



ANNUAL REPORT

2022

حركة مناهضة
العنصرية



Anti-Racism
Movement

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Opening Letter

'Resilience', 'recalibration' and 'normalization' are words frequently used to describe Lebanon's strength in 2022. However, these concepts have shown to be quite problematic in certain respects. Some things should not be normalized. Resilience can end up numbing us completely. Recalibration drains resources, time, energy - and hope. Living through the failed uprising, the financial collapse, the COVID-19 pandemic and the Beirut Port explosion has depleted us. For three years, we've been running around trying to plug holes in a sinking ship and this has left us all exhausted, both personally and professionally.

All the while, the need for our work grew faster than ever. In crisis more than at any other time, the failures of the systems that surround us become more apparent, as those on the margins become more easily excluded - or scapegoated. The horrific truth of this was more apparent than ever this year as we saw migrant workers consistently targeted with hatred, violence and blame. And so, supporting migrant workers became even more crucial and urgent - but ARM started 2022 under-resourced, without a permanent home, and without a clear path ahead.

Though the conditions had changed, we realized that our vision had not. Over the course of the year, we renewed our belief in our core work and approach: pushing for the abolishment of the Kafala system, hand-in-hand with migrant communities. We managed to redirect our focus away from the immediacy of daily crises, in order to create space for long-term thinking. We challenged ourselves to create conditions that foster imagination in times of instability and emergency. We reminded ourselves of how strong we can be, when we stand together.

Throughout this year, we were perpetually inspired by the migrant workers around us, who refuse to give up, and who in the darkest of hours, show even more strength and solidarity. We found a new home for our MCC in Beirut, a rare anchor in times of uncertainty for migrant workers surviving the city. We grew our Advisory Board, which is supporting us in working with what we have, forgiving ourselves for our limitations, and focusing on what we do best. And we continue to intentionally detach ourselves - as much as possible - from the systems that limit us: the banking sector, state power supplies, and short-term employment models encouraged by short-term grant schemes. Although we face considerable challenges in every aspect of our work, we are determined to work more mindfully and joyfully, and to celebrate all our small successes as they happen.

We move forward tired, but believing once more in the possibilities for radical change - we already see them emerging in our new space and its growing community.



**WE WANT
TO GO
HOME**



NT

O



**WE
TO
HOM**



About ARM

MISSION

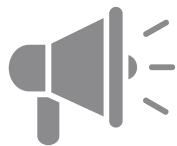
ARM works to achieve social, economic, and gender justice for all migrant workers and racialized groups in Lebanon.

VISION

A just society where all migrants enjoy decent living and working conditions.

OUR VALUES

Migrant Voices First



We privilege the voices of migrant workers in every aspect of our work.

Care at the Core



We adopt feminist ethics of care in our work, where we value attentiveness, responsibility, responsiveness, compassion.

Justice



We employ a social justice framework as the basis towards upholding fundamental human rights for everyone in our communities.

Solidarity



We value the expression and practice of solidarity among all marginalized communities as a necessary alliance against oppressive and unjust systems.

Political Engagement



We view our everyday work as political and seek to always address the larger social, cultural, and economic structures that enable discrimination, abuse, and rights violations.

Community



We value the importance of building safe and strong communities that sustain activism and offer supportive social networks for migrants and their allies.

OUR APPROACH

ARM's approach is rooted in working with women migrant domestic workers, and other racialized groups in Lebanon to build a movement against the systems that exploit them.

Our aim is to build social justice systems that respect workers' rights and freedoms with no exceptions.

We believe that this political change is possible through building strong and supportive communities for migrant workers in an environment that often only treats them as "cheap labor" or "beneficiaries" of aid.



OUR STRATEGIC GOALS

With its grassroots history and experience, ARM occupies a unique and exciting position as an organization that is able to **support and maintain strong community bonds among migrant domestic workers and other racialized groups in Lebanon**. These strengths play an important role in enabling us to fulfill our strategic goals, which are:

- I) Advancing structural change against racism in Lebanon by developing a stronger anti-racism movement in the country
- II) Strengthening and supporting migrant worker communities, self-advocacy, and collective action in Lebanon, especially for women migrant domestic workers
- III) Developing the capacity of our team and the sustainability of our work



General Context

A current conservative estimate of migrant workers living in Lebanon is reported to be 400,000¹. **The vulnerability of migrant workers is multi-layered:** they are vulnerable in terms of their exclusion from the Lebanese Labor Law through the Kafala (sponsorship) system, which places them under the legal power of their employer/sponsor, deprives them of access to basic labor rights, social protection mechanisms, exacerbates abusive power structures and often criminalizes speaking out. Since **the Kafala system ties a worker's legal status to one employer (without which they are often criminalized and may be detained), many end up in a state of forced labor.** In fact, this system creates a situation that many have dubbed 'modern-day slavery', since so many workers become stuck with abusive employers who rarely face repercussions for their behavior.

