



## **Palestine Trauma Centre (UK) Report for 2013.**

**Company Number: 6795059    Charity Commission Number: 1133560**

Address: 4, Tanners Crescent, Hertford, Herts. SG13 8DS

Trustees: Andrew Enever, Belinda Milani, Shaida Uddin, Colin Egan, Tareq Ismail, Khalid Bukhari, Gesine Miller, Jill Weston.

Chair of Trustees: David Harrold

Hon. Secretary: Denis Hawes.

*Trustees are appointed or resign at the AGM which is held in November or early December. Decisions about the use of donated money and the training programmes to be run by PTC(UK) are made at trustee meetings throughout the year. There were for such meetings during 2013. The AGM is a public meeting. The others have invited therapeutic practitioners to advise on the decisions.*

*These are Dr. Mohamed Altawil, for the Family Therapy project and Jerry Conway for the Focusing project.*

### **PTC(UK)'s objects are set out in a Memorandum of Association for Companies House:**

The objects of the Company are to relieve members of the Palestinian Diaspora who are suffering from trauma-related mental health disorders, in particular but not exclusively by:

- i. providing training and supervision, either by itself or in conjunction with other individuals and organisations, for staff working with individuals, children, families and groups who, as a result of war, conflict, occupation, natural and/or man-made disasters, have experienced wide-ranging levels of trauma, particularly in the Palestinian territories;
- ii. supporting on-going research into psycho-social programmes designed to alleviate trauma caused by war, conflict or occupation;
- iii. encouraging the sharing of good therapeutic practice with other groups.

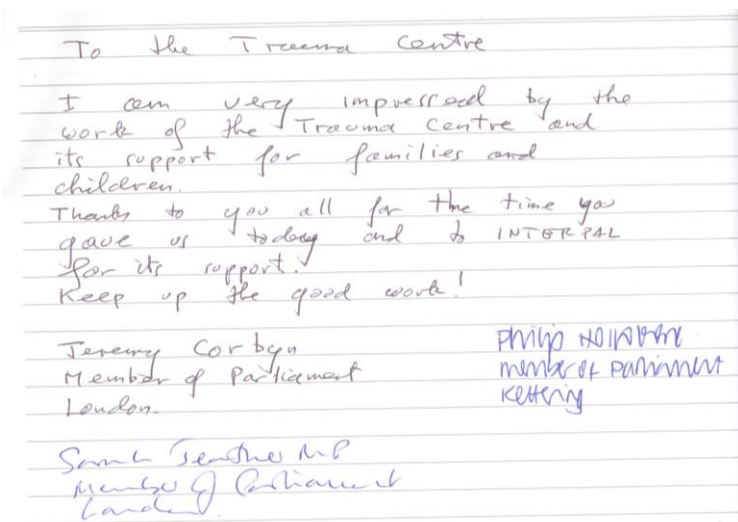
### **These objects will in large part be fulfilled by having these aims:**

- *Build a network of specialist trainers in trauma therapies*
- *Offer training in therapeutic techniques for Gaza's mental health workers at Palestine Trauma Centre in Gaza City.*
- *Design, deliver, fund and evaluate training courses at Palestine Trauma Centre in Gaza City.*

PTC(UK) has no assets and is run entirely by volunteers. We bank at HSBC, having a Community Account and a Savings account. Money collected is used rather than saved, on the whole, since we have no overheads beyond buying in some work, like auditing and the trainer-coordinating work and translation. This year, INTERPAL has given us money to keep the trauma centre in Gaza open so that our training can continue. Travel expenses are paid by PTC(UK) for those who go on our behalf to Gaza. All training expenses and projects at PTC(Gaza) resulting from that training are funded by PTC(UK). We are collecting films, case studies and reports of this work in order to assess the efficacy of the training which, in a public benefit sense, could later be of use in many parts of the world, including the UK. Details are on our website: [www.ptcuk.org](http://www.ptcuk.org)



