



مجلس كنائس الشرق الأوسط
The Middle East Council of Churches

Education and Leadership Development Unit

MECC Executive Meeting, September 30- October 2, 2008. Cyprus - Kikko Monastery

Today is my first opportunity to thank you all for the trust you have placed in me to be the Director of the Education and leadership development Unit.

Following are the programs & activities which took place during the past four months as the first three months were the submission period between Mr. Razek Siriani the former ELD Director and myself, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank him for his support and add that what he had contributed during his leadership was a giant job, many church related people has benefited from his continuous efforts, and I hope and pray that I will continue to make such a difference and be up the expectations.

WOMEN COMBATING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Forty-five social assistants from Church institutions came together on the 26th of July 2008 at the Antonito Monastery in Bikfaya-Lebanon, and at the invitation of MECC Women Program to be engaged in a one-day workshop on ways of “Combating Domestic Violence”... Lawyer Danielle Howayek from “Kafa gave an overall view on the legal aspect and laws pertaining to the problem.

Another speaker asked the question: **Who is responsible for violence?** The participants assembled in working groups to discuss the issue and the negative consequences of violence on women and ways to remedy it.

THE EAST-WEST YOUNG ADULTS INTER-ACT IN DIALOGUE ABOUT CONFLICT MANAGEMENT & PEACE MAKING IN AMMAN

“The participation of so many youth is a representation of the unifying power of ‘Hope’ in a future where those who would have conflict instead choose peace” said by one Canadian Participant. To her and to the 30 participants both Christians and Muslims from the Middle East, United States and Canada it was a unique occasion of encounter and dialogue in Amman - Jordan that lasted for four days of training workshop on the 11th of Aug.2008 , discussing issues related to conflict management and peace making.

Speakers appreciated the MECC initiative of inter-cultural dialogue between young people, which enhances building bridges and overcome misunderstandings.

Ice-breaking, expectations, fears and hopes were the introductory session of learning about each others and expressing personal interests, Participants from Lebanon, Jordan, Palestine, Syria, Iraq, Egypt, United States and Canada were engaged in intensive time of training on skills of conflict management, overcoming stereotyping and peace building, which were conducted by my colleagues Mr. Razek Siriani and Mr. Elie Halabi.

One of the new policies of the ELD is getting the MECC Staff involved in the ELD activities and programs by, inviting them to be the Speakers and the teachers during any ELD Activity, emphasizing the fact that many of them has the expertise on one hand, thus reducing the expenses of an outside speaker or lecturer on the other hand if possible.

Cultural and religious differences made the workshop more creative, challenged the participants to discover commonalities and differences and build a network of relations between participants. Words such as “understanding, communication, relationships, acceptance, knowing the other, diversity, dialogue, and respect” were the motives of the participants to discuss and engage in dialogue about it. While the workshop was successful at the time, the participants were eager to establish a follow up plan to be facilitated by MECC.

In the Final Communiqué participants learned that “their differences are not barriers but rather an incentive towards having deeper dialogue in the future”.

SCHOOLS RELATED TO CHURCHES PROGRAM IN EGYPT

Addressing the Quality of Education in Overcoming

The annual seminar of the ELD Program Schools Related to Churches welcomed 75 participants of directors, supervisors and educators from different church schools in Cairo - Egypt on Aug.28th 2008 under the theme: **“Quality of Education in Overcoming Violence and Peace Building”**.

The seminar was organized to highlight the role of the schools in education about non-violence and peace making investment in education Speakers presented their papers referring to values of love, coexistence, overcoming violence, restoring education, and criteria of restoration.

Rev. Dr. Safwat Al-Bayyadi, MECC President reflected in his paper on love as a tool to overcome violence and build peace.

Other activities and Programs implemented by the MECC Amman office.

- Implementation of the ACT Appeal MEIQ71 for Iraqi Refugees, of food and non food Parcel, winter children clothes and cash assistance.
- Implementation of the Missio Project for Medical assistance for Iraqis in Jordan through local hospitals and clinics.
- MECC President HB Patriarch Theophilos III of Jerusalem for the Greek Orthodox Family, met with the ELD Director for an over all update.
- MECC President Rev. Dr. Safwat Bayadi and ELD Commission Moderator Visited MECC Amman office for an update and future vision of the Unit. The Discussion went on prioritizing issues and following up on the 4-year plan of activities as well as the administration of the Unit, Future Vision and obstacles.

- **A Delegation from the United Church of CHRIST visits the MECC Amman Office, during a visit to the Region.**

The visit of the delegation aimed at establishing relations with churches in the region, learning from the churches in the Middle East about their situations and learning about the Christian-Muslim coexistence as well as the issue of the Iraqi Guests in Jordan. The delegation met with some

Church representatives who are directly involved in assisting the Iraqis in Jordan through the MECC ACT Appeals and the Missio Projects , as well as a brief from the ELD Director of their situation and current legal status.

- **NCCCUSA High Rank Delegation Visit to Jordan**

A delegation from the National Council of Churches of USA top leaders visited Jordan in July 2008 during a visit to the region

In Amman - Jordan The delegation met with His Highness Prince Hassan Bin Talal with whom they went through a variety of global issues. They also met with His Excellency Senator Akal Baltaji, Also, the delegation met with bishop Vendiktos of the Greek Orthodox Church and discussed with him the issue of Christian presence. and the director of the Royal Institute for Inter-Faith studies Mr. Hassan Abu-Nimah.

Conclusion

The three mentioned activities implemented during the past three months were addressing two main issues that are highly needed nowadays, Violence against women, violence in Schools and the importance of using love and Tolerance as a main Christian tool in dealing with each other and overcoming many obstacles.

The second topic was Peace building and the Art of Dialogue within us and with others in the West.

The Education and leadership development Unit is a part and Parcel of the MECC General financial situation and the restructuring process; our job will be more difficult, without the Local MECC member Churches help, we seek your support, your Tolerance, your Wisdom, your financial input and contribution so the Road will be less traveled.

Your Daughter

Wafa Goussous
Director
Education and leadership Development.
Amman - Jordan

