

**Evaluation Report**

**April 1<sup>st</sup> 2011**

**Operation Palestinian Children and Youth (OPCY)**

**2008 - 2011**

**A Project of the Palestinian Bible Society**

**With support from**

**The Evangelical Lutheran Free Church of Norway**

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Commissioned by the Evangelical Lutheran Free Church of Norway

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# I. Introduction

Operation Palestinian Children and Youth (OPCY) is a project operated by the Palestinian Bible Society (PBS) that provides educational programs to children and youth and their families in Palestine, and training of trainers to adults working with children and youth.

Through the programs they offered in cooperation with the local communities, such as the Ministry of Youth and Sports, local churches and other local communities, OPCY aims at raising awareness of the communities' responsibility for children's well-being, to bring joy in a situation marked by despair, to build bridges between Muslims and Christians and establish informal peace education in villages and towns throughout the Palestinian occupied territories.

The initial project period ran from 2005 through 2008. Its main focus is the well being and healthy development of Palestinian families, children, youth and their parents. The project is now in its second phase (2009-2011). In this phase the focus is on the family as a unit. This means that the target group has been narrowed in order to achieve a deeper impact.

The present evaluation is commissioned to provide input to ELFCN (Evangelical Lutheran Free Church, Norway) for determining whether further financial support from NORAD (Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation) for the project should be sought to continue working with the families as a unit.

## **The main goals of the evaluation are:**

- To evaluate if working with the family as a unit is essential for children's development, wellbeing, and for raising them to become responsible members of society.
- To assess the impact and the potential of including the media in the project.

## **The development goals are:**

- To uplift the family as a unit from the effect of the socio-political crises, and feelings of victimization, hatred and anger, into a mentality of hope, tolerance and forgiveness.
- To release positive emotions such as fun and laughter among Palestinian children, in an environment essential for growing hope.
- To change the attitude of youth from glorifying martyrdom into positive constructive patriotism.
- To enhance the role and position of females in the family and eventually in the society including the recognition of their equality to the males.
- To raise awareness among leaders in the communities regarding the needs of youth and children as well as the importance of healthy families.
- To improve relations between the Christian and Muslim communities.
- To prepare the new generation of Palestinians for bridging the gaps between Israelis and Palestinians.

## **The project's goals are:**

- To raise the awareness and responsibility in the community for the children's wellbeing and future
- To raise parent's capacity and awareness to meet the different social, mental and physical needs and challenges of their children and youth.
- To inspire teachers and community leaders to use new tools and methods for a healthy up-bringing of Palestinian youngsters
- To enhance the role and position of females in the target families
- To release positive emotions such as fun and laughter within Palestinian villages
- To create sustainable friendships and partnerships between Muslim and Christian families

## **The Target Groups**

### **Children (6-12years old):**

Through the variety of fun and play, like stories, puppets, tricks, and drama the children are stimulated to positive thinking about peace, hope, love and reconciliation. By helping children to express their feelings (frustration, fear, anger...etc) in a natural and constructive, the project aims to contribute to build a healthy society.

### **Youth (Teenagers):**

Palestinian teenagers are like any other teens struggling with their identity, rebellious and looking for meaning in life. The difference here from many other places is that they live in a traumatised society which to a great degree neglects their struggles and the shift in their behaviour, with minimum to no extracurricular activities fitted to their age and needs, and with their parents struggling with their basic needs. Some of the consequences are;

1. Sex addiction.
2. Alcohol problems.
3. Drop out from schools.
4. Violence.
5. Expression in a destructive way.

The project will raise their awareness and reflection regarding:

- Making critical decisions for their future
- Their own social and emotional competence
- The needs of their community
- Constructive subjects like exploring and developing their different talents

### **Fathers:**

Palestinian fathers are the focal point of the family; they are the main element for lasting change in the society. With the high unemployment rate, there is more violence in the family, and the tolerance level of the fathers is very low.

The project will raise fathers' awareness and reflection of what their daughters/sons are going through. It aims to teach them positive ways to deal with their children and thereby help them build healthier families. The importance of the role of women in the family will be underlined in the teaching as well as the importance of avoiding violence in building a healthy family.

## **Mothers**

Palestinian mothers are the buffer zone and the main source of positivism in the family. Unfortunately the lack of education and the general situation gives them the sense of hopelessness and helplessness. There is a higher leaning toward violence in solving family problems.

The project will raise their competence in dealing with their children by improved understanding of their development stages. The importance of children's education will be focused on. This will also be means for building their character. The project aims to encourage and teach them to stand for their rights in a positive way.

