

Since 1949



CNEWA-Pontifical Mission, Jerusalem
the papal agency for Middle East relief and development

Annual Report 2022



CNEWA-PMP President, Msgr. Peter Vaccari, visits with the Comboni sisters in Jerusalem. The sisters missionary work extends to Bedouin communities and Asylum seekers



Since 1949



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CNEWA-Pontifical Mission

establishment and work today

It was the Arab Israeli war in 1949 which created one of the largest displacement of peoples in the world at the time. Pope Pius XII launched the Pontifical Mission for Palestine (PMP) to care for the hundreds of thousands of Palestinian homeless — many of them Christian. He asked Catholic Near East Welfare Association (CNEWA) to take on his special initiative, appointing the head of CNEWA as its president, and charging it with coordinating worldwide Catholic aid.

Pope Pius' successors have continued to support this work, expanding the mandate of Pontifical Mission to assist all peoples in need throughout the Middle East. PMP began implementing humanitarian and development programs and projects through three regional offices in Beirut, Jerusalem, and Amman. After the 1967 war and the occupation of the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip, with the blessing of Pope Paul VI, PMP began supporting a network of community-based organizations (CBOs) and Church-affiliated institutions throughout the Holy Land.

Today, PMP works for, through and with the local churches and community-based institutions, allocating donor funds for programs and projects that support the institutions and community leaders in Palestine and Israel. The Amman Regional Office oversees projects in Jordan and Iraq while the Beirut Regional Office oversees projects in Lebanon, Syria, and Egypt.

One of the 22 “tent-schools” for the little refugees- supported by the Mission (1950)



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CNEWA-PMP President, Msgr. Peter Vaccari, inaugurates the newly rehabilitated playground of the YMCA, Gaza courtesy of Embrace the Middle East & Children's Relief Bethlehem



Forward

As a Vatican agency driven by the Catholic Church social teachings and the Christian values, which are for the most part reflected in the human rights charter, PMP holds a special place for children whom we greatly value and appreciate. PMP looks to the Holy Family as the primary example of this. The Holy Family had a child in circumstances that are incomparable to any other; yet as Mary and Joseph decided to accept the Child - a gift from God, He turned out to achieve a mission that changed history and continues to inspire us to cherish and love our children.



Based on this conviction and faith, PMP looks to the work of the local Church and community-based institutions in the Holy Land which continue to give special attention to God's children; especially underprivileged children, children with special needs, orphaned or abandoned children. CNEWA - Pontifical Mission in Jerusalem acknowledges the importance of supporting these childcare institutions as the needs continue to be great.

For instance, the Crèche in Bethlehem, a childcare institution established over 100 years ago, offers care, love, and support for orphaned, abandoned or abused babies and children. On a recent visit to the Creche, we were saddened by the story of a 12-year-old girl who was abused by her relatives and recently gave birth to a baby. The Sisters of the Creche receive social cases, like this case, each year. Our assistance has helped the sisters care for infants and toddlers, ensuring that they have a comfortable environment with which to fully grow and develop.

The Infant Welfare Center in the Old City of Jerusalem is another example of our assistance towards local childcare institutions. PMP provide aid towards the center's remedial education program. Thanks to this program, underprivileged and underserved children and teens from the Old City of Jerusalem and other neighborhoods of East Jerusalem could improve their school grades and succeed at school.

The Franciscan Boys Home in Bethlehem is another welcoming residential home for 30 Palestinian boys from Bethlehem, where sadly, most come from broken families, are abandoned or whose parents suffer from mental health problems, alcoholism, or abuse drugs. Many boys have no immediate family relatives to take care of them and are at risk of dropping out of school and being homeless. With PMP support, the boys can attend school full-time, have access to healthcare and have a warm and caring home environment with which to grow and draw the path for a different future.

PMP also prioritizes funding the needs of local schools as they continue to face challenges. Each year, PMP contributes towards procuring educational equipment, school desks and chairs or rehabilitate classrooms and other school facilities. Recognizing the need to help schools look towards cost-effective, environmentally friendly solutions which reduce operating costs over time; PMP installed solar panel systems that reduce electricity bills for schools which in turn, improves education and facilitates classroom learning.

In Gaza, PMP continues to provide an annual subsidy for the Near East Council of Churches Mother and Child Clinics. Aid supports operating costs of all three medical clinics in central Gaza city and Rafah, in the south. Additional grants support special programs that aim to reduce anemia and malnutrition among poor children in these areas, offer child health and nutritional education for parents and provide free psychosocial counseling for both mother and child.

Finally, PMP recognizes the need to invest in the next generation of Christian leadership in the Holy Land. A special program, “Koinonia” was developed after four years of planning and will concentrate on offering career and educational guidance, workshops and courses, internships, and scholarship opportunities for Palestinian youth.

In closing, let us be reminded that when a child is cared for, loved, and appreciated, he/she will grow up to do wonderful things in their lives and their community.

