



ANNUAL REPORT

2022

Annual Report 2023

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Mrs. Leila Saleeby Dagher
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Message from the Chairman



The way we live our lives is influenced by the experiences we go through and the values we adopt throughout our lives. The conflict between what is powerful and ethically right has long been a fundamental part of human behavior. Philosophers and writers have long advocated for a better world with safe environments and peaceful relationships, but evil forces have frequently undermined these efforts throughout history.

The conflict is exemplified tragically by the Palestinian community. Those who owned land and aspired to preserve their heritage were forcefully removed from their homes through deceptive and sudden acts of aggression, resulting in an unprecedented tragedy.

Churches that believe in preaching and practicing justice recognized the challenge

and jumped into action to assist the oppressed victims. They worked to help the Palestinian people, following the principle of teaching them how to fish rather than simply giving them fish.

This effort required coordinated efforts from a wide range of partners, and thankfully, the world responded. Churches, partners, and like-minded individuals worked to alleviate conflict and oppression. Schools were established to ensure education, shelters and temporary houses were constructed, and vocational training was introduced.

The number and quality of partners grew over time, while the plight of the Palestinian people persists until today. Nonetheless, with a seemingly shift in power politics and a more favorable environment, there might be hope that justice might be attained.

We are grateful to our partners who continue to offer us support, assistance and encouragement in our effort to help the Palestinian refugees with their ongoing struggle.

May justice prevail in the end.

Respectfully yours

Edward Asmar
Chairman



Leila Saleeby Dagher was always the first to arrive at meetings, carrying a special treat to be served with the coffee. Radiating warmth and determination, she would encourage all to start the meeting promptly and on time to conclude on schedule.

Since 1985, Leila has been serving as the representative of the National Evangelical Church of Beirut on the Joint Christian Committee Board. She served as treasurer on the executive committee and acted as a delegate to all the regional meetings held by the Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees in various countries. Leila proved to be a valuable asset to the JCC, consistently representing the organization with excellence and effectiveness in every situation and location she was called upon to attend. She was a faithful friend to everyone who knew her and was always ready to help. She was incredibly generous as demonstrated in her buying and distributing all the unsold organic products brought once a week for sale from our Tyre farm or at Churches' food or cake sales. Her kindness and consideration were truly remarkable, as shown by the gifts she purchased for all her friends and companions during her travels. She forgot no one and never rebuffed anyone who asked for her help.

The sudden loss of her life on November 17, 2020, due to the Covid-19 virus came as a profound shock to everyone, leaving a deep impact on all who knew her. A pillar of JCC, a great friend, a good mother and a wonderful grandmother was suddenly gone.

We all miss you so much, Leila. You were one of a kind.

May God rest your soul.

Acknowledgments

The JCC with its board, staff and beneficiaries extends its appreciation and gratitude to partners and friends who support its work and make it possible. We are committed to helping the Palestinian refugees as they enter their 75th year of being refugees with no solution in sight. The war in Syria brought big numbers of refugees into the country, many of whom took refuge in the camps as they are of Palestinian origin. This added to our work and responsibilities.

Many of our partners have been faithfully supporting our work and encouraging us for many years. Others have recently joined us, offering the help and support we greatly need and appreciate. Our sincere gratitude and appreciation to our old partners and new partners and supporters. May we all be able to work together upholding our values and beliefs to help and serve those who need us.

We also thank representatives of churches, organizations and media members who ask to visit our projects and the camps. This allows them to witness the suffering and misery of life within the camps; home to thousands of people for the last 75 years. We are happy to show them our programs, share our successes, express our frustrations and listen to their ideas and suggestions.

- Bread for the World-Germany
- Embrace the Middle East -Britain
- Pontifical Mission
- Action of Churches Together (ACT)
- Edukans Foundation-Holland

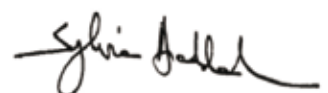
- Global Ministries – United Church of Christ and Disciples of Christ-USA
- Christian World Service – New Zealand
- Church of Scotland
- Presbyterian Church of Canada
- United Churches of Canada
- General Board of Global Ministries –The United Methodist Church – USA
- Church of Sweden
- Church of Finland
- Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
- German speaking Evangelical Church of Beirut

We appreciate the cooperation we have with local NGO's and extend to them our thanks and gratitude.

- The Arab Resource Center for Popular Arts (Al Jana)
- Najdeh Association
- Beit Atfal Assumoud
- Taawon
- Mousawat Organization
- Terre Des Hommes- Italy
- Unite Lebanon Youth Project (ULYP)
- Doctors without borders

Warm wishes are sent to all and we hope that we will continue to work together for a better future.

Sylvia Haddad
JCC Director



Introduction

The Joint Christian Committee for social Service in Lebanon (JCC) established in 1950 is one of the five areas of the Department of Service for Palestine Refugees (DSPR). The DSPR is a regional organization established to help the Palestinian refugees who were forced out of their ancestral homes and land in 1948. The DSPR at present serves the refugees in three areas of Palestine, in Jordan and in Lebanon. The DSPR became part of the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC) when it was established in 1974.

The JCC began its service with relief but later had to change into empowerment programs as the time of refuge extended beyond the few months or the few years first expected. Education and vocational training were the tools chosen by JCC as the means of empowerment to help people care for themselves and face what lay ahead. Schools and vocational centers were established offering training on the skills of carpentry, iron work, leather work, electronics, dress design, sewing and embroidery. Equipped with a good education and trained on skills, the refugees found jobs locally and in surrounding countries as they awaited their return home while upholding the UN resolution 194 "The Right of Return".

Seventy-five years later, the refugees are still waiting while the world is changing. These changes have caused a gradual decrease of funds causing the closure of many schools and vocational centers. A civil war in Lebanon had its adverse effects on the refugees causing the destruction of four camps and the closures of a number of training facilities. New restrictive laws were introduced which added to the difficulties the refugees already were experiencing. But the refugees have

no choice except to struggle on with most cramped into the 12 remaining camps and their surroundings.

