

Palestine Trauma Centre (UK)

Report: January – July 2015

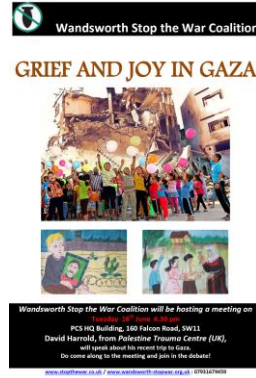
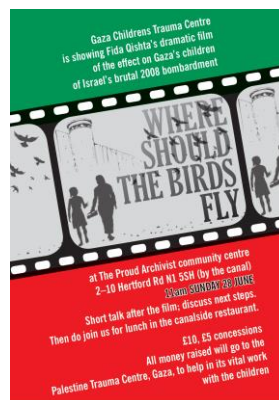
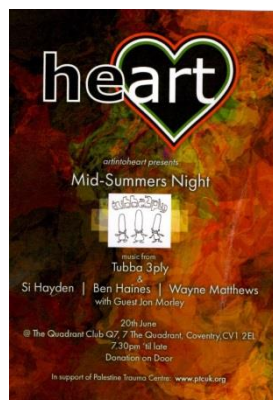
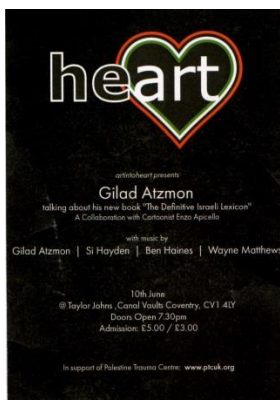


The end of 2014 saw Gaza struggling to survive the physical and psychological effects of the July-August invasion, a devastated infrastructure and economy, thousands of displaced families, extreme weather conditions, floods and an intensification of the siege. PTC(UK) had made efforts to find a route into Gaza, but had not been successful since the visit of a UK paramedic in March to July 2014. Then an opportunity arrived thanks to Tony Laurance, the CEO of Medical Aid for Palestinians. Through their office in Ramallah, MAP provided David Harrold (PTC(UK) Chair of Trustees) with a permit to reach Gaza through Erez in Israel. This visit meant that the three key projects – Family Therapy, Focusing and Friday of Joy – could be observed and a number of families supported by PTC(Gaza) visited. Films were also made during the visit so that conditions and projects could be reported on in the UK.



EVENTS AND FUNDRAISING

Meanwhile, fundraising groups inside the UK established themselves in Brent, Islington and Coventry. Ongoing affiliations were reinforced with Az Theatre, the UK-Palestine Mental Health Network, the UK-Palestine Social Work Network and Kingston University. Plans for a conference at Kingston University in November 2015 are well under way. We had a meeting of the fundraising groups at the Friends Meeting House in Euston and they were brought up to date with our activities and the Friday of Joy project in particular. The partnership with Interpal has thrived and PTC(UK) contributed to their televised fundraising appeal. We were also part of, and benefiting from, a fundraising appeal for ChildrenPlus. Kris Connolly in Coventry organised two fundraising concerts. Norwich and Worcester PSC groups continue to support us. Islington fundraisers, led by Shosh Morris, had successful events in north London. Jenny Kassman (pictured below) ran a plant stall in her street and raised money for PTC. Presentations about the Gaza visit were given at venues in Brixton, Hertford, Wandsworth and Brent. *The Friday of Joy* has attracted funds from the British Shalom-Salaam Trust and the Palestine Committee of Norway.



GOVERNANCE

Two of our trustees, Andrew Enever (a psychotherapist) and Gesine Miller (a specialist in Filial Therapy) have been appointed to oversee projects in co-ordination with Mohamed Altawil and report back to trustees. Another trustee, Colin Egan, is to help with work on the accounts and will keep PTC(UK) up to date with requirements from the Charity Commission. A public meeting was held in January at Welwyn

Garden City and the Focusing team led by Jerry Conway met in June to plan the next stage of that project. Our website is being redesigned by Tania de Sousa and Annika Waheed.

