



just
childhood

جست نسايلدروود



Annual Report 2019



About Us

Just.Childhood is offering the children in two Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon a safe space for learning and simply being a child on a continuous, reliable basis whilst preparing them for school. Five years ago, we introduced an alternative, reformatory educational approach based on Waldorf Education in our first kindergarten project *Bait al-Shams* in Shatila Camp.

At the beginning of September 2019, our work expanded as we were approached by Inaash organization already in the previous year with the request to take over the pedagogical and administrative management of their kindergarten in Wavel Camp in Baalbek, Eastern Bekaa. The direct beneficiaries in Baalbek have reached 202 children between three and six years old, including Palestinian refugees from Lebanon, Palestinian refugees from Syria as well as Lebanese and Syrian nationals.

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

Our approach in both of our projects 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 aim 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.



The Board

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.

Mofida Al Hakim

Mofida Al Hakim is a social worker with 8 years experience as a social investigator in the National Poverty Targeting Program at the Lebanese Ministry of Social Affairs. She holds a PhD in social sciences from the Lebanese University and her areas of interest are human rights, immigration, unemployment and trade unions. Mofida is a newly elected board member since 2018.

Elie Karam

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



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The Staff Baalbek

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Mona Hamdan

Librarian



Background



Already the fourth generation of Palestinian refugees 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.

Wavel Camp is located in one of the peripheral rural areas of Lebanon with high deprivation and poverty rates among the Lebanese population. The deprivation and socio-economic situations for Palestinians and Syrians living in the Camp is even worse with increased poverty incidents particularly among the Palestinian refugees coming from Syria.

After almost 71 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 curriculum.

A qualitative study of the American University of Beirut in 2011 has analyzed 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 this could be prevented through a focused action plan. Among other measures the study recommends providing a high quality, universal preschool and full-day kindergarten.

Local Developments

The situation in Lebanon has been deteriorating and during the last three months of 2019 Lebanon truly started to hit the rock-bottom. As the protests started in October the country witnessed a general strike that lasted for weeks. All roads were blocked, and some of our teachers were stuck in their homes outside Beirut which forced us to close a couple of times. The closing situation was no better in Baalbek as we were also forced to close multiple times due to road blockages and different clashes in the area. At the same time the economic situation in Lebanon started to rapidly deteriorate, Lebanese currency started to inflate, banks started to practice masked capital control and people were unable to withdraw their money. In addition, a great proportion either lost their jobs or their salaries decreased by half.

Under these devastating circumstances, the continuity of some of our programs became a major concern for us. With money being stuck in the bank and the pressure of keeping up with the unreasonable increase in prices, we had to think of many alternative measures in order to maintain the quality of our programs. It took several weeks before being able to withdraw our monthly funds and eventually we were forced to change our previous bank and move our bank account. Even at this stage, we are still under enormous financial pressure because of the current inflation and high prices.

The effect of the socio-economic crisis is reflected in the Palestinian camps and

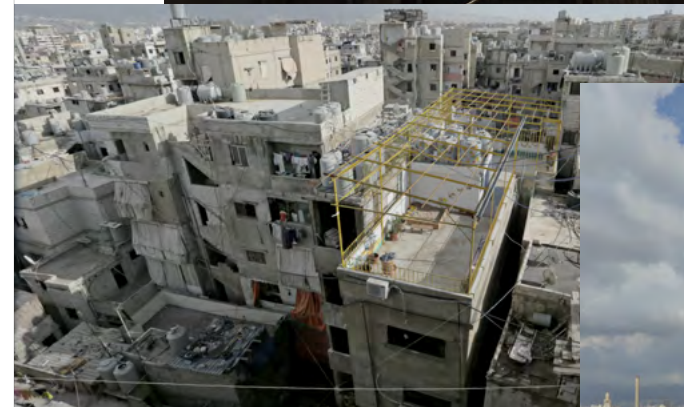




gatherings as well. The unemployment rate which was already high among Palestinian refugees further increased after the government obliged Palestinians to obtain a work permit a few months prior to the crises and it kept on increasing afterward.

