

UNRWA Summer Games: Evaluation Report Template for Coordinators and Implementing Partners

a) Design

- Relevance of project. Did it address real needs?

Considering the situation on the ground in Gaza, the Summer Games addressed real and immediate needs. In the feed-back of animators we experienced very many cases of stressed children who relaxed and opened up during the workshops. In performances, we heard of many hundreds of children who are out of their town or region for the first time of their lives because of poverty or fear of the parents.

- Human resources, materials and funds allocated to this project: were these adequate?

Nature and quality of Materials was excellent. Part of materials was left unused and was returned to supplier or UNRWA. Additional note: because children are used to get Summer Camp cloths or uniforms, the distribution of uniforms must be part of a next budget when Games are continued next year! TDP lost participation of many children because they (many times at order of parents) wanted to be part of another activity that provided uniforms. A lot of workshop materials could have been left out of the budget and used more adequately with lower amounts, when proper estimates would be in place for number of children participating in the activities. In that case, also investment of Human Resources could have been limited. We must say, however, that the intensity of the work asked for much more input per day per animator than a regular working day. Pay per person should be higher than the regular JCP payments per day, unless the work is spread out over a longer period. For TDP, this is the first time we work on such a large scale and with complicated coordination tasks, over such a short period. At a following occasion, we would put more Human Resources on supervision of the project. Funds were adequate as to estimates of participating children. Lower output left some of the funds unused. Also: funds would have been used more efficiently with proper estimates of children. Some costs, for materials of every animator in the project, were poorly put to work in regions where only part of the expected number of workshops could be realized. We believe we could have used a few more "hands on deck." Re: material, we ended up with too much due to the lower number of participating kids. And regarding funds, we think that overall this was adequate.

- Were the activities appropriate to achieve the objectives/produce the planned output(s)?
Absolutely! All reactions of children, teachers, and parents support this.

- Any comments on the planning of activity locations, the allocation of children or any other technical/logistical issues?

As we all know, there was a big problem with logistics that we all tried to get a hold of. The biggest problem seems to have been the discrepancy between number of registered children, scheduled for certain dates and places, and the actual number of children present at the moment of implementation of the program at the right time in the right place. At present, it seems to be impossible to have drinking water available for children in UNRWA schools. We believe this is a serious problem. According to our experiences, the Summer Games had to win trust and understanding from teachers and parents. Drama activities were new for many, people needed to discover the nature and benefit of this work. At the completion of the workshops, when the children presented results, enormous support was gained across the board. PR-missions with exemplary activities should be part of preparations, when the Games are to be continued next year.

b) Implementation

- Were any major changes made during implementation and what were the reasons for the changes?

Many changes were made in terms of project management, not in the content of the work. The prepared, trained, content resulted in envisaged quality output. A publicity campaign for attracting more children to the activities was initiated in close cooperation with UNRWA, using animators who had no work because of low number of children in some schools. Several Focal Points were replaced because of better management skills of others. While the Games progressed, Focal Points changed from administrative assistants to supervisors on the job. Some changes by UNRWA, for instance the decision to allow all interested children to participate in the activities, confused some of the animators. It took some time before all animators and Focal Points understood the change from strict rules

about who could attend to complete 'open house'. This was an indication for TDP that more time for supervision and coordination must be available next time, for a fast flow of information concerning changes in the program.

- Assessment of performance of animators.

In a group of 120 animators, there will always be those more enthusiastic than others. In general, animators were happy to be working, to have something productive to do, and to meet new people. The experiment of having 3 disciplines in art working together in a drama program was an unbelievable success. An entire network of artists, who hardly ever met each other before, was established and guarantees future cooperation in other occasions. This is an important impulse to the cultural/art sector in civil society; an important unexpected effect of the program. As far as TDP is aware, there is only one "trouble-maker" among the animators and he is now off our list. TDP was able to identify the most talented and committed animators who could become specialists in programs of this nature. Administrative problems with one of the art group leaders had to be dealt with by removing this person from the Summer Games, when UNRWA noticed these irregularities. The animators of this group could continue working under management and supervision of TDP. Some of their animators were responsible for outstanding successes in the workshops (hip-hip, aerobics)

- Assessment of helpfulness/responsiveness of UNRWA staff at the field level (school staff and others).

