

Ghassan Kanafani Cultural Foundation



About Us

Ghassan Kanafani Cultural Foundation (GKCF) was founded as a Lebanese NGO on July 8th 1974, on the 2nd commemoration of the martyrdom of Ghassan Kanafani, author, journalist, artist and spokesman for the Palestinian people.

Among its several programs, the foundation runs six kindergartens, two habilitation centers for children and youth with disabilities, three libraries & art centers and three clubs for older children in the Palestinian refugee camps and in some deprived Lebanese areas.

The organization has more than one hundred highly committed staff members and volunteers who work to achieve GKCF's goals and objectives.

Our Mission

Ghassan Kanafani Cultural Foundation is a nonprofit organization that aims to improve the educational, cultural, economic and social life of the Palestinian children by improving children and youth's capacities to develop and learn in highly educational, interactive and safe environments and by empowering children with disabilities to function and participate more effectively in society. The foundation believes that every child has the right to learn, live with dignity and explore all their potentials for a better future in a better world.

Our Vision

The Palestinian society is empowered and effective and enjoys all its rights and is able to participate in decisions that influence its future. The Palestinian children and youth are living with dignity and have both the skills and opportunity to grow and develop in a supportive environment. Ghassan Kanafani Cultural Foundation is a highly successful organization that has all the proper capabilities to design, implement and monitor effective and creative programs and methodologies aimed at empowering Palestinian children. The foundation has independent and committed sources of funding and its human resources are well developed and highly motivated.

Our Overall Goal

Improve the educational, cultural, economic and social life of the Palestinian children and youth

Our Objectives

1. Improve children's capacity to develop and learn in highly educational, interactive and safe environments
2. Empower children and youth with disabilities to function and participate more effectively in society

Our Target Groups

- A. Palestinian and Lebanese children *in addition to other nationalities* (age: 3 – 18 years)
- B. Palestinian and Lebanese youth (age: 19 – 25 years)
- C. Children and youth with disabilities and special needs (age: 1 month to 25 years)
- D. The families of the children and youth

Our Values

Children's Rights

We believe that every child has the same rights and freedoms regardless of his/her creed, gender, physical and mental status, social or ethnic origin. All children have the right to protection, care, nationality, human identity and freedom of expression, as well as the basic needs for food, education and health care. Moreover, we also believe that children should be physically, mentally and emotionally free from any kind of abuse.

Children are the Future

Ghassan Kanafani Cultural Foundation strongly believes that a better future can be established through the participation of children today. Children can contribute to building a better and more developed society in the future provided they are given the proper skills, tools, opportunities and environment so they would explore their potentials and develop their personalities in safe, supportive and motivational environments.

Participation and Empowerment

We believe that children must be prepared and empowered to participate effectively in making decisions that affect their lives and future. As well as their rights, children need to understand their duties and responsibilities as well as learn how to respect others' rights, their own cultural values and those of others.

Inclusion

We believe that all children with disabilities and without disabilities have the right to be included in all processes within the society where they should be given the equal opportunity to develop and use their capacities with respect and without any discrimination. Palestinian children, in particular, should be equally and integrally included in all social, cultural and educational events and activities.

Decisions and Priorities

Ghassan Kanafani Cultural Foundation has adopted a participatory approach to involve all its staff and stakeholders in its strategic planning process. Using a combination of focus groups, interviews and a survey, the consultation process was implemented in three phases that targeted partners, staff and the administrative committee. The results were analyzed to highlight the decisions and priorities GKCF is planning to adopt for the next four years (2009-2012). Among these are the following decisions:

A- Mission and Vision

- Maintain the organization's vision and values that were inspired by Ghassan Kanafani
- Persevere to work in supporting the Palestinian people
- Display strong solidarity with staff members and strive to maintain their well being and safety because they are the most precious asset GKCF has

B- Competitive strategy to achieve mission

- Create a mission that provides competitive advantage
- Develop creative and quality programs based on the holistic approach that serve all the children within all the programs
- Build the current partnerships while working to create new ones
- Invest in programs that aim at building the capacity of the staff
- Build the image and the identity of the organization
- Conceive an emergency/contingency plan for GKCF
- Develop cooperation with other organizations working in the same field

C- Development of the organization's structure

- Redesign the administrative structures to be more inclusive & adaptive
- Form, institutionalize and delegate to functional subcommittees
- Develop a fundraising strategy
- Strategically develop human resource management functions within the organization
- Maintain and motivate staff and create a clear staff policy and reward system (e.g. provide CNSS and/ or health insurance)
- Continue to improve the workplace environment conditions
- Document the organization's work and share the experience of the organization with others (*Knowledge Management and Networking*)

Core Strategies

To achieve its mission, GKCF is planning to adopt three core strategies: the first two are focused on programs and operations while the third revolves around GKCF's organizational development and the enhancement of its performance.

