

Qatr an-Nada

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Towards a fair start for children in the Arab World



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Psychosocial support for teachers,
children and parents in difficult circumstances

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In Southern Sudan, 250 Demobilized Child Soldiers Trade Weapons for Text-books

“We are determined to demobilize all child soldiers this year,” announced Executive Director Benjamin Gimba of the Southern Sudan Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission at a gathering.

About 250 children associated with a local armed group had been demobilized just before the announcement. The landmark event was the biggest of its kind since the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, which commits the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement/Army and the Government of Sudan to child demobilization throughout the country.

Local officials, military officers, parents, religious leaders and UN representatives attended the two-hour ceremony. After a final parade, the children handed over their weapons and uniforms and received a set of second-hand clothes along with textbooks from the local school.

Sarah, 13, was among the more than 40 girls and 200 boys who were demobilized from the military. “From today, I will be a student,” she said. “I will leave behind being a soldier.”

Sarah’s mother, Nyakuach Mayang, is a soldier herself. “I love this day because it is a symbol of peace,” she said. “My daughter Sarah will have a different life than me, a better chance. Maybe now there will not be so much death.”

When Sarah was six years old, her father died fighting in Sudan’s 21-year civil war, which claimed an estimated two million lives and displaced more than four million people. After his death, Sarah’s mother joined the army, and at age nine, Sarah began her military training – learning to march and handle an automatic rifle.

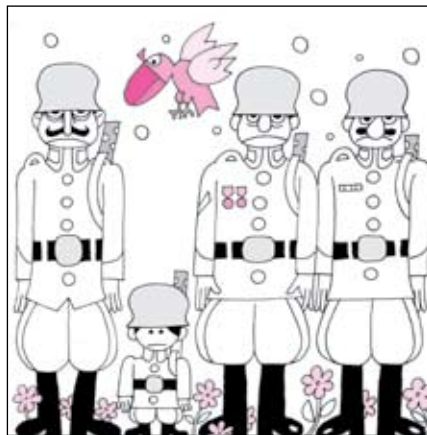
For the past few years, she has been deployed on missions, leaving home for five or six days at a time to carry supplies, cook and clean for her fellow soldiers. However, today, a pile of guns lies at the foot of the flagpole at Khorfulus. Moreover, all Sarah is carrying is a Primary 1 (first grade) English textbook and a big grin.

“This demobilization event is very significant, not only for each child,” explained UNICEF Child Protection Officer Dombek Deng, “because we were

able to release them from the military before they were moved further away to join other units and became difficult to trace.”

So far this year, more than 400 children have been removed from the Sudan People’s Liberation Army and other armed forces and groups in Southern Sudan. There are at least 2,000 more children to be identified, registered and released to their families to begin the process of reintegration. Since 2001, some 20,000 children have been demobilized in Southern Sudan.

Meanwhile, teachers in Khorfulus are preparing for the start of the new school year, armed with enough textbooks for all the primary school children – including those who will be joining school from the military. Over the coming days, UNICEF will complete distribution of additional school supplies such as pencils, chalk and exercise books all over the region with the logistics assistance of other UN agencies and peacekeepers.



A drawing by Bahjat Othman in Lana Haq

“I was very happy from the first moment I heard that my sons had been registered to be demobilized,” said Joseph Bayak, putting his hands proudly on the shoulders of his sons Simon, 12, and Musa, 11. “So you can imagine how happy I am now that it has actually happened today. I have been a soldier and I am still a soldier. But now that our children have been removed from the army, I only ask that you help them go to school and change their minds from the military way of thinking.”

However, some habits die hard. As Sarah and Musa waved goodbye from the boat on the riverbank, they proudly saluted.

(http://www.unicef.org/protection/sudan_33617.html)

Promises and Goodwill Are Not Enough

Scenes of children living in circumstances of armed conflicts, waiting in refugee camps to get food and medical care, and the spread of landmines and light weapons, make the international community feel the suffering of these children. Their protection is provided for by the human rights incorporated in agreements and treaties, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The initiatives, provided for in UN Security Council resolutions 1261, 1379 and 1314, contributed to the classification of child protection as a matter of human security. Children in more than 50 countries suffer from armed conflicts or their effects. Wars have displaced 22 million children inside or outside their countries. Out of four million people who died because of wars since 1990, 90% were civilians, while 80% were women and children.

An active childcare movement was established after World War I after millions of children underwent tragedies during the hostilities. In 1919, the League of Nations established the Committee for the Protection of Children. However, the ongoing deterioration of child conditions after the war compelled a non-governmental organization, International Save the Children Union, to object and call for orientation programs to consider childhood. The organization adopted in 1924 the Geneva Declaration on the Rights of the Child, which called on humanity to give children the best it had.

After World War II, the international community felt more worried about child security. In 1946, the UN General Assembly established a special child protection organization, the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF), which was tasked with providing special protection to wounded children, especially war victims. In 1959, the Declaration of the Rights of the Child was adopted in UN General Assembly resolution 1386. The same concern was expressed in two international pacts of 1969, dealing with economic, social and cultural rights and civil and political rights.

Efforts to develop child protection during armed conflicts were intensified later on. In mid-1970, the UN General Assembly adopted the Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict. In 1989,

the international community adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which was endorsed by 191 countries, giving a push to humanity's efforts to protect children. In September 1990, the World Summit for Children was held in New York, where the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children was adopted and an action plan to implement the declaration was devised. The UN General Assembly in 1995 appointed experts to study the effects of armed conflicts on children. A special protocol, issued on May 25, 2000, dealt with alleviating the suffering of children in areas of armed conflicts.

Nowadays, the international community continues to stress the utmost necessity of protecting the new generation from the effects of war. However, violence since 1990 has increased compared to earlier stages of history. The world has become less stable and more violent since a world summit adopted 27 resolutions in favor of women and children, to be implemented before 2000. Obstacles hindering the implementation of commitments are becoming more difficult, compared to the early 1990s when the world pledged to build a viable community for children.

The following numbers show the difficulties currently faced by children victims of armed conflicts:

- Three hundred thousand children are being abused to fight in wars around the world.
- Two million children have been killed.
- Five million children have been disabled.
- One million children have been orphaned.
- Ten million children have been severely wounded in wars.

The failure of the political international community to keep its promises about protecting children overshadows a dangerous ethical crisis with major effects on the world's future. "As today's children are the citizens of tomorrow's world, their survival, protection and development is the prerequisite for the future development of humanity." [Plan of Action for Implementing the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children in the 1990s].

Measures being taken to protect children in armed conflicts show that promises and goodwill are not enough. Strict

measures must follow; child violators must be sent a clear message that the world will not watch violence and violation against children. Child violation in armed conflicts should cease to be just a deplorable act.

(Extracted from al-Jaysh magazine, 216, www.lebarmy.gov.lb)

Pro-Majority and Pro-Government Sentiments in a Third Intermediate Class!

During her explanation of a national education and civic upbringing lesson, a teacher asked her third-intermediate students (13- to 14-year old children) in a pro-government school in Beirut to focus on the following sentence: "An authority that possesses only material assets, that does not abide by laws or by the powers endowed upon it, and does not enjoy the approval of the people's majority, at least, cannot be considered legitimate." Her predominantly pro-government class became a stage for a political discussion among teenagers.

The class is made up of 32 students,



A Drawing by Lina Merhej

including a minority of seven who are pro-Hezbollah and Amal Movement and 20 students, who support the Future Movement and the Progressive Socialist Party (progovernment). The remaining five treat politics with nonchalance, and usually do not take part in such discussions. Although political discussions are officially prohibited in the school, pro-government students wear blue scarves, while pro-opposition students wear yellow shawls. Here, the administration steps in to prevent confessional tensions among their students, warning against political and sectarian emblems and declaring potential violators punishable.

(al-Safir, March 14, 2007)

Lebanese children face post-war challenges

In the southern Lebanese town of Srifa, older generations have lived through many wars. However, the recent, month-long conflict between Israel and Hezbollah was the first for 15-year-old Mariam Kamal El-Dine and her younger sisters. Mariam and her family fled during the hostilities but are now back living in what is left of the house where her parents and grandparents grew up. The house has no electricity. Outside, huge piles of rubble, broken glass and twisted metal are everywhere.

Although the family survived the ordeal, trauma still shows in Mariam's face and in her voice. "We feel miserable and emotionally drained," she says. "We have been separated from our friends." Adds Mariam's sister Sara, 14: "Srifa has suffered vast destruction. Before the war, we used to go to the town centre. There would be many people there. Now if you go there, you don't feel like walking around."

For Mariam's parents, even meeting basic family needs is a daily challenge. The small generator is not strong enough to power a refrigerator, so meat and other foods spoil quickly.

"It's painful to see this. We built our dreams here," says Mariam Kamal El-Dine of the damage done in Srifa during the war between Israel and Hezbollah.

As grim as their situation is, Mariam's family has been relatively lucky. Some 15,000 houses – including at least half of those in Srifa – were destroyed in the bombing of southern Lebanon. Of the nearly one million people who fled during the war, more than a quarter remain displaced – either because they lost their homes or because unexploded munitions and other dangerous circumstances make it impossible to go back.

Mariam's school was also badly damaged – as were about 50 schools in the region. For now, classes that were to have started in mid-September have been postponed until the building can be repaired.

UNICEF Lebanon's back-to-school campaign aims to have 350,000 children in classes by October 18. Mariam hopes she will be one of them. She wants to be a journalist one day.

"Some of our dreams and aspirations have been shattered," she says, "But I am sure many things will change in our future."

(UNICEF in Emergencies, http://www.unicef.org/emerg/index_35910.html)

Child soldiers: A Global Issue

As armed conflict proliferates around the world, increasing numbers of children are exposed to the brutalities of war. In numerous countries, boys and girls are recruited as child soldiers by armed forces and groups, either forcibly or voluntarily. Children are susceptible to recruitment by manipulation or may be driven to join armed forces and groups because of poverty or discrimination. Often they are abducted at school, on the streets or at home. Once recruited or forced into service, they are used for a variety of purposes. While many children participate in combat, others are used for sexual purposes, as spies, messengers, porters, servants or to lay or clear landmines. Many children serve multiple roles. Children may be recruited for several reasons. In countries that are already poor, war tends to deteriorate economic and social circumstances, thereby forcing families into further economic hardship. As a result, children may join armed forces or groups to secure daily food and survival. Conflict is also likely to disrupt children's education. When schools are closed, children are left with few alternatives and may be more easily swayed to join armed groups or forces.

