

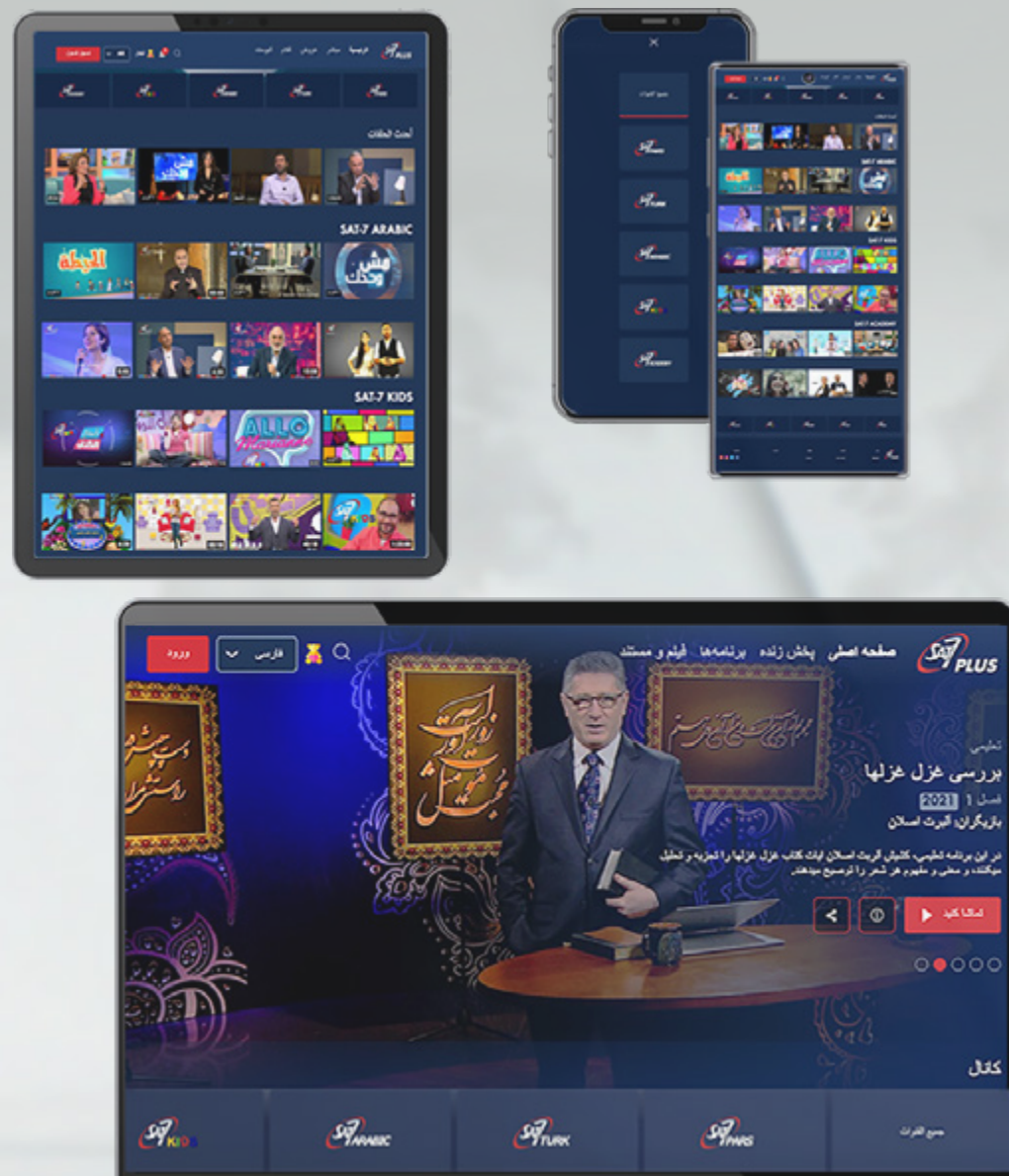
News from SAT-7
May 2021

INSIGHT



**25 YEARS OF SHARING
GOD'S LOVE IN THE
MIDDLE EAST
AND NORTH AFRICA**





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Front cover | Light fixture graphic by Reza Jafari

Pictured above | The new on-demand platform SAT-7 PLUS is available on multiple devices

Editor-in-Chief | Maia Woodward

Content Coordinator | Stefanie Mitchell

Editors | Becky Lucas, Stefanie Mitchell

Writers | Mary Joseph, Becky Lucas, Stefanie Mitchell, Maia Woodward

Graphic Design | Christiana Polyviou

Video Editors | Jani Ilola, Stefan Netsov

Video Support | Daniel Middleton, Omeed Jouyandé

SAT-7@25: CHANGING LIVES IN A DIGITAL WORLD

A greeting from Rita El-Mounayer, SAT-7 CEO

This year, SAT-7 marks 25 years since our first-ever broadcast on 31 May 1996. It is such an honour to lead this ministry as it marks this significant milestone. I became CEO two years ago after serving in SAT-7 for more than two decades, and I have witnessed first-hand how much we have to be thankful for. Most of all, I am thankful for God's faithfulness and grace in bringing His ministry this far.

SAT-7 was a trailblazer 25 years ago, when we launched the first Christian satellite channel in the Middle East and North Africa, and at 25, we are trailblazing again. In this anniversary year, we have launched SAT-7 PLUS – the region's first Christian video-on-demand platform – and we have begun important developments in our social media and Audience Relations work.

In fact, we can no longer call ourselves a "Christian satellite television ministry" without leaving a significant portion of our work unrepresented. Thanks to the support of our donors and Partners – without whom none of this would be possible – we begin our next quarter-century as a multi-platform Christian media ministry, evolving to meet our viewers' needs in today's digital world.

I am forever grateful and encouraged that after 25 years, prayer and Christian unity remain central to SAT-7's work and we remain rooted in the Middle Eastern churches who have guided and partnered in this ministry from the very beginning. Most importantly, across all the platforms where we now work, making God's love visible remains at the heart of what we do.

In March 2021, we had the pleasure of throwing open our studio doors for our SAT-7@25 Open Studios online events. These spotlighted our channels' work with isolated believers, women, and children and youth. The stories

we heard at Open Studios – the stories we, inside the ministry, hear every day – show just what a radical difference His love makes in people's lives.

The Middle East and North Africa remains in great need of God's love today. The pandemic has worsened many of the issues Middle Easterners face, and the road to recovery will be long. They will need God's hope, and SAT-7 will be there to share the love and grace we have in Him.

I am excited to share more about the impact SAT-7 is having in our key mission priority areas, and our pioneering new developments, in this special SAT-7@25 edition of our magazine. You can also read a special excerpt from the book *Dare to Believe!* by SAT-7 Founder and President Dr Terence Ascott, which tells SAT-7's history – and an article that shares some of my own story, too.

Please give thanks with us for God's faithfulness to SAT-7 in the past 25 years, and please pray, as you read, for our viewers in the Middle East and North Africa.



OPEN STUDIOS

SAT-7@25 ONLINE EVENTS



SAT-7 @25

In March 2021, SAT-7 hosted **Open Studios**, a series of online events.

Featuring producers and presenters of SAT-7's flagship programs and the testimonies of our viewers, the event focused on **Isolated Believers in Growing Christian Communities, Women Across the Region, and Children and Youth.**

Here you can read the most powerful stories.

ISOLATED BELIEVERS: IRAN

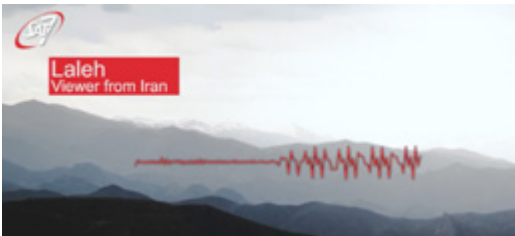
“Regarding our circumstances, we have nothing, yet we thank God,” says Laleh*, who lives in a remote village in Iran. “I am content because we live with God and have peace.” During our Open Studios events, we heard Laleh’s story – and how SAT-7 PARS is a lifeline for isolated believers who follow Christ amid extreme difficulty.

“Being an isolated believer in Iran truly is a heavy price that many brave Christians choose to pay,” shares Reza Jafari, Presenter of the live SAT-7 PARS program *Signal*. “Just as Christ has taught us, we must carry our own cross and follow Him (Matthew 16:24). This is exactly what many Christians in Iran are doing, and why we see such strong examples of faith among our viewers.”

Laleh* and her husband are both Christians and watch SAT-7 PARS. Laleh has been in regular contact with the SAT-7 PARS Audience Relations team since 2011, sharing her fears over finances and family, and requesting prayer. Since their house church was forcibly closed, they have been prevented from joining other believers in fellowship, and as known members of the church, they are under surveillance by the authorities. Yet through this time, Laleh has continued to share her immense faith and hope in Jesus Christ.

“Our house is full of light”

“I have a recurring dream in which I am looking down on the earth from heaven. The earth is completely dark, yet our house is full of light. The Bible is found here in our house, where the name of the Lord is lifted up, and so He has placed His light here. The Lord keeps giving this message to us, whether in wakefulness or in our sleep: ‘Do not be anxious, for I have prepared joyful days for you,’” Laleh says.



[CLICK HERE](#) ▶ LALEH’S TESTIMONY

“For many of our viewers, SAT-7 is more than just a TV channel,” explains Reza. “SAT-7 offers Christian counselling and support for people in need. That is why many people like Laleh contact us on a regular basis: because they know we care and are always there to listen and pray with them.”

Recently, Laleh’s prayer requests have been for her son. Unfortunately, when their house church was closed, he became depressed and turned to drugs. “Pray for my son to be saved from his addiction, which torments us and torments him too,” Laleh shares. “I know that he can be freed through the power of the Lord, and I look for that day.” Laleh’s son is currently receiving counselling from Pastor Milton, who presents the SAT-7 PARS program *Our Neighbourhood* and who overcame addiction himself.

“Testimonies like Laleh’s are so inspiring that they leave us in awe,” comments Reza. “We praise the Lord for such strong and brave believers in countries where being a believer really is a danger to their lives. Despite all the chaos, oppression, and isolation, Iran has the [world’s] fastest-growing Church, and we are witnessing God’s work in changing the hearts and lives of people in the country.”

A bountiful harvest

Shoaib*, a SAT-7 PARS viewer in Iran, shares how he too is witnessing God at work in Iran. “People here are so keen to hear the Word of God that if we could go out and freely distribute Bibles, perhaps even 500 a day would not be enough,” he says.

“People are thirsty for the Lord. It isn’t like the early days, when we had to go and approach people.

“**The Bible is found here in our house; God has placed His light here.**”
Laleh*, SAT-7 PARS viewer in Iran

[Now] they come and seek us out. They get our telephone numbers and call us so they can hear the Word. We need more books and more labourers, because the conditions and opportunities for witnessing abound to our hearts’ content.”

Meeting the needs of a growing Church

“Some people cannot believe that freedom of religion and belief in the 21st century is not possible, but it is the sad reality for Christians in Iran who come from a Muslim background,” explains Reza. He explains that religious minorities, especially Christian believers, often suffer extreme pressure and, often, persecution.

Under these circumstances, satellite television ministries such as SAT-7 are playing a significant role in Church growth. “For many Christians in Iran, SAT-7 is the only resource they have, and for those who don’t have a house fellowship, SAT-7 is often considered like a church for them, as the programs connect isolated believers to their global Christian family. Therefore, it is vital for them to access these programs, so that they can keep growing in their faith and in Christ,” adds Reza.

