



Middle East and North Africa
Women Empowerment,
Social Inclusion and Refugees' Rights

“Someday, when things will go well, you will look back and feel proud that you did not give up.”

Hevrin Khalaf



Who we are



19

OFFICES IN THE WORLD



22

OFFICES IN ITALY



12

COUNTRIES

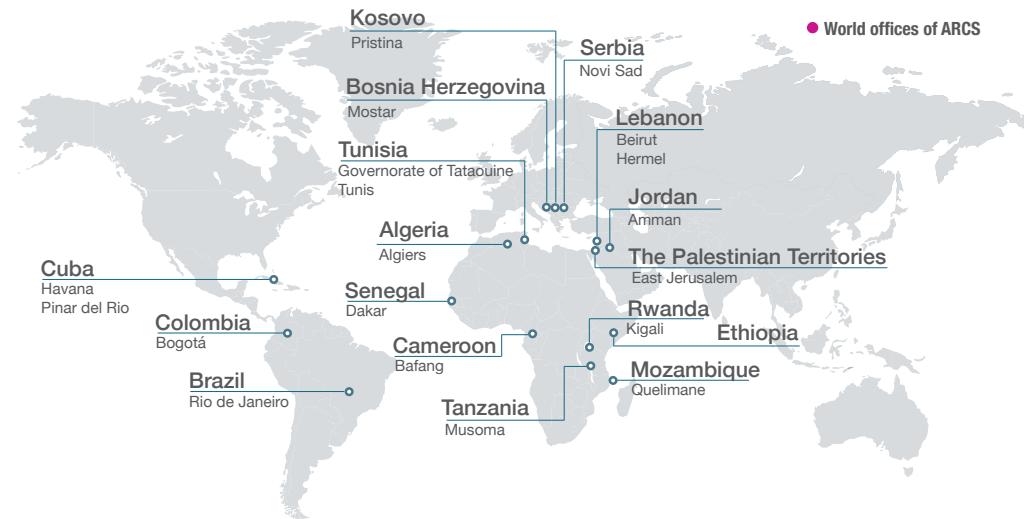


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EMPLOYEES

ARCS Arci Culture Solidali is a non-government organisation for social promotion founded in Rome in 1985 by ARCI, one of the most important Italian associations in the non-profit sector and spread throughout Italy. ARCS is registered in the list of social organisations for development cooperation (Art. 26 of Law 125/2014) and is an APS, national Association for Social Promotion (decree no. 419/II/2011).

As a place of meeting and activism for important figures such as Tom Benetollo, Renzo Maffei and Rino Serri, ARCS benefits from the values



inherited from its founders by incorporating its own ethical model and directing its actions according to the principles of honesty, equality, responsibility, transparency and solidarity. ARCS works in the areas of:

- ▶ international cooperation;
- ▶ volunteering and education in world citizenship and peace;
- ▶ humanitarian aid and reception.

Mission and vision

ARCS promotes processes of social change that guarantee each person, especially those who belong to the more vulnerable swathes of the civil populations, is fully included in society and has paths towards active citizenship, the full enjoyment of civil rights, gender equality and guaranteed access to education, professional training and the work world.

ARCS works to create a world of global rights, peace and democracy that is just and sustainable.

Our projects focus on:

- Civil rights, democracy, peace and people's self-determination
- Humanitarian emergencies, refugees' rights and reception
- Migration and co-development
- Intercultural dialogue
- Education and social and cultural training
- Protection of cultural heritage
- Food sovereignty
- Gender rights and empowerment
- Agriculture and rural development
- Combatting climate change and promoting renewable energies
- Work and social inclusion



For ARCS this vision forms the basis of the building and strengthening of international relations and partnerships, in accordance with the main goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

A fundamental component of ARCS' strategy in its international cooperation efforts is the involvement of communities of citizens in order to promote civil associations and reinforce democratic ownership. For ARCS, cooperating means getting communities involved, weaving relationships and partnerships among areas, people and organisations to develop projects aimed at affirming human rights, peace and dialogue, and promoting active citizenship and democratic participation.

Some of its statutory aims are:

- ▶ To affirm the values of solidarity, peace, non-violence, universal rights and global justice;
- ▶ To struggle against all forms of poverty, discrimination and social and political exclusion;
- ▶ To foster the social and cultural advancement of citizens through democratic participation and ownership and by strengthening cooperative relationships between communities and between areas;
- ▶ To affirm and safeguard equal opportunities and gender empowerment;
- ▶ To raise awareness of and implement the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- ▶ To spread the founding principles of the European Union;
- ▶ To affirm conscious and socially sustainable life styles.

Since 2011 ARCS has been a member of the Italian Institute of Donation (IDD), which annually certifies the proper use of the resources collected.





ARCS in the Middle East and North Africa: issues, goals and strategy

ARCS has been working in the Middle East and North Africa for over twenty years with projects to support local communities and refugees even in emergency and reconstruction situations. Over the years, the interventions have reached several countries in the area. The commitment has been intense in Palestine, where ARCS stepped in to support children and those impacted by the conflicts.

ARCS has started programmes for emergencies, the prevention of drug addiction and the social hardship of the new generations.

ARCS has fought against the marginalisation of children and women in Gaza by promoting reading and through many volunteer activities. During the first Intifada in Palestine, ARCS stepped in to support children and those affected by the conflict, which went on for years from Jerusalem to Hebron, from Bethlehem and Ramallah to Gaza.

The heritage of the nation-wide child-sponsorship campaign “Salaam, ragazzi dell’Olio” was reaped by activating emergency programmes, in collaboration with the United Nations, with the project for the Hebron refugee camp, with its work with “Bethlehem city of peace and culture”, with the support of the city’s educators and the camps in East Jerusalem and with work and “meeting” camps involving many young people.

Today, ARCS focuses its initiatives mainly in Lebanon, Jordan and Tunisia. A fundamental choice confirmed also by the most recent three-year programming and guidance document for development cooperation policy which indicates the strengthen of socio-economic development in these countries as a priority, also in terms of need to contribute to the stability of the area and to the restoration of the regional political framework.

Our projects in this area focus on:

- Human rights and social inclusion
- Women empowerment
- Reproductive health
- Education and the defence of children’s rights
- Refugee assistance
- Fostering employment and decent work



Goals

ARCS has decided to take action in the area in line with the goals of Agenda 2030, focusing in particular on contributing to the achievement of some of its important objectives.



3. Ensure health and well-being for everyone and for all ages

ARCS aims to contribute to guaranteeing access to sexual and reproductive healthcare assistance services.



4. Provide quality, fair and inclusive education, and learning opportunities for everyone

ARCS intends to contribute to:

- Increasing the number of young people and adults with specific skills – including technical and professional skills – for decent employment and jobs;
- Eliminating gender disparity in education and guaranteeing equal access at all levels of education and professional training for protected groups, including people with disabilities, indigenous populations and children in vulnerable situations;
- Ensuring the necessary knowledge and skills are acquired to promote sustainable development, also through education aimed at sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender parity, the promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and the appreciation of cultural diversity.



5. Achieve gender equality and the emancipation of all women and girls

ARCS intends to contribute to:

- Ending, everywhere, all forms of discrimination against women, girls and children;
- Guaranteeing universal access to sexual and reproductive health and to reproductive rights, as agreed in the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and by the Beijing Platform for Action and by the documents generated during the subsequent conferences.



