

To : The members of "Fluchtlingskinder im Libanon".
From : Ibtissam al Khalil (Social worker from Ein El Helweh camp)
Subject : Annual report of my work in 2007

This report contains:-

- 1- The situation of Ein El Helweh Camp.
- 2- Our center and its programs
- 3- My work

1-The situation of Ein El Helweh Camp:-

Socio- economic situation

Our camp is the largest Palestinian refugee camp in Lebanon. It is located near Saida City; the economic situation of Ein El Helweh Camp is very severe. Unemployment rate is extremely high and it is estimated at 60%-70%. Over 60% of Palestinian refugees are below the poverty line. Moreover, 36% of refugees are without any source of income. Special consideration needs to be given to the hardship cases which UNRWA estimates to comprise 11% of the Palestinian refugee population. Consideration also needs to be given to the 60% of the Palestinians who are below the poverty line

As a result of high unemployment and severe economic problems, the young segments of the population are exposed to a number of serious problems and social drawbacks that need to be seriously considered: drug use and other social misdemeanors, emigration and the exploitation of youth, violent tendencies, etc. Accordingly, it is believed that sports centers, cultural activities, and educational initiatives can be instrumental in curtailing these difficulties and other social problems associated with the youth. In this year 2007 there was a war in our camp about one week after the war that destroyed the Naher Al Bared camp. Approximately 90% of the people in the camp escape outside the camp, their suffering is long, painful, and continuous, especially in the last decade where life became very difficult and full of dangers every step of the road. Simply, the human being's life is unsecured and in danger even inside their own homes, many children are exposed to psychological and psychosocial disturbances whose implications can reach every segment of the society and every facet of life. Unrwa's support is not sufficient to fulfill the people's essential needs.

Medical services:

There are still two UNRWA clinics in our camp and that is not sufficient for the number of patients in Ein El Helweh.

The cost of medical treatment is very high, and secondary health care is rarely covered or subsidized. Moreover, there is scarcity in health human resources and in medical equipment. The overall health care system needs to be seriously addressed especially in disease prevention. Improvement in the health care system in this respect will help in reducing the general cost of medical treatment

Education in our camp:

The educational system faces major shortcomings, most important of which is that pertaining to dropouts, especially in the secondary level where the rate reaches 35%. The high dropout rate is correlated with severe social problems amongst the youth.

In addition, vocational schools are neither sufficient nor properly distributed. Graduates of these schools rarely find adequate employment because the experience earned in these institutions does not always qualify them for adequate employment.

The educational system is also deficient in cultural, extra-curricular and summer activities. Consequently, children do not find places for leisure or for spending their spare time except on the streets where they are often exposed to damaging influences.

2- Our programs:-

1) Family Happiness Project:

We have now in our center 152 sponsored children among 76 families. We try to help these families, to improve their life as much as we can .especially this year which was very hard to Palestinians people in all camps mainly Naqher Al Bared camp and then Ein El Helweh. In Ein El Helweh camp there are hundreds of families who were displaced from their homes in Naher al bared camp during the war and whose living conditions are miserable. Three families from Naher Al Bared camp joined the family happiness project, we provide them with Social , financial and psychological assistance .

2) Pre-School Education (Kindergartens)

There are three classes in which 76 children aged (3 to 5 years old) are enrolled. .This project is important because the UNRWA begins education from 6 years, some meals and milk are provided for children in our kindergarten because they need nutrition. The teachers follow in-service training to improve their skills. This past year we closed the kindergarten one month earlier due to the fighting in Ein El Helweh camp. 4 children from Naher Al Bared camp, are enrolled in the KG.

3)- Dental Clinic Project:

Work continued with the children of all kindergarten and with our families, in addition to the displaced families from Naher El-Bared with families of naher al bared camp. The electricity cut in our camp affect in working in clinic.

4) - Embroidery Training

This project provides financial and social assistant for a group of women who in their turn can help.

5) - Vocational Training for Youth:

This project is new in our center, it provides support for youth who dropped out from school. We have a class for 18 boys aged from 14 to 19 years old, they study auto mechanics (car maintenance). The theoretical part is given inside our centre while the practical is provided in a workshop in the industrial district of Saida according to special agreement. Duration of the course is 6 months.

6) - Literacy Project:

There are 14 girls aged 15 and above who left school, they learn how to read and write, in addition to social and health subjects. Our aim is to empower those girls and let them know their rights. There is one teacher for that class.

7) - Remedial Classes for Children:

There are three classes and three teachers providing help, for the children of the first, second and third elementary. About 60 children boys and girls learn and have activities, 30 of them come before school, 30 come after school. All children need help in their studies, we also discovered that many children have seeing or hearing problems, while some have psychological problems.

8) Special class:-

There are 16 girls with special needs in this class, who are helped writing and reading they have psychological problems, and the teacher takes advice from the professional at the Family Guidance Center. These programs is strengthening their self esteem and adding fun to their life.

9) - Family Guidance Center:-

Children suffering from psychological problems are sent to Family Guidance Center in Beirut, but there is an actual need for a similar center in Siada because many people refuse or lack the means to go to Beirut. Recently, a father from our sponsored families, suffering from psychotic illness committed suicide.

10) Scholarship of students:

Under this program, two university students and three vocational training students benefit from scholarships in our centre.

11) Computer and Internet Project:

There is only one computer with internet facility for the staff and some children use it. Another three computers were given to us from Mar ZELias center for the children use, but the continuous electricity cut creates problem for the computer users.

12) Activities:-

We do many activities for children during school vacations and every Friday and Sunday. Friday's activities are for children aged 7to14 years old.

Sunday's activities are for youth aged 14 and above. The activities include sports, theatre, reading, trips, awareness about cultural heritage, children's rights, health and environment. It includes seminars/workshops on issues related to health, environment, social problems, and human rights, woman and children's right and information about Palestine. In addition, our staff receive regular training to improve their skills/performance.

My work also includes writing reports about the children for the sponsors and help the sponsored c children to maintain their relationship with the sponsors.

I am responsible for the youth activities, but also share in the activities held for the age group 7-14 years when Bahaa the director of the centre is absent I act in her place and take all her responsibilities.

I follow-up the vocational training care mechanics course and is in continuous touch with the trainer.

I participated in several training workshops inside and outside the Institution.

Ibtissam al Khalil

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