

Semi Annual Report for the project: “Empowering Family Resilience in Gaza”

(Family and Community Therapy Project: FCTP)



1st July 2015 – 31st May 2016

Funded by INTERPAL-London

Implemented by Palestine Trauma Centre (PTC-Gaza)

Supervised by PTC-UK



1. Summary

Funded largely by INTERPAL (London) and partially by (PTC-UK) for the period 1st July 2015 to the 31st May 2016, this project consists of implementing psychosocial activities for needy families and their children.

The Family and Community Therapy (FCT) team are working with families especially in border areas. The team screened the families who needed immediate psychological services. Psycho-social intervention operated with the whole family in the presence of a psychologist, social worker, children's animator and a psychiatrist. Activities with the beneficiary group varied in aim; some of them depended on concentration, and the others depended on therapy techniques such as Mind and Body Therapy, Focusing Therapy and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (C.B.T).

57 families with 433 people (219 females and 214 males) benefited from the activities during months from July 2015 till May 2016. In addition to that, social, psycho-educational and psychological support activities took place in some partner institutions (NGOs) and in some schools and kindergartens and seaport in Gaza where structured games were organized. These included skipping, kangaroo jumping, sack races and movement to music. Talent competitions were organized for the children by members of the team. PTC center has a consultation unit. 24 beneficiaries (15males and 9 females) were referred to other associations specializing in Autism and Atfaluna for the deaf. The number of beneficiaries from these group activities was 5,170, their ages ranging between 5 and 14 years.

Psycho-education meetings were held in some institutions in Gaza City and in northern Gaza to support mothers, fathers and old people. The purpose of these meetings was to explore responses to psychological trauma and discuss how to deal with children whose behavior had been affected by war. The opinions of the beneficiaries were completely positive. They appreciated all the efforts by animators and the work team in general and especially INTERPAL who had supported and funded these activities. Moreover, implementing the activities enhanced the skills of the work team and made them gain confidence in dealing with hard situations. All this raised the profile of PTC and enhanced its estimation in society, motivating people to visit the center to enjoy its services despite their fears of the stigma that can be attached to therapy. The number of beneficiaries from these particular psychological support activities was about 223 people, their ages ranging between 10 and 65 years.

The total number of the beneficiaries from the INTERPAL's grant during the 11th months is 5,850. These people benefited from psychological and social support, therapeutic meetings and psycho-educational meetings. The groups of beneficiaries are men, women, children, the young, the old and people with special needs (audio and physical disability and autism).

2. The general aim of the project

To reinforce Palestinian family resilience after the wars and to help it overcome the psychological and social traumas through integrated family and community therapy programmes based on individual and group therapy methods.

3. The special aims of the project

- To reduce the social and psychological stress in traumatized Palestinian families
- To help reinforce the social and psychological resilience of Palestinian families in remote areas
- To help traumatized Palestinian families acquire the skills of appropriate and positive behavior during and after times of crisis.

4. The project vision:-

The project aims to help traumatized Palestinian families all over the Gaza Strip by training the family to acquire adaptation skills; it also aims to reinforce social and psychological resilience in order to enable them to rebuild their lives positively and effectively.

5. Implemented activities

5.1 The work team formation

The FCT work-team was selected by supervisors in both Gaza and the UK. One person in the UK is the clinical supervisor from PTC-UK, the rest of the team is from Gaza: project coordinator in Gaza, psychiatrist, accountant, project coordinator, psychological specialist, social worker, media coordinator and logistic worker. This team was divided into two groups each comprising a psychiatrist, psychological specialist, a social worker and an animator.

