Palestine Trauma Centre (UK)



This report is in two parts. The first section looks at the UK activities and the second reviews the projects in Gaza. Key people mentioned are: Mohamed Altawil – Projects Co-ordinator in the UK; David Harrold - Chair of trustees PTC(UK); Jerry Conway, Mary Jennings - advisors on Focusing; Ghada Radwan- Team leader of the Focusing project in Gaza; Gesine Miller, Sarah Hawes, Belinda Milani and Gwyn Daniel – Family UK Therapy advisors. Rasha Oandeel, Munther Yaghi and Ahmed Altawil – PTC(UK)team leaders in Gaza. Links to project photos are at the end.

Report for January – December 2019 Part One.

2019 started with the tragic news of Jeremy Hardy's death. He was a greatly loved national figure and we were so proud to have him as one of our patrons. He knew everything about PTC's projects and spoke eloquently about them at last year's fundraising event at Brent. He is irreplaceable.



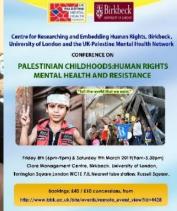
MOHAMED

JEREMY

PTC(UK) held a public meeting for donors and other friends. There have been some important changes in our structure, but the projects continue with the same teams. The Family Therapy team have made a film of interviews related to the Great March of Return. It can be found here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rz9VYk3 9Sg&feature=youtu.be

We used the film at a London conference organised by the UK-Palestine Mental Health Network. This was a well-attended event which brought therapists together to explore Palestinian Childhoods.







In July we spoke at the Palestine Expo event at Olympia organised by Friends of Al-Aqsa and we were invited to take part in the recently started North Herts PSC film evening where David Harrold interviewed Leila Sansour before a showing of her film "Jeremy Hardy versus the Israeli Army".

Later that month we held an Iftar fundraiser in Hatfield which raised £14,000. Thanks to Nisreen Altawil and her family, Sister Razwana and her family and friends, Dr Umar Hayek, Najat and family, Dr Safwan, Abdel Basit and family and Gesine Miller.

PTC(UK) gave talks to groups in Welwyn Garden City, Lewisham and Merton. Mohamed Altawil attended a conference in Dublin on Focusing.



DAVID INTERVIEWING LEILA SANSOUR.

An article on Friday of Joy was published in the magazine "Palestine Voice" and our Focusing team leader in Gaza, Ghada Radwan, wrote an article for "Focusing Initiatives International".







One of the most inspiring events this year was Ghada Radwan's success in leaving Gaza for a short time to attend a Focusing conference in the Netherlands. Rene Veugelers, **Mary Jennings** (pictured with Ghada, left) Mohamed and Ghada herself worked tirelessly to navigate the bureaucratic procedures set up to make such a visit as difficult as possible. This was the first time in her 35 years that Ghada had been outside the prison that is Gaza. She was thrilled and, like us, most grateful to the Focusing Institute in the US for supporting her trip. We have broken the siege for her and hope to do it again for someone else on the team. Here is her report:

A Seriously Playful Journey from Gaza to the Netherlands and Back

Ghada Radwan talks about her recent trip The Netherlands to attend the *Seriously Playful* training in children's focusing with René Veugelers and Harriet Teeuw. The trip was made possible by funding from TIFI's Arabic Fund project, a scholarship from Focusing Centrum, the Netherlands, PTC UK and members of the Focusing community in Ireland.

'This year, thanks to the generosity of many people, I was able participate in a week's training on children's focusing. It was a great opportunity for me to increase my skills and to learn from experts like René Veugelers and Harriet Teeuw and all of the 19 other participants from around the world. It was my first time outside of Gaza and it was so exciting to visit The Netherlands.

The course will be very useful in my work and I really enjoyed every moment of it. Some highlights included exercises such as *How Nothing Can Become Something*. In a very gentle way, it enables participants to get in touch with what's alive in them; something that's not yet ready to be expressed or cannot be expressed in words alone. Using expressive arts – music, movement, gesture, painting, sculpture – the felt sense can be gradually symbolized. I think this will be especially useful working with traumatized children. They need to feel safe and to be given lots of time and space to do things in their own way, at their pace.

Another important point – which I have learned many times in the past and learned it again in this training – is that we cannot change what happened to us, but we can change our response or our inner relation to it.

At the end of the week, I was very honoured to receive The International Focusing Institute certification as a Children Focusing Companion and proud to be representing Palestine.