Given the situation surrounding the Summer Games, we believe that everyone involved in the Summer Games at UNRWA did their top best to keep the program on. All indicators pointed to cancellation but all UNRWA staff worked towards continuation! Bravo. We believe that many headmasters/teachers were unaware of the unusual character of the Games as implemented. Their cooperation and understanding of the activities was sometimes low or hesitant. A proper info campaign before the Games, of proper size and content, is needed. But TDP is confident that the Games of 2007 have organized good understanding and good-will for any continuation in the next years. The new formula/program has to sink in, and we feel it did!

- Assessment of relations with Summer Games team (Summer Games Coordinators and Operations Support Program).

In the different regions, we noticed difference in engagement and commitment of coordinators. Sometimes we had the feeling that erupting conflicts or misunderstandings with teachers or headmasters were brushed aside, sometimes they were dealt with in a supportive and professional way. Always, misunderstandings and potential conflicts could be dealt with or solved thanks to the intervening engagement of coordinators or TDP supervisors. For a deeper personal evaluation of cooperation with coordinators, a separate meeting with Randa, Rafat, and Jan (administration and artistic managers of TDP in the program) could be arranged. Again, there are twists and turns, misunderstandings, but most of it minor given the size of the project.

- Did external factors influence the project?

Absolutely. Everyone will be writing it... the verge of a possible civil war between the Fatah and Hamas factions in Gaza where Hamas took over the Gaza Strip and Fatah went into temporary hiding. This happened short of two weeks before the start of the project. In retrospect, it's unbelievable that we actually did it; and that UNRWA, participating organizations, and parents/children, showed the resilience to stand up and keep moving in this situation. But that's also the nature of Gaza. We feel that the lower than expected presence of children is caused by these circumstances to a high degree. And also part of the positive results, meaning the healing work of drama for many children, can be traced back to these external factors.

- Were there variations between the governorates in terms of successful implementation of activities? What were the reasons behind this variation?

Yes, especially concerning the number of attending kids. In the governorates of Middle, North, and Gaza, we had especially successful presentations and dialogues with parents and teachers. The animators had gained experience in the implementation of the program to really get quality output. But at the same time we were not able to compensate for administration mistakes that gave lower attending of children than expected (children were given wrong dates of drama program). In Khan Yunis, in retrospect, we had the biggest attendance of the Summer Games. In Rafah, it was most difficult with lowest attendance numbers. We would like to discuss with UNRWA possible reasons for this fact. We are not sure; especially since the attendance in Khan Yunis, like Rafah a hot spot concerning difficulties in the recent political turmoil, was biggest in the Summer Games.

- Any other key aspects (positive and/or negative) of implementation that you wish to highlight.

An important experience was the presence of girls in the drama activities. As an average there were twice as many girls as boys. This is a fabulous result given the tendency we usually experience that parents as well as teachers are more hesitant to expose their girls to physical and expressive drama activities than they are to do this with boys.

Another aspect is the impressive positive response of children and their care takers to drama activities. It was new, unexpectedly good and changing the mood and behaviour of the kids; very many requests that the program continues in regular school life.

c) Achievements

- The overall objective of Summer Games was to provide as many Gaza children and youth as possible with a sustained program of educational and entertaining activities during their summer holidays. Has this objective been met?

We think objectives were met. But some further details are necessary for deeper understanding of the success:

For a kid in Gaza to have 3 days of relief, education, and entertainment, is of major importance; our evaluation with children and animators showed that important impact was achieved. In TDP, opinions differed about the need for a longer period than 3 days. However, we do believe that for increased sustainability/impact of drama, the 3 days should be expanded to one week and (ideally) have a follow up during the school year. We believe that more children should be reached. We also believe that this pilot year needed to give the organizers the experiences of learning about – and dealing with - all possible problems and opportunities of the program in order to know how to prepare for a full scale participation of UNRWA school children next year. TDP itself learned many lessons that would streamline our own management of the project at a next occasion. Concerning quality and impact of the intervention, we think the Games were an outstanding success. So the objective was met! Concerning effectiveness of communication, coordination, and cooperation of all parties/actors involved, important lessons were learned. Objectives were met here as well because “as many children and youth as possible” were provided with proper activities.

