

Gaza Focusing Project

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Administrative report

1st July 2016 – 30th June 2017

Gaza Focusing Project

Society Palestine trauma centre for victims welfare Administrative report (June–2017)

1. General information:

Project's name	Gaza focusing project
Donor	Palestine trauma centre for victims welfare- Britain
Project's duration	July2016-June2017
Duration covered in the report	1st July/2016- 30th June/2017
Targeted areas	Gaza strip
Report writer	Ghadah Mahmoud Radwan (Project coordinator)

2. Abstract:

The Gaza focusing project's -funded by PTC/UK- final administrative report covers the period from 1st July 2016 to 30th June 2017. The project's activities were executed during this period based on the project's work plan, one of the most important events was the work team participation in the international focusing conference in Cambridge –Britain in 22/July 2017 in order to present the focusing experience in the Gaza strip. The focusing activities were represented by delivering group and individual focusing sessions with families, children, and adults with ages that varies from 6 to 65 at different centers within the targeted project areas, during this period; 1170 participants benefited from the project, 849 Females and 321 Males. The number of adult beneficiaries of Educational focusing sessions (two sessions) conducted at partnering associations was (774) participants (659 Females, 115 Males), through which; cases that needed more in-depth intervention were identified. The number of adult beneficiaries of entertaining focusing sessions, including the feelings bus activity, conducted at home visits was (338) participants (136 Females, 202 Males). The total number of adult beneficiaries of group focusing sessions conducted at partnering associations and home visits was (52) participants (44 Females, 6 Males), which consist of 12 sessions that are delivered in a three months period. The number of adult beneficiaries of Family focusing sessions was 4 Females, and 4 Males, in addition; the number of adult beneficiaries in the individual sessions was (6) female participants through field (home) visits.

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A number of participants were transferred to receive more specialized therapeutic sessions at the centre. The follow-up and referral system is represented by a continuous observation of the clients made by the facilitator during the sessions, clients who specifically provide signs of cooperation and positive signs for improvement.

The techniques used in the focusing program varied, for instance; the listening to ourselves skill, the quality of listening to others skill, distance at present time and partitioning skill, verbal reflections skill, psychological resilience activity, relaxation and tabbing activity, safe place exercise, name expression exercise, thoughts and feelings differentiation, drawing of feelings, expressing feelings by symbols and images, images embodiment, children feelings expression through teddy bear exercise , and a number of other open activities.

In regard to observation and follow-up mechanism; Regular individual and group weekly sessions are conducted by the professional supervisor Dr. Mohamed Altawil with the project coordinator and the focusing team in order to develop and follow up on delivering the focusing activities, and to evaluate the 12 sessions' focusing programme and its effectiveness. This is maintained by applying a pre-post assessment, prepared by Dr. Mohamed Altawil, on the participants during the first and last sessions. By observing the participants during this period, there was a notable improvement on their daily tasks and their ability to understand their selves and others. This provides an evidence for fulfilling the general outcomes of the project.

3. Main goal of the project:

Contribute to enabling the participants to develop their skills in using the focusing techniques with their selves, and help in developing their ability to dealing with their children, and family members by adopting the focusing program techniques.

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4. Delivered activities:

4.1. Preparing and developing the focusing session's manuals.

1. Preparing and developing the focusing manual for trainees.

The professional supervisor -Dr. Mohamed Altawil- prepared and developed the focusing manual for trainees, which included the first, second, and third level of the focusing sessions and the delivered activities with the trainees. He also trained the focal group on these three levels of focusing sessions through regular weekly meetings and trainings.

2. Preparing and developing the focusing educational manual :

The focusing project coordinator Ghada Redwan prepared a manual for the focusing educational sessions under supervision of Dr.Mohamed Altawil, the manual included focusing sessions such as; listening to ourselves and others, and safe place, psychological pressures and resilience. Our colleague Dina Abu-Shawish trained the Muslim Aid project's team and the focusing team on this manual.

3. Preparing and developing the focusing manual for adult

beneficiaries:

The focusing project coordinator prepared a manual for the focusing sessions for adult beneficiaries under supervision of Dr.Mohamed Altawil, the focusing trainers; Jerry Conway, Merry Jenings, and Renieh Fewglrz. The manual included twelve sessions along with other supporting activities, and assessment forms. As well as; new sessions were developed as a result of the documented individual and group sessions, and the manual still under continuous revision and improvement.

3.1.1 The Manual contents:

Identification of the focusing project and its goals - Focusing session's content - Program implementation mechanism - Pre-Post assessment – Appendixes – Documents.

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3.1.2 Sessions content:

First session: program identification, consent form, building trust, and listening to ourselves skill

Second session: quality of good listening to others.

Third session: distance at present time and partitioning skill, and verbal reflection skill.

Fourth session: Safe place exercise.

Fifth session: name expression, thoughts and feelings differentiation, and drawing of feelings.

Sixth session: Psychological resilience exercise.

Seventh session: feelings expression through symbols and images.