VISIT TO GAZA: 7TH – 16TH April 2015

The visit to Gaza involved two meetings with the PTC(Gaza) trustees, participation in the Friday of Joy Initiative at a refugee camp and then a follow-up meeting, two meetings with the work team at the centre, observation of a Focusing session with a women's group, a visit to the MAP office in Gaza to explore the possibilities of more co-operation between our groups, visits to four families, a Bedouin social event, a theatre company in Gaza called "Theatre for Everybody", two visits to the devastated area of Shujaiyya and the filming of activities which could then be shown in the UK. David then spent a day in Israel where he visited the offices of the human rights group "Windows for Peace". The team at PTC(Gaza) has had unusual stability over the last two years working continuously at the centre. This is a result of Interpal's continued support. Three of these young practitioners have, as a result of this security, now started to work on masters degrees based on their work at PTC. We will give them as much support in the UK as we can.



The centre is most efficiently supervised by Rasha Qandeel, who is one of four fluent English speakers at PTC. Dr. Omar Buhaisi is the psychiatrist with responsibility for the severe cases that are brought to the centre. Ghadah Radwan is responsible for the Focusing project and this has been most successful. David witnessed a women's group going through this process. Ghadah wants to do degree level research on this subject area. Jabir Thabet has overall responsibility for the *Friday of Joy Initiative* and was invited by the Islamic University in Gaza to do a presentation on his work with this. Ahmed Altawil is supporting the media work, Samer Awad is using her Family Therapy work to prepare for a degree and Sabrin Mousa has been making excellent films about bereaved families. So, the team at the centre shows a lot of potential. Muslim Aid has also set up a project with PTC(Gaza). All of this is supervised every week by Mohamed Altawil in the UK. PTC is a tight-knit, mutually supportive young team and well-prepared for the horrors and despair they have to cope with in Gaza.



The visit would not have been possible without the generous help of Medical Aid for Palestinians and its CEO, Tony Laurance. It fulfilled an important requirement for PTC(UK) to oversee the projects and meet the PTC(Gaza) team and to bring back films of the situation in Gaza to be shown in the UK. So far there have been five talks given to groups in and around London as a result of this visit. Thanks, also, to Mohamed Rajab for being such a good friend and resourceful guide inside Gaza.

Interpal has given a verbal undertaking to support the centre for at least the next three years. This will be a great relief for all at PTC(Gaza). Fundraising for the Friday of Joy Initiative will increase, we hope, so that the project can visit more areas more often. Handbooks on Focusing and Family Therapy are being prepared and it is hoped that they will be available in a few months.

Finally, we are helping to organise a conference at Kingston University for 14th and 15th November 2015. The mental health and social work networks are involved in the planning as are the psychology and social work departments at the university. Its title is “Rethinking Trauma and Resilience in the Context of Political Violence: New Directions in Research and Practice.” This could be a fascinating event.



The main projects supervised by PTC-UK and implemented by PTC-Gaza.

Gaza Focusing Project

Funded by Irish and British Quakers and supervised by Palestine Trauma Centre(UK), May 2014 - April 2015, Field project coordinator (Ghadah Radwan).



The poster features a light orange and yellow background. At the top, there are two circular logos: PTC(UK) on the left and P.T.C. on the right. The main title 'Gaza Focusing Approach' is written in bold red text. Below it, the Arabic title 'برنامج التركيز لتعزيز الصمود النفسي والاجتماعي' is displayed. The dates '1st May 2014 to 30th April 2015' are centered. The text 'Organised and facilitated by Palestine Trauma Centre (Gaza & UK)' is in blue. Below that, 'Funded by' is written in blue, followed by the logos for IQFA (Irish Quaker Faith in Action) and Quakers (Quaker Peace & Social Witness). At the bottom, the full names of the funding organizations are listed: 'Irish Quaker Faith in Action (IQFA) & Quaker Peace and Social Witness (QPSW-UK)'.



