



Provide preschool education for Palestinian children refugees in Nahr

El Bared Camp (3-5 aged)

Who is Najdeh ?

Association Najdeh was founded at the beginning of Lebanese civil war in 1976 by a group of independent secular Lebanese persons for providing job opportunities and economic support to the Palestinian refugee female headed-households who displaced from one of completely destroyed Palestinian refugee camp (Tel-Za'atar) and they became the main breadwinners of their families.

Mission

Association Najdeh's mission is to empower Palestinian refugee women in Lebanon. Najdeh believes that self-reliant women will be able to contribute substantially to the sustainable development of the Palestinian refugee community in Lebanon. In addition, Najdeh aims at promoting Palestinian and Palestinian women refugee rights nationally, regionally and internationally. Association Najdeh runs 36 centers in 10 Palestinian refugees' camps in Lebanon. Najdeh is seeking to:

- Empower the vulnerable Palestinian Refugee females to challenge patriarchal social norms by providing educational, vocational and professional skills, psychosocial and psychological support.
- Promoting human rights values and good practices at the community-level,
- Campaign for the implementation of the Palestinian community's Human Rights, especially right to work and to own properties.

Since the end of 2012, Association Najdeh is also involved in the response to the Syrian crisis, described as the fastest growing refugee's crisis. Association Najdeh started emergency projects through distribution in-kind assistance and cash assistance. The target group was mainly Palestinian-Syrian Refugees & Syrians who accommodated in the Palestinian camps and gathering. As Najdeh's core business, the "women's rights" component was integrated into the emergency projects. At the same time, Association Najdeh has started to include Palestinian-Syrian and Syrians living in camps within its development programs with a focus on psychosocial support and pre-schooling remedial activities.

How do live Palestinian refugees in Lebanon?

The Palestinian presence in Lebanon is one of protracted (long term) refugees rather than refugees fleeing from recent conflict. Despite this fact, Palestine refugees remain excluded from key aspects of social, political and economic life in the country. They are barred from owning property or practicing in more than 70 professions, among which all liberal professions. In addition the Lebanese army controls access to Palestine refugee camps, restricting refugees' mobility.

This social exclusion physically extends to camps, the space inhabited by about two thirds of Palestine refugees. Camps are enclaves outside the authority of the Lebanese state. However, the surface area of the camps has not increased with population and many have become cramped shantytowns, offering little privacy to residents and exposing them to health hazards. Within camps UNRWA provides housing, water, and electricity. These services do not extend to gatherings and camp surroundings, mostly also inhabited by Palestinians, and which suffer from irregular waste disposal and water and electricity supply, which officially are the responsibility of the Lebanese Government. UNRWA also provides education, health care services as well as some additional welfare services to Palestinians living in camps as well as gatherings.

Nahr el Bared Camp

Nahr el Bared camp is 16km north of Tripoli near the coastal road in north Lebanon. In mid-2007, around 27,000 Palestine refugees were displaced from Nahr el Bared camp and its adjacent areas in northern Lebanon, as a result of the conflict between the Lebanese Armed Forces and the extremist group Fatah Al-Islam, which has established itself in the camp.

As of January 2014, 5857 residents have returned to live in their new apartment and 284 shops have been provided for traders. The remaining 15 723 residents (3 546 displaced families) continue to live in temporary accommodation in the Nahr el Bared camp adjacent area and in nearby Beddawi camp. Almost 7 years later, much of the community remains uprooted and continues to rely on assistance from UNRWA. Only 3 of the 6 schools have been rebuilt and opened since 2011.

The project

Association Najdeh has been active in the pre-school education field since its foundation in 1978, offering disadvantaged children a creative learning environment while affording their mothers the necessary time to seek work and assume a productive role within the family and the community.

Palestinian refugee children and their mothers are suffering the most from the steady reduction of donor funds for the Palestinian community in Lebanon. In dealing with the reduction of donor funds, all NGOs, working in the mother and child domain, raised the tuition fees. UNRWA, the UN agency which provides education, health care and social services within Palestinian refugees' camps, does not provide preschool activities.

Nahr El Bared kindergarten accommodates 75 children aged to 3 to 5 years old, includes 3 classrooms, