EMBRACE

EMBRACE the Middle East

THE CHRISTIAN DEVELOPMENT CHARITY TACKLING POVERTY AND INJUSTICE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

SUMMER / AUTUMN 2026



Read the amazing story about the church that created a dairy!

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Twin your Christmas Tree!
With a Palestinian Olive Tree Pages 20-21



WELCOME

Our Christian faith calls us to be peacemakers. As I read the stories in this full summer-autumn issue of Embrace, I'm encouraged by the many ways our partners are living examples of this, supported by your generosity.

On page 23, you'll read about our partner Musalaha, determinedly holding open the door of reconciliation in Israel and Palestine at a time of deepening division.

On page 16, we're delighted to introduce a new partnership with IMPACT, helping refugees in Egypt rebuild their lives through practical support, training and employment opportunities.

In Lebanon, many children living in Dbayeh refugee camp are still carrying fear and trauma from the recent war. On page 24, you'll discover how our partner the Joint Christian Committee is helping them rediscover confidence, friendship and joy through sport.

You'll also find an update from Gaza on page 18, where the health workers you support continue to care for their communities with remarkable dedication and compassion despite the challenges they face each day.

What strikes me in all these stories is that peacemaking can be found in everyday acts of kindness, courage and perseverance that help people

> **For us, standing alongside our partners means not only responding to immediate needs, but also speaking out for justice and a lasting peace for everyone who calls the Holy Land home.**

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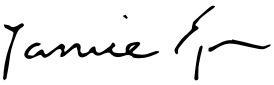
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heal and look to the future with hope. For us, standing alongside our partners means not only responding to immediate needs, but also speaking out for justice and a lasting peace for everyone who calls the Holy Land home.

You'll also find an update on the Time to Act campaign and our work with the Christian Just Peace Coalition on page 10, uniting Christians in practical action for a just peace for all who call the Holy Land home. We also share how you can get involved, alongside news of our recent involvement at General Synod.

In our deeply troubled and divided world, thank you for continuing to walk alongside us. Your prayers, generosity and encouragement make this work possible. Together we can reach out and speak out with faith, hope and compassion.

Every blessing,



Jamie Eyre,
CEO, Embrace the Middle East



Invitation to the Embrace

Bethlehem Carol Service!

When: Thursday 10th December, 7pm
Where: St Pancras Church, Euston Road, London

Join us to celebrate and worship together with Christmas carols, traditional Middle Eastern music, and an address from His Eminence Archbishop Angaelos, OBE, Coptic Orthodox Archbishop of London.

Further details will be announced soon at embraceme.org/events

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FROM A MUSTARD SEED OF FAITH GROWS

A DAIRY!



"The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed... it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches." **Matt. 13:31-32**

Faith means we often follow where we believe God is leading us without knowing what the consequences will be. In 2021, Embrace supported a small Sustainable Agriculture Training Course, run by our Lebanese partner Thimar. Little did we know how this mustard seed would grow...

Members of Rahbeh church in northern Lebanon travelled over 3 hours to attend each session as they had the vision of starting a farming project in their community to bring employment and support for low-income families. Over the next few years, we, Thimar and Rahbeh church worked together as their vision took root and a mixed farm of crops and dairy herd began to flourish:





Initially, their herd numbered just 9 cows and milk was sold to help fund the rest of the farm. But Rahbeh church soon realised that turning the milk into cheese and other dairy products would be a better use of the resource – creating more employment opportunities and increasing profitability.

They began producing cheese in the church kitchen, but by the end of 2024 the team were looking for a place to turn into a full-time dairy to expand the enterprise.

continued over

“Today the herd has grown to 36 and produces around 500 litres of milk per day!



In August 2025, part-funded by Embrace, they moved their cows to a larger location in a neighbouring village, which had a disused but purpose-built dairy they could renovate. Today the herd has grown to 36 and produces around 500 litres of milk per day!

As the dairy production expanded, so too did the employment opportunities. The team ran a dairy production vocational training course for local women and at the end of the course were able to offer three of them permanent positions in their newly expanded dairy.

On 18 October 2025, the fully refurbished Rahbeh Farm Dairy Factory was opened! Today the team produce a wide range of products, including cheese and yoghurt, providing affordable, high-quality food for the local community.

They were also able to help when the recent Israel-Hezbollah war displaced hundreds of thousands of families – regularly sending supplies of dairy products to shelters and host communities.