5.2 Coordination with institutions

The teams coordinated with Ministry of Education in Gaza to implement some recreational activities such as: Zainab Rayyes, Oroba secondary school , Shohadaa Zaiton and Shadya Abu Ghazala schools. They also coordinated with some of the civil society institutions in Gaza which work in the field of psychological support, such as Thaghreed, Right to live, Sanabel, Bnaa associations, Dar Soad Azam and Elderly care center in Gaza city, Haii Salateen association in Jabalia and Nqaa in Beit Hanoon in North Gaza. In addition to that, PTC shared the transferring net which belongs to Handicap International which includes two-partner institutions from all over Gaza to transfer traumatized cases who needed psychological and social support. PTC also coordinated with Save the Children Network which belongs to UNICEF and attended its monthly meetings in UNDP. PTC sent them all updates of the team's work every month on Wednesdays. PTC also attended focus groups about the situation of mental health in Gaza in NRC and attended 6th

International conference for mental health which was held by GCMHP. In addition to that, PTC coordinated with Elham Jarar the manager of Shababeek association in Yafa and shared pictures and movies produced by the center which expressed the suffering of the families in the Gaza Strip and showed these materials for people in our lands (Palestine1948) to highlight the injustice and oppression of the Israeli occupation. The work team contacted and visited the INTERPAL office in Gaza to coordinate the provision of some services to needy families.

5.3 Work Mechanism

5.3.1 Mechanism of team's work with traumatized cases

The five-member team was divided into two groups, 2 females and 3 males, so as to cover all areas in Gaza City. The team consisted of a psychiatrist accompanied by a psycho-social specialist and an animator. The team's psychological and social interventions included visiting the family, conducting a diagnostic psychological evaluation, therapeutic play activities and conducting a summative psychological evaluation. Later, a follow-up evaluation of the family was done.

5.3.2 Implemented techniques

The team uses several techniques and activities when working with the family such as Focusing, drama exercises, Mind / Body work and movement therapy. Other psychological exercises included Narrative Therapy, Play Therapy and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (C.B.T).

5.3.3 Referral System

The center coordinated with some working institutions to receive referral cases to be followed up within the Family and Community Therapy (FCT) project. PTC co-operated with Future Palestine Association to receive traumatized families through PTC-Gaza's referral system, and coordinated with Palestine Children's Relief to help needy cases physically in addition to co-operating with Ana and Tefle, Atfaluna and Elderly care associations. Some traumatized cases were found due to field screening by PTC's team and they are being followed-up within the FCT project. This table (1) shows the names of the associations who referred cases to PTC-Gaza.

Table (1): Referred Cases to PTC-Gaza.

Institution name	Address	Total	Cases complaints	Gender
------------------	---------	-------	------------------	--------

Atfaluna association	Gaza City	2	Depression and poor school performance	1 male 1 Female
Elderly care center	Gaza City	1	GAD	1 Female
Ana and Tefle Association	Gaza City	2	PTSD and behavioral disorders	2 males
Field screening	All places in Gaza Strip	52	Overwhelming fear, nightmares, sleep disorder, behavioral disorders, PTSD, introversion, anxiety and tension.	30 females 22 males

5.3.4 Recreational activities and educational sessions

Since the first of July 2015, the Family and Community Therapy (FCT) work team have organized many purposeful recreational activities in different places such as governmental schools, private schools and civil society institutions. These activities aimed to alleviate suffering and bring the community together to support orphans, injured old people and people with special needs. The total number of the beneficiaries of these activities is **5,170**, their ages ranging from 5-50 years. The vast majority of them are children, women and old people. Activities included movement exercises, races, talent shows, friendly competitions and other games which encouraged children, parents and others to participate as a mutually supporting group. In addition, the team held some workshops at PTC-Gaza, which were attended by high school students.

These workshops were based on the following theme: "How we can deal with our parents and younger brothers?" They explored ways of dealing with their families. The team also held psycho-education meetings with old people in Gaza city in Dar Soad Azam and elderly care associations. The following tables show the details of the activities and beneficiaries.

