News from SAT-7
Winter 2024

INSIGHT

SEEDING HOPE, NURTURING FAITH

Children and young people in the MENA

Engaging programs | From viewer to presenter | Youth project updates

CHRISTIAN MEDIA
FOR THE MIDDLE EAST
AND NORTH AFRICA

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Front cover image: Elie Awwad and Rouba Yamine presenting *Behind the Door* on SAT-7 KIDS. See Rouba's story on page 12.

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TRUST IN THE LORD

Hope is in short supply in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). Last year was a year of extreme crisis for children across the region. Many have been lost to earthquakes in Türkiye, Morocco, and elsewhere, and to floods in Libya. Large numbers have fled with their families from Azerbaijan. There are reports that more than 5,000 children have been killed so far in the war in the Holy Land. And all this is in addition to the intractable problems of instability, poverty, and persecution that afflict so many in the region.

Here at SAT-7, our hearts are broken by all this suffering and death, but still we stand against widespread hopelessness with the secure hope that we have in our Lord Jesus Christ. In the first letter of Peter, we read that God has given us Christians new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead (1 Peter 1:3). That hope is for a heavenly inheritance to be revealed in the future (1:4-5), but it also motivates us in the present (1:13) to lives of holiness and love (1:14-16, 22-25).

This edition of *Insight* is focused on SAT-7's ministry to youth in the MENA. Here you can learn about the many difficulties that they face, and how SAT-7's programs and projects for children and young people are seeding hope, building bridges, and sharing the love of Christ. You can also read the story of our flagship educational program *My School*, which has now completed its filming, and hear about one young viewer who became a participant on SAT-7 before joining us as a presenter.

We are so grateful for your support and prayers, especially for the children and youth of the MENA who have suffered so much this year. May our eyes look to Christ to bring a peace that the world cannot give, and let us ask Him that our children may thrive and find life in all its fullness. May the Lord bless you and your families this year.

Rita

Rita El-Mounayer
SAT-7 CEO

THE HOLY LAND: MOBILIZING PRAYER AND AMPLIFYING VOICES

As intense violence erupted in the Holy Land in early October, SAT-7's channels moved quickly into action to support our viewers, both there and across the region. As in other crises, their priorities were to mobilize prayer, contact and strengthen their audience in the region, and provide live programs focused on the unfolding events.

Soon after the outbreak of hostilities, SAT-7 ARABIC launched an on-air prayer campaign involving church leaders from the Middle East. The channel scheduled a live broadcast every Friday, including prayers from guests and viewers. SAT-7 PARS and SAT-7 TÜRK have also provided opportunities for their viewers to join in intercession for the Holy Land.

"Lord, we are bent over under the weight of the events. Strengthen our faith, for we rely on You. We trust in You, and You will not let us down. If You are with us then who is against us?"
Bishop Antoine Nabil Andari

Other programs provided spiritual and emotional support, especially for children. SAT-7 KIDS's program *Behind the Door* offered an opportunity for young Arab viewers to share their fears and prayers, while also encouraging them to cling to faith and hope. The children's prayers were moving and powerful, showing great empathy for those suffering loss and grief.

Throughout the conflict, SAT-7 has also been amplifying the voice of the Church in the Holy Land and beyond.

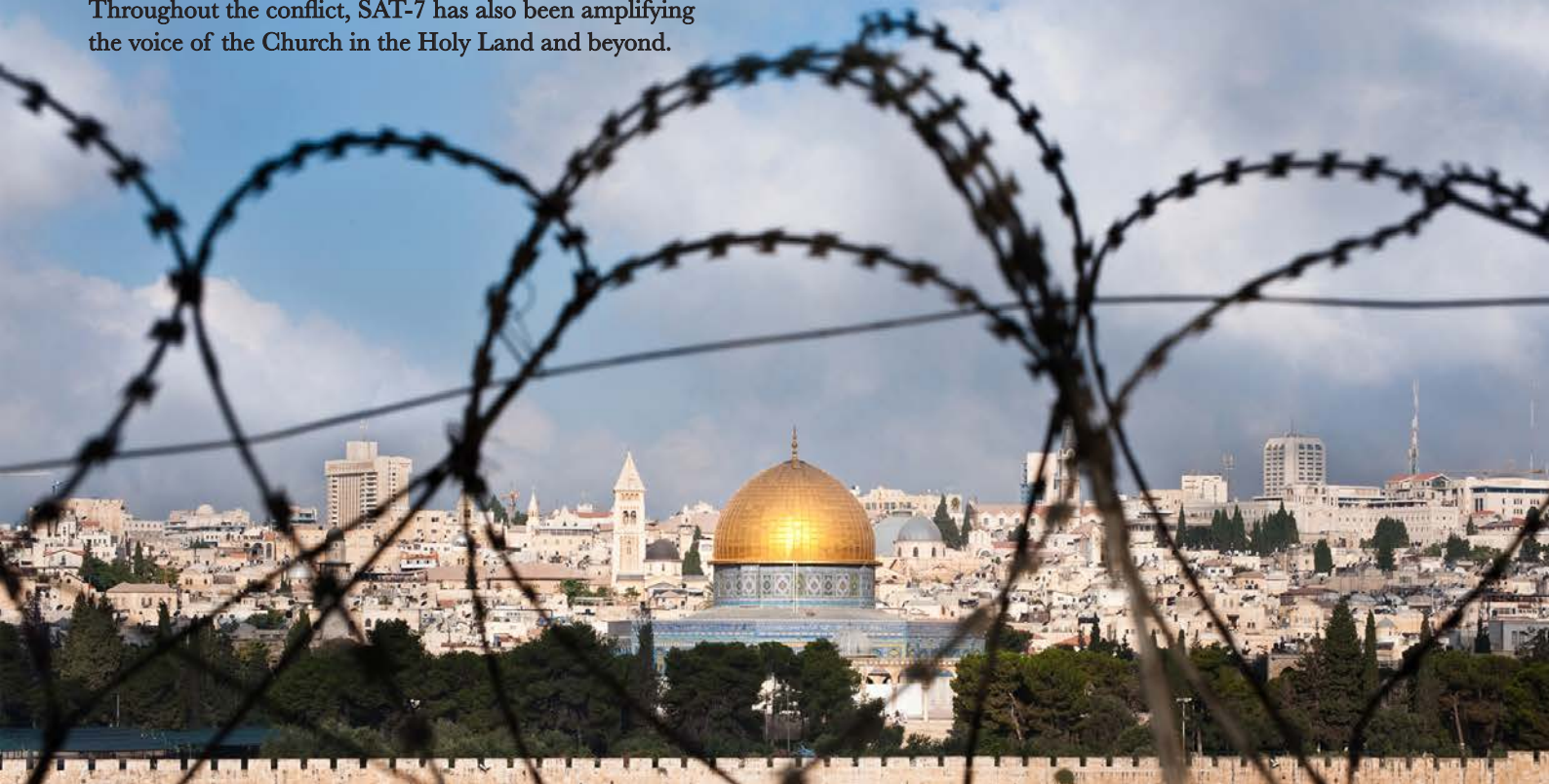
SAT-7 ARABIC's live current affairs programs *You Are Not Alone* and *A Different Angle* have welcomed church and Christian leaders, who have reported on how Christians are being salt and light in their communities and called on them to "stand in the gap" as voices for peace, justice, and reconciliation.

