Indeed, this is a very good opportunity MECC offered me, especially that women don't have access to such awareness due to different reasons especially in our region in Marjeyoun.

”

“

### Syrian refugee woman

*who benefited from the home care training in partnership with Balamand University in Lebanon*

“I gained self-confidence and self-esteem when I graduated and found employment in church related medical centers. I contributed to improving the health services of these centers.

Another beneficiary said: “I am now a well-trained auxiliary nurse up to the standard of private care workers and can accompany patients during their hospital stay, I can now support people at home or in community based centers which will also bring me and my family additional income.”

”

# Rehabilitation of impacted diakonal church services in Syria



## A Pilot program towards Ecumenical Partnership and Collaboration

2021 was a year of significant achievements in the rehabilitation of diaconal church services badly affected by the crises in Syria. Some of them were intentionally targeted while others were damaged for being near military clashes. With the help of one MECC partner Kerk in Acti (KiA) which provided reliable funding from different congregations in Holland, the program managed through an ecumenical steering committee nominated by beneficiary churches and the technical team at MECC to rehabilitate eleven projects with different types of services. The aim was to preserve the Christian witness in the Syrian society and play role in peace building to shape a better shared future among different societies components.

The program initiated a special Facebook page to keep informing donors on how their money are being spent as well as attempting to generate more funding to target more projects in the future.



# Name of supported project

- 1.Rehabilitaion of St Paul Church in Daraya/ Damascus suburb.
- 2.Rehabilitaion of the Armenian orthodox school in Homs.
- 3.Rehabilitaion of the Syrian Secondary school of the Armenian Orthodox church in Aleppo.
- 4.Supporting the foundation structure of the community center of the National Evangelical church in Aleppo
- 5.Rehabilitaion of St Elias Elderly center.
- 6.Renovation and furnishing of the Annunciation community center.
- 7.Renovation of to Al Rahma elderly center in Aleppo.
- 8.Renovation of youth center in St George monastery in Mehardeh.
- 9.Renovation of the secondary school in Kamishly.
- 10.Rehabilitation of St. Mesrob church for Armenian Orthodox in Homs
- 11.Rehabilitation of Misakian cultural center for Armenian Protestant in Kassab



# Contribution to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The Diakonia activities contributed towards achieving the following strategic sustainable Goals



## **No poverty**

through many agriculture activities and financial grants to initiate new SMEs and assessment studies.

## **Zero hunger**

through providing food assistance and supporting agriculture and livestock investments.

## **Quality education**

through providing safe education space, restoration of schools and training to teachers on quality education and applicable of child protection policy.

## **Good health and wellbeing**

Through supporting chronic disease and cancer patients, vaccination to children, medical counselling and rehabilitation of health services.

## **Climate Action**

Through adopting MECC environment policy in all MECC operation as well as launching community campaign to preserve the climate conditions by initiating CASH for Work activities in the area of sanitation and irrigation

## **Peace, just and strong institutions**

Through adopting shared future approach in all activities to enhance peace building among targeted population, tolerance and forgiveness.

## **Gender Equality**

All MECC programs takes Gender representation into consideration. at least 50% of targeted beneficiaries are female.

## **Decent work and economic growth**

By initiating small business for unemployed HHS and revering disrupted business as well as supporting value chain system in targeted rural communities.

## **Clean water and sanitation**

through the provision of clean drinking water in schools and rehabilitated of WASH and sewage system.



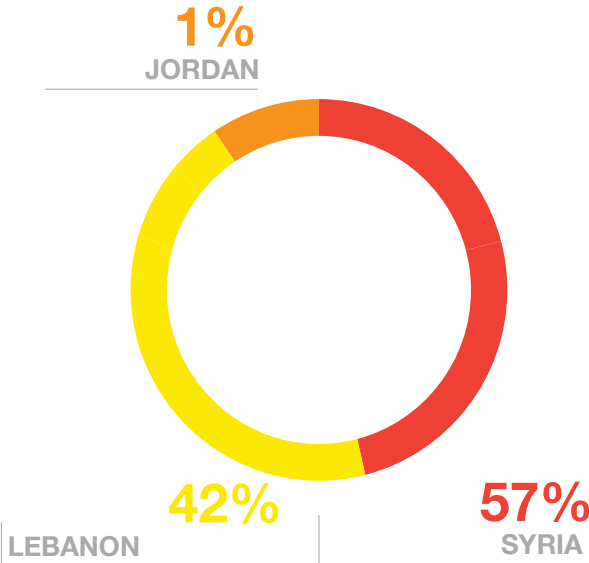
## Partnership and funding:

Diakonia department maintains the required funding over 2021 to continue the ongoing activities and launch new ones over 2022 and will continue developing Jordan programs under Jordan ACT appeal and beyond. Due to success in achieving all designed activities in efficient and transparent manners, new partners joined the council and engaged in new partnership during 2021 while additional partners will join MECC over 2022. The overall income of MECC /Diakonia department in 2021 is ( 4,983,696 US\$ ) as the following :

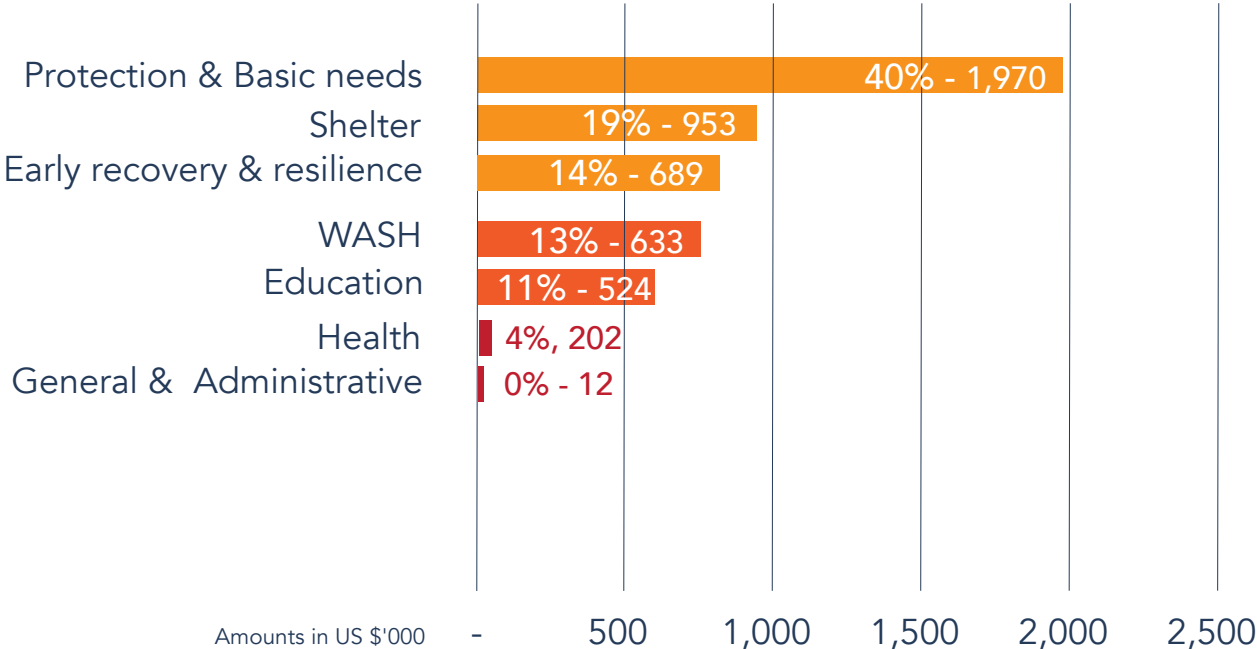
Country	Lebanon	Syria	Jordan	Total
Diaconia income /country	\$ 2,087,731	\$ 2,824,201	S 71,764	\$ 4,983,696
%	42%	57%	1%	100%

