Amidst the challenge of the Covid-19 pandemic and other challenges facing all of us, it is a pleasure to offer some introductory words to the 2019 Annual Report of DSPR MECC. The Palestinian Refugee issue remains in need of our attention particularly as refugees, like the rest of us, face the challenges of the times and the complex social and economic costs of the refugee status. MECC sees the work of DSPR through its Central Office and its five Area Committees in Gaza, Jerusalem and West Bank, Galilee, Jordan and Lebanon as essential to maintaining human dignity and hope for the Palestinian refugees. The right to return remains one of the basic rights of refugees and displaced. MECC is committed to respect and advocate this right among the many other rights. MECC DSPR will continue with its work to ensure that the refugees are not forgotten. It is my firm belief that now, more than ever, we need to insist that the decades-long tragedy of refugees must be ended to pave the way for a sustainable peace in justice. Thank you DSPR for your ongoing work.

DR. SOURAYA BECHEALANY
DSPR MECC takes stock in its 2019 Annual Report of the work that has been done to ensure that Palestinian refugees and those living amidst us in similar conditions are not forgotten. Hope for our refugee brothers and sisters cannot be separated from the exercise of their basic rights in justice. The Middle East region continued to be unsettled by economic, political, and social challenges and these had affected the refugee population harshly. The tending hand of DSPR MECC continued to be extended through our various programs and activities to refugees and communities in our five areas of operation from the Gaza Strip to Nazareth in Galilee and from Jerusalem and the West Bank to Jordan and Lebanon. Despite the anxiety surrounding the US planned Deal of the Century, announced unilaterally by the US and Israel in late January 2020, and other steps taken to legalize Israeli illegal measures in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, including East Jerusalem and the ongoing siege on the Gaza Strip, we continued with our commitment to serve and to work side by side with refugees and needy communities. In Galilee with the precarious status of the Arab community; in Lebanon with its precarious economic and social situation and in Jordan with its hosting of millions of refugees, DSPR MECC in all of its constituents remained faithful to its mission of service and work through the variety of its contextualized activities and programs with the refugees and the affected communities. We remain hopeful that better things will eventually evolve and that we need to be steadfast in our hope. Thank you Partners and thank you all in DSPR MECC.

WE ARE OVERWHELMED AND HEARTILY THANKFUL FOR THE SUPPORT, AND FRIENDSHIP OF OUR FRIENDS, PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS

DR. AUIDEH QUAWAS
Chairperson
Central Committee

DR. BERNARD SABELLA
Executive Secretary
Central Office
ABOUT DSPR

WHO WE ARE
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.

HISTORY & STRUCTURE
With the different socio-economic, political, and legal contexts, each of the five Area Committees had to register independently thus evolved the different names of the Area Committees ensuring their legal entitlement:

- International Christian Committee (ICC – West Bank)
- International Christian Committee in Israel (ICCI - Galilee)
- Joint Christian Committee for Social Service in Lebanon (JCC - Lebanon)
- Near East Council of Churches Committee for Refugee Work (NECCRW - Gaza)
- The Near East Council of Churches Committee for Refugee Work (NECCRW - Jordan)

The Central Committee, and its Central Office, operates as the unifying board and foresees the implementation of decisions and recommendations adopted in the two meetings held each year. There are 9 voting members in the Central Committee one each representing the respective Area Committees and four Members-at-Large nominated every four-year cycle, to coincide with the General Assembly of the Middle East Council of Churches, by the Heads of the Four Families of Churches.

VISION
The vision of the Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees of the Middle East Council of Churches (DSPR MECC) is of 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.

MISSION
The mission of the Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees of the Middle East Council of Churches (DSPR MECC) is to foster and advance the socio-economic conditions of the refugees and marginalized through provision of health, education, economic, social and humanitarian programs in keeping with the exercise of basic human rights.

BENEFICIARIES 2019

VOCATIONAL TRAININGS

- Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning 42
- Carpentry & Furniture Making 47
- General Electricity and Solar Energy 70
- Metal and Welding Works 36
- Barber & Hairdressing & Beauty Skills 100
- Folkloric Handicrafts 50
- Agriculture 60
- Aluminium Works 19
- Secretarial & Office Management 28
- Advance Dress Making 23

SOCIAL & LIFE SKILLS

- Micro Credits for education & business 292
- Social & life skills report for girls 98
- „Start Your Business Program“ 125
- Women Empowerment Program 1,800
- Intergroup / Interfaith Dialogue 130
- Emergency Relief 5,568

HEALTH IN GAZA & JORDAN

- Expected Mothers 1,624
- Patients less than 6 years old 39,353
- Dental care visits 6,797
- Postnatal care visits 3,192
- Antenatal care visits 17,747
- Well baby visits 38,172
- Women and Children get psychosocial support 10,716
- Children Screened for Anemia & Malnutrition 14,070

PALESTINIAN REFUGEES AND DISPLACED GROUPS CAN LIVE HEALTHY LIVES

PALESTINIAN REFUGEES CAN SUSTAIN THEMSELVES ECONOMICALLY

EMBRACING PALESTINIAN COMMUNITIES CAPABLE TO ADDRESS NEEDS AND RIGHTS OF THEIR MEMBERS
The Gaza Strip is home to a population of approximately 1.9 million people, including some 1.4 million Palestine refugees and faces a chronic humanitarian crisis, impacting the livelihoods and access to essential services.

For the last decade, the socio-economic situation in Gaza has been in steady decline. The blockade on land, air, and sea imposed by Israel following the Hamas takeover of the Gaza Strip in 2007 entered its 13th year in June 2019 and continues to have a devastating effect as access to markets. People's movement to and from the Gaza Strip remains severely restricted. The blockade and related restrictions contravene international humanitarian law as they target and impose hardship on the civilian population, effectively penalizing them for acts they have not committed.

