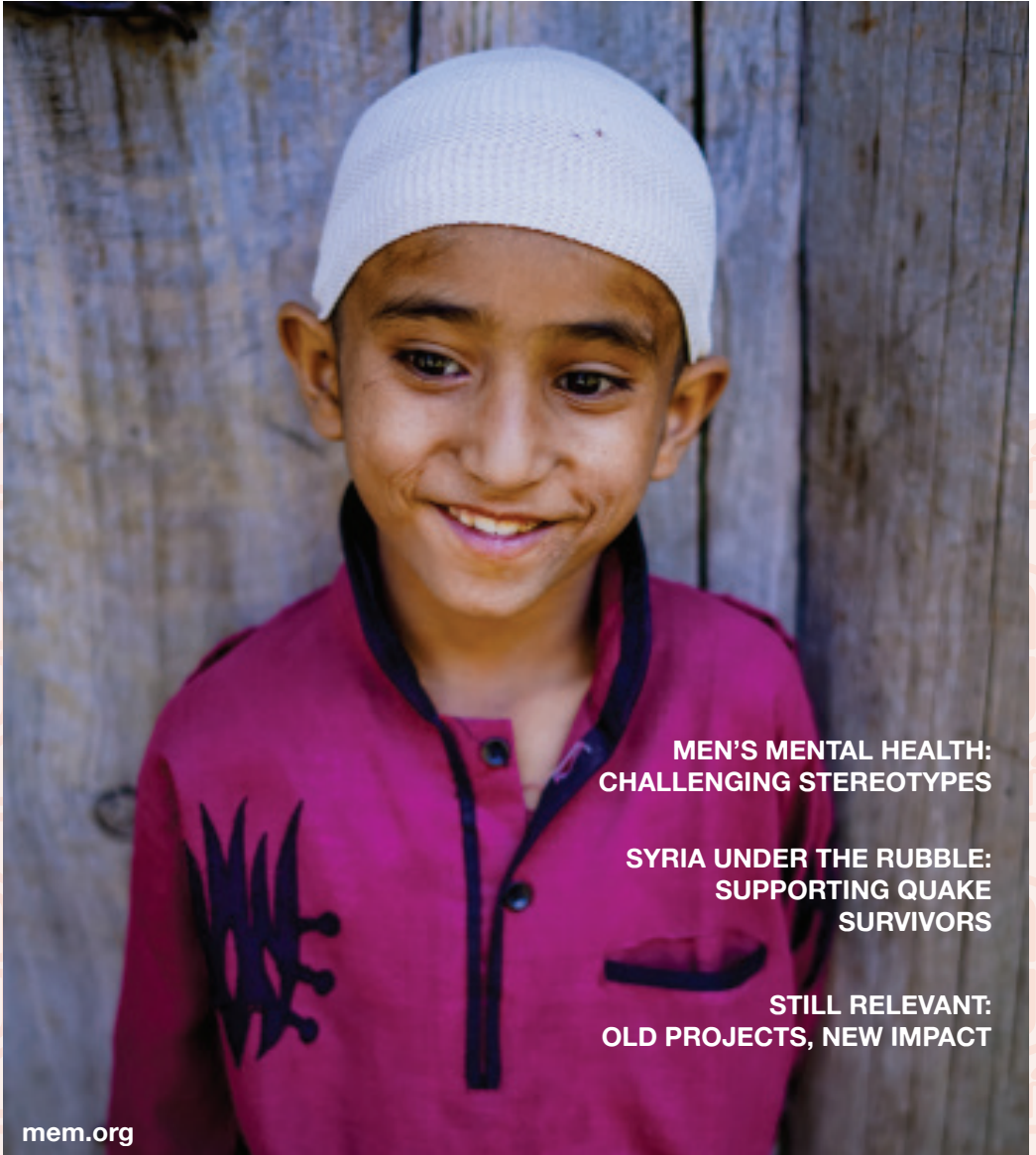


MEMO

TRANSFORMING LIVES WITH UNSTOPPABLE HOPE

SUMMER 2023



**MEN'S MENTAL HEALTH:
CHALLENGING STEREOTYPES**

**SYRIA UNDER THE RUBBLE:
SUPPORTING QUAKE
SURVIVORS**

**STILL RELEVANT:
OLD PROJECTS, NEW IMPACT**



Letter from the editor

Dear Friends,

Welcome to your Summer MEMO! Here in the UK, we are ready for some bright and warm weather ahead. My prayer for you as you read this newsletter is that you would be filled with the light and hope of Christ, while being encouraged by all the news and stories.