There were challenges too in making the trip. When I said goodbye to my husband and children, I felt quite afraid, wondering what might happen if there was another war in Gaza and I was not there with them. It was difficult to obtain a permit to travel through Israel via the Erez crossing, with many days' delay. In the end, it was worth it to be able to develop my confidence in teaching Focusing and to bring back new skills as well as the long-promised presents to my beautiful children. I am so grateful to have had this wonderful opportunity. Thank you.'

The most important event of 2019 was moving the projects from PTC(Gaza) to the larger, more secure premises of Noor el Marifa. PTC(UK) and the project teams encountered some difficulties with a few of the trustees at PTC(Gaza) which made us immediately respond with Safeguarding measures to project the projects and our teams. This was precautionary, but we at PTC(UK) feel a strong responsibility for the welfare of our loyal and hardworking teams and they have been very happy to come with us to Noor el Marifa.

Website: www.noorelmarifa.org





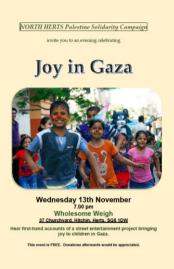


This is a school which specialises in helping children with learning difficulties. There was an enthusiastic opening ceremony at the school for the new partnership which PTC(UK) contributed to via Skype. The team have given us positive reports about working there since July, but we may look for new premises closer to the target beneficiaries in the near future. The Charity Commission have been advising us on this issue over Due Diligence procedures. We have increased monitoring of Delivery Partners in Gaza and Noor elMarifa has been willing to accept our recommendations over Safeguarding and public profiles.



THE CORE TEAM OF PTC(UK) IN GAZA AT THE NEW VENUE, NOOR ELMARIFA.







During this period, a major funder of our projects found themselves in difficulties with their banking transfers and so had to cease donating to us. We have started the long process of making a partnership with another funder. Meanwhile, we have appealed to friends for extra donations to keep projects going. The response has been overwhelming. Worcester, Hitchin, Norwich and St John's College Cambridge hosted presentations from PTC(UK). Jafar and Sandra Ramini held another successful fundraiser for us and another charity. Brent Friends of Palestine organised an emergency Christmas collection for us as well. Locally, the Welwyn and Hatfield Islamic Society have donated generously.





CAMBRIDGE: DAVID WITH STEVE TILLER, OF THEATRE DAY.

WORCESTER: MOHAMED AND JERRY ON FOCUSING.

We had a generous donation from someone in Norwich, whose written comments to us were so moving that they are worth repeating here:

I grew up with a foster-brother — one of the Kindertransport children. He lived a long and full life — mostly in the US — but died while staying with us in Norfolk a year ago. Last week, his family gave me some money — as a "thank you" to his foster family of 70 years ago. Although he came from an Austrian Jewish family, I am sure he would have approved of me passing on some of his money to support your work among the dispossessed people of Palestine.

The emergency fundraiser has ensured that the teams can continue to work in Gaza for another three months during which time we are sure to get a major funder for the projects.

Meanwhile, we have partnered with a research group at Birmingham University called "Rights of Time" who have made a successful bid to the Global Challenges Research Fund Network Plus Award from the Arts and Humanities Research Council. This means we will get funds to write up research of our work in Gaza in 2020. Our strand of the Rights of Time project is called Protracted Time and will explore memory and trauma and the concept of ongoing trauma. This academic involvement in the UK is most exciting for us, adding to the academic connections we have with research and training groups in the US, the Netherlands, Ireland and Italy.





Mohamed and Gesine with Dr Heather Flowe and Dr. Nora Parr from Birmingham University, talking to the Gaza team via Skype and preparing for the research project "Protracted Time".

We enter 2020 with a sense of great opportunites for the wider dissemination of our work, but also urgent concerns about the future security of the projects. The year starts with very welcome news that author and Family Therapy specialist, Gwyn Daniel has agreed to be a patron of PTC(UK).

Report for January – December 2019 Part Two.

1. Family Therapy.

The Family Therapy Project, empowering resiliency, works with families still affected by the war on Gaza in 2014. The teams work with displaced families, using techniques such as Mind Body Therapy, Focusing and Cognitive Behaviour Therapy.

63 new families with 234 people (111 females and 123 males) benefited from home visits and carefully structured activities. In addition, community welfare was reinforced in cooperation with Friday of Joy Initiative in local associations and private schools.



