

UNRWA Summer Games 2008: Evaluation Report Theatre Day Productions Service Contract no. G37/08

a) Design

- Relevance of project. Did it address real needs?

With the experience of the 2007 Summer Games Drama and considering the worsening situation on the ground in Gaza, the 2008 Summer Games absolutely addressed real and immediate needs. In the feed-back of the animators and supervisors, we again experienced very many cases of stressed and repressed (blocked) children who are caught in a bad routine with no outlets (not at home and not in school) and who, like the adults, are under the siege of Gaza. We noticed that these kids could relax and open up during the workshops. In performances, we heard from hundreds of children who are out of their town or region for the first time in their lives because of poverty or fear of the parents. Additionally, we addressed real needs because in 2008 we could discover the real needs of the children because we were able to spend much more time with them and thus had a great impact concerning relief, their increased believe in self, bigger creative skills, and strengthened coping mechanisms.

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

Human Resources – In 2007, we worked with 120 animators. From among them, we chose the best 40 for project. In such a project, however, for a better result, one animator cannot work alone with 20 children. We had to put assistants with each animator (two people per workshop) so each animator worked a double shift. In fact, we needed 40 more people as assistants in order to make a regular workday for all. We further lacked human resources in 2 other categories: technicians and supervisors were running all over in order to get the job done. Although they did the work well, it was too much for the individuals in these two categories. Yes, it can be done, but a high price in energy is paid by these people therefore it can be said that pay for their effort was low (JCP). Regarding materials, we had what we needed. We were able to save some funds on material expenses. These could be used at the end of the project for extra human resources costs and hospitality needed for the two performances weeks and for the closing Stadium ceremony, all in coordination with UNRWA.

- Were the activities appropriate to achieve the objectives/produce the planned output(s)?

Absolutely! All reactions of children, teachers, and parents support this, as well as the reaction of responsible UNRWA officials. There were also several positive unplanned effects:

1) 6,000 children were able to visit a theatre performance, combined with an interactive drama activity that made for an unexpected and exciting summer day trip.

2) The training of animators prepared them so well for the practice of drama work that several have obtained additional project employment in drama activities; others were able to choose drama as their favourite professional perspective and will enroll in TDP's 3-year training curriculum for acting/drama-teaching.

3) The acceptance and support for drama activities connected to educational goals was substantially further increased

4) TDP itself was able to benefit by expanding its capacity to create large scale theatre activities with performances by children for children. We also increased our pool of available trained drama animators.

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

This is where all the problems are.

Locations – We have a question about the drama program being in the schools because most children don't like to go back to school in summer. Also the parents want the kids to be in a new space away from school (to enjoy). Perhaps the classrooms have to be prepared in such a way that the classroom doesn't really look like a classroom. Maybe the kids should be in an environment that feels different from school. It means more investment

in preparation/decoration of the room. Difficult to solve now, it needs thought. Another question is about the sports, music, and drama activities being in the same school. If each school was one activity, they could begin the day together as a big group and then each group would be off to his or her classroom. Presentations could be shown in the entire school. This would also skirt around the problem of kids wanting to change from one activity to another. Then there was the problem of another study-activity that took place in the school before we started. This made a negative ripple effect with space and with the buses that brought the study-children to school but were too early for the other activities, or too late when they had to do the ride again (buses schedules were a big problem.) Outside the framework of TDP's budget, we faced problems with many children who were asking for shoes because all sports-children got shoes. We feel that the children should be equally treated in what they get regarding the clothes for the activities. For a second year in a row, we faced many problems because no clean (sweet) drinking water was available in most of the schools. In some venues, the available water was turned off (esp. in Breij) and the bathrooms were locked in the Breij Primary Girls School.

The allocation children – As in 2007, there remains a problem with the registration process of the children. It seems that the system of giving out slips (that gives the expectation that these children will come) doesn't work. Instead, other children, when they see what's going on, want to come. We wonder if advertising for the summer games could go through television or newspapers so that parents, teachers, and kids, can know which will be the venue for their kids and which will be their activity days. We also wonder why the headmasters are not more informed and involved in what is going on in their schools. Perhaps a modest PR machine is needed to organize the advertising and registration of the kids and information dispersion to all participants.