Today, JCC under its official permit of 264/AD obtained in 1961 operates through six Centers in the different areas of the country. It implements programs best suited to the refugee community focusing mostly on education, vocational training and community development. All programs aim at improving human rights conditions, improving community life, empowering women and youth, developing potentials for self-realization and increasing community involvement in order to attain better income generation capacities.

The Syrian crises brought in a new wave of refugees with a big number of them being of Palestinian origin experiencing once again the bitterness of losing their homes. Most of these refugees took refuge in the existing camps and their surroundings and sought the assistance of UNRWA. These additional numbers added to the already congested and miserable situation in the camps and added a burden on the NGOs serving in these camps. The JCC offered the services it could, beginning with relief. But following the example of our founding fathers, we introduced new programs for them offering young people education and equipping those older with market relevant vocational skills while welcoming all into the numerous community activities we run. Two new locations have been added to accommodate the programs begun for the Syrian refugees, namely Ein-El-Hilweh camp, and Baalbeck. Programs implemented in these two new locations, deal mostly with education and community programs best suited to the new refugee needs.

Mission:

Empowering Palestinians, regardless of age or gender, with knowledge and skills that lead to self-reliance and equipping them to be providers for their families and communities while at the same time preserving the Palestinian identity, heritage and culture.

Vision:

- Youth equipped with academic and vocational education.
- Youth participating in their community.

- Men and women carrying out sustainable community development programs.
- A community leading a dignified life while preserving the Palestinian identity, heritage and culture, and upholding the all-important "Right of Return".
- Palestinian and Lebanese communities working on restoring harmonious relations between them.
- The Palestinian struggle as central to Christian Church movements in the Middle East and Worldwide.

JCC Goals:**Goal 1:**

Empower marginalized Palestinian women and youth to improve their own economic conditions through access to basic education as a human right.

Goal 2:

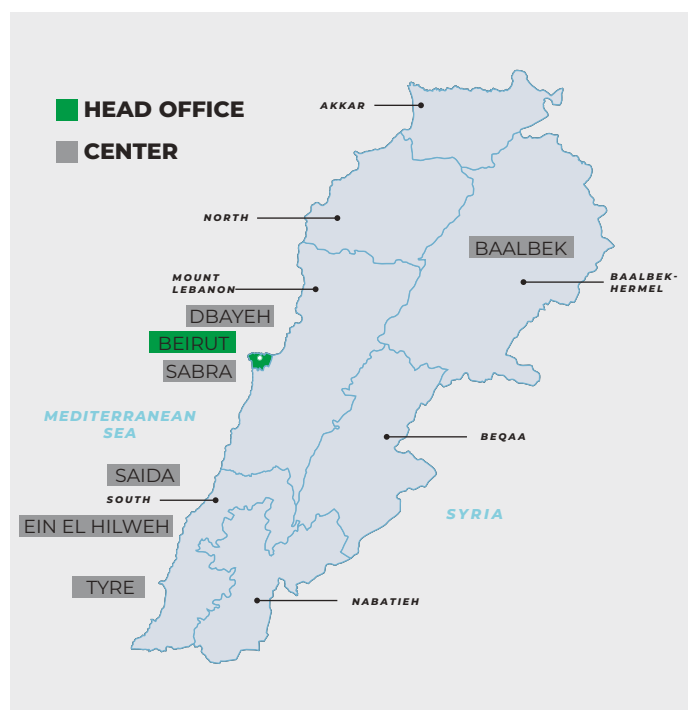
Enable refugee women, youth and the needy of the community to develop their potential to advance their self-realization and income generation capacities.

Goal 3:

Gain world support for the plight of the Palestinians, advocate for their rights and support their right of return.

Goal 4:

Enhance the DSPR organizational operation and financial sustainability.



Forward

Lebanon is experiencing an array of challenges which has crippled the country triggered by strikes which began on October 2019. People in the thousands had taken to the streets all over the country to protest against the government, its bad management and corruption for the last 30 years which has led the country into bankruptcy. The fall of the banks began and with it began the fall of all the institutions, companies and organizations. It was the beginning of the economic recession which the country continues to suffer from. The refugee camps already poor became poorer as people lost their jobs and livelihoods. In March 2020 the Corona virus hit and the scare began. All centers were cleaned and sprayed and were closed for a month believing that a month is all what is needed for the virus to end. But as the virus continued, and the programs had to be continued, training began on teaching online. It was not easy as the teachers had to be trained on this new method of communication and most of the students did not have computers and had to use the WhatsApp program on the phones. It took some time to establish the system but then it seemed to work. As the initial fear decreased and sanitary precautions were strictly followed, students came in small groups at different times. Slowly and as the epidemic became more controlled, classes and activities began resuming their regular routine and thus the year 2022 saw all the programs and classes functioning normally.

JCC carries out its programs in 6 centers and is accessible to seven camps and their surroundings.

Sabra Center



In the southern part of Beirut, lies the JCC Sabra Center in the heavily populated area of Sabra next to the Shatila camp with its dark and narrow and over built alleys. The area is unified by a diverse population of Palestinian and Syrian refugees, migrant workers of different nationalities and some poor Lebanese families. They all share the harsh living conditions crowded with shops and street vendors. The Center has affected the lives of thousands for more than seven decades offering sewing, embroidery, home economics and preschool education. Over the years, programs have evolved according to the needs of the community and at present it offers

educational, vocational, cultural and community development programs.

These last two years have been real difficult for this Center as the building, where programs have been running since 1950 in its spacious premises with its playground, was sold. The new owner wanted JCC out and used acts of vandalism to speed our departure. The difficulty faced was the scarcity of rental spaces in that area but after an extensive search, a premise was found, and the move took place during the summer vacation of 2021 with programs resuming as the scholastic new- year began. It was very sad and difficult to leave our old premise with all its memories .



During this past year, the Centre had to adapt to many changes as the premise we relocated to was much smaller than our previous premise and had no playground. A lot of reconstruction and rehabilitation had to be carried out to redesign it to meet our needs. Throughout these changes and the construction period, our teachers and staff have worked with immense dedication, patience, love and flexibility to prepare all the rooms to fit the different programs.