Years of conflict and blockade have left 80 percent of the population dependent on international assistance. At the same time, the continuing intra-Palestinian divisions serve to exacerbate the humanitarian and service delivery crisis on the ground. The economy and its capacity to create jobs have been devastated, resulting in the impoverishment and de-development of a highly skilled and well-educated society. In 2019, the average unemployment rate reached over 50 percent – one of the highest in the world, according to the World Bank.

Access to clean water and electricity remains at crisis level and impacts nearly every aspect of life in Gaza. Freshwater is unavailable for 95 percent of the population, and the availability of electricity improved only recently. Ongoing power shortage has severely impacted the availability of essential services, particularly health, water and sanitation services, and continues to undermine Gaza’s fragile economy, particularly the manufacturing and agriculture sector.

As a result of the continued deteriorating socio-economic situation in Gaza, the blockade, and widespread hopelessness among Gaza’s population, tens of thousands of Palestinians have since 30 March 2018 participated in largely nonviolent “Great March of Return” demonstrations near the perimeter fence separating Gaza and Israel. The March of Return was halted in late 2019 for a review by the authorities, given safety considerations. The health system, on the verge of collapse following years of blockade and de-development, continued to be overburdened in 2019 with the massive casualties sustained in the “Great March of Return” demonstration.

The prolonged strain and economic isolation of the Gaza Strip have pushed vulnerable families deeper into poverty. Vulnerable families have resorted to different harmful coping mechanisms to deal with the high level of poverty and vulnerabilities. There is no progress concerning intra-Palestinian reconciliation as well as negotiations between Palestinian authorities and Israel over a long-term cease-fire or reviving of the Middle East Peace Process.

DSPR Gaza tends to the wounds of some of those injured as a result of the Great March of Return and also offers psychosocial support to them and their families, in addition to emergency relief and economic support in the form of temporary employment. Our presence in Gaza continues with high quality preventive primary care to thousands of expecting mothers, infants, and children. The stamp of quality of our vocational training centers for young men and women is acknowledged both locally and internationally. Our dedicated professional staff members give community and family support to improve the quality of life for hundreds of Gaza families. We continue to strive to optimal delivery of needed health, vocational, communal, and personal services through arranging for our staff members opportunities for in training in the various specializations. Besides the Heating and Air Conditioning course introduced in 2018, DSPR Gaza launched in 2019 a Multimedia and Graphic Design course targeting young Gaza women.
The three-round of elections exposed the fragile fabric in Israeli society in general, and the fragile relations and distrust towards the Palestinian community in Israel. The Basic Law: Israel as the Nation-State of the Jewish People, which was passed in 2018, continued to impact the relations between the Jewish majority and the Arab minority. The questions of equal rights challenges to society and economy and the allocation of funds to local authorities, based on their national and religious background, raised the concern of Arab citizens as well as those forces that believe in equal standards for all citizens.

The rate of unemployment, which can reach up to 35% in some Arab localities, heightens the effect of discriminatory practices. Young people do not have prospects for their future, and with increased frustration, some turn to illicit pursuits, which can eventually lead to violence. The violence that the Arab community in Israel continues to suffer from scores of victims annually is the result of the community’s abandonment by the respective governmental ministries.

Educated Palestinian women are particularly hit with unemployment, and overall, the salary of Arabs in the labor force is half of that of Israeli Jewish laborers.

The “unrecognized villages” in the Negev and in Galilee, where about 100,000 people live, do not receive government development funds and remain accordingly without the needed service infrastructure. DSPR ICCI continues to follow up on some of these villages and their needs, especially in the North of the country. The separate social and geographical contexts in which Israeli Jews and Arab Palestinians in Israel live are reflected in close to 90% of Israel’s Arab citizens living in entirely Arab villages and towns.

On an institutional level, the dual run school systems cement the segregation, starting with kindergarten and upward. As a consequence, Jewish and Arabic children grow up in “different worlds” and know each other mainly through the [negative] information that is available within their community or via the media. The prevailing stereotypes and negative images within both groups and the segregated neighborhoods provide no opportunities to dismantle them through direct, positive contact.

Arab Christians, numbering between 120,000 - 125,000, comprise 8% of the country’s Arab population and less than 2% of the total population of Israel. The feeling of marginality and a developing tendency to exclude themselves from both Jewish and Muslim compatriots adds to their unease in interfaith and intergroup relations. How to establish a common ground on which the socio-economic and political issues affecting all citizens can be addressed becomes of relevance. DSPR ICCI, through its programs and activities of intergroup and interfaith relations and its youth training programs, seeks to help establish a common ground for resolving some of the outstanding societal issues.
Jordan still faces external regional challenges as the refuge country for Syrian and previously Iraqi refugees, together with the original Palestinian refugees who number over two million officially registered with UNRWA. The Jordanian economy suffers from a weak growth rate and a high unemployment rate of almost 20%. Females, youth and university graduates are particularly hit by this high unemployment rate.

The Jordanian Ministry of Labor in late 2019, in an effort to lower the unemployment rate among Jordanians, raised the number of professions barred to non-Jordanian nationals seeking employment. Among them were long-term Palestinian refugees not holding Jordanian citizenship, most of whom were from the Gaza Strip; they continued to be denied other fundamental rights and services. DSPR Jordan has been working in refugee camps since it was founded in 1951. It undertakes youth and women empowerment programs with vocational training, start your own business training for women and a variety of community-oriented educational activities.

Its Mother and Child Program caters to the health and nutrition needs with mother support groups as well as children forums and free medical days. DSPR Jordan is active with the Relief Response Program that includes distribution of food and non-food items, encourages voluntarism, and engages with other like-minded organizations. Over ten thousand women, children, and men visited the two clinics run by DSPR Jordan, with close to one thousand benefited from the free medical days. Start Your Own Business attracted 250 women, some of whom were able to use the skills learned to launch their own businesses.

Thanks to Act Church of Sweden, the psychosocial protection program outreaches the Syrian refugees and vulnerable Jordanians who face multiple psychosocial and protection concerns. Women and children are the primary focus of this program. The Embassy of Ireland in Jordan helped in establishing production units and greenhouses benefitting refugee women and the host community. Church of Scotland also supported DSPR Jordan in building capacities of Church related organizations in the south of Jordan.