Many will have heard about the earthquake that affected Syria, among other countries, but as the dust settles, there is great need. MEM is responding by taking our *Life in the Desert* programme to help traumatised children in Syria. You can read more on page 6, and learn how you can walk alongside these children.

I also hope that you will be able to join us for MEM Week this year. More information can be found on the page opposite, but we are gathering to pray online, as well as having an in-person event in London.

All the best to you in the months ahead.

James Ballock

Senior Communications Manager

comms@mem.org

MIDDLE EAST MEDIA exists to make a strategic contribution to moving people of the Middle East towards life-transforming faith in Jesus Christ through the creative and culturally relevant use of media. We produce indigenous Christian media content and holistically empower other content creators in countries where it is most challenging to be Christian. We walk with them on their journey of faith so that they, too, can reach out to the unreached in their communities.

We connect supporters to real stories of struggles, hope and holistic life transformation. Join our mission and help more people experience His love.

MEM WEEK

FILM REAL 2023

Have you RSVP'd yet?!

15 - 21 MAY

Join us online or in person at Film Real 2023. Whether you've taken part the last two years, or have never been involved in MEM Week before, this year **we're offering you an unmissable showcase of MEM's powerful media productions.**

Have you always wanted to see some of our *REAL* films from the Middle East? This MEM Week, we invite you to experience some of the most compelling media we have under our belt. Don't miss out!



For more details and to reserve your spot, head to mem.org/memweek

We have been filming *REAL* stories, spiritual journeys and presenting the Gospel through creative media for decades, with lives transformed as a result.



Men & Mental Health

Challenging gender stereotypes in the Middle East

From Jacob, to King David, to Jesus himself – the Bible is full of instances of strong, male figures weeping. Explicit outpourings of emotions of all kinds were commonplace for both men and women in biblical times.

What's changed? Though the narrative may slowly be changing in parts of the West – thanks to the efforts of many men's mental health charities – a group of men openly sharing, weeping and expressing their feelings would still raise eyebrows.

Today, the pressure for men to embrace toughness and masculinity runs even deeper in Middle Eastern cultures. Boys are taught that crying is a sign of weakness. They should not show struggle when life is hard; true manhood means denying one's emotions and persisting in the face of adversity. Sadly, this attitude often leads to fractured relationships and mental suffering for many Arab men and their families.

Our *Nisa'a* project has been empowering Arab women to speak their hearts for 10 years, with thousands impacted by our in-person workshops, and hundreds of thousands reached by our online resources. Yet recently, this initiative has begun to attract a growing

number of men. Our team noticed that 30% of the *Nisa'a* online magazine's readership were male, and it soon became clear that they desperately needed emotional support, too. We therefore initially offered a few mixed-gender mental health workshops, which were attended by some married couples. Both men and women shared in follow-up groups that learning to express and communicate their emotions in healthy ways had not only enhanced their own sense of wellbeing, but had also led to improvements in their marriages and family lives.

Anwar* shared his experience with us.

"I began expressing my emotions and admitting their existence. That was a turning point in my life as I started to understand my wife's emotions. Now, raising up my son, I will give him the freedom to cry, to express his sadness and all his emotions. Also, I am very grateful that the workshop helped me to develop a better self-image and increased self-confidence."

Due to demand, our team now run smaller, focused workshops specifically for men. We want to provide a space where men are encouraged to share what is on their hearts and reap the benefits.

*name changed to protect identity

So David and his men wept aloud until they had no strength left to weep.