2013 -14 has been PTC (UK) 's most busy and eventful year: two trips to Gaza; two fundraising events; a Focusing workshop; a conference presentation; a stall at a local fair and meeting with the local interfaith group; talks to PSC groups in Norwich and Sheffield and an invitation to meet students from Gaza arranged by PSC in London. We also had our first therapists' advisory board meeting to evaluate the work done both here and at PTC(Gaza). This will be an annual event. Mohamed Altawil completed his Family Therapy training in London and visited New York five times to develop skills in Focusing-Oriented Therapy in Complex Trauma. We also had a generous donation from INTERPAL so that they could provide money through us to the centre in Gaza for one year and also support Mohamed Altawil's work here as co-ordinator, trainer and fund-raiser. We supplemented the INTERPAL donation with a "Child's Cry for Help" project funded by the March event and other donations. This is the "Family Therapy Project". A film has been made of the recent Gaza visits – this is our fourth film. Three British MPs visited PTC(Gaza) and left messages of support and appreciation.



### **PTC(GAZA)**

The news from Gaza at this time (December 2013) is very bad. Since the military coup in Egypt, the crossing at Rafah has been closed for long periods. Oil supplies are not reaching the people. Gaza exists on 3 to 4 hours of electricity a day. 95% of the supply tunnels on the Egyptian border have been destroyed. Everyone is prevented from leaving or is delayed for weeks. Very few are allowed in. Our contacts inside Gaza say this is the worst time for them since 1948. The situation in Sinai is dangerous and it would be unwise for us to try to cross the desert at this time. This is our only viable route into Gaza and it is very disappointing to have to postpone the visit we intended to make this month. We will see if we can go at Easter 2014.

There are now working teams in PTC(Gaza) whose 4 co-ordinators are paid a basic salary for this year (1<sup>st</sup> July 2013 – 30<sup>th</sup> June 2014) An office manager, an accountant, a psychiatrist and a projects' co-ordinator are also paid. 25 -30 people work as volunteers. The administrative supervisors are volunteers too.

**THERE ARE TWO PROJECTS DIRECTED BY PTC(UK) AND USED BY PTC(GAZA) TO SUPPORT THEIR WORK WITH FAMILIES AND CHILDREN.**

1. **FAMILY THERAPY** - incorporating Filial Therapy, Play, Drama, Art, Media.  
Co-ordinator: Mohamed Altawil     UK team: Gesine Miller, David Harrold, Aimee Valinski, Peter Offord
2. **FOCUSING** - Co-ordinator: Jerry Conway  
UK/Irish team: Mary Jennings, Lina Geha, Mohamed Altawil.  
This year from the Netherlands: Rene Veuglers.



#### **THERAPISTS' ADVISORY BOARD, PATRONS & TRUSTEES**

The Advisory Board: Andrew Enever, Peter Offord, Mary Jennings, Jerry Conway, Sarah Hawes, Gesine Miller, Sahida Uddin, Lina Geha, Dr. Pieter Nel, Antonia Jenkins, Belinda Milani, Jeyda Hammad.

This year we have welcomed Leon Rosselson as a Patron and Belinda Milani onto the board of trustees.

#### **VISITS TO GAZA:**

1. January 2013 – Family Therapy. Families were visited and their progress since 2011 noted. PTSD symptoms had returned because of the bombardment in November 2012. Drama and media activities were introduced. Assessment techniques were presented and noted by PTC(Gaza) and visiting organisations like Gaza Community Health programme, INTERPAL Gaza office, Qatar Red Crescent and UNDP. Mohamed trained the PTC work team in Systemic Family Therapy and how to do individual and family assessment.
2. February 2013 – Focusing. Focusing in the community was explored and Rene introduced Focusing for children. Focusing training has been reinforced throughout the year with Skype sessions from the UK. Presence Language skills and other techniques were used for resolving relationship problems within families. Jerry's update on Focusing is at the end of this report.

Mohamed Altawil has completed his training to become a Focusing Trainer. He is the first Focusing Trainer from Palestine and the first trainer from the Arabic-speaking world. This is a significant step in helping to bring Focusing to Gaza. In New York he presented the activities and films of PTC-Gaza and UK which show the partnership link between PTC and Interpal. He has been invited to present the PTC(UK) film at Columbia University in New York in January 2014.