In sum, the relative calmness during the previous year has changed dramatically. We were forced to close the kindergarten and the supporting programs from end of May until beginning of September 2019. There were daily clashes right next to our kindergarten building on a daily basis. After the staff was trapped for some hours while preparing an Iftar event for the parents, we decided to close until the situation is resolved. Since the security situation is generally deteriorating mainly because of the drug mafia, we started searching for an alternative kindergarten building. The search is difficult as buildings around the camp are rarely suitable and costly. Moving farer out would mean losing the families and community we have been working and buildings trust with over the last years. Since we needed to prepare the pre-school children for school, another organization helped us out and allowed us to use a room in their premises. This was the place where the end of the year ceremony and farewell for the school children took place. The planned trips outside the camp took place for the kindergarten and pre-school children. The situation stabilized in mid-August, so that we started preparing the kindergarten and started our new kindergarten year two weeks earlier than usual, on September 2nd.

Due to all these insecurities, the prevailing violence and unforeseen events, a rhythmic and structured day is of utmost importance for the children. The kindergarten can provide them with these structures that help cope with traumatic experiences. We as a team worked on an improved risk management in order to be as safe as possible, but at the same time as reliably open and operating as possible.





Methodology



Our kindergartens are open to all children living in Shatila and Wavel Camps, giving them a safe space for learning and simply being a child on a continuous, reliable basis, and a future of possibility and hope. 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 strongly rely on the help of the parents. Such collaboration includes parent-teacher conferences, courses and lectures. Currently we have three age-mixed groups with 20 children in Shatila and ten groups with between 20 to 22 children in Wavel Camp. Each group is led 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.

The competencies in language, movement, playing, learning, and social skills that need to be achieved by entering school are supported on a permanent basis through the composition of everyday 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 the kindergartens do 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 2019

This year was the fifth full academic cycle in Shatila and was marked by some additions to our current program. The number of children stayed at 55 with still many on the waiting list. We have conducted a number of capacity building activities for the team and developed our parent/community project further. Beside our pre-school program for the children who are in their final year before entering school, we have the afternoon learning support program for those children who left our kindergarten and entered school. Also, we have started working and conducting different sessions and trainings in our newly renovated floor for our family center.

Registration

With the start of the new academic year, the number of registered children at Bait al-Shams kindergarten stayed at 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, and a number of Lebanese, Jordanian and Sudanese children.

As in the previous years we were officially announcing our registration dates in May and then follow a first-come first-serve policy, but with two constraints: if we have a sibling already registered, his or her brother or sister is prioritized. Also, the parents need to agree on our way of education and have to be willing to engage in our Parent Program for the benefit of their children. In 2019 it took longer than the previous years to fill the places. The demand is there, but many families especially from Syria were looking for a temporary space in our kindergarten, sometimes only for a couple of weeks. As we believe that our work is more fruitful when the children actually stay with us for at least two years, we gave preference to the children who are staying in Shatila.

The selection criteria for the ones on the waiting list are as follows: The child on the list's top position gets the space if an already enrolled child leaves our kindergarten.



Early Childhood Education Trainings

We were in our fifth year of teacher training in the kindergarten. The concept of *Bait al-Shams* follows the guidelines of Waldorf Early Childhood Education. One training module comprises four to six days, including class observation in the morning, evaluation, lectures, artistic exercises, methodology in the afternoon. Subjects of the training are arranged on three levels:

1. PROFESSIONAL SKILLS (Methods in Waldorf Early Childhood Education; structure of day, week, year; handwork; toys; circle games; gestures; play with dolls, puppet play; paperwork; nutrition; working with parents and more.)

2. ARTISTIC EXERCISES (Painting; music; form-drawing; Eurythmy; storytelling.)

Two of our educators continued their two-year training in Eurhythmics at Step Together Association in Daichounieh, which started in October 2018. At the end of the training, they will be certified by the Goetheanum in Dornach, Switzerland¹. With this, we'll be able to do music education and Eurhythmics in house without being dependent on visiting staff.

3. BASIC CONCEPTS OF WALDORF EDUCATION (Study of human: development of the child; biography; social structures; self-education.)

The trainers, coming from Germany and Great Britain, are experts in Waldorf Early Childhood Education with professional experience for many years in Waldorf kindergartens. They all graduated from Waldorf training centers. The trainers are qualified and experienced in teaching in exceptional situations, as in foreign cultures, languages, and religion, and under extraordinary conditions.

Curriculum and fields of study in the training follow the guidelines of the International Association of Steiner/Waldorf Early Childhood Education (IASWECE).