Watch their video update: embraceme.org/blog/rahbeh-dairy

The road from Damascus: **Lily's Story**

The Christian communities of Syria have been shrinking dramatically since 2011. As economic paralysis and sectarian violence continue to blight the country, more Christians are looking to leave. Those who choose to stay are often motivated by their faith – like Lily, Programme Manager at Embrace partner the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC) in Syria, an ecumenical alliance of local churches, providing a range of humanitarian support for their neighbours:

"I have always wanted to do social work. I started volunteering in my church when I was 13 and I have continued since then. I love my job so much because for me it's the only way that I can do something for the people who are vulnerable here.

I believe that the most important expression of our faith is through helping others, impartially and with respect – whether Christian, or any other faith. When people thank us for our help, we tell them that we are just the intermediaries; we are giving them what they deserve.

Before the war, we had a large middle class in Syria. Now, the poverty is dire. Thousands of people have lost their jobs. People face food insecurity, difficulty providing shelter, education, meeting their medical needs.

People have been living under such stress for so long it affects their wellbeing - there are huge numbers of people with mental health issues and depression... Violence at home is also very common here.



Above: Lily leading a health awareness session for women in Damascus.

Many cannot do anything in the current situation. They often feel despair, helpless, hopeless. They look to MECC and other organisations to provide some hope. This is why I do my job, because we are giving hope to people.

But the humanitarian needs are huge – more than donors are able to meet. This is the problem we are facing as an organisation: you cannot help all. It is really hard when you meet people face-to-face and have to tell them, 'I cannot help you'. It is unimaginably hard."

Please hold Lily, the rest of the staff at MECC and all those they are helping in your prayers.



REACHING THE UNREACHED:

SPECIALIST LOCAL DISABILITY CARE

Imagine not being able to access the specialist treatment your child needs. That is the reality for many in the West Bank, where movement restrictions, difficulty getting travel permits and the high cost of travel can stop families from reaching clinics, particularly in Jerusalem.



This is why our partner the Jerusalem Princess Basma Centre (JPBC) has been building up their Living Roots Outreach Programme – training medical professionals at clinics across the West Bank to ensure that expert assessment, intervention and rehabilitation therapies are available for children with disabilities near to where they live. This year they've been able to add two new clinics to their network!

Their local network meant that when Asma noticed that her youngest child Zaid was slower in reaching key milestones than his siblings, she was able to take him to be assessed at her local medical centre in Yatta, in the Hebron governorate. Diagnosed with brain damage caused by oxygen deprivation at birth, he was immediately enrolled in JPBC's intervention programme.

It was the first step on a long journey which has included an initial stay at the Jerusalem centre for intensive intervention and then ongoing local support, visits and online consultations to help the family continue Zaid's treatment at home.

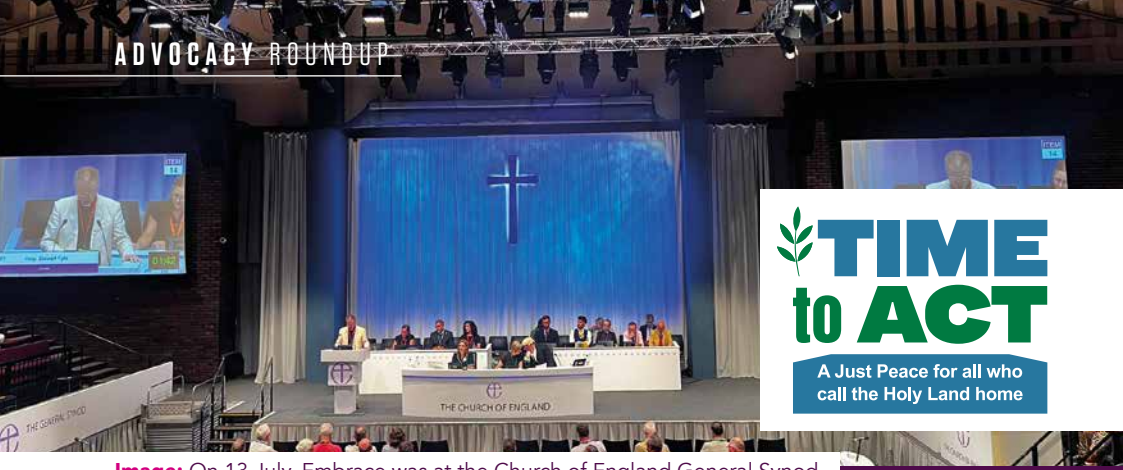
Initially Asma's dream was to see Zaid walk, so when that moment came it was incredible. The JPBC team told us:

"His mother and father were overwhelmed with disbelief and joy. It was a moment they describe as unforgettable, clear proof of how the right intervention, at the right place, can change a child's life…

Zaid now moves confidently. He has grown stronger and more empowered, greeting everyone he meets with a bright smile. His positive energy fills the space around him, and his progress during therapy sessions continues to be remarkable, reflecting both his determination and the impact of consistent, specialised care."