The majority of migrant workers in Lebanon are women domestic workers coming from Sub-Saharan African and South Asian countries, who are therefore also made vulnerable through the feminized, racialized and classist social norms and practices they experience in Lebanese society. **The social and legal vulnerability of migrant domestic workers is exacerbated by the fact that most of them live in their employer's household,** beyond the reach of law enforcers and labor inspectors, which frequently leads to their isolation from other migrant workers and potential sources of assistance. This combination of factors facilitates the rampant physical, economic, verbal, and sexual abuse of migrant domestic workers in the region.

Since 2019, the situation in Lebanon has been steadily deteriorating due to the worsening economic situation and dwindling resources. The economic collapse comes with more political and social restrictions on migrant workers and refugees. There are reports of many migrant workers losing their jobs, going months or even years without pay, or simply watching their salary decrease to a negligible amount as the Lebanese pound loses its value. Many migrant domestic workers were also victims of crimes ([links here](#) and [here](#)).

The economic crisis caused **severe shortages and rationing of fuel and electricity,** making it extremely difficult and expensive to move around the country and within cities and slowing communications networks. Medical supplies are at a worrying low and the lack of resources is fuelling political and sectarian tensions. **The hostile conditions have created a multitude of barriers to our work and have created an even more extreme situation for the people we work with** - one of the most marginalized communities in the country.

1

IOM (2020). Wellbeing and Security of Migrant Workers in Lebanon Deteriorate since Beirut Blast.



Our Current Context - 2022

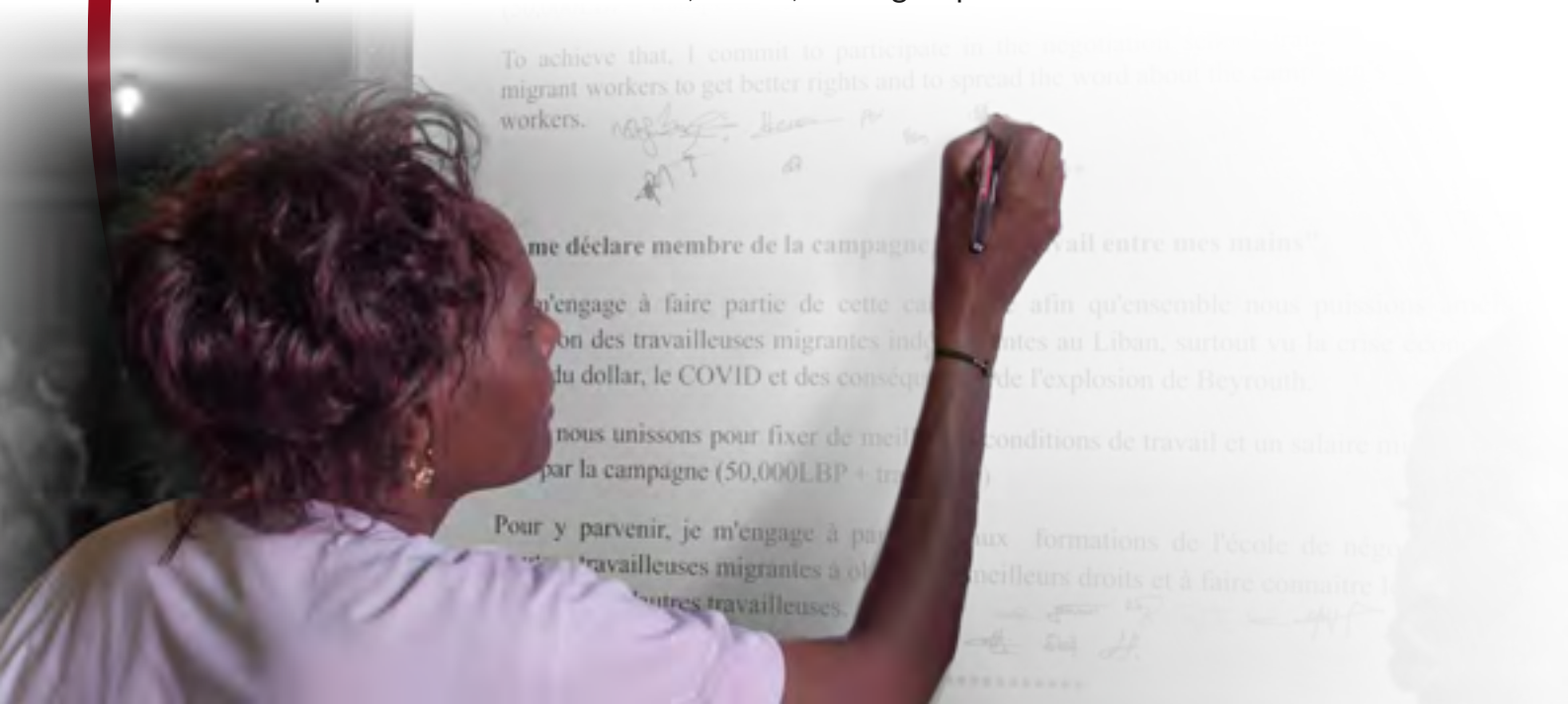
This was a turbulent year for ARM, migrant workers, and refugees in the country. It began with yet another harrowing scene of a migrant domestic worker being [abused in public](#) by her employer, who, predictably, was never held accountable. Shortly after, a [leaked draft](#) of the Ministry of Labor's update to the standard unified contract (SUC) threatened to deny migrant domestic workers even more rights. Thankfully the draft was not adopted, but it revealed that decision-makers were leaning towards even more restrictive working conditions - which motivated us to work as hard as ever to advocate for the rights of migrants in Lebanon.