# Chart of fund allocation by country

## Spending breakdown by country - 2021

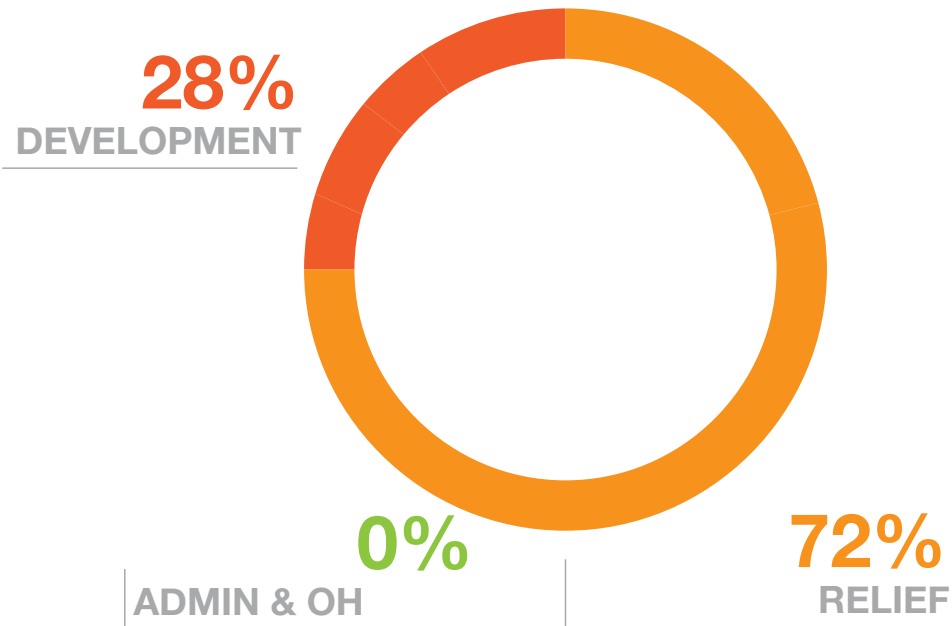


## Program spending breakdown by sector





## Mecc 2021 spending breakdown



### Closing note

2021 was no different from the precedent years, it brought more challenges not only at humanitarian levels but at the wellbeing and dignified life of people whose daily life deteriorated due to unprecedented collapse of economic situation and the gloomy horizon to witness any political and economic reform that brings safety and stability to people.

Despite everything, the Diakonia dedicated staff managed to execute all the planned activities with utmost care and efficiency and responded to the need of people on time. the spirit of teamwork was a key success in overcoming challenged and turning them into opportunities, preserving by that the quality of services and dignity of beneficiaries.

The cooperation of beneficiaries played a role in achieving the targets and indicators without any major problems or concerns. The monitoring and evaluation system in place facelifted measuring the indicators and achieve the desired outcomes. Our deep thanks to them for allowing us to witness the joy of giving and meet the face of the Lord in each face we served through such difficult times along the year. Our thanks also go to the many volunteers who responded to MECC calls and joined hands with us to lend help on time.

Finally, we thank all MECC partners who trusted our work and funded the activities from through their communities and entities. Without them, MECC would not have been able to offer any help.

Diakonia Team

# COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENT & PUBLIC RELATIONS

## **A year of struggle to continue the mission and achieve the goals**

“

During the year 2021, most of the Middle East countries faced the same challenges, either armed conflicts or economic collapses, in addition to the Corona pandemic and its social and health repercussions. The Churches of the Middle East, which are an integral part of these societies, had to stand with their parishioners, support them and make sure that they do not lose hope and that they do not forget that their presence in this East is a message, a role and a deepening of roots extending in history. Christians of the Middle East must be proud of their belonging to the land of the cradle and salvation.

This presence and this pride, with all its challenges, sacrifices and precious costs, was the focus of our work throughout the year 2021, so we dedicated the MECC platforms to this task and gathered on it the voices of the ME Churches.

Since we believe that Communication is the bridge of the world-wide fellowship of Christian believers, and a tool of solidarity, we decided to take advantage of the Momentum and send the news of the Eastern Churches in a weekly Newsletter - MOMENTUM - issued by the MECC and including a weekly message from the Secretary-General of the Council Dr. Michel Abs.

Again we extend media bridges to convey the voice of the Eastern Churches together to the whole world. Today, more than ever, the voice of Middle Eastern Christians must be heard in the region and internationally. This can only be done effectively if the churches in the Middle East, each with its own language, can speak with one voice whenever the need arises. The Council works through the Communication Department to achieve this.

