

ANNUAL REPORT 2023



WHO ARE WE?

Caritas MONA is the Regional Secretariat for the “Middle East and North Africa”.

The MONA region is one of the 7 Regions of the Caritas Internationalis (CI) Confederation. It is subdivided into three zones - the Middle East, North-Africa, and the Horn of Africa - and covers more than 9.5 million km², 15 countries, and a population of nearly 390 million inhabitants.

The MONA region is rich in cultural, linguistic, ethnic, and religious diversity which characterize it, at the crossroads of the East and the West. Subject to multiple external and internal struggles, the Region faces strong geopolitical tensions, which generate persistent economic crises, large refugee movements and major armed conflicts, in addition to the impacts of climate change and water scarcity.

Fifteen Member Organizations (MOs) of the Caritas network are involved, mandated by their respective episcopal conferences, in contexts involving significant challenges with respect to emergencies, social inequalities, minorities, and the sectarian fragmentation of societies, in often vulnerable and unstable nations.

OUR STRATEGIC ORIENTATIONS 2020-2023



Table of Contents

S.O.1 - Caritas is at the heart of the Church	4
Identity and Mission	4
Dialogue with Church authorities and organizations	5
S.O.2 - Caritas promotes Emergency Response, Integral Human Development, Peace and Reconciliation in the communities	6
Emergency Coordination and Support.....	6
Natural Disasters	6
War in the Holy Land.....	6
Missions of the Regional Coordinator.....	7
S.O.3 - Caritas promotes the involvement of Youth and Women in the life of communities.	8
Promoting the Engagement of Women	8
S.O.4 - Caritas builds global solidarity	10
Humanitarian Impact of Unilateral Coercive Measures (UCM)	10
War in the Holy Land – Gaza	10
Integral Ecology.....	11
S.O.5 - Caritas is a professional network	12
Participation in <i>Caritas Internationalis (CI)</i> Committees and Governance Bodies.....	12
Caritas MONA’s Regional Conference and Elections.....	13
Joint Partners Meeting and Fraternal Cooperation	14
Institutional Development and Capacity Strengthening (IDCS) Regional Committee	15
Caritas Internationalis Management Standards (CI MS).....	16
CI MS Assessors Forum	17
CI MS Coordinators and Assessors Trainings.....	18
Safeguarding	18

S.O.1 - Caritas is at the heart of the Church

Identity and Mission

The "Regional Capacity Building Project (CSP)" in the fields of interreligious and ecumenical collaboration completed its first phase in 2022.

In 2023, Caritas MONA held focus groups with participants and bilateral consultations with Member Organizations (MOs) in the Region, in order to build on the evaluation of the previous phase and identify both the needs, recommendations and motivation of MOs for a possible continuation of the project. Beneficiaries recommended, in particular, that further in-depth training be organized, that training be extended not only to colleagues but also to the governance and management of MOs, that young people be involved and that the participatory approach adopted be further consolidated.

In March 2023, the Caritas MONA Regional Conference brought together all the directors and presidents of the MOs, who also stressed the need to reflect in greater depth on the meaning of Caritas' Catholic identity and of the service to which it is called, and to integrate this into the life and work of the MOs. This point was also emphasized at the last Caritas Internationalis (CI) General Assembly in May 2023. The Regional Secretariat (RS) has therefore considered the growing demand from MOs and CI to put more focus on internal training in identity and mission, taking into account the different contexts in which the Caritas organizations operate as well as the need for a more synodal dynamic.

A redirection of the second phase of the project has therefore been decided, to place stronger emphasis on these issues, and to progress in parallel with CI's work on the Fraternal Cooperation Modus Operandi and that of the Caritas Catholic Identity Committee, in which the RS is particularly involved. Meetings with potential partners were also held to discuss the content of the program and the modalities of possible future collaboration.

The new proposal was thus developed and discussed with donors, and approval was obtained: the second phase will therefore begin in January 2024 and will run for two years, during which 10 member organizations are expected to participate, including 3 pilot organizations. It will include the creation of a regional core group, training of national Caritas Organizations, and a synodal process designed to ensure the relevance and sustainability of the initiatives.