When a conflict is prolonged, armed forces and groups are more likely to use children to replenish their ranks. This trend is facilitated by the availability of light, inexpensive small arms and light weapons that can be easily handled by children aged 10 and younger.

Children who are used as soldiers are robbed of their childhood and are often subjected to extreme brutality. Stories abound of children who are drugged before being sent out to fight and forced to commit atrocities against their own families as a way to destroy family and communal ties. Girls are frequently used for sexual purposes, commonly assigned to a commander and at times gang-raped.

The number of children who have been recruited and used in hostilities is difficult to quantify. Although research suggests that 300,000 child soldiers are exploited in over 30 conflicts around

the world, in fact, no one knows the real number. Efforts are under way to collect more reliable information on the use of child soldiers and to gather data systematically on the effects of war on children.

Despite progress achieved over the last decade in the global campaign to end the re-cruitment and use of child soldiers, large numbers of children continue to be exploited in war and placed in the line of fire. The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict – entered into force on 12 February 2002 – is a milestone in the campaign, strengthening the legal protection of children and helping to prevent their use in armed conflict.

The Optional Protocol raises the minimum age for direct participation in hostilities to 18 years from the previous minimum age of 15 years specified in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other legal instruments. The treaty also prohibits compulsory recruitment by government forces of anyone under 18 years of age, and calls on state parties to raise the minimum age above 15 for voluntary recruitment, and to implement strict safeguards when voluntary recruitment of children under 18 years is permitted. In the case of non-state armed groups, the treaty prohibits all recruitment – voluntary and compulsory – under age 18.

The Optional Protocol's entry into force represents a great achievement on behalf of children, but is not a sufficient response to the human rights abuses suffered by thousands of child soldiers each day. Instead, it should be seen as an important step in a process that includes widespread ratification of the Optional Protocol and its systematic implementation. The ultimate objective is to end the recruitment and use of children as soldiers. There are several key elements that are essential to realizing this objective: close monitoring of, and reporting on, states' compliance with the Optional Protocol, political leadership, and a strong focus on the rights of all children not only during conflict but also after it ends.

(Amnesty International, <http://web.amnesty.org/pages/childsoldiers-background-eng>)

Children Bear the Brunt of Lebanon-Israeli War

Children face serious health problems in the coming months because of the Lebanon-Israel conflict, in which about a third of those killed or wounded were youngsters, a US medical charity said.

California-based International Medical Corps, or IMC, which has been giving medical help in Lebanon, said that a "disproportionately high" number of children were victims of the month-long conflict, particularly in Lebanon.

Citing UN statistics, the IMC said more than 300 children were killed in Lebanon and 1,000 wounded while a further half million youngsters were displaced by battles between Hezbollah guerrillas and Israeli forces in southern Lebanon.

The Israeli Foreign Ministry names eight Israeli children killed by Hezbollah rockets, including two 18-year olds. The total Israeli death toll is estimated at more than 150. It is unclear how many Israeli children were wounded.

"We are particularly horrified by the effects this crisis is having on children," said IMC president Nancy Aoessey, referring to children on both side of the conflict.

A fragile truce is in place following a UN resolution to end the fighting, but the IMC predicted the conflict would exacerbate childhood diseases, such as measles, in Lebanon.

"Diarrhea and respiratory illnesses, which were rampant in Lebanon during the earlier civil war, are expected to resurface," added the group.

Doctors from the IMC have noticed marked behavioral changes in children living in the conflict zone, with an increase in nightmares and sleep disorders.

Many displaced adolescents and children were taking on the role of providers and becoming preoccupied with acquiring supplies, the group said.

"This has brought on increased incidents of violence and quarreling with conflicts about food, water and clothing occurring between refugee and internally displaced children who are standing in distribution lines," said the group.

The IMC estimated there were about 135,000 displaced people living in schools, camps and other public sites in Lebanon and that about 470,000 had sought refuge with friends and relatives. A further 180,000 had fled to neighboring

Syria, with about a third of those sheltering in public areas such as schools.

With so many children displaced and no longer near schools, the IMC said the academic year set to start in a few weeks would be seriously disrupted.

In Syria, some Lebanese families were refusing to leave schools where they had taken shelter and this would disrupt the new academic year for the local population, too.

Those returning home after the violence face the danger of thousands of unexploded bombs. The IMC estimates up to 300 unexploded bombs could have landed in the conflict zone a day.

Land mines are another danger, with about 500,000 in southern Lebanon alone, the report said.

(RedOrbit,

http://www.redorbit.com/news/general/617548/children_bear_brunt_of_lebanonisraeli_war_report/index.html)

Violence, War and Terror... in an Exhibition for Children's Drawings

In innocent, colored drawings, Iraqi children expressed the effects of acts of violence and terror on them and their imaginations. The drawings seemed scared, confused and filled with ongoing fear. Their eyes could not see anything other than guns, tanks... and gilded domes. Their memories did not bear anything other than images of body parts, fires and smoke. This was expressed in works displayed at an exhibition of children's drawings that was held by the Central Federation of Baghdad Youths on the theme "The Iraqi Child's Rights," which was accompanied by a blood donation campaign. The event, held in cooperation with the Iraq Commission for Civil Society Organizations," included more than 200 drawings by children from the provinces of Baghdad, Karbala, Hilla and Falluja. It included a seminar on the dangerous effects of violence and terrorism on children's behavior and present and future tendencies. The seminar, presented by Dr. Safira Naji, a professor of aesthetics at the Fine Arts Institute, hosted Dr. Naji Kinani, a professor at the Fine Arts Academy, and Dr. Hanan Obeidi, a specialized researcher. Kinani and Obeidi presented two studies on the psychological damage that acts of vio-

lence and terror have on children, the atmospheres of terrorization and fear that threaten them and surround them all the time, and their behavioral effects that heavily disturb social balance, leading to destructive ethical degradation.

(al-Sabah al-Jadid,

<http://www.newsabah.com/paper.php?name=News&file=article&sid=8595>)

Children and Occupation: Two Opposites

"When you go to the battleground, armed down to your feet, and you find your enemy bearing no weapons at all, it is fair to pull back. Otherwise, your war will definitely be outright assault" – attributed to an ancient Chinese officer. Ongoing crimes against Palestinian children, during the current Intifada, are a continuation to past crimes [omission]. The reason is that the Israeli military establishment is trying to avoid strong Palestinian elements by military reinforcements, counter attacks, new weapons, bloody deterrence and activist assassination. Preparedness is not merely military; it has reached media, the judiciary and psychological warfare; they want to offset Palestinian political and ethical supremacy that prevailed during the First Intifada. Once the Aqsa Intifada was launched, Israeli media experts came up with a misleading premise: the Palestinian people, the National Authority and political organizations are pushing children to the forefront for militants to hide behind when they fire at Israeli soldiers, who fire back in self-defense, wounding and killing children. Pro-Israeli US and Western media have focused on the claims of sending children to die and on questions and conclusions that undermine the human aspect of the Palestinians: Why do Palestinian women let their children face death? Why do they give up their children without compassion or sympathy?

Childhood and occupation are two opposite and contradicting matters; military occupation is a matter of ongoing war in all aspects of life. War means threatening childhood and forcing hatred onto children. Consequently, their childhood is stolen, and they are pushed into a stage where they endorse adult practices and expose themselves to danger.

Israeli Occupation authorities have deep-

ly undermined all symbols ad valorem of children: the human being, the land, sanctities, individual and communal freedom, trees, water, civilization, culture, leaders, houses and even toys and bread. All what children love have become threatened, destroyed or confused by a specific argument: occupation. It is logical, then, for children who are less than 18 to defend their private and public things with their special means, which look very hard to understand in normal living circumstances and in a normal society. Children's fear for their symbols from the occupation, which threatens everything, has become bigger than their fear for their own lives. This forces them to clash fearlessly with soldiers, and the result is death. This behavior does not stem from prior conscious thinking; it is a result of an interaction of all those elements in daily life. It expresses itself in the moment of face comprehensive outburst (uprising). Internal interaction starts inside the children with questioning, discontent and anger, develops into hatred and desire for revenge, and ends with resistance and clashing with the soldiers and settlers who have destroyed their childhood.

A strong emotion of insult and oppression prevails due to occupation actions that threaten all symbols ad valorem of children. Children belong to the mainstream national culture of the Palestinian people, which glorifies freedom, independence, redemption from the occupation, sacrifice for the homeland, rejection of surrender and submission, and radical rejection of occupation. These are supreme national values of the whole people. And these intricate factors push children to take part in resisting the occupation and clashing with its symbols once any contact takes place.

(Mohannad Abdel-Hamid, Ru'ya magazine,
www.sis.gov.ps/arabic/roya)

Children in Difficult Circumstances

The term “difficult circumstances” does not have a single meaning in all settings. In calm countries, difficult circumstances include adolescent problems, conflict between generations, rape, poverty, problems of solitude, etc. In the Arab region, difficult circumstances have crueller meanings: war, death, destruction and violence. Life in our countries is at the brink; what is always needed is avoiding the abyss, no less. Israel’s existence at the heart of this region led to the prevalence of violence and destruction and made the war an ongoing threat.

Dr. Fadia Hoteit

Early childhood professor at the Education Faculty, the Lebanese University



What remains of al-Ishraq School in Bint Jbeil after the Israeli onslaught!

What is the cruelest scene in wars? If you ask people this question, it will not be late before you get the answer: the image of a wounded infant, the image of a lonely child sitting in tears between the remains of a house where his parents have perished, or the image of the remains of children being carried by rescuers from a destroyed building. The cruelty of these scenes is a result of the innocence of children’s faces. “What is their fault?” is

a question that comes to your head, hot and sticky; it sticks to you and refuses to go away. When adults die in wars, it is something that can be understood. However, how can children, who have not seen much in life or done anything wrong, be treated with such brutality?

How big is the horror lived by children in our Arab region?

In Lebanon, statistics show that the latest Israeli war led to 1,140 civilian

deaths, including 214 women (19%), while 30% were children under 12. In addition, 4,036 people were wounded, and 220,000 people fled the country. Four million square meters of buildings were destroyed, while 700 factories, workshops, studios and industrial and institutions workshops were partially or completely destroyed. The Israeli army targeted 74 bridges. Ten thousand tons of heavy fuel leaked off the Lebanese coast,

polluting 80 kilometers of the Lebanese shores. Thirty thousand housing units were destroyed.