”



# The MECC Communication Department divided its priorities during the year 2021 into 3 categories:

- 1. Ongoing Missions**
- 2. Trainings & Advocacy projects**
- 3. Steps Forward.**



# 1. Ongoing Missions:

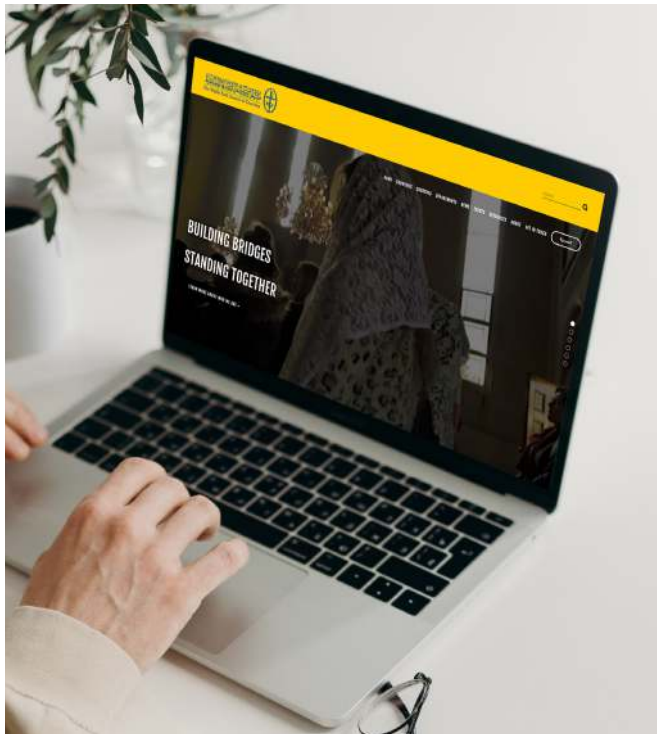
## MECC's Website

**47000** visitors  
**46%** from last year.

During 2021, the department prepared and published many types of materials:

- MECC Secretary General's messages
- News covering the MECC General Secretariat and departments' activities
- Statements, articles, interviews
- Middle East Socio Economic reports, ME Coronavirus reports, Beirut Blast reports
- Daily prayers, international days
- Middle East Churches news.

The content focused on the MECC mission, ecumenical topics, religious temporary topics and events, advocacy and humanitarian themes... published in Arabic and English, as well as Spanish and German.



## MECC's social media platforms:

- Daily prayers
  - MECC news
  - Member churches, Partners news
- All materials published on the website.

### Our Facebook reached

**357,597** Accounts  
**21.3K** Likes.

### The new Instagram page has in almost 6 month

**4578** Accounts  
**438** Followers.

### Twitter

**977** Followers

Noting that this engagement level increase on social media is organic.





## MECC's mass mails:

Almost

# 175

## mass mails in Arabic and English

sent in one year. Including the Momentum MECC weekly newsletter, statements, news, announcements, invitations, and Covid-19 in Syria and Lebanon weekly reports to the partners.

## Momentum the MECC weekly newsletter:

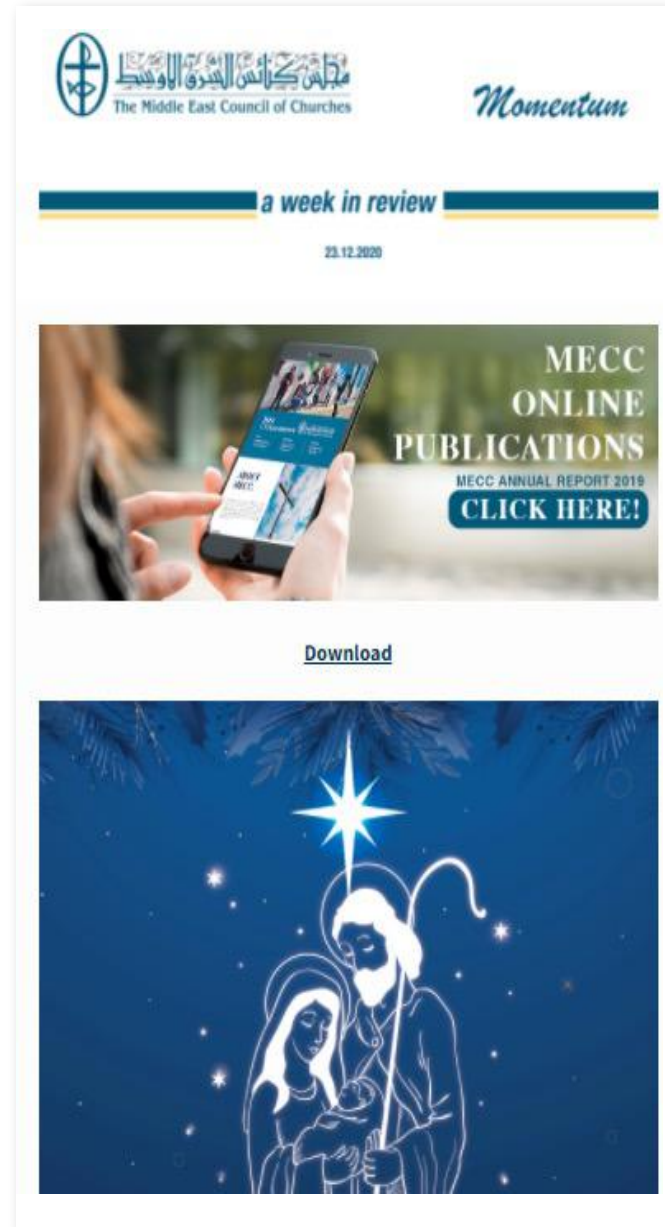
We can say that the launching of the MECC's Weekly newsletter Momentum is the Highlight of the year.

# 102

## Momentum 51 per language

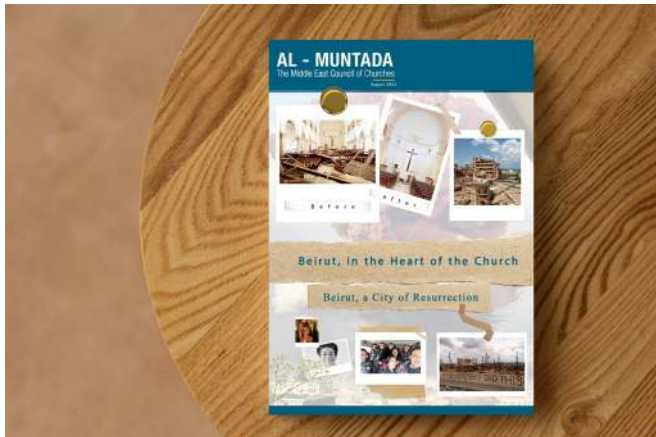
In fact the Communication team launched 102 Momentum; the first issue was published on December 23, 2020, and (51 per language) issues in Arabic and English sent during 2021.

Noting that the MECC Communication contact lists includes more than 1000 contacts and subscribers and each Momentum issue is published on MECC website and social media platforms.