8. Provide incentives for long-lasting economic growth that is inclusive and sustainable, full and productive employment and decent work for everybody

ARCS intends to contribute to guaranteeing full and productive employment and decent work for women and men, including young people and people with disabilities.



16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development

ARCS intends to contribute to:

- extending and boosting the participation of developing countries in the institutions of global governance.

Strategic lines

ARCS believes it is essential to base projects, programmes, information and awareness campaigns, meetings, debates, cultural events, training and information initiatives, workshops, camps, volunteer initiatives and any other activities carried out with cultural organisations and partners on a few strategic principles.

1. Give a central role to gender issues and to the social inclusion of vulnerable groups in society:

- Make gender issues, the struggle for equality and women and minorities' empowerment essential priorities of its work;
- Focus in particular on women, children, the elderly, the sick and people with disabilities and their specific needs;
- Foster gender parity and equity in all programmes and projects and ensure equal benefits for women and men, girls and boys, female and male children;
- Generate and disseminate data and information broken down by sex in order to improve planning and assessment processes.

2. Strengthen resilience:

- Develop strategies that reinforce the resilience of women and men, girls and boys, female and male children in order to reinforce their ability to end poverty and promote the values of peace and social justice;
- Facilitate the active participation of the beneficiaries of its initiatives;
- Plan programmes that actively involve communities as a whole.

3. Cultivate partnerships:

- Create strong, stable partnerships with civil society organisations, members of communities, donors, governments and institutions to promote, support and achieve gender equality and the development goals that have been set;

- Support civil society organisations in reinforcing lobbying and advocacy.

4. Foster an agile transition between initial relief phases and rehabilitation towards sustainable development:

- ARCS acts in line with the goals of the Good Humanitarian Donorship Initiative, responding in particular to principle 9, which requires that humanitarian relief be provided using methods aimed at long-term rehabilitation and development, ensuring support, where appropriate, for the restoration and maintenance of adequate means of support and the transition from humanitarian action to actions aimed at rehabilitation and development.

“The ongoing debates in the principal international forums, UN and OECD-DAC, increasingly stress the need for coherence and continuity between humanitarian aid and development. The extension of the average period of population displacement has required the way that humanitarian aid is used to be revised, highlighting the need to tie emergency relief activities more closely to those designed to strengthen the resilience of the population and, therefore, the ability of local communities to prevent and manage emergencies, thus reducing their dependence on external support. At the same time, Italian humanitarian aid will continue to comply with the fundamental principles of neutrality, impartiality, independence and humanity approved at international level.”

(International Development Cooperation, Three-Year Programming and Policy Planning Document 2017-2019)

Context and problems

The crisis in Syria and refugees The eruption of the crisis in Syria in 2011 generated one of the most severe humanitarian crises in the area, throwing off many of the balances in the Middle East. The countries that have been hit the hardest by the influx of refugees are Lebanon and Jordan.

This situation has inevitably had negative repercussions for the social protection system of these countries, influencing, for example, the need for refugees to be documented and registered both civilly and legally, the increase in child labour, the rise in episodes of sexual and gender violence against women, including disabled women, and minors and the overall increase in social tensions.

Despite the efforts of the governments involved and the international community, both for the refugees and for the host communities, the need for protection and economic and social inclusion is still great: in particular, for families that are especially economically and socially vulnerable.

Host communities are less and less able to receive people and the services available, in areas that are already impoverished, are lacking.

The problem of violence against women is particularly alarming.

The number of early marriages, practicing sex in order to survive and domestic violence are increasing steadily.

Women are one of the most vulnerable groups. In particular, women who are alone and the head of a household indicate that a lack of money and difficulty paying the rent is one of the main problems for their safety, in addition to the urgent need for access to protection services.

Then, within this scenario, there are other discriminating factors that aggravate the condition of women, such as disability.

The existing health care, psychological and legal support services, counselling and reception services should be strengthened to ensure proper support from competent and qualified staff to women victims of violence. It is essential to renew the commitment to the protection of families with a high index of economic and social vulnerability so as to help ensure and promote their rights and dignity.

Unemployment and marginalisation among young people in Tunisia

Considered the country where the Arab Spring started, Tunisia has a population of 11.5 million, only 3.5 million of whom are employed. The unemployment rate, which has been rising steadily over the last years, at the end of 2017 reached 15.3% of the active population, also recently sparking clashes and protests. The energies of the main national and international players are geared towards fostering the process of democratic transition and reforms and towards creating a situation that fosters participation and reduces the social tensions that are triggered due to the lack of job opportunities and social mobility. Social friction is also fuelled by the economic gap between marginalised inland areas and coastal areas with a higher economic growth rate and greater foreign and state investment, which, for that matter, has also dropped sharply in recent years.

Marked unemployment is also an expression of a country's limited ability to include women in the world of work (27%), which is itself a consequence of a patriarchal vision of society that discourages women's active participation in economic activities.

Tunisia still does not seem able to recover from the prolonged crisis triggered by the 2011 revolution.



In Jordan...

we help improve access to the job market for Syrian refugees and vulnerable Jordanians. We try to create job opportunities by providing support to microenterprises and we help strengthen the role of associations, social movements and independent unions to promote reforms and democratic changes. We work to protect the right to education of the most vulnerable swathes of the refugee population and foster opportunities to access public school services.

In Jordan, since its registration in July 2012, ARCS has established contacts and developed relationships with local organisations, in particular, through projects financed by the EU with the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) and through the European Voluntary Service in collaboration with the West East Center (WE).

From 2012 to 2014, ARCS has managed the project **“Promotion and Protection of Rights of Migrant Workers in Agricultural Sector in Jordan”** in partnership with the Jordanian NGO Tamkeen, which provides social protection and legal support to vulnerable groups and victims of human rights violations. Funded by the European Union Delegation in Amman under the EIDHR funding line, the project sheds light on the living and working conditions of migrants in Jordan who work as seasonal workers in the agricultural sector. Among the main actors involved, the Jordanian Ministries of Labour and Agriculture.

Since 2015 ARCS has taken part in the project **“Decent Work, Social Protection and Freedom of Association in the Middle East and North Africa: Mobilising for Social Justice by Strengthening and Promoting CSOs, Social Movements and (Independent) Trade Unions’ Role in Reforms and Democratic Change”**. This initiative, thanks to financing from the EU, aims to strengthen the role of civil society, social movements and independent trade unions in promoting democratic reforms aimed at fostering decent work, social protection and the freedom of association in the Middle East and North Africa.

In Lebanon, Jordan and Palestine the ENPI CBC Med project was carried out entitled **“WATER DROP: Policies to Develop Water Resources for Water Management in Semi-arid Areas”**, presented by the Italian National Agency for New Technologies, Energy and Sustainable Economic Development (ENEA, leader), along with other international and local organisations. The aim of the project was to develop an integrated approach to the management of water resources through four pilot actions (monitoring, water treatment, water management, cost-benefits analysis) in four countries (Lebanon, Jordan, the Palestinian Territories, Italy) and in some pilot sites identified during the feasibility study of the proposal. The projects sought to help harmonise regulations regarding water resource management in the Mediterranean countries.

ARCS has helped create a social map to harmonise water management legislation in the Mediterranean area and was responsible for coming up with and implementing an awareness campaign in the schools of three countries: Lebanon, Jordan and Palestine.

ARCS has worked on programmes to protect the right to education by fostering opportunities to access public school services.

