

The Trust of Programs for Early Childhood
Family and Community Education

ANNUAL REPORT **2017 - 2018**

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Jerusalem



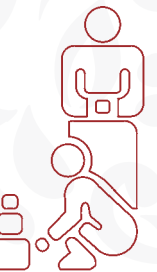
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Foreword

Another year has gone by amid the hard circumstances our society lives in.

As everyone knows, our society has been going through challenges of all forms and kinds, whether economic, social or political. It is regrettable that those challenges appear to be worsening and that we need to anticipate an even compounded future relative to what we have so far.

Though those challenges may frustrate our willpower, it is our obligation to stand firmly against obstacles in order to achieve our goals.

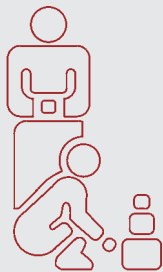
I would like to acknowledge the efforts and dedication of our team along the past years, which have fostered our steady steps forward disregarding the various attempts to hinder our progress.

This determination to carry on through our route forward towards better future is what bestows hope upon our new generations aspiring toward better life.

As per every occasion, we would like to express our gratitude to all institutions for their contribution and support, financial and moral, supporting our efforts. Without this support we would not have been able to continue this noble work that you are doing.



Sincerely,
Awni Habash
Chairperson



Introduction

Dear Friends and Supporters,

I hope this annual report finds you well.

It is my pleasure to write to you and thank you for your friendship, support, and commitment that you have showed to needy people at this part of the water.

Despite the fact that Palestinian children and families continue to live in limited and limiting resources, and that the challenges to achieve normal development in the current socio-economical and political realities, yet in this report I will not focus on the empty half of the glass, instead I insist on staying positive.

I would like to share with you the full half that reflects the wonderful work of the coordinators, paraprofessional mothers, women and young women, and children who never lost hope and continued to give their all through their hard work and commitment. In addition to what you will read in this report, please allow me to highlight some of the significant achievements:

- The cooperation with the Palestinian Ministry of Education, not only did the Trust contribute in developing the framework of the draft national curriculum framework for early childhood education. Recently, in April 2018, an



exposure visit to Germany took place by four delegates of the Ministry and two representatives of the Trust's preschool training team which introduced the delegates to the German educational system of early childhood and allowed them to gain knowledge that they can integrate in the Palestinian educational system. As part of the program funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) through Deutscher Caritasverband.

- As a grassroots organization and in response to the families' request to raise awareness to social media, the Trust, within all its different and diversified programs addressed this issue in the campaigns "safe surfing of the internet" to limit the frequent abuse of women and children through the social media.
- Many women who were marginalized are taking a proactive role not only to voice their needs and stand for their beliefs but also to contribute to their community. Volunteering is one of the main steps that helped them become social change agents.

I would also like to take this chance to honor the memory of our beloved colleague, sister and daughter "Wafa Abdulhaq" who left us all in shock when we heard of her sudden death in September 2017. Overwhelmed by an inexplicable worry and discomfort, they said she just didn't wake up.

The news of Wafa's death spread like wildfire. Hundreds of friends, family members, delegations gathered in groups to participate her funeral and giving their condolences. She left us too soon, but life is not measured by the years on earth,

rather by the actions and memories. Yes, Wafa's life was short with the concept of age, but it was full of giving and production, leaving a clear imprint on society.

Wafa worked in the Trust for ten years, she had an initiative personality, always willing and eager to help and serve the community. She was well-known for her good heart, she was a pioneer in social and volunteer work and her dedication to help victims of violence will always be remembered.

Although the Trust's family has lost a dear sister but she will always be present in spirit and in the goodwill that she did, and we hope we will be able to continue her mission.

May God Rest her soul and bring patience to her dear family and loved ones.



Sincerely,
Farid Abu Gosh
President



Background

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.

Vision

We envision a society where social justice and human dignity is achieved within the Palestinian community.



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

Goals:

- To support the development of community coherence and integrity;
- To enhance and facilitate empowerment of women, children and families;
- To provide a development basis for children and women towards a functional family;
- To create networks among organizations that share our values
- To 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 and paraprofessional staff, and involving the local target groups in the planning, implementation and evaluation of the programs, towards achieving long lasting effects.



Current Programs

It is a challenge to maintain all the program's achievements, considering the difficult socio-political and economical conditions the target groups are living in.

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.



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.

Combating Family Violence Program aims at limiting and preventing violence in families, it is integrated into the running programs of the Trust as part of the holistic and integrative approach.

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.