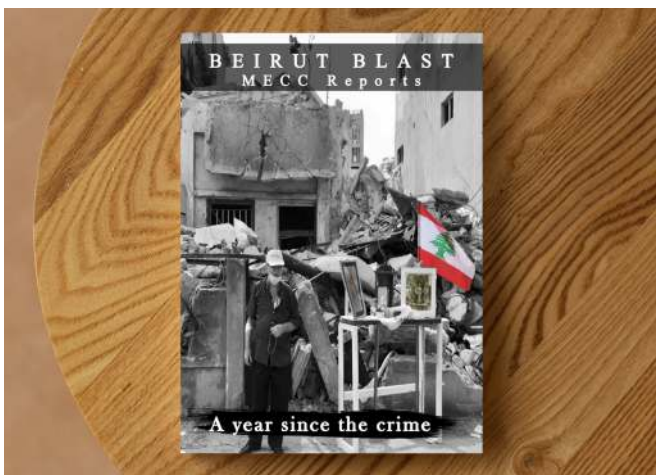
## MECC's magazine Al – Muntada:

A special issue was published in August 4 one year Post Beirut blast in Arabic and English.



## Flipbook

In addition to a special Flipbook including all the materials prepared by the MECC Communication Department regarding the Beirut Blast and its repercussions.

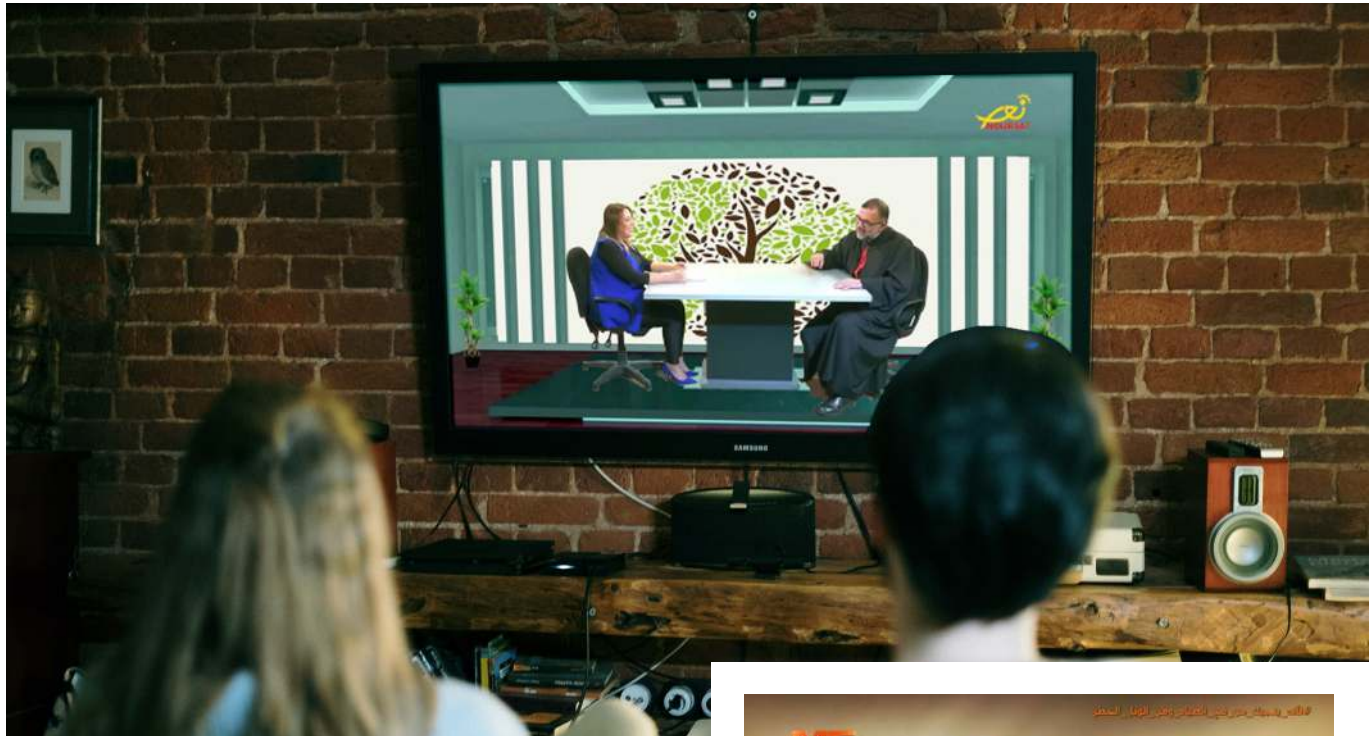


## Publications

- MECC Annual Report in Ar. & Engl.
- Season of creation booklet
- Week of Prayer for Christian Unity booklet.



## TV shows



### **5** TV episodes prepared and produced in partnership with **TeleLumiere NourSat** on environmental issues during the Season of Creation Week.

This is in addition to coordinating with religious and secular television station to spread the Council's message during and to secure specialized guests to host them in its programs, including SAT 7, Suboru TV, the Egyptian Coptic ME Sat, the Lebanese MTV and OTV.

Moreover, let us not forget that we coordinated for the same purpose with more than 10 radio stations and many news websites and news agencies.



## Online Ecumenical Prayers

Due to the Corona pandemic and the inability to meet in order to pray together on the

### “Week of Prayer for Christian Unity”,

the COMM Dept. prepared an online Ecumenical Prayer in collaboration between the Middle East Council of Churches and the Episcopal Committee for Ecumenical Relations, on Sunday January 24, 2021.

The event was broadcasted on Zoom application, as well as on the MECC and CEROE Facebook pages.”



After the approval and support of the Secretary-General, Dr. Abs, the department launched a call for a unity in prayer to face the Coronavirus entitled

**“in the midst of the storm, we fear nothing for God is with us”.**

Therefore, MECC invites all its members to join an online Ecumenical Prayer on Friday February 12, 2021 to pray together for the recovery of all those infected and those who suffer from the seriousness of this virus, and for the sake of those who have passed on to heaven.



## Online Media coverage

the team covered the news and activities of the Middle Eastern Churches and most important Christian events in the East such as recently the visit of His Holiness Pope Francis to Iraq.



Bishop Ephreim Maaloui:  
Metropolitan of  
Aleppo, Alexandretta  
and their  
Dependencies

Balamand, October 7, 2021

### Bishop Ephreim Maaloui: Metropolitan of Aleppo, Alexandretta and their Dependencies

Given that nearly nine years have passed since the kidnapping of Metropolitan Paul Yazigi without knowing anything about his fate, the Holy Antiochian Synod that is held in Balamand, took a decision to transfer Metropolitan Paul Yazigi to be the bishop of the honorary diocese of Diyarbakir. [Read More](#) ...