With regard to the initiation and/or continuing training of MOs directors and governance in this area, Caritas MONA already began by devoting a full day to it at the start of its last Regional Conference (March 2023): H.E. Msgr. César Essayan, Apostolic Vicar of the Latins in Lebanon, proposed to the directors and presidents a half-day of reflection on the meaning of the Caritas presence and invited them to delve deeper into the sources and foundations of the Caritas vocation, in order to grasp its specific meaning for our times and for the people we are called to serve; Mr. Dominic Verhoeven, President of the Caritas Catholic Identity Committee, and Msgr. Giorgio Bertin, current President of Caritas MONA, then guided participants through an overview of the Caritas mission in relation to the Church's social teaching, focusing on regional diversity and the concrete situation of the MOs. This approach will henceforth be included in the MONA regional meetings.

Dialogue with Church authorities and organizations

Caritas MONA attends the regular meetings of the ROACO agencies.

The first meeting for the year 2023 (January 10) was dedicated to discuss the notes prepared on the theme of the universal Church's support for the crisis of Catholic institutions in the Middle East, in preparation for the 10th anniversary conference of Ecclesia in Medio Oriente; the second meeting (February 28) aimed at coordinating the response to the Earthquake in Syria and Turkey ; and the third meeting (March 30) was held to follow up on the earthquake emergency projects supported by ROACO agencies and to discuss the results of a survey carried out by Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) in Syria on Christian institutions damaged or destroyed by the earthquake. Caritas MONA participated in the preparation of the ROACO youth Conference that was held in Rome in June 2023 (See below)

Caritas MONA was among the participants at the Eastern Catholic Churches' symposium "Rooted in Hope", held in Nicosia from April 20 to 23, 2023, on the 10th anniversary of Pope Benedict XVI's post-synodal apostolic exhortation, Ecclesia in Medio Oriente (2012). The event brought together the patriarchs of the Eastern Catholic Churches, bishops, clergy and laity from each of these Churches, as well as ROACO agencies and a delegation from the Dicastery for the Oriental Churches.

The main goals of the meeting were to re-examine the calls contained in the exhortation in the light of the current situation of the countries and Churches in the region, to discuss the challenges and aspirations of the Churches, and to consider the future together. At the end of the Symposium, recommendations were proposed on the following themes: Christian education, inter-religious dialogue, ecumenism, citizenship, governance in the Church, youth, women and migration. During the meeting, Caritas MONA's regional coordinator, Mr. Karam Abi Yazbeck, had the opportunity to speak with several bishops, bringing them up to date on the work of Caritas in the Region.

With regards to the Gulf countries, Caritas MONA has been in contact with H.E. Msgr. Aldo Berardi, Apostolic Vicar for North Arabia (Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar and Saudi Arabia) with the aim of strengthening ties and exploring possibilities for collaboration, particularly with a view to building the capacities of local actors. The feasibility of such an initiative is currently being discussed with RS partners. The Regional Secretariat is also in contact with H.E. Msgr. Paolo Martinelli, Apostolic Vicar for South Arabia (Oman, United Arab Emirates and Yemen) mainly regarding the projects implemented by Caritas organizations from the Confederation in Yemen.

S.O.2 - Caritas promotes Emergency Response, Integral Human Development, Peace and Reconciliation in the communities

Emergency Coordination and Support

Natural Disasters

In 2023, the MONA region was struck by **MAJOR NATURAL DISASTERS**:

- Earthquakes in Syria (February 2023)
- Earthquake in Morocco (September 2023),
- Floods in Libya (September 2023), Somalia, and Iran.
- Drought in Iraq, and in the Horn of Africa.

The Regional Secretariat (RS) played a key role in organizing and coordinating the initial emergency response with CI's emergency team and the affected MOs. Regular communication with the affected MOs' directors and presidents ensured that all aspects of their organization's needs were covered to respond to the crisis within existing capacities, and that capacity-strengthening assistance was provided where needed.

With Caritas Syria and Caritas Morocco in particular, Caritas MONA helped co-organize and facilitate recurring teleconferences and meetings gathering CI MOs to identify needs, prepare emergency appeals and update partners on the implementation and progress. Caritas MONA also coordinated communication requests with CI, MOs and partners, as well as advocacy and awareness-raising dimensions to raise public and stakeholder awareness on the situation.

With Caritas Syria, the regional coordinator facilitated partner meetings in Aleppo, aimed at helping Caritas to coordinate short and long-term earthquake response and to continue responding to protracted crises. Caritas MONA also coordinated the mission of a group from Caritas Lebanon's Emergency Response Unit who supported Caritas Syria for a full week in rescue efforts.

With Caritas Morocco, bilateral meetings have targeted specific areas of effort that helped improve their response.