1 Samuel 30:4



YOUR SUPPORT IS BRINGING EMOTIONAL HEALING. THANK YOU.

Image: pexels.com/@tehmasicpkhan



Syria Under the Rubble

How we're sending hope to earthquake survivors

Life in the Desert is one of our most highly-demanded projects to date. The 3D animation series and curriculum were developed specifically to minister to Arabic-speaking children who have experienced trauma. We train local carers and NGO workers to use the programme effectively with vulnerable children in their communities. Very often, we find that the programme deeply touches the adults, too – many have also experienced horrific traumas.



Long before the deadly earthquakes hit south-eastern Turkey and northern Syria this February, our team planned to deliver this **training to the NGO workers** connected with our Syrian partner. One of the reasons LITD is so effective with children is the way that children identify themselves with the main character, **eight-year-old Farah (pictured)**, and with the difficult themes that it presents so sensitively.

Using language that the children understand is equally important. We recently dubbed Season 1 (13 episodes) of *Life in the Desert* into the **Syrian dialect**. Now, ensuring that carers are fully equipped to deliver the programme is a vital next step.

Shortly after the quakes, a desperate plea from our Syrian partner came for us to deliver this training as quickly as possible. **This disaster has drastically increased the numbers of displaced, bereaved and traumatised children in their communities.** These children are at risk of developing severe mental health problems if the psychological impact of the events this year goes unaddressed.

Enabling this training is now a priority. We are currently raising urgent funds for this.



Pray for Life in the Desert

MAY

For Training
For the **NGO workers of our Syrian partner** desperate to receive LITD training so that they can reach earthquake survivors.

Pray for **sufficient funding** to enable this to take place, and for a safe location where this can be carried out.

JUNE

For Dubbing
For a partner of ours currently dubbing the series into **Turkish** for use with earthquake survivors.

For funding to enable us to continue dubbing **Season 2 into the Syrian dialect**, and also into **French and Sudanese Arabic**.

JULY

For Distribution
Please pray for our partners and the **262 LITD-trained NGO workers** as they continue to reach more vulnerable children.

Pray especially for our **Lebanese partner**, taking LITD to some of the most hard-to-reach **refugee camps** in the country.

Could you Pray, Give or Share?

To give a one-off gift towards LITD training for Syria, head to mem.org/give, or return the enclosed giving form to us.

Head to
mem.org/pray
for more prayer needs



Image: pexels.com/@budgeron-bach

STILL RELEVANT

THE ONGOING IMPACT OF COMPLETED PROJECTS

Did you know that globally, radio is still the most widely consumed medium?* Not to mention the most far-reaching, accessible – perhaps even most trusted – method across generations and societies.

Today, it's not uncommon to hear about the transience of media. In an age of ever-evolving technology and short-lived trends, we're often asked about the shelf life of our productions. Though we proudly continue to create fresh content every year, with almost 50 years worth of completed projects under our belt, such questions are reasonable.

Will today's popular Arab TV series be irrelevant within 5 years?

How memorable is our work? And how do we hold the attention of young people in such a fast-paced media scene?

Our work is full of unexpected trends...as the following observations demonstrate!

In our Spring 2023 edition, we reported on how our **Kingdom Platform** has surprised us. We've noticed another interesting pattern in the popularity of its YouTube videos. One of our oldest clips, filmed in the 1980s using hand puppets, has consistently remained within the top 3 most-watched videos on the platform since its launch in 2021, despite the regular addition of new content.

*Source: *Unesco*, World Radio Day 2023

Maybe this shouldn't be a surprise. Consider the many films and TV shows in our culture, produced decades ago, that remain popular. There would no doubt be uproar if Hollywood tried remaking *The Shawshank Redemption* (1984) or *Gone with the Wind* (1939). **Media can span the generations!**

We also recently discovered an online discussion among Middle Easterners reminiscing about our former **Magalla** magazine, first published in 1977. Commenters not only fondly remembered the magazine as they were growing up, but wished it was still in print today! **Our media truly leaves a lasting legacy in the region.**

When we complete a film series or project that no longer needs funds, depending on the kind of media, it can sometimes be difficult to obtain accurate engagement metrics. However, some partners using our material regularly keep us in the loop with their reports.

