



# GHIRASS CULTURAL CENTER

## BETHLEHEM ARAB SOCIETY FOR REHABILITATION



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## NEWS LETTER 2/2017 MAY-AUGUST

### EDITORIAL

#### Continuous progress, good achievements and happy social news ...

In the past months, as in previous years, summer at Ghirass witnessed a variety of activities, events and news. As the children took part in summer activities, joy and pleasure were apparent in their faces. They painted, played, sang, swam and interacted with each other. The volunteers and the advocacy team at the Center demonstrated good leadership roles in working with children. This new experience was acquired by young people and has been recorded in their curriculum vitae.

The quality of the learning through the **Essence of Learning** project. This was both promising and enjoyable, in training and upgrading the teachers of kindergartens and schools. Work was carried out by members of the Ghirass team as well as staff working in the field of schools and kindergartens. Target locations were equipped with resources to meet their needs.

The Hakaya Band of Palestinian Folklore and the Amwaj Choir enjoyed demonstrating their exciting performances, audiences showed their admiration for their high level of artistic skills and their commitment to the humanitarian content of their work and awareness of our national culture.

Now we have also a new team member: Sama, an employee at Ghirass is born beautiful girl named Aden; Aden means a name of paradise .

The month of September of this year coincided with the Eid al-Adha and Virgin Mary celebrations. The editorial board presents the best congratulations and blessings of the Christian and Islamic nations, wishing that peace and stability prevail throughout Palestine and the world.



# EVENTS

## 250 children benefit from the activities of Ghirass Summer activities:

The summer activities received a high and remarkable attendance by both male and female children for the summer camp organized in two stages by Ghirass center. The first summer camp was for 5-9 year olds. 150 children participated in the first stage.

The second summer camp was for 10-13 year olds; it was held between the 5th of July to the 12th August 2017, the children received many recreational, educational, and artistic activities, as well as swimming and hiking activities. Furthermore, The Foot Health Foundation provided health services to the group of children participating in the second camp.



## Ghirass Children participate in a performance with the Choir

The Amwaj Choir School organized a performance on the evening of Sunday, July 2, 2017. With the participation of children from the Lyon Choir in Paris and the choir from Aida Camp, a musical evening was held, which included various musical passages presented by the children, from Palestine and France in different languages. This was as a result of the joint workshops led by Amwaj Choir. The Amwaj Choir School set up a summer camp in the resort of Murad with the participation of a group of children's choirs from France. This concert occurred as part of the "Days of the Young Generations" in a festival organized by Philharmony Palestine.



### **Ghirass Children take part in an event to support advocacy of prisoners**

Dozens of children from the Ghirass Center took part in a show of solidarity in a tent in the courtyard of the Church of the Nativity to support Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails who were on hunger strike, fighting for their human rights.



### **Ghirass Children participate in a chess competition**

Children from the Ghirass Center participated in a chess competition in the Russian Center on 7/5/2017 on the occasion of the victory of Russia over fascism in the Second World War. The group gained top positions and received certificates honoring their abilities.

## **CAPACITY BUILDING**



### **Trainer from Caritas Switzerland trains Ghirass staff in the Essence of Learning Skills**

In the period from 15/5/2017 to 23/5/2017, 13 teachers from Ghirass were trained in the essence of learning undertaking 56 hours of practical training on the essence of learning skills for early childhood education for kindergartens and primary school children. The trainers were professionals from Caritas Switzerland, the new partner organization for the Ghirass center. The project targets a group of kindergartens and primary schools in area C.



The training focused on the use of natural assets such as plastic bottles, wooden sticks and other waste material items that can be used in both playing and learning. The practicality and usefulness of these inexpensive and instructive means was observed through practical implementation.

This training was provided by the international trainer Beatrice and was co-translated by Maram, Ghazala and Ibtisam from Ghirass. The summary of the eight days of training was by Kate from Caritas Switzerland.



## WORK EXPERIENCES



### The Psychosocial and Public Relation sections participated in CBT training

The social worker and the public relations officer received first and second supervision in the field of cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) with children and parents on 7 July and 4 August 2017.