Table (2.A) No. of beneficiaries from family therapy sessions and consultation for (81 families)

Males	Females
223	234
Total is	457

Table (2.B) Number of Beneficiaries from Group Activities

Day	Date	Place of activity implementing	No. of beneficiaries	Client's feedback
Monday	24/08/2015	Zainab Rayyes elem. School-Gaza city	300 students (12-16) yrs	Fatima (15 yrs) , "I enjoyed sharing in these activities very much. I wish you can come again."
Friday	18/09/2015	Nusairat Camp-Middle Gaza	400 children (6-16) yrs	Sara (10 yrs) , "I played with my friend and jumped about. I had a lot of fun."
Monday	05/10/2015	Zawaida Camp-Middle Gaza	220 children and mothers (11-50) yrs	Sonya (11 yrs) , "I would like to thank Alish and Maroosh, I really enjoyed the games."
Thursday	08/10/2015	Beach Camp-Gaza city	100 children (11-15) yrs	Yamen (12 yrs) , "Your activities are very nice and the games we played are very joyful, thank you"
Tuesday	13/10/2015	Taghreed association- North Gaza	20 children (11-15) yrs	Rasha (12 yrs) , "All the games are fun. I laughed and played a lot this day."
Wednesday	25/11/2015	Right to Live Association-Gaza city	200 dawn and autism children (10-30) yrs	Animator Alaa (33 yrs) , "It's a pleasure to cooperate with PTC; this is the third time during this hard situation after the war. Thanks for coming."
Thursday	10/12/2015	Shohda'a Zaiton school-Gaza city	530 high school students (11-16) yrs	Tamer (14 yrs) , "I hope you will always come here to let us entertain ourselves, I really enjoyed myself."
Wednesday	23/12/2015	Fajr Association-Gaza city	150 disabled children (7-16) yrs	Specialist: Marwa (25 yrs) , "This is the first cooperation between us. I hope there will be more in the near future."
Thursday	14/01/2016	Zahraa city- Gaza city	100 children (10-15) yrs	Mother Amal (40 yrs) : "Much appreciation and gratitude for your generous efforts in bringing happiness to the hearts of children and adults".
Monday	15/02/2016	Tamkeen association- Middle Gaza	100 children (8-14) yrs	Father Mousa (41 yrs) : "When our house was bombed, my children suffered badly for a very long time. These activities are very important and we need more of them".
Monday	29/02/2016	Karama elem. School-Gaza city	1000 children (7-12) yrs	Teacher Fayez (33 yrs) : "The activity was marvelous and purposeful; the short play had a moral about forgiveness among friends. The activities were beautiful and we hope that they can be brought into

				our school again”.
Thursday	07/04/2016	Gaza seaport	1200 children and parents	Feras (9 yrs): “I am so happy today because I have played with uncle Alaa, and I have danced with the dolls. I want you to come every day to play and dance with us”.
Sunday	08/05/2016	Nusairat prep. School- Middle Gaza	850 children (12-15) yrs	Nahed (11 yrs): “Today was the most beautiful day in my life, because I have participated in fun activities and I have played with my friends. I wish always we can do this”.
Total number of beneficiaries from group activities			5170 people	

Table (2.C) Number of Beneficiaries from Psycho-Education Sessions

Day	Date	Place of activity implementing	No. of beneficiaries	Client’s feedback
Saturday	15/08/2015	Haii Salateen association in Beit Lahia- North Gaza	25 mothers	Em-Ramy (45 yrs), "I felt I benefited a lot, but I need more."
Saturday	12/09/2015	Shadia Abu Ghazala secondary school for girls- North Gaza	20 students	Rana (15 yrs): “In the future I would like to be a psychologist to work with and like you”.
Wednesday	04/11/2015	Bna'a association- North Gaza	20 mothers	Sobhya (47 yrs), "I think I can now deal in a good way with my children according to your advice."
Thursday	17/12/2015	Zainab Rayyes school-Gaza city	50 mothers	Em Abood (34 yrs), "I benefited greatly. I hope there will be monthly meetings “.
Tuesday	09/02/2016	Development association- Khanyounis city	15 mothers	
Tuesday	22/03/2016	Nqaa association- Beit Hanoon	15 mothers	
Thursday	14/04/2016	Oroba sacendary school-Jabalia	15 students	
Wednesday	04/05/2016	Dar Soad Azam- Gaza City	23 elderly women	
Thursday	12/05/2016	Elderly Care Center-Gaza City	40 elderly men	
Total number of beneficiaries from psycho-education meetings			223 people	

Total number of beneficiaries is 5,850 people

The psychologists and psychiatrist have almost finished preparing the manual for the Family Therapy sessions under the supervision of Dr. Mohammed Altawil. The manual will consist of 12 sessions include the techniques of therapy and implemented activities with families.