The benefits of the economic development program reached over 1,300 in various activities. The Relief Program reached out to 2,400 refugee families and host communities with food and non-food items. Exercises and group discussions and programs for raising awareness on contextual issues in the refugee camps benefited more than 3300 women and children. DSPR Jordan serves more than 20,000 beneficiaries altogether, including in 13 refugee camps. It synchronizes its activities and services in refugee communities with public social service and welfare institutions. The overall objective of this concerted effort is to ensure decent living conditions for all the country’s inhabitants, regardless of status.
The year 2019 was a challenging year for the people of Lebanon. The Lebanese economy is broken; the national debt rose to over 150 percent of the gross domestic product. In September, the government of Prime Minister Saad Hariri, which was not formed until January 2019, declared an economic emergency. Subsequently, the Lebanese took to the streets to protest against corruption and mismanagement. Many of the demonstrations have escalated. Until the resignation of the government on 29 October, the protests were fought by the state with brutal violence. The security forces dispersed the protests throughout the country using firearms, rubber bullets, and tear gas grenades. In all three places, the demonstrators were beaten with rifle butts. The demonstrations had triggered Lebanon’s worst political and economic crisis since the end of the civil war 30 years ago. Since then, the economic crisis has worsened once again, and the country is on the verge of insolvency.

The situation in Lebanon has been worsening for some time now, partly because, in addition to the 4.5 million citizens, there are also 1.5 million Syrian refugees, mainly in refugee camps. Conditions in the camps are dire and characterized by overcrowding, poor housing conditions, unemployment, poverty, and lack of access to justice. Authorities heightened calls for the return of refugees in 2019, and municipalities have forcibly evicted thousands of refugees. Under these severe conditions, the problem of the Palestinians in Lebanon almost disappears. But they still have a difficult life in Lebanon and suffer from living away from their roots. Palestinians in Lebanon do not enjoy several necessary rights; for example, they cannot work in as many as 39 professions and cannot own property (real estate). Because they are not formally citizens of another state, Palestine refugees are unable to claim the same rights as other foreigners living and working in Lebanon. DSPR Lebanon aims to empower Palestinians, regardless of age and gender, with knowledge and skills that lead to independence and enable her/him to be a provider for the family and community while preserving the Palestinian identity, heritage, and culture. With the Syrian refugees seeking shelter, DSPR Lebanon makes sure that hundreds of Syrian students, many of whom are of Palestinian origin, receive adequate education to enable them to sit for the official exams in Damascus. DSPR Lebanon seeks to give hope as it extends help with various educational, vocational, and community development programs.

From a kindergarten that has seen several generations of the same families benefiting from its pedagogical attention to toddlers, to community work in refugee camps side by side with vocational training for young women and men, to organizing fun days to refugee communities to get their members out of the bleak daily routine, to advocating for the right of refugees with various duty bearers. DSPR Lebanon is also devoted to bringing Palestinian and Lebanese youth together to discuss various issues and concerns of mutual interest. As DSPR Lebanon strives to give refugees hope and help ensure human dignity, it also embarks on new programs such as one on Forgiveness and Reconciliation, another on Children on the Go, and a third a Bee Keeping project which sees scores of adults becoming beekeepers and honey producers.
The West Bank is home to nearly 775,000 registered refugees, around a quarter of whom live in 19 camps. Most of the others live in West Bank towns and villages. Some camps are located next to major cities, and others are in rural areas. The lack of progress towards peace and reconciliation continues to create an unsustainable economic situation in the West Bank.

The continuing illegal settlement activities in the West Bank are making life for the Palestinians very difficult. Besides having to deal with the effects of expanding illegal settlement activity, the Palestinian farmers have to cope with water problems as the water carrier infrastructure remains inefficient or, in many cases, nonexistent. This is one area in which DSPR Jerusalem and West Bank intervenes in support of farmer communities. Through ongoing cooperation with local village communities, especially in the vicinity of the separation wall, DSPR Jerusalem and West Bank seeks to ensure that these communities sustain their agricultural activities through access to water sources, including potable water.

Jerusalem, with an Arab population in East Jerusalem of close to 40% of the 900,000+ city population, suffers from one of the highest poverty rates as eight out of every ten Palestinians are under the poverty line, as defined by Israel. There is a high dependence on the Israeli labor market for East Jerusalemites, and the Israeli economic dominance limits the economic prospects for Palestinians, particularly the youth, in the city. DSPR Jerusalem and West Bank keeps taps on developments in the city and elsewhere in the West Bank.

The DSPR Advocacy adopted by the Central Committee and by the Partners Roundtable has been entrusted to DSPR Jerusalem and West Bank to implement. See the adopted Advocacy Strategy below.
DSPR has a long history of offering needed medical and health care to refugee communities in Gaza and Jordan. While Gaza continued to endure the Israeli imposed illegal siege trapping more than two million Palestinians, DSPR continued to serve the target populations in primary health. During 2019, DSPR Gaza continued focusing on General health and primary health services including mother and childcare before and during pregnancy, postpartum, and family planning.

Through this program, staff conducted growth and development monitoring of children during early childhood. They have also continued screening and providing supplements for children under five with anemia and malnutrition. Medical, pharmaceutical, and dental services were all provided to the marginalized communities in North, middle and south Gaza through its medical centers. DSPR Gaza also continued to provide mother and child psychosocial ongoing awareness support programs for children and women. Also, part of the health program, staff from clinics visited homes of those injured from the great march of return to check on their health and dress their wounds. Under this program, during 2019, the team received more than 10,000 patients in the general health clinics, provided services to more than 7,000 women with pre-natal, pregnancy and post-natal care; screened and supported 500 children in the anemia and malnutrition program, served 5,000 men, women and children through group and individual psychosocial sessions; visited more than 90 young men at home as part of the emergency reach-out for dressing the injured.