With Libya, Caritas MONA has organized teleconferences to help partners better understand the local context and brainstorm ideas for emergency response and collaboration. The RS is also evaluating with the local Church in Benghazi the option of creating a diocesan Caritas.

War in the Holy Land

Another major emergency was **THE WAR IN THE HOLY LAND**. Since October 2023 the Occupied Palestinian territories, Gaza in particular, have been razed to the ground by bombardments on an unprecedented scale. The West Bank is also the scene of massive violence perpetrated by occupying powers. The number of dead and wounded is higher than ever, mostly children, and the total destruction of infrastructure is compounded by the fact that the population of Gaza is being starved and placed under total siege, without water, food or electricity or fuel.

The war also affected the entire region, although not comparable to what the Palestinian population is enduring e.g. in Lebanon, thousands of people have moved from the South to other

regions to escape the fighting, not to mention the worsening economic crisis and pressure on the country.

Caritas MONA was mobilized from the first moments of the war, first and foremost to check on the condition of Caritas Jerusalem staff, especially colleagues living in Gaza, and to coordinate with them both communication within the confederation, with partner CI MOs and with Church bodies.

The Regional Secretariat has also taken on the task of communicating the impact of the catastrophic humanitarian situation forced upon the residents of Gaza (and later, of the West Bank); it has also co-organized and/or coordinated with CI information and advocacy, internally and externally in various meetings such as online teleconferences, the RepCo, the ExBo, joint working meetings between the advocacy and humanitarian committees, and at international church or humanitarian/UN level. The Regional Secretariat's team also responded to several requests for information from partners and institutions and took the time to discuss the situation with them. With the directors of neighboring Middle Eastern countries, Caritas MONA held recurring weekly meetings to discuss joint issues, in particular the impact of the war in the Holy Land on their organization and the possible responses to it.

Missions of the Regional Coordinator

In January 2023, the Regional Coordinator made a three-day visit to Prague to meet with Czech Caritas and discuss with them challenging situations linked to their partnerships with specific MOs in the regions.

That same month, the Regional Coordinator was joined by Ms. Moira Monacelli, Director of Confederation Development (CI), on a visit to Damascus at the invitation of His Eminence Cardinal Mario Zenari, Apostolic Nuncio to Syria, to help Caritas Syria and other faith-based organizations and Church bodies reflect on the service of charity in which they are engaged.

In July 2023, the Regional Coordinator was invited by the Director of Caritas Poland to accompany him on a mission to Aden (Yemen). This visit was an opportunity to meet with partners



With the Caritas Poland Team in Yemen – Aden, July 2023

(local authorities and organizations) and to witness the importance of the health services they provide in many of Yemen's towns and villages

. Besides the field visit to understand the local context and the needs of the community, it was an opportunity to meet local Caritas Poland staff in Yemen and to discuss with the management of Caritas Poland the situation, their challenges and future plans.

S.O.3 - Caritas promotes the involvement of Youth and Women in the life of communities

Promoting the Engagement of Women

The promotion of the role and leadership of women is not an isolated activity but a culture that Caritas MONA intends to integrate and expand with the support of the MOs throughout the region, so that this change is effective and visible on the one hand and becomes naturally integrated into the way we perceive our organizations, our programs and all our work and relationships. In the coming years, the RS will be thinking about how to take even more concrete action in this direction.

Caritas MONA is currently represented by 2 people on the Caritas Internationalis (CI) Women "Leadership, Equality and Participation (LEP)" Committee.

This year, the contribution of our two representatives (the Regional Coordinator and a colleague from Caritas Syria) was mainly in the framework of preparing and finalizing the brochure on "Catholic social teaching and theological principles behind women's leadership". In addition, they contributed to the preparation of the CI General Assembly on this theme, and the Regional Coordinator intervened in the session on "Equality, encounter, renewal; together for the rights of women and girls". Caritas MONA also prepared a statement on "Men's commitment to women's empowerment", in which the presidents and directors of the MONA MOs committed themselves to promoting women's participation in decision-making bodies in a significant way and without delay, and to promoting their role within the organizations; this statement was proposed to the General Assembly as a model for other regions to adopt.

Promoting the Engagement of Youth

Caritas MONA is also committed to promoting the participation of young people at various levels in their respective Caritas organizations, and to highlighting their commitment within the confederation and beyond.