Joseph Hazboun
Regional Director

Country Brief Palestine

Recurring violence is creating a difficult political and humanitarian crisis in Palestine. Military operations and raids in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, detentions and fatalities among Palestinians have intensified during 2022. Plans for new settlement units in Palestine also advanced, especially in East Jerusalem, which has been accompanied by a worrisome trend of rising settler violence. In particular, there were 849 settler-related incidents, a 58% increase over 2021. Settler violence and other extremists have attacked Church property and land. The Heads of Churches in Jerusalem and other religious leaders condemned physical and verbal attacks against priests and other members of the clergy, attacks on churches, vandalism, and desecration of holy sites as well as constant intimidation of the Palestinian community.

Civil and Christian-related organizations (CROs) that have historically served the Palestinian community since the late 19th century, are experiencing a financial crisis. Many CROs rely significantly on donor aid to cover annual operating costs, rehabilitation and equipping, services and programs. The CROs provide vital services for the Palestinian community – as there is a gap in the public sectors for services, and the needs of the population are increasing. Unemployment has remained high throughout Palestine; in the Gaza Strip, unemployment has reached 45% and 13% in the West Bank. It is the highest among youth graduates (aged 19-29 years); reaching 28.6% in the West Bank and 73.9% in the Gaza Strip. Poverty is also widespread throughout Palestine and rising among households, especially in Gaza.

The situation in the Gaza Strip is dire; 80% of the population (out of 2.1 million people) are dependent on humanitarian assistance. Households need aid to cover basic living costs such as food, healthcare, utilities, and education costs. The Christian community in Gaza continues to decline, now less than 1,000 people as a result of political upheaval and an economic crisis in Gaza.

Focusing on CROs is a necessity to help maintain access to services and programs that offer quality health, social, and educational services for the Palestinian population. More sustainable methods of reducing overall living costs are required. Support for education programs for children and youth are needed to help support education across Palestine.

Country Brief Israel

Israel's population increased to 9.7 million in 2022; 73.6% are Jewish, 21.1% Arab; and 513,000 (5.3%) are defined as "others," including non-Arab Christians, members of other faiths and those listed as not belonging to any religion. Israel's Christian community represents 1.9% of the total population. The majority of Christians in Israel (70%) live in the country's north, predominantly in Nazareth and Haifa. The average size of a Christian household was 3.06 people, on par with that of a Jewish household (3.05), but lower than a Muslim household (4.46). The Christian community in Israel has a high tertiary education rate compared to the rest of the population; in fact, 52.9% of Arab Christians and 31.2% of non-Arab Christians continue on to higher studies after completing high school, a larger proportion than Muslims and Jews. Arab Christian women had some of the highest education rates in Israel.

There have been anti-Arab, anti-Christian attacks in Israel, in the past few years. Church leaders have voiced concern and have denounced the inaction of Israeli authorities. This comes at a time when Israel's new hard-right government has been installed.

Economic inequality between the Arab and Jewish populations in Israel continues to increase. There is real concern that many Arab households will continue to be pushed into poverty, and that many workers will remain unemployed.

Organized crime also rose in the past few years and the community has witnessed a surge in the number of murders. Moreover, mass demonstrations among the Israeli public have taken place due to the re-election of Netanyahu and far right allies marking a period of political instability in Israel, in which five Knesset snap elections were held in a span of less than four years.

More attention needs to be given to the Arab community in Israel, especially in the form of leadership training and improving the relationship between Christian and Muslim youth that can foster cohesion within the community and help protect the Christian presence.

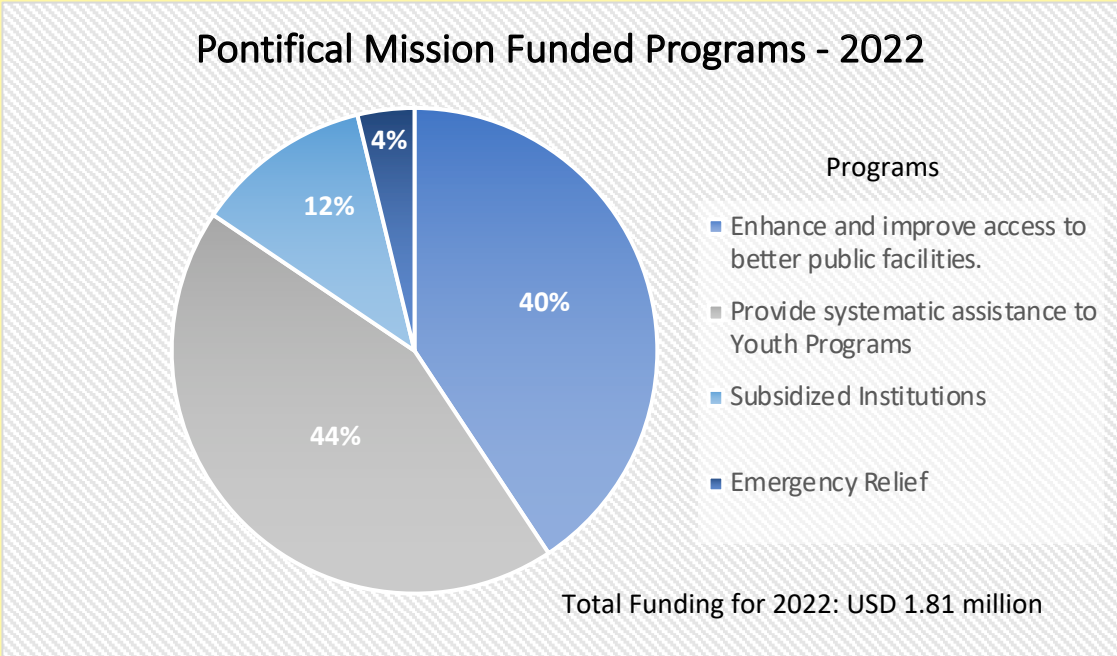
Background photo: looking at the separation wall from the rooftop of the Comboni Sisters in Bethany. The Wall separated the Community from their apartment and Shrine in Eizarieh.