### Two teachers from Ghirass participated in the right-to-play

Two teachers –Areej and Hanan- participated in an 18 hour training program with the Right to Play Foundation, which lasted three days and focused on enabling skills in the right to play and children's rights in general. The teachers will include the skills they learnt in the remedial teaching program.



### The sixteenth Summer Forum Jannana 2017 in Lebanon

From 21/8 to 28/8/2017, the Ghirass librarian participated in the Forum with a group of libraries in cooperation with the Tamer Institute for Community Education. The forum included many activities and workshops directed specifically at children and young people in war zones. It also included the launch of the book *Jnger* written by Ahlam Bisharat, in addition to honoring the late filmmaker Jean Chamoun on his work. Finally, certificates were distributed to participants in the Forum .



### Teachers from Ghirass carry out a pilot project

Teachers from Ghirass carried out a pilot project, in order to practise the essence of learning, the teachers implemented the training manual on with 20 children aged 6-9 years and 9-12 years. The study lasted for 8 weeks, based on the skills of entertainment and play, and used the curriculum of kindergartens and primary schools.



## VOICES



### **Anas Abu Omar, 11 years old**

When asked about Ghirass and what the center means to him, while preparing for the closing ceremony of the summer activities in which he participated, he answered: "I love Ghirass and feel safe in it, the center gave me a chance to express my thoughts and feelings, I participated in many activities, loved it and I was creative in it, I love the center and my school."

### **Sybille Oetliker , Geschäftsleiterin Schweiz, Luzern , Kinderhilfe Bethlehem**

I was very impressed by your work. It is great that you have such a good and varied offer of cultural activities for the children from Bethlehem and the villages around Bethlehem. As I told you, I have always been impressed by the quality of the work of NGOs in Palestine and the important impact of women for the wellbeing of the local society. Really mabruk for your work!

## PROJECTS



### **Program: Essences of learning**

Essence of learning (EoL) is an educational program, that combines psychosocial, remedial and accelerated extracurricular approaches to improve in early childhood development and to develop outcomes. The program targets 4-6 years old children in kindergartens and 6-9 years old children in primary schools.

(EoL) will be implemented by Ghirass Cultural Center through Caritas Switzerland – the partner organization of Ghirass.

Caritas organization provided Ghirass staff in a Teachers Training (ToT) with experience and consolidate skills, then Ghirass team trained teachers, social workers and directors in the target locations in order to implement the EoL prior to expanding it into schools and kindergartens.

Kindergartens and schools will implement EoL in classrooms with mentorship from Ghirass center and Caritas organization, it will start from 10<sup>th</sup> of September 2017 until 31 of May 2018 in three government primary schools and seven kindergartens in Bethlehem district.

European Partners of Caritas will evaluate the effectiveness of EoL program on the children's development.



### Empowering women professionally and socially:

Ghirass Cultural Center collaborating with the Union of Sawa Sawa and with support from The German Development Foundation held a number of training sessions since the beginning of 2017 in the field of vocational training aimed at empowering women professionally and socially. 15 women participated from different areas in Bethlehem Governorate. The women received 72 training hours through workshops including: making educational games, making chandeliers and Social psychology. They plan to start a candle workshop before the end of 2017. Ghirass Center is one of the founders of the union of sawa sawa, which includes many Palestinian cultural organizations.

### Sawa Sawa in Festival Preparing

Children and teenagers from the Ghirass Cultural Center participated in three workshops from 5/7/-7/8/2017, four days each. The participants stayed at Talita Qoumi school as part of the preparations for the annual festival that will be held in September. The participants represented Ghirass Cultural Center Bethlehem, Jaffa Center Nablus, Shu'fat Children's Center, Mada Center Silwan and Al Fawar refugee Camp in Hebron.

Four members from each center participated in a four-day music and singing workshop that included many activities related to music and singing.

Four other children from each center participated in four-day dabke workshop, during which they acquired several skills related to Palestinian Dabke and contemporary dance.

Eight children from each center participated in football workshops where players were trained in life skills through football.

The participants stated that not only did they learn new skills but this workshop also provided a great opportunity to meet people from different cities in Palestine and make new friends.

## OUTLOOK

### Ghirass Timetable

Starting from **1/9/2017**, the Center will be open every weekday from **8:00** am to **4:00** pm except Monday.

**15/11/2017** The Center is closed on Independence Day.