Lina Geha has been on a short Focusing course funded by PTC(UK) and maintains Skype contact with Gaza. She and Mohamed are the two Arabic speakers for Focusing in PTC(UK).



Jerry and Mohamed delivering Focusing training to PTC (Gaza). The first in the Arab world.





**PTC(UK) VISITS GAZA**

### **EVENTS:**

In March 2013 there was a large fundraising event in London organised by Anzar Moin. It was called “*A Child’s Cry for Help*” and this is the title of the PTC(Gaza) project it has funded. £10,936 was raised.

In June 2013 a proposal was agreed with the UK branch of INTERPAL to provide £24,000 of which £18,000 was to support the three basic workers at PTC(Gaza), pay rent and accounting costs and fund a year’s basic salary for 4 mental health co-ordinators at the centre. Volunteers would be brought in to help and be trained in the techniques being used. This has rescued the centre from closure for one year. Mohamed’s work for PTC(UK) as co-ordinator, trainer and fund-raiser is also supported by INTERPAL for six months.



At Oaklands College we had a stall at a fair at which Mohamed and Nisreen Altawil cooked and sold Palestinian food. It proved very popular and we hope to develop this food-centred approach to local fundraising events next year.

### **FOCUSING WORKSHOP JULY 2013:**

A Focusing workshop at the University of Hertfordshire was attended by 25 people. Beatrice Blake, from a Focusing group in the US, explored community Focusing with traumatised societies. She introduced Non-Violent Communication techniques.

In November 2013 we spoke at the London Conference “*Social Work in Palestine*” at Amnesty Headquarters and showed our film. This aroused a lot of interest and we will continue to be associated with this enterprising group. In



the same month, we had a second fundraising event, this time organised by Aimee Valinski. It took place in a small venue called *D’Gaf* in East London. The journalist Yousef al-Helou attended along with musicians (including our patron, Dave Randall) and poets. It raised over £3,000. We also did presentations for local groups in Norwich and Sheffield and are planning one in Cambridge.

**NETWORKING:**

LOCAL: We maintain contact with the Psychology department at the University of Hertfordshire through Dr Pieter Nel, who is also on our team of advisors. The events manager at Oaklands College (St. Albans) is a friend and has helped with fundraising. We have recently made contact with an interfaith group in Welwyn and Hatfield and Mohamed Altawil has done a presentation for them. Our contacts with Watford Friends of Salfeet, St Albans Friends of Husan and Luton Friends of Battir put us into the network that twins with areas of Palestine. In a sense, we twin with PTC(Gaza). Last year we attended the national twinning conference.

NATIONAL: We maintain strong links with *Palestine-UK Social Worker Network*, having done presentations at two of their conferences; The link with *Az Theatre* in London continues. They assist *Theatre for Everybody* in Gaza in a project for children with hearing difficulties. We have attended occasions organised by *Medical Aid for Palestinians*. At one of these, we shared a presentation.

INTERNATIONAL: Mohamed's link with *The Institute for Focusing* in New York has gained us some support there and led to an invitation to speak at a conference in Columbia University. *The Ford Foundation* in New York has also shown interest in showing the film. The Irish Quakers in Galway continue to directly support our Focusing work with donations. Shirley Turcotte, a leader Instructor in the Focusing-Oriented Therapy and Complex Trauma Program (FOTCT), is a registered Clinical Counsellor & Supervising Focusing Trainer & Therapist in Canada. She has offered clinical supervision for PTC-UK and Gaza and sent supportive filmed comments in the light of meeting Mohamed several times and watching the film.

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## Focusing in Gaza - Project Update

*Jerry Conway – Focusing Co-ordinator.*

**Introduction**

The Focusing Project in Gaza has made a number of major developments in spite of the recent difficult conditions. We were able to get in to do further Focusing training in Gaza before the border was closed and have continued to offer support through Skype. Mohamed became the first Palestinian Focusing Trainer and Practitioner and he has been learning skills in using Focusing to work with complex trauma.