2022 Program Review

PMP works to aid local community-based organizations (CBOs) in Palestine and Israel which provide vital services, jobs and support the Palestinian economy. A major contributor among the CBOs, are the Church-related organizations. In fact, there are approximately 296 CROs in the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip, which serve mostly non-Christians (over 90%). They constitute the third largest employer after the Palestinian Authority (PA) and UNRWA and women are a significant portion of the workforce while injecting around \$416 million annually in the Palestinian economy.

PMP also prioritizes the Palestinian youth sector, aiding local youth organizations, parishes and scout troops in Palestine and Israel.

PMP is also committed to supporting three subsidized institutions that deliver essential education and healthcare services. PMP also mobilizes emergency relief



efforts when crisis arises.

Each PMP program consists of sub-projects with objectives associated with the overall response plan.

Donor contributions from CNEWA and other donors generously provided USD 1.81 million in contributions that supported 93 projects across 4 strategic areas.

USD 1.81 million

donor contributions and grants
that supported CNEWA-PMP
programs in 2022

93 projects

implemented in collaboration
with local partners in Palestine
& Israel

85%

of projects
implemented in
Palestine

44%

of projects
supported Palestinian
children & Youth

15%

of projects
implemented in
Israel

USD 35,000

for Emergency aid/
grants for Gaza and
Bethlehem CBOs to
help in recovery post-
Covid-19 efforts

USD 1,545,000

for projects
implemented in
Palestine
(West Bank, East
Jerusalem, and the Gaza
Strip)

USD 267,500

for projects
implemented in
Israel

Systematic assistance to youth programs

As part of its strategic objective, PMP aims to invest in the children and youth of Palestine. Through several programs, PMP and donor partners provide funding towards the local scout movement, aid local youth programs and youth centers, and provide scholarships for undergraduate students that foster young leaders within the community.

Scouts:

The scout movement in Palestine focus on pastoral and leadership programs that aim to strengthen the relationship between the Christian youth members of the various troops, and work in collaboration to better serve the Church and local community. Parish priests in various areas of Palestine especially in East Jerusalem, realize the need and have attempted to revive the scout movement and require donor funding to continue.

PMP recognizes the importance of supporting scout troops in Palestine. In 2022, grants supported a total of 7 scout troops in Palestine, reaching a total of 1,300 scouts. According to the scout leaders, the funds have enabled the scout troop members to build on crucial interpersonal skills, build relationships with scout members and develop a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ and the Christian community. The activities also helped scout members realize the role and its impact has on society and makes them more empathetic towards others.

Additionally, the funded program enabled the scout leaders and members to partake in activities that relate to environmental and nature conservation issues, create awareness regarding the environmental problems and make them capable to provide solutions and actions.



Case Study:

Terra Sancta Scout Member: “Scouting is my life so I would never think of leaving it; it is what I was brought up with and what I will be when I grow up. It has laws and rules, as it is an integrated circle of knowledge, faith, love, and respect. Scouting is life, sport, education, knowledge, and discipline.”

The 6th Salesian Scout Troop Member: “The days of the camp are my happiest days in scouting because I enjoy them very much, as we stay in the camp for about a week. The camp break introduces life values that the school cannot teach us, and with it the sense of responsibility and self-reliance, as well as discipline and working as a team”.





Koinonia

Koinonia of the Holy Land is an initiative that brings together several Christian-related organizations (CROs) and the local Christian community of Jerusalem. It's objectives are to establish a research hub, to raise awareness through advocacy and strategic planning that concerns the future of the Christians, helping to preserve their presence and work toward the core of the Christian community's interest. In cooperation with John Paul II Foundation, the new initiative for the Christian youth of Jerusalem "Koinonia" was launched in 2022.

