

**The Trust of Programs for Early Childhood
Family and Community Education**

Annual Report

July 2006 – June 2007

Jerusalem



Contents



The Trust of Programs for Early Childhood Family and Community Education

P.O.Box 51303
Wadi Al-Joz – Jerusalem
Tel. 02-6260836 Fax: 02-6260837
e.mail: trust@trust-programs.org
Website: www.trust-programs.org

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IS **education still the way to make a difference and achieve social change?** This question comes to my mind often when a tragic event, political or social, happens in one of our communities.

Some time ago I shared with many of you an article I wrote after the tragic murder of a young woman in the village of Abu Ghosh. Disturbing as the story may be, I will share it again because that brutal killing of an innocent woman, by her husband, illustrates that without proper education and community intervention there is no hope for a better tomorrow.

The question of why Rawan was killed has taunted me until I realized she was not killed on that day alone, Rawan was killed the minute her family forced her to marry her relative, only because he was related to her.

She was killed when her family, under pressure from village dignitaries, denied her cries for help, every time she was beaten by her husband and sent back to her suffering.

Rawan was killed again when no one responded to her outcry or messages sent to all the people around her alerting them that her husband was threatening her with murder.

Rawan was killed when nobody came to her aide and claimed it a "family matter", despite her screams (according to neighbors) while the murderer stabbed her again and again.

Rawan was killed again after her death when they hired a first class criminal lawyer to defend the murderer.

Rawan was killed when the police closed her file without achieving any justice.

Guilty only of being born female, Rawan herself was perhaps the only innocent person in this tragedy. There was no doubt regarding her behavior or honor when everybody knew her as intelligent, respectful and loyal. Would the same reaction to a murder have been expressed had the victim been a man? How can a whole community, each in his/her own way, have participated in the killing of a young woman?

I do not know how to end this paper when I am thinking of these social values that paralyze moral values and subject women to a vicious circle of violence, controlling the victims intellectually and physically.

Today, after all the rage and feelings of despair, I start recalling the faces of dozens of young women and children who managed to improve their life after our intervention and I realize that it's time to look forward and see what can be done to prevent similar tragedies. I believe that community based programs focusing on continuous education for human rights, dignity, awareness and gender equity should be available to everyone. Only through this we will be able to prevent humiliation, violence and save lives.

Farid Abu Gosh
Chairman



Introduction

The Trust runs a series of community service programs that together offer a holistic and integrative service to the communities in which it operates. These community service programs aim at:

- Helping develop and maintain the Palestinian identity
- Improve the quality of life for the Palestinian people, and
- Strengthen social responsibility through community empowerment

New programs are often developed as a result of experiences gained from implementing existing programs or are developed based on requests from the communities themselves as they recognize the need for such programs.



Current Programs

- **The Mother-to-Mother Program** empowers mothers (and fathers) and offers them the supervision and guidance to become more effective members of society on both the family and the community level.
- **The Young Women Program** gives young women the opportunity to gain self-confidence and knowledge in the field of education. It raises awareness among parents and young women of the consequences of early marriage.
- **The Teachers Training Program** trains pre-school staff members through a basic and specialized course that supports their work with children, parents, and the community.
- **The Learn-by-Play Program** aims at improving elementary school children's scholastic achievement to reduce or eliminate drop out among elementary school children and to enable them to compete in modern society.
- **Combating Domestic Violence Program** develops new capabilities to equip the families with the necessary skills and technical know how to overcome the struggle of family violence.
- **The Parenthood Center** in Baqa (in the Triangle) operates country wide in cooperation with the Israeli Ministry of Education and Al-Kasmi College. The center is the first of its kind in the Arab Community and trains Arab parent counselors and acts as a resource center for developing material and research in the area of parenthood.



