



منتدى التنمية والثقافة والحوار  
Forum for Development, Culture & Dialogue  
(FDCD)

“MY HUMANITY  
IS BOUND UP  
IN YOURS,  
FOR WE  
CAN ONLY  
BE HUMAN  
TOGETHER!”

DESMOND TUTU

# NEWSLETTER 2019

*A LOOK BACK AT 2018*

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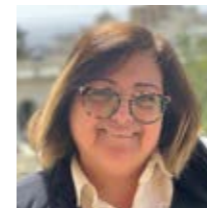
# FDCD TEAM



**Dr. Riad Jarjour**  
*President*



**Mireille Hamouche**  
*Assistant to the President*



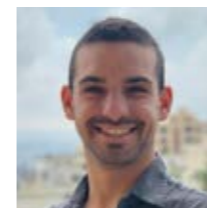
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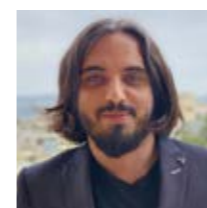
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*Program Officer*



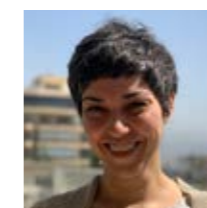
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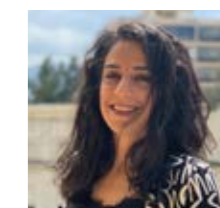
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*Peace Building and Conflict Resolution Program Coordinator*



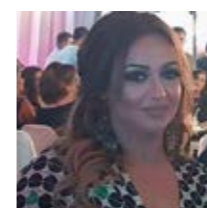
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**Lama Ammar**  
*Interfaith and Intercultural Dialogue Program Coordinator*



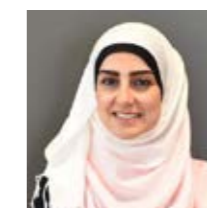
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*Media Officer*



**Magd Rdwanian**  
*Office Director CSSD - Syria*



**Bishr Mohamad**  
*Field Coordinator CSSD - Syria*



**Rahaf Abdo**  
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**Chadi Jarjour**  
*Field Coordinator*

## MIREILLE HAMOUCHE ASSISTANT TO PRESIDENT



## REFLECTIONS

Here comes the time of the year where we have to stop for a moment, look back at the year that passed and reflect on what it has been; a look back at 2018, with all its events and developments all over the world - and with a particular focus on our region of the world - might possibly trigger mixed feelings of sorrow or happiness, frustration or hope, victory or devastation... all depending on our positions, opinions and worldviews.

However, no matter what our feelings might be, a look back at the reality in our region and the world (with a closer lens on the Middle East) in 2018, cannot but leave us with a single overwhelmingly clear impression of vulnerability.

Wars, devastation, displacement, violent extremism, intolerance, racism, discrimination, fear... just name it! Our present and recent history are replete with examples and live evidence.

### *A reality that provides FDCD with more determination and assertiveness about its mission*

Vulnerable reality was the raw material, out of which – with our long-lasting tool of dialogue - we made the birthplace of creativity, mobilization and change.

In 2018, FDCD customized its dialogue approaches in innovative and creative ways that best responded to the particularities and needs of our contexts of intervention.

In addition to the traditional exchange around the table, dialogue manifested in forms of community mobilization, local initiatives, youth camps, sports activities, child-friendly spaces, NGO capacity building, women empowerment, humanitarian assistance and much more.

Hundreds of activities of all kinds and nature gathered thousands of beneficiaries (whom later on became partners as they rallied around our cause) in safe spaces where stereotypes, prejudice and fear from the different Other were broken, clearing the space for Diversity to be nurtured, citizenship and humanity to be celebrated. Spaces of dialogue that answer so well the call by Pope Francis for “Dialogue to become presence, to be present to talk and create freedom, to be present to generate hope”.

**“Do your little bit of good where you are; it’s those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world”**

**– Desmond Tutu**

FDCD seeks no credit except creating a sense of ownership within actors of change through appropriately tailored projects and activities.

An ownership that is sure to create a multiplier effect within our societies paving the way for a permanent Dialogue of Life and leading to a rooted culture of peace, citizenship, equality and justice.

As we turn the page to a new phase, we renew today our commitment to awakening Humanity in our hearts so that we and everyone around us finds it in every heart. ■

**“To be a Man is to feel that one’s own stone contributes to building the edifice of the world”**

**– Antoine de Saint Exupery**

# FDCD IN LEBANON



## FDCD'S PEACEBUILDING AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION PROGRAM

Our peacebuilding and conflict resolution program is focused on bringing together Lebanese - especially the youth - from many regions and faiths towards a common vision of Lebanon. It is also known as the LBI Program, Lebanon a Better Image; "Albee" in Arabic – My Heart. One of the most enjoyable and gratifying aspects of working with youth, is seeing the positive impact on our volunteers and beneficiaries, who are the young leaders of the future, capable of driving a positive change in Lebanon.

**The LBI Program is comprised of four main activities:**

## INTERNATIONAL DIALOGUE CAMP



In these troubled times when the world is getting increasingly polarized, it's very important to spread seeds of dialogue, acceptance, and understanding. Moreover, youth have a very important role to play in this paradigm shift.

For the 14th consecutive year, the International Dialogue Camp (IDC) 2018 gathered a multi-confessional group of 25 youth from around the world for seven days in the serene mountain-town of Dhour El Chweir. Here they engaged in dialogue and learned tools and techniques which empowered them in the face of the rising tide of extremism.