The Lebanese did not suffer one Israeli war; they experienced a long and intermittent civil war, thus, accumulating many wounds and painful memories about war. The effects must have had disturbed their children's psychological balance. Experts estimate that more than half the Lebanese suffered Post-Traumatic Stress/Syndrome Disorder (PTSD) for a short period after the July War.

Palestine

Statistics show that Israeli wars in Palestine had the following results: Almost two thirds (65.0%) believe that anti-children violence exists in Palestinian territories (69.8% in the West Bank and 55.5% in the Gaza Strip) during the first half of 2006; 56.8% of families believe that security circumstances are the main source of violence against children, followed by security problems (9.6%); and 38.7% of fathers and mothers believe that tension levels and psychological stress symptoms increased between 2005 and 2006 among children living with their families. According to a report by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 4,516 people died during the intifada up until Oct. 31, 2006, including 868 (19.2%) children (under 18). Psychological health studies show that "81% of Gaza Strip children had sleeping problems, such as nightmares and inability to sleep alone, while 87% of Palestinian children suffer sadness and depression, 83% fear of aircrafts, 72% show signs of violence and 79% suffer concentration failure and absentmindedness. In all cases, suffering hits children, leading to psychological crises in many instances, such as bedwetting, low achievement in school and acute fear. Childhood has become daily nightmares, and children lack a healthy and safe environment, while playgrounds and children parks are absent."

Iraq

The circumstances in Iraq are also very violent. Data show that loss, orphanhood, oppression, diseases and



A drawing by Bahjat Othman in Lana Haq

psychological disorders affect post-war Iraqi children. Children not only suffer oppression and deprivation of care and attention but also suffer the killing, torture and oppression of their parents. Studies show that "the percentage of Iraqi children who suffer PTSD has risen alarmingly, affecting their actions and behaviors. This is an abnormal indicator of these children's unstable condition." In a recent study on "the psychological effects of the war on Iraqis, which was carried out on 2,000 people in all Iraqi provinces, 92% fear being killed by an explosion and 60% suffer panic bouts that prevent them from getting out, fearing being the next victims."

Generally, the main conditions suffered by children during wars include:

- 1- Orphanhood and tragedies

- 2- Disease and malnutrition
- 3- Homelessness
- 4- Violent scenes

Specialists note that "these traumas may be accompanied by cases of chronic phobia or fear from events, persons or things associated with the incident, such as soldiers, sirens, loud voices, aircrafts. Sometimes, the child expresses these cases with tears, violence, anger, yelling or getting into a state of deep depression, in addition to symptoms, such as headache, colic, breathing difficulties, vomiting, involuntary urination, lack of appetite for food, lack of sleep, nightmares and illusionary pains in the event of watching people in pain or subjected to torture."

The psychological difficulties that people suffer have varying effects according to the personality and prior expertise. Weaker and younger people suffer more destructive effects: "traumas leave scars on the victims' psychologies. It is painful that these psychopathological effects remain in most cases for life." Children suffer psychological pressures more when they are far from their parents or when their parents are harmed. Parents are in many instances protect children from assault.

Usually, researchers define PTSD as "an anxiety disorder that can develop after exposure to a terrifying incident, causing emotions of strong panic and helplessness vis-à-vis the incident. It appears at any age, in-

Symptoms of Disorder

- Continuously recalling the traumatic incident's experience in one or more of the following:
 - o Having disturbing memories of the incident. In young children, play in which aspects of trauma recur repeatedly.
 - o Having upsetting dreams. In young children, having blurred, frightening dreams.
 - o Acting or feeling such as the traumatic experience is happening again, that is, living the traumatic experience, hallucinations, delusions and breakups of the trauma's memories (children reenact the trauma's qualitative role).
 - o Severe psychological anguish when faced with internally or externally generated conditional stimuli similar to one of the trauma's aspects.
- Continuously avoiding stimuli related to the traumatic incident and showing a calm general response that did not exist before the traumatic incident (avoiding certain thoughts, emotions, discussions, activities, places and people). Failing to remember the trauma's important aspect. Showing relatively limited emotions, disengaging with others and having a pessimistic view of the future).
- Two or more ongoing expressions of a growing agitation nature (difficulty in falling asleep, anger, difficulty in concentrating and excessive alertness).

cluding childhood. The symptoms appear following the traumatic incident, whether immediately or a month or a year later. The incident may be manmade (plane crashes, car accidents, wars, massacres, acts of torture, assaults and acts of violence, such as rape, forced theft, etc.) or natural (earth-quakes, floods, volcano eruptions).”

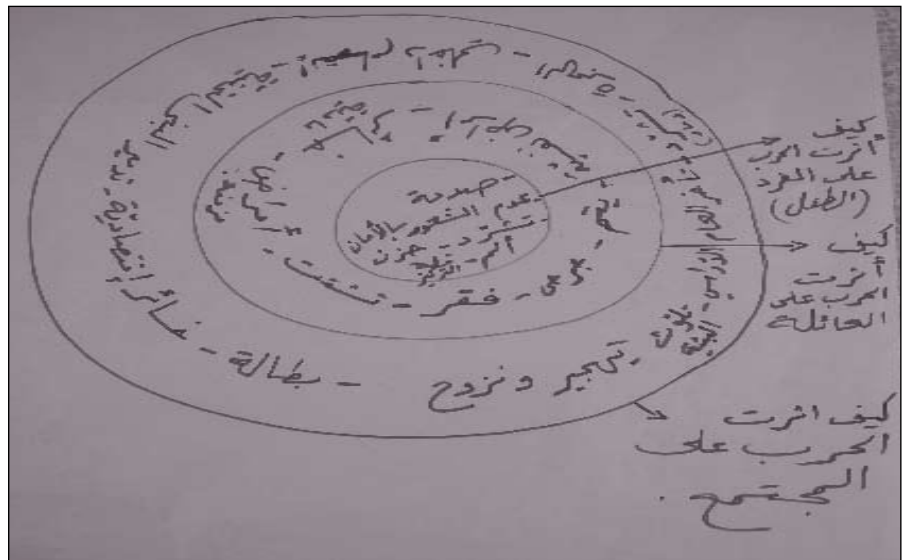
Precautions

In an issue of Messages, a magazine of Médecins Sans Frontières, a dossier is dedicated to providing psychological support, as part of the medical services provided by the organization in societies at war. A group of doctors at a roundtable discusses the efficiency of dealing with observed cases in comparison with PTSD symptoms. They concluded that precautions must be taken into consideration while dealing with cases in severe circumstances, including:

1- Distinguishing between disorders after disasters or earthquakes and disorders after repetitive incidents. In the latter, a person can develop a behavior that adapts to a certain extent with the disturbed situation. His/her responses can also differ from PTSD symptoms, as the case is in Palestine. (See elsewhere an article by Dr. Elie Karam on Lebanon)

2- Resorting hurriedly to psychotherapy leads sometimes to unsuitable consequences, especially when intervention takes place too early, that is, immediately after the traumatic incident. Such intervention may put on hold voluntary internal psychological action mechanisms, sometimes obstructing the effects of mourning an individual or a family – a process that needs time to complete.

This precaution coincides with the findings of a study conducted by IDRAK on war circumstances in Lebanon. The study concluded that 40 to 45 percent of young residents of war-torn areas show severe symptoms for four to six weeks, but the majority was healed within a year thanks to limited help. Experts believe that remedial intervention is better put off and restricted to the 10 percent who show chronic psychopathological symptoms. The primary and necessary stage must be that of psychological support for traumatized people, who should be encouraged to express themselves and let out their strong



The effects of war on children, parents and society as seen by trained teachers

emo-tions.

3- Violence should not be taken out of context. PTSD therapy does not discriminate between those subjected to violence and those inflicting it, or more importantly, between violence that is a response to external aggression and violence that is internally generated.

Furthermore, being through a war and its horrors can help develop some practical and helpful approaches. In an experiment in southern Lebanon with the parents of young, war-traumatized children, mothers found through expertise some suitable approaches

to deal with traumas:

- To have all family members together during danger is better than to send children away from parents.
- Parents should express their emotions in order to feel better and let out pressure and psychological burdens.
- It is better to have the father with the family during danger.
- It is good to believe and pray.
- It is good to have at hand a military force that individuals believe is capable of defending them and their habitat.

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2. Lysandra Ohrstrom, "War inflicts broad range of mental wounds", The Daily Star newspaper, Sep. 4, 2006; and walid.virtual.vps-host.net/crtd/?q=en/node/184.
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Education and Crises

Childhood is a period of innocence, a special stage in life in which children are protected, more than any other time, from the external world's threats and incidents. In crises and wars, however, the ongoing and unexpected threat of violence and hostility leaves major effects on children's lives and development. War is a major threat to health; its direct and indirect effects last for months, maybe years to come. The role of school and education seems crucial here in facing the psychological effects of tension, fear, anger and anguish on teaching and learning.

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Head of mainstreaming programs
al-Mabarrat Organization, Lebanon



A "classroom," substitute to the destroyed room. Admission exams took place here

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last for months, maybe years to come. The role of school and education seems crucial here in facing the psychological effects of tension, fear, anger and anguish on teaching and learning.

The effects of crises are reflected in children in the form of behaviors that are accompanied with hyper-activity, under-attention, uneasiness and hasty

responses, thus affecting academic performance.

The Teacher's Role

In light of wars' effects on children's psychology and the individual's attachment and psychological vulnerability to his/her habitat (the psychosocial model), the teacher's



Play automatically helps in the expression of hidden emotions

role is that of psychological support. The teacher helps the student overcome wars' repercussions of war and supports the student morally to express his/her emotions and develop an objective view of wars. The teacher provides the student with behaviors that help him/her accommodate and control tension (cognitive-behavioral therapy) by using the communication skill in listening well to others and sympathizing with them. The teacher also asks open-ended questions that help the student discharge and reveal unbalanced ideas. He/she uses play, drawing and theater, according to children's ages to release such emotions, on the condition that the teacher does not become a psycho-therapist; he/she should play the role of a psychological supporter. If indications of disorder appear, the teacher plays an important role by providing psychological work-ers and parents with important observations to follow up such cases with specialists.

