

Gaza Community Mental Health Programme

"Sound mental health is a product of the subjective feeling of well-being and harmony with the environment"

Visitors & Delegations

AN AMERICAN MEDICAL DELEGATION FROM PHYSICIANS FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY VISITED GAZA TO OFFER MEDICAL TREATMENT

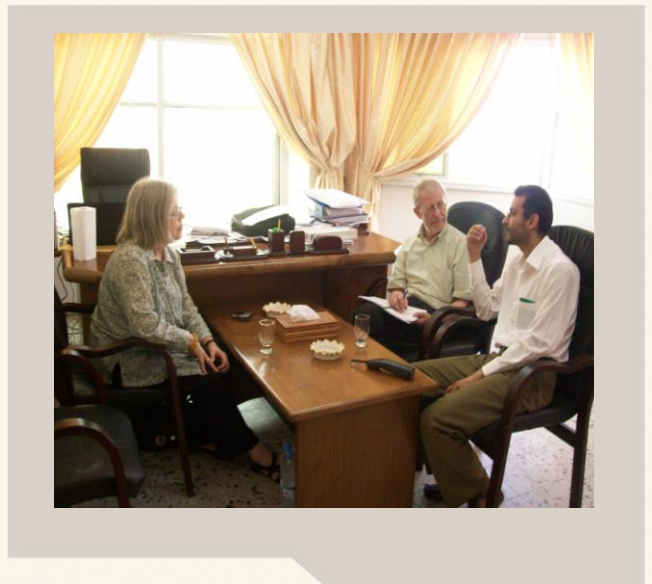
An American medical delegation from Physicians for Social Responsibility concluded its visit to the Gaza Strip. The delegation which consisted of 9 members, physicians and surgeons specialized in different medical fields; made many distinguished surgeries and treated many patients inside Gaza hospitals. GCMHP, in coordination with the Ministry of Health and the General Administration of Hospitals, organized this visit lasting for ten days, during which the delegation made 17 distinguished surgeries in the field of orthopedics, urology, and neurosurgery. They also examined and treated many patients in the area of cardiology, oncology, orthopedics, urology and mental health in several hospitals. Furthermore, they hold a few lectures and visited the Islamic university. Accompanied by Dr. Eyad Sarraj, the delegation met the Prime Minister Ismail Haniya and the head of UNRWA, John Ging.

More: www.gcmhp.net; www.larryjohnsononline.com



Swiss representatives from Medico International Schweiz Visited GCMHP

P. Jochi Weil, who is responsible for projects of Medico International Schweiz (MIS) since 1983, and Anjuska, Manager of the Olive Oil Campaign in Switzerland, visited GCMHP from 11. to 15. of April. The purpose of the visit was to acquaint themselves with the current activities of GCMHP and to meet with psychologists of GCMHP, especially the ones involved in psycho-drama. During their visit, they saw many projects implemented by the Palestinian Medical Relief Society (PMRS) in Gaza and met with Dr. Abu Tawahina, Dr. Yasser Abu Jamee and Marwan Diab. They attended a session of psycho-drama, conducted by psychologists of the Gaza Community Center, Inshirah Zaqout and Enas Joda. This therapy is supported by MIS. Anjuska and Jochi Weil were able to get a clear picture of the current political situation and the mental health of the community.



Press Releases & Appeals

Press Releases Concerning the Attack on the Gaza Freedom Flotilla

- GCMHP condemned the attack by the Israeli navy, which led to many deaths on the Gaza Freedom Flotilla. In a press release, the Programme expressed its strong condemnation against this heinous crime, reaffirming that this attack on the ships carrying civilians and humanitarian aid can only be described as an act of piracy and a serious violation of international law and human rights. More, www.gcmhp.net
- Furthermore, a joint press release was issued, signed by all civil society organizations in Gaza, including GCMHP, in which they called for a global response to the killings on the flotilla. The organizations insisted on severance of diplomatic ties with Israel, trials for war crimes and the International protection of the civilians of Gaza. More, www.gcmhp.net
- Dr. Eyad El-Sarraj, President of GCMHP, published an article entitled "*Israel is a victim of its own Pathology*", in which he condemned Israel's behavior, acting brutally towards the people on the ships, as well as towards the people of Gaza. He hoped the recent events would be a turning point to end the siege on Gaza. More, www.gcmhp.net
- GCMHP participated with a number of organizations in the West Bank and Gaza as part of the Palestinian Coalition against Torture in a press release condemning the Israeli aggression in attacking an aid convoy bound for Gaza, leading to significant loss of life among human rights defenders.