The project's work plan was designed for both group and single focusing sessions with families, children and adults. The ages of clients ranged from 6 to 65 years old. Sessions were held at different centres within targeted project areas during the 12 month project period. 1787 participants benefited from the project: 830 Females and 957 Males.

During the July-August war, the work-team used Focusing techniques as Psychological First Aid. The total number of beneficiaries of the group focusing sessions for children and families at the harboring centres during the Israeli invasion on Gaza strip was 770 participants: 410 Males and 360 Females.

After the war, 280 school children (120 Females, 160 Males) from UNRWA schools benefited from the Focusing activities. In addition, 100 families (55 Females, 45 Males) had Focusing Group sessions. There were other group Focusing sessions for students and women and some individual Focusing sessions with children and adults.

The following techniques were used:

- listening to ourselves
- quality of listening to others
- the concept of distance and present time
- partitioning skills
- verbal reflection skill,
- relaxation activities
- safe place exercise
- name-expression exercise
- thoughts and feelings differentiation
- expressing feelings by symbols
- teddy bear exercise with children

Using pre and post assessments (Altawil, 2008), it was found that an improvement was made in 60 out of 62 cases, a success rate of 85%. Observing the participants during this period, we found notable improvements in the participants' daily routine, and their ability to understand themselves and others. This strongly suggested that the project's aims had been fulfilled, especially in regard to mothers within families. This is important because they are the supporting spine of the family.



Family and Community Therapy Project: FCTP

“Empowering Family Resilience in Gaza”



1st July 2014 – 30th June 2015



Funded largely by INTERPAL (London) and partially by PTC-UK for the period 1st July 2014 to the 30th June 2015, this project consists of two parts: psychosocial responses during the war against Gaza known as Operation Protective Edge and implementing psychosocial activities after the war.

At the start of the war, an Emergency and Rapid Response (ERR) team was formed and voluntarily operated in the middle area governorates of Gaza. This team consisted of 21 members led by one of the PTC staff. This team provided Psychological First Aid at the sheltering centres like hospitals, schools, mosques and churches. The number of the beneficiaries during the period was 11,435 people, 10,407 of whom were children and 1,028 of them adults.

After the end of the war, the Family and Community Therapy (FCT) team started working with displaced families when they returned to their partially destroyed houses. The team screened the families who needed immediate psychological services. Psycho-social intervention operated with the whole family in the presence of a psychologist, social worker, children's animator and a psychiatrist. Activities with the beneficiary group varied in aim; some of them depended on concentration, and others depended on therapy techniques such as Mind and Body Therapy, Focusing Therapy and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (C.B.T). 70 families with 482 people (223 females and 259 males) have benefited from the activities since the end of the war and up till end of June 2015. In addition, psycho-educational and psychological support activities took place in some partner institutions (NGOs) and in some schools where structured games were organized. Psycho-education meetings were held at some institutions in Gaza City and in northern Gaza to support martyrs' wives and old people. The purpose of these meetings was to explore responses to psychological trauma and discuss how to deal with children whose behaviour had been affected by war. The concept of Psychological First Aid was shared with parents. The opinions of the beneficiaries were completely positive. They appreciated all the efforts by animators and the work team in general and especially Interpal who had supported and funded these activities. Moreover, implementing the activities enhanced the skills of the work team and made them gain confidence in dealing with hard situations. All this raised the profile of PTC, motivating people to visit the centre to enjoy its services despite their fears of the stigma that can be attached to therapy. The number of beneficiaries from these psychological support activities is 9,395, their ages ranging between 5 and 65 years.

The total number of the beneficiaries from Interpal's grant for psychosocial sessions and recreational activities during and after the war since July 2014 to June 2015 is 21,312. These people also had therapeutic group meetings and psycho-educational meetings. The beneficiaries included people with special needs (audio and physical disability and autism).



Half-Year Report-Friday of Joy Initiative

(July-December 2014)

Palestine Trauma Centre (UK) received funding from a London based fundraising group called 4 Pillars of Hope to support the Friday of Joy Initiative at Palestine Trauma Centre (Gaza).



