

# **FRIENDS OF WALDORF INTERVENTION PROJECT**

## **EVALUATION REPORT**

Yasser M AbuJamei MD, MSc

Date of evaluation September 23<sup>rd</sup> – December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2012

# Acknowledgement

---

I would like to thank Al-Qattan management and staff for their cooperation, Mr Mamdouh Abu-Kmail the Outreach Activities Coordinator and Ms Rana El-Helo the CFS coordinator who facilitated the evaluation meetings.

# Table of Contents

---

<u>Introduction</u> .....	<u>6</u>
<u>The Project</u> .....	<u>7</u>
<u>The Evaluation</u> .....	<u>9</u>
<u>Main Findings</u> .....	<u>12</u>
<u>The Training Activities</u> .....	<u>12</u>
<u>The Child Friendly Space</u> .....	<u>26</u>
<u>In-Depth Interviews:</u> .....	<u>39</u>
<u>Recommendations</u> .....	<u>41</u>
<u>Annex I: The training evaluation questionnaire</u> .....	<u>43</u>

# List of abbreviations

---

CFS	Child Friendly Space
FWE	Friends of Waldorf Education
GCMHP	Gaza Community Mental Health Program
QCC	Qattan Center for the Child
SDQ	the Strength and Difficulty Questionnaire

# Executive Summary

---

The evaluation aims at assessing how successful the Friends of Waldorf Education in achieving the objectives of their intervention in Gaza Strip. The project included psychological interventions with children in order to stabilize their psychological wellbeing after the Cast Lead operation, and various training activities aiming at developing the skill of staff and animators who work with children.

The evaluation methodology included documents review, focus groups with trainees, children from the Child Friendly Space and their parents, in-depth interviews with two trainers from FWE, the director of Qattan Center for the Child, the coordinator for the outreach activities and the coordinator of the CFS. Tools used for the evaluation include a tool design to evaluate the training courses delivered and applying the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire to parents of Samouni children.

The report sections give a brief description of feedback received from the beneficiaries, and also recommendations for future work and interventions.

The evaluation main findings give clear indication that the targeted children and their parents have benefited from the CFS. This does not warrant a termination of the project, but the development of the CFS into a cultural or social center. The trainees have gained different levels of knowledge and experience based on how many courses they have attended and with how many children they have worked. The CFS who gained the needed skills and experience are potential trainers that could start disseminating their knowledge and experience to the local staff in Gaza strip, with the FWE team providing more advisory and supervision roles.

Key recommendations include the establishment of a social center that serves Al-Zaitoun neighborhood and continue to provide a safe place for the children and a space where they could engage in productive activities, to continue the training courses with the FWE team providing more advisory role while the training is conducted by the trainees who gained the needed skills and experience, and to document the CFS intervention and produce a model on intervening with children living under stressful conditions.

# Introduction:

---

In December the 27<sup>th</sup> 2008 Israel launched its major operation in Gaza Strip. The operation called Cast Lead continued for 22 days leaving more than 1380 palestinians killed, and over 5380 wounded. Among those who were killed are 431 children and 112 women. 1872 children and 800 women<sup>1</sup> were among the wounded. The operations that deployed Israeli naval unit, air strikes, and land invasions stroked a nation already exhausted by occupation, siege and internal conflicts. Gaza Strip was occupied in 1967 by Israel and has the population of 1.6 million inhabitants, most of them are refugees, and 80% of the population lives under poverty line<sup>2</sup>.

The Cast Lead operation had a major impact on the psychological wellbeing of children and adults. A study that was conducted during February 2009 by Gaza Community Mental Health Programme, a key organization working in the field of mental health and human rights in Gaza Strip found that 51.9% of the parents reported that their children have emotional problems, 40.6% reported peer relationships problems, 23.5% reported hyperactivity, and 13% reported social problems. This warranted the high need for mental health and psychosocial intervention. Experts in this field either working in governmental institutions, non-governmental organizations, or international organizations extended their hands to help the needy people.

An intervention team was sent from Friends of Waldorf Education (FWE) in February 2009. The team used the Waldorf pedagogical methods to alleviate the pain and suffering of the Palestinian children affected by the Cast Lead operation. The four day first aid visit included helping the children, and also meetings with professionals including those from the Gaza Community Mental Health Programme. The GCMHP professionals warranted the need for further intervention, and help. The project that developed to serve those children started in July 2009, and this report provides an evaluation of what have been achieved, and it could be develop in the future.

---

<sup>1</sup> The Palestinian Ministry Of Health

<sup>2</sup> The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics.

# The Project:

---

The project aims at overcoming the consequences of the Israeli Palestinian conflict on the Palestinian children<sup>3</sup>. Untreated psychological wounds make children vulnerable and might be a fertile land for growing aggression and hates. Young children could become the future fighters, and thus the victims could become the future aggressors<sup>4</sup>. The FEW team is expected to work directly with children, and also train other actors on the pedagogical methods, thus expanding the experience and the possible target group.

The project will target Al-Samouni family. This family lost 35 members who were killed during the land invasion to Al-Zeitoun area. The killing was witnessed by their siblings, children, wives and friends who were gathered in one house and watching the other houses being demolished. It was one of the most violent and brutal operations during the Cast Lead operation.

## **Project Aim:**

Stabilize the psychological wellbeing of children using the Waldorf methods (WPM) through building new experiences and memories in the children's lives, and provide the needed help and support to their parents. Animators from Gaza Strip and other actors including KG teachers will be trained on the WPM which will hopefully enhance their skills in dealing with children.

## **Key actors:**

- The project is implemented in cooperation with Qattan Center for the Child (QCC). Qattan Centre for the Child is an independent children's library and information centre aimed at improving the cultural, social, educational, recreational and psychological environment for a large section of the Gaza Strip's child population, without social, physical, religious, sexual or racial discrimination. The center will be responsible for the project activities and will supervise the animators and staff working with the affected children.
- Al-Samouni family will benefit through creating a Child Friendly Space (CFS) which will give the children a safe area where they will receive the WPM. This

---

<sup>3</sup> The project documents

<sup>4</sup> The project documents

will be delivered either directly through the FEW team or the animators trained by them. Parents are also expected to receive some help, and support on how to deal with their children.

- Teachers from six KGs and other local actors will also be included in future trainings. This will equip the participants with the basic skills that are needed to help the children overcome their problems and difficulties.

**Target group:**

- Children living in Samouni (Zaitoun) area.
- Animators and staff working in QCC.
- KG teachers and other local workers with children

**Project Objectives:**

1. Train animators and educators on pedagogical activities that help stabilize the children.
2. Stabilize and rehabilitate children of Al-Zaitoun area using the Waldorf Pedagogical methods.
3. Provide the needed advice to parents on dealing with the difficulties their children has.



# The Evaluation:

---

## **Purpose of Evaluation**

This evaluation aims at assessing the various activities that were implemented during the project including training the staff and local personnel, and intervening with Al-Samouni children and parents in the child friendly space.

## **Objectives of Evaluation**

The evaluation aims at assessing the efficacy of the project in achieving the following main objectives:

1. Help the children in Zeiton area gain the needed psychological balance and stability to go back to their normal routine live through the Child Friendly Space. This objective is to be achieved through the following activities:
  - a. Run the CFS activities: Children are divided in three groups according the age who will later on become involved in four types of activities: Drawing and art, puppet games and storytelling, active learning and motion therapy.
  - b. Involvement of parents: This includes:
    - i. Family literacy programme
    - ii. Counseling sessions
2. Train the QCC staff on the Waldorf pedagogical methods:
  - a. Deliver training to the team involved with the CFS activities
  - b. Deliver training to the other staff in QCC
3. Develop the pedagogical methods in the six kindergartens in Gaza strip, and other interested centers.

## **Methodology:**

- Project Documents Review:

Available documents were reviewed including the project proposal, implementation reports, and other documents related to the project.

- Focus groups:

The following focus groups were conducted during the evaluation process:

- One focus group targeting KG teachers. The meeting was attended by 6 KG teachers.
- One focus group targeting 8 children aged 11 years and above.
- One focus group targeting 9 staff members from QCC.
- One focus group targeting the CFS team. The meeting was attended by the Rana El-Helo, the team coordinator and 4 animators.
- One focus group targeting mothers of children who attend the CFS. The meeting was attended by 22 women including 14 mothers and 8 other relatives of children.

- In Depth Interviews:

Two trainers from the FEW were interviewed. A third interview was carried with Mrs Nehaia Abu-Nahla, the director of QCC, and a fourth interview was conducted with Mr Mamdouh Abu-Kmail the Outreach Activities Coordinator at QCC.

- Assessment tools:

Two assessment tools were used in the evaluation. The first one was designed for the purpose of evaluating the training activities. It's composed of two parts. The first one aims at evaluating the need for the specific training (eg. Art and drawing, puppet making.. etc), the suitability of the training content and the method used for the training. The second part is an open-ended questions elaborating further on main challenges, and obstacles during the training and suggestions for future training.

