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### Crisis Intervention Plan GCMHP Modifies its Plans After the Israeli War on Gaza



In response to the urgent need for psychological intervention resulting from the war, GCMHP implemented the Crisis intervention Plan for victims of the Israeli war instead of the Strategic Plan that was set for the period 2008-2010. This shift in work was taken to meet the urgent need for psychological intervention among the traumatized population. The Crisis plan focused on the most vulnerable groups mainly children and women through direct activities at the community level including: home-to-home visits, school visits, KGs visits and hospital visits as well as providing specialized therapeutic services for victims of the Israeli war. For this reason, GCMHP aimed to recruit local and international experts to participate in the implementation of the plan.

### High-Profile Delegations and Visitors Visit GCMHP

#### Swedish Minister of Foreign Affairs Carl Bildt Visits GCMHP

Mr. Carl Bildt, Swedish Minister of Foreign Affairs, visited GCMHP on a head of senior delegation. The delegation included the General Swedish Consul in Jerusalem, the Head of

Swedish Cooperation Office and a number of officials in the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Swedish Consulate in Jerusalem. The Delegation met with Dr. Eyad El-Sarraj,



President of GCMHP, Dr. Ahmad Abu Tawahina, Director General and other administrative personnel. The meeting was commenced by Dr. El-Sarraj who welcomed the Minister and the delegation, expressing that this visit is of a high significance especially after the Israeli war on Gaza. Dr. El-Sarraj also welcomed the European role at this time and described it very important in the present time. Dr. El-Sarraj explained the short and long-term psychosocial ramifications of the Israeli war on Gaza as well as its political implications. [More Details...](#)

#### U.S. Congress Delegation Visits GCMHP

Gaza Community Mental Health Programme GCMHP received a high profile U.S. delegation included two Congress members, Mr. Brian Baird, and Mr. Keith Ellison and Mr. Nick Balarino, the Senior Policy Advisor. The delegation met with Dr. Ahmad Abu Tawahina, the Director General, Mr. Husam El-Nounou, Public Relations Director and Mr. Hassan Ziada, Director of Gaza Community Center. Dr. Abu Tawahina welcomed the delegation and acquainted them with the psychological impacts of the Israeli war on the Palestinian population in Gaza, especially children. Dr. Abu Tawahina explained that this war has short and long-term



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consequences on the mental well being and the ways of thinking for new generations. Dr. Abu Tawahina emphasized that the war caused catastrophic consequences at the level of feeling of insecurity and powerlessness among the Palestinians. This will lead to feelings of frustration and anger and establish a base for new era of hatred, violence and desire for revenge.

[More Details...](#)

### German Delegation from "Friends of Waldorf Education Organization" Visits GCMHP



Gaza Community Mental Health Programme GCMHP received a German delegation from Friends of Waldorf Education Organization. The delegation consisted of 15 professionals work

with traumatized children victims of wars and natural disasters and aimed to help in offering acute emergency education to prevent the development of post-traumatic stress disorders among the Palestinian children. They will also participate in the implementation of the crisis intervention plan which GCMHP is carrying out in order to alleviate the psychological suffering of the Palestinian population especially children in Gaza Strip resulting from the last Israeli war. The delegation which includes professionals from various background and experiences held various activities in education, entertainment and child treatment.

### Egyptian Delegation from Arab Federation of Psychiatrists Visits GCMHP



In response to the urgent psychological need resulting from the Israeli war on Gaza, Prof. Ahmed Okasha, the President of the Arab Federation of Psychiatrists (AFP) delegated an Emergency and Disaster Psychiatry Mission dealing with this crisis in Gaza. The medical delegation which included 6 members headed by Dr. Wael Abu Hindi Head of Emergency and Disaster Psychiatry Section in AFP visited GCMHP and met with Dr. Eyad El-Sarraj, President of GCMHP, and Dr. Ahmed Abu Tawahina, Director General and other members in GCMHP who acquainted them with the



deterioration of mental health situation the Gaza Strip during the war and explained the action plan details and activities which the delegation will participate in.