<u>5,915</u> children benefited from these activities, their ages ranging between 5 and 16 yrs. PTC also had a consultation unit. <u>64</u> (24 males and 40 females) were referred to other associations according to their type of the psychological disorder. Thanks to our colleagues at Gaza



Community Mental Health Program and Atfaluna School for the Deaf.

A Psycho-education meeting was held in Azhar University attended by Abd Rahman Ben Awf School in Gaza, Rehana School in Khanyounis, Medical Services in Nusairat to support 647 mothers, teachers,

university students, doctors and nurses. The object of this meeting was to explore how to deal with the everyday psychological pressures on parents and how they can learn to cope with this continuous responsibility and anxiety. The beneficiaries at this meeting were completely positive about their experience of the event.

The total number of the beneficiaries during January- December 2019 from both group and individual activities is 6,878 people.

The training and discussions via Skype between the UK and PTC(Gaza) are increasing. Gesine Miller, Sarah Hawes and Belinda Milani are still offering regular professional consultations assisted by Dr Mohamed Altawil. There are occasional visits to these sessions from other UK mental health professionals, including Gwyn Daniel.

The Family Therapy team trained four female students in the first term and five students in the second term from Al-Azhar University in Gaza. The training included the basics of working with cases, how to implement educational and recreational sessions and how to write a case study and make the necessary diagnosis.

This training is part of PTC's contribution in cooperation with civil society and the professional development of the cadres of institutions in Gaza.

Sabah (45 yrs), " I have suffered a lot since the 2014 war after losing all my family members, but since I started therapy sessions with PTC and I am constantly improving."

Mohanad (18 yrs), " I feel like I was born again, and I am grateful to the psychologists from PTC (Monther and Samar) for their support throughout my therapy to help me walk again."

Saleem (Nusairat camp-33 yrs), "Honestly, all of us enjoyed this activity, especially that we needed these joyful activities after the recent Israeli attack on Gaza last week (Nov.2019)".

Miss Eman (Hamad school, Khanyounis-30 yrs)," This is the second cooperation between you and Hamad city. It was a wonderful activity and you have a professional team. I hope there will be more in the near future."

Em Marwa (Gaza- 43 yrs), "I enjoyed my time, I feel like a young girl after the activity, and I can say I can deal with pressures in life now ".

Miss Wfaa (Abd Moati Rayyes School- 50 yrs), "I and the teachers can now deal better with students in a good way according to your advice, thank you."

2. Focusing

Focusing is funded by Irish Quakers Faith in Action and Palestine Trauma Centre (UK). Focusing is the development of a process of listening to our feelings in a warm, kind, and accepting way in order to open an entrance to the human body's wisdom. It aims to enable the participants to develop their own skills from using these techniques in order to be more mindful of their inner resources to improve the quality of their lives.

One of the most important events during this period was project coordinator Ghada Radwan's participation in the Ministry of Health conference, Psychosocial Interventions in Crises. She described the Focusing program and its unique role in supporting people's resiliency in Gaza.





The work team also participated in the DVV initiative, "Close to Hope" with representatives from many associations in Gaza strip. So PTC's work is being disseminated in the way we intended.

A second film about the Focusing program was completed. It depicted the support given to a cancer patient to turn him away from despair and seek to re-join his family and community. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TGiEvoBgmPY&feature=youtu.be

During this period, (1171) participants benefited from the project activities; (873) Females and (298) Males. There were 26 adult participants (13 Females, 13 Males). Among them were 13 Male Managers from The Ministry of Telecom & Information - Omar Elmokhtar area, 13 Female Doctors & Nurses from Al Rantesy hospital -Alnaser area. The number of adult beneficiaries in the psychoeducational Focusing sessions was (823) participants (707 Females, 116 Males).

The number of adult beneficiaries of Focusing sessions conducted at other associations and hospitals was 531 (296 Females, 235 Males). 19 persons were transferred to receive more specialized interventions at Palestine Trauma Centre's therapeutic unit.

The number of adult beneficiaries of entertaining focusing sessions conducted at home visits was (115) participants (56 Females, 59 Males).





Regular individual and group weekly sessions are conducted between the professional supervisor in the UK, Dr. Mohamed Altawil, and the project coordinator and the Focusing team in Gaza. Evaluation of the program used a pre-assessment interview at the first session and a post-assessment at the end of the sessions to identify the effects of the program.