Support

The teacher at this stage, through good class management, should establish a class environment that enhances

security and belonging and clarifies rules and expecta-tions. He/she should also establish a fixed system of reward and consequences. Means for support aims at:

- Helping students express emotions.
- Providing students with behaviors that help facing and easing the effects of war.
- Helping students express their ideas and get rid of unhelpful ones.
- Helping in establishing a supporting environment that meets the human needs of students.

Crucial for the success of support is its suitability to the age group. Good communica-tion is also crucial for the success of all sorts of education psychosocial support.

Sorts of support

- Communication and listening.
- Therapy through play:
 - oSocio-dramatic play (masks, puppets, role-playing, acting, etc.).
 - oPlay with sand and water.
- Arts (drawing, newspaper collages, etc.).
- Activities that express emotions.
 - Expressive language.
 - Cognitive behavior and its

strategies.

- Open-ended activities.

Therapy through Play

-What does therapy through play mean?

- oAccepting children the way they are.

oEnhancing the feeling of tolerance.

oKnowing the emotions of children.

oContinuously respecting their abilities.

oGiving them freedom of play.

The principles of therapy through play:

Therapy through play relies on the fact that play is the child's natural envi-ronment for expressing himself/herself. A child has the right to:

- oPlay.
- oTalk.
- oDiscover, create and experiment.
- oInnocence.
- oDignity.
- oIndependence.
- oLive in a safe habitat that helps him/her develop.
- oExpression.
- oThink freely.
- oReceive emotional support.

- What is the objective of therapy through play?

o Play is a basic element of early childhood programs.

o Play is a chance for physical activity, entertainment, intellectual challenge and social interaction.

o Play helps children express their talents, interests and emotions and practice games that help them develop.

o Play helps in discovering the child's personal identity and develops his/her feeling of himself/herself and others.

o Play helps in playing social roles and learning their importance in life. This helps in finding ways to face problems, face real or imagined threats and work on resolving conflicts.

In other words, voluntary play is a constructive medium for expression, communication, social integration and problem solving.

Palyng With Sand And Water

Therapy with sand provides a free and safe space for expressing hidden emotions. This kind of play, its tools (such as containers, shovels, spoons, machetes, etc.) and related living organisms, generate an emotion within the child. This emotion affects his/her sense of himself/herself, which is latent in his subconscious.

- By playing with sand water, children express their emotions or what they have been through during a war (the teacher discusses with the child what he/she expressed with sand).

- Playing with sand gives children a chance to remember [?] the pre-speech stage (it helps them remember) by recognizing the shapes they make with sand without being able to remember them. However, by starting to harmonize with shapes, children are given a chance to deal with the trauma's subconscious reasons.

- A closed container with fine sand represents the limits of a safe environment for the child – sand stays in a limited space – while the child has a trusted person nearby. When the child makes shapes or symbols with sand, he/she remembers incidents or developments hidden in his/her subconscious that he/she does not



[Drawing by Abdel-Hamid Kabesh [psychosocial support/difficult circumstances

want to express directly.

Organizing kindergarten classrooms

- Putting aside the classroom's corners (mathematics, sciences, readings, etc.) during the follow-up period.

- Putting in place games that reflect various topics (war, home, street, etc.).

- Diversifying games: toys, cubes, Lego pieces, charades, puppets, games for symbolic play (war toys, home toys, toys of public places, etc.), etc.

How does play start?

- Therapy through play starts with free play to allow for voluntary expression of hidden emotions or emotions that children try to hide.

- It helps children face off when they discuss directly their emotions, thus learning how to control of abandon emotions.

- Various games are placed in the room and the child is given the freedom to choose. This makes him/her feel safe and in charge without anyone interven-ing or snooping into

his/her own world.

The teacher's role starts with observing the child's responses to see if they are standard or violent and aggressive, to see if he/she is repelled by a certain toy (a car, for example) because it reminds him/her of a certain incident, and to see if he/she takes part in play, exchanges roles with other children or refuses to play.

Therapy through expressive language

- This is a method of cognitive therapy. It gives children a chance, through a certain image, to use their memory and recall a certain incident that they witnessed during the war. It helps explore their emotions during this period.

- It gives a space for imagination and develops a dialogue between external and internal realities by using symbols (images of wartime destruction, an injury, a weeping child, etc.) that stem from personal experiences. The use of images helps children the ability to develop a meaning for what they saw or experienced, to feel they are healthy and to develop in a manner that is in harmony

with their selves.

- It enhances creativity, and it is used in psychotherapy.

- Expressive language is used in treating social, emotional and cognitive cases of children and youths in an exciting and interactive atmosphere.

- Expressive language therapy resorts to direct discussions, images or role-playings to help children express and to guide them in the following skills:

o Train on conclusive and deductive analysis.

o Gain experience in dealing with vocabulary.

o Enhance awareness and listening skills.

o Enhance reflective thinking skills.

o Enhance the memory of words and sentences.

- Expressive language therapy is implemented to achieve the above-mentioned objectives during socio-dramatic play between teachers and children and among children themselves at trial time, using the following methods:

o Thinking.

o Monologue (good for children who are hesitant to express their emotions).

o Parallel talk (the child or the teacher describes what he/she is doing, matching words and actions, ideas and emotions. Therapy here helps transforming words to sentences, introducing new words and supporting old ones).

o Ongoing talk (the teacher listens to the child speaking and expressing, and responds to him/her by adding to his/her words. Ongoing talk sustains dialogue and clarifies the topic with free questions).

A definition of cognitive-behavioral therapy

Cognitive-behavioral therapy looks into the relation between mental or internal emotional incidents and behavioral changes. It aims at influencing cognitive processes in order to introduce changes in behaviors and emotions, and at providing children with substitute and helpful new behaviors.

Strategies

-Training.

-Modeling.

-Self-education.

-Monologue.

-Problem solving.

-Endless open-ended activities (open-ended questions).

Steps of Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy

Usually, your body tells you when you are angry.

- Recognize the emotion's symptoms: Do you breathe fast? Is your face red? Are your muscles cramped? (Cramps affect the jaw, the neck, the shoulders; you feel tightness in the chest) Do you feel an urge to break something or hit someone? Anger makes you shout even in the face of the ones you love.

- The teacher discusses with children what makes them angry.

o Many reasons make children angry. You may get angry when things do not go the way you want, when you lose a game, or, most importantly, when others blame you for something you did not do or when you witness incidents you cannot control. (Here, the child is asked free questions to let him/her talk about his/her experience during the war, with which he/she had nothing to do, such as the injury of a relative in front of him/her, having to run away alone, losing a friend or toys...etc.)

- The teacher explains times during which she felt angry and presents a model about herself overcoming anger.

o Thinking: "I hold on and think that anger will not help me find solutions."

o I get inside my self; I take three deep breaths. I think calmly, bringing up substitute thoughts, "I was not the cause of the war." I manage to calm down and help my mother, "I am good in problem-solving."

o I get out of my self when I feel calm, satisfied and safe. I think what to do when I get this emotion. Here, the teacher says that children can implement this method when they get another emotion, such as fear or anxiety.

When the teacher explains the idea of anger, she should show the positive aspect of it. This reflects the reasons why incidents are handled differently,

and has a good share of religious concepts.

A Definition of Open-ended Activities

Open-ended activities are a strategy that offers children choices to explore their ideas and emotions, and express them in various contexts to generate other outputs, or give varied and creative answers. Such answers help in dialogues and enhance the motive to learn when children notice their ability to interact and create various results. Open-ended activities have several characteristics, including:

- They are considered a means for personal instructions because they stir up views, interests, values and knowledge in children.

- They focus on asking endless questions, such as "What happened next?" or asking myself, "Why was the house destroyed?" or "Why did I say that?" Such questions help children handle incidents and gain a feeling of being in charge.

While implementing this strategy, the teacher uses newspaper pictures, from before and after the war, or stories about resolve and people facing many difficulties that require acceptance and handling that serves self-determination and self-confidence.

Open-ended response allows for endless activities. It is the first sentence that focuses and describes a student's emotions about what annoys him/her and allows for helping him/her express himself/herself. It is the key to expression because it encourages the other party to express himself/herself and lets you into his/her heart through a description of what he/she feels.

The student: "A bomb fell near our house, and the house was damaged."

A closed answer: "Why don't you forget? This is war."

An open-ended answer: "It seems that you are sad for what happened."

The student: "I cannot do this homework."

A closed answer: "Do not speak like that! You have just started."

An open-ended answer: "It seems that it was too difficult for you."

Children During and After an Armed Conflict

War is a man-made thing full of acts of violence, including killing, kidnapping, torture, shelling and destruction. The danger posed to a human being by a fellow human being is sometimes more lethal than diseases and natural disasters (earthquakes, floods, drought, famine, etc.). Difficult and unstable circumstances of conflicts between warring groups pose real dangers to children's health and psychological and physical wellbeing. Family and economic circumstances and atmospheres of anxiety, fear, and instability often lead children and adolescents into general stress and disorder, reflecting on their development and social and academic behavior. Children's responses to these circumstances differ.

Parents and society play a basic role in reducing their negative effects.

Zeina Hobeish

Clinical Psychologist

The Effects of Armed Conflicts on Children

Children at the time of war face various kinds of painful and unexpected experiences, affecting their development and future and causing them loss, alienation, fear, horror, psychological pressure, anger and distrust. These emotions may grow more acute if children do not receive the support they need to face changes and adapt to new circumstances.

It is natural for children to show violent responses to tough incidents they heard about, saw or witnessed. Yet, these responses differ according to the child's personality, age and family environment and to the type of the incident in question.

However, the effects of armed conflicts on children are similar, including fear, anger, sadness, aggression and sleeping, eating and movement disorders. Some children lose confidence in themselves and in others and suffer mood confusion and physical pain from organic illnesses.

When the conflicts grow in severity and last for a long time, children's agitations become abnormal, requesting changes in family and school therapy methods. Then, children need specialized attention and therapy, not just the help of close ones.

During war, children undergo various

kinds of experiences. They become direct or indirect targets of combats, tough fighting, horrors, kidnappings, tortures and displacements. All of that impact of his/her memory, directly affecting his/her emotions and development. Watching violence on television and in magazines and other media increase his/her fear and anxiety about incidents he/she fears.