Other technical/logistical issues – Finally, the entire management of the transport of kids in buses was very confusing: (1) buses not on time so kids didn't come because the buses were late (2) bus drivers do not have proper information about which children to take and which not ie: drama activity kids were brought to the beach and disappeared (3) incidentally bus drivers had left when children still had to be transported back home (4) often bus drivers came early and wanted to move the children before the activity time (5) One time the children that were picked up from a school for a performance never arrived at the theatre (6) In general there are too many irregularities in the transport system causing late start of activities or cancellation of days.

b) Implementation

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

A change made by UNRWA was in the second round when the 4th week of drama was changed to 3 weeks of drama because of the early start of school. The performance week stayed the same but a week earlier. Also, in good coordination with UNRWA, it was decided that the performance week (week 4 and week 9 of SG) would take place in TDP's theatre rather than organizing several smaller presentations in inappropriate venues or spaces in the five governorates. And this was a great idea enabling an intensive theatre and drama experience for 6,000 children who came on a day trip to the theatre. It also considerably raised the level of impact on the children who were acting in the performances.

- **Assessment of performance of animators.**

As mentioned we selected the most qualified 40 animators from among the 120 of Summer Games 2007. In order to guarantee the good performance with the children, TDP decided that all the animators would work in duos. Every group of children was led by 2 animators in order to maintain good concentration of the children and the proper outcome of the objectives to the children. This was a very good choice even though it doubled the time invested by the animators. The 40 animators were intensely trained for 7 weeks, 6 days a week (May 1 – June 20). The progress they made is remarkable. Outside the regular training for drama teaching, they were also trained in acting and directing improving their skills to prepare theatre presentations by children and for children. (See also Long Term Impact for animators who secured jobs after this training.)

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

Given that the Summer Games is a huge project, all UNRWA staff did their best for the success of the games. The supporting teams in Rafah, Khan Yunis, Deir Al Balah and the North were very supportive of the activities of TDP. We had problems with the field staff in Gaza in the first drama cycle of 4 weeks in the Salah Eddin School and El Ma'mounia School and in the Breij Primary Girls School. In these schools we felt resistance against our program

and only through the insistence of TDP, the activity was kept going, additional kids were found to keep up proper group numbers, and workshops completed successfully. In The second cycle of 4 weeks, the situation was different and all schools were cooperative.

- **Assessment of relations with Summer Games team.**

In 2007, each governorate had a Summer Games representative. This year, it was only Sami Alhaw, and needless to say he was very busy. He alone had to solve all problems. Though he heard every problem, and dealt with every problem, they were not always in time. But Sami was a great and positive factor in the 2008 games. We wonder if each governorate or each NGO should have its own exclusive contact person.

Decision making in the OSP is slow especially when changes in the activity program need to be made. Contacts with Saskia were pleasant like always, even at the time that a painful decision had to be made concerning the content of a dramatic scene made for the closing ceremony.

The help in bringing supplies from Jerusalem was a great support.

TDP's logo on the t-shirts was incorrect. We suggest that prior to printing, partners see the product.

- **Did external factors influence the project?**

Clearly the siege of Gaza affected TDP in all matters concerning the purchase of needed materials. There were some black-market prices for fuel and décor-building material that could not be avoided. Also there was a big negative psychological effect on the population, adults as well as children. This made the need for a relief program like drama bigger and paradoxically resulted in a higher impact of the program.

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

Absolutely. Gaza governorate was the most difficult one to work in. Maybe this was because there were many other activities going on in Gaza and the children had a choice. This was good for the kids but it resulted in a loose organization of the Drama Activity in Gaza City.

The Location Manager in Gaza in the first 4-week cycle, as stated above, was not the most cooperative of people and there were lower number of kids in each workshop.

The Location Manager in the second 4-week cycle tried, but still there wasn't the full number of kids.

The North Governorate was the most successful. The Location Managers were with us, recording the number of kids, supporting and encouraging the kids along the way. They were good active participants.

Regarding Khan Yunis, the Middle Region, and Rafah, it all went well.

We can conclude that the supportive attitude of Location Managers is crucial to the highest activity outcome.

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

The last minute decision for the large-scale presentation in the Palestine Stadium added extra and extremely long unexpected hours of work. In the end, however, the result justified the means!

The decision to hold the performances in TDP's theatre was a completely positive aspect of the program. TDP had the possibility to turn our house into a complete space where every corner and every step of the way had something for the children to see and do before and after the performance. The kids who were acting had the chance to perform in front on all their peers on a professional stage, under lights; they had the chance to hear that roar of applause that follows a performance. All TDP staff and all animators and technicians were present for the performances, each with tasks and responsibilities connected to this fabulous day of theatre: A very good move indeed!