Ultimately, these tools will be useful for them in implementing local dialogue initiatives in their countries and environments after they return from IDC. Through this camp, we aspire to create a multiplier effect that helps in the emergence of more youth-led initiatives which facilitate dialogue and togetherness. ■

**“What I liked about this camp is that it doesn't orient us to a certain belief. It presents tools and concepts, and allows us to reflect on them from our point of view.”**  
 ~ Mahmoud – Iraq

**“When you are engaged in a dialogue process with people from different countries backgrounds, and faiths, it makes you reflect on a lot of things you took for granted.”**  
 ~ Hend – Jordan

**“IDC has been a wonderful learning experience. For example, I was very glad to learn about the Druze faith, which I was not familiar with prior to the camp.”**  
 ~ Deborah – USA

**“This was not my first dialogue experience. In the beginning I may have thought: “Oh I already know these exercises”, however yesterday we did an exercise where we had to share our faith stories. I don't think I have ever shared my story like this. It was an eye-opening experience for me.”**  
 ~ Laerke – Denmark

## MEDIATION TRAINING



We believe that peacebuilding starts with the individual. Any person can be a catalyst of peace and non-violence in their local community and surroundings. FDCD has partnered with Université Saint Joseph for the last three years, in order to bring mediation trainings to many Lebanese regions. The trainings focus on the basic concepts of mediation, its definition, the role of the mediator, tools and techniques of mediation, as well as case studies and mediation practices. ■

**3 years**  
**60 participants**  
**25 sessions**

**2018:**  
**7 sessions**  
**20 participants**



## ■ MY CITIZENSHIP, MY FREEDOM



Youth are at the forefront of social change, and their active participation in the public sphere is essential for a healthy economic and social system.

"My Citizenship, My Freedom" is a series of workshops on the subject of citizenship, with the purpose of raising awareness on active citizenship. According to social / political researchers Arend Lijphart and Theodore Hanf, who focused on the subject of democracy in pluralistic societies: In systems where there are many communities, the majority's rule as

per normal democracy might do more harm than good and may lead to further tensions. As such, in countries like Lebanon, it's best to have a transitional period where decisions are taken by consensus and agreement of all the communities. In order to do that efficiently, each constituent of the country must understand the other, and view the other as they view themselves. They want to be viewed and not through prejudice and stereotypes.

Thus, it's very important to incorporate dialogue when working on Citizenship. ■



**Locations:**  
Tripoli, Nabatieh,  
Baalbeck, Zahlé



**Date:**  
March – June 2018



**Participants:**  
72

## ■ HIKE FOR PEACE



**Location:**  
Kfardebian



**Date:**  
09 September 2018



**Participants:**  
80

“Dialogue...is a way of exploring the roots of the many crises that face humanity today. It enables inquiry into, and understanding of, the sorts of processes that fragment and interfere with real communication.”

~ David Bohm

Dialogue has always been a staple of our work with youth. Whether through direct dialogue initiatives, or customized approaches like sporting events, we always look forward to engaging in dialogue and learn to tackle our differences in a constructive way.

Sports are a powerful, engaging, and fun tool to bring people together, facilitate getting to know one another, and dismantle stereotypes and prejudice. ■

# WALKING TOGETHER

## TOWARDS PEACEBUILDING AND RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN SYRIA AND LEBANON

In 2018, a three-year project focused on peacebuilding and religious freedom came to a close. By working directly with local leaders, FDCD enabled communities to build their own vision of peaceful social cohesion and acceptance of religious diversity. The goal of the last year of the project was to equip local leaders with the necessary tools to create and design their own projects aimed at promoting peace, tolerance, and understanding in their communities. In the last year of the project, four local initiatives were implemented, and several have continued to run, even after the project came to a close, a testament to the power of grassroots initiatives.



## WALKING TOGETHER IN LEBANON

*In Lebanon*, journalism was the focus. In Tripoli, a city that has suffered from sectarian violence, clerics and religious media workers in North Lebanon participated in separate workshops which focused on utilizing media to promote civil peace, develop mutual respect between Muslims and Christians, and combat violent extremism. These meetings developed the “Sustainable Network of Clergy in North Lebanon,” through which our partners and participants will continue making an impact on their communities.

More inland, another project took place in Baalbek. Several meetings were held in Baalbek during this time, which gathered local media, community activists, and social network managers and trained them to promote social cohesion in their work. The initiative also partnered with the Baalbek Media Forum to reach a broader audience and gain credibility in the community. At the conclusion of the workshops, participants signed a code of conduct titled “Media Association in the Service of Civil Peace,” which will be used as a future reference for

journalism in Baalbek. This project was particularly impactful as it was the first time the subject of peace journalism was raised in Baalbek.

 **Date:**  
**January 2019**

 **Participants: 30**

 **Objectives:**

- The role of women and youth in the face of conflict and extremism for the first year.
- The role of media in building peace for the second year.
- Building a social cohesion network and its role in the peace-building process in Lebanon and Syria for the 3rd year.

 **Location:**  
**Broummana - Lebanon**

## WALKING TOGETHER IN SYRIA

*In Syria*, an initiative in Aleppo focused on increasing the visibility of peacebuilding in the area, through the use of media. Topics such as humanitarian aid, communication, photography and videography, local media resources, social media, and peace journalism were all discussed during local training workshops. The initiative was concluded with an Iftar for participants and other influential media members in Aleppo. Present at the meal were participants, trainers from Aleppo, business leaders, and members of other charitable organizations. This event helped bring the ideals and values taught in the initiative to a tangible level, as participants displayed what it means to accept “the religious other to find unity in community” and cooperate toward building a better future.

Another project in Syria, this one in Tartous, likewise brought together activists and media members to participate in workshops, with the goal of spreading peacebuilding and conflict resolution through media. 48 representatives from both different CBOs, FBOs, NGOs, as well as from local from local communities supported the initiative and praised its efforts. Thanks to this project, roughly 400 individuals, primarily youth, better understand the principles behind nurturing diversity in journalism and encouraging others to do the same.

The leaders of this initiative worked diligently to promote and provide visibility of the project, creating innovative ideas to spread the message of peace. One such example was a day-long project to paint cultural murals in Tartous. The result was the creation of a beautiful collection of murals in Tartous, which reflects the richness and diversity of Syrian society.