¹ For more information see: <https://www.goetheanum.org/en/>



Early Childhood Training in Bait al-Shams is an ongoing process. In 2019 there were four modules to improve and develop the quality of the kindergarten consistently. In addition to that, we had two training conducted by the trainer Uta Stolz, a specialist for learning support and learning difficulties, for the teachers who are leading our learning support program, which started in June 2018.

In summary, we can say that all the educators demonstrate respectful relationships with the children, which is evident in all interactions including supporting children in managing their behavior.

Parent Program

The Parent Teacher Project encouraged active participation of the parents in relation to their children both in *Just.Childhood's* kindergarten Bait al-Shams and at home. The project was enriched through the parents' involvement in and interaction with the concept of Waldorf Education. The parents' interest in a variety of activities ensured their understanding of the principles of the kindergarten's non-violent and age-appropriate educational approach. This process created an environment within which the parents developed a deeper understanding of Child protection values. Monthly sessions were conducted for the new parents to get familiar with Waldorf Education and to expand their creativity through developing their artistic skills. This in effect, transformed the kindergarten premises into a healthier, friendlier and safer place for parents and their children. Overall, we have been able to strengthen the relationship between parents, educators, and children, another important aspect in regard to the healthy development of the child.

Pre-school program

This program started in September 2016 and is now in its fourth year. Two educators



specialized in teaching the children the essential knowledge they will need when entering the school in the following academic year. In cooperation with Waldorf class teachers at schools and educators in Germany 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 hour 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 one after the other before being repeated.

Family Center

At the beginning of 2019, we started working on our family center project, the center which encompasses different programs such as the mother-child group and sewing sessions that are mainly aimed at targeting the different and various needs of the local community.

MOTHER CHILD GROUP

The mother-child group is based on preparatory sessions for parents and their children age one and a half till three years before potentially registering in our kindergarten. The sessions aim to familiarize both the parents and children with the kindergarten, its environment and system so they can adapt easier and faster once the child is enrolled. The sessions also aim to develop a bond between the parents and Bait al-Shams, encouraging them to participate in our various programs such as cooking healthy lunch for all our children throughout the academic year.

SEWING SESSIONS

The positive impact of this program went beyond its original idea to provide parents





with the opportunity to contribute to the kindergarten through helping in preparing things like costumes or dolls for children to play with, which can be reflected positively on caregivers' self-esteem. The program also provides the parents with the opportunity to gain important skills that can eventually help them support their families financially. It also strengthens the bonds between the parents and kindergarten and provides a platform for parents to share their different experiences and skills with each other.

HEALTH CARE/DENTAL SESSIONS

Addressing health issues is with no doubt an integral part of raising children and an aspect of early childhood education as well. Mainly oral and dental health is a problem with high prevalence yet with very low, inappropriate attention and intervention, especially in the camps. The impact of oral and dental diseases on the overall health status and the well-being of children is often neglected and has been overlooked or underestimated, which makes the problem persistent. In the framework of our family center we have started our dental sessions in 2019. Focusing on prevention as intervention, being by far the most appropriate and sustainable approach to take action against early childhood caries and towards an optimum dental and oral health for children and mothers, we aim to rebuild the notion of oral health through awareness and early intervention, which provide beneficiaries with basic and concrete steps towards better management and understanding of existent dental diseases, while meeting the needs of the individual to enhance their oral health.

Learning Support

The much-needed Learning Support Program started in the summer of 2018. Since a couple of years dropping out of school has become a major concern in the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) manages the primary education system in the camps. A qualitative study conducted in 2011 by the American University of Beirut² identifies four main reasons for the rising percentage of school dropouts. First, although many Palestinian families seem to be



willing to sacrifice a lot for their children's education, the daily struggle for survival in the Palestinian camps still appears to be their first priority in Lebanon. Second, dropouts and parents perceive that the UNRWA teachers and administrators are generally not caring when students start to fade out of the system. Third, the UNRWA schools are fragmented; some parts of the school system are either not working or do not exist at all. Fourth, corporal punishment and lack of extra-curricular activities are another factor that leads to early school dropouts.

The concept of a healthy learning support program after school aimed to ease the transitional process for children as they leave our kindergarten into their first year of school. This transitional process is often traumatic and difficult for children as they are forced to adapt to a completely different environment and cope with an extremely pressuring educational system that is mostly not attentive to children's needs and does not consider individual abilities and differences.

The program offers the children attending its different activities that are specifically tailored to suit their needs and age, and in addition pays attention to their psychological wellbeing.



