

# ***Our Struggles Are Forever Connected***

Anti-Racism Movement  
Annual Report: 2024



حركة مناهضة  
العنصرية



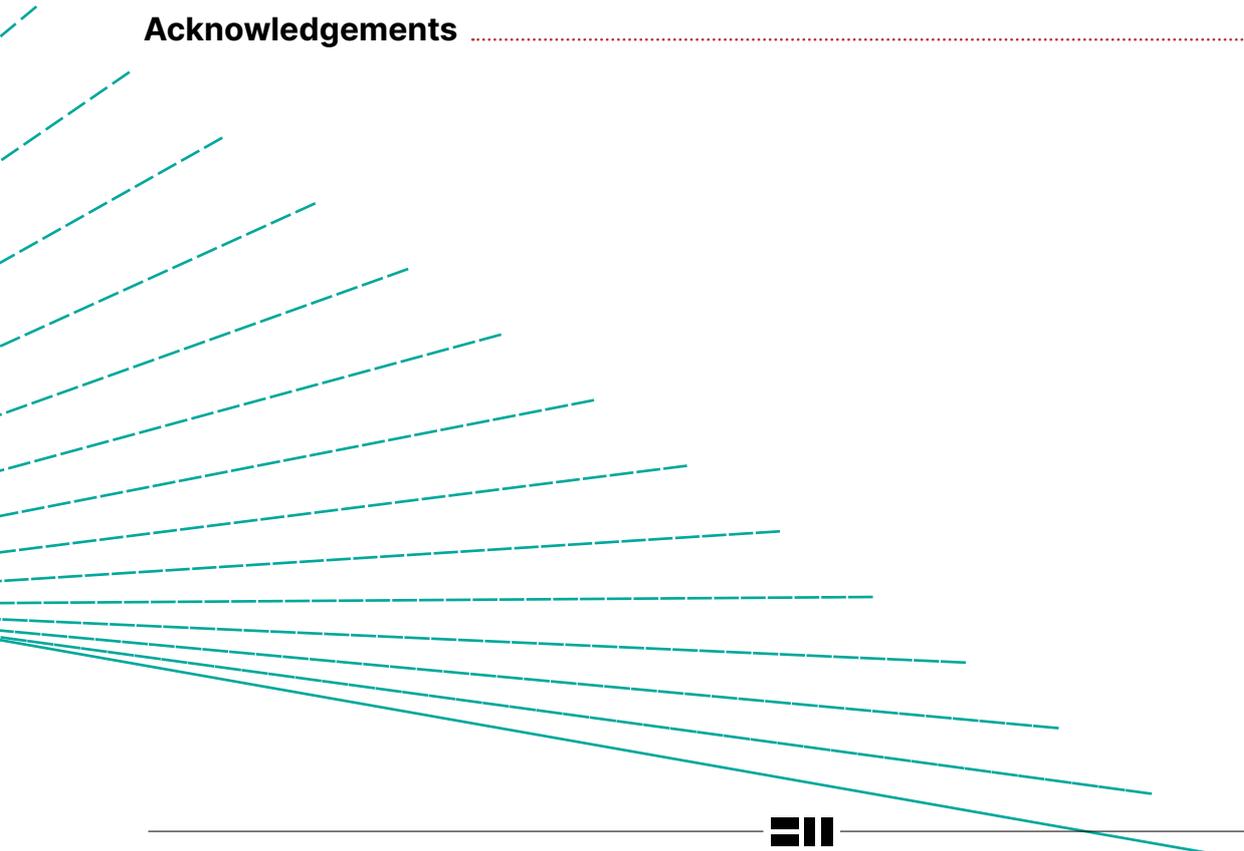
Anti-Racism  
Movement



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## Opening Letter

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2024 was a year with its own brand of unrelentlessness. It was a year of disorienting limbo, of endless scenario planning, and of an eeriness of watching as an escalating situation comes to the edge of explosion. This year we were not only operating next door to - and with our hearts engulfed in - the genocide on Gaza, but we were working in the midst of what eventually turned into a full-scale war on Lebanon, and advocating within an international rights framework whose legitimacy is taking one blow after another. We were also doing so with ever dwindling resources.

We continue to grapple with questions that are not so new, but ones that are increasingly challenging. In the face of receiving calls from migrants who are abandoned in the south of Lebanon by their employers amidst bombing, stranded in various places because they have been turned away from shelters for not being Lebanese, evicted from their homes to make space for others more “worthy”: what is the balance between attempting to fill a drop in the ocean of basic necessities and of working towards a world where we would not have to be in this situation in the first place? How do we build on the bonds we have with the communities we organize alongside, and how do we make space to think collectively as we create makeshift response plans to make up for the national ones that regard migrants as invisible? To add to it, we practice now more than ever constant reflection that can help us stay true to the ethos of our work, as shifts in the funding sector threaten to change the face of civil society.

We enter this new year with questions that we know have no straightforward answer, that should always be a work in progress, and that we should never stop questioning ourselves on. We also enter with immense pride of being part of a movement that has been through so much, and that never stops adapting and finding ways to maneuver an impossibly difficult landscape.



To the communities we organize with, we are humbled by the incredible ways you keep stepping up and the brave networks of solidarity that have been built throughout the years that are the real saving grace in times of crisis. We also share in the anger and unwavering commitment to working towards a fairer Lebanon and world where you do not need to be holding these loads and under such circumstances. To our longstanding partnerships in Lebanon and beyond in all their different forms, we are of no delusion that there is any way out other than by us thinking together, organizing together and completing each other's work. And to our staff, who spent their nights hearing bombs drop and showing up to work the next morning, who juggled invisible but essential administrative work while searching for new homes for their displaced families, who brought difficult questions to the table and who kept us in check, and who did it all with so much heart. We could not be more grateful.

Despite all the unknowns ahead of us, we start the year with the comfort of knowing that we're in it together. We rededicate ourselves to our intersecting struggles. And we rededicate ourselves to our duty of, and redemption in, solidarity with all living under Kafala and the regimes that make it possible.



## About ARM

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Launched in 2010, the Anti-Racism Movement (ARM) began as a grassroots collective of Lebanese feminist activists and migrant domestic workers living in Lebanon, and has been a registered non-profit organization for over thirteen years. As migrant workers are unable to register their own organizations and are ignored by many actors, ARM was created as one of few organizations in Lebanon focusing specifically on migrant workers, and one of even fewer working with migrant workers on long-term and sustainable change with an anti-racism approach.

We work to abolish the Kafala system and build an alternative future for all migrant workers and racialized groups in Lebanon, with a specific focus on migrant domestic workers. Our theory of change shifts the positionality of migrant workers from “beneficiaries” to leaders and agents of change, taking a migrant-centered and feminist approach throughout our programming.

### Our Vision

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

### Our Mission

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



## Our Approach and Beliefs



Migrant-centered solutions are the strongest and most genuine challenge to all forms of racism in Lebanon.



Strong communities are more able to support and represent themselves politically.



Influencing narratives and increasing understanding is a vital step in changing attitudes and beliefs.



A shift in attitudes and beliefs results in less resistance to change and increased action to support if barriers to change are removed.



Structural change will improve the situation of migrant domestic workers in Lebanon and the region.



Only by working on individual behaviour and structures simultaneously will we be able to achieve our mission.



Improving internal processes, investing in staff wellbeing and finding as many ways as possible to become self-sustainable will better protect us from the crisis context in Lebanon.

## Our Objectives

1. Advancing **structural change** against racism in Lebanon
2. **Strengthening and supporting** migrant communities to self-advocate and take collective action
3. Benefiting from a **healthy, well-functioning, sustainable** organization

## Our Context in 2024

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The year 2024 was characterized by profound devastation, marked most notably by the monstrous and ongoing Genocide in Gaza and the brutal Israeli war against Lebanon. These events had already displaced over 100,000 individuals within Lebanon by September 2024. The persistent threat of a wider regional conflict created significant operational challenges for ARM. The organization was required to concurrently prepare for a potential escalation of the crisis while managing the ongoing impact of these events on its staff and the migrant workers it supports.

Migrant communities experienced a bulk of complex difficulties. These included displacement from Southern Lebanon and markedly uneven access to accurate information regarding the evolving wartime situation. The inherent structure of the Kafala System contributes to the isolation of migrant workers, limiting their access to accurate information. Thus, some individuals received no information, while others were subjected to inaccurate or misleading reports.

