

.....Overseas Partner Fact Sheet.....

Armenian Evangelical School, Anjar

How it all started

The village of Anjar is an Armenian settlement located in the Bekaa Valley, almost 30 miles east of Beirut. About 3,000 people live in this agricultural village, working on the surrounding farms. Interestingly, when the village was built, it was planned in the shape of an eagle. In 1939 the scene was quite different. Thousands of Armenian families had fled from Turkey, seeking refuge, living in tents, without food, work, schools or medical attention. Swiss missionaries brought relief and began their work in 1947, which included opening a school with 43 girls in the corner of a church.



Current Activities

The school now has around 300 boys and girls, aged between 4 and 18 years of age. Up to 150 of the students are boarders, whilst the other pupils live in the village and travel to school daily. The school's aim is to help each child grow academically, spiritually, physically and mentally within a healthy environment.

Most of the children at the school are from Armenian Christian families, but children from other faiths and nationalities are also accepted and welcomed. The children come mainly from poor families, which means that, although their parents make a contribution towards their school fees, the amount paid is only a fraction of the real cost.



Above: Rev. Raffi Messerlian is the school's Principal

Key facts

Founded: 1947

Location: Anjar, Bekaa Valley, Lebanon

First Grant from BibleLands: 1976

BibleLands' Grant: £31,620 p.a.



Right: Some of the school's kindergarten children



The boarding section was begun in 1955 and the children come from Beirut or as far away as Syria and Jordan. The boarders live in one of three 'homes', one for the younger boys, one for the older boys, and a section for the girls. There is a family atmosphere in each of these homes and the playrooms have plenty of pictures, plants and toys.

Some of the boarders attend this school because the climate and altitude of Anjar is a very suitable place for children with bronchitis or asthma. All of the boarders go home to their families during the school holidays.

The school teaches the national Lebanese curriculum to a high standard, including computer studies, music and sports. In addition to this, pupils receive lessons in Armenian History and Culture. The main language is Armenian, but the children also learn Arabic and English, each language using a different script. Anjar's peaceful natural environment provides space for many extra-curricular activities, including walking, picnics, games and art.

All the children join in morning Chapel before school starts, and the boarders also have evening prayers.

Above left: The children learn, live and play together



Above: Some of the children enjoy playing chess in their free time

Lebanon's recent history has been deeply unsettled. Just as the country was emerging from a 15-year civil war, she was plunged into renewed turmoil by the assassination of Prime Minister Hariri in 2005 and war with Israel in 2006. However, successful parliamentary elections in 2009 led to the formation of a coalition government which, it is hoped, will usher in a period of stability, unity and co-operation.

The latest news, prayer points, and other information are all available from *BibleLands*.

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