Zaid's family continue to do everything to support his development and Asma is now hopeful that her son will be able to grow up to live an independent life – it will be an incredible achievement for someone who has started life with so many obstacles to overcome.

"His mother and father were overwhelmed with disbelief and joy. It was a moment they describe as unforgettable, clear proof of how the right intervention, at the right place, can change a child's life."



TIME to ACT
A Just Peace for all who call the Holy Land home

Image: On 13 July, Embrace was at the Church of England General Synod.

TIME TO ACT
CAMPAIGN LAUNCHED

Uniting churches in working together for a Just Peace in Palestine and Israel

On 13 July, the Church of England's General Synod passed a historic motion committing the Church to hear the witness of Palestinian Christians and to work for justice, peace and reconciliation in Israel and Palestine. Embrace, alongside partner organisations, supported the Diocese of Carlisle and Synod members who successfully brought the motion before Synod.

The decision comes at a significant moment. Just weeks earlier, on 22 June, the Just Peace Coalition (of which Embrace is a founding member) launched its Time to Act campaign, mobilising Christians and churches across the UK to work for a just peace for everyone who calls the Holy Land home.

Across Palestine and Israel, communities continue to endure devastating violence, loss and injustice. Palestinian Christians have called for the global Church to respond not with silence or despair, but with courage, compassion and action.





The Time to Act campaign is a response to this call, and is supported across the denominations, including by the Methodist Church, URC, Quakers in Britian and leaders of the Catholic Church and the Church of England – including the Archbishop of York and the Archbishop of Jerusalem.

By standing together, we can amplify our voices and act with conviction, clarity and compassion to stand against injustice.

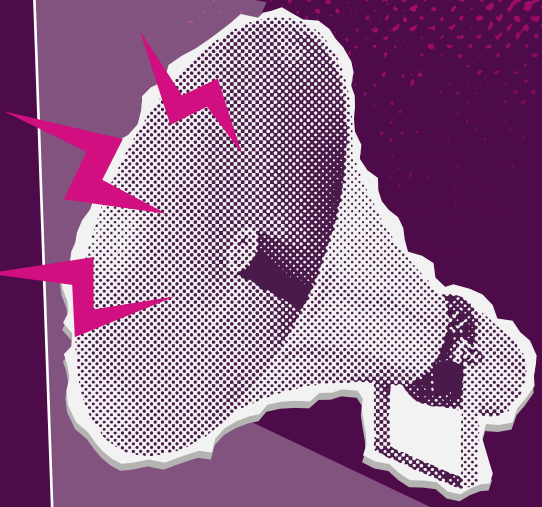
At the heart of the campaign is a call for the UK Government to take concrete steps to help end Israel's illegal occupation and uphold Palestinian human rights by:

1. **Banning trade with and investment in illegal settlements,** and suspend the UK–Israel Trade and Partnership Agreement until Israel ends its illegal occupation and respects Palestinian human rights.
2. **Suspending all arm sales to Israel** until it complies with international law.
3. **Imposing sanctions on Israeli ministers and political leaders** who are inciting or are responsible for severe human rights violations against Palestinians.
4. **Cooperating with and supporting the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court to ensure accountability for all parties.** Accountability includes prosecuting UK citizens who have committed war crimes abroad.

Add your voice to this call and join a growing movement of people committed to listening, learning, living differently and taking action for justice, accountability and peace in Palestine and Israel by visiting: **embraceme.org/timetoact**

There you will also find resources, learning opportunities and practical ways to take action in support of a just and lasting peace.

WE NEED YOUR HELP TO AMPLIFY OUR PARTNERS VOICES FOR CHANGE IN SYRIA



In June, Embrace submitted a report for the UN's Universal Periodic Review (UPR). This represents an opportunity to ensure that the voices of our partners in Syria are heard by both the UK government and Syria's transitional authorities. The UPR is a UN process that reviews a country's human rights record and allows other states, including the UK, to recommend changes.

