

**Respect for Diversity in ECCD.  
The case of the Palestinian In Israel**

**December 2015**

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## Historical Background

Following a history of colonial rule by a succession of foreign forces After the ending of Ottoman control over Palestine the British Mandate took over the control of Palestine. In 1917 Belfor Declaration was issued stating the right of the Jews to establish their own state in Palestine. During the British Mandate many Jews especially from Europe succeeded in entering to Palestine. The Palestinian struggled against the plan using different tools including strike, and other political and military strategies. The newly formed United Nations General Assembly voted in 1947 to partition Mandatory Palestine into two states, one Jewish and one Arab, with special international administration of Jerusalem.<sup>1</sup> The partition plan recognized the self-determination rights of both nations, while preserving the right of existing populations to remain on their lands, regardless of the envisioned new borders. Amidst tensions between Jews and Arabs in the area, Israel declared statehood in May 1948, which led to continuing fighting.

In what became known to the Palestinians as “al-Nakba,” the catastrophe, the vast majority of the 940,000 Palestinians who lived in what became Israel were expelled or fled from their homes, hoping to come back when the fighting were over. The displacement and dispossession resulted in 780,000 refugees,<sup>2</sup> 520 destroyed villages, confiscation of the land and other means of distraction causing the distraction of the Palestinian infrastructure. The 160,000 Palestinians who were able to stay were given citizenship status in the newly-established State of Israel,<sup>3</sup> whose borders were defined by the 1949 UN-brokered armistice lines.<sup>4</sup>

At the outcome of the war, the majority of the Palestinian population has been reduced to a debilitated and persecuted minority. More than 520 Arab villages were destroyed,<sup>5</sup> a quarter of the remaining Arab population was transformed to internal refugees,<sup>6</sup> and families were divided by newly defined international borders.<sup>7</sup> The 1967 Israeli-Arab war created a second wave of displacement with more than 500,000 Palestinians, nearly half of whom were already refugees, uprooted again.<sup>8</sup>

Today, the 1.3 million Palestinian Arab citizens of Israel<sup>9</sup> live in three concentrated regions in Israel, the Galilee (a rural area in northern Israel), the Triangle (an area in central Israel adjacent to the border with the West Bank) and the Naqab (Negev) (arid

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations General Assembly Resolution 181, UN Doc No. A/RES/181(II)(A+B), November 29, 1947.

<sup>2</sup> As'ad Ghanem and Sarah Ozacky-Lazar, *The Status of the Palestinians in Israel in an Era of Peace*” Part of the problem but not part of solution, in *THE ISRAELI PALESTINIANS: AN ARAB MINORITY IN THE JEWISH STATE* 263 (ed. Alexander Bligh, 2003).

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* at 264.

<sup>4</sup> See e.g., Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Fact about Israel, Armistice line 1949, available at <http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Facts+About+Israel/Israel+in+Maps/1949-1967+Armistice+Lines.htm>.

<sup>5</sup> See ALL THAT REMAINS: THE PALESTINIAN VILLAGES OCCUPIED AND DEPOPULATED BY ISRAEL IN 1948 (Walid Khalidi ed., Institute for Palestine Studies 1992). Other accounts report that about 531 communities were destroyed. See Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, Palestinian in Israel, at [http://www.pcbs.org/abs\\_pal/abs\\_pal4/palestinian.htm](http://www.pcbs.org/abs_pal/abs_pal4/palestinian.htm).

<sup>6</sup> Mustafa Kabha, *The Conspiracy and the Victim*, in *KAFR KASSEM: MYTH AND HISTORY* 106 (Ruvik Rosenthal ed., 2000).

<sup>7</sup> As'ad & Ozacky-Lazar, *supra* note 2, at 263.

<sup>8</sup> United Nations, Palestine Refugees, at 8 at <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpi/palestine/ch10.pdf>.

<sup>9</sup> Arab citizens constitute 1.3 million versus 5.4 Jews and other groups. Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), Statistical Abstract of Israel 2004, Table 2.1, available at [http://www1.cbs.gov.il/shnaton55/st02\\_01.pdf](http://www1.cbs.gov.il/shnaton55/st02_01.pdf).

lands in the south). Israel includes between 228,000 and 249,270 Palestinian Arab permanent residents<sup>10</sup> of annexed East Jerusalem as part of the total Arab population in Israel.<sup>11</sup> About 63% of the community lives in villages, including 8% in “unrecognized” villages in the Naqab and Galilee, 29% live in small municipalities, mostly in the Triangle area, and 8% live in mixed Arab-Jewish urban centers.<sup>12</sup> Religious affiliation is primarily Sunni Muslim (1.1 million) with Christians and Druze minority.<sup>13</sup>

### **Some facts representing the current situation**

Palestinian citizens of Israel comprise approximately 20%, or 1 million and half of Israel’s population. Palestinian children citizens of Israel comprise 25% of all children living in Israel. This national minority is discriminated against on a number of levels, through laws as well as government policies. This discrimination is affecting all spheres of life and creating huge gapes between the Jewish and Arab citizens in Israel. Poverty is only one example: 60% of Arab children are living under poverty line.

Palestinian citizens of Israel are not a monolithic group. They live in a variety of cities, towns and villages throughout Israel, including the unrecognized villages, mixed cities, and Palestinian villages, and within secular and a variety of religious communities (Muslim, Christian, Druze).

About 50,000 citizens in the Negev, and some 30,000 other Arab citizens across the country, are considered illegal residents of their 200-400 years-old villages, which the State did not recognize or place on any maps. The Government of Israel does not recognize many of these villages as legitimate. The unrecognized villages lack public services, such as an educational framework for preschool children, elementary and high schools, paved roads, public transportation, electricity, in many cases running water, garbage collection and disposal, telephone connections and community medical services.

The situation of the recognized Arab localities in Israel are also effected by the long year of discrimination policies and they when scaled by the CBS in Israel according to socio- economical scales from 1 to 10 where 1 is the lowest and 10 the Best localities. 95% of the Arab localities are scaled in the lowest 4 scales as demonstrated below:

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<sup>10</sup> Under the Entry into Israel Law of 1952, Palestinians living in annexed East Jerusalem are permanent residents. The immigration law permits their travel as tourists and stay as immigrants, granting authorities wide discretion to terminate their status. See B’tselem and Hamoked, *Forbidden Families: Family Unification and Child Registration in East Jerusalem* (January 2004), at 5.

<sup>11</sup> According to 2004 Israeli CBS data, 464,000 “Jews and others” and 228,000 Arabs live in Jerusalem, including East Jerusalem. CBS, *The Population of Israel* (released April 25, 2004), at [http://www.cbs.gov.il/hodaot2004/01\\_04\\_98e.htm#\\_ftnref2](http://www.cbs.gov.il/hodaot2004/01_04_98e.htm#_ftnref2). According to the Palestinian Bureau of Statistics, 249,270 Palestinians lived in Israeli-annexed Jerusalem in 2003. PASSIA, *Palestine Facts* (2003) at [http://www.passia.org/palestine\\_facts/pdf/pdf2003/sections1/4-population.doc](http://www.passia.org/palestine_facts/pdf/pdf2003/sections1/4-population.doc).