- **Networking:** The Trust encourages cooperation between the program sites as well as networking with other organizations and institutions dealing with community services. We are building on our previous successes to increase our involvement with different organizations, local stakeholders, local governmental and non-governmental establishments, and professional agencies of all kinds to increase our capabilities to respond to all challenges in a well-organized and professional manner.



Program Highlights for the year 2006 - 2007

The overall program achievements for the year 2006 - 2007 are numerous. Presented here are some highlights from the programs.



Mother-to-Mother Program

Demands for the Mother-to-Mother as a core program are increasing. We continued our cooperation with the Buero Fur Interkulturelle Arbeit (RAA), a German organization concerned with integrating non-native Germans into German society. A team from the Trust traveled to offer additional training to qualify more mothers to do home supervision and guidance. The team conducted two workshops. They are planning an expansion of the program there.

This year we started cooperation with UNESCO through the Qatar foundation where we were called upon to discuss our Mother-to-Mother program at the UNESCO Regional Conference and Innovations in Education Series in Support of Global Literacy: Building Partnerships and Promoting Innovative Approaches (12-14 March 2007, Doha, Qatar). At the conference we presented the Trust's Mother-to-Mother training program at the panel of Mother-Child Literacy and Intergenerational Learning.

Back at home we continued to expand our services in multicultural cities offering training and supervision. In addition to servicing Jerusalem, Shu'fat refugee camp and Ramla we added the following cities to our services: Haifa, Akko, Ma'lot Tarsheeha and Lod.

We trained a total of One hundred and thirty-four (134) mothers from Jerusalem, Shufat refugee camp, Ramla and Lod through our Mother-to-Mother program. This training was performed in groups each lasting for approximately six months. These mothers were trained to become paraprofessionals to perform home supervision to other mothers.

We enrolled a total of one hundred and seventy-two (172) mothers and families through our home supervision program. This training normally continues for a total of ten home-visits. We offered follow up courses, workshops, and study days to those mothers interested in performing home supervision. These courses aim at:

- Giving the selected mothers skills in home supervision and leadership
- Helping the selected mothers in developing their self-confidence
- Working the selected mothers on improving their communication skills, speech skills, and team work
- Offering the selected mothers study days and workshops that aim at giving them the necessary skills help them perform home supervision visits to other families.



We attempted to work with the husbands in an effort to help create mutual understanding among couples and on how to deal with children and teen-age daughters. The group consisted of eleven couples from the three neighborhoods of Jerusalem, we conducted seven meetings which consisted of role-play, case studies, discussing poems, discussion and suggesting techniques in solving communication problems.

- 75% of the mothers reported progress and self-development ; the home-supervision helped them in their relations at home and in their child development.
- 85% of the paraprofessional mothers involved in the program over the last two years reported improvement which was clearly seen in the meetings and in the attendance of their husbands in the couple's group monthly meetings. They also showed change of interests, and they are encouraging their children to enter college and finish their education.
- The fathers who participated in the program also reported improvement in the family atmosphere and relation.

The impact of the program was more significant in the paraprofessionals' families who were involved in the program for the last two years, both on the husbands in the couples' group and on the children when comparing them to their brothers before the mother joined the program.



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Learn-by-Play Program

The Learn-by-Play program with its limited resources and increasing demands continues to offer its services to all communities. The program attempts to prevent elementary school children from dropping out of the educational system due to lack of resources, overcrowded classrooms, lack of parent involvement, and lack of expertise in dealing with low attention span-children. Elementary schools are facing an increasing rate of dropouts. Our Learn-by-Play program attempts to fight this phenomenon using games, coupled with special techniques aimed at making the educational process fun and easy to deal with. It takes the students away from the rigid learning environment and offers them the chance to relax and be creative in a fun and trusting environment. It builds relationships between the students and their tutors and presents the study material in working papers that use games as illustrating aides.

Our Learn-by-Play program is carried out in the west bank as well as areas around Jerusalem, the villages northwest of Jerusalem (Ramallah villages) and Negev.