"Jesus Christ's teachings compel us to actively pursue peace and be the agents of peace."
Rev Dr Salim Munayer

SAT-7's Viewer Support Team has been reaching out to viewers in the Holy Land from the beginning, listening to their concerns and offering words of comfort and strength. The WhatsApp platform for the weekly broadcast has been flooded with messages from viewers touched by the prayers, worship songs, and encouragement.

"How comforting it is to see that everyone is standing together and asking and praying as if we are one person, praying for God to stop this destruction happening against humanity, because every human is precious to the Lord."
Maha, from the Holy Land

These activities represent SAT-7's staple responses to crises in the MENA, and we continue to stand with our viewers throughout such desperate times.



A PLEA FOR THE CHILDREN

As violence broke out in the Holy Land in October, SAT-7's CEO Rita El-Mounayer recorded a heartfelt appeal for the children of the Middle East and North Africa. An edited version of this vlog appears below.

As I speak (October 18), we know that at least one thousand children have died in the last week as casualties of the terrifying violence that has engulfed the Holy Land. The Middle East and North Africa has suffered the loss of so many children in this year alone: from earthquakes in Türkiye, Syria, Morocco, and now Afghanistan; from floods in Libya, from violence in Iran and Sudan, and now in the Holy Land too. And so many children continue to be displaced because of ongoing conflicts in Yemen, Sudan, and Syria. Over 26,000 children fled from Nagorno-Karabakh following its takeover by Azerbaijan this autumn.

These are all children of our region, children like those who so often call in to SAT-7's programs and share their prayers, reminding us of the goodness of the Lord, reminding us that through each one of them there is hope for the future.

Like young Siamak, who recently called in to our Persian *Church4Kids* program to pray: "God, I pray for Iran, for all the struggles in the country and also for the war in the Holy Land. God, help all of the people in the war. I pray for all the kids and parents that died. I pray that there won't be any more deaths. In Jesus' name. Amen."

Let us learn from children's genuine and unbiased wisdom in building bridges across the region. Let us continue to help children develop resilience, and encourage prayer for protection against the violence that surrounds them, destroys their families, and scars them for life.

SAT-7 invites you, too, to pray for the children across the region who are in such desperate need. Please pray especially for all those affected by the violence in the Holy Land, and remember the orphans everywhere, that they may be cared for and sheltered by adults who will treat them as their own. Please pray, too, for the parents and families of children who have died in tragic circumstances this year who must now learn to live without them. And pray, too, for displaced children, that they may be spared further suffering and protected from evil.

We also value your prayers for SAT-7, that God will encourage us, as His hands and feet on this earth, to support the children of the Middle East: to hear their voice, share their voice – yes, and even be their voice when they are silenced, oppressed, and killed. We thank God for His sustaining love and mercy, and we entrust these beloved children into His hands.

Amen.

FULLNESS OF LIFE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

SAT-7 longs to see children and young people in the MENA enter into fullness of life in Christ and enjoy the fruits of His Kingdom. In this, the love of Jesus urges us on. In His own ministry He welcomed children and encouraged His disciples to do the same (Mark 10:13-16); His apostles' message is for people of every generation (Acts 2:39); children were part of His churches from the first, and Christian parents have a God-given responsibility to instruct their offspring in godliness (Ephesians 6:4).

Christian children in the MENA are part of a dwindling and often marginalized minority, and may have few opportunities or resources to help them become mature disciples of Christ. Meanwhile their contemporaries often have very limited access to the Good News. This year many young people have suffered in the violence and natural disasters that have struck the region, with all their destructive effects, and the already severe physical, emotional, and social needs of the rising generation have been greatly exacerbated as a result.

In light of biblical teaching on God's love for children, and of these urgent needs, SAT-7 is committed to supporting young people through our broadcasts. Our programs and video series share the Good News with them and help Christian children to understand the Bible and apply it in daily life. They also promote health and inclusion, encourage personal and social development, and equip young people to serve their communities and societies. We run several large projects with some of our partners to further in various ways the well-being of youth across the region.

SAT-7 has a dedicated satellite channel, SAT-7 KIDS, for children in the Arab World, which introduces them to the Gospel and encourages them in Christian discipleship. This includes educational content that addresses their wider needs. Our Persian- and Turkish-language channels, SAT-7 PARS and SAT-7 TÜRK, include a range of programs for young viewers. And in recognition of their viewing preferences, we are also expanding our digital presence, especially on social media, with content prepared specifically for them.

In the following pages, you can read more about the acute challenges faced by young people in the MENA and about how SAT-7 is addressing these through our programming and other activities.

A BELEAGUERED GENERATION: CRISES FACING YOUTH IN THE MENA

Children and young people should grow up in an atmosphere of love, security, and freedom. But many of those in the MENA are weighed down by hostility, insecurity, and restriction.

Moreover, recent crises have exacerbated these long-term problems. Authoritarian regimes are restricting young people's freedoms more than ever, while economic problems are jeopardizing their present and future wellbeing, and continuing conflict threatens their very lives. On top of this, armed conflicts and huge natural disasters have killed thousands of children and traumatized, impoverished, and orphaned many more.