مركز فلسطين للصدمة
Palestine Trauma centre



Half-year report for the **Friday of Joy** project funded by Palestine Trauma Centre (UK) and 4 Pillars of Hope, from 01/07/2014 to 31/12/2014

This period went through many stages, starting with emergency work during the war of 2014 on Gaza strip. The project team immediately organised group activities with the children and parents at the harboring centers, hospitals and destroyed neighborhoods in and around Gaza City.

The total number of beneficiaries during the period from early July to the end of August 2014 was 11,435; among them 10,407 children and 1,028 parents and mothers. The Friday of Joy Initiative had been operating before July 2014, but as soon as the war ended, a regular team

was selected to develop this work. The new team consisted of 10 employees: a project coordinator, an accountant, a sound technician and 7 animators. They planned entertaining activities for children to be conducted in the streets of refugee camps and towns. These activities were partly entertainment, partly educational and full of movement, singing and games. The psycho-social purpose of these activities was to reduce stress through exercise and build community feeling by sharing challenges. Everything is done in a spirit of celebration. Everyone succeeds, thus reinforcing the confidence of children and their families. Professional services from trained mime artists and a story-teller for children have increased the range of FoJ's activities. From September - December 2014, there were 24 sessions with 14,302 beneficiaries: 7,302 males, 5,635 females, 1,365 parents.

The total number of beneficiaries during the project's period 01/07/2014 to 31/12/2014 was 25,737 children, as well as parents and teachers.

Friday of Joy Initiative ~ January to July 2015

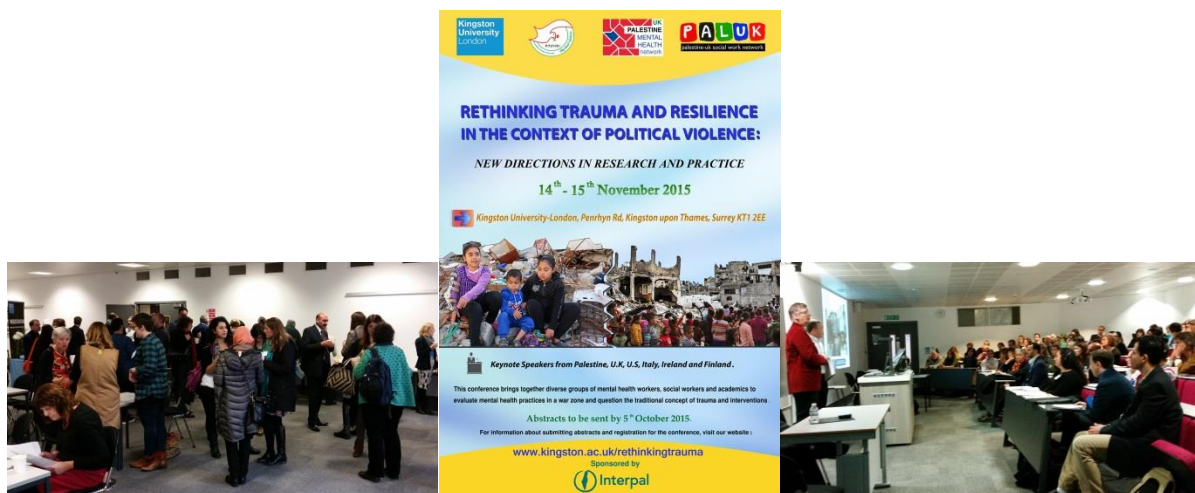
Donations came from PTC(UK) general funds and a fundraising concert in Coventry Cathedral to sustain the FoJ project from January to July 2015.

Since January 2015, *The Friday of Joy Initiative* has continued working in refugee camps and there have been many requests for it to increase the number of sessions it organises. At present this is beyond the resource capacity of PTC, but we are considering options for expanding the project. The Chair of trustees for PTC(UK) visited the project in April 2015 and was able to witness its effectiveness.