The second evaluation tool used was the Strength and Difficulty Questionnaire (SDQ). The SDQ is used to evaluate the psychological wellbeing of 14 children from the parents' view of randomly selected mothers. Further information about the SDQ will follow later in the report.

### **Procedure:**

All the focus groups, in-depth interviews, and assessment questionnaires were conducted by the evaluator. The QCC field coordinator was of great help on coordinating the time and place of the meetings. The analysis of the questionnaire was made by an expert statistician.

**Reporting:**

The evaluation main findings and recommendations are included in this report.

**Challenges:**

The main challenge was due to the possible interference between the Israeli operations during November on the assessment of Al-Samouni family. The focus groups with children and the parents took place 10 days after the operations ended. The SDQ was used as a tool that gives a more objective view at the children in addition to the evaluator's opinion. Still, the small size of the sample and short duration between the operations and the interview date might mask the efficacy of the WPM on children, and in the same time results could warrant continues work and intervention in the neighborhood. In the other hand, as the evaluator was involved in the previous evaluation carried between July and September 2011 behavioral changes among the children were noticed, as this will be mentioned in details later in the report.

# Main findings:

---

The report will highlight the two main activities separately. The training activities will be followed by a report on the activities related to the CFS. Later on, findings from the in-depth interviews will be summarized.

## **Part 1: The Training Activities:**

This part will focus on activities related to training, including those targeting the QCC team, the animators working in the CFS, and the KG teachers.

### **QCC Team focus group:**

The meeting was attended by nine staff members of Qattan Center for the Child. These were staff working in the main building and their tasks include library work (4), art services (3), coordinating the activities with the families and children (1), and an assistant coordinator from the extended service unit. The objective of the meeting was to make an evaluation of the project through round table questions, open discussion, and distributing an assessment questionnaire.

In the beginning of the meeting the participants were asked to individually describe their role in the center, the type and number of the training courses they have attended, and how have they found the courses. Later on, the participants were asked to elaborate whether the training was beneficial and on what aspects. They were also to describe the main difficulties or challenges they faced during the training and finally what are they looking for in the future.

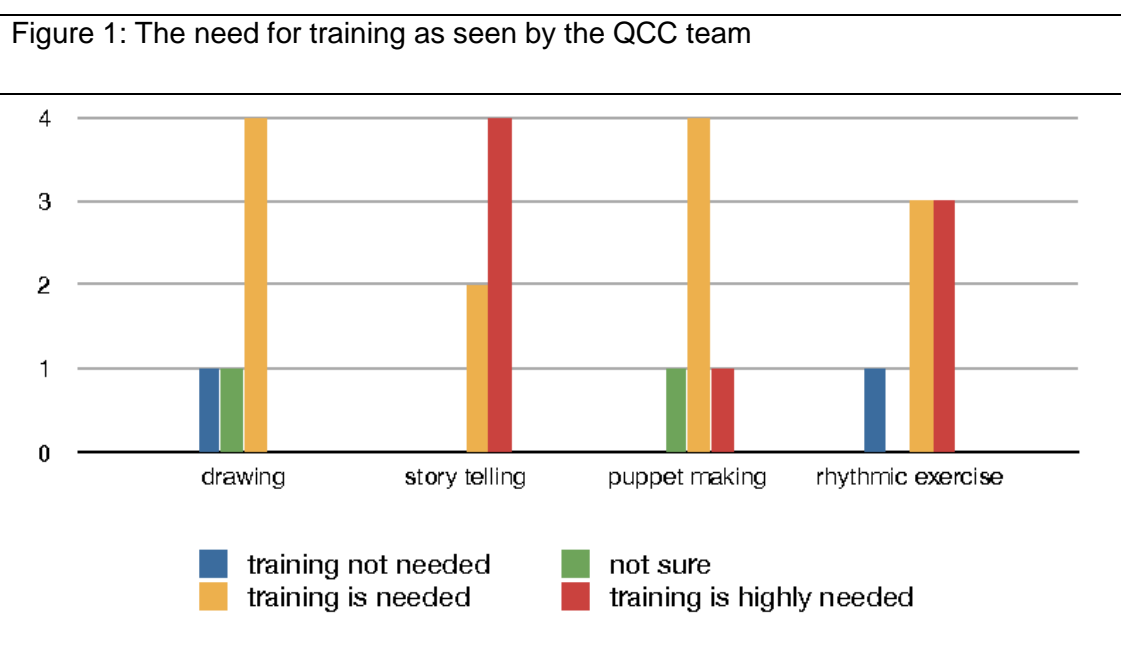
Most of the participants (at least six out of nine) have attended the main types of training (drawing, storytelling, puppet making, and rhythmic exercises). Fewer have joined other training courses namely child development, carpentry, child personality, or other training sessions. Story telling was the most repeated type of training with some staff attending about 4 times.

## Results of the Assessment Questionnaire:

The first part of the questionnaire asked the participants to choose a score between 1-4 which best describe the need for the training, training content, and training techniques. These were filled having in mind the four main types of training (drawing, storytelling, puppet making, and rhythmic exercises. Results of this part are as follows:

### 1. The need for the training:

The following chart (Figure 1) describes the main results regarding the need for training:



Most of the trainees found the training either needed, or highly needed. Training on storytelling was of highest need. In the focus group the trainees explained that the story telling training was very beneficial as they were able to use the learned techniques in encouraging children, and help them show their personality. It was also interesting to tell a story through singing, an activity which was great to communicate between the staff and the children.

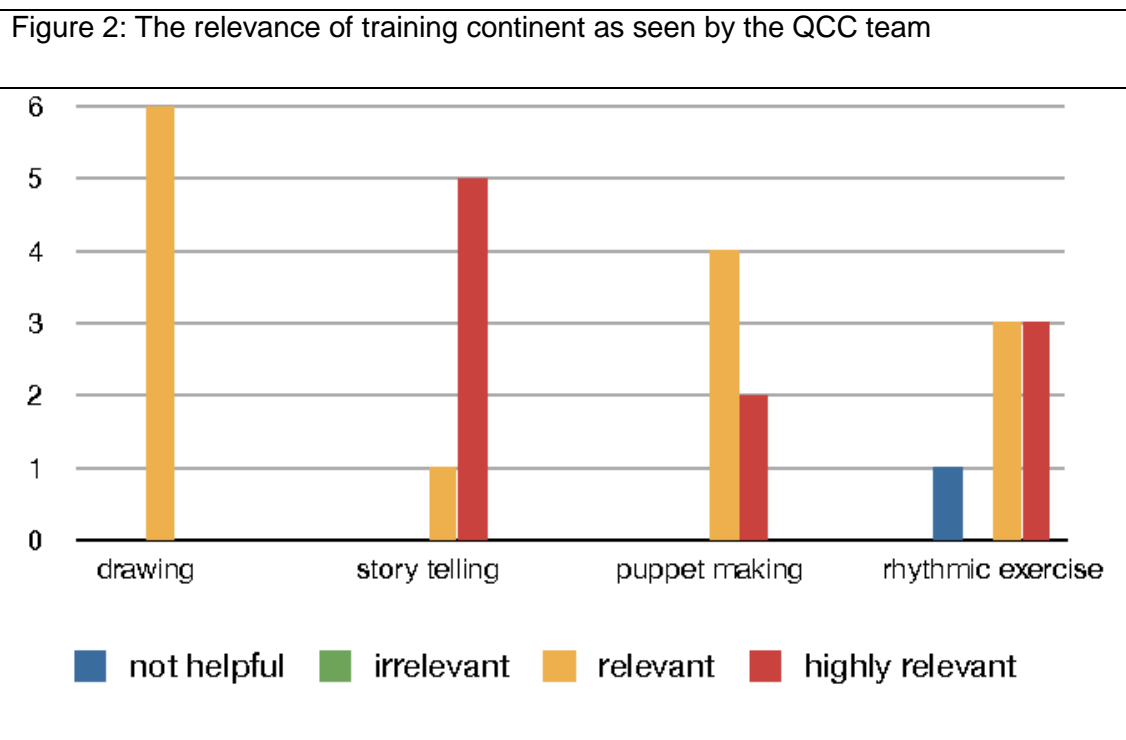
Rhythmic exercises were the second most needed training. These were as described during the focus group as a very beneficial and easy method to keep the children concentration and attention. Those were also used as an efficient way of dealing with daily work related stresses by the staff members. One of the female staff

members said that it took much courage to combine singing with the exercises, but it gave her a great opportunity to break barriers in communicating with children.

Puppet making was an interesting training and activity. Puppets were of great help to make children understand many things as they were used to tell stories, and keep the children interested in the activities. Drawing training scored the least of importance; still four out of six staff who attended the training described it as needed.