“Please know that the things you say on television have impact; you have viewers and listeners who are affected,” Shoaib concludes. “Be encouraged that not the smallest grain of your work will be without fruit.”



① Sharing viewer and guest testimonies, live program *Signal* is a platform for isolated believers ② SAT-7’s Open Studios online event *Isolated Believers* was hosted by Kurt Johansen, Executive Director of SAT-7 Europe, Asia, and Pacific, and George Makeen SAT-7 Arabic Channels International Director. They were joined by Reza Jafari, Presenter of *Signal* ③ Presented by Sally Momtaz, *Question Mark* is dedicated to answer the hundreds of questions that viewers send in every week ④ Through prayer, song, and Bible passages, *Heavenly Worship* encourages and builds up isolated believers in Iran, Afghanistan and Tajikistan ⑤ *Principles of Faith* helps new believers increase their understanding of the Bible by teaching the core principles of the Christian faith.

*Names changed for security purposes

ISOLATED BELIEVERS: NORTH AFRICA

“As Christians, we always felt few and lonely. Now, as part of the SAT-7 family, we are excited to support the growth of the Church and its ability to witness to Christ,” shares Samia Kessai, SAT-7 Producer and Presenter in Algeria. Samia joined Open Studios along with her husband Salah and Pastor Moez Mediouni from Tunisia.

“I remember when I first went to Algeria and met Samia [Kessai]. I questioned her, saying, ‘Are you sure you want to show your faces to millions of people?’ I was afraid for her safety. And she said, ‘Rita, persecution is like a crown we wear on our heads every single day. Don’t take it away from us.’” – SAT-7 CEO Rita El-Mounayer

During Open Studios, Samia’s description of life in the young North African Church touched many hearts. “Believers here are young in their faith and thirsty to learn, especially through programs in their mother tongue,” explains Samia. “When they accept the Lord, they give everything to Him. They open their hearts and their homes to His servants. It’s like the early Church. Everyone has their mind set on Christ, not worrying about any worldly things. We share everything.”



[CLICK HERE](#) VOICES FROM NORTH AFRICA

Just as the earliest Christians did, the Church in North Africa today also faces oppression, discrimination, and even persecution. “It is not easy to be a Christian in this region,” says Samia.

In the past several years, authorities in Algeria have cracked down on churches, forcing many of them to close, preventing Christians from connecting in fellowship and engaging in prayer. The government also restricts the import of Bibles and Christian books, meaning that Christian resources in Algeria are in scarce supply. Samia and Salah work hard to support isolated Christians through programs that build up new believers’ faith.

“God gave us a special grace to serve Him”
“Here, life is not easy,” Samia explains.
“But God gave us a special grace to serve Him through media. The overall status of Christians has deteriorated over the past years. Today, there is no sense of protection and security for Christians. Protests for two years, closure of churches, difficult economic conditions, lack of jobs, and poor education levels are pushing Christians out of the country.”

Pastor Moez Mediouni, a church leader and Professor of Philosophy in Tunisia, shares how under these circumstances, church leaders have been gathering to pray for believers and for the continued growth of the Church. “They pray for peace in the country; for hope, protection, and provision – as many are suffering from poverty,” Moez shares.

He believes the Church must reach out in society as Christ did, for example when Jesus reached out to the Samaritan woman. To achieve this goal, Pastor Moez has set up a new SAT-7-supported production house in Tunisia, creating programs, including *Standard Talk*, that address basic theological topics to explain the Christian faith to non-believers.

“I believe that Christ did the same thing – building bridges back towards Him. We want the Church to have a place and voice, so people can hear what we want to share with them; so we can make space for communication and build connections between the Church and society,” Moez adds. “God is using these programs so believers continue to connect, grow, and witness.”

Building bridges within society
Samia adds that the Christians not only want to build bridges between the Church and society,

“We want the Church to have a place and voice, so people can hear what we want to share with them, create spaces of communication, and build ways of linking the church to society. Moez Mediouni, Pastor and SAT-7 Presenter

they also aspire to be peacemakers, helping put an end to regional conflicts, such as the hostility that can exist between Arab and Amazigh members of Algerian society.



[CLICK HERE](#) A TESTIMONY OF LOVE

“The Church sends a message of peace, love, and respect to its neighbours, to limit the effect of sensitivities and put an end to some destructive ideas,” Samia adds. Stories like that of Abdel-Nour, who shared on SAT-7 how he has come to love the Arab neighbours he once hated, are proof of how God can change people’s hearts and lives.

Connecting to Christian heritage
Dating back to the early Church in Carthage, the Christian faith has endured centuries of marginalisation in Tunisia and is now trying to regain its footing.

“Our church is about forty years old,” shares Moez. “We are seeing the new generation come forth, with children born in Christian families. We have a whole identity to defend. We have a heritage that we need to gain back, and we have an image that we need to create in society. Our church is looking for its identity.”

Moez says that he and the SAT-7 team share a common goal: “To see through media – through the programs that we send to SAT-7 – a movement of people coming to Christ and hoping to see this light of Christ shining in this country. We thank the Lord that we have brave people with limited resources. Hopeful people, who have a burden in their hearts to see something great happen. We trust in the Lord. It is the season of the Lord, God’s new season, in this country.”



① On the set of new SAT-7 ARABIC program *Standard Talk*, produced in Tunisia and presented by Pastor Moez Mediouni ② SAT-7’s Open Studios online event *Isolated Believers* was hosted by Kurt Johansen, Executive Director of SAT-7 Europe, Asia, and Pacific, and George Makeen SAT-7 Arabic Channels International Director. They were joined by Samia and Salah Kessai from Algeria, and Pastor Moez Mediouni from Tunisia ③ Samia and Salah Kessai with their son Nathan

WOMEN IN THE MIDDLE EAST

25 YEARS OF TRAILBLAZING

“SAT-7 understands both the opportunity and the weighty responsibility it has to contribute to the lives of women and girls, as diverse as they are, across the region,” shares Maggie Morgan, Director and Producer of the women’s program *Needle and New Thread*, as she opened our “Women Across the Region” Open Studios event.

“A key challenge for us is to restore God’s blueprint for women to all women. To help every woman to deepen her understanding of her own value in God’s eyes and to influence the sphere around her,” says Sara Eid, a Presenter on the new SAT-7 ARABIC program *The Secret Within*. “We really wanted to support women to deal with their challenges,” she continues. “Not only those caused by the pandemic, but the struggles women face every day, such as making choices, dealing with abuse, and finding the right partner – and all of this should be understood from a biblical base,” she continues.

Sara is one of a group of Presenters and Producers from across the ministry who joined the online event, opening a window into the lives of women across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), speaking to the challenges they face and SAT-7’s unique approach to producing programs for them.

She shares how reflecting the viewer’s experience was behind the decision to work with three presenters from different age groups. By representing the experiences of three generations, the program can challenge misconceptions about the roles society imposes on women and girls at different stages in their lives.

Nicoletta Michael, SAT-7 International’s Development Manager, explains that this aim is shared across all SAT-7’s channels. “We support women to know their God-given value and offer a platform for their voices to be heard in a number of local cultural contexts,” she says. Giving the example of the SAT-7 TÜRK program *Homemade*, Nicoletta shares how the program focuses on

building strong families and giving women a voice in a culture that often offers them only one choice: to give up their careers when they have children.

“Only 30 percent of the female population work outside the home,” Nicoletta explains. “This limited cultural expectation often results in discrimination, oppression, and gender-based violence both at home and work. Through *Homemade*, viewers are introduced to women from all walks of life, women who have struggled – whether at work, due to violence at home, or with mental health problems – but were able to overcome their challenges and thrive within their families and communities.”

Reality, not abstract concepts

Maggie Morgan agrees that speaking to real-life experiences is key. Sharing about the impact of *Needle and New Thread*, which ran for seven years on SAT-7 ARABIC, she says, “We had open discussions about many topics, including gender inequality, freedom of thought and belief, freedom of expression, and the right to own and inherit property.”

Speaking of the impact evaluation for the program, carried out in 2020, Maggie says, “We learned that the way we present topics – not as abstract concepts, but as real-life experiences – helps women understand that the problems they face are not individual, but collective, and can be addressed together. Some of the phrases repeated in every focus group were ‘I am glad to know I am not the only one,’ or ‘I never imagined that anyone could say exactly how I feel on television.’”

“We support women to know their God-given value and offer a platform for their voices to be heard in a number of local cultural contexts.”
Nicoletta Michael,
SAT-7 International’s
Development Manager

Picture: The SAT-7 ARABIC program *Despite All* seeks to encourage women in North Africa and help them recognise their true value. SAT-7’s channels serve as a platform for women across the region to share their voices and experiences

Women and men changing society together

As part of SAT-7’s growing Arabic social media platform, the team from *The Secret Within* now plan to build an additional online platform for women to connect and identify potential leaders in their communities, who can then be supported by the team to enable more women across the Arabic-speaking world to come together.

“It is not about empowerment. Women are powerful enough!” says Sara. “But I do believe what we need is enabling. To really change society, it is key to also work with men; to restore our relationship with men. Men and women together can reflect God’s glory. This is the vision for our program: to be a lighthouse for women and a guide for men.”

“Agreed,” says Maggie, reflecting on her years on *Needle and New Thread*. “The male viewers of our women’s programs are key. Gender issues and oppression in this region are made much worse because people – all people, not just women – do not have freedom to question their own beliefs, re-formulate them, and practice and act upon new beliefs. Some women shared that if they spoke their minds about their faith or opinions, their fathers or brothers would forbid them from leaving the house. In this sense, SAT-7 has been a trailblazer as a platform for expression, and often the first Arab channel to discuss challenging and taboo topics.”

The truth can set women free

Being a platform for free expression is also a crucial part of SAT-7’s role to support women in the Persian-speaking world. The SAT-7 PARS social impact program *Insiders*, for example, focuses on women and freedom of religion and belief. Presenter Sally Momtaz shares that honour killings had been a recent topic on the program.

“One of the viewers contacted me straight away after we finished the program,” recalls Sally. “She wrote to me directly on the Instagram page, and said, ‘I saw that in our

neighbourhood, one lady was burned in a fire by her family, and they made it look like an accident or that she killed herself.’ Unfortunately, women from our background do have this kind of experience. But we believe that through this program, with our experts on-hand to support and advise, we can show women their rights, direct them to support, and pray for them.”

For the past 25 years, SAT-7 has had the vision to see women and girls realise their God-given value and dignity, to make their voices heard, and to foster strong, secure, and loving families. Today, SAT-7 continues to empower women as wives, sisters, daughters, mothers, grandmothers, and community members; to be a witness through their own changed lives; to demonstrate the love of God; and to challenge societal attitudes and inspire wider positive change.

Challenging perceptions and circumstances for women across the region is a process that will take time. Yet with so many women viewers living in challenging circumstances, supporting women through prayer and connecting them to experts and practical local support are central to SAT-7’s holistic mission in the MENA.

“Hearing what is happening across the region sounds very familiar,” comments Sally. “Here in the Middle East, we live in a male-dominated society. The resulting skewed perception has created a misconception about women – a lie, actually. This is why we wanted to create our program, as we know that the truth can set women free.”

Sara adds, “And crucially, men also need to understand that this perception of women is a lie. Then, together, they can unleash their God-given potential.”