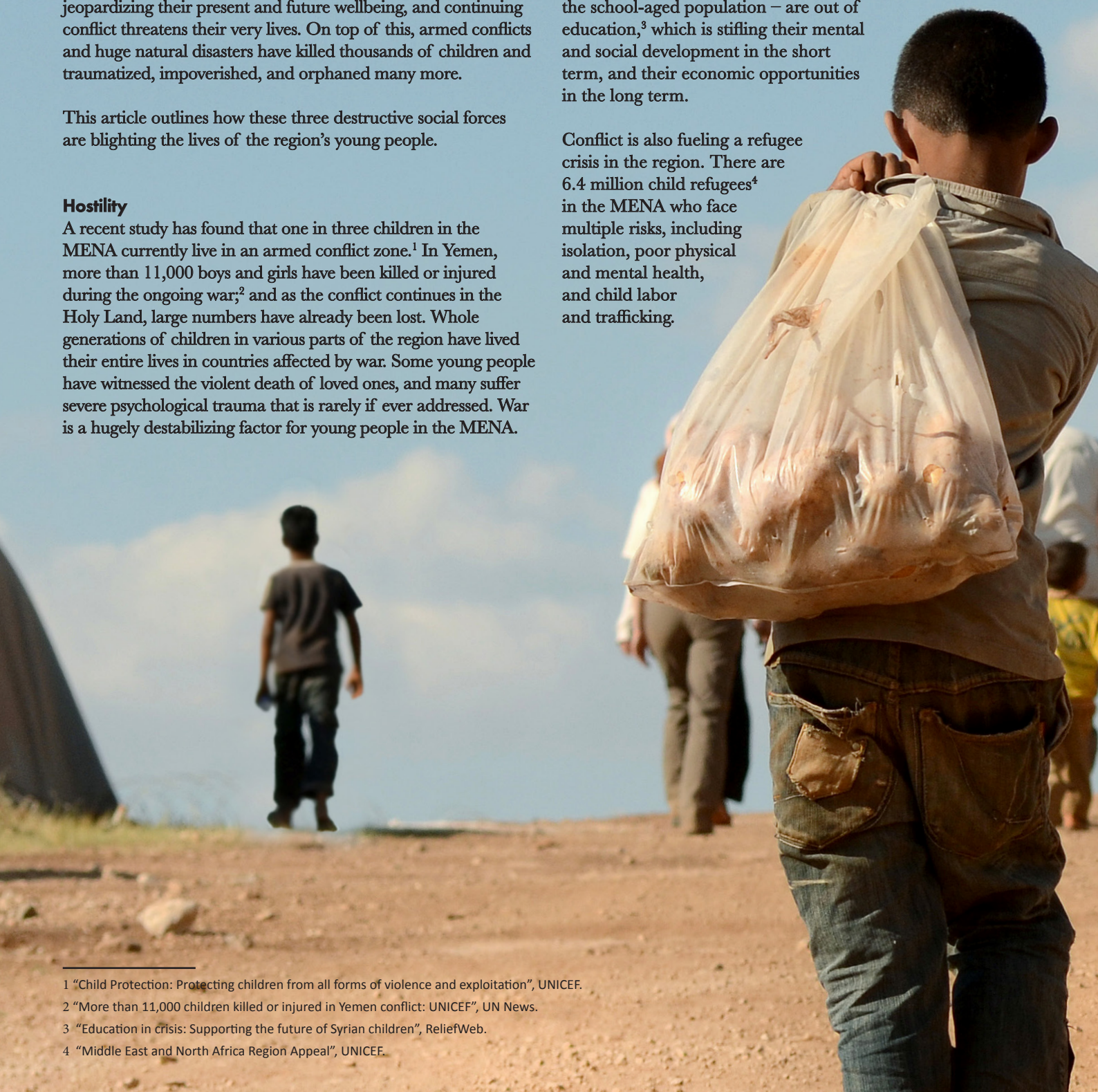
This article outlines how these three destructive social forces are blighting the lives of the region's young people.

Hostility

A recent study has found that one in three children in the MENA currently live in an armed conflict zone.[1] In Yemen, more than 11,000 boys and girls have been killed or injured during the ongoing war;[2] and as the conflict continues in the Holy Land, large numbers have already been lost. Whole generations of children in various parts of the region have lived their entire lives in countries affected by war. Some young people have witnessed the violent death of loved ones, and many suffer severe psychological trauma that is rarely if ever addressed. War is a hugely destabilizing factor for young people in the MENA.

As schools, hospitals, and other vital services suffer damage, so do children's prospects. An estimated 2.4 million Syrian children – about half of the school-aged population – are out of education,[3] which is stifling their mental and social development in the short term, and their economic opportunities in the long term.

Conflict is also fueling a refugee crisis in the region. There are 6.4 million child refugees[4] in the MENA who face multiple risks, including isolation, poor physical and mental health, and child labor and trafficking.



1 "Child Protection: Protecting children from all forms of violence and exploitation", UNICEF.

2 "More than 11,000 children killed or injured in Yemen conflict: UNICEF", UN News.

3 "Education in crisis: Supporting the future of Syrian children", ReliefWeb.

4 "Middle East and North Africa Region Appeal", UNICEF.

Insecurity

Financial insecurity is plaguing families across the region. A recent study suggested that one third of the Arab World now live under the poverty line,[5] while 15 million more people in Afghanistan have fallen into poverty since 2020.[6] The United Nations Development Program suggests that by decimating Gaza City, the war in the Holy Land has put the local economy back by a decade.[7]

Youth unemployment and disillusionment are widespread; in Lebanon in 2022, 31 percent of young people are not in education, employment, or training,[8] with many forced into informal work to contribute to household income. Lack of education and work over generations makes these young people vulnerable to radicalization and hopelessness, and so the cycles of violence continue.

Girls are also endangered by harmful social practices. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), especially prevalent in north-east Africa, is proving difficult to eradicate. In Egypt, instances of FGM were down just one percent between 2014 and 2022[9] despite extensive campaigning.

Child marriage is declining, but 700,000 girls still become child brides each year,[10] jeopardizing their education and increasing the likelihood of their suffering domestic abuse.[11] All children are vulnerable to their parents' frustration, and hostile parenting techniques are tightly linked with abuse in the home, as many parents rely on techniques such as beating, shouting, and intimidation. Around 106 million (more than 8 in 10) children age 2 to 14, are regularly subjected to violent discipline at home.[12]

Restriction

Societal restrictions are widespread in the MENA, and young women are the worst affected. Limitations on their movement, minds, and bodies are rampant across the region.[13] For example, in Iran, the authorities impose compulsory veiling on girls from the age of seven,[14] and in Afghanistan the Taliban have indefinitely banned women from public spaces and intermittently stopped girls from attending secondary school.

Young people wanting to follow Jesus experience various degrees of persecution, directly or indirectly. In particular, those who become believers from another faith background may be harshly treated by their families and communities and denied access to Christian community and resources. And those from Christian families can be deprived of their education in an attempt to intimidate their parents.

To address these challenges, SAT-7's response is to be agile, relevant, and available 24 hours a day, seven days a week to its young audiences through our programs on satellite television and digital media. Please turn the page to learn more.

5 "One-third of Arab population lives in poverty: ESCWA", Middle East Monitor.

6 "Afghanistan's economy close to collapse with 85 percent of people in poverty: UN", Middle East Eye.

7 "UN report warns war has already set Gaza and West Bank economy back more than a decade," CNN.

