



Mediterranean Children's Movement (MCM) Approved Strategic Goals for 2024-2027

Who are we?

"A journey through the Mediterranean is not only inspiring and stimulating, it is also humbling. The men and women who created antique treasures for us to marvel at, had to deal with plague, genocide, a world without writing, iron tools, or penicillin – and yet they made something extraordinary of their life and times".

Bettany Hughes, English Historian and Broadcaster

Child Poverty, Migrant and Refugee Children, Children living in areas of armed conflict and war, Education, Health Care and Housing, Climate Change and the Children's Right to Participation are major issues of concern across the Mediterranean region.

Recognising Rights – and Children's Rights of course - is primarily the obligation of the states and it entails the recognition of injustice and discrimination. Standing indifferent to injustice, inequality and discrimination does not promote peace and human rights – it just makes us an accomplice.

The Mediterranean Children's Movement (MCM) affirms its commitment to safeguarding Children's Rights to JUSTICE, EQUALITY, EQUITY and PEACE and considers this to be an urgent responsibility. Especially when 35,000,000 children in the world were forced to leave their homes and motherland and become refugees and migrants (UNHCR 2022).

The underlying philosophy of the MCM is undoubtedly the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN CRC)*. We fully foster the children's right to their full participation on whatever impacts their lives. We provide a safe space for Children to share freely with others and empower them to voice their opinions about the inequalities that affect children in any way.

We believe that addressing inequalities will pave the way to building sustainable peace.

We believe that peace is not just the absence of wars and conflicts.

We need to build a culture of positive peace where the presence of justice, equity and equality are invested in our Mediterranean societies. The MCM addresses the social and economic disparities in the countries of the region, and in turn, the conflicts and violence associated with exploitation and inequality.

We believe that by investing and empowering Children to uphold these values will help to build sustainable peace, holistic wellbeing and inclusive societies in our region.

Strategic goal 1: Advocate for the elimination of War and all forms of Violence and Exploitation (Abuse, Sexual exploitation, trafficking etc.) against children

Strategic goal 2: Reduction and eventual elimination of Child Poverty in the Mediterranean

Strategic goal 3: Ensure that children living in the Mediterranean conflict areas are given the necessary humanitarian assistance due to the deprivation of water and sanitation, education, health care and protection services, including increasing awareness on the need for INCLUSION in schools and society implementing non-discriminatory policies and practice that safeguard children's rights

Strategic goal 4: Mediterranean governments to respond to the needs of migrant and refugee children at every stage of their journey, urging them to protect their rights

Strategic goal 5: Mediterranean governments to support sustainable economic growth, improve education with special attention to informal education, health services and housing conditions of children and develop other public initiatives advancing children's wellbeing, including special attention on Mental Health as well as physical Health

Strategic goal 6: Increase children's participation and cooperation while advancing children's rights

Strategic goal 7: Support the transition from using fossil fuels and press for re-forestation, conservation of resources and protecting and improving the environment

Strategic goal 8: Expose state corruption and advocate for transparency and ethical administration in all Mediterranean countries



The Mediterranean Children's Movement (MCM) and its Children's Council (MCMCC) approved the following Resolution during the MCM General Assembly held online on October 24, 2024.

RESOLUTION

1. War

Children are entitled to peace and to a future that safeguards their rights and development yet, they are the most affected by war and violence.

The use of violence for territorial and personal gain is increasing instead of decreasing because of the economic power of the arms industry and the oil industry that feeds it, and the greed, corruption and impunity of leaders who enrich themselves through outdated and destructive methods of violence, fear and repression.

The people of Libya and Sudan, the people of Palestine, Lebanon and Israel – to name just a few - face the spectre of militarization and death instead of demilitarization and fruitful dialogue. The vast majority of people are against war. Our awareness and action can make a difference.

Canada, Japan, the Netherlands, Belgium and Spain have announced they will stop shipping weapons to the Israeli government. 142 countries in the United Nations General Assembly have pledged boycotts on the Israeli government. Mediterranean governments are beginning to join the No Harbour for Genocide actions against providing assistance as bases or suppliers to Israel's war.

We must unite for Peace: military spending should be curtailed instead of increased, there should be divestment from arms production and sanctions should be put on all criminal states that violate international humanitarian law.

2. Refugee and Migrant Children

Each year we watch with deep concern thousands of refugees and migrants cross the Mediterranean Sea. Amongst these desperate people, the number of unaccompanied minors is growing fast. As the percentage of children grows, so does their vulnerability to exploitation, abuse, and death.