It recently took part in the project **“ScEGLi: Schools and Education in Jordan and Lebanon”** which sought to help protect the right to education for the most vulnerable swathes of the refugee population and of the host communities in Lebanon and Jordan.

It is currently involved in the projects **“Integrated Actions to Help Syrian Refugees and Vulnerable Jordanians Enter the Job Market in the Tafilah and Aqaba Governorates”** and **“We Are the Future: Professional Training and Socio-economic Inclusion of Young People, Women and People with Disabilities in Lebanon and Jordan”**.





In Lebanon...

we protect the right to education of children and the rights of young people, women and people with disabilities, also in prisons. We help ensure the social inclusion and socio-economic empowerment of refugees, especially women and children, and guarantee they have access to healthcare services.

ARCS has been active in Lebanon since 1980 with projects financed by the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation, the EU, international organisations, decentralised cooperation and private funds. It has worked with both international and emergency cooperation projects, and since 2004 has been involved in education initiatives and initiatives to support women's cooperatives in different areas of the country.

ARCS has been focussing more and more of its initiatives on gender, economic and social empowerment and on reinforcing educational, cultural and social and economic integration services for minors, young people and women.

Over 20 projects have been carried out in Lebanon financed mainly by the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation through the Ross Programme. ARCS has carried out programmes, also in consortium with other NGOs, in the area of education, the fostering of employment and in support of policies on gender, Palestinian refugee assistance and institutional building with the local authorities. Today, it continues to work on projects to empower women and children, foster the socio-economic inclusion of young people, women and people with disabilities and improve access to healthcare services for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged swathes of the population.

Its most recent projects are:

- **Ayounkon: Supporting Access to Ophthalmology Services in the Bekaa Valley**

- **Social Inclusion, Education and Reproductive Health for Women and Children in Naba'a, Bourj Hammoud**
- **We Are the Future: Professional Training and the Socio-economic Inclusion of Young People, Women and People with Disabilities in Lebanon and Jordan**
- **DROIT: Rights, Social Reintegration, Career Guidance and Protection for Young Adults, Women and People with Disabilities in Lebanese Prisons**
- **Social Stability: Creating Temporary Employment Opportunities in Municipalities on the Border of Northern Bekaa**
- **Career Guidance and Help to Get Started Working for Vulnerable Young Adults Hosted in Reception Centres in Rabieh, Lebanon**
- **Peace Facilitators for Resilient Communities in the Suburban Neighbourhoods of Beirut**





In Tunisia...

we work to reinforce women's empowerment in agriculture, support local small-scale entrepreneurship in rural areas and create microenterprises.

In Tunisia the process of democratic transition underway is in conflict with the lack of economic and social opportunities affecting entire generations, forced to suffer the consequences of the lack of jobs and social mobility.

ARCS is mainly active in the governorates of Medenine and Tataouine, a marginalised inland border area with an economic growth rate and rate of state and foreign investment that is considerably lower than that of the coastal areas. The area suffers from a severe lack of productive economic activities and unemployment rates are still among the highest in Tunisia, fuelling instability, social conflict and marginalisation.

This region has an important vernacular heritage; however, it lacks the specific skills to enable the development of tourism.

The projects proposed by ARCS are the fruit of assessment confirming a need for and interest in recovering and promoting knowledge, traditional knowhow, cultural heritage and biodiversity as resources to develop the area and sources of income for its population.

ARCS has invested its resources in creating microenterprises to increase job opportunities for the most vulnerable swathes of the population, in line with local policies aimed at reducing unemployment and according to the recommendations and strategic priorities indicated by the main bodies working in the area. The projects currently underway are:

- **Ter-Re. From the Local Area to Income: Paths of Empowerment for the Women and Youth of Tataouine**
- **ARD (earth): Agriculture, Income and Dignity for the Women of Rass El Oued**





ARCS' most recent projects

Some of ARCS' main goals in the area are to: provide support to refugees, reinforce the services offered in Lebanese prisons, improve prison conditions and provide support to rehabilitation processes; create job opportunities, also by implementing professional training programmes and bolstering microenterprises; provide support to the social and economic empowerment of women and young people; protect the right of access to public school services; safeguard health.

Lebanon

Global Gender Gap Index 2018

Score 0,595
0.00 = imparity
1.00 = parity

Rank 140
out of 149
countries



Key indicators

GDP (US\$ billions)	51.84
GDP per capita (constant '11, intl. \$, PPP)	13.368
Total population (1,000s)	6,006.67
Population growth rate (%)	0.72
Population sex ratio (female/male)	0.99
Human Capital Index score	-

	2006	2018
	rank	score
Global Gender Gap score	140	0.595
Economic participation and opportunity	136	0.432
Educational attainment	110	0.959
Health and survival	122	0.967
Political empowerment	147	0.024
rank out of	114	149

Data retrieved from: <http://reports.weforum.org/global-gender-gap-report-2018/data-explorer/#economy=LBN>



DROIT: Rights, Social Reintegration, Career Guidance and Protection for Young Adults, Women and People with Disabilities in Lebanese Prisons

		
<p>Duration</p> <p>The project was started on 1 September 2018 and will end on 4 October 2019.</p>	<p>Partner</p> <p>Association of Justice and Mercy (AJEM); Mouvement Social (MS); Non c'è Pace Senza Giustizia (NPSG); Associazione Antigone Onlus; Authority for the Rights of Prisoners of the Tuscany Region; ARCI Tuscany</p>	<p>Financing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Italian Agency for Development Cooperation

With this project, ARCS aims to bolster the services offered in Lebanese prisons to improve prison conditions, support rehabilitation processes for inmates and foster the social reintegration of those who are most at risk.

ARCS seeks to promote a new approach for the Lebanese penitentiary system aimed at transforming the punitive function of prisons into re-education, geared towards the rehabilitation and reintegration of inmates.

The proposal includes a training programme for the two local NGO partners, AJEM and Mouvement Social, involving a network of leading Italian operators, such as Associazione Antigone and the Authority for the Rights of Prisoners of the Tuscany Region, ARCI Tuscany and Non C'è Pace Senza Giustizia.

It focusses on monitoring and developing prison services and the defence of human rights to boost the ability to plan prison interventions.

“Despite the appeals of civil society and the international community, conditions in Lebanese prisons are still far from international standards. According to the 2016 World Prison Brief, the prison population counts roughly 6,502 individuals (only Roumieh, the largest Lebanese men’s prison has roughly 3,500 inmates), 286 of whom are women (4.4%) and 110 of whom are minors (2%). Roughly 36% of the inmates are foreigners and the majority are from Syria.


According to the Ministry of Justice, with the Syrian crisis the prison population went up by 30-35%. The slowness and improper functioning of the judiciary system, with arbitrary arrests, errors and long waiting times for judgements, limited legal assistance and economic and social support for inmates (people with disabilities, minors and young adults who have suffered abuse, HRW 2015) and their families and the lack of infrastructure and services for people with disabilities make Lebanese prisons bastions of depression and radicalisation, rather than places of recovery and re-education.”

Micol Briziobello

This initiative aims to bolster basic assistance services (psychological and legal support), organise professional training and provide support for the social reintegration of young adults, women and people with disabilities who have been subjected to restrictions on their personal freedom, including support for their families.

This project also strives to help improve infrastructure for people with disabilities and services that help bring families back together, such as counselling on the process of imprisonment and organising areas for family visits.

