



مجلس كنائس الشرق الأوسط

The Middle East Council of Churches

Executive Committee Meeting
29/9-3/10/2008
Kikko Monastery
Troodos - Cyprus

The Middle East Council of Churches The Ecumenical Relief Service Program Program report Jan – Sept / 2008

The ACT Appeal MEIQ 71

During the last 9 months, the ERS Program completed the requirements of ACT Appeal MEIQ 71 in Iraq, Syria and Jordan. In all these countries the Program has worked with and through the Churches as its main partners, providing relief supplies, food and none food items, clothing for children, medicine and in some cases simple medical equipments.

In Jordan, six hundred (600) families were provided with food parcels, 600 Iraqi children were provided with Winter Jackets and a total of 732 families were provided with cash assistance.

In Iraq, mainly in Baghdad (due to the security situation it was not possible to send relief supplies to the North or South of the country) 1050 families were assisted with food parcels, a total of 500 families received cash assistance, and 115 types of medication were provided for two Church related medical centers that serve Christian and Muslim population.

In Syria, the Appeal provided food parcels to needy families, a total of 1200 parcels were distributed in Damascus, Aleppo and North East part of Syria , also the Appeal provided vocational training to 100 young men and women in Damascus and Aleppo. Again all these activities were carried out through the local Churches.

The Appeal was supposed to be completed by early 2008 but due to the interruption of funds received from ACT the fulfillment of implementation was delayed till the end of July 2006. Due to shortage of funds and cash flow, MECC had to borrow funds from ERS to pay MECC Staff their salaries. In any case, the Appeal was completed by the end of July with a narrative report that was sent to ACT and a final audit report sent in early September.

Talking about the ACT Appeals, there is also a new Appeal MEIQ 81 that was presented end of July. This Appeal covers only Syria, and the total amount is US\$ 220,000.00. Again this Appeal is designated to help the Iraqi refugees in Syria only, and the area of services or assistance will be to help 500 families with hygiene items, also to help 300 youth of both sexes and of different faith affiliations, aged 18-25, in covering fees of vocational training, as well as to assist 400 Iraqi women for

education fees. The implementation of this Appeal started already in early September and will be completed end of February 2009.

**PS: A detailed narrative report on Appeal MEIQ71 is available upon request from the ERS Coordinator Office.
If interested to know more about the new Appeal MEIQ 81, go to < act-intl.org>.**

The MISSIO / MECC Project

MISSIO of Germany, responding to a proposal from ERS, has given MECC in June 2007 a grant to help 2000 needy Iraqi families living in Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and Iraq.

The project was to be implemented and completed by the end of 2007, but due to shortage of funds and cash flow at MECC the implementation and completion of the project were delayed and again MECC had to borrow funds from ERS to pay the salaries.

In 2007 ERS started the implementation of the project with assistance to the needy Iraqi families in Lebanon and Iraq. But by early 2008 ERS could not implement the project in Jordan and Syria due to the reasons mentioned above. The Program had to wait till June 2008 to start the implementation of the project in Jordan and till August to start in Syria.

In Lebanon, ERS started the implementation through the local Churches that already have a ministry with the Iraqis, mainly the Chaldean Bishopric of Lebanon, the Syrian Orthodox Bishopric of Mount Lebanon and the Syrian Catholic Bishopric of Lebanon. The Churches were given the choice of helping the families within the territories of their authority either by giving them cash assistance or food parcels; some Churches opted for the food distribution and others effected the cash distribution, according to needs. Over 600 families were assisted through this project.

In Iraq, ERS provided cash assistance to 500 families through the local Churches in Baghdad, Basra, Karkouk and Mousel. Where cash assistance was provided the Churches submitted a single receipt or a list with a photocopy of ID for each family that benefited from this assistance. The Churches in Iraq felt it easier and safer to effect cash assistance than food distribution.

In Jordan, as mentioned earlier, the implementation was delayed and started this last June. The project in Jordan will provide medical assistance to about 400 needy families through two local hospitals, ERS Jordan made arrangements with these two hospitals to provide medical care to Iraqi refugee families with a limited ceiling per each case, and funds are paid to the hospitals directly.

A more detailed report on this activity will be submitted when the project is completed.

In Syria, the project started early this September and it will help provide 100 food parcels to very needy families, also school kits + book cases to the children in private and public schools; it will also cover a percentage of the school fees in private schools. Further, the project will assist in the cost of Diesel in winter season especially for families living in villages and cold places like Saydnaya. An estimated number of 500 families will benefit from this project in Syria. Again, we hope to

complete this project by the end of November 2008 and a final narrative report will be available to the partner who gave the money and to MECC Executive Committee.

The United Church of Christ (UCC) Grant to ERS

After a UCC delegation's visit to Lebanon, and since the ACT Appeal did not include assistance to Iraqis in Lebanon, the UCC gave ERS a grant to assist Iraqi refugees in Lebanon. This grant provided for the distribution of relief items, food and none food, and was implemented through the four local Churches that have a large population of Iraqis and already have assistance programs for them. A total number of 250 families were helped, the relief parcels contained 15 food items and 5 none food items.

Also, 12-16 Iraqi women will have the chance to get vocational training through this grant, this coming October.

Limitations, Challenges and Recommendations.

The ERS was established in the early 1990's to respond to emergency situations and to disasters, whether man or nature made.

Because of geopolitical factors, the Middle East Region has always been the victim of such situations, more so since the mid of the twentieth century, hence it is very much in need of assistance to face those situations.

If MECC aims to be a Church related organization that responds to these emergencies and disasters, the ERS has to have a better structure than its present one. The limitation now is that ERS does not have funds on hand to respond when there is an emergency. The way things work now is to wait till there is an emergency and when it happens appeals for funds from MECC partners are urgently prepared and sent, by the time the funds are received the victims would have been suffering for a relatively long time and MECC humanitarian role would be tarnished. The ERS needs to be structured differently in such a way to have funds available on hand and to make sure that when the funds are available they should not be used for other than ERS activities.

The challenge is to keep the ERS funds as designated and not use or borrow them to pay salaries for personnel in other programs. The new structure should allow ERS to raise funds and keep them for immediate response to emergencies resulting from disastrous situations.

The ERS recommendation to the Executive Committee is to have the restructured ERS under the MECC umbrella but independent with a Church board and a status similar to that of the DSPR or ICNDR.

May God empower all MECC activities and related programs to serve His people and alleviate their sufferings.

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ERS / coordinator
Beirut , September 2008