### 2. The training content:

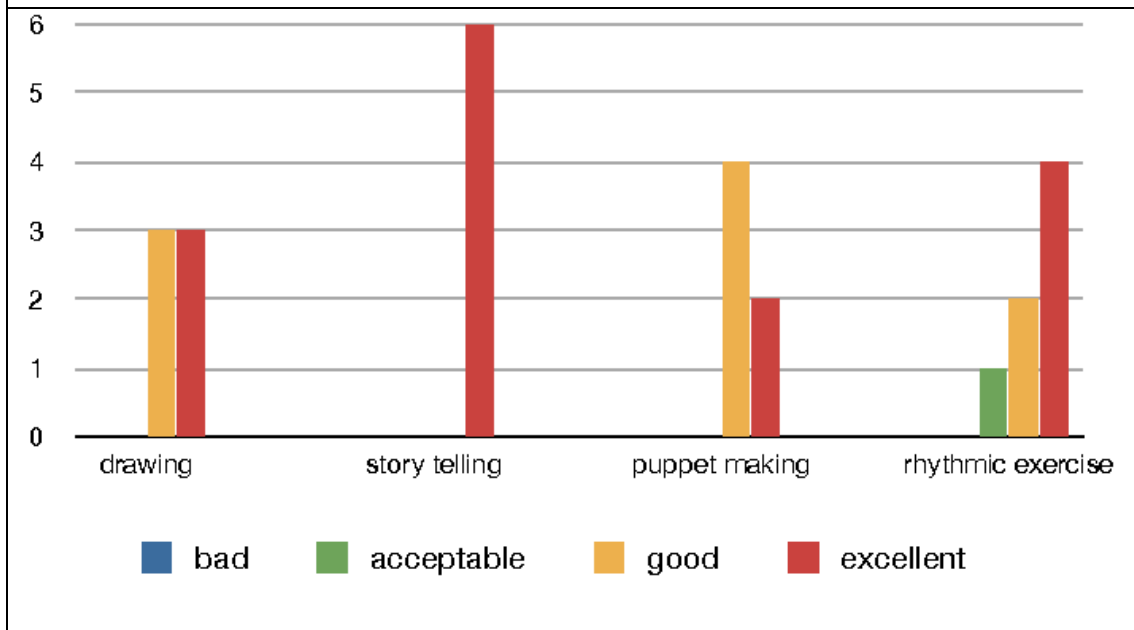
The training content was found to be relevant to highly relevant during the training courses. The following chart (Figure 2) gives further illustration. The disadvantage that was described is related to the lack of training material, or kit that could be helpful for the trainees in the absence of trainers.



### 3. The training techniques:

As shown in the chart (Figure 3), the trainers used good to excellent training techniques with storytelling training having the best training techniques.

Figure 3: Techniques used by the trainers as seen by the QCC team



The second part of the questionnaire is made of open ended questions that pay attention to suggestions on either including new topics, or excluding topics from any future training. It also asks the participants to describe any difficulties or problems that appeared during the training, and to evaluate the training logistics. Results of this part are as follows:

- Future training courses should include topics as dealing with children under stressful conditions, how to help the children develop their existing skills, and an introduction to cognitive psychology in children.
- The participants did not find any unneeded training course or topic that was given during the training. One trainee argued that the training on carpentry was time consuming and not that beneficial.
- The main issues that concerned the participants were the need for clear objectives and material for each training course that is delivered. They attended the training not sure what the course objectives, expected outcomes, and training material.
- Logistics are fine, but there was a need for a better translation service (translators) and better coordination regarding the staff ability to participate in certain training due to work needs. This unfortunately made some participants miss parts or whole training days.

### **Results of the round table questions and open discussion:**

The meeting investigated how the work with the children was affected by the training, questioned the need for future training, and difficulties that could be addressed later on.

How the training affected work: This was answered in different ways by the participants. Those who are not in direct contact with children in the center spoke about how they started to deal with children in their life (outside work). Trainees who are in direct contact with children mentioned more than one way of improving their services. This will be summarized in the following points:

- The training generally added a new perspective regarding understanding children, how they think, behave, and feel.
- The long cooperation with the German team also added respect and value to commitment to time, appointments, and organization.
- The training on storytelling added a lot of new techniques that were found very helpful in communicating with children. The House of Tales Club was introduced in the center work where children listen to stories and tales using the learned techniques.
- The ability to use raw material from nature to make puppets and other objects was interesting, and kept the staff and the children interested in various productive activities that overcome possible communication barriers.
- The short session on the affect of media and video on children made the team reevaluate the way they approach children in the center, including replacing TV and Video sessions with other activities.
- Puppets were also very good as a technique for making children easily understand some ideas.
- Rhythmic exercises were always good in keeping children attention, and also in removing any stress related tensions at work or home.
- Trainees who do not work currently with children said that they are both, ready to use the learned techniques when needed at work, or simply use with other children in their personal life.



The main challenges during the training: The main difficulties and challenges during the training were as follows:

- Participants agreed that there was a problem with translation as it needs time, the translators are not good enough to make all ideas understandable by the trainees. Translation was the main disadvantage during the whole training.
- Some participants mentioned the shortage of timing in delivering some training sessions. Others spoke of the difficulty related to attending the courses and maintaining the job related activities in the center.
- The need to have a written material or training kits that would help participants maintain the information and skills gained from the training.
- Its difficult to find the same good quality of raw material in Gaza (specially wool) which make some activities hard to implement.

Is there a need for further training: This was asked directly to the participants who answered as follows:

- Participants have had long training and possible future training could be just a repetition, or for assurance and opinion.
- There will be always more techniques to be learned and the German team visits are always a source of joy. Their visits ensure further development of capacities, and the only window to the other world and experiences.
- Participants have already started to form their activity groups, with clear tasks and roles, with the feeling that they know what is needed and that they are capable of counting on themselves and help children who visit the center.

### **KG teachers focus group:**

The meeting was attended by six teachers from both YaHala and Hekayat KGs. One KG has nursery and KG1, KG2 children while the other does not provide nursery service. The teachers introduced their KGs as being modern and using the most updated ways of dealing with children. They also mentioned that the teachers who work in the KGs are all educated and most of them carry a bachelor degree in education. They attended 3 training courses and the topics attended mostly are wool balls, rhythmic exercise (circle dance), and storytelling. The meeting took a similar

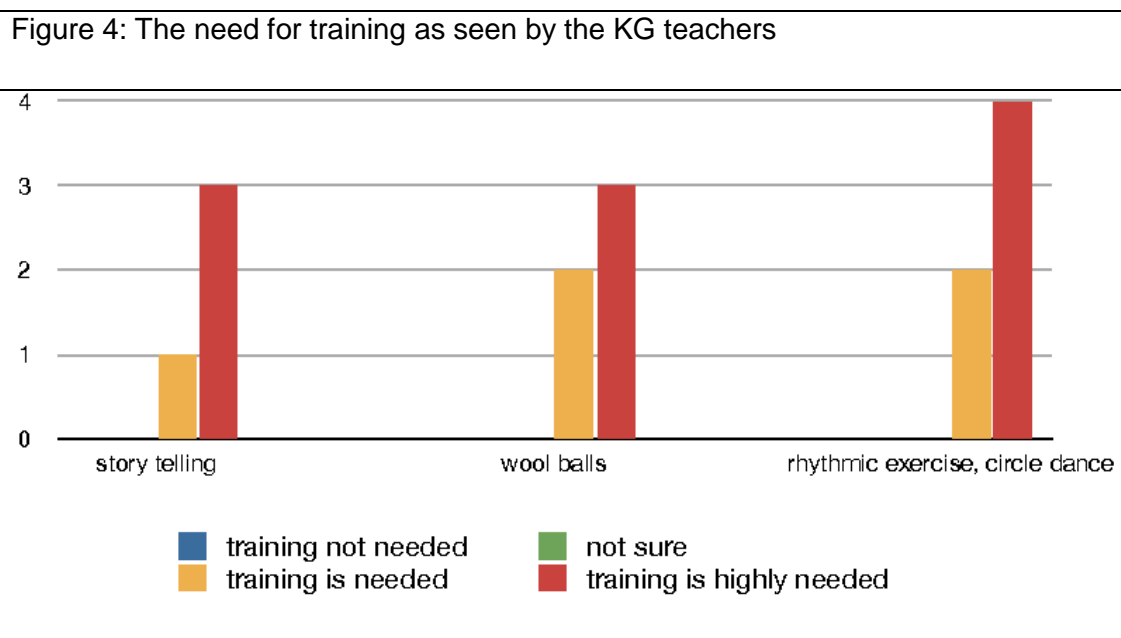
procedure to the one mentioned above, i.e. round table questions, plenary discussion and an assessment questionnaire.