Programs' Highlights

The Mother-to-Mother program

Being a social change organization addressing the family as the unit of intervention has made the mother-to-mother program the key of entry to all our community based programs and has been the corner stone program that sustained the combating family violence program. Through the program implementation, early childhood has become one of the priorities of the stakeholders at the sites of implementation, and many of the mothers have proved their ability to improve themselves, to learn new skills and to pass it on to more mothers from their neighbourhood. The paraprofessionals have become strong advocates of the Trust's work, they are a model for other mothers, spreading hope that they too can develop and take control of their life and be constructive members in their children and husband's life.

In this report period, 34 women finished the paraprofessional training course conducted in Jerusalem, Lod and Ramla, and a new training started in October 2017 and is still running in the villages, Lod and Ramla, and in Rahat for 55 mothers. The home intervention reached 204 families by 33 paraprofessionals. The program built on the potentials of the paraprofessional mothers, ten of them finished a training course that upgrades their role, not only they perform home counselling but they also lead the mothers groups with the supervision of the program coordinators in Ramla, Lod, the villages and Shufat Refugee Camp. The work in the Negev had remarkable results after the program coordinator from Ramla took over the follow-up and training.



The group and individual supervision helped the paraprofessionals to overcome their fear and shyness of entering the home of a new family, it improved their counseling skills and helped them to identify the needs of the families. Quote: "when I perform the home visit with confidence I feel that

it is reflected on the mother positively, and that I am helping her with all my knowledge". The home counselling is considered as a tool to reach the mothers, not only to discuss new information but also to give them a sense of purpose and improve their self-esteem. the mothers 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 children's hygiene and nutrition. Most of them reported that they spend quality time with their children and are aware of their needs, by playing or reading together.

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 parenthood pamphlets took an important role in the home and group counselling, they have increased the fathers' involvement and improved the communication among the family members. The pamphlets were also a tool to continue combating family violence, by discussing subjects that raise awareness on family violence. In

addition, storytelling and borrowing books have taken a deeper part in the intervention process during the home visits and the study days. The fathers were also involved in the couples groups with 28 couples who benefited from the meetings and workshops and reported improving their relations with their children and their spouses.

Two study days were conducted in 2017, one on "Storytelling and the importance of the story in child education" and the other on "the effect of family violence on children" with 30 participants from all sites.

Quote: "we have benefited a lot and gained skills in reading stories in away that attracts the children to the events and ask them open questions".

The study-days included a lecture, activities, small groups and brainstorming. All the participants expressed their feelings of joy and benefit of this day either by the evaluation form or by telling the coordinators.



A big challenge was faced after the death of the program coordinator in the villages Ms. Wafa Abdelhaq. Her death was a shock to all of us and it was hard on the paraprofessionals to continue their work normally after her loss. Therefore, special attention was given to them by conducting meetings and counselling for the group on releasing stress and allowing them to express their feelings and fears, which encouraged them and put them back on track.

The mother-child centres have become the umbrella under which most of the activities take place, mainly the group counselling, couples groups, mother child activities, arts workshops for the mothers including the ones who receive home counselling. After the meetings the mothers have the chance to stay and play with their children and enjoy the pleasant atmosphere.

In general, the centres have reached

more than the expected numbers where at least 290 mothers, 440 children and 520 students enjoyed the facilities of space, games and books together and at the same time benefit from the meetings and get the chance to socialize with other mothers and children. 25 volunteering paraprofessional mothers helped in facilitating the activities at the centers.

Following the successful results of volunteering the paraprofessional mothers showed more initiative and commitment in implementing activities. They are more involved at the centres with the mothers' groups and at the hospitals in Jerusalem, Ramla and Ramallah.

Volunteering will be addressed in a more systematic manner that involves training and enrichment of the volunteers to facilitate activities coordinated by the Trust.



Community based preschool education program for children

With the beginning of year 2017 the program entered its second phase of implementing the Life Oriented Approach (LOA) in cooperation with Caritas Germany. The program has shifted in 2014 from conservative approach into working with the preschool as a unit of intervention through addressing the different key situations that support the child's optimal development.

The program targets ten preschools from Shufat Refugee Camp and the Villages Northwest of Jerusalem, reaching 742 children most of them 5-6 years old.

The training continued this year, a basic training course was conducted for 35 educators and volunteers for a total of 40 hours, then 25 of them continued in the LOA training where they finished 20 hours. The preschool education program addressed both the physical and educational environment in the preschools in order to achieve quality services that help the children to develop in a supportive and safe environment. All the activities were developed to respond to the child's individual need and develop his/her cognitive, emotional, social and psychomotor skills.



The parents of the children were also involved in many activities at the preschools, in fact most of the local community was involved; by networking with the local councils, NGOs, local committees, the educators' forum, the mothers' committees, the Ministry of Education... they are all partners in the program implementation.