Pastoral Program

Young Palestinians today have lost a sense of belonging and purpose to remain in their homeland. With this, PMP is committed towards supporting the network of Churches and Church-related organizations (CROs) to develop and strengthen pastoral services and programs that fortify the Church and support Christian identity, to remain steadfast in their homeland. Palestinian Christian youth in Israel and Palestine require active pastoral programs in their parishes, Churches, Christian youth centers and scout troops.

With CNEWA's support, young Christians are given the opportunity to freely participate in catechetical programs and Sunday School, Bible summer camps for children and youth, a Bible competition, and Christian Scout movements, which build leadership skills, deepens their faith, and creates a sense of belonging to the land of Jesus.

A new approach was needed to create a solid foundation – a sense of belonging, for the new generation. Through meetings with local Church leaders, Christian youth center directors, scout troop leaders and lay people representing the Christian community, PMP developed a pastoral program that aims to raise the sense of belonging among young people in the Palestinian Christian community in Palestine and Israel. PMP and its implementing partners aim to provide specific programs that educate Palestinian Christian youth of their faith. In addition, the program foresees minor needs for equipment, furniture or maintenance work aimed at improving and supporting various pastoral programs in Palestine and Israel.



Youth pastoral Ministry in Jerusalem

The Youth Pastoral Ministry of PMP is essentially a pastoral program that targets Christian children and youth residing in East Jerusalem, supporting year-round pastoral activities, and procuring furniture/equipment that support pastoral work.

CNEWA's contribution in 2022 has supported pastoral activities and contributed towards pastoral centers and parishes in East Jerusalem. This effort helps support the pastoral work of the local community and its Churches.

With the generous grant, the program directly benefited 1,200 Christians and indirectly supported 4,000 Christians.

Through the generous contribution from CNEWA, Sunday School and Bible Summer Camps were supported in East Jerusalem in 2022.

CASE STUDY

St. Mark Syriac Parish in Jerusalem:

The Parish organized a 'summer club' which provided the opportunity to conduct catechism education in addition to the recreational, cultural educational and sports activities. The club enabled participants to develop relationships and friendships in a spiritual framework. Religious practices of the Church, Christian history and identity were also included in the program activities.

The Latin Parish of St. Savior in collaboration with Christian Quarter Academy in the Old City:

The parish conducted a summer program for one of the neediest and marginalized Christian children from the Old City of Jerusalem. The summer program lasted for about 3 weeks. The number of children increased from 50 – 85 because of the community's interest in the program. The program organized a large variety of educational and recreational activities including drama, music, sport, art and religious education and lectures. Additionally, children were also able to play in recreational sports, participate in a small leadership course

as well as attend several recreational trips.

Promote Leadership Skills among the Youth

Greek Catholic Melkite Scout Troop-Jerusalem

The Scout troop organized a successful scouting camp for 80 scout members from ages 7-18 years old. The camp had many diverse activities to fully develop the potential of the scout children during the summer. The camp included pastoral and spiritual activities, swimming, hiking, rappelling and many other sport activities. Furthermore, spiritual activities were held in addition to visits to Holy places and daily prayer.



The Arab Catholic Scout Troop – East Jerusalem:

The Arab Catholic scout troop in Jerusalem have been able to organize a successful scout camp for 180 scout members from the ages of 7-18 years. The camp had many diverse activities to fully develop the potential of the scouts. The camp included swimming, hiking, rappelling and many more sports activities. Further, they made sure also to develop their scouts spiritually by visiting holy sites and daily prayers. This fund helped the scout troop organize small events such as a children's gathering with inflatable games on the playground of the Terra Sancta Parish Center – Beit Hanina, and a one-night scout camp for a group of scouts between the ages of 14-16 years old. This effort helped bridge cooperation and collaboration with the scout members.

The Arab Orthodox Scout Troop – East Jerusalem:

With funds, the Arab Orthodox Scout Troop was able to implement and organize a scout camp for 150 troop members for one week at Beit Jemal. The program included many scouting activities which promoted teamwork. The scout members trained on a special training field that contained climbing, landing, crossing barriers, jumping tires, walking on the balance rope, and pressure sports (Push Up, jumping over fire, and crawling on the ground).

This effort helped build teamwork, self-discipline and skill-building which contributes towards individual development and growth.

Support the Work of the Greek Catholic Melkite Church

Sunday School & Summer Programs serve as a unique opportunity for Christian children and youth to reconnect with their faith. Specifically, Bible summer camps enable children and youth to have access to coursework and classroom sessions on the Bible, catechism, and church teachings during the summer months.

Also, functioning, well-organized pastoral activities can attract youth back to the Church

and increase their involvement in parish life. Proper communal places for Church related activities are essential.