On this level, Caritas MONA was directly involved in all the preparation and implementation stages of the ROACO Youth Conference that was organized by the Dicastery for Oriental Churches in Rome from the 16th to the 23rd of June 2023, under the title "A Young Church Sharing the Journey with the Young: Youth Actors of the Common Good". Caritas MONA co-organized the event with the AKIJA foundation, regarding the content of the sessions, the selection of young people from regional Caritas and other Faith-Based organizations, and the accompaniment of participating Youth on every step of their journey to the conference, and during it.

The event gathered 32 young people from several parts of the World, aged 18 to 30, representing their Eastern Catholic Churches, from 13 countries. From the Middle East, participants came from Cyprus, Egypt, Holy Land, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria and represented the following Catholic churches: Armenian, Byzantine (Greek Melkite), Chaldean, Coptic, Latin, Maronite and Syriac. Participants had the opportunity to share with others presentations on their own Church and to discuss ideas and initiatives on how to foster youth engagement, to make their voices heard and to better serve the Common Good in each of their countries. Youth were then invited to attend the ROACO agencies annual meeting and share their experiences.

On another note, the Regional Secretariat facilitated the participation of 2 young persons from Egypt and Lebanon in the World Youth Day in Lisbon (August 2023), within the CI youth delegation. The RS coordinated as well with CI and regional MOs the participation of youth representatives in the CI World Day of the Poor and World Youth Day's week of prayer and action (19-26 November 2023). Youth focal points in each MO were also invited to engage with their MO in the Confederation's "Together We" Global Campaign on Integral Ecology.



Youth at the ROACO Conference – Rome, June 2023

S.O.4 - Caritas builds global solidarity

Caritas seeks to build global solidarity in all its actions; this is made particularly visible through communications and advocacy. Although distinct, these two disciplines come together in the work of the Regional Secretariat, above all to highlight the work of its Member Organizations and their commitment, and to bring the Region's main humanitarian causes to the fore, particularly where human life, dignity and social justice are at stake.

In terms of **COMMUNICATION**, in addition to daily internal and external activities in this area, Caritas MONA publishes a biannual Newsletter in 3 languages (English, Arabic and French) and manages two pages on social networks (Facebook and Twitter). We also encourage our Member Organizations to use the confederation's own Baobab platform and help those who need it to become familiar with it.

In terms of **ADVOCACY**, the Regional Secretariat's main areas of action in 2023 were the following:

Humanitarian Impact of Unilateral Coercive Measures (UCM)

Since the beginning and especially since the year 2020, Caritas MONA is engaged in the awareness raising and advocacy on the Unilateral Coercive measures and its humanitarian impact on many countries in the Region, along with CI and other partners from the Confederation.

Regular exchanges are planned with Ms. Floriana Polito, Advocacy Officer Human Rights & Humanitarian Policy (CI) in Geneva, in preparation for the statements which will be delivered by Caritas Internationalis (CI) in particular during the sessions of the Human Rights Council (HRC), and , this year, at the Brussels conference on Syria, as well as to participate when relevant in the meetings and events proposed by Professor Alena Douhan special rapporteur on the humanitarian impact of the UCM with NGOs and FBOs.

An applied research project of the University of Geneva, implemented in partnership with the World Evangelical Alliance, the World Council of Churches, and Caritas Internationalis, on "Assessing the impact of sanctions on humanitarian work" was also supported by Caritas MONA and finalized in the end of year 2022. On March 10, 2023, Caritas Internationalis co-organized a side event in conjunction with the 52nd session of the HRC to launch the final report of this project and discuss its findings. Mr. Karam Abi Yazbeck was a panelist in this event.

War in the Holy Land – Gaza

Based on international humanitarian law and the Church's teaching on human dignity and justice, Caritas MONA has issued statements advocating for a ceasefire, the provision of sufficient and unimpeded humanitarian aid and the upholding of international law. Caritas MONA joined as well the taskforce that drafted the advocacy key messages proposed to the whole Confederation, and co-signed statements with CI, in close collaboration with the CI advocacy and humanitarian teams and in constant dialogue with Caritas Jerusalem. Discussions with other Caritas Organizations helped raise awareness on both sides of the key issues, available resources and possible actions.



Gaza shelled to the ground

On communication level, the Regional Secretariat helped set up guidelines and coordinate communication content with Caritas Jerusalem, CI, CI MOs to answer internal and external media requests. When in Kenya for the IDCS workshop (November 2023), the Regional Coordinator was interviewed by a regional news agency and had the opportunity to address the subject and its impact on the region.

