



Electronic Newsletter
September- December
2014



Welcome to the sixth edition of the Palestinian Counseling Center's newsletter! Through this edition, we hope to update our partners and friends on recent developments at the PCC between the months of September-December 2014, specifically focusing on staff news, their participation in various workshops and trainings, as well as end of year assessments of our five-year strategic plan (2010-2014) to help us plan for the upcoming five year period.

Looking Back, Moving Forward

With the conclusion of 2014 comes the end of the PCC's five-year strategic plan. The entire PCC team has accordingly been working hard over the last several months to reflect on achievements made during this time and ways to improve the organization's work as it embarks on a new period.

Launching this effort was the completion of an internal assessment amongst all staff. Carried out by UNAIS with support from Save the Children, PCC team members from each of the organization's five offices were surveyed about their satisfaction with various components of the PCC, including governance, external relations, and program performance. Nearly 40 PCC staff then attended a full-day workshop in Ramallah where survey results were presented and analyzed. It was found that all areas of the PCC's work scored average or high in satisfaction amongst staff – a true feat, as the facilitator explained. Most notable were the high scores of organizational strategy development, fiscal accountability, and relationships with civil society members and beneficiaries.

Complementing the internal assessment, the PCC has also contracted an external evaluator to review the organization's performance and implementation of its current strategic plan. PCC department directors have been busy conducting reviews of team members and annual action plans to assist in this process. Lessons learned through the assessment will help to guide the development of the PCC's upcoming strategy for 2015-2019.

Some changes to PCC operations are already starting to be made. The internal assessment, for example, suggested that the PCC would benefit from the hiring of a designated human resources person and the creation of a safety and security plan. The PCC has also invested in the development of a management information system (MIS) with support from Diakonia. This will allow for a much more organized, detailed method of storing key data and allow for the PCC's work to be all the more efficient.

In light of this year's escalation of violence throughout the occupied territories, the PCC has also identified a need to work thoroughly on an emergency response plan. While PCC team members excelled in their swift reaction to on-the-ground developments, particularly in Jerusalem, further preparations will allow for more effective work to be done. As such, department directors have been working closely with the PCC's executive director to identify potential emergency scenarios and build valuable response strategies. This will be an ongoing project into the new year.

The past five years have been marked with tremendous growth and accomplishment for the PCC. Notably, the PCC has:

- Integrated new therapeutic techniques that respond to the needs of beneficiaries, such as music therapy, and cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) in cooperation with Sumud-Palestine, an organization in the UK that trained 13 professionals (7 PCC staff, 6 external) in the application of CBT.
- Improved in the quality of education, through the development and integration of the Response to Intervention methodology in working with children with learning disabilities in schools with support from Save the Children and the Drosos Foundation. The PCC also established two Central Inclusive Education Units in Jerusalem with support from Save the Children, and transferred the non-formal education program to Ministry of Education schools.
- Developed and integrated a professional supervision program in cooperation with the University of Berlin in Germany. During the first phase of implementation, 17 professionals received a diploma in supervision. During the second phase, 9 professionals were integrated into a training of trainers program, whereby they are carrying out training and supervision for 67 professionals, who are in turn training 335 health providers.
- Empowered the Beit Skaria community psychologically, socially and economically. Beit Skaria is a village in area C near Bethlehem that suffers from complete isolation as a result of being surrounded by settlements. The program was implemented with support from NDC and in cooperation with The Red Crescent Society, the East Jerusalem YMCA, Riwaq, ACAD, and Right to Play.
- Improved the quality of services that are provided by 8 Jerusalem-based organizations with support from UNICEF and the NDC, and contributed to the improvement of resilience in East Jerusalem.
- Provided immediate response to emergency situations, whereby the PCC provided psychological support to families that were evicted from their homes in Sheikh Jarrah in Jerusalem, families of children that were killed during the bus incident in Jaba, injured civilians from Gaza that were transferred to hospitals in Jerusalem and the West Bank, and professionals from Gaza.
- Documented Israeli violations of human rights in Palestine, and in Jerusalem in particular, and implemented international advocacy campaigns that aim at reversing Israeli policies towards Palestinians, such as the Residency Rights campaign with support from Oxfam Novib and the European Union.
- Published "With Our Own Hands," a report on the psycho-social consequences of self-demolitions throughout occupied Jerusalem.
- Contributed to improved services of Juvenile delinquency centers in the West Bank, including Dar Al-Amal and Bethlehem Shelter for Girls, through the development of policies and procedures of the centers, and succeeded in lobbying the MOE to approve Dar Al-Amal as a center fit for formal education.
- Maintained and developed partnerships with 23 Arab and international organizations that financially support the PCC.
- Supported psychiatric patients through advocating for their rights to employment, and emergency transport to hospitals.

Collectively these achievements, along with the strengths and weaknesses identified in the organizational assessments, will help to guide the PCC as it sets forth with developing its next five-year strategy. As it has for the past 30 years, the PCC looks forward to this opportunity to adopt new and innovative methods in addressing the most pressing psycho-social needs amongst Palestinians.

