



Just Childhood  
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# Bait al-Shams Annual Report 2016

We color our lives with education



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# Bait al-Shams Annual Report 2016

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# WHO WE ARE?

## ABOUT US

### BAIT AL-SHAMS KINDERGARTEN

With Bait al-Shams, just.childhood is offering the children of Shatila Refugee Camp a safe space for learning and simply being a child on a continuous, reliable basis and prepare them for school. We are introducing an alternative, reformatory educational approach based on internationally developed Child Protection regulations.

For us it is important to teach children from an early age that they don't need to limit themselves.

The kindergarten aims at providing a vital creative outlet, which often cannot be provided by parents, and is traditionally abandoned in favor of more academic subjects by chronically underfunded schools.

In our understanding of a humanistic approach to pedagogy, learning is interdisciplinary, integrating practical, artistic and conceptual elements. Bait al-Sham's approach is based on Waldorf Early Childhood Education and emphasizes on the role of imagination in learning and developing thinking that includes a creative as well as an analytic component. We would like to provide the children the basis on which to develop into free, morally responsible and integrated individuals, and to help every child fulfill his or her unique destiny.

## INFO ON THE ORGANISATION

just.childhood consists of two NGOs, a German and a Lebanese. As the German association is mainly existent to collect funds in Germany and to give donation receipts to European supporters, but also to serve as an approving authority, the Lebanese NGO is responsible for running and administering the kindergarten Bait al-Shams itself. Both NGOs are actively involved in enhancing continuous teacher training on Waldorf Early Childhood Education both in Germany and Lebanon.

“THE TEACHER WHO IS INDEED WISE DOES NOT BID YOU TO ENTER HE HOUSE OF HIS WISDOM BUT RATHER LEADS YOU TO THE

Khalil Jebran



# BOARD AND THE TEAM



## THE BOARD LEBANON

### Wiebke Eden-Fleig

Political Scientist and initiator and founder of just.childhood. Has been working for the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung in Lebanon as a Program Manager and as a journalist for the German weekly die ZEIT, as well as for the Middle East Quarterly Magazine zenith.

### Samir Farah

Sociologist and Journalist who worked for the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung in Lebanon for 40 years, 28 of those as their country representative in Beirut. He was rewarded the German Federal Cross of Merit in 2003 and the National Order of Cedars in 1988 in honor of his great social and political earnings.

### Badia Baydoun

Holds a BA in Communications Arts and Sciences and a MA in Political Science. She worked as a news editor, news anchorwoman and field reporter at Tele Liban. Also she had her own radio program at Radio Libanon and worked as a news editor and news presenter for the National News Agency and for Radio Liban. Worked in all three jobs for more than 20 years. Badia Baydoun started to work as Program Manager at the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung in Beirut in 2001.

### Hassan Dakroub

Is Joint General Manager at Sarnia Marine Brokerage based in Cyprus. But now, after more than 35 years in shipping and marine insurance, his interest is focused on fundraising and assisting several NGOs in several countries.

### Elie Karam

IT expert and manager in a multinational company. He is holding a degree in Finance.