## **1. Background**

The Palestinian Bible Society started the pre-cursor to the project "Operation Palestinian Children and Youth" in direct response to the Second Intifada (also called Al-Aqsa uprising) in September 2000 when PBS put together a Christmas program for children in Bethlehem. Due to the continued negative impact of the second Intifada and the Israeli response to the intifada, the one-time event was developed into an on-going program. Insight to the current situation creates a backdrop for understanding the context in which OPCY is operating. (Evaluation Report, 4 March 2008).

- **The rational of the project**

According to the project document, the project was evaluated in February 2008 by an external team. In the Evaluation Report (4 March 2008), a number of valid recommendations were made. One of the recommendations was that the next phase of the project has to focus more on activities that will ensure long-term impact and sustainability. In the plan for 2009-2011 some of the recommendations in the evaluation report have been followed. One of which is working more with families, the core unit of society and the most important base for the development of children to become well functioning and responsible members in the society.

The reason for choosing the family as a target group is because in the Palestinian family, the man is the central figure of the family. He is the decision maker and the main supplier. Children and women are the weakest members. As life pressure increases more deprivation and harm is inflicted upon them. The OPCY has concentrated mainly on children and youth in the past years, but little on the family as a unit. It is believed that working with the family members as a whole will positively affect the family dynamics and develop the intra-relations among its members.

## I. Methodology

Two evaluators carried out the evaluation between January and March of 2011: Maisa Zidani, research assistant at the Institute of Community and Public Health, and an instructor at the department of Psychology, Birzeit University. Maurice Backleh, the chair of the department of Psychology, Birzeit University.

The evaluators used different methodologies in conducting the evaluation, these included:

- Semi-structured interviews
- Observations (various camp activities, puppet shows)
- Content analysis (puppet show scripts, DVDs of camp activities)
- Focus Groups (with participants and parents)

During the 10-day evaluation visits to some cities in Palestine, the evaluation team carried out the following tasks/activities:

- Meetings with OPCY staff at Birzeit University
- Observations of a sample of activities during the camp
- Field visits to various sites in Beit Jala and Salfit area
- Interviews and focus groups with various stakeholders, community leaders, administrators, trainers, volunteers, participants and parents
- Meetings with staff in the OPCY office in Al-Dahyeh office
- Examining project documents, annual reports, monthly reports, financial reports, and other relevant documents/internet sites and CDs

Overall, evaluating this project was difficult due to the lack of utility of the baseline measure. It would have been useful to have indicators for the family situation (e.g. family relations, modes of communication, conflict) prior to the launch of the project in order to evaluate if the project goals were accomplished due to the intervention. The OPCY team administered a baseline questionnaire that the families answered during the visit that was done before the program started. These questionnaires were filled with all the MOYS families. With the North West Bank group, Father Nairouz conducted the visits and completed the questionnaires with the families. The JEC families did not give OPCY access of visitation before the program, in addition to the fact that the OPCY team received the family list on the same morning the program was supposed to start.

OPCY team also revealed that the baseline assessment that was done before the program did not reveal deep problems within the family, because families would not open up on the first visit with people they don't know. During the program, the different family members were reminded of where they started (the baseline need / problem) and were asked (and sometimes helped by either the facilitation of the trainer, or feedback from the other family members about their change) to see how far they have progressed in relation to that starting point.

## **II. Findings and Assessments regarding the program**

This section outlines the main findings of the evaluation and an assessment of:

### **I. The project goals and outputs:**

- a) Socially: Improving and strengthening the relationships among family members through their communication skills. Expanding their world view through introducing them to others who differ from them culturally and religiously
- b) Mentally: Increasing their knowledge about their own environment and other cultures.
- c) Physically: Sports are a big part of the program, especially within the summer camps where sports are highly emphasized. The OPCY team anticipates that the youth and children will gain sport skills through different activities during the project (e.g. football and basketball) and improve their physical fitness.
- d) Psychologically: Part of the program is helping traumatized children and youth. It is anticipated that many of them will be able to express their feelings positively, deal with pain in their lives in a constructive way, and be able to continue in a healthier way.

In addition, it was mentioned in the project documents that key people in the different communities will be trained to conduct similar programs, establishing a network of volunteers who will be connected with the OPCY team, and thereby make the program more sustainable.

### **Thoughts regarding the objectives**

- Overall, the relationships among family members seemed to improve as reported by participants' anecdotes and written evaluations at the end of the program (at the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> camp). The program helped boost participants' self confidence and morale and everyone seemed to enjoy themselves and camp activities.
- Several families involved in the project were living under stress, and two of the families had lost a child at a young age. However, the project did not target traumatized populations directly as indicated in the project document.
- Concerning the objective of improving relations between Christian and Muslim families, the project was unable to mix the groups due to refusals from some families. OPCY has succeeded in mixing groups in their puppet and leadership training. They also conducted workshops on accepting the other, and invited Muslim lecturers in Christian family sessions and vice versa. For the next phase of the project, more effort should be channelled towards mixing Muslim and Christian families.
- Regarding the objective of idolization martyrdom, the issue was not directly addressed to avoid political conflict. However, their work with the teens included creating hope, helping them with their problems and communication skills. Lectures addressed peaceful resistance, respecting others and dealing with ones own feeling and how to express it in a nonviolent way, in hopes that this this will alienate the idea of martyrdom.
- One of the concerns in evaluating this project is that measuring impact was done by recording testimonies of change from parents, youth and children. However, a more effective way of measuring impact can be conducted by identifying specific indicators

and measuring change of these indicators across time utilizing ongoing assessments (pre/post and follow-up assessments).