### Results of the Assessment Questionnaire:

Results of the first part of the questionnaire that focused on the need for the training course, the suitability of the content to the title, and the techniques used during the training were as follows:

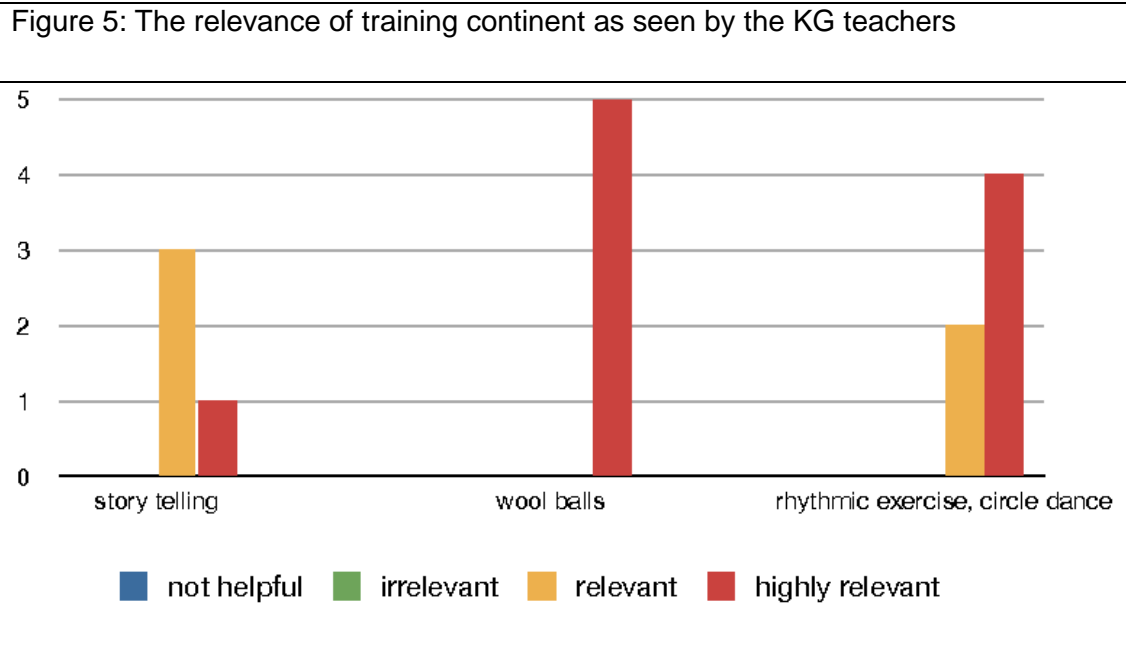
#### 1. The need for the training:

The training courses were found to be either needed or mostly highly needed (Figure 4). The teachers highlighted the importance of the circle dance training they learned which was a great technique (as they mentioned) to keep the children focused and concentrated during classes. These exercises were also of importance either to finish (close) one class and start the other one. The games with wool balls were also of importance to strengthen the hands and fingers of children. Both techniques were neither used nor known to the teachers, and they feel that they were causing a positive change in their relationship and communication with the children. Story telling was also important as they learned the necessity to repeat the same story over one week period to the children, a skill that they did not use before. The idea of using the sand during story telling was also useful.



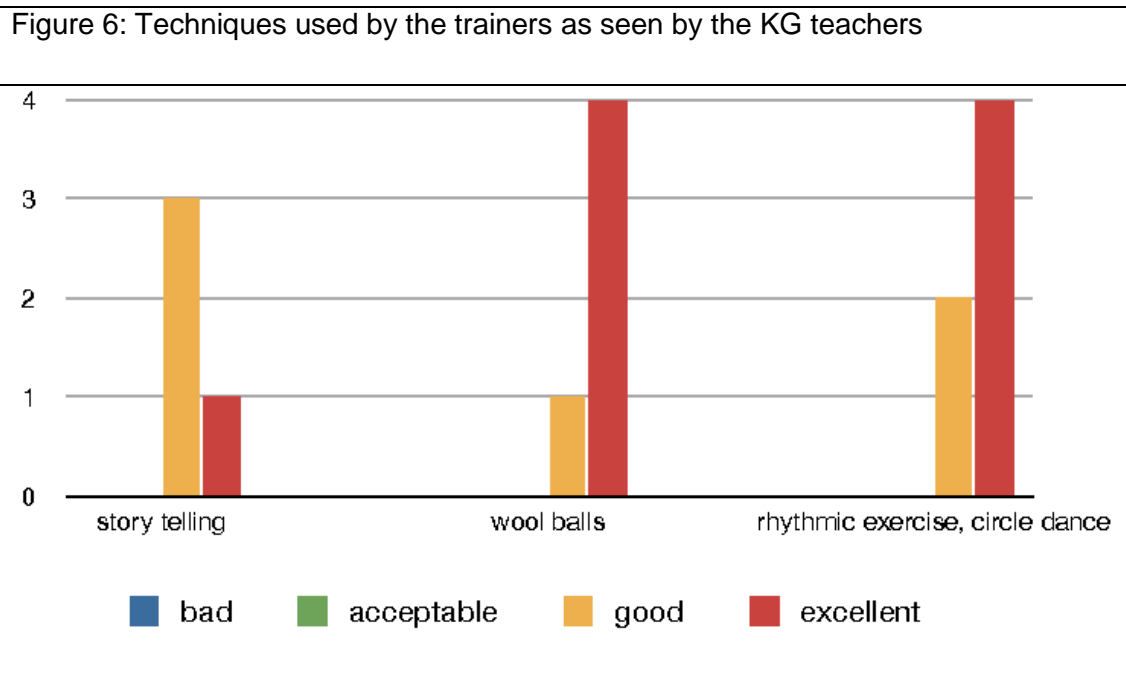
2. The training content:

As shown in the following chart (Figure 5), the training content was relevant to highly relevant to the training topic.



3. The training techniques:

The techniques used during the training were rated to be between good and excellent. The following chart (Figure 6) is a good illustration of that.



The second part (open ended questions) focused on suggestions to include new topics, or exclude unneeded topics from any future training, the main difficulties that faced the teachers during the training. The results are as follows:

- There is a need to include more exercises in future training. More collective games that would involve groups of children rather than solitary games are needed.
- To involve more KG teachers and may be parents in future training.
- The need to prolong the time for training. Time was problematic as it was OK when the German trainers arrived during the holidays, but it was rather difficult to attend the training when the children were in KGs.
- One of the main difficulties is the different opinions and loud discussions that interrupted some of the training sessions due to differences in opinions among trainees from different KGs.
- The teachers also reported that teachers attending from other KGs were less firm on time.

#### **Results of the round table questions and open discussion:**

How the training affected work: The discussion focused on the impact of the training on the trainees (KG teachers) work. Although the teachers consider themselves as working in modern KGs with advanced skills in raising and teaching young children, they spoke enthusiastically about the training they received. They were satisfied with the skills they gained especially when it comes to exercise and circle dance. Those exercises helped the teachers a lot with keeping the children focused and concentrated. The use of wool balls was very interesting either to help the children strengthen their hands and fingers or to use them during story telling. The new techniques used have bridged any gaps that were between teachers and children and facilitated communication.

The main challenges during the training: The main challenge is related to the demands of parents and the educational system in Palestine and the expectations of 5-6 years old children. Those young children are expected to be able to write and read before even starting their schools. The demands also come from parents who are always interested in seeing their children read and write. While the Waldorf

method recognizes the difficulties associated with the hand motor skills in young children, prefer to strengthen those with wool balls, the teachers are to work on teaching the young children how to grab a pencil and write down. One of the teachers said that there should be a compromise where we could both, apply some of the techniques and advices given by the German teachers, and in the same time be able to teach the children how to write. The teachers suggested to involve the parents in future training which would be helpful in explaining why its better not to rash and ask a young a child to grab a pin and write, and that its better to wait for the right age.

Another challenge was related to the timing of the training. The course takes about two weeks which is considered a long time that is unavailable unless the visit is during vacation. The teachers suggested that the timetable could be scheduled in advance and that it could take place during wither the summer or winter vacations. They also requested to know in advance the topic of the training and to get some written material at the end of the course.