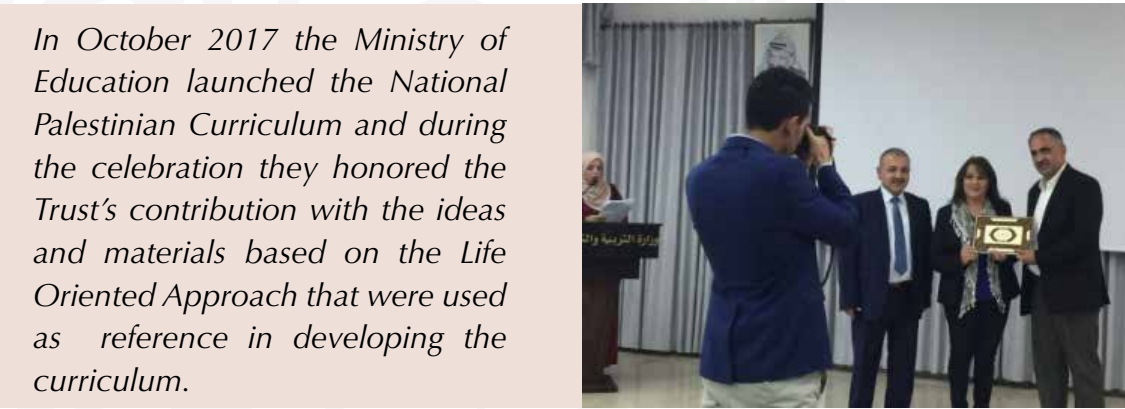
The coordinators continued with the follow-up of the preschools for six hours a week of the activities conducted according to active learning and LOA, working with children in small group in the preschools. The coordinator focused on implementing the activities according to the LOA objectives and on involving the local community and the parents.





All six key situations were documented and printed: “Healthy food” and “Hygiene”, “Coping with stress”, “my family and I” and “my preschool and I”, “my first weeks in the preschool” and finally “We like plants and animals”. Due to the difficult situation, mainly the political events, the educators received training on coping with stress and learned about activities that can be conducted with parents and children.

The parents were involved in positive way through group meetings, campaigns, pamphlets, announcement board, individual counseling, parent teacher committees, volunteering and assisting the preschool teacher... nine meetings were conducted for 90 mothers. In all meetings the coordinator focused on the importance of good communication between the preschool and the parents, and the families role in social upbringing.



In October 2017 the Ministry of Education launched the National Palestinian Curriculum and during the celebration they honored the Trust’s contribution with the ideas and materials based on the Life Oriented Approach that were used as reference in developing the curriculum.



In April 2018 an educational visit to Freiburg took place, a high rank delegation of four members from the Palestinian Ministry of Education visited Caritas Germany and a number of preschools to learn about the educational system of early childhood in Freiburg. The delegation was accompanied by Dr. Irene Berger, the project consultant of Caritas Germany, and Ms. Yusra Mohamad the director of the early childhood domain in the Trust, and Mr. Farid Abu Gosh the president of the Trust. The knowledge gained in this visit had an additive value to the Palestinian early childhood education.



In December 2017 two of the team members visited Caritas Egypt for the purpose of learning about psychomotor skills and benefiting from their experience on this subject.

The Palestinian Ministry of Health: In cooperation with the Palestinian Ministry of Health, the Trust launched the medical guide for the preschool educators in January 2017. Then a meeting was conducted to measure the impact of this guide on the children at the preschools, the results were encouraging since they indicated that the rate of children's absence decreased drastically, less sicknesses and that the parents are sending healthy meals for their children.

Taawon Awards for Excellence and Innovation: The Trust won the Jerusalem Award 2017 from the Welfare Association (Taawon): The Late Ragheb Kaloti Award, "For Jerusalem ... We Work". The Awards given by Taawon complement aim to encourage Palestinian NGOs located and operating in Jerusalem, to excel and innovate in their work, to improve community services provided to Palestinian residents of Jerusalem.



The Young Women Empowerment Program



This program aims at improving the quality of life of young women from three age groups: 13-14 years, 15-17 years and 18-25 years from Jerusalem, the villages near Ramallah, and in Ramle and Lod.

They are socially marginalized and suffer from socio-economical problems that limit their opportunities. This year the program reached 495 young women who are at risk of school drop-out, early marriage, abuse, poverty, divorce, or single motherhood.

The project's activities have given the young women a sense of belonging and enhanced their self-esteem and involvement in the community. The young women are up to the challenge; they changed their sense of hopelessness and passiveness from being reactive to proactive.