For Christmas, Caritas MONA decided to shed light on the tragedy unfolding in the birthplace of Christ, and on the need for humanity not to turn its gaze away from all those who suffer under bombs and/or injustice, in Palestine and everywhere else in the world where this occurs: the Christmas card we prepared was proposed to several Caritas who adopted it in order to amplify and unify the message, starting from Jerusalem.

Integral Ecology

Little by little, integral ecology is taking its place among the advocacy topics that the Regional Secretariat addresses and to which Member Organizations are becoming more and more aware. From the North and Horn of Africa to Iran, every country in the region is suffering from climate change and its impact on the population, particularly the poorest. Drought is a tragic reality in countries such as Somalia, Jordan and Iraq, as are floods in Somalia, Djibouti, Iran and Libya.

In November 2022, for the first time, Caritas MONA took part in the COP 27 in Sharm el Sheikh, which was an opportunity to better understand the stakes and possibilities, despite disappointing international policies, it must be said, as well as the importance of networking in this field. Caritas MONA followed with great interest the progress on the Losses and Damages legislation as well as the requests supported by Caritas actors at the COP 28 in Dubai (December 2023).

Caritas MONA is also active in the Confederation's Global Campaign "Together We" on integral ecology. The Advocacy and Communication Focal Point participates in campaign committee meetings on behalf of the Region and coordinates the campaign with CI and the MOs. She also moderates the MONA regional group on integral ecology created last year; In 2023, two virtual meetings were held with this group in April and May 2023. Global campaign activities, events and resources were channeled through this group to our MOs. Unfortunately, the outbreak of war in Gaza and its impact on the whole region prevented many of our MOs from participating in the Global Action Week (October 2023).

S.O.5 - Caritas is a professional network

Participation in *Caritas Internationalis* (CI) Committees and Governance Bodies

Participation in <i>Caritas Internationalis</i> (CI) Committees and Working Groups (WG)			
MO	Representative's Name	WG / Committee	Reference Person from the Regional Secretariat Team
Diocesan Association of Algeria	Monia Zergane	Caritas Youth Committee (CYC)	Sylvia Eid
Caritas Egypt	George Mansour	Women's Leadership, Equality and Participation (LEP) Committee	Sylvia Eid
Caritas Iraq	Ahlam Yokhana	CI Institutional Development and Capacity Strengthening (IDCS) Committee	Sylvia Eid
Caritas Jerusalem	Harout Bedrossian	Advocacy Committee	Saria Khabsa
Caritas Jordan	Riva Nasrawin	Safeguarding Task force: Accountability, Protection Mainstreaming and Real-Time Evaluation WG	Sylvia Eid
Caritas Lebanon	Peter Mahfouz	Caritas Youth Committee Youth Representative in RepCo (till the GA- May 2023)	Sylvia Eid
	Nadim Nader	Finance Commission (FINCO)	Karam Abi Yazbeck
Caritas Somalia	Sara Ben Rached	Integral ecology Taskforce	Saria Khabsa
Caritas Syria	George Kahhal	Legal Affairs Commission (LAC)	Karam Abi Yazbeck
	Rita Jarallah	Women's LEP Committee	Sylvia Eid
Caritas MONA	Karam Abi Yazbeck	Women LEP IDCS Committee Fraternal cooperation taskforce CI Statutes commission	
	Saria Khabsa	Communication Committee Catholic Identity Committee Global Campaign Committee	
	Sylvia Eid	Safeguarding Task Force	
Participation of Caritas MONA in CI Governance Bodies			
Executive Board - ExBo		Karam Abi Yazbeck, Regional Coordinator of Caritas MONA	
Representative Council - RepCo		Msgr. Giorgio Bertin, President of C-MONA Wael Suleiman, Director of Caritas Jordan Karam Abi Yazbeck, Regional Coordinator of Caritas MONA	
CI MS Revision Committee - RevCom		Gabriel Hatti, President of Caritas Mauritania and of the RevCom	

Caritas MONA's Regional Conference and Elections

Caritas MONA held its Regional Conference in Beirut, from 7 to 9 March 2023. The Regional Conference is the highest decision-making body of the Region, composed of the presidents and directors of the 14 Member Organizations (MOs), or their representatives; guests were also invited to attend the non-statutory sessions as well as a Caritas Internationalis (CI) representative.

This year's regional conference began with a full day dedicated to a spiritual deepening of the Caritas mission and a focus on the foundations of its identity and mission, with concrete examples and a special emphasis on the cultural and religious diversity of our region.