- Objectives specific to implementing partner (as defined in the official project proposal attached to MOU). Do you think these have been achieved? Please list the key outputs demonstrating the achievement of these objectives.

*“To enable children and youth to express themselves in a creative and positive manner.” In more than 350 presentations, performed at the end of 3 day workshops, children demonstrated their newly found expressive skills, showed their theatrical creations in a festive and positive way. TDP also collected narratives and other feedback from children and their animators. See attachment for a summary choice of this material.

*“To promote social skills such as conflict-resolution and team work through drama.” Animators witnessed many heartbreaking stories from children with difficulties and violent confrontations in their families. They were strengthened to deal with the situation, to relax and have confidence and understanding. Some of these stories are listed in the feed-back attachment. All presentations and witness reports contain proof of gained social skills by children and of successful team work.

*“To provide young people with thought provoking and creative means to spend their spare time during summer holidays.” The boys play provided thought provoking questions. In the play, they are transformed from audience members to actors who have to deal with a violent conflict between brothers in the family. The play provoked sparkling discussions. Some of their reactions are included in the feed-back attachment. The girl’s performance gave a lot of food for discussion among female audiences about the position of girls in the family and about their rights to choose their own way of being. They also laughed a lot. For many young girls and women the performances were a long awaited chance to leave their town or camp and see something else of the world (for some the Gaza Strip is a big world with many undiscovered places). Some of their reactions are included in the feed-back attachment.

*“To promote the love of drama and theatre in youth as a means of entertainment and personal growth.” This might be the most successfully fulfilled objective. TDP experienced how little was known about drama and theatre in the Gaza Strip by children, parents, and teachers. The entire operation of drama activities turned into a gigantic PR campaign for the understanding of the beauty and strength drama is able to provoke in children. A lot of support for quality theatre and drama was won. The list of people and organizations who asked for more and longer activities is sheer endless.

d) Longer-term impact

- What are the longer-term results of the project so far or what can/should be done, in your view, to achieve longer-term impact?

True, long term impact can be achieved by integrating the Summer Games activities (especially activities like Drama, with the power of personal transformation, healing, and raising self-efficacy) into an aspect of ongoing education in children’s schools life. A good system of after-school activities could provide this. A general

introduction of drama in the curriculum would be best, whether through additional training of UNRWA teachers, or through the creation of animation teams in schools.

Long term effects that were realized this summer:

*Understanding of positive value of drama, and of arts in education in general was found. We believe that we made lasting positive impressions on parents and teachers. The misunderstanding about the possible negative character of drama and theatre was solved period for a large part of the population.

*Drama and other art forms are accepted as friendly activities for girls and boys. The existing fear of public exposure of girls in performing arts activities was broken. In all governorates, the participation of girls was twice as big as the participation of boys.

*The demand for continued drama activities was so massive, that we feel one can speak of a long term effect: the taboo is broken, now people are curious and receptive of new activities in the future.

*The relief and personal change of behaviour that many children experienced might be an only shortly lived experience that will only last by continued exposure to drama or comparable activities; what will be remembered over a long time, however, is the knowledge that drama activities like the one experienced this summer have the power to bring beauty, fun, and change. You can always choose to go back to them, to find more.

*Creation of a future audience for theatre and arts. We believe that children who were exposed to the program are receptive of future theatre programs.

*Our cooperation with organized groups of painters and circus groups will certainly develop into strategic alliances for future cooperation in activities for children.

*Many children had experiences that they will never forget, that will continue to be part of them. Some examples are given in the feed-back attachment to this evaluation. Dozens of witness stories of our animators support this fact.

e) Lessons learned

- What will you remember from your involvement in this project?

*New confirmation of the fact that in 'miserable' Gaza a beautiful project for children could be realized in spite of many indicators pointing at fear of people and fear for public activities after the recent violent clashes.