We received one such encouraging report recently about **Arabian Dawn**,

our series of real testimonies shared by Gulf believers. Numerous partners have used these short videos in their outreach since 2013. **Just one partner reported that, in 2022, they saw no fewer than 35 professions of faith, from individuals who first made contact with them through an Arabian Dawn video!** For this region, this is an incredible number.

Similarly, **GOT IT!** is our 70-episode short video series on apologetics, completed in 2019. A partner using the series reported that in the **last 3 months of 2022**, three **GOT IT!** videos alone generated nearly one million views, and **246 people engaged in more personal conversations about Christianity.** **GOT IT!** shows no signs of a diminishing impact, and has also been dubbed into **9 different Arabic dialects** for use across the continent.

We praise God that He is using our media, old and new, to build His Kingdom!

Below: A still frame from one of our **GOT IT!** apologetics videos.





Puzzle

We hope you enjoyed our first crossword in your Spring edition of MEMO! Here are the solutions. Did you get them all?

- | | | | |
|------------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|
| 1. Blossoms | 10. Zebedee | 20. Iraq | 28. En route |
| 2. Libya | 11. AND 16. | 21. Overflow | 29. Egypt |
| 3. Suddenly | Arabian Dawn | 22. Magnet | 30. Disaster |
| 4. Ogee Arch | 12. Trade | 23. Pitted | |
| 5. Shanty | 13. Actresses | 24. ACROSS: | |
| 6. ACROSS: Farah | 14. Idiolect | Animation | |
| DOWN: Frames | 15. Imaginary | DOWN: Agape | |
| 7. Reinstall | 17. Newsreel | 25. Vicar | |
| 8. Hands | 18. Evangels | 26. Cause | |
| 9. Tzatziki | 19. Proverbs | 27. Against | |

In the Wordsearch grid below, we have hidden the names of the 6 different projects which have been mentioned in this Summer 2023 edition of MEMO. Some names have been separated. Can you find them all?

Y V B Z P O T H K Z K P Z K U
 A P Y P R I G F S J U D H P A
 T L Q D H P J A E R S A W G S
 L A S M R K Y A R N L W T O G
 A T J B D C R A M A R N X Y O
 I F U J T S D U J N B A K G T
 M O K L H A Q X B O A I M R I
 L R I I E A W I B S T N A X T
 W M N F D M A G A L L A L N B
 C S G E E U Y L T B A E U G O
 W O D I S A U H N S K Y A D W
 C D O N E F Q O I F G V W H Z
 E Q M Z R Q Q Q S H Z L A D S
 A O J F T T M N A A I G H S O
 N P I D K A C K A P R X Q O X

ARABIAN/
DAWN

KINGDOM/
PLATFORM

NISA'A

MAGALLA

LIFE IN/
THE DESERT

GOT IT



Bits 'n' Pieces

MEET CHRIS LARGE

We're delighted to have Chris as the new chair of our UK board. Chris is a former firefighter, and also ran a consultancy business for 10 years. Since his early retirement in 2009, he has been dedicating his time in various ways to furthering the Kingdom.



Growing up, I wanted to be... a professional footballer.

I am passionate about... Jesus, obviously. But also, Manchester United, Formula 1, and travelling to parts of the world I've never been to.

If Jesus was on Twitter, His first Tweet would say... I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

My family and I love... sharing meals together. We are a family of foodies and we will be eating one meal whilst planning our next.

My heroes of faith are... too numerous to mention, but one of them is Archbishop Ben Kwashi from Nigeria, who I met and heard speak a few years ago. I have just finished reading a book about his experiences of life.

Why do you support MEM? Having followed the work of MEM for a number of years, I just love what they do and want to help in any small way that I can.