Contributors came from every religious sect in Syria, displaying a strong sense of unity that contradicts the pervasive idea

that Syrian communities are irreparably split along religious lines. The leaders told us that “the murals are a reminder of the beauty of diversity and difference in Syria,” which should be viewed as a strength rather than a weakness. In total, there were 213 contributors to the murals.

While the initiative leaders organized the paintings, support was widespread in the community and in the Arab World. Activists in other countries even contacted the initiative leaders to congratulate them on their success and discuss ways to collaborate on similar projects in the future. ■

# FDCD IN THE MIDDLE EAST



## HIWAROUNA

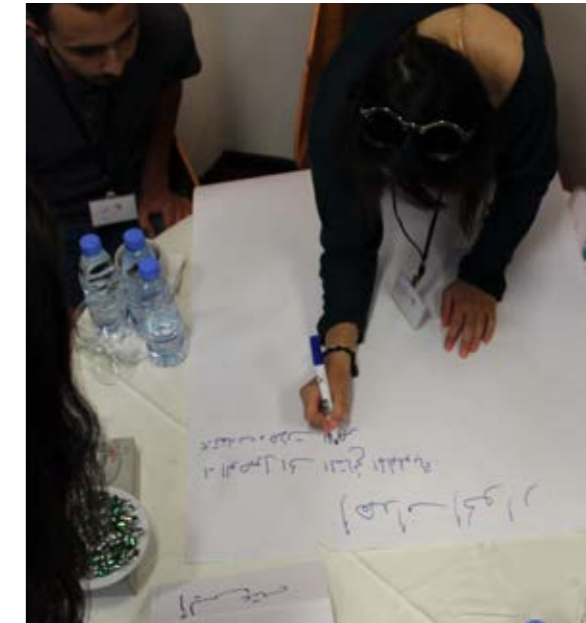
*“Mutual respect among people of faith in general and between the followers of the two great religions in the Arab world in particular”*

Hiwarouna (Interfaith and intercultural dialogue) is one of our 3-year projects, which was conceived from the vision to contribute to cultural and religious pluralism, tolerance and peaceful coexistence in Syria, Iraq, and Lebanon. The main axes of intervention in this project are:

- **The “Leadership” level:** through a regional religious leaders' platform established at the beginning of the program.
- **The “Opinion Makers” level:** through a dialogue space for professional and social leaders.
- **The “Youth” level:** through national and local youth training workshops for activists, students, journalists, and social media and art communicators. The youth are encouraged to develop and implement their local initiatives to benefit their own community.
- **The “Academic” level:** through motivation Young researchers to conduct research on the topic of inter-religious dialogue and related fields to produce new findings and strengthen the knowledge of these topics.







Document on mutual respect established by the Arab group for Christian – Muslim Dialogue in 2001, was edited and approved by the Hiwarouna religious platform in 2018:

**1-** Mutual respect is a necessary result of acknowledging difference and otherness. The adherents of every religion have their religious particularities. Every group or confession within the same religion has also its intellectual particularities. The behavior of the adherents of all religions should take into consideration these particularities, by showing respect to those to whom they belong and protect their right to express them.

**2-** No one should be harmed for his beliefs or his religion. Religions and doctrines, in the view of those who adhere to them, are ways to obey and worship God. Discriminating between them lies solely in the hands of the One God.

**3-** Citizenship means sharing in the homeland and in the associated obligations and rights which must be protected and enjoyed regardless of the religion or beliefs of the citizen. The adherents of

religions should exhibit solidarity in preserving these rights and duties and in resisting any attempt to deprive anyone of these rights and obligations under any form or for any reason.

**4-** Every state must guarantee its citizens a true equality protected by the law in access to employment, professions, mobility, and in any legal activity. Any discrimination among citizens of the nation in these matters or in other rights and obligations because of their religion or belief or gender or race is a violation of the rules of mutual respect and of the right of equality among all human beings accepted by all religions.

**5-** The belief of the adherents of any religion or confession in the truth and correctness of their faith should not create in them a feeling of superiority or privilege and should not affect negatively human relations among people, lest such feeling of favored selection of one's faith over another turn into a hateful fanaticism which incites the ignorant against anyone not from their own community

**6-** Although fanaticism is originally an intellectual position, it is in reality a reason for conflicts and a basis for separation and schisms among people of faith. It is incumbent on any believer personally and in the community to preserve the faith unblemished by the influences of fanaticism and to guard against any feelings of superiority.

**7-** The adherents of a religion should not interfere in the particularities of another religion. This is also true for the different confessions and groups within the same religion. By interference is intended the public intervention in matters of difference whose philosophical and intellectual foundations they do not understand.

Doctrinal difference is old. It will also last as long as there is life. Scientific discussions by specialists on the basis of mutual respect are necessary; but when it becomes a topic for the general public, and opposition and contradiction between doctrines of different faiths are widely circulated, it only leads to mutual hatred, rancor and provocation. The Group warns insistently against such attitudes and calls on people of insight to prevent this and

to take a stand against regardless of the provocations.  
**8-** True believers do not transgress the boundaries of respect, good friendship, reputation and abiding by commitments within the one nation – indeed, with humanity in general – and with the people of other faiths.

The discourse of all people of faith must be united and express concepts which establish the brotherhood of faith and the human love necessary to build the earth.

**9-** The adherents of every religion or faith have the right to expect from those who differ that they correct any mistake committed against themselves, and to apologize for any harm, insult, or inappropriate expression. Those who commit these mistakes, intentionally or unintentionally, should not hesitate to correct or explain it.

**10-** All people of faith have the right to defend their religion against false depictions and to teach its foundations and application to its adherents and to invite them to abide by its rules and commandments. All the opportunities provided by today's freedom of

expression must not, however, become a tool to insult others to provoke discord or slander among the religions.

**11-** The freedom of choosing a faith is an individual freedom. The religious consequences of such a choice are set by the adherents of a religion following its texts and rules. Legal consequences are set by the constitutions and national laws.