## THE TEAM BAIT AL-SHAMS

### Wiebke Eden-Fleig

CEO & Program Manager

### Rabieh Ali El Tayeh

Program Coordinator

### Samah Rmieh

Kindergarten Educator

### Khadijeh Taha

Kindergarten Educator

### Hanaa Kublawi

Kindergarten Educator

### Layal al Hajj Ali

Kindergarten Educator

### Inas Alajouz

Kindergarten Educator

### Fadia Mohammad

Kindergarten Educator

### Zeinab Moussa

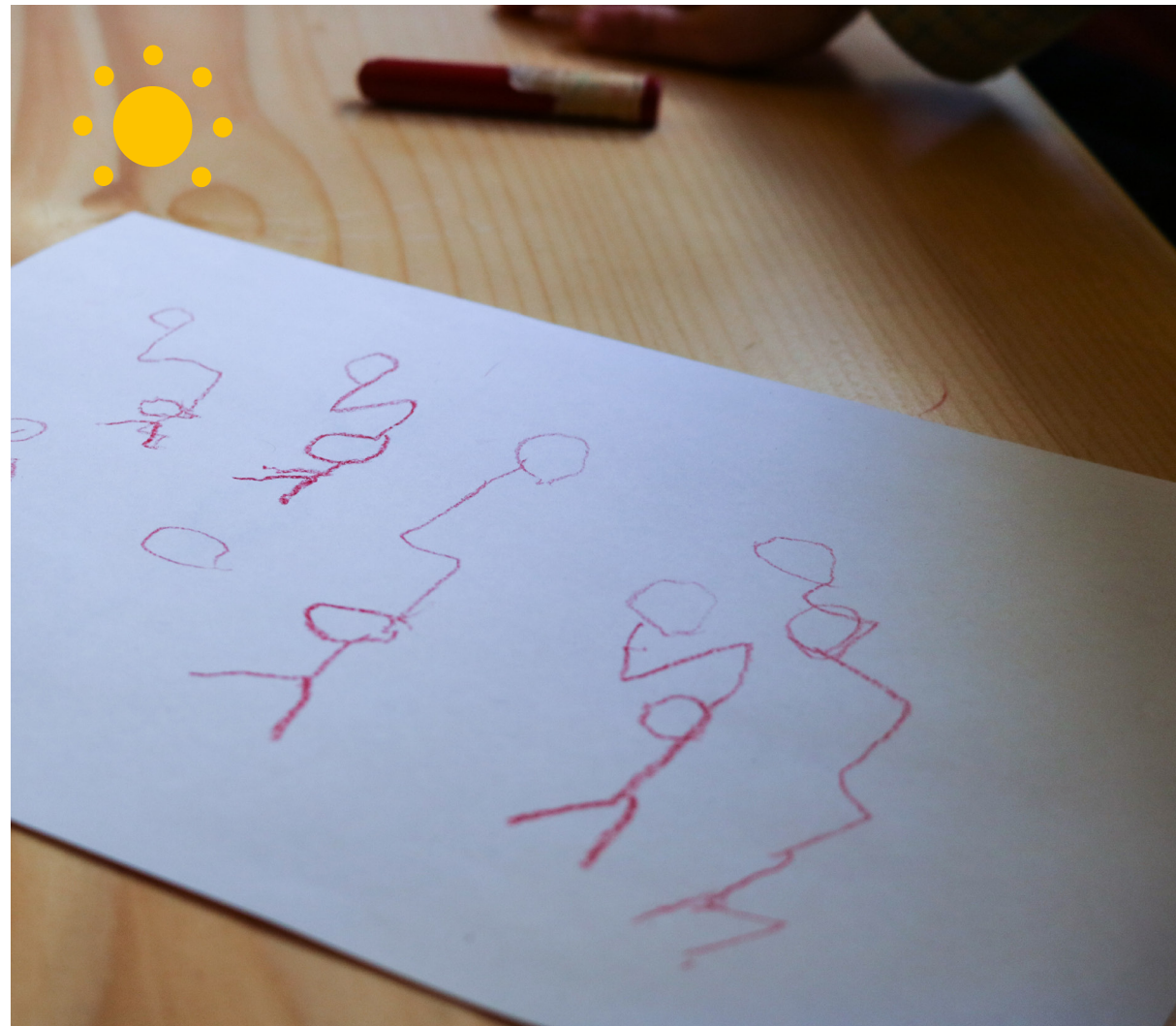
Kindergarten Educator

### Maher Shehadeh

Communications Manager







December 2016. Writing exercise during pre-school classes.

# BACK- GROUND

## BACKGROUND JUST.CHILDHOOD

Already the fourth generation of Palestinian refugee's lives in a hostile environment, is denied basic human rights, and has no effective means of representation or education. Worldwide the number of protracted refugee groups is increasing; nevertheless responses to refugee situations are still driven by the assumption that they are short-term.

Originally hosting hundreds of refugees, Shatila has grown since 1949 to more than 12,000 registered Palestinian refugees. With the influx of Syrian refugees into Palestinian camps there are currently more than 22,000 people living in Shatila. It is one of the 12 official long-term camps for Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, situated in a poor area of Beirut that was badly damaged during the civil war. It is probably best known of all the Palestinian camps because of the 1982 massacre in which thousands of people were killed.