<sup>12</sup> According to MADA, 55% of Palestinians in Israel live in more than 100 villages and 8% live in over 40 unrecognized villages. Arab Center for Applied Social Research (MADA), *The Palestinians in Israel*, available at <http://www.mada-research.org/about/palsinisrael.shtml> (last visited April 3, 2005).

<sup>13</sup> Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Minority Communities* (February 1, 2004) at <http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Facts+About+Israel/People/SOCIETY-%20Minority%20Communities>.

**Table 1: Arab and Jewish Municipalities according to the Socio-economical Scale**

Socio-Economical Scale	Total of Villages and Cities	Arab	Jewish
1	10	9	1
2	37	32	5
3	31	22	9
4	30	13	17
5	31	3	28
6	17	1	16
7	19	0	19
8	25	0	25
9	9	0	9
10	3	0	3

Awraq Musharaka Table 4, P 27, Indicating # 1 at the bottom on the scale.

The state, to date, failed to provide meaningful or effective programs to eliminate discrimination against Palestinian citizens of Israel. Although the state policy impacts all citizens and all spheres of life, however the most affected groups in our society are women and children.

### **Some facts concerning the Education in General**

Since the establishment of the state, governmental policy toward the discriminatory practices against Palestinian Arab school children that are institutionalized in its educational system place Israel in violation of its international legal obligations; such as the Convention for Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), Convention for Children's Rights (CRC), the Convention for Elimination of all kinds of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), etc according to which Israel is obliged to offer effective protection against discrimination to all of its citizens, and special safeguards for the rights of minorities and children.

Discrimination and inequality in education versus Arab Palestinian population today is a recognized fact, as expressed in the Dovrat Report,<sup>14</sup> in High Court rulings, in Knesset committees, and in statements by top officials in the education system. This inequity has severe implications in regard to the ability of young Arabs to integrate in society and become productive and useful citizens with a chance to advance in society on the basis of their qualifications.

### **Lack of Equality in education**

The social worldview of the developers of the Equality Index selected Indicators and variables for *monitoring equality in education*. It expresses equality of input and equality in educational output.

The Table below presents these Indicators and variables in the Hebrew education system and the Arab Education system.

**Table 2: Indicators and Variables for monitoring Equality in Education**

<sup>14</sup> Dovrat report, P28.

Indicator	Variable	Arab Education	Hebrew Education	Notes
Resource of the Education System	1. Average number of pupils per classroom in elementary education	29.3	24.3	starting point in Arab education is already lower than in Hebrew education
	2. Average number of pupils per classroom in secondary education	30.7	28.9	
	3. Average number of pupils per classroom in elementary and secondary education	29.8	25.8	
Pedagogical Infrastructure	4. Average number of full-time teaching positions per classroom (by population group)	1.8	1.9	Additional variables, such as the percentage of under-achieving students who receive learning assistance, teaching resources (library, computers, study areas), were not included in the current Equality Index due to the lack of availability of continuous data.
Out-Puts	5. Percentage with 0-8 years of schooling	30.3	10.8	
	6. Percentage with 13-15 years of schooling	10.8	23.3	
	7. Percentage with 16 years or more of schooling	8	19.6	about 20% of the Jewish population, compared to only 8% of the Arab population, completed 16 years or more of schooling
	8. Median number of years of schooling in the population	11	12.6	
	9. Dropout rate among pupils in grades 9-12	8.9	4.6	Almost as twice
	10. Percentage of 12th graders qualifying for matriculation certificate	48.7	5.6	about 7%
	11. Percentage of 12th graders with a matriculation certificate that meets entrance requirements for university	29.6	46.4	About 17% when it comes to matriculation certificates that meet university requirements (46.4% in Hebrew education, compared to 29.6 percent in Arab education).
	12. Percentage of students in university among ages 20-34.	3	9	related to the percentage of dropouts

*The social worldview of the developers of the Equality.*<sup>15</sup>

*Data from the Central Bureau of Statistics.*<sup>16</sup>

Furthermore, the Ministry of Education (MOE) severely under-funds schools for the Palestinian minority in Israel. Statistics published in 2004 reveal that combined public and private investment in Palestinian school students stood at an average of 862 New Israeli Shekels (NIS) per student, compared with NIS 4,935 per Jewish student for the academic year. The government spent over 5.73 times as much on each Jewish student as on each Palestinian student. This under-funding is manifested in many areas, including the poor infrastructure and facilities characteristic of Palestinian

<sup>15</sup> The social worldview of the developers of the Equality Index, 131.

<sup>16</sup> The Central Bureau of Statistics,<sup>16</sup> Statistical Abstract of Israel, 2006

schools<sup>17</sup>, crowded classrooms<sup>18</sup>, few teaching hours relative to Jewish students, the lack of support and management professionals in the Palestinian educational system in Israel, and poor Arabic textbooks. This environment creates a negative experience for students, academically, emotionally and socially, and leads to phenomena such as academic under-achievement and high drop-out rates.<sup>19</sup>

### Children with Special needs

*The Special Education Law* – 1988, it is the state policy of the Ministry of Education (MOE) is to integrate children with special needs into the regular educational system. The right to learn in the general educational framework is part of the greater right of people with disabilities to take part in communal life and its activities as full and equal members of society. Inclusive frameworks fall directly in line with the currently accepted educational approach - that it is essential for children with special needs to acquire normative behavioral skills, while at the same time it is necessary to create a more tolerant society.

Palestinian Arab children who are diagnosed with "special needs" rate higher than Jewish, and they also have higher rates of severe impairment, 5.4% of all children versus 3.3 percent. About 7% of Negev Bedouin are hearing impaired, compared with 3% of the general Israeli population. But these numbers still underestimate the rate of impairment among Palestinian Arab children,<sup>20</sup>

Despite higher rates of Impairment, Palestinian Arab children receive proportionately fewer special education resources than Jewish children. According to official data from the Education Ministry, it allocated only 10.8 percent of the total special education hours to Palestinian Arabs in 1996, by 1999-2000 it had increased their share, but only to 14.1 percent, with 2 percent of the total to Bedouin.<sup>21</sup>

**Table 3: Distribution of Teaching Hours for Special Education**

Teaching Hours for Special Education	Jewish schools	Arab schools
Weekly special education hours for primary and secondary levels 1999-2000	85.9%	14.1%
	(288,662)	(47,342)

<sup>17</sup> A study commissioned by the Follow-Up Committee on Arab Education in Israel found that, for example, of the 6,300 classrooms surveyed, as many as 6.5% were completely unsuitable for productive learning and instruction. In addition, the physical facilities themselves are also laden with health risks, such as asbestos and other hazardous substances.

