

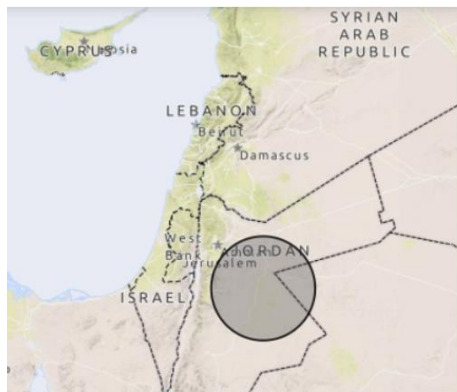
MECI – INSTILLING HOPE THROUGH EDUCATION

The activities of the Middle East Children's Institute (MECI) caring for Syrian refugees in Jordan

MECI's mission is to address the educational, psychosocial, health and basic humanitarian needs of children and women impacted by conflict or poverty in the Middle East.

MECI developed an innovative holistic approach to relieving the distress of children impacted by poverty and war. Our work focusses on children's education which includes outlets for self-expression through the arts, sports and music. Impressed by MECI's program, in 2013 UNICEF formed a partnership with MECI to create a holistic educational program to address the educational and psychological obstacles facing Syrian refugee children who are living in Jordan. MECI is currently operating in 23 schools in north- and central Jordan and teaches approximately 7,000 children.

SYRIAN REFUGEES IN JORDAN



Since the civil war broke out in Syria in 2011, millions of families have fled for their lives and have become refugees.

About 700,000 Syrian refugees are registered in Jordan. The estimated number of unregistered cases is much higher than that. We can estimate a total of 1.4 Million Syrian refugees living in this small country (approximately the size of Austria). The median income of a Syrian family is 300 US\$. About 90 percent of Syrian refugees live outside of refugee

camp, in the villages and cities of the host country, meaning that they have to pay for housing and transportation themselves. Many children and especially adults are working illegally in the informal economic sector to increase the household income.

MECI IN JORDAN

MECI Jordan is currently employing approximately 200 field-based workers as school principals, teachers, outreach counselors, social workers and trauma therapists. MECI employs Syrian Outreach Counselors to identify and enthruse children in need of the interventions offered by the Institute. They rapidly become a main point of contact and support for families, schools, and MECI.

In order to address the needs of both Jordanian and trauma-exposed Syrian children, MECI's model in Jordan is a multi-faceted approach beyond the sole education sector. Acknowledging the academic struggles of a trauma-exposed generation that was pulled out of school for sometimes as much as 6 years, MECI Jordan developed an effective program providing education, psychosocial support as well as child protection and broader referral services.

HEALING AND LEARNING

MECI believes that education is the most powerful healing tool for children who have experienced war and trauma. At MECI schools, children of any background are given a chance to physically enter a safe space and environment where their wellbeing and skills are nurtured. Providing children with a space to learn, socialize, play and heal creates building blocks that are critical to paving the way for a positive future for this trauma-affected generation.

Through informal and remedial education for both academically struggling students in school and out-of-school students, MECI provides vulnerable children with academic support, an outlet for self-expression, and a supportive community.

MECI addresses the health, academic, psychological and social needs of each child and also integrates family members through community awareness sessions and social cohesion activities. All teachers were trained specifically to understand the particular context and situation Syrian students come from and evolve in, and given practical tools to identify and manage learning and behavioral disabilities resulting from trauma.

WHAT IS UNIQUE ABOUT THE MECI MODEL?

MECI developed a multi-faceted integrated approach providing all students with learning and psychosocial support opportunities, life skills, and child protection services as well as access to the referral network of trauma therapists and self-development activities.



Lessons are held in public schools in the afternoons. Over the past years, MECI has become a reference in the education of refugee children. MECI's holistic approach supports the academic education of children and youth focusing on self-expression through the arts, sports and music.

MECI MEANS INTEGRATION

In its more than 23 schools MECI teaches Syrian refugee children as well as academically struggling Jordan children and youth and also integrates their parents through community awareness sessions and social cohesion activities.

THE MECI MODEL RESTS ON FOUR PILLARS:



Academics

Informal & Remedial Education

Academic education in Arabic, mathematics and English.



Psychosocial Support

Trauma Informed Interventions

Strong emphasis of the MECI curriculum lies on the self-expression of the students through the arts, sports and music. Extracurricular activities are used to convey essential life lessons to students. A trauma-therapeutical approach is used both in academic and extracurricular activities in order to enhance the living conditions of the children and youth.



Youth Engagement

Basic Life Skills Trainings & Initiatives

A further component to the MECI program targeting young adolescents and youth are Life Skills Trainings and handcraft lessons.



Community Engagement

Awareness Sessions & Social Cohesion

True to our child-centered approach to community development, MECI involves parents and community members in their children's education through awareness raising and social events.

About MECI

MECI was founded in 2005. Today, MECI operates in the West Bank and Jordan in partnership with the respective Ministries of Education. MECI Jordan has risen to be one of the leading International NGOs in remedial education for refugee children, with a high impact and progression rate. MECI is registered as public non-profit charities in Austria, Jordan, Switzerland, and the USA.

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