In response to the intensification of the conflict in September 2024, ARM, once again, transitioned to an emergency response operational role. This involved a strategic reprioritization, including the suspension of non-essential activities, to concentrate resources and reshift roles to addressing the immediate needs of affected communities in the unfolding crises. This shift was executed in a manner consistent with ARM's core values and its long-term commitment to structural reform.

The September 2024 escalation resulted in the displacement of more than one million people. Reports from community organizers highlighted a surge in rent increases and eviction threats directed towards live-out migrant domestic workers or "freelancers". These actions were reportedly driven by landlords seeking to capitalize on the increased demand for housing, either for personal gain or to accommodate their own families, acquaintances, or other Lebanese families. Concurrently, there was an increase in job losses among migrant workers, attributed to employers relocating abroad or reducing expenditures on domestic labor.

Beyond the immediate threat of conflict, the year was also marked by a rise in xenophobic sentiment (and action), particularly targeting Syrian refugees and communities. Routine neighborhood raids conducted by the Lebanese Armed Forces in Beirut led to the forced deportation of Syrian residents. Members of ARM's Migrant Community Center (MCC) were also impacted by the increased presence of security checkpoints, experiencing stops, harassment, detention, and the seizure of their motorcycles.



Moreover, since 2019, Lebanon has experienced a sustained decline, characterized by a worsening economic situation and resource scarcity. The nation's financial collapse has precipitated a severe degradation of the public sector and governmental capacity, significantly hindering the delivery of essential services and support to the already vulnerable migrant population. The financial crisis continued to loom as part and parcel of what made 2024 an exceptionally challenging time for everyone in our communities.

**What is Kafala?** The Kafala ('sponsorship' in Arabic) system is the main legal framework enabling the rampant oppression of migrant domestic workers in Lebanon. It is a set of policies and practices used primarily in the Gulf States, Jordan, and Lebanon to hire low-paid foreign workers. There are currently **35 million people** living under Kafala in the region, including migrant workers hired for a wide range of types of labor.

**How does Kafala work in Lebanon?** The Lebanese state systematically denies workers under kafala the rights guaranteed to all other categories of labor: Workers are excluded from labor law, cannot unionize, cannot change employers on their own, and the few rights they have lack a real enforcement mechanism. The large majority are migrant domestic workers who live in the houses of their employers, and are often completely dependent on employers for their immigration status, income, and access to basic resources. As a result of the intersection of gendered and racialized global inequality, domestic workers in Lebanon are mainly women from Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.

**Who benefits?** The Lebanese government and recruitment agencies earn approximately **\$100 million per year** from fees paid by employers and workers themselves. Employers benefit from the lower wages they pay migrant workers under Kafala, compared to the expected salary of a Lebanese employee.



## Major Events in 2024

While much of our work is ongoing, the political and economic situation in Lebanon and the region deeply shapes our day-to-day lives and capacities at ARM. This timeline shows the key events of the year that impacted MCC members, ARM staff, and our wider communities.



1. **Targeted campaigns against Syrians with forced deportations:** The rise in anti-Syrian sentiment has led to a sharp increase in violent and racist attacks and discriminatory behaviors against refugees. At MCC, we observed an increase in the number of Syrians coming to our center to register as members, seeking some form of community and a safe place to spend time as well as access to legal support.

2. **Escalation of the war on Lebanon:**

The war in south Lebanon escalated into an all-out war against Lebanon by Israel in September 2024. For two months, Israel went for the relentless bombardment of Southern Lebanon, the Bekaa Valley, Beirut, and surrounding areas causing waves of internally displaced persons fleeing from one targeted area to another. Amid this crisis, the government emergency response was blatantly discriminatory as it was largely focused on providing assistance to Lebanese citizens, leaving many vulnerable groups, including migrant workers and Syrian refugees, without access to shelters or basic necessities. This exclusion exacerbated the already dire conditions faced by non-Lebanese individuals. Furthermore, the lack of organizational funding opportunities, especially at the start of the border aggressions between Lebanon and Israel, was unprecedented.





**The activation of ARM's emergency war response:** Facing the exclusion of migrant workers from national relief efforts during the war, ARM rapidly established an Emergency Taskforce and redirected operations and resources. We ran a community kitchen with The Great Oven that provided over 14,729 meals, mapped and connected individuals to essential

services, and distributed donated items like clothes, blankets, and hygiene products to 1,100 displaced migrants. Overall, ARM directly supported over 2000 migrant workers through referrals, cash assistance, and support for migrant-led initiatives, while also supporting 26 community organizers.

3. **MCC members-led committee organized its first event.** This year, members-led committees emerged at MCC. Under the theme of collective solidarity and sharing our experiences with the war, the committee organized a "Solidarity Day" as an opportunity for members to lean on one another. The event provided a platform for sharing emotions, featuring performances, an open mic, and a communal meal to foster connection and support.



# ARM in 2024

## Key Facts and Figures

As we navigated deep crisis and uncertainty in 2024, we still maintained the core pillars of our work. Check out our work in numbers from this year, and continue on to the next few sections to see how these translated into daily activities, campaigns, and concrete support for migrant communities living under kafala.

### In 2024, we worked with 3,526 people.



1,977 women

131 men

1,418 children

This encompasses the data below, including people who accessed MCC, joined our advocacy work, and got support from the casework team.

### Migrant Community Center

Supporting Strong Migrant Worker Communities

#### Membership

**1,072** registered migrant worker members of MCC

**22%** increase in membership throughout 2024

**300** migrant workers access the MCC space each month on average, for activities, programs, and spending time with friends

**2** members-led committees created, with a total of 16 members

#### Community Building

**62** social events and activities held by MCC, attended by 751 workers

**13** MCC community meetings conducted, attended by 212 members

**55** psychosocial support sessions for MCC members, attended by 650 workers

**3** info sessions were organized, attended by 82 members

#### Capacity Building

**46** media capacity building sessions, attended by 189 workers

**1** photo exhibition organized about the Kafala system in Lebanon, based on works presented by members of the center

**2** computer literacy courses were organized, attended by 10 participants

#### Memory

**1** archive of migrant worker organizing maintained, with various posters, photos, and objects included

## Advocacy

Building Power and Self Organizing

### Community Participation

**699** migrant workers actively engaged in community empowerment and self organizing activities

**3** active ongoing campaigns

**68** preparatory meetings to strategize and plan with migrant worker community members held in preparation for advocacy work

### Traditional and Social Media

**28** media interviews by ARM staff with journalists and researchers

**40,097** people influenced by ARM's advocacy through social media

### Capacity Building

**1** hands-on guide developed to support migrant domestic workers facing poor working conditions and pay

**18** capacity building sessions conducted with migrant workers to equip them to organize and self advocate, attended by 138 workers

**11** coaching and mentorship sessions provided to 32 members of migrant-led groups

### Knowledge building

**3** research papers completed on [public perceptions](#), [anti-Syrian hate in Lebanon](#), and [honorary consulates](#)

**1** public brief on the situation of migrant workers in times of war

**3** public advocacy materials produced (statements, news reports, podcasts, articles), including:

**1** letter to the International Organization for Migration urging them to open a shelter for displaced migrant workers in the war

**1** public social media campaign calling for support to homeless and displaced migrant workers during the war

**2** public panel discussions on migrant worker rights

### Casework

Improving Access to Support

#### Direct Support

**63** migrant workers and refugees accessed legal, medical, or counseling support. Of these:

- 47** accessed legal aid services directly from ARM’s Casework team
- 27** were directly and actively referred to other organizations
- 33** received casework counseling services from ARM’s Casework team

#### Capacity Building

- 4** legal awareness sessions held in different languages with 18 migrant worker participants from different nationalities
- 9** workshops were provided to 24 migrant activists on issues related to case management and emergency response

#### Building Strong Referral Networks

**44** local and international organizations were outreached in order to set up or improve referral systems, coordination, and our service mapping. This resulted in the formation of 10 new partnerships.