CNEWA's financial contribution towards various pastoral work of the Greek Catholic Church supported pastoral activities, bible summer camps, and church rehabilitation for the Greek Catholic Churches and its center during 2022.

This generous contribution benefited 2,200 Christians, most of which (880) are Greek Catholic children aged 4-12 years old. Through the contributions made to the Greek Catholic Melkite Bishop and the Churches, these children had access to a wide variety of child-friendly activities, supervised by teachers and volunteers from the community. Activities were organized by the parish priests and various church committees.



Case Study

1. Rehabilitation of the Church in Jafa:

The Greek Catholic Melkite Church in Jafa had serious structural problems. The newly assigned parish priest requested PMP's assistance to conduct minor rehabilitation work for the church which would provide a better environment for worship service. The building had serious cracks which caused some areas to collapse including the entrance to the Church which damaged the foundation. According to an engineer's report, part of the foundation needed to be strengthened, and rehabilitation work was needed for the dome of the church. Additionally, the electricity required an upgrade and the installation of AC units within the Church, as well as plastering work to fix water leakage in some areas of the church which caused power outages. Additionally, the sanitary units were in poor condition and needed rehabilitation work.

CNEWA's generous grant enabled the Church to conduct the necessary rehabilitation work. Thanks to the work, the Church is renovated, and parishioner attendance has increased.

2. Children Summer program in Taybeh:

The 2022 summer camp was held in Taybeh village. The theme of the camp was to strengthen Church Unity. The camp was implemented jointly with the three churches in Taybeh village: the Latin Church, the Greek Orthodox Church, and the Greek Catholic Melkite Church. The theme of this year camp was "My Life with You" which means that our lives is with Jesus and belongs to the land that our Lord was born in. Most of the activities were concentrated on the pastoral work and the themes that Jesus used such as love, forgiveness, the spirit of giving, humility, strength and hope. Other important goals the camp concentrated on were enhancing the concept of accepting the others and how to live according to Christian values and also improving the leadership skills.

CNEWA's support for the camp included several cultural, spiritual, sport and recreational activities that were implemented for more than 140 children from the ages of 4-13 years old for 16 days, supervised by 85 youth trained leaders.



3. Infant Welfare Center – Children’s Summer Program:

In 2022, the theme of the summer camp was divided into three main activities: mosaics, planting and how to recycle everyday objects into art. Through this camp, the center was able to help support the development of children in a positive, supportive environment. Additionally, there were youth volunteers between the ages of 17-20 years old who helped the camp leaders.

CNEWA’s support enabled a total of 62 children from the Old City of Jerusalem, aged 3-9 years old, to have the opportunity to participate in the summer program during 2022.



Create greater opportunities to decent employment Program

Arab Orthodox Cultural & Social Center, Gaza

The AOCSC proposed program, Job Creation and Strategic Management/Capacity Building, is expected to offer 13 unemployed youth with capacity-building training in management and leadership as well as temporary paid employment, which resulted in permanent employment opportunities at the ASCSC – Gaza. AOCSC launched its services, advertise the center, and start hosting events and activities, generating sufficient income to cover its own operations after a period of 12 months. The AOCSC hired and provided salaries for a Center Manager (full time), Secretary (full time), Accountant (full time), two Cleaners, three Security Guards, IT-Technician / IT-Engineer, Two Sports Coaches, Electrical Engineer, and a Gardener, from August – October 2021 and continue with their employment until July 2022.

Scholarship Program

- Provide scholarships for high school graduates
- Provide scholarships for individuals

In response to the ongoing humanitarian and political crisis in the Gaza Strip, PMP launched a scholarship program in 2015 that awards underprivileged Christian high school graduates with a scholarship for a four-year university diploma which can propel their chances of finding work in their field of study and earn an income that supports their families. The scholarship program has continued to date, thanks to the generous financial support from PMP's donors and contributors. There are currently 31 students under the Gaza Christian scholarship program to date, 45% are female and 54% are male. Most of

the university students attend Al-Azhar University (74%) while the rest, attend other local universities in Gaza (Al-Quds University, Gaza University, Islamic University and Palestine University).

The students chose majors based on the local job market and the market demand. Those that have graduated have reported that they plan to continue their studies and earn a master's degree. Other graduates are planning to open their own businesses, work with local social/health institutions or small local businesses.

Case Study

Name: Khader Suheil Saba,

Major: Accounting

University: Al-Azhar University, 3rd year

"Last year was a challenging year for me as the coursework was difficult; nevertheless, I was able to raise my GPA and stay in the scholarship program. In my free time, I took workshops at the local YMCA to improve my leadership skills. I also helped manage the YMCA's children's summer camp over this summer. I've recently signed up as a volunteer with a PayPal company as part of the Bank of Palestine. I joined this volunteer program in order to gain more experience and build my skills in marketing, which will be a good advantage when I apply for jobs".