The entire camp comprises one square kilometer and thus has an exceptionally high population density. After almost 70 years thousands of Palestinian refugees still live in temporary shelters in overcrowded, unsanitary camps where unemployment and poverty levels are high. The Lebanese restrictions on land for Palestinians have led to severe overcrowding in the camps. There is a lack of privacy and natural light. It is not surprising that all these factors lead to violence in many aspects of life (even in schools), drug abuse, as well as severe psychological problems.

Education is one of the most important pillars of development. But Palestinian children are only under certain circumstances allowed to visit Lebanese public schools and most families cannot afford private education. The schools run by the UN require the visit of a kindergarten, without offering any in Shatila. This again leads to very early school dropouts, because children are not able to follow the UN curriculum.

A qualitative study of the American University of Beirut in 2011 has analysed the UNRWA school dropouts in Palestinian Refugee Camps in Lebanon. By looking toward developing an intervention plan to address the rate of early school dropout in Palestinian refugee camps, the study concluded that dropping out could be prevented through a focused action plan. Among other measures the study recommends to provide a high quality, universal preschool and full-day kindergarten.

# METHODOLOGY

Our Kindergarten Bait al-Shams is open to all children living in Shatila, giving them a safe space for learning and simply being a child on a continuous, reliable basis, and a future of possibility and hope. The appropriate and culturally sensitive humanitarian assistance is providing a foundation for sustainable development by actively involving the target group in the planning, implementation and management process.

To achieve the biggest benefit for the children, the kindergarten educators will

strongly rely on the help of the parents. Such collaboration includes parent-teacher conferences, courses and lectures. The kindergarten is not only open to all children living in Beirut's Shatila Camp, but also children with special needs are, if possible, welcome in our kindergarten. Currently we have three age-mixed groups with 20 children, each lead by two qualified educators.

With our work we aim at actively protecting childhood, by respecting age-appropriate life- and development conditions and making this the base of the pedagogic daily routine. In this daily routine of the group, "good habits" are initiated and cultivated according to the need of the children for rhythm and repetition of similar actions and experiences.

The competencies in language (Bait al-Shams is a bilingual kindergarten using Arabic as well as English), movement, playing, learning, and social skills that need to be achieved by entering school are supported on a permanent basis through the composition of every day life. In the year before entering school the children attend a pre-school program tailored to their needs and the schools' requirements. If possible we seek cooperation with the schools to ensure a smooth entry for the children. It should be mentioned though, that this kindergarten does not aim to be a school, but a place where children are allowed to gain their first experiences outside their families in a secure environment.

In our educational approach, which follows the Waldorf Early Childhood Education, teaching is by example rather than by direct instruction and is integrated rather than subject based. In recognition of its vital role in early childhood education, children are given time to play. Emphasis is given to regular patterns of activities both within the day and over each week. The child presents a particular set of physical, emotional and intellectual characteristics, which require a particular (empathetic) educational response in return. In Bait al-Shams we consider the first seven years as the period of greatest physical growth and development. At this time the young child's primary mode of learning is through doing and experiencing – he or she "thinks" with the entire physical being.

The nature of this learning should be self-motivated, allowing the child to come to know the world in the way most appropriate to his or her age – through active feeling, touching, exploring and imitating, in other words, through doing. Children are encouraged to master physical skills before abstract intellectual ones.





# SUMMARY OF 2016

The year was our first full academic cycle and was marked by some additions to our current program. The number of children grew to 55 with still many on the waiting list. We have conducted a number of capacity building activities for the team, introduced our parent/community project, started our pre-school program for the children who are in their final year before entering school. We have produced a film, which sums up our work and we have started to complete our rooftop for the children to play and move outside.

## Tomorrow I came – Film production

We have produced our second film in this year. Waldorf Early Childhood Education is relatively unknown in Lebanon, therefore our Bait al-Shams kindergarten in Shatila Camp is an unprecedented. Raising awareness and educating the parents, as the caregivers of the children, is quintessential in promoting the status of the Waldorf Early Childhood Education system and in effect Bait al-Shams kindergarten. The parents and community in Shatila camp either are not familiar with the teaching methods, indifferent, disapproving, unaware or distrustful towards the teaching methods.