Social Stability: Creating Temporary Employment Opportunities in Municipalities on the Border of Northern Bekaa

		
Duration The project started on 4 October 2018 and will end in August 2019	Partner The Municipality of Chawaghir	Financing The Italian Agency for Development Cooperation Beirut; the Municipality of Chawaghir

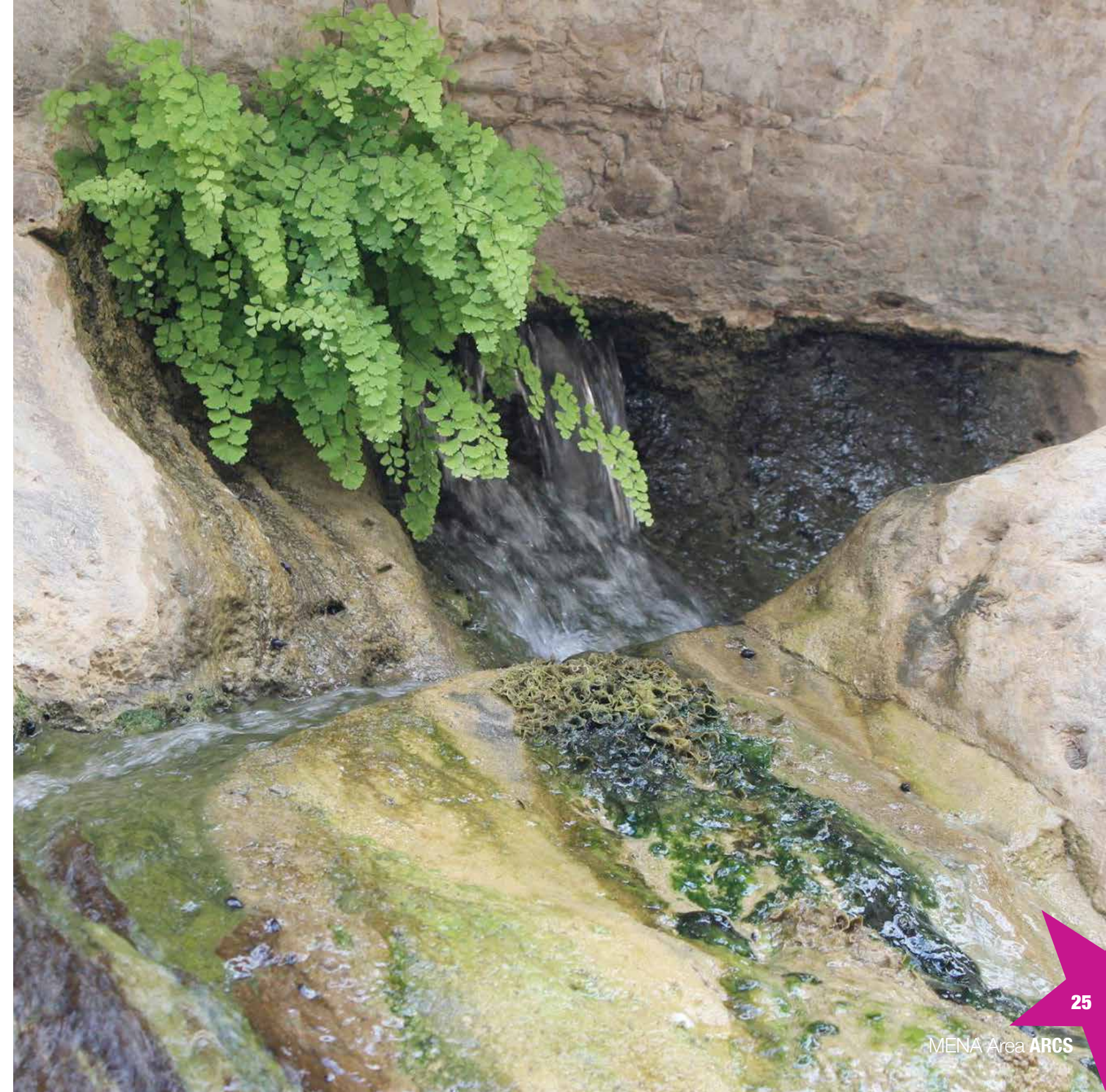
With this project, ARCS aims to provide job opportunities to Syrian refugees and Lebanese who have returned to their home country and assist in handling the Syrian crisis in the border area in northern Bekaa. The project will employ 309 Syrian and Lebanese people to improve public areas and municipal services, including waste collection. These are people who are currently living below poverty level, calculated at 4 dollars a day.

“In Lebanon, services, from sewer systems to waste collection, healthcare and education, are insufficient and the central government, which is finding itself with less and less tax revenue and an increasing demand for services, is unable to support local municipalities.

The project takes places in northern Bekaa, Lebanon, where after the Syrian crisis, there was a large influx of Syrian refugees and Lebanese coming home after years of working in Syria and totally foreign to the situation in Lebanon.

According to the needs analysis carried out by the Lebanese Ministry for Social Affairs and by the UNHCR, refugees have three main needs: access to jobs, education and medical care.”

Giorgio Vassalli





Following the Syrian crisis, waste collection services in the small municipalities deteriorated to the point of becoming almost non-existent in some cases, like in the Municipality of Chawaghir, a small municipality on the border.

The municipality covers the entire course of the Assi River, one of the country's main natural resources, from Hermel to El Hawch, on the border with Syria.

Agriculture is the main source of income but part of the economy centres around domestic tourism, and hence economic endeavours connected to the Assi River, the region's undisputed environmental asset.

ARCS aims to support the Municipality of Chawaghir in improving public areas and services by:




- Cleaning the banks of the Assi River (12 km) and maintaining the adjacent streets;
- Making the streets along the riverbanks safe;
- Starting a waste recycling system;
- Reinforcing waste recycling.

The initiative aims to carry out a campaign to clean the riverbanks, create 20 waste recycling collection points, 2 recycling centres for citizens and organise door-to-door household waste collection. The municipality will also be given 80 waste collection bins and a truck to remove waste from the bins.

The maintenance of the road running along the river Assi will involve the construction of retaining walls on the upstream side of the road itself. Currently, during the winter period, landslides, slips of soil and stony material occur on the road due to the rain and the excessive slope, obliging the municipality to a continuous maintenance in order to keep the road system efficient.

Training courses will also be held on waste recycling and safety in the workplace. The participants, organised into teams, will do the work.

Social Inclusion, Education and Reproductive Health for Women and Children in Naba'a, Bourj Hammoud

		
Duration The 1-year project started on 2 June 2017 and ended in July 2019.	Partner AIDOS Italian Association Women for Development; Basmeh & Zeitooneh	Financing <ul style="list-style-type: none">• AICS• Private funds• Local partners

In Lebanon the Syrian crisis has generated serious economic and social repercussions, mainly in the severely disadvantaged areas in the suburbs of Beirut. One of these is Naba'a (Bourj Hammoud), a neighbourhood northeast of the capital.

For the UNHCR, there are 400 Syrians for every 1,000 Lebanese: 1 million registered refugees, 440 thousand of whom are school aged, which is more than their Lebanese peers. The repercussions of the Syrian crisis on the social and economic conditions are very serious, mainly in the severely disadvantaged areas in the suburbs of Beirut, including Bourj Hammoud, a neighbourhood northeast of the capital. One of its 7 main districts is Naba'a, an area that is historically Shi'ite Muslim and Christian Armenian. Since the end of the war in 1990, Asian and African migrants have come into the neighbourhood to work in manufacturing plants and handicraft workshops, turning Naba'a into a melting pot of culture, religion and politics. Today, Syrian refugees represent 63% of the inhabitants of the neighbourhood. Although there are no official estimates, women and children are clearly vulnerable. Minors do not have easy access to education. Women are discriminated against in access to education and the job market.