“**Men and women together can reflect God’s glory. This is the vision for our program: to be a lighthouse for women and a manual for men.** Sara Eid, Presenter on the new SAT-7 ARABIC program *The Secret Within*



① Presenters Hengameh Borji and Sally Momtaz wearing traditional Iranian dresses for a Nowruz special of SAT-7 PARS program *Insiders* ② Representing three generations of women on SAT-7 ARABIC program *The Secret Within*, presenters Mira Motassem, Sara Eid, and Yola Shafik ③ SAT-7’s Open Studios online event Women Across the Region was hosted by Kurt Johansen, Executive Director of SAT-7 Europe, Asia, and Pacific, and Maggie Morgan, Producer and Director of *Needle and New Thread*. They were joined by Nicoletta Michael, International Office Development Manager, Sally Momtazi, Presenter of *Insiders*, Sara Eid, Presenter of *The Secret Within*, Ayda Danacıoğlu, Presenter of *Power of Prayer*, and Stefanie Mitchell, International Office Communications Officer ④ On the set of SAT-7 ARABIC women’s program *Needle and New Thread* ⑤ Şemsa Deniz Bakır, Presenter of the SAT-7 TÜRK women’s program *Homemade*, empowering women to be members of strong and supportive families and to be positive change-makers in Turkey

CHILDREN AND YOUTH

“We went to encourage them, but they encouraged us,” shares Andrea El-Mounayer, SAT-7 KIDS’ Channel Manager, recalling a family of seven made homeless by the Beirut blast. Along with children’s Presenter Marianne Awaraji Daou, Andrea shares how SAT-7 KIDS has been present with children, both onscreen and on the ground, since the explosion.

“The children who experienced the blast have needed special support, and our programs have given them space to voice their fears and share their prayers and hopes for the future,” says Andrea. “In many ways, their response to what happened has inspired us to keep going. We know we have to walk alongside this next generation more than ever.”

As part of an initiative to help families in Lebanon following the explosion in August 2020, Andrea and the team visited and filmed with a Kurdish refugee family residing in Beirut. The parents and five children had fled Syria seeking cancer treatment for Ali, their young son, after their local hospital in Syria was attacked in the war – only for them to then be hit by the Beirut explosion.



[CLICK HERE](#) SAT-7 KIDS VISITS KURDISH FAMILY

“In Aleppo, there were missile strikes only six streets away from my house,” shares the mother. “But it was never like the Beirut blast. May God never allow this to happen to anyone else.”

“When we met the family in the summer, their house was in a very bad condition,” Andrea remembers. “The kids were deeply depressed.”

Children’s voices and experiences

To help the children give voice to their experiences in Syria and after the explosion, the SAT-7 KIDS team was joined by Sirine Daou, a certified children’s coach, who supported them through art therapy. “When the Beirut blast happened, I remembered the missile strikes in Syria,” shares

Cedra, the eldest daughter, during the session. “When it happened, I ran into the street crying out ‘Father, father!’”

Andrea shares that at the end of the visit, the team prayed with the family, and were amazed by their openness and faith. “I can’t forget the prayer time we had,” she says. “One of the children was pouring her heart out to the Lord with tears, asking Him to give her family a better place to live and her the opportunity to go back to school.”

Thankfully, the prayers of the young daughter from the Kurdish family have since been answered. When the SAT-7 KIDS team went to visit them for Christmas, they were living in a new home and the children had joined an informal school.

Hundreds of messages from children and young people like Cedra poured into the SAT-7 KIDS channel after the explosion. As they shared their feelings, faith, and prayers on programs such as *Allo Marianne*, they were comforted by the presenters and Audience Relations teams, and by one another. Rashad, a young boy from Lebanon, prayed: “I thank God because he saved me from dying in the explosion. Although I am wounded, He is my healing, and I witnessed His miracles.”

“We just want to show [the children] that all we have to do is take our grief and the pain we go through and put it in God’s hands,” shares Marianne Awaraji Daou, SAT-7 KIDS Presenter and Arabic Audience Relations Manager. “We have to trust Him and believe that He will turn the sorrows and the ashes in our lives into beauty.”

A companion through the years

For 14 years, SAT-7 KIDS has been a faithful companion to children in the Middle East and North Africa, supporting them through all the challenges they face. Jad*, a teenage boy from

“We just want to show [the children] that all we have to do is take our grief and the pain we go through and put it in God’s hands.”
Marianne Awaraji Daou, SAT-7 KIDS Presenter and Arabic Audience Relations Manager

Syria, recently contacted Marianne to tell her that he has secretly been watching the channel for almost ten years. He shared his experiences during the war, saying:

“Everything changed... I moved to a new place. I was far from my siblings, away from my dad. Some people attempted to murder my dad; I was also kidnapped. Even when I was kidnapped, I used to remember the songs [I learned on SAT-7 KIDS], I used to sing them again and again.”

“I am sure there are many viewers like Jad, who are from a non-Christian background, watching us secretly,” shares Marianne. “I believe that God is working in their lives just like He did in Jad’s life. We should do what we do faithfully – pray for our viewers, follow up with them, and show them real the love and hope we have in Christ. And when we cannot follow up, like in the case of Jad or any other kid watching us secretly, we trust that the Holy Spirit is working in their lives and believe that God’s Word never returns void.”

As the region has once again been thrown into turmoil with conflict in the Holy Land, SAT-7 KIDS continues to offer a platform for viewers’ prayer requests and messages. A recent prayer by a young viewer named Thomas reminds us once more of how important this platform is at times of deepening crisis – as it can bring everyone together in prayer for peace and for change for the next generation. Praying for the Holy Land, Thomas says: “Take care of the people who are hurt. Take care of the people in the homes that were destroyed, that they will also be well. Please, Lord. Watch over the little children. Take care of the people who are waging the war, that they will come to know you, Lord. That they would be well. That they come to know your Word and Your love and everything that is Yours, Lord. Watch over us. Watch over all of us.”



① Juliana Sfeir, SAT-7 ACADEMY Brand Manager, interviews youth cleaning the streets following the Beirut explosion ② SAT-7’s Open Studios online event Children and Youth was hosted by Kurt Johansen, Executive Director of SAT-7 Europe, Asia, and Pacific, and Andrea El-Mounayer, SAT-7 KIDS Channel Manager. They were joined by Marianne Awaraji Daou, SAT-7 Presenter and AR Manager, Juliana Sfeir, SAT-7 ACADEMY Manager, and Parastoo Poortaheri, Presenter of *Hashtag* ③ Teenage boys watch SAT-7 KIDS, Zahle refugee camp, Lebanon

*Names changed for security purposes



- 1) “After the coronavirus, the world will be beautiful, green, and full of love and more joy for everyone,” writes Sarah.
- 2) “After the coronavirus, the world will be calmer, and the world will be more beautiful, without any sickness that came with the virus, amen.” shares Farnoosh, a young girl from Iran.
- 3) “After the coronavirus, children will be happier and celebrate Children’s Day,” hopes Mariam.
- 4) Donya, whose name means “world” in English, depicts the world being free of the virus in her drawing.
- 5) “We will be happy again,” Saeede writes, depicting her washing her hands now (right) and her dream for the future (left).
- 6) Mahan hopes to celebrate his birthday together with friends and family.

SETTING IRANIAN CHILDREN ON THE RIGHT PATH

“Thank you for telling these [Bible] stories to our kids so they can find the right path in life,” says Zohreh*, an Iranian Christian mother whose daughter watches SAT-7 PARS. As we hear the family’s story, Presenter Parastoo Poortaheri and Audience Relations team member Rahel* share how the channel guides young people on their life journeys.

“I love you very much and I thank God that I came to know about your program [*Hashtag*] that is so full of blessing and helps me get close to the Lord,” says Nikita, Zohreh’s daughter.

Speaking to how important it is for children to have access to God’s Word in Iran, Zohreh says: “We didn’t hear stories of Jesus and the Bible on TV or at school. These kids are the future of this country, and they have to find God’s way – not the wrong way, or the way we had.”

In a region with limited Christian resources, especially for children, Audience Relations Coordinator Rahel says, “Parents like Zohreh are in touch with us, asking us to help their children know more about Christ. We continually build on the support we provide these young people, through a range of resources that will help grow and encourage their faith and their enthusiasm for Jesus and His Word.”

“I gave my daughter to God, and God put you in her way,” Zohreh continues. “She prays everywhere and anywhere. I hope you continue making this beautiful program [*Hashtag*], to show the way to our kids.”

Growing up in Iran, Afghanistan, or Tajikistan, children and youth face social restrictions, financial difficulties in their families, pressure to succeed, lack of future job opportunities, and rising drug abuse among their peers. Faced with these difficulties, many are asking questions about life and challenging social norms in the region.

“Teenagers have become braver, more daring,” shares Parastoo Poortaheri, Presenter of the youth program *Hashtag*. “They are smart, and they love technology. To find answers to their questions, they

even find ways to go around all the restrictions in the country, like censorship of Facebook and other social media apps.” Through SAT-7 PARS programs such as *Hashtag*, many viewers are expressing a curiosity in God, Jesus, and the Christian faith, comparing what they learn on the program to what they learn at school.

Although popular live youth programs such as *Hashtag* provide a platform for viewers to engage with these topics, not all questions and comments can be addressed within the one-hour show. Audience Relations teams are therefore an essential part of building relationships with viewers and helping them answer their questions. Recently, Rahel says, the number of children contacting the team has grown.

“One young girl called Elnaz* sent us messages full of questions,” shares Rahel. “One of her questions was ‘Jesus Christ is a prophet, right? Because I have heard some say that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and this is a mistake because I learned that God has no children.’” In the conversations that followed between Elnaz and the Audience Relations team, Elnaz wanted to know more about the story of Jesus calling children to Himself.

“The children who are in touch with us are mostly between nine and 14 years old,” shares Rahel, explaining the team is growing in capacity to answer theological questions. “Many of them think maturely, and we need to adjust the way we discuss and answer their questions. As more children are reading Bibles, we want to be ready to respond to questions from children who are not able to attend Sunday schools or church groups, considering the constraints that Christians face in the country.”



[CLICK HERE »](#)
ZOHREH’S VOICE MESSAGE

*Names changed for security purposes.

OPEN STUDIOS: BEHIND THE SCENES



ON AIR

PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

“

The reports of the SAT-7 PARS interviewers about the work of the ministry were really touching. I never tire to hear of the amazing courage and faith of the Christians in these persecuted nations. Thank you for setting this up.
Robert and Pinky

“

Thank you so much for hosting this event. It was very important for me to hear more about your phenomenal work since I regularly post news about your work to our audience on our social media channels. You are a blessing to so many people.
Eveline Würzler, AVC Switzerland

“

I joined the live panel on the women's programs and watched some of the recordings. It was so interesting and inspiring. Thank you very much for organising it. I was particularly impressed by the internationality and the expertise of the women, and your moderation was high quality.
Eva Baillie, Diocese of Mainz, Germany

“

Thank you for the very valuable programs. I am so happy to be part of the SAT-7 community. In the spirit of good cooperation.
Representative of Media Mission the Messengers, Finland

“

I must have seen dozens – perhaps hundreds – of webinars, but this one has to rank in the top three!! Absolutely brilliant. A GOLDMINE of information and quotes, from my perspective.
Julian Lukins of InChrist Communications, USA

“

It was my first time meeting the Christians of North Africa and Iran. Their talks vividly conveyed the real situation of their difficult lives there and their strong faith toward Jesus. I could see and feel God working for the isolated believers and churches there through your show.
Hyunmin Kim, South Korea

“

We are honoured to partner with you. May God bless you!
Jostein Saeth, Norea Media Mission, Norway

“

You are a model for us because you realised how important men are in this process of education.
Representative of AVC Switzerland

“

Very inspiring to hear about your work to reach women through SAT-7's programs. We are proud to be a part of this mission.
Jonas Norden, Swedish Evangelical Mission

NURTURING NEW BRANCHES OF SAT-7'S MINISTRY

Jan Ørskov, SAT-7's Chief Operations Officer, joined the ministry in January 2020. After an extraordinary first year, in which crisis propelled innovation and great faith was required, he shares how SAT-7's operations are evolving as the ministry turns 25.