Shortly after, Kenyan domestic workers [took to the streets](#) at their Consulate, demanding to be repatriated to Kenya. Their main grievances involved the complete lack of assistance in the midst of the crisis, and abuses they faced from their employers - but also their Consulate.

This year also saw a huge number of instances of state violence towards civil society, activists, social movements, and marginalized groups. These included brutal physical attacks, intimidation and arrest of activists and members of independent media, imposition of discriminatory curfews and procedures on Syrian refugees and migrant domestic workers, and a ban on pride events, to name a few. **Within the migrant communities, activists were targeted, [arrested](#) and deported as a reaction to their growing strength and the increased attention from international media.**

The absence of functional state institutions greatly hindered our (already limited) ability to make much progress on most of the legal cases brought to us by migrant workers. In addition, our neighbors were growing increasingly hostile towards our efforts, restricting most of our work and activities in the Migrant Community Center. Goodwill among our neighbors is essential for our center, as complaints could lead to a police raid or shut-down at any moment.

This increasing precariousness pushed us to pour a huge amount of our time and efforts into finding a new, safer, and hopefully permanent, location. We ended the year optimistic that this new home will afford us the safety and security we need to re-create the sense of community amidst the mindless brutality, the sense of togetherness in the face of the relentless fragility, and a measure of peace needed to remember, reflect, and regroup.



Key Facts and Figures

The Migrant Community Center

732 Migrant workers are active members of the MCC

18 Community meetings conducted

387 Attendees (259 women, 128 men)

70 Community events and activities were organized

~2600 Migrant workers & their children participated (983 women, 1355 children, 260 men)

Improving Access to Support

161 Migrant workers and refugees accessed legal, medical, or social support

92 Migrant workers received formal counseling services

15 Legal cases were provided legal representation

54 Migrant workers benefited from ARM's referrals to other organizations

Advocacy & Self-Organizing

105 Advocacy meetings conducted with migrant workers

914 Migrant worker participants

164 Migrant workers involved in migrant-led advocacy campaigns and activities

64 Media interviews conducted by ARM

16 Media interviews with migrant workers facilitated by ARM

1 United Nations advocacy submission (to CEDAW)

7 Public talks and awareness sessions

4 4 major advocacy materials produced:
1 video for the Kenyan Consulate Campaign, 1 season of the "Women of The Blame" podcast, and 2 issues of the Racism Monitor

ARM in 2022

To achieve its strategic goals, ARM ran three concurrent programs in 2022:

1. BUILDING AND SUSTAINING STRONG COMMUNITIES FOR MIGRANT DOMESTIC WORKERS

We believe that a strong community is at the core of a successful political movement. This is why one of our core objectives is to support the growth of migrant-led change through community-building and organizing, without which, collective action becomes extremely difficult.

The Migrant Community Center (MCC)

MCC is an alternative, feminist, anti-racist, social space built around the needs, interests, and initiatives of migrant domestic workers, who live under the oppressive Kafala system in Lebanon. Through participatory approaches, MCC's purpose is to support, strengthen, and facilitate community building and political activism within migrant communities.

Since 2011, MCC has served as a safe space for migrant community members to meet, make friends, access resources, learn languages, build skills, produce knowledge, self-organize, and advocate for their rights.

During the past 2 years, MCC members and staff have experienced an increase in tensions and racist incidents from the surrounding neighborhood, including persistent microaggressions, intimidation tactics, threats, and overt harassment. **In order to safeguard members and to defuse tensions, we decided to search for a friendlier and less densely populated area to operate in.** In the meantime, we had to make the difficult decision to restrict visitations, gatherings, and activities in the existing space. This was a huge disappointment to the migrant community members, who had so recently reconnected and come together to help reopen MCC after the year-long closure during the height of the pandemic. **Feelings of isolation and frustration grew among members.** It was also extremely demotivating for our team, who were just beginning to recuperate from the catastrophic events of the year. In order to mitigate these negative impacts, we built strong partnerships with like-minded organizations, who were able to host larger events and activities for most of the year, which enabled us to continue most of our planned work.



Capacity-Building

We launched the Migrant Community Newsroom in 2021 by establishing a fully equipped physical space that hosted a series of media related capacity-building workshops and launched a blog to archive migrant-produced media content. It was built to support migrant workers in developing technical skills to produce citizen journalism and lead strategic communication campaigns beyond MCC. In 2022, interest among MCC members in media education, production, and networking grew. **The program was structured in a flexible way, and so the participants were able to reshape and expand the scope of the program by placing more emphasis on practical application and follow-up.** Together we built a curriculum around the interests, competencies, and priorities of participants. The program helped build their confidence and assertiveness, as they produced authentic, unapologetic content. **Participants eventually decided to use the program primarily as a means to reclaim ownership of their narratives,** by telling their stories their way, without the censorship, misrepresentation, and marginalization that were becoming a hallmark of mainstream media.