Over the next two days, each session was devoted to Caritas MONA's main areas of action such as Institutional Development and Capacity Strengthening (IDCS), Management Standards (CI MS), Safeguarding, Advocacy, Communication, Catholic Identity, and themes such as Integral Ecology. During these sessions, the RS presented a summary of its work in each of these areas and its strategy for the coming years. Discussion followed on the addressed topics, tackling regional thematic priorities and commitments, and concluding with regional recommendations and the adoption of the Caritas MONA 2024-2030 Strategic Orientations.

The last day was devoted to the elections of the President and Regional Commission. H.E. Msgr. Giorgio Bertin was elected as the new Regional President for a 4-year term, succeeding Mr. Gabriel Hatti who ended a double mandate of 8 years. Msgr. Bertin is also the President of Caritas Djibouti and Caritas Somalia.

The new Regional Commission will be composed of the following three Member Organizations (MO), representing the three different zones of the MONA Region: Caritas Djibouti for the Horn of Africa, Caritas Jordan for the Middle East and Caritas Tunisia for the North of Africa. Among the latter three, Caritas Jordan was selected to represent the Region, besides the Regional President, on the Representative Council (RepCo) of CI.

The new President took office after the CI General Assembly (May 2023). The first meeting of the new regional commission was held in June 2023, presided by Msgr. Bertin and composed of Sr Speciosa Mukagatare, Director of Caritas Tunisia, Father Solomon Ponraj Panneerselvan, Director of Caritas Djibouti and Mr. Wael Suleiman, General Director of Caritas Jordan.



Caritas MONA Regional Conference – Beirut, March 2023

Joint Partners Meeting and Fraternal Cooperation

For the second consecutive year running, and in response to requests from its member organizations (MOs), Caritas MONA organized joint partners meetings by zone.

The first meeting took place in Cairo from September 4 to 7, 2023, for the Middle East MOs and their partners from the rest of the Confederation.

The second meeting was held in Tunis on October 2-3, 2023, for the North Africa and Horn of Africa zones. These meetings are an excellent opportunity for the region to consolidate mutual knowledge and build common orientations between MOs and with partners. It was also an occasion for the Regional Secretariat to present its activity report and action plan to the Region, and to collect main recommendations for its work.

During the discussions, regional topics such as Institutional Development & Capacity Strengthening (IDCS), Management Standards (CI MS), communication or advocacy were addressed according to the challenges and interests of the Caritas organizations.

This year, three recent emergencies were highlighted: the refugee crisis in Sudan by Caritas Egypt, the emergency response to the earthquake by Caritas Morocco, and the humanitarian intervention in Libya.

Bilateral meetings were held and enabled interested MOs to discuss certain topics in more detail with their partners.

In Cairo, the Caritas Secretary General Mr. Alistair Dutton was present, as was CI's Emergency Response Team Leader Mr. John Coughlin. Mr. Coughlin informed the participants about the toolkits and protocols to be used in case of emergency and updated them on the activities concerning localization and fraternal cooperation carried out at the Confederation level.

This year's main topic was Localization and Resource Mobilization. Ms. Esther Kauffman, CRS Regional Technical Advisor in Corporate Development, analyzed the main trends in international development funds (sectors, operations, etc.) and Ms. Silvia Sinibaldi, Deputy Director of Caritas Italiana, gave an overview of localization, equitable partnership and subsidiarity from a European perspective (online). Ms. Kauffmann also intervened on the second day on resource mobilization and the business development cycle, moderating both workshops and plenary sessions. The last day of the meeting was also an opportunity for participants to visit Caritas Egypt centers in Cairo: the community center - Kafar Al Sissi, the refugee project - Garden City and the Caritas SETI (Support, Education, Training for Inclusion) center - Heliopolis.



Working Group at the M.E. Joint Partners Meeting – Cairo, September 2023

In Tunisia, two interventions focused on current issues: Dr Elie Abouaoun, Country Director of the International Rescue Committee in Libya, addressed the socio-economic and migratory situation in the North African zone, and Mr. Romdhane Ben Amor, official spokesman for FTDES (Tunisian Forum for Economic and Social rights), focused more closely on the Tunisian context, particularly from a legal, mediatic and social point of view. As in Cairo, Ms. Silvia Sinibaldi intervened online and gave an overview of localization, equitable partnership and subsidiarity from a European perspective. Fr. Jawad Alamat, World President of Catholic Schools, presented the challenges of education and transmission of values in a globalized world.