**12-** The national identity unites all citizens across their different faiths, confessions and doctrinal schools. It constitutes the foundation of their unity and their respect for the various communal religious and cultural characteristics. The citizens, individually and collectively, are equal in their rights and obligations in the expression of these characteristics on the principle of mutual respect and devotion to the fundamentals of the collective national identity. ■

## RELIGIOUS PLATFORM



### Regional conference “nurturing diversity and living together”

June 2018 Haigazian University – Beirut

Under the patronage of HE Prime Minister Saad Al Hariri

**120 participants** (high-level leaders, institutions, religious, political, academic and community leaders from Lebanon, Iraq, Jordan, Syria, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Denmark). ■

“وبيروت أمّ الشرائع تستحقّ منا أن نجعل من تاريخها وتراثها منطلقاً للأهداف الإنسانية السامية، وهي التي جعلت من إستقرار الإنسان وتقدمه وازدهاره غاية نبيلة مما يؤكد أنّ دولة لبنان الكبير هو وطنٌ للمعرفة والمحبة والسلام لما احتضنته بيروت من جامعات ومدارس ومعاهد وجمعيات ومؤسسات فكرية وثقافية وإعلامية على مدى ما يقارب المئتي عام. وإنتي أعتقد بأنّ الحديث عن لبنان المعرفي يضع الأمور في إطارها الصحيح.”

~ **النائب بهية الحريري**  
رئيس لجنة التربية النيابية اللبنانية

“If one focuses on genuine spirituality with one’s life and one’s faith, then inter-faith dialogue and

life with the others will show the depth humans deserve. If one succeeds to create, teach and exhibit kindness within one’s group, then the fruits of peace will appear when with those we consider other. If one is disciplined to value and enjoy serving from one’s heart when young, then the love of the neighbor would become possible to imagine.”

~ **Dr Paul Haidostian**  
President of Haigazian University

لا بد من أن ننوّه نحن المسيحيين بخاصة بقولنا إن الإرهاب لا علاقة له مع الإسلام أساساً. فالإرهاب يولد في كل المناخات الدينية سواء أكانت مسلمة أم مسيحية أم في ديانات أخرى. ونحن معشر المسيحيين أعرف الناس بالإسلام والمسلمين لأننا عشنا معهم منذ بداية الإسلام. ونعرف الفرق بين مسلم لا يعمل بموجب دينه ومسلم يعرف دينه وبالتالي يعرف ربه. لذلك نحن معاً نسعى لرفع راية الاعتدال في العالم الإسلامي كما في العالم المسيحي. ولندرك أن السياسة قد تتحوّل من خدمة الناس إلى استغلال لهم من أجل مآرب خاصة.

~ **المطران بولس مطر**  
رئيس أساقفة بيروت للموارنة



## REFLECTIONS

As I welcome you all to Haigazian University, I salute the good efforts of FDCC and its partners, and hope that the voice of dialogue and peace will penetrate into the hearts of individuals and nations in such a way that all may see beauty in dialogical life and not simply a necessity.

I cannot help but look back at our 63-year experience as a higher education institution, and realize how in fact somewhere within every academic or social effort, we have been critically mindful of our place in society and the value of the presence of all the others. In fact, the operating psychology of Haigazian University has not been one of minority at all. This every exact neighborhood (Kontary) has gone through so many transformation, migrations and displacements, and yet testimonies of faith have integrated people of various convictions, and religious systems. No healthy society can survive in spite of others. We all exist with others and owe who we are to those who are alike or very different.

In faith and interfaith matters, compromise, strength, weakness, competition security or comfort cannot be the key words. The key words are such: peace inside and

out; quality of life inside and out; spirituality shaping material living; self-realization alongside the realization of the selves of the others.

Many of the characteristics of Inter-faith dialogue are repeated in Intra-faith life: I will illustrate with the simplest possible notions:

- If one focuses on genuine spirituality with one’s life and one’s faith, then inter-faith dialogue and life with the others will show the depth humans deserve.
- If one succeeds to create, teach and exhibit kindness within one’s group, then the fruits of peace will appear when with those we consider other.
- If one is disciplined to value and enjoy serving from one’s heart when young, then the love of the neighbor would become possible to imagine.

With the extreme complexity of inter-faith dialogue and life, and with the distortions that confuse humans regarding religion, there is a plainness about the faith of the heart. Therefore my hope is that in all our dialogues, we try to bring the plainness of the heart to a humility of the mind. ■

**Rev. Dr. Paul Haidostian**

# ■ YOUTH ENGAGEMENT IN PEACEBUILDING



## Objectives:

- Enhance Communication
- Social Cohesion
- Citizenship
- Community Empowerment
- Youth-led Initiatives



## FIRST SESSION



**Date:**  
November 2018



**Participants:** 29



**Location:**  
Beirut

9 projects  
5 provinces  
600 indirect beneficiaries

"I guess that what I loved most about my experience with FDCD, in addition to being a wonderful team providing a great atmosphere between them and us-participants, was the amount of useful information provided in a smooth practical way and the well-organized way of managing time and efforts.

I enjoyed that short experience and it was very helpful learning how to translate the field work we do into organized forms and shapes which support our work and give it more value."

-Majd Jalhoum

"My journey with FDCD was relatively short, but I really had a great time with this amazing family. I have learnt many things that would positively affect critical things in my life, change my vision to the new relations that I am willing to build and develop the interactive methods I must use while dealing with new connections. I would like to add that what I have gained from my experience with FDCD must be transmitted not only to the zones of conflicts, but also to everybody around the globe.

Bunch of thanks to all the helpful, friendly and lovely staff of FDCD for having given me this unforgettable opportunity."