Educational Programs

Kindergarten

When entering the Sabra Center, you are welcomed by ninety-six children between the ages of 3 to 5 who fill the kindergarten with life. At the end of 2022, a premise on the ground floor of the building we had moved to became available. We renovated it and moved the kindergarten from the crowded first floor to this more spacious premise. This was a big delight for everyone as the children now have access to a small indoor playground which allows them to run and play during morning recess. The classrooms were colourfully decorated with the children's names, pictures, posters, and instructional material. Cartoon pictures were painted on the entrance and playground walls contributing to a more joyful and happy atmosphere. The children helped in carrying out the colouring.

Like other kindergarten programs in Lebanon our Center takes the children through three levels of preschool. By providing a creative environment of educational games, sports activities, storytelling, and songs using both Arabic and English, the children learn in a fun and playful manner. Moreover, care is taken to nurture the children's social and emotional skills such as self-expression, respect, self-esteem, teamwork, and leadership. This way the children are equipped to join elementary school after finishing the kindergarten program and their path to a bright and fulfilled future is paved. Parents are encouraged to be involved in their children's education to help them achieve the best results in these formative years.

In the course of 2022, the children participated in many special activities outside of their everyday curriculum even if not as many as in the years before the Covid pandemic: Children's birthdays,



celebrations of special occasions such as Christmas, Adha, Teachers, Mothers and Children's Day were celebrated. Distribution of gifts and serving sweets make these occasions special.

An upcoming celebration is discussed with the children and reinforced by engaging them in arts and crafts. To commemorate Nakba Day as well as the Lebanese Independence Day, flags were hung up and small parades were organized. At the end of the scholastic year in June, a special ceremony was carried out





for the highest kindergarten class as they ended their preschool years and got ready to move to the elementary level.

Learning problems are common amongst children especially in the refugee community where they face a lot of disadvantages. Teachers have been trained to identify children who suffer from learning difficulties or psychological problems. The organization “Mousawat”, which works with children with learning difficulties and psychological problems, offers us the help we need. Psychologists, mental health specialists and speech therapists are called upon when needed. Nineteen children received help this year with seven more identified. The needs helped with were speech difficulties, communication abilities, behavioral problems or slow learning abilities. Those who needed more care were referred to outside specialists. Often parents are also in need of guidance. This year, we included two physically challenged children in the program.

The Kindergarten classes were invited by the ULYP organization to their large hillside outdoor premise to the south of Beirut. They went there daily for a whole week where they played and enjoyed planting and playing with the animals kept on the premise.



Children On The Move –Moving to a better future.

Convinced that basic education is a human right, JCC introduced a special class which welcomes school dropouts or youth who have never been to school. Some of the underlying factors are prevailing poverty, displacement, overcrowded classrooms or overworked teachers. The parents bring their children with the objective of teaching them a skill in readiness for the labour market. However, assessing their abilities and level of knowledge, they are advised to enrol in this special class to acquire a basic education and realize their potentials and interests before they are exposed to a number of vocations they might want to pursue. During the last five years, some of these young people have returned to school, others have begun vocational training, while some remain in this class until they are ready to move. Yet others are uncertain of what to do like the two girls who joined the hairdressing program in our Centre but also asked to help in the kindergarten until they decide on their vocational preference. In general, this class exposes the children to enjoyable and encouraging learning experiences in a positive environment that helps them realize their potentials. These are the "Children on the Move" moving towards a brighter future. They are not "dropouts"!

During the year the students engaged in many different arts and crafts, games, fun gatherings, and celebrations for special occasions: Cards



were crafted for Mother's and Teacher's Day, presents were received for Adha, Christmas and Children's Day and ceremonies were attended for graduation, Remembrance Day of Nakba, and the Lebanese Independence Day. After the relocation of the kindergarten the "Children on the Move" also participated in painting the walls of the new apartment. It is a great delight to see the children flourish in excitement and joy on days where they can escape their daily grind. In addition to these special occasions the children participated in a 3-month workshop from "Terre des Hommes Italy" focusing on self-empowerment, strengthening emotional and psychological resources, and learning to manage difficulties in everyday life.

As the parents play an important role in the lives of their children, it is important to fortify them with knowledge how to handle their children. Therefore, we have offered many lectures, meetings, and support groups for the parents as well as the children. Many were delivered by "Doctors without Borders," "Movement Social," "Terre des Hommes Italy" and other local organizations. The aim is to educate the children's mental, psychological and physical health as well as offer a space for the parent's difficulties and improve their critical thinking skills. Parents and children are benefiting greatly from these programs.



Summer Program for the Kindergarten and for the Children on the Move:

In the middle of their 3-month summer break the Center offered a 6-week summer program for the Kindergarten and the Children on the Move. New activities every day, such as drawing, painting, handicrafts, games, puzzles, storytelling, and riddles kept the children well entertained. The high attendance and joyful faces reveal how much such a program is enjoyed since the children were kept busy and had the opportunity to find new interests.

The Children on the Move were invited to accompany the women attending the program for the elderly on a picnic to a river side. This proved to be highly successful as all enjoyed the great location and each other's company. The children were thrilled with the chance to swim while the old women looked out for their safety. It was the highlight of their summer.



School Support and Tutoring:

From different schools and different scholastic levels come 12–16-year-old students every afternoon carrying their school bags and seeking help with their school assignments. With the big number of students in the classrooms and the new added burden of the Syrian refugee children, it has become difficult for teachers to cope with all the students. The curriculum has to be followed and the teachers have no time to give sufficient attention to each student considering their learning abilities. Many have learning problems, behavioral problems or speech difficulties. Most

of these children endure bad living conditions and poverty and the majority have no parental help or guidance. To fight the ease of dropping out of school, the JCC has been offering school support in class assignments and tutoring help to students since a very long time.

One main teacher supported by two helpers provide the tutoring and guidance needed. The staff follow up on the progress of the students in their respective schools, and coordinate with them for further guidance.

Literacy

People are reluctant to admit their illiteracy and suffer in silence. Although, a lot of effort is put into teaching children, very little is done for adults who have for different reasons been "left behind". A literacy program began in 2014 with four women who were courageous enough to admit their illiteracy and seek to learn. Their success attracted more women and now the yearly enrollment is around 15 women aged 18 to 60. They learn to

read, write and do some basic arithmetic. These new found abilities give them pride and increase their self-esteem. They are happy to be able to read labels on boxes, write shopping lists, check prices before they buy and, in some cases, help their young children or grandchildren with their homework. This class met regularly in small groups all during the epidemic not wanting to waste time as they were so thrilled with their new achievement.