8 "Searching for hope: A grim outlook for youth as Lebanon teeters on the brink of collapse", UNICEF Lebanon.

9 "Egypt struggles with female genital mutilation", Deutsche Welle.

10 "Facts and figures: Child marriage in the Middle East and North Africa", UNICEF.

11 "Child marriage: Child marriage threatens the lives, well-being and futures of girls around the world", UNICEF.

12 "A profile of violence against children and adolescents in the Middle East and North Africa: Leaving no one behind", UNICEF.

13 "Trapped: how male guardianship policies restrict women's travel and mobility in the Middle East and North Africa", Human Rights Watch.

14 "Repressive enforcement of Iranian hijab laws symbolizes gender-based persecution: UN experts", United Nations High Commissioner of Human Rights.

TRANSFORMING YOUNG LIVES THROUGH THE GOOD NEWS

SAT-7's viewers have demonstrated that they want to connect with young presenters who understand them, hear from other like-minded children, pray for each other, learn more about the Christian faith, hear a captivating story, and tell us about their lives. Whenever they watch, we ensure that they encounter the love of God and biblical values through our programs.

Covering a broad range of concepts, topics, and styles, SAT-7 produces high-quality Christian media for young people and children in three languages on four channels, as well as on the streaming platform SAT-7 PLUS. Many of these programs focus on different aspects of Christian discipleship.

Worship and fellowship

The foundations for a godly life can be laid at an early age. SAT-7's worship and fellowship programs for young people and children help lay these foundations in a joyful, life-giving way.

The program *My Jesus* uncovers the true character of Jesus through heartfelt worship music. In each episode, the program hosts a praise and worship team from a different church who present hymns and reflections relating to a certain characteristic of Jesus, such as His compassion, humanity, or courage.

La Fiesta, now in its second season, takes a more theatrical approach, inviting viewers to celebrate God's love and one of His greatest gifts to us: music. The program is filled with anthems of praise, explorations of musical information and famous composers, and talented musicians sharing their passion. In each episode, viewers get the opportunity to learn something new about God as well as a new worship song. One young viewer said, "In *La Fiesta*, I liked how we were learning stories about Jesus, and at the same time, we were singing stories about Him."

Since late 2021, SAT-7 PARS has been helping Persian-speaking children grow in faith through our fellowship project *Church4Kids*. Through live Instagram streams, worship, teaching material, and one-to-one encouragement, *Church4Kids* creates a safe space for children in Iran, Afghanistan, and Tajikistan to learn more about God. Young Iranian viewer, Ava, said, "*Church4Kids* helped me to know God and His Son Jesus Christ and to come to faith. When I was going through hard days, He gave me peace. My best memories are with my two families, one of which is *Church4Kids*."

Click here to watch a video from *Church4Kids*

Church4Kids and *How Things Are Made* (mentioned overleaf) are two of several programs broadcast under the new digital brand **sat7parskids**.

Teaching and talk shows

Young people have burning questions about the world we live in. SAT-7's teaching and talk shows for children and young people take those questions seriously, using them as a springboard to share God's love and unpack the wisdom of His Word.

Distracted from spending fruitful time with God, teenagers in the Arab world need the Gospel presented in an attractive and concise way. SAT-7 ARABIC program *Quality Time* is trying to capture the attentions of young viewers and direct their gaze upwards through songs, Bible readings, and discussions about vitally important topics.

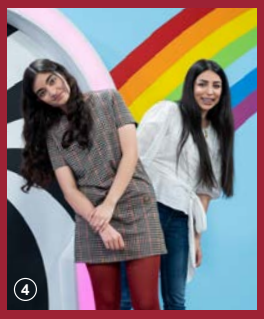
Days of Youth on SAT-7 PARS unpacks difficult topics such as how to communicate with the opposite sex, how to build self-confidence, and how to respect older, wiser people in your life. This studio-based talk show will help the youth of Iran to develop a coherent, Christ-centered worldview and grow into mature believers.

SAT-7 ARABIC's creative new program *Catalyst* applies the Bible's wisdom to the everyday struggles of young people, helping viewers to live a more fulfilled life. The show's presenters voyage through the desert, over the sea, and into social spaces to find each episode's special guest, a motivator whose insights can become a catalyst for change in young viewers' lives.

What can young Iranian Christians learn from previous generations about following Jesus? SAT-7 PARS' new program *Inner Revolution* seeks to answer that question by looking back at the experiences of different generations in Iran. Those whose faith has withstood many trials have an important message to share with today's youth: God is concerned with an "Inner Revolution" that will give you the strength to deal with anything.

Light-hearted SAT-7 TÜRK talk show *Great News* is aimed at a younger audience. Children's presenter, Nora Yazırlıoğlu, teams up with a comedic dog puppet named Mr. Straw in a news-style program filled with interesting stories from around the world, answering common questions asked by children and weaving in biblical truth, humor, and encouragement.

Click here for a clip from *Great News*



On the set of SAT-7's children's programs:
① *Catalyst* ② *Great News* ③ *Bedtime Stories* ④ *Hashtag*
⑤ *La Fiesta* ⑥ *Mini City* ⑦ *Inner Revolution*

Storytelling shows

Storytelling was central to the ministry of Jesus and continues to be a marvelous way to reach the hearts of young people. One of SAT-7's most popular programs ever, *Bedtime Stories* – which used to be presented by SAT-7's Chief Executive Officer Rita El-Mounayer – has been reimagined on both SAT-7 ARABIC and SAT-7 PARS.

SAT-7 ARABIC's version, simply titled *Bedtime Stories,* used its newest season to tell the stories of Jesus' ministry. Viewers were taken on a journey with the Messiah, hearing all about His powerful miracles, thought-provoking parables, and day-to-day adventures. Presenter Joanna was joined by two young co-presenters, Jamy and Karl, who made sure to relate the stories of Jesus to everyday issues that children face at home, at school, and in their local community.

Click here for an excerpt from *Bedtime Stories*

A pivotal moment in the new season was its exploration of bullying, drawing parallels with the story of the Samaritan woman from the Bible. Jamy, one of the co-presenters, was visibly moved by the story and encouraged viewers to embrace the message by promising to show kindness and refrain from causing harm in their community.

"The objective is to attract the new generation towards reading the word of God," says Andrea El Mounayer, SAT-7 KIDS Channel Manager. "We tell the stories in the Bible so as to make kids want to know more and to raise important spiritual questions in their minds."

Over on SAT-7 PARS, three new, captivating storytelling shows are soon to be released. *Coastal Café* tells the story of a group of students who arrive in a coastal city together and stumble upon the curious case of a café owner who keeps getting younger every day! They learn he has lived a difficult life but has a lot of wisdom to share. Their conversations cover everything from the sea to relationships, from science to faith, and from philosophy to forgiveness.