Name: Meran Ayyad

Major: Business Administration

University: Al-Azhar University, Graduated

"I earned a bachelor's degree in business administration from Al-Azhar University in 2022, thanks to the scholarship program. For the time being, I am working at the local

YMCA as a basketball trainer of the (young) girls' basketball team, as basketball is one of my passions. I strongly believe that it is important for girls to have healthy outlets like sports and help them see that they do have the right to play sports, even though there is societal pressure on girls/women playing sports in Gaza. I also plan to take training courses to help develop and improve my career skills for a business administration-related job in the near future".



Enhance and improve access to better public facilities

Many community-based organizations (CBOs) and Church institutions in Israel and Palestine face difficulties such as severe financial constraints and fundraising capabilities, which limit access to services in the short-term and destabilize these services in the long-term.

With the support of donors, PMP allocated donor support in 2022, that has enhanced and improved the facilities and services of local partner institutions in Palestine and Israel. Grants enabled the procurement of needed equipment and rehabilitate facilities which benefit vital services and support for beneficiaries.

It is part of PMP's strategy to continue to support the work of Church organizations and institutions whose quality services are with Christian values and act as the "tools of evangelization". PMP has continued partnership with several Christian institutions that care for the marginalized and poor and for those who come from broken homes, have minimal to no access to health, education and social care and are in dire need of continued support.

Case Study – Green Energy Solar Power System Installation

Creche is the only childcare institution in Bethlehem Governorate, that caters for the abandoned infants. Running the Creche depends heavily on donations from the local community and international visitors and donors, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic, donations dropped by more than 50% in the past two years. The project directly improved the electrical output to the Creche/Hospital, ensuring that there is an uninterrupted supply of electricity to power the orphanage/hospital facilities, withstanding local power outages which occur frequently throughout Bethlehem Governorate. The new system, courtesy of Manos Unidas, Spain is capable of providing 30KWp for the next 25 years.



The project has improved/upgraded the electrical supply to power the Creche facilities including the classrooms and residence rooms, restrooms, administration, kitchen, and laundry facilities, as well as hospital facilities (departments, patient's rooms, delivery rooms, neonatal section, clinics, administration, restrooms, hallways, and storage areas of the hospital). The project has benefited 45 orphaned/abandoned children of the Creche (residing at the Creche) and 70 (impoverished) children from Bethlehem Governorate attending the preschool program at the Creche.

*Case Study – AISHA – Psychosocial Support Program
in Al-Shati' Refugee Camp, Gaza Strip*

The program provided psychosocial support for Palestinian refugee women and children living in Al-Shati Refugee Camp, in the Gaza Strip. Al-Shati Refugee Camp is one of the most crowded refugee camps in the Gaza Strip, with limited mental health services available for residents. The project was undertaken by a local mental health organization, AISHA - Association for Women and Child Protection, and was held at a public park - Brotherhood Park, located within the camp. AISHA worked to identify and treat mental health problems among an estimated 720 refugee boys and girls and help improve parenting practices and reinforce mental health and wellness among 200 parents (mothers) through various mental health and psychosocial support mechanisms and activities.

Several accounts of beneficiaries supported under the program are listed below:

Salma* (name change for privacy) is a 29-year-old married woman with four children: two girls and two boys, and an eight month old baby. Salma was also diagnosed with cancer. During the pandemic, Salma contracted Covid19 twice and entered the hospital as chemotherapy lowered her immunity. At home, her husband is physically and emotionally abusive towards her and her children. She recalled, "My husband used to hit me without mercy or pity. After that, my parents intervened and told him to stop but he didn't. He began to emotionally abuse the children too. He then began to beat me again, severely, for no reason". Salma was in a desperate state when she heard about AISHA's psychosocial program offered in the refugee camp. Salma joined the adult psychosocial support sessions where she spoke with a counsellor and was transferred to AISHA's community center for

individual treatment. Salma spoke with specialist at the center about her problems and experiences. "I began to see changes in my thoughts and reactions following the counselling sessions", says Salma. Attending the treatment sessions and the counsellor's instructions on how to deal with her husband greatly helped. She said, "[the sessions] changed my life and the lives of my children. My husband began showing respect for me and my children. He also started to care about my needs and my children's needs. I finally told the AISHA counsellor, "It's magical [recalling her husband's positive transformation] and what I'm living with now."

Heba, is also a resident of Al-Shati refugee camp and participated in the psychosocial sessions with AISHA, "From the awareness sessions and psychological support, we learned how to defend ourselves. Personally, I learned how to communicate and handle my husband's violent outbursts towards me. I also learned how to face pressure; problem solve; among other things. I came out of the project as a new person."



Emergency Aid and Relief

In emergency crisis, Pontifical Mission - Jerusalem works alongside local CBOs and other partners to assess the immediate needs of the local communities. Funds are allocated to provide emergency relief and assistance to local partners in the target area.