The Focusing journey in Gaza was a huge success. Techniques were spread quickly due to the ease of extending them between the different target groups and the simplicity of the skills they are taught. The safety element of Focusing program, in which the participant is given the freedom to manage and lead the situation in expressing feelings without any sort of blame, judgment, or enforcement, also encourages the spread of the technique. Participants during this period noticeably improved their daily performance and their ability to understand themselves and others. This provides a good indicator for accomplishing the general goal of the project. On the communal level, coordinating and networking with local NGOs opened new channels for cooperation in implementing the project's activities at different locations in the Gaza Strip.

*A male participant (Kh.A 48 yrs) General Manager from Ministry of Telecom & Information said: "The Focusing sessions opened new prospects for me. They gave me the way of dealing with my family and others. Also, my responses to different situations changed after the sessions."

A Female participant (Z.A_5yrs): I loved Bus emotions activity; I would like to be with my family in this activity.

A Female participant (N.A48 years) House wife said: "Departure session help me to divide negative emotions and have accompany with them sympathetically, as I had previously suffered from general body fatigue constantly, after focusing sessions, especially after the green branch session, I enjoyed life again and started to practice new rituals of hope that I have never experienced before."

A Female participant (E.A 35 years) employee in an institution: "After the focusing sessions, I was able to adapt with the situation of my autistic son, I used to get angry with him and violate myself because of the surrounding pressures. After the Focusing sessions, especially the Safe Place session, I found that my son was the only safe place for me. This changed my relationship with him to one of sympathy and kindness.

A Female participant (E.B 32 years)) House wife from psycho-educational sessions: "I was isolated from others, but after the Focusing session on Resiliency, I was able to see happiness in moments that combined my children and family with the simplest rituals. In resilience sessions I felt that I was strong, and I embraced this hope and I will keep it.

A male participant (A.H 14 years) from group sessions: "When I drew the Safe Shield in the Safe Place session, I found many safety and loving symbols that I had never seen together in my family and many other things."

A male participant (Z.Kh12 years) from group sessions "In the teddy bear session I remembered my grandmother who died a long time ago. I used to cry when I remembered her, but when I embraced the teddy bear I felt happy and did not cry. I just had beautiful memories. I remembered how much she loved my smile and jokes. So, at the end of the session I was smiling and reassured."

3. Friday of Joy Initiative.



Friday of Joy has two distinct parts to its activity-led therapeutic aims: the street entertainment project and the sports project. Both combine entertainment and movement to relieve trauma symptoms and both engage the community as a support system to enhance wellbeing. The projects are funded by Palestine Trauma Centre (UK) and supporting groups in the UK, including Friends of Palestine in Brent, Norwich, Hitchin, Worcester, Merton, St Albans and Lewisham. Also Sandra and Jafar Ramini and the British Shalom/Salaam Trust. During the project period, the team delivered **52** street-entertainment sessions. The total number of direct beneficiaries was **26,390** (**17,730** children, **4,160** parents).





FACE-PAINTING AND CLOWNS





ANIMAL COSTUME DRAMA AND THE STORYTELLER (HAKAWATI)

Yousef Khodari (13yrs), a child from Zaiton area: The child Yousef said: "I am happy that I played the clown role like uncle Aloosh. Thank you so much and I hope you will return to our street again to be happy".

<u>Amal khodari-Em Yousef (42yrs), said:</u> I was very happy with these activities, especially seeing my son Yousef who suffers from kidney failure so delighted and participating with other children.

Awatef Abu Bolbol (46yrs), Director of Hamad school in khanyounis: Mrs. Awatef talked about the nature of the activities that we provide in an organized and professional manner, because these educational activities teach children to be better behaved at school.

The sport training courses for traumatised young people were analysed for their impact and it was found that PTSD symptoms were reduced from nearly 100% to only 6% over a period of a few weeks. A film about the sports project can be seen here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iSOFx78pEbI&feature=youtu.be





KUNG-FU TRAINING AND COMMUNITY CELEBRATION.

80 children who participated in these sessions were observed to have psychological and behavioral problems. **20** of these children were transferred by the FoJ team to the Family Therapy team to receive individual interventions. **7** male children volunteered to receive regular therapeutic sessions, supervised by the psychiatrist. Most of the others benefitted from one. This showed that the stigma surrounding mental health therapy can be got around if linked to positive activities rather than an emphasis on weakness or sickness.









4. Psycho Social Support Project – Emergency Response. (SANID)

Funded by Muslim Aid.