Is there a need for further training: There is still a need for future training. Suggested topics are the following:

- How to teach young children writing
- Techniques for making puppets for young children
- How to deal with children that have problems like aggression, shyness, and hyperactivity
- The involvement of parents and introducing them to the needs and abilities their children have.
- More ways to draw children attention either through dancing or exercise.
- More ideas and instructions regarding dealing with children in the nursery age

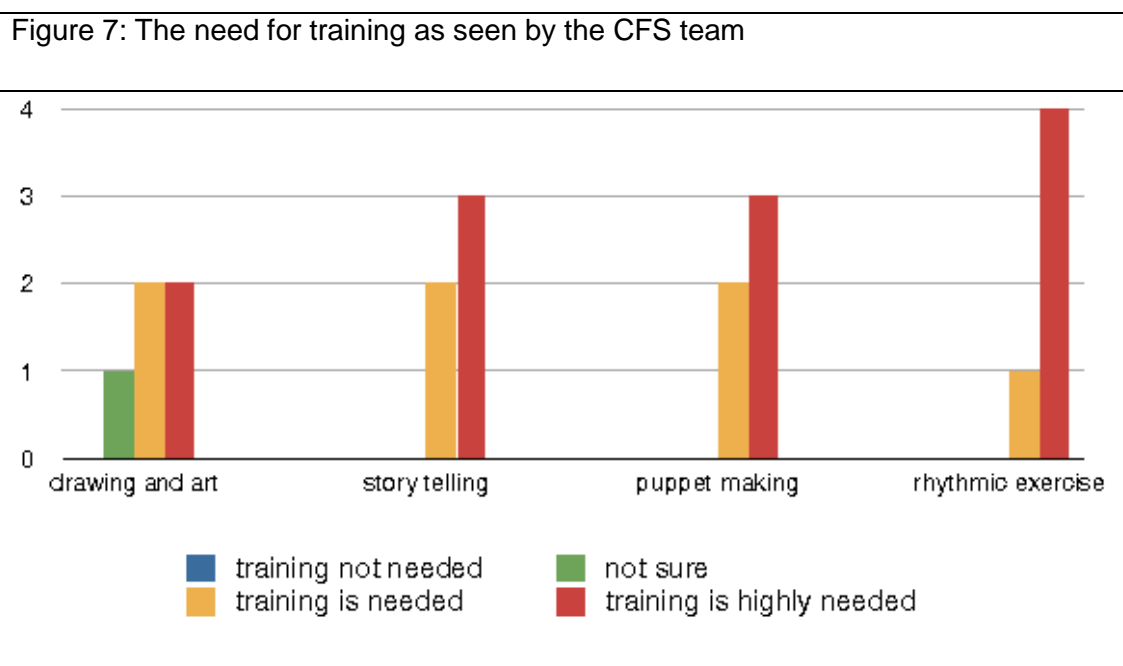
### **Child Friendly Space (Samouni) Team focus group:**

Four animators and the coordinator attended the focus group meeting. The meeting discussed both, the training and the CFS activities. This part of the report will focus on the training received by the team. Evaluation of the training courses followed a similar process as the ones mentioned above. Main findings follow:

#### **Results of the Assessment Questionnaire:**

##### 1. The need for the training:

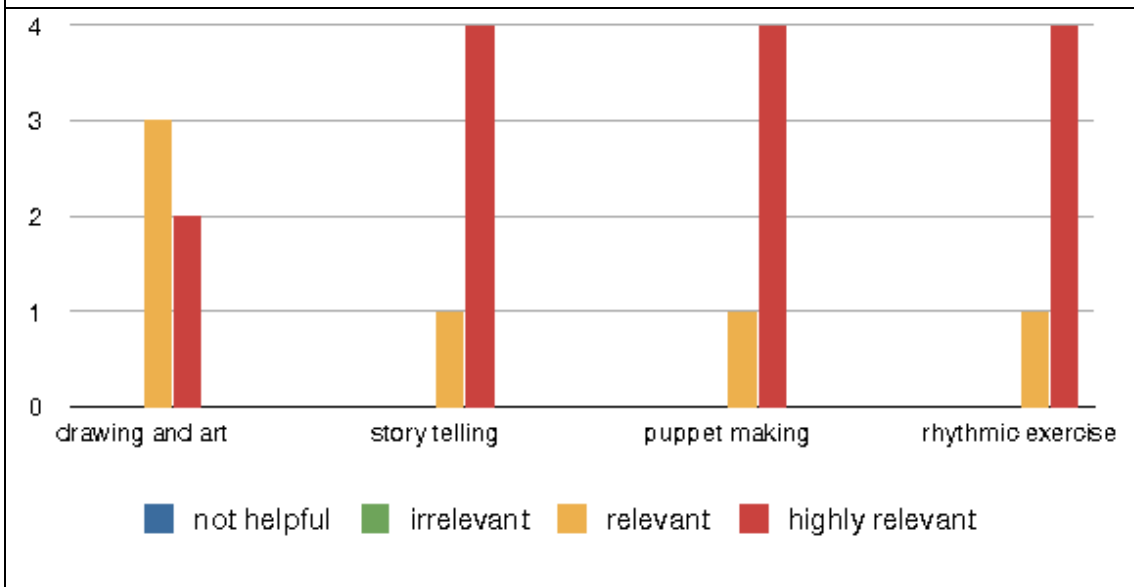
The training of the CFS team was a most from the beginning of the project. They were the first local staff to act with the children using the WPM. Rana, the coordinator has attended almost all the trainings, and the other members have attended many. As shown by (Figure 7) training related to storytelling, puppet making, rhythmic exercise (motion therapy) was rated between needed and highly needed. Art and drawing had lower rate perhaps because some of the animators were not part of the art and drawing corner.



##### 2. The training content:

The training content was found to be relevant to highly relevant in storytelling training, training on puppet making, art and drawing, and rhythmic exercises (Figure 8).

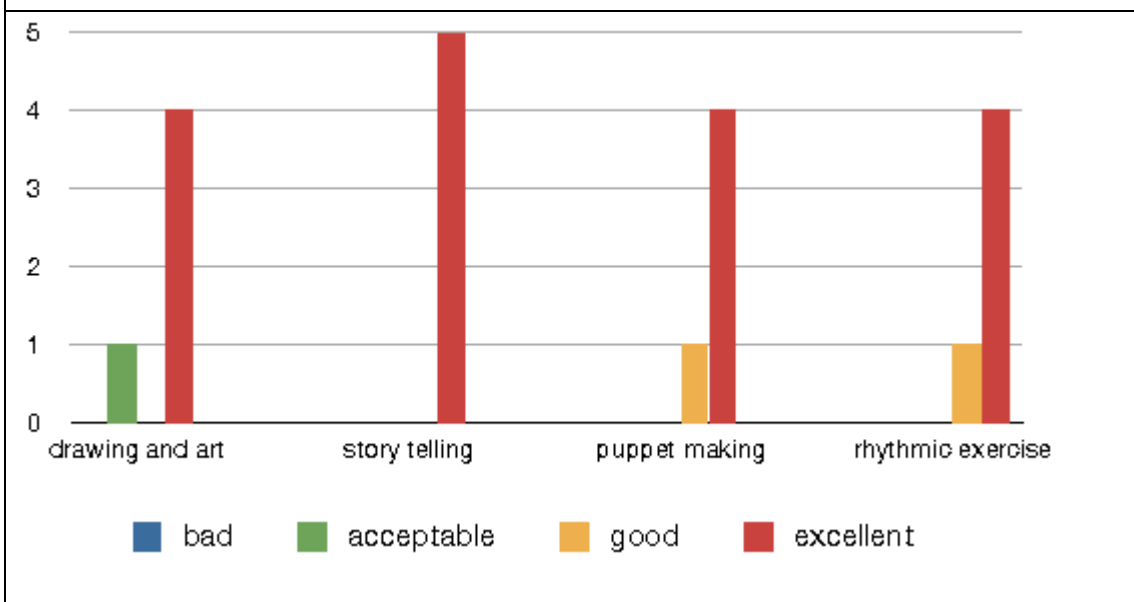
Figure 8: The relevance of training content as seen by the CFS team



### 3. The training techniques:

The following chart (Figure 9) illustrates how the CFS team evaluated the techniques used in delivering the training:

Figure 9: Techniques used by the trainers as seen by the CFS team



Results of the open ended questions were as follows:

- Some of the techniques were hard to apply either because of the young age of the children (as in case of carpentry) or due to cultural issues.
- The FEW team was always open to any changes that are warranted due to cultural issues, and CFS was always encouraged to be creative and give songs, and activities from the Palestinian folklore.
- There is a need to learn more activities that are suitable for children under 6, and activities that would be suitable for parents.
- The need for training courses on methods of psychological intervention.
- One of the suggestions was to have further training on drama and theatre activities.
- Some animators mentioned that in some courses there was a problem with coordination and they missed some training that could be helpful.

#### **Results of the round table questions and open discussion:**

How the training affected the work: Most of the skills that was learned during the training had its impact on the CFS activities. The various trainings on storytelling have enriched this activity. It became a source of joy to both the animators and the children. The animators could also use puppets, the sand, or mud to keep the children interest and make the story more colorful. The art and drawing also taught the animators better skill that would also benefit the children. A good example of that is to give the child a bigger drawing sheet and big pencil to let him draw something, then let him add colors to the drawing, rather than simply giving him an already drawn picture. The motion exercises needed a lot of courage from the animators in the beginning as they thought that it might make the children more hyperactive, while they noticed that in reality they calm the children down. The CFS team feels too confident and able to implement the activities. This was also empowered when they were introduced during the last training to new trainees as a good example of how to implement the activities.