Eighth session: children feelings expression through teddy bear.

Ninth session: needs and feelings expression through play cards game.

Tenth session: trust and emotions.

New sessions were added, hence; the total number of focusing sessions is twelve, and the new sessions are:

Eleventh session: feelings expression through Quran, Hadith, and proverbs cards.

Twelfth session: deep feelings expression through the edge of feelings session.

3.2. Delivering group focusing sessions (12 sessions in three months period):

The focusing team, which consists from; the project coordinator Ghadah Redwan, and the facilitators Nuha Abukarsh, Iman Matar, Hadeel Budier, and Alaa Matar), delivered group focusing sessions as mentioned in the focusing manual, which consisted of twelve sessions that varies in duration from one hour to one and a half hours, with (48) Female participants, and (4) Male participants, with ages that varies from (18 to 35). These sessions were conducted at the partner associations, in which the coordinator arranged for focusing sessions at the women activation centre with (25) females, and other focusing sessions to (19) deaf girls at Beit Maqdes college. In addition to delivering 12 focusing sessions with one family for three months (4) males, and (4) females.

3.3. Delivering educational focusing sessions (2 sessions for onetime):

The focusing team delivered educational sessions based on the manual with (774) participants; (659 females, and 115 males) with ages that varies from between (8-65). The sessions were delivered in cooperation with other associations including; smile of hope to care for cancer patients association, Beit Maqdes college, polytechnic university, women's activation centre, Palestinian red cross.

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3.4. Delivering group entertaining focusing activities (for onetime):

The focusing team delivered various entertaining focusing activities with (338) participants; (136 females, and 202 males), with age groups that varies between (8-65) through associations such as; kindergartens, and associations.

3.4. Delivering individual focusing sessions:

The facilitator Ghada delivered individual focusing sessions as mentioned in the focusing manual, which consisted from twelve sessions that varies in duration between (60-90) minutes, with six Female participants with ages that varies from (8 to 65). These sessions were conducted at the Centre, houses, and partner associations.

Sessions implementation mechanism:

The focusing program was applied on individuals, groups, and families where it included the following procedures:

1. The participants signed a consent form to the project activities, while preserving the center's rights in photography and publishing.
2. The facilitator applied the focusing program using a pre assessment before starting the sessions, which is represented in a group of questions the facilitator asks during the first session.
3. The facilitator applied a formative assessment during the sessions, and a post assessment after the sessions to measure the program's effects.
4. A number of participants were transferred to receive more specialized therapeutic sessions at the centre. The follow-up and referral system is represented by a continuous observation of the clients made by the facilitator during the sessions, clients who specifically provide signs of cooperation and positive signs for improvement.

Programme evaluation:

Pre assessment: the facilitator helps the participants in filling a pre assessment form which includes a number of questions that are normally asked during the first focusing session. (*see the appendixes for the pre-post assessment form*).

Formative assessment: Each focusing session was assessed by asking the participants about their opinions and obtain their feedback for each session, and apply a formative assessment form.

Post assessment: The effects of the program are measured by applying a post assessment form at the end of the session, in order to ensure achieving the programmes goals.

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The results from the pre-post assessment will be compared to identify the effectiveness of the focusing activities with the participants.

Programme evaluation results:

- ❖ Assessment forms were filled in by all the participants of the individual and group sessions that were coordinated through associations.
- ❖ The written and verbal assessment results showed that the participants in the focusing sessions' activities and focusing exercises, who were numbered (1170) participants; (849) Females, and (321) Males, were directly benefited by reinforcing their psychosocial resilience during crises. Success signs were clearly visible in their perception of the focusing techniques, which will be shown in the success stories mentioned later in this report, since a number of them managed their emotions successfully, and accepted the hard feelings accompanying their deep buried memories.
- ❖ New participants indirectly benefited by the focusing sessions, since the direct beneficiaries transformed their experience to their surrounding community.
- ❖ Results have shown that the workers in PTC/Gaza have clearly benefited from the programme, which was visible in their ability to care for their selves and in reinforcing their resilience while working with the cases.

Observation and follow-up mechanism: Regular individual and group weekly sessions are conducted by the professional supervisor Dr. Mohamed Altawil with the project coordinator and the focusing team in order to develop and follow up on delivering the focusing activities and techniques. The professional supervisor arrange for administration meetings to follow up the project activities, in addition, the focusing ream implements pairs focusing sessions for follow up on the focusing techniques. The project coordinator implements focusing sessions with the focusing trainers Emanuilla Gelanty and other groups.

3.5. The focusing team's participation in the international focusing conference in Cambridge –Britain (July 2016):

The focusing team and the project coordinator participated in the international focusing conference in Cambridge –Britain (22/July 2016) to talk about the focusing experience in the Gaza strip. A short film in Arabic subbed in English was played, which documents the focusing journey in Gaza and the importance of the focusing activities. Afterwards; the international focusing Centre in New York

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produced an English film about the focusing journey in Gaza based on the Arabic focusing film.

