

The Trust of Programs for Early Childhood
Family and Community Education

ANNUAL REPORT **2016**

Prepared and Edited by
Flavia Kamar

Jerusalem



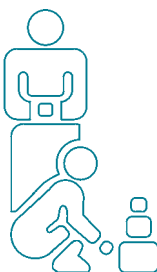
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Foreword



Greetings,

Since the Trust was established more than three decades ago I have been following its progress and the spread of its activities in Palestinian society both inside Israel and in the West Bank. The success of the trust in its programs is due to two main reasons: Firstly, the sincerity and dedication of the managers and the employees of the Trust who are fully convinced of its noble objectives and the importance of spreading knowledge to those groups who live in the margins of the society giving them the means to meet the social, educational and humanitarian problems they are living. These groups are provided with methods needed to confront these difficulties in order to feel that they are an integrated part of their communities.

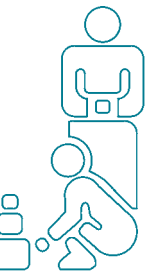
The other reason which leads to the success of the Trust is the support of different institutions who believe in the projects and humanitarian goals set by the Trust for a better future for those unfortunate groups. We appreciate and thank all the institutions that believe in the objectives of the Trust and support it financially as well as morally.

All who review the programs of the Trust, as they are fully detailed, will notice that the main target of these programs focus on Mother, child and Family issues. The depth of the ideas and their importance are remarkable and essential in helping these groups to integrate and to be a positive and active part in their communities and their society in general.

In conclusion, and on behalf of our staff, I would like to emphasize our sincere gratitude to the directors and staff of all the organizations and institutions who share in fulfilling our dreams and contributing to the prosperity of our Trust.

We hope and wish the year 2017 will bring happiness and peace to all.

Dr. Awni Habash
Chairperson



Introduction

Dear Friends and Supporters,

I hope this annual report finds you well.

I would like to thank you all for your support and friendship, it is heartwarming to share with you our challenges and achievements.

For this year I decided to keep my words short and to let my friend and brother Dr. Nicholas van Oudenhoven write the opening words of this annual report 2016. Dr. Nicholas is a well-known child psychologist from the Netherlands, founder and senior associate at International Child Development Initiatives in the Netherlands (ICDI) and has worked closely with the Trust. We have learned a great deal from him and we thank him for helping us in our professional growth and recently for conducting a professional evaluation to some of our programs.

I would also like to thank each one of you for contributing in making our dreams come true and taking us a step forward towards our vision.



Sincerely,
Farid Abu Gosh
President

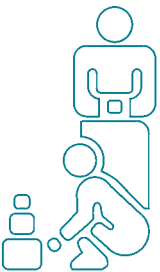


Beautiful People; Beautiful Trust

By: Nicholas van Oudenhoven

Some twenty years ago, Farid and I were talking with a mother in a little village not far from Ramallah. Strangely enough, I remember only the face of her child; it was a boy with black curly hair and big brown, almost black eyes; he wore a light blue sweater. A little girl sat on the floor. I forget how the mother looked like, but not what she said. Holding the little boy close to her chest, and looking at her daughter, she almost cried: “Do you have any idea in what kind of world our children grow up in. Will they ever see beauty? Look around: no place to go, no flowers, no colours, only misery and garbage. I’d wish I could take my children to a park with fountains, to the zoo.” I didn’t know what to say back, as I could only agree with her. Palestinian children in the marginalized communities do indeed live in a toxic environment; exposed to a toxicity that doesn’t only find expression in physical things like a dearth of playgrounds or an abundance of dilapidated cars, but also in constant social and emotional assaults brought about by poverty and lack of resources.