The main challenges during the training: The main challenges were related to some of the activities that are hard to implement with young children, or due to cultural reasons (an example of that is a game that ends with boys carrying one of their female friends). These were solved by the team as being creative and finding some other way of implementing activities. The other main challenge was due to the



training timing coordination. The team is interested in attending all possible trainings and if they miss a training they think that its due to coordination issues.

Is there a need for further training: The team feels that they are not the focus of interest at the moment as they see the KG teachers get more training than them lately. When they were asked about the type of training they are interested in they mentioned various types of trainings which are not related to the current job tasks. A good example of that is the request for training on psychological intervention, and some training on library work.

### **Summary of the main findings:**

- The need for the delivered training to the QCC team, the CFS team, or the KG teachers is unquestionable. The evaluation also shows clearly that the FWE were successful in choosing the best possible training techniques, and the most suitable training content.
- The lack of any training material or training kits is an important issue that should be managed properly.
- The trainers together with the trainees were able to overcome any obstacle or difficulty related to cultural differences.
- Unfortunately there seems to be a problem with translation. It takes time, and in sometimes the concepts are not adequately understood.
- The CFS team received most of the training courses and gained a lot of practical experience during the time they have spent with Al-Samouni children. They are also confident and in good shape to start sharing this experience with others.
- The QCC team is also capable of working as the team is divided in groups with specific tasks and roles.
- Most of the future needs requested by both, QCC and CFS teams seem to be beyond their current job tasks.
- KG teachers are still in need for further training, and they still seem to lack the concept of what young children are capable of. They are also expected to

meet the demands of parents that their children should learn how to read and write at that young age.

- It's not clear to the trainees why sometimes they are invited to attend a specific training, or why they are excluded from attending. This is thought to be a problem with coordinating the training activity in the QCC.

## **Part 2: The Child Friendly Space:**

The evaluation is based on focus groups meetings that involved the CFS team of animators, the parents, and of course the children. The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire with the impact supplement (completed by parents) was also used to provide good assessment of children living in Zeiton neighborhood. Results of the focus group meetings and SDQ follows:

### **CFS animators focus group:**

- The meeting was attended by five animators including Rana El-Helo the CSF coordinator.
- As I did the previous evaluation, the meeting started with asking what's new and how the project is going on.
  - The animators are proud of their work, as they described the improvement of the CFS including having more space and more privacy for the children.
  - Another important development is the under six corner which targets small children that are below the age of sex. The animators became more confident in dealing with this age group as a result of the training delivered by the Waldorf trainers.
  - The other three corners are still ongoing (art and drawing, storytelling, and movement games).
  - Activities in the CFS were positively enforced with the trainings that were carried by the Waldorf trainers. These will be discussed separately under the evaluation of training.

- Although some of the children graduated from the CFS because they became 15 years of age or older, new children are joining the activities.
- The CFS still the only existing and ongoing project that provide any type of intervention targeting Samouni family area and the surrounding neighborhood.
- More children joining the CFS live in the area and do not belong to Samouni family. They were welcomed to join and participate in the activities.
- Children are engaged in the activities and they became more organized and respectful for the place.
- Main challenges and difficulties related to the work with children are:
  - Some children still show tantrums every now and then.
  - Some other children have periods of times when they look sad and prefer to be alone.
  - The animators suggested that could be related to some problems at home, or could be just an age related challenges.
  - Most of those difficulties are solved using positive reinforcement techniques.
  - There are some other problems related to the need to attend private after school classes. These classes are arranged by parents hoping that their children would do better at school. Sometimes the classes' time does not allow children to come to the CFS.
- Another important development was related to engaging parents in the activities through illiteracy education programme and the weekly meeting sessions.
  - The literacy education programme started as a response to the requests of some of the children parents.
  - More than ten parents were involved in the education classes.

- The classes continued for six months and stopped temporarily due to the farming season.
- Out of the ten parents four are now capable of reading and writing. It was a big joy for them to start helping their children with the homework. They are hoping to get some further education to allow them help older children.
- The other activity is the parents' weekly meetings. This activity started with the aim of supplying them with good skills that would help them engage with their children.
- The parents were given training how to carry several activities that the CFS provide for the children. These include drawing, puppet making, how to make productive things from nature, etc.
- Parents were highly interested in the training and 25 to 35 attending each session.
- The parents were eager to request more practical sessions to learn how to perform activities with their children.
- These meetings engaged parents with the animators, and engage them with their children, thus providing children with more comprehensive and better care.
- Open days: The CFS team organized open day activities that engaged both children and parents.
  - The activities included small trips, mother-child workshops, birthday celebrations and Palestinian folklore.
  - It was a very practical and suitable way to show parents how to be engaged with their children.
- At the end of the meeting, the CFS team members were asked to write down a successful story, and how do they want the CFS or Zeiton neighborhood to develop. A couple of successful stories are written somewhere else; the main suggestions for the development of the CFS are listed next.

- The area is in need for a sports club where children could participate in collective and solitary games, and spend their time with joy and happiness.
- The CFS could develop into a cultural center where children from the whole area could attend and participate. The cultural center could have corners for art, music, and a library. The center should work on full day basis and provide the service for children who go to schools either in the morning or the afternoon.
- The need for wide spaces and play fields where children could meet and play.
- Provide educational classes for children to help them with school achievement.
- Establish a computer club or lab to teach the children how to use computers, and use programmes to develop them and their parents.

**CFS children focus group:**

- The visit to the CFS area was delayed due to the Israeli war on Gaza during the third week of November.
- The evaluator visited the area 10 days after the war ended. This was intentionally done to (if possible) minimize any direct effect of the war impact on children.
- The evaluator was also curious to see how the children are functioning 10 days just after the war.
- Interestingly there were three groups of children engaged in different activities.
  - The under 6 children were sitting in a lovely atmosphere on the sand just outside the CFS. This newly used area gave the children more privacy and space. The place looked great with more paintings and decorations outside and inside the hosting building.
  - The children under 6 were sitting in a circle with the animator telling a story using a couple of puppets. She encouraged the children to respond to her questions through mimicking various childish voices.

The children looked interested and completely focused. It was also obvious that the children have already heard the story before, and they are enjoying hearing it and foreseeing what will happen next.

- In the other corner just outside the building there was still the caravan located and used as a room for some other type of activities. Children of older age (7-10) were just sitting in a big circle with their backs to the walls and through a big wool ball from one child to the other. They were in the middle of forming a big spider net, and of course the animator was sitting as any other child and participating. This game looked very interesting to the children as each one who participates gets his head inside the net, and gets into the game.
- Just entering the ground floor of the building two animators were preparing for a new activity to be implemented over a nice carpet. The whole space was divided in two by a curtain and behind the curtain I met the eldest group of children (over 10). The children were having a drawing and art session. I took a quick look at the drawings then asked the animator: What have you asked them to draw? What directions did you give them? He replied: It's a free drawing. No instructions, they are just drawing whatever comes into their mind.
- I looked at the smiley faces and started asking them about the drawings. It was interesting to see the children drawing colorful nature, sunny days, and flowers (Figure 10). Some other children preferred to draw complex shapes from triangles, circles, and what seemed to me a complicated mechanical drawings.
- Although most of the children presented their drawings with pride, some were shy to talk. I asked the animator if there were any drawings from the last 10 days and he replied positively. I took a brief look at them on a separate table and I found what I was looking for. Some of the children drawings show destroyed buildings, killed people, blood, tanks, and airplanes (Figure 11). These were the first drawing that some children drew for the first two days after the 8 days war. Luckily they disappeared later on.

Figure 10. A drawing by one of the CFS children



Figure 11. A drawing by a CFS child. The drawing is entitled: Al-Dalo massacre.



- While I was looking at the drawings it was time to change corners. It was interesting to see the children stand up, clean the table and walk in a line. They moved towards the door heading to the caravan, where the other group of children were standing in another line and heading towards the carpet where the next session is prepared. Children were organized, tidy, and moving orderly. This was a big change from the time I saw them during the previous evaluation, over a year ago.
- Now with the drawing corner and table being free. I asked from Rana, the CFS coordinator to invite half of the children from age 10 and above to the focus group.
- The children sat around the table and the evaluator described to them in simple words the reason for the visit. They were encouraged to talk about the CFS activities, and how they find the animators, the place, what do they want from the CFS in the future.
  - The immediate response was that they are in need for play grounds. Boys and girls requested to have a playground to play football, basketball, and a tennis table. They also wanted good football and tennis coaches, and sports costumes.
  - Another request was to have a computer lab, a garden, and more decorations to be used in the CFS.
  - Girls were also interested in learning more skill on how to use wool and natural material to make clothes and other products.
  - When they were asked if they have a playground at school or in a nearby place they replied that the school is far away, and they have only one class per week. That class is less likely to be used for playing, but for other educational classes. They also said that besides the CFS, no one else is interested in the area (its only Qattan camp and journalists who visit us). There is also one foreigner who voluntarily give them English language classes once weekly.
  - Children were also asked how they spend their daily life. After returning from school, they are just interested to finish their homework or house duties (requested by the parents) to be able to attend the CFS activities in time.



