

INTRODUCTION

About NORWAC

NORWAC is a humanitarian non-governmental organization. Established in 1983, we have a long history in the Middle East and longstanding relations and cooperation with major local service providers across different communities. Our mission is to provide humanitarian medical assistance to the most vulnerable and neglected groups mainly living in the most exposed areas which are characterized by instability and frequent crises. All of our projects are implemented through local partners and based on a needs-based approach and the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, independence and neutrality.

Through close cooperation with medical institutions in Norway, many highly qualified experts cooperate with us in a wide range of medical specialties, as consultants, trainers or work directly in the field during emergency situations. As a result, this has contributed to NORWAC's position to design and implement successful capacity building projects. This expertise also allows NORWAC to perform professional assessments and evaluations of the healthcare services in the countries we work in.

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Board Members

Berit Jagmann, Kristin Øren and Line Khateeb

Country Directors

Lebanon: Dagfinn Bjørklid Palestine: Marit Lieng Syria: Belal Al-Jabri

As of 31.12.2022

Cover photo: The Wall in Bethlehem. Photo: Solveig Øiestad

NORWAC'S VISION

NORWAC shall contribute towards ensuring that entire populations, including refugees and other exposed groups, in countries and areas with humanitarian needs have access to basic, safe health services of high quality. NORWAC's work shall support national health authorities, local institutions and individual health workers' efforts to sustain the provision of necessary health services to minimize consequences of war and humanitarian crises.



THE HISTORY OF

NORWEGIAN AID COMMITTEE

After the Israeli invasion in Lebanon there was an urgent need for medical support to the Palestinian refugees living in South Lebanon. The Norwegian Aid Committee (NORWAC) was founded in January 1983 at initiative by the Palestine committee with the aim to provide humanitarian aid to people affected by conflict and crisis. In 1983 NORWAC established a local representation office in Lebanon, and the first team was sent to work with the Lebanese NGO Magrouf Saad Foundation.

1983

2023



The Israeli invasion in Lebanon in 1983. Photo: Wikimedia Commons/ Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0.

THE WORK BY NORWAC was stopped by the Lebanese authorities after four months. However, NORWAC established projects in Palestine with local NGOs, and started working with the Palestinian Red Crescent Society in Egypt supporting their hospital in Cairo and Sudan. Following the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Lebanon in 1985, NORWAC reestablished a presence in Lebanon and started a long-term collaboration with Lebanese and Palestinian NGOs. In collaboration with the Norwegian Palestine Committee. Medical Aid for Palestinians in UK and several other European NGOs, NORWAC sent medical teams to Beirut and South Lebanon that worked both for the PRCS and Lebanese organizations.



In the ruins of the Abdel Fattah Shamalakh familiy homes after waractions in Gaza in May 2021. Photo: NORWAC

IN PALESTINE, NORWAC ran a mobile dentistry unit on the West Bank with the Palestine Committee. After the first intifada i 1987 NORWAC started sending medical teams to the Ittihad hospital in Nablus. After the Oslo agreement in 1993 and the establishment of the Palestinian authority the year after, NORWAC ended all collaboration with the Palestinian NGOs to work specifically with the Ministry of Health of the Palestinian authority. The main projects in Palestine comprised capacity building and help building an independent Palestinian Healthcare system. Self-sufficiency in Oxygen supply was an important item, another was systematic building of pre-natal care and training of midwives and other medical staff.



IN 1999 NORWAC was informed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) that our services no longer were required as they expected a two-state solution soon, and they would no longer support health collaboration between NGOs like NORWAC and the Palestinian authority.

IN THE SPRING of 1999 Kosovo experienced a huge crisis involving ethnic cleansing. NORWAC sent and managed a field hospital to the Albanian village of Krumë helping refugees and injured form the military confrontations. In the wake of the war, NORWAC was asked by the MFA to assist in restoring the health care systems in Albania, Kosovo and Macedonia. This work continued for ten years, national health plans and restructuring of specialized care.

IN THE WAKE OF THE second intifada, it became obvious that a peaceful establishment of a Palestinian state was far away, and the Norwegian authorities decided to continue supporting NORWAC projects in Palestine.