<sup>18</sup> From primary to secondary school levels, average class sizes are larger in Palestinian schools than in Jewish schools, with an average class size of 27 pupils per class in Jewish schools compared with 30 pupils in Palestinian schools. Source: CBS, Statistical Abstract of Israel 2004, Table 8.11.

<sup>19</sup> *Human Rights Watch Report- Second Class: Discrimination Against Palestinian Arab Children in Israel's Schools*, (New York: Human Rights Watch, 5 December 2001).

<sup>20</sup> JDC-Brookdale Institute, 2000 study.

<sup>21</sup> Proposed Budget for the Ministry of Education 2001 and Explanations as Presented to the Fifteenth Knesset, no. 11, October 2000, p. 158

<b>Weekly hours for integration 1998-1999</b>	91.60%	8.40%
	(75,819)	(69,992)

*Golan, Closing the Gaps in Arab Education in Israel, p.3.*

Tens of thousands of Arab children with special disadvantages (disabilities, etc.) do not have suitable schools or classes to meet their needs. Hundreds of children with special needs do not attend school at all.

The Ministry of Education has not provided Arab students sufficient educational enrichment programs for both children with impairment and gifted students. Jewish teachers receive a significantly larger amount of training for special education integration than do Arab teachers. There are 61 integrated kindergartens for Jewish children but 0 for Arabs. In addition, there are 484 separate special education kindergartens for Jewish children but only 45 for the Arab Palestinians.<sup>22</sup>

### **Culture and identity issues**

The MOE retains centralized control over the curricula for Palestinian schools and Jewish secular schools. The State Education Law sets the educational goals of the state educational system, which emphasize only Jewish history and culture; mandatory subjects for all students who take the matriculation examinations at the end of high school include, for example, Jewish religious texts. The structure has no policy to promote Social Inclusion and Respect for Diversity especially when dealing with the Palestinian national minority. Palestinian students are even denied their right to develop a positive cultural and national identity.

### **The Palestinian ECCD Field**

Education and psychology scholars agree upon the important role which early childhood has in building the individual's personality. Therefore the Field of early childhood care development (ECCD) demands worldwide attention. Studies have demonstrated how efficient it is for the society as a whole to invest in ECCD. The child's first years are considered a crucial period, particularly when it concerns the cerebral development.

Israel is considered to be very developed regarding ECCD, especially concerning laws and services, however, this valid in the Jewish communities only. For historical background, ECCD educational services fall under the responsibility of two ministries:

- The Ministry of Industry Trade and employment
- The Ministry of Education.

### **The Ministry of Industry Trade and labor: ages Birth - 3**

The ministry of commerce, industry and employment deals with the educational frameworks for early childhood, not necessarily for the sake of ECCD, but as a mean

<sup>22</sup> Ori Nir, "Separate and Unequal: Arab Education in Israel," *Haaretz Daily Newspaper*, (17 May 2006).



of supporting working mothers. Under the Ministry responsibilities falls the following:

- Support working women and provide subsidy in Nurseries and home nurseries fees.
- Set the rules for payment in the nurseries and home nurseries
- Approve the Nurseries and provide them with license.
- Supervise the work in the Nurseries.
- Supervise the home nurseries.

**According to the law each working women could receive subsidy in accordance with the family income given she is working women and her child is visiting a recognized nursery.**

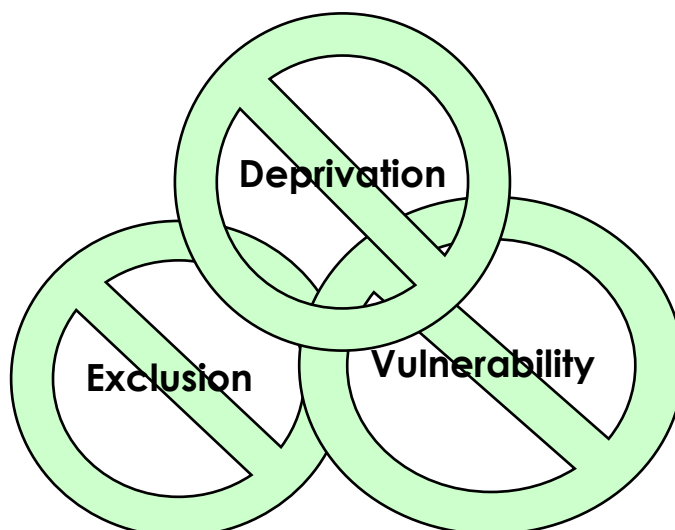
According to the Ministry, of the 1,665 daycare centers, which have recognition, only 31 centers operate in Palestinian villages equaling only 1.86%. They provide service for 1700 Arab child that is 2.1% of the total children in that age. Another 2500 Arab children aged 0-3 attends publicly subsidized house care programs.

### **Ministry of education: 3-5**

*The Ministry of education- ages 3-5 is responsible for;* funding together with the local authorities, the opening and running costs of the KGs for this age, the supervision of all public and registered private educational institutions for children aged 3 and upward, curriculum development, and Pre-school teacher training. The Arab education public system as mentioned above has separate curriculum and institutions. All decided upon and managed by the MOE. Other ministries have other roles in ECCD; The ministry of health deals with pre and post-birth health issues, The welfare Ministry with children at risk

The Free Compulsory Education Law (1949), amended in 1979, requires all children between the ages of five and sixteen (kindergarten through tenth grade) to attend school free of charge. The *Amendment to the Compulsory Education Law-1949* required that implementation of the new amendment be fully achieved by 1992 the law was frozen.

The situation in ECCD, can be all summarized under the three coming frames;



**Deprivation:** The lack of material conditions and services generally held to be essential to the development of children's full potential.

**Exclusion:** the result of unjust processes through which children's dignity, voice, and rights are denied, or their existence as a whole person threatened.

**Vulnerability:** an inability of society to cope with existing or probable threats to children in their environment.

To deal with these aspects and to promote Social Inclusion and Respect for Diversity in ECCD and to advocate for policy changes toward the Palestinian ECCD, we, a group of Palestinian organization working in ECCD field, organized ourselves in 1992, after years of working separately on the issues, and created the early childhood committee. The committee started working on addressing different aspects using various strategies, The Rational for these efforts was:

- Children have recognized national and international rights, the Palestinian children's rights are often violated.
- Arab children have the right like all other children to be treated equally by all levels of decision makers on the local and national level in order to develop ECCD in the Arab community.
- We believe that the child is an individual with his/her own characteristics and a full member of its family and society and have rights. Our founding vision is to work for the rights of children according to the UN Convention of the Rights of Children (CRC), 1989.
- There is a need to create a coalition of different role players to advocate for children's rights.
- It is important that the decision-making bodies locally, nationally and internationally remain updated on the situation of children in our society.
- We believe that advocating for children rights could improve the services provided for children and enhance the quality of their life.
- We believe that advocating for Arab children's rights is essential for reaching equality and to enhance democracy.