5.3.6 Filling longitudinal study questionnaires

PTC-Gaza with supervision from Dr. Mohammed Altawil conducted a study in 2006 entitled “Siege and War and its Relationship to the Mental Health of Palestinian Children and Young People in Gaza”. The work team began in August 2015 as a longitudinal study. 133 questionnaires have been completed up to the writing of this report.

5.3.7 Work team professional development

Dr. Mohamed Altawil (from PTC-UK), who is the clinical supervisor, regularly evaluates the Family and Community Therapy Project, which aims to empower family resilience. He supervises the work team by holding weekly meetings via Skype and e-mail in order to be updated on every aspect of the project. He advises the work team on how to overcome any obstacles or difficulties. Moreover, he trains them on new therapy techniques to be used with families, such as Focusing drama therapy and play therapy. He is assisted by Gesine Miller, a specialist in play therapy and Sara Hawes from PTC-UK. The work team was trained in December 2015 by Ahmad Thabet on C.B.T techniques. American specialists Dr. John Sos and Janet Right visited the center and delivered training in psychological pressures and EMDR. In May 2016, Dr. Guido Veronese, a Family Therapy specialist from Milan, visited PTC and assessed the needs of the team for future training sessions about Family Therapy techniques, which will be held in October 2016. The following are comments by the work team on their professional development, follow-up sessions and training with the project clinical supervisor.

-From **Samer Awad (social worker)**, " I appreciate the role of Dr. Altawil in following-up work and supervision. I wait for the days of training impatiently because they really benefit me."

- From **Ahmad Altawil (the media coordinator)**, "The weekly meetings and supervision sessions make us feel that the supervisor really cares about us."

-From **Noha Abu Karsh (psychologist)**, “These meetings provide an excellent chance especially for me as the newest one in Family Therapy team to get more information and techniques about work.”

-From **Monther Yaghe (psychologist and drama specialist)**, “These meetings help us to release pressure and strengthen our capacity to be able to carry on with our job working with many severely traumatized cases. I got a lot of benefits as a new psychologist in the Family Therapy team".

-From **Rasha Qandeel (project coordinator)**, "I am the first one who really needs these meetings, to develop skills and overcome the obstacles.”

6. Impact of the project

6.1 At the families' level

Because of the critical situation in Gaza all the time, there is an urgent need to provide all kinds of continuous support for the affected families. Social and psychological support will go some way to enable them to regain mental stability.

Through working with these families, it was obvious that they benefited greatly from our activities like the recreational activities in schools. In addition, there were therapeutic and activation sessions of Family Therapy. These sessions varied from being diagnostic and summative to offering immediate psychological intervention in the form of therapy and follow-up support. They helped relieve the stress of daily life and helped people acquire positive skills to enable them to deal with traumatic situations. **81** families benefited from these sessions. This is equivalent to **457** beneficiaries: **234** females and **223** males.

-**The old man Abu Mohammed (55 yrs):** "We are in real need of PTC's activities for releasing our strong feelings and expressing our sadness and knowing how we can deal with our children."

-**The mother Em Arkan (50 yrs):** "I feel I am better when I attend these meetings; I can now deal in a good way with my children."

6.2 At the local society level

An increasing number of visitors who desperately need help are taking advantage of the free services at PTC-Gaza. Also, many schools and the community associations have referred traumatized cases to PTC-Gaza. **81** families benefited from the activities of the Family and Community Therapy Project. It is generally felt by ordinary people and NGOs that PTC's team has been effective in relieving family stress and building individual resilience in the Gaza Strip.

Abu Foad (Manager of Bna'a Association): "Our target group benefited from these activities and meetings. Gaza is in urgent need of the services we are receiving from PTC-Gaza. Keep going and thank you very much for your efforts. "

The old man Abu Ahmad (75 yrs): I was very sad because my wife left me after 50 yrs. I remembered her all the time and I was very angry, but now I feel better and I wish you can come again to spend a good time with me."