“How does a Dane fall in love with a Middle Eastern ministry?”

In 2015, Denmark began to receive large numbers of refugees, and my family got to know many young people from Iran and Afghanistan who were the same age as my sons. Through our relationships with these friends, several of whom have become like family, I began to learn more about life in the Middle East. It was fascinating, complex, and heartbreaking.

Always motivated by a desire to make a difference, I had spent 30 years in public broadcasting. So when I was introduced to SAT-7 a few years later, these experiences intersected, and I instantly connected with the ministry.

Making God's love visible is something I profoundly believe in and have always felt a calling for – my very first role in media was actually as a volunteer with a Christian radio program, when I was 17. SAT-7's interdenominational work, holistic mission,

and non-confrontational approach all deeply resonated with me, too. Here was the chance to bring my knowledge of media and leadership to serving the people of the region I had come to love.

This is both an exciting and demanding time to be steering SAT-7's operations, after 25 years of broadcasting. SAT-7's first pioneering years – as the ministry transitioned from seedling, to sapling, to maturity – were truly amazing. As I began my role, I expected to focus on how we should consolidate and build in this next phase; how we handle the huge and necessary transition from traditional television ministry into the digital age.

And then, just two months after I joined SAT-7, COVID-19 turned the world upside down.

While the first months of the pandemic were hard, as I feared both for the health of SAT-7's staff and for

the future of our work – it was an important and instructive time to be our CEO Rita El-Mounayer's right-hand man. Rita is always confident in God's provision for the ministry, and she has been proved right. Not only was SAT-7 able to continue making God's love visible in many vital ways, but He has worked to bring so much unexpected good out of the tragedy of the pandemic.

Among SAT-7's audience, as well as across the world, the increased need for digital connection sparked a significant growth in audience engagement as well as innovation that might otherwise have happened much more slowly. The result is that as we mark our anniversary, SAT-7's ministry now has multiple branches. Our satellite branch remains vital in the Middle East and North Africa, a region with high illiteracy rates, the risk of censorship and security issues. But alongside it, two new, digital branches now grow: our pioneering video-on-demand streaming service SAT-7 PLUS, and a new social media presence with its own innovative content that is reaching a whole new, distinct audience.

But while it is beautiful to see these new branches grow, what is really exciting is the fruit of SAT-7's work: the fruit of changed

lives, of hearts transformed, of hope where there was none. This is why our Audience Relations work is also receiving wholehearted investment, enabling our teams to support all the viewers who begin their journey with SAT-7 on one of these platforms.

A while ago, a friend of one of the young refugees I met through our church in Denmark contacted me from Iran. Through SAT-7 PARS, this young seeker has since connected with pastors and found answers to his questions about Christianity. This is a young man who once felt so desperate that he thought of taking his own life – now he says, “Jesus saved me.” We hear from him very often, and he shares his faith journey and the worship music that he loves.

When I lay my head down at night, it is stories like this that stay with me. People meeting God, God meeting people. It is our privilege to share these stories, and the advances for which we give all the glory to God, with you as we mark 25 years of ministry.

“What is really exciting is the fruit of SAT-7's work. The fruit of changed lives; of hearts transformed; of hope where there was none.”



SAT-7 PLUS: GOD’S LOVE MADE ACCESSIBLE

SAT-7 is once again pioneering in the Middle East and North Africa. SAT-7 PLUS, the region’s first on-demand streaming service of Christian content, launched in early 2021. Antoine Karam, Broadcast and IT Director, shares how this platform is a key element of SAT-7’s digital transformation.

“This new digital branch of SAT-7’s ministry is bringing God’s love to new places. To an arena where not only has SAT-7 not been before, but ministries generally are not present. For a whole new audience in the Middle East and North Africa – especially young people – this is a gamechanger,” says Antoine.

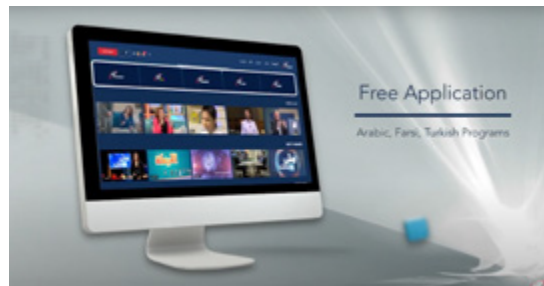
Today, people anywhere in the world can access SAT-7 programs in Arabic, Farsi, and Turkish on-demand, from any mobile device via an app as well as from their computer browser and soon, from any smart television. In sensitive contexts, they can watch safely, without having to share any personal information or being profiled by artificial intelligence. And once they have watched, they can share a program with anyone else – on social media or privately by direct messaging. “On-demand content is the expectation of so many media users in the region today. SAT-7 PLUS not only makes us relevant in the contemporary media field, but more importantly, it makes our programming more available and accessible,” says SAT-7 CEO Rita El-Mounayer.

A movement, not a moment

Antoine is clear that being accessible is not only about adding a new technology – SAT-7’s digital transformation is much more fundamental than that. “It’s not enough to be available on these platforms – we must present an attractive image to those who find us,” he says. This is particularly the case for younger generations, who generally no longer watch television. Antoine, who is from Lebanon, also sees a general shift among young people, even those from Christian backgrounds. They are moving further away from Christ – or from religion generally – as they reject “outdated” customs and beliefs.

To reach the youngest generations with God’s love, requires renewed thinking. “We need to speak the language of Generation Z,” Antoine says. “So, we are going to where they are most comfortable: on their mobiles, and on social media. We have to be innovative; we have to present them with apps with an up-to-date, colourful look and feel. We cannot present them with the same identity that we presented 25 years ago.”

Antoine feels the potential impact on young people of being able to easily access Christian content cannot be understated. “Sometimes watching a single episode, or even watching a clip – even for just one minute – can be the moment that sets a person on a different course in life.”



[CLICK HERE](#) ▶ SAT-7 PLUS INNOVATIVE PLATFORM

Viewer-friendly features

Currently, new episodes aired on satellite are regularly added to SAT-7 PLUS, meaning they can reach audiences outside of SAT-7’s satellite footprints, such as Middle Easterners living in Europe or the United States. SAT-7 PLUS breaks though the first barrier, the language barrier, by automatically loading the platform in Arabic, Farsi, Turkish, or English depending on where the user is located. They can then find the content that will most speak to them by navigating through a series of themes.

“**This new digital branch of SAT-7’s ministry is bringing God’s love to new places.**

**Antoine Karam,
Broadcast and IT
Director**

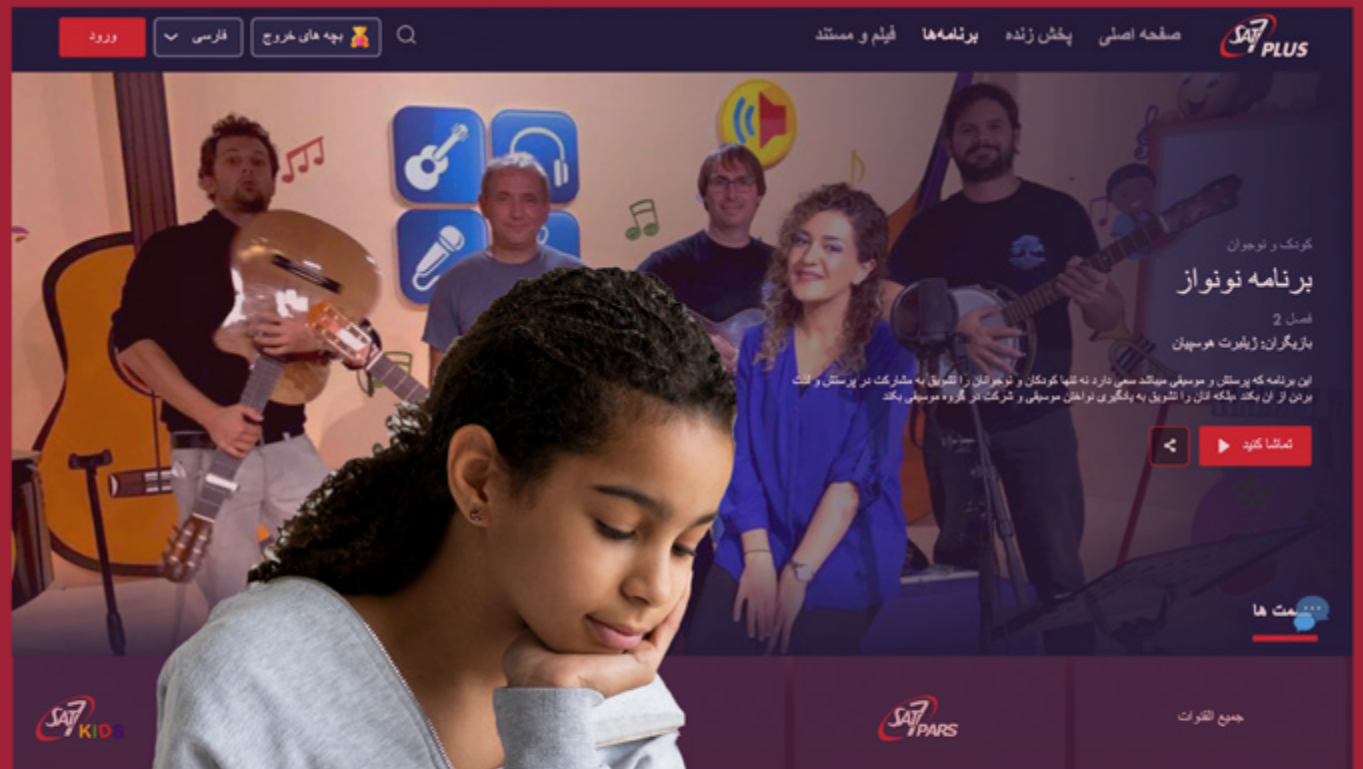
Viewers can also watch any of SAT-7’s satellite channels live on SAT-7 PLUS. They can message their feedback on programs through the platform, and in time, Antoine plans to add a live-chat features that will enable them to receive responses in real time. For the very youngest viewers, who are increasingly watching via handheld devices or smart televisions, SAT-7 PLUS includes a built-in “Kids” section including parental controls.

Eventually, SAT-7’s language bases will produce content designed specifically for on-demand streaming, as well as for satellite. It is hoped that the on-demand platform will drive not only innovation, but cross-channel production – as users of streaming services are more likely to be comfortable watching dubbed or subtitled productions. This means a program produced in Farsi, for example, can also be watched in Arabic – which is not only cost-effective but will help viewers feel connected to their brothers and sisters in other parts of the region.