We developed this report together with local Christians, who work every day alongside communities affected by violence, insecurity and hardship. Their evidence, insight and lived experience are at the heart of this submission.

The report raises urgent concerns, including the need for an inclusive constitutional process, better protection for religious and ethnic minorities, affordable access to basic goods and services, and stronger protection for women's rights.

Be part of this important effort by writing to your MP and urging them to raise this report and its recommendations with the UK government ahead of Syria's UPR.

Scan the QR code or visit: **embraceme.org/syria-upr**

You can read the report in full at: **embraceme.org/syria-report**

Though we are many, **we are one body**

> *For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another."*
>
> **Romans 12:4-5**

Few of us have the skills to give a medical check-up to a refugee family; or know how to run a crisis response programme; or experienced in giving specialist support for traumatised children…

But we can all play a role in making this vital work happen. Because as St Paul tells us, we are all part of the one body of Christ.

Our sisters and brothers in the Middle East recognise the role your partnership - in the form of prayer, advocacy and giving – plays in their work. Regular giving, in particular, provides something precious: stability.

We thank all who have already committed to give monthly or yearly. Your donations give the assurance that help will still be there tomorrow, making it possible for our partners to plan ahead, invest in long-term solutions and serve with confidence and resilience right across the Middle East.



If you do not already give regularly, please consider setting up a regular donation - find out more at embraceme.org/regular-giving

THE BEEKEEPER OF SLEVANY



LOANS BUILD NEW LIVELIHOODS

Finding a job in Iraq is incredibly difficult. Years of war, displacement, political turmoil and the increasing impact of climate change have left the Iraqi economy in crisis. Any employment that is available is often temporary and low paid.

In northern Iraq, approximately 60% of the working-age population are not in paid work. For many, their only option to earn a living is to build a business from scratch. But this is tough - and all but impossible without funds. This is where the work of Embrace partner CAP (Christian Aid Programme) is so important.

They provide holistic support to economically deprived villages to, in their words, "build stronger communities for a sustainable tomorrow". This includes helping villages improve their infrastructure, such as installing sustainable irrigation systems; initiatives to tackle the impact of climate change; and loans and grants to help locals set up stable businesses that will provide a service for their communities and help build up employment opportunities long term.

28-year-old Mustafa applied for one of these grants. He had struggled to find enough work as a day labourer in his village in the Slevany region of Iraq. Having learnt the art of beekeeping from his uncle, Mustafa used his loan to purchase 60 beehives. With the help of his uncle, he is now building up a thriving business and has regular customers. Thanks to this year's long spring season, which he says has given the bees enough time to feed, Mustafa is hopeful of a bumper crop of honey per hive - sweet reward for his hard work!



"Finally, I have a stable source of income that helps me support my family and secure a better future for them."
Mustafa

Hassan also received help through the scheme. A talented blacksmith, he makes metal doors, windows, and agricultural items. But the limited and unreliable national electricity supply meant his work often ground to a halt. A grant from the scheme has meant Hassan could buy his own generator:

"The support provided by CAP made a real difference in my work. The generator helped me complete installations on time and work more independently without delays."
Hassan

Help more people like Mustafa and Hassan with our new Support for Start-Ups Alternative Gift available for £25 from **shop.embraceme.org**



Bridges of Hope

Vocational training for refugees in Egypt

"Impact's heart is that while migrants grieve their losses, they may encounter new life, hope, and healing through Christ... Our mission is to build bridges of lasting hope by serving refugees and vulnerable communities enabling them to use their God-given skills and resources to rebuild their lives with dignity and purpose."

These are the words of Embrace's newest partner – Impact. Although only three years old, this Christian-run initiative in Egypt is already more than living up to its name!

Founded in 2023, to help the thousands of refugees fleeing to Egypt because of the brutal civil war in Sudan, Impact now runs a wide range of training courses, for both Sudanese refugees, and women and youth from Egypt's marginalised communities, helping them gain the skills they need for Egypt's job market. Their 'Bridges of Hope' courses include textiles skills, home appliance maintenance and hospitality.

But it is far more than a training programme – it's about healing from trauma, building resilience, community and sustainability.

Psychological support sessions are offered, concentrating on life skills, emotional resilience and (for the Christian participants) Bible study.



Impact's train-to-hire scheme helps around ¼ of those who complete the training to find employment straightaway – giving them long-term security.