Newsroom training sessions included street photography, self-portrait photography, documentary filmmaking, video editing, creative writing, and storytelling. Participants proudly exhibited the photographs they had taken for this project at the International Migrants' Day [event](#) in December 2022.

Community-Building

Our community building efforts this year included social, cultural and recreational activities such as seasonal field trips, outings, gatherings, celebrations, wellbeing activities, and workshops. **Due to the increased number of children at the center, we organized more activities for them, in coordination with their parents.** These activities were mostly focused on their social, emotional, and academic development, and aimed to improve self-expression, interpersonal skills, and teamwork. We also addressed the political context that shapes their lives, which generated age-appropriate discussions around racism, stereotyping, bullying, friendship, and access to education. Here are some examples:

- **The Robotics STEM program, which spanned 7 sessions,** offered children a chance to explore specific technological and scientific concepts.
- **A two-month-long theatrical project** culminated in a production wholly scripted by the participating children, and directed by the facilitators Rania Mroueh and Zeina Ibrahim. This theatrical piece revolved around the theme of children's rights and aspirations, highlighting the encumbrances imposed by the Kafala system.
- **The Summer Kermesse,** a much-anticipated event, brought together a large number of community members of all ages. The day was full of merriment and amusement.

The highlight of the year, in terms of community-building, was the International Migrants' Day annual event, which gathered over 300 participants, and included several activities led by MCC members, such as storytelling, a talent show, a fashion show, a theater performance, a photo exhibition, a market, and a panel discussion about the challenges and promises of migrant-led community organizing.

Psychosocial Support

MCC ran three psychosocial support programs throughout the year. Two programs, one of which was a collaboration with SHiFT social innovation hub, provided psychosocial support through creative and somatic expression. The third program was a closed support group. All programs spanned over eight weeks and received overwhelmingly positive feedback from participants. During these sessions, they worked through difficult emotions and built on their shared experience of distress under the Kafala system.

These programs are planned and delivered with the overarching aim of **promoting a sense of belonging to the MCC community and facilitating the formation of self-organized migrant groups.**

Archiving

This year, ARM began its archiving efforts in order to preserve the history of migrant-led movement-building around anti-racism and Kafala in Lebanon, which is currently scattered, if not lost, along with everyone who is no longer with us. By gathering these materials and oral histories, we hope to protect ARM & MCC's story and help preserve the movement's collective memory, to inform future movements and new generations of activists.

Our first archiving initiative consisted of collectively documenting our decade-long journey of community organizing, specifically in relation to the annual Workers' Day protests. This included a storytelling event honoring the protesters, organizers, and migrant domestic workers we encountered along the way. We also collected event posters, photos, videos, banners, news stories, and other materials created throughout the years. Our archiving project also includes various structured discussions, workshops, and training sessions for those interested in learning more about the process. Sessions include: feminist approaches to archiving, feminist oral histories, and collecting and sorting materials from our past MCCs.

An archiving exhibition has also been conceptualized, to be launched in 2024. This exhibition sits at the intersection of art & activism, and will present "an intimate encounter with Kafala", and a compelling take on the endless ways in which migrant communities have resisted its oppression.



2. SUPPORTING MIGRANT DOMESTIC WORKERS' SELF-ADVOCACY & SELF-ORGANIZING

For over a decade, migrant workers have been making efforts to organize and advocate for their rights in Lebanon. ARM recognizes self-organizing and self-advocacy as a necessary element for long-term change, and so our role is to facilitate and strengthen these efforts while helping to maintain the communities' safety, security, and wellbeing.

ARM has supported migrant communities in designing, leading and implementing advocacy efforts by holding training sessions and workshops on different organizing and campaigning tools, directing them towards external training and networking opportunities, coaching groups and individuals on practical skills such as public speaking and creating media presence, and creating spaces for political discussions and sharing sessions in order to bring together different communities with common goals. The purpose of this program is to ensure that migrant community members are able to effectively be the central actors in their struggle.

During this year, we continued our campaign to organize and support specific groups of migrant domestic workers to improve their working and living conditions. What started as a small group of 50 people in 2021 has grown to include hundreds of workers of different nationalities and languages. In order to help overcome the particular set of challenges that came with this new approach, we sought the support of one of our partners, Ahel, who conducted an intensive workshop with ARM staff and campaign leaders to structure and plan the campaign for the rest of the year. **Together, we delivered 25 capacity-building sessions to over 100 migrant women geared towards building and strengthening their collective power** in a time of crisis, within a system that tends to pit workers against each other.

One of our highlights in 2022 was the launch of REMAN, or "Regroupement des Migrant.e.s de l'Afrique Noire" (The union of migrants from black Africa). This collective was established by a group of migrant domestic workers, with the support and coaching of ARM staff. REMAN aims to raise awareness on an international level of the abuse and exploitation migrant domestic workers face in Lebanon, and to help migrant workers build income-generating skills. ARM's advocacy team has supported REMAN since its inception with fundraising, campaigning, and communication strategies. You can follow their work [here!](#)



3. ADVOCATING AND MOBILIZING FOR RACIAL JUSTICE IN LEBANON



Through this work, **we collaborate with migrant community groups, activist groups, and local and international rights organizations to document and oppose racist narratives, policies, and practices on the institutional and social levels.** During the past few years, the advocacy team has been monitoring the media for news related to migrants and refugees, and has helped provide deeper and more nuanced information and analysis to media outlets and journalists covering, researching or advocating for migrant workers' issues.