Community Programs

Program for the Elderly:

Every Wednesday the rooms of the Sabra Center are filled with chatter and laughter as 75-80 older ladies from the community meet to discuss subjects of interest, sharing stories from the old days, exercising their memory, and improving their fine motor skills with puzzles, arts, crafts and games. They partake in lectures and discussions on improving their physical and mental wellbeing led mostly by "Doctors without Borders." The two favourite activities, all look forward to, is Mother's Day with special celebrations by the whole Center and a picnic by a riverside restaurant.



Lectures and Workshops

One of the goals of JCC is to reach out to the community through lectures and workshops. While many are offered through the programs at the Center, effort is continuously put into reaching out to other community members. At present lectures were conducted for the parents of students in all the programs as well as to the women in the literacy program and to the older women's program. Lectures and workshops were presented by the organizations, "Doctors without Borders" "Movement Social," "Terre de Hommes

Italy." Some of the subjects handled were family planning, children's rights, understanding and dealing with your child, dealing with your teenage children. Also handled were health issues including the importance of vaccinations, respecting doctors' advice, caring for your liver, dealing with asthma, dealing with epilepsy, fighting depression and insomnia. Taking precautions against falling. Social issues discussed were old and new customs, immigration and the reasons behind it, forgiveness leading to a better community.

Vocational Programs

The Electronics Program:

In 1962 when radios were popular and television was just starting, a program of teaching electronics was introduced. It was a four-years course which attracted many young men whose acceptance prerequisite was an intermediate school certificate, good grades and mathematical abilities. At the time, few training centers offered this program which helped our graduates find employment easily and especially in the Gulf countries. In the early 1990s, restrictions on the employment of Palestinians, greatly affected the scholastic and vocational ambition of the Palestinian youth reducing their interest in studying. Demand for this program decreased. To regain the interest the four-year program was reduced to two years with the second year being optional. The curriculum at present offers theoretical and practical instruction classes. The students learn installing and extending electrical wiring and cables, installing switches, sockets, lights, repairing electronic house



equipment and installing satellite dishes. Fixing cellular phones was added to the curriculum. With the move, this year to the new premise with its needs for renovation, the students helped carry out the renovation work so as to practice their skills in an actual situation. They fixed, installed, fitted devices and extended the needed wiring.



The Computer Program:

Computers were added to the Electronics program in 2000. The curriculum offers an introduction to the hardware, software and the extensive terminology of computers. This is followed by learning to assemble the different parts of the computer, install the hardware and maintain its various parts. Students learn to diagnose and repair problems and identify and repair network related problems. They are also taught how to use computers in the electronics field. The addition of computers to the electronics program has proved beneficial and has added to the attraction of the electronics program in preparation for the job market. All students partake in both programs, but some ask for extra training in one part of the program which they think is more suited to their interest. This fits our goal of preparing our graduates find jobs or start their own business using their skills in electronics, computers or cellular phones.

In addition to their education in computers and electronics the student's psychological, emotional, and motivational needs are met by offering workshops about emotional resources and self-empowerment. The students also had the opportunity to visit the alumni of the previous years at their work. This proved to be a great motivation and an inspiring experience for the students as

Hairdressing:

One of the professions that is always in demand is hairdressing where in a six-month course, students learn the techniques of hair scalp care, cutting, colouring, straightening, curling, and lifting of hair. It is a skill that allows many possibilities of practice that will secure an income afterwards. The students practice on each other and welcome members of the community. The course runs twice a year with usually 12-15 trainees in each session. It is a profession which is always in demand. Most find jobs directly after graduation while some start their own businesses or work from their homes. An agreement prior to the Covid-pandemic with a nearby home for elderly women with limited means, had allowed the hairdressing and beauty program students to practice on the residents. This had made these women very happy as they



they could see for themselves what possibilities the future holds.

The end of the program is celebrated by giving the successful students upon completing the course, certificates in a small gathering at the Center. This year, two ladies from the Church of Sweden, Anna Levine and Jessica Deek, happened to be visiting and we had the pleasure of having them hand out the certificates.

An activity the students especially enjoyed is the day they spent at the JCC farm along with the students of the "Children on the Move" They explored the plastic tents and walked amongst the plants but mostly enjoyed wearing the protective clothing and watching the activities of the bees in their beehives.

The Electronics and Computer program is open to both genders but mostly men are attracted with few women joining at intervals.

were getting their grooming needs while getting youthful company. As this agreement was stopped over the last three years, we are now working to restart the arrangement again.



Beauty:

The basics of facial skin care, applying makeup and the latest techniques in make-up applications are taught in this four-month course. Also offered is hand and feet nail care where cutting, shaping, filing, lengthening, coloring and adding designs is learned to arrive at well groomed nails. A popular part of the course is learning the cultural tradition of drawing designs with Henna on nails and skin to decorate the legs and hands.



Barbering Skills:

A four-month course teaches young men scalp care, hair conditioning and the different methods of cutting, trimming, shaping, and styling hair, following the newest trends. Also taught is shaving and trimming moustaches and beards. The students practice on each other and on friends and family in the community. In previous years, an agreement with a boy's orphanage allowed the students to practice their new skills on the boys. This was a great opportunity for the students to gain confidence. Since the pandemic, this practice could not be followed. But hopefully it will soon be resumed.

Many of this year's hairdressing, barbering and beauty vocational program students found jobs after joining the program whether it is working from home, opening their own business or being employed in hair salons.