In Tunis, in addition to the MOs, the partners too presented the areas of interest and intervention of their programs, enabling an even more balanced exchange; a good practice to remember for future meetings.

Finally, the Regional Secretariat took the opportunity to organize its own partners' meeting in Cairo on the afternoon of September 6. Achievements, challenges, as well as the new Caritas MONA Strategy 2024-2030 and its action plan for the next 4 years (2024-2027) were presented and discussed, following which partners will examine ways of supporting the Regional Secretariat to ensure greater sustainability.

It is worth noting that Caritas MONA has been involved at various levels in Fraternal Cooperation, especially in the task force formed for this purpose, within the CI committees, and in the elaboration of the new CI strategy.



N.A & H.A. Joint Partners Meeting – Tunis, October 2023

Institutional Development and Capacity Strengthening (IDCS) Regional Committee

Caritas MONA created the IDCS Regional Committee (RegComm) in 2019 in order to accompany its MOs in integrating the CI Management Standards (CI MS) with the aim of strengthening their organizational development.

Since its creation, the RegComm was to meet in person once a year, which it did in 2019 and 2022, in addition to online meetings. In 2020 and 2021, the Covid-19 pandemic-related travel ban was still in force. During the year under reporting, 2023, the RegComm held 2 meetings, both remotely, due to the circumstances:

One meeting in August, to debrief the members on the action led by the MOs in terms of CI MS implementation and coaching/accompaniment provided by Caritas MONA, update them on the changes of the Operating Structure at CI's level, share information on planned trainings for CI MS coordinators and assessors, review the Action Plan and prepare for the in-person meeting before year end.

A closing meeting in December: This meeting was planned to take place in Jordan. However, due to the War in the Holy Land, it was held online. In preparation, an evaluation questionnaire and other relevant documents were sent to all members, who were asked to fill-in the evaluation.

The main achievements identified were: i) developing and implementing an Action Plan, which included the accompaniment of at least 3 MOs in their institutional development, ii) coordinating with MOs and sharing experience, and iii) assisting regional MOs in submitting proposals to CI's Organizational Development Solidarity Fund (ODSF) and implementing the projects.

Challenges ranged from the need to promote the role of the IDCS RegComm and finding ways to better work together, to getting some MOs to accept the assistance offered and how to support MOs in implementing their Improvement Plan.

Coordination was perceived as a good practice, and a lesson learned, as it is key to achieve the set goals. There was a long list of priorities and recommendations, the emphasis was put though, on the need to review the Action Plan, retain the most relevant and impactful actions and accordingly develop a new realistic Plan for the next phase.

All members repeated the importance of increasing the frequency of meetings to stay updated, monitor achievements, shortcomings, address any challenges, share case studies, Fraternal Cooperation Modus Operandi, etc. Also, it was recommended to discuss with the members of time allocation they can realistically commit to the Committee's work, as they are supposed to honor their commitment to allocate 3% of their time to the RegComm.

The final handing-over document would be presented at the induction of the new MONA RegComm.



CIMS Assessors Forum – Beirut, March 2023

Caritas Internationalis Management Standards (CI MS)

In 2014, CI embarked on a journey to make the confederation a more professional one, through the CI Management Standards (MS). The CI MS evolved throughout this journey to adapt to

the changes occurring. After the addition of the 5th MS on Safeguarding, CI's EXBO decided in December 2020 that all the MOs of the Confederation have to be assessed against all 5 CI Management Standards. Accordingly, the MOs were invited to conduct their self-assessment (against all 5 MS or solely the 5th MS, depending on the case) and submit their documentation to CI so they can be externally assessed. After validation of the external assessment report, including the recommendations, the MOs are supposed to submit their Improvement Plan for the next 4 years, in order to align with international standards.

The Region's MOs were committed to the CI MS process. At the end of 2023, 13 out of 14 MOs had submitted their self-assessment (full 1st round: 11 MOs, full 2nd round: 2 MOs), the remaining MO having pledged to initiate the process in early 2024. Concerning the CI MS process, the Region counts only its 14 operational MOs, excluding Caritas Libya who is an Associate Member.

The Regional Secretariat (RS) conducted their own self-assessment in July and August, using an Organizational Review Tool (ORT) version adapted to their specificity and mandate and were externally assessed in September. During the last quarter of 2023, the RS Team was working on their Improvement Plan for the coming 4 years, based on findings and recommendations of the external assessor.