Picnic is also packed with wisdom from experienced elders, but for a different audience. This children's show, set in Türkiye, takes viewers on a journey across the country to meet Iranian Christians – many of whom have emigrated to Türkiye in recent years – and discover their life stories.

Gameshows

Children and young people love to be entertained. SAT-7 produces a variety of lively programs bursting with games, quizzes, and challenges that introduce their young viewers to the Bible and the Christian faith.

Tia and Uncle Medhat presenting *Cupcake*

SAT-7 PARS' live programs *Golpand* and *Hashtag* remain very popular. Primarily for children, age 4-10, *Golpand* teaches core biblical values through interaction, educational segments, and drama. The interactive element is particularly important for isolated viewers who are desperate for a chance to connect with their wider Christian family. Leeda, a child from Iran, contacted the program to say, "Taking part in the program means that I learn more, and I also help others to know more about the topic. In the beginning, I didn't know who Jesus Christ was, but from *Golpand* I found out that Jesus Christ is our heavenly Lord."

Hashtag exists for a slightly older audience. After introducing a Bible story or character, which is often represented in a short video, presenters Ava and Parastoo take viewers through an assortment of exciting segments. They teach hacks and tricks, introduce helpful mobile apps, demonstrate science experiments, share fun facts about the world, teach worship songs, and more. An Iranian viewer, Aryana, said, "I really like *Hashtag* because the program helped me to know the Lord better. It has taught me so many things."

Over on SAT-7 KIDS, a thrilling gameshow *Challenge Accepted* pits two teams of four against each other to answer rapid-fire questions about the Bible and complete whatever challenges are put in front of them. Viewers are highly entertained, but they also get to watch participants grow as people as they explore their faith and learn how to work as a team.

Our young Arabic viewers can also tune into *Cupcake,* SAT-7 KIDS' humorous gameshow. Presenters Uncle Medhat and young Tia present fun competitions that deliver a moral message, while Fakiha Al Nabiha, a puppet reporter, provides not-so-serious commentary. There is also time for children to present their special talents, ask questions about the episode's theme, hear a story illuminating its message, and learn a relevant Bible verse.

Watch an extract from *Cupcake* here

SAT-7 TÜRK's youth program *Mini City* effortlessly combines spirituality and fun. Presenter Nergis Günay sets daily tasks for the program's little viewers, presenting craft activities relating to nature, biology, or food, with interesting facts scattered throughout. Each episode contains English songs to help with language learning as well as Bible stories and animated videos. "It is vital for SAT-7 TÜRK to have biblical programming for children," says SAT-7 TÜRK Executive Director Melih Ekener. "By airing interactive children's programs, such as *Mini City*, we're appealing to both children and parents about how to grow up in a godly way."

Social impact programs

SAT-7 wants to benefit society at large as well as its Christian viewership, and it has a growing repertoire of social impact programs that help individuals and communities take hold of their universal rights and enjoy a fulfilling life. These include some programs for or about children and young people.

The popular education show *My School* will continue to be broadcast on television and online after wrapping up its fifth and final season. Around 400 episodes in the region's core subjects of Mathematics, Arabic, English, Science, and French are now available to Arab children who are lacking a quality education. Turn to pages 12-13 to read more.

The second series of an innovative activity program, *Puzzle*, is in production and will be broadcast in 2024. Children from different backgrounds, ages 10-15, participate in various exciting activities that encourage them to build bridges with each other. See page 16.

Shirin's Freedom, a new SAT-7 PARS drama series centered on the struggles of female refugees, tells the story of a young Iranian girl called Shirin, who was forced out of her country for taking part in the recent women-led protests. The program explores the considerable difficulties of leaving a home country as well as settling into a new one.

On a lighter note, a new SAT-7 PARS program *How Things are Made* aims to increase the general knowledge of youngsters and help them have a better idea about humanity and nature. This highly accessible program reveals the fascinating creative process behind everyday items like paper, chocolate, and soap, as well as delving into the science of electricity, the solar system, and more.

SAT-7 also runs several larger projects for children and young people in collaboration with some of our partner organizations. More information about these can be found on pages 15-17.

MY SCHOOL FILMING COMPLETE – BUT LESSONS CONTINUE

***My School*, SAT-7's pioneering program to provide high-quality complementary education in the Arab world, has wrapped up its fifth and final season. Since the program launched in 2015 in response to the war in Syria, SAT-7 has made over 400 episodes covering the region's curriculum in the core subjects of Mathematics, Arabic, English, Science, and French.**

With one in every five children in the MENA not in school – nearly 15 million in total – the ongoing need for *My School* is clear.[1] All episodes will continue being aired on SAT-7 KIDS and multiple social media platforms, and also shown on SAT-7's video-on-demand service, SAT-7 PLUS, for years to come.

While the program was originally created to support the learning of Syrian refugee children, *My School* has helped to fill the educational gap created by further conflicts and crises in the region. Teachers' strikes in Lebanon in 2022 kept half a million children out of the classroom.

My School has also attracted enormous interest from children attending poor-quality state schools across the region, as well as from adults who did not receive a decent education in their younger years. By 2018, an estimated 1.5 million people were watching, with the largest audience based in Egypt.

Its success was clear from the beginning, with many children and parents thanking SAT-7 for the program's impact. "My daughter has been watching *My School* since we were in Iraq, and this is why she is excelling," said Renalda, an Iraqi mother living in Lebanon. "We love you so much. I cannot thank you enough."

During the eight-year development of *My School*, SAT-7 has worked with educational specialists from the Middle East and partner organizations on the ground to adapt and expand the program. SAT-7 has monitored its impact through pupil tests, online surveys with parents, and viewer feedback, and is now considering how to adapt the content to use with different groups in the future.

"I am so proud and grateful for the *My School* project," said SAT-7 Chief Executive Officer Rita El-Mounayer. "It brought education into homes and refugee camps across the Middle East and North Africa, enabling children and adults to learn key subjects that will stand them in good stead for the future. We pray that many lives will be changed as a result of having free access to high-quality informal education, even as the episodes are replayed and repurposed over the coming years."

Click here to watch a video about *My School*

My School season 5 impact results included:

284%
improvement in student grades at the Heart for Lebanon centers (averaged across all subjects).

76%
of parents surveyed online said their children's knowledge improved in various subjects.

91%
of parents surveyed online said their awareness of the importance of education had grown.