WHEN THE CIVIL WAR broke out in Syria in 2012, near two million refugees came to Lebanon, resulting in an escalation of NORWAC's activities there. Many of the refugees suffered from chronic diseases, so it was a need to expand our health capacity in renal dialysis, blood banking and other services.

NORWAC ALSO STARTED providing the same services in areas in Syria where the governmental health care services were no longer available, in order to limit the need to depart Syria for people suffering with chronic diseases.

SINCE 2008, THERE HAVE been four major attacks on Gaza causing severe material damage and more than 6000 killed and 121 000 wounded. NORWAC has supported the emergency with specialist teams, medicines, and equipment.

IN 2023 NORWAC runs projects in Palestine, Lebanon and Syria supporting the building of modern health care services for chronic illnesses, reproductive health, pain management, psychiatric disease, cancer, and spinal cord injury. NORWAC also supports hospital infrastructure like library services, oxygen supply etc.

CONNECTING HEALTH CARE

PROFESSIONALS FOR 40 YEARS

NORWAC WAS established in 1983 as a novel type of NGO. The founders and management were all physicians and nurses with full time employment in the Norwegian health care system. For forty years medical professionals working in university hospitals in Norway, with a background in several medical specialities have constituted the core of the NORWAC management.

THIS PROFESSIONAL profile together with deep knowledge and a genuine interest in the history and situation of the people in the Middle East has enabled us to support our partners in their endeavour to maintain and improve health care in difficult situations.

THE PROJECTS have ranged from building oxygenator infrastructure in hospitals, pre-natal midwifery care to training in laparoscopic surgery, cancer treatment, dialysis treatment of patients with renal failure, blood bank services, pain clinic management, mental health and rehabilitation and training of patients with spinal cord injuries. In all areas capacity building and training of local staff are the main objectives of the projects, making our partners able to provide the services independently.

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IN 2022 NORWAC supported various projects in Palestine, Lebanon, and Syria, all within the framework where capacity building and quality of services were prioritized.

IN PALESTINE NORWACs sole partner is the Palestinian authority. The last years the main bulk of projects were in Gaza where the special situation of the Israeli blockade make access to health care for the population particularly demanding.

NORWACS PROJECTS have a dual purpose, both addressing the most pressing medical need, but also to assist the local authorities in building a resilient health care system, acknowledging that a public health care system is an important part of building a Palestinian state.

IN LEBANON and Syria NORWACs projects are run through various highly skilled local partners and are mainly aimed to relieve the health care burden of the on-going civil war in Syria and the refugee situation in Lebanon.

WE ARE PROUD to be part of the work our partners do both in Palestine, Lebanon, and Syria.

Erik Fosse

Chief Executive Officer, NORWAC







Erik Fosse in Gaza together with NORWAC colleagues Mohammad Tashtoush, Robert Brown, engineer Hasan Ifraineh and local children in 2017. Selfie by Mohammad Tashtoush

Mads Gilbert and Erik Fosse informing international media about the situation in Gaza during the war in 2009.

Photo: Private

LEBANON

Grant: 25 000 000 NOK



Target Groups



A community of around 1500 000 refugees-Palestinians from Lebanon (PRL), Syrians and Palestinians from Syria (PRS) - and an increasing number of vulnerable groups in the host community.

NORWAC's Goals

- Providing access to sexual and reproductive health services, primary - and secondary healthcare services.
- · Strengthening mental health services.
- Physical rehabilitation and access to specialized treatment.
- Support Palestinian youth in education within health sciences.
- Providing access to life saving treatment for people with non-communicable chronic diseases, such as renal failure, thalassemia.

Local Partners

- Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS-L)
- National Institution for Social Care and Vocational Training (NISCVT)
- Maarouf Saad Social and Cultural Foundation (MSSCF)
- Mousawat
- Imam Sadr Foundation (ISF)
- · Health Care Society (HCS)
- Palestinian Student Fund (PSF)
- Ghawth for Relief and Emergency

«NORWAC is extremely proud of the heroic efforts of our partners to meet the needs of the most vulnerable people in Lebanon.»

Dagfinn Bjørklid – Country Director, Lebanon.