~ Dr. Majed ALAZZAWI

"لقد كان انضمامي مع فريق منتدى التنمية والثقافة والحوار مميّزًا شعرت اننا عائلة واحدة متماسكة مع بعضها، كنا بدأ واحدة رغم الوقت القصير الذي قضيناه معًا. أضاف لي مهارات وخبرات جديدة حيث كان التدريب مليء بالمعلومات القيمة التي تفيد في تطوير الذات، قمنا كفريق واحد بتبادل خبراتنا واكتساب مهارات العمل الجماعي. أعطانا المنتدى جواً من التحفيز والابداع والمنافسة الجيدة ومعرفة أفكار جديدة لم أكن ملمة بها"

~ ولاء زينو

## SECOND SESSION



**Date:**  
March 2018



**Participants:** 26



**Location:**  
Beirut

"As one of the youngest participants during the training workshop on Youth Engagement in Peace Building, I can assure every piece of information was taught from A to Z where I didn't feel like my knowledge was younger than anyone else's! Despite the short amount of time, this training changed the way I used to work things to a whole new higher level that will help me out better in my daily life. FDCD must be transmitted globally, where anyone needs to learn more of whatever specified topic they would be training about."

~ Rawd Dandashi

"لم يكن لدي أية خبرة فيما يخص المبادرات المجتمعية وكان لدي رغبة دائمة في تعلم كيفية صنع مبادرة، خاصة أن محافظتي تكاد تغيب فيها هذه الأمور، وعلمتني هذه الورشة الكثير من التفاصيل الأساسية وأكسبتني المهارات المطلوبة التي سأشاركها مع الآخرين، كما صرت قادرة على تقديم مبادرة خاصة بي."

~ سماح أبو رجب



# DANISH ARAB INTERFAITH DIALOGUE (DAID)

The Danish Arab interfaith dialogue, now in its eighth year, began in 2012 when 50 high level Muslim and Christian representatives met in Beirut, Lebanon, to develop a common vision on such topics as religion, interfaith relations, and citizenship. This first conference resulted in the "Beirut Statement." There have since been five DAID conferences in Copenhagen (2012, 2016), Istanbul (2014), Beirut (2017), and Amman (2018) each of which has helped build a stronger network and drive progress in the area of interfaith dialogue. During these conferences, high level Muslim and Christian religious leaders, scholars, and activists discuss strategies for developing a committed partnership between Muslims and Christians, as well as methods of fostering understanding and respect for one another and advocating the interests and rights of all. In addition to these conferences there have been many smaller local initiatives in Arab countries and Denmark that use interfaith dialogue to eliminate fear and establish trust of "the religious other." ■



# WORKSHOPS

## BROUMANNA WORKSHOP

**Date:**  
May 2018

**Participants: 25**  
religious and social activists, students, and NGO participants from both Denmark and the Arab World.

**Location:**  
Broummana - Lebanon

## MADABA WORKSHOP

**Date:**  
September 2018

**Participants: 27**

**Location:**  
Madaba - Jordan



## ■ ROLE OF OPINION MAKERS IN GUIDING THE PEACE-BUILDING PROCESS



“أمام حملات الميديا “الموجهة“ يفقد المجتمع هويته ومعرفيته سيجد نفسه أمام سلوكيات قلقة ومتفلتة وستغيب القدرة على التقويم إلا لدى شريحة ضيقة من المثقفين والنخبويين الذين قد يفلت بعضهم من أن يلعب دوراً تصحيحياً في ظل هذا الخواء الفكري الذي نعانيه. لا يمكن بناء سلم أهلي بدون مقومات متكاملة العناصر أساسها حرية الفرد كما حرية المجتمع وامتلاك منظومة المصالح المشتركة في المجتمع والتي ستقودنا حتماً إلى المواطنة.”

~ الأستاذ رفيق نصرالله،  
صحفي وكاتب لبناني، ومدير المركز الدولي للإعلام والدراسات في بيروت.

أنا لبناني، يعني أنا سوري، لأن مصيرنا واحد؛ لا يجوز أن نفكر في السياسة من خارج الجغرافيا. أي هزة تحدث في سورية يتأثر بها لبنان، والعكس صحيح – أي هزة تحدث في لبنان تؤثر على سورية. نكذب على أنفسنا عندما نقول، أننا مختلفون عن بعضنا. في لبنان مؤخراً ظهرت بعض بوادر حركات مدنيّة، لعلها تبشر خيراً!”

~ الدكتور حسن حمادة،  
صحفي وكاتب لبناني، وعضو المجلس الوطني للسمعيات والبصريات

“المصالحة الوطنية في رأيي هي: العمل المبرمج الهادف إلى إزالة كافة أشكال الخروج عن القانون، في طرق التعبير عن المواقف المتعلقة بالقضايا الوطنية العامة وإعادة الأشخاص، والأنشطة الصادرة عنهم، إلى العمل ضمن إطار المؤسسات الدستورية، وتحت رقابة ورعاية القانون وصولاً إلى تحقيق الوثام الاجتماعي، والتأسيس للمواطنة الصالحة، وإعادة بناء سورية الجامعة لكل أبنائها.”

~ الشيخ محمد أديب ياسرجي،  
خطيب ومستشار في دار الافتاء في حلب.

**Date:**  
October 2018

**Participants:** 37

**Location:**  
Broummana - Lebanon

## ■ LIVING TOGETHER IN “THE BEKAA”

National meeting at the Church of the Lady of Salvation of the Melkite Catholic Church in Zahle

«من نتائج الحوار المشترك والسليم تعميق العيش المشترك، وان ما يبنيني عليه مشروع تعميق العيش المشترك من خلال الحوار الإسلامي - المسيحي هي القناعات الراسخة بأن الدين، وخاصة المسيحية والإسلام هو عطية من الله، ورحمة منه، وهداية للبشر اجمعين، لذلك لا يمكن ان يكون في جوهره وغايته، الا مصدر محبة وسلام وعدل وارتقاء لإنسانية الإنسان في توفيقها الى الله المطلق الوحيد.»