We used different strategies to address the different aims we were trying to achieve:

**1. We worked to raise awareness in our community to the important of ECCD and we encourage our local councils to take responsibility for ECCD in the community.**

Here we used the several strategies; discussions in the Media, publishing articles on the issue in the Newspaper, Events open to the public, study days, seminars, training workshop with different groups etc. our aims were;

- Raising social awareness to the importance of early childhood
- Raising the level of the local authorities' involvement in the early childhood context, especially in establishing Kindergartens for age 3-5.

There has been a remarkable progress in this field. The concern for children and childhood in general, and the awareness of the importance of early childhood in particular have increased.

Following the increased interest in developing early childhood specializations, we, at Musharakah, provided six Master female students with scholarships to develop leaderships in early childhood. Nowadays, we are developing a similar project for another 15 students. Musharakah has also graduated 19 professional supervisors who passed a pioneer and formally recognized training course in the Arab society in Israel.

One of the important challenges we still dealing with is appreciating our own knowledge and the rich cultural heritage and critically consume it or change it. After years of colonization and occupation and discrimination most individuals in our community are acting in the framework of the psychology of the oppressed, they internalized their inferiority and tend to refuse their own culture and are open to adapt all "what comes from the west" or glorify the past and "refuse all what comes from the west" they prefer to Freeze in that past instead of contributing to the generating of knowledge.

In Musharakh we are trying to take the lead in the third direction: build on our accumulated experiences and Heritage as well as newly learned knowledge and adopt methods which integrate authenticity with innovation and generate new resources for children, parents and Kindergarten teachers, which promote Social Inclusion and reflect respect for diversity.

The challenge here is to disseminate our vision and our educational approaches.

- Recognizing the child's internal life that appears and prospers under certain conditions (valuing the individual's various capacities).
- Recognizing the child's internal motivation which leads him to initiate activities and direct them, as very crucial for developing his different personality aspects.
- Appreciating the individual differences between children.
- Raising the child on self-discipline, for guaranteeing his personal freedom and responsible behavior in a socio-cultural context.
- Raising the child should be done according to the child's own capacities.
- Appreciating and respecting the parents and large family's role in enriching the child's surrounding.

Despite this improvement, our children still suffer a serious discrimination regarding the services and opportunities offered to them. Caregivers are still in need for supportive resources in Arabic, and parents still encounter serious challenges.

## **2. Intensive work in Advocacy in front the government to increase the educational services to our children**

Here we used several strategies including Lobby in Parliament, petition to supreme court and other means of campaigning include national and International advocacy efforts. We aimed at:

- Advocating in front of the government to promote inclusion and social integration :

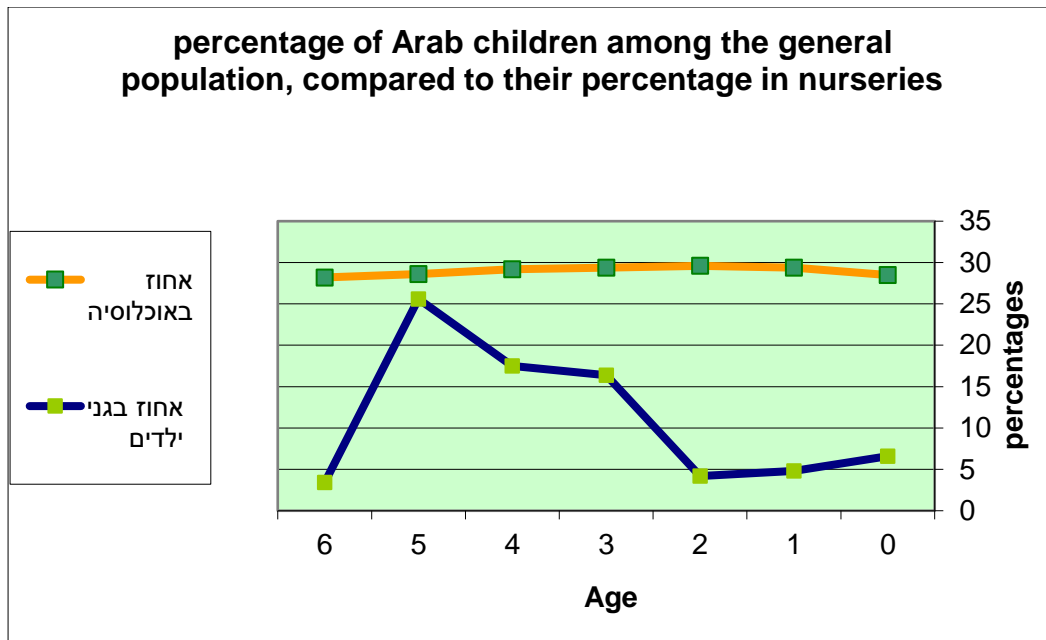
- Implement the compulsory education law from 3 years old in the Arab society.
- Lobbying on the governmental level to change the criteria for implementing the free compulsory education.
- Lobbying to increase the early childhood courses in the formal training institutions.
- Lobbying to obtain recognition of the existent training institutions.

Long years of Advocacy led to the government decision of applying the law of free compulsory education gradually, within 10 years beginning from 1999. At that time, the minister of education suggested applying the law according to “national priorities”, thus excluding the majority of Arab children. Following the application list which included 136 settlements in the occupied territories, we organized another campaign against that discriminating decision. The public institutions, including Shatil’s early childhood committee and the follow-up committee on the Arab education, approached the high court regarding this issue. They required a just application of the law and suggested the socio-economic scale as an appropriate and fair scaling. These insisting public committees were welcomed by the new minister of education who adopted our attitudes and suggestions and transformed the “national priorities” into measures determined according to the socio-economic scaling published by the central surveys bureau (previously presented in this paper). 41 Arab villages and towns were included in the list, these were the lowest on the socio-economic scale. For the first time we were able to promote social inclusions for Arab citizen too.

Despite our achievements concerning the 1999 free compulsory education and our successful impact on the ministry of education, the application of this law still suffers<sup>23</sup> budget deduction and the ministry’s ignorance. According to the 2003 general survey, there was an increase in the number of children attending KGs (3-4 years old) in the areas where the law has been applied.