Programs of Sabra Center	No. of Beneficiaries	Duration
Kindergarten	96	9 months
School support	24	9 months
Literacy	15	9 months
Library	All programs	Ongoing
Children on the move	20	9 months
Elderly	75-80	9 months
Workshops & Lectures	500-550	On going
Summer activities for Children	65	6 weeks
Electronics & Computer	11	9 months
Hair dressing	20	6 months
Beauty skills	18	6 months
Barbering	16	4 months

Sidon & Ein EL Hilweh Centers



Accessible to two camps and the old city of Sidon where many refugee families resided, a vocational center was established in 1950 to teach dress design and sewing. Hundreds of women learned the skill and supported their families. Programs of office management and secretarial skills were later added followed by a hairdressing and beauty skills program. Hundreds graduated from these programs. In 2012 with the advent of the Syrian refugees many of whom were of Palestinian origin; the JCC changed its focus to an educational program to meet a pressing need. The main program began in Sidon and branched out to our centers in nearby Ein El Hilweh camp, Tyre farm in the south and Wavel camp in the Beka'a valley. Sidon continued to provide the leadership role.



Syrian Education program

Arabic is the language of instruction in Syrian schools while major subjects in Lebanon are given in English or French. It was easier for the younger refugee children to adapt to this system while many of the youth were unable to cope and dropped out of school. This left a big number of young people lost and wasting the most formative years of their lives. Seeing this problem, the JCC began a schooling program for the higher classes following the Syrian curriculum in Arabic, with many qualified and experienced refugee Syrian teachers who knew the system well and needed to work, the JCC was able to launch an educational program for students aged 14-18. Once the program was announced, hundreds of students applied anxious to continue their education, encouraged by more anxious parents. The program was to prepare them for two officially accredited diplomas by the Ministry of Education in Syria. The first at the completion of the intermediate level (9th grade) and the second at the completion of the high school level (12th grade). Official exams for both

diplomas require that students of both levels travel to Damascus to take the qualifying exam.

A number of challenges were faced as the program began. Application forms for the exams from the Ministry of Education in Damascus had to be obtained and returned to the Ministry after the students in Lebanon had filled them. Travel documents from the Lebanese security had to be secured to allow passage of the students at the Lebanese borders into Syria and insure their re-entry into Lebanon. Lodging had to be found for each group with their supervisors for three weeks. And as travel approached, many of the older boys were scared to travel to Syria for fear of being recruited into the army. All these factors had to be considered as the program began. But the unexpected big numbers which applied, showed the dire need for this program which encouraged its continuation and forced our expansion to two additional locations. This program has proved successful with all administrative work, carried out through the Sidon Center.

Ein-El-Hilweh Camp

Ein El Hilweh camp lies on the southern outskirts of Sidon and is the largest and most heavily populated Palestinian refugee camp in Lebanon. It is built on 170 acres and its population of 70,000 swelled to more than 120,000 with the influx of Syrian/Palestinian refugee families in 2011 as a result of the Syrian conflict. In the midst of the camp lies the JCC center where educational and

recreational programs are carried out. As the need arose for additional space to accommodate the unexpected number of students applying for the Syrian education program, the center was prepared to do that. Families living in the camp or nearby with older children unable to cope with the local schools, were very happy that such a program had become available to them.

Al-Jalil Camp

Near the historic city of Baalbeck in the Beqaa valley lies Al Jalil camp. It was once a French army barracks but was turned into a Palestinian refugee camp in 1948 and placed under the care of UNRWA in 1952. As it is easily accessible to the Syrian borders many Syrian families took refuge in it and their children joined local schools. But they soon found out that

their older children were unable to cope. A group of Syrian teachers in the camp tried to tackle this problem by running an educational program for the higher levels. They soon realized their inability to do that and asked JCC to take over which it did. Thus, the program run in Sidon branched out to include the students in this camp as well.

Lectures and Workshops for Teachers:

Teachers are the most crucial part in education because of their impact on students' achievement. A good teacher is a guide to students' learning, development and growth. But for teachers to be effective, they must understand their material well and know how best to handle and influence their students. This is even more important for teachers who deal with refugee students who left their homes and are living under difficult circumstances.

Edukans Foundation is an organization whose mission is to provide training for teachers so as to equip students with a good education, two trainers, Hendrien Matt and Tonnie Spinhoven from the Foundation have been coming periodically since 2016 and spending a number of days in the centers observing, filming the classrooms and studying learning activities. Based on the films and observations, two to four-

day training workshops were being carried out for teachers in all centers emphasizing interactive learning. Four teachers were selected to become trainers themselves. They received special training and were guided during a number of workshops as they carried out trainings.



Lectures and Workshops for Parents:

Parents play a pivotal role in the education of their children. School meetings to discuss problems facing their children are crucial. Lectures and workshops were carried out to help parents understand the challenges and problems adolescents face and especially in their case as refugees. Parents noting and encouraging the progress of their children helps the children build

self-confidence. Parents must encourage and not shout or degrade their children. Often students were invited with their parent to receive guidance on behavioral problems, differentiating between good and bad and building good character. Class absenteeism, responsibility, respect of classmates, proper class behavior good conduct and self-respect were some of the subjects discussed.

Lectures and workshops for Students:

JCC strives to offer its students support through workshops on subjects that benefits them physically and emotionally. Some of the subjects handled were smoking and its effects, importance

of personal hygiene, prevention of measles and of cholera, practicing good study techniques and improving self-concept to gain self- confidence.

Students Travel to Syria for Exams:

As the school year nears its end, the students completing the intermediate and high school levels get ready to travel to Syria for the exams that will give each level the accreditation needed to continue their higher studies. Securing all applications, acceptance papers and other documentation needed for our students to cross the borders into Syria, sit for the exams and return safely is a big

responsibility and a challenging undertaking. Transport, lodging and supervisors accompany the students during the 3-week exam period for each level at different times. After finishing their exams, the students are taken to visit historical landmarks in Damascus and its surrounding as well as to amusement places. Many also go to visit relatives.



JCC Syrian graduates go to University:

The main goals of this program when it was introduced in 2012 was to provide the young people, who are unable to cope with the local system of education, to continue their studies following the Syrian curriculum of education.

Their success will allow them to sit for the official exams in Damascus from where they will obtain their brevet or baccalaureate diplomas. With their success, the choice of joining a university or studying for a vocation will be open to them.

Programs in Ein-el- Hilweh Center

Homework Support:

Getting help with homework has become essential for many students. UNRWA schools and some of the local schools are over- crowded Many find themselves unable to cope and get no help at home and find it easier to drop out of school. It is even more difficult for children who have come from Syria and have to deal with a different curriculum and a foreign language to succeed. Thus, homework support is being provided to prevent students of all ages from dropping out of schools and losing the most important formative years of their lives.