OCTOBER 7, 2021



### Decisions of the Holy and Sacred Synod of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem

On Monday, October 4, 2021, the Holy and Sacred Synod of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem was convened, chaired by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III.

His Beatitude discussed with the members of the Synod a number of issues related to ecclesiastical and pastoral administrative affairs that fall into the service of the Patriarchate, its monasteries, churches, clergy and the people. [Read More](#) ...

OCTOBER 6, 2021



### Speech of HH Patriarch Mor Ignatius Aphrem II during the Prayer for Peace, in Syria

Your Eminence Christoph Cardinal Schonborn, Archbishop of Vienna,

Your Beatitude Patriarch Joseph Abbas,

Your Eminence Mario Cardinal Zenari,

Your Eminence, Graces, Excellencies, Distinguished guests,

With great pleasure and immense joy, I welcome you, Your Eminence, together with your entourage to the seat of our Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and to Damascus, the city of St Paul the Apostle and ancient capital of our beloved country Syria. The most ancient capital continuously inhabited in the entire world. [Read More](#) ...

OCTOBER 6, 2021



### HH Pope Francis at Audience: True freedom flows from the Cross of Christ

In his weekly General Audience, His Holiness Pope Francis continues his



### The Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross at the Monastery of the Cross, West Jerusalem



### 'Listen!': Vatican announces theme for World Communications Day

His Holiness Pope Francis has chosen the single word, "Listen!" as the theme

## 2. Trainings & Advocacy projects:

- Trainings for the departments' officers in communication strategic planning, social media and online tools... with the WCC Capacity building program, UN and UNHCR.
- Working on organizing a workshop for communication and media officers in member churches to share best practices and communications strategies for the digital age (capacity-building) and keep them up-to-date with the latest communication techniques and contemporary journalism (train the trainer).
- Holding several meetings with prominent journalists in the Middle East to evaluate and enhance the media approach to all topics related to the Christian presence in the region.

## The polls and podcast project

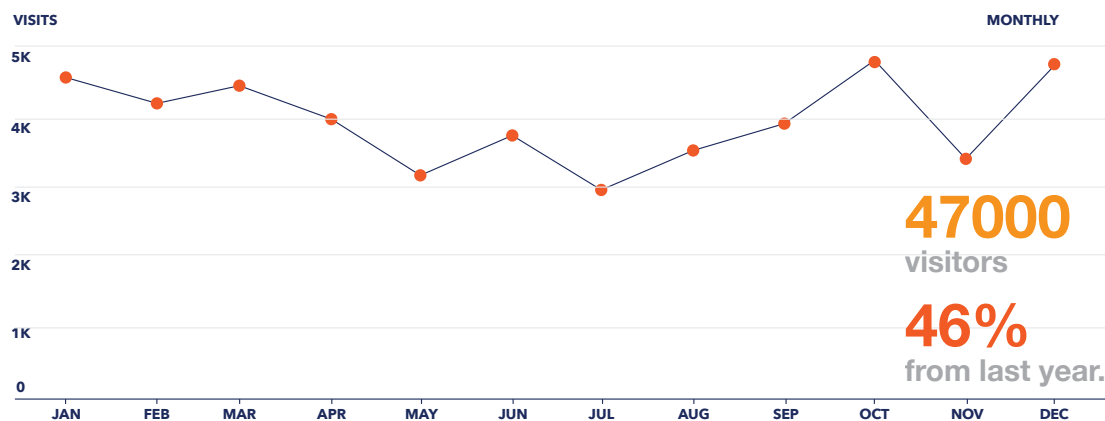


### Building Bridges Podcast

- Ecumenical podcast where the Middle East council of churches will be streaming a monthly episode to spread the ecumenical message all over the Middle East. Involving many guests from different backgrounds under mecc criteria.
- Ecumenical Polls where debatable or interesting questions will be asked to MECC audience , with up to 5 answers (like a survey) and they choose the most relevant one. These polls will help to compare public opinion on a wide range of topics

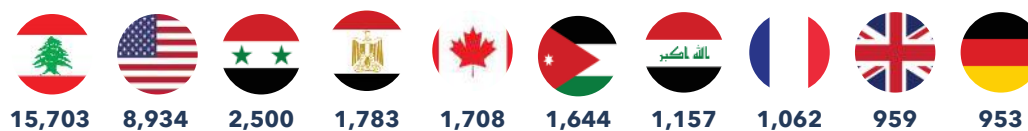


## MECC Website 2021 - ANALYTICS



JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
4,565	4,207	4,464	3,976	3,173	3,748	2,972	3,519	3,893	4,785	3,395	4,745

## Top 10 Countries- International and Middle Eastern



# Published Materials

MECC Posts per day:

**3 to 4**  
**POSTS A DAY**

Church News Posts per day:

**4 to 5**  
**POSTS A DAY**



## So that identity does not become a tool of devastation

Nothing is more precious to a person's heart than his identity.

It defines who he is, towards himself, as well as towards others, towards his narrow surroundings or towards his community.

Identity becomes more complex and richer and more diverse as civilization progresses, and it becomes made up of sub-identities and layers of belongingsness.

Modern man is no longer monolithic, and there is no longer a single dimension that expresses his identity, but multiple dimensions that combine and multiply and may sometimes contradict one another, depending on the surrounding social structure as well as on the personality of the individual. [Read More](#) →

NOVEMBER 10, 2021



## The Start of the Preparatory Phase for the Synod of Catholic Bishops in Rome

H.E BISHOP PAUL ROUHANA:

'THE LORD INVITED US TO BE A CHURCH'



# Important Coverage

## Restoration Fund for Rehabilitation of Faith-based Social Services & Religious Infrastructure Damaged during the Crisis in Syria