Participation of staff in trainings, conferences and workshops

Barometer of local women's security workshop

A total of 9 women leaders from the PCC's Women's leadership program and 5 PCC staff members participated in a two-day workshop organized by Cordaid, a long-term PCC partner, on an initiative of Cordaid entitled "Barometer of local women's security." The workshop took place in Jericho, whereby PCC delegates interacted with Cordaid partner organizations in Palestine. The barometer kick off workshop focused on introducing participants to this tool, which enables women to work together to identify daily safety concerns that matter most to them, gather evidence of their concerns, and use the evidence generated to help promote accountability of local and national authorities, as well as international bodies towards ensuring women's safety.

International Conference on Women's Freedom, Peace and Dignity in Palestine

Members of the PCC took part in the International Conference on Women's Freedom, Peace and Dignity in Palestine: UN Security Council Resolution 1325 for Accountability. Hosted by the YWCA in Bethlehem, the three-day event was attended by over 300 men and women from around the world. The conference focused on accountability and recognition of Palestinians' rights under international law. PCC staff served on the conference's steering committee and participated in a panel at the event, concerning presentations on rights violations such as home demolitions, displacement, Area C, and residency revocation.

Training on engaging men and boys

Two PCC staff members, Ms. Asma Sharabati and Ms. Rima Shweiki from the Capacity Building department, participated in a regional training workshop coordinated by Save the Children in Amman, Jordan. The training focused on examples from the field on engaging men and boys in promoting gender equality, lessons learnt, as well as developing practical actions on mainstreaming transformative approaches towards gender equality within on-going and future programs, with the participation and support of men and boys.



Arab Resource Collective Workshop

Mr. Salah Malayshe, a coordinator in the Capacity Building department at the PCC, participated in an early childhood development workshop in Amman, Jordan, coordinated by the Arab Resource Collective (ARC), a long-term partner of the PCC. The workshop focused on the importance of working in early childhood development, specifically the 1-3 age group, due to the enormous developmental changes that children undergo during these early childhood years. Participants discussed their experiences in working with children, and highlighted the services that are provided to children in various Arab countries.

Emergency preparedness planning workshop

Ms. Rima Awad, Director of the Advocacy department and PCC's Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, participated in a training on emergency preparedness, coordinated by Save the Children. The training was timely as the PCC is in the process of developing an emergency response plan to enable us to be better prepared to respond during times of emergency.

Autism workshop

Mr. Basel Zayed, a Music therapist working in PCC's Clinical department, travelled to Kuwait to participate in a 3-day international conference on Autism organized by the Kuwait Center on Autism. The conference discussed various theories on the diagnosis and treatment of individuals with autism, highlighting the experience of the Kuwait Center on Autism, as an example, and developments around the world on autism as a developmental disorder.

Training of professionals from Gaza

Six PCC staff traveled to the Dead Sea, Jordan, to provide support to 47 professionals from six organizations from Gaza that survived the latest Israeli aggression, through expressive art therapy (clay, drama, music). The three-day workshop was commissioned by GIZ, a partner of the Gaza-based organizations, to help relieve some of their colleagues' pain, grief and loss following the Israeli aggression.

Positive discipline workshop

Two PCC staff members, Ms. Sana Bleidi and Mr. Mahdi Shalodi, participated in a regional workshop in Amman on Positive Discipline, organized by Save the Children. Positive discipline trainers from the region participated in the workshop to discuss challenges, successes and recommendations for future trainings on positive discipline. The PCC has been using the positive discipline approach for the past year, which is based on introducing parents to the needs of children according to their development stages. Parents are encouraged to understand problems from children's perspectives, and to engage children in problem solving. The tool helps parents develop non-violent approaches to raise children.

Psychological first aid training

Two PCC staff members, Ms. Asma Sharabati and Mr. Khaled Obeidat, from the Capacity Building department, participated in a training on psychological first aid organized by Save the Children, which focused on training trainers to work with children and caregivers experiencing severe distress after being exposed to disasters or other traumatic events. The PCC staff benefited from this training and trained others from the community to provide support to individuals that have been, and continue to be, affected by discriminatory Israeli policies, including child arrests, home demolitions and evictions, school raids and settler violence.



Launch of RTI manual

The PCC printed a manual for professionals and educators that work with children with learning disabilities on the Response to Intervention methodology (RTI) that the PCC has adopted in working with children in schools. The RTI methodology focuses on three levels of intervention: 1) working directly with children that need support through individualized plans, 2) working with children within the classroom through making adjustments to teacher's teaching techniques, 3) and working with children through small groups. The manual was printed with support from the Drosos Foundation, and was launched through a workshop that was attended by 40 professionals from schools, the Ministry of Education and organizations working in the field of education.



Open day and exhibition for psychiatric patients

In cooperation with INJAZ Palestine (which is part of the global organization Junior Achievement Worldwide), and Jerusalem Open University-Qalqilia, an open day and exhibition was carried out for psychiatric patients at the PCC's center in Azzoun. The Open day highlighted work done by volunteers from the Jerusalem Open University over a 10-day period with PCC rehabilitation patients, focusing on the reintegration of patients into the community through training them, and conducting various activities with them through the day care center. The open day was attended by representatives from INJAZ Palestine, the Jerusalem Open University, Azzoun Municipality, Qalqilia Municipality, the Chamber of Commerce, and the PCC.