Caritas MONA is adapting its support to its MOs in the process of implementing the CI MS based on the MOs' needs. The accompaniment was done upon request, and was in the form of assistance in preparing self-assessments, filing and submitting documentations to CI, as well as developing their improvement plans. The RS is also part of 2 Accompaniment Committees, alongside relevant partner CIMOs, tasked with accompanying and strengthening the organizational development of respectively C. Iraq and C. Mauritania.

Activities were organized with the purpose of helping MOs in improving their organizational structure, such as:

- A Strategic Planning Workshop for Caritas Iraq held in Baghdad (Iraq) on 20-23 February 2023, which gathered over 25 staff members and partners who worked together to define the organization's Vision and Mission, identify gaps and set together a viable 5-year strategic plan.
- A Workshop on Human Resources Management (HRM) organized in Beirut (Lebanon) on 23-26 May 2023. Eighteen HR personnel from Caritas Iraq, Syria and Lebanon participated in this event, whereby the participants exchanged on different experiences and on the last day, each MO developed a draft action plan to improve their HRM practices and/or approaches.

CI MS Assessors Forum

During 2023, CI organized the first forum for the CI MS Assessors, which was held in Beirut (Lebanon) on 13-16 March. It gathered 20 assessors from 5 CI Regions (3 from the MONA Region), who exchanged experiences and lessons learned, as well as concerns and challenges faced while conducting the external assessment, both remotely or on-site. It was also an occasion to conduct with the present assessors a training on Safeguarding thus reinforcing their knowledge on the 5th mandatory Management Standard.

CI MS Coordinators and Assessors Trainings

Several trainings were organized by CI throughout the year 2023, geared mainly towards replenishing the Confederation’s pool of CI MS assessors, as well as reinforcing the skills of CI MS coordinators newly appointed by their respective MOs. The trainings were as follows:

- CI MS Coordinators’ training held in Malaysia from 28 to 31 March 2023. From the MONA Region, 4 new Coordinators were trained on the tool to implement the CI MS; and 4 “old” Coordinators joined for the last 2 days, to get updated and deepen their knowledge.
- CI MS Coordinators’ training that took place in Nairobi, Kenya, on 19-23 November. 5 staff members from the Region’s MOs benefited from this training.
- CI MS Assessors training in Istanbul, on 11-13 Dec, in which one assessor from the MONA Region participated.

The RS was involved in all the preparations for the different trainings and forum, as well as the selection of the eligible participants. The Regional coordinator was among the facilitators of all 4 events.

Safeguarding

At the beginning of the year under report, Caritas MONA sent to the Region’s MOs a survey, to map the safeguarding mainstreaming, identify gaps in policies, procedures and systems and accordingly, prioritize the support and accompaniment to be offered to the MOs.

The Regional CI MS Focal Point (FP) attended CI safeguarding committee meeting held in Rome from 13 to 16 February, including a training on safeguarding investigations management.

In April, further to their request, the Regional CI MS FP delivered an introductory training session on Safeguarding online to Caritas Morocco staff. The participants were from the dioceses of Rabat, Tangiers and Layoun as well as from partners in the different local communities.

The Regional CI MS FP coordinated with CI’s Senior Safeguarding Officer (SSO) to prepare for an in-person workshop that took place in Tunis in October. Msgr. Ilario Antoniazzi, Archbishop of Tunis, the staff of Caritas Tunisia and Tunisian Catholic schools, as well as Caritas Morocco, Djibouti and Somalia personnel participated actively in this training. The program covered the following topics: i) Reminder of the key elements of safeguarding: the definitions, forms, processes and international best practices, Safe and Dignified Programming; ii) Codes and Policies; iii) Safe recruitment; iv) Feedback & Complaints Handling (CH) Mechanism; v) Investigations; vi) Accompaniment; vii) Communication; viii) Mainstreaming Safeguarding in Education; and ix) Roles and Responsibilities. The sessions were lively, participants appreciated all experiences shared that provided a concrete perspective on ways of mainstreaming safeguarding in the work of participating organizations.

At the end of the workshop, the Regional CI MS FP and CI SSO had a session with relevant Caritas Tunisia staff to define the main issues they wish to address in their Improvement Plan. With the Diocesan Complaints Handling Unit, they scheduled activities to put in place safeguarding policies and systems as of 2024.

Throughout the year, the Regional CI MS FP has been coordinating with CI’s SSO the response to safeguarding complaints received, as well as with concerned MOs.



P.O.Box: 60-317 Zalka - Lebanon

+961 1 893 599

caritas@caritasmona.org

Caritas MONA

@Caritas_Mona