Strategy One: Education and Development of Children and Youth

Rationale of Strategy One

ECDE, Early Childhood Development and Education, sets the foundation for any real sustainable and long term development in society. It also represents a basis of cultural and economic development as well. So to plan for a better future we need to start working early with the children of today because as Ghassan Kanafani had always believed '*children are the future*'.

Early childhood is the most important period of development in human life. Although individual children develop at their own pace, all children progress through a sequence of physical, cognitive, and emotional growth and change. Early brain development is interactive, rapid and dramatic. Early sensory stimulation influences the brain's ability to think and regulate bodily functions. Good nutrition and nurturing support optimize early brain development and later learning and behavior.

The Early Childhood Development and Education program, GKCF is implementing, is based on the holistic approach and the fact that young children respond best when activities and programs are designed to encourage and stimulate progress from one level of development to the next one. Moreover, the GKCF's ECDE programs are specifically designed to address the children's needs in the context of their integration in their own communities (*learning-for-life*).

GKCF's kindergarten programs are based on Early Childhood Development and Education. GKCF intends, as such, to improve young children's capacity to develop and learn while providing the children with a highly educational, interactive and safe environment that can positively nurture their intellectual and physical development, social behavior and their creative abilities and talents. This approach would develop children's positive abilities and attitudes. They would become socially and emotionally healthy, confident, and friendly; have good peer relationships, can tackle challenging tasks and persist to solve them, have good communication skills, and are attentive and ready for school. The ECDE programs can also contribute to improving the life and future potentials of children by the time they enter school. A child who has been well prepared to elementary education and its challenges can usually advance steadily in schools and has a higher chance of having good grades, passing classes and not dropping out of school early.

GKCF believes in the holistic approach to ECDE and plans for interventions that include kindergarten education, supporting parents, developing the capacities of staff and providing

different services to children such as libraries, clubs and art centers where children can learn to explore their talents, acquire new skills and develop their potentials.

GKCF also realizes that the best ECDE approach takes place both at home and in the kindergarten and should be both educational and learning-orientated and must necessarily include parents' cooperation and support. As such, GKCF works to build up and strengthen an interactive and continuous relation with the parents of the targeted children.

Overall Goal of Strategy One

Improve young children's capacities and possibilities to develop and learn in highly educational, interactive and safe environment

Objectives

1. Children have the emotional, physical social, creative and behavioral skills necessary for learning for life
2. Children can tackle challenging tasks and persist to solve them
3. Children have good communication skills
4. Children have good peer relationships
5. Children are attentive, focused and ready for school and later for life challenges

Competitive Advantages¹ of Strategy One:

1. Holistic approach within the GKCF kindergarten, libraries and clubs, art centers, summer activities and camps, etc.
2. Continuous development of an advanced and accredited curriculum
3. Continuous development of creative programs and activities
4. Utilization of international standards and benchmarks to develop and monitor the ECDE programs
5. The human resources skills and capacities are continually built
6. Introducing one foreign language within the kindergarten program.

Strategy Two:

Habilitation, Education and Empowerment of Children and Youth with Disabilities

Rationale of Strategy Two

Persons with disabilities have the right to get comprehensive and effective participation and opportunities in economic, social, cultural and political life. But in order to make participation possible, the early childhood phase needs to be properly nurtured. The quality of early care and education settings is an important contributor to children's development and to the quality of their own and families' future life. But to help children and youth with

¹ These are the approaches and methodologies that GKCF will adopt so as to differentiate and excel with its services from other care providers for children

disabilities participate more effectively in society, there are several areas that need to be addressed, among these are:

- a. Children and youth with disabilities must have the possibilities to develop physically, mentally and emotionally as their abilities permit
- b. They must live in a safe environment that encourages their growing and learning potentials
- c. They need to learn to enjoy their lives by being able to achieve and make contributions within their own surroundings, and
- d. They need to live within a healthy functioning family that sustains their well-being

GKCF, who is implementing the holistic approach, realizes that besides physical well-being, it is important to create supportive and safe environments and provide appropriate stimulating activities for all children, regardless of their disability status. Special and careful consideration to each individual child's abilities, experience and situation is an important factor for making decisions regarding the curricula for children and youth with disabilities and special needs.