The greatest effect is seen when the child's personal experiences include watching the killing or kidnapping of parents, friends and relatives, sustaining injuries and disabilities, one's losing sense or sustaining burns or wounds, with all accompanying suffering. Equally dangerous is the child's actual participation in militant activities.

All such experiences pose psychological pressures on children, causing sometimes traumas and mental

and physical risks that threaten their future and deprive them of chances to get ready for peace and adapt to it, free of oppression.

It is necessary for us to know the nature of his/her experiences and their emotional impact if we want to intervene efficiently.

Difficulties Faced by Children

Displacement

When residential areas are shelled and the safety of children and their parents is at risk, families desert their homes and property and move to safer places.

Displacement, whether temporary or prolonged, causes negative changes in the family's lifestyle. The child faces homelessness and other threats expected during displacement.

When children move from familiar atmospheres to new ones that are "strange" to their habits and culture, they feel burdened and face various dangers and problems. Children make an additional effort to cope with the new habitats that they were forced to move. They also feel homesick, hopeless, at loss, incapable and oppressed and sometimes acutely depressed. Armed conflicts have painful effects on children who are away from parents and loved ones for long times.

"Peace is the only battle worth waging."

Albert Camus

The participation of fathers or brothers in fighting adds to the child's difficulties: he/she worries about their safety, on one hand, and misses their support, on the other. Parents are sometimes a "supporting cover" for children. Children who are not separated from their parents during war are in better off compared to others.

Children are often victims of violence, such as kidnapping and torture. Some may be forced to take part in fighting, thus receiving violent upbringing that fills them with emotions of grudge, revenge and aggression. Yet others may sustain dangerous physical injuries, such as burns, loss of senses, disabilities...etc. These painful cases require medical help, specialized therapy and rehabilitation to help them accept their painful reality and cope with it.

Although general anxiety causes behavioral problems in children and adolescents, most behavioral disorders result from specific pressing cases, such as displacement, separation from parents and facing death. When we understand the kind of incidents faced by children, we can understand their responses.

In a conflict, a child may be forced to separate from his/her family, while, at the same time, missing his/her father who is taking part in the war. He/she may be anxious because of his/her separation from the family, but his/her basic crisis may be related to anxiety about his/her father.

Children become incapable of protecting themselves if their parents' lives are endangered; they consequently feel afraid and unsafe. Some children express the difficulties they faced during the crisis; others isolate themselves and abstain from expression. However, being silent does not mean that the child has not been affected.

It is not easy to know what kind of pressure the child is facing. We may have to resort to expressive means (play, drawing, storytelling, etc.) to help him/her express what is bothering him/her.

Death

Children sometimes lose a family member or someone close during war. This causes them strong psychological



A drawing by "a child displaced by aggression."

pressure, leading sometimes to depression. In addition to emotions of sadness, mourning and loss, a child may feel defeated vis-à-vis difficult or painful circumstances.

Losing loved ones and the inability to take revenge or let out steam to get rid of aggression and grudge against those who caused the suffering leads to lower morale, isolation tendencies and a feeling of guilt, helplessness and despair.

Children under five are not aware of the concept of death; they think it is such as separation and expect the dead to come back. Nevertheless, they are frightened by the loss of a parent or a family member; thus, they suffer more agitation and anger bouts. In some instances, they may feel guilty for the disappearance of a dead person, thinking that their behavior caused his/her death.

Some children pass through difficult circumstances and try hard to forget. Adults think children are beyond such circumstances, but developments show that children need a longer time to get over their crises. Those who live through long wars may show some sort of "negative accommodation" with the war's conditions (shelling, displacement, etc.) when peace seems elusive. They may not show any disorder, but difficult experiences during the conflict negatively affect their need for healthy development. Children who suffer anxiety during wars may show it in their discussions; anxiety is fear of an expected danger.

Accordingly, the child's psychological health becomes subject to disorders. When someone is unable to avoid war, his/her behavior reflects fear and

anxiety. In addition, since a child is unable to fend off dangers, he/she tries to overcome the painful reality through imagination and symbolic games (games of war, for example). When he/she cannot express negative emotions, anxiety resurfaces.

Children and Trauma

A child's behavior may be a response indicative of psychological pressure resulting from trauma. This is shown in repetitive nightmares and thinking of the incident (reminiscing the trauma), while avoiding places and incentives related to it (pictures, certain places...etc.). The child gradually loses interest in enjoyable activities and feels emotional separation from others. Excessive awareness causes excessive anxiety, poor concentration and sleeping disorders.

Age-Related Behavioral Problems

The responses of children under five include strong attachment to parents and fear from separation from them. Children feel afraid of things around them, such as thunder, noise and solitude. They may also fear certain personalities (bad guys, geniuses, etc.). Also noticed is a regression in acquired abilities (regressive behavior), such as finger-sucking, nocturnal enuresis, etc. Attempts by children to understand the crises they have been through cause them nightmares, fear and horror at night.

Children between six and twelve deal better with painful experiences. They try to understand what happened to them. They resort to imagination and

play to cope with psychologically stressful experiences. They understand the concept of death. They may suffer behavioral disorders in class, difficulty in concentration and absentmindedness. This affects academic performance. Furthermore, they develop sadness-generating thoughts and emotions. These children may become more aggressive, showing bullying attitudes and harshness in play and behavior.

Teenagers try to deal differently with painful experiences. They are capable of understanding and assimilating the effects of wars on their lives. Some may hurt themselves in dealing with emotions of anxiety, depression and despair. Others may do dangerous stuff, such as rebelling against authority, parents and officials, using drugs, joining the fighters or resort to robbery and infringement on property. Dissatisfaction, anxiety or nervousness may appear as ongoing psychophysical concerns and complaints.

Helping Children after War

The environment plays a crucial role in providing support to children who have been through difficult circumstances. A supportive psychosocial environment is provided through:

- Meeting the basic needs of children (food, shelter, healthcare...etc.).
 - Safety, attention and love (especially to displaced and orphaned children).
 - A quick return to ordinary life (school, extracurricular activities...etc.).
 - Encouraging the expression of violent experiences (sadness, fear...etc.).
 - Support, praise and appreciation. Children who have been through conflicts feel no self-confidence and lose hope in the future.
 - Involvement in entertainment activities (games, expressive activities...etc.).
 - Family support (acceptance, sympathy, security...etc.).
 - Re-inclusion and rehabilitation of child soldiers into ordinary life, within the family and the local society.
- When a child receives support, praise and sympathy from his/her environment, he/she regains a feeling of satisfaction, thus, becoming able to express and accept his/her painful emotions in a constructive and balanced manner. Only then does the child re-gain his/her confidence in himself/herself and the future.

The Role of Parents in Difficult Circumstances

Parents understand their children more than anyone else. Thus, they can provide them the best care. What is the role of parents in difficult crises? How can parents help their children overcome crises resulting from difficult circumstances, such as war and accompanying psychological pressures? How can they ease the effects of difficult and psychologically pressing circumstances on their children?

Dr. Elham Shaarani

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From training courses I held, whether with teachers or parents in the villages of Jwayya and Maaroub in southern Lebanon, I noticed that parents usually stand perplexed, confused, disheartened and anxious in their search for means to interact with their children.

At a discussion with parents after the July War ٢٠٠٦, a mother said, "We, too, passed through the

same circumstances and crises and must be helped." I would like to note here that parents who survived wars and difficult circumstances and who have not managed to get rid of the effects, especially on the psychological level, find it difficult to help and support their children.

Many children live in difficult, abnormal circumstances, including:

Effects of Family Space

The family is at the roots of human life and is the basis and the source of psychological health. If you add to the genetic code of a human being his/her diversified, rich and indescribable vital space of the family, you can say each human being is unique thanks to his/her unique history.

The family space of an individual is made up of several aspects, which can be summed up as follows:

- Marital relations: These are affected negatively and positively by relations with parents. This makes parents a helpful element in enhancing and supporting the marital tie vis-à-vis problems, or, on the contrary, a hindering element through intervention, the fueling of conflicts and the exploitation of contradictions between the married couple.
- Relations with the environment: neighbors, society, customs and traditions.
- The exchange system between parents and children, that is, parental relations: The nature of marital relations and the degree of their maturity and strength provide effective parental atmospheres that either establishes good psychological health and development in children or hinder the performance of proper parental roles vis-à-vis children. In ordinary circumstances, parenthood is a sort of capability and responsibility, and even more so in difficult circumstances.
- The system or relations of siblinghood affects other systems, and it is affected by them.
- The impact of the country's economic, political and social crises on family and marital conflicts.

- Natural disasters: floods, famine and epidemics.
- Violence, unemployment and emigration under new and pressing circumstances.
- Wars and their effects: Displacement, hunger, kidnapping, poverty and loss of family and friends.
- Family problems: violent actions by parents against one another or against children, crime, addiction and mental disorders.

Most victims of wars and armed conflicts are innocent children, who suffer most harm and become direct targets of physical, psycho-emotional or sexual violence, in addition to the destruction of their homes, their displacement with their families and the destruction of their confidence in their parents who fail to protect them. Examples are many around the world.

Wounds from bullets or shrapnel can be treated, prostheses can be installed to the victims of mines, and homes can be provided to refugees and displaced people instead of the homes they were forced to leave behind. But what about the human psyche that is more fragile and less capable of overcoming the effects of wars on all levels, especially when it comes to young people and children? The experiences and circumstances of war generate pain and sorrow in most children. Each child is affected by war in a special way. Some children suffer a series of fears or fearful responses, and parents here must act as a protective shield against all acts of violence directed to their children. Sometimes, parents are not aware of what their children have witnessed and a discussion on that may be absent. However, violent scenes, such as the destruction of homes, and violent noises, such as the explosion of bombs, as well as the killing of a person



close to the child (sometimes, a parent or a sibling) are causes of strong psychological pressure and depressive responses that can become more dangerous when children themselves are subjected to violence or separated from their families.

Frankness and Protection

Parents must tell the child about the death of a relative or a friend. Not telling him/her that, does not protect or help him/her later on. Parents and children must share grief; this helps children adapt better, when they lose a loved one who was close to them. A supporting and soothing environment at home (the father, the mother or siblings) or at school (educators) can help the child overcome the crisis, no matter how strong, with the least possible damage. Signs of anger, fear or anxiety that children show after a certain incident indicate a healthy psychological interaction and confirm their mental health, but parents must deal with such signs in a positive and mature way in order for children to treat them as an example for them.