6.3 At the level of project work team

Working in the Family and Community Therapy Project (FCTP), the team gained many skills and much experience in dealing with traumatized cases and intervening with families. New therapy techniques, especially Focusing, have been developed successfully throughout the team and with clients. The experience of running street activities has led to the development of street theatre for a mixture of therapeutic and recreational outcomes. The work-team rapidly developed their skills to recognize psychological disorders in families, and the crisis has given them much experience in

selecting appropriate coping strategies. They have also strengthened their ability to carry the heavy workload involved in dealing with severely traumatized people. By operating as a mutually supportive team, they maintain their own psychological health. They also share their skills and experiences with other projects in the centre, thus enhancing the general provision of psychological support for neglected children.

6.4 At the level of PTC-Gaza

The implementation of this project was greatly extended after the last war on Gaza in 2014. The trauma centre became extremely busy because of the urgent needs of families affected by bombardment, displacement and fear. As this report has already shown, the Family Therapy Project has been endorsed by families, relief organizations and local communities. Many families now wish to be included in the project and many different associations and schools have visited PTC-Gaza. Therefore, we can proudly say:

- The centre has got a complete team of animators, specialists, professionals and trainers who are able to deal with traumatized families through using Family Therapy techniques. Also, the centre managed to coordinate and network through contact with various institutions in the Gaza strip where psychological support is their main focus.
- The centre has become a well-known institution working in the field of psychological support.
- The centre is able to improve and to develop through providing psychological services to all groups of people in Gaza.

7- Institutions visits to the centre

Many civil society institutions, national and international mass media have visited PTC-Gaza during the last period to be acquainted with the activities and the services the centre provides to the Palestinian society. Cooperation between the center and these institutions was discussed regarding any psychological support projects in the near future.

Notably here, Hope For All (HFA) -Finland, visited PTC- Gaza three times through April and May 2016 to provide the Friday of Joy Initiative with games, a generator and some important tools they needed in implementing activities. And next step will be to create a library for children in the center in Gaza.

The table below lists the institutions and the dates of their visits followed by photos.

Table (3): List of visits from local, national and international institutions to the centre

Visitor name	Institution name	Place of work	Date of visit
Alaa Jarada + Delegation of trainees students from Italy	Counseling Center	North Gaza	28/07/015
			19/08/015
Heba Abu Eyada	Palestine relief office	East of Gaza	25/08/015

Asmaa Jebreel	NRC	West of Gaza	13/09/015
Sommaya Nahhal	Marsa association	West of Gaza	04/10/015
Eng. M. Lubbad, Eng. A. Shorrab	Interpal	West of Gaza	12/10/015 21/10/015 18/11/015 24/11/015 17/12/015
Ola Dadah	Muslim Aid	Gaza city	04/11/015
Ahmad Salem	Ketab T.V.	Gaza city	13/12/015
Asmaa Shalayel	War Child- Holland	West of Gaza	Monthly
Dr. M. Khorate	Basma organization	West of Gaza	12/01/2016
John Sos & Janet Right	GCMHP	Gaza	16/01/2016
Mohammad Meqdad	Horooof for culture and arts	Khanyounis-South Gaza	20/01/2016
Ahmad Swareh	Human Care organization	Nusairat-Middle Gaza	20/01/2016
Lara Ghsain	Disabilities Care organization	North Gaza	20/01/2016
Feker Shaltoot & Jamal Rozze	MAP	Gaza City	21/01/2016
Ayman Swersawe	Future organization	East of Gaza	25/01/2016
Heba & Maha & Hnaa	Palestine Children's Relief		01/02/2016
Rezeq Basyone	Nqaa organization	Beit Hanoon-North Gaza	04/02/2016
Yousef Khattab	Youth Environment Org.	Zawaida-Middle Gaza	21/04/2016
Yasmeen J.	Amal for Autism organization	West of Gaza	26/04/2016
Loay & Asma	Holland War Child	West of Gaza	26/04/2016
Dr. Mazen Abu Qamar	World Vision	Gaza center	04/05/2016
Eman Nassar	Tamer organization	West of Gaza	09/05/2016
Jukka & Margit	Hope for All (HFA)-Finland	March & April & May	