PROJECT FROM 2022

Reducing Risk and Improving Quality at PRCS Hospitals

PRCS IN LEBANON runs five hospitals, in Saida, Beirut, Tripoli, Tyre and Bekaa, and have a total capacity of 184 beds. NORWAC has for many years supported the central sterile services department at Hamshari hospital in Saida, which supervise the other four PRCS hospitals. The sterilization work at Hamshari has reached satisfactory levels, and NORWAC will now support training and education of staff who are responsible for running the sterilization departments at the four other hospitals.

THE AIM OF THIS project is to reduce the risk for infections and complications for patients in PRCS hospitals, as well as improving quality on surgical procedures (Safe Surgery) and improving quality on instrument handling and maintenance of surgical instruments. The sterilization depart-

ment is a crucial at any hospital, and this training is vital to ensure the best quality of work for the good of every patient visiting the hospital.

THE TRAINING started with a three-day training course in October 2022. The 12 participants were employees at the sterilization departments in PRCS hospitals in Lebanon, but also from a PRCS hospital in Syria. The plan is to continue the training for two project periods.

NORWAC CONSULTANTS, Kjersti Fiveland and Rune Fjeldstad, who work in the sterilisation department at Akershus University hospital conducted the training in October together with the local coordinator, Mounir El- Hajj. Mounir is the head of the sterilization department at Hamshari hospital in Saida.



A SUCCESS STORY

Changing People's Lives in Lebanon

Palestinian and Syrian refugees as well as poor Lebanese with physical disabilities, do not have access to quality essential healthcare services and medicine in the Lebanese healthcare system. Persons with disabilities face adverse political, social, cultural, and economic conditions. They often face barriers that limit their access to education and ability to become independent and integrated members of the community.





All patients receive treatment and follow up from a multidisciplinary team. Photo: Ramzi Haidar

HOUSEHOLDS LIVING in extreme poverty are almost twice as likely to have a family member with disability and they also experience negative attitudes and stigma from family.

PATIENTS WITH spinal cord injuries (SCI) have particularly complicated cases and are often a neglected category of people with disabilities. The main factor for early death among these patients is kidney failure, caused by complications in the urinary tract.

NORWAC HAS worked together with Imam Sadr Foundation (ISF) in South- Lebanon since 1985-86, and started to support services and training at the centre in Derghaiya in 2013. At the centre the patients receive specialized services and consultations comprising rehabilitation, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, mental health, and psychosocial support, in order to build awareness and skills concerning their situation. The centre also has a specialized urodynamic unit for patients with urinary tract problems and can assist couples in getting pregnant even when the man has a SCI.

THE TRAINING AND capacity building for the staff at Derdghaiya is conducted by NORWAC consultants from Sunnaas Hospital in Norway. The cooperation between Sunnaas and NORWAC

started up in 2013 and a highly specialist team which consists of urologists, nurses, physiotherapist, occupational therapist and peer consultants have travelled to Lebanon several times per year to build capacity of staff and caregivers. One of the ground-breaking effects of this work has been the establishment multidisciplinary teams and this model and knowledge have now been spread to other rehabilitation centres in Lebanon.

ONE OF THE MOST important successes of this project has also been the cooperation between three of NORWAC partners ISF, Mousawat, and PRCS, this to ensure accessibility for as many patients as possible.

THE DERGHAIYA CLINIC has 1020 patients and follow-up their patients over a period of years. The centre also offers several group activities, like self-support and peer-support groups and conduct multidisciplinary home visits.

THE AIM OF THE project has been to improve access to quality health care services and the quality of life for people living with disabilities in Lebanon. Patients at Derghaiya has gone from being bedridden and in need of care and help from their families, to become independent individuals with an education, a job and their own family.

PALESTINE

Grant: 10 000 000 NOK



Target Groups



- The Palestinian population in need of health services, with a focus on war injured, women and neonates, patients with chronic diseases, and mental disorders.
- The Palestinian governmental health sector.

NORWAC's Goals

- Contribute to MoH's ability to deliver critical health services in Gaza.
- Contribute to strengthen and develop local health staff capability.

