



SINTEF Unimed

Address: P.O.Box 124, Blindern
0314 Oslo NORWAY
Location: Forskningsveien 1
Telephone: +47 22 06 73 00
Fax: +47 22 06 79 09

Enterprise No.: NO 948 007 029 MVA

SINTEF REPORT

TITLE

**ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND OTHER INITIATIVES FOR THE DEAF IN PALESTINE.
An ex-post evaluation (end-of-project evaluation)**

AUTHOR(S)

Marit Hoem Kvam and Onar Aanestad

CLIENT(S)

The Signo Foundation and the Norwegian Association of the Deaf

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ABSTRACT

This report is an end-evaluation of a Norwegian Development Aid Project in Palestine. The overall objective of the project was to increase the possibilities of deaf Palestinians to attain the same rights as the hearing population by capacity-building through sign language. The project started in 1999 and was due to end in 2004, but has been extended until the end of 2005.

The evaluation is based on relevant documents as well as on-site visits and interviews with key persons during 02-10 April 2005. It has been somewhat difficult to undertake a precise evaluation because of unclear criteria for achieving the objectives. Also, the focus and the practical implementation have changed underway, partly due to recurring curfews and the limited freedom of movement in the different parts of Palestine.

Based on the information and observations which are available, it can be stated that the project so far has not achieved its two main goals (bilingual education in the schools and establishing a deaf union). However, the project has undoubtedly been a contributing factor in the improved situation for the deaf in Palestine. One positive development is that the deaf seem to have gained increased self-confidence. The status of sign language has increased among the common man on the street as well as among professionals, especially since it is used during news broadcasts.

It must be noted that the project probably would have been more effective if there had been a stronger project management from the Norwegian participants as well as from the Palestinian participants, with a stronger emphasis on short term and long term plans as well as better information to the deaf society.

| KEYWORDS | ENGLISH | NORWEGIAN |
|--------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| GROUP 1 | Evaluation | Evaluering |
| GROUP 2 | Deaf Palestinians | Døve palestinere |
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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

In the last half of the 1990s, the Norwegian Association of the Deaf and the Signo Foundation started planning a project in Palestine¹. Prior to this, a survey of the situation was carried out and the report *A study of the development aid co-operation in the Palestinian Territories between The Norwegian Association of the Deaf and The Home for Deaf Foundation* was presented (Cicerone, Kottmann Consultancy).

Following this survey, funds were made available by NORAD² for the first phase of the project called *Organisational Development and Other Initiatives for the Deaf in the Palestinian Territories* (the Palestinian Project). The project was given a time frame of five years: 1999-2004. The project has been delayed, partly due to the political situation in the area, and the end date of the project has been extended to December 30, 2005.

The 1999 Annual Report from The Disabled Person's Aid Fund (now called Atlas Alliance) states that "evaluation will first begin after the main project is initiated." The Norwegian Association of the Deaf and The Signo Foundation engaged SINTEF Unimed (now SINTEF Health Research) to undertake this evaluation. Research Director Arne H. Eide performed the first review of the project (SINTEF Memo dated Nov. 29, 2002). The memo was based on meetings with the involved parties in Norway as well as selected documentation made available by the Project Manager. The memo stipulated that a subsequent in-progress evaluation of the project should be undertaken and should include information from Palestine.

The in-progress evaluation took place at the beginning of 2003 by Senior Researcher Marit Hoem Kvam at SINTEF Health (SINTEF Report dated May 2003). The report described the development phase and status of the project. Furthermore, it evaluated what functioned well and what did not function well in relation to the objectives. It also evaluated why parts of the plan had been changed underway and how these changes had affected the objectives of the project, both positively and negatively.

¹ Here named the Palestinian project

² A directorate under the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

In the beginning of 2005 SINTEF Health Research was invited to take part in a competitive tendering process involving several research centres for the end evaluation of the Palestinian Project. Senior Researcher Marit Hoem Kvam made a plan for an evaluation, which included several ways of getting information and several groups of informants (triangulation of methods). SINTEF Health Research was awarded the project and the plan was approved by the Norwegian Association of the Deaf /Signo Foundation. Senior Researcher Marit Hoem Kvam visited Palestine for one week in April, 2005, and interviewed, partly together with Onar Aanestad, both hearing and deaf key persons. In addition, two interviews were conducted in Oslo, one in Ramallah, and one per e-mail from Canada. This report is based on these interviews in addition to relevant documents and observations in Palestine.

The draft of this report was sent to Signo at the end of May 2005, who forwarded it to the Central National Committee for Rehabilitation (CNCR). Thus factual errors could be corrected, and further information could be supplied. However, the conclusions in the report have not been affected by this communication.

The study was built on informed consent with voluntary participation. Anonymity was important in the report, and throughout the evaluation ethical considerations were taken.

1.2 THE STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

The next section will describe the chosen evaluation method. Section 3 will follow with the chief evaluator's background as well as a short history of the situation of deaf people in Norway in order to provide a background to the point of reference of the author. A description of the project's objectives and management and collaborating organisations follows in Section 4. Data collection and the interviews in Palestine are presented in Section 5. The interviews in this section are presented collectively (not individually) as: a) stakeholders, b) members of deaf clubs, c) sign language interpreters, d) Ministry of Education, and e) TV-administration, and thus made anonymous.

Finally, Section 6 will present the conclusions.

2. EVALUATION METHOD

According to Patton Michael Quinn, an evaluation means a systematic assessment of the operations and/or the outcomes of a program or a policy (Sverdrup, 2002; Weiss, 1998). Evaluation research is achieved when such investigation is systematically performed through empirical data collection and carefully analysed results. What has the program achieved? There are different types of evaluation methods available, all depending upon the purpose of the evaluation.

An evaluation can be seen in relation to three central approaches within evaluation research (Sverdrup, 2002). One approach is the *user-oriented* approach, which first and foremost is of interest for the users (in this case the deaf in Palestine). Another approach is *the process-oriented* approach, which is concerned with adjusting and improving a process underway. The third approach is *decision oriented* and is concerned with objectives and processes. The results can be used to support decision-making regarding a programme or measure or the possible prolonging of a project.

2.1 A DECISION ORIENTED APPROACH

Since this report is concerned with the end evaluation of the Palestinian Project, the decision oriented approach is the best method to follow. The recipient of the evaluation is the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation -NORAD. The report should assess objectives and processes. Since there is no detailed description of the situation before the start date of the project, this evaluation report will not contain any comparisons of the situation before and after. Instead, it will focus on the situation today in relation to the laid objectives and available resources, as well as investigate the users' opinions.

The following sources of information are relevant:

- a) Documents,
 - b) Interviews with informants in Palestine,
 - c) Interviews with informants from Norway (Signo),
- as well as informal observations in Palestine.