### **Other Visitors and Delegations**

- A delegation consisted of 6 members from Swedish Development and Cooperation (SDC) and Ministry of Foreign Affairs visited GCMHP and met with Dr. Ahmad and Husam El-Nounou and discussed GCMHP's activities to alleviate the psychological consequences of the Israeli war.
- Mr. Mario Carera, the General Coordinator of GCMHP's Consortium of Donors visited the Programme to follow up the implementation of crisis intervention plan. Mr. Carera discussed many issues with Dr. Eyad and Dr. Ahmed including: difficulties that hinder the activities implementation, coordination with other health service providers in Gaza Strip as well as financing the intervention plan.
- Dr. Eyad El-Sarraj met with a delegation of American lawyers in Marna House Hotel in Gaza and acquainted them with the impacts of violation of human rights violations during the war on Gaza and its devastating effects for reporting purposes to document the truth and present it in their countries.
- Mr. Kazimierz Kuberski, Deputy Director Office of Foreign Affairs, from Chancellery of the President of the Republic of Poland, office of foreign affairs met with Dr. Ahmad and Husam El-Nounou to discuss holding partnership with GCMHP to carry out joint project regarding traveling 70 children and some teachers to Poland for 3 weeks to decrease the effect of war on children. The project was to take place in April, yet GCMHP requested to delay its implementation to the summer vacation so that children don't lose their academic year.
- Husam El-Nounou met with a European Parliament delegation consisted of 15 members from the EU Parliament headed by Ms. Luisa Morgantini, Head of EU Parliament, and presented a brief account about the psychological impacts of war on Gaza and EU role in the current situation.
- Two visitors from Free Gaza Movement Ewa Jasiewicz , Caoimhe Butterly visited GCMHP and met with Husam El-Nounou and Hassan Ziada who explained the psychological impacts of war on children as well as GCMHP's activities to reduce these ramifications of war on the Gaza population.
- Mr. Adham Tubeil, representative of "Project hope" in the West Bank visited GCMHP and met with Husam El-Nounou and Hassan Ziada. The meeting discussed suggestions about psychosocial support for women and children project that intends to be implemented in partnership between "Project Hope" and civil society organization in Gaza.



## Training Courses and Workshops

### GCMHP organizes a Specialized Training on "Mechanisms of Crisis Intervention"



As part of its mission to develop its professional capacities in dealing with victims of the Israeli war, GCMHP's Training and Research Department held a training course entitled "Mechanisms of Crisis Intervention" by Dr. Abed Al Aziz Thabet, Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist and Senior Researcher and a number of GCMHP's and WEP's professionals. The training that lasted for 36 hrs in Marna House Hotel was designed to provide the participants with new means of intervention techniques especially with adults such as: life line, ways of discovering risk and safety sites, problems' tree, and emotional debriefing as well as Quick Research for children with involvement. The trainees also appreciated the course as it gave them opportunity for emotional debriefing and learning of new skills.

### One-Year Specialized Diploma in Counseling

Gaza Community Mental Health Programme plans to hold One-Year Specialized Diploma in Counseling. This diploma aims to sustain and enhance the qualifications and competences of the school counselors and will be carried out in

coordination with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education. The Board of Directors of the High Diploma held a meeting on 18 February, 2009 including academics from the Islamic University in Gaza and GCMHP's Training Department, where they discussed preparations and start of the One-Year Specialized Diploma in Counseling and other issues related to the Diploma students.

### Training on Stress Management



In its efforts to meet the needs of the local community organizations in stress management issues, The Training Department organized a training course entitled "Crisis Intervention" for 23 professionals form local organizations including partner organization and other organization that requested training for its staff. These organizations are Al-Wedad Association for Community Rehabilitation, Union of Near East Council of Churches, Palestinian Red Crescent Society, National Center for Handicaps' Rehabilitation, Sharek Youth Forum, Women's Health Center, Culture and Free Thought Association, Social Workers Association, and Development of Civil Society Center. The training continued from 16th Feb. – 4 March with 2 meetings weekly. The training included a number of issues such as: psychological consequences of war, PTSD, emotional debriefing, relaxation mechanisms, psychological evaluation, First Psychological Support,



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psychological impacts of war and disasters on children and how to deal with them, the last day of the training course was open discussion on mechanisms of Follow up. The training was given by a number of Professionals at GCMHP including: Dr. Taysir Diab - Senior Psychiatrist and Clinical Supervisor, Dr. Yasser Abu Jame - Psychiatrist, Rawia Hamam, and The psychologist, Hassan Ziada.