For years, ARM has been working alongside migrant communities to advance both structural and social change against racism in Lebanon, with a particular emphasis on the rights of women domestic workers. To this end, we focus much of our efforts on the abolishment of the Kafala system, the primary legal framework enabling the rampant oppression of migrant domestic workers in Lebanon. **Our advocacy efforts are informed by our research, by the patterns observed by our advocacy and casework teams, and by deliberations with migrant activists.**

ARM's advocacy plays an important role in shifting and strengthening the discourse in Lebanon around migrant domestic workers. Our campaigns aim to raise the bar of policy proposals and demands presented by civil society organizations to the Lebanese government. They range widely in scope: some touch upon the general situation and larger frameworks, others focus on individual cases or specific communities in Lebanon.



Campaign highlights

This year, we had our hands full with events and crises that required our immediate attention. As soon as the protests of the Kenyan domestic workers began, we supported them with media coverage, direct assistance, and writing and disseminating a statement explaining their demands and calling for accountability from their honorary consulate in Lebanon. This marked the start of a year-long collaborative campaign. **Throughout the year, we worked with journalists, researchers, and activists to document, archive, and ultimately shed light on how diplomatic missions sometimes support and benefit the Kafala system.** Our campaign included [a video](#) aiming to counter the false and racist narratives perpetuated by the consular staff about the protestors and Kenyan women in mainstream media. **We also met with the Kenyan Ambassador to Kuwait and the Kenyan Trade Union (COTU-K)** in order to ensure that the women's demands were heard internationally.

Unfortunately, these protests came at a high price: following the leaking of her name and passport picture by the consular staff, one Kenyan activist and refugee, referred to by her initials 'NM', was arrested in April 2022. On August 4th 2022, on the day of commemoration of the Beirut Port explosion, the Lebanese authorities attempted to deport her, despite the lack of legal grounds for both her arrest and deportation. ARM's Casework and Advocacy teams worked together to immediately launch an emergency campaign to ensure her safety.

Our caseworkers intercepted her at the airport and successfully stopped her deportation through direct action. Their efforts also included working on the usual legal pathways, making referrals to other NGOs, reaching out to the UNHCR, as well as providing moral support to NM by visiting her regularly at the detention center.

In the meantime, **the advocacy team launched an [intensive campaign](#) to make the details of the case known to the public**, and to enlist the support of relevant stakeholders who could secure her release. This included writing official letters to the Lebanese General Security, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression, Special Rapporteur on Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants, and Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders.

These efforts eventually secured [NM's release](#) and resettlement to Canada in December 2022.

Countering racist narratives

Media representations of refugees and migrant women brought their own set of challenges in 2022, as the tendency for these communities to be demonized and scapegoated in mainstream narratives was going strong. To address this, **we launched the Racism Monitor**, a subversive online platform that serves to compile and analyze the different elements of racist narratives, namely media coverage, policies, hate-speech and attacks. Its aims are to undermine and weaken these narratives by making it clear that most of the underlying arguments are rooted in misinformation and fear, and also to hold accountable those who propagate it - whether that is the media, politicians, political parties or individuals.

By the end of the year, we had published our second issue, which highlighted the personal experiences of black migrant women in Lebanon being [discriminated against based on their body odor](#). This issue of the Racism Monitor quickly became one of our highest-viewed pages since we launched the ARM website.

Based on our continuous [monitoring](#) of racist and violent narratives and events in the country, and in the midst of the relentless ‘divide and conquer’ strategies of the Lebanese government against refugees, women, migrants, queer, and other marginalized individuals, we issued [a statement](#) to call on our allies around the world to come together and take a unified stance against these persistent practices.

During this year, we also launched the “[Women of the Blame](#)” podcast to counter the monolithic representation of migrant women as victims in mainstream media, which is at odds with the lived experience of so many of these women. This podcast helps give them a wider platform to balance these portrayals, by sharing the stories of these bold community leaders who work tirelessly to help their communities protect & promote their rights and wellbeing in the absence of any kind of social or governmental support.

We began developing different kinds of content aimed at **amplifying the voices of influential figures within migrant communities**. This initiative was launched upon the request of the online influencer, and son of a vocal migrant domestic worker in Lebanon, Ochienga, to co-publish a [video response](#) to a racist and hateful TikTok video. Ochienga’s powerful response to the video quickly went viral, garnering immense support for his counter-narrative and disapproval of the original racist video. Since then, we have co-published a [second video response](#) to one of the comments, and a [sketch](#) with Ochienga, and are **working to develop a strategy to nourish similar collaborations with influential figures within migrant communities**.