**Al Rahma Home for Elderly in Aleppo is Back to Life**

Dec 13, 2021



**St. Paul's Church in Darayya Gets Rid of All the War Residues**

Dec 6, 2021



**End of Restoration Work at St. George Monastery in Muhardeh**

Nov 25, 2021



**Following its restoration, when St. Elias Elderly Center in Aleppo Governorate Will Return Back to Life?**

Nov 16, 2021



## “Season of Creation”



# THE DEPARTMENT OF SERVICE TO PALESTINIAN REFUGEES

## HOPE IN WITNESS

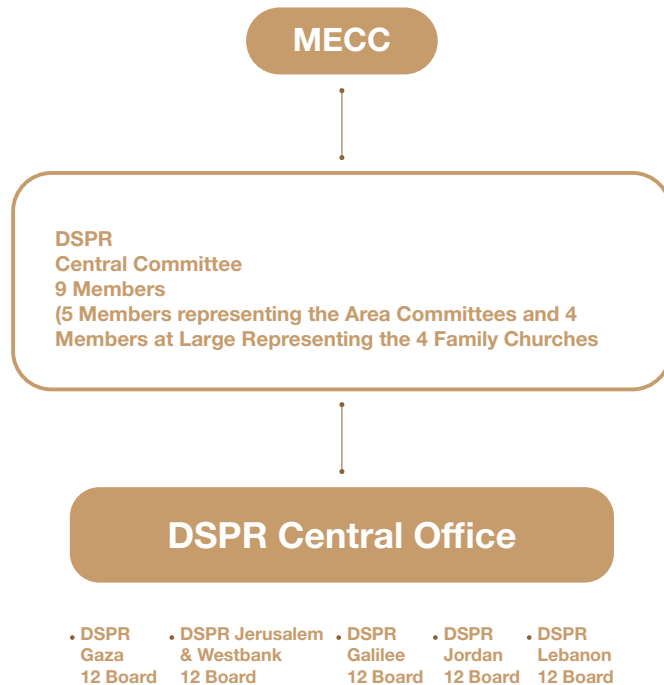
“

The Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees “DSPR” of the Middle East Council of Churches “MECC” started in 1948 as an ad-hoc ecumenical group with both international and local spirited clergy and lay people to tend to the trauma of over 726,000 Palestinian refugees from the first Arab-Israeli war. DSPR eventually evolved into five Area Committees one each in Jerusalem and West Bank; Jordan; Lebanon; Galilee and the Gaza Strip coordinated through a Central Office that is located in East Jerusalem since 1997. DSPR was initially registered in Cyprus in 1970, where members met regularly from all over the region, and became part of the MECC when it was established in 1974. The Department has a governing board (Central Committee) composed of four Members-at-Large nominated by the Heads of the Four Church Families in Jerusalem – together with five delegates one of each of the areas.

Each of the Five Areas of DSPR/MECC has its own governing board (Area Committee) also nominated by the respective Heads of Churches.

DSPR Executive Secretary attends the MECC weekly staff meetings and is administratively responsible to the Secretary General of MECC, Dr. Michel Abs. In 2021-2020 and due to the Pandemic, DSPR/MECC Central Office held a series of webinars on topics of interest to the Department and to MECC and developments taking place. Among these webinars was one on the Beirut explosion and its aftermath. Another was done in cooperation with the new Secretary General of MECC, Dr. Michel Abs, who introduced his vision for MECC during his tenure. DSPR worked hard to produce the Strategic Plan for 2026-2022 which focuses on programs and activities of the different geographic areas of DSPR/MECC. We keep in touch with our partners through a Round Table meeting every 18 months. Both the Secretary General of MECC and the Finance Manager attend our meetings as Ex Officio.

”



## DSPR Gaza

Economic shocks resulting from blockade, years of conflict, and recently COVID-19 implications dramatically impact the people in Gaza who already lack access to critical services. In Gaza, DSPR NECC focused particularly on health services during the difficult year of 2021. The focus was on mother and child health particularly health services and early discovery of childhood illnesses and developmental delays. Over 20,000 people have benefited from the health services provided by DSPR NECC three primary health clinics located in Refugee Camps or in their proximity. Furthermore, over 2,000 mothers and over 1,600 children have received psychological support. In 2021, a total of 181 students successfully graduated from Gaza's vocational training institutions and 191 new students started their vocational training.

Executive Director Dr. Issa Tarazi  
Health Clinics. Psychosocial Support Program. Vocational Training Centers. Emergency Relief Program.

## MISSION

To foster and advance socio-economic conditions of Palestinians and the marginalized through active contribution to improve living conditions, though providing health, education, environmental, economic, social and humanitarian programs with the realization of basic human right.

## VISION

An empowered pluralist Palestinian society which guarantees equal opportunities for all its members and vulnerable communities based on the ideals of justice, equality of rights, opportunities and freedom.



## DSPR Jordan

In Jordan DSPR has been able to help more than 22,000 people, mainly women, children, and youth, through our different programs, clinics and centres such as food security, Hygiene kits, Livelihood programs, resilience, capacity building, awareness-raising events, health & nutrition, and protection programs. DSPR has distributed 1020 food parcels, and conducted 76 training workshops in psychosocial support, gender-based violence, production kitchens, home gardens, and health & nutrition sessions. Over 1500 women in three Palestinian refugee camps benefitted from the psychosocial program that included awareness-raising sessions on psychosocial components, formulating support groups for women, and therapy activities.

Executive Director Fares Swais  
 Start Your Own Business Program. Health Clinics.  
 Psychosocial Support Program. Kindergardens.  
 Emergency Relief Program



## DSPR Lebanon

In Lebanon DSPR is faced, like all in the country, with the worst economic crisis it has ever experienced. Poverty is on the rise as many people have lost their jobs and livelihoods. DSPR JCC Lebanon went on with our work with energy and zeal to overcome all the problems, although we were forced to leave the centre in Sabra/ Shatilla Refugee Camp where we had been housed since 1952. Fortunately, a new space was found and we were able to open all programs in the new centre, with many new students in each class. The Syrian program for students of the higher classes following the Syrian curriculum in the Saida centre is going well. This is a unique program intended to allow Syrian students, many of Palestinian refugee origins, to follow up on the official educational curriculum and to sit for exams in Damascus. At Tyre Farm, with four plastic houses, agriculture has become an activity of vogue for many in the community. Hundreds of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon are reached throughout our different programs and activities. Executive Director Sylvia Haddad  
 Kindergardens. Emergency Relief Program. Vocational Training. Educational programs



## DSPR Nazareth

In Nazareth, special focus was given to positive youth empowerment and related youth programs where scores of youngsters and high school students participate; empowering girls where some 60 to 70 girls are reached in ACRE Rehabilitation Centre; and strengthening peace and dialogue, with some 20 schoolteachers from different religious communities are involved. Bread for life is not always food for the body, but often food for the spirit as well. Beside the outreach we do across communities, we also provide for over 90 Educational Loans for university students from Galilee.