## **II. The Target Group**

According to the project document, the target group is 10 families (the father, mother, youth, and children from each family), selected from 10 less privileged villages, and families should have a leadership role in their communities.

The responsibility for choosing the target groups was given to three main bodies:

- The Ministry of Youth and Sports (MOYS) for choosing the Muslim families
- Father Ibrahim, a priest from Nablus for choosing the Christian families
- JEC (YCS - Youth Christian Catholic students) for choosing the Christian families

A number of leaders from different communities were selected to assist the team in working with youth and children throughout different phases of the project. Selecting youth leaders contributed to achieving program sustainability. The youth leaders were part of previous programs that were implemented by the OPCY, and they were selected because they demonstrated strong leadership skills in previous projects.

### **Thoughts regarding the target group**

- Working with the family as a unit seemed like a good choice and is consistent with prior findings and evaluations. It was also helpful in demonstrating the importance of family relations and taking the responsibility for the well-being of children and youth.
- Selecting youth leaders for subsequent projects furthers the project objectives and contributes to its sustainability.
- However, families were not selected from less privileged villages as the project documents stated. OPCY deliberately aimed to have the partner organization nominate the families for the purpose of ownership and sustainability.
- The criteria for selecting the families are not clear and recruitment seemed variable between the different partners. For example, the priest identified families whom he thought would be a good fit based on the criteria outlined by the project, while MOYS posted an advertisement of the program in the newspaper. Evaluators were not given a copy of the advertisement for assessment, which would be helpful in assessing ways to improve recruitment.

## **III. Qualifications of OPCY\ project staff members**

The OPCY\ project staff consists of 10 members as listed:

- |                  |                           |
|------------------|---------------------------|
| a. Diana Sam'an  | Project director          |
| b. George Filmon | Media coordinator         |
| c. Raed Khattab  | Member in children's team |
| d. Rawan Zahran  | Field director            |

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| e. Ramzi Kandalaft         | Finances coordinator and children's groups |
| f. Johnny Botros Youth     | Group facilitator                          |
| g. Dr. Sami Basha          | Program Consultant                         |
| h. Janne Bjerkholt         | Volunteer                                  |
| i. Ingjerd Grimstad Bandak | Project Advisor, Liaison to ELFCN          |
| j. Jack Karkar             | Media Consultant                           |

The staff is adequately qualified for the nature of work and activities that are currently carried out by the project. The staff's formal qualifications are somewhat variable, but most of the members have a bachelor's degree in a relevant field, except one who is currently pursuing his bachelor's degree at Al-Quds Open University. They also have professional expertise in relevant fields (media, drama, film) and have conducted relevant volunteer work prior to joining OPCY.

### **Thoughts regarding staff qualifications**

- The project is not over-staffed and staff members have a clear job description
- The staff seems highly motivated and enthusiastic about their work and the impact it makes on families. They carry out a variety of tasks aside from the camps and workshops which include; preparing for the project (workshops, camps), conducting home visits, preparing for the following year, meetings with old partners, recruiting new partners, conducting summer sessions. And during camp, the staff spends days and nights away from their families
- The staff works as a team, collaborates on most tasks and divide the work among themselves based on their job description and area of expertise. They try to hold regular team meetings, and they emphasized that they thrive on team spirit.
- Some staff members are not satisfied with their salaries and find it inequitable to the effort they put in their work. However, the staff demonstrated a desire for professional development.

## **IV. Assessment of effectiveness, impact, relevance, sustainability and efficiency**

### a) Cooperation and Network:

The OPCY cooperated with three main bodies: The Ministry of Youth and Sports (MOYS), JEC (Youth Christian Catholic students), and Father Nayrouz (Priest in the city of Nablus), who also acted as a facilitator for the recruiting of Christians of different nominations from the different villages of the North West Bank. It is largely up to the local collaborating partner to identify groups for participation, the criterion of selecting the groups is not unified among partners. However, OPCY found that the word of mouth and personal connections is an effective method for recruiting families, and Father Nayrouz's personal judgment was valued considering his role as a shepherding figure in the North West Bank.