«الهدف الأبعد من الحوار هو أن نصل إلى المحبة ونأخذ على عاتقنا المسؤولية في قيادة شعبنا إلى التحالف لنعمل معا من أجل الإنسان. أنا أفهم أن الديانات يجب أن تكون حامية «حضارة الوفاق» بين الناس تعطيتهم الثقة بمستقبل أفضل، ليس لأتباعها فحسب إنما لجميع البشر، فمن غير الممكن أن نبني عالماً تسوده العدالة دون تضامن حقيقي بين المؤمنين بإله واحد خالق الكون. لذلك على المسيحيين الصالحين والمسلمين الصالحين أن يعتنقوا اليوم مبدأ الأخوة واحترام الآخر، ويكونوا معا رسالة سلام الى العالم كله.»

~ المطران عصام يوحنا درويش،  
راعي أبرشية الفرزل وزحلة والبقاع للروم الملكيين الكاثوليك



## THE SIXTH DANISH ARAB CONFERENCE

In November 2018, FDCD organized the sixth DAID conference, "Muslim-Christian Dialogue Towards a Better Understanding," in partnership with Danmission and the Royal Institute for Inter-Faith Studies (RIIFS) and under the patronage of His Royal Highness Prince El Hassan of Jordan.

The conference took place in the Jordanian capital of Amman with the participation of activists, politicians, religious leaders, and institutions active in interfaith dialogue. Over three days, attendees discussed means of activating Islamic-Christian cooperation to prevent

extremism and promote better understanding between Christians and Muslims in Denmark and the Arab world. Several dialogues were held on "The Contribution of Muslim-Christian Dialogue to the Development of Public Life", "Conviviality of Pluralism vs. Negativity of Polarization", "Nation vs. Religion," "Religion and Citizenship," "Economy," "Social Capital," "Common Values," and "Ethical Ground for Interreligious Dialogue."

His Royal Highness Prince El Hassan, also the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of RIIFS, welcomed the attendees and

wished them a prosperous meeting, then took part in the final session by presenting recommendations for future work.

This meeting better equipped members of the DAID to utilize dialogue in their home communities, strengthened by the unique perspectives they encountered in Amman. ■

### "Muslim-Christian Dialogue Towards a Better Understanding"

«لم تعد القضية اليوم، قضية دين أو مذهب أو جماعة ننتمي إليها، أو قضية معسكر حق وباطل، أو أهل هداية وضلال، بل قضية: أي عالم نعيش جميعاً فيه وهو يقلنا، حلفاء وخصوم، أصدقاء وأعداء، نحو الهاوية. إنها مسألة أي نمط وجود نحيا، وأي خيارات نعتمدها، وراء صخب الجدل على الحقيقة أو الأحقية.»

~ سمو الأمير الحسن بن طلال  
رئيس مجلس أمناء المعهد الملكي  
للدراستات الدينية

«بتمتع لبنان بقيم مشتركة هي التي سمحت له بالنهوض بعد الحرب كما يتمتع بالثقافة وبحركة تلقائية نحو الآخر وبممسعى الي الرقي، وذلك من خلال بناء قدرات الأفراد. الحرية هي عنصر أساسي لأي مجتمع ديمقراطي وفي التماسك الاجتماعي.»

بعض الديكتاتوريين يقولون إن الحرية هي القيام بالموجبات الموكلة إليك، الديمقراطيون يعتبرون أنفسهم أحراراً «نقوم بأي شيء نريده طالما لا يمس بالقانون أو بالآخرين». لذا لا نستطيع أن نطبق مفهوم التماسك الاجتماعي في أي مجتمع ديكتاتوري، يجب أن نقبل أنها مبدأت من فكر ديمقراطي حتى نستنتج ما يمكن أن يطبق منها على أرض الواقع.»

~ د. دميانوس قطار  
وزير لبناني سابق وخبير اقتصادي ومالي

**Date:**  
October 2018

**Location:**  
Amman - Jordan

**Participants: 45**  
religious, academic and political figures from: Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Denmark

**Under the patronage of  
HRH Prince Al Hassan  
Bin Talal**

## LEADERS FOR INTERRELIGIOUS UNDERSTANDING

### The "Leaders for Interreligious Understanding (LIU) program

was initiated in 2011 within the framework of the Danish Arab Partnership Program. LIU sought to engage young professionals from Denmark and the Arab World in the fields of media, religion, politics, education, and civil society, training them to utilize interreligious dialogue as a means for mutual understanding and peace. This has taken place through face-to-face seminars, academic e-learning, and local initiatives.

Over seven years of collaboration, more than 100 young Danes and Arabs were empowered with the skills and knowledge to impact their communities. During this time, there have been countless success stories as these young participants learn to accept "the religious other" and assist others in their communities to do the same. The final meeting of the program was held in September 2018, gathering for one last time the alumni who have been transformed through LIU. This provided participants an opportunity to reflect on the impacts of LIU on their lives, as well as the change they created through their involvement. LIU came to a fitting end at the closing ceremony at Université Saint-Joseph, during which USJ President

R.F. Dr. Salim Daccache encouraged attendees to recognize their common values, especially those expressed in Islam and Christianity - mercy and love. Though the program has ended it was clear from this meeting that the alumni were dedicated to continue in this work, further encouraged by one last opportunity to share successes, encourage one another, and move forward together. ■



# FDCD IN SYRIA



# MEDIATION AND RECONCILIATION

Syrian Leaders for Peace Building and Reconciliation is the continuation of FDCD's multi-track mediation and reconciliation efforts in Syria. The process dates back to the end of 2013 when FDCD spearheaded a reconciliation initiative, bringing together religious leaders from all communities in Syria in an open and, at that time, unprecedented dialogue. This paved the way for the identification of a common vision for the future of Syria. Little by little over the years, FDCD has scaled the effort to include other stakeholders (in an attempt to make the dialogue more and more inclusive) and coupled such initiatives with tangible action on the community/grassroots level, where dialogue has been practiced with different tools and approaches customized to the needs of each community and the nature of each target group.