Through its Madaba refugee camp clinic, DSPR Jordan provided health programs including maternal and child health and nutrition services, community medical open days, medical referrals, community support groups, and the establishment and development of nurseries and kindergartens. During 2019, staff reached more than 5,000 people coming from different surrounding areas of the camp.
A WAY OUT OF MALNUTRITION IN GAZA

HEALTHY FOOD FOR RANIA’S CHILDREN

Mohamed was born in 2016. His mother, Rania, has two other children, and she did not complete her education because she got married at an early age. The house of the family has been demolished during the war in 2014, and the family didn’t find any place to live at then, so they lived in a metal caravan for around five years, sometimes they lived with their in-law’s house. Two months ago, the family moved to the newly built home through a fund from the Norwegian government, and the house has been made in the same place as the old one, located in the Shajaia area. The good thing about the Shajaia area is that families are connected, and they support each other. The bad thing is that the houses are located near the borders, with a lot of bombing and violence. There is widespread unemployment in Shajaia, especially among women. Shajaia was not traditionally a deprived area; historically, the primary sources of income were trading of clothes, working in Israel, and agriculture. But since the blockade on Gaza in 2006, the main source of income is employment with government social services.

The family lives below the poverty line and receives monthly welfare benefits of 400 ILS and 200 ILS from the husband’s work, which they spend on the basic needs of the house, such as sugar, eggs, yogurt, milk, legumes, flour, pampers, and oil. Rania is a quiet person, social, and optimistic, and she loves to help people. Because she is poor, she tends to isolate herself and not too much interaction with people outside her family circle. More than eight years ago, she heard from family members about the DSPR NECC health clinic in Shajaia, and since then, she followed up at the clinic for all of her children.

During antenatal care sessions, she heard from the staff about the well-baby service. In the well-baby program, it was discovered that Mohamed suffers from anemia, and he was followed up in the Malnutrition and Anemia program. Rania was instructed on how to feed the child with healthy and balanced food. She was advised to do medical tests to check on the child’s health and was given educational brochures on Malnutrition, Anemia, personal hygiene, and complementary feeding.

The health status of Mohamed was improved. The services Rania received at the health clinic enabled her to take care of her children better and to improve their condition. She knows now that anemia and malnutrition are dangerous in the long run, and she learned many things, like the typical development pattern that every child should pass through. Rania also learned which nutritious food is healthy for the baby. She becomes more aware of how to prevent diseases through better sanitation and hygiene. Rania looks forward to continued support and assistance from the DSPR NECC aid clinic for her children as they continue to grow up under the severe conditions in Gaza. She is full of hope that her children will continue to grow up well and later on the go on to study at a university.

MOHAMED AT THE DSPR NECC HEALTH CLINIC IN SHAJAIA AT A ROUTINE MEDICAL CHECKUP
SANA PRODUCES CHILDREN AND MEN’S CLOTHES

EVERY WOMAN SHOULD BELIEVE IN HERSELF

“In 2016, I attended a training workshop on “Start Your Business” for 15 days. I have learned how to establish my project, how to make sure that my project will run while making a good profit and how to sustain it, and market for it in light of competition of another similar project. From home, I bought one sewing machine and started working. By the time, I was known within my community and started to make a good income that allowed me to move from my house and established my workshop with two women who had good sewing and embroidery experience. I became well known in the camp and outside it and even started a more significant business by producing children and men’s clothes. It is essential for every woman to believe in herself and that she can stand on her feet without depending on anybody.”
During 2019, DSPR NECC in Gaza continued focusing on youth and women empowerment programs. While men, school dropouts, 14-16 years of age, received training on vocational training on Carpentry, Welding, Aluminum Works, Heating, and Air Conditioning at Shajaia, others, aged between 16 to 23, received training in Electricity, Motor Welding, and Solar Energy in Qararah. Young women received training on Secretarial, Office Management, Fancy Dressmaking, and Sewing. Both had the opportunity to be prepared for the labor market through the short term on the job training opportunities. Under this program, the team trained more than 200 students in vocational training; and 20 young women. Besides, 50 young men and women were trained and prepared for the labor market. Twenty men and women were provided with small grants and microcredit for starting a small business and for university education.

DSPR Jordan continued to work with women and youth as relevant target groups of the empowerment program. Staff in the different refugee camps centers provided vocational training, small business development for women and girls, productive kitchens, home economics, and medium enterprise development. During 2019, staff provided ten workshops of “Start your business” initiative composed of a fifteen-day workshop for more than 250. The vocational skills training staff conducted a nine-month-long program in four centers of the different refugee camps, targeting more than 20 women in each center who acquired skills in embroidery, sewing, etc. Staff also conducted 10 workshops in home economics, targeting more than 400 women. The workshop focused on empowering women to make better decisions around the household. As for the production kitchens workshops, women were trained on producing food products and meals for the association and individual levels. Women were trained in enhancing their capacity and build their confidence in cooking skills, many of which they already know. Staff also conducted several special education and awareness programs on health and socio-economic topics, nutrition, violence awareness, psychosocial support, and life skills, reaching more than 1000 men, women, and children.

During 2019, DSPR ICC continued in the West Bank to focus its programs on empowering youth and women, especially farmers, through working with associations to supporting small projects and agricultural production of medicinal herbs and developing them for export. The program staff has also worked intensively during 2019 on land and water development through developing agrarian land. The highlight of the year was on providing agricultural inputs mainly through building water cisterns and sources of water. It offered seedlings, fodder, seeds, compost, and small loans for educational purposes and small business development.
SOLIMAN GRADUATED FROM VTC EL-QUARARA GAZA

"I AM THRILLED WITH MY CAREER"

I graduated from El-Qarara VTC in November 2019. I am now 22 years old, and I live with a family consisted of 13 persons in our owned house in Gaza city. My father is a worker in the agriculture sector, working daily, and I have four brothers; I’m the middle among them, and the other two youngsters are at schools. The two older brothers are university graduates and working-age now, but unfortunately, they are unemployed. The family is receiving subsidies from the ministry of social development, which are unfortunately not covering the basic life needs of my family.