## b) Effectiveness

“Effectiveness” for this evaluation assesses the level to which the project has accomplished the objectives set in the project document for the three-year period 2009-2011, and the degree to which the activities planned have been carried out and have contributed to the long term goals.

The first and the second objectives of the project are:

- To raise the awareness and responsibility in the community for children's wellbeing and future
- To raise parents’ capacity and awareness to meet the different social, mental and physical needs and challenges of their children and youth

Most of the respondents expressed clear conviction that the program offered by OPCY (camps and workshops) raised their awareness. Awareness was defined differently by families. Some perceived it as their ability to better appreciate their families while others defined it as awareness related to the positive impact of resolving familial issues in a constructive way.

The Activities conducted by OPCY team during the camps and the workshops were valuable in changing the daily practices of families. For example, one of the fathers indicated that he used to yell and shout at his children without listening to their needs, but after attending the Social-Emotional Training (SET) provided by one of the OPCY team members, he learned new ways and practices; respect, listening and sharing of their life experiences. These comments were echoed by the children and youth. Firas, one of the children who participated in the camp said that his father was shouting less at home and that the family sits together every day and discusses issues related to their thoughts and needs.

Additionally, many of the topics covered by the camp activities furthered the goal of raising awareness; especially topics covered by the Red Crescent (e.g. protecting our bodies from harassment, self-defence, meddling with foreign objects).

The evaluation team concludes that OPCY is contributing to raising awareness in different aspects of family dynamics.

- The third objective of the project is: to inspire teachers and community leaders to use new tools and methods for a healthy up-bringing of Palestinian youngsters

Teachers did not participate in the project; hence the evaluators cannot determine whether teachers were inspired to use new tools for a healthy up-bringing of Palestinian youngsters. Community leaders who were involved in the project were the partner organisations themselves, most of the families that participated in the program, and others who were being trained via the program to become leaders in this field. Training local leaders – like the puppeteer groups, youth leaders, UNRWA counsellors whos were trained in SET- were all potential community leaders.

However, the SET program was effective in raising awareness and encouraged parents to reflect upon their children’s social and emotional needs. SET also trained parents in positive ways to

deal with their children and thereby helping them build healthier families. Finally, the importance of the role of women in the family was highlighted in the training, as well as the importance of avoiding violence in building healthy families, and understanding the developmental stages of children and youth.

- The fourth objective of the project is: to enhance the role and position of females in the target families. The Palestinian family, regardless of its form or organization, is recognized as a fundamental unit of society. With increasing longevity, four- and five-generation families are becoming common throughout the world. The changes in the status of women, however, have reduced their traditional role as caretakers of older family members; it is necessary to enable the family as a whole, including its male members, to take over and share the burden of help in and by the family.

The OPCY activities which were implemented made a good contribution to raising awareness regarding the role of females in society in general and in the family in specific. Families reported that camp encouraged them to engage in more family activities at home, make meals together, respect each others' needs, make time to see each other and even sing camp songs at home. All these activities contributed to enhancing the role of women at the home and perceiving them as equals and an integral part of the family system.

- The fifth objective of the project is: To release positive emotions such as fun and laughter within Palestinian villages. Due to the conflicted political and socio-economic situation in Palestine, this is considered an important tool for dealing with fear, anger, resentment and other stress factors.

Community leaders and parents pointed out that the OPCY-program brings smiles and laughter to the children through the activities they implement, which they consider as very positive. Through observations, focus groups with children and parents and interviews with staff, the evaluators found that children were happy and enjoying camp, which was reflecting positively on their well-being and family relations. This was corroborated by parents who indicated that their children's positive energy was reflecting well on their family ties and communication. When evaluators asked staff "what has been the benefit of working with OPCY?" many responses echoed one community leader who said: "We want to see smiles on the faces of our children again."

- The sixth and last objective of the project is: to create sustainable friendships and partnerships between Muslim and Christian families.

Evaluation findings reveal that even though the relationship between Palestinian Christians and Muslims is not always a rosy one, the above claims are not valid. As revealed by focus group discussions and interviews, most of the youth from both sides (Muslims and Christians) did not find it easy to stay together and held certain reservations regarding spending several days in the same residence. Parents were also reserved about mixing Muslim and Christian groups and indicated that they did not want their children to develop romantic relationships with children from the other religion.

c) Impact

Evaluation findings reveal the following positive Impacts:

- Strengthening the relationships among family members
- Parents seem to better recognize the needs of their children on different levels and at variable stages of development
- The camp brought joy and happiness to all family members
- Some of the family members discovered their capabilities, and expressed their views and feelings more positively without hesitation. Some learned new ways of healthy self expression and new modes of communication with each other
- Shyness was reduced among the wives, female children and youth as they became more vocal and expressive throughout the various stages of the program
- Cooperation with the local community has an added value impact because the local community can assist in identifying target groups and reaching individuals who may benefit from these camps and others who may have special needs.