A total of five hundred forty-four (544) students benefited from this program:

- One hundred fifteen (115) from Jerusalem area
- Three hundred and two (302) from the villages northwest of Jerusalem (Ramallah villages)
- One hundred twenty-seven (127) from the area of Rahat in Negev



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Programs Highlights

In addition, the program helped train fifty-two (52) volunteer tutors in Jerusalem, the villages of Ramallah, and Negev to assist in the program. These volunteers include college students from nearby colleges and young women who completed the twelfth grade. The tutors are given continuous training to enrich their knowledge and experience in subjects like communications and interview skills, as well as study days and workshops as needed.

The program attempts to work with the parents of the enrolled children in all areas. It is a way to involve the parents in their children's educational process.

As a new venture we worked with the community school in the villages of Ramallah where we completed the training for thirty-three (33) young women to work at the community school. This work aims at:

- Community empowerment
- Bridging the school and the community
- Opening doors for educational, recreational, and community programs
- Offering students a chance to utilize their idle times and gain proper understanding of community issues as well as help them in their studies

"I thought that my son has limited abilities and started to accept that, but today nothing brings more joy than seeing the school's grades report"

Quote by parent



- We conducted eight meetings for parents of children enrolled in the program. We got many positive reactions to the program.
- The program tutors' reports indicating that the pupils improved a lot in reading, writing, math, the English language and recognizing the letters and writing were as follows:
 - 4th Grade: 75% remarkable improvement 25% slow improvement
 - 3rd Grade: 65% remarkable improvement 35% slow improvement
 - 2nd Grade: 70% remarkable improvement 30% slow improvement



Combating Domestic Violence Program

This program is implemented in Jerusalem and in five villages northwest of Jerusalem. In the villages the program continues to expand with the support of the BMZ and Caritas Germany.

The program has broken the barrier by dealing with problems that have been long considered taboo in this society such as: incest, abuse, and harassment among women and children. During the last twelve months we reached three hundred and fifty (350) families through this program's services.

Through a miniature conference held at the city inn in Ramallah, the Trust succeeded in attracting a number of organizations involved in combating domestic violence. Among them were a number of psychological, educational, health, and legal organizations. The attendees selected a task force made up of three of the organizations including the Trust. The three organizations agreed to establish a "Center for Professional Counseling" to deal with victims of Domestic Violence.

We worked with small groups to offer domestic violence education and guidance concerning domestic violence. These groups include:

- Husbands group
- Group of parents with children in our Learn-by-Play program
- Parents with adolescent children
- Women involved in early marriage
- Women involved in marriage from close relatives

We continue our cooperation and networking with all professional organizations, local stakeholders, and local governmental and non-governmental establishments to help in the fight against domestic violence. We have managed so far to bring to the surface the phenomenon of Domestic violence and we will start our work on changing the behavior of the community we are serving.





“Upon completion of the education and guidance courses I became a different person. I share in family’s discussions and participate in all children activities. The courses on teenage behaviors have been very useful to me and I look forward to learn more. Other study days and workshops made me realize I have rights that I was not aware of. I am exercising these rights and not allowing my husband to control me. I try to share my experiences with others. I am thankful to the Trust for giving me this opportunity.

One of the women in my group refused to do any work assigned to her. Through my discussions with her I found out that she was a victim of violence. I worked with her on this issue. She improved and started accepting work assignments. Although she improved she was completing her assignments and just reporting the same results all the time. Again I worked with her and gave her the time to understand the assignments and explained to her how important her work was for the project and how it should be factual. She continues to improve and completing her assignments.

I feel I am doing something worth while.”

By: Firyal, field coordinator.

Young Women Program

In Jerusalem we worked with ten (10) young women who are not enrolled in school, to help them integrate into their local communities. These young women have been part of the program for the last two years.

After completing two years of training four of these young women became active at the different programs of the Trust, two decided to start a kindergarten with the help of a relative, one decided to work with the elderly, another one is helping students in their neighborhood and two went back to school.

