



Palestinian Counseling Center

Promoting Mental Health Services and Policies

Dear partners and friends,

It is our pleasure to share with you the first electronic newsletter for the year 2016, released by the Public Relations department at the Palestinian Counseling Center. This newsletter will cover activities that were implemented between the months of January-April 2016, with a focus on the PCC's role in capacity building in the field of mental health, both locally and regionally.

The Palestinian Counseling Center:

A leader of Capacity Building in the Field of Mental Health

The Chinese proverb: "Give a man a fish, and you feed him a day. Teach a man to fish, and you feed him for a lifetime," is one of the most accurate proverbs that refer to the importance of capacity building within societies everywhere. Capacity building supports communities in improving their abilities to solve problems, and especially the problems developed in urban settings. Capacity building is not just about developing skills, but it is also about people's abilities to benefit from community resources. It is also about helping people get organized help to reach their desired goals. Through the capacity building process people learn to work in teams and divide tasks among them to maximize benefits. It is a process in which division of labor that contributes to the development of societies. Hence, capacity building consists of a series of training programs and internships that are aimed at achieving professional, sustainable development.

The Palestinian Counseling Center believes in holistic development, and in the importance of empowering all segments of the community, individuals and organizations alike. The PCC draws its strength from the expertise of professionals in the field of mental health within Palestinian society, and believes in the



importance of knowledge transfer in building the capacities of mental health professionals whether they are employees of the center, university students or *professionals who work at various Palestinian organizations, including NGOs, government agencies or the private sector*. The PCC's capacity building programs are based on practical trainings, theoretical discussions, partnership building with GOs and NGOs, development of psychosocial intervention model programs, support and mentoring of CBOs, and participation in national and international discussions on mental health.

In line with PCC's belief in the importance of staying abreast of scientific developments, capacity building of employees is an integral part of PCC's operations. Not only are employees encouraged to pursue higher education opportunities, development opportunities are integrated in yearly plans of employees, each in

his/her field of work. Additionally, all employees of the Clinical and Prevention departments participate in weekly individual supervision sessions and monthly group supervision sessions, aimed at providing technical and psychological support to counselors and social workers who, in turn, provide services to the Palestinian community

Based on its belief that mental health is a right for all, and it is the basis for satisfaction, productivity and creativity of individuals, and that mental well-being is also a pillar of steadfastness at times of political, social and economic instability. PCC works on transferring knowledge and expertise through capacity building of professionals and expand the pool of professionals so as to be able to reach out to as many people as possible who need mental health support.

The PCC's strength in capacity building lies in the fact that its professional trainers are also service providers, and their service provision is based on years of experience and training. PCC's professional employees constantly develop and improve their own interventions in mental health, and learn from their daily interaction with beneficiaries, which gives their work credibility.

Our work in the field constitutes the basis of our success in professional trainings. Through our work in various sectors, and with different professionals, we build knowledge and experience which serve as a strong reference for our work.

Despite the availability of professional, academic, logistical and administrative resources, over the past 34 years the PCC did not evolve into a training institute, but was able to maintain its unique identity as an organization that provides direct mental health services to individuals and communities. As a result of the center's belief in the importance of knowledge sharing, its work is crowned with experience sharing through training and capacity building, ensuring that professional and quality services are available for generations to come.

Today, the PCC offers a range of specialized trainings in mental health issues and life skills, both internally and externally. Trainings range from short-term training based upon requests made by organizations and long-term training, such as the supervision diploma which was developed by the Free University of Berlin, and implemented by the PCC and other partners in the West Bank and Gaza. All PCC trainings are modified to accommodate up to date scientific information on a regular basis. The PCC does not limit itself to the provision of direct trainings, but it also follows up and observes organizations and individuals that have been trained, in order to determine the success of the training and quality of services provided.

Finally, the most important factor that reflects the PCC's success in this field is that the capacity building program generates income for the center. The PCC is constantly contracted by local, national, regional and international organizations for training services. This income helps support the PCC's sustainability in the provision of mental health services within the Palestinian community.