Evaluation findings reveal the following negative impact:

- Separating Muslims Families from Christian families does not Improve/ strengthen their relationship nor does it bridge the social gap between them.

d) The relevance of the activity and goals

With over 52% of its population under the age of eighteen, Palestine's future will be determined by the strength of its children. On November 24, 2010, 60 prominent Israeli professionals, including educators, authors, psychiatrists and psychologists, social workers, and children's rights specialists wrote Prime Minister Netanyahu and other top officials saying:

*"....children and teenagers related that they had been dragged out of their beds in the middle of the night or arrested in their neighborhoods by undercover detectives and special security forces; taken in for questioning while handcuffed and unescorted by their parents; in certain cases, the families were not notified of the arrest in real time; minors were asked to give names and incriminate friends and relatives as a condition of their release; were threatened and humiliated by their interrogators; and some were even subjected to physical violence while taken in for questioning and under interrogation."*

DCI/Palestine investigated 24 cases, collecting 18 sworn affidavits, 15 from children, aged seven to 17. Specific violations included:

- detaining, interrogating, and abusing children as young as seven; yet under Israeli law, they're not criminally liable and must be released;

- 76% reported violence during arrest, transfer and/or interrogation, including punching, slapping, kicking, beating with rifle butts, and in one case, throwing a pen at a child's head during questioning;
- 61% reported painful hand ties, yet under section 10B of Israel's Youth Law relating to trial, punishment and modes of treatment, other methods should always be employed; restraints may only be used to prevent escape of harm to others;
- 53% reported interrogations with no parent present; under Israeli law, they're entitled to be there, except in special limited cases; and
- 53% reported threats during interrogation, suggesting long imprisonments, various forms of abuse, and other forms of intimidation.

The disproportion of children in Palestine is not necessarily a negative trait. If given a suitable environment, the opportunities for these children are unbound. This means that working with children is an urgent demand, and the objectives of this project are very relevant to the needs of the children.

Evaluation findings reveal that when children were asked about the things they liked about the program, most of the responses included: Enjoyment, parents better understanding their needs, learning to express their ideas/feelings without hesitation, and spending more time with their families.

The Palestinian educational system does not focus on life skills, and this program provides children, youth and their family members the space to practice some daily life skills/activities such as decision making, volunteering, etiquette, avoiding aggressive behavior, understanding the others, respecting women in the family, improving/appreciating the role of women in the family, listening techniques, forgiveness and overcoming some family problems and a variety of other life skills that are needed in the Palestinian society. The camp provided a safe space for families where they are disconnected from the psychological effects of occupation-related factors such as siege and checkpoints.

#### e) Sustainability

Sustainability with respect to this project can be evaluated by the following:

- 1) Is there any lasting impact on the target group?
- 2) Have families (children, youth and parents) acquired life skills/ tools that they will utilize in their daily lives?
- 3) Are there any local initiatives prevailing in the community for working with families as a unit?
- 4) Are there any sustainable changes in the attitudes, practices, and family dynamics and their ability to deal with problems?

#### **Thoughts regarding sustainability**

- Based on a series of meetings with family members, most reported improvements in their family relations and communication skills. More specifically, several maladaptive behaviours have been modified to more adaptive behaviours (e.g. fear of dark, aggressive behaviour, shyness). Family members also noted an improvement in their ability to address issues that were not previously addressed, understand each other better and become more open to each other needs. Family members also learned how to better care about each other.
- Family members discussed the changes in their families and how camp has been beneficial in positively affecting their relationships with their extended families and neighbours.
- A father who is running a local institution indicated his willingness to coordinate a gathering for families and their neighbours to transfer some of the skills and knowledge to them.
- Some members became youth leaders in other camps conducted by OPCY and other local institutions, which is a form of sustainability and a way to transfer skills. For example, providing puppetry workshops for youth/youth leaders. Many puppetry shows and training of other youth were conducted in local communities.
- OPCY has built positive relations with many communities and formed a basis for working more on training of trainers.
- There are few local initiatives prevailing in the community for working with families as a unit and targeting specific populations of need.
- Media was used as a tool to support sustainability through the website, videos, and documentation. We recommend posting lectures and workshops on the website to reach other local communities.
- Overall, the sustainability of the project is a bit fragile and should be further promoted in the next project period. One reason for fragile sustainability is simply the continued instability and economic hardship in the region.

#### f) Efficiency

Evaluation of efficiency addresses whether the resources spent on this project could yield better results if spent elsewhere.