Fathers and mothers understand their children more than anyone else. Thus, they can provide them the best care by recognizing and understanding their responses and asking them about the problem or experience that caused them psychological strain or anxiety. Parents are the primary psychosocial workers in children's lives; they guide and help them in ways that allow them to specify their problems and find realistic solutions in their environment. Parents must show children permanent readiness to help them, respect their emotions and feelings and win their confidence. Thus, children must be allowed to express their emotions no matter what because children do not respond the same way to the same incident. Differences here stem from many variables, including the nature of the problem or incident, the child's age, the general family environment, and the child's relation with his/her family. A child's relation with his/her family is unique in psychological terms, even if parents treat their children equally in terms of material care. A death in the family, for example, may make a stubborn

child aggressive and a shy child introverted.

Specify, when possible, the time during which the child's behavior changed, especially in young children who need help in expressing their emotions. Let that be with the help of parents in order for them to know the meaning that the child gives to a certain incident and the degree of strain it caused to him/her. Help may be through drawing, coloring, storytelling, role-playing (psychodrama) and exchanging roles between parents and children. Children can include a trusted person in the way they express their emotions and concerns.

Common Responses in Children in Difficult Circumstances

-Recurrences of a violent image, idea or incident that concern the child and make him/her think about it all the time.

-A sense of insecurity and fear of violent experiences that children witnessed or heard about.

-Failure to control their selves or anger for the simplest things.

-Emergence of psychophysical symptoms because of fear and sadness, including loss of appetite for food, loss of the ability to carry out any activity, abdominal pain or headaches, etc.

-Permanent mobility and instability.

-Loss of self-confidence and seeking help and assistance in the simplest things that the child used to do alone. Loss of confidence in adults because children did not find them by their side to protect them when they were in need of such protection.

-Absentmindedness and lack of concentration because a concerned and fearful child finds it hard to actually take part in

any educational or recreational activity.

-Sleeping disorders because of fear and anxiety, the emergence of nightmares that may bring

Symptoms requiring a specialist

- Continuous recurrence of the mentally stressing event, nightmares and continuous thinking about the accident
- Loss of interest in daily activities such as play or complete inattention to basic personal hygiene
- Isolation from friends and especially from parents: Emotional detachment
- Extreme nervousness and anger towards simple things (repetitive panic attacks, sleep disorders...)
- If these symptoms or some of them persist for a time period over a month, we have to seek professional mental intervention. The psychiatrist will encourage parents and guide them for them to be able to help their children effectively.

back to them their violent experiences, and waking up to the smallest noise.

Children, especially small ones, may resort to silence about painful events, and of course, this does not mean that the incident did not affect them. Hence the importance of the presence of a parent, or someone the children are accustomed to his/her presence and care, to help them express their emotions, fears and concerns. A prerequisite is trust between the children and the adult. The lives of children rotate around the family and those who care for them.

How Can Parents Help Their Children?

-Parents can help their children through good communication and active and positive listening, with openness and generosity towards the strong emotions of their children or towards their silence and concern, and away



A drawing by "a child displaced by aggression."

from criticism, offense, yelling and haughtiness.

-Joking, smiling and playing with the child help him/her relax and feel safe and confident.

-Some children are more capable of dealing with psychological pressure than others, thus, the parents must supervise and understand the pain and suffering of their children as expressed through their behavior, their dealing with others or through the feelings and emotions they express in their dialogue with them.

- There is no child who does not love play, which enters joy and pleasure to his/her psyche and is a means for learning some future roles (such as when a girl imitates her mother when playing roles).

- When parents play with their children, they give them a opportunity to let out underlying anger, aggression, fear or concern, especially when they exchange roles (the girl plays the role of the mother and vice versa, or the father plays the role of the son and vice versa). This is significant because the child mixes imagination with reality through automatic motor activity, while also mixing reality with myth. This encourages the child to let out suppressed desires and the sources of concern and tension and satisfies the needs that he/she cannot satisfy effectively in their daily lives.

Parents may share with their children some games that involve more movement (football or basketball for example). Play is a means that relieves children and makes them happy, re-establishing their confidence in themselves and others, especially adults.

However, some children, being affected by the experiences that they went through, are unable to play or incapable of it. Play in such children becomes



pathological (the child plays the same game, especially if it is violent and painful). This indicates that the child has not yet overcome the bitter experience and may feel comfortable if he/she can talk about it. The same applies to drawing. When a child repeats the same drawings or the same images, this is evidence that he/she cannot get rid of the experience or put it away from his/her mind.

- Parents can help their children when they themselves remember experiences and

difficult events that they experienced themselves and that the accompanying emotions and how they could settle the matter and restore psychological balance. All of this helps them understand what the child can pass through after being exposed to a given incident.

- Parents must know that their children, if unable to express in words the psychological effects of war, destruction and violence, a lack of a feeling of security and protection will haunt them and keep them

silence. Other symptoms may include aggression, introversion, loss of self-confidence, fear, concern, a feeling of insecurity, a disinterest in play, excessive or lack adherence to adults, nocturnal enuresis...etc.

The emergence of one or more of these symptoms requires understanding and support by the parents. Thus, the support by parents and their making of children feel safe and loved allow children to overcome the experience of war and its effects. Parents must reassure children and avoid holding them guilty of these symptoms or pushing them; they should look for the causes inside or outside the family.

-Clinical practices show that the most serious psychological disorders are not those that are starkly strong in character, especially in children at an early age. The intensity of symptoms is not necessarily an indicator of serious disorders; the symptoms may be mere responses to a passing critical situation. On the other hand, "silent" disorders that develop slowly without disturbing the environment may indicate the development of a serious pathological condition. The seriousness of the case and its neglect may result from the fact that the emotional disorder may be over-restrained, compared to noisy behavior problems where restraint and disturbance to the environment may be low. The crisis is internal, and the suffering is personal and sentimental, thus threatening the child's being, as civil wars threaten the well-being and immunity of countries.

- Children silently regurgitate their suffering. They do not take part in play, and when they do, they are amenable and lack initiative. We ask parents to overcome shyness and resort to confidence and knowledge

because there are chances of help and support. They should abandon "psychological illiteracy" that makes our society deal harshly with psychological problems no matter how simple. He I ask: What can they do in difficult times, that is, when there are responses indicative of strong psychological pressure after exposure to a traumatizing incident?

The role of parents in such circumstances is to positively listen to everything children say, while giving legitimacy to all what children express, especially emotions. However, parents' acceptance of their children's emotions should not be merely verbal but also through body language, that is, gestures and movements must not contradict what the parents say. This is very important to gain children's confidence and save them from contradictions.

- Parents must answer children's questions honestly and clearly. They must provide them with truths, and not lie to them. This is important for children to be able to understand facts and deal with them. Knowledge and understanding are basic to psychological and mental balance in children.

- A safe home atmosphere is a child's resort. Furthermore, the acceptance of children the way they are and making them feel that they are loved for themselves, no matter what they say or do. Parents' love of their children is not to what children do or to a behavior of theirs that their parents did not like. Parents love their children all the time; they may not like something a child did or a phrase he/she uttered. Children are unconditionally loved by their parents. That is what children must be made to understand. The child has the right to live safely, to love and be loved by his/her parents irrespective

of his/her looks, abilities and behaviors. A child has the right to be happy, sad, worried or angry because these are natural human responses to crises.

- Help children take part in activities, such as play, which is a natural habitat for the child to express his/her self. This is especially true about free play, such as play with sand and water, for example, which is a symbolic expression and a non-verbal play that allows the child to make various shapes that remind him/her of certain events and incidents that he/she is not willing to express in a direct manner. The role of parents here is to ask the child about what he/she did and for what reason. They should get into an expressive dialogue with their children to let them express much of their worries and fears.

- Drawing is an important means for the child to express problems and fears that he/she cannot express by words. Tell your children that you are always ready to listen to them, now and in the future, if the children can talk about what happened.

- Anecdotes and stories help children express their feelings, see different models and regain their psychological balance.

The psychosocial support project in southern Lebanon

The Role of Non-Governmental Organizations in Crises: A Case Study

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are often flexible, experienced and quick in response and communication with the local society in peaceful and non-peaceful situations. They contribute to civil society's stability by knowing and working on strengthening human and psychological needs and helping local workers understand the importance of their role in society. The role of NGOs in crises and emergencies is a frontline in providing help, especially as the role of governments in such crises is sometimes ineffective and even non-present.

Dr. Hiyam Zein

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Wars are among the most dangerous circumstances faced by people in terms of economic, social, political and psychological pressure they cause to the human being, let alone destruction, killing and losses. The effects of wars are more than just the collapse of buildings and economic deterioration because their bigger and more enduring effects impact individuals' psyches and their abilities to adapt to pressing external circumstances.

Between July 12 and Aug. 14, 2006 Lebanon experienced a situation of death, displacement and destruction that created hidden fears in people and developed fears and many disturbances in children. People's security was threatened violently, and death surrounded them from all sides.

This Israeli aggression left 1,183 dead, 30% of whom were children less than 12, and 4,055 wounded, while 913,000 were displaced, 10,000 homes and a large number of schools were

destroyed, and 77 bridges become unusable. Economic losses were estimated at millions of dollars.

NGOs played an important role during and after the war, providing relief, healthcare and medical support. NGOs were characterized by a quick field deployment at times of crises, flexibility and easiness in providing services in a changing environment, and an understanding of the effects of disasters on survivors and their rights to receive care and continue their lives.

Priorities that arose after the ceasefire were various: rebuilding society, mainstreaming displaced people in the current situation, sustaining security,

developing endurance, emotional and material compensation, building societal relations, planning an active role for media and education, etc.

After the war was over, educational institutions were among the sectors in dire need for support. Children usually pay the price of wars and are the least capable of understanding what is going on. For children to be able to go back to normal life, they need psychological support from an administrative and educational system, and special programs that help them overcome difficult circumstances. Thus, NGOs presented in the educational field



Workgroups during the training of teachers on Psychosocial support

many sorts of support: rebuilding and renovating schools and pooling teachers and students of destroyed schools in one school after providing aca-demic equipment, support or training on psychosocial support through curricular and non-curricular programs. They tried to reach most educators, children and parents with psychological support.