Projects

- Oxygen (O2) support in Gaza
- Spare Parts to Al-Shifa
- Medicines and medical disposables to Gaza
- Sterilization equipment to Al-Shifa hospital
- Improving Mental Health in Gaza
- · Quality Maternal and New-born Care
- · Pain Management

Local Partners

Palestine Ministry of Health (MoH) West Bank and Gaza:

- Al Shifa Hospital Gaza
- Central Engineering Department (CED)
- Gaza and West Bank
- Human Resources Development
- Department (HRDD) Gaza
- International Cooperation Department
- West Bank and Gaza (ICD)
- Mental Health Directorate (MHD)

«NORWAC is privileged to have the ability to contribute to a better health care for Palestinians in close coordination with local authorities and health workers.»

Marit Lieng – Country Director, Palestine.







Dr. Shady Hillel taking a selfie with other participants at one of the trainings sessions, April 2022.

PROJECT FROM 2022

Improving Mental Health in Gaza

THE MINISTRY of Health (MoH) in Gaza provides mental health services through six Primary Health Clinics (PHC), and one psychiatric hospital (40 beds). In 2022 the community centres received 1 520 new cases and provided 95 428 follow up sessions. The hospital received 2 262 cases and admitted 717 patients.

THERE IS a need for more qualified and skilled mental health workers in Gaza. The medical staff also lack time, resources, and available facilities to make diagnostic formulations. This increase the risk for unnecessary use of medication.

THE AIM of the project is to improve the quality of mental health services in Gaza and NORWAC supports:

- Training of staff in the mental health sector.
- Procurement of essential medication for mentally ill patients.

In 2022 NORWAC's team of three psychiatrists have conducted:

 Introduction training to Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT) for 15 psychologists at the

- community centres.
- Training for six medical doctors working at the community centres.
- Training in recovery and person-centred approaches as well as core psychotherapy skills for the staff at the hospital.
- Case base discussion group, both at the hospital and online in between visits.

THERE ARE only two specialized psychiatrists in Gaza. In 2021, MoH started a Board Program in Psychiatry and have recruited five medical doctors who will become psychiatrists. These doctors are a part of the training at the hospital and NORWAC assists MoH in the development of their curriculum.

ALL TOPICS for the training have been requests from local staff, and NORWAC will gradually encourage selected local staff to take a leading role in the project and they will be able to continue the training and lead others. To be able to establish the change needed and to ensure qualified local staff to keep the project sustainable the plan is a five-year project period.





Improved Medical Treatment for Women in Gaza

Endoscopic surgery (laparoscopy and hysteroscopy) is beneficial for women suffering from gynaecological conditions requiring surgical treatment. Endoscopic surgical procedures are minimal invasive and significantly reduce the risk of post-operative complications, such as infections, compared to open abdominal surgery. Furthermore, postoperative pain after endoscopic surgery is significantly reduced enabling the women to faster recovering and shorter absence from normal activity postoperatively.





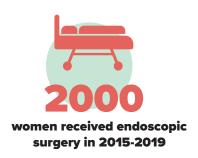
THE PROJECT took place from 2015-2019 and more than 2000 women, in average 25-30 monthly cases, underwent endoscopic surgery at Al-Shifa hospital in this period. 95% of these procedures were day surgical, which leaves space and nurses available for other patients in the overcrowded ward.

PRIOR TO THIS project, only a few gynaecologists in Gaza were able to perform endoscopic procedures and on a basic level only. NORWAC conducted training of gynaecologists, anaesthesiologists and a team of OT nurses at Al-Shifa Department of Gynaecology through many expert visits from Oslo university Hospital, supervision between the visits, and by provision of surgical equipment. Local staff was furthermore trained in how to clean and maintain the relatively advanced surgical equipment necessary for minimal invasive surgery. This project has consequently increased the local capacity and competence in Gaza among different health workers in Gaza.

THE SUSTAINABILITY of this project was also ensured, as the first surgeons who were trained started teaching colleagues in basic procedures. In 2019/20, at the final stage of the project, a team of local gynaecologists performed advanced endoscopic procedures and two additional teams

performed basic procedures. Minimal invasive gynaecological surgery is available at Al-Shifa today and the treatment is performed in line with international standards. The risk for infections, complications and morbidity has been reduced, and women suffering from gynaecological conditions experience quicker recovery. Health services for women in Gaza is significantly improved as a result of this project.

CONDUCTING THIS form for training and capacity building, is not only of advantage for the selected patients and staff, but rather a whole team of e.g. surgeons, anaesthesiologists and OT nurses, physiotherapists and sterilization teams, as well as midwives. This enables institutionalization at department level and provide a system preparedness necessary in further emergency situations in Gaza.