International advocacy

As the ongoing crisis in Lebanon made efforts towards meaningful policy change for migrant workers futile, we pursued avenues beyond the Lebanese borders to push for international accountability. We engaged with United Nations review mechanisms that Lebanon is signatory to, by submitting a [report](#) on the situation of migrant women as part of “Lebanon’s Civil Society Submission to the 81st Session of the Committee on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)”. In fact, the report by the Lebanese state effectively excluded migrant domestic workers from the official number of women in the country. Our report emphasized unfair employment conditions, lack of reproductive rights, human trafficking, forced labor, GBV, and lack of accountability or investigations in cases of abused migrant domestic workers. Most of the issues we highlighted were eventually included in CEDAW’s recommendations to the Lebanese government.



4. CASEWORK: IMPROVING ACCESS TO SOCIAL, LEGAL, AND MEDICAL SUPPORT FOR MIGRANT WORKERS IN LEBANON

Through our casework in the past years, we have bore witness to the repercussions of the Kafala system on every aspect of migrant workers' lives, including their basic rights, work, and family life. Our casework team provides case management services to workers facing labor violations (unpaid wages, exploitative working conditions, violence from employer/sponsor/agency), forced labor, trafficking by recruitment agencies, legal status issues, and asylum claims, in order to mitigate the often violent effects that Kafala has on the lives of the people it governs.

Our approach is migrant-centered, which means that 'caseleaders' (the migrant workers who come to us with cases) themselves decide on the path that their case will take. ARM's primary role in casework is to support and facilitate these decisions and the ensuing processes by expanding access to necessary information and resources, offering direct legal interventions (administrative, filing complaints before relevant entities, trial), or providing legal counseling and information. For needs ARM is not able to cover, we work in collaboration with a number of NGOs that provide services to migrants related to GBV, health, mental health, shelter and legal support. When needed, referrals to embassies, consulates and government institutions are also facilitated.



Similarly to 2020, **we received numerous cases through our helplines (which at the time was the only means of contact due to the COVID lockdowns and the closure of our spaces)**. Most legal cases were related to forced labor, unpaid wages, and repatriation, which highlights how the crisis caused further exploitation and abuse of migrant workers by their employers/sponsors and recruitment agencies. **Our casework team has directly reached and supported 161 migrant workers and refugees in 2022: 148 women and 13 men, 6 of whom are refugees.** Most received direct counseling services from the team, some were offered legal aid services, while others were referred to external organizations including KAFA (enough) Violence & Exploitation, Caritas Lebanon Migrants Center, Lebanese Centre for Human Rights (CLDH), International Organisation for Migration (IOM), Housing Monitor (HM), and Doctors without Borders (MSF).

Our casework has not been immune to the precarious and deteriorating situation of the country: this year has been one of the team's most challenging to date as a result of the collapse of the public sector. As the economic crisis and political instability in Lebanon rage on, little is being done to mitigate the impacts on the public sector, including the General Directorate of General Security (commonly referred to as "General Security") and the judicial system, which are the most relevant stakeholders in our casework. **Additionally, since organizations we collaborate with were also overcoming the extremely challenging context, our support system was severely compromised.**

Hyperinflation caused another significant barrier to case success, especially with regards to one of the most common labor violations this year: unpaid wages. Since government entities were still abiding by severely undervalued exchange rates, even our successful cases sometimes resulted in significant salary losses for the worker.

Taking into consideration the extremely complex and changing environment we've been operating in, we believe that our case work has nonetheless been rather successful. **We have managed to offer direct services to alleviate short-term grievances in many instances, while in parallel, we continue to push for long-term change, build capacity among our allies, and work on migrant-centered solutions in collaboration with migrant communities.** This has required a good amount of flexibility and experimentation with different approaches and strategies, to ensure that we continue to provide reliable and quality services to caseleaders.





5. PROGRAMMATIC WORK

We created the Programs Team in 2021, with the goal of streamlining the planning and support to ARM's implementing teams. The Programs Team creates spaces and strengthens staff capacities to creatively brainstorm, strategize, implement, collect data, report, fundraise and learn.

2022 was a year of growth for this team, in size but also in experience. The addition of a Head of Programs and a MEAL (Monitor, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning) Manager improved our efforts to create and implement **systems and processes that align with ARM's principles, support ARM's mission and improve accountability towards the migrant communities we work with.**

The Programs Team main focus areas in 2022 included

Prioritizing ARM's organizational development:

- **The growth of ARM within this extremely complex context has amplified the need to invest more in our systems and build a solid foundation, which in the long term, will make our growth more sustainable.** With this intention, the Programs Team worked on streamlining workflows, developing new policies and processes, supporting the implementing teams by providing resources, improving participation in programmatic planning and staff development.
- **Setting up and finalizing the MEAL framework in line with our Theory of Change: One of the priorities for 2022 was to have a more functional MEAL framework that builds on and derives from ARM's Theory of Change.** The annual planning cycle workshops enabled each team to create their own logical framework and monitoring plan that allow for more intuitive monthly monitoring and follow-up of planned and implemented activities.
- **Planning a data system setup:**
A needs assessment for an in-house comprehensive data system for ARM's output and indicator data is being finalized. **The purpose of the data system will be to collect, store, manage, retrieve, and analyze the data of ARM's teams in an effective and efficient way.**