The following documents have been used for background information and reference:

- Preliminary Study of the Development Aid Co-operation in the Palestinian Territories between The Norwegian Association of the Deaf and The Home for Deaf Foundation (Cicerone, Kottmann Consultancy Services, Spring 1998),
- Assignment Description (dated January 04, 1999),
- Agreement Between NDA, HFD, NIDA and NHF,
- Collaboration Agreement 01.06.99/NDF and CNCR,
- Bi-Annual Report (Live Jetlund, dated March 31, 1999),
- Atlas-Alliance's Annual Report for 2000, 2001 and 2002,
- The Palestinian Project Coordinator's Progress Report: Progress Report 01.08.01.08.2001-05.01.2002 (Atef Tamimi),
- Review of the Project *Organisational Development and Other Initiatives for the Deaf in the Palestinian Territories*. (Arne H. Eide, SINTEF Unimed. Memo, November 29, 2002).
- The report from 2003 from the in-progress evaluation of 2003 *Organisational Development and Other Initiatives for the Deaf in the Palestinian Territories* (Marit Hoem Kvam, SINTEF Health Report, May 2003),
- Narrative Report 01/01/2003-31/12/2003 (Atef Tamini, Project coordinator)
- Narrative Report 15/05/2003-31/12/2003
- Financial Report, 31/05/2004, CNCR

Most of the above mentioned documents were more relevant during the starting phase of the project, but are also regarded as important in relation to the description of the objectives and plans. It must be noted that some annual reports from CNCR were written by the stakeholders themselves and not confirmed by outsiders. Hence the compliance with schedules and plans are not necessarily reliable. This makes it more difficult to make a trustworthy evaluation.

Interviews and observations

The chief evaluator carried out the interviews and observations in Palestine from February 02-09, 2005. Other participants in the evaluation were Onar Aanestad. He took part in the interviews of key persons in different administrative positions (hearing informant), and is a co-author of the report. Christine Jildeh served as an interpreter (Arabic/English) during interviews with deaf people and also with hearing people when necessary. Onar Aanestad and Christine Jildeh arranged the meetings to the different informants.

3. THE NORWEGIAN DEAF'S HISTORY - THE AUTHOR'S INTERPRETATION

This report will be influenced by the responsible author's background; a PhD. in special education/hearing impairment, experience as a teacher in a deaf school, and contact with hearing impaired professionals as well as friends. Hence, knowledge about the communication situation of deaf will serve as a backdrop for this evaluation.

For readers with less first hand experience, it can be useful to give a summary of the development of the rights of the deaf in Norway. This process has revolved, for the most part, around the recognition of sign language.

3.1 THE SCHOOL SYSTEM FOR DEAF STUDENTS

Anders Christian Møller was a brilliant deaf student educated in Denmark (Sander, 1980). In 1825 he established the first Norwegian school for the deaf in Trondheim. This means that the deaf in Norway were given their first education opportunity among deaf peers more than 180 years ago. The school based its education on the 'total communication' principle. With time, several deaf schools were founded in Norway, but were soon dominated by hearing teachers, resulting in sign language not being accepted, and the so-called oral method taking over as educational principle (Falkenberg & Kvam, 2004). Many older deaf persons can remember sitting on their hands during class so as not to be tempted to sign. In their spare time, they would communicate with each other through the use of sign language. Many deaf persons were drawn to larger cities, where they communicated with each other using sign language. However, sign language was not considered an official language.

3.2 SIGN LANGUAGE AND INTERPRETERS

During the 1960s and 70s, there was a change in attitude towards sign language. In 1968, The Norwegian Association of the Deaf employed their first sign language consultant and a sign language committee was established. Gradually, sign language courses were held, but in many cases, only as an addition to spoken Norwegian. Many parents of deaf children went to these courses in order to improve communication with their children. Friends of deaf people, caregivers, and teachers participated in these courses.

In 1972, the Norwegian National Insurance Administration established a scheme whereby sign language interpreters were refunded through the National Insurance for their expenses in connection with doctor's call and hospitalisation. At the same time, much work was being put into

establishing education for sign language interpreters. Up until this point, hearing family members had functioned on a voluntary basis as intermediaries and interpreters for deaf persons in need of communication assistance. In 1977, after much preliminary work, a group was chosen to complete a five-week basic course for sign language interpreters. By the fall of 1978, Norway could proudly present their first 14 authorised deaf interpreters (Grut, 2001). Simultaneously, some sign language experts functioned as ‘temporary authorised deaf interpreters.’ During 1990-1993, The National Insurance Administration carried out a pilot project in 4 counties, employing permanent interpreters to the Technical Aids Centres in the counties. The project was so successful that it has become a permanent scheme. Freelance interpreters are also associated with this scheme and step in when needed.

The Legislative Proposition No. 1/1987-88 stated that the university system would be responsible for education of interpreters. By 1995, this education had become a three-year programme at the University of Oslo and at the University College of Sør-Trøndelag.

It has taken about 30 years from the time the first plans for deaf interpreters were drafted until the current situation, with 500 highly qualified deaf interpreters and about 4000 users. These interpreters are today of great help for deaf people, and they have participated in the struggle to give deaf people more free access to different types of services.

3.3 THE NORWEGIAN ASSOCIATION OF THE DEAF (NDF)

With time, local deaf organisations were created in cities that had established deaf schools. In Oslo and Bergen, it took 30 years between the establishment of deaf schools and the establishment of deaf organisations (1878 and 1879, respectively) and 53 years in Trondheim (1878). These organisations were initiated and in some cases led by hearing persons - often teachers or priests - connected to the deaf schools. With time, it was the deaf themselves who more and more managed the organisations. In 1918 the Norwegian Deaf Association was established, about 40 years after the establishment of local deaf organisations. They approved their own laws and statutes and have lobbied ever since for change in Norwegian rules and laws for the benefit of deaf people. A magazine for the deaf was started as well as a printing office. A college and a video department were also established. Yearly cultural events, sport competitions and bridge tournaments were arranged. As of late, a Sign Language Theatre is established with funding from the National Budget.

3.4 THINGS TAKE TIME

The intention of presenting the above has been to give a perspective of what has happened within the deaf community in Norway. It has taken a long time to achieve the respect that the deaf today hold among most people and within the professional community. Normally, hearing persons have been involved in the starting phase, but with time the deaf have taken over the responsibility and probably have made a better and more relevant effort to improve the conditions of the deaf.

As a point of reference, one can therefore not expect the deaf in Palestine, who are living under extremely difficult political circumstances where even basic needs often cannot be met, to be ready to undergo the same development within a few years.

The project *Organisational development and other initiatives for the deaf in the Palestinian Territories* should not only be evaluated according to how far the objectives have been reached, it is equally important to assess if relevant ideas and attitudes have been established, both among hearing and deaf people in the country. If so, the deaf in Palestine will be able to continue the development on their own.

4. THE PROJECT'S OBJECTIVE AND MANAGEMENT

The overall objective of the project is to work so that deaf Palestinians can achieve the same possibilities and have the same rights in society as hearing Palestinians.

4.1 THE OBJECTIVE OF THE INITIATIVES

The overall objective was to be achieved through two strategies or initiatives:

1. "To establish and strengthen a network of interest groups for the deaf in the Palestinian Territories, at Gaza and the West Bank. The goal was to increase the strength and awareness of adult deaf Palestinians so that they can be able to fight for their own rights through the different interest groups."
2. "To offer continuing sign language education for teachers of the deaf in Palestine. The strategy should provide the best possible bilingual education to children in order to achieve the best possible competency in Palestinian sign language as well as written and spoken Arabic. This should enable them to have meaningful lives and power to fight for the rights of the deaf in society as adults." (From *Assignment Description*)

The above-mentioned objectives are unspecific and difficult to make operational. This complicates the evaluation regarding the degree of objective achievement. The project group has more concrete, short and informal working objectives 1) *to establish a Deaf Union* and 2) *to implement bilingual education in the schools for the deaf*.