5. Importance and benefits of the focusing sessions to the beneficiaries:

- ❖ **Why the focusing programme was successful in Gaza:** the focusing journey in Gaza was very successful and its techniques spread rapidly due to the ease of transferring it among beneficiaries and the simplicity of its skills, its skills are easy to learn within or outside the family context regardless of age and educational level. Also the safety element that the focusing provides made it easy to spread, in which focusing provides the focuser the lead to manage the sessions and express his feelings without judgment, accountability, or force.
- ❖ **Benefits obtained by the focusing sessions:** Through the comments of the beneficiaries and the observation of the coordinator, the results of the verbal assessment have shown the magnificent effect of the focusing session's exercises on the beneficiaries, the extent to which they can find the location of their pain after attending these sessions, and how they have acquired the ability to reduce the painful feelings and partitioning them, and then initiate the dialogue to reach their inner peace with these feelings. They have also showed their ability to transfer their expertise of the focusing sessions to their familial context to share the central exercises which they have learned in the focusing sessions with their families, that was shown in one of the beneficiaries comment during the focusing sessions, that she have created an energetic atmosphere within the family, and that the children were waiting her return from the focusing session to share what she have newly learned in the focusing session.

5.1 benefits obtained by participants (Adults and children): The participants benefited from the focusing sessions which were delivered to them at the associations, and centers in the Gaza strip, this success appears clearly throughout the success stories, some of them are shown as follows:

- ❖ Success story of (A.M 19yrs) from Beit Maqdes college: the focusing session improved the way I see myself and my abilities, before the focusing sessions; I used to feel helpless, embarrassed from others looks, and always defensive against others, but the focusing sessions provided me with calmness in dealing with myself and others.

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- ❖ Success story (R.A 18yrs) from the women activation centre: before the sessions, I used to feel lonely and sad because of being divorced at the age of 18, and the community's look to divorced women was painful. However, the focusing sessions, especially the green and dry branch exercise, supported me and made me stronger to challenge the community and other's look, in addition, the edge of feelings sessions helped me in accepting myself and my experience, and to positively overcome it.

Some responses as shown from the focusing session's review:

- **A deaf student (K.A 21yrs) from Beit maqdes College said:** “the protective shield exercise during the safe place activity made me feel like I possess a power that enables me to overcome our difficult circumstances as deaf people trying to be involved in our surrounding society”.
- **A disabled student (H.Y 32yrs) from Beit maqdes College said:** “I liked the exercise of listening to ourselves a lot. Some of us (people with disabilities) face a lot of fear while dealing with others, and the way they look at our needs and abilities as disabled persons. But this skill gave me a new perspective on how to listen to others in a new way, I joined college in a late age (32yrs), but I feel content about this decision”.
- **A girl (M.T 29yrs) from Women activation centre said:** “I benefited a lot on the personal level, I gained confidence in myself and my feelings. I used to suffer a lot from my mother's physical and verbal abuse, and I didn't have the ability to do anything about it. Then, I asked help from the focusing facilitator, and indeed the focusing sessions that my mother received contributed to alleviate her anger reactions, and it directed her to deal in a better way with me.

5.2 Benefits on parents and family level: families and parents benefited by the focusing activities in reinforcing their psychological resilience during crises.

5.3 Benefits on the local community's level: networking and coordination was made with associations, new channels for cooperation were created to deliver the focusing activities at many centres in the Gaza strip.

5.4 benefits on partner associations level: administrative interaction and cooperation expressed the benefits of transferring the focusing experiences between the centre and other partnering associations.

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5.5 benefits in professional development on staff's level: the work team acquired many experiences and skills in delivering professional intervention with the participants, and other skills in managing the focusing sessions.

5.6 benefits on the academic level for the staff: the project coordinator finished a master degree in focusing “The Effectiveness of a Counseling Program based on the Focusing Skills in Improving Life Skills among a Sample of Al Azhar University Student’s in Gaza” that will be discussed in July 2017.

6. difficulties and how to overcome them:

- 6.1 Difficulty of coordination for sessions in May due to the children exams.
- 6.2 Difficulty in coordinating for sessions at the beginning of June, because our partner associations postponed their activities to after Ramadan.

Overcoming these difficulties:

- 6.1 We overcame the difficulty of coordination for sessions in May due to the children exams by taking advantage of this month in preparing the session’s manual, and preparing completion reports.
- 6.2 We overcame the difficulty in coordinating for sessions at the beginning of June, because our partner associations postponed their activities to after Ramadan by preparing the completion reports.

7. Recommendations and suggestions :

7.1. On the working staff level:

Perform a comprehensive assessment for the previous stage of the project, and work on how to deal with the coming stages while training the staff to enhance working in the focusing project.

7.2. On the activities provided to the targeted beneficiaries level:

Try providing intensive focusing sessions to new groups to find out what is the best way in delivering the focusing activities; daily intensive focusing, or weekly sessions on different periods.