The short educational video highlights specific aspects of the Waldorf Early Childhood Education system through a docu-drama style narrative. The aim was to visualize Bait al-Shams kindergarten's work and to raise awareness about our educational approach. The uniqueness of Bait al-Shams educators' roles and physical environment were depicted through the interviews with educators, coordinator, parents and children and the visual narrative of Bait al-Shams kindergarten as a physical being.



## New Year Admissions

With the start of the new academic year, the number of registered children at Bait al-Shams kindergarten grew from 36 to 55. We have paid attention to gender and also age-balance in our age-mixed groups. The majority of children are Palestinian from Shatila or around, but we have admitted a number of Syrian children, whose parents found refuge in the camp.

## Early Childhood Education Trainings

We are in our second year of teacher training in the kindergarten. While during the first year there have been training and mentoring workshops on a monthly basis, this year we were providing seven trainings financially supported by the International Association for Waldorf/Steiner Early Childhood Education (IASWECE). One of the trainings however was focused on developing a pre-school curriculum for the children in their final kindergarten year before entering school. In a nutshell the content of the trainings was divided into two parts. While the trainers spent the mornings with the groups to monitor the educator's work, the afternoons were used for feedback and additional training in handcrafts, coloring, drawing, felting, story-telling, finger games, finger-knitting, woodwork, eurhythmics and movement exercises, life-skills as well as observing children and writing and administering child case studies, psychology of the child, education of will forces.

## Other Capacity Building

Activities focused on child protection organized by the University of Saint Joseph in Beirut (USJ) and UNICEF, communication by our communications manager, and medical First Aid for children conducted by our partner MSF /Doctors without borders in Shatila Camp.

## Parent Program

In May 2016, we have started with the support of the German organization Kindernothilfe e.V. our parent/ community project. The Champion Parents Program is part of the overall Early Childhood Education project (Bait al-Shams kindergarten) implemented in Shatila Camp by just.childhood. It supports the overall project in its attempt to be a best-practice example in the camp in terms of child protection and right of (non-violent, age appropriate, holistic) education. The situation in the Palestinian refugee camps is deteriorating on all levels since years, also on the education level, which makes the most vulnerable of the refugee community, the children, even more vulnerable. This is mainly due to the fact that the crisis in Syria continues to take a devastating toll on Lebanon's civilian population. The large influx of Palestinian refugees from Syria and Syrian refugees into Palestinian communities in Lebanon has created new demographics. The already insufficient resources cannot match up with the increase in the growth of population in the camp. As a result there is a huge shortage of educational and basic medical services as well as an increase in unemployment. Naturally, the current approach of the relief organizations is to reach the highest number of children possible. However, the lack of strong structures, which could support a large number of children, is jeopardizing the goal of reaching out to the children and the overall community. For instance, as opposed to decrease the problems of violence in kindergartens, schools, and homes, the problems are enforced due to the lack of capacities and structures and overall pressure on the parents. The pressure on the parents – due to lack of employment and therefore financial instability, alcohol and drug abuse, lack of space just to name a few - is mirrored directly in the behavior with their children. There is a lack of patience, lack of care, indifference at times, as well as physical and psychological abuse. This again leads to violent behavior also between the children themselves, as this is how they learnt problem-solving at home.

To establish our humanistic, non-violent educational approach in the kindergarten as a best practice, we first need to attract community's support for the project. In order to gather such support, we need to develop a strategy that aims at educating and informing the community about the need of child protection and non-violent, age-appropriate, learning. The strategy needs to target both the parents and other existing educational institutions. Parents, caregivers, and other key adults play important roles in the lives of children. We need their support to make our approach a successful one. The challenges faced by children are often related to their families. Therefore adults also need to be engaged in order to fully support children's healthy development and protecting them from violence and abuse. This project aims at reaching and empowering more parents and children. In a community like Shatila, parents function as ideal multipliers. In this context we are also aiming at including those Lebanese organizations that have set up infrastructure, like kindergartens, that follow the same principles like just.childhood.