Nurturing both branches

Satellite remains important to reach older generations who do still watch television, as well as for viewers for whom the Internet is inaccessible – although SAT-7 PLUS has built in accommodations for those who can only access Internet at certain times, such as the ability to download and watch offline or at lower bit-rates. Satellite programming remains important especially for programs from the education and social development brand SAT-7 ACADEMY, as lack of access to education and lack of access to Internet often go hand-in-hand.

“Presenting SAT-7 PLUS does not mean we are moving away from satellite,” says Antoine. “It’s important that we are available on both mediums, because they are reaching different audiences.” Antoine’s prayer, therefore, is for investment, so that SAT-7 can maintain both its digital platforms – which include social media along with SAT-7 PLUS – and its satellite channels.



SAT-7 PLUS will reach a whole new audience in the Middle East and North Africa

GUIDING VIEWERS ON THEIR JOURNEY

As part of the digital transformation of SAT-7’s Arabic media, both our social media and our Audience Relations departments are making a vital shift. Once, both acted only as support functions for SAT-7’s satellite broadcasts. While they will continue to do this, they are now also becoming platforms for God’s love in their own right – platforms that interact seamlessly to support viewers on their journey.

SOCIAL MEDIA

“My aim is for SAT-7 to become the largest online distributor of Arabic Christian media,” says Shady Francis, SAT-7’s Arabic Digital Director. Shady’s first step toward this goal has been to completely revamp SAT-7’s social media presence, distilling its many Facebook pages to eight “brands”. SAT-7 ARABIC, SAT-7 KIDS, and SAT-7 ACADEMY remained – and five new brands were launched: SAT-7 Family, SAT-7 Youth, SAT-7 Woman, SAT-7 Worship, and SAT-7 Daily Bread, which shares discipleship content.

The benefit of this, Shady explains, is that by following the most relevant brand, audience members are consistently reached by content that speaks to them. “We are building what our viewers need,” he says. “Instead of being satellite program-driven on social media, we are driven by the needs of this audience, who are younger than our television viewers.”

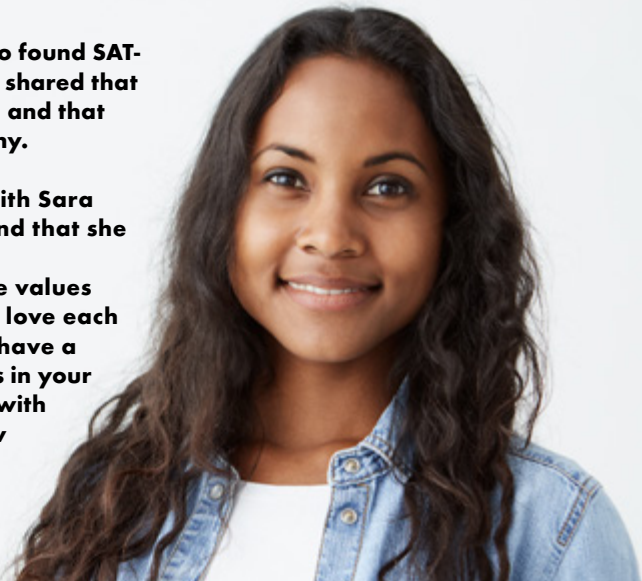
Each brand guides its Facebook and Instagram audience through a series of themes, which work towards the same objectives as SAT-7’s satellite

programming. SAT-7 Woman, for example, is moving through the topics of society’s treatment of women, a woman’s value in God’s eyes, her role in her family and community, and how she can find her own passion. Each week, the topic is introduced through eye-catching graphics and text, and these posts prompt conversations in the comments box and in private messages from viewers. In between these posts, the teams share relevant video clips from SAT-7’s programs. SAT-7 Worship, the only brand not based on themes, makes Arabic worship music and church services available 24/7.

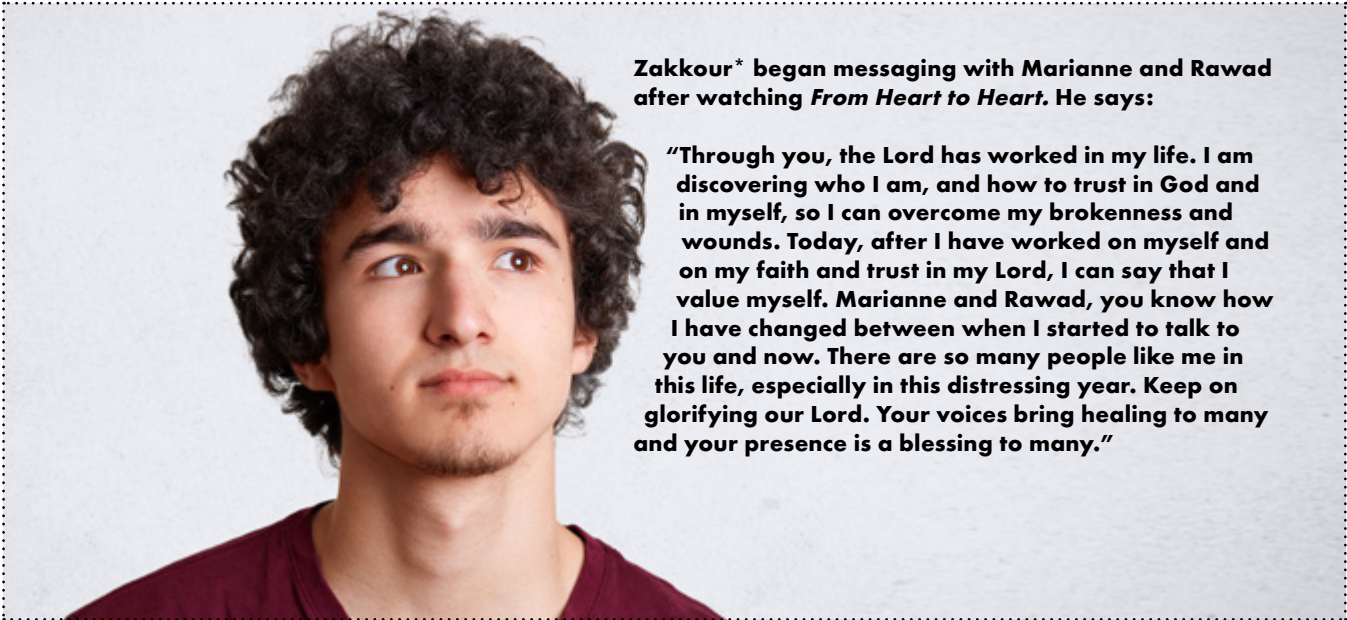
Shady’s team have also launched two closed groups for special demographics: one for audience members learning online with SAT-7 ACADEMY, and another for SAT-7 KIDS viewers. “A lot of parents are sharing their kids’ videos, and children who are old enough for social media accounts are really engaging themselves, too. Last month a child from Egypt and a child from Algeria made friends in the comments section. We are building a true, safe online community for children through SAT-7.”

Sara* is a 20-year-old woman from North Africa, who found SAT-7 for the first time through the SAT-7 Youth page. She shared that she had been heartbroken and disappointed by love, and that she has a disability, which has made her feel unworthy.

The Audience Relations team member who spoke with Sara helped her to understand her value in God’s eyes and that she is worthy of being loved. “I feel so relieved just talking to you,” Sara shared. “I’ve never seen these values in my community, and I love the way you Christians love each other.” The team member told her that anyone can have a relationship with Christ, telling her, “He sees what’s in your heart.” The team continue to communicate and pray with Sara and are ready to guide her if she wants to know more.



*Names changed for security purposes



Zakkour* began messaging with Marianne and Rawad after watching *From Heart to Heart*. He says:

“Through you, the Lord has worked in my life. I am discovering who I am, and how to trust in God and in myself, so I can overcome my brokenness and wounds. Today, after I have worked on myself and on my faith and trust in my Lord, I can say that I value myself. Marianne and Rawad, you know how I have changed between when I started to talk to you and now. There are so many people like me in this life, especially in this distressing year. Keep on glorifying our Lord. Your voices bring healing to many and your presence is a blessing to many.”

AUDIENCE RELATIONS

Shady’s team is responsible for the content SAT-7 shares on social media. But the minute a viewer begins to interact, the Audience Relations team, headed by Marianne Awaraji Daou, takes over.

“Follow-up is a journey; it is not merely answering our viewers’ questions,” says Marianne. “Our viewers have certain spiritual needs; that is why they watch our shows or follow us on social media. We want to accompany them on a journey that leads them through, and out of, the tunnel they are in.”

The viewer’s journey might progress through messaging, calls, prayer, counselling, direction to other services, and eventually connection to local Christian fellowship. “Our ultimate goal is hearing testimonies from viewers whose lives were changed by SAT-7,” Marianne says. To help make this happen, the team has been taking part in counselling training and building a large network of volunteer counsellors, psychologists, and church leaders, including in Iraq, Jordan, Dubai, Algeria, Tunisia, Lebanon, and – to support refugees – Germany and the United States.

But Marianne and her team, again, are not waiting for viewers to come to them. They are designing Zoom

workshops, led by Christians who are specialists in various disciplines, to engage audience members on a series of topics. The first workshop, which will be held in June, will focus on family counselling; the second will be on empowering children.

“We are reaching a whole new audience now,” says Marianne. “Everyone is so isolated today, and it has become the norm to reach out to others online. This was a strategic moment to develop our work, one not to be missed. We took this opportunity to build a dynamic online community, based on empathy, availability, authenticity, friendship, and – after we have demonstrated these principles – sound theology. This is what people need today. More than ever, they need to feel accepted and loved.”



CLICK HERE » JAD’S* CALL TO MARIANNE

*Jad’s voice has been edited for security purposes

A VIEWER’S JOURNEY: MAYA

Mariannne shares the story of a viewer whose life has been transformed. We are telling Maya’s story here with her permission, and with her name changed to protect her identity.

“Maya is from a North African country. She is from a non-Christian background but has been a believer for some years. She married a man who was also a new believer. But a few months later, Maya discovered that her husband was unfaithful and was also addicted to pornography. She was heartbroken.

When Maya asked for help from her church, her pastor refused and gossiped about her instead. Maya left the church. Struggling in her relationship with her husband, who was also an absent father to their child, Maya felt broken.

Maya reached out to SAT-7 after watching *From Heart to Heart*, the relationship counselling program I present with my husband, Rawad. She watched an episode in which we discussed addiction to pornography – which Rawad shared that he once struggled with, too.

After messaging with me, Maya agreed for us to speak. During our video call, she was very low and hopeless. Maya still loved her husband, even after ten years of his infidelity.