The goal achievements will be assessed in this report. However, since the plans have partially changed underway, it would be also natural to assess how the Palestinian project has worked, the obstacles met by the participants, and intended or non-intended by-products which may be attributed to the project.

4.2 PROJECT ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT

Funding

Funds were made available by NORAD through an established agreement with The Disabled Person's Aid Fund (now Atlas Alliance). The project is a collaboration project between The Norwegian Association of the Deaf (NDF) and The Signo Foundation.

Project Management in Norway

During the project's planning phase in 1998, it was decided that the project group would have a shared leadership between The Norwegian Association of the Deaf (NDF) and the Signo Foundation. This worked for most of 1999, but circumstances changed when NDF replaced its original representative at the end of the first project year. Today Signo has the majority in the Board and the NDF has the leadership.

For the time being, two persons from Signo and one from NDF represent the Board of the Project in Norway (Gunnar Dehli, General Director at Signo, Jarle Kottmann, Senior Adviser at Signo, Hege Lønning, member of the Foreign Aid Work in NDF and leader of the Board). The task of the Project Board has been to ensure that the co-operation agreement between the organisations was followed in the best possible manner. They were to have four yearly meetings.³ This was the case in 2003, but in 2004 only two meetings were held.

Currently, the *Project Group* is comprised of Knut Rune Saltnes, Signo (project leader), Live Jetlund, Signo, and Toralf Ringsø, NDF. Jarle Kottmann, Signo, has provided technical assistance.

The Steering Committee in Palestine

A steering committee was established in Palestine with roots in deaf societies and existing voluntary organisations. There was one representative from Qalquilia and one from Gaza representing the deaf societies, plus three hearing persons from the voluntary organisations Central National Committee for Rehabilitation (CNCR), Community Development Association for the Hearing-Impaired (CDA), and General Union of Disabled Palestinians (GUDP). In 2003 the members of the Steering Committee changed and now there are only deaf members: One from each city Qalqilia, Nabus, Hebron and Ramallah. Gaza has no longer a representative.

4.3 COLLABORATING ORGANISATIONS

There are many organisations that deal with rehabilitation work in Palestine and which directly, or indirectly work with the project.

³ "Agreement between the Norwegian Deaf Association, the foundation HFD, the Norwegian International Disability Alliance (NIDA) and the Norwegian Handicap Association (NHF)," article 5. Leadership structure.

Central National Committee for Rehabilitation (CNCR)

This voluntary organisation was established in 1980 with support from the PLO. It was reorganised in 1989, arising from an increasing need for unifying all Palestinian efforts and capacities in the field of rehabilitation. This need was a consequence of increased injuries during the first Intifada. This organisation has offices in Jerusalem and Al Ram. CNCR is a coordinating "umbrella" organisation, which includes many local organisations. Its mission is *to promote coordination among disability and rehabilitation institutions and influence rehabilitation policies in order to upgrade the status of rehabilitation services in Palestine*. The chairman of the board is Irsan Ibrahim Najjar.

CNCR has the following organisational structure:

- Assembly with 62 representatives from Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs). All local clubs for disabled are represented.
- Board, comprising 14 representatives from different rehabilitation organisations on a national level as well as other NGOs and donor groups. Three members of the board are themselves disabled.

Five different organisations are under the CNCR umbrella: Community-Based Rehabilitation Committee (CBR), Physical Disability Committee, Mental Disability Committee, Visual Impairment Committee, Community Development Association for the Hearing impaired (CDA - see under).

CNCR acted as employer for Atef Tamimi, who since October 2000 was engaged as Project Coordinator. He left Palestine in September 2004, and his successor, Lubna Kaloti started working on January 01, 2005. CNCR has the administrative and economic responsibility for the project and is the Project Coordinator.

The Technical Committee in CNCR

CNCR has a technical committee led by Dr. Allam Jarrar. Allam Jarrar is also Secretary of the Board of CNCR. The technical committee and its leader seem to have been perceived as the organisation that de facto has followed the project, and the leader has been working closely with the Project Coordinator.

Community Development Association for the Hearing-Impaired (CDA)

There are five different organisations under the CNCR working for different disabilities, one of which is named the Community Development Association for the Hearing impaired (CDA).

The CDA was founded in 1992. 17 organisations working for or with deaf people form part of this organisation, and the leader share offices with the CNCR. Their tasks are to co-ordinate and improve all services for the hearing impaired (including hard-of-hearing and deaf) in the areas of education, health and culture. Helping hard-of-hearing get a hearing aid is part of CDA's responsibilities. The office is in Jenin. CDA has been led by Mohammad Ba'jawee since 1994. According to the programme guidelines, CDA is supposed to be represented in "The Steering Committee" of the Palestinian Project.

General Union of Disabled Palestinians (GUDP)

This organisation was founded with an interim board in 1991. The first ordinary election took place in 1997 and a democratic organisation for the disabled was established, with its headquarters in Ramallah. Today, it has more than 6000 members with different types of disabilities. All who work or participate in the board are themselves disabled. Thus, the aim that all kinds of disabilities shall be represented in the board is greatly implemented. Currently, one of nine board members is deaf.

The President, Ziad Amr, sits on the board of the CNCR and is an appointed member of "The Steering Committee" of the project. The organisation GUDP works to try to influence legislators to pass laws that help the disabled. Their objective is to ensure that these laws are upheld.

Diakonia Rehabilitation Program - the Norwegian Association of the Disabled - NAD

Diakonia is a Swedish human rights group supported mostly by six Swedish churches. Diakonia is located in Jerusalem, where the local NAD representative used to have his office. The Program Director, Ghada Harami, represents her organisation in several NGOs, including the CNCR board.

In 1989, Diakonia took part in establishing a rehabilitation centre in Ramallah. The centre's initial intention was to rehabilitate persons who had suffered spinal cord injury during the first Intifada. This was the start of Diakonia's rehabilitation program, which was formally founded in the 1990s. The program is called Community Based Rehabilitation – CBR, and works according to WHO's

CBR-approach. The objective of this program is to facilitate social integration of people with disabilities as well as to promote their rights as citizens.

Diakonia / NAD have a coordinating role and support local voluntary organisations (NGOs) financially and technically. They co-operate with more than 20 different Palestinian organisations that work on a regional or local level. More than 28.000 disabled persons have been serviced through this project. Diakonia / NAD do not directly participate in the Palestinian deaf project, but are in contact with the Norwegian project group and are oriented about the project's progress.

5. DATA COLLECTION IN PALESTINE AND ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEWS

5.1 INTERVIEWS

Organisation of the interviews

All interviews with hearing key persons in Palestine were carried jointly by Marit Hoem Kvam and Onar Aanestad, except for one, where Aanestad worked alone. The interviews were built around an open interview guide, and included informal questions as well as informal conversation. English was the working language, except in one case where an Arabic/English translator was used. Each interview with the Palestinian hearing informants lasted approximately 1 ½ - 2 hours. Notes were taken during the interviews, as well as recorded on a sound cassette to ensure quality and correctness.

The interviews with the Norwegian participants were carried out in Norwegian by Kvam alone.

Kvam lead the interviews and informal meetings and observations among the deaf. This was facilitated by sign language interpreters, which were mainly self-taught persons. The interviewer took notes during the interviews.