- MOYS is running some youth and children camps during the summer, but those camps are focused mainly on developing children and youth's sports skills.
- School and after-school extracurricular activities are not part of most governmental and UNRWA school systems, and are less available in private schools.
- Even if schools or some organizations provide some training offered by OPCY, the need for after-school-activities persists, and activities offered by the OPCY are high quality activities targeting societal and personal needs.
- The 4-day camps (offered twice in the program for each group) offered by OPCY were very efficient in terms of their project outputs.
- Some families participate in informal social gatherings with other families, where they discuss issues related to what they learned during the camps or the workshops.

#### g) Advocacy

Advocacy for this project is being implemented primarily through the media component, as some sessions are videotaped and uploaded on the project website. These efforts should be continued and the website should be enhanced with lecture and workshop postings because advocacy through both modern and traditional media plays an essential role in disseminating knowledge and awareness. Community leaders can utilize the lectures to hold discussion groups among individuals in their communities. Holding these lectures can spread awareness and alleviate some reservations regarding participating in the program. We suggest new channels of advocacy including creating dvds, brochures, reports, and disseminating them in the local community (e.g. school system, MOYS). There is a wide avenue for promoting advocacy related to several topics including the following:

- Family violence – physically and verbally
- Promoting gender equality
- Importance of children and youth in the family and in society
- Empowering youth to discover and develop their leadership skills

### **V. Obstacles & Challenges**

- Integrating Muslim and Christian families in all activities of the program (workshops and camps). However, the OPCY team found it easier to bring Muslim and Christian families together for puppeteer training and leadership training workshops.

### **VI. Conclusions**

- Based on the assessment findings, the evaluation team concludes that the program has a very positive impact on the families they work with.
- The program gave families an opportunity for self expression and respect of different viewpoints.
- The OPCY provides positive extra-curricular activities, and provides training to parents and their children.
- Due to the social and political instability of Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, it may be unreasonable to expect the Palestinian Authority or other governmental organizations to fulfil all the needs of the people, including social-emotional health. This necessitates the role of projects like OPCY.

## VII. Recommendations

For the next phase of the project, OPCY must focus more on activities that will ensure long-term impact and sustainability. Hence, we recommend the following:

- Continue supporting activities for working with families as a unit, and continue conducting workshops and camps.
- We recommend working with families in the rural and marginalized villages and communities.
- In order to ensure follow-up and sustainability of parents, we recommend developing a plan for increasing the number of workshops/seminars/training/camps offered to families and youth leaders and potentially extending them over a longer period of time.
- Focusing on SET or other related trainings aimed at helping parents in supporting children and youth during difficult circumstances because they represent the foundation of the Palestinian society.
- If the budget is increased, we recommend employing professional staff trained in caring for families with special needs such as marginalized families, families who suffered from social problems such as divorce, separations, loss etc.
- Increasing the advocacy role through increased efforts to cooperate with curriculum developers, teacher training colleges, teacher education department of the MoE, head masters at schools, teachers unions, youth union (whichever organizations are relevant) to promote the interest of children/young people (showing in practice that unconventional methods are valid and positive). PBS is showing on a small scale that there are other ways of learning than by memorization and that social and emotional well being is important in order for a child to thrive and learn. The major institutions that can spread these methods/ideas on a bigger scale (such as the Ministry of Education) should be identified and approached. If budget is increased and recruiting additional staff members is an option, keep this in mind when considering qualifications in the hiring process.
- Consider partnering with the Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA), who can help access target populations.
- Families need follow-up and encouragement. We recommend organizing occasional seminars for all those who have participated in the workshops and camps. This can be one way of bringing people together and allowing them to learn from each other's experiences.

- Establish a baseline against which results of this project or the next project period can be measured. OPCY should build an evaluation tool that directly measures the main indicators/goals of the project. The evaluation tool may consist of a battery of self-administered assessments that are conducted at baseline (pre-program), post-program and at follow-up (6 months after the program ends) to measure both effectiveness and long-term impact.
- OPCY should continue to work towards integrating Muslim and Christian families by raising awareness and challenging some of the reservations regarding mixing the groups.
- Integrating more local volunteers because volunteers are essential in serving the community through learning and employing their experiences in camps or workshops. Additionally, having volunteers may help children and youth indirectly realize the value of teamwork, which may encourage them to adopt volunteer work in their daily lives. Volunteers can also reduce the budget spent on certain activities and allow flexibility for budget redistribution.