**Training Delivered in Gaza City February 2013**

A team of 3 people visited Gaza in February 2013 consisting of Mary Jennings (Ireland), Jerry Conway (UK) and René Veuglers (Netherlands). The trip was planned to provide much needed specialist training in using Focusing with Children to support PTC's main objective of bringing psychosocial support to children and families suffering from the effects of trauma. This was a follow-up to the Focusing For Yourself course delivered the previous year. This visit was made possible through funding from West of Ireland Quakers and Quaker Peace and Social Witness in the UK.

René ran a 4 day course for a core group of PTC staff and volunteers in Children Focusing which included:

- Mirroring the situation of the child (Prouty steps) and pausing
- Using techniques to help the child to make contact with their own inner sense of their situation and facilitating them to express that non-verbally
- Learning to respect the boundaries of children and their own boundaries in a safe way.
- How to create more possibilities for the child to decide what they will share - by offering invitations to the child.
- Clearing a Space exercise

While this course was taking place Jerry offered a 2 day follow-up course for staff from other agencies who had attended the initial Focusing for Yourself course the previous year.

### **Developing More Advanced Skills in Focusing**

This aspect of the Focusing project has concentrated on developing the skills of our Arabic speakers in the UK so they can offer Skype support to the team in Gaza. Mohamed Altawil has attended a course in using Focusing with Complex Trauma in New York. This has been funded by The Focusing Institute and PTC - UK. In November 2013 Mohamed was awarded his Focusing Trainer and Practitioner Certificate through mentoring support from Jerry Conway and Rob Foxcroft. These two developments are important in his current role as supervisor of the 4 project workers working on the ground in Gaza. They will equip Mohamed to plan a pathway for people in Gaza to become Focusing Trainers in the future. Lina Geha, our translator and training assistant, has attended further training in Focusing and has developed her Focusing Partnership skills by Focusing with Jerry and Mohamed.

### **Non Violent Communication course - July 2013**

In July 2013 PTC-UK hosted a visit from Beatrice Blake from the USA. She has spent 7 years developing Focusing in El Salvador to aid recovery from the war which took place there 20 years ago. Their experience is that people who have experienced recent warfare need easy steps into Focusing and they do this by teaching Non Violent Communication (NVC) first – it is easier for them to get. The workshop she ran in Hatfield introduced supporters of PTC-UK to skills in using the Safe Space exercise and Feelings and Needs cards to express feelings around a particular incident in their lives. Videos of their work in El Salvador were shown illustrating the progress they had made. The Feelings and Needs exercise has been translated into Arabic and sent to Gaza.

### **Supporting Project Workers in Gaza**

The project in Gaza received funding from INTERPAL to support 4 workers in using Focusing and Family Therapy. Mohamed is providing regular supervision to the 4 project workers through Skype. On October 20th we were able to set up a group Skype call, enabling Mary Jennings and Jerry Conway to listen to the work people are doing and give them some advice on how to do that in a Focusing way. We heard much about how they were using what they had learned with Focusing. Skills they found particularly useful were:

- Using presence language and Distancing
- Teddy bear exercise
- Resilience exercise using the green and dry stick
- Focusing on an object
- Using pictures to express a feeling

We hope to provide more such sessions but the short hours of electricity supply in Gaza make these difficult to plan.

Ann Weiser Cornell donated an electronic copy of her Focusing Manual to the Gaza project and this was sent out in October. Jerry is working on a manual that reflects the exercises which have been taught in Gaza so far.

### **Next Steps**

We now need to ensure that the project workers can carry on supporting people in Gaza using Focusing. We need to prepare a budget for continuation of funding for the centre in Gaza when the initial award of funding runs out in July 2014. In addition we need to;

- Continue providing support through Skype
- Develop the training manual to support workers in Gaza
- Explore how NVC and Supporting Complex Trauma skills can be used to help people in Gaza.

David Harrold (Chair of Trustees)

Jerry Conway (Focusing Co-ordinator) Mohamed Altawil (Family Therapy training co-ordinator)

December 2013