### Emergency War Task Force

**14,729** meals were distributed

**1,100** non-food items (such as blankets, hygiene kits, pillows, and other items) were distributed

**2,255** migrant workers benefited from referral services from the emergency task force

**26** community organizers were assisted with rent, recharge cards, and/or emergency cash support

**21** migrant-led initiatives were supported, reaching

**1,200** migrant workers in total (with heating, food kits, and other needs)

### Internal Capacity Building

**5** political learning sessions held with ARM staff on the legal, social and economic situation and context, along with the historical aspect of kafala, and overall context affecting migrant workers

**7** staff trainings on casework case management, attended by 14 staff members

**17** wellbeing sessions attended by the casework team

**8** external and internal technical trainings attended by ARM staff





## Emergency Response to the War on Lebanon

With the escalation of the war in September, we temporarily closed MCC to set up security precautions before re-opening the center on the 2nd of October. To have a better understanding of the immediate needs of community organizers who had already been active in responding to emergencies and providing relief to their communities, we conducted a needs assessment that allowed us to have an initial overview of the realities and challenges faced by the communities we work with. Over the course of three months, our focus was on connecting displaced persons to different services through our national service mapping, running a community kitchen with The Great Oven, advocating for the accessibility of services to migrant workers, and providing direct assistance to displaced migrant workers and MCC members, in addition to migrant-led initiatives. It needs to be acknowledged that although the ARM team itself was naturally also affected by the war, they were also able to adapt and respond to the needs on the ground despite the limitations/difficulties given by the context.

With the opening of the center, we hosted The Great Oven – a community kitchen run by chefs and assistants from the migrant communities – in order to provide meals that were distributed by ARM staff and other migrant-led organizations to migrant communities in informal shelters. The kitchen prepared and distributed between 100 and 300 meals per day, totaling 11,135 meals throughout October, November, and December. Given the high demand for warm food, the emergency response team also coordinated with Le Jardin, a restaurant serving lunches to internally displaced people, and referred an additional 3,594 meals over three months. In total, ARM ensured that 14,729 meals reached migrant domestic workers displaced by the war.

Eventually, The Emergency Taskforce was created at ARM. The taskforce was formed through expanding our casework team's capacity and allocating additional staff hours from other teams, thereby extending total operating hours to seven days per week. The taskforce conducted a mapping of available services that were inclusive of migrants. A significant part of the intervention involved connecting people to various services



and making information about ongoing programs more accessible to communities. We ensured regular contact with all organizations, initiatives, and collectives providing support to migrant communities, continuously updating our list. Moreover, the team reached out to all embassies responsible to understand their intervention and emergency plans during the war. Several calls to the General Security Office were made to stay updated on any ad-hoc circulars or memos released. This service map served as a reference for anyone in need of assistance, detailing the criteria, contact information, and location of each intervention. With the consent of the service providers, ARM made this service map public and shared it with the migrant communities we were in contact with.

ARM also collected various donations, including clothes, mattresses, blankets, pillows, gas heaters, baby formula, diapers, hygiene kits, and feminine hygiene products. We coordinated with various organizations, such as Haven for Artists, Beirut Synth Center, MSF, and INSAAF to secure these items. With the help of community leaders and individuals running informal shelters, these donations were distributed to 1,100 displaced migrants, primarily during October and November.

- In total, during the war, ARM was able to support **over 2000 internally displaced migrant workers** through referrals for food and non-food items, medical support, shelters, and cash-for-rent programs.
- We supported 19 people with direct cash assistance **for medical purposes and livelihoods** (such as rent for a worker whose home was destroyed or assistance for a worker who lost both their job and home when the building they worked at as a concierge was destroyed).
- In addition, 302 children with their 171 mothers received cash support **for diapers and milk**.
- **Migrant-led initiative support:** 1,200 migrant workers had their needs covered through assistance provided to 21 migrant-led initiatives.
- **Community organizer support:** 26 community organizers were supported with rent and cash assistance to ensure they could continue supporting their communities, such as paying electricity bills for shelters or assisting migrant activists hosting displaced workers.
- **Transportation assistance:** 135 individuals were supported with transportation, which included evacuations from high-risk zones, the transport of in-kind donations and materials, and trips to the MCC space, shelters, hospitals, or safe spaces.

Throughout the war the center remained operational for the members and migrant workers as a comforting space to meet, cook, make sense of news, express solidarity and participate in various activities. MCC also reintroduced open activities such as yoga sessions for both adults and children.

### Special Focus: Psychosocial Support During the War

Starting October, MCC carried out **psychosocial support sessions for children and adults** as per the request of members. These sessions were in high demand, reflecting the pressing need for emotional and psychological support among members.

In collaboration with Clown Me In, we implemented two distinct types of interventions:



- **Art-based sessions:** These sessions served as a safe, creative outlet for women to express their emotions and experiences. Designed as a short-term intervention, they aimed to meet the significant demand from many women seeking immediate support.
- **Support groups for women:** These support groups were for women who were displaced or had experienced significant loss, such as having their homes bombed. Through a series of sessions, participants shared experiences, built resilience, found mutual support, and created a bridge of shared understanding and healing.



In collaboration with Cirquencial, we organized **psychosocial support sessions tailored for children**, providing a much-needed outlet during these challenging times. With schools remaining closed and the constant threat of war, these sessions served as a refuge for children to express themselves and find relief.

We conducted two parallel sessions of 15 children each. Guided by trained PSS coaches, the children engaged in circus-based activities and movement exercises. These sessions not only introduced them to new skills but also offered a creative and physical avenue to release their emotions and cope with the ongoing stress. This initiative was a valuable step in supporting children’s mental well-being during a period of immense uncertainty and upheaval.



On a smaller scale, during the war, a solidarity based initiative that was proposed and led by members consisted of baking sweets to be distributed to displaced members and non-members affected by the war. Over three weeks, small groups of approximately 5 people each - mainly from Sudanese and Ethiopian communities - baked desserts for around 150 individuals.



## 1. Migrant Community Center

### Building and Sustaining Strong Communities for Migrant Domestic Workers

We believe that a strong community is at the core of any successful political movement. This is why we support migrant-led change through community building and then organizing, leading to collective action for systemic change.

**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 and free space for migrant community members to meet, make friends, foster stronger relationships, access resources, learn languages, build skills, produce knowledge, self-organize, and advocate for their rights.

**Space is crucial for any political movement—but especially for migrant domestic workers and other racialized groups in Lebanon.** The employers of live-in women migrant domestic workers often prevent them from leaving the home, or severely limit their mobility. More broadly, migrant workers and refugees are routinely denied access to the little public space that exists in Lebanon. This only worsened with the Lebanese army's increased targeting of Syrians for detention and deportation this year, with checkpoints and a culture of fear further limiting people's movements and access.

Another factor: ***As the Kafala systems gets older, so do the people living under it.*** MCC members have children, some of whom are now teenagers, and they need a safe, supportive space even more.

## Making Space: Sustaining Our New MCC

Following the grand opening of MCC in our new center in 2023, we focused on resuming community and capacity building activities, **encouraging the engagement of MCC members, and fostering an accessible space for migrant workers.** We wanted to make sure our space was accessible for migrant-led organizations who proposed different initiatives, used our open kitchen, and participated in different activities without having to “register” or be on any waitlists. We wanted to improve the sense of ownership members had over the space (especially through regular open members’ meetings and the creation of committees). Since the opening of the new MCC in Sin el Fil, the team’s primary focus was to create a warm, inclusive and accessible environment, while also being intentional about fostering a sense of belonging and ownership among members in shaping and caring for the space.

During the weekdays, the center hosts a variety of capacity and community building activities. However, it’s during the weekends that the center truly comes to life, buzzing with energy. People gather to socialize, cook together in the communal kitchen, access resources, and participate in the center’s collective life. The space is often also **booked by migrant-led groups/organizations** (such as VONWAIL, Tsenat, Reman, The Sons of Nuba Mountain group, and others) to gather, hold meetings, and organize events such as birthdays, cultural celebrations, courses (like baking or computer), farewells, graduations, and -sadly- funerals too.

In 2024, MCC hosted 37 migrant-led events/meetings. **Activities not requiring prior registration** such as yoga, aerobics and crochet circles, and movie nights were integrated. The inclusive activities were designed to welcome all migrant workers accessing the center regardless of whether or not they were registered as members.

With over 1000 members, biweekly members meetings have been a precious venue for encouraging communication and engagement with the different communities we work with. These gatherings provide members with a dedicated space where they can share feedback, raise concerns, discuss issues relevant to the center, and stay informed on the latest developments in MCC and the country.