An Art and Music Program

In this heavily populated camp with its narrow and often unsafe streets and alleys and where poverty prevails, life is very difficult. Hoping to enter some happiness into the camp and especially amongst the youth, a music program was introduced as music has proved its benefits in different areas. Some wanted to learn instruments, others wanted to sing. Music classes began for 24-30 students aged 8-24. They had the choice of learning to play the piano, violin, oud, flute, guitar, drums or learn to sing. The program brought joy to those learning

and to those listening as often we'd have some popular songs played on the street in front of our premise. We then had the opportunity to add art classes which immediately attracted a lot of students and showed a lot of talent. The program was first started in a premise adjacent to our center but has now moved to our premise which was prepared to accommodate such a program. We have good instruments and good instructors. Many would like to join, but space and capacity is at present limited.





Syrian Programs of Sidon, Ein El- Hilweh & Ba'alback	Beneficiaries	Activity Duration	Comments
Grades 9-12	400 students	9 months	3 months for special classes
Traveled to Damascus for Official exams	220 students	3 weeks each level	157 succeeded, 63 failed
Registered but did not go	110 students		Fear of inability to return
Teacher Training workshops	35 teachers	1 work shop in 2 centers	Carried out by trained teachers
Other programs			
School support	85-100	ongoing	
Art Center			
Music	30	Ongoing	Instruments, Choir
Drawing, Painting	38	Ongoing	
Students at University	96	According to courses	

Tyre Farm



In the southern of the country at the outskirts of the city of Tyre, lies the JCC farm. It is accessible to three camps and a number of informal refugee gatherings. A program of teaching the basics of agriculture was started in 2000 after the premise was prepared for this program. The soil was tilled and fertilized, a water well with an irrigation system installed, four plastic tunnels for planting vegetables were set up while a side area was planted with fruit trees. One of three old structures, already standing on the land, was turned into a greenhouse for house plants to be grown from seeds. The two remaining structures were prepared as classrooms. An open space with an old tree in the middle was designated as an area to socialize and conduct open air meetings and workshops. Encouraged by the fact that working in agriculture does not need a working permit for Palestinian refugees, as is the case in many other professions, the project attracted refugees of different ages. It also welcomed the Syrian refugees who took refuge in the southern camps.

A four-month course in the basics of agriculture is offered twice a year beginning with theory followed by practical work. Organic planting is implemented on the farm and its principles taught. The course is open to both genders and attracts all ages. Many have found work in the surrounding fields or in agriculture related establishments. Some have rented small pieces of land to work on while others have found jobs in the Gulf countries or abroad. Still others used their knowledge for their own home use planting their own back spaces, balconies or rooftops. The farm continues to welcome and help any of the graduates who





need help and advice. This year we ran a special course of roof top planting.

A beekeeping training course offered two years ago to 16 men who are practicing what they learned and have since added more bees to what we initially gave them. They continue to receive our guidance and have access to our honey machine for the production of their own honey. The honey production has given them an additional income.



The bees we first bought for teaching purposes have added honey production to our regular farm products of fruits and vegetables and has added beekeeping program to the curriculum. Caring for bees and the production of honey have become an attraction for schools who like to bring their children to see how bees live and how honey is produced.

People living adjacent to the farm come and buy their vegetable needs directly. The rest of products are sold in the Tyre vegetable market except for once a week when some of these vegetables and fruits are transported to be sold in Beirut at the German Church who have allowed us to use their yard for this purpose.



Programs on the Farm	No. of Beneficiaries	Duration
Agriculture classes	29	4 months -2/year
Roof top Planting	12	9 months
Honey production	15	9 months
Sale of organic products in Beirut	16	9 months

Dbayeh Camp



On a hilly slope to the north of Beirut lies the Dbayeh camp occupying an area of 80 thousand square meters. It is home to 325 Palestinian families, 195 Lebanese families and 70 Syrian families who fled from Syria in 2012 at the aftermath of the Syrian conflict. As one enters the camp, a long street with four narrow parallel streets branch out to the right, on which small, attached houses are built. To the left lie few small shops, an auto repair garage and a church with a yard. The houses are very small giving the camp a crowded appearance. House plants at the entrance of most houses reflect a calm, clean and peaceful atmosphere hiding the difficult life within. The Dbayeh camp was once blessed with a good and well-designed school with classrooms spread over a number of well-built functional structures and a playfield in its midst. During the civil war (1975-1990) the school was destroyed and all efforts to obtain permission to reconstruct it were rebuffed. At present these structures lie destroyed except for a number of structures that we have been able to fix and are using as a gym facility and some art and physical activities.

In front and to the side of these structures are two big spaces. One was the entrance to the school and the other was the playfield. The entrance area was cleaned and prepared to provide a space for camp celebrations, summer activities, carnivals and a variety of other programs. The play field was cleared and turned into a sports field for football and basketball. A small area to the side was turned into a well-equipped playground for children. Recently the sports field was renovated and upgraded by the Taawon foundation into a modern grass sports field.

In the center of the camp and accessible to all, lies the JCC Library/ Community Center.

The Library /Community Center

The library was established in 2008 and was equipped with books, educational games and computers. All the community was invited to come and use what this library had to offer. The children and youth were the first to get interested. The young people came to check the books available while children came to listen and enjoy the story reading sessions offered. Adults soon joined and people began to acquire the habit of browsing through books for subjects of interest. A membership system was established encouraging borrowing of books and their return. Slowly, the library became the meeting place of people. As their interests and needs were expressed, programs were accordingly introduced. Lectures and workshops on various

subjects were carried out and programs in the fields of art, music, dance, drama, sports and life skills were offered. All activities for all ages were planned in this center whether implemented in this center or carried out elsewhere. Visitors from the media, other organizations or just friends were received in this premise. Gradually what started as a library, slowly turned into a Community Center with its doors opening at nine in the morning until nine in the evening.