- Executive Director Hussam Elias
- Leadership programs. Interfaith programs.. Psychosocial support program. Interreligios programs. Educational Loans. Small Business Loans



## DSPR Westbank

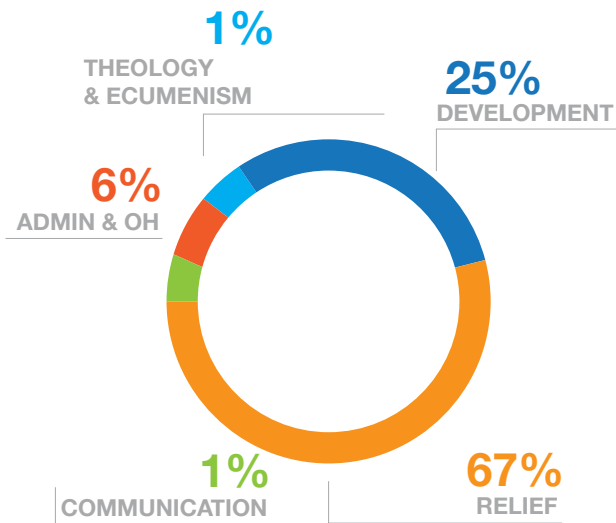
In the West Bank as a whole, DSPR has secured the completion of a 13.5 km agricultural road that will benefit over 7000 farmers in seven different rural communities in Area C in the Tulkarm district in the northwest of the West Bank. A video was produced on the agricultural road and shared on the web. There was also an artisanal well dug in Atteel in Area C which provides water for over 800 dunums of land. On advocacy we are planning to hire a new Advocacy Officer starting early 2022.

- Executive Director Ramzi Zananiri
- Water relief programs. Land protection. Educations Loans. Advocacy Work. Women Empowerment

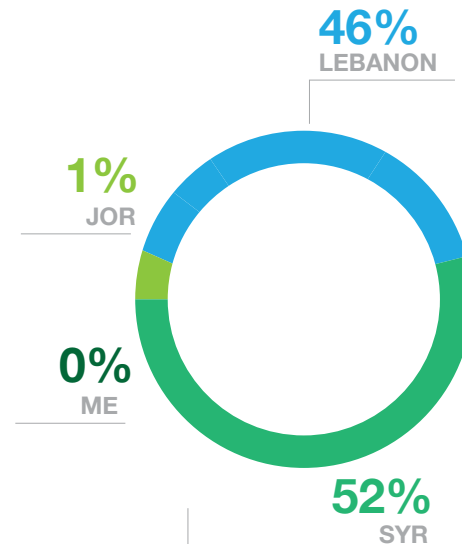
# FINANCIAL REPORT



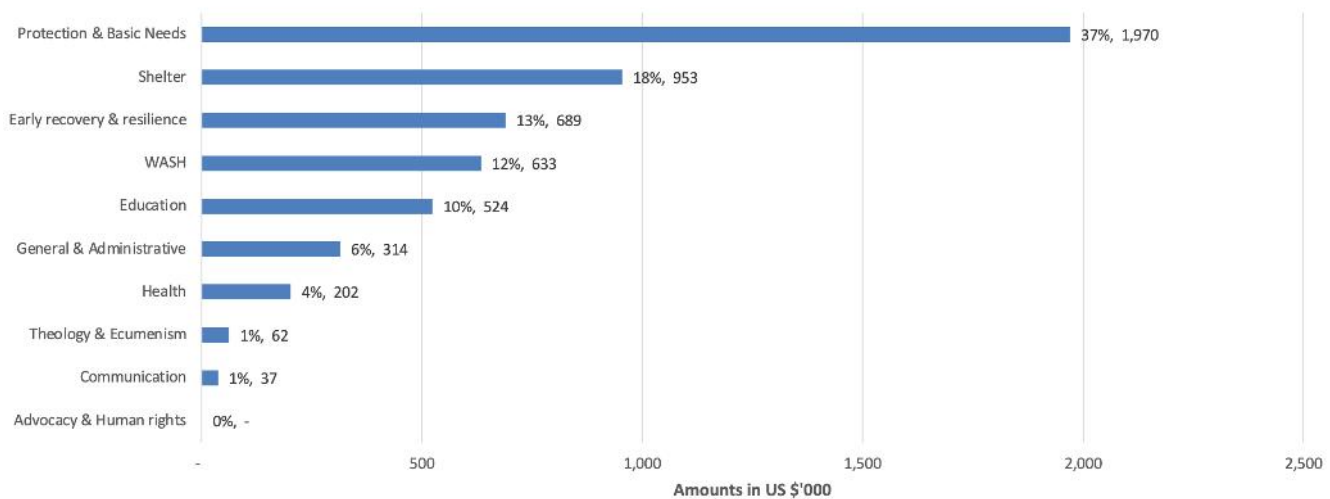
## MECC 2021 SPENDING BREAKDOWN



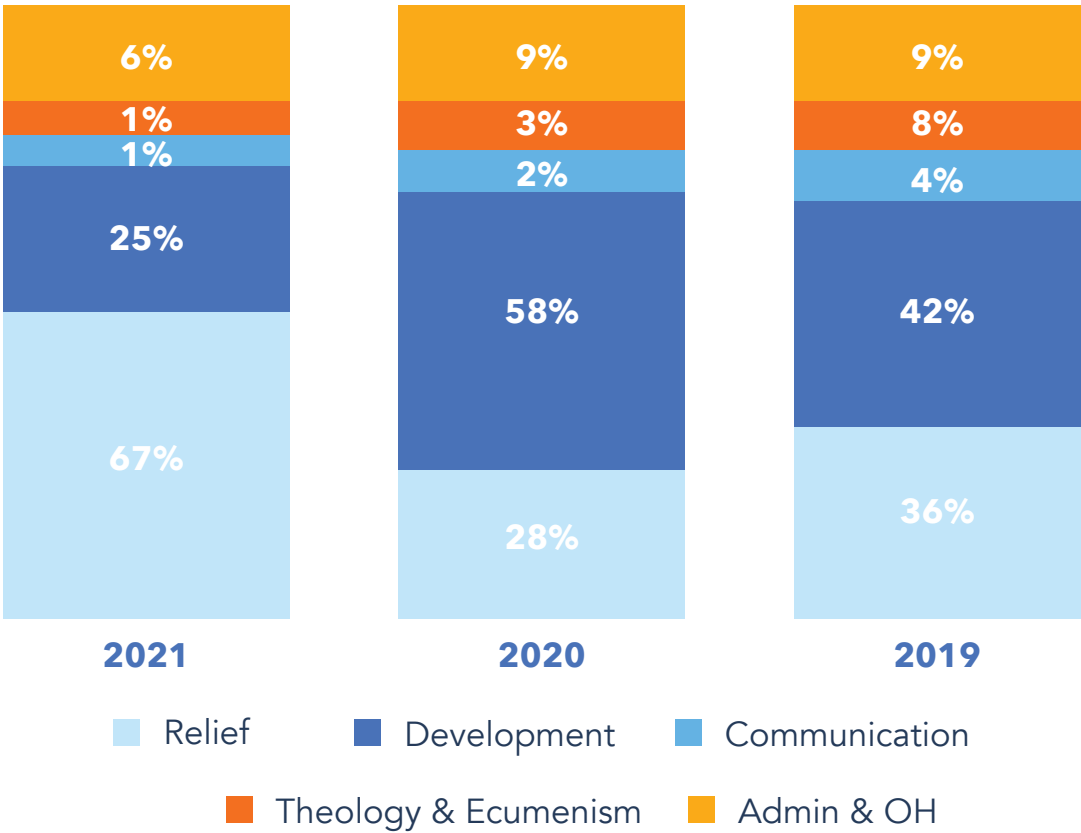
## SPENDING BREAKDOWN 2021 by geographic area