Furthermore, there was more intentional work in designing and proposing activities catered to teenagers. We became aware of the fact that most of the activities done at the center were catered for children and/or adults, often leaving teenagers out of our interventions despite most of these teenagers having grown up at MCC. Teenagers didn't really have the opportunity to take on an active role in shaping the center. In order to address this gap, we organized consultations with teenagers who were split into two distinct age groups: 13 to 15 year olds and 15 to 18 year olds. Workshops and interactive activities were held in order to discuss their potential role and involvement in MCC, focusing on their interests, desires and expectations. The insights gathered demonstrated a strong desire for teenagers to have their own dedicated space in the center; a place they can personalise and feel ownership over. They also expressed their preferences when it comes to possible activities, mutual support initiatives, and had several suggestions on how to facilitate the development of stronger bonds amongst them. Based on this feedback, we designated a room solely for teenagers and worked on integrating their inputs in all upcoming interventions.

## Community Building

The community building component is the foundation of MCC as it fosters a sense of collectiveness, strong bonds and solidarity networks that contribute in creating a supportive environment. Over time, this foundation eventually leads to stronger and more politically engaged communities better equipped to advocate for their rights. In 2024, we organized **different social, cultural, and recreational activities** for MCC members and their children. Our 62 gatherings this year included various outings, wellbeing activities, and workshops such as:



- **A Robotics STEM education program and a summer camp** for children and teenagers, which encompassed robotics, circus and acrobatics, organic arts, clay making and painting. At the end of the summer camp, an exhibition was organized where children showcased the art they had created in the program, with a special focus on organic art and clay sessions.
- **A theater performance** by Circenciel titled Bayti Baytak was hosted at the center. The play addressed important issues like recycling and the environment.

- **A special “Ramadan night” open to the public featuring live Sudanese music and traditional Ramadan sweets.** The meals for the iftar were prepared by some MCC members who catered for 150 people. The Sudanese Cultural Band was invited, adding an element of excitement and contributing to the creation of an upbeat atmosphere where people were dancing, chanting, and enjoying the food.
- **A sports outing for families and children.** During winter, we had an outing at Hoops that was attended by 250 children.
- **Members decorating the center for different celebrations,** such as Christmas and New Years’ Eve.
- **A Halloween party in November.** In an effort to reclaim a sense of normalcy amidst the ongoing war, a group of MCC teenagers approached the center with a request to organize a Halloween party. With support from their parents, 15 teens enthusiastically took on the task of decorating several rooms at MCC, transforming the space into a ghostly, thematic setting. Despite the tragic circumstances surrounding the war, the event was a remarkable success. It not only brought joy to the teenagers but also allowed both teens and parents to momentarily step away from the distress of their reality and reconnect.

### Special focus: Workers’ Day

A discussion on Workers’ Day with MCC members took place in May 2024 during an open members’ meeting. The session featured a presentation that traced the evolution of Workers’ Day celebrations for migrant workers in Lebanon over the past decade, showcasing the banners and demands from various protests since 2013. The presentation motivated a discussion among members, the majority of whom were women, about the invisibility of domestic labor and its intersection with gender, race, and social status. The conversation expanded to address the discrimination faced by refugees, prompting reflections on the broader implications of irregular work and labour rights. To continue this conversation and further explore the themes that emerged from this dialogue, we organized a series of screenings focused on some of the key topics discussed.



### Spotlight: Committees!

In 2024, MCC focused on launching members-led committees in order to build an active, connected, and engaged community of members. The committees’ primary goal is to ensure that members are actively engaged in decision-making related to activities at the center through direct communication and involvement. The vision behind creating these committees is achieving a community that not only works together, but



supports one another to collectively thrive. These committees are designed to provide members with a platform to organize activities and understand how the organization functions on a larger scale.

The creation of these committees aligns with the core mission of ARM: to sustain a strong, well-connected, and active MCC membership. They emphasize feminist decision-making and non-hierarchical leadership in order to promote informed and appropriate decisions. The committees also serve as a way to strengthen the representation of members in ARM decision-making, enhancing communication and collaboration in the planning and management of activities.

The journey to this point began in 2017 when the conceptualization of the first MCC Members' Board took place, followed by board elections in the center in 2018. However, the outbreak of COVID-19 in 2020 temporarily halted these efforts as the pandemic closed the MCC, making it impossible for members to meet. In an effort to resume this essential component of the center after its re-opening in 2023, we spent a lot of time preparing for these committees by conducting research on community organizing and alternative decision-making models, in addition to gathering feedback through focus groups with past board members, ARM staff, and MCC members. Eventually, in 2024, the committees were launched through a series of presentations and training sessions.

Finally, a sortition event resulted in the selection of 16 members from diverse nationalities. Two committees were formed: the "Open and Accessible Space Committee" and the "Community Building Committee".

Following the war, the MCC committees organized their first event, a Solidarity Day. This event was designed as a space for members to share their feelings and reflect on their difficult experiences during the war that affected everyone in different ways. The goal was to foster solidarity among various migrant communities in Lebanon. It was a day of exchanging love, experiences, and emotions, both joyful and painful. The event included several performances, such as a theatre sketch, followed by an open microphone session and a large communal meal.



## Psychosocial Support

The 2024 psychosocial support (PSS) program targeted already-formed migrant-led groups. Throughout the year, we realised that different migrant-led groups that were relatively young needed a space where they could work on their internal dynamics, trust-building, and team-bonding.

In April 2024, the PSS Rhythm Intervention program kicked off with the migrant-led group “REMAN”. The program allowed 13 women to express themselves and release stress by playing music and singing, which was positively impactful on group dynamics.

In June, we collaborated with Clown Me In to carry out an Expressionism PSS program, which featured a variety of expressive approaches: theater, playtime, art, and music. It encouraged the participants to explore their emotions in a supportive environment. Six sessions were conducted targeting a total number of 15 teenage girls.

In July, a music therapy program was also organized targeting teenagers. Recognizing that music can serve as a powerful medium for self-expression, emotional exploration, and social connection, we believed it would be an effective tool to facilitate communication among this age group.

With the escalation of the war, PSS programs became a vital service as they created a space where members can collectively process feelings of loss, fear, uncertainty, and mourning.

### Special focus: Kafala Exhibition

This exhibition was envisioned from its inception as a collaborative platform, grounded in the active participation of MCC members. The planning process was designed for members to take a central role in defining both the theme and the goals of the exhibition. This participatory approach ensured that the exhibition would be shaped by their experiences, perspectives, and stories, challenging the dominant racist narrative about migrant workers. Through a series of consultations, it was decided that we would hold an exhibition about the Kafala system with a dual focus: to showcase Kafala’s oppressive nature while also celebrating acts and forms of resistance that migrant workers developed throughout the last decade against Kafala.

The intention was to raise awareness on the topic, showcasing the brutality of the Kafala system and institutionalised racism, without resorting to narratives that depict migrant workers as passive victims. It was important to illustrate the resourcefulness of workers, their strength, and collective efforts in challenging the oppressive conditions they live under. To make this happen, it was important for members to attend a workshop about the depiction of violence through an ethical lens, in order to avoid both sensationalisms and further trauma to survivors of abuse and other people affected by the Kafala system.



The members were involved in the creation of visual and written material using different means. Disposable cameras were used by many of the participants to document various aspects of their daily lives such as challenges met by migrant workers living under the Kafala system as well as glimpses of personal more intimate moments - friendships, trips, times of freedom etc.

With the escalation of the war, the focus of some participants shifted to capturing the destruction in their houses and neighborhoods, alongside funerals. Unfortunately, the planned exhibition

meant to highlight the horrors migrant workers endure under the kafala system, whether in their daily lives or in times of war,

could no longer proceed as originally intended. However, the participants decided not to abandon the project entirely, but to organize a smaller showcase of the photographs alongside some of the objects that were previously collected for the exhibition. Thus, on the 28th of December, the showcase was launched at the entrance of MCC. Despite the multiple challenges to the project, the group was committed to presenting what they've achieved so far. Their goal was to raise awareness, showcase their capabilities, honor their efforts, and keep the photographs displayed as living memories.



## Trainings and Info Sessions

Our media trainings aim to **empower migrant communities with the skills and tools they need to produce their own counter-narratives** that subvert the prevailing discourse on migration. Throughout the year, MCC provided hands-on video editing trainings catered to members who had different skill levels.