Training on emergency intervention during times of crisis

Over the past two years, the need for emergency interventions has grown exponentially in Palestine. Hence, the PCC established an emergency intervention department, and has worked diligently to develop a comprehensive emergency intervention plan. With support from UNICEF, several groups were trained during the first quarter of 2016 on emergency psychosocial aid and methods of intervention over the course of three days during the period of 17-19 April, 2016 with the participation of 12 trainees from various areas in Jerusalem, including Anata, Al-Ram, Kufor Aqab, Al-Izariya, Qatna as well as the city of Ni'lin. The trainees will be able to plant initial seeds of support in their communities during times of emergency, in order to decrease the level of trauma to which their community members are exposed.



Supporting the Child Protection Network in the West Bank

through its active involvement in the Child Protection Network, and with support from UN Women for the project “Responding to gaps in GBV interventions through enhancing child protection in the West Bank”, the PCC built the capacity of counselors from Ministry of Social Affairs and policemen from the Family Protection Unit on child protection. A total of 30 individuals were trained in various topics on family structures, case management, intervention techniques in family therapy, and family counseling. Additional capacity building, follow up and supervision will be provided to trainees in order to improve their child protection skills, and quality of services provided to beneficiaries, especially children and their families.





Capacity building of doctors and nurses at primary health care clinics in Nablus

In partnership with MDM, the PCC worked on capacity building of doctors and nurses at primary health care clinics of the Ministry of Health in Nablus on psychological disorders faced by individuals, detection of psychological disorders and referral to specialized centers. The PCC coached the doctors and nurses through visits to the clinics, and built their capacities over the course of one year, reaching a total of 30 primary health care clinics. Additionally, through this intervention psychosocial support was provided to 400 beneficiaries, and 50 cases were referred to counseling and specialized therapy.



Capacity Building of PCC Counselors on Positive Discipline

In partnership with Save the Children, the PCC engaged 10 of its counselors in a training on positive discipline for parents, which was then implemented with 8 groups of 14 parents. Positive discipline focuses on child development stages, caring for children, disciplining without resorting to violence, developing long term goals for childrearing with the aim of helping children succeed later in life, problem solving methodologies, etc. The program helped improve the mental well-being of parents, and built their capacity to provide better care and support for the children, as well as decrease levels of stress faced by parents in their daily life.

Regional Capacity Building program

In partnership with the Office for Psychological Institute at the University of Berlin, and through support from GIZ, the PCC began to implement a regional capacity building program at the beginning of 2016 to develop the UNRWA-run mental health program in Jordan, whereby 5 PCC specialists provide regular trainings to relevant departments at UNRWA, including education, social work and health.



The youth empowerment program motivates participants

to come up with innovative community initiatives

The youth empowerment program in Jerusalem encouraged young participants to plan for, and implement, a community youth initiative in the Old City of Jerusalem to raise awareness towards equality between all sectors of the community. Youth designed and printed posters to communicate messages that address discrimination and racism, which were distributed throughout the old city. Youth produced a video of their initiative, which includes interviews they conducted with various sectors of the community that live in the Old City.



Activities conducted on the occasion of Palestinian Child Day

In coordination with the Child Protection Network, the PCC participated in the implementation of several activities on the occasion of Palestinian Child Day, including the formation of a human chain in solidarity with a Palestinian child prisoner, Kariman Swedan, in the village of Azzoun, Qalqilia with the participation of 200 children. A festival for children with disabilities was also organized, with the participation of 150 children. Children also participated in painting a mural in the middle of Nablus city, through which they reflected on their rights. An open day was organized for children at Burj Al-Laqaq in the Old City of Jerusalem, with the participation of 300 children, which included awareness raising activities on child rights and

freedom of expression through art work, painting of murals, movement activities, folk games, etc.

In coordination with the Culture and Free Thought Association (CFTA) in Gaza, UNRWA, the Red Crescent Society, Ma'an, the Family Center, the Social Movement in Lebanon, and Al-Tufula Center in Nazareth, the PCC in Nablus participated in an exhibition, which presented children's drawings from Gaza, the West Bank, Jerusalem, Lebanon and Nablus, entitled "Together," reflecting children's aspirations to the "Right to Live." The exhibition took place in Nablus, and through video conferencing. A total of 140 children from Palestine and Lebanon contributed drawings to this exhibition.