Palestine Trauma Centre (UK)

Report: August – December 2015



The main event in the second half of this year was the highly successful conference at Kingston University. Interpal sponsored the event with £3,000. Well over 100 people attended and some important international mental health researchers and practitioners took part, including some from Israel. Four of our colleagues from Gaza were prevented from attending by the British and Jordanian authorities. Our Mental Health Network colleagues led a protest which became a news item in the Independent and in turn led to an offer from two barristers at Michael Mansfield QC's chambers to take up the cases.

Professor Brian Barber talked at length to PTC(UK) at the conference and expressed interest in visiting PTC(Gaza). This he may do in December. It is a real privilege to have such a distinguished scholar taking an interest in us. The conference provided an excellent opportunity for networking and strengthened our links with the UK-Palestine Mental Health Network and the UK-Palestine Social Work Network.

Interpal invited us to their Parliamentary meeting in October. Interpal wish to extend their association with us to include a joint project between PTC(Gaza) and Interpal (Gaza) to do with Special Needs work in Gaza schools. This matter is still being discussed. Tony Laurance, CEO of MAP, has said that MAP will facilitate our visits to Gaza through Israel and that the MAP Gaza office and PTC(Gaza) could arrange some kind of co-operation arrangement. PTC(UK) will be sending a project proposal for PTC(Gaza) to use in these

negotiations which will begin in January 2016. It is very important that we do not over-extend our responsibilities, but all this attention from major organisations shows that we are probably doing a good job.

Fundraising continues and we must thank the following small groups and individuals for continuing to support us:

Kris Connolly in Coventry *Art into Heart*. Kris has made a film of the Coventry cathedral concert last year and has used it for further fundraising.

Shosh Morris and the Islington group, who held a film event in addition to the music event earlier in the year.

Ashok Sethi and Brent Friends of Palestine, who had another fundraising meeting in November where we spoke. Also **Carmela Ozzi** from this area has raised over £2,000.

Peter Offord and Norwich Stop the War, who held a dinner event in October, at which we spoke.

Philip and Hilary Tyrrell and the St. Albans Friends of Palestine who organised an evening where we spoke.

Kim Reynauld and the Tooting, South London group who showed Kris' film and are fundraising for us.

PTC(Gaza) has developed the capacity and the skills to make films about their work. Sabrin Mousa and Jaber Thabet have led the way with this. PTC(UK) use these in our presentations.



During October and November, four talks were given in South London, one in Kilburn, one in Norwich and one in Stratford, East London. Mohamed Altawil's research work was presented at the Kingston conference and also, in December, at the University of Bristol.



PROJECTS

Focusing. The Focusing (funded by Irish Quakers Faith in Action) is hugely successful in Gaza and has attracted the interest of the Focusing Institute in the U.S. Below is a project proposal:

Healing and Resilience for Arabic Speaking Peoples

Providing psycho-social support using the Focusing method

Summary

This paper outlines a project to develop a training program of psycho social support to Arabic speaking people who have experienced upheaval or trauma. This would be particularly targeted at refugees and displaced people from Arabic speaking countries in the Middle East. The training programme is based on ‘Focusing’ which is a body oriented process of self - awareness and emotional healing. This training program is a result of work to teach Focusing in Afghanistan and it has been successful in reducing Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in Gaza.

The proposal

This project will build on a successful initiative in Gaza developed by the Palestine Trauma Centre (PTC). The Centre has developed a program of psycho social support in Arabic which has been delivered to 1700 people in Gaza and has been shown to reduce the symptoms of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

Working with existing NGO’s in the region, the project will identify people who can be trained to facilitate a 10 session programme of learning and development for people who have experienced turmoil or displacement as a result of conflict or instability. These facilitators will be supported to deliver the training programme to people in need in their areas of operation.