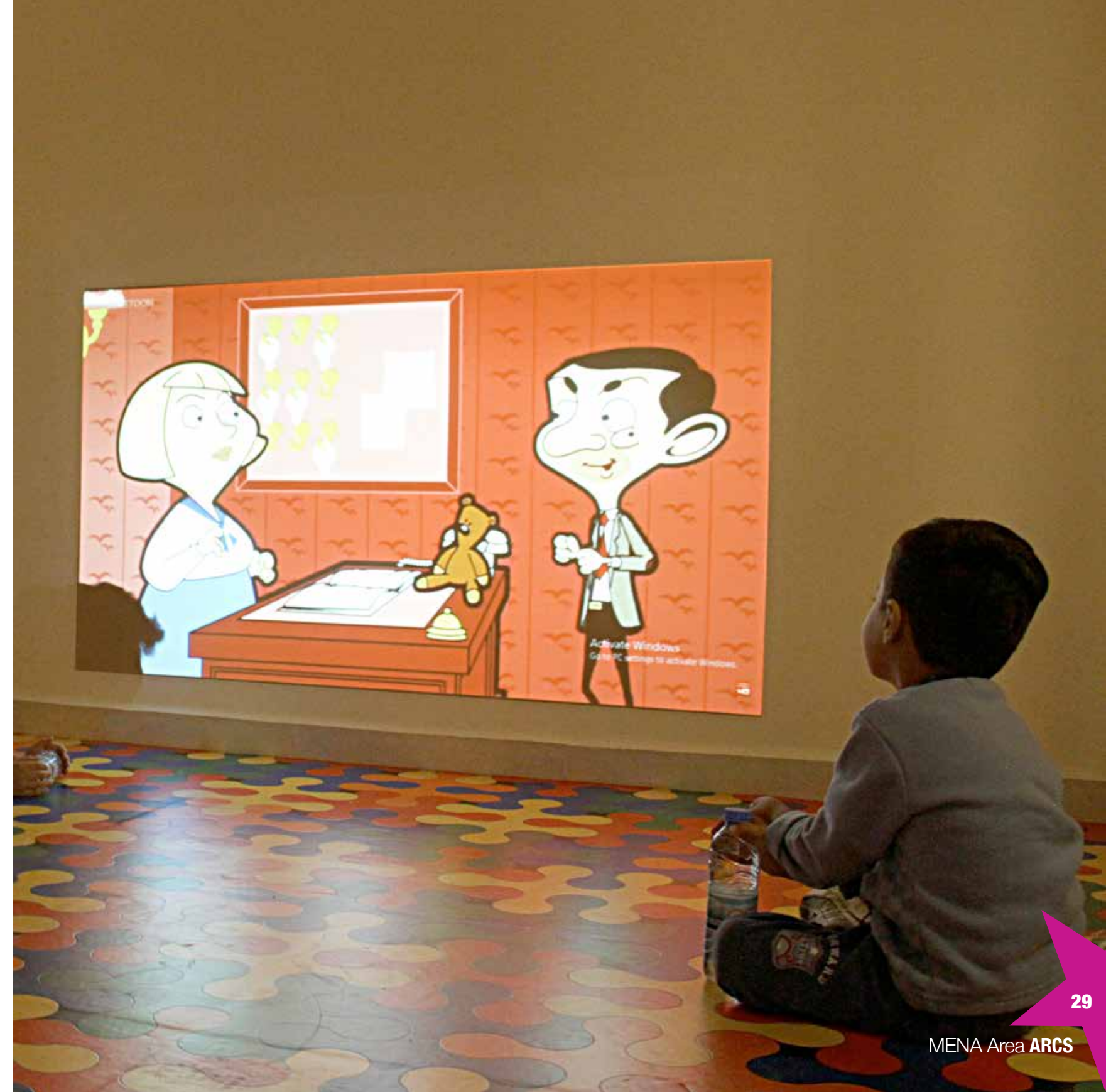


Bashmet & Zeitooneh is a Lebanese NGO founded in 2012 by Syrian and Lebanese young people who decided to take steps to deal with the Syrian refugee emergency in Lebanon. Along with them, ARCS founded a Community Centre to foster the social and economic empowerment of Naba'a women and promote the health of those who live in the neighbourhood. The goal of the project is to promote social inclusion and access to health services for vulnerable women and children. There are many different activities: courses in literacy, English and computer life skills, courses in textiles and handicrafts and professional training to develop skills enabling women to be self sufficient. They also offer recreational activities and catch-up classes for vulnerable children and young boys and girls. A day-care centre has also been created for very young children as well as a healthcare/legal information hub to address reproductive health and the prevention of gender violence.

Peace Education aims to strengthen some key concepts in children's education, such as self-expression, trust in oneself, identity, communication and dialogue, conflict resolution, children's rights and gender equality. There is also a programme underway offering psychological support for women.

“Today, I want to tell you about the women of Naba'a, about their desire to participate, to get involved... to be there. It is indeed their enthusiasm and their good will that strike me every time I watch them through the small window, busy with their knitting needles or weaving cloth, telling each other stories about the past and the present that excite them and make them smile. And this desire to participate has not waned even in these last weeks, when the rain beat down on Beirut without stopping for days, flooding streets and houses, cutting off the electricity and causing considerable damage for the entire population of Naba'a. Norma did not stop them and every one of them took part in their weekly sessions, because this is what makes the women of Naba'a different from the rest: their strength, desire to participate, to get involved... to be there”

Adele Cornaglia





The number of direct beneficiaries of the Community Centre was estimated to be about 2,213 people (number of registered users of the Centre), 1,086 of whom are children, 1,012 are women and 111 men, whereas the number of indirect beneficiaries (non-registered users, families of beneficiaries, individuals who have taken part in organised community events such as neighbourhood parties, inaugurations and collective kitchens) is estimated to be around 4,000 people. Today, the Centre is a key point of reference for women and children, who even go there several times a week. On average, there are 80-120 registered users a day, 50% of whom are children and adolescents, 40% women and 10% men.

We Are the Future: Professional Training and the Socio-economic Inclusion of Young People, Women and People with Disabilities in Lebanon and Jordan

		
<p>Duration</p> <p>The 1-year project started on 2 May 2017 and ended on 1 May 2018.</p>	<p>Partner</p> <p>Research and Cooperation; AIDOS; Mada Community & Environment; Lebanese Physical Handicapped Union (LPHU); Noor al Hussein Foundation (NHF).</p>	<p>Financing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AICS, Beirut office • LUPD • NHF • Own funds

Promoted by ARCS and approved by the Regional Coordination for the Syrian Crisis of the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS) with an office in Beirut, this initiative aims to improve the life conditions of vulnerable swathes of Syrian refugees and the local population in Lebanon and Jordan by strengthening their ability to do a job.

The project involves professional training programmes for Syrian refugees and Lebanese and Jordanian citizens residing in the areas hit the hardest by the economic repercussions of the Syrian crisis.