For the more entrepreneurial minded, the business management and financial literacy training included as part of the course





> With your partnership, we can continue building bridges of dignity, faith, and opportunity — one life at a time." **Impact team**

means they can go on to start their own micro-enterprises. The Impact team help with business starter-kits and ongoing mentoring, and support graduates to form cooperative groups for shared production, mentoring, and resource sharing, helping to build long-term sustainability and foster a sense of community.

This year was the first time Embrace supported Impact's programme. Your donations helped to fund a new sewing course for 100 participants, teaching a wide variety of sewing skills, pattern making, and finishing techniques. It's the first fruits of an exciting partnership that we hope will continue to grow and flourish.

HORRIFIC CONDITIONS IN GAZA'S DISPLACEMENT CAMPS CONTINUE...

The media reports on Gaza have diminished, but this doesn't mean the situation is getting better – far from it. Despite announcements promising progress on the peace deal, conflict continues and conditions on the ground remain catastrophic.

> *"When there were more missiles we were counting hundreds of dead from the missiles, but now we are counting thousands of dead from lack of healthcare and hygiene.*
> Al Ahli hospital, Gaza City, May 2026.



Above: Conditions in one of Gaza's displacement camps, early summer 2026. (***Credit:*** *Hosny Salah)*

Inadequate shelter and overcrowding have been causing a health catastrophe

Displacement camps are overcrowded and exposed. The simplest routines become difficult - keeping clean, cooking, managing illness, and even sleep.

The medical teams of Embrace's partners in Gaza continue to provide interventions for hundreds of patients each day, but all report on the toll the living conditions are taking. They describe a pattern that is hard to break: people are given treatment, but return to the same environment, where illness quickly returns.

Hot summer temperatures led to the spread of pests, with Caritas Jerusalem telling us: *"Our medical teams are treating rodent-related incidents every single day… Rats and mice spread deadly infections through bites, urine, saliva, fleas, and droppings."*

Anaemia and malnutrition widespread because of restricted diet

Over 80% of the population now have no income, and limited supplies have made food prohibitively expensive. A single egg can cost as much as £2.25! Malnutrition and anaemia remain widespread, particularly among young children and pregnant women. Thanks to your donations, alongside the medical care we support, we've also been able to fund Caritas Jerusalem's cash assistance programme – helping the most vulnerable families afford basic food and supplies. But ongoing restrictions and delays on aid entering Gaza means hunger is still ever-present.



Above: Yvette, nutritionist at the Embrace partner the Princess Basma disability unit in Gaza assesses a young child for malnutrition

Lack of clean water and infectious diseases are a big threat

Access to safe water is another huge challenge. Our partners now have to purchase water to run their clinic. Many people survive on less than six litres of water a day—far below the minimum amount required to meet basic daily needs. In June, the Caritas Jerusalem team were able to increase their services and began delivering free drinking water to displacement camps.

It's yet another example of the resilient commitment of Christian partners in Gaza, continuing to respond to the evolving crisis, despite themselves being displaced, grieving and exhausted after three years of overwhelming suffering. As one partner put it, *"Despite all that has happened in Gaza, we are still here and we will rebuild."* Embrace commits to standing with them every step of the way.





TWIN YOUR CHRISTMAS TREE WITH A PALESTINIAN OLIVE TREE

Twin your Christmas tree with an olive tree in the land where Christ was born and stand in solidarity with olive farmers, helping to protect their land from confiscation, destruction and illegal settlement.

With many olive trees in the region aged hundreds or even thousands of years, olive trees represent Palestinian rootedness in the land.

In the West Bank, Palestinian farmland is being seized for illegal Israeli settlements. Palestinians are being driven from their land with violence and intimidation, their trees uprooted and property destroyed.

The Olive Tree Project plants new olive tree saplings as a direct and peaceful way to stand with Palestinian farmers, replacing their source of income and helping them to defend their right to work their land.

Every twinned tree will help support this work, and the wider work of Embrace's Middle East Christian partners as they advocate on behalf of vulnerable communities and meet practical needs through healthcare, education, community development and crisis response.

OLIVE TREE TWINNING



TWIN YOUR TREE FOR JUST £40

The sponsor of every twinned Christmas tree will receive a personalised tree twinning certificate to display in their church or home.

OR GROW YOUR TWINNING IMPACT!