## PROGRAM SPENDING BREAKDOWN BY SECTOR 2021



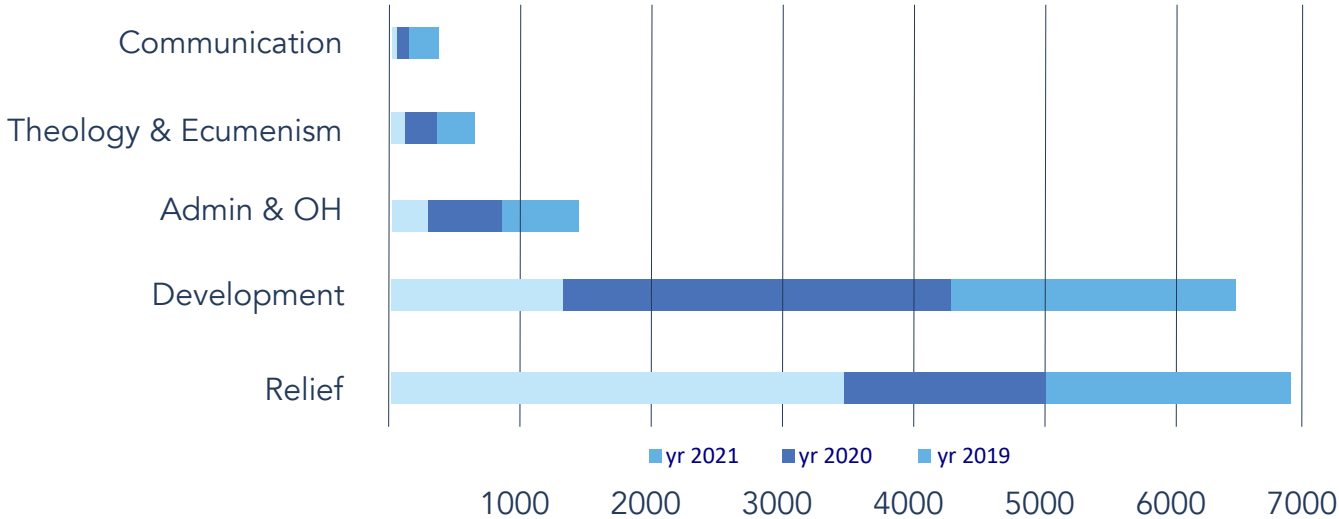
**EXPENDITURE COMPOSITON BY CATEGORY (2019 - 2021)**



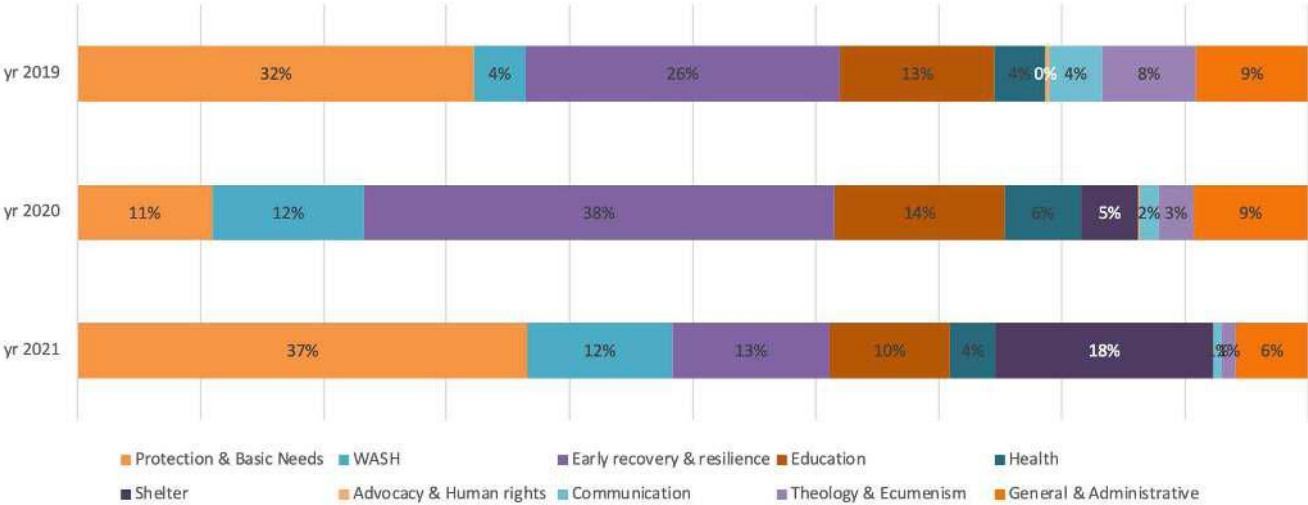




### EXPENDITURE BY CATEGORY IN US \$'000 (2019 - 2021)



### EXPENDITURE COMPOSITION BY SECTOR (2019 -2021)





Momentum, An Ecumenical Platform from the East to the World

The MECC Activities and the News of All the Eastern Church Families in one MECC Weekly Newsletter Momentum!

This is in addition to various Ecumenical topics, special reports and videos...

You can Subscribe Now to Momentum in less than a minute through the QR Code, or by sending your email to [info@mecc.org](mailto:info@mecc.org).



# OUR PARTNERS





## Building Bridges Standing Together نتواصل ونتكاتف



[www.mecc.org](http://www.mecc.org)

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