The training programmes include theory courses and paid internships with local public institutions or private companies and last 150 hours overall: 30% of which are theory lessons and 70% the internship. There are 36 training courses and professional internships for 620 vulnerable Lebanese, Jordanians and Syrians, including women and people with disabilities in the most disadvantaged areas of Lebanon (Akkar and Bekaa) and Jordan (Irbid and Ajloun).

The sectors involved are the agro-food sector and those relating to construction and the environment. The project is coordinated by ARCS in consortium with two Italian NGOs, AIDOS and Research and Cooperation, and three local NGOs, Mada Community & Environment and the Lebanese Physical Handicapped Union (LPHU) in Lebanon and Noor al Hussein Foundation (NHF) in Jordan.

At the end of the first cycle of training courses, focussing on the pruning and management of forests, gardening, the maintenance of smartphones and small electronic components, hygiene procedures and standards in food packaging, food processing, accounting and secretarial skills, building techniques, computer skills and database management, 73 participants completed internships in local enterprises and small- and medium-sized enterprises, for a total of 105 hours.

Internships strengthen relationships between the participants and employers, allowing these two parties in the job market to communicate: potential employees and small- to medium-sized entrepreneurs. Many participants received job offers thanks to the internship or started income-generating activities or became entrepreneurs themselves. This is the case of Ali, who, after he had finished his internship at a smartphone retailer, set up a small maintenance desk in the family shop where now not only he but his sister also works. This is also the case of Boshra, who in Baalbek is getting ready to start a cooperative with the others who took part in the training course in accounting and that will involve young people with disabilities.





On the topic of fostering entrepreneurial spirit and women's entrepreneurship, ARCS works with AIDOS to provide technical consulting and capacity building regarding gender inclusion on the job market.

Portrait of Dar el Ahmar

“By taking part in this project I acquired the knowledge that will enable me to include my profile in the area of food production to qualitatively improve the supply chain from producer to consumer.”

Rouba




“During the training course, we had lessons with local experts like chemical engineers and bacteriologists, who showed us what hygiene-sanitation procedures to follow to ensure adequate production standards. Their contribution gave considerable added value to the experience.”

Angel

“Rouba and Angel are only two of the voices we have chosen to illustrate the situation in Dar el Ahmar and shed light on how important it is to try and find innovative development solutions in the local economies by supporting and expanding traditional knowledge and facilitating connections with local entrepreneurs.”

Carolina Cinerari

Ayounkon: Supporting Access to Ophthalmology Services in the Bekaa Valley

		
Duration	Partner	Financing
The project started on 16 July 2018 and ended on 15 July 2019.	Beirut Eye and ENT Hospital (BESH); AMEL International.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNOCHA–LHF United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs–OCHA/Lebanon Humanitarian Fund

The goal of the project, built on the results achieved by the pilot initiative “Ayounkon: Urgent Action for the Visual Health of Syrian Refugees in the Bekaa Valley”, is to improve and facilitate access to ophthalmological services for Syrian refugees and particularly vulnerable Lebanese citizens in the Bekaa Valley. Based on its previous experience, ARCS decided to launch another project in the area of visual health, a field often overlooked by international humanitarian relief.

Over 12 months, ARCS, in collaboration with the staff of the Primary Healthcare Centers of the Lebanese NGO AMEL International, will offer opportunities to 1,200 patients to be visited by an ophthalmologist free of charge at three towns in the Bekaa Valley: Masgharah, Kamed el Loz and Arsal. 600 pairs of eyeglasses will also be given out to correct refractory disorders.

Overall, 125 eye operations have been planned that can prevent these people from losing their vision. In this second phase in the project, the group of volunteer ophthalmologists and the BESH, supported by ARCS' organisational staff, will do 80 cataract operations, 5 cornea transplants and 40 paediatric operations, including strabismus and paediatric cataract.





A study carried out in February 2017 by resident ophthalmologists from Saint Joseph University on a sample of the population in the Bekaa Valley showed how the majority of the elderly and children from Syria did not have access to visits with an eye specialist during their five years of displacement, despite having vision disorders, infections and cataracts which for some had consequences – that were sometimes even disabling – in their everyday life.




“What motivated us to promote a campaign of visits and operations on a volunteer basis for more than a year was the consideration that the majority of the people visited – including children suffering from severe short-sightedness that had caused them to have to leave school and young breadwinners who were no longer able to work – were able to go back to their normal life with a prescription for the right pair of glasses or by doing simple operations. Many of them were elderly people suffering from diabetic cataracts, a very widespread disorder among refugees, also due to their diet and living conditions. Without this operation, which costs from 1,000 to 2,000 dollars in Lebanon, these people would have eventually lost their vision.”

Sylvain, volunteer ophthalmologist for Ayounkon





Vocational training and work for vulnerable young adults in the center in Rabieh, Lebanon

		
Duration The project started on 15 November 2018 and will end on 14 November 2019.	Partner AJEM	Financing Fondazione Terzo Pilastro

The conditions in Lebanese prisons are still far from meeting international standards. Limited economic and social support for inmates and their families are what render Lebanese prisons ineffective in developing a path to recovery and re-education aimed at social integration and helping young people in conflict with the law to get started working. Within this context, ARCS seeks to support the work of the AJEM, one of the few Lebanese NGOs that ensures psycho-social support services, legal aid and professional training for inmates, especially minors and young adults (males) in the male prisoners at Roumieh, the largest in Lebanon, and their families.

Aware of how incredibly challenging it is for minors, young men and men in conflict with the law to reintegrate into society and go back to work, the AJEM instituted the Accommodation and Social Reintegration Center in Rabieh (Antelias), just outside of Beirut.

The Center's goal is to allow users, all of whom are in extremely vulnerable situations, to rebuild a social network of emotional and work-related bonds allowing them to create a long-term plan and face the world of work.

This will be achieved using an integrated approach that includes a programme to help participants get started working, with professional training courses along with psycho-social support sessions to nurture beneficiaries' psychological and emotional stability.

This project strives to reinforce the services offered by the Accommodation and Social Reintegration Center in Rabieh (Antelias), the only reception centre in Lebanon for vulnerable young adults and men, both those who are in conflict with the law and ex-inmates, in Lebanon.

By offering professional training courses along with psychological support services, ARCS aims to foster the right of young and adult men (17-25 years old) who have been subjected to measures restricting their freedom to a decent life by helping them to get started in the work world and reintegrate into the local social fabric.