Nevertheless, GKCF realizes that more attention must be given to 1) the shaping of positive attitudes toward children and youth with disabilities 2) the provision of resources and appropriate environments, and 3) the curricular approaches that support meaningful inclusion of children with disabilities and 4) the provision of quality intervention to promote children's potentials to the maximum possible levels. To develop meaningful inclusive environments, teachers and parents need to promote 'positive relations among peers and examine how to support quality social relationships for children and youth with disabilities. That's one of the reasons GKCF also runs an inclusion program that includes the children with disabilities with other children in the same mainstream classrooms where they get exposed to the same activities and experiences. This approach also includes the fact that innovative alternatives should be continuously explored, applied and modified in the classroom and the curriculum. One of the main keys is to have continuously well-trained and motivated staff members and teachers who are able to successfully provide positive and innovative solutions throughout the program.

Overall Goal

Empower children and youth with disabilities to function and participate more effectively in society

Objectives

- 1. Improved education, skills and learning processes for children and youth with disabilities
- 2. Improved functionality, mobility, confidence, independence of children and youth disabilities
- 3. Increased inclusion of children and youth with disabilities into social life
- 4. Children and youth with disabilities have acquired relevant knowledge and skills
- 5. Families of children and Youth with disabilities have the relevant skills and support (emotional & Technical) that leads to healthier functioning of the family dynamics

Competitive Advantages of Strategy Two:

1. Holistic approach using a combination of different activities and programs designed for children and youth with disabilities
2. Access to therapy, social care services and equipment
3. Tailored programs for each child
4. Inclusion and integration of children with special needs and a number of children with moderate disabilities into the GKCF mainstream kindergartens
5. Focused intervention, support and follow up for the parents of children and youth with disabilities.
6. Early intervention
7. Outreach program
8. Manufacturing of assistive aids in the occupational therapy workshop

Strategy Three: Organizational Development of GKCF

Rationale of Strategy Three

Determined to maintain its values, realities and identity, Ghassan Kanafani Cultural Foundation understands the need to continuously respond and adapt to the emerging challenges the organization is facing. This means that the ability to change needs to become a natural part in the life of the organization and will, as such, be embraced and integrated within all its processes. GKCF intends to use strategic management as means to continuously structure and manage change.

Needless to say, real change is not only the change that transforms the processes and administrative systems within an organization, it is also the change that aims to influence the behaviour of all the staff and *motivate* each one of them to act in order to make things better. Thus when GKCF plans for organizational change, it intends to focus on both the behavioural change of individuals and the organizational culture. GKCF realizes that the only way to implement this kind of 'change' is by getting everyone on board and stimulating ownership of the process.

GKCF will adopt the following nine-step change model:

1. Establish a sense of urgency to the 'change' among all staff and administrative board; this will be done at all levels and with the participation of all key staff and at all GKCF centers
2. Identify and empower individuals from within the organization who have the ability to stimulate and lead the 'change' process
3. Communicate clearly the vision and values of the organization
4. Ensure that the staff members are all involved and have ownership of the adopted processes
5. Clarify an action plan for change where all roles, concerns, benefits, etc. are clear and known by all staffs

6. Empower staff members at different levels so they can achieve the roles and results expected from them
7. Ensure short term wins for all concerned stakeholders
8. Adopt and institutionalize the changes within the organization and its culture
9. Constantly monitor and evaluate the process and results

Overall Goal

Enhance organizational capacity and increase GKCF's performance

Objectives

1. Enhanced organizational structures and procedures that are responsive to the dynamic changes and emerging challenges and needs
2. Empowered and motivated staff members who are well trained and delegated to provide high quality services
3. Increased performance and high quality services
4. Increased volunteer attraction and enhanced interaction with programs and community

Strategy Three: Components and course of action

The third strategy's success will not only ensure the sustainability and resilience of the organization in the coming years but it will also contribute into the accomplishment and success of the first two strategies as well.

GKCF as such will focus on five organizational development elements:

- a) The Organizational Structure
- b) Social Marketing of the organization
- c) Strategic Human Resources Management
- d) Emergency Preparedness and Response
- e) Coordination and Networking

Risk Management

GKCF has analyzed some of the assumptions and risks that might arise during the next four years and that might hinder the organizations' plans. These risks are listed below along with their possibility of occurrence, the level of impact on GKCF plans if they ever occur, and the proposed action that GKCF suggests to take once/ before they have occurred:

Assumption/Risk	Possibility	Impact	Proposed Action
1. Decrease in funding the current programs	Medium	High	Develop alternatives sources of funding
2. Resistance to change	Medium	Medium	Address the situation dynamically while using rational incentives, peer influence and interactive communication
3. Instability of the security situation in the Palestinian camps	High	High	Prepare an emergency preparedness plan immediately & implement it whenever needed
4. Break out of local or regional war	Medium	High	Prepare an emergency preparedness plan immediately and implement it whenever needed
5. Lack of cooperation from parents and/or local community	Low	Medium	Build tailored interactive communication, examine each situation and propose innovative solutions and incentives



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