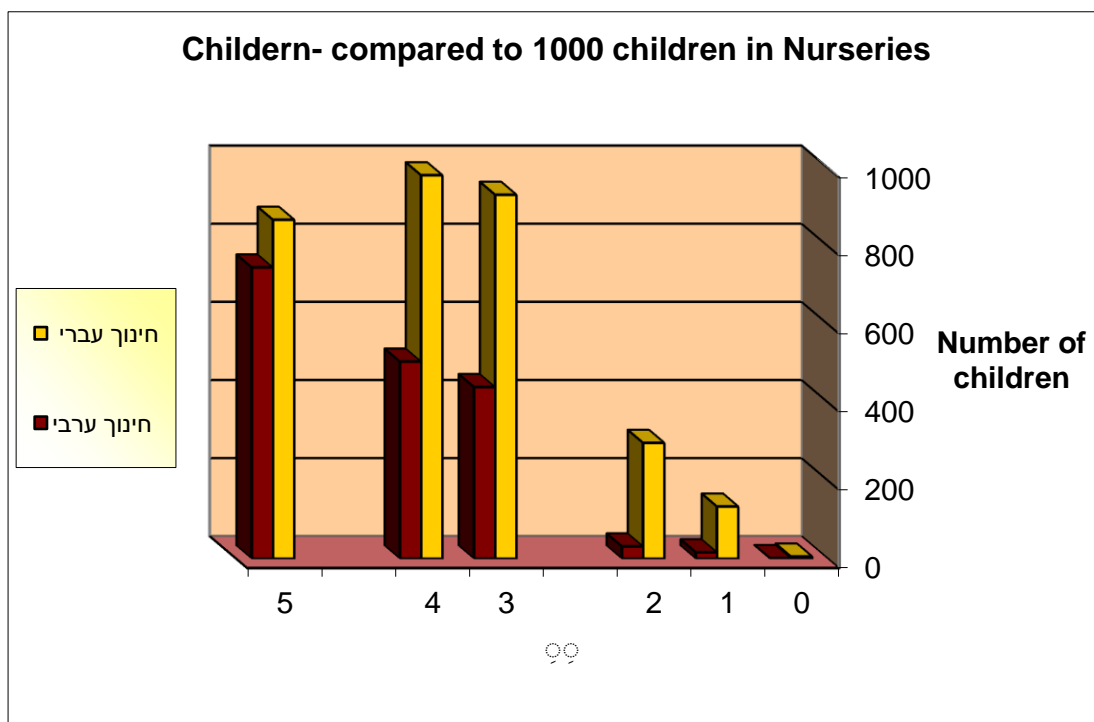
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<sup>23</sup> The report prepared by Ameen Fares, Mossawa center, and according to the General survey conducted by Dr. Hala Espanioly of Altufula center to follow up on the implementation of the law 2004



Following the law application, the children number was doubled, especially after applying the law in the two lowest levels of the socio-economic scale.

If we look at the education percentage, which is the percentage of the children number in the educational framework for 1000 child in each age category, we conclude that the gap between the Arab and the Jewish education percentage is huge, reaching 50%: the Arab education 24.7%, while the Jewish 47.3%. The gap becomes smaller once the children are younger:



This demonstrate the positive impact the law has on the numbers of children in KGs.. We also have invested maximum efforts to lobby on the ministry of education to increase the training courses in teachers' formal institutions to qualify the caregivers

working in the field. Though much was achieved, there is still a need to give more weight to this issue in order to:

- Implement the law in all areas, especially in the Negev
- Training for the unqualified caregivers
- To enhance the quality of the training adopted in the different official training organizations.

### **Child's cultural identity and respect for Diversity**

In respect for the child's cultural identity, the Committee on the Rights of the Child has commented that Article 29(1) emphasizes the child's "individual and subjective right to a specific quality of education" and where "the curriculum must be of direct relevance to the child's social, cultural, environmental, and economic context . . .".<sup>24</sup>

The official Arab education system in Israel, however, has been widely criticized by Palestinian Arabs as failing to adequately consider the Palestinian identity of Arabs in Israel and reflect respect for diversity in the society. The overarching aims of education remain based on the transmission of Jewish values and culture, and Zionist thought. This type of education is inappropriate for Jewish or Palestinian Arab children, who suppose to respect diversity adapt democratic humanistic values which promote and protect minorities rights in the sense which is reflected in the CRC. Article 29(1) of the Convention on the Rights of the Child focuses on the aims of children's education:

- (a) The development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential;
- (b) The development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations;
- (c) The development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilizations different from his or her own;
- (d) The preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of the sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin; and
- (e) The development of respect for the natural environment.<sup>25</sup>

The concept of "rights" contains many educational dimensions that are necessary for the existence of an educational framework at this period in time and for all children especially minority children such as Arab Palestinian *Children or children with special need* who are the most vulnerable and the most neglected by the state.

Therefore we will continue with our advocacy effort for Arab children's rights and to bring the messages to the forefront of the government and the different Ministries, municipalities and village councilors, as well as internationally.

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<sup>24</sup> General Comment 1, Article 29(1): *The Aims of Education*, U.N. Comm. on the Rts. of the Child, ¶ 4, U.N. Doc. CRC/GC/2001/1 (2001).

<sup>25</sup> Human Rights Watch - Article 29(1) builds upon the aims of education as articulated in Article 13(1) of the International Covenant of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

## **Lessons learned**

- Despite the witnessed progress in the domain of early childhood, the different organizations realized that the efforts they invested have not been enough to fill the still existent gaps. The attempt to influence the government policies toward the Arab society and Arab children's right could only be achieved via networking.
- The work has to be run simultaneously on the community level to raise the social awareness regarding the importance of early childhood and on the governmental level.

## **Networking and not Networks**

The new networks that were developing created a lot of power struggle between the people. The hierarchical structure of the networks created a space for envy, power struggle, conflict and strange intersects etc. With the time to continue in these networks need a lot of energies, ego-sustaining after each meeting one would ask him/herself why I need it. Often the cause is forgotten and instead of agent of change the structure becomes an obstacle in front of any change. The Network frame/s were a space which recreates the hierarchical structures in the community and activates all factors combine with the psychology of oppression.

We needed liberating strategies.

- Strategies that are based on collective processes
- Strategies that respect Diversity and enable all to be involved in decision making
- Strategies that enable us to see our self as agent and not only as victims,
- Strategies that enable us to take responsibilities and incite not only react to other initiatives.
- Strategies that enable each partner to see the abilities and disabilities of his own organization.
- Strategies that enable us to celebrate the abilities of others and see them as complementary and not as competitive to each other.
- Strategies that contribute to the development of a sustainable structure (since it is not concentrating the power by one person rather all are sharing each other power)
- Strategies that empower the participant and create new positive energies

## **Therefore we decided to use Networking and not to develop Networks**

Networking as a strategy is built upon the awareness that:

- Every one can do something no one can do everything.
- That every one has the right to participate on all levels
- Use the power with the others and not over the others
- Networking builds nonhierarchical structure
- Networking is effective in bringing about change especially in discriminatory environment
- Creating the culture of Networking is a liberating culture

**We did not finish we just began**

# **Al-Tufula Center**

Diversity in time of war

**Children in Distress – Emergency project**



## **General Background**

Palestinian citizens of Israel comprise approximately 20%, or a little over 1 million of Israel's population. Palestinian children citizens of Israel comprise 25% of all children living in Israel. The Palestinians in the North comprises about 50% of the total population.