Jordan

Global Gender Gap Index 2018

Score 0,605
0.00 = imparity
1.00 = parity

Rank 138
out of 149 countries



Key indicators

GDP (US\$ billions)	40.07
GDP per capita (constant '11, intl. \$, PPP)	8,337
Total population (1,000s)	9,455.80
Population growth rate (%)	2.32
Population sex ratio (female/male)	0.97
Human Capital Index score	58.15



	2006		2018	
	rank	score	rank	score
Global Gender Gap score	93	0.611	138	0.605
Economic participation and opportunity	105	0.442	144	0.375
Educational attainment	70	0.979	45	0.998
Health and survival	62	0.975	102	0.971
Political empowerment	100	0.048	129	0.075
rank out of	114		149	

Data retrieved from: <http://reports.weforum.org/global-gender-gap-report-2018/data-explorer/#economy=LBN>

Integrated Actions to Help Syrian Refugees and Vulnerable Jordanians Enter the Job Market in the Tafilah and Aqaba Governorates

Duration The project started on 1 July 2018 and will end on 30 April 2019.	Partner AIDOS (leader), Municipality of Bushira and affiliates, Noor al Hussein Foundation	Finanziamento • AICS AMMAN • AIDOS • NHF • Municipality of Busera and Tafilah • Own funds




Coordinated by the NGO AIDOS, this project aims to provide integrated services to help Syrian refugees and vulnerable Jordanians take part in employment opportunities and create and strengthen microenterprises in the Tafilah and Aqaba Governorates in southern Jordan. ARCS oversees cash-for-work initiatives in the Tafilah Governorate in collaboration with the two municipalities of Tafilah and Busera. The project is carried out in partnership with the Noor al Hussein Foundation and intends to undertake various complementary initiatives with them aimed at improving the socio-economic conditions of the communities involved by:

- organising Rapid Employment Schemes (RES) aimed at helping 70 vulnerable people to increase their income through short-term employment and boost their skills. The activities include maintaining streets and public buildings, cleaning municipal areas such as schools, cemeteries and gardens, restoring and maintaining parks;
- reinforcing business incubators in Aqaba and Tafilah managed by the local partner (the Noor al Hussein Foundation) by offering services to create and develop microenterprises and facilitating vulnerable people's access to the job market;
- strengthening the NHF and local organisations' ability to work with highly vulnerable people and supporting the offering of services to create and develop microenterprises.





ScEGLi: Schools and Education in Jordan and Lebanon

		
Duration The 1-year project started on 2 June 2017 and ended on 1 June 2018.	Partner COOPI (leader); the Lebanese Ministry of Education; Dawhat al Adab Public School for Girls; Tripoli First Public School for Boys of Tripoli, Khalil Salem Public School of Btarram; El-Hermel Second Intermediate Public School of Hermel; the Jordanian Ministry of Education.	Financing AICS Beirut office

ARCS has recently concluded a regional emergency project coordinated by the NGO COOPI: the “ScEGLi: Schools and Education in Jordan and Lebanon” programme aimed at protecting the right to education of the most vulnerable swathes of the refugee population and the host communities by fostering opportunities to access public school services. In addition to providing furniture for schools and distributing school kits to students, in Jordan ARCS also coordinated awareness and protection initiatives in the public schools of Balqa both by providing 91 Jordanian teachers with continuing education courses and by undertaking initiatives to prevent and combat bullying and school violence to foster an educational approach centred on rights. The project involved:

- Restoring 9 Lebanese and Jordanian schools;
- Providing furniture for 2 Jordanian schools;
- Distributing school kits to 280 students;
- Paying for transportation to school for 240 students;
- Continuing education courses for 91 Jordanian teachers;
- Protection activities for the most vulnerable children and families.

Some of the initiatives carried out by the project were: museum days, open days and awareness-raising sessions.

“During the open days, different activities were carried out, such as storytelling, musical activities, drawing and body painting, thanks to the support of three educators who were experts in alternative education techniques. The students were personally involved in all the activities, which allowed them to express themselves in ways that were different from how they usually expressed themselves during school hours.

For many of them, this was also an opportunity to try new things, such as uncommon musical instruments, for instance.

Given the lack of opportunities in the areas where ARCS carried out this project, offering creative-playful activities was a way of allowing the young students to be part of dynamics that were different from their family or school dynamics by introducing them to alternative activities.”

Cecilia Trevisan

The children had the opportunity to visit the Children’s Museum. This museum in Jordan, the only one of its kind, was conceived and designed specifically for kids, with areas dedicated to various topics (such as history, science and music) with games and interactive sections aimed not only at explaining, but also at personally involving visitors to this facility.

The spirit of this place is to stimulate children’s imagination while also conveying concepts and knowledge that can help them in their daily lives. 25 awareness-raising sessions were carried out in the five schools involved in the project aimed at drawing attention to issues such as bullying, early marriage, minor’s rights, gender violence and discrimination within the family nucleus. Some of these sessions were carried out in collaboration with local NGOs like the Jordanian Women’s Union, the Institute for Family Health Lo Zaha Center.





The theatre piece performed for 45 students and 5 teachers at the Second Intermediate Public School of Hermel explored some of these topics, especially focussing on the importance of family bonds and building relationships based on values such as honesty, loyalty and sincerity as the building blocks of the well-being of minors and adults.



11,566 people benefitted directly and 70,257 indirectly from the project's activities.

“The project closed with the inauguration of four restored schools in the Balqa Governorate.

Thanks to the collaboration of the Ministry of Education, the headmasters of the schools and the support of the local organisations we worked with throughout the entire project, the impact was positive not only for the students and their families but for the entire community.”

Cecilia Trevisan





Decent Work, Social Protection and Freedom of Association in the Middle East and North Africa

		
Duration The project started on 1 January 2015 and will end in 2019.	Partner West and East Centre for Human Resources Development (Jordan); Daem Observatory for Consultation and Training "Tamkeen Fields for Aid".	Financing The European Union

This project, the leader of which is Solidar, began in January 2015 and lasts for four years. There are 21 partners from 11 different countries (Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan, Palestine, Tunisia, Morocco, Belgium, France, Italy and Spain). The goal is to strengthen the role of associations, social movements and independent unions on the shores of the Mediterranean to promote democratic reforms and change in their countries and encourage the participation of civil society in local regional and European decision-making processes. This initiative also aims to monitor the status of the achievement of the goals set out in advance in the Plans of Action and by the Associative Agendas between the European States and the countries in the region. The project involves various stakeholders, including civil society organisations that ensure that the most vulnerable groups have access to social services and further advocacy initiatives for their economic, social and cultural rights.

Conferences, workshops and seminars were organised while the reports generated were used to support negotiation processes within the European Commission. ARCS' local partners, the focal points for Jordan, are Tamkeen Fields for Aid and the West and East Center. Tamkeen Fields for Aid focuses on the rights of migrant workers, especially those employed in the agricultural sector, whereas the West and East Center fosters the active participation of young people in Jordanian society.

Some of the activities organised by ARCS along with its local partners include, for instance, seminars to train young representatives of Jordanian civil society in order to reinforce the skills of Jordanian associations regarding the freedom of association and reflect on possible ways of dialoguing with local institutions.

These seminars also provided specific training on social policymaking and were repeated in other countries, forming the basis for the exchange of good practices, theme-based work groups, monitoring and ad-hoc missions at regional and global institutions.

Currently, there are still many challenges to the topic of social protection in Jordan. Although Jordan is one of the Arab countries that does the most to guarantee social protection, especially regarding the world of work, there are still many issues that need to be resolved. In fact, the system of social protection is still horizontally and vertically weak because it does not include all the citizens and does not provide total coverage. Only a third of the population, for example, has the right to healthcare services whereas unregulated workers (about 40% of the workforce) do not have access to any form of social protection.

The crux of the debate is the need to increase minimum wage – set at 190 JOD, well below the level of poverty for families – the urgent need to resolve the problem of extreme unemployment (over 30% among young adults) and the tragic situation of workers.

“Working Women in Sectors of Secretary, Beauty Salons, and Supportive Health Services. Ill treatment and lack of protection”
During the project, the NGO Tamkeen Fields for Aid carried out a study published in 2015 on the condition of working women in Jordan. This study confirmed that many female employees in the secretarial sector, beauty salons and supportive healthcare services had been exposed to violations that can be defined as forced labour.