We worked with ten (10) young women of the ninth grade program. These are young women who passed the eighth grade but did not continue their education. They desire to continue their secondary education but must first pass the ninth grade. We offer special tutoring and educational instructions and assistance to help them pass the ninth grade exam. Five of these young women passed the exam this year and the rest will try again next year.

In Ramla we worked with twelve (12) young women (ages 15 – 25). These are young women who dropped out of school and have no career and no social involvement.

Four of these young women prepared to continue their education and complete the twelfth-grade program in cooperation with HELA center. HELA center is a program sponsored by the Ministry of Education to offer educational assistance to those who dropped out of school prior to completing the twelfth-grade.



We made arrangements for a summer camp for eleven young women where we discussed weekly topics that deal with the young women's relationship with their family and the community, it also included educational tours and meetings with similar groups from different areas such as Jaffa.

Volunteer work at the hospital Augusta Victoria faltered due to a change in the hospital's policies governing their volunteer program. We attempted to work with other hospitals in the area but due to bureaucratic delays we have not yet received permission to work together.

We continue to offer our volunteer program at Asaf Haroofi Hospital where volunteers work at the children's ward and spend most of their time with the children and their mothers. They offer health care, physical assistance and moral support to the children and their mothers. In some cases they help the children with their studies when their stay at the hospital is extended or prolonged.



- 57% of the young women developed on the personal level and started to approach organizations to work and some of them are now finishing their school degree.

Teenage Girls Program

In Jerusalem we worked with ten (10) teenagers from Shufat camp (ages 12 to 14 years). The purpose was to prevent these girls from dropping out of school and to offer them training and education that will help them move through this difficult stage of their lives.

In Ramla fifteen (15) teenagers from Al-Jawareesh school have also joined this program.

On the social level we discussed several subjects with the group encompassing:

- Father/daughter relationship
- How to deal with schoolteachers
- Social and family differences between the genders
- Importance of education in a teenager's development
- Mannerisms of speech, eating, and general hygiene
- Communications and networking
- Life skills
- Other general topics

On the personal level: through home visits and individual meetings with the teenagers the program coordinator attempted to learn as much as possible about each teenager. There were cases where the coordinator had to interfere in order to solve some family problems.





On the educational level: the girls' center forms a suitable place for small groups of teenagers to meet and socialize while working on improving their scholastic achievement. The trust utilizes different sources of help to offer the young girls tutoring in subjects like mathematics and language skills.



Preschool Teachers' Training Program

Our Preschool Teachers Training Program and Preschool Framework, continues to score successes inside and outside the green line. the programs aims at:

- Improving the preschool teacher's performance and developing her personality
- Enriching the preschool teacher's knowledge and experience to help her deal with children in a professional manner
- Encouraging effective participation of parents in their children's education



Basic Training Course

Twenty teachers finished the basic course in the mid of June 2007, comprising 160 hours of theoretical study and 40 hours supervised on-the-job learning. The contents of the course focus on the fundamentals and principles of early childhood development, planning, child literature and the necessary skill. In addition, the participants receive a workshop that helps them develop and construct games flowing from the subject matter studied, and they also received 10 hours on First Aid for children.

The training went as planned, the teachers showed great improvement and are eager to continue with us in the specializing course.

The Specialization Course

The Specialization course offers advanced studies for graduates of the first course that was conducted last year in Jerusalem. This year we conducted 150 hour course, comprising 100 classroom hours and 50 hours on-the-job for twenty-two teachers from the different kindergartens in Jerusalem. The contents of the course focused on the following areas: Arts in the classroom, making educational toys through the workshop that are suitable for child developmental needs, child drama and literature, the importance of parent's involvement and dealing with post-traumatic symptoms on children.