GCMHP together with Palestinian and Israeli human rights organizations published a petition to stop deporting people from the West Bank to Gaza

In the petition, they condemned the deportation of Palestinians by the Israeli forces in the West Bank, calling on Israel to abolish the military order 1650, issued by the Israeli authorities. Israel must admit that Palestinians and foreigners have the right to live in the West Bank, work there, and visit it, in accordance with the international law and conventions that Israel abides by.

GCMHP issued a press release regarding a “Mural”

Together with the Rachel Corrie Foundation and the Break the Silence Foundation, GCMHP participated in creating a Mural. The Olympia-Rafah Solidarity Mural is a community building memorial honoring all who have lost their lives in struggle and all who are resisting oppression. The mural was inspired by the killing of Rachel Corrie, a resident of Olympia who was crushed to death by an Israeli army bulldozer while defending the home of a Palestinian pharmacist and his family. It is the tale of people working together for a better world. The mural uses technology and advancements in printing processes to include artists from Palestine who are forbidden to travel.

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Press releases concerning the attacks on the sites of the UNRWA summer camps

- GCMHP issued a press release condemning the attacks on the sites of the UNRWA summer camps, committed by about 40 masked men, who burnt several of the tents offering recreation for children and work for hundreds of employees. GCMHP condemned such vile incidents, attacks, threats, and provocations against UNRWA which evoke a distorted and harmful image about Palestinians and Islam, and demanded from the Gazan government to carry out a thorough investigation to apprehend these suspects and prosecute them.

More, www.gcmhp.net

- GCMHP issued a press release condemning the preventing of peaceful gatherings by the government of Gaza. The sit-in was organized by PNGO and other human rights organizations to express their strong rejection of the attack on the UNRWA sites on the beach of Gaza. The Programme condemns such procedures as they are a violation of the right of assembly and the freedom of speech. More, www.gcmhp.net
- Dr. Eyad El-Sarraj, President of GCMHP, and Dr. David Hall, representative of an American delegation visiting Gaza gave a press conference condemning the attacks on the UNRWA sites and calling on the government to bring the delinquents to justice.



MEDIA

- Hassan Zeyadah, head of GCMHP Gaza Community Center, held an interview with the People Radio, in which he talked about the "Psychological Impact of the Siege and War". He also talked about the experiences that people were exposed to during the war, and how they psychologically and behaviorally affected them.
- Dr. Ahmed Abu Tawahina attended the ceremony of the inauguration of an educational conference entitled "General Secondary in our school – where is it going?". The conference was under the auspices of Dr. Mohammad Askoul, Minister of Education.
- Dr. Ahmed Abu Tawahina attended a video conference through skype with the attendance of Mr. Dyaa Symah from WHO and Dr. Tysir Diab. They talked about GCMHP activities and means of cooperation between the Programme and other organizations in Berlin. He also attended a video conference with Harvard University, during which he talked about the professional supervision in the field of mental health.

GCMHP participated in a demonstration against the attack on the Gaza Freedom Flotilla

GCMHP participated in a march against the Israeli attacks on the ships carrying humanitarian aid, during which 9 persons lost their lives. The march took place at Gaza port, and was organized by Palestinian Non-Governmental Organizations (PNGO). During the demonstration, the participants expressed their refusal of the attack and denounced the Israeli measures against aid ships trying to break the siege on Gaza Strip. The civil society organizations protested at the UN headquarters in Gaza City.

ISMAIL HANIYA, WELCOMED AN AMERICAN DELEGATION FROM PHYSICIANS FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Ismail Haniya, the Prime Minister of the de facto Government in Gaza, welcomed an American delegation, consisting of nine medical professionals from Physicians for Social Responsibility. The American delegation was accompanied by the President of GCMHP, Dr. Eyad El Sarraj, Marwan Diab Public Relations Director, and representatives from the Ministry of Health and the Public Health Hospital. Mr. Haniya welcomed the delegation, thanked them for what they have done and achieved to help Gaza, and expressed his gratitude towards the message of their visit, which is a sign of solidarity with the Palestinian people and of their position of standing with the Palestinian people in their struggle for justice. Dr. El-Sarraj stressed the importance of receiving medical delegations in a regular manner in order to help our people. He also emphasized the role that such solidarity delegations play in conveying the real picture in terms of health and humanitarian situation that people in Gaza go through.