We also enjoyed the openness and cooperation of UNRWA when changes were suggested: Very good dialogue.

An interesting aspect is that the drama program is extra appealing to girls (and not only the young ones). Their participation is slightly higher than the boys and they show a stronger, empowering presence in all the presentations. This seems to be a continuing characteristic of the drama activities. In 2007 we noticed the same trend.

The drama program gave several traumatized children the possibility to express specific problems bringing them relief to function normally afterwards. TDP was able to support the children and ask for professional help (in Unrwa) where needed.

Another aspect, as in 2007, is the impressive positive response of children and their caretakers to drama activities. For them, it was new, unexpectedly good, and something that changed the behavior of the kids. There were many requests that the program continue 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 programme of educational and entertaining activities during their summer holidays. Has this objective been met?

The comments made in the 2007 report regarding the difference between 3-day drama workshop and a one, two, or three-week workshop were actively taken into account in 2008. The 4-5 week workshops of 2008 made all the difference. Although there were fewer kids, these kids grew into small but strong teams of drama students. Drama teachers were able to get very close to the kids, to know them personally, and to work with them more deeply. Attachments grew between the kids and between kids and teachers. This resulted in a better outcome for the participating kids and for the audiences on performance days. These are the kind of workshops that TDP has made the core of its activities since several years. They were the basis for our Measurement Study on the Impact of Drama on Gaza Children (Report February 2007) which states that 60 hours of TDP drama result in a 25% increase of creative skills and another 25% of increase of children's self-efficacy: real change and empowerment that was verified. The final sustainability of these effects, the further development of social skills, tension release, and the preservation of coping mechanisms, will depend on the way these activities can be repeated or, better, gradually become a structural part of the education system in Gaza. TDP gladly offers its expertise and international network assistance in efforts to make this happen.

- 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 some 80 presentations, performed at the end of 3-4 week 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 foster dramatic talent of children and youngsters by giving time for a deep experience and the possibility to publicly present their creative skills." This might be the most successfully fulfilled objective. Close to 1600 children were guided to have a deep and joyful drama experience and they presented their creative work (see above for the measurable effect). The most creative presentations were selected. The children acting these presentations were able to develop their talent further. They showed their efforts in a professional theatre and were further coached to bring out their best energy and inspiration in a week of theatre performances for 6,000 children and youngsters. Their theatre performances were amusing and thought provoking, as some of the audience reactions testify. Some narratives of the acting children and reactions of their audience are included in the feed-back attachment. The girl's scenes in the performances 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. Of course they also laughed a lot.

*" To spread joy and trust of youth among the Gaza community in a time of mayhem and despair." For many young girls and boys 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).

Evaluations and reactions of children show that many children found a surprisingly entertaining and relaxing activity in the drama workshops. Some of their reactions are included in the feed-back attachment. Group trust with group

members was found. Parents, teachers, as well as animators from outside TDP, showed their surprise and happiness with the activities wherever they were presented. Many were surprised by the unexpected level of acting and commitment of the children. As in 2007, the Summer Games turned out to be a PR campaign for the understanding that is able to generate children's strength and beauty. Again, a lot of support for quality theatre and drama was won in the Gaza community. The list of people and organizations who ask for more is getting longer and longer.

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?

In 2007, 120 animators were in the Summer Games via JCP. Of these, we chose 40 for 2008 also under the JCP. Now TDP is working with these 40 people (m/f).

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 and that reflect, on a deeper level, the effects of 2007:

*Understanding of positive value of drama, and of arts in education in general was found. We believe that we continued to make lasting positive impressions on parents and teachers and on hundreds of NGO cultural workers and animators participating in the SG. 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 again almost twice as big as the participation of boys.

*The demand for continued drama activities was again 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 will be longer lived than in the previous year. The intensive character of the drama activities this year guarantees a memory over a long time. Certain skills will continue to be part of children's lives and this is certainly true for the children who acted during the two performance weeks with electrifying theatre performances for their peers. The long term sustainability of relief and behavioural change, however, can only be established through continued exposure to drama or comparable activities. What will be remembered over a long time 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.

* The choice to work with organized groups of arts students is becoming part of TDP's strategic plan for training of drama animators that can be put to action in emergency aid cultural project. Alliances with many local NGOs were established for future community and civil society action.

*Many children had experiences that will continue to be part of them. Some examples are given in the feed-back attachment to this evaluation. The 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 in a time of mayhem and despair.