As some of the interviews were conducted with both parties using their own mother tongue, some inaccuracies may exist. However, this should not be decisive for the total outcome of the evaluation.

Informants

The interview objects are briefly presented below. Our informants and the date of the interviews are the following:

- Leader of the Deaf Club in Ramallah (April 03)
- Sign language interpreter in the Deaf Club (April 03)
- Five deaf members of the Deaf Club in Ramallah (April 03)
- Sign language interpreter in Ramallah (April 04)
- Two program responsible persons from the local TV-company Watan on the West Bank (April 05)
- Minister of Education on the West Bank (April 05)

- Leader of GUDP (April 05)
- Chairman of the board of CNCR (April 05)
- Leader of the Deaf Club in Gaza City (April 06)
- 5 members of the Deaf Club in Gaza City, plus informal group interview (April 06)
- Sign language interpreter in Gaza City (April 06-07)
- Program leader of the International Palestinian TV (April 07)
- Minister of Education in Gaza (April 07)
- Program Director of the Rehabilitation Program of Diakonia/NAD, Jerusalem (April 08)
- Leader of CDA (April 09)
- Leader of the Technical Committee (April 20)
- A meeting was held with four hearing members the board of CNCR (April 03) and three members of the board (April 09)
- Norwegian project coordinator (April 15, in Norway)
- The Norwegian project Leader (May 03, in Norway)
- E-mail interview with Atef Tamimi (May 22)

Some informants wished that their answers be kept anonymous. Respecting this request, we have tried to credit viewpoints arising from the interviews to a group rather than to an individual. The answers are therefore compiled into five groups to get a clearer picture of their experiences and reflections.

- Stakeholder and high level key persons
- Members of Deaf Clubs
- Sign language interpreters
- Ministry of Education
- TV administrators

5.2 INTERVIEWS WITH STAKEHOLDERS AND HIGH LEVEL KEY PERSONS

The evaluators had expected CNCR to arrange the meetings with the necessary key persons. Instead, all arrangements, including permissions to Gaza, fell on the shoulders of the local evaluator Aanestad and the translator Christine Jildeh. The board of the CNCR were reluctant to take part in the evaluation process, as there seemed to be a misunderstanding between CNCR and SIGNO. The chief evaluator was made aware of this during the first meeting with the four members of the board of the CNCR on April 03 (Irsan Ibrahim Najjar, Allam Jarrar, Ziad Amr, and Murad Dwaikat). The present board members claimed that they expected a participatory

evaluation. Signo, on the other hand, had asked SINTEF for an end-of-project evaluation. The members of the board of the CNCR were disappointed that they had not been involved in the planning as they had expected. They had not received sufficient information about the evaluation, the terms of reference and the CVs of the two local participants. Due to this, their enthusiasm for the evaluation was diminished.

The leader of the Technical Committee Alam Jarrar did not want to be interviewed until these papers were available. Hence, the interview with the leader of the Technical Committee Allam Jarrar was postponed until April 20 and carried by Onar Aanestad alone. The interviews with two of the Norwegian project participants were held in Norway by Marit Hoem Kvam.

Interviewees

Irsan Ibrahim Najjar, Chairman of the Board, CNCR

Irsan has previously been a principal at a school, but has volunteered for many years in the CNCR, and is also a member of the Steering Committee of the project. Like the other members, he receives no salary for this work, but he receives some compensation for travelling between his home in Nablus and the office in Al Ram.

The interview took place at CNCR's office on April 05. Christine Jildeh served as Arabic-English interpreter. The person responsible for the SMS-project (mobile telephones to deaf people) joined the group to tell about the experiences so far.

Ziad Amr, Leader of GUDP

Ziad was interviewed at the Royal Court Suites Hotel in Ramallah in the afternoon of April 05. GUDP has seven branches of disabled groups, one of which is a group for both hard-of-hearing and deaf.

Mohammed Ba'jawi, CDA

Mohammed was interviewed at the CNCR office (Ramallah) April 09. The Community Development Association for the Hearing Impaired was established in Nablus in 1992 to give services for hearing impaired people, and Mohammed has been the coordinator since 1992. CDA works closely together with the CNCR. The organisation has also a facilitator in Gaza. They work with 7 different NGO's, and the main objective is to support hard-of-hearing people who need hearing aids. CDA has arranged or facilitated courses in sign language.

Allam Jarrar

Dr. Allam Jarrar is a member of the Board of CNCR, where he represents the Medical Relief Committee and is the Board Secretary. He is a medical doctor, works in the Medical Relief Committee and is also the director of the CBR program in the West Bank and Gaza. He is a voluntary consultant and the head of the Technical Committee of CNCR. In CNCR he is responsible for rehabilitation policies. He was interviewed in Ramallah by Onar Aanestad on April 20.

The Norwegian participants

Informal talks were held with the project leader from Norway, Knut Rune Saltnes, in Jerusalem on April 02, April 04 and April 08. The coordinator of the project, Jarle Kottmann, took part in informal talks in Jerusalem April 08 and in the meeting with the board April 09. He was formally interviewed by Kvam in Norway on April 15, and Knut Rune Saltnes on May 03.

Signo/the Norwegian Association of the Deaf has been to Palestine 6 times in 2004. Due to the Intifada, previous visits have been irregular. They have found it more valuable to extend the numbers of visits and reduce the duration. The last visit (April 2005) included a visit to the Qalkilya Deaf Club in relation to a gathering of representatives from all West Bank deaf clubs. The objective was to encourage the establishment of a Deaf Union.

5.3 WHAT DID THE INTERVIEWEES SAY?

The interviews with stakeholders revealed somewhat miscellaneous opinions about the project, for instance, goal achievement, involvement of the Norwegian group, CNCR's leadership in the project, cooperation between the different parts, economy, obstacles, and unintended by-products.

a) Goal achievement

Practically all⁴ agreed that the original strategic objectives had **not** been reached.

The **bilingual education** in the deaf schools has not been implemented. This task has been complicated by the presence of NGO schools parallel with public schools. They also meant that

⁴ When the answers are described in the following, we sometimes use the word "they", even if it does not include all informants, but the majority.

the ministries were somewhat uncertain about the best educational method, and the school teachers were not prepared for the job, despite courses in sign language. The schools worked with a form of "total communication", which - for most of the informants - meant that they communicated with the children in the manner they found most effective. Therefore the project had drawn its attention to other ways of strengthening the deaf society. However, courses in sign language for teachers and other caretakers had continued and were valuable, but not sufficient compared to need.

A Deaf Union is not yet established. Most of the stakeholders were optimistic and expected it to be a reality before the end of the year. There are five important deaf clubs on the West Bank. Some informants meant that the deaf clubs were rivaling to have the union headquarters connected to their own club, and that this had hampered the establishment of the union. Currently, four clubs have agreed to work together; they have contacted lawyers to take care of the formalities, and seem to be willing to compromise. Most of the stakeholders agreed, though, that the most realistic scenario is that there will be two Deaf Unions one for Gaza and one for the West Bank.

b) The Norwegian leadership

The Palestinians agreed that the cooperation with the Norwegians had been very friendly and fruitful. Especially important was the information about the situation and rights of deaf people in Norway. They affirmed the positive impact the visits from the Norwegians had on both deaf and hearing people in Palestine. Several hearing admitted that the Norwegian deaf participants had opened their eyes to the ability of deaf people. One high level person admitted that he had totally changed his view regarding the abilities of deaf people. Most of them were now more optimistic about Deaf Union administered by deaf.