This national minority is discriminated against on a number of levels, through laws as well as government policies. This discrimination is affecting all spheres of life and creating huge gaps between the Jewish and Arab citizens in Israel. Poverty is only one example: 60% of Arab children are living under the poverty line in general, in time of war this amount increased dramatically.

Palestinian citizens of Israel are not a monolithic group. They live in a variety of cities, towns and villages throughout Israel, including the unrecognized villages, mixed cities, and Palestinian villages, and within secular and a variety of religious communities (Muslim, Christian, Druze).

The state, to date, has failed to provide meaningful or effective programs to eliminate discrimination against Palestinian citizens of Israel. This was very apparent during the war period and the impact of many years of discrimination became more evident during this period.

## **Description of the Emergency Situation**

The Lebanon war began on the 12 of July during the summer vacation for all schools and during the high season of the summer camps and the recreation activities. The war continued for more than a month. The cease fire began implementation on the morning of the 14 of August.

The impact of this war over our population, Palestinian citizen in Israel, was and continues to be tremendous. We are all experiencing the war and its impact. The Palestinian villages and towns in Israel lack the support infrastructure, which are normally developed and run by government, such as public shelters, hotlines, food support and supplies. Many Palestinian villages in the north have no public shelters, no alarm system (both are the responsibility of the Internal Defense department in the Ministry of Internal Affairs).

The support system available in the Jewish communities to support children and families to deal with stressful situations are not available in the Arab communities in Israel. Many Arab children and families are exposed to the daily attack with no protection and are left alone to deal with their stress. The different organizations working in Israel do not have Arabic specialist and do not address the needs of the Arab children. Most of the children were on school vacation and the summer camps in the north were canceled. This left the families alone to deal with their children. The Arab children and families needed support systems to empower them to deal with the situation.

A great number of the population in the North were not able to work during the war and translates into more children falling below the poverty line. If the statistic before the war stated that already 60% of the poor children were Arabs, we believe that after the war this percent is much higher. This is especially difficult in times of special

needs such as the opening of the new school year in September and Ramadan fast beginning end of September with the feast in October. Most of the families were not able to pay for essentials such as school supplies. Most of the Arab families in the north needed all the help they can get.

The Arab families have been discriminated against for the last 58 years and during the war we witnessed that the government policies did not change towards the Palestinian citizens of Israel. Under normal circumstances Al-Tufula would advocate for our peoples rights and wait for the policy change. In times of emergency this role had to change and we needed to address the needs ourselves, immediately.

The need for support was overwhelming and while we can't solve all the problems, we are able to at least help families overcome this stressful situation and to support the children to begin the school year with more optimism.

### **Project goal and objectives:**

Al-Tufula center decided to develop a support system in Arabic for all Arab children and families, including children with special needs. We decided to begin where we have the capacities and the experience.

Our goal was to support families in dealing with children's anxieties, including families of children with special needs. Due to lack of planning time, the objectives were developed in an organic way during the war period and we are today still continuing to react to the needs of the community. However, the objectives set during the war included:

- To publish and distribute a booklet and various activity sheets to the most needed families via the social welfare offices in the north and NGOs acting in the different villages.
- To publish the booklet and the activities sheets on our website for the use of the wider public.
- To advocate in front of other organizations for the rights and needs of the Arab children during the war
- To empower the children and families to deal with the impacts of the war.
- To act as active data base center on the subject of stress and trauma and to distribute to the public all gathered information in the centre.
- To create a support system for teachers, caregivers, social worker and parents.
- To cooperate with others in the different activities that aim at providing war relief.
- To contribute to the community's resilience.
- To contribute to the strengthening of the individual's resilience.
- To document this experience and to draw lessons learnt for developing strategies in dealing with stress in the long term.

### **Target groups / beneficiaries**

We aimed to reach the most marginalized in our community and those directly impacted by the war. That is the Palestinians living in the unrecognized villages in the north, the poor and needed families.

We were in contact with the welfare offices in the north and they provided us with lists of these families. Through our network of organization and activist especially in Nazareth, we were also able to identify the needed families locally.

The location and focus of our work concentrated in the Arab villages in the North of Israel.

As a women organization working for social change gender perspectives is integrated in all our work, therefore it is needless to say that one of our criteria was to provide a gender equality perspective in our work.

## **Diversity in time of war**

It is well known that in time of pressure and distress one of the elements which determine individual reaction is the community unity.

In the described background the Palestinian community in Israel was in an accursed situation: from one side we were under attack as all the residents of the north of Israel, from the other side our friends, relatives and family were attacked not only in Lebanon but also in Gaza. If a rocket fell down in Haifa it could kill or injure friends (Arab or Jews) and if it fell in Beirut it could kill

the community resilience. Community resilience is supported normally through developed special services and infrastructure which is built over the years and activated in time of war.

## **Implementation**

Four days after the beginning of the war we realized that the war was not going to be a short one contradictory to what was repeatedly announced in the Israeli media. And since all our plans for vacations, summer trips, etc were canceled, as well as receiving the disturbing news about the victims of this war; we asked ourselves what should/could be done. A group of the Al-Tufula staff gathered and decided that we have to begin doing something and we cannot just look and wait until it ends. The question was- what can we do?

"Stop the war was a simplistic idealist demand", as a Lebanese friend living in Jordan told me. Yes, it is simple but it is the most effective method to decrease victims, but it was a wish, which was and still is, unattainable.

Our plan was to react to the immediate needs of our community, and to build on our strength and capacities as a center.

We began organizing ourselves quickly in addition to recruiting volunteer teams which began implementing the plan. The aim was to support the Arab children and families in time of distress. Therefore the following actions/activities were implemented:

### **A. Radio Program-**

Building upon the experience in 2000<sup>26</sup>, when we created a hotline to deal with stress, and drawing on lessons learned at that time, mainly the fact that our society still deals with denial when it comes to the psychological pressure, it was decided that a hotline in our community is not an effective tool. And since many people at the time were not aware of the possible stress impact and it was difficult to ask for help and support when you are not aware that specific behaviors or feelings are connected to the stressful situation you are experiencing. In addition to building upon the intervention program we developed in 2005 in the Magahr village and the previous experiences in Um-Alsahali, etc, we realized that in most of the cases, unfortunately, parents lack awareness of how to deal with children in times of distress.

A hotline was not the answer; therefore we called the Arabic radio station with the suggestion to organize a special radio program on dealing with distress. This would enable the participation of all parents and individuals who have questions concerning this subject. The local radio agreed to the idea and began the initiative to implement. This radio program became very essential when on the evening of the 16<sup>th</sup> of July, two rockets fell on Nazareth, killing two children and injuring more than 100 people (according to the psychological data at the time, there were in Nazareth 200 people who required psychological treatment from the first circle of those impacted directly, and after the war ended, the number is higher for those indirectly impacted). The radio took upon itself the organization of such a program and we provided them with several names of professionals who specialize on the subject and who can provide relevant counseling. Nabila Espanioly, the director of Al-Tufula and a psychologist herself was interviewed on this Radio program and also on the Israeli Broadcasting Radio several times concerning the same issue. Other professional staff members from Al-Tufula were also interviewed several times during the war period.