With time and increased activities, the need for some renovation arose. The whole space was redesigned, modernized and made more functional. The programs that continue within are the following:

Arts and Crafts:

Children and youth meet according to age three times a week for sessions of drawing, coloring and learning different handicrafts. Some of the many things they learned to make are animals from a special dough, dolls from wool, a lion's face with hair from spaghetti, toothbrush containers, picture frames, Halloween masks, boxes and rocking chairs from clothes pegs, frogs from plastic bottles, cards in the shape of flowers, in addition to drawing, coloring and painting.



Music:

Music was first introduced through starting a choir and teaching popular songs. Later instruments were purchased, and instructors recruited while training of voices continued. Thirty-five young people partake in this activity.

Moral Guidance:

It is important that moral values should be learned at an early age to help young people grow up to be honest, straightforward and responsible. Children and youth of different ages gather in the library three afternoons a week to get guidance from the teachings of the Bible. With television, cell phones and the social media entering every home, people's thoughts and lives are being strongly influenced. As people are responsible for their own behavior which affects their families and communities, it is important that they learn to build their own character so as to protect themselves from the many negative societal influences that surround them.



Lectures, Trainings ,Workshops, Celebrations:

Lectures and trainings were carried out on a variety of subjects throughout the year for young people aged 13 to 25 divided into groups according to the subjects of interest to their age. Some of the multiple subjects handled were intelligence, improving memory, values and their importance in life, differentiating between right and wrong, building trust, importance of kindness, team building, increasing creativity, showing interest in others, working on self-confidence and understanding others and handling criticism. Also offered, was a three-month training on using the excel program on the computer which fifteen youth joined. A number of sessions on writing effective business letters were also offered.

Workshops of photography were carried out for two different age groups. The first workshop was for children aged 10 to 13. It was offered once a week for the whole year. The second photography workshop to extend over three months was more extensive and targeted young people aged 17-25 to attend three times a week. Fifteen young

people of both genders joined and were very enthusiastic especially that they were also exposed to film making and were able to produce a short film of their own. At the end of the workshop, a photography exhibition invited the community and friends to come and see their work.

A recycling training program was open to all men and women in the camp in an attempt to encourage sorting separately the different recyclables of organic materials, plastic, cardboard, paper, cans, glass and electronic materials. The training extended over the year at the end of which 25 women took received extra training and learned to make art objects from recycled material.



A Women's Leadership Group:

A women's leadership group was formed this year with three main goals. The first was to encourage women in the camp to participate socially and culturally in the life of their community. The second was to have the right to be part of any decisions

related to their life in the camp and the third was to encourage women to volunteer in helping others and carry out fundraising events to help those in need. They meet on regular basis to discuss and plan their activities.

Other programs offered by JCC Dbayeh Center

Tutoring program:

Dbayeh has no school within the camp like in other Palestinian refugee camps which forces children to go to nearby schools. As learning abilities amongst children vary and a good number of them suffer from learning difficulties, many find themselves unable to cope and are in need of help which very few parents can offer. Thus, the JCC found it necessary to begin a tutoring program. It is set up to offer tutoring and homework support with special emphasis on working to overcome learning difficulties. Students from the different schools gather every afternoon in a floor beneath the library to receive the different help they need. Parents are very grateful to have this support especially that the majority of them are of a low educational level and most, if not all, are unable to afford private tutoring. Five tutors give the study support needed while children who suffer learning difficulties and problems of speech defects, hyperactivity, concentration difficulties,

and other psychological problems receive the specialized support they need. A speech therapist, a psychologist and a social worker, work with these students offering them, the help and guidance needed. The services offered by the center have given self-confidence to the students and have shown positive results in both, school records and in the decreased rate of school dropouts.



Schooling for the Syrian Refugees:

For a number of years, an elementary program of schooling for Syrian refugee children living in the camp and its surroundings was offered following the Syrian curriculum. But for a number of reasons this program was replaced with a

kindergarten following the Lebanese curriculum. The Karaghuesian Association for Child Welfare carried out this year physical checkups for all the children and supplied whatever was needed as a result of these tests.

A Thrift Shop:

To the side of the kindergarten are two rooms with their own entrance which are being used as a thrift shop. It is well stocked with used clothing, toys and household items. A number of women volunteer their time to receive the donated items, sort them out and price them. The shop is frequented by all in the camp as many find their needs available at very low price. The income goes to help those in need of medical needs and medicines.



Football and Basketball:

When the space near the destroyed school was cleared of the rubble and debris piled over the years, the children and youth of the camp had a place to gather at all times. To run and play enjoying the open space which soon became their playfield. They attempted to play football and basketball by kicking balls and throwing them into the air. To help them with these sports, lines were marked on the field and baskets hung up on poles. When trainers from the camp were found, teams for both sports made up of both genders were formed. With regular practice, they learned the rules of both games and were educated on the importance of teamwork. All teams met regularly and practiced until they could compete against each other and later were able to compete against teams from other camps.

The field was beautifully renovated and lights installed last year by the Taawon organization making it more functional and attractive to the athletes of the camp.



A gymnasium:

Four rooms of the destroyed school were fixed and turned into a gym facility with the latest available exercise machines. The new gym immediately attracted the whole camp community as well as those living in the vicinity. Two young men from the camp, who already had some gym training, were put in charge. It is a very busy place with the membership list of young and old increasing regularly.



Dbayeh Center Programs	No. of Beneficiaries	Duration
Library/Community Center	All the community	Ongoing
Study station	78 Children and youth	9 months
Story reading	63 Children	Ongoing
Moral Education	40 Children and youth	Ongoing
Kindergarten- Syrian refugees	80 Children	9 months
Music	35 Youth	Ongoing
Summer program	150 Children	2 months
Photography	14 children	11 months
Photography and filming	11 Youth	3 months
Computer, Excel program	15 Youth	3 months
Recycling	All the community	12 months
Handicrafts from recyclables-	25 Women	4 months
Sports : Football and Basketball	100 Youth	Ongoing
Gymnasium	46 All ages,	Ongoing
Summer program	164 children and youth	2 months
Lectures, workshops, trainings	150-175 women, men & youth	10 months
Thrift shop	Community & neighborhood	Ongoing

Advocacy

As the number of refugees from different nationalities are increasing and are in need of assistance, the Palestinian refugees seem to be forgotten. They continue to suffer and live with the hope that they will go back to their country one day. The JCC works to raise awareness of these refugees who were uprooted from their country and have been living in camps for the last 74 years. It tries to tell the story of the misery of the old, the despair of the young and the yearning of all to return to a country that some can remember, and others have been raised with its love in their hearts.