I enrolled El-Qarara VTC for a primary strive for learning the career of general electricity as I like this profession since I was young. I applied for the Qarara VTC two times before the last time I got selected as I succeeded in the written exam and the personal interview. My instructors and trainers were accommodating and supportive; they did not hesitate to answer all my questions and inquiries in the field of electrical work. This 2-year training program was beneficial and full of technical and professional knowledge as well as the behavior and attitudes perceptions. I learned a lot in dealing with peers, clients, and relations in general.

Currently, I have voluntary work with an electrical contracting company. I am working in supplying houses and different establishments with electrical networks, and I am gaining a lot of work experience daily. I hope that I will switch to a daily base contract soon so I could maintain my life expenses and assist my family in their basic needs. I am thrilled with my career. I advise every person of my friends who has had no job opportunity to join vocational training diplomas to find jobs and gain income and build a better future.
ACCESS TO WATER FACILITATES AGRICULTURE

THE LAND BECAME ALIVE THROUGH WATER

Mohammad is a construction worker and farmer residing in Hajja/Joret Amra area. He is 47 years old, married and a father of 4 children, two girls, and two boys. The 2 Girls are above 18 years of age and attending university studying English literature and Business administration at the open university, while the rest are at school. His average monthly income is USD 441. Hamdan and his family live in a house comprising of 2 floors, the first is 70 meters in space, and the one above is 40 meters of space. The upper level is covered by zinc metal roofing.

Hamdan’s family-owned 5 Dunums (1.24) acres adjacent to the agriculture road, which became accessible in the previous year. The land is planted with 70 olive trees and 10 Almond trees, which are four years old. Previously access to the land was complicated, mainly on feet and hard to attend to the property.

Having the agriculture road enabled farmers easier access and can plant trees that are of additional income to families. Previously they used to purchase water for irrigation at the cost of USD 250 per year with great difficulties of storage of water in the inaccessible area. With improved access to land and the construction of a 50 cubic meters of a water cistern, Hamdan can have access to his family’s farm and tend to it with the availability of a water source adequate for a full year of irrigation. The water cistern made available by UMCOR with the catchment area is filled with God’s gift of rain, which is adequate to irrigate the 80 trees throughout the year, providing a yield of olive oil benefiting the family with a new monthly average equivalent to USD 220. The cropping season is mainly in October.

“Before access to water, the land was dead, and with the availability of water, it became alive. Now the whole family is engaged in farming, and we spend the weekend in the land. The boys and girls are more attached to the land and happy to spend time in the open air watching trees grow and appreciate access to water made available to the land and family.”
NEEDS AND RIGHTS OF COMMUNITIES

EMBRACING COMMUNITIES THAT ARE EMPOWERED TO CARE FOR THE NEEDS AND PROMOTE THE RIGHTS OF ITS MEMBERS

DSPR Lebanon continued to serve in the different refugee camps primarily in educational programs, including early childhood development. Activities included supporting nurseries and kindergartens, follow-up of children with learning difficulties due to psychological or physiological challenges, remedial education for students with poor performance, reading and literacy programs, adult education in computer literacy, languages, and the Syrian refugee relief educational program. During 2019, DSPR Lebanon reached more than 700 refugee students and adults under this program. The vocational training program includes the empowerment of youth and women in vocations such as beauty care, hairdressing, barbering, agriculture, and electronics allowing women to be better prepared for facing their future and win their bread with dignity. In 2019 alone, more than 100 students graduated from the different Gaza vocational programs, many of whom were able to find jobs immediately after they graduated from the program. The social and community development program includes sports, music, and entertainment activities for children. Specialists were invited to conduct special educational and awareness programs on health, social and economic topics, nutrition, building life skills, among other activities, with more than 200 people targeted in this program for 2019.

In the empowerment program, DSPR Jerusalem and West Bank provided a woman association with inputs for their medicinal herbs toward production. The land and water development program saw the construction of more than 20 water cisterns for water preservation, especially during the drought. Farmers were provided with seedlings, seeds, and compost. Fifteen men and women from Jerusalem and the West Bank were offered multipurpose microcredit. In the positive youth engagement program, DSPR Galilee continued with the youth leadership and life skills program in Me'ilya. More than 50 Young men and women were targeted at the Notre Dame school in the village with communication, leadership skills, etc. Under this theme, the program staff worked with 90 young women considered to be vulnerable or socially marginalized in the high-risk areas of Acre and support them in their teenage years to complete their education and their subsequent involvement in the labor market. During 2019 and for the first time, DSPR Galilee has started an ecumenical program in Shaf‘a‘amr, and the staff is currently piloting a model called “we the church” for church leadership that aims to maintain Christian young people in the holy land and as an integral part of the Palestinian society. In this project, more than 50 young men and women attended the group weekly. As for the promoting of peace and conflict transformation program, DSPR Galilee staff worked on a cross-boundary project that focuses on the concepts of tolerance and reconciliation in schools (Nazareth) empowering staff and teachers of Christian, Muslim, and Israeli Jewish schools. Ten teachers and more than 30 students came together once a month to form the group discussion and work toward understanding and conflict transformation. Also, the staff worked in 2019 on a teachers’ exposure program of others religious and cultural heritage where the people, especially teachers (50 men and women) from different religions visit holy sites and conduct visits to understand the other better. Staff also provided more than 15 small loans to help and develop small businesses across the Galilee region.
In the slowly overpopulated camp of Ein El Hilweh in the south of Lebanon, a small premise was prepared and equipped to bring some joy into the lives of this community. Ein El Hilweh, a Palestinian refugee camp, houses around 120,000 refugees with an estimated influx of 6,000 Palestinian refugees from conflict-torn Syria. All live in an area of 1.5 square kilometers. The horizontal and vertical expansions of housing units to accommodate the significant population have destroyed the once open spaces that existed and minimized the reach of sun rays and healthy ventilation to the houses.