The Psychosocial Support Project provided trauma relief to <u>8,588</u> beneficiaries. This project had a rapid intervention team for trauma cases that were not supported by other agencies: for the children and their families who have faced the destruction of their houses, witnessed death through shelling, or suffered injury to themselves, their families, neighbours or close relatives.

The main activities and the numbers of targeted beneficiaries were:

- A. <u>1,861</u> home visits for delivering therapeutic and counselling services for 376 families (2617 persons). Those families were exposed to traumatic events and referred to PTC from local societies to gain psychosocial support intervention. The average number of visits for each family was 5 sessions. The Psychological Rehabilitation Team assisted these families by relieving them of some day-to-day burdens, helped them to cope after crisis, and helped them attain some degree of normality in their lives.
- B. <u>19</u> psychological education sessions were carried out for 576 parents and teachers. This activity increased community awareness of psychological trauma and its management, stress management and psychological resilience.
- C. <u>42</u> indoor recreational activities carried out for 3,969 children. Examples of these recreational activities: Drawing on children faces; Group dancing with music (Aram

- sum sum; Purposeful comic role-play (sketch); Competition games and group children's songs with movement.
- D. <u>2</u> big **outdoor entertaining events** for children and their families were carried out in two different places for more than 4 hours each, targeting **1,330 children**. The Friday of Joy team of 14 animators used recreational activities as a way to mitigate stress and fear in the children.
- E. <u>24</u> sports psycho-active sessions were organised for 96 children who had been exposed to stressful events and referred from local associations. An evaluation by our therapist revealed that all of them had many signs of PTSD.
- F. <u>376</u> **food vouchers delivered to poor families**, who have benefited from psychosocial support during home visits by our team.
- G. <u>2,643</u> gifts/toys delivered for targeted traumatised children in all activities performed during the project.
- H. <u>51</u> out-door training hours, 'Help the Helpers', were delivered for the project team. The main topics covered: Project activities and duties induction, Case management, Management of violence based on gender, Psychosocial support for women with disabilities.

This recent project, funded by Muslim Aid, has proved to be an excellent way of spreading the good practice used the other three projects created by PTC(UK). It offers immediate therapeutic response for a relatively short period of time and helps a wide range of people who are made aware of their inner and community resources for enhancing resilience.









To watch short films about the main activities, click on the below links

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XxHD9xkkZFM&feature=youtu.be

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TQLmD0KmbAw&feature=youtu.be

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QY2KvbeEKqA&feature=youtu.be

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QofJQ-n8VQs&feature=youtu.be

To view more pictures of the activities, click on this link:

http://ptcuk.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Annex1-Photo-gallery-April.-2019.pdf

5. Skype supervisory and training sessions.

Training sessions and discussions via Skype between the PTC-UK and the team in Gaza are increasing. Gesine Miller, Sarah Hawes, Gwyn Daniel and Belinda Milani are still offering regular professional consultations and discussion for cases, assisted by Dr. Mohamed Altawil. In addition, UK trustees have social/supportive contact with the team. Dr. Flowe and Dr. Parr from Birmingham University had Skype sessions to prepare for the research project.





Dr. Mohamed Altawil trained the Gaza team by Skype on "Obsessive Compulsive Disorders" for 3 training hours. Another 3 training hours reviewed the use of psychotherapy cards. Case studies are brought to these sessions and discussed with the Family Therapy advisors.

Photography Gallery

Photo Gallery – Family Therapy Project 2018/2019

http://ptcuk.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Photos-Gallery-of-Family-Therapy-30-04-19.pdf

Photo Gallery – Family Therapy Project (July -Dec. 2019)

 $\frac{http://ptcuk.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Photo-Gallery-from-Family-Therapy-July-\\ \underline{\%E2\%80\%93-Dec-2019.pdf}$

Photo Gallery – Friday of Joy Project 2018/2019

http://ptcuk.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/1st-June-2018-%E2%80%93-30-th-April-2019.pdf

Photo Gallery – **Friday of Joy Project** (July -Dec. 2019)

http://ptcuk.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Photo-Gallery-from-FoJ-July-%E2%80%93-Dec-2019.pdf

Photo Gallery – Focusing Project 2018/2019

http://ptcuk.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Photo-Gallery-Focusing-from-1-7-2018-to-30.06.2019.pdf

Photo Gallery – **Focusing Project** (July -Dec. 2019)

http://ptcuk.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Photo-Gallery-from-Focusing-Project-July-Dec-2019.pdf