- They also mentioned that their parents now understand what they are doing in the CFS and are not resisting them spending time there. They are also happy with their parents who gained some skills and received some training during the weekly parent meetings.
- The children were also asked about the war and what they were doing during its days. Apparently as many were expecting land invasions all families left the neighborhood and went to their relatives. One girl commented: we left our area and went to stay with my auntie, but all places were not safe. Another girl added: Why they are doing this to us?
- We were waiting for the truce, said one child. We celebrated it, another child added, but when we returned home we found some broken windows, and the house looked terrible.
- We were happy when we returned home, because we could also see our teachers in the camp, one child commented.

**CFS parents focus group:**

- Parents of children who attend the CFS activities were invited to the focus group meeting.
- 22 women came to the meeting with most of them being the mothers, and the rest were grandmothers, elder sisters or aunties of the children. They were encouraged in the beginning of the meeting to talk about their experience with the CFS.
  - One started with saying that all children love the (camp). She also stated: Now they have culture. They know how to draw, and how to sing beautiful songs.
  - Another mother added: My little daughter goes to the KG. When the teacher heard her singing songs, she asked her: How come that you know such beautiful songs! Where do you get them from?
  - Most of the mothers described improvements in the children drawing and singing skills. Some others added that their children come back from the camp with various stories that they tell to their brothers and sisters.

- The parents also talked about an improvement in children behavior. Children who were aggressive, and used to beat their younger brothers and sisters became less violent, and started to behave. Nevertheless, parents are still concerned about aggression among their children. A couple of parents said that we tell our children that if they want to go to the camp, then they should behave, finish the school homework, or not cause problems.
- Going to the camp was used either as a reward to the children who behaved good at home which was very helpful to the parents.
- Another woman said: Our children now love to play and have fun. We now see them laugh and smile. They tell us stories and tales.
- Later on, the mothers were asked how the last war affected their children. Although they agreed that this time the brutality and consequences of the war was less than the Cast Lead, they reported the following problems:
  - Bedwetting, fear, and night terrors appeared in many children during and after the last attacks.
  - Some other children started to have various bodily pains mainly in the lower limbs.
  - Children were less likely to go out from their homes during the night.
  - Although most of the children improved, still some have complaints to be dealt with.
- Parents were also keen to talk about the experience they gained from attending the weekly parents meetings arranged in the CFS:
  - The CFS provided the parent with various learning experiences including first aid, how to use wasted items in making bags, cases, clothes, the importance of reading, and relaxation techniques.
  - The meetings were always interesting with new topics that never made parents feel bored.
  - The parents stated that now they know the importance of giving their children some free time and space for joy and play.

- They also learned how to use relaxation either during the meeting or at home.
- Parents became able to provide their children with certain activities and games that the CFS provides. They got closer to their children and as they said: We now have lovely things to do in our free time. One woman also added: but still many activities need a group of children not only few, and the camp is the best place for some games.
- A couple of women said openly that they both stopped beating their children.
- At the end of the focus group, the parents were asked what do their children need in their neighborhood. Suggestions and answer were as follows:
  - The need to have a small library where children can borrow books for reading.
  - They wanted their children to have their own private place or club.
  - The need to have reading and educational classes to help their children with any academic and educational difficulties.
  - They also requested to have a computer class, or lab to let children learn how to use the computer and benefit from its programmes.

### **The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire:**

As stated by its authors, The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) is a brief behavioral screening questionnaire about 3-16 year olds. It exists in several versions to meet the needs of researchers, clinicians and educationalists.

The SDQ ask about 25 attributes, some positive and others negative. These 25 items are divided between 5 scales: emotional symptoms (5 items), conduct problems (5 items), hyperactivity/inattention (5 items), peer relationship problems (5 items), and prosocial behavior (5 items). The total difficulties score is generated by adding the first four scores together. The version used for the evaluation is the SDQ and impact supplement for the parents of 4-16 year olds. The impact supplement asks whether the respondent thinks the young person has a problem, and if so, enquires further about chronicity, distress, social impairment, and burden to others.

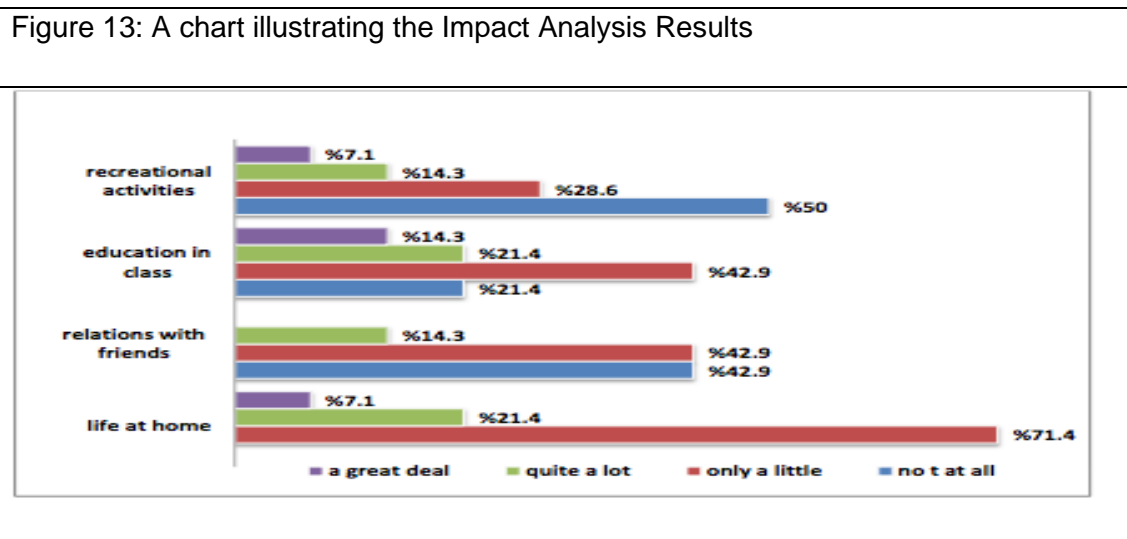
The SDQ can be used for clinical assessment, outcome evaluation, epidemiological studies, research, or screening purposes. The evaluator asked parents of the CFS children who attended the focus group to fill the questionnaire, and a statistician made the needed data entry and analysis.

14 parents filled the SDQ and impact supplement for the parents of 4-16 year olds. Age of the children varied between 5-14 years old, (mean was 9.34 years), with 50% (7) male and 50% (7) female children. The analysis showed that 44.76% of the children still have total difficulties. Those varied between hyperactivity/inattention problems (69.29%), and prosocial problems (16.4%). The following table illustrates the results:

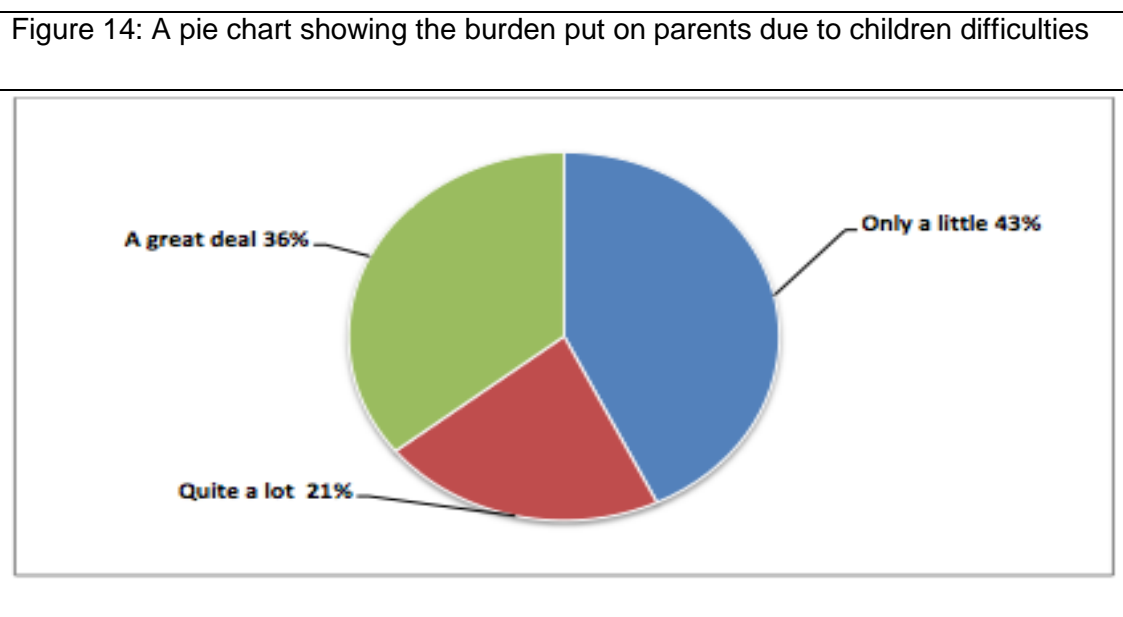
Figure 12: Difficulties as shown by the SDQ according to difficulty type.