1 "Conflict drives 15 million children out of school in the Middle East and North Africa", UNICEF, https://www.unicef.org/mena/education; https://www.unicef.org/mena/out-school-children

MY SCHOOL TIMETABLE

2015

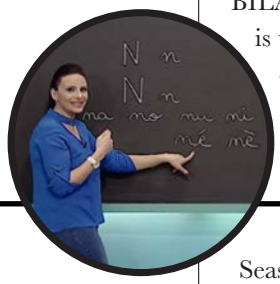
Season 1 launches for children ages 5-6, covering the core subjects of Arabic, Math, and English.

2016

Season 2 is produced for children ages 6-7 with Science being added to the curriculum.

2017

The Cultural Heritage and Interactive Learning Development Center is created in partnership with BILADI, where *My School* is used in more formal classroom settings with Syrian refugees in Lebanon.



Season 3, for 7-8-year-olds, adds French plus four new segments designed to break up the learning and help children overcome trauma.

Following discussion with partner NGOs, teaching segments in Season 4 – for 8-9-year-olds – are shortened to 15 minutes to aid concentration. Four more new segments are created.

2019

My School's online presence expands with 1,169 videos being added to YouTube, attracting over 78,000 views.

Videos are also shown on Facebook, with teachers hosting live-streaming sessions.

2020

As the world is rocked by the COVID-19 pandemic, the closure of schools creates further demand for *My School*. The program receives a huge increase in phone calls, messages, and comments from viewers.

Throughout the pandemic, teacher-presenters offer extra tuition on social media platforms, and special live episodes help viewers study successfully at home.

2021

A new partnership with Lebanese NGO Heart for Lebanon brings *My School* to two refugee centers in Lebanon (South and Bekaa).

During the two-year collaboration, hundreds of refugee children learn core subjects and social skills by watching episodes of *My School* at Heart for Lebanon's centers. Test results show that children made significant progress in many areas, both academic and behavioral.

2022

Season 5 is produced for 6-9-year-olds. Based on viewer feedback, the episodes are built on a modular approach and cut to a maximum of ten minutes.

Over 250 episodes of *My School* are made available on Tabshoura, a leading e-learning platform, through SAT-7's partnership with Lebanese Alternative Learning, who are committed to using technology to support children's educational needs. Online challenges support each episode and enable participants' progress to be measured.

2023

The final episode of *My School* airs on SAT-7 KIDS. All five seasons will continue being broadcast on SAT-7 KIDS, social media, and SAT-7 PLUS for years to come.

FINDING HER VOICE

To see Rouba Yamine – a confident, articulate, and talented young woman – today, it is hard to imagine that she once struggled with low self-esteem as a result of bullying and mental health problems.

From Lebanon, she grew up in a Christian family and loved to watch SAT-7 KIDS as a child, dreaming of one day appearing on the channel. Rouba, now age 20, remembers how the programs presented stories from the Bible in creative ways, which helped her to understand and remember them.

In her teens, Rouba struggled with depression and anxiety and was bullied by her classmates. "They used to make fun of me at school, thinking I was mentally ill or crazy," she said. "I no longer trusted myself, and I gained weight. This also didn't help."

But life started to turn around for Rouba when she saw an ad on SAT-7 KIDS for auditions to take part in the quiz show *Challenge Accepted*.

Then aged 18, she went along to the casting, and the SAT-7 team immediately saw her potential.

Rouba, who has a beautiful singing voice, went on to appear as a contestant on *Challenge Accepted*, performing a worship song on the program. She said, "With time, and when I came to SAT-7 KIDS, I realized that there are people like me who were bullied once, and they supported me a lot… Through SAT-7 KIDS, Jesus made my dream come true."

The producer and director could see that Rouba was a natural talent and said she could go on to become a presenter. But this seemed like a huge step for Rouba in her battle with low self-esteem.

Reflecting on how this made her feel at the time, she said, "I thought, 'I wish I could see what they are seeing in me. I wish I could have more self-confidence.'"

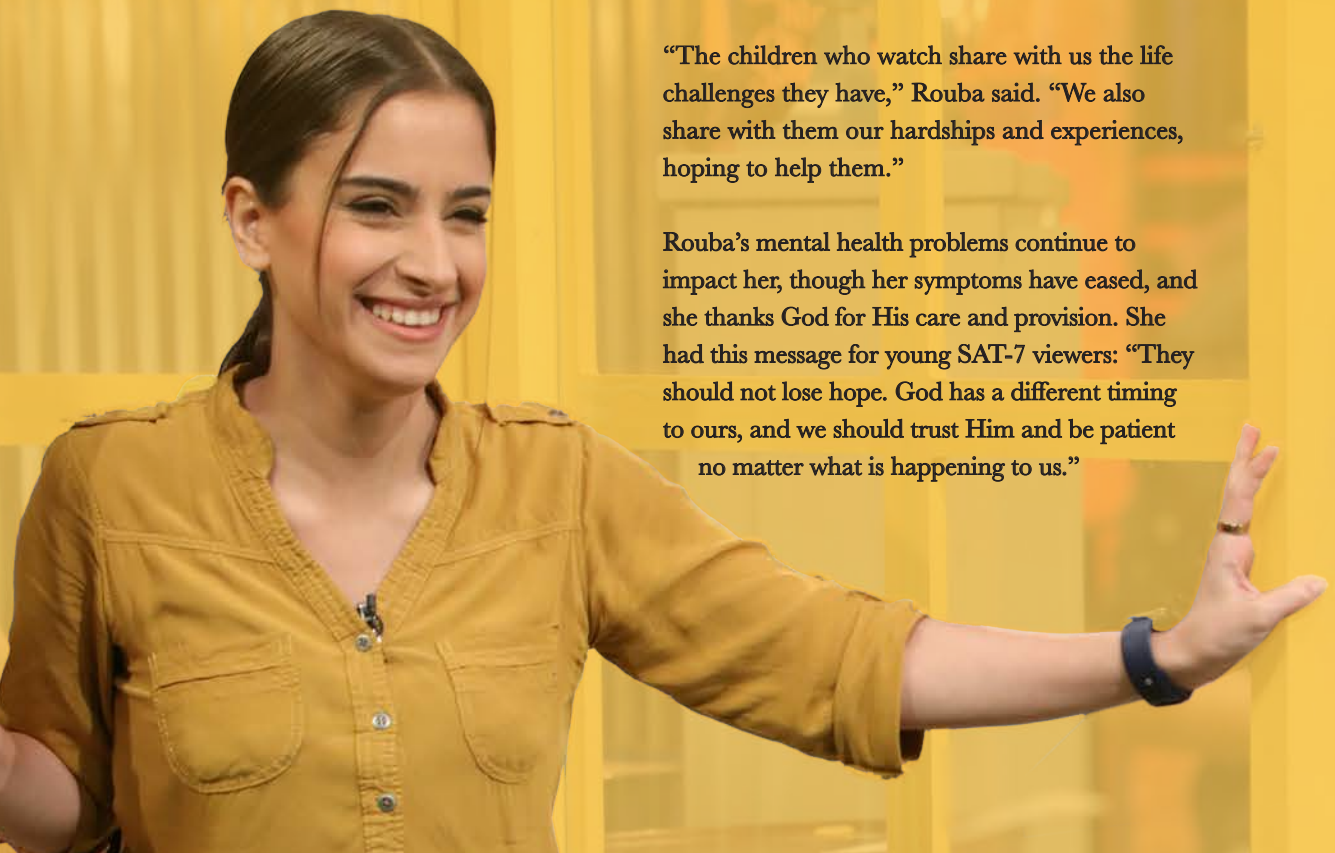
Rouba was selected as a presenter for a new children's program, *Behind the Door*. Now in its second season, the show helps young viewers to learn about Jesus through games, puzzles, and other entertaining segments. The program also gives space for young viewers to share their own stories.