*Drama can be implemented successfully in a 3 day program, reaching many children in an activity that keeps up depth and integrity besides fun and entertainment.

*TDP has the capacity to train 120 (selected) people to implement a large scale drama and arts project. The senior management was pleasantly surprised by the level of artistic capacity and teaching skills (TOT) of its Gaza team.

*The need to be prepared for surprises every second; the knowledge that all supposedly well organized aspects of the program can turn out to be a failure and have to be saved by last minute emergencies. Examples are the sudden fact that children just don't come because we have no clothing for them; that children have received wrong workshop dates; that some animators avoid to work and lack team solidarity; that working with a large organization like UNRWA means dealing with many formal procedures.

*The pleasure of working with the Operation Support Office of UNRWA.

*The stubborn and uncooperative character of some teachers.

* The discovery of new "partner groups in art" who are able to provide good and professional animators.

* Unexpected results of the project. We are thinking of an Exhibition Project with all paintings and with photographs/videos of the projects (to be coordinated with UNRWA).

- What would you do differently if you had to implement a similar project in the future?

*Be part of all preparing meetings from the very beginning.

*Increase the supervision team; appoint Focal Points who have no further responsibility for teaching children.

*Prepare PR-campaigns that explain drama and arts activities. Example lessons to be given at all schools (part of the training month(s) of the animators.

*Lower expectations of children's participation; planning for emergency strategy to attract new children if needed (in the Performance Program in 2007, TDP was able to compensate for children who didn't show up or for organizations that didn't do their promised mobilizing work)

f) Recommendations and Follow-up

- Summary of key recommendations for future Summer Games projects/suggested follow-up.

*Evaluation meetings with coordinators and TDP supervisors of 2007 Summer Games in order to identify specific points of found smooth cooperation and difficulties/problems.

*Strategic planning of OSO and TDP of possible integrated drama implementation in schools through use of existing programs in UNRWA (an after school program through Relief and Social Services; re-education of Mental Health counselors; be partner in Schools of Excellence Program)

*Identify qualified and/or talented animators in TDP's 120 members animators team for future jobs in comparable program, or for further training to be part of key staff training UNRWA teachers or educators and children.

*Organize brainstorming sessions with UNRWA and TDP staff for festive design of future Summer Games Program. Ritualize the program by fun ceremonies at beginning, middle and end. Prepare broad media coverage and a special Games activity in which children reporters write and film daily events and publish them on a daily basis (we have suggestions for partners), etc. These meetings should start happening now.

Annex: Overall attendance figures for Summer Games

	North Gaza	Gaza	Middle Area	Khan Younis	Rafah
Week 1 <u>projected</u> number of participants *		6,607			
Week 1 actual number of participants		1,776 5,328			
Week 2 <u>projected</u> number of participants *	5,200				
Week 2 actual number of participants	2,773 8,317				
Week 3 <u>projected</u> number of participants *			6,800		
Week 3 actual number of participants			2,610 7,830		
Week 4 <u>projected</u> number of participants *					3,080
Week 4 actual number of participants					1,138 3,412
Week 5 <u>projected</u> number of participants *				6,033	
Week 5 actual number of participants				3,664 10,988	
Week 6 <u>projected</u> number of participants **					1,600
Week 6 actual number of participants					1,624
Week 7 <u>projected</u> number of participants **				1,600	
Week 7 actual number of participants				1,601	
Week 8 <u>projected</u> number of participants **		1,600			
Week 8 actual number of participants		1,650			
Week 9 <u>projected</u> number of participants **			1,600		
Week 9 actual number of participants			1,642		
Week 10 <u>projected</u> number of participants **	1,600				
Week 10 actual number of participants	1,292				

- Projected numbers of participants expected by UNRWA subscription and these numbers are average number of children per 3-day workshop. Many children came for 1 or 2 days. The exact number of children participating in the program is higher than the average per workshop mentioned here. In blue: the number of children reached if we consider the program to be a 1-day activity: total of 35,875 children.

** Plays were performed for 4 days per every Governorate, as planned.