It took me those two decades to find an answer to the mother’s question of ‘will they ever see beauty’? In the period in between we often talked about finding beauty and sustenance in the rich Palestinian culture, its art, poems, music, literature, dances, stories, food, architecture, their love for nature. But then, a thought occurred to



me when colleagues and I were talking again with mothers, teachers, community leaders, tutors and the staff of the Trust, in Shu'fat Camp and in the homes and schools in the villages Northwest Jerusalem this October. When listening to them, the thought hit me as a lightning bolt. "How beautiful these people are; all of them", I realised. In spite of, or perhaps because of, so much that impacts on their societies, communities, families and their children, day after day, generation after generation, many Palestinians keep their heads up, reach out to each other and look for ever better ways to do things right for their children. Some young women, working as 'tutors' in a 'girls' school in Shu'fat, told us defiantly "we are strong". We fully agreed with them, and said, "yes, you guys are awfully strong", but we should have added: "you are also beautiful, and not only you, but all of you". I do this now.

Now, I know what I should have told the mother: "yes, I see your point, you're right, there's a lot of ugliness and dreadfulness about, for sure, but also much, much beauty. And: "This beauty is of the highest order: look at yourself, you are beautiful, your children are beautiful and so many around you". It's too late now, but not too late to tell Farid that what his Trust brings out, and all who support its work, is amazingly beautiful. I trust Farid will convey this message to all who are part of its programmes. But then, he and his co-workers must have already known this all along; what else could explain their total devotion and commitment?

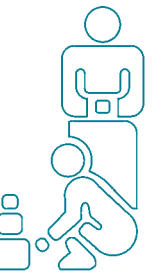


About the Trust

The Trust is an indigenous developmental agency established in 1984 in Jerusalem and registered as a non-profit NGO to empower members of the Arab Palestinian community through education and leadership developmental programs targeting Palestinians everywhere.

We are a nonprofit, nonreligious and nonpolitical organization that believes in social Justice, human rights conventions, equal access to resources, gender equality, human dignity, accepting others as they are, and not as they should be, regardless of their cultural, racial, or religious backgrounds. We believe in people's capacities which they can use to improve their lives towards social change.

The Trust has built up a range of effective and innovative programs that develop the capacities and improve the lives of children, young women, educators and mothers living in marginalized situations and aiming at transforming their sense of hopelessness and dependency into individual and collective feeling of hope and capabilities.



Our Mission

- Contribute to the maintenance and development of Palestinian cultural identity.
- Improve the quality of life of the marginalized groups mainly women and children.
- Strengthen social responsibility through community empowerment.

Our goals are to:

- Support the development of community coherence and integrity;
- Enhance and facilitate empowerment of women, children and families;
- Provide a development basis for children and women towards a functional family;
- Create networks among organizations that share our values
- Promote and provide training for women leadership.

All our programs contribute to social change through targeting the family in a holistic, integrative and inclusive approach, constantly developing to meet the local needs of our target groups; ranging from service delivery to raising awareness and community empowerment. Being community based we focus on building the capacities of the local professional staff and the paraprofessionals, and involving the local target groups in the planning, implementation and evaluation of our programs, towards achieving long lasting effects.

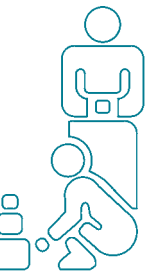


Current Programs

The Mother-to-Mother Program supports and strengthens the parenting skills of young mothers (and fathers) and empowers them individually and as a group. It empowers mothers and offers them the supervision and guidance to become more effective members of the society on the family and the community levels.

The Young women empowerment program aims at improving the quality of life of young women and teen-age girls towards inclusion and community involvement. In addition to involving their parents towards building better relations within the family and preventing early marriages.

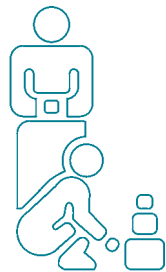
Community based preschool education program which addresses the preschools as the unit of intervention towards developing both a physical and educational friendly environment for the children. The program develops the teachers inborn potential to interact with the children following the life-oriented approach in a safe and supportive environment.



Combating Family Violence Program aims at engaging in the fight against violence in families, developing new capacities and equips them with the necessary skills and technical know-how to face the challenges of family violence. The need for skills is ever increasing.