Some meant that a more clear structure from the Project Management in Norway would have made it easier to work towards the goals. All informants said that the project would have benefited from more visits from Norway. However, the Intifada as well as financial considerations kept the Norwegians from traveling as often as needed.

c) CNCR's leadership

There was some disagreement as to the leadership in Palestine. Most of the informants thought that locally the project would have benefited from a closer follow-up and a stronger leadership. The connection to and the contact with the deaf clubs had not been sufficient, even though Atef

Tamini had done a good job, in spite of insufficient economic resources and the lack of freedom of movement. Most of the Palestinians meant that much had been done during the period, mentioning the importance of courses in sign language.

Most of the informants concluded that the Steering Committee in CNCR had not functioned as expected. After an optimistic start, it seemed that the Steering Committee did less and less for every year that went by. One reason was the difficulties of traveling within the West Bank. But - as a couple of people remarked - anyone can manage to come to a meeting when everything is arranged and the meeting is of importance. They also wished that the Steering Committee had produced long-term plans that were disseminated to all the deaf clubs.

However, the leader of the Technical Committee claimed that there were "approximately" 6 meetings every year. Activities were planned at the beginning of the year and evaluated at the end of the year. The report of 2003 from Atef Tamimi supports this. They both agree that the attendance was not satisfactory. No signed minutes from the meetings are available.

A problem often mentioned was the discrepancy between the contact with Gaza and the West Bank. The two Deaf Clubs on the Gaza Strip (Gaza City and Rafah) had not gotten the same services and offers as the five clubs on the West Bank. This was mainly due to the difficulties associated with border crossing in and out of Gaza. The funding of a coordinator/sign language interpreter for half a year was an attempt to compensate for this⁵. The use of modern technology (video-conferences, e-mail, telephone, SMS) to overcome these difficulties, as well as the possibility of using local representatives for the relevant NGOs in Gaza City was limited.

The problem of communication between deaf and hearing was mentioned, as well as cultural and linguistic differences. *"The deaf people want to arrange things themselves, but at the same time they want help. We have problems understanding them, and they us. That makes it difficult to do the right things."* The leadership courses were regarded as an important contribution to further the progress of founding a Deaf Union.

Furthermore, it was mentioned that sign language interpreters are often connected to their regions and use a local "dialect". This may also hamper the situation. The local deaf societies want their own headquarters, technical aids, vocational schools, and meeting arenas for deaf members. These

requests are outside of the mandate of the project. The deaf members may take rejection of such requests as a lack of cooperation.

d) Project cooperation

This was regarded as a rather weak part of the project. Some meant that the Board of the CNCR only got *information* about the project, but did not take an active part in the decision making. The Steering Committee had not functioned as intended, and the different Deaf Clubs had not been involved in all activities. There was a need for more written short- and long term plans and information.

A clear description of the roles of each participant would be of great help. This would prevent local participants to go directly to an irrelevant person to complain and get help.

e) Economy

Much of the money was spent on administration. The Norwegian Project Group had travel expenses. CNCR had some compensation for administration of the project, and the local Project Manager received his wages from the project. Hence, not much was left for carrying out project activities (supporting travels, hiring rooms and professionals, buying material etc.). It is clear that the financial part of the project could have benefited from more strict control by the Norwegian partners.

f) Obstacles

Communication problems were mentioned as an obstacle. The deaf people did not understand the hearing, and vice versa. Another problem was the difficulties to get a good interpreter. Most of them were autodidacts, and they knew little about ethics. The resignation of the coordinator Atef Tamimi had delayed the progress.

The lack of a clear description of the roles for each participant hampered the development and cooperation within the project. Also, clear expectations and demands for those who agreed to take part were mentioned as obstacles. The geographical distance between Norway and Palestine was also reducing the efficiency, as it is easy to forget each other when the distance is long.

⁵ The Norwegian project group could not go to Palestine due to the curfew, and the money was instead spent on a part time job for a sign language interpreter in Gaza

The difficulties with transportation within Palestine were frequently mentioned, and the curfews were repeatedly mentioned as a main obstacle.

g) Positive unintended / by-products

Some positive effects may follow a project, even if it is not written as a specific objective. All informants mentioned many positive by-products. First and foremost they reported that sign language had obtained a far better status in Palestine now, partly thanks to the Palestinian Project⁶. When the project started, few people knew about sign language. Today many people know about it and take interest in it. Many teachers and caretakers have learned or want to learn some signs.

The SMS-project was also mentioned. This project was part of the emergency plan during the curfew, and was supported by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The SMS project emerged thanks to the Palestinian project. This project consists of giving mobile phones to deaf people and a service from CNCR to send SMS twice a day. This makes the deaf people interested in writing, and will probably be a motivator for later courses in reading and writing.

Another point was the attitudes towards the deaf. The informants were now more aware of deaf people being ordinary citizens with a communication problem.

As mentioned earlier the different parts of Palestine have their local sign language, which is not always understood all over the country. Hence there is a need for an official sign language for the whole country. A dictionary has been made, and the project may have contributed to this initiative.

5.4 THE DEAF CLUBS

The circumstances surrounding the interviews with Arabic sign language users were far from perfect. The questions were formulated in English by the evaluator (from an interview guide). The Arab-speaking research assistant translated the questions into Arabic to a sign language interpreter. The sign language interpreter translated into sign language addressed to the deaf person. The deaf person answered in sign language, and the utterances were translated into Arabic by the sign language translator. The answers were then translated into English and written down by the Norwegian evaluator. Hence, there are many possibilities for misunderstandings. The fact that the evaluator has worked with deaf people for many years, may have reduced these risks.

Marit Hoem Kvam together with Christine Jildeh visited the Deaf Club in Ramallah on April 03. One day was set aside for individual interviews. The leader of the club (male), plus one male and four female deaf club members were interviewed. In addition an informal group interview was held during lunch.

In the Deaf Club of Gaza around 30 people came to meet Marit Hoem Kvam, Onar Aanestad and Christine Jildeh to answer questions (and ask questions themselves). There were some English-speaking sign language interpreters present⁷.

What did the members of the deaf clubs say?

Two of the informants were leaders of a club and knew more about the Union issue than the general members.

a) Goal achievement

There seemed to be more interest in the question of a Deaf Union among the deaf members in Gaza than among the members we interviewed in Ramallah. This may be due to their newly established Association for the Deaf on the Gaza Strip.

The leaders as well as the members seemed to be somewhat frustrated that they still had not established a Union. They hoped to have a Union very soon, but the members in Gaza felt that they were kept away from the discussions. In Ramallah they assumed that some other clubs were hampering the plans.

The members did not know much about bilingual schools, but mentioned that sign language was increasing in the schools. They were occupied with the low level of education for deaf students, and they wanted vocational schools for the deaf and more jobs earmarked for deaf students.

b) The Norwegian leadership

They were pleased with the Norwegian leadership and called the Norwegian Project Group their "friends." But they wanted them to come more often, because "nothing happens until they arrive". At the same time they admitted that they had "expected the project to give more help", without specifying this further.