### Participation in Workshops

- Dr. Ahmed Abu Tawahina participated in a workshop in the framework of continuous coordination between GCMHP, World Health Organization (WHO), Ministry of Health and other health organizations. This workshop was organized by WHO in Al Andlus Hall to congregate efforts and to identify the current general needs assessment. The resulted recommendations will be followed up through the work of sub-clusters groups.
- Dr. Ahmed Abu Tawahina participated with a research paper entitled "Reality of Psychosocial Services Provision" in a workshop entitled "The Palestinian Health Sector Needs in Gaza Strip after the Siege and War" organized by Health Sector in the PNGO(Palestinian Non-Governmental Organization Network) and took place in National Association for Handicaps Rehabilitation.

### Public Awareness Meetings

- Deir El-Balah Community Center held a public meeting for 60 women and children in Ben Rashid School where GCMHP's

professionals talked about trauma, its impacts and how to deal with children during crisis as well as factors of protections during crisis. The women were also given opportunity to ask questions and they received answer about their problems.

- GCMHP held a public meeting in Women's Work Center in Deir El-Balah for 20 women where the professionals talked about the mental health, mental illness, traumas, and how to deal with children during crises. It's worth to mention that the professionals distributed brochures and awareness publications on different issues as well as called the women to benefit from the Free Telephone Counseling Service provided by GCMHP.
- Osama Freena, psychologist, held group counseling session in Aid Al-Agha School in Khanyounis for 30 parents using emotional debriefing and giving them opportunity to express their traumatic experiences. Mr. Osama Freena explained how to help children during the war. It's worth to mention that the parents complained from scenes of violence on TV and thus were recommended to avoid their children witnessing such scenes.
- Two group counseling sessions were done for women and children. The first session was done in National Center for Community Rehabilitation, one of GCMHP's strategic partner, for 30 women from a affected area. During the session, the professionals divided the women into 3 groups and gave them papers and pens to draw diagram of risk and safety places, one of the techniques learnt in the training courses. Then they expressed their feelings and experiences of exposing to



risks during the war and how they dealt with the crisis. The second session was done for 20 children aged 7-12 who experienced very catastrophic incidents in Al-Atatra area, one of the most affected areas by the war. The children were given opportunity to express their experiences during the war and were given psychosocial intervention and recreational activities.

- GCMHP held a group therapy session in Al-Qattan center for 27 children from the American International School, their teachers and other workers in the center. The GCMHP professionals provided psychological support for them through discussing what mental health concepts, storytelling activity about the "fear and life threats" and emotional debriefing for some cases. At the end of the meeting, the teachers and children became more aware of mental health and expressed their relief.
- Dr. Samir Zagout held group emotional debriefing session at Ard El Ensan for 60 professionals where they talked about their suffering experiences and traumatic events.
- Dr. Samir Zagout held a debriefing session at Union of Near East Council Churches' Union for 8 professionals including: physicians, nurses and social workers.
- Ms. Khitam Abu shawareb, Psychologist, held a group supervision session in Al-Amour area in Khan Younis . The session consisted of 7 women whose houses were demolished. Ms. Khitam introduced an indirect intervention by group guidance and explained the psychological and physical effects of trauma.

## Work Meetings

- ◆ Dr. Eyad El-Sarraj met with, the European Union High Representative for the Policy and Foreign and Relations, Mr. Javier Solana within his tour around Gaza After war.
- ◆ Dr. Ahmed Abu Tawahina met with Ms. Karin Abu Zaid, the General Commissioner of UNRWA in the framework of continuous coordination in delivering mental health services. They also discussed possibilities of GCMHP's contribution in appointing psychologists and social workers in accordance with the needs of UNRWA.
- ◆ Dr. Eyad El-Sarraj and Husam El-Nounou met with the Arab League Fact Finding Committee in two separate meetings. The delegation consisted of 15 members including lawyers and doctors from Algeria.
- ◆ Dr. Eyad El-Sarraj met with Mr. David Henley and Henrik Pelling then they visited GCMHP provided supervision for the professionals and get acquainted with the developments in the Programme's crisis intervention plan.
- ◆ Husam El-Nounou participated in a meeting with the rehabilitation sector in PNGO Palestinian Non-Governmental Organizations which was held with the participation of 25 rehabilitation organization working in Gaza including the international handicapped organization. Participants explained the activities of each organization and how they can cooperate with each other.
- ◆ Hussam Al-Nounou participated in a meeting with Human Rights Protection Sector in the High Commissioner Office for Human Rights where they discussed many issues including the fact finding committees which visit Gaza



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and talked about the mechanisms for activating the Sector work in Gaza.