The Learn-by-Play program which aims at limiting illiteracy and decreasing the dropout rate from schools by operating on three levels: parents, teachers, pupils. College students and young adults are engaged as volunteers.

The Trust's CTRD "Center for Training, Research and Development" which seeks to contribute to early childhood, family and community education by conducting action research, feasibility and planning studies, program evaluation and training.



The Mother-to-Mother program

The paraprofessional mothers have become a model for other mothers from their neighborhood, that they too can develop and take control of their life and be constructive members in their children and husband's life.

The program continued with all its 40 paraprofessionals. The program built components, 78 women graduated on the potentials of the paraprofessional training courses conducted in Jerusalem, Ramla, mothers by upgrading their role where Rahat and in the villages. The home not only they perform home counselling intervention reached 218 families by groups with the supervision of the



program coordinators. The parenthood pamphlets are taking an important role in the home and group counselling, they have increased the fathers' involvement and improved the communication among the family members.



The mothers gained skills and knowledge in early childhood development and counselling. They were very committed in attending the meetings and anxious to learn and participate actively. All the paraprofessionals can identify the families' needs and respond to them and most of them have started volunteering at schools, mother centers, the preschools...

Quote by mother: "I sing to my child and talk to him more, even if he's still a baby but I learned that he can understand and feel me".

The home counselling gave the mothers a sense of purpose and increased their self-esteem; they look forward to the paraprofessional's visit and welcome her with enthusiasm and willingness to learn. Most of the mothers take better care of their looks and hygiene and of their children's nutrition and cleanliness. Most of them reported that they spend quality time with their children and are aware of their needs, by playing or reading together. Most of the program's activities took place at the mother-child centers in each of the target sites, like the group counselling, arts workshops and the mother-child activities where mothers and their children enjoyed together the facilities of space, games and books and at the same time benefited from the meetings and got the chance to socialize with other mothers and children.



Special focus was put on reading and storytelling and the educational purpose of the stories. Also several arts workshops took place at a rate of twice a month for the mothers to produce educational games for their children using materials from around the house, like rags, boxes, sticks... On 7th Nov. a fun day took place for the mothers in Jerusalem which included activities and face painting for the children, 25 mothers and 30 children participated.

A remarkable study day was conducted in February 2016 to discuss "Child upbringing" focusing the children's needs and the current challenges. There were 70 participants who enjoyed the study day and gave positive feedback both on the subject and the specialist.

On 11th May 2016 a study day was conducted on "positive thinking" by two specialists, where 30 paraprofessionals participated. In addition to the theoretical part given that day, there were several activities that helped them understand and discuss the subject.

Quote: "failure is not a negative thing, it teaches us a lesson for the future and gives us experience. It is hard to accept the positive side of a bad situation".

On 29th October 2016 the couples' groups from all sites got together in the study day on "Love and Compassion" with 40 participants. The specialist focused on the importance of good communication skills and how the couples relation reflects on their children.

Quote: "I didn't know how valuable a smile can be, and I am happy to know that my husband loves my smile. Please give us more days like this".



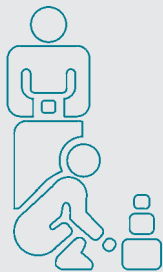
Community based preschool education program for children

On 24th November 2016, a conference took place in Ramallah on “Life Oriented Approach – Children of Today Determine the Future” in cooperation with the Palestinian Ministry of Education, Al-Tireh College and Caritas Germany, with the participation of educators and representatives of the local community. Ms. Yusra Mohamad the program director highlighted the synergy of this approach with the Palestinian national curriculum framework and the reality that the Palestinian children are living in, since it addresses real life situations and helps the children to grow and develop in healthy and educational environment. The conference was concluded with the following recommendations:

- Starting a steering committee to help in Spreading this successful experience to other educational frameworks.