2022 Emergency Relief in Gaza and Bethlehem

In 2022, PMP provided emergency relief towards minor rehabilitation work for the YMCA and Al-Quds Home for Palestinian Studies & Research in Gaza, in addition to providing heating fuel for the Creche in Bethlehem. This effort ensured that services and programs can continue for the local partners in these areas who continue to be inflicted from war, political upheaval or financial crisis.

YMCA Emergency Rehabilitation Work & Psychosocial Intervention

PMP launched an emergency appeal after the Gaza war in June 2021 to help support the Christian – based YMCA - Gaza since the center sustained moderate damages by ordinances hitting the streets near its building. There were extensive internal and external damages to the center's offices, playgrounds, kindergarten compound, windows, and the newly installed solar energy system. No personnel were on the premise during the bombing. The YMCA - Gaza staff required immediate donor aid that would cover the costs to repair the damages and cover the clean – up work at the site. Emergency aid would allow a total of 20 YMCA employees to return to work (including 10 employees, 6 administrators, 4 security guards and grounds maintenance/cleaners) and resume program activities that reach approximately 2,200 YMCA members (including children, youth, men, and



women). Finally, the project would also enable the YMCA to implement its planned emergency psychosocial program that can help children and their families recover from the devastating psychological impact of the war. It is important to note that the psychosocial intervention began in January 2022 for parent's training only (as training was offered in one room of the YMCA) while the other sections of the building were under rehabilitation. The intervention's psychosocial activities for children and families were later launched in May 2022 once the premise was rehabilitated and activities could be conducted in the various halls/rooms of the building as well

as in the playgrounds of the center. Psychosocial activities included art, field trips and social events, helping to reduce pent-up stress and feelings of anxiety and raise morale.

The rehabilitation work conducted at the YMCA offices, halls and areas used for YMCA programs annually was supported by Embrace the Middle East and Children's Relief Bethlehem.

Case Study:

Mrs. Dina Shaheen was one of the first women to sign-up for the YMCA - Gaza psychosocial program. The purpose of the psychosocial program was to provide women and children with a safe outlet to be able to freely express themselves, articulate and share their feelings with others, and find some solace in their difficult situations. During the women's discussion sessions with the group's psychologist, Dina recalled the difficult times she has faced. The psychological impact of decades-long closure of the Gaza Strip, high unemployment and poverty and war has negatively impacted Dina and other women in the group.

For Dina however, the YMCA's art sessions (paper crafting and glass painting) not only created a quiet space with which to work and create art, but also served as an inspiration. Partaking in the art activity actually turned it into a potential job opportunity for her. Dina recalls, "I did not expect that participating in a psychosocial art session would qualify me for a new job". Since completing the program, Dina has established herself as a local artisan, creating her own paper roses and glass paintings for a local organization. This new path not only is new source of income for herself and her family but also helps her to heal mentally.

Creche – Bethlehem Emergency Heating Fuel

Donations to the Creche – Bethlehem have slowly recovered from the pandemic but still has a significant impact on the Creche's ability to overcome budget shortfalls. The operating costs are increasingly becoming a burden, and the Sisters were in a desperate need for heating fuel during the 2022 winter. Thanks to the generous contribution from Children's Relief Bethlehem in 2022, the Daughters of Charity were able to procure a total of 38,000 liters of heating fuel to fill up the tank three times per year for the entire winter. CRB supported a total of 45 beneficiaries: babies and children of the Creche and 30 caregivers/ staff, 65 children from the local community and 3 Sisters, all of whom live, are cared for, or work at the Creche.



Subsidized Institutions

PMP maintains its commitment to support three public institutions in the health and education sectors: Near East Council of Churches Mother and Child Clinics (NECC) in Gaza, Pope Paul VI Ephpheta Institute for the Hearing Impaired in Bethlehem, and the Pontifical Mission Educational and Cultural Center (PMECC), also in Bethlehem.

Ephpheta Paul VI Institute, Bethlehem

It is estimated that 3% of the Palestinian population in the West Bank and Gaza Strip have hearing impairments, especially in some isolated villages where the percentage rises to 15%. Hearing-impaired children in Palestine have limited access to education and assistance they require; families must find alternative educational and support services.

Ephpheta provides specialized education services for the hearing impaired since 1971 and it is still one of only a few specialized schools in Palestine. Ephpheta Institute is operated by the Sisters of Saint Dorothy, an Italian congregation who are specialized in educating the deaf, in addition to a team of 39 teachers and specialists trained in the field of oral deaf education and auditory-verbal therapy. The school offers an early childhood education, primary and secondary education; enrollment in 2022 is 190 students. Each class has a maximum size of 12 to 14 students, with an individual educational plan (IEP) as well as educational support. Students are taught how to speak and lipread so that they will be able to communicate with others while developing other skills. Ephpheta also offers classes or individual support for parents which enhances the parent-child relationship. Ephpheta also offers boarding for those students living in areas beyond Bethlehem Governorate; about half of all the students at Ephpheta use this section during the school week.