Click here to watch Rouba on *Behind the Door*

"The children who watch share with us the life challenges they have," Rouba said. "We also share with them our hardships and experiences, hoping to help them."

Rouba's mental health problems continue to impact her, though her symptoms have eased, and she thanks God for His care and provision. She had this message for young SAT-7 viewers: "They should not lose hope. God has a different timing to ours, and we should trust Him and be patient no matter what is happening to us."

> **"We want to thank you for this beautiful program because you made us love to read the Bible and to get to know God more and more.**
> ***Behind the Door* viewer**



YOUNG PEOPLE MAKING A DIFFERENCE

The *Youth for an Enabling Society* (*YES*) project was launched in 2023. It has three main goals: to help young people in the MENA live well together despite their differences; to encourage and equip them to take responsibility for shaping their societies; and to support them in working towards the common good and building a better future for everyone.

"Youth are feeling desperate and disappointed, and they have every right to do so," said George Makeen, SAT-7's Ministry Content Adviser. "They are in a situation that is really disabling, living in disabling societies. Society has to enable them, but they can be the change that they want to see. We wanted to start by suggesting areas where they can see the challenge, but where they can also say, 'Here we can make a little difference.'"

The team from SAT-7 are filming stimulating youth initiatives, supported by on-air advertisements and in-person focus groups. In October, they were also present in force at the huge Count It Right youth festival in Egypt to raise awareness of the project. Some examples will illustrate its wide scope.

Six initiatives have been filmed in Nuweibaa in eastern Sinai, an area that has seen both severe drought and heavy and unpredictable rainfall in recent years. The activities showcase the role of youth in preserving the natural world and spreading environmentally friendly practices.

Short documentaries are in preparation that tell the stories of young people who were able to change their seemingly hopeless circumstances into successful initiatives that benefited other people. One of these features the youth of a village in Egypt who were trained in honey manufacture and export and whose business eliminated unemployment from their village.

A further short film focuses on isolation among young people, which can lead to suicide. *May God See Me* is about a girl who is about to kill herself because she feels that no one notices her and that God may see her if she goes to Him. But then something happens that makes her view the world from a different perspective that makes her want to serve others.

More than 60 segments and 60 reels have been prepared for social media. In response to a clip on an organic farming initiative, one person commented:

"Wow, this is amazing! We always hear slogans about getting back to nature and staying away from chemicals, but it's the first time I've seen those words actually realized in reality, proving that it's possible to implement them."

YES is implemented by SAT-7's Cairo Studio and is supported by Norad via Digni and SAT-7's partner the Norwegian Mission Society.

Click here to see the project team at a music festival

① A fish farming initiative ② The project lead at a conference in Kenya ③ Filming a business initiative in Tunisia

ACTIVITY SHOW BREAKS DOWN BARRIERS

SAT-7 KIDS' innovative activity program for young people, *Puzzle*, will be returning to the screen early in 2024! The producers and presenters are using imaginative new approaches to convey the program's core messages of friendship, Freedom of Religion or Belief, and the recognition of diversity.

The show is filmed in Lebanon, which is home to people of many nationalities and religions. It brings together children, ages 10-15 years, from a variety of backgrounds, including some refugees. They take part in a range of engaging challenges that encourage them to connect with each other across their traditional divides.

In one episode, a guest talked to the children about beekeeping and explained how we humans are like bees, working together towards a common goal. The activity involved building a beehive from parts that the children were asked to find in the room. The teams also had to share the tools among themselves in order to finish the task. This was followed by a Q&A session about human rights, freedom of expression, and equality.

Although some of the children were wary at first, they connected well with each other during the filming, and barriers began to break down. For example, one girl mended a scarf belonging to a girl from a different background, and they said that they became friends "a little bit!"

Some of the activities encouraged the children to explore their hopes and dreams. Another episode was filmed at a craft center, where they were asked to draw something about peace in their home countries. One girl drew a beautiful city with police guarding it; for her, peace meant security. The program also gave the children an opportunity to showcase their different talents, and one child recited a poem about unity among different social groups.

The second season of *Puzzle* is presented by Elias Maalouf, a young Lebanese man who has previously been involved in many programs with children. He explained that he himself has been changed by his involvement in *Puzzle*, and he has enjoyed meeting children from such varied backgrounds and encountering the richness of the cultures they represent.

Juliana Sfeir, the series producer, said, "Young people are the future of Lebanon. Conditions here are currently precarious, with a paralyzed political system, collapsing economy, and huge refugee population. As sectarian tensions rise, *Puzzle*'s message of friendship, freedom of religion, and the acceptance of national and religious difference is urgently needed."

The 13-episode series is part of a larger project run in collaboration with SAT-7's partner Right to Play Lebanon. Its purpose is that young people in Lebanon learn to respect Freedom of Religion or Belief and work towards unity.

Above: Juliana Sfeir, producer of *Puzzle*, with the project bus!

Below: Making drawings about peace formed part of the *Puzzle* project

NEW DRAMA SERIES TO INSPIRE LEBANESE YOUTH

SAT-7 is excited to announce that our *Lebanon, Our Story* project has finished filming its original drama series, *For Your Eyes Only*, which will be broadcast exclusively on our platforms.

Lebanon is a country in need of a new narrative. After years of economic troubles, social hardship, and large-scale calamities like the Beirut blast in 2020, its people are seeking a fresh vision for the future that will promote unity among its diverse groups. *For Your Eyes Only* aims to contribute to that story.