- **Learning across teams:** An important component of the annual strategic retreat this year was a set of three learning sessions led by the MEAL team, each targeting a different implementing team. **A special emphasis was placed on discussions about learning, in which we collectively identified specific areas the teams were most interested in discussing in depth, and discussed how to forecast & manage team learning.** A learning plan & system are being put into place to enhance our MEAL work, centered on four different types of interaction with knowledge – knowledge creation, retention, transfer, and use.
- **Donor relationships and fundraising:** Post-crisis funding, which peaked in Lebanon in 2020 and 2021, was a challenge to secure during 2022 - and will likely continue to be so moving forward. **As global media attention shifted to other contexts and donor priorities changed, we worked on maintaining relationships with our current donors and began expanding the search for new collaborations.** The formalization of our donor policy and our 2023 fundraising plan, along with the majority of the processes carried out by the Programs Team, have managed to better position ARM in attracting new relationships, thus bolstering our financial sustainability as we move forward.





Key Challenges and Achievements

CHALLENGES

The economic & financial crisis in Lebanon has posed the most prominent challenge across all ARM's work. **Like us, the migrant community members we work with saw their priorities and limitations shifting.** As their income became more restricted, their interest in MCC started to lean more towards income-generating activities and vocational training, as opposed to advocacy activities with more long-term goals. **As their mobility began to decrease, their presence at the center started to dwindle.** One way we tried to increase members' access to the center was by providing transportation stipends, which mitigated the problem in the short term, but was obviously not a sustainable solution.

In such turbulent times, even the mandate and scope of ARM were called into question, as the needs of most migrant workers changed from rights and justice to basic survival and income. Many expected ARM to respond more substantially to these growing economic and material needs.

To make matters worse, the growing acceptance of racist narratives and practices, and the ongoing hostility against migrant workers and activists, made our work extremely challenging. The advocacy team in particular felt the pressures of having to constantly assess the safety of strategies to use in any meeting, report, campaign, or direct action to ensure that no further harm is done to the individuals and communities we work with. This ultimately led to the delay or reduction of planned advocacy activities.

Operating in an erratic context has ultimately taught us to embrace the uncertainty and complexity that comes with it. The Programs Team did so by shifting its mindset and looking at more adaptive management approaches for the whole organization. **This led us to re-work existing policies and processes, and develop new ones based on specific needs, contextual dynamics, and outcomes of our learning.** It also pushed us to regularly assess the relevance and functionality of our interventions and make adjustments when needed. Although continuously adapting to changing conditions is essential for operations to be effective, it can become mentally and emotionally draining when the context remains unsettled for so long. Setting up and becoming adept at using new systems and procedures is a lengthy process that is particularly challenging in a complex and unstable context such as this one, as these crises affect not only ARM's interventions but also staff wellbeing. In this sense, it has been a challenge to integrate custom-built systems in a participatory manner whilst avoiding staff burnout. **And while our regular wellbeing measures were still in place (free in-house counselor, yearly wellbeing stipends, staff training, etc.), it was clear that this was an exceptionally challenging year for the organization and individuals alike.**

Hiring during this time was also a huge challenge, namely in terms of finding candidates who possess the technical expertise needed and are also in line with ARM's political positioning and feminist values. Unfortunately, due to the ongoing crisis, Lebanon is experiencing a massive 'brain drain', as many who are able to leave have done so. We are attempting to mitigate this by prolonging the recruitment process and increasing our reach through key members of our network, but it remains a major challenge across all levels.

ACHIEVEMENTS

We believe the NM case to be our biggest success of the year, considering the forces she was up against (see full story above). **She continues to seek justice for her mistreatment with ARM's support.**

In MCC, we were successful in prioritizing community consultations to improve the programs and operations of the center, and to ensure the meaningful involvement of members throughout the planning and decision-making processes. **This led to MCC increasing its focus on migrant-led initiatives, which remain the core of the center's work.** Some of these initiatives consisted of community events via the "Chef Residencies" project, with chefs from Kenya, Senegal, Togo, and Ivory Coast hosting fundraisers for urgent cases within their communities.



In terms of programming, we worked on implementing the annual planning cycle in a formal way for the first time. It was designed by the Programs Team in 2021, and first implemented in 2022 using a participatory approach, with the active involvement of ARM teams, migrant community members, and other stakeholders at different stages of the process. **The cycle can be considered ARM's roadmap in the process of setting clear organizational goals, developing strong strategies, building innovative projects, tracking progress, evaluating and learning from our work in order to continue to improve.** It is a process that throughout the year gives us the opportunity to create spaces for reflection, analysis, discussion, planning, and growth in a holistic manner, recognizing the interconnectedness of strategizing at the organizational, programmatic and operational levels. **This has been immensely helpful in alleviating some of the stress and burnout by facilitating better workflow and ownership of plans.**

Testimonials

A word of thanks and best wishes: To you I offer the most beautiful expressions of gratitude for what you have provided us at your wonderful community center. The center has always helped us in alleviating the burdens and hardships of life in Lebanon as migrant workers. May you always be well, and may the center remain a burning flame of hope in the coming years.