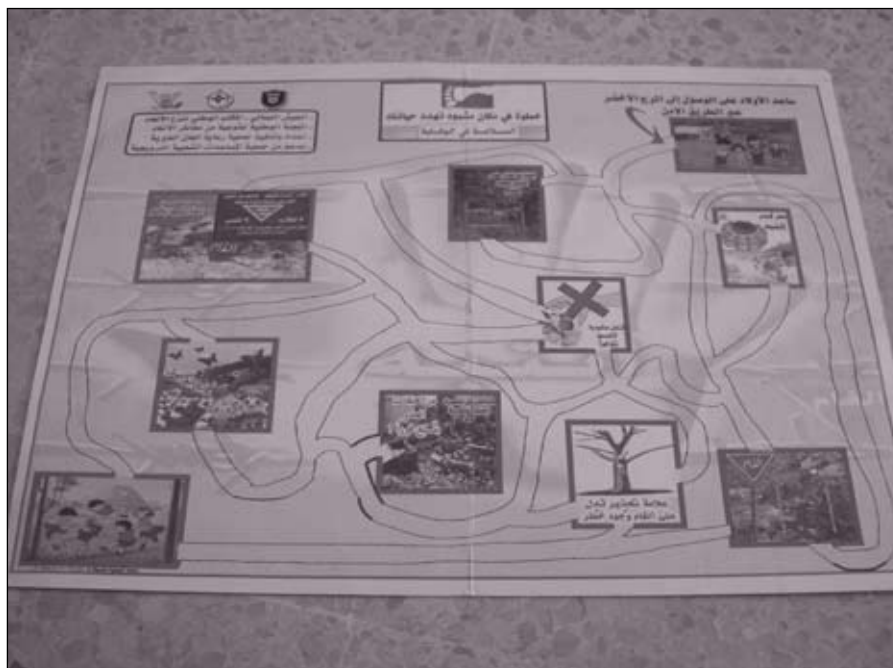
How Can Children Be Helped?

A quick initiative to contain the trauma decreases the trauma's negative effects, especially since a trauma's effects do not show in the few following days but a week or a month later. As for the age factor, children less than 11 are affected three times as much as others when they face a trauma. However, they can overcome the problem in case someone supported them emotionally. Thus, the Arab Resource Collective (ARC), shortly after the ceasefire and the return of displaced people to their villages, held The Preparatory Course for Psychosocial Support for People Affected by the Lebanon War. This program offered teachers from al-Mabarrat Organization schools the method of intervention, dealing with how to handle children between three and eight after a trauma and how to relief the trauma's effects. A teacher needs psycho-logical support to start an academic year in a healthy and correct manner, especially that the teacher herself is a war victim.

It was imperative to be quick in intervention and providing support on spot, expecting children to return to normal activity as soon as possible. The comprehensive method of fieldwork required an integral, comprehensive approach. The goal was to not re-strict the program on educators but to address parents, teachers and students and the same time and to resort to systematic education at times of crises.

The Goals of the Project and the Program

- Provide psychosocial support and care to war-affected children.
- Build the abilities of the educational committee to provide children between three and eight with psychosocial



A labyrinth game, designed by hiyam Zein and Teachers, to enhance children awareness about mines (al Ishraq School)

support and developmental requirements.

-Providing parents with psychosocial support and services to provide children between three and eight with developmental requirements.

-Enhancing the ability of children to cope with the situation that is changing because of the conflict.

The Project Design

Before field implementation, many participatory and coordinative meetings were held, including the project's designers and trainers, to explain to them the work at-mosphere and the project's goals.

The project is made up of two stages:

- The first stage was made up of eight days dedicated to educators. It included two four-day workshops. During this stage, a psychological support program for parents was designed and presented in four meetings. Two field visits were made by trainers to follow up the work of educators in schools in terms of im-plementation and any possible problems.

-The second stage was made up of six days, and it included three field visits.

The themes presented during the two stages sought providing developmental, preven-tative and therapeutic support and help to enable individuals and groups to adapt to

difficult circumstances, and to ease their suffering and trauma by releasing their latent abilities and skills, with the restoration of psychological balance being the goal. Thus, themes came as such:

The first stage:

- Providing support to teachers or educators in difficult times.
- The child's development, the circumstances of war and the role of education and teachers.
- Communicating with children: how to talk to them during their crises.
- Teachers and the protection of children.
- Effective classroom management strategies.
- The strategies of managing behavioral problems in the classroom.
- An education strategy that reaches all children.
- Helping children who suffer psychological traumas through psychosocial ac-tivities.

The second stage:

- Conflict resolution.
- Positive thinking.
- Critical thinking.
- Dealing with differences.
- Self-appreciation.

-Child participation.

The Program's Elements

-The program took into consideration a balance between offering presentations, knowledge and activities and giving information and self-discovery.

During training, the following themes were discussed: relaxation, guided imagination, anxiety management, symptoms of anguish, intellectual strategies, correcting thinking and supporting activities by peers. The goal was to achieve psychological discharge, which allows for psychological classification, that is, telling who needs backing and support more than others.

-The program sought to empower educators about how to create a safe work-place, share experiences and convey expertise. Educators are expected to bring war out of children in various means and ways, including helping them ex-press what happened, what they saw and heard by talk, drawing, coloring, storytelling and various games, especially creative dramatic play (playing roles or acting), while stressing the importance of accepting their response or non-response.

-The program focused on means for anger management in children by creating awareness in educators about their biological, social and psychological needs, while concentrating on post-trauma communication and intervention skills and keeping in mind children's rights, their importance and

how we sometimes overlook them. The program offered activities to support children.

-The program tried to mix all teaching and learning techniques to reach all children through:

o Knowing how to enhance the school's physical atmosphere pending the reenrollment of children.

o Enhancing the relations between parents and the educator by providing parents with information on trauma and means for dealing with it, and making available to them guidelines on how to deal with behavioral problems.

o Training on case studies and how to collect information on children.

o Defining the problem and providing available help, and training on collective guidance.

Working with Parents

With respect to the psychosocial support program for parents, four sessions were held. The goals focused on:

-Monitoring and understanding difficult conditions among parents.

-Providing them with support through listening and communication.

-Providing them with suitable knowledge that helps them deal with their children's psychological problems and work on solving them.

-How to raise children and bear with pressures.

-Anger management.

-Behavioral problems and moodiness in children.

-The sexual identity of children: boys playing girls' games and vice versa,

etc.

Generally, the sessions were characterized by transparency and a strong desire in ex-pressing postwar trauma. The sessions also showed that the effects of postwar trauma are hefty enough to require long-term psychological follow-up.

Trainers carried out field visits to training sites to monitor the implementation of the course's pieces of knowledge and activities, learn about implementation problems faced by educators, and follow up the cases of children once discovered.

Results

-Direct contact with some of those who survived the war. They provided trainers in ARC and al-Mabarrat with lived facts.

-On the other hand, the supporting workgroup provided necessary backing and psychological support at the right place and time.

-The program, with all practical and theoretical details, was coherent from the beginning until the end, thus guaranteeing radical change.

-Trainees showed a desire to participate and work together, together with an apparent motivation to learn more.

-Participants responding and implementing what they have learned throughout the training stages. The benefit was obvious.

-Immediate implementation of information (such as changing desk distribution, the display of items on the bulletin board, setting daily programs and the in-troduction of activities).

The Program and Partners

-The program addresses four schools in southern Lebanon, run by al-Mabarrat: al-Ishraq High School in Bint Jbeil, Imam Ali ibn Abu Taleb in Maaroub and al-Rahma High School in Kfar Joz and Jwayya.

-Participants in the four centers included 91 educators and 150 parents (see table).

-Two thousand children benefited from the program.

-ARC, a regional independent non-profit organization, builds on the abilities of each human being in order to develop required pieces of knowledge and skills to translate his/her rights into reality so he/she can consequently enhance his/her control of his/her life circumstances in a society of justice and fairness.

-The strategy of the Bernard van Leer Foundation, which provides financing and shares information in early childhood development work, relies on work on local ability building and enhancing renewal and flexibility, and stresses on investing

contributions in the right place.

-Al-Mabarrat is a non-profit organization that provides formal and vocational education to students of all abilities and needs, especially orphans and students with hearing and speech disabilities. It runs healthcare centers throughout Lebanon.

-The program was run by an ARC team, which was made up of early childhood care and development program coordinator Maysoun Shehab and program assistant May Abu Ajram.

-Trainers were specialized university graduates.

Center	Educators	Parents
Kfar Joz	22	20-30
Maaroub	30	40-60
Jwayya	23	20-55
Bint Jbeil	21	50-60

-Implementation of the daily lesson plan to introduce multiple intelligences.

-Consideration of the basic needs of students and elements that effect education.

-Using multi-sense education.

-Logistic planning, preplanning and provision of tools.

-A readiness by schools to provide any kind of help or cooperation in the interest of parents, students and educators.

-Acceptance of the role of NGOs in supporting the community.

Thus, the project of quick intervention and systematic education in crises:

-Reflects the ability of wide partnerships and their effective role in helping with the restoration of the civil society's normal life. It underscores the role of NGOs and networking in supporting society's infrastructure social. It also shows the chances for creating a sustained commitment in relations between individuals and society and NGOs.

-Helps transform the crisis and its results on individuals and groups, and helps reach an understanding of the effect of sustained work in order to remove resulting problems.

-Shows a possibility to rely on local civil society and on extra-societal forces, to get the job done.

-Creates opportunity to enhance the abilities of educators, parents and children, thus allowing individuals who have been trained to support their local society to empower others with their acquired knowledge.

Other helpful factors included:

-Commitment by ARC and the workgroup to their vision human professional objectives.

-Neutrality and non-bias in dealing with the set targets during and after the crisis were basic factors in building confidence between the team and local community, thus facilitating the better handling of problems and led to the anticipated results.

-Partners had good knowledge of the local circumstances and of individuals who were selected for training.

-Awareness of activities of other organizations prevented duplication in work.

-Trainers enjoyed relevant professional abilities, and enough opportunities were available for interaction, joint preparation and revision.

-Ongoing monitoring of training and documentation.

A program for mental health for adolescent and young people

Towards Enhancing Awareness and Positive Behaviour

This issue gives special attention to the psychosocial support project for the educators and parents of young children who survived war and displacement. However, The Arab Resource Collective (ARC) is implementing another program to support adolescent and young people who live in conflicts and difficult circumstances. Here is a briefing on the program and an address for further information.