Activities Include:

- free play
- guided activity in periods according to season
- eating together
- homework in groups
- labs for language, movement, and mathematics
- excursion

As the program started parents in the local community were very encouraged, however as time passed the initial idea of the program was mostly ignored and the parents

² Al Hroub Anies: UNRWA School Dropouts in Palestinian Refugee Camps in Lebanon. A Qualitative Study, Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs American University of Beirut, November 2011; http://website.aub.edu.lb/ifa/public_policy/pal_camps/Documents/research_reports/20111212ifi_pc_unrwa_research_report01_hroub_english.pdf



started to form assumptions and expectations that the program is mainly found to assist children in their daily homework.

After conducting different meetings with parents and collecting feedback, parents acknowledged that the learning system in UNRWA schools is very hectic for children and leaves no room for them to play or to be engaged in other activities. Children are forced to study and practice all the time after they return home to meet the high expectations of their relevant teachers such as having perfect handwriting and finishing tons of homework. These factors make it impossible for children to be enrolled in any activity or program after school.

Outcomes

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



Outlook 2020

One of the major challenges, as every year, will be finding new donors to support the overall costs of the kindergartens and its additional programs.

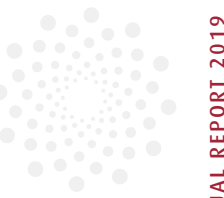
On an organizational and pedagogical level, we will continue in the way we are working for now. This basically means:

- Moving forward with expected program put down by team and trainers
- Advancing community work
- Extending the system of milestones to be achieved concerning the development of the children/developing tools to measure success
- Developing the best-practice approach by developing strategies for opening more kindergarten branches in the other Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon (Baalbek as a first step)
- Continuing intensive training
- Strengthening the fundraising plan towards more independence from political circumstances/ visibility

Conclusion:

In a nutshell, despite the challenges that come with the environment we are working in, the team was able to look back at another another successful year. The work with the children continued very well, we could again 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.

Just.Childhood consists of people who have many years of experience working with





social or political-related work within Lebanon in general and its current refugee and host community context in specific. The staff working in Shatila Camp is all from the respective community. With the additional programs like the Parent/Community Awareness and Learning support mainly, we were able to support and strengthen the effectiveness of the overall ECE project. Follow-up strategies to evolve from best practice to a larger scale project, possibly in other refugee camps in Lebanon, and, if possible, regionally, will be developed additionally.

Part of our organizational goals, to move from best practice to common practice in terms of Early Childhood Education as well as growing expertise in Elementary Education has been achieved by expanding our work to Baalbek. Also, the team is more confident and is working closely with the parents to establish a social link through participation in supporting their children in the kindergarten and beyond. We were able to create a healthy environment for educators, children and parents. In general, the team is much more active and is taking responsibilities more naturally. This, at the same time reflects on the parents, who learn about their children's rights, their own rights and ways of articulating them beyond the kindergarten routine.





Success stories

Shatila



Mahmoud Houwari

5 YEARS, BEES GROUP

Since his first day at kindergarten Mahmoud used to act in a very aggressive manner towards his friends. He used to hit them and aggressively take away their toys and use inappropriate language. Being extremely active and stubborn he refused to eat with the group and preferred to sit away and alone. Also, he wasn't very open to all kinds of healthy food. Besides, he refused to place the toys back in its place and when playing with his friends he would always wrestle them, push them to the ground and randomly throw wood and toys to the ground and at his friends. A lot of his friends used to complain about him, especially that he did not like to wait for his turn to play and starts to cry when his time at the swings is over.

Afterwards, a great development occurred to the child's personality and behavior through participating in all the kindergarten activities, which allowed him to gain new life skills and allowed him to have a positive attitude toward others. Being provided with enough space for movement and outside activities with the help of educators, the child was able to vent out negative energy. Activities such as coloring, painting, felting and other activities made him calmer and more organized since daily routine made him more active and committed to the rules of kindergarten. In addition to encouraging him to eat healthier food through giving him some responsibilities like allowing him to participate in food preparation, short stories told by educators which tackle different subjects such as hygiene and neatness, cooperation, love, friendship and other subjects played a role in changing his behavior. Now the child loves his kindergarten and friends a lot. He became closer to them and participate with them in all activities and help his friends when needed. Moreover, he is now very excited about classes and interacts with educators. We are noticing his positive progress daily.

