

I was a stranger and you welcomed me!

Last week I met a Syrian family that left Homs two years ago. Now they have started a new life in a European country. The children attend school and are learning a new language. Father and mother take courses to help them integrate in their new society.

The mother told me about her father who recently passed away; she told me about her disabled brother who is still in Syria; her sister is taking care of him. And here she is - living in a foreign country, separated and far away from home and family. Heartbreaking!

There are plenty of articles in the media about refugees. They give the statistics; they tell us how people migrate from the Middle East and Africa. They talk about the agreements, the politics, and the regulations.

We see documentaries on television about refugees and often I need to remind myself not to think about refugees as numbers and statistics, but as individuals. Each one has his/her own, often painful, story.

As Arab Vision we want to do what we can to meet their needs, and you can read more about our programs for and with refugees in this newsletter.

Would you pray for much creativity for us as we plan new ways to minister God's love in word and deed to the many millions of refugees in and from the Arab World?

May we always remember the words of Jesus: *"I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me."*

May God bless you as you read this newsletter,

Gabino Boutros
International director Arab Vision

Staggering figures – what can we do?

20 June is World Refugee Day - "an expression of solidarity with people who have been uprooted from their homes by war or persecution", according to António Guterres, secretary-general of the United Nations.

Nearly 20 people are forcibly displaced every minute as a result of conflict or persecution. The UNHCR report continues: "We are now witnessing the highest levels of displacement on record. An unprecedented 65.6 million people around the world have been forced from home."

The Arab World is facing one of the most challenging periods in its recent history. Because of the continuing instability people flee in search of safety and better conditions.

Syria with its more than 6 million people internally displaced and 5.1 million people who have fled across the borders is not the only country in the Arab World in crisis.

The people in Yemen are in dire need of humanitarian assistance; almost 2 million people had to leave their homes because of the ongoing conflict.

In Iraq there are still about 3.4 million people who haven't been able to return home and are in need of assistance and protection. Libya is yet unstable and the conflict between the Israelis and Palestinians is still waiting for a solution.

Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey are doing what they can to deal with the millions of refugees in their countries, but their resources are limited and are often not sufficient for the huge increase in population. The Middle East and North Africa region ranks 2nd in hosting displaced people.

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Where are the refugees?

The Middle East and North Africa region ranks 2nd in hosting displaced people. Here are the percentages: Africa (30%) MENA (26%) Europe (17%), the Americas (16%) and Asia and the Pacific (11%).

MEDIA FOR CHANGE

Story telling club

Creative trauma care for Arab children

There are thousands of traumatized children in the Middle East, packed in refugee camps, or on the run from danger, violence and death. There are also many children who are not refugees, but face poverty and pain on a daily basis. Most of all they need food, shelter and safety, but at a certain point they need to find a way to continue their lives.

Arab Vision is involved in an initiative of story-telling by and for children. Story-telling is an effective way for children to find their strengths and to work through the events in their lives. The *Story Telling Club* is a project that promotes resilience, creativity and mental health in children and helps them to deal with their traumatic experiences.

A group of children will get together during 5 consecutive days to tell their own stories, use creative means to work on the theme of the day and share ideas with other children. One day the meeting can have the theme "The day I overcame fear", the next could be "The day I could help someone," or "The day I solved a problem". By not focusing on all the negative things around them, children are encouraged to grow in self-esteem and mental strength.

Last year one of our colleagues conducted a workshop with refugee children in which they learned to express themselves not only through telling their stories, but also in creative ways like photography and drawing. The project was very successful and really made a difference in these children's lives.

Would you please pray for these plans? And if possible, could you help us financially so we can give children a chance to experience a beginning of healing in their lives? (See page 3, Can you help?)



Maaki – God is with you

In 2007 we produced the first season of *Maaki*, (literally 'with you') a series of portraits of Christian women about issues they face in life. Since that time we have produced four seasons of each 26 episodes, portraying women from Iraq, Egypt, Jordan and other Arab countries. We have seen how this series has been used to encourage Arab men and women as they watch the testimonies of other women, especially because the focus is not on a solution to the problems, but on God's faithfulness in their situations.

We are now producing the fifth season of *Maaki*, portraying refugee women who share their stories. Would you please pray with us so we can get in touch with women who are willing and able to tell their stories and also for safety for them and for our production team?

"Can you help me find a church?"



Nasser is a Muslim from Yemen. He left his country and now lives somewhere else in the Middle East. He watched the Jesus film and started to read the Bible. Nasser also visits one of our Facebook pages and asked us how he can join a church. We are happy that, through our network, we can help him connect to other Christians and to a church.

Lina is an Algerian lady and she has questions about Christ. She feels sad and is afraid of death. After having talked to our follow-up team, she felt at peace and told us that we are like brothers and sisters to her. We sent a Bible to Lina and will continue to stay in touch with her.

Will you pray with us for Lina, Nasser and for the many thousands who watch our programs on TV and/or online? Many of our viewers get in touch via social media and ask for prayer!