⁶ Several NGOs from different countries have developmental projects in deaf school and deaf society Palestine

⁷ These interpreters gave also information about the sign language interpreter situation

c) CNCR's leadership

The leaders as well as the members were critical of the CNCR. They had expected them to be more of a service provider, and they felt they had not received the help they wanted. *"For instance - we tried to get hearing aids, but they never answered"*. The mobile telephones were mentioned as positive, but the number of telephones was not sufficient and the SMSs they received from CNCR were regarded as mainly irrelevant. *"It is about the weather and about the rate of exchange."*

d) Project cooperation

The clubs claimed that there was no cooperation between the deaf and CNCR. They felt that they were not taken in as a partner in the organization, they were neglected as participants in the project, and they were not asked what they wanted and how they wanted things to be arranged. They also complained about the lack of information.

e) Economy

The clubs wished they had received more funding for their own club from the project. They had only received mobile phones and one computer, but needed more. They also wanted to get help to buy or rent their own locals. They seemed to accuse CNCR of spending the money assigned to the deaf clubs on its own organization. The CNCR organization took, in their opinion, too much of the funding, sacrificing the deaf clubs. *"We are deaf and know what we need."*

It should be said that the above mentioned points were more often expressed by the deaf people in Gaza, who felt that they were often neglected in practice. When asking the evaluators about a planned trip to Norway for a group of deaf Palestinians, they feared that it only included people from the West Bank.

f) Obstacles

Lack of information and lack of inclusion in the CNCR were regarded as obstacles in connection with establishing a Union. Meetings were only arranged when Norwegians were present, *"and afterwards nothing happens"*. Hence they wanted the Norwegians to come more often.

The curfews were also mentioned as an important obstacle for meetings in the deaf clubs. The parents were afraid of sending their children to the deaf clubs, and this made it more difficult to arrange meetings to discuss a Deaf Union

g) Positive unintended / by-products

The society is now more open to sign language. The families understand their needs better, and it is easier for girls to be allowed by the parents to go to the clubs. The participants are also younger. The membership has increased all the time (in Ramallah from ca 100 in 2000 to 180-200 in 2004). For the girls it is important to be allowed to go to the clubs and perhaps meet with deaf boys and maybe find a boyfriend/husband. Deaf boys had as a rule gotten married, while the girls were kept at home. Some families were afraid of the genetic outcome of the children of deaf girls.

5.5 SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS

Marit Hoem Kvam took part in the three formal interviews with sign language interpreters (two on the West Bank, one in Gaza). Onar Aanestad took part in two of the interviews. Some informal information was also obtained from the joint meeting in Gaza. Christine Jildeh served as an English/Arabic/English interpreter in two of the cases.

What did the sign language interpreters say?

The sign language interpreters were involved in the deaf society in different ways and knew the members and their needs well. This may have hampered an unbiased evaluation, as they may be influenced by the views of the deaf members. However, their answers seemed to be mostly objective and impartial.

a) Goal achievement

They agreed that bilingual education had not been accomplished. Many teachers knew too little about the purpose of bilingual education, and many had little proficiency in sign language. But the situation is much better than a few years ago.

As for the Deaf Union, they thought it had taken far too long time to establish it. Two of them were eager to point out that establishing a Union was the first step - the goal was to make it function during the years to come.

b) The Norwegian leadership

They had often been interpreters when the Norwegians came to visit Palestine, and the collaboration between the deaf and the Norwegians seemed to be very good. The deaf Norwegians and the deaf in Palestine got along very well and had developed friendship and close relationships. The Norwegian deaf visitors have given the deaf Palestinians self confidence.

c) The CNCR leadership

The interpreters were reluctant to describe the role of CNCR. They informed that the deaf people felt that CNCR did not work to promote their case, perhaps more due to lack of communication than to actual reasons. They also remarked that CNCR should have a sign language competent person in the staff to replace Atef Tamini, who had good knowledge about deaf people.

d) Economy

They knew little about the economy of the project. They knew that CNCR had funded a sign language interpreter on the West Bank for a short period, and that an interpreter was paid to help the Deaf Club in Gaza for half a year, including payment for sign language interpreting on TV.

Most of the interpreters had a full time job (many as teachers) and did the translation as an unpaid service, except for the wages paid by the TV-company for a daily ½ hour transmission of news into sign language. One informant had worked voluntarily for many years for friends at the Deaf Club in Ramallah, but was currently receiving some compensation.

e) Obstacles

The lack of a licensed education for sign language interpreters was seen as an obstacle for reaching the goals of the project. A licensed education would give more and better translators, and the aim of bilingual education for deaf children could come closer to realization. Also, more sign language on TV would be of great help, and special programs made for the deaf would give more and better information to the deaf society.

The lack of a common Palestinian sign language was an obstacle for the deaf. They had sometimes problems with an interpreter from another part of the country. An approved common language would make it easier for an interpreter to help people from all parts of the country. There was also a need for common rules regarding the ethics of interpreting.

f) Positive unintended / by-products

The project had - together with other projects - undoubtedly made the situation better for the deaf in Palestine. Sign language was accepted, and hearing people were interested in the situation of deaf people.

5.6 THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Interviews were conducted with Director General Shifa Shakha in Ramallah on April 05 and with Director General Dr. Haifa'a F. El-Agha and Ghanem Meegati, Minister of Education, Gaza on April 07.

The evaluators got the impression that the two Directors have different views about the future of educating hearing impaired students, and that they do not coordinate this work. The area in the West Bank is extensive. For many people the transportation to a center will be long and expensive. Hence the ideas of education in the local school seemed to be relevant. The West Bank had registered 66 deaf students and 580 hard-of-hearing. The deaf and hearing impaired students are trained in the same subjects as hearing students. The Ministry pays for the teachers of the deaf and supports them with sign language courses. They also have on their pay sheet a sign language interpreter. They have 3 resource centres for mentally disabled children, and the Ministry wishes to establish a resource centre also for the deaf and hard-of-hearing. They also want to arrange summer camps for the deaf, so that they can meet with deaf peers from different parts of the territories.

Gaza has a large population living in a small area, and for them the idea of a large school for the deaf could be a practical solution. The Ministry in Gaza has six fulltime positions for teachers with education in special needs. These positions are offered to the public as well as the ten non-governmental schools for free in accordance with the needs. In addition, they supply all disabled children with books for free.

The Ministry arranges sign language training for teachers. There are currently 4-5 places offering such courses. Today, the Ministry of Education in Gaza has registered 238 hearing impaired students aged 6-15 years in ordinary schools (public schools) and 1198 in NGO schools. No deaf children are integrated in their local school.

What did the representatives of the Ministry of Education say?

a) Goal achievement

The representatives knew little about the project and could not conclude as to goal achievement. However, they both emphasized that the situation for the deaf had become better during the last five years. Sign language was accepted in the normal hearing population. Bilingual education was however not implemented in either of the two parts of Palestine.

b) The Norwegian leadership and c) The CNCR leadership

The Ministry of Education on the West Bank has had several meetings with the Norwegian Project Group and with CNCR. CNCR invited them to make a plan concerning a resource center for deaf and hard-of-hearing. The ministry had done this, but nothing has followed so far.