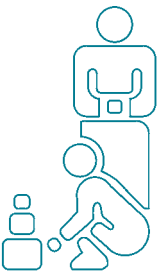


- Raising funds to support the training of professional capacities who will supervise the implementation of the program in a holistic and integrative way and involving the parents.
- Developing two community preschools as a model of implementing the Life Oriented Approach.
- Developing a resource center that contributes to deepening and spreading this approach.



As part of developing curriculum for early childhood, several key situations were documented and implemented at the preschools: Healthy nutrition, Hygiene, My family and I and coping with stress following the training given in cooperation with Ms. Irene Berger - Caritas Germany's consultant and Yusra Mohamad – the program director. During the follow-up, the coordinator focused on enriching the activity corners with real tools that are suitable for the child's needs, height and convenience.

Training 25 preschool directors and teachers from level A preschools from Shufat Refugee camp and the villages on these key situations. The teachers planned and implemented several activities on the key situations based on the weekly and monthly plans, and





the children's right to express their opinion. They focused on verbal expression and pronunciation skills to improve the children's language and ability to express their feelings. The activities included arts, crafts, talks, cooking, role-play, math and storytelling, in addition using educational cards. The imagination center was enriched with cloths and costumes for role-play, such as folkloric cloths, bags, shoes... that allowed the children plan and play together.

The teachers have shown better communication skills, they listen more and involve the mothers. They enriched the classroom with stimulating decorations and games relevant to the key situations. They divided the children into small groups and implement the activities according to the plan following the five levels of "understanding, knowledge, implementation, responsibilities and feelings".

As for level B preschools, they also received training on the LOA, communication skills, active learning, expressional art, planning activities. They have identified and are currently conducting therapeutic sessions for 37 children with minor disabilities in cooperation with CBR.

The teachers involved the parents in their children's therapeutic sessions and they have shown positive reactions. "I can see actual development in my child's case; he is talking better and can pronounce the letters better, thank you for giving us this opportunity".

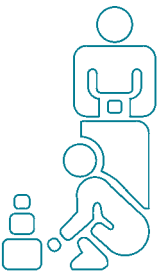
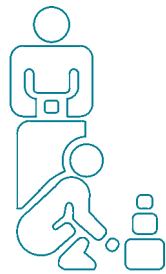
The difficult socio-political situation had an effect on the achievement of the objectives but was overcome by the team through stress release techniques in the beginning of the meetings, and finding support within the group, in addition to other activities such as listening to music, expressing feelings and through directed imagination.



There was a remarkable cooperation with the Ministry of Education in developing the draft national framework for ECD where the Trust's coordinator introduced the Life Oriented Approach during the meetings, which then became one of the credible approaches in this framework. Representatives from the Ministry also helped the Trust's team to develop the first draft of three key situations. In addition, the consulting department in the Ministry of Education conducted ten training hours on psycho-social classroom based intervention (CBI) for the teachers.

The team coordinated with Al-Tireh College for the next phase plan to train their students on the LOA. This fruitful cooperation is part of the program's sustainability and spreading its successful experience.

The team has also cooperated with the local community based organizations like the Red Crescent and the Palestinian Medical Relief, UNRWA clinic and the Palestinian Medical Relief Services who helped in conducting different fun-days, workshops and awareness raising.



Combating and Limiting Family Violence

Early in our mission we took the decision to focus our professional efforts on combating Family violence, particularly against women and children. These efforts were defined in practical terms as reducing the phenomenon of violence through raising awareness among the victims as well as the oppressor and the society at large in Palestinian villages northwest of Jerusalem. We gradually moved to introduce other methods of intervention such as group dynamic and individual counseling.

Eleven years of implementation have been sealed with the voices of many women who broke the silence and started seeking a decent life for them and for their children in the villages North West of Jerusalem. This program has been a big challenge, even after breaking the silence of taboo issues, there is still lack of a support system, therefore, we are now in the process of conducting a fact finding survey on violence against minors.