Health Science Library

NORWAC HAS since 2009 supported the upgrading and maintenance of the Gaza Health Science Library (GHSL) at Al-Shifa hospital in Gaza. Technical support and maintenance are done through a collaboration with the Norwegian Union of Librarians and the medical library at Oslo University Hospital (OUS). The medical library is appreciated by all health personnel.

IT ENABLES them to remain professionally updated during the blockade, which isolates Palestinians from participation and further education abroad. The library has become a modern medical library with access to medical databases and updated journals. The library project is a part of NORWAC's overall aim for the Palestinian health sector, namely, to increase Palestinian medical expertise through education and knowledge transfer.

SINCE 2016 the support to the GHSL from NORWAC's is dependent on private donors and partnerships. Funds raised are used entirely to sustain the medical library at Al-Shifa Hospital.

In 2022 NORWAC also supported the opening of two satellite libraries, the first one was at the European hospital and the second at Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital Library (AMHL). As satellites of the GHSL, these libraries will receive the support and assistance they need to become great learning facilities by providing easy access to the necessary resources and references for medical staff. The future plan is to expand the GHSL satellite project to other MoH hospitals, making sure that no medical staff in Gaza has access to necessary and updated medical information.

THE LIBRARIES have many events and high activity. In 2022 the GHSL had 4594 visitors and 421 lectures/events were held at the auditorium for 9428 participants.



Please donate to the library by using VIPPS 126863 or account number 1503.61.48346



Two major events at the GHSL in 2022 were the Medical Book Fair and the Female Leadership in the Health Sector conference. Photo: Solveig Øiestad.

SYRIA

Grant: 26 300 000 NOK



Target Groups



- Local communities and IDPs in Syria.
- People in need of medical assistance, such as patients with spinal cord injuries, neonates, children, or elderly with chronic renal failure.
- Doctors, nurses, paramedics, and other health personnel.

NORWAC's Goals

- Contribute to retain Primary Healthcare Services.
- Contribute to retain specialized healthcare services (blood bank/thalassemia, chronic diseases/renal failure, physical rehabilitation).
- Establishing and operating a midwifery upgrading programme.

Projects

- Primary Healthcare Centres
- Blood Banks and Laboratories
- Kidney Dialysis and Thalassemia Programme
- Urology clinic
- · Radiology center
- Midwifery Upgrading Programme
- Rehabilitation Services
- Procurement of Medical Equipment

«NORWAC has since 2012 provided emergency healthcare to Syrians and supported a variety of community-based medical facilities focusing on life-saving services and reaching the most vulnerable and those in most need.»

Belal Al-Jabri – Country Director, Syria.





PROJECT FROM 2022

Improving Health Care Services

THE OVERALL goal for NORWAC's projects is to improve access to essential healthcare services for the population in Syria.

NORWAC HAS supported the establishment of a diagnostic department at a hospital in Syria. In 2021 the unit was fully rehabilitated, and all medical equipment were procured to open a new diagnostic department. The procurement of a new CT-scanner, the first one for many years, was of major importance and improved the specialized health care services significantly. NORWAC's support also includes running costs of the department to be able to buy consumables as well as providing salaries and capacity building of the staff.

AFTER THE opening in July 2021 the diagnosis department has been running according to the implementation plan.

patients (average of 3 976 patients per month) received laboratory services

45 732
patients (average of 3 811 patients per month) received radiology services

5 772
CT-scan images of patients





NORWAC



Saving lives in Syria

NORWAC has since 2017 been saving lives in Syria by supporting treatment for non-communicable chronic diseases, like thalassemia and renal failure.

THALASSEMIA IS an inherited blood disorder which leads to anemia, a condition in which the body does not have enough healthy red blood cells. Some patients need regular blood transfusions, approximately once every three weeks, to prevent anemia to reach lethal levels. Renal failure, also known as end-stage kidney disease, is a condition where the kidneys no longer function.