8. Attending the external meetings, conferences, workshops and trainings

The project coordinator (Rasha Qandeel) asked the team to accept the invitations of various institutions to attend their meetings, conferences and workshops in order to introduce the ideas of the centre and to acquaint these institutions with the activities and services the centre provides. They distributed brochures, leaflets and films about the Family and Community Therapy Project to make them have a clear idea about the project and the essential role of the INTERPAL in supporting and funding this project.

The next table shows the name of the institutions which the team visited and the dates of visits.

Table (4): The institutions which the work team of PTC-Gaza visited

Institution name	Event description	Date of visit/ event
UNICEF	Coordination between national and international associations	Last Sunday of every month
Handicap International	Coordination between members of referral network	First Sunday of every month
Social Affairs	Coordination between mental health association and referral system.	Second week of every month
Welfare Association, Bank of Palestine	Beginning of “Wajd” program for orphans 2014	06/08/015
Palestinian Red Crescent	Training of psychosocial first aid	12/08-10/08-29/09-30/09-12/11-17/11-23/11
World Vision	Closing ceremony for a project	13/08/015
NRC	Attending F.G. titled” coordination between NGOs in psychosocial field”	20/10/015
Mobadron Association	Attending F.G. about the role of youth in Palestinian society.	20/10/015
Qattan Association	Attending science gallery	21/10/015
SEC	Attending F.G.	28/10/015
NDC	Workshop titled” How to get funds”	03/11/015
Gaza Community Mental Health Program	Training on CBT-Trainer Guido Veronese from Italy	27-10/2/11/015
Aisha Association	Woman’s Day celebration	08/12/015
Ketab T.V.	Interview to know more about PTC and Family Therapy project.	14/12/015
Ministry of Health	Conference titled” Research in mental health field”.	16/12/015
PNGO	The situation of people in Gaza Strip from 2007 till now	27/12/015
Theatre Day	Play about the Rights of children	29/12/015

Ministry of Culture	Workshop: Situation of children in Gaza Strip	05/01/2016
Help Age International	Attending workshop for elderly people	27/01/2016
Interpal	Discussion of a new project for disabled people	01/02/2016
Future Association	Coordination	10/02/2016
World Vision	Coordination	22/02/2016
Handicap International	Attending workshop for disabled people	24/02/2016
Quds Channel	Discussion about: Palestinian woman	26/02/2016
Beit Samed	Attending opening of Beit Samed gallery	06/03/2016
Palestinian Red Crescent	Training of emergency	10/03/2016
GCMHP	Attending 6 th international conference for mental health	19-20/04/2016
Aisha Association	Attending closing ceremony	21/04/2016
Quds Open University	Attending mental health conference	26/04/2016

9. Difficulties and how to overcome them

9.1 The ongoing power cuts

Because of the crippling blockade imposed on Gaza, we all suffer a lot from regular cuts in the electricity supply which interrupts work on the project. To overcome this obstacle, we use the generator despite the expensiveness of the fuel.

9.2 Fuel crisis in Gaza

Because of the siege imposed on Gaza for more than nine years, there has been an ongoing fuel crisis. As a result, the working taxis are rare and in certain situations it is extremely expensive to get to some remote areas. This problem has not been solved yet.

10- Recommendations

1- *Extending the Family and Community Therapy Project to be more regular and increasing the work-team in order to help more needy traumatized families in Gaza.* Gaza lacks everything

essential to maintain basic living. Increasing numbers of families visit the center for advice or help because of problems or conflicts within the family which derive from the behavior of traumatized children or the stress and frustration of the parents. There is an urgent need to extend Family Therapy support.

2- Expanding work areas to include all areas in Gaza in addition to securing everything needed to facilitate the team's capacity to travel to these areas.

May 2016

By field Project Coordinator: Rash Qundeel (PTC-Gaza)

Supervised by: Dr. Mohamed Altawil (PTC-UK)