Rafeeq Musalem, legal counselor of GCMHP participated in:

- A regularly sit-in in front of the ICRC as an expression of solidarity with Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails.
- A solidarity march for Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails and deportees from the West Bank, in commemoration of the 8th anniversary of a deportation which has taken place in Bethlehem.

GCMHP worked on the Programme's strategic goals from 2011 to 2013

GCMHP held a workshop to discuss the strategic plan for the years 2011 to 2013 with the attendance of Dr. Eyad El-Sarraj, President of GCMHP, members of the Programme's board of directors, the general director and heads of the community centers and departments, and guided by Dr. Sami Abu Arrus from a consultation management company. The workshop aimed at improving the strategic plan and at studying and analyzing the activities and mechanisms followed by the Programme. In the planning operations, the workshop also included realistic and comprehensive reviews of the Programme's performance and plans during the past years.

Dr. Eyad El-Sarraj met Dr. Ahmed Ukasha, the President of the Arab Union of Psychologists and President of the Egyptian Society for Psychiatrists in Cairo

Dr. Eyad El-Sarraj, the president of GCMHP, met Dr. Ahmed Ukasha, the President of the Arab Union of Psychologists and President of the Egyptian Society for Psychiatrists in Cairo. Dr. El-Sarraj told about the current situation of the people in Gaza, the consequences of the siege and the last war and the impact of both on the mental health on the citizens in Gaza, which is proved by many studies and researches conducted by GCMHP. He discussed different activities conducted by GCMHP and means of joint cooperation between the Programme and Dr. Ukasha, for which Dr. Ukasha expressed his full preparation to cooperate with the Programme in all academic, clinical and research issues.

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Dr. Eyad El-Sarraj participated in the demonstrations on the 62. Anniversary of the Palestinian Nakba "Catastrophe" in London

Invited by the judge Yugin Qatran, the President of the Palestinian community in Britain, the Palestinian ambassador Manuel Hasasian, a member of the Knesset and several other human rights activists, Dr. Eyad El-Sarraj participated in the commemoration of the Nakba in London. On that occasion, Dr. El-Sarraj talked about the danger of the war and the siege that led to enhancing fanaticism among the Palestinian people, which was demonstrated by the results of several studies and researches by GCMHP on that issue.



Gaza Community Mental Health Programme a dream comes true

Dr. Eyad El-Sarraj had a **dream** of a mentally sound Palestinian society which resulted in creating Gaza Community Mental Health Programme (GCMHP). At that time, the establishment of a community mental health facility was unique in the Palestinian society. The founding of GCMHP not only bolstered the importance of the mental health field, but also provided trained professionals to serve the specific needs of the Gazan community. GCMHP started humbly with one clinic for children and six professionals in the field of mental health.

In the ensuing years, GCMHP:

- Established three community centers, the Women Empowerment Project (WEP), and a postgraduate diploma in mental health.
 - Continued the improvement of staff capacity.
 - Disseminated information on mental health and human rights to the Palestinian society.
 - Published 69 professional magazines and 20 scientific brochures.
 - Conducted over 68 research studies about trauma and psychological and social phenomena.
 - Organized five international conferences addressing key issues in the Palestinian community.
 - Built a network of Palestinian NGOs, which now serves as the main body of the civil society, advocating democracy and respect for human rights.
 - Received international awards for the promotion of peace and social responsibility.
- Today, GCMHP:**
- Is an institution with over 135 employees.
 - Is involved in 18 international, regional, and local coalitions and networks.
 - Treated over twenty thousand patients.
 - Delivered the concept of linking community mental health with human rights principles.
 - Generated public awareness about the importance of mental health within the society.
 - Contributed to building a civil society and creating a cultural movement to empower the Palestinian community.