The Trust has succeeded to establish good cooperation with the local Ministries in addition to putting together a committee of representatives of the local police and the Palestinian Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, Ministry of social welfare and the Police - family department. This cooperation will continue through our other running programs. In addition we will bring out the positive impact of the program and our accumulated experience

beyond the targeted villages, by integrating it into Ramle, Lod and Jerusalem through the Mother-to-Mother program and the Learn-by-Play program.

On 11.2.2016 a big study day took place in Ramallah on “How to deal with cases of sexual abuse“ with 62 participants who are representatives of the local community, the Ministries, the police department and other local organizations who work with the Trust.

Our next step which is still a dream of the Trust is to establish a safe home for underage girls to protect them and improve their chances in life. It is still a long process, so we are also negotiating alternative solutions for the severe cases by arranging for them to join a boarding school away from their oppressors.

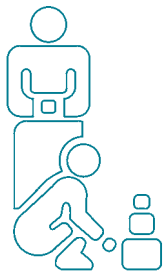


The Young Women Empowerment Program

The program is based on empowering young women and steering their potentials towards community work, and by this they start to value more their self-worth and have hope for the future. This year the program reached 468 adolescent girls, 81 young women and 81 mothers from Jerusalem, the villages surrounding Ramallah, Ramle and Lod.

The program enriched the young women with life skills (communication skills, listening skills, respecting others' opinion, solving problems, taking decisions...) and prepared them to become active in the society and the family levels. Gaining the skills has definitely increased the young women's self-esteem, and allowed them to think about the future positively, and become active members in their families. The meetings included dynamic activities, discussions, brain-storming, role play, creative writing and drawing, case studies, arts, stories, work-papers, and meditation, which responded to their needs and helped in building their self-esteem and confidence. The pre-post evaluation

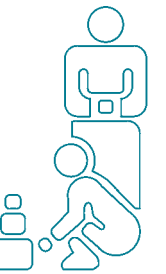
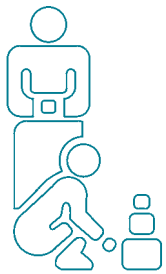
forms and the coordinators' observation were of extreme importance in assessing and evaluating their progress, there was an increase in the number of girls who wanted to continue their education or learn a profession. A new subject was added to the meetings on discussing the risks of the social media, they are more aware of the risks of chatting with strangers or giving personal information, they use their phones and computers more wisely and cautiously. The young women are experiencing a significant change on the personal and family level, they take care of their hygiene, they approach their mothers for advice about their cloths, physical changes, personal issues...



In the beginning, less than half of them agreed that a girl should continue school, but in the post evaluation form 90% of them agreed on the importance of learning and getting a job.

The young women ages 18-25 years from all the targeted areas received training and awareness raising a first step in their self-development, some of them started working and others will continue their studies. It encouraged them to volunteer in community work, gain skills and qualified them to become tutors in the Trust's learn-by-play program for teaching pupils in primary school.

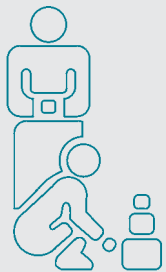
The participating mothers support their daughters in their efforts for a self-determined life the meetings contributed in strengthening the relation between them, they involve them in family matters and encourage them to continue their education.



One of the girls wrote this letter to poverty:

Dear poverty,
You are as bad as cancer. If you were a man I would have killed you, you are ugly and mean. I often ask God “why is there poverty in the world? Is it to humiliate us humans? Or just to make us ask for help from strangers?” Why do you still exist among us? Because of you there is a lot that we can’t do, we want to continue our education but we can’t! My father is in prison now because he tried to steal food to feed us!! And because my father is in prison, my mother had to work.

In winter, it was very cold and we slept most of the times without electricity!! We all hate you and I don’t wish you for anyone, not even for my enemies.