Lea Mahmoud

4 YEARS, BUTTERFLIES GROUP

As Lea started at the kindergarten, she did not know how to speak at all. Her hand and body muscles were always cramped. She would walk very slow as if crawling on her feet. When she used to paint, she would use too much pressure causing the colors to become extremely dark. While playing with her friends she used to only listen, she did not help them in cleaning the class, she would hold a toy very tightly through such times.

Through the age-mixed groups and inside and outside playing (climbing, jumping, running. etc.), stories, morning routine and wrap-up routines with songs along with simple body movements and felting activities, Lea gained self-confidence and got encouraged to speak with her educators and friends. Also, hand and body games helped to ease the cramps in Lea's hands and body.

Lea is now a social child who likes to play and to participate in tidying up the room with her educators and friends. She shows care toward kids who are younger than her through holding their hands while going up to the roof. She became a very fluent speaker and she knows now how to pronounce the letters properly. She also likes to tell stories to her friends through dolls and animal toys in class. Most importantly Her body became more flexible.





Ranem Hamzeh
4 YEARS, BIRDS GROUP

Ranem was an overly active child, she would always hit her friends and she couldn't sit still or stop beating her friends.

She used to throw wood at her friends without any obvious reason as she also used to throw the house stuff outside the house corner. She refused to tidy up or to help her friends in tidying. She also refused to follow the educators' and group rules. The educators assigned her the role of preparing the food table or preparing for activities inside the group.

The activities followed in the kindergarten helped Ranem to be calmer and more interactive. Besides, working inside groups helped her to care more about her friends and to accept and interact with them.

Ranem now loves to tell stories out of her imagination, she even asks her friends to gather around and hear her stories after she used to refuse to talk or to express herself. Moreover, she was able to develop a proper and sound technique while eating instead of her old random eating habits.

Success stories

Baalbek

Since the beginning of our work in September 2019, we have been able to build a healthy and loving atmosphere in the kindergarten, which is felt through the remarkable integration of children within our program.

We would like to consider the daily work applied and its impact on our children in general under the present circumstances and the quite sudden change, as one success story. Through offering the free space and safe atmosphere in the kindergarten, we could already observe positive effects on shy and vulnerable children, as well as on active children, or those who have been acting aggressively, after a short time. A confirming factor of the program's positive effects was the development of the educators and their acceptance of the changes taking place. The educators received training on Waldorf methods and trauma orientated education, conducted by a specialized team from the German Team Friends of Waldorf Education – Emergency Pedagogy. This was followed by a second training in September 2019, right before the beginning of the scholastic year. We had to build the team and change the kindergarten, its interior and atmosphere within the classes considering the basics of the curriculum and its needs.

Also, with an attempt of sharing experiences and capacity-building, a training program has been developed, continuing over the course of the year, where the educators are constantly trained for the implementation of Waldorf methodologies. This training is supported by Shatila's kindergarten educators who have gained practical experience that has proven its worth after a five-year experience since *Just.Childhood* was founded. Baalbek's educators observed positive and tangible reflections on the children of the kindergarten with regard to the new approach.

Educator Marwa Adwan, who worked in Inaash's kindergarten for nearly 10 years, expresses that "the actual adoption and application of the Waldorf pedagogy helped me to have a better communication with the children, as well as enabling them to express themselves freely and build communication and social skills with the other children. The warmth and love that floods the daily atmosphere in the kindergarten was preceded by a lot of anxiety and fear at the beginning of the transitional stage while





preparing for the new approach that is different from what I used to in my previous years of experience. The mixed ages groups have also enabled me to see and observe children's abilities more deeply, especially for 5-year-olds."

For *Just.Childhood* the most important success stories rely on focusing and directing the potential of each individual. After almost 5 years of constant and professional training, our educators became trainers themselves and they are responsible to train the new educators in our new project in Baalbek. Parents who were skeptical at the beginning of their journey with *Just.Childhood* became a changing factor in the Shatila community by believing in our value system and transferring it to other individuals. Age-mixing allows the older children to facilitate the learning process through being a leading example even without them realizing sometimes.



Donors 2019



Rotary



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Annual Budget for all Programs

STAFF COSTS:	121.400 USD
OPERATIONAL/ADMINISTRATIONAL EXPENSES:	108.042 USD
TOTAL:	229.442 USD