In 2014 in Jordan working women only represented 16% of the country's workforce: one of the lowest percentages in the world, so low that the Global Gender Gap Report ranked Jordan 140th on a list of 142 countries in terms of women's participation in the economy.

The reason for women's lack of participation is unsafe workplace conditions and unsafe transportation, the disparity in their salaries compared to their male colleagues and widespread exploitation, in some cases considered an indicator of forced labour.

Forced labour is one of the most common forms of violence suffered by women in the workplace. The ILO defines forced labour as "all work or service which is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the said person has not offered himself voluntarily" (Convention 1930-C29), including not only all situations where work is performed under threat of violence or physical abuse but also, for example, where payment or salaries are withheld.

According to the ILO, there are estimated to be at least 600,000 victims of forced labour in the Middle East, the majority of whom are unqualified migrants, which includes a large number of women. The study, also an important point of reference for advocacy activities and the promotion of workers' rights in Jordan, formulates a series of urgent recommendations, including the creation of unions, raising workers' awareness of their rights, reforming the Social Security Act, increasing the number of work inspectors and developing a road map for social and economic development for Jordanian women.

In 2018 working women in Jordan represented 14.7% of the country's workforce, a figure that highlights a negative trend for this indicator and confirms the persistent nature of the problems highlighted in the report by Tamkeen Fields for Aid.



Tunisia

Global Gender Gap Index 2018

Score 0,648

0.00 = imparity

1.00 = parity

Rank 119

out of 149

countries



Key indicators

GDP (US\$ billions)	40.26
GDP per capita (constant '11, intl. \$, PPP)	10,849
Total population (1,000s)	11,403.25
Population growth rate (%)	1.11
Population sex ratio (female/male)	1.02
Human Capital Index score	50.76

Global Gender Gap score

Economic participation and opportunity	97	0.480	135	0.439
Educational attainment	76	0.959	108	0.966
Health and survival	98	0.966	105	0.971
Political empowerment	53	0.110	55	0.216

rank out of

	2006		2018	
	rank	score	rank	score
Global Gender Gap score	90	0.629	119	0.648
Economic participation and opportunity	97	0.480	135	0.439
Educational attainment	76	0.959	108	0.966
Health and survival	98	0.966	105	0.971
Political empowerment	53	0.110	55	0.216
rank out of	114		149	

Data retrieved from: <http://reports.weforum.org/global-gender-gap-report-2018/data-explorer/#economy=LBN>





TerRe. From the Local Area to Income: Paths of Empowerment for the Women and Youth of Tataouine

		
<p>Duration</p> <p>The project started on 1 February 2016 and is scheduled to end on 31 July 2019.</p>	<p>Partner</p> <p>Institut des Régions Arides (IRA); TAMAT.</p>	<p>Financing</p> <p>AICS, Tavola Valdese, MAECI, own and private funds</p>


This project aims to foster independent work and socio-economic integration for women and young people in 5 rural, predominately-Berber villages, Ras El Oued, El Ferch, Douiret, Bir Amir, Bir Thalathine, by reinforcing agricultural production and offering and diversifying tourist services through professional training initiatives and the development of the private sector.

The project offers professional training courses and support to small local business initiatives specifically focussing on women working in the rural sector and unemployed youth that need to enter business circuits and ecotourism.

In order to promote the local area, efforts were undertaken to improve the quantity and quality of local products by adopting techniques to boost soil fertility and combat desertification and soil erosion processes.

The Ter-Re project aims to foster the socio-economic development of the rural communities in Tataouine, southeast Tunisia, by promoting tradition knowledge. It especially supports village women in the area of Tataouine, south Tunisia, who work on processing vegetables and local aromatic and medicinal plants.





“Some of the participants in the project, for example those from Bir Amir, roughly sixty kilometres south of Tataouine, the most arid zone with difficulties in transportation and limited telephone or internet communication, use these training sessions as an opportunity to emerge from their isolation and meet other women who engage in similar activities.”

Alberto Sciortino

Opportunities for public visibility

The women who benefitted from the project had many different opportunities to publically present their products, including the fifth edition of SIPAM, an international symposium on aromatic and medicinal plants, held in the coastal town of Zarzis. The gathering was proposed by the project’s Tunisian partner, the Institut des Régions Arides de Médenine (IRA), and researchers from many different countries took part. Here, the women of Ras El Oued, Douiret, El Ferch, Bir Amir and Bir Thalathin, along with the project’s staff, presented for the first time the fruits of their efforts while participating in the project to re-work traditional recipes based on the properties of aromatic and medicinal plants.

Formalisation into an “Agricultural Development Group”

Five groups concluded the project and formalised the process of organising into “Agricultural Development Groups”, a structure envisioned under local law that provides subsidies and technical support for the management of rural activities. The collaboration between the project crew and the Regional Commission for Agricultural Development (CRDA) was complete and the meetings for each discussion with the women took place in the presence of both the project staff and the CRDA, and guaranteed all the necessary support. In this way, the five groups built a unique network of GDAs entirely composed of women.

Product commercialisation

After numerous meetings and training sessions, with the invaluable technical contributions of the experts from the IRA (Institut des Régions Arides), each group was asked to select from among many product ideas based on local agricultural resources and traditional knowhow in order to propose a small number of products to show and sell in trade fairs and markets. For the first time, these women went from proposals to facts, meeting to create skin creams, hair oils, jams, syrups, filled biscuits and traditional woollen rugs dyed using herbs and roots, which were then to become part of the initial core group of products that they expected to commercialise on a larger scale.

Processing centres

The project Groupements de Développements Agricoles (Agricultural Development Groups) envisions five processing centres.

The TATA-OUI trademark

The local trademark that will accompany the products (food, textiles and cosmetics) to the market was registered with the Industrial Property Institute. This trademark may be applied to all the products in the region that provide proof of having been prepared using artisanal and natural methods and aim to guarantee an income to the disadvantaged sectors of the population by promoting the local area.





The logo chosen for this trademark is “TATA-OUI”. This choice is based on the conviction that a more positive message must finally be given about the Tataouine region and its people, too often seen as a culturally backward area where the high youth unemployment rates encourage them to passively wait for public employment, which is more a myth than reality. The logo “TATA-OUI” is written in part using characters resembling the Tifinagh alphabet, i.e. the alphabet used – or that should be used – to write the so-called “Berber” language (more correctly, “Tamazigh”), one of the features of the local culture, which in past decades has been repressed by governments and that today is beginning to circulate again. It is currently spoken in three of the five villages of our project. Along with the name, there are three symbols of this area: a sun, symbolising its warm climate, a stylised “ksar”, symbolising its historical heritage and a hand representing its skill in handicraft. And again, next to the logo, the slogan “Tataouine Essemha”: Tataouine, the generous, the tolerant, the willing.

Alberto Sciortino

By the end of 2018 the TER-RE project, the five Agricultural Development Groups that took part and the TATAOUI products had many important opportunities to boost their visibility. After winning both national and local awards, their products were presented on 7 December at the Italian Cultural Institute in Tunis before the Italian ambassador and about fifty representatives from the institutions and businesses. The official catalogue of the TATAOUI trademark was also published for the occasion, adding to the marketing tools available to the women of the GDA.

The 2019 goal is to ensure the long-term sustainability of the businesses set up.





Communication channels

We keep our partners, financial backers, supporters, friends, fans and followers up to date through the news, bi-weekly newsletter and information we publish on our website and social media channels.

To receive information or ask to be put on our mailing list, please write to arcs@arci.it

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