The drama series fuses the reality of life in Lebanon with fictional fantasy elements. Set on the lively streets of Lebanon, the drama centers on Dr. Edwards, a healer and protector who remains loyal to his people in the face of unfolding crises. The narrative also features a romantic story that reveals the true power of love in a dark and difficult world. From young adults seeking thrilling adventures to older generations longing for nostalgic storytelling, this series – which provides a close-up view of the resilience and resolve of the Lebanese people – promises to captivate viewers of all ages.

Executive Director of SAT-7's Lebanon office, Maroun Bou Rached, said, "I am filled with deep pride in having the opportunity to be a part of this remarkable project, and I am privileged to have viewed the extraordinary talent of the actors involved, many of whom I have admired throughout my life. It has been a truly inspiring journey."

An inspiring journey it may have been, but not without its obstacles. The team behind the series endured an exceptional setback when Mr. Marwan Najjar, one of the project's main driving forces, passed away during the development phase. The team pushed on towards the finishing line with Marwan always on their minds.

Click here to go behind the scenes

The *For Your Eyes Only* drama series builds on the momentum and content of another activity of the *Lebanon, Our Story* project: an anthology written by young people who participated in its Storytelling Clubs in 2022.

These clubs were spaces facilitating creative explorations of a new national narrative. Each story in the book was shared by a young person in Lebanon, in their own words, showing how their own stories intersected with those of others who are different from them.

Download your copy of the book here

STRENGTHENED IN ADVERSITY

Dalir is a new Christian from Afghanistan living under the rule of the Taliban. "Beloved of the Lord, we would be grateful for any advice you can give us," he told the SAT-7 PARS Viewer Support Team. "We have only been in the family of believers for two years and I give thanks to our heavenly Father that He touched my heart and received us into His family."

Dalir was well aware of the dangers that he faced. "The situation here in Afghanistan is very difficult for believers, and if the Taliban find out about us, they will certainly kill us. We don't take our mobiles out with us because they check people's mobiles. I am changing the name on my WhatsApp account to provide some security."

In these restrictive conditions, Dalir had no access to Christian resources, so he was delighted to receive some from SAT-7. He responded, "Thank you for all the content. The worship songs and the teaching clips are truly excellent. We always follow your programs and are blessed by them."

The team also pointed Dalir to some Bible teaching sessions on Zoom hosted by an Iranian Christian couple living in Türkiye. He soon became an enthusiastic participant. "I was very blessed by your teaching on the Trinity. It was excellent. Many of the questions I had have been answered…" "This session about prayer was truly full of blessings. Thank you for the notes file that you sent…" "The answers you gave about the role of women in Christian communities were excellent and we were blessed." When he was unable to attend he asked for the recording to be sent to him.

Dalir is thankful to God for how SAT-7 PARS has helped him and his family in the early stages of their Christian life. "We are grateful to you, who like loving brothers serve us and help us to take our first steps. You are glorifying the Lord through your beautiful programs. You will build the Church and deliver the message of the Gospel. May God bless you, dear friends, with His grace."

Pray for protection for Dalir and his family, and that they will continue to be built up in their Christian faith.

> **"The worship songs and the teaching clips are truly excellent. We always follow your programs and are blessed by them.**

SAT-7's YouTube videos had
6,278,735
views

SAT-7's Viewer Support teams held
21,987
conversations with viewers

SAT-7 gained
98,976
new Facebook fans

*All statistics cover the period 1 July to 30 September 2023

GROWING WITH GOD

A new series on SAT-7 PARS is helping Persian-speaking viewers grow in their personal relationships with God and other people by teaching them about different forms of Christian spirituality.

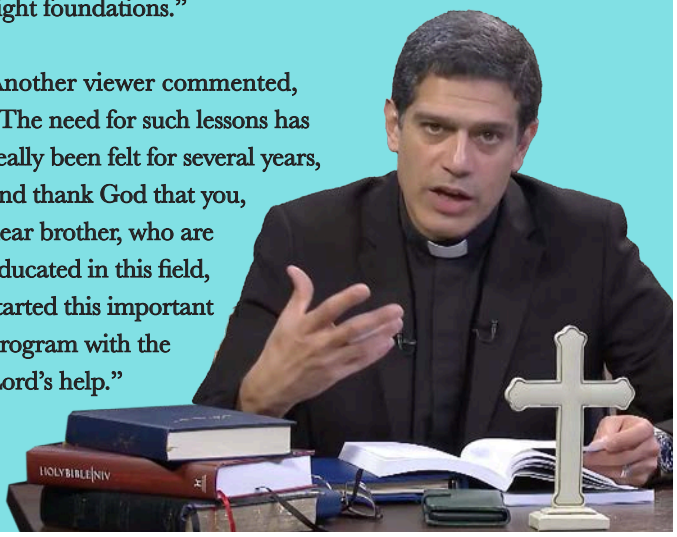
The program, called *Christian Spirituality*, introduces spiritual practices and devotional exercises from the major historic Christian traditions. Rev. Keyvan Cyrus, a popular presenter on the channel, describes the various schools of spirituality and explains their relevance to Iranian believers today, regardless of church background or affiliation.

One challenge of presenting this content is that some of the theological terminology has no equivalence in Persian or that the nearest word means something different in the majority faith. Pastor Keyvan takes great care to ensure that the ideas are conveyed accurately in the viewers' own language and are explained clearly and understandably.

Click here to watch an extract

The program is proving very valuable to isolated and persecuted Christians in Iran. One viewer contacted the channel to say, "Thank you to [Pastor Keyvan], who is full of knowledge and right theology in line with the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Truly, young Farsi-speaking churches need to have a deeper understanding of Christian theology built on right foundations."

Another viewer commented, "The need for such lessons has really been felt for several years, and thank God that you, dear brother, who are educated in this field, started this important program with the Lord's help."



HISTORICAL DRAMA COMPLETES FILMING

SAT-7 TÜRK is excited that their new movie *Yakamoz*, about the historic population exchange between Türkiye and Greece, has now been filmed!

The team testified to the help of God in enabling them to finish the production in just two weeks, an extraordinary timescale for a feature film. A distinguished cast of actors with a heart for the project worked together in the town of Gelveri, Cappadocia with a professional film crew furnished with high-quality equipment.

The film narrates the experience of two families, one Turkish and one Greek, who are caught up in the two-way migration across the countries' borders in the early 1920s. It illustrates how Türkiye has always had Christian residents. The team hopes that it will help to build bridges between Türkiye and Greece and bring people together.

After editing, *Yakamoz* will be launched at various film festivals. Then it is scheduled for release in 2024, the 100th anniversary of the exchange, and will be shown in cinemas all over Türkiye. A behind-the-scenes documentary, including interviews with the cast and crew, has also been prepared.

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