Difficult circumstances, such as war, displacement, torture and occupation, leave deep scars in people's mental health. Natural responses to crises include fear, instability, helplessness, anger and despair, as well as some physical symptoms. In such circumstances, emotional and behavioral difficulties, such as sleeping disorders, prevail. However, people in such circumstances show numerous and various energies and great endurance ability, strong personalities, good management, commonality, generosity and social solidarity. Despite strong gloom and sadness, individuals and groups can overcome the dangers of living in difficult circumstances, on condition that proper support is made available to them.

During and after Israel's aggression against Lebanon, and in light of ensuing events, complications and various needs, many groups of volunteers and resource persons mobilized and worked on coming out with all sorts of community-, rights- and partnership-based interventions. The aim was to provide various kinds of psychosocial support to war-affected individuals.

Many of ARC's partners in Arab countries, especially Palestine and Iraq, contributed to these interventions the expertise they gained in their own difficult circumstances, such as war, displacement, torture and occupation. It is clear that working on

pooling these pieces of expertise - and on their interaction - to develop and use them in the future is crucial and must be launched through partnership.

“Mental Health Programme for a New Generation in the Arab World”

The Program of Mental Health for a New Generation in the Arab World

ARC's seeks to enhance awareness of psychological health issues, develop positive stances about psychological health, positive development and special psychological needs, and, thus, remove stereotypes that hinder the promotion of positive psychological health through increasing and disseminating knowledge and producing and distributing mental health resources in Arabic.

The project's first stage included a general and comprehensive survey of active psychological health programs in nine Arab countries (Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Palestine, Egypt, Sudan, Yemen, Iraq and Morocco) and a survey of available psychological health resources. The present stage focuses on producing needed mental health resources, especially those dealing with emergencies



(برنامج الصحة النفسية)

and difficult circumstances. During the war on Lebanon 2006, the mental health program, through its human and material resources, contributed to supporting psychosocial interventions. In addition, knowledge, information and resources provided by partners in Arab countries, such as Palestine and Iraq, facilitated preparation and planning for suitable intervention forms.

The number of local organizations active in mental health increased after the Lebanon war thus increasing the need for related resources. Thus, ARC organized in November 2006 a local meeting to bring together workers in this domain and provide a joint space for thinking and sharing various experiences that accumulated in this field. Participants worked on setting the challenges and needs faced by workers, and discussed the means for overcoming hindrances.

During the meeting, a need was felt for a regional meeting to provide an opportunity for sharing expertise and local and regional experiences, to discuss the means for facing challenges and needs felt by local and regional psychosocial support workers, to discuss means for cooperation and networking. The regional meeting was held in February 2007 and was characterized by various

experiences and presentations-demonstrations from different Arab countries. It was a chance for thinking and joint work.

Scheduled Resources

- **Mental Health for All: Where There Is No Psychiatrist**

An expanded comprehensive manual for healthcare workers, parents and people interested in psychological health issues. The book complements a series of health books, including "Where there is no Doctor", "Where Women Hve no Doctor"... etc. The manual deals with psychological health issues, explaining psychological problems and disorders, and means for dealing with them in a simple and clear language.

- **School Health for All: A Scholastic Manual**

A manual addressing intermediate students and seeks to enhance awareness and knowledge about psychological health issues, especially those of concern to this age group, like difference, identity, psychological problems and fear of the future. The book includes activities and practical exercises

that help students implement and understand ideas through group work.

- **Youth and Healthy Living: Healthy Living Package**

A package of 13 illustrated booklets on physical and sexual health and social life issues, divided into three themes: puberty, reproduction and sex, and healthy living. Booklet 13 includes basic information on healthy living of adolescents. The package also includes a CD of basic information, a good resource for parents and workers with young people. The booklets address young people to enhance their knowledge of changes in their lives and bodies to help them understand these changes and know how to deal with them.

- **Mental Health Organizations**

A manual of psychological and social health organizations in nine countries (Lebanon, Syria, Palestine, Jordan, Iraq, Egypt, Morocco, Yemen and Sudan), this directory was organized by theme according to specialization of listed organizations: vocational training, education and teaching, primary healthcare, childcare, youths, psychological health, women and call. It is made up of nine booklets, each dedicated to one of the surveyed countries.

- **Mental Health Bibliography**

A reference tool of mental health resources, this manual includes reports, books, articles, publications, studies and other information resources on positive development and psychological health in the comprehensive sense.

For more information on the activities and resources of ARC's mental health program, reports on workshops and means for getting resources, please visit our website www.mawared.org or call the program's organizer Ms. Ola Ataya at mho@mawared.org.

Resources on Working with Children in Conflicts

Here is information on some resources that were used at the Workshop on Psycho-social Support for Children in Difficult Circumstances, which was offered by the Arab Resource Collective (ARC) to four al-Mabarrat Organization schools in southern Lebanon following the war on Lebanon in the summer of 2006. This section introduces the reader to the most important resources on crises and means for dealing with them that are available in bookshops and organizations



Helping Children in Difficult Circumstances: A Manual for Teachers

Prepared by Naomi Richman and Diana Pirera

Published in Arabic by ARC and Save the Children (UK)

This manual shows the importance of teacher-student relations and helps in discriminating and understanding the effects of wars and conflicts on children's emotions and development. It carries important information for the teacher, allowing him/her to understand the effects of war on children. It also suggests methods of support that can be used in schools, families and the local society to help children overcome all sorts of problems and difficulties.



Our Children in Crises (Arabic)

Prepared by Dr. Hala Spanioli and Nabila Spanioli

Issued by al-Tufula Center, Nazareth Nurseries Institute

The booklet seeks to contribute to supporting children to overcome crises and regain balance through quick intervention methods. It also seeks to encourage dialogue and discussion, share knowledge, liberate emotions, discover difficulties faced by children, allow them to let out their emotions, and encourage communication to help them face difficult circumstances. It presents some activities that can be done to entertain children and restore their balance. It also includes many appendices, including stories, a list of emotions, parts of a story and supporting resources.



Helping Children Overcome War-Induced Psychological Pressures (Arabic)

Prepared by Mona Maqoud

Issued by UNICEF, UN

A booklet for parents and educators, this work describes severe psychological pressures faced by children because of war and forms of violence. It explains behaviors

that children follow in dealing with war incidents, presenting introductions that facilitate the understanding of differences between natural and severe responses, and the characteristics of children's responses. It suggests general guidelines for educators and parents to deal with [children's] responses to psychological pressure. It also presents specific practical advices to deal with 10 common problematic behaviors. In other words, the booklet presents certain behavioral phenomena, and then gives parents and educators guidelines on how to deal with them. Such phenomena include attachment, nocturnal enuresis, nocturnal terrorization, etc.

Communicating with Children

Prepared by Naomi Richman

Published by ARC and Save the Children (UK)

This manual discusses practical problems that arise during your discussions with children, how you provide practical and emotional support, and how you become a good listener. It helps workers with children in conflicts and emergencies develop their skills in listening to children, communicating with them and helping them communicate with others. The manual underscores the importance of understanding different cultural communication means, and successfully coping with malaises and hardships. It resorts to cases and examples to clarify the problems faced by children, and it proposes solutions. Practical exercises allow readers to develop, test and implement proposed ideas.

Creative Drama: A Tool in Educational Work and Communication (Arabic)

Prepared by Ulla-Stina Nilsson

Issued by ARC

This book discusses how drama helps children develop healthily. It presents practical activities from the psychological

point of view, offers proposals on dramatic work with children of all ages, and introduces some general guidelines. An accompanying videotape helps in training on and mastering the exercises.

A Comprehensive Introduction to Psychology (Arabic)

Authored by Drs. Elham Shaarani and Maryam Sleem

Issued by al-Nahda al-Arabiya

This book seeks to shed light on psychology, a science that is unclear in the minds of most people. It can be helpful to anyone who is interested in learning about this specialization, whose end is to serve humanity in all fields: childhood, learning and teaching, society, work, etc. It is equally helpful in developmental psychology (development from the embryonic stage to old age). It clarifies the roles of psychology specialists: psychologist, psychotherapist, psychoanalyst, psychiatrist, etc. in order to know what is best to do when faced by a problem or a difficulty. This book underscores difficulties in taunted and disabled children, discusses the possibility of mainstreaming them in schools, and helps the reader be acquainted with mental illnesses. It provides a comprehensive view on psychological health at home, school and society. It is a good book for people interested in reading and educating themselves.

Working with Children in Light of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (Arabic)

Prepared by Dr. Farid Antoun

Issued by ARC, UNICEF and Radda Barnen

This booklet focuses on enhancing parents' awareness about the rights of their children and the importance of their role in implementing these rights. It addresses field workers and workers in programs addressed to children and parents. Made up of three volumes, the booklet presents a briefing on the convention, underscoring the responsibilities and rights of parents and the supporting role of organizations. It also proposes activities with parents on the rights of children, and includes several appendices on active learning. It provides programs for working with parents and dealing with their questions about their children, and a list of related resources.

Helping the Young Traumatized Child: A Manual for Health and Community Workers and Pre-school Teachers

Issued by UNICEF – Amman, Jordan

This handbook presents a comprehensive view of the conditions of traumatized children and families in difficult circumstances, offering intervention strategies. Its sections reflect ideas about psychological

pressure, people's responses to trauma and means for helping children in these cases. It discusses means for empowering parents to help their children in difficult circumstances, offering applicable activities, exercises and guidelines.

Psychosocial Play and Activity Book for Children and Youths Exposed to Difficult Circumstances

Prepared by Robert Macy, Dicki Macy and Steven Gross

Issued by UNICEF, Center for Crisis Psychology – Norway

This booklet discusses the effects of crises and emergencies on children and youths, and pressure manifestations. It seeks to provide help to children to regain their psychological balance through intervention mechanisms that introduce strategies, such as the use of psychosocial play and creative activity. It includes a list of games and activities for children between five and 14.

Websites Dealing with the Effect of Violence and Traumas on Children

Exploring Fear, an activity book from the Enchante Emotional Literacy Series, www.kidseq.com

Exploring Grief with Your Child, www.kidseq.com/articles/grief.htm

Exploring Anger with Your Child, www.kidseq.com/articles/aboutanger.htm

Young Children during War and Conflict, www.naeyc.org/ece/06/2003.asp

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