Enforced migration from Africa and the Middle East to Europe is mainly caused by deepening social inequalities and military attacks. Currently, in 35 African countries children are regularly exposed to military explosives and other harmful firearms.

Children above all must be guaranteed the right to safe journeys and safe spaces. They need quality lives, health and education. They should not be kept in detention on their arrival in



The MCM Mission Statement

PURPOSE

Children must be at the heart of the Mediterranean agenda. Children are our future but also our present. Mediterranean Governments and civil society must place children and their future at the top of the political agenda. We must ensure all children are provided safe, healthy spaces in all Mediterranean communities and in their transitions through the Mediterranean. All children deserve a quality life in peace and prosperity.

CORE PROBLEMS

The Mediterranean Region includes countries that are similar geographically but incredibly different socially, economically, environmentally and culturally. A child in Lebanon, Palestine or Syria clearly has a very different life to a child in Spain, Italy or Malta. Many problems are universal such as inequality and poverty, violence and climate change but they are experienced at very different scales.

Increased inequalities and poverty impede the lives of more and more children in the Mediterranean. Violence against children has also been increasing. In May 2021, the world was alarmed to watch Israeli forces kill more than 67 children in residential areas of the Gaza Strip. Hundreds more were wounded. We also witnessed the dangerous crossing from Morocco to the Spanish enclave of Ceuta of some 8,000 migrants of whom up to 2,000 were children. As they swam to shore, the Spanish military seized them. These children have been forced to flee their homes primarily because of three threats: military attacks orchestrated by western powers, poverty and destitution, droughts and other climatic disasters.

In addition, the global pandemic has brought unprecedented changes in our interactions and routines due to the threat of viral contagion and subsequent social distancing and confinement. The spread of COVID-19 has impacted all levels of society, but children were the first to suffer the consequences. They have been more exposed to domestic violence, mental health challenges, and isolation.

For the children of the Mediterranean, the pandemic adds to the misery caused by other sources of instability and hardship. On a daily basis children are living in a Mediterranean where their health and development is being directly damaged by issues pertaining to, i) poverty, ii) migration, iii) violence and war, iv) health, education and housing, v) climate change, vi) children's participation and empowerment.

1. CHILD POVERTY IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

The rising trends in child poverty and social exclusion over the past decade across the Mediterranean highlight the urgent need for information, unity and action to tackle the reality



human resources, health services and community interventions to improve the well-being of children.

Quality education has to be accessible to all, to ensure that children can develop their full potential and can grow to adulthood in dignity. Education can address many of the inequalities that persist for communities in the Mediterranean as it can provide the skills and tools for a productive life. Education is essential for a sustainable Mediterranean economy that can provide for one and all.

On the other hand, adequate housing is also essential for the wellbeing of children. Research shows that environmental factors have a direct bearing on the development of children and their wellbeing, therefore their immediate environment through adequate housing is essential.

Furthermore, widespread State-capture by big business and organised crime, and lack of governmental and economic transparency, result in the loss of trillions of dollars of public resources that could otherwise be used to support sustainable economic growth, improve education and health services and other public initiatives advancing children's wellbeing.

5. CLIMATE CHANGE

Children increasingly share their concern with regards to climate change, and many are advocates on an international scale. Children of the Mediterranean are now experiencing more temperature extremes and more environmental disasters that threaten their access to clean water, good food, adequate shelter and quality education.

Following on from the examples of children from other regions, Mediterranean children may too be advocates to protect our beautiful Mediterranean Sea, lands and climate, while practising skills to become agents of change.

6. PARTICIPATION AND EMPOWERMENT OF CHILDREN

The right of all children to be heard and have their views taken seriously is laid down in Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the child (UNCRC).

Children are acutely aware of fairness and injustices. They are very sensitive to violence. They are quick to communicate and react. Children have taken a lead in campaigns for a more equal and fair society, for peace, and for the prevention of climate change.

Children's right to give their opinions freely must be recognised and implemented. Adults should make every effort to listen to and take children's views seriously. Children have the right to share freely with others what they learn, think and feel, by talking, drawing, and writing or in any other way.

By working with local organisations that promote children's participation, empowerment and leadership for justice, equality and peace, the MCM shall facilitate children's networking and education in human rights and ensure children can take informed decisions and have positive effects on their future.