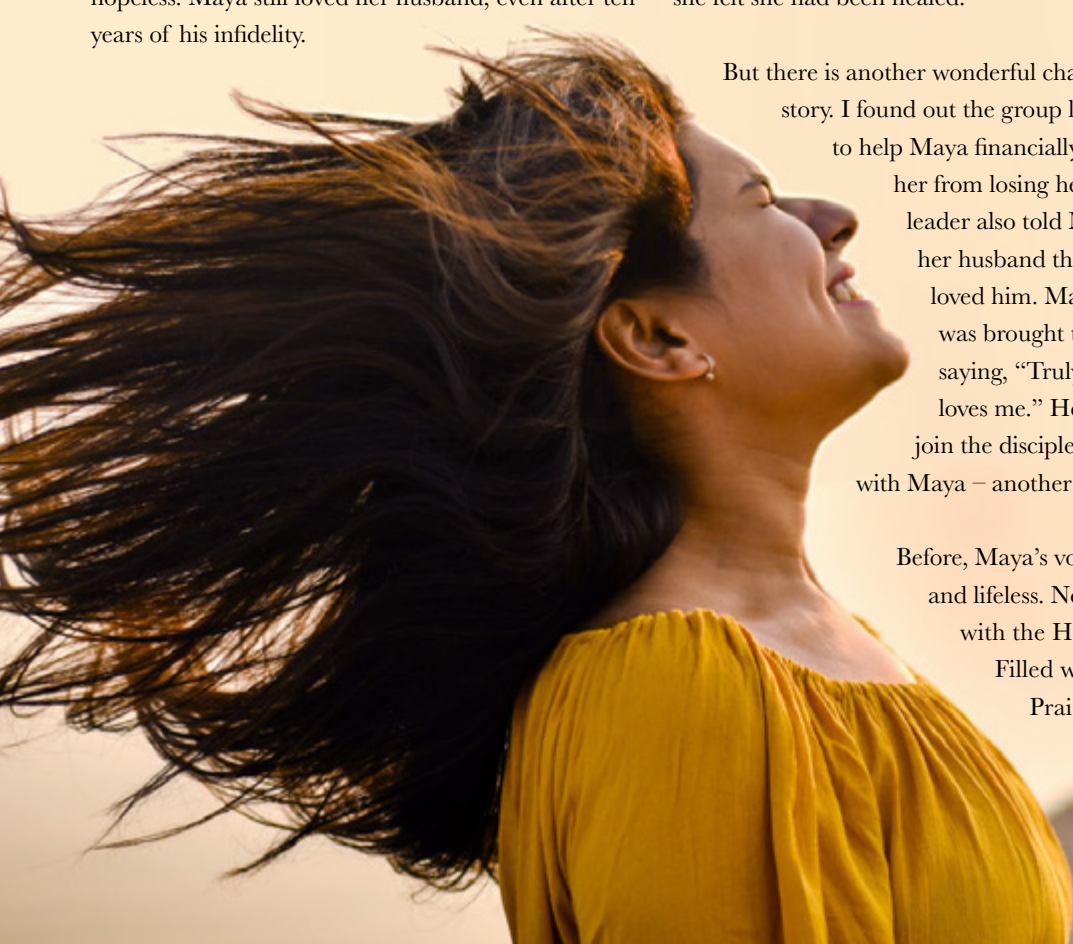
I felt somewhat helpless, and I asked God to give me the words to say. After listening to Maya for an hour, I simply prayed with her and shared His Word.

After that call, Maya messaged saying, “I felt the Holy Spirit perform an operation in my heart.” She had hope again, and she felt energised to pray for her relationship. We continued to connect with her, and she shared many details about her life. But Maya had no Christian friends to support her, and she did not feel ready to go back to a local church. Finally, I felt ready to invite her to join an online discipleship group, run by a partner church in Dubai and welcoming Arabic-speakers from across the region.

After attending her first meeting, Maya said she felt like King David when he danced in the Bible – like her spirit was renewed. She felt joy for the first time in a long while. The group had also prayed for her mother, who was very sick, and Maya felt so supported. Maya’s mother’s condition improved, and she felt she had been healed.

But there is another wonderful chapter to this story. I found out the group leader felt led to help Maya financially, to protect her from losing her home. The leader also told Maya to tell her husband that Jesus still loved him. Maya’s husband was brought to tears, saying, “Truly, God still loves me.” He agreed to join the discipleship group with Maya – another miracle.

Before, Maya’s voice was empty and lifeless. Now, she is filled with the Holy Spirit. Filled with life. Praise God.”



FARSI AND TURKISH AUDIENCE RELATIONS

While these new, more developed platforms are being piloted in Arabic, they will eventually be rolled out for SAT-7’s other language bases, too.

“SAT-7 ARABIC is our oldest channel with the largest audience – and therefore, by necessity, the largest capacity,” explains Jan Ørskov, Chief Operations Officer. “This makes it the perfect place to pilot these strategies. But this does not mean SAT-7 PARS and SAT-7 TÜRK are not being innovative. In fact, by meeting viewers’ needs in their respective contexts, they are each doing something very special that involves constant creativity.”

SAT-7 PARS

SAT-7 PARS’ six-strong Audience Relations (AR) team responds to viewer messages – currently mainly through WhatsApp – prays for viewers, answers their questions, and provides theological counselling. “Our counsellors provide a great deal of support for viewers in Iran, many of whom live difficult lives,” says Rahel*, SAT-7 PARS Audience Relations Coordinator. In response to growing numbers of children contacting the channel, SAT-7 PARS has recently hired a specialist AR team member to support them.

Rahel’s team has also begun producing a special prayer calendar that allows Persian-speakers to pray for each other each day, and each month, they also send out a virtual devotional. “The overwhelming response from viewers suggests a deep need for engagement,” says Rahel. “We will now endeavour to send devotionals or prayer resources every week. SAT-7 PARS is also enjoying a stronger presence on social media, especially since live programs began to be simultaneously broadcast on Instagram and other platforms,” she continues. “This is resulting in a greater volume of messages from viewers.” The team also works with an external Christian agency to help follow up with viewers, and their next priority is to expand the support they provide for Afghan viewers.

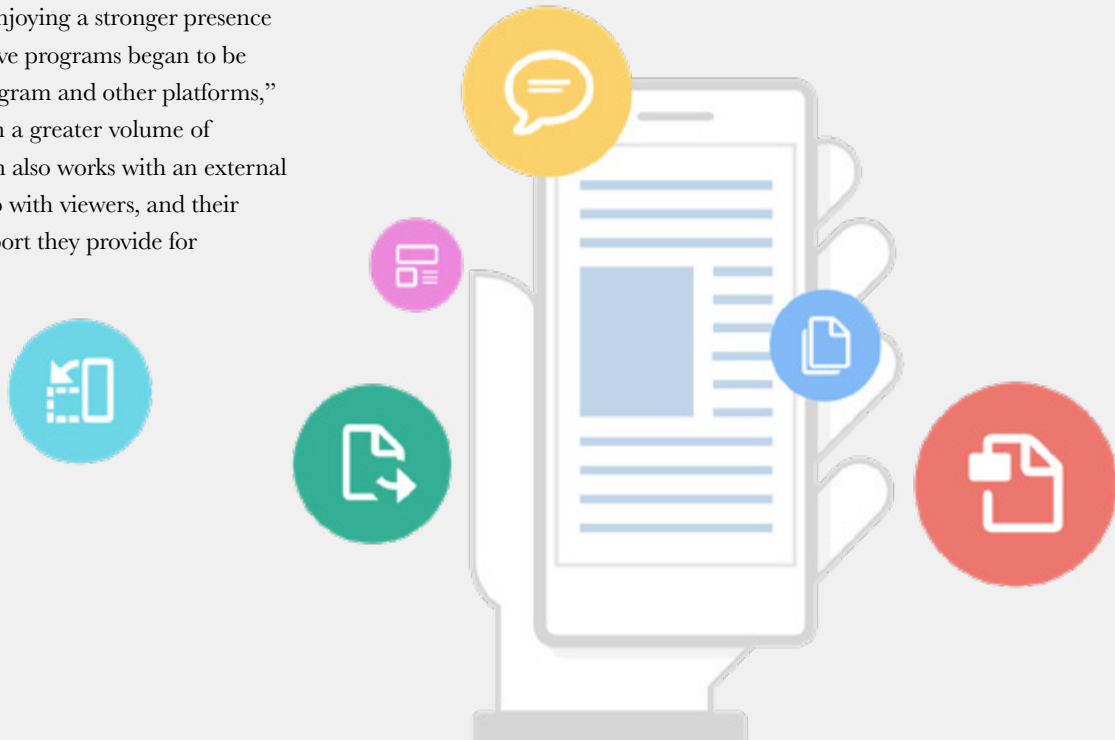
SAT-7 TÜRK

SAT-7 TÜRK’s two Audience Relations team members answer phone calls and help viewers to find Bibles or connect with their local churches. They also create strategies for social media content and engage with viewers on social media platforms.

“At SAT-7 TÜRK, our top priority for social media – as on all our platforms – is to convey God’s love and grace to our followers,” says Ümit Teymur, Audience Relations and Social Media Manager. “In order to achieve this, we are trying to appeal to our young viewers by producing content and videos suitable for social media platforms. With the wisdom and power given by God, we strive to guide people in the right way.”



[CLICK HERE »](#) SAT-7 TÜRK ON SOCIAL MEDIA



*Name changed for security purposes.

A SPOTLIGHT ON SAT-7 TÜRK AND TURKEY

SAT-7 TÜRK is not only SAT-7's youngest channel, but also the only one working in a restricted context, under a locally regulated broadcast license. What does this mean for the staff and their work? Gülsüm I., the channel's Deputy Executive Director, shares her journey to becoming one of SAT-7 TÜRK's key leaders and how her family life plays out in Turkey.

“This has been an extraordinary year,” Gülsüm reflects. “I took on my new role as SAT-7 TÜRK's Deputy Executive Director in 2020, and my family and I moved to Cyprus in March that year to work with the International Office – only for the island to go into full COVID-19 lockdown a week later!” she exclaims.

Unable to visit Turkey throughout the year due to travel restrictions, Gülsüm and her family instead moved to Istanbul, home to the studio from which SAT-7 TÜRK broadcasts Christian content in Turkish. For Gülsüm, the prospect of moving back to her home country in March 2021 meant both opportunity and restriction. “Being one of God's people in a country like Turkey is a great opportunity to share one's faith. I had missed being able to share my faith with family and friends. My life, my actions, my work, and my values are a testimony to them,” she says. And Gülsüm is not the only member of the family finding opportunities for witness. “Having spent her life so far abroad, our daughter is not shy about her faith, and freely shares her testimony with her grandmother – which is having a positive impact on both of them,” she continues.

Witnessing amid restrictions

But speaking to a wider societal context, Gülsüm says, “While most people are quite accepting of us being Christians, living as a Christian in Turkey has its challenges. Although we have the freedom to live as believers, we must always be careful about what we say – especially on social media – who we talk to, and who we invite into our homes,” Gülsüm shares. “I cannot openly share about my work with those I don't know well, because you never know the intentions of the people you are talking to.” As a Christian channel in Turkey, SAT-7 TÜRK

also faces certain restrictions. “We have to be aware that there are certain social issues we cannot talk about as openly as we would like to in our programs, because they are too ‘political’,” says Gülsüm. “We live and work in this country, and we want to continue to share God's love with our viewers. We do not want to jeopardise this wonderful opportunity we have.”

Raising awareness

This does not mean that the channel is silent. “One issue we feel very strongly about in Turkey is the rise in domestic abuse and femicides in recent years,” Gülsüm says. Last year, 300 women were murdered by partners, ex-partners, or male relatives. By March 2021, the deaths of 79 women had been identified as femicides, and an additional 45 women were found dead under suspicious circumstances¹.

“The great thing is that there are many women and men in Turkey who know that domestic abuse and femicide are wrong and unacceptable, and they are speaking out about it,” says Gülsüm. “Organisations such as ‘We Will Stop Femicides’ are constantly advocating for change, and at SAT-7 TÜRK we have a social responsibility to continue raising awareness and keeping these issues on the public agenda.”