Khalilda (translated from Arabic)





I would like to express my appreciation. I'd like to thank MCC for providing me with a space I can call home, a place I can walk into any time, without any restrictions. I would also like to thank all the staff, who are like family to me - warm, generous, kind, loving and supportive. People who are always there to guide me every step of the way. I have benefited from different workshops at MCC, by learning and improving my skills. Finally, thank you for the fun activities like swimming, bike-riding, snow trips and all the little things like birthday celebrations. Thank you MCC!

Veronicah (translated from French)



Financial Overview

Total Income: 1,318,000 USD

Income Breakdown (in USD, rounded figures):

Donors & Partners:

W.K. Kellogg Foundation: 800,000

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC): 255,000

Norwegian People's Aid (NPA): 63,000

International Labour Organization (ILO): 55,500

Kvinna Till Kvinna (KTK): 44,700

Medico International: 40,000

Global Fund For Women: 30,000

Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women (GAATW): 4,000

World Association for Christian Communication (WACC): 1,800

Other contributions:

Individual contributions: 24,000

Total Expenditures: 1,318,000 USD

Expenditure breakdown (in USD, rounded figures):

Staff salaries: 570,000

MCC and its activities: 134,000

Rent, utilities and maintenance: 121,000

Consultancies and legal services: 114,000

Casework support: 110,000

Staff benefits: 66,000

Accounting and auditing: 46,000

Transportation and communication: 35,000

In-house counseling and clinical supervision: 23,000

Books, stationery, design and printing: 22,000

Government taxes: 20,000

Groceries, food and cleaning supplies: 15,000

Furniture, equipment and computers: 13,000

Evaluation & learning meetings, staff training: 12,000

Advocacy efforts: 9,000

Bank charges: 8,000

Our team

Farah Salka

Executive Director / co-ED

Rana Boukarim

Programs Director

Kelly O'Donovan

Fundraising Manager

/ Head of Programs

/ Interim co-ED

Theresa Sahyoun

Assistant to Directors

Salma Sakr

Advocacy & Communications

Manager

Farah El Baba

Advocacy & Communications Officer

Imane El Hayek

Advocacy Officer

Aname Gnanguenon

Community Organizing Coordinator

Kareem Nofal

Communications Specialist

Ramy Shukr

Knowledge Coordinator

Joane Cremesty

Casework Department Manager

Jamil Oueini

Casework Team Manager

Rabih Keyrouz

Lawyer

Mira Bene

Legal Officer

Rahaf Dandash

Casework Management Officer

Samuel Tesfaye

Caseworker

Hadi Nasreldine

Caseworker

Nicoletta Akiki

Caseworker

Laure Makarem

MCC Operations Manager

Myriam Claire Baker

MCC Activities Officer

Chantale Salameh

MCC Activities Officer

Paul Samrani

MCC Activities Officer

Razan Yehya

MCC Activities Officer

Sara Wehbe

MCC Admin Officer

Eleonora Gatto

Programs Manager

Nadia Chakr

MEAL Manager

Rim Trad

Programs Officer

Manale Assaf

Accounting Manager

Rachelle Sabe

Accountant & Administrative

Assistant

Nada Sarbaji

Human Resources Coordinator

Hiba Taha

Human Resources Assistant

Houssam Ballout

IT Coordinator

Zeina Mir Ali

Procurement & Logistics Officer

Mahmoud Sharafeddine

Procurement & Logistics Officer

Partners and collaborators

We are grateful for our strong relationships and collaborations with organizations and networks whose work we value.

Organizations and groups we've collaborated with in 2022:

- United Diaspora Lebanon
- MCC partners: Haven for Artists, Tota, The Knowledge Workshop, Switch Perspective, The A Project, SHiFT
- Social Innovation Hub, LAU Institute of Media Research and Training, AUB Department of Health Promotion and Community Health.

Alliances and networks ARM is active in:

- EuroMed Rights Network
- Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women (GAATW)
- Regional Coalition of Women Human Rights Defenders in MENA (WHRD)
- My Work, My Rights local network

Our casework partners:

- Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF)
- Lebanese Center for Human Rights (CLDH)
- KAFA (enough) Violence & Exploitation
- Frontiers Ruwad Association
- Restart Center for Rehabilitation of Victims of Violence and Torture
- Amel Association International
- International Organization for Migration (IOM)
- Federation de l'entraide protestante (for the French Humanitarian Corridors)
- Federazione delle Chiese Evangeliche in Italia (for the Italian Humanitarian Corridors)

We are very thankful for the support and guidance our team members continually receive from:

- **Nermine Sibai**, human rights lawyer, ARM's legal advisor
- **ARM Advisory Board members:**
 - Dr. Sawsan Abdulrahim
 - Nadine Moawad
 - Rabi' Bashour

Find us on Social Media



ARM: facebook.com/ARMLebanon

MCC: facebook.com/MigrantCommunityCenter



ARM: instagram.com/armlebanon

MCC: instagram.com/mcc_lebanon



Website

www.armlebanon.org



ARM: twitter.com/ARM_Leb

Contact us: contact@armlebanon.org

حركة مناهضة
العنصرية  Anti-Racism
Movement