

HABILITATION PRESCHOOL

GHASSAN KANAFANI CULTURAL FOUNDATION

2023 ACHIEVEMENTS

This report is a very brief summary of the achievements of the Habilitation Preschool- Ghassan Kanafani Cultural Foundation, for the year 2023.

SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, AND ENVIRONMENTAL BACKGROUND

Locally, we still live in the dire circumstances, that started in the fall of 2019. Economic severe inflation, cut in salaries, sharp rise in cost of electricity, clean water, & food prices (not from government but private owners). Added to this, the mounting war in the region (Gaza & Southern Lebanon). But we follow the motto of defy sorrow with working to help promote the living conditions of our children with multiple disabilities, mainly refugees, and their families.

Our work continued as usual. Five days a week 7 hours per day. We didn't stop attending any day, aside for the days off for the Holidays. All the staff and beneficiaries bore the high cost of petrol and high prices of food and other necessities. With this stand, life has a meaning and a purpose.

WORK PHILOSOPHY

Also, I would like give a brief description of our philosophy of work. We believe that children learn mainly through play (which is synonymous to work with adults). And when you play/work, you are having fun, and being an active participant in all your discoveries and progression. Active participant entitles that the child executes the activities with his/her hands, body, mind and emotions. When you passively receive information, i.e., you are sitting idle listening and seeing what is being said or done, only two sensory systems are at passive work. But when you explore the dynamics of being involved, with all your senses (visual, auditory, tactile, motorically and cognitively), the learning experiences is imprinted in all your nervous system. So, as you know, how it feels when you use soap, add water and moving the soap with your palms to reach a foam of soap that makes you drop the soap and rub both your hands together (bilateral body coordination), then open the faucet to wash away the soap. If I observe someone doing it, I don't know how the soap feels on our skin and how are the hand movements to execute this task (just one example of many).

ACHIEVEMENTS

I can go on indefinitely in showing how life activities should be practiced by children to achieve knowledge through the integration of all the senses. I will stop here and just rely our achievements for year 2023.

- **68 children with multiple** (21 females, 47 males) disabilities and their families, have been served. Thus, a total of **272 beneficiaries**.
- 32 % were Palestinians, 19% Lebanese, 48% Syrians, & 1% Somalian
- 22% were children with Cerebral Palsy (prenatal damage to the brain that affect the cognitive and motoric abilities of the child), 6% had Developmental Delay (delay in

development in the motoric, cognitive, emotional & social domains), 6% had Learning Difficulties, 59% had Autism, and 7% had Genetic Diseases (inborn hereditary diseases).

- **1836 physical therapy sessions** were conducted, **1938 sessions of occupational therapy, 1936 sessions of speech therapy** and **4395 sessions of special education** (1483 for children with autism, 1456 sessions with children with moderate multiple disabilities & 1456 sessions with children with severe disabilities)
- **22 children with multiple disability received dental treatment.** 22 had regular treatment and **4 had surgeries** (when the child has a complex- disabilities it is difficult to treat if not under general anesthesia)
- **9 children** with motoric problems underwent **check up** by our **Orthopedic Surgeon**
- **114 parents received training, education & awareness in all aspects of intervention for their children.** 49 families were followed up, by our clinical psychologist, on their day to day life dynamics (Alia's family received 40 contact-hours of follow-up and training)
- **12 Parent Support Group Meetings** were conducted with the parents. Subjects discussed were:
 - Situation that arises anxiety in daily life
 - Techniques/activities to reduce stress
- **15 hour of interactive education workshop** were conducted with the families
- **Staff** acquired **16 contact hours of training** to enhance their professional skills
- **4 University students**, in different professions (2 speech therapy, 2 occupational therapy, ...) received their field training in our center. A total of **1255 contact- hours of training** (607 hours in Speech Therapy, 648 in Occupational Therapy) students in the paramedical domain

FINANCIAL SITUATION

Our programs were supported by different channels:

- Medical Aid for Palestinians covered around 30% of our budget
- Taawon, Welfare Association for Palestinians, covered around 46% percent of our budget
- Families of the children covered around 6% of our budget
- Switzerland Supporters covered around 15% of our budget
- Canadian Supporters covered around 3% of our budget

We were able, with all your generous donations to sustain our existence for year 2023.

CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES

Following this small narrative, I will provide as usual, visual data, with a description of what the child is being trained on.

1. DRAWING



This picture, figures a child with severe motor and cognitive problems. The professional working with him is a Special Educator. All Professional Team, are aware of all child's intervention plan, of the child, in all disciplines.

Motorically: as you can see, this child has problems standing with balance, proper grasping of crayons, and is non-verbal. Instead of letting the child stand, using a standing board, the professional stand behind the child giving support, when needed, is she feels the child is off balance. Thus, he is trained to sustain his standing balance while executing another activity with his upper extremities. At the beginning, it does not matter how the child is holding the crayon, the importance

her is of forming a cognitive plan of what steps, motor, visual and cognitive, are to be executed to achieve drawing, while standing still. Later when the child develops good control of the gross motor movement, we go on to train the coordinated activities of the fine motor movements (eye movements, finger movements, wrist movements, ...). The child is trained here, primarily, on Mobility with Stability (i.e., keeping upright posture without falling, while executing another task in his upper extremities).

2. DAILY LIVING ACTIVITIES



In this picture, another child, with Neural Tube defects and Hydrocephaly (the accumulation of the water surrounding the central nervous system in the head). This results in an enlarged head, which affects the ability to develop good control of the head and neck.

This child is being trained on how to open a bag and withdraw things out of it. To be able to execute this activity while sitting, the child has to have good trunk control (mainly pelvis & torso). To achieve this, with our child, we have to stabilize the sitting position, so the child doesn't have to be worried about falling during his activity. The first step, is the stabilization the pelvic joints, through a pelvic belt that crosses the joints, and the belt is tied on the back of the chair (with valcro). The child does not have a good torso control, a chest belt will provide this, with the back being supported by a flat chair back. The child legs should bend at 90 degrees, all joints, and feet are situated flat on a board/floor.

After the child is secure, and does not have to worry about his body, we start the training on upper extremities and hand function. This is also Mobility during Stability (while sitting in this condition).

The chair the child is sitting on, with all its accessories, is designed and manufactured here in our Occupational Therapy workshop.