The program empowered the marginalized groups of young women socially, personally and culturally through its different strategies that address their needs, situation and capacities. It also enhanced their volunteering spirit, they visit and help children at hospitals. The program has also strengthened the bond between the young women and their mothers, the pre and post evaluation forms showed that the young women are experiencing a significant change on the personal and family level, they take care of their hygiene, and they approach their mothers for advice about their cloths, physical changes, personal issues...

The young women who were at risk of dropping out from school were encouraged to continue their education, there was no drop-out this year, many young women got involved in the community, by volunteering at the hospitals or at the mother-child centers,



some of them worked either in our learn-by-play program or as teacher assistants in kindergartens, and the others joined the working force.

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.

This project is a proof of success of the Trust's holistic and integrative approach, ten of the teen girls of the teen-age girls group in the villages were previously part of the learn-by-play group. These girls have shown more confidence and knowledge of the group ethics than the rest of the group. Their participation was remarkable; they also showed more initiative and volunteer spirit.

The project was also supportive on the family, schools and community levels, which was clearly seen in their changed attitude towards the young women and their needs. The project is highly recommended at the schools where the





project has been running and the school teachers became more understanding of the teenagers needs as individuals.

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.

In March 2018, two study-days were conducted in Ramla for 120 girls and parents from Omariah school and for 60 girls and parents from Jawarish school, on the advantages and disadvantages of social media and internet. The study days were in cooperation with the schools and with the participation of the girls who performed a drama scene that served the subject of the study days.

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.

A field study was conducted in 2017, on the abuse of minors in the West Bank. The survey committee included representatives of the Ministries of Education, Welfare, health, the Police, and the representative of the local directorate responsible of the villages. A first draft of this survey was ready in November 2017. The study was conducted in 31 PA (Palestinian Authority) schools and 3 girls' schools of UNRWA (UN Refugees Work). A total of 1131 study forms (cases of pupils) from the PA schools and 106 forms from UNRWA schools were completed – a total of 1237 pupils.

In March 2018, the survey was followed by a networking seminar day "Results and recommendations of the survey on the abuse against minors in the West Bank. Policy makers and representatives of the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Welfare, the Ministry of Health, UNRWA, and the child protection unit participated to tackle the issue of violence against minors and steer their efforts towards finding effective solutions.



The Learn-by-Play Program:



The program continued in the underserved villages northwest Jerusalem, in Shufat Refugee Camp and in Ramla reaching a total of 480 elementary school children. The learn-by-play program prevents dropout by helping pupils with low school achievement. Through the past years, the program has been leading a more systematic relation with the Ministry of Education, the UNRWA, the schools and the parents. What distinguishes the program is that it takes the curriculum and simplifies it into work-papers developed by the Trust that helps the pupils understand the material and learn in a pleasant way.



The program continued as planned with all its objectives and planned activities by the Trust's coordinator and tutors, based on its good relations with the school principal and teachers who are already familiar with the program. The program provided the necessary support on both academic and behavioral levels, using the active learning approach and encouraging them to express themselves and to experience success as they improve their school achievement and their self-esteem. The pupils' groups continued through regular afterschool meetings and activities that were conducted by 40 tutors who finished special training on the Learn-by-Play approach.





The pupils showed improvement and progress, in Arabic language, Arithmetic, and English language, their school grades are improving and their school teachers' gave us positive feedback about both the pupils' behavior and their studies. This improvement is measured through our follow up with the schools and the families, the teachers and the school principals' evaluation, the parents' positive reactions to the program, and the pupils' grades at school. The screening test has widened the cooperation between the Trust and the schools and has helped to identify the children who need the program the most.

Monthly meetings were conducted to the parents groups which helped the parents to become more involved in their children's education and more aware of their needs. They started using the work-papers sent by the tutors and followed up their school progress at home as well. The tutors conducted home-visits to the mothers of the pupils, most of them welcomed them and showed interest in improving their communication skills and adopting new techniques in teaching their children and understanding their difficulties. It is also worth mentioning the positive feedback we got from the Ministry of Education who requested from the Trust to implement the program in more schools or to at least adopt its strategy.



In the end of the school year in May 2018 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.



A big study day was conducted on 24.5.2017 for all the young women who work as tutors in the learn-by-play project from all the sites (villages, Shufat and Ramla). It was titled "Community work and volunteering" with 50 participants focusing on empowerment on the personal, family and social levels, life skills, volunteering, selecting a career that suits their potentials and taking an active role in the community.



..Special Thanks..

Special Thanks and appreciation to each of the Trust's supporters for their generosity and kindness that made it possible to carryout our community based programs as planned:

- Deutscher Caritasverband - Germany
- Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development Germany BMZ (through Deutscher Caritasverband)
- The Swiss Friends of Kiriath Yearim in Israel - Switzerland
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