THE SURVIVAL of patients with renal failure depends on the access to regular kidney dialysis, and without it, most patients will die within weeks. The treatment is intense, demanding, and costly. The lack of advanced specialized services in parts of Syria makes it difficult for these patients and many of them risk ending up as IDPs or as refugees to get the treatment they need. These projects are designed to reduce morbidity and mortality and strengthen health services especially for children and elderly people in Syria.

NORWAC'S SUPPORT has provided patients with hemodialysis sessions free of charge and patients have also received close monitoring of their condition, providing them with medical consultations and medicines on a regular basis as well as receiving health promotion and awareness on how to live a healthy life with the disease.

NORWAC's support has included rehabilitation of buildings, salaries, medicine, consumables, dialysis kits, maintenance of the dialysis machines and fuel to the medical centers. NORWAC has also provided transportation for patients who live too far away to reach the centers which provide treatment.

NORWAC HAS been supporting around 140 patients every year, with an average annual number of more than 10 000 kidney dialysis sessions.

NORWAC has supported life-saving treatment to thalassemia patients, providing them with necessary blood transfusion and medication. Thalassemia is a genetic disease, and many of the patients are children and young adults. A clinic treating thalassemia patients also needs a clinical laboratory and blood bank and all patients receive close follow-ups with examinations and testing. Centers also offer a screening program to the close relatives of the patients. To reach more beneficiaries, mobile medical unit has been launched.

IN 2022, NORWAC supported to more than 600 patients, with more than 7500 blood transfusion sessions.

NORWAC IN NUMBERS





projects
NORWAC supports

15
active medical consultants



- Doctors
- Nurses
- Midwives
- Physiotherapist
- Occupational therapist

30%
of NORWAC projects target women and children

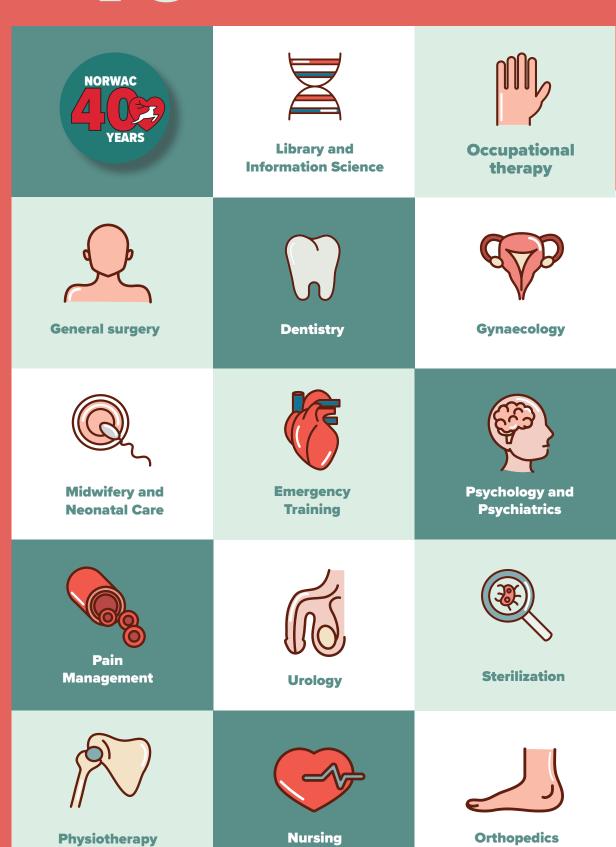
55 project visits



COUNTRIES SUPPORTED OVER THE 40 YEARS



40 YEARS OF CAPACITY BUILDING HEALTH PROJECTS





- Medical Equipment and Infrastructure
- . Medicines
- Medical disposables

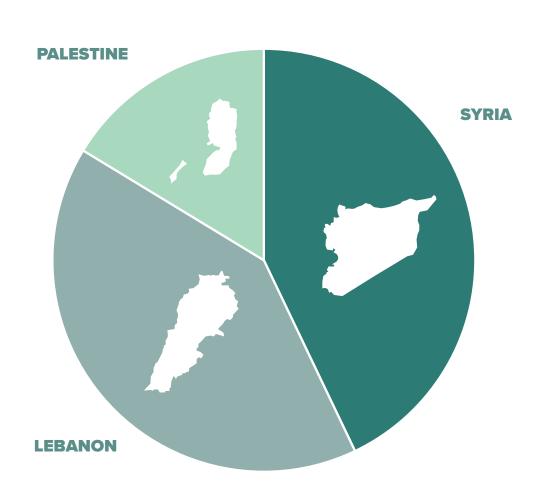
The oxygen project 1994-2022 has included procurement of generators and spare parts for maintenance of all generators at public hospital in Palestine. Photo: NORWAC