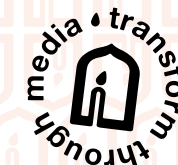
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@middleeastmedia

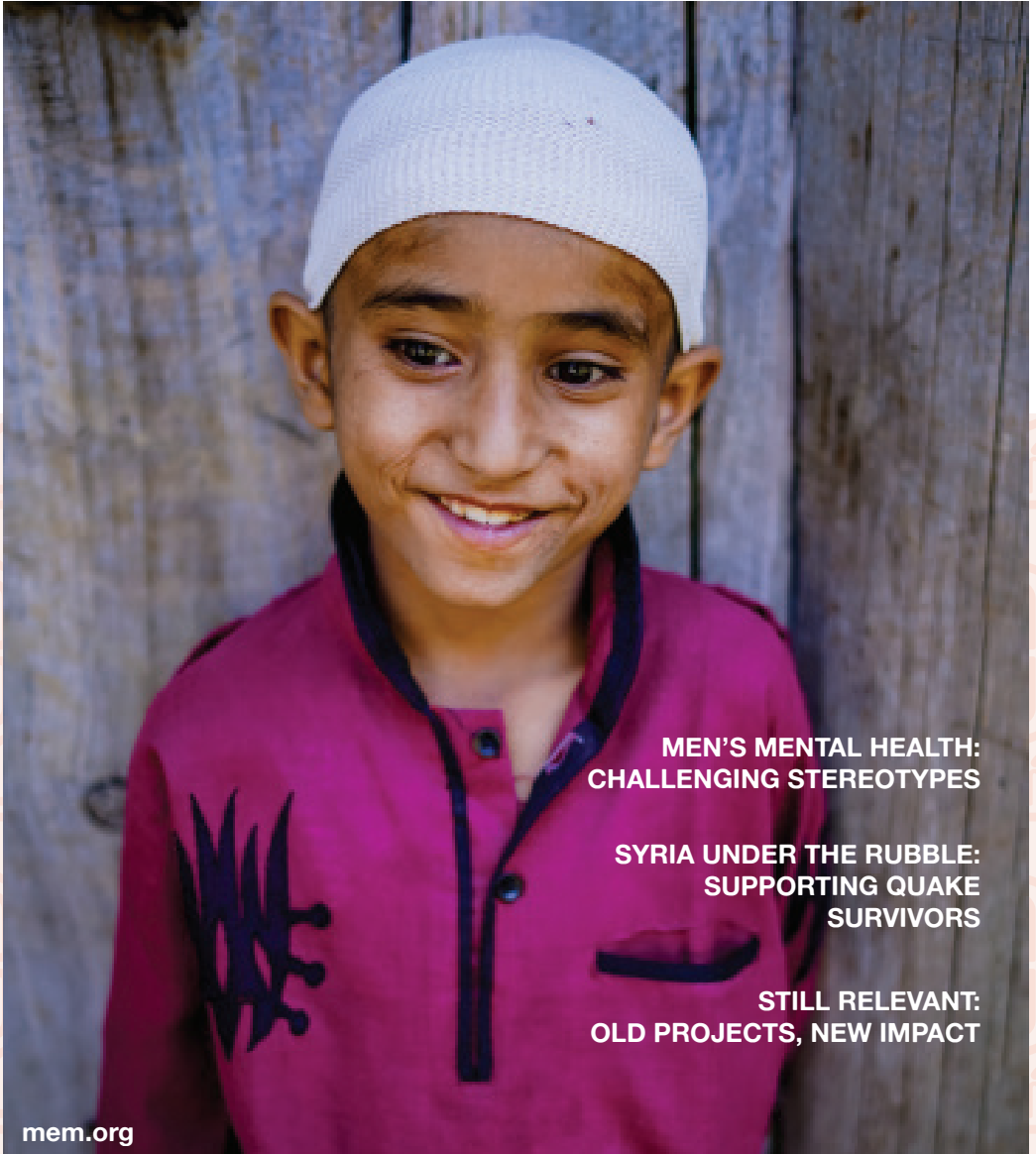
Follow us on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter for more stories of unstoppable hope.

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