Preparatory sessions that cover basic computer knowledge are a prerequisite to the beginner video editing classes, ensuring that all participants possess a shared minimum level of technical skill. This foundational training is designed to facilitate a smoother engagement during the video editing sessions, enabling participants to focus on creative skills without having to struggle with various technical difficulties.

Additionally, a creative studio focused on storytelling was held in March and was designed to assist participants in delving deeper into their emotions and imagination, thereby unlocking powerful and inventive ways to articulate themselves and narrate their stories. The sessions were led by Shatr Collective who identified and trained writers within the MCC community, supporting them with creative tools to develop their storytelling abilities. Participants explored different writing prompts during the sessions and were given an overview of various writing outlets, such as fiction, poetry, and creative non-fiction. The collaboration was also meant to lay the groundwork for future creative writing sessions that are more targeted and customised to the interests of the members.

In an effort to **raise awareness about crucial health topics**, MCC organized a series of informative sessions in collaboration with specialised organizations. These sessions are fundamental as they facilitate migrant workers' access to essential services as well as providing information and guidance on sensitive topics, thus enabling workers to make informed decisions about their health and well-being.

- In July, MCC collaborated with SIDC, on the topic of sexually transmitted diseases. The first session included safe and confidential medical testing for STIs (sexually transmitted infections) for interested participants.
- In December, the center hosted MSF's mobile clinic. This event functioned as a medical day, where a dedicated team of doctors, nurses, midwives, and health educators provided essential healthcare services. Attendees received a range of free services, including medical consultations that specifically addressed sexual and reproductive health concerns.



### SPOTLIGHT: The Migrant-Led Media Collective continues its work!

After its launch in 2023, 17 migrant workers joined MCC's migrant-led media collective, which aims to counter racist media depictions, reclaim the public narrative, and offer more realistic multimedia reporting based on their lived experience. The collective challenges the profit-driven populist approach of traditional media, and instead implements a participatory, transparent, and democratic model.

In 2023, the media collective focused on laying a strong foundation by defining its identity, establishing its core values, and setting its shared vision. Moving into 2024, the collective members organized into three working groups, focusing on key areas: outreach and fundraising, governance, and sustainability. Through outreach and fundraising, the collective seeks to expand its reach and secure resources. The governance group works to establish clear decision-making processes, promoting accountability and inclusivity. Meanwhile, the sustainability group aims to identify the most relevant platform to the content they want to produce taking into consideration their resources and their need to remain anonymous for security reasons.



During the war, the media collective worked on documenting the experiences of migrant workers. They conducted three interviews with migrant workers and refugees affected by the war from Sudan, Kenya, and Cameroon. One of the interviewees had taken on the responsibility of hosting other displaced migrant workers in her makeshift shelter. The narratives shed light on the diverse challenges faced by migrant workers during the war, including displacement, loss of livelihood, the emotional toll of supporting others in similar circumstances, as well as a strong sense of solidarity.

The solidarity networks and supportive sentiment that emerged during the war was showcased by a video that was conceived, curated and edited by the media collective and screened during a Solidarity Event organized by the MCC Committees at the end of December.

## Archiving and Oral History

Since its inception in 2022, our in-house documentation and archiving program has been dedicated to **collecting and archiving physical and digital material** related to our work.

Given that many migrant community organizers have either been deported or made the decision to leave Lebanon in recent years, collecting their voices and testimonies is an important process to not only preserve their memories, but also to build on their experiences, strengthening future movements. As such, in 2024, we conducted six **oral history interviews** with MCC members specifically on migrant-led collective actions and organizing efforts. These interviews documented the process through which several migrant domestic workers became politicized in Lebanon, their experiences with collective action and collective support, and their dreams regarding the future.



## 2. Advocacy

### Mobilizing for Racial Justice in Lebanon and Supporting Migrant Domestic Workers' Self-Organizing

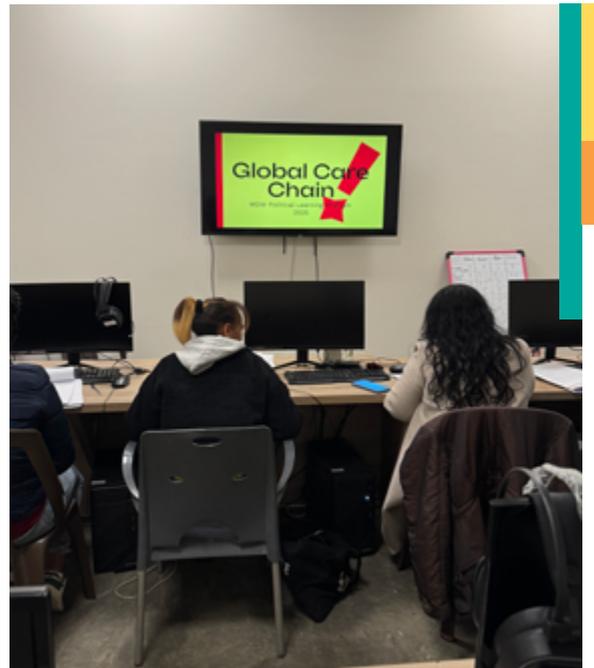
ARM believes that achieving a just society requires long-term, structural, and sustainable change. For years, our advocacy team has collaborated with migrant communities to challenge racism and the Kafala system in Lebanon, particularly focusing on women domestic workers' rights. We balance rapid response campaigning with long-term power building strategies. Our advocacy approach is shaped by partnerships with migrant activists, MCC members, participatory research, and insights from our casework. Our commitment to structural change includes supporting migrant domestic workers' political organizing, strategic campaigning, knowledge production and dissemination, and movement building through political education and awareness raising.

In 2024, we expanded our capacity for comprehensive research and knowledge production to support our campaigns and migrant led initiatives. This enhanced our understanding of Lebanon's racial dynamics, migrant worker organizing efforts, and the institutional frameworks sustaining the Kafala system, while also documenting and highlighting our movements' achievements. Our advocacy addresses numerous emergencies — such as the detention and deportation of valued migrant activists, anti-Syrian xenophobia and deportations, and the repercussions of the Gaza genocide and the Israeli war against Lebanese territory. Throughout these challenges, we maintained our commitment to empowering various self-organized migrant domestic worker initiatives toward greater independence from ARM, building on years of collaboration that provided them with essential resources, tools, and capabilities to independently lead their campaigns and initiatives.



## 2. A Political Learning Program Catered to Migrant Workers

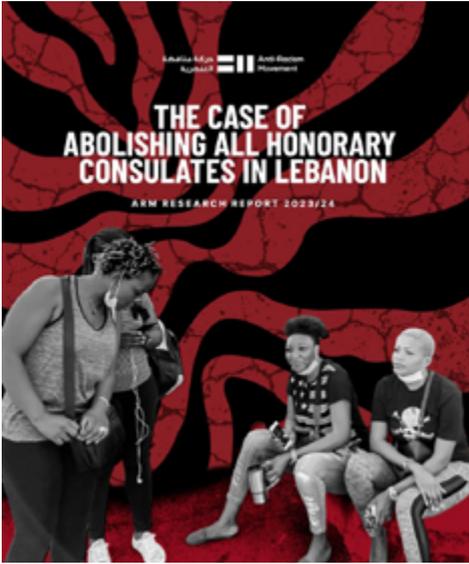
In addition to direct coaching, ARM developed a political learning program specifically for migrant organizers. The program covers the history of migration to the region, the history of the Kafala system and the exclusion of domestic workers from the labour law, alongside special considerations and lessons learned when it comes to collective bargaining and community organizing in Lebanon. In 2024, 15 workers attended this program which ended by providing participants with certificates of completion after they completed a set of quizzes related to the course material.



Another highlight of 2024 for our Advocacy team (in collaboration with MCC) was planning and executing the International Domestic Workers Day (IDWD) celebration. This included organizing a two-day nature retreat where members from diverse nationalities gathered to commemorate IDWD and enjoy time away from work and family responsibilities.