Over the past five years, the above-mentioned endeavors have succeeded in establishing a large network of religious, political, academic, intellectual and civil society actors united by their will to use their resources to promote dialogue as a factor for peace, reconciliation and social cohesion. This will has translated into concrete action on the ground, mobilizing communities and producing a multiplier effect amongst agents of change, thereby sowing the seeds of reconciliation and giving Syrians a role in healing trust, binding up the wounds and ultimately contributing to the rise of their country from ashes. ■



**2 conferences in Lausanne**

**20 local initiatives in local communities in Syria**

**40 religious and civil society influential figures**

**50 volunteers involved (community leaders, activists, youth)**

**More than 1000 direct beneficiaries**



## شمس SHAMS

Nahl social center is a safe space established three years ago with the support of FDCD in Mezze 86 and regularly conducting activities with different target groups, feeding into the objectives of FDCD's programs.

This time, the selected target group is Women and the initiative aims at highlighting and raising women's (and the local community's) awareness to the role of women in national dialogue, through workshops and sessions on political/social/community participation, the educational role of women within their families and societies. By gathering women from different areas and different backgrounds, the initiative contributes to the consolidation of social cohesion. ■





## ■ DRAW AND SMILE

“Art Therapy Initiative” is an artistic project supporting children affected by war, expatriates, orphans, the marginalized and the sick.

The project was implemented in several Syrian governorates and on several stages leading the launching of the book “How-to Live-in Peace,” a training guide for children and caregivers highlighting the values of citizenship and respect. ■



## ■ CYCLES

This initiative targeted the youth in collaboration with local NGOs as well as legal consultants, and provided trainings for young men and women to increase their political and legal knowledge (knowledge of the laws, with a special focus on the Syrian constitution). It also helped them acquire better skills for political analysis along with practical sessions during which they practiced their dialogue skills. The ultimate aim of the initiative was to sow the seeds of a network of educated men and women who are well aware of their rights and duties, ready and motivated to be a model of active citizens in their communities. ■



## ■ JAWA PEACE ZONE

The initiative aimed at the creation of a safe space that would be open for youth to meet, study, and play music, etc., and which would mainly be used for capacity building workshops, trainings and dialogue sessions all revolving around issues of citizenship, and nonviolent communication.

The space is equipped with books to encourage reading. The movies are played regularly, followed by group discussions, which have both a cultural as well as a social impact. ■



## ■ YOUTH NETWORK FOR CITIZENSHIP AND SOCIAL COHESION

This initiative aimed at bringing together NGO leaders and activists from all over Syria in workshops and camps where they discussed matters related to diversity, citizenship, rights, and duties, they also received legal literacy trainings and meet “the Other”, breaking stereotypes and building a network of Syrian youth of tomorrow. ■



## ■ PUZZLE INITIATIVE

A group of women volunteers established in Aleppo in 2017. This year's support helped the group organize its activities in a better structured way. In addition to the regular meetings it holds, the group declared itself to the local community as a resource group where each member used her knowledge and skills to build the capacities of other women and help them become independent and self-sufficient.

The group mobilized itself after the displacement from Afreen to provide support to women in IDP camps and conducted dialogue sessions and focus groups for Arab and Kurdish women after separated by life circumstances, or by pressure from their communities. ■



## ■ CULTURAL FORUM

The initiative aimed at highlighting the Syrian mosaic through arts. In fact, 14 painters from 14 different areas were invited to the center (once a week over a period of 4 months) where each one was asked to draw a painting telling the story of their area of origin.

The activity was open for the community to attend and follow. Guests and partic-

ipants were asked to prepare traditional meals (from a different place each week) and were given the chance to dialogue with each other through guided discussions, with the aim of promoting a spirit of openness towards the other, and building social ties that would eventually break the circles of tension. ■



## ■ INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE FOR PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT

As the conflict continued to ravage Syria, the role of civil society has increased significantly. There has been a large increase in the number of civil society (CSOs) and community-based organizations (CBOs). As religion and political affiliations have become flashpoints for conflict, the role of CSOs and CBOs became ever more critical. At this point, they are viewed as more neutral actors and therefore more trustworthy of unbiased participation. However, as most CSOs in the Middle

East, these were born as a reaction to crisis, mainly to respond to the people's needs in emergencies. And with time, they used to adjust their programs and interventions in light of the changing developments and according to the newly emerging needs.

This project leans on the potential of these organizations, and related groups and individuals, as well as on the effort they have done throughout the war to facilitate conflict resolution, an understanding of "the religious other", active citizenship, and greater implementation of human rights standards.

It seeks to build and support sustainable and resilient communities where civil society has skills and knowledge that can be applied to create lasting solutions based on the needs of the people including marginalized people and IDPs laying the foundations for a better-established civil society structure, which will be one of the first steps towards a better governance and healthier relationships across administrative and social lines, represents the central goal of this project. ■

### Relevant topics addressed:

- Social Cohesion
- Good Governance
- Restorative Justice
- Community Engagement
- Participatory Planning Approach
- Project Cycle Management
- Strategic Planning

### FROM 2018 AND EARLY 2019

**Actions:**  
**4 workshops on project management and MPE**  
**10 small projects (on the province level)**

**Participants:**  
**50 NGOs involved to date**

**500 indirect beneficiaries**

**Location:**  
**5 provinces (Damascus, Aleppo, Homs, Hama, Latakia)**





## REFLECTIONS

Leaving university, I knew I had much to learn. Having studied international relations and conflict resolution, I was knowledgeable about interfaith dynamics, humanitarian responses, and the region in general. But I lacked any real, concrete understanding of these topics, as I had only read about them in textbooks or discussed them with my professors. I was eager to immerse myself in them, gaining a perspective and capacity that was driven by experience. When I was presented with the opportunity to work with FDCD in September 2017, I knew this was my chance to develop my knowledge and understanding.