Ephpheta Institute's operational expenses are partly subsidized from CNEWA. The generous grant from CNEWA in 2022 ensured that teachers, who are responsible for the education and care of Ephpheta Institute's 190 students, received salaries during the year. This ensured that all academic programs continued, and teachers were available to implement the school's framework to bridge the language/ education gap of students impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Case Study:

Dana Yacoub from Beit Sahour graduated from Ephpheta Institute in 2015 and was described as a productive student. Since graduation, Dana earned a bachelor's degree in graphic design from Dar Al-Kalima University in Bethlehem and joined Ephpheta Institute as an art teacher. She is a very committed teacher and enjoys creating art with the students at Ephpheta and is a role model to other female students who wish to pursue an art degree after graduation.



Pontifical Mission Education and Cultural Center (PMECC), Bethlehem

The Pontifical Mission Educational and Cultural Center (PMECC) was established in 1970 as a small library in Bethlehem which has evolved into a multipurpose library and community center. The Teresian Sisters and its team operate the PMECC, which offers a variety of reading, after-school education and cultural programs for children, youth as well as adult programs. It also organizes a children's annual summer camp program; in 2022, 85 children participated in the camp.

The PMECC emphasizes hands-on learning as a tool to help school-aged children and youth to learn to read better and build language and other skills which contribute towards the education, development and wellbeing of Palestinian children in Palestine. PMECC's programs have received recognition by the Palestinian Ministry of Education in addition to local private and public-school support for the quality of creativity of their programs, especially the PMECC reading program. The PMECC reading program comprises of a reading competition, which was conducted in 2022. The program involved hundreds of 5th graders from thirty-two (32) private and government schools from Bethlehem and Jerusalem areas.

CNEWA's annual subsidy towards the PMECC contributes towards the operations of the library section; one director (Teresian Sister) and three staff members, other operating expenses, and programs/activities costs; supports the PMECC reading and after-school programs. This effort will ensure that residents of Bethlehem and other areas of the West Bank, have free access to reading and academic support, educational activities year round.



Near East Council of Churches (NECC), Gaza Strip

Political instability, poor infrastructure, high unemployment, and widespread poverty have complicated the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip. More Gaza households are increasingly becoming vulnerable. In particular, malnutrition and anemia are becoming a serious health problem that affects countless newborn babies, children, and pregnant women in Gaza.

NECC Mother and Child Health Clinics which operate in three areas of Gaza (Shijaia, Darraj and Rafah) are part of a network of healthcare institutions in Gaza that provide free healthcare for Gazans. NECC's primary healthcare services include Antenatal and Prenatal Care Program for women as well as a Well-baby Healthcare Program for mothers and their babies/ children. The main target group are those that are non-refugee who are denied healthcare due to this status.

CNEWA provides an annual subsidy to support the work and operations of all three NECC clinics in Gaza. In 2022, CNEWA supported the Prenatal and Antenatal Care Program which covered patient's lab tests, medical examinations, medicines, and vitamins benefiting a total of 3,499 pregnant women and new mothers. Some of the pregnant women were diagnosed with anemia; after treatment, 49% improved their condition or fully recovered. Postnatal Care is also provided to ensure the health and welfare of new mothers. The subsidy covered the screening and treatment of 13,836 children for chronic diseases, malnutrition, and anemia. Through the intervention, 7,812 children diagnosed with a chronic disease received the treatment; 4,154 anemic or malnourished children were identified and received appropriate medical treatment. Raising awareness and about important issues such as proper nutrition, health and hygiene practices and food preparation is key to healthy lifestyle practices. NECC's education and awareness sessions reached 6,371 women in various areas of Gaza contributing towards better community health practices.

Case Study:

Bashir is 1.5 year old child who lives with his family in Rafah, south of the Gaza Strip. Bashir's mother was concerned for her child's health after having symptoms and took him to the local NECC health clinic in Rafah for a check-up. After his length and weight were measured and a blood test administered, NECC's pediatrician diagnosed Bashir as moderately malnourished. Thanks to this subsidized program, Bashir was provided with free iron syrup, vitamins, and folic acid, as well as fortified biscuits for three months. An information pamphlet was provided for his mother which describes the condition and lists what foods are rich in iron. A free follow-up appointment was made for Bashir after two months of which his iron level increased, and the child's nutritional status improved. Bashir's mother was pleased with his progress and sincerely thanked NECC Clinic and the staff for their treatment and care of Bashir.



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- Manos Unidas
- Misereor
- Swiss Holy Land Foundation



The Jerusalem Office Team during the planning day in Abu Gosh

CNEWA-PMP President visits the Helen Keller school in Jerusalem where the work was underway to install a solar panel green energy project

COVER PAGE: Inauguration of the new green energy project in the presence of Most Rev. Francesco Patton, Custos of the Holy Land. The project was funded by Misereor



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