Many of the old timers who held tightly onto their keys to houses that have long since been demolished within the hundreds of villages that no longer exist, have now died. But the key remains the emblem of return for the Palestinian refugees.

At present the Palestinian refugees are enduring increasingly bad conditions in the camps. They

suffer discrimination socially and politically and have very few civil rights. This injustice has caused poverty, misery, and hopelessness.

JCC works to advocate for the Palestinian refugees' plight and rights through partners who support us and visitors from independent church groups, researchers, and the media. We hope that they will advocate for the Palestinian situation in their churches and through their organizations. The JCC also works with sister organizations to fight for the rights of the refugees on important issues. Gaining support for the plight of the Palestinians, advocating for their rights and supporting their right of return is an important goal that JCC believes in and works for. The Palestinians must not be forgotten and swept into the background. This must not happen. Until today no steps have been taken towards solving their problem and giving them, some hope for a better future.

Partners and Visitors

The outbreak of the Covid 19 epidemic in early 2020 has greatly reduced the number of visitors and partners. Zoom meetings became the norm. But as the year 2022 rolled in, some of our partners and friends came to visit.



From the Global Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) USA came Dr. Peter Makari accompanied by Rev. Teresa Hord Owens and Rev. Marco Cable. They visited our new Center in Sabra and walked in the Shatila camp. We had the

pleasure of seeing them once more, later in the year accompanied by Rev. Dr. Jennifer Janzen-Ball and Rev. Dr. Japhet Ndhlovu, from the United church of Canada as well as Rev. Dr. John Dorhauer and Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia Thompson, from the United Church of Christ. They all visited the Dbayeh camp and saw JCC work.



George Majaj, Elaine Neuenfeldt, Cyra Bullecer and Marjorie Schmidt from our partner "Action of Churches Together" (ACT Alliance) have visited our new Sabra Center and explored the programs offered.



From “Embrace the Middle East”, came Jamie Eyre and Bruce Clark who visited the Dbayeh camp and discussed the JCC programs with the staff as they sat in the newly renovated library. At a later date, Bruce visited with Tim Livesey and at a later date, he accompanied Beth Amphlelt, the new communication officer at Embrace so she can meet us and learn about our work.



A group of visiting German pastors and church members visiting the Near East School of Theology (NEST) asked to visit a refugee camp and were taken to visit the JCC Sabra Center and see its programs. They also walked in the Shatila camp witnessing the difficulties its residents face.



From the Church of Sweden came Anna Levine and Jessica Deek. They came at the right time to attend the graduation event of the Electronics and Computer program which the Church of Sweden supports. They handed the students their certificates which made the boys feel that it was a real special occasion.

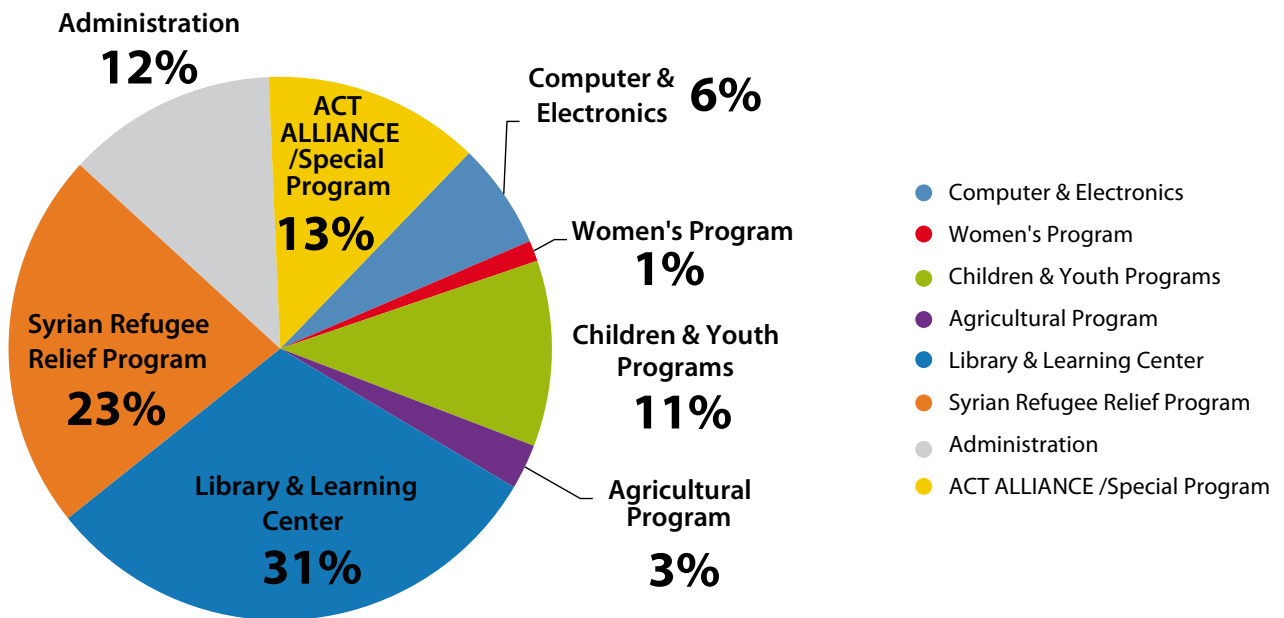
Hendrien Mat and Tonnie Spinhoven are from the Edukans Foundation of the Netherlands. They support a number of our main programs as well as their being teacher trainers themselves. They have been training our teachers on the latest interactive method of teaching for the last few years and are now training some of our teachers to be trainers themselves.



Rev. Elmarie Parker Regional Liaison to Iraq, Syria and Lebanon of the Presbyterian Churches of the USA along with her husband Rev. Scott Parker always take the time to visit the JCC to encourage and find ways to support.

Dr. Chris Lange always visited JCC and its programs when her husband Rev. Jonas was pastor of the German Church in Beirut. Dr. Chris continues to visit us whenever she is in town.

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