This was the best decision I could have made. During my time with FDCD, I have learned so much about relations between faith groups in Lebanon and the region. I have seen how organizations like FDCD are bringing them together, fostering understanding and acceptance between both religious leadership and their followers. I am very fortunate to contribute to these programs and meet so many driven and influential individuals who are making real change in their communities. Through this aspect of FDCD's work, I have witnessed my studies come to life, experiencing conflict resolution and dialogue firsthand.

Another element of FDCD's work is emergency response and livelihoods. Working in these areas has given me invaluable technical experience and important skills. But more significantly, I am able to see immediate needs being met daily in Syria, where families are still desperate in their efforts to survive the conflict. FDCD is playing a major role in helping them do so, delivering monthly aid to tens of thousands while developing livelihood initiatives for women in both rural and urban areas. I feel so grateful to be just a small part in that process, supporting FDCD as it tackles the major challenges of the region. Looking back, I am amazed that this opportunity so closely aligned with my hopes, and more so, that I have participated in such important work with people who are changing the world. ■

**Ben Drolet, project assistant**

## LIVELIHOOD



For the seventh year, FDCD continues with its Women Empowerment Program in Syria for vulnerable persons. We are at a time when we have to stand next to families who lost not only their homes but also their sense of security. This project provides women of different cultural and religious backgrounds with training in food preservation as well as business skills with a curriculum catered specifically for this program. With two locations running simultaneously, we were able to graduate 22 women in 2018, 22 women who are now able to not only provide for their families but also have a sense of comfort and protection. ■

## CHILD-FRIENDLY SPACE

### 3 Main axes for the project:

- Capacity-building of local partners
- Fostering the psychosocial and nutritional welfare of children
- Developing social cohesion within communities

This project addresses since the beginning of 2017 the massive psychosocial and nutritional needs of children in the Syrian areas of Saddad, Deir Attieh, Damascus and Aleppo. As the conflict has continued in Syria, these needs have too often been overlooked for more observable challenges like distribution of aid, coordination of displacement, and security.

The reality is that each of these issues only serves to increase the need to provide psychosocial support for children, many of whom have been exposed to severe trauma in the course of the conflict.

This project therefore provides adequate psychosocial protection and nutritional support, and indirectly contributes to the overall well-being of the Syrian society.

In the baseline study, more than half the children did not have a single friend, now the children have the opportunity to make many friends and find support in a safe space. Child-Friendly spaces has helped building relationships, challenge negative coping strategies, and improve the emotional state of many Syrian children. ■





**900 children benefit directly each month from child-friendly spaces spread Syria**

**2100 family members of children are in communication with project coordinators**

**55 volunteers participating in capacity-building training workshops**

**%20 more children participating in the program every two months**

**15 partnerships with public and private organizations and civil society organizations**

**30 new psychosocial activities created and implemented according to the situation in each region**



## HUMANITARIAN AID

The Syrian conflict, now nearing its 9th year, is one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world. The number of people who remain in need is extremely high, at 12.8 million, while 6.2 million people continue to be internally displaced.

The conflict continues to drive humanitarian needs, with civilians in many parts of the country exposed to significant protection risks that threaten life, dignity, and wellbeing. The war in Syria remains

multifaceted and appears that it will continue for the foreseeable future, as the various parties involved jockey for power. This program aims to provide food baskets to more than six thousand Syrians households for one year which will sustain their food security amid the devastating Syrian conflict. The aim of these activities is to increase both the consumption level and diet diversity of beneficiary households. ■



**Our work in numbers:**

**7,000 families**

**40,000 individuals**

**2,000 children**  
(a targeted distribution of children clothes during winter)

**1,000 children**  
(assistance for schooling)

# FDCD PRESIDENT



## A MESSAGE OF THANKS FROM THE PRESIDENT

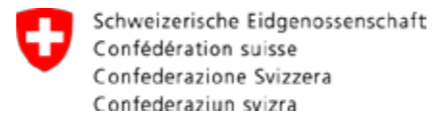
I am writing this message with a word of thanks and appreciation for all our partners and friends who have assisted in FDCD's work and enabled us to fulfill our mandate in Lebanon and the wider region. FDCD has endeavored to carry out its programs and activities in the midst of a turbulent and fragile Middle East. Our staff has spared no effort in sowing the seeds of peace and justice and disseminating a culture of dialogue in our context. It goes without saying that FDCD has helped thousands of displaced people, alleviating their suffering through provision of aid in such a way that they can live in dignity. The same is true for programs which focus on peacebuilding and reconciliation, areas in which we have sought to gather people and build trust, promote forgiveness, establish respect, and foster equality throughout the region.

As you read about the activities discussed in this report, you will see the immense work we have undertaken, which we could not have done without you. Thank you for your constant support for FDCD and its vision. May you be blessed as you keep the way open to God's justice in this region.

Riad Jarjour  
FDCD President

## ■ OUR PARTNERS

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# ABOUT US

Founded in 2004, FDCC represents the collective vision, mission and history of the Urban Rural Mission program's work in the MENA region. As such, the program looks back over 20 years of history of community organizing, leadership, training, spiritual reflection and response to marginalization and dehumanization.

Based in Beirut, Lebanon, with a regional outlook, the Forum for Development, Culture and Dialogue (FDCC) offers workshops, conferences, and dialogue sessions to enable society to approach conflicts in a non-violent way.

**OUR VISION:** Our vision is to reach an enlightened Arab World, where political views, ethnicities and religions are incorporated into a richly diverse culture of peace and dialogue, respecting and promoting the human rights of all citizens.

**OUR MISSION:** We promote peace building, equal citizenship, and human rights in the Arab World by creating common spaces for dialogue and building the capacity of community and civil society groups to be catalysts for peace.

**OUR VALUES:** We respect the dignity of every human being, value the diversity of cultures in the region, encourage dialogue and understanding as a means of resolving conflict, and perceive justice as the long term foundation for peace.



منتدى التنمية والثقافة والحوار  
Forum for Development, Culture & Dialogue  
(FDCC)

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