### **B. Stress Relief Kits**

After the tragic event in Nazareth, it became clear that we had to concentrate on activating children, especially since most of the Arab villages (90%) have neither public shelters (normally an infrastructure developed by the state) nor safe rooms (most of the houses built before 1992, were not obliged to have safe rooms). Since the beginning of the war until the 16<sup>th</sup> of July, we did not have a warning alarm activated in Nazareth, and the Existing Alarm system was not functioning. Had it been functioning and utilized then maybe the Taluzi children (the two brothers killed in Nazareth) would still be alive. All safety governmental instructions were in Hebrew and they did not include any instructions for the Arab villages. After the tragic event in Nazareth on the evening of the 16<sup>th</sup>, the security forces demanded the immediate cancellation of all extracurricular activities with children. At Al-Tufula we closed the Nursery only as of the 17<sup>th</sup> of July. We could not risk the 56 nursery children ages 3 months to 3 years, had a rocket fell during the day on our center-nor do we want to imagine the catastrophe!

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<sup>26</sup> In 2000 when the second Intifada broke out and the population in Nazareth was effected as we lost 3 citizens and we were affected by the killing of the other citizens and from the reoccupation of west bank and Gaza, Al-Tufula organized itself to deal with distress in the community.

Therefore all summer children activities were immediately ceased and all summer camps were canceled; the only place where one could activate children was the shelter-something that the Arab villages and towns lacked. In all of Nazareth, the largest Arab city, we could not find any safe halls to bring children to safety from the immediate surrounding of the falling rockets. For collective relief activities, the help could only be in their homes.

The idea was to develop "**Stress relief kits**" for families and children. Each kit included the following:

- A sturdy kit case that can be utilized by children
- "**Our children in times of Stress**": A booklet written by Dr. Hala Espanioly and Nabila Espanioly, published by Al-Tufula center.
- **Activity sheets "Tell me what is in your heart"**; translated and adapted from the book on "What color is your heart", by Al-Tufula staff Rawia Lusia and Ruba Simaan.
- **Activity sheets "Do it at home"** with fun activity ideas for parents to develop using inexpensive creative materials at home. Written by Al-Tufula staff member Samar Abu-Alheja.
- **A Toy**, such as a puzzle or other toys for children which could be used in their free time.
- Coloring pencils
- Regular lead pencils
- A child's safety cutting scissors
- Dough box and other creative materials
- Some candy

### **Filling and Distribution**

When we began creating the kits we did not have any funds, not even promised funds. However we began to develop what we believed was urgently needed. Later we discovered how many friends we had and we learned that our strong network of partners and supporter was growing and we were able to utilize all the assistance, for our important work both in terms of funding and volunteering.

Once the booklets and activity sheets were developed, many copies were made. Nabila worked diligently to insure we had sufficient supplies of the other materials required to complete the kit.

Once all the materials were available the assembly phase of the project began. The staff and volunteers came to the centre in spite of the war and began the work. (Two of our permanent staff members were on maternity leave, two others were impacted by the war during their last trimester of pregnancy and were expecting the birth of their children any day: funny or not, they managed to hold on till after the war and past their due dates but they both delivered healthy baby girls. Another employee was in Canada on vacation, three others had children at home to take care for). In spite of all this we functioned all very effectively and efficiently. Some of our staff worked from their refugee homes, others from their homes and some from the office with their children. Our volunteers were ready to come in everyday all day, and they brought their daughters and sons with them. Some brought their visiting relatives, while others brought new volunteers.

Everyone came to help assemble the kits for the children and to assist us in fulfilling our goal.

First, we assembled 1000 kits and distributed them in Nazareth and other villages. Later we were able to collect more funds and donations for developing a further 3000 kits and distribute them to other villages which were directly impacted by this war. Due to the need and demand we continued and developed another 2440 kits, which were also distributed to other villages and groups.

The distribution of the kits began by visiting the home of the Taluzi family with our volunteers, explaining to the family about the kits and providing them with a kit for their children to utilize. Then with the permission of the parents, the siblings of the two brothers who died joined our volunteers in distributing the kits to other children in their neighborhood. The experience was very moving to say the least.

In the unrecognized villages in the North, the women groups that we work with on other projects, volunteered to distribute the kits in their villages door to door. We were able to call upon all the different women groups in different villages and towns that we work with, to volunteer to distribute the kits. Additionally, we were able to distribute the rest of the kits with the cooperation of the social welfare office, community centers and other NGO's.

There was media coverage in the form of newspaper reports, reports on Hot News, as well as website updates, several times during this period.

### **C. New publication**

- **"Our Children in times of stress"**- This booklet was an outcome of rewriting of two of our booklets published in 2000, one was for parents and the other for teachers. We re-edited the two booklets and joined the materials in one new edition having the same name and published as a second edition of "Our children in times of stress" written by Dr. Hala Espanioly and Nabila Espanioly. The fact that we had the old booklet made it possible to produce new booklet suitable for this difficult period. We printed this booklet during the war period 3 times; the first was 1000 copies, the second time 3000 copies and the third time 4000 copies.

The booklet was part of the kits that were distributed as well as a resource provided to people who asked specifically to have copies, such as parent groups, social workers, teachers, psychologist and mothers.

- **Activity Sheets "Tell me what is in your heart"**; we translated and developed 15 different activity sheets for children for different ages which they could use at home with their parents. The activities included songs, drawing, writing and other means of expression.
- **Activity sheets; "Do it at home"** with fun ideas for parents to develop utilizing inexpensive materials at home. It was written by Al-Tufula staff member Samar Abu Alheja. We suggested to parents to develop some

creative materials at home such as finger painting dough, using cheap and available materials which they could afford.

#### **D. Activities in cooperation with other NGOS**

- **Mossawa Day** - After the war ended, Mossawa organized a fun day for children from different villages in the North. Al-Tufula took upon itself organizing the transportation from Nazareth and the newly recognized villages in the North – Arab Al-Naeem, Eastern and Western Kamanah, Hussinia, Demida which belong to one of our projects. In addition, the Al-Tufula staff planned and implemented fun activities and creative workshop on-site for the children. We also distributed kits for all the families who participated in this fun day. There were about 13 buses from the different localities that attended the day's events.

#### **E. Advocating**

Nabila Espanioly primarily took on the task of advocating in front of local organization who had received large amount of funding to distribute different materials to children during the war. However, the materials were only distributed among Jewish children. Nabila had several meetings with the different organizations and was able to advocate for the equal right of the Arab child to the Jewish child. As a result, Al-Tufula received material (not equal to Jewish community but a good beginning) support from these organizations to distribute to Arab children.