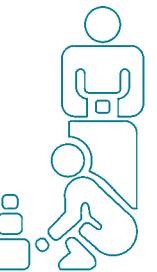


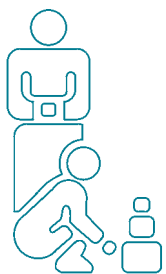
Learn-by-Play Program:



The program reached 470 pupils from Jerusalem and the villages who joined the learning groups at the school premises after school hours and were divided into small groups of 7 pupils each, an assessment form was filled to identify their needs and capacities; this form was also used for the pre-post evaluation of their progress. They are primary school children from the 2nd, 3rd and 4th grade who are enrolled in the program. Most of them have started improving their grades and skills in arithmetic, reading and writing skills in English and Arabic language and in recognizing the letters, numbers and writing. One of the pupils said: "I am happy that I am able to read out loud in the class just like my friends".

The program operates on three levels: the parents mainly the mothers, the children, and the educators in order to bridge the gap between the home and school and to cope with the accumulated illiteracy at schools. The learn-by-play program focuses on the educational activities as part of its strategy. The children are given at each meeting some free time to express themselves and share their talents as a way to release stress from school and from the difficult situation that they are living in. Monthly fun days were conducted at each of the ten school. The pupils enjoyed the different activities conducted by the tutors of the program and in cooperation with the parents, the schools and with local





organizations such as the Red Crescent and the mother child center.

One of the things that encouraged the pupils was their parents' involvement who participated actively in many activities.

On the behavioral level, the children started to listen to the teacher and to one another, their participation in the classroom has been improving, they help each other and they say "please" and "thank you".

The tutors reported symptoms of stress that were seen on the pupils, mainly due to the difficult political situation. This required the tutors to utilize stress release activities that were successful in giving the pupils a chance to express their feelings and talk about their fears through talks, music, role play, arts, dancing... that took place in the beginning of the meetings and in the fundays.

In the end of May 2016 all the pupils celebrated the end of the school year through a big recreational day where they enjoyed several activities and had the chance to show their talents in singing, folkloric dancing and arts, in addition to a healthy snack and a small gift. The parents also participated mainly the mothers, and some fathers, the school teachers and principal participated as well, in addition the 5th grade pupils who used to be in the program also participated. The 4th grade pupils were given symbolic gifts since it is their last year in the program.



The Trust's CTRD "Center for Training, Research and Development"



A second visit to Malta by Farid Abu Gosh, the founder and director of the Trust, took place in February 2016, initiated by The Ministry for Education and Employment of Malta where he conducted a workshop on Including children from Arab speaking countries in the Maltese teaching and learning communities through training a group of professionals. In July 2016 a Memorandum of Understanding was signed.

In November 2016, Flavia Kamar participated in the International Workshop for the Development of a Resource Pack for Reaching Vulnerable Families with Intergenerational Approaches to Literacy Teaching and Learning, where she presented the Trust's experience in two sessions on how can a family learning programme get started and how can a family learning programme establish an operational working structure.

..Special Thanks..

Special Thanks and appreciation to all our supporters who were kind and generous enough to allow our programs to continue to serve the local community:

- Deutscher Caritasverband - Germany
- Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development Germany BMZ (through Deutscher Caritasverband)
- Kinderhilfe Bethlehem (through Deutscher Caritasverband)
- The Swiss Friends of Kirjat Jearim in Israel - Switzerland
- Katholische Zentralstelle für Entwicklungshilfe e.V. – Misereor – Germany
- Kindermissionswerk - Germany
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- The Harris Foundation - USA
- The Leo Model Foundation - USA
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- The Linden Stiftung - Germany
- Evangelischer Arbeitskreis kirche und Israel in hessen und Nassau - Germany
- Caritas Italiana – Italy
- The International Child Development Initiatives (ICDI) – Netherlands
- UN Fund on Modern Slavery - Geneva
- Asamblea de Cooperación por la Paz (ACPP) – Spain
- Agnes-Philippine-Walther Foundation - Germany
- The Trust Germany