## **Annexes 1: Individuals and groups interviewed**

- Initial meeting between the evaluation team (Maisa & Maurice) and OPCY staff at Birzeit University.
- Observations of the activities implemented in the family camp held in Taleta Qumi School Beit-Jala over the course of three days.
- Interviews with trainers, leaders and some participants (parents and youth) during the camp.
- Focus group meetings
  - Mixed families (Muslims and Christian, old and new group) focus group (5 members)
  - Mixed youth (Muslims and Christian, old and new group) focus group (9 members)
  - Mixed children (Muslims and Christian, old and new group) focus group (5 members)
- Interview with Walid Attatra MOYS representative in the area. Other attendees: Thaer and Rania Odwan .
- Interview with puppeteer groups (14 individuals) in Salfit town
- Interview Father Ibrahim Nairouz in Nablus
- Interviews with OPCY staff:
  - From the children group: Raed Khattab, Rawan Zahran and Ramzi Kandalaft
  - From the youth group : Johny Botros
  - From the parents group: Diana Sam'an
  - From the Media group: George
  - Volunteer: Janne

## **Annexes 2: Terms of Reference**

### **Evaluation of Operation Palestinian Child and Youth (OPCY) Winter 2011.**

#### **1. Purpose:**

The main purposes of the evaluation are:

- We want the evaluation at the start of the last year to find out if we are on the right track focusing on the family.
- A new media component was included in the project in 2010. We want the evaluation to assess its impact and potential.
- We want the evaluation also to assess the cost effectiveness of the project.

#### **2. Background information.**

The project's main focus is the well being and healthy development of Palestinian children and youth. The project is now in its second phase (2009-2011). In this phase the focus is on the family unit. This means that the target group has been narrowed in order to achieve a deeper impact.

The project's goals are:

- To uplift the family as a unit from the effect of the socio-political crises, and feelings of victimization, hatred and anger, into a mentality of hope, valuing tolerance and forgiveness.
- To release positive emotions such as fun and laughter among Palestinian children, in an environment essential for growing hope.
- To change the attitude of youth from glorifying martyrdom into positive constructive patriotism.
- To enhance the role and position of females in the family and eventually in the society including the recognition of their equality to the males.
- Leaders within the communities recognise the needs of youth and children as well as the importance of healthy families.
- Improve relations between the Christian and Muslim communities.
- To prepare the new generation of Palestinians to bridge the gaps between Israelis and Palestinians.

The project's main activities are:

- The family programs
- Puppeteer group follow up

- Leadership training
- Media

### **3. Methodology:**

1. Two external local evaluators with relevant background. At least one of them needs to have a deeper knowledge about children & youth, and about development work.
2. Project administration and staff needs to prepare for and make appointments and the necessary arrangements for the evaluation.
3. Project staff needs to participate in evaluation when requested.
4. Written plans and reports/documents available for evaluators at least 2 weeks in advance.
5. PBS gives presentation / orientation on:
  - a. PBS organisation
  - b. Areas of work
  - c. PBS culture
  - d. Management and administration.
6. Interviews with some staff members.
7. Field visits to project sites. Minimum 5 days in field, 2 in family camp, and 3 for visiting relevant cooperation partners/families and puppeteer groups.
8. Observation of project activities in the field.
9. Interview with stakeholders:
  - a. Our cooperation partners in society (Ministry of Youth and Sport, Amaneh, Father Ibrahim Nairoz)
  - b. Puppeteer groups, teachers who were trained in SET
  - c. Parents (mothers and fathers)
  - d. Children and youth

### **4. Reporting:**

Written report from the external evaluators no later than 2 weeks after their visit.

- Containing:
  - a. Summary.
  - b. Observation and findings.
  - c. Analysis and Recommendations.

### **5. Time schedule:**

Field work: 10 days somewhere before the 15<sup>th</sup> of February 2011.

### **6. Areas of assessment / questions:**

- a. Organisation:
  - Structures of PBS (organisation chart)
  - Monitoring (registration and reporting routines)
- b. Human resources:
  - Qualification requirements /training of staff.
  - Use of volunteers
  - Functioning of project team.
- c. Goals:

- Clarity of goals (long term, project period and annual goals).
  - Indicators of impact of project activities.
  - Adjustment of goals and their reasons.
- d. Target group:
- Gender
  - Age groups
  - Criteria for selection.
  - Capacity building: Target group and stakeholders.
- e. Cooperation and network:
- Stakeholders in local communities (involvement, trust, transfer of knowledge)
  - Ministry of Youth and Sport, Amaneh, father I. Nayroz
  - Puppet groups connected to local organizations/NGO's
  - Teachers/youth workers trained through OPCY
  - Other contributors
- f. Achievements:
- Activity plans: Performance and achievements.
  - Assessment of effects and side effects.
  - Assessment of relevance (activities and goals).
  - Assessment of obstacles/challenges.
- g. Advocacy:
- Family violence – physically and verbally.
  - Promoting gender equality.
  - Importance of children and youth in the family and in society.
  - Empowering youth to discover and develop their leadership skills.
- h. Relevance:
- Project relevance and impact
  - Cost efficiency (travel distance/time/amount of people affected: Is it worth it?)
- i. Sustainability:
- Lasting impact on the target group.
  - Change in attitude and practices, family dynamics – how they deal with problems.
  - Local initiatives prevailing.

