

Sharjah/IBBY Fund for Children in Crisis

Gaza-Palestine Occupied Territory

Progress Report

April- September 2012

Palestinian Section of IBBY

Al- Shawka & Al -'Ataa libraries

The Sharjah/IBBY Fund for Children in Crisis was most welcomed by PBBY as it created a serious opportunity to sustain and partially promote our project of Children in Crisis in Gaza which is vital for the extremely deprived and traumatized Palestinian children.



Al- Shawka and al -'Ataa libraries are situated in a dangerous and marginalized areas - Rafah and Beit Hanoun- in Gaza. Despite their humble means, they play an important role in the lives of people living there especially children who severely suffer from Israeli aggressions, occupation and ruthless siege the library is their

Haven and their only outlet and pleasure. These two libraries have a great impact on children, a good space for non -formal education, an effective stress-release and an enhancer of imagination and creativity.

The two libraries which are hosted by two community based organization, provide books, encourage the reading habit, and implement different activities which help develop children and youth reading skills, knowledge, expose them to other cultures and refine their talents. Bibliotherapy and psycho-social activities are employed as helpful tools to release the trauma and the stress endured by the children as a result of their un-human oppressive situation.

These libraries hold a variety of activities implemented by librarians, whether the individual and the group activities, the audiovisual and others that is related to cognitive and emotional activities. The diversity of these activities is based on the objective of widening the scope of knowledge of children by introducing them to the environment surrounding them.

Activities vary from drama, theatre, illustrations, handcrafts storytelling and story discussions, creative writing entertaining and cultural activities educational competitions, outdoor activities such as picnics and some group play. Moreover a writer and an artist give training workshops for children in creative writing and illustrations to enhance their abilities and talents.



The Importance of Establishing al- Shawka Library

Establishing al- Shawka library in 2007 in such circumstances proved to be an important venture to children and their parents as well.

Al- Shawka Library lies in the east of Rafah at the touchline with the Israeli military forces and Rafah land crossing and the commerce crossings. Due to the constant bombing and shelling and continuous incursions the people living in these areas lost most of their land and thus they have no income, so they depend on receiving aids from Palestinian agricultural organizations.

The library is constantly exposed to destruction and damage due to the constant bombing and shelling hence renovation is always badly needed.

Activities of the two libraries during April-September 2012

Al 'Ataa Library- Beit Hanoun

#	The activities	Details	The attendances		Total
			Male	Female	
1	Creative writing (Two activities)	Children who participated in the activity wrote their stories from their own imagination; some of the best stories participated in "My first book" competition which was organized by Tamer Institute. The positive interaction was very obvious among the children who participated in the activity.	19 15	20 20	39 35

2	Creative Group writing	Small groups of children wrote their own stories on posters, designed their covers, wrote a beginning and an end and bound the story creating large board books	20	20	40
3	Story discussion	Story was discussed such as “ قصة مغامرة ” الدبودوب الصغير، وحكايتي الأولى، وحكاية زينة”. The storyteller told the story and discussed it with the children trying to answer how they would benefit from it and how would they use it in their real lives.	22	18	40
4	Documentary films	A number of documentary films were shown that talk about positive values besides few films that talked about important Palestinian issues such as al-nakba, Palestinian prisoners and Israeli siege in Gaza. Films were discussed in groups.	23	18	41
5	Puppet theatre	Children rewrite the stories as plays, and they perform them as Puppet shows.	25	21	46
6	Poetry as games	Children organized the games based upon a story that they read or free poetry; this kind of game is the most loved game among children it helps them enrich their vocabulary	18	21	39
7	Poetry contests	Organizing poetry contests among small groups of children, providing each group with poetry and proverb book to be used during the contest.	15	18	33
8	Young people’s Parliament	Establishment of a Parliament for children this is the children’s idea. They	18	17	35

		elected its members and they defined its mechanism and activities.			
9	Community meetings	<p>Four meetings were held about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internet is a double edged weapon and how we should protect our children when using it • Establishing the first parliament for children and youths • Raise the Parents' awareness on how to deal with children during crisis • How should children use their leisure free time in reading 			
10	Reading stories	The children were distributed into small groups. Children in those groups read and discuss selected stories. During this activity Children interacted and exchanged their experiences	20	22	42
11	Drama	Plays and drama performances.	25	20	45
12	Meeting parents	<p>Two types of meetings with parents were held about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to use summer holiday in developing children's skills and thoughts through library visits. • Computer and technology and their role in developing reading skills for children. 	22	18	40
13	Book display	Books were displayed and Children chose their favorite books and talk about them in front of the audience.	14	10	24
14	Storytelling	A number of stories were discussed	13	12	25

		such as “ تعال العب معي، والزرافة الظريفة، والسمة A التي ما أرادت أن تكون سمكة، وبيت الأرنب الصغير storyteller told the story and then it was discussed.			
15	“Stars of the library” competition	Competitions were organized to choose the most reader among the participants.	16	20	36
16	Meeting parents	Lecture was held about attracting children to educational programs through information media such as internet and TV	13	14	27