	Mean	SD	Cumulative percent
Prosocial behavior	1.64	1.15	16.4%
Hyperactivity/inattention	6.93	1.21	69.29%
Emotional problems	3.43	2.03	34.29%
Conduct problems	4.07	1.49	40.71%
Peer Problems	6.31	1.55	63.08%
Total of SDQ	22.38	3.88	44.76%

The impact supplement analysis showed that those difficulties have affected various aspects of children life and activities. The parents evaluated that the difficulties have affected ( a great deal, or quite a lot) 21.4% of children’s recreational activities, 35.7% children’s education in class, 14.3% children’s relation with friends, and 28.5% children’s life at home (Figure 13).



Another question was regarding the burden that the difficulties children have put on their parent or family as a whole. 43% of parents responded that the difficulties only put a little burden on them, 21% quite a lot of burden, and 36% have a great deal of burden put on them (Figure 14).



The SDQ results show clearly that the children still have difficulties with various aspects of their life. Although the total SDQ score shows that 44.76% of children have difficulties, the highest impact was 35.7% and on education from the parents view point. Parents also find their children hyperactive, have problems with peers and misconduct. Those have put a great burden on 57% of the parents. Those results can only be indicators for the need for further intervention and help in the area. The SDQ was applied to the parents just 10 days after the November operations, which would affect the results. These also can not indicate whether the CFS was helpful or not as we do not have a base-line data.

### Summary of the main findings:

- The CFS continued to successfully provide a safe place for children where they can play and add colorful memories to their life.

- Children feel the ownership of the area. They keep themselves tidy, organized and follow the roles, something they are committed to do in the CFS but not in their homes.
- The programmes that targeted parents were very helpful to the parents, and children. They helped have a better communication at home and a better understanding between parents and children.
- Children and parents are all keen to see the CFS develop into a social or cultural club with a spacious playground, a small library, a theatre, and a computer corner.
- It was quite interesting to hear the children, the parents, and the animators give the same request or advices for the future.
- The children are still in need for further support and help. This does not necessitate their daily attendance and performing the same activities all the time. They need to have some time for their studies, and other duties, and cannot depend on the animators.

## In-depth Interviews:

Two trainers from FWE were interviewed ( Mrs Monika Goizel-Straube and Mr Hans-Joachim Sannock), and two members from QCC (Mrs Nehaia Abu Nahla the director, and Mr Mamdouh AbuKmail the Outreach Activities Coordinator). They were interviewed separately and the main findings from the meetings with the FWE trainers are:

- It was obvious to the FWE team that more people are interested in the CFS as more children started to participate, and the number of parents who attended meetings raised from 5 to about 35 in some days.
- It was noticeable the change in children behavior over the last two years.They became less aggressive, better school achievement, and parents seemed to be engaged with their children.
- It was also noticed that children started to laugh, smile, and appeared more clean and tidy.
- This caused the training on WPM to extend further to other QCC staff members, and later to KGs and other local people working with children in the community.
- The FWE team members were also attached to the children as they were trying their best to help them improve.
- Although there is a difference in culture, but the Waldorf methods encourage exchange of experiences and transcultural engagements. Some of the activities were modified to be suitable for the local culture.
- The FWE team delivered a training to the help the trainees become accountable, and dependant on themselves. Many of the trainees gained the needed skills to lead their own work.
- Still there is a need to have longer periods of training to be able to finish the training properly.
- There is a feeling among some trainers that the training is just half way and still more to be given especially to KG teachers and the rest of QCC staff.

The other two meetings results are as follows:

- .The QCC managed together with the FWE to develop the project from being a psychological intervention into more developmental one.
- The visit to Germany during November 2011 was of great importance as it was an eye opener on the FWE and a nice window to take a closer look at the schools.
- Finding a suitable place was always a challenge in Al-Samouni area. The current CFS there is a result of prolonged developments and successful achievements.
- The parents were skeptic in the beginning from dealing with the FWE team as they faced many issues with reporters and journalists immediately after the Cast Lead operation.
- The QCC also acknowledged the problem with translation but there was no better qualified translators in Gaza.
- There is also a huge difficulty in organizing workshops or training sessions where 10 trainers are delivering the training in the same time.
- There are noticeable improvements on children behavior during the CFS but what could be done next?
- There is no clear exit strategy or phasing out, thus the children could one day wake up and find the CFS gone.



# Recommendations:

---

- KG teachers still in need for further training. They also work under the pressure of having two conflicting directions. The demands of parents that their children should be able to read, write, and be ready for school, and the FWE team directions regarding the inability of children to do these tasks in such young age. This issue should be solved and clarified before any future training.
- Both, the QCC and CFS teams are capable of running the needed tasks with confidence and independence. The gained experience by the CFS animators is to be reproduced. They can start transferring their knowledge to other animators that work locally in Gaza strip. The FWE could provide more advisory or supervision tasks to the teams in the future rather than the regular training sessions.
- Its recommended that the QCC could move one step further in supporting the children in Gaza Strip through training KG teachers and other professionals that work with children. This will need the establishment of a training unit in the center, but the benefit will be great in terms of cost effectiveness.
- In any case, any future training needs to be based on an assessment of the trainee needs, and a clear schedule agreed upon between the FWE team and the QCC management. The schedule is to be announced and trainees informed who should attend, what the objectives are, or why they are excluded.
- The children and parent in the CFS are still in need for further intervention and support that need to be provided in less intensive way, allowing the children to be less dependent on animators.
- A cultural center that will be open for longer hours for either parents or children is recommended. The center should contain a play ground a sport club, in addition to a library, and a computer corner. The parents and children could be encouraged to participate in shaping the new center and developing their CFS. A visiting mental health specialist is needed to deal with children that have difficulties, and in need for specialized intervention.

- A sudden termination of the CFS project could cause emotional difficulties to the children and add a lot of burden on their parents. A phasing out strategy is recommended if the project is to stop. This necessitates a gradual decrease of the contact days between the animators and the children. The children and their families should be aware of any decision made regarding terminating the project and be part of the phasing out strategy.
- The experience gained from the work in the project worth to be carefully documented and a model for dealing with children living under stressful conditions could be developed.

Annex I: The training evaluation questionnaire

يهدف هذا الاستبيان الي التعرف علي مدى فاعلية الدورات التدريبية التي عقدها الخبراء الألمان من مدرسة فالدورف وبالتعاون مع مركز القطان للطفل على اكساب المتدربين المهارات اللازمة في التعامل مع الأطفال . ويتكون هذا الاستبيان من جزئين يرجى منكم في الجزء الاول وضع العلامة المناسبة والتي تقيس مدى الحاجة الي التدريب الذي عقد وكذلك مدى مناسبة محتوى التدريب والالية التي تم استخدامها كما ويمكنكم اضافة أي تعقيب .

يقيس الجزء الاول بشكل اساسي المواضيع التدريبية التالية : سرد القصة، صناعة الدمى، الرسم، الأنشطة الجسدية بالاضافة الى انه يمكنكم اضافة مواضيع تدريبية اخرى. كما يرجى منكم تعبئة الجزء الثاني من خلال اجاباتكم على الاسئلة المطروحة.

الموضوع التدريبي	الحاجة لتلقي التدريب	المحتوى	آلية التدريب	تعقيبات أخرى
	1 ليس هناك حاجة	1 غير مفيد	1 سيئة	
	2 غير متأكد	2 غير مرتبط بالموضوع	2 مقبولة	
	3 هناك حاجة	3 مفيد الى حد ما	3 جيدة	
	4 حاجة ماسة	4 مفيد جداً	4 ممتازة	
الرسم				
رواية القصة				
صناعة الدمى				
الأنشطة الحركية				

برجاء الإجابة على الأسئلة التالية :

1 هل هناك أي موضوعات أو أنشطة أخرى ترى أنه يجب تضمينها خلال برامج تدريبية مستقبلية؟

---



---



---

2 أي من المواضيع التي تم طرحها أثناء الدورات التدريبية كان يمكن حذفه، أو عدم ادراجه، ولماذا؟

---

---

3 يمكن لك الان كتابة أي اقتراحات أو توصيات بخصوص الدورات التدريبية. برجاء طرح ثلاثة تعليقات على الأقل

---

---

4 برجاء التعقيب على الأمور التالية:

a. الترتيبات المحلية المتعلقة بمكان التدريب

---

---

b. الألتزام بوقت ومواعيد الدورات

---

---

c. الطرق والوسائل التدريبية المتبعة

---

---

نشكر لكم حسن تعاونكم

د. ياسر أبو جامع