The UNRWA, on which the camp is heavily dependent for its essential services and especially education, has been trying to deal with the large number of children living in the camp with the additional burden of the new Syrian refugee children. But the cuts to the UNRWA budget have led to the closing of schools, merging overcrowded classes increasing the drop-out rate of students who are unable to cope. This has left many young people and children wandering in the camp alleys, prey to fanatic groups, drug dealers, and political factions. The political factions are heavily armed with their frequent clashes, which caused residents to live in constant fear as many have been killed or maimed and their houses destroyed. Children are the most vulnerable group of this community as they grow up in a violent environment, with a severe lack of security. Within this multitude of problems, the DSPR Lebanon brought a ray of happiness into the lives of the children and youth of the camp.

Music, it is said, has proved to have a significant and positive impact on old and young alike. Music can help people, especially children, and youth, improve their social behavior, refuse the temptation of drugs, resist brainwashing, and enhance their academic performance. Finding a premise in such an overpopulated camp was a challenge, but where would music teachers be found.

As providence dictates, to the camp came Osama Zidan escaping the destruction of his camp in Syria. Like many other Syrian Palestinians, he had fled to Lebanon haunted by the horrific images of the battles which pushed him out of his home, leaving his beloved musical instruments behind. He ached to play on them and to teach others, but he knew that they were long destroyed by now. His life brightened upon hearing of the JCC plan to start a music project and wasted no time in contacting the JCC offering his services. When such an opportunity arises, said Osama, you have to act quickly because you’re afraid to lose the only thing that gives you hope. Form your groups, find your helpers, and prepare the place and provide the instruments, said JCC. And so it began.

The First Music Centre in Ein-El-Hilweh camp

The center offers music classes to around 30 students, aged 8 to 24, but many more would like to join. They study violin, piano, oud, flute, guitar, drum, and learn to sing. In case of special events in the camp, the music, the class performs in the street. Students take lessons three times per week, but they can always come to practice because the door is open every day. It is great to see how much joy music brings into the life of these young people.
THE PROGRAM COORDINATOR MARY AND THE GIRLS IN ACRE

SOCIALLY MARGINALIZED GIRLS AT ACRE IN GALILEE

BELIEVE IN THE ABILITY TO CHANGE LIFE

Under the leadership of the program coordinator Mary, the center in old Acre continued to serve 88 girls from vulnerable communities in and around the city. These girls’ ages ranged from 12 years to 21 old, with the most significant group within the younger age bracket.

Some of the ongoing activities at the center include weekly sessions on dealing with and discussions on daily challenges, emotions stimulating group games, and using story, drawing, drama, acting, and play to life situations. During the last months, the program was able to continue with its weekly meeting “my girlfriend supports me,” which is similar to big sister / little sister, which focused on providing support from older girls to younger girls in education and social support.

Girls throughout the months were invited to share contemporary issues that they wanted to discuss, such as the current political and social situation, elections to the Knesset, incidents of violence and repeated killings, age-appropriate awareness sessions on sex education, and dangers of smoking hookahs and energy drinks.

As for some of the special activities that took place are: the new year “life planning” in January was one of the special events that helped the girls think about their emotional, family, educational, or professional aspects. As March is the month of celebrating the woman, the girls and Mary organized special events for the Mother’s Day celebration and Women’s Day 8th of March: a massive party for the girls where more than 80 women-mothers and relatives attended the event.

This initiative was organized entirely and implemented by the girls as a group at the end of the party. They handed out flowers to their women relatives. Also, in March, special workshops were conducted. The girls were encouraged to search for stories and role models of women, locally or globally, who have had an impact due to their leadership roles in society, such as in science, social, and political activism.

Girls had to each look for stories and biographies to share with the others and then reflect on how these examples were able to get out and think of how they can develop themselves and believe in their ability to change their living conditions.
DSPR, in its various Areas, continued to extend supportive activities to the displaced, refugees and those in need, thanks to ACT Alliance and the contributions received from partners in response to the ACT Appeals. In Jordan, there were in kind services offered to hundreds of families with food and non-food parcels, blankets, school bags, and children’s clothing.

Syrian, Jordanian, and Palestinian women learned how to start their businesses, and some implemented their newly acquired knowledge in the practice of starting their businesses. Psychosocial support and educational fora for women and children were undertaken across the different Areas. In Gaza, the relief given to the vocational training students and those clinic visitors through reduction of tuition and medical fees helped in particular families blessed with many children impacted by unemployment and low to no income. In Lebanon, attention was given to Syrian students who needed to complete their studies and to earn recognized degrees from the relevant educational authorities. Some help was offered to those in need of rent and other essential costs of living.

At DSPR Jordan the Business Recovery Services and Fund supported by Kirk In Actie and Truvalu Netherland continued to work to create economic development and employment. By engaging refugee entrepreneurs, their presence can be transformed into an asset for the host country and create job opportunities for both Syrian refugees and Jordanian host communities.

DSPR in Palestine and throughout the region remains an active member of ACT Alliance Fora in the respective countries. Given the continuing chronic crises facing societies in the Middle East, ACT Alliance continues to be an essential and significant address for working together and partnering to deal with the challenges resulting from these different crises. ACT Alliance provides hope that life continues amidst the most difficult and challenging circumstances.

**EMERGENCY SUPPORT INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES**

- **EMERGENCY RELIEF IS PROVIDED IN A TIMELY MANNER AND SUFFICIENTLY IN ACCORDANCE WITH SPHERE STANDARDS**

CHILDREN PERFORM A TYPICAL PALESTINIAN WEDDING DANCE AT THE SUMMER CAMP IN THE DBAYEH CAMP IN LEBANON
ABEER SULEIMAN, NABILA FARRAJ AND IMAN ALAZABI WORKING TOGETHER IN HUSN CAMP, TO PRODUCE THE BEST FOOD EVER

FOOD PRODUCTION IN HUSN CAMP JORDAN

STRONG WOMEN CAPTURED THE MARKET

“We are a group of women who have been part of a voluntary team that DSPR Jordan formulated to facilitate DSPR’s activities. Which had a great impact on building our capacities, especially the economic part, where we attended several workshops on “Start Your Business,” “Production Kitchens,” and “Home Gardens.”