The Gaza representative knew too little about the project to give any comments.

d) Economy

They had not received any funding from the Palestinian project and knew little about the economy.

e) Obstacles

The teachers knew little about bilingual education and many teachers had just the most necessary knowledge about sign language. The lack of good sign language teachers and interpreters was an obstacle in providing deaf students with good education. The deaf students are often quitting school by 5th grade. If they are to become "strong and powerful" they need to have higher education. They must learn how to be leaders, a subject that has been discussed on the West Bank in connection with summer camps for young deaf people.

f) Positive unintended / by-products

The situation for deaf students is much better today than 6-7 years ago because sign language is more accepted in the schools, in the families, and in society. The education and training in sign language for teachers, parents and other people is increasing.

The ministries are interested in the education of disabled, and the interest has been increasing. Most of the schools for deaf are NGO schools. The Ministry in Gaza has plans to build a governmental school for the deaf 1-7 grade, thus overlapping the existing NGO deaf schools.

The situation for deaf adults compared to hearing adults is miserable when it comes to full time job and income. This is mainly due to their lack of vocational or academic education. The ministries both on the West Bank and in Gaza have been talking about improved higher education, but have no concrete plans. In the town Qalkilya a vocational NGO school for deaf students from all Palestine has been established, but due to obstacles in the transportation system the school is de facto a school for students from the surrounding district only.

5.7 TV STATIONS

Program director Violette Haddad from Wattan, the largest local TV-channel in Palestine, was interviewed on April 05 together with an assistant. The programs in this channel are popular among viewers from the West Bank, in Gaza, and in Jordan. The channel is focusing on news, health issues, and children. They regard themselves to have a social profile. Wattan has no economical support and is financed by commercials. They started interpreting news into sign language when CNCR offered to pay for the interpreter in 2003. After 6 months the economical support stopped, and they had to terminate the translations. The programs with sign language were also offered to other local TV channels for free. Hence, the coverage exceeded Wattan's broadcasting area.

Ammad Albas, General Director of Palestinian TV, was interviewed on April 07. The company started as a radio channel in 1936 and in 1964 they became a TV channel. In 2000 they were a satellite TV company supported by the Government. They started with a sign language interpreter on the news more than 3 years ago. At the beginning the interpreter worked as a volunteer, and programs had religious content. After a short while CNCR offered to pay for an interpreter. This lasted for 6 months, during which time the interpreter donated his income to the Deaf Club in Gaza. After this period, Palestinian TV offered the interpreter a job as a sign language interpreter, and he interprets ½ hour news every day, plus some religious programmes.

What did the representatives of TV stations say?

The representatives talked about their programs, the profile of the programs, and their experience with sign language in the programs.

a) Goal achievement

The representatives knew little about the project, and could not give any details about the question.

b) The Norwegian leadership and c) The CNCR leadership

The representatives knew too little about the leadership to make any conclusions.

d) Economy

They knew about the funding of a sign language interpreter given to them for a period of time. Apart from this - which to Wattan was a necessary support - they would not comment on the

economy. Wattan would like to continue with the interpretation of the news and of health programs if they were economically supported.

e) Obstacles

To the private channel the lack of funding was the main obstacle for helping deaf people with news and other necessary information.

The public TV sender wanted to make special programs for the deaf, both for children and adults. However, they did not know the needs among the deaf population. Hence, they want research to find what are the needs and wishes of the deaf viewers, so that they can make the best programs possible.

f) Positive unintended / side effects

The TV channels want to interpret news and other programs into sign language. The experiences so far have been only positive. The ordinary viewers have become interested in sign language. They would like to make special programs for the deaf, also special news. People have become curious about sign language, and sign language has been accepted and become prestigious among the public.

6. OVERALL EVALUATION

The conclusions describe the overall impression seen from the point of view of the evaluators. It is built on the informal and formal information collected by reading documents, conducting interviews with different participants of the project, and from informal talks. It must be noted that our evaluation is mainly built on a short visit to Palestine, where none of the parties used their mother tongue during the interviews. Using several different stakeholders as informants we hope to decrease the risks of uncertainties.

The objective of the Palestinian project is to ensure that deaf people can achieve the same possibilities and have the same rights in society as hearing Palestinians. This aim is difficult to measure and probably impossible to reach, as some forms of discrimination of disabled is found in all societies. However, before giving the evaluators' detailed view, it is important to stress that, despite all reservations and criticism, the project has undoubtedly contributed to a better situation for deaf people in Palestine.

6.1 GOAL ACHIEVEMENT

The above-mentioned overall objective was to be achieved through two strategies or initiatives

1. "To establish and strengthen a network of interest groups for the deaf in Palestinian Territories, at Gaza and the West Bank. The goal was to increase the strength and awareness of adult deaf Palestinians so that they can able to fight for their own rights through the different interest groups."
2. "To offer continuing sign language education for teachers of the deaf in Palestine. The strategy should provide the best possible bilingual education to children in order to achieve the best possible competency in Palestinian sign language and Arabic written and spoken language. This should enable them to have meaningful lives and power to fight for the rights of the deaf in society as adults." (From *Assignment Description*)

RE 1: *To establish and strengthen a network of interest groups for the deaf in the Palestinian Territories* was concretized into establishing a Deaf Union. This Union is not yet established, and therefore the first objective is not yet fulfilled. The attempts to establish a Union has been in process for five years. The underlying reasons for the postponement

seems to be partly due to the fact that the Steering Committee has not functioned properly, partly because it has been difficult to travel in the country, but mostly because the deaf have been more preoccupied with their own deaf societies than in transferring their power to a larger body. Most of the deaf work hard to ensure that their own deaf society gets the best possible benefits but are less preoccupied with all deaf people having equal rights.

RE 2: *Sign language education for teachers of deaf and bilingual education to deaf children* in order to give children the best possible competency in Palestinian sign language and Arabic written and spoken language has been problematic. Some courses in sign language have been carried out, but the number is far from sufficient. Other organisations have also given such courses, and sign language is used in schools for the deaf. However, teachers' competences vary, and bilingual education is not common in schools.

The two strategic objectives were not reached, due to different reasons. The first objective - the work with the Union - has been in process all the time and is probably closer to a solution than ever. In connection with the second objective the focus has little by little been moved from the bilingual education in the schools towards spreading sign language in the society, as for instance on TV. The evaluators find this a wise decision, as the generalizing of sign language has helped and will help the total deaf population, both children and adults.

The following part of this chapter will include some views regarding both the factors that have been obstacles in connection with goal achievement, and success factors not mentioned in the original plans.

6.2 OBSTACLES AND SOLUTIONS

Management

The goals have been vague and wide. Specific secondary goals with time-tables would have given a better direction and a better opportunity to evaluate en route. This lack of secondary goal description may be found in the management of the project, which has not been optimal. The Norwegian Project Board, the Norwegian Project Group, the Steering Committee in CNCR, and the Technical Committee in CNCR have not cooperated sufficiently to reach the goals of the project. The visits from Norway have been an incentive to activities. The original plans included four visits a year, but some years they managed only one or two, due to both practical,

economical, and security reasons. The contact between Norway and Palestine during the absence was not regular.