#### **F. Database Resource center**

In addition to updating our website with new materials that can be utilized by professionals and individuals, we also acted as a database of resources for the community. As new information was received by the staff, it was insured that the information was passed on to other NGO's, community centers, city councils, our network of partners and the general public. As a result, we developed the reputation of the "Database Resource center" and people contacted us for further information, advice, counseling etc.

#### **G. The day after**

Before the war ended, and when the talk about possible cease fire began, we were asking ourselves what else we should do. Several directions were developed here and will be the subject of future reports.

#### **Evaluation:**

At Al-Tufula center it is standard for every project to be evaluated at different stages of its life span. Lessons learned are drawn from every project and utilized in the planning of future projects.

For this specific project as it had a short project time, an overall evaluation was conducted by the staff and the center director in a staff meeting. We began by evaluating our strengths and weaknesses as a center. The outcomes were as follows:

**Strengths:**

- Efficient planning of a new project – as a team we were able to develop an idea, plan and implement in a very short amount of time.
- We have an excellent support group of volunteers who we can relay on in times of need.
- Large solid network – this allowed us to cooperate with other organizations, community centers, schools etc and be able to reach our target group for the project.

**Weaknesses:**

- Efficient planning of a new project – meant that the plans were not fully complete and would have been better had there been more time to plan.
- Quick implementation – meant that the distribution of tasks among the staff was not necessarily according to their capacities. The task allocation could have been better.
- Insufficient media coverage – a news bulletin about our work should have gone out in the newspapers every second day.
- Lack of sufficient update of our website – while we were adding more materials to our website, we could have added more.

**General overall evaluation:**

- As a center we were able to come together, plan and implement in a very short period. That is we have the ability to act efficiently in times of an emergency and we don't sit back and wait. We take action where it's needed and we try to fill in the gaps and meet the needs of our community within our limits.
- As a center we have varied capacities and energies, that when put together, great things are accomplished.
- We were able to serve the poor of the poorest in times of need.
- We have an excellent support of volunteers. The volunteers who contributed to the implementation of this project ranged from the age of 6 years old to 60 some years old. Women and men alike, boys and girls, all from different experiences and backgrounds. Our good relationship with them was strengthened and they all gave whole heartedly.
- Our volunteers expressed their gratefulness for allowing them to be involved in this project as it brought them a sense of satisfaction knowing they were contribution good work towards helping others. While they were living in times of fear and had many concern, volunteering at Al-Tufula made them proud of their good work and they felt it was a stress relief activity for them. Some of the volunteers came to many important realizations such as that there are people who are in dyer need of financial assistance and who are living below the poverty line. The volunteers learned about the importance and existence of NGO's and their work. The teenage volunteers became more aware of their community and its needs. They commented that this experience was an eye opener for them. The young boys and girls who volunteered made comments to the effect that now they realize how lucky they are and that not all children have the basic needs met. They also commented that been



together with others working to serve others gave them the opportunity to vent their stress from the war. As a result the volunteers became more dedicated to Al-Tufula center and we were able to establish a strong sense of volunteerism in the children and teenagers.

- There was good media coverage in terms of our activities on the radio, newspapers and the web. While we do believe the media coverage could have been more, we noticed that Al-Tufula center became more known in different communities and at the individual level.
- Our solid network of NGO's, community centers, professionals, city councils, schools etc, allowed us to reach the most needed in the community. By utilizing the information available through the networks, we were able to reach the most needed individuals in the community.
- Additionally, our network allowed us to successfully advocate for the rights of the Arab children. Our knowledge and advocacy skills were utilized effectively to obtain and distribute materials for the Arab children just as the Jewish children had been receiving.
- Our network with various foundations and supporters, allowed us to elicit their financial support at such a short notice and be able to utilize that support to reach our goal.
- The need for the kits was so big that we could not completely fulfill all the needs. We received many different responses of gratitude from parents, professionals; NGO's who were lost for ideas as to how to help children in times of distress. Many informed us of the positive difference this kit made to their family lives. Parents, with the information in the kits, were able to elicit from their children, their feelings and utilize different methods to express their feelings which were very important. The parents had different ideas at hand to utilize and help their children overcome this distress. We were constantly receiving calls for more kits.
- The fact that our distributed material was the only one developed in Arabic, and not translated from Hebrew was considered by people as a very important factor. It was a great support for many as they were able to read and apply the information given.
- We also received many positive responses and reactions from different partners who assisted us in distributing the kits or has asked for a kit to utilize in their local area.
- For many places, the kits were the only support they received during the war.
- The radio program and the participation of various Al-Tufula staff on the radio giving advice to families, was seen as a crucial support to the parents. We received calls at Al-Tufula asking for various counseling assistance in dealing with different cases of children in distress.
- We have reached our target group and more children and families than we could have anticipated. Our work primarily concentrated in the North of Israel where the larger Arab population exists and they are the ones that were in most need as they were experiencing the war first hand.
- As a center, in the past we have documented and always discussed the statistics about the poverty of the Arab community in Israel, but this war brought this statistic home and it became a reality. Our work has touched the lives of those who are a "statistic". Poverty became a hard fact we were dealing with on a daily basis during the war. This was a difficult human factor to deal with and we began to think of what else we can do.

Our work is still continuing after the war with projects dealing with the deeper poverty that families are now experiencing as a result of the war. The details of this work will be documented in future reports.

**Budget:**

Al-Tufula center received a total of 43,743.50nis from the New Israel Fund. The donation was used to cover the cost of the first 1000 kits only, and was spent as follows:

Item	Cost in nis
1000 plastic kit case, scissors, pencils etc	10,490
Coloring pencils, play dough	8,831
Toys	10,862
Sweets	1,500
Printing of Activity sheets	3,291.75
Printing of 1000 copies of booklet (our children in times of stress)	8,085
Printing of stickers for kit cases	1848
<b>Total</b>	<b>44,907.75</b>

Please note that Al-Tufula received funds from other resources which we could send you in later phase. Since this report was written quickly, we will share with you the rest of the information in a later phase, if you wish.

**Summary of Outcomes: (Accomplishments)**

- Several radio programs became available to the public for psychological support.
- 6440 stress relief kits were compiled and distributed to 6440 families in 54 Arab villages and cities in the north of Israel.
- 8000 copies of the booklet “Our children in times of Stress” were distributed
- 100 volunteers organized and put together the kits in Al-Tufula
- 100 other volunteers distributed the kits all over the north.
- Hundreds of Professionals and volunteers used the materials and the suggested activities with children.
- Many visited our website and downloaded the published resources to utilize with children
- Several articles were written and published in newspapers and the web
- Cooperated with other organizations such as Mossawa center, Women Against Violence and implemented families and children fun days
- Made information accessible about activities to the groups that could benefit from them during the war.