## Pre-School Program

This program started in September 2016. Two educators are specializing in teaching the children the essential knowledge they will need by entering the school in the following academic year. In cooperation with Waldorf class teachers at schools and educators we have developed a specially tailored curriculum for our oldest children. In a creative, flexible and age-appropriate approach the children learn the English and Arabic alphabet and numbers and do simple writing and reading exercises. The children gather once a day for one our and learn in a separate classroom according to a structured cycle consisting of movement and concentration/ studying exercise. The subjects English, Arabic, Math, and Form-drawing, are taught in so-called epochs of three weeks in a row after each other before being repeated.

## Roof Garden

Playing outside is one of the most important pillars of our curriculum. During the year, we were able to equip our roof with a bigger sand pit for the children to play in. Also, we have built our own gardening bucket for the children to plant and grow herbs and vegetables. Furthermore we received a new climbing frame designed and built by Kinderspielkunst e.V. and financed by Bild hilft e.V./Ein Herz für Kinder. Thanks to the PCRF we were able to start securing the floor and to build additional furniture for outside teaching and eating.







April 2016. Playing during the weekly park trips

# OUTCOMES

- 01 //** Children are developing strong relationships with the staff, which is evident in improved confidence, and engagement with learning
- 02 //** System of child observation has been developed (Child case studies, home visits)
- 03 //** The educators demonstrate respectful relationships with the children which is evident in all interactions including supporting children in managing their behavior concerning the development of the children
- 04 //** Children are demonstrating curiosity and resilience
- 05 //** Parents are more familiar with our methodology; absorb the curriculum and follow-up with their children and their siblings at home
- 06 //** Closely working with parents to establish a social link through participation in supporting their children in kindergarten and beyond
- 07 //** Healthy environment
- 08 //** Parents are involved and responsible
- 09 //** Children are prepared for school
- 10 //** Evaluation standards developed
- 11 //** Child Protection Policy developed





# OUTLOOK 2017

- 01 //** Move forward with expected program put down by team and trainers
- 02 //** Certification of the teachers by the Waldorf Academy in Mannheim/Germany
- 03 //** Advancing community work and developing an action plan
- 04 //** Developing follow-up strategy for Parent Program
- 05 //** Developing a system of milestones to be achieved concerning the development of the children
- 06 //** Developing the best-practice approach by developing strategies for opening more kindergarten branches in the other Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon
- 07 //** Continue intensive training
- 08 //** Introducing summer activities for older children in Shatila camp
- 09 //** Strengthen the fundraising plan towards more independence from political circumstances/ visibility



# CONCLUSION:

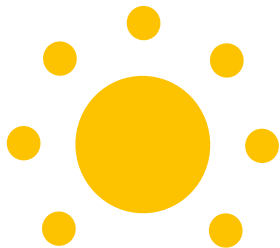
## RECOGNIZE POSITIVE CHANGES

In a nutshell, the team could look back to a successful year. The work with the children continued very well, we could recognize positive changes especially regarding social and behavioral matters within a relatively short period of time. Especially with some special cases of children who were forced to flee from Syria, and who were in a state of shock and freeze and who gradually found their way into movement and expression. In general, children became more peaceful and at ease and started to develop trust towards their educators and the kindergarten itself. Challenges however are still being faced with the parents at times which require a close follow-up and instruction. Nevertheless, the Parent Program had a positive impact on the involvement and care of the parents towards their children.

# DONORS

UNICEF	INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR STEINER/WALDORF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (IASWECE)	FREUNDE DER ERZIEHUNGSKUNST RUDOLF STEINERS E.V.	PCRF - PALESTINIAN CHILDREN RELIEF FUND
KINDERNOTHILFE E.V.	BILD HILFT E.V. "EIN HERZ FÜR KINDER"	NORDDEUTSCHE STIFTUNG FÜR UMWELT UND ENTWICKLUNG (NUE)	KIEZHelden FC ST. PAULI E.V.





# BUDGET

# ANNUAL BUDGET

Descriptions	Total
STAFF COSTS	98,000
TRAINING/EQUIPMENT/ BUILDING	29.725
RENT	26,400
INSURANCE	8.840
GRAND TOTAL / ANNUAL BUDGET 2016	163.065

All figuers are in USD and include tax

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**JUST.CHILDHOOD**

**THANK YOU FOR  
YOUR SUPPORT**

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#### **GET INVOLVED**

Direct Link : <http://www.justchildhood/get-involved>