Al- Shawka Library- Rafah (Activities two shifts morning and evening)

#	The activities	Details	The attendees		Total
			Male	Female	
1	Storytelling	A number of stories were discussed such as “ منها قصة الحصان الذكي، والأرنب الأبيض، وقصص الأنبياء، ومغني المطر، وليلى والذئب ر A storyteller told the story and then it was discussed with children	22	18	40
2	The story of National proverbs	The book about “Palestinian national proverbs” was discussed. The discussion included the review of some proverbs their stories and the situation they are used to describe	18	16	24
3	Cultural competitions	The importance of these competitions lies in the diversity of their forms. The participants choose which activity they want to	15	18	33

		participate in depending on their capabilities and interests. These activities aim at raising the spirit of competitiveness among the participants, improve their skills, and increase their knowledge and improve their vocabulary.			
4	Story discussion	The storyteller read and discussed few books and discussed them with the children. Children interacted very well during the activity.	24	17	41
5	“The birds of knowledge”- (cultural, artistic and educational competitions)	Children issued small hand-made bird like magazines. Groups of children participated in the designing, the drawing, the writing of articles, and the editing of the magazine. At the end there was a competition to choose the best magazine according to layout and content.	17	13	30
6	“We care about your opinion” (Cultural and educational)	The children were asked to write their opinions about an issue or a current event in few words	19	26	45
7	intelligence games	Games were introduced to help develop the educational and thinking skills and to develop the team work spirit in children.	17	23	40
8	Who is he? (Weekly activity)	The Librarian chooses a personality, an animal or a plant and the participants try to ask question about it and at the end they name The competition aims to let children know who the librarian talks about.	14	17	31

9	Meetings for community	<p>Three meetings were and they were about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting with parents about Child labour. • Meeting with children about effective reading. • Know your library: the meeting was used to introduce the library to the parent also to read some valuable books from the library 	23	11	34
10	Story analysis	Encouraging children to analyze the story characters, illustration style and more.	15	16	31
11	Drama	Plays and performances.	18	13	31
12	Creative writing and drawing	The activities aim to develop children's writing skills, expression skills through drawing	13	15	28
13	Magazine/Journal	children prepare the magazines themselves including the design and content	20	18	38
14	Puppet show	The activity aims at developing children interaction with the characters and events through puppet performance besides they learn how to do the puppets for their own theatre	17	15	35
15	Identity card	Encouraging the children the biographies of famous figures whether they are literary or political and then writing a resume in the form of an ID	20	15	35

		card			
16	Poetry games	This activity aims at encouraging the children to write meaningful poetic text using scattered words and to link between the poetic text and the events of the story in order to develop	22	23	45
17	Research discussion	Encouraging children to write a research about a famous celebrity with special needs then to discuss these Researches in groups	20	18	38

Creative writing

It is interesting to read what the children are writing, some of their writings reflected their enhanced self confidence and how they wanted to share their ideas and news with adults and their parents, they insist to be heard! Another story expressed how a girl enjoyed to listen to the stories told by her grandmother as it 'opened the door of knowledge about her country and her heritage'...



A New Librarian/Facilitator in al- Shawka library

Iman, the librarian since end of 2007, resigned from her post for personal reasons as she gave birth to a child with disability who needs a lot of attention. Ahamd al-Hissi was chosen to replace her. Ahmad is very active and hard working; he used to volunteer in the library and used to administer the activity sessions... He loves children and communicates well with them.

The librarians participated in the following **training**:

A special training course: “Strategic planning for librarians”. The course held at Al-Qattan Center for the Child (25 hours for five days).

A training course, “cataloguing and classification”, with Tamer Institute (5 hours for one day).