Through a grant from Irish Embassy in Jordan, DSPR Jordan managed to establish two greenhouses and a production kitchen at DSPR Vocational Training Center in Husn Refugee Camp. From our experience in gardening and cooking, DSPR Jordan allowed us to run this project, which had a high start-up after establishing the kitchen and building the greenhouses. It started to provide the kitchen with needed vegetables and fruits instead of buying it from the local market. We started producing all kinds of food, Pastries, and sweets and managed to organize local Bazaars, which was a great start on revenue level. Schools, homemakers, medical centers, and other institutions inside the camp started sending orders for food to be delivered to their sites, which gave us a great push and generated income for us and the center. The next step will be advertising for the project outside the camp in the surrounding villages. “Our lives are completely changed, we are more confident, and the most important thing, we are completely independent of ourselves, and can support ourselves as well as our families.”
Doris lives in the Dbayeh Palestinian refugee camp, which lies 12 km to the North East of Beirut. She is married and has an 11-year-old daughter. Their family’s difficult economic situation forced them to live with Doris’ mother, who was of great support to them. The young daughter had learning problems, and the grandmother wasted no time enrolling her in the school support classes of DSPR Lebanon and followed up on her progress. The classes run in the lower premise of the DSPR Lebanon Library/Community center, which runs numerous programs that serve the community. The learning abilities of the daughter began to improve, and so did her lessons. But suddenly, the grandmother became sick and passed away. Doris was devastated as she had lost the most supportive person in her life. Nothing that her neighbors or friends said or did succeeded in getting her out of the depressed. For her, the world had stopped.

One day when her daughter was late in returning from the school support program at DSPR Lebanon, Doris walked over to see the reason. And there was her daughter in the library fully and happily occupied with other children playing a game, seated around the table. Other mothers were also there waiting for their children. The librarian welcomed her warmly, and all the mothers immediately gathered around her. They told her about a new program which was to start the next day, and they insisted she joins. Under their insistence, she reluctantly agreed.

The next day saw Doris arriving at the center for the handicrafts course. In the beginning, she was tense and uncomfortable, but the warmth she was receiving and surrounded slowly relaxed her. She finally felt the joy of being with people whose living circumstances were similar to her own. And as the course progressed, Doris found out that she had creativity talents. She loved creating new objects and started to seek new ideas that were not costly. Soon she came up with the idea of creating artistic purposes from what people discarded. She began retrieving empty bottles and cans and working on them to turn them into beautiful objects. Her house soon became an exhibition for handicrafts made from recyclable materials.

Today Doris has many friends, and her neighbors look out for her. She has already participated in some art exhibitions and hopes that one day she can earn some needed income by selling her recycled items.
THE DSPR ADVOCACY PLAN

PALESTINIAN REFUGEES AND THEIR RIGHTS TO SAFETY, ESSENTIAL EDUCATION AND HEALTH SERVICES, ECONOMIC AND EMPLOYMENT SECURITY AND POLITICAL RIGHTS

The DSPR Advocacy Plan, which was adopted both by the Central Committee and by Partners’ Round Table in 2018, accentuated the Priority Issues and Long Term Goals for DSPR Advocacy:

PRIORITY ISSUES
• Palestinian Refugees and their rights to safety, essential education and health services, economic and employment security, and political rights.
• Restrictions are about the rights to safety and essential services besides the constraints on economic and employment opportunities and political expression.
• The Palestinian refugee issue is on the list of local, regional and international authorities.

LONG-TERM GOALS
1. The rights of Palestinian refugees are promoted in line with UN Resolutions and international conventions and laws about refugees.
2. Palestinian refugees, in their countries of refuge, are entitled to essential services, natural resources, and humanitarian assistance.
3. Duty bearers are held to account for the continuing predicament of Palestinian refugees as a result of the impasse of finding a political solution that would enable Palestinian refugees and Palestinians in general to exercise their right to a State.

DSPR, aside from its field work and close association with our Sister and Brother refugees and displaced, has for objectives to achieve the following through its advocacy work:

1. Raising awareness internationally about the urgency of the crisis in the oPT and the costs of inaction to elicit political and financial support.
2. Influencing parties to the conflict and those with influence over the parties [locally and at capital-level] to promote respect for international humanitarian law and international human rights law, with specific emphasis on the objective areas.
3. Strengthening coordination with international networks and strategic outreach with media, to better influence capital-level discussions and decisions.
4. Partnering with development and political actors to ensure the complementarity of advocacy initiatives and support the addressing of root causes of needs and sustainable solutions.
5. Listening to affected persons and integrating their views into advocacy strategies and messages.

DSPR Jerusalem and West Bank has been designated as the hub for DSPR advocacy work. An advocacy staff member has been recruited, on a part-time basis, in 2019.
CENTRAL COMMITTEE

DR. AUDEH QUAWAS
Chairman - Central Committee
Member at Large
(Greek Orthodox)

MR. GHAZZAN MUSTAKLEM
ICC - West Bank
Alternate - Member at Large
(Greek Orthodox)

MR. GEORGE HAZOU
Member at Large
(Oriental Orthodox)

DR. JEAN SLAMANIAN
Alternate - Member at Large
(Oriental Orthodox)

MRS. CLAUDETTE HABESCH
Member at Large
(Roman Catholic)

MR. SAMI MANNEH
Alternate - Member at Large
(Roman Catholic)

BISHOP SANI AZAR
Member at Large
(Lutheran)

MR. BASSAM DAWANI
Alternate - Member at Large
(Anglican)

MS. RIMA KHLEIF
ICC - Alternate Delegate
(Lutheran)