“You are not alone”

The SAT-7 TÜRK program *You Are Not Alone* provides viewers with practical information to support victims of domestic violence, including contact details for organisations that can help, information about women's legal rights to protection, and practical steps women should take if they are abused, such as recording their injuries for use as evidence in court cases.

“We felt that such a program was necessary because many women do not know where to go or what to do,” shares Gülsüm. “In some instances, such as cases of psychological and emotional abuse, women are not even aware that they are being abused. It is vital that they have access to this basic information, because it saves lives,” she continues. “We want women to know that they are not alone in this.”

Part of the battle is cultural. “There are Turkish proverbs such as ‘*Dayak cennetten gelir*’, meaning ‘A beating comes from heaven’, or ‘*Karı koca arasına girilmez*’,

meaning ‘One does not come between man and wife,’” explains Gülsüm. “These are embedded in our culture, and this is not acceptable.”

As she shares these priorities with us, Gülsüm and her family have been in Turkey for several weeks. “I'm very happy to be back,” she says. “It's especially wonderful for our daughter to see her grandmother and cousins. I have been living abroad for almost a decade, and it is great to be reunited with my extended family and the SAT-7 TÜRK team.”

¹ We Will Stop Femicides: <http://kadinayetlerinidurduracagiz.net/kategori/veriler?sayfa=1>

“**Being one of God's people in a country like Turkey is a great opportunity to share one's faith.** Gülsüm I., SAT-7 TÜRK Deputy Executive Director

SAT-7 ACADEMY

INNOVATIVE EDUCATION

The COVID-19 pandemic has interrupted the education of 110 million children across the Middle East and North Africa, resulting in a growing fear of a generational loss in learning and skills region-wide¹. In response, the educational brand SAT-7 ACADEMY is adapting, mobilising a cutting-edge modular approach to better meet the needs of the most vulnerable children.

“SAT-7 ACADEMY is a treasure,” shares Hany, a Syrian teacher working in temporary schools for Syrian refugees in Turkey. “It has the potential to spread education and abolish illiteracy in every home. Thanks to its wonderful staff, education becomes much easier.”

SAT-7’s educational brand SAT-7 ACADEMY was launched in 2017 to help meet the needs of Syrian refugee children and others out of school due to regional conflict. *My School*, a flagship SAT-7 ACADEMY program, provides regular instruction in maths, science, Arabic, English, and French, and many children have now grown up with its foundational teaching. Renalda, an Iraqi mother who left with her family for Lebanon, says:

“My daughter is 9 years old, and she has been watching the *My School* program since we were in Iraq. Thanks to *My School*’s teachers, she is excelling. She has already learned from *My School* all the topics she is studying at school now, and she finds them very easy thanks to you. Thank you very much for your hardwork. I cannot thank you enough.”

Today, an estimated 1.3 million children across the MENA are at risk of dropping out of school² due to falling behind in their studies. To ensure that no student feels left behind, *My School* is now implementing a modular approach, introducing themes through 10-minute episodes, and moving away from the traditional linear approach to teaching. This means that episodes need not be watched strictly in order,

and that students can begin at the level they need, not at the level their age-group is studying in school. This approach is more student-centred, enabling the most vulnerable children who have missed more school to gain maximum benefit.

“The short-term goal is to save whatever time can be saved in terms of learning acquisition,” shares Educational Consultant Roy Saab. “If we can save everybody a year, up to age nine or ten, we know that we have served a massive long-term goal when they go back to school. We have saved them the emotional impact of falling behind. We have saved them having to catch up. And we have saved them the very high possibility of dropping out.”

SAT-7 ACADEMY Brand Manager Juliana Sfeir shares, “Children must be equipped with the skills they need to build functioning societies in the future. So, in 2022, *My School*’s curriculum will incorporate psychosocial topics, financial education, children’s rights, resilience, and communication skills. We are also exploring partnerships that will increase our impact and reach in this new era of online education.”

“
My daughter
has already
learned what she
is now learning
at school from
My School.
Renalda, an Iraqi
mother in Lebanon

Despite pandemic restrictions, dedicated teachers on SAT-7 KIDS continued to teach young viewers from their homes.

¹ UNICEF: <https://www.unicef.org/mena/media/10811/file/UNICEF%20MENA%20RO%20COX%20ID%20Situation%20Report%20Nov%201%20-%2001%20Dec%202020.pdf>

² Ibid

“LEBANON: OUR STORY” LAUNCHES

SAT-7’s Beirut team recently launched *Lebanon: Our Story*, a major new Danish Government-funded project being carried out with the Danish Bible Society and the Centre for Church-based Development (CKU). The project will connect young people from different backgrounds to develop a vision for a better Lebanon through storytelling and media activities.

“This project is at the heart of rebuilding a strong democracy in Lebanon. We have to find new ways to coexist peacefully with each other and strengthen the voice of civil society, especially as our society changes and refugees become more integrated in the host community. As Christians, I believe, our role is to lead the way. *Lebanon: Our Story* is a great and timely opportunity for SAT-7 to play an important role: to bridge the gap between youth from minority and majority backgrounds, give them a voice, and tell their stories,” says Juliana Sfeir, Brand Manager for SAT-7 ACADEMY and SAT-7’s Beirut-based project lead.

The project will bring young people from a variety of backgrounds – including Syrian refugees – together in storytelling clubs and an online platform, to rethink the divisive narratives that have grown up in Lebanon and instead develop a new shared story of hope. The media wing of the project will produce several programs to be shown on SAT-7’s platforms.

In this exciting early phase of the project, the team

are recruiting storytelling club facilitators and growing partnerships with local non-governmental organisations who will partner with them in holding the activities.

Synne Garff, International Director of the Danish Bible Society, is confident in SAT-7’s ability to bridge social, cultural, and religious divides. “SAT-7 knows how to bridge societal gaps, bring diverse young groups together, and engage them in dialogue,” she says. “SAT-7, with its professionalism, can transform lives and give joy to young people. I have seen it happen before.”

SAT-7 has previously brought young people from a variety of backgrounds together in the program *Puzzle*, which was produced by Juliana Sfeir. “It is amazing to see how, from when we first started filming and the children were wary around each other, they became friends, running to greet and play with each other,” Juliana says. “They didn’t want the filming to stop, because they didn’t want their time together to end.”

Youth in Beirut take a break from cleaning up the streets in the aftermath of the explosion, August 2020



THE FIRST BROADCAST

In this excerpt from his book *Dare to Believe!*, out now, SAT-7 Founder and President Dr Terence Ascott recalls the landmark day of SAT-7's first broadcast, 25 years ago.

We scheduled a 31 May meeting of our international board, so we could watch the first broadcast together. I am not sure if it was a head cold or stress, but by the day of the meeting, I had completely lost my voice. SAT-7's Business Director, Erling Wennemyr, had to read my written report, and I had to resort to writing notes in order to respond to questions or when trying to make a point. But by the time I had done so, the board conversation had usually moved to another issue. The board adjourned between 1:30 and 3:30 p.m., so everyone could watch the first broadcast.

We had not really expected any immediate responses to it – thinking it would take time for people to find a two-hour-a-week Arabic broadcast on a European satellite that otherwise broadcast in Albanian and Romanian, but we did get calls and faxes!

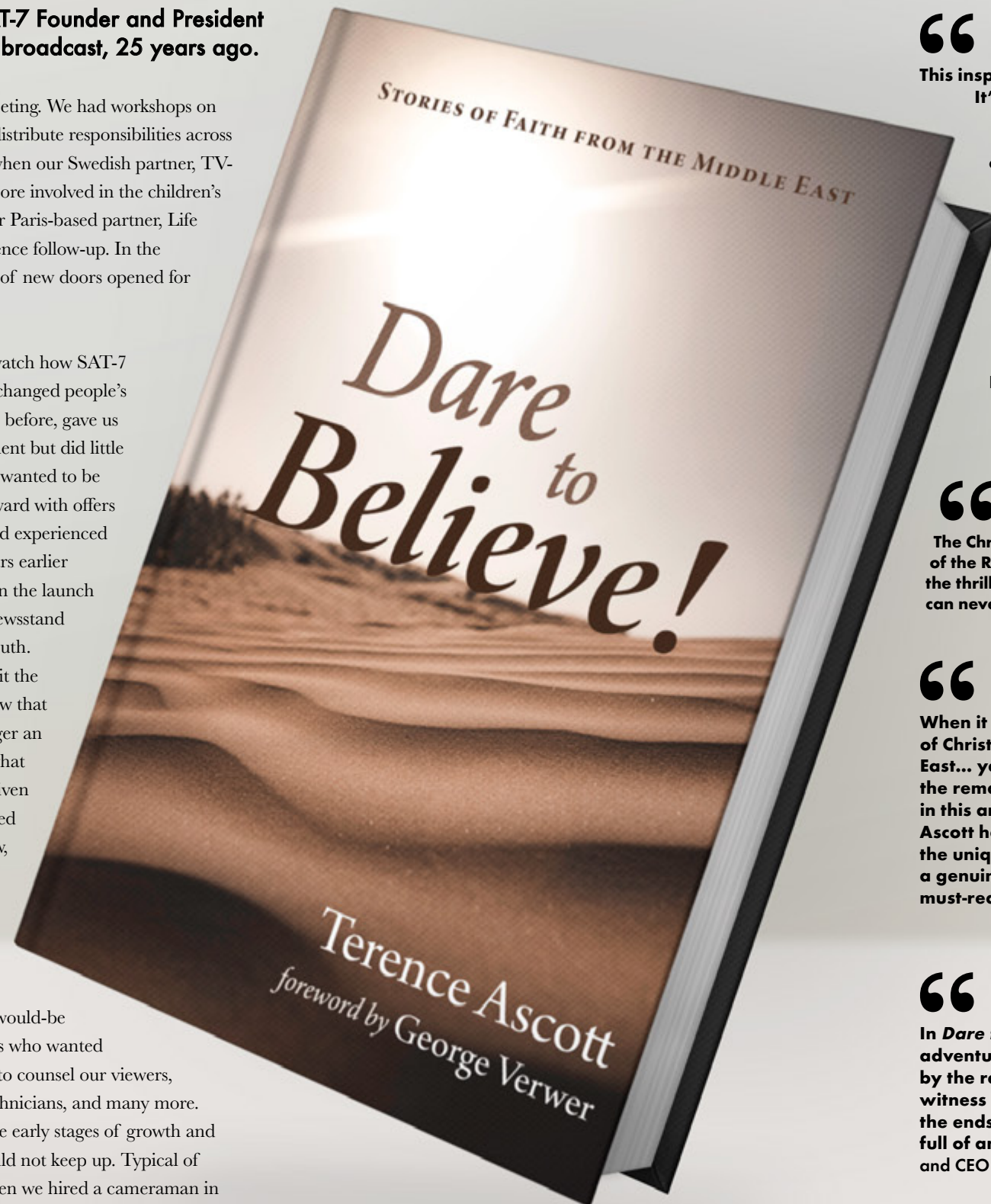
Within minutes of the broadcast's start, a call came into our Nicosia number. It was from a man in the Arabian Peninsula who was astonished at the program Presenter he had just seen. "What is this channel? I just saw a woman wearing a cross around her neck and speaking Arabic!" Here was someone who did not even know Arabic-speaking Christians existed!