Feed back:

Children: Through working and dealing with a number of children from both sexes the children assured that participating in library activities have improved their communication skills, their scientific thinking, their reading and writing and drawing skills. Children expressed their delight that reading improved their school achievements and improved their personalities. Children expressed with regret that they were not aware of the importance of reading stories even few of them did not like going to the library.



Parents: Regular meetings took place with parents and with the local community. Parents got acquainted with the library activities and saw how it affected their children. Parents and mostly mothers started to use the library and borrow books.

One of the fathers said that his daughter Fatima after participating in the library activities has developed a lot of talents among them reading stories, drawing and acting. She became more active and self confident.

Another mother said that her son Mustafa 12 years old started to care for his personal hygiene after attending many workshops the library held about hygiene his father insisted that all of his children must participate in the library activities.

Nasser the father of three children who participate in parents meeting said that he has three sons participating in the library programs. Ahmad a very good student who participates in the activities regularly has gained a mature and logical way of thinking the same with his daughter Nisma who improved her and skills and is expressing more self confidence.



Success stories

Linda Nishwan:

Linda joined the library anxious to learn and then became a frequent member. Linda's mother assured the librarian that Linda has become more sociable and gained leadership skills.

Fatima Khruwat:

Fatima lives in difficult economic and social circumstances, and it was even very difficult for her to reach the library. In spite of this situation she was determined on participating in the library activities which helped her develop her reading and drawing skills. She became a stronger person and in February she was awarded the prize of Distinguished Child.

Arij Mu'amar:

Arij is fifteen years old who was under trauma because she lost her eldest brother (11 years old) and she could not cope with his death. After attending the library activities, workshops and therapy sessions she overcome her trauma and was able to write a sad story about her brother this helped in relieving her pain.



Yousef al-Hissi:

Twelve years old Yousef was a good student. At the beginning he refused to participate in any the library activities but with the help of the librarian he became very active with strong personality he also became a distinguished student.

Obstacles and Some Needs:

Obviously, there are tremendous obstacles due to deprivation and siege. A main obstacle is the inability to reach Gaza. We have to follow up on the work via telephone and e-mail. However, people working on the project are very motivated and energetic which facilitates the work. Another main problem is how to send books to Gaza, occasionally; we manage to send them with the help of UNICEF or UNESCO.

As Al-Shawka Area is exposed to constant bombing and incursions, the library was partially affected last year, its windows and doors need repairing and the whole library needs decoration/ whitewashing, (We are trying to find some funding for that)

For the near future: Add a new and bigger room for library activities (4x3 and 3x2) and a partition, and if possible, a wall/siege for the play ground,

Overall Progress:

As it is the first year of Sharjah/IBBY Fund work in the libraries was carried on as usual with basic expenses knowing that the money will arrive in time to cover any shortages and debts PBBY endured. Training and working with children with special Needs and Marginalized Children will start in October 2012.

As we were offered a generous contribution of books from Mohamed Bin Rashed Foundation courtesy our friends the UAEBBY, we requested the reallocation of

Our budget allocating some of the books money to support the Workshop on the Reading culture in Palestine to be implemented in October and the construction of a PBBY webpage.

Purchases:

We bought two laptops, two printers and two digital cameras and some needed furniture for the libraries.



Appendix I:

The Importance of library activities

Story hour: One of the most important activities in library which aims at:

- Evaluating the Literary and the popular heritage in a very interesting way
- Promoting children's aesthetic taste
- Developing listening skills and improving the vocabulary
- Providing opportunities for participants for creative thinking and developing imagination.

Dramatizing the story: Acting a story gives the participants a chance for artistic expression. It aims at:

- Training children on good recitation and different voices
- Playing/acting different roles which child may be able to act in reality
- Create the spirit of cooperation among children
- Psychological discharge

Film watching: It is the most attractive and interesting activity for children. Children are distributed in small groups to discuss and criticize the film.

Visits: The aim of such activity is to expose the child to the outside environment surrounding him and to connect/relate it with what he learns at the library. For example they visit different organizations and their libraries they meet new friends and listen to different stories.



Competitions: This kind of activity has a special impact on children because of the diversity of their forms. The participants choose which activity they want to participate in depending on their capabilities and interests. These activities aim at invoking the spirit of competitiveness among children to be self asserted and to gain more in self confidence. It enables the children to utilize the knowledge the resources more efficiently and to practice the habit of individual research.

Library Skills: Visiting the library regularly is an experience by itself. In addition to reading books and participating in activities, they attain skills and the experience that enable them to use information resources more efficiently and more frequently and we learn to enjoy books.