## Knowledge-Production and Research



### 1. **Abolish All Honorary Consulates - A Research Report**

The need for robust Consular responses that support migrant workers has become even more pressing since 2020, as Lebanon has faced significant socio-economic challenges, including a financial crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic. Protests by migrant domestic workers against their consulates highlighted systemic abuses and the inadequacies of Honorary Consuls who often lack the resources and authority to provide effective support. This research examined the role of Honorary Consuls in Lebanon, their historical context, and the structural issues that hinder their effectiveness. It underscores the urgent need for accountability and better support mechanisms for

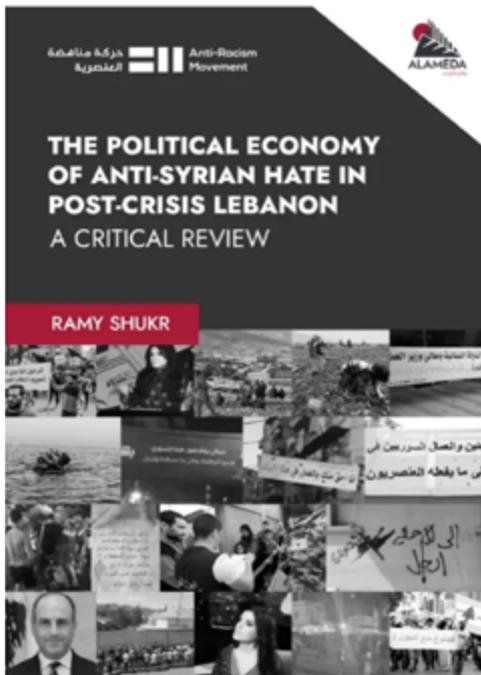
migrant workers, emphasizing that sending countries must enhance their diplomatic efforts to protect their citizens abroad. The remittances sent by these workers are vital for their home economies, making investment in Consular support a necessary priority, in the place of abusive honorary consuls.



### 2. **Publishing a Perception Survey**

In April 2024, we published a Perception Survey that investigates Lebanese citizens' perceptions of the Kafala system and domestic labor in light of Lebanon's economic crisis. The study, using surveys and focus groups, reveals a significant shift towards hiring freelance Migrant Domestic Workers over live-in ones (a 50% increase in freelance hiring and a 50% decrease in live-in), primarily due to it being a cheaper option for employers (48.7%). Despite this shift, exploitative practices persist, with only 29.31% of live-in MDWs possessing both their passport and residency permit, and 75% working 7 days a week. The research found

widespread misconceptions about the Kafala system, with many Lebanese incorrectly believing sponsors are legally responsible for MDWs' actions (50.9%) and that employers can withhold passports (55.4%). Almost half the respondents support abolishing Kafala (45.7%), with 38% suggesting migrant domestic workers be included in the Lebanese labor law. The public clearly sees private recruitment agencies as profiting most from the system, followed by state agencies, then employers, and with MDWs profiting least. The data presents some seemingly contradictory results, as many respondents want the abusive system abolished, yet still operate within the system.



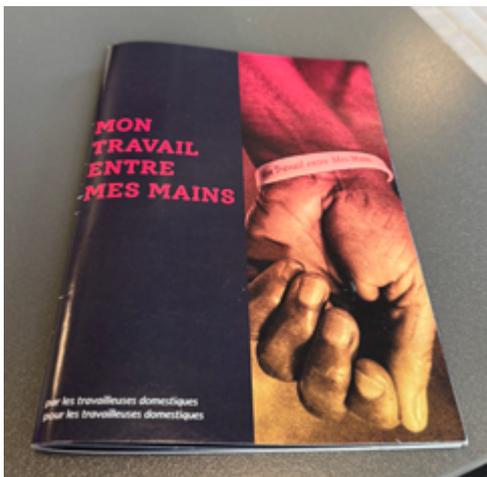
### 3. The Political Economy of Anti-Syrian Hate in Post-Crisis Lebanon

The economic crisis in Lebanon has caused a significant shift in the Lebanese class structure, with many previously middle-class individuals now pushed to take working class jobs. This shift has not been due to direct competition with Syrian workers but rather to the overall contraction of the economy and the scarcity of employment opportunities. The Lebanese ruling class has been attempting to solidify its position by exploiting Syrian labor and spreading anti-Syrian hate, while continuing to avoid the need for structural economic reforms. This strategy attempts to divert public attention from the root causes of the economic crisis in order to pit different segments of the working class against each other. This report contributes new insights by contextualizing the plight of Syrian refugees within

the broader dynamics of Lebanon’s economic crisis and the structure of the Lebanese economy. Unlike previous studies that often isolated the refugee issue from Lebanon’s structural economic problems, this analysis demonstrates how the refugees’ situation illuminates the failings and exploitative nature of the Lebanese economy.

### 4. Guidebook

In 2024, we also developed a guide book in 4 different languages (English, French, Sinhala and Amharic). The guidebook teaches you how to effectively deliver trainings on issues related to self-advocacy for migrant workers. The guidebook was prepared and finalized, and will be published and distributed in 2025.



## Local Advocacy

Since October 2023, escalating violence and Israeli bombardment in Lebanon have caused a massive displacement crisis. The Lebanese government's response has created a discriminatory situation, as it has declared that government-run shelters will only accommodate Lebanese citizens, leaving the responsibility for non-Lebanese nationals, including numerous migrant workers, to the UN and other agencies. This policy has resulted in incidents of migrant workers being evicted from public shelters, with documented cases involving dozens of Sierra Leonean and Bangladeshi individuals in areas like Tripoli and Beirut. Despite appeals from concerned civil society groups, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Lebanon has deemed the establishment of an IOM-operated shelter "infeasible." This has left civil society organizations and migrant activists with the overwhelming burden of running informal shelters, operating with severely limited resources and facing considerable personal risks.

**In response, ARM in collaboration with Migrant Workers Action (MWA) led a coalition of organizations to issue a statement condemning the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Lebanon for inadequately responding to the current crisis and refusing to open shelters for displaced migrant workers during the Israeli war on Lebanon.** The statement demanded that the IOM take immediate action by establishing and maintaining emergency shelters specifically for migrant communities and by actively advocating for the Lebanese government to adopt a non-discriminatory approach in its emergency response, ensuring that all residents, regardless of nationality, receive protection and assistance.





**What is capitalism?**

2. Production is based on **wage-labor**, i.e. people who, in order to survive, must sell their capacity to work in exchange for a salary or wage. These workers **do not**:

- a) own the machines that they use ('the means of production').
- b) own the wealth that they produce.
- c) nor do they acquire the profits made from the sale of that which they produce!





### 3. Casework

#### Improving Access to Social, Legal, and Medical Support for Migrant Workers in Lebanon

ARM's casework program has, over several years, documented the extensive consequences of the Kafala system on migrant workers. These impacts are pervasive, affecting fundamental human rights, employment conditions, family life, freedom of movement, and physical and mental well-being. While ARM advocates for systemic reform, the casework team concurrently strives to alleviate the immediate harms of the Kafala system experienced by individuals. The team provides direct support to workers facing labor exploitation (including wage theft, unsafe working conditions, and abuse by employers, sponsors, or recruitment agencies), forced labor, human trafficking, immigration status irregularities, and those seeking asylum.

The casework team employs a multi-faceted, migrant-centered approach. The core service is case management, wherein designated "case leaders" – migrant workers with active cases – receive comprehensive support, including counseling, referrals to partner organizations, mediation between parties involved, and legal assistance and representation. The team adheres to defined criteria for providing legal aid, prioritizing cases involving labor law violations, recruitment agency misconduct, UNHCR appeal processes, and assistance with administrative procedures (e.g., nationality applications, sponsorship transfers). Beyond legal support, the team provides psychosocial support to address, holistically, the well-being of case leaders.

To ensure comprehensive support, ARM maintains a robust referral network. When the casework team's internal resources or expertise are insufficient, migrant workers are connected with partner organizations that can provide essential services, including basic needs provision, medical care, and specialized legal interventions. This referral process is informed by a detailed service map, which is continuously updated through regular collaboration with other non-governmental organizations (NGOs) serving migrant communities. The casework team is committed to rigorous follow-up on all

referred cases to ensure the needs of the caseleader are fully addressed. This may, at times, involve a prolonged process of coordination with multiple service providers.

Furthermore, the team conducts community-based workshops, informed by direct consultations with affected communities. These workshops address prevalent concerns and provide clarification regarding the legal complexities of the Kafala system.

**Special focus:** While the workload in 2024 remained similar to previous years, the casework team noticed a shift in the types of cases, particularly an increase in documentation needs, UNHCR appeals and re-openings, and, more prominently, difficulties in registering children for school. These issues are interconnected, as the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) in Lebanon released a new circular by the end of 2023 for school registration: non-Lebanese individuals must hold a valid residency permit or be recognized as refugees by UNHCR. Those with only a UNHCR barcode are given lower priority and can only add their names to school waiting lists.