When we started, we wondered if anyone would be willing to take the risk or go to the expense of making an international phone call to get in touch with us. Up to this point, none of the international radio ministries had offered a phone number to their audiences and instead relied on mail. In the coming days we were astonished at the number of people who were willing and wanted to make international calls to speak to us. The partners – especially those interested in program production or audience relations – met immediately following

the 31 May board meeting. We had workshops on each topic, trying to distribute responsibilities across the group. This was when our Swedish partner, TV-Inter, offered to get more involved in the children's programming and our Paris-based partner, Life Agape, with the audience follow-up. In the coming months, a lot of new doors opened for us.

We were amazed to watch how SAT-7 actually being on air changed people's attitudes. People who, before, gave us words of encouragement but did little to try to help us, now wanted to be engaged, coming forward with offers of practical help. I had experienced the same thing 20 years earlier when I was involved in the launch of *Huwa wa Hiya*, a newsstand magazine for Arab youth.

Once the magazine hit the newsstands, people saw that the vision was no longer an optimist's dream of what could be but a God-given reality, and they wanted to be a part of it. Now, people were flocking to us – clergy who were ready to write or present teaching programs, Christian musicians, would-be producers, counsellors who wanted to offer their services to counsel our viewers, camera operators, technicians, and many more. But we were still in the early stages of growth and our infrastructure could not keep up. Typical of this challenge was when we hired a cameraman in Beirut before we even owned our first camera!



“

This inspiring volume, *Dare to Believe!* is really three stories under one cover. It's the autobiography of a Christian leader with 50 years' experience of working in the Middle East and North Africa. It's the history of SAT-7, a gift of God for the satellite age and a glowing example of entrepreneurial faith which had the vision to embrace new technologies as an effective servant of the Gospel. But above all, it is the compelling story of the suffering Church standing firm while the world collapses into anarchy and chaos. It is action-packed with powerful testimonies of dramatic conversions to Christ and a hunger for Christian fellowship and Bible teaching. There are vivid stories of persecution, intimidation, blood-soaked martyrdoms, and miraculous escapes. Please read it and recognise there is a price to be paid for daring to believe!
– David Coffey OBE, Past President of the Baptist World Alliance, Former General Secretary of the Baptist Union of Great Britain

“

The Christian faith began in the Middle East, but it is there today where followers of the Risen Christ face constant persecution. In *Dare to Believe!*, Terence Ascott tells the thrilling story of SAT-7's ministry, showing that the faith of Jesus Christ can never be crushed. – Lord Carey of Clifton, 103rd Archbishop of Canterbury

“

When it comes to giving the Gospel, we must always go where the Kingdom of Christ is under assault. Nowhere is the opposition fiercer than in the Middle East... yet Christ's Church is springing up all over! It's why I thank God for the remarkable work of SAT-7 and its tireless efforts to make Christ known in this ancient region of the world. In his new book, *Dare to Believe!*, Terence Ascott has captured the danger, intrigue, yet passion and ingenuity behind the unique development of SAT-7. If you are looking for inspiration, as well as a genuine witness of the life-transforming power of the Good News, this is a must-read! – Joni Eareckson Tada, Founder/CEO of Joni and Friends

“

In *Dare to Believe!* you become Terence Ascott's companion on an EPIC adventure of faith and obedience. You join him on harrowing pursuits driven by the revelations of what media and technology make possible. You bear witness to God's master plan and how the hope of the Gospel is on its way to the ends of the earth. The story of SAT-7 left me awestruck, praising God, and full of anticipation as the day of the Lord approaches. – Tami Heim, President and CEO of Christian Leadership Alliance

***Dare to Believe!* is available for order now by Wipf and Stock (www.WipfandStock.com), through Amazon.com, and as an eBook on Kindle.**



LEADING THE WAY AFTER 25 YEARS OF SERVING SAT-7

Twenty-five years ago, Rita El-Mounayer was standing at a crossroads, unsure where God was calling her. A chance encounter to give Dr Terence Ascott and his team from SAT-7 a tour around a studio in Beirut had opened a door – one that she remembers being quite resistant to walking through at the time.

The SAT-7 team were looking for talent and challenged Rita to apply as a writer and presenter for their children's program. Rita prayed in earnest about whether to apply. Then, she says: "I felt God give me a vision: the call of serving the children of the Middle East and North Africa through SAT-7. As I was praying, I saw children in the streets, children barefoot, children eating ice-cream with it dripping on their clothes. I saw children in their school uniforms going off to school, and I saw lots of children having fun. And I felt love for them all! It was the kind of love that feels so strong that you cannot take it anymore; it is too much to bear because you love so much that it hurts. God gave me this huge love, and, in my heart, I heard Him tell me, 'Rita, I don't need your skills and I don't need you to look good in front of the camera. All I need is for you to be a channel taking My love to these children. Human love often ends or changes, but My love is unfailing. It is always there.'"

That moment was 25 years ago. Today, Rita has been SAT-7's CEO for the past two years, bringing her wisdom from decades of serving in this unique media ministry – her expertise in production; broadcasting excellence; effective, culturally sensitive witness; and working with partners – to her visionary leadership today. This wealth of experience, along with Rita's commitment to oneness and working together across the ministry, is particularly important as SAT-7 now looks ahead.

Over the past two years, Rita has created reporting and working structures to ensure different voices and experiences are regularly brought to the table. "This is especially crucial at times of reflection and evaluation, and is something we are keen to prioritise after 25 years of working around the clock," shares Rita.

Currently, a reflection and learning process on "Holistic Mission" is underway to ensure SAT-7 is equipped, energised, and unified to faithfully respond to the mission of God. Key strategy discussions are also underway for SAT-7's new three-year strategy, which will be launched in 2023.

"With the new strategy, our aim is to continue to build on flagship programs, investing in people – those we have, and those we would like to attract to the ministry – and to continue to nurture our video-on-demand and social media platforms. These are foundational components to our next strategy as we build the vision for the next 25 years!" shares Rita.

Whatever unfolds over the next 25 years, Rita is clear about two things: across SAT-7's ministry, content is king and Jesus will always lead the way. "We are working hard on our strategy and visions, and I have dreams for SAT-7. But if there is one thing that 2020 has shown me, it is that we can plan all we want, but we never know what is going to happen. It has also reminded me that the most important thing we need to do is focus on God and what He is calling us to do. To continue to create relevant, hopeful, and encouraging content to bring His message to the Middle East and North Africa. Whatever technological advancements may come that will lead to the continued growth of the ministry, it is the content we need to continue to focus on across all platforms, and we will need to invest in talented people to do that," she shares.

During these first years as CEO, prayer has been the cornerstone of building oneness between the people who make up the ministry. Ironically, as the world became more isolated, the pandemic offered an opportunity for deeper connection. *[continues overleaf]*

“Our aim is to continue to build on flagship programs, investing in people and to continue to nurture our video-on-demand and social media platforms. These are foundational components to our next strategy as we build the vision for the next 25 years.”

Rita instigated a weekly prayer call for all staff and those connected to the ministry, to share devotions, worship, and prayer across the globe. “It was extraordinary for me to not be on a plane, but instead, to be able to connect on a different level with staff and supporters from across the world,” she reflects.

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?” Contemplating Romans 8:35-39, her most cherished Bible verse, Rita adds: “To feel this connection we have as the Body of Christ in this way was a beautiful way to encourage each other that Christ never leaves us. That nothing can separate us from Him no matter what happens. I believe we all needed this message.”

There are busy days ahead, and there is so much to be grateful for and to pray for. This year, prayer will be key to commemorating 25 years since SAT-7’s first broadcast. Prayer to thank God for His provision, prayer for protection over our viewers, Partners, supporters, friends, and staff, and prayer for the children of the Middle East and North Africa.

Looking back 25 years to the early days of writing Ears of Wheat, the first program that launched Rita’s SAT-7 career as a writer, Producer, Presenter, Channel Director, and now CEO, it has been a rich and rewarding journey so far for Rita.

Twenty-five years on, SAT-7 is a trusted media ministry, celebrating record-high audience engagement. It has launched the first Christian video-on-demand platform in three languages and has developed social media and audience engagement strategies to nurture an authentic and dynamic online community of believers. It maintains strong and faithful partnerships and, not least, has a passionate CEO planted firmly in the hope of our Lord Jesus, in His Mercy and His Grace – where she has been rooted for the past 25 years.



① On the set of *Bedtime Stories*: Rita’s heart for children led her to SAT-7 ② Rita speaks at SAT-7’s Europe Vision Meeting in Copenhagen, September 2020 ③ Listening to children’s stories and learning more about their lives in a refugee camp in Beqaa Valley, Lebanon, 2015 ④ Rita El-Mounayer and Dr Terence Ascott at SAT-7 TÜRK AGM, Istanbul, Turkey, in May 2019 ⑤ Rita reading Bible stories to children on *Bedtime Stories* ⑥ International Office building opening event, November 2015 ⑦ Rita in Algeria, July 2011 ⑧ Rita meets children in the refugee camp in Lebanon, 2015 ⑨ Filming with schoolchildren for *Ears of Wheat* in Morocco, 2001 ⑩ SAT-7’s Executive Board, 2019

PARTNERING FOR THE NEXT 25 YEARS OF IMPACT



For 25 years, SAT-7 has answered God’s call to share His love with men, women, and children across the Middle East and North Africa. Will you help us continue to change lives in the region?

SAT-7’s faith-based media is a platform for Christian minorities across the region, a support for the persecuted Church, and a lifeline for new believers who want to grow in faith. Our social impact media challenges attitudes towards isolated believers and women, and addresses topics including domestic abuse, freedom of religion and belief, and child marriage. SAT-7’s ACADEMY brand also provides educational content for children out of school across the region. And this is only a taste of SAT-7’s full impact.

As we grow as a holistic ministry and develop new ways of reaching more people across the Middle East, we look forward to what God will do through SAT-7 in the next 25 years. We invite you to join us, through prayer and support, on this exciting journey.

NETWORK 2022 SAVE THE DATE!



We look forward to
welcoming you to Cyprus!

How to support SAT-7

 **Credit card / PayPal**
www.sat7.org/get-involved/donate

 **Bank transfer**
US DOLLAR ACCOUNT
Account number: 57319020
Account name: SAT-7 International Trust
Bank: Pax-Bank eG
IBAN: DE19 3706 0193 0057 3190 20
BIC (SWIFT-address): GENODED1PAX

 **EURO ACCOUNT**
Account number: 57319011
Account name: SAT-7 International Trust
Bank: Pax-Bank eG
IBAN: DE68 3706 0193 0057 3190 11
BIC (SWIFT-address): GENODED1PAX

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SATELLITE: Nilesat (E7WA) at 7° West, 11.354 GHz Vertical;
Covering Middle East & North Africa.
ONLINE: www.sat7.com | www.facebook.com/sat7ar
www.youtube.com/user/SAT7ARABIC
Smartphone App: SAT-7

SAT-7 KIDS (ARABIC)
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Covering Middle East & North Africa.
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www.youtube.com/user/SAT7KIDS
Smartphone app: SAT-7 KIDS

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Smartphone App: SAT-7 TÜRK

SAT-7 PARS (PERSIAN)
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Smartphone App: SAT-7 PARS

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<https://sat7plus.org>

Contact details

Europe	europe@sat7.org
UK	uk@sat7.org
USA	usa@sat7.org
Canada	canada@sat7.org
Brazil	brasil@sat7.org
Asia	hongkong@sat7.org



SAT-7's first camera, Lebanon, 1998

SAT-7 International

P.O. Box 26760, Nicosia, Cyprus, CY-1647

+357 22761050 | info@sat7.org

www.sat7.org



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