Staggering figures – what can we do?

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Regular schools and universities in host countries in the Arab World are hardly able to deal with the thousands of extra children and young people in need of education. In Lebanon refugee students can't officially study at a university and in other countries they face similar obstacles.

After years of war with no resolution in sight, millions of high school students, elementary-school kids and kindergartners are waiting in line for nothing. About 13 million children across the region are out of school and another 9 million are at risk of dropping out soon. Some people talk about 'a lost generation'- young people who grow up with severe mental and physical scars and suffering from a lack of education.

Violence and instability jeopardize their futures and leave them vulnerable to the perils of poverty, child marriage, and radicalization, among others. If young people don't get an opportunity to study, who will then be able to rebuild their countries after the war?



My first words

Literacy project for children in refugee camps

Television can play a key role in providing information and education when people are cut off from regular schooling. That is why Arab Vision, in cooperation with SAT-7, is preparing a literacy program via television. This basic program for reading and writing is for 6-8-year-old children who live in refugee camps and have access via satellite TV to the special education channel of SAT-7 Academy. This channel is broadcasting educational programs (including some of Arab Vision's programs) and in this way we can reach many children who are out of school. .

We will produce short video-clips providing practical teaching on how to learn to read and write. A child draws and writes 3 or 4 different objects and words, you can see the picture growing on screen, and the words written. The words and meaning are further worked out in short video fragments in Arabic.

The clips will be frequently shown on TV and will be available on social media. Children can be actively involved by drawing and writing objects and words and upload the results on Facebook.

With these programs we expect to help more than 500,000 children in refugee camps to learn the basics of reading and writing.



Can you help?

Story telling club -

US\$ 23,000 for the whole project

We are preparing 5 workshops and will produce 4-6 short movies which can be used on satellite TV and social media. Could your church sponsor one workshop and movie and help hurting children find healing again?

My first words - *US\$ 175 per clip*

Short clips for refugee children, teaching them how to read and write. Arab Vision plans to produce 100 clips during this year. You can sponsor one clip (production, broadcasting and follow-up via social media) for US\$ 175.

Are you looking for a project for your school or Sunday school? Help Arab refugee children to learn reading and writing via TV and internet. Adopt one or more "My first words"- clips for US\$ 175 per clip. For more information about this project, please get in touch via contact@arabvision.org



"There is a lack of education in this camp.

By watching school programs on TV our children learned a lot."

- Syrian refugee parents in Lebanon

Arab Vision plans to produce 100 clips during this year. Invest now in the lives and future of many thousands refugee children in the Arab World and help us produce these clips!

Film Festival a great success

Not only do we produce films, but we also provide training to young people to produce short high quality movies with minimal resources. Movies with a message, often raising awareness about issues like women's and children's rights. 27 young men and women in the Middle East were recently trained during seven workshops in scriptwriting, filming, directing and editing the raw material. All of them had to produce a short film.

Five of the best films were selected and shown at a film festival we organized. All movies were addressing women's and children's issues in society, for instance child labor.

"The movies produced by the students made a big impact on the attendees and many people asked for the movies to use them in their work or campaign", says Fawzy, our colleague and initiator of this media training project and the festival.



When on stage to receive prizes and awards, the young film makers showed happiness and pride. "The festival was a great success. Several international NGOs and public figures were present and at the end of the festival they asked us to produce programs with them," Fawzy proudly concludes.

Holy Crumbs

Holy Crumbs is a series of 60 episodes with Bible stories, created as cartoons (length 7-10 minutes per episode). *Holy Crumbs* has been produced in the US and is very popular.



Producing a similar series is quite expensive, so we have decided to use this existing series and produce it in several Berber languages for North Africa. The series will also be used on social media and a weekly contest will increase the attraction and fun!

Now on TV

Hope for Tomorrow:

The second season of our series on taboo subjects like domestic violence, sexual harassment and incest. This program is shown on Miracle channel and on SAT-7. The response is overwhelming and our follow-up team receives thousands of comments and questions.



Just a Couple of Words:

In two to three minutes an experienced Bible teacher gives a short apologetic message on a subject that often raises lots of questions, like the trinity. The program is now broadcast on SAT-7.

Photos refugee children ©Fadi Taher, used with permission

**ARAB
VISION**

Arab Christians proclaiming the Gospel on TV and internet in the Arab world



CONTACT & FINANCE INFO

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In the USA, checks can be sent directly to: our American office. Arab Vision Inc. is a 501(c)3 organization.
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You may also **donate by paying through our website** www.arabvision.org. This is a secure payment facility.

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Account name: Arab Vision Inc
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Federal EID no:
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In Canada, Australia and New Zealand, cheques can be sent to Interserve with a cover letter indicating that the money is meant for Arab Vision.

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**"Your ministry is
very encouraging
to me and you are a
blessing to my life!"**

Samy, Egypt