As a result, many cases emerged from individuals needing support in obtaining legal residency, securing documentation for their children, or registering with UNHCR, most with the goal of enrolling their children in schools.

## Direct Support

People seek casework support through helplines, in person at our center, and through partner referrals from migrant worker collectives and local and international organizations. The majority of cases in 2024 were migrant workers facing labour violations. The team consistently provided case management, counselling, referrals and legal intervention. This year, we provided a total of 207 services. We were able to

- Conduct 110 needs assessments,
- Refer 47 individuals,
- Provide legal intervention to 48 caseleaders, and
- Counsel 39 individuals.

Furthermore, as part of the Agencies Project, where the team tracks and compiles agency violations, we submitted 3 complaints about different agencies to the Ministry of Labour.

## Community Capacity Building

Our model of systemic change includes actively sharing access to information and resources with migrant-led collectives and MCC members. As the few available interventions for abuses under Kafala are often complex and obscured, we held some legal information sessions for MCC members and community members. These included:

- An information session on the process of release of sponsorship/transfer of guarantorship attended by 60 individuals. This session was conducted in 4 different languages: English, Arabic, French and Amharic. One of the sessions took place outside of the space, in Wadi Chahrour, as per the request of a community organizer.

- The team also ran a series of workshops on 4 topics: legal frameworks, simplified emergency guide, NGO processes, and psychological first aid. The workshops ran in 3 languages: English, Arabic and French, and reached 4 people per language, for a total of 16 community organizers.

## Internal Capacity Building

In response to the incredible challenge of the past few crisis years, the casework team invested significant time this year in improving its internal mechanisms and expanding outreach. This included:

- The team attended 4 training sessions on mental health, substance use among vulnerable women, and refugee resettlement processes. The team also organized a training on repatriation, facilitated by our colleague Hadi Nasreldine who led on the repatriation process during the 2020 crisis that followed the covid pandemic, Lebanon's economic collapse and the August 4<sup>th</sup> port explosion.
- The casework team finalized a comprehensive emergency guide along with a shorter and more simplified version. This guide serves as a manual for how to support when encountering emergency cases involving migrant domestic workers. We rolled out two internal training sessions on the emergency guide for our staff.
- Some improvements to our internal case management guide took place, to keep it up to date with the recent lessons learned.



## Expanding Partnerships and Referrals

Our service mapping and outreach both aim to expand access to resources for migrant workers seeking casework support, and advocate for partner organizations and others to prioritize migrant workers and other racialized groups in their work. This year, we:

- Outreached to 20 organizations for the purposes of service mapping and different collaborations. We also outreached to one embassy and held one meeting with the Lebanese General Security.
- Collaborated with several organisations including: Seeds for Legal Initiatives, CLDH, SIDC, HEAL (AUBMC), MSF, IOM, Amel, Skoun, IRAP, ICRC, Public Works Studio, and Legal Agenda.
- Regularly attended national migrant sector monthly meetings, emergency response migrant sector meetings, and the national protection working group.





## 4. Organizational Development

### Building Internal Capacity, Learning, and Accountability

ARM's programs team is in charge of facilitating ARM's fundraising, monitoring, and safeguarding processes. The team is made up of five people and two sub-teams. The head of programs and one program officer focus on fundraising operations whereas our MEAL manager and another program officer focus on data intake, evaluation, and monitoring. ARM's third program officer is also the organization's appointed safeguarding focal point.

The MEAL and fundraising team work closely together to ensure smooth operations with our partners and the reporting of relevant data. As a whole, the team works to oversee ARM's annual cycle (including but not limited to the internal and external stakeholder analysis, the bi-annual analysis, the work plans and MEAL plans setup, etc.) and organizes relevant workshops (such as safeguarding trainings and strategic workshops) to ensure the relevance and adherence of ARM's overall operations to its mandate.

2024 was shaped by a combination of planned programming, crisis adaptation, and organizational strengthening activities.

### Organizational Planning

When it comes to carrying out ARM's annual cycle, the teams organized strategic workshops that aimed to plan ARM's interventions for the years ahead. These strategic workshops took place during the beginning of the year on set "strategic planning" days where the whole organization got together to reflect on the year that passed and plan for the next phase. In order to do that, we go over what we've accomplished, our challenges, and desires for the future. Also, we make sure to integrate learning and team-building activities during these sessions.

## Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL)

Alongside program implementation, the MEAL team played a crucial role in streamlining operations and enhancing the organization's approach. A significant undertaking was the transition to a new reporting software, Odoo. The MEAL team worked closely with all other teams to ensure a smooth data migration process, ultimately simplifying data management and reporting.

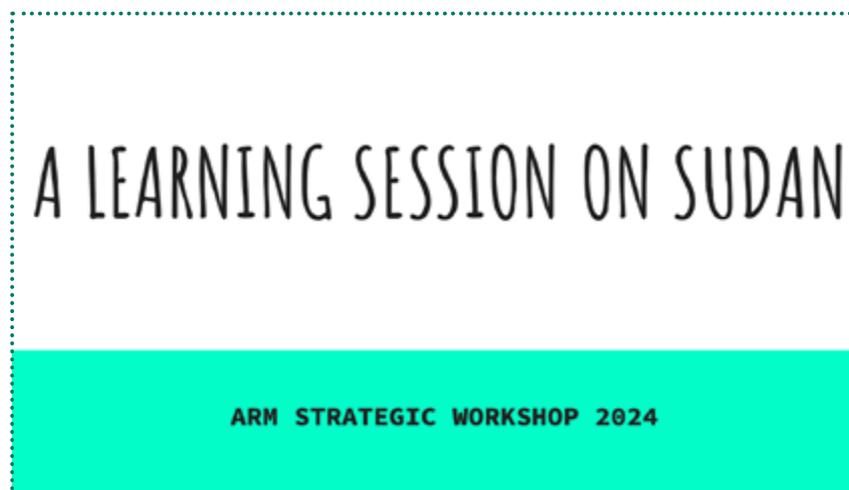
To better understand the needs and perspectives of the community served, the MEAL team conducted a "social and political survey" at the MCC. The insights gained from this survey were intended to directly inform the center's activities, strategic planning, and future program development, ensuring that initiatives were relevant and responsive to the community's evolving situation.

Furthermore, the MEAL team took steps to advance the organization's commitment to transforming current gender relations. They embarked on research into feminist MEAL principles and practices. Building on this research, they began integrating a gender-transformative approach across all of ARM's teams. This involved incorporating gender considerations into daily plans, as well as overall monitoring and evaluation processes.

## Internal Capacity Building

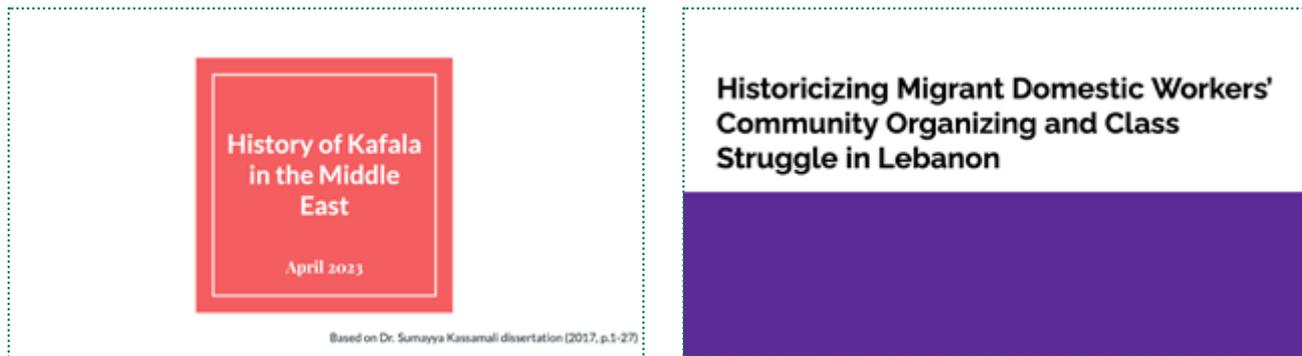
### 1. Context Analysis

Conducting context analysis is essential for civil society organizations working in complex and often unstable environments. It helps understand the context, various social, cultural, political, economic, and geographical trends and factors that contribute to crises, which can either hinder or facilitate their efforts. In conducting the context analysis for 2023 and beginning of 2024, which was presented in organizational strategic workshops, different aspects that could affect migrant workers were enumerated and explained based on secondary data collected. In addition, a learning session on the war in Sudan took place during the strategic retreat.