- **£45** Twinning certificate + single Olive Wood Dove of Peace Decoration
- **£65** Twinning certificate + pack of four Olive Wood Joy Hope Peace & Love Decorations
- **£85** Twinning certificate + pack of four Olive Wood Joy Hope Peace & Love Decorations + additional olive tree sponsorship to gift to a friend



Stand in solidarity and plant justice, peace and hope this Christmas.

For more info and to twin your tree today go to
shop.embraceme.org/olive-tree-twinning

£15 from every olive tree twinning will go towards planting an olive tree in Palestine. Trees are planted in the spring and you will receive a tree planting certificate the summer after your tree is planted. Your remaining twinning donation will support our in-region partners as they run life-transforming projects in their communities across the Middle East.



SEEDS OF RECONCILIATION PLANTED BY ISRAEL'S TEACHERS

Amid the fear, anger and grief that the recent years have brought to the Israel-Palestine conflict, there are those there who steadfastly continue to hold open the gates to dialogue, creating spaces for people to come together to hold deeply difficult conversations and work towards understanding, justice and reconciliation.

One is long-term Embrace partner Musalaha (which means 'Reconciliation' in Arabic). They've been expanding their work with a joint project run with the Rossing Center for Education and Dialogue (another long-established organisation promoting interreligious dialogue, based in Jerusalem). Their new 'Foundations for Change' course, launched in September 2024, is providing training for principals and teachers from Israel's Jewish and Palestinian schools to facilitate cross-community dialogue, respect and empathy.

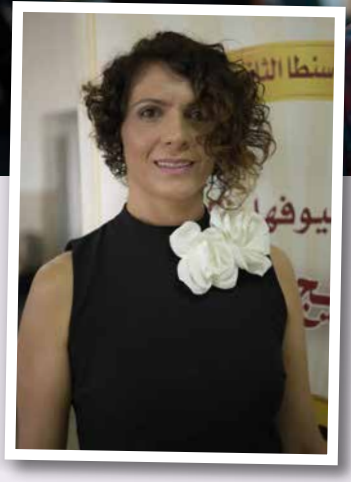
In a climate of entrenched mistrust and heartbreak, it is hard to over-emphasise the compassion, bravery and grace needed to both take part in and run programmes like these. Reflecting these challenges, several schools dropped out before the course began but staff from 14 are taking part.

Israel has a largely segregated education system, ostensibly designed to preserve cultural and religious identities. It means Jewish and Arab-Israeli children are educated separately, increasing the chances of mistrust, misunderstanding and racism. The Rossing Center told us:

"As a result of the war – which has further widened the chasm – the education system is even less equipped than previously to cope with the mounting needs of school principals and teachers in terms of combatting extremist, hate-based, fear-driven discourse and providing any form of peace education."

A 2-year course, much of the initial training focusses on increasing





awareness of self-identity, trauma and prejudices and how these can affect interactions and attitudes. Teachers also learn techniques for facilitating, such as how to create safe spaces for difficult discussions, emotional language, and guiding students through issues related to identity, conflict, and shared society.

Sara (left) is one of the school principals taking part:

> "You feel that there is no hope, no faith, but I'm not giving up. I have to push for it, hold on to faith in change. Reality is not ideal—everyone doesn't just live easily together [but] it is possible to influence young people and give them a good education and respect for others. It doesn't matter if they are a different colour or a different religion. Without politics, it is possible to work on this."

Find out more about this project at:
embraceme.org/blog/seeds-of-reconciliation



FOOTBALL FUN HELPS HEAL TRAUMA

For children at Dbayeh Refugee camp north of Beirut, where living conditions are poor and parents struggle to make ends meet, life is often tough. But the recent wars have brought so much fear, heartbreak and upheaval.



The Dbayeh Library and Community Centre, run by Embrace partner the Joint Christian Committee (JCC), is one place the children of Dbayeh can go to decompress, learn and form friendships. The library provides a range of educational and fun activities, including games on their small sports pitch.

Your donations mean Embrace can support a variety of activities there. Recently we were pleased to be able to help purchase football equipment – including kits, boots, balls, cones, and nets.

It's given them a chance to embrace the simple joys of competitive sport and for some is a way to start healing from their trauma:

"The enthusiasm and participation in football activities have been remarkable, with children eagerly joining each training and match. Football has become more than just a sport for the boys and girls, it has grown into a true passion that brings excitement, joy, and a sense of belonging."

Dbayeh Library and Community Centre team