*An intensive and effective drama program can be successfully integrated in a Summer Games operation, merging education and empowerment with pleasure and entertainment.

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

*The continued need to be prepared for surprises every second; the knowledge that usually several aspects of a good program turn out to be failing pieces in the organizational chain, putting activities at risk and calling for last minute actions. Examples are the sudden fact that children don't come because of transport problems and administrative problems with registration or lack of follow-up to the registration of kids; drama activities receive general support but also keep attracting suspicion of some people because of its relatively intimate, emotional, and physical character, being closed off from the public eye until the presentation. Some teachers/headmasters still show resistance in supporting it in their SG schools. Also in 2008, and together with OSO staff, TDP's supervisors and animators were able to compensate for the arising problems. The success of the activities in a previous year is no guarantee for an easier going management and supervision of the project one year later. We are quite sure that the closure of Gaza had a psychological impact in the previous year. It seems that the increased support for drama goes hand in hand with increased suspicion by some.

*The intensive 7 week training program for our 40 animators was excellent. It has guaranteed motivation and professional skills in the drama teaching team. Expanding the training from basic drama teaching to include work on acting and directing skills was a good choice. In comparison with 2007, we experienced less problems related to low team solidarity or motivation of animators. And because of these new skills, many of the children's presentations were well prepared.

*Working with a large organization like UNRWA means dealing with many time consuming formal procedures.

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

* There were unexpected results of the project. Part of the animators group has chosen to take drama as their professional perspective. They will enrol in TDP's 3-year curriculum acting and drama-teaching training. Some of the animators have found work in other drama teaching projects. Their training in the UNRWA JCP actually provided them with an immediate new project job.

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

*From the beginning include plans for children presentations in TDP's theatre, allowing thousands of SG participants to have a theatre day-trip.

*Renew request to be part of all preparing meetings of UNRWA and partners from the very beginning.

*Further increase the supervision team; appoint more technicians.

*Double the number of participating children by hiring (low pay) assistants for the trained animators.

*Combine the intensive 4-5 week drama talent activity with a lower impact fun/relief activity of shorter time with many more children.

*Suggest to UNRWA to prepare one or more PR-campaigns that explain drama and arts activities. Example lessons to be given at schools.

*Lower expectations of children's participation; planning for emergency strategy to attract new children if needed (in 2007 and in 2008, TDP was able to do mobilizing work in order to compensate for the number of children who didn't show up because of organizational mishaps).

f) Recommendations and Follow-up

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

*See all suggestions in the previous paragraph!! (..“what would we do differently to implement a similar project”)

*We repeat our recommendation for strategic planning of OSO and TDP for all-year drama implementation in schools through use of existing programs in UNRWA or through creation of a Pilot Program for several schools.

*Organize brainstorming sessions with UNRWA partners and SOS for festive design of future Summer Games Program. Ritualize the program by fun ceremonies at beginning, middle and end. Prepare a special S-Games activity in which children reporters write and film daily events and publish them on a daily basis (we have suggestions for partners)

*TDP-internal: Development of a 1 year specialized drama-animation TOT-course for creating drama animation teams able to execute short term emergency aid (mental health/relief) projects.

Annex: Overall attendance figures for Summer Games. Appendices. (below)

TDP Summer Games: Final Report 2008 Children's participation

First and Second Session of 4-5 weeks drama workshops Summer Games 2008

Attendance per governorate

	North	Gaza	Middle Area	Khan Younis	Rafah
Number of children in drama workshops or acting in presentations					
Totals accumulated	3741	2471	2917	3544	2934
Overall total: 15,607 counting all attendance every day. 798 children participated in the first session of 5 weeks. 927 children participated in the second session of 4 weeks. Total: 1,725 children. (Planned: 1,600)					

Children audiences in Performance week 19-23 July 2008 & 16-20 August 2008 (SG week #5 + #9)

Area	Number of audience children present at TDP theatre				
	North	Gaza	Middle Area	Khan Younis	Rafah
Total accumulated number of Audience in the first performance week (week #5)	636	676	620	564	675
Total accumulated number of Audience in the second performance week (week #9)	630	541	601	684	710
Total accumulated number of Audience in the performance weeks.	1266	1217	1221	1248	1385
Total audience week # 5 + # 9 Summer Games	6,337 (planned: 6,000)				

Appendix 1: Photographs

Appendix 2: Reactions and narratives of children, animators, supervisors, adult spectators/visitors