The material is based on Community Wellness Focusing (CWF) which aims to promote wellness and harness the strengths of the community. Non-professional people will facilitate groups which can become mutually supportive. Sensing directly into feelings can be difficult for people who have experienced highly traumatizing events. Community Wellness Focusing has developed a range of exercises that provide an indirect way of touching into feelings. One discovery is that using objects, movement, teddy bears, drawing, and mood cards provides a bit of distance and safety. This enables people to talk about their feelings without getting overwhelmed and so access their inner resilience. Participants have reported considerable psychological relief as is evidenced by the success rates of the program in Gaza.

Palestinians have been involved in adapting Community Wellness Focusing to their situation in Gaza and they have identified what works for them. Having tested it in one of the main pressure points in the Middle East we are confident that it will be transferrable to other areas.

This approach moves people away from helplessness to taking a positive step to improve things for themselves and their communities. CWF doesn’t change the events immediately but it changes how the events are perceived and processed. Participants have reported that it has improved their ability to cope by increasing their inner resiliency.



Training in Focusing continues at PTC(Gaza) and Mohamed Altawil supervises progress via Skype every week. Jerry Conway and Mary Jennings continue with overall supervision.

Family Therapy. Brief report for the project: “Empowering Family Resilience in Gaza”

1st July - 30st November 2015



This project consists of implementing psychosocial activities (group and individual) since the war on Gaza in 2014. 34 families with 280 people (165 females and 115 males) benefited from the activities from July to November 2015. In addition to that, purposeful social, psycho-educational and psychological support activities took place in cooperation with some partner institutions (NGOs) and in some kindergartens where structured games were organized. The number of beneficiaries from these group activities is 1170, their ages ranging between 5 and 18 years. Psycho-education meetings were held in some institutions in Gaza City and in northern Gaza to support mothers and old people. The purpose of these meetings

was to explore responses to psychological trauma and discuss how to deal with children whose behaviour had been affected by war. The number of beneficiaries from these psychological support activities is about 95, their ages ranging between 10 and 50 years.

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Number of beneficiaries from Family Therapy sessions for (34 families)

115 Males, 165 Females (Total: 280)

Number of beneficiaries from group activities

Day	Date	Place of activity implementing	Number of beneficiaries	Client's feedback
Monday	24/08/2015	Zainab Rayyes elem. school	300 students	Student Sara 12 yrs: 'I am very happy to be here'.
Friday	18/09/2015	Nusairat camp	400 children	Raed 10 yrs: 'It is the best time we spend here, thank you for you all'.
Monday	05/10/2015	Zawaida camp	220 children and mothers	
Thursday	08/10/2015	Beach camp	100 children	
Wednesday	25/11/2015	Right to live association	150 down and autism children	
Total number of beneficiaries from psycho-education meetings			1170 people	

Beneficiaries from psycho-education meetings

Day	Date	Place of activity implementing	Number of beneficiaries	Client's feedback
Saturday	15/08/2015	Haii Salateen association in Beit Lahia- North Gaza	25 mothers	'Um Ahmad (45yrs): 'I really benefited from this meeting and I need more'.
Saturday	12/09/2015	Shadia Abu Ghazala secondary school for girls	20 students	
Tuesday	13/10/2015	Taghreed association	20 children	Abu Foad (Manager of Bna'a): 'Our association in Jabalia is in urgent need of your services. Thank you'.
Wednesday	04/11/2015	Bna'a association	30 mothers	
Total number of beneficiaries from group activities			65 people	

The total number of the beneficiaries from the INTERPAL's grant during the last five months from both group and individual activities is 1,545 people. These people benefited from group activities, psychological and social support, therapeutic meetings and psycho-educational meetings. The groups of beneficiaries are women, normal children and down & autism children.

Friday of Joy. This continues to be very popular and in order to make the event serve a referral function, one member of the team, a psychologist, is now designated to walk amongst the audience to talk to children and parents and see if any need to use the therapeutic services at the centre.



Sponsors for the projects are shown below:



Further work needs to be done on the development of a new website which PTC(UK) and PTC(Gaza) will share. Present estimates are £3,000 for its building. A calendar for 2016 has been produced, designed by Shehnoor Ahmed, after the success of last year's.