The lack of activity is partly connected to the turbulent situation in the country. It has not been possible to travel from Gaza to the West Bank (and vice versa) in order to participate in meetings. The management might have coped with the difficulties in the transportation situation by using technical aids as SMS, fax, telephone, e-mail, and video conferences, which was done only to a small degree. However, the main solution could and should have been, as recommended in SINTEF's mid-term evaluation of 2003, to introduce one project coordinator for Gaza as well as the West Bank. Also cooperation with local branches of NGOs would have made the situation more open and made it easier to inform and include the deaf people in Gaza. Information between the project management and the members of the deaf clubs seemed to be incomplete throughout the project.

Also, lack of good communication between the deaf members of the Steering Committee, the hearing members in the committee (from the CNCR, CDA and GUDP) and the Project Coordinator seems evident. Minutes from meeting had (according to the deaf members) either not arrived, the agenda was not specified or the meetings were not planned well enough. It must also be noted that the person employed to replace Atef Tamimi has neither sign language competence nor experience with deaf people. The evaluators would expect CNCR to find applicants with these qualifications, especially as the project approached the end.

Strategies

There have been some strategic issues which should be mentioned. For instance, should the project work towards the Ministries or towards the grassroots in the country? NDF wants to collaborate with deaf people in Palestine, and establishing a Deaf Union has been the main focus. Signo seems to be more in favour of the Ministries as a collaborating partner.

Another difference in views concerned best educational practice. Some informants want all children to be integrated in their local school if they want to, preferably with a sign language teacher or interpreter (integration). Others mean that a special school for deaf children represents the best solution (segregation). The Palestinian project has made a wise decision in concentrating on *adults* instead of school children. All agree on the importance of sign language, which is an uncontroversial subject that cannot be regarded as "missionary tactics".

There are also some discussions as to where the Deaf Union should belong. Should it be a part of CNCR? Of GUDP? Of CDA? Or should they be an organisation of their own? This is a question that should be solved by the deaf themselves when all alternatives have been scrutinised.

Another ideological difference was found in the view of "West Bank and Gaza - One country". The "official" view is that Palestine always must be regarded as one country. What is offered to the West Bank must be offered to Gaza, and vice versa. Hence it would have been wise to share the post as coordinator between the two groups as a more permanent solution. Most people had a pragmatic view and claimed that the geographical distance as well as differences in topography and population density made it practical to find local solutions, one for the West Bank and one for Gaza. Some persons felt that two Unions should be established, each with its own duties and objectives. The people from Gaza and their sign language were more connected to Egypt and the people from the West Bank felt more connected to Jordan.

The Palestinian project has all Palestine as their target and must treat the two equally. The deaf in Gaza felt left behind in some respects. The assignment of a position for a sign language interpreter to TV news in Gaza was a right decision to compensate for limited contact from the project coordinator.

TV programs

Deaf TV viewers got very little information through TV, as only a few programs (news) were translated, and only in one channel. There was a wish to have ordinary programs simultaneously interpreted, and many mentioned the need for special programs made for deaf children and deaf adults. One of the TV directors wished that a study could be implemented, revealing the needs and wishes of the deaf in order to make the best possible programs. The evaluators find that CNCR has the necessary knowledge to perform such a study, and propose that the SMS-program could be the instrument. Questions about program preferences could be communicated through SMS on mobile phones. Those who are illiterate could get help from relatives.

6.3 OTHER POSITIVE OUTCOMES

Some results were seen that was not especially mentioned in the plan, but which may nevertheless be attributed to the Palestinian project, partly or completely.

Sign language acceptance and knowledge

There is no doubt that sign language is more known and more accepted in Palestine today than it was five years ago. The hearing population is interested in the situation of the deaf and in their language. Parents and teachers want to learn sign language, and it is seen in the television on the news. Sign language has been accepted during the course of a few years, a very satisfying result compared to the time it took in Norway (see chapter 3).

The sign language used is not, however, an agreed language for the whole of Palestine, but is comprised of different local sign languages, not always understood by all deaf people. Hence an approved sign language used by all interpreters ought to be a future goal. Also, as sign language becomes more popular, more interpreters will be needed and this should be emphasised.

SMS-program

Mobile phones were delivered as an emergency plan. It was supported by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and would not have been a reality without the Palestinian project. Deaf people now get SMS twice a day or more. This can make some deaf people interested in writing, and will probably be a motivator for later courses in reading and writing.

Empowering by role models

Deaf people from Norway visiting Palestine have made a great impression on deaf Palestinians. To see deaf Norwegians leading a project in a foreign country and employing their own interpreters has given deaf Palestinians an understanding of their own possibilities and capabilities. Deaf Palestinians declare themselves as a linguistic minority and not as handicapped persons. The same ideas are emerging among the members of CNCR.

6.4 POSSIBLE FUTURE COOPERATION

The project *Organisation development and other initiatives for the deaf in Palestine* has come to an end. The project has - together with other initiatives - contributed to a development and generalization of sign language in the common Palestinian society as well as in the deaf society.

It is difficult to say to what degree there will be a need for more help in the future. A well-known principle is that successful projects emerge from the wishes and needs among the recipients. It is also important to make realistic plans, fully in accordance with available human and economical resources. It may also be more effective to concentrate on one objective and one target.

Furthermore, we recommend that the leadership both in Norway and in Palestine have more written details about the tasks and duties of all participating project members. This will enable the management to control whether they are on the right track.

If the Norwegians will continue to cooperate with projects in the future, the evaluators will recommend that the Norwegian proficiency in sign language matters be in focus. There will be, in any case, a need for Palestinian support from CNCR or another NGO, or officials on a higher level.

1. The Norwegian Association of the Deaf knows much about organisation building. If the Union is established within this year, it will probably be of importance to the Union to get support in both developing the regulations and operating the Union. This will be "deaf helping deaf", which is a meeting on equal terms. This may be facilitated through CNCR or another NGO.
2. NDF has established a video department at Ål in Norway. Here sign language programs are made, both entertainment for children and information programs for adults. Experts from Ål could invite sign language translators or teachers and interested people from TV stations in Palestine to see the work at Ål and establish a working group. That would also be a meeting on equal terms. This may be facilitated through CNCR or another NGO, by a TV-channel or by the Ministry.
3. Most and foremost we will suggest the establishment of sign language interpreter education. There is an enormous need for interpreters, and the need will grow as sign language achieves a greater status. This may be facilitated by the Ministry or other governmental institutions, for instance at a university.

Sign language education could be managed as a co-operation between three parts:

Signo, the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Science, and the Palestinian Ministry of Education. In Norway there are two establishments educating sign language interpreters: one at the University of Oslo and one at the University College of Sør-Trøndelag. The two establishments will probably find the idea challenging. This would represent a meeting at the ministry level. The idea of a temporary sign language interpreter certification and a later education with certification will have many important consequences.

- The approved and registered interpreters will be instigated to work towards a common language with a national standard.
- More interpreters will be available.

- The interpreting will have better quality.
- The interpreters will establish their own organisation and work towards making interpreting services more available for deaf people.
- The Ministries will have to include deaf people in their plans. A law has been passed in Palestine which states that the deaf will be provided with Sign Language information on TV. It can nevertheless be a big leap from intention to practice, and an association of sign language interpreters will have to work towards law implementation. The sign language interpreters will be a resource group working for the implementation.

The Palestinian project has demonstrated the needs among deaf people in Palestine. It has a long way to go, but the initiative has been important to them. They constantly repeated that they were thankful and impressed that deaf people from Norway cared about them. This is an important result and should not be forgotten among the more critical remarks.

7. LITERATURE

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