- ◆ Hassan Ziada met with Mrs. Saeda Kuhail, Head of the Counseling Unit in the Ministry of Education to discuss GCMHP's crisis intervention plan and its activities in the schools to alleviate the psychological impacts of the war on children. Ms. Ziada requested the Ministry to coordinate selection of 15 schools to avoid where the plan will be implemented.
- ◆ Hassan Ziada and Dr. Yasser met with Ms. Reem Abu Jaber the Director of Al-Qattan Center for Child to evaluate the joint work and to take a feedback about the nature of work with the chosen schools.
- ◆ Mrs. Marion Junca from Human Land institution in Jerusalem visited GCMHP and met with Dr. Ahmed Abu Tawahina to evaluate GCMHP services in Gaza Strip and to search for other partners to cooperate with. They also discussed GCMHP's services delivered to children and adults. Mrs. Junca expressed her interest in the implementation of certain projects for youth and children in Gaza Strip.
- ◆ The Emergency and Human Security Advisor, Dr. Unnikershan from the International Emergency and Conflict Team Aid visited GCMHP and met with Dr. Ahmed Abu Tawahina. They talked about working with children and ways to develop future projects.
- ◆ Dr. Ahmad Abu Tawahina met with Mrs. Serina Cambo Grand from the Italian Human Land Institution and they discussed a joint project between the Programme and the Medical Relief and Human Land Institution.
- ◆ Husam El-Nounou met with German Journalist from Carsten Koall magazine to

make all the required preparations to take pictures for the staff working in GCMHP clinic.

## Media Activities

### Radio Programs:

- GCMHP started a media campaign through local radio stations media agency to publicize in and announce the free telephone counseling service in three prominent radio stations (Gaza FM, Al-Shaeb Radio and Al-Quds Radio). It's worth to mention that this service will be offered for 12 hours a day (from 8 a.m. To 8 p.m every day except Saturday from 8 a.m to 4 p.m). In addition, GCMHP's professionals worked intensively to promote this service in most of their activities such as radio programs, public meetings and workshops.
- GCMHP carried out a monthly radio programme on mental health issues "Trauma, its impacts and how to deal with it". The first interview was done by Hassan Ziada, psychologist and was broadcasted in three local radio stations (Gaza FM, Al-Shaeb Radio, and Alwan Radio).
- The Psychiatrist, Mohamad Al-Zeer, recorded radio Programme in Al-Quds radio with six families were exposed to the bombardment, loss, and the difficult circumstances.
- Dr. Smair Zagout presented a radio program about emotional debriefing and radio counseling at AlQuds radio with 6 families experienced traumatic events such as: shelling, loss of beloved people. Most of these cases exposed to abuse, some lost their sons before them and felt powerless. In turn,



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Dr. Zagout presented intervention on how to deal with children during traumas.

- Another program was broadcasted at Al-Eman radio station by Dr. Samir Zagout and talked about "Role of Parents in Reducing the Impacts of Trauma on Children" where the specialists explained the psychological impacts on children and parents and how to deal with children in during crisis.
- Dr. Nemer Abu Zarka recorded a radio episode on "Impact of war on Medical Staff" in cooperation with Video Unit. This episode will be broadcasted jointly at 3 local radio stations (Gaza FM, Al-Shab Radio and Alwan Radio) and last for 1 hour.
- Dr. Samir Zagout gave a program at Al-Quds radio station on "Using the Mobile as Radio during War" where he talked about health impacts of using it for long periods and the psychological impacts resulting from news.