MR. FARAH GERAISY
Chairman - ICC Nazareth Area Committee
(Greek Orthodox)

DR. SUAHL MADBAK
NECCRW/Gaza Delegate
(Greek Orthodox)

MR. SUHAIL TARAZI
NECCRW/Gaza Alternate Delegate
(Greek Orthodox)

DR. GHAZI MSHARBASH
NECCRW/Jordan Delegate
(Anglican)

FATHER SALEM AL-MADANAT
NECCRW/Jordan Alternative Delegate
(Oriental Orthodox)

MRS. LEILA DAGHER
Vice Chairperson - JCC/Lebanon Delegate
(Presbyterian)

MR. EDWARD ASMAR
Chairman - JCC/Lebanon Area Committee
(JCC/Lebanon Alternate
(Oriental Orthodox)

MRS. SANDRA KHOURY
ICC Delegate
(Roman Catholic)

MS. ELHAM SALAMEH
ICC - Alternate Delegate
(Oriental Orthodox)

EMPLOYEES AT DEPARTMENT OF SERVICE TO PALESTINIAN REFUGEES

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Gaza Area</th>
<th>Galilee Area</th>
<th>West Bank Area</th>
<th>Jordan Area</th>
<th>Lebanon Area</th>
<th>Central Office to Areas</th>
<th>All Areas</th>
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<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30</td>
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<td>54</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>men</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>women</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>119</td>
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<tr>
<td>EMPLOYEES TOTAL</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>224</td>
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</table>
The Central office in Jerusalem came about to provide technical support to the different areas or area committees. Staff provided financial, internal audit, and programmatic, technical support to the areas; they also provided logistical support during central committee meetings, team compiled communication stories and managed the office’s central office Facebook page and website. During 2019, while the support continued to the areas through centralized support, the Central office continued to host the Act Palestine Forum every month with one of its staff as the coordinator. Furthermore, the CO office staff with the central committee held their semi-annual meeting in Istanbul in May 2019. In November 2019 and due to changes in the annual rent, DSPR central office and the DSPR Jerusalem and West Bank ICC decided to find new premises where both organizations can share the space and costs. The new office identified to be strategic with the needed services was in the Mount of Olives- Augusta Victoria Compound.
COMMUNICATION
OUR COMMUNICATION CHANNELS TO GET IN TOUCH WITH YOU

WEBSITE: WWW.DSPRME.ORG
FACEBOOK: DSPRME
PERSONAL NEWSLETTER

PARTNER
WE ARE OVERWHELMED AND HEARTFULLY THANKFUL FOR THE SUPPORT AND THE FRIENDSHIP OF OUR FRIENDS, PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS

ACT ALLIANCE
ACT CHURCH OF SWEDEN
ACT FOR PEACE AUSTRALIA
AMOS TRUST
ANERA
ANGELICAN B. MIS. AUSTRALIA
BROT FÜR DIE WELT
CARTAS JERUSALEM
CARTAS FRANCE (SECOURS -- CATHOLIQUE)
CNEN
CCFD-TERRE SOLIDAIRE
CHRISTIAN AID
CHRISTIAN WORLD SERVICE - NEW ZEALAND
CHURCH OF SCOTLAND
CHURCH IN WALES
DIKONIE KATASTROPHENHILFE
EDICAMS
EMBASSY OF IRELAND – JORDAN
EMBRACE THE MIDDLE EAST
EVA LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
EVA LUTHERAN MISSION (FELM)
FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY
FINN CHURCH AID
GENERAL BOARD OF GLOBAL MINISTRIES
GERMAN SPEAKING EVANGELICAL CHURCH BEIRUT
GIZ
GLOBAL MINISTRIES – UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST AND CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)
ICCCO COOPERATION
ICELANDIC CHURCH AID
INCOLO
INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL CORPS (IMC)
KAIROS CANADA
KERK IN ACTIE
LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF
MENNOITE CENTRAL COMMITTEE (MCC)
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF DENMARK
MINISTRY OF HEALTH PALESTINE
NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES IN AUSTRALIA
NECEF SABEEL CANADA
NORWEGIAN CHURCH AID
PONTIFICAL MISSION OF PALESTINE
PORTICUS FOUNDATION
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
REPRESENTATION OFFICE OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY RAMALLAH
SAVE THE CHILDREN
SECOURS CATHOLIQUE CARTAS FRANCE
ST. PATRICKS CATHEDRAL DUBLIN
Svenska Missionskyrkan
TERRE DES HOMMES TOH
THE CCFD - TERRE SOLIDAIRE
THE FINISH EV LUTHERAN MISSION (FELM)
UMCOR
UNICEF
UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA KAIROS
UNITED PALESTINIAN APPEAL (UPA)
WELFARE ASSOCIATION
WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES
WORLD VISION

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WELFARE ASSOCIATION
WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES
WORLD VISION
FINANCIAL OVERVIEW 2019

PROGRAM EXPENSES

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

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<th>Region</th>
<th>Amount (in €)</th>
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<td>283,003</td>
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<tr>
<td>DSPR Jordan</td>
<td>28,559</td>
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<tr>
<td>DSPR Lebanon</td>
<td>161,639</td>
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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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<th>Amount (in €)</th>
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<tr>
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<td>DSPR West Bank</td>
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<td>DSPR Jordan</td>
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<tr>
<td>DSPR Lebanon</td>
<td>496,493</td>
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<td>DSPR Nazareth</td>
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EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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ADVOCACY / CAPACITY BUILDING

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<td>DSPR Jordan</td>
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<td>DSPR Lebanon</td>
<td>101,045</td>
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SPECIAL PROJECTS / EMERGENCY

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<td>DSPR Nazareth</td>
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AC’S ADMINISTRATIVE COST

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GENERAL AND ADMINISTRATION CO / CS

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<td>DSPR Gaza</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL PROGRAM EXPENSES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount (in €)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4,741,557</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>