The teachers were very satisfied with the program, there was a great development in their approach in the classroom, they now plan and prepare for the activities, they are able to offer their best to the children and we can see how they welcome the parent's involvement in the child's education. Also they enriched their classroom environment with many toys and decorations that they prepared at the workshops of the Trust.

In the Negev, in Rahat, we started preschool teachers training program, where 18 teachers are enrolled in the course (112 hours) training on parents' involvement in the educational process.

Four preschools were chosen as model of the parents' involvement and intervention program, each of these preschools involve the parents especially the mothers in various activities at the preschool, such as: parent teacher meetings, once a month a mother volunteers to take a duty at the classroom, grand-mothers group, workshops to create didactical toys...



- Ten (10) of the teachers decided to carry on their own education.
- Most of the teachers now encourage active learning and parents involvement in the school activities.

" In addition to the many skills I gained from the program, I learned to accept myself and work on developing my potentials, I am now aware of my self-value."

Networking

We continue to train Arab college graduates in counseling in cooperation with the Israeli Ministry of Education.

Our cooperation continues with: the Palestinian Ministry of Education, Al-Quds University, Y.M.C.A., Palestinian Red Crescent, and a number of local and professional organizations.

We continue our cooperation with the Buro Fur Interkulturelle Arbeit (RAA), who last year asked the Trust to lead a conference on multicultural societies and integration. Mostly German citizens of Lebanese and Moroccan origins attended the conference. We offered two (2) workshops there and expect cooperation to grow with this organization.

We worked with the Qatar foundation in Qatar, attended a conference in Bahrain, and worked with UNESCO.

We cooperated with the General leadership of Police, Women Center for Legal and Social guidance, and the Council for Fatwa and Islamic research to work on finding a solution to the problem-ridden villages of Ramallah. We held a number of meetings that culminated with the agreement to start a counseling center to handle critical cases of domestic violence and early marriage victims.



Summary

Our programs are holistic and inclusive, targeting different gender and age groups and focusing on empowering the family unit and helping them to interact with the community. Our programs are developed according to local needs. We see women as the major agents of social change for their crucial role in the family and in the community.

- Expansion of our Mother-to-Mother program overseas in Germany must be considered the most significant achievement. It has given yet another boost to all our programs and our efforts in community service and development. Our expansion of home supervision in areas like Haifa, Akko, and Ma'lot Tarsheeha also offers us the depth we need for our services to reach more areas deprived from critically needed services. Based on the significance of the program an overall evaluation of the program will be carried out this year.
- A three-day training workshop was held at the Trust's premises in Wadi Al-Joz on April 3rd, 4th, and May 7th, 2007 on staff capacity building, to discuss organizational issues and matters of concern to our employees.
- Through the learn-by-play program we started a community school in Biddo that bridges the gap between the school and local community through after school programs. The school's afternoon activities have a positive impact on the children's behavior at school, at home and in their neighborhood. The activities will carry on for the coming school year with the participation of 60 children.





- Raising people's awareness is just part of our Combating domestic violence program, they are now able to see the different faces of violence that results in mental, physical, or materialistic suffering of the victim and dehumanizes one's dignity.

In the villages North West of Jerusalem the program's first phase will end on 31.12.07 and a new phase was submitted to our major partners Caritas Germany and the BMZ Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development Germany . On the family

level there is improvement in communication, time management and the decision making process. We have determined a need for professional and not paraprofessional staff. The issue of family violence has become more of a priority among leaders and influential personalities in the community. We noticed improvement in children's academic achievements and family's requests to enlist their children in the program. In response to these demands we started a pilot of a "community school" with children, parents and teachers. Staff have also gained ability to deal with the subject of Domestic violence.

- The parenthood center in Baqa proved to be successful and we are planning this year to expand the program both vertically by enhancing the community based programs of last year and horizontally by opening a new course in Baqa and another course in the North.
- We will increase the parents' involvement in The teachers' training program, through parent-teacher meetings, home visits, mother assistance at the classroom and the toys workshop





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