### **Interviews:**

- Dr. Eyad El-Sarraj was interviewed by the Moroccan TV and talked about Gaza situation after the war.
- Dr. Eyad El-Sarraj was interviewed by BBC news paper and talked about (The Israeli Election).
- Dr. Eyad El-Sarraj was interviewed by Asma Besisso, Film Producer, as part of a film about the situation in Gaza entitled by "Gaza in Silent Times ". This film will be presented in the international Festivals and Institutions.
- Dr. Ahmed was interviewed by the Senior Correspondent, Susan Taylor Martin and talked about the social and the psychological future of the war upon the Palestinian children in Gaza Strip. The interview focused on the most common psychological problems for Gaza children and the possibilities for building a civil Palestinian society.
- Dr. Ahmed Abu Tawahina was interviewed by the Foreign Editor Mr. Iren Meierthe from the Swiss Radio and talked about the current situation after Gaza war and it's psychological implication on the Palestinian community and how we can alleviate these severe effects.
- Dr. Ahmed Abu Tawahina was interviewed by the Swiss journalist ,Emiliano Bos ,and discussed the psychological effects of the last war on Gaza and the action plan of the programme and its programmes in alleviating the suffering of the Palestinian populations.
- Hassan Ziada was interviewed by Women's Voice and a US journalist to talk about Trauma and how to deal with it in the current crisis.
- Hassan Ziada was Interviewed By a Japanese magazine "Ansahi Shmein" to talk about the psychological impact of the war on children and the behavioral problems appeared among children and mechanisms of intervention.
- Dr. Abdel Aziz Thabet was interviewed By "Marah" Radio To Talk About The Psychological Impact Of War On The Palestinian Population And how to deal With children during difficult times.
- Dr. Samir Zagout Was Interviewed By The Journalist , Merfat Own, to talk About The Last Israeli War And The Its Difference From The Last Wars. Dr. Zagout Explained That Despite The Negative Impact Of The War, The Palestinians Showed Coping Mechanisms Due To The Last Experiences.
- Hassan Ziada was interviewed by Al-Resala Space Channel about the effects of losing the mother on the children as well as impact of



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immigration and home demolition and psychological reality of the injured people.

- Husam El-Nounou, Public Relations Director was interviewed by Nils-Inge Kruhaug, Norwegian journalist by met with, to talk about the impacts of war on the population.
- Enas Joda was interviewed by Al-Eman Radio about psychosocial impacts of the war and means of protection.
- Rawya Hammam was interviewed by BBC to talk about the psychological impacts of war on Children and other 2 interviews about the current mental health reality in Gaza and GCMHP's services for population and the future consequences.

## Press Release and Petitions

### "Relief and Development Efforts in Gaza Should Be Coordinated and Unified"

- GCMHP issued a press release entitled "Relief and Development Efforts in Gaza Should Be Coordinated and Unified" in response to the incident of confiscating some of UNRWA's relief aids by the dismissed government in Gaza. GCMHP warned from this incident to be a beginning of friction which may lead to a crisis between the dismissed government and UNRWA, and called for accelerating the creation of coordination mechanisms between all relief and development agencies including official, local and international agencies such as UN agencies in the current time. GCMHP highlighted that this coordination will be reflected positively alleviating the citizens' need and would establish a base for strong partnership between all these agencies for the reconstruction of Gaza in the near future.
- GCMHP signed an electronic petition calls for the prosecution of the Israeli war criminals in the ICC. The petition was launched by a group of mental health and human rights professionals.

## Meetings with Health Providers:

- Hassan Ziada and Dr. Yasser Participated in a meeting organized by WHO in the attendance of a number of health organizations in Gaza Strip Working On Psychosocial Issues To Discuss A Protocol about Mechanisms of Crisis Intervention "IASC" proposed by WHO.
- Dr. Yasser Met with Suhaila Tarazy from Al-Ahly Hospital about means of cooperation in capacity building for their staff and referral system.
- Refiq Mussalam met with the Prisoners' High Committee that included many Human Rights organizations and discussed the prisoners' conditions in the Israeli jails and means of activating the committee work. Also Mr. Mussalam participated in the preparation for holding a workshop on the Palestinian Prisoners in the Israeli Jails and the Israeli violations against them and the impact of the internal division on the prisoners. The workshop entitled "Political Division and its impact on the Palestinian Prisoners in the Israeli Jails and internal detention on political base"

## Articles and Stories

- Dr. Eyad Al Sarraj wrote an article entitled "president Abu Mazen and Salam Fayyad ...come to Gaza?!".
- Dr. Eyad Al Sarraj wrote and an articles entitled "Torture of intestines "
- Article "Health conditions of the Palestinian children after the crazy war on Gaza" published in Al-Dameer magazine.
- Video Unit in GCMHP produced four video testimonies for victims of the Israeli war on Gaza and translated into English. These testimonies will be used to show the human suffering and expose the Israeli violations of human rights..