GCMHP published a brochure in Arabic and English, in the course of the celebration of its 20th anniversary. The title of the brochure was "A dream comes true". The brochure highlighted the main achievements of the Programme for the past twenty years. It was distributed to local organizations and interested individuals.

Work Meetings

- Dr. El-Sarraj, President of GCMHP, met a French Consultant, with whom he discussed the latest developments of the conditions in Gaza.
- Dr. Ahmed Abu Tawahina, the General Director of GCMHP, received a delegation from the General Consulate of Sweden, Jerusalem, with whom he discussed the latest developments of the Programme's activities.
- Dr. Ahmed Abu Tawahina met a delegation from the International Medical Corps (IMC). During this meeting, they discussed means of joint cooperation between the two organizations and conducted an evaluation and follow up for the work in the occupational Therapy unit.
- Dr. Ahmed Abu Tawahina attended the meeting of the Local Academic Council of the Mental Health Diploma. Dr. Ahmed Abu Tawahina was accompanied by Dr. Yasser Abu Jamee, Director of the Scientific Research and Training Department at GCMHP.
- Marwan Diab, head of the Public Relations Department from GCMHP, and Rawya Hamam met with Anna Carizo from terre des hommes Suisse to discuss the mutual cooperation, and provide her with information about child labor.
- Dr. Ahmed Abu Tawahina received Mrs. Claire Colliard in his office, with whom he discussed means of evaluating the Programme's previous strategic plan.
- Dr.. Ahmed Abu Tawahina met a delegation from Action Aid, including Mr. Yasser Tashash and Ms. Tess Dico-Young. During this meeting, attended by Dr. Mohammed Abu Shahla, the Chairman of the board of directors of GCMHP, they talked about joint cooperation between the two organizations

COURSES & WORKSHOPS

- GCMHP held two workshops on psycho-therapy for 35 volunteers and professionals. In the course, some psychological concepts, main basics of consultation and objectives of psycho-therapy were discussed.
- GCMHP held a workshop on Stress Management in the Happiness Organization for 23 female attendants. The workshop was under the supervision of Hassan Zyadah, head of the GCMHP Gaza Community Center, in which he discussed concepts of positive and negative stress, traumatic and physical stress, and identified the main sources of stress.
- GCMHP held a study day on psycho-therapy and psychological counseling under the supervision of Dr. David Hall, Family and Adolescence psychiatrist, which was attended by GCMHP professionals. He explained some concepts related to the process of psycho-therapy and counseling.
- GCMHP held a training course entitled "Stress Management" in Our Home Association, with the attendance of 23 women. In the course, techniques of dealing with stress and means of adaptation were discussed. It was under the supervision of the psychologist Inserah Zaqout.
- GCMHP Gaza Community Center held a training course entitled "Mind and Body Techniques", with the attendance of 10 beneficiaries from the medical staff and volunteers. The course included means of relaxation, information about mind and body techniques and emotional debriefing. It was under the supervision of the psychologist Zahian Al Farah.
- Dr. Ahmed Abu Tawahina attended a workshop held on the National Plan of Mental Health and the suggested Emergency Plan under the auspices of the Palestinian Minister of Health.
- GCMHP held a symposium on the Psychological effects on the wives of the detainees, which come from the absence of their husbands. During the symposium, which took place at the Ministry of Detainees, the impact of detention on the detainees' families, stress and psychological symptoms were discussed.
- Dr. Ahmed Abu Tawahina presented a work paper entitled "A draft on practicing the Profession of Mental Health" in a workshop organized by the ministry of health.

Dr. Brian Barber held a lecture about "The Quality of Life among Adults who participated in the first Intifada"

The training and research department received on Wednesday the 26th of May the international scientific expert Brian Barber. During his lecture, he reviewed the preliminary results from his study, entitled "The Quality of Life among Adults who participated in the first Intifada". The lecture took place with the attendance of 60 professionals from GCMHP and others from partner organizations and associations.

**Celebration of the end of the counseling units at a Kindergarten in the beach camp**

In coordination with the Quaker Organization, the GCMHP Gaza Community Center organized a recreation ceremony, on the occasion of the finishing of the counseling units in a Kindergarten in the beach camp. The ceremony was attended by the mothers and teachers of the children. One of the psychologists of GCMHP, Aida Kisab, talked about mental health issues provided by GCMHP to this Kindergarten.