NORWAC HAS SUPPORTED

- Blood banks
- Kidney dialysis treatment
- Primary Health Care clinics
- Rehabilitation
- Sexual Reproductive Health
- Thalassemia treatment
- Urology clinics
- Medical oxygen generators, maintenance and training



NEW GRANTS 2022



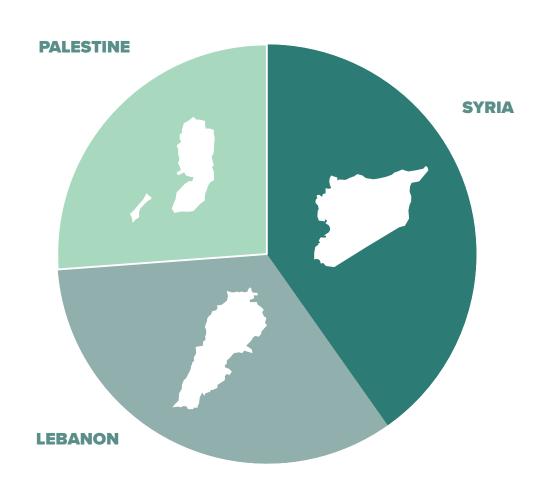
Distribution Per Country



*9,96 NOK for 1 USD when main donation was received in 2022.



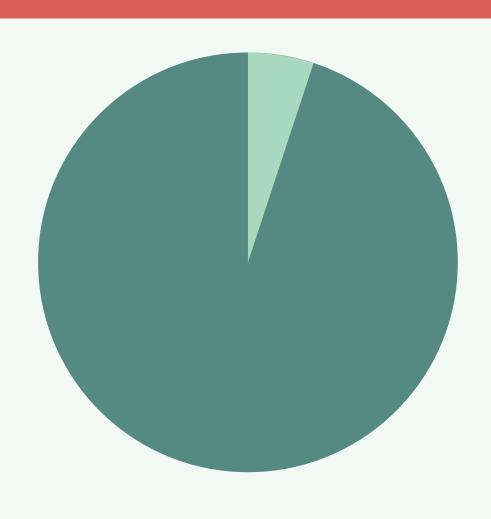
GRANTS LAST 10 YEARS



Distribution Per Country

SUM	672 897 000	NOK
PALESTINE	176 127 000	NOK
LEBANON	226 120 00	NOK
SYRIA	270 650 000	NOK

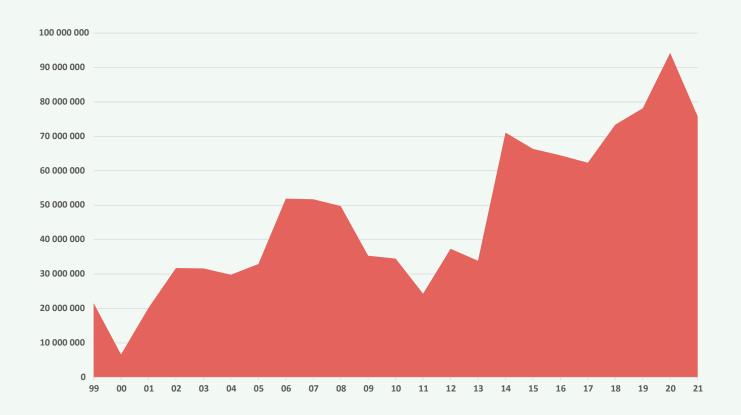
DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS FOR PROJECTS AND ADMINISTRATION LAST 10 YEARS



- PROJECTS/IMPLEMENTATION: 58 292 000 NOK = 95 %
- **ADMINISTRATION:** 3 008 000 NOK = 5 %



NORWAC'S GRANTS LAST 20 YEARS



TOTAL GRANTS 1 161 300 000 NOK



THANK YOU!

From everyone in NORWAC: We would like to thank our donor, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the generous support to the projects over 40 years.