## 2. Staff Political Learning

In an effort to continuously improve our team members' knowledge and critical thinking skills, we conduct regular political learning sessions led by our in-house Knowledge Coordinator. In 2024, five sessions were conducted, attended by all staff members, with various topics discussed such as the History of Kafala, Understanding Anti-Syrian Hate in Lebanon, and Historicizing Migrant-Led Groups in the Country.



## Building Culture

The year marked significant progress in strengthening ARM's safeguarding processes, prioritizing the safety and well-being of all individuals associated with the organization. A dedicated safeguarding officer was appointed, providing a central point of contact and expertise for safeguarding matters. Complementing this role, two People of Confidence (PoCs) were designated, serving as accessible and trusted individuals for staff, volunteers, or community members to report any safeguarding concerns or incidents. The establishment of this multifaceted approach was crucial for creating a responsive and supportive framework that addresses potential risks.

To ensure a comprehensive and unified approach, an in-depth review of existing ARM policies was undertaken, alongside research into various approaches to justice and best practices in safeguarding. The goal was to consolidate these insights into a single, robust safeguarding policy that reflected the organization's values and addressed the specific needs and context of its operations. Input from different teams within ARM was actively solicited to identify and incorporate their specific safeguarding concerns into the newly developed policy.

Following the policy's development, a comprehensive training program was rolled out. All staff members received workshops and training sessions to ensure they understood their responsibilities under the safeguarding policy and were equipped to recognize and respond appropriately to potential safeguarding issues. Additionally, designated safeguarding focal points received specialized training to deepen their understanding and enhance their capacity to effectively deal with potential safeguarding cases.

## In Their Own Words

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For me, MCC is a home that is so loving, caring and accommodating. It is a home for all migrants who have lost hope. MCC gives you hope. I come here with my daughter to relax, cook whatever I want to eat, all is provided. My daughter and I celebrate our birthdays there every year. We always feel safe and protected. We've learned many skills through activities and trainings. This is a home where my daughter and I have peace and feel safe and secured. We've been there and are still there to this day and I pray MCC our home will continue to function as is and even better in the nearest future. MCC, our second home!

Scholar



MCC has managed to create a safe place for migrants to meet, get along and socialize. I consider the center to be a place where we can release stress and have some kind of real and genuine community support. That is what I am grateful for, and will always be hopeful for its continuity.

Shourouk



**The following two testimonies are from members of MCC committees:**

“

When I first started I did not know what it was going to be like. Then we started meeting and working together on the bylaws and agendas for future meetings. This made me very happy. Happy about the committees - we were all happy. You held the space open for all the difficulties and pains we were experiencing (during war). I also like that we organized the Solidarity Event. I enjoyed the workshop we recently had.. it helped me progress. I also share some of my ideas in these spaces.. I think the harmony is there. We try to understand each other and discuss things together. We're working well together. It's beautiful and it's good.

Jeanette [Translated from French]

”

“

In regards to my experience with the committees, honestly it was a beautiful experience with collaboration. It had new ideas being proposed, being discussed together, and hopefully it will be good for the MCC. I love that we are all respectful of each other and each other's opinions. So honestly, the experience was a good one, but one that holds responsibility. The responsibility of being on time to our meetings, of sticking to our decisions, and sticking to what we're doing. I gained new skills, I heard new ideas, and I loved that we were meeting.. I feel like meeting days are days that bring us together like a family, we share both positive and negative things together which I really enjoyed and benefited from.

Fatima [Translated from Arabic]

”

## Key Challenges and Highlights

The organization faced a myriad of interconnected challenges in 2024, significantly exacerbated by the war escalation from September 2024 onwards. The war in Lebanon impacted all aspects of operations, from activities at the MCC to program implementation and advocacy work. A primary challenge was maintaining a balance between addressing short-term emergency needs prompted by the war escalation with our commitment to long term and sustainable change. This required constant adaptation of work plans and structures, placing immense pressure on staff and community organizers, leading to a situation where burnout was common.

Resource constraints, particularly staffing shortages and a lack of funding opportunities, created additional challenges that prevented us from doing more. Difficulties in recruiting qualified personnel created bottlenecks in fundraising and project management, limiting the scope and impact of some programs. The rapid pace of the emergency response, while necessary, created subsequent challenges in documentation and reporting. A complex transition to a new organizational management system (Odoo) further strained resources, requiring extensive consultations, training, and customization, which delayed full implementation and added to operational difficulties.

The presence of the MCC, while a vital resource, also introduced complexities to safeguarding processes. The organization needed to address power dynamics not only between staff and MCC members but also among MCC members themselves.

In summary, the organization navigated a highly challenging environment characterized by a major conflict, internal capacity limitations and resource scarcity. The interconnected nature of these challenges across different operational areas highlights the systemic impact of external crises and some internal vulnerabilities on an organization's ability to fulfill its mission. Nevertheless, ARM's resilience and its commitment to ongoing learning and transformation enabled it to survive and actively address these challenges, as we remain hopeful for a brighter year ahead.

## Our Financial Records

We are grateful for the deep relationships, collaborative spirit, and essential support from our funding partners, which makes this work possible.

Below is a breakdown of our total income by donor, and a breakdown of our expenditures. All amounts are in USD and are rounded figures.

### Total Income 1,629,155 USD

The Ford Foundation	1,125,000
Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC)	160,000
Kvinna till Kvinna (KTK)	90,381
UN Women	82,718
Norwegian People Aid (NPA)	36,364
Fundahope	33,122
Fund for Global Human Rights UK (FGHR)	27,490
The Freedom Fund (FF)	25,000
Porticus	22,520
African Women's Development Fund (AWDF)	5,000
Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women (GAATW)	3,200
Other donations from ARM supporters	18,360

### Total Expenditures 1,793,102 USD

Staff salaries	517,000
MCC operations	282,337
Rent, utilities + maintenance	147,873
Consultancies + legal services	301,844
Advocacy + casework operations	141,670
Staff benefits + social security	175,936
Work permits	21,000
Accounting + auditing	92,145
Transportation + communication	32,624
In-house counseling + clinical supervision	5,200
Government taxes + bank charges	15,845
Groceries, food, + cleaning supplies	21,313
Furniture, equipment, + computers	14,524
Evaluation + learning meetings, staff training	23,791

*Please note that the difference between income and expenditure figures is related to the spending timelines and the dates of receipt of various grants and donations. If you want to learn more, please feel free to reach out.*

## Our Partners and Collaborators

In addition to our funding partners on the previous page, we are deeply grateful to our local and regional partners for their expertise, collaboration, and work for systemic change. These include:

### Organizations and groups that we collaborated with in 2024:

- Alameda Institute
- Beirut Institute for Critical Analysis and Research (BICAR)
- CAPE
- Cirquenciel
- Clown me in
- Eгна Legna Besidet (ELB)
- Great Oven
- Inform Africa
- Migrant Workers Action (MWA)
- MSD Lebanon
- Tabitha

### Alliances and networks that we participate 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:

- Amel
- HEAL (Health, Empowerment, Advocacy, Learning - AUBMC)
- ICRC
- International Organization for Migration (IOM)
- International Refugee Assistance Project (IRAP)
- Lebanese Center for Human Rights (CLDH)
- Legal Agenda
- Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF)
- Seeds for Legal Initiatives
- Skoun
- Society for Inclusion and Development in Communities (SIDC)
- Public Works Studio

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

- Lara Wakim, for music therapy and psychosocial sessions
- Nermine Sibai, human rights lawyer, ARM's legal advisor
- ARM Board members and advisors: Nadine Moawad, Haitham Khoury, Dina Baslan, Sumayya Kassamali, Soumaya Berri, Rania El Rajji

Last but never least, **we are deeply grateful to the ARM and MCC team, MCC members, and broader migrant communities**, without which we would not exist. Thank you for living the world as we want it to be.



## Connect with Us

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[www.armlebanon.org](http://www.armlebanon.org)



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## Acknowledgements

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العنصرية



Anti-Racism  
Movement