## **8. Specific questions:**

- a. Unpredictable moving restrictions. The cost... The risk....
- What is the influence on the team's focus? Does it lead to less building of relationships with communities? Does it increase focus on achievements (quantity)?
  - Does it make an impact on development taking place? If so, how?
- b. OPCY's use of Bible based principles.
- How is this perceived by the target groups and the stakeholders in the local communities.
- c. Balance between breadth and depth:
- Is OPCY focusing too much on a few people now? How can the project be more cost effective but without losing its deep impact on the families/cooperation partners involved?

- d. Should the project expand?
- To add or change focus area/activities/strategy?
  - To add/change target group (s)?
  - To add/change cooperation partners?

**9. Evaluation team**

1. Mr. Maurice Backleh – team leader.
2. Ms Maisa Ziadni

## **Annexes 3: Program For OPCY Evaluation**

### **Thursday 20/1/2011**

Meeting between the evaluation team (Maisa & Maurice) and OPCY Staff (Diana & George ) and Ingjerd Grimstad Bandak-Field representative for the Evangelical Lutheran Free Church of Norway.

### **Tuesday 25/1/2011**

Working /planning session for evaluation team.

### **Wednesday 26/1/2011**

Afternoon: Observing the activities implemented in the Family camp held in Taleta Qumi School Beit Jala .

Interviews Trainers, leaders and some participants (parents and youth) in the Camp

Writing the day report

### **Thursday 27/1/2011**

Afternoon: continuing observing the activities in the family camp held in this day

Meeting with MOYS representative in the area (Mr.Walid Atatra)

Interview with leaders, facilitators or trainers, a sample of: family members, youth and children.

In addition to some side meetings with OPCY staff.

Interviewing OPCY consultant Dr. S Basha during the Romantic night

Observing and interviewing some children during their night activity

Writing the day report

### **Friday 28/1/2011**

#### **Observing morning activities**

- Focus group meetings
  1. Mixed family(Muslims and Christian, old and new group) focus group ( 6-7 members)
  2. Mixed youth (Muslims and Christian, old and new group) focus group ( 7-9 members)
  3. Mixed children (Muslims and Christian, old and new group) focus group 7-8 members)
- Two family visits in the area participated in OPCY activities (from the old group and new one)
- Writing the day report

### **Saturday 29/1/2011**

- Working/planning session for evaluation team

### **Sunday 30/1/2011**

- Morning 9:00AM the evaluation team leave Ramallah to Salfit town.
- Meeting two puppeteers group  
Travelling to the City of Nablus
- Meeting Father Ibrahim Nairouz
- Back to Ramallah
- Writing the day report

### **Monday 31\1/2011**

- Working/planning session for evaluation team

### **Tuesday 1/2/2011**

Afternoon, Meeting OPCY staff

- From the children group: Raed, Rawan and Ramzi
- From the youth group : Johny
- From the parents group: Dr. Sami and Diana
- From the Media group: George and Jack
- Meeting with some volunteers
- Writing the day report

### **To be decided**

- Meeting with OPCY staff – wrap-up, last questions, addressing the preliminary outcomes, feedback from the staff.

**Annexes 4: Needs Assessment Questionnaire  
Potential Families in PBS family camps**

**Husband's name:**  
**Date of Birth:**  
**Education:**  
**Profession:**

**Wives' name:**  
**Date of Birth:**  
**Education:**  
**Profession:**

**Date of marriage:**

**Number of family members:**

**Address:**  
**Telephone number:**  
**Fax number:**  
**E-mail address:**

**Family members interested in participation:**

| <b>Name</b> | <b>DOB</b> | <b>Work / Education</b> | <b>Special Considerations</b> |
|-------------|------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
|             |            |                         |                               |
|             |            |                         |                               |
|             |            |                         |                               |
|             |            |                         |                               |

**The difficulties and problems that the family faces, as a whole unit or as individuals within the family**

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**Do you have any reservation on joint activities (between families, genders and age groups)?  
If yes, then what suggestions for alternatives do you have?**

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**Does anyone of your family members have special health problems, requiring special attention? If yes, then specify.**

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**Does anyone of your family members have special nutrition practices? If yes, then specify.**

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**Do you have any objections (for youth and children) for sleeping in joint room, with the separation between the sexes? tions for alternatives do you have?**

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**What are the practices / traditions that you as a social family unit practice?**

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**Do you or anyone of your family members have gifts or special creativities? Please specify.**

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**How willing are you in connecting with other participating families, socially or on an individual basis? What are your suggestions to reinforce this connection?**

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**What are your expectations and desires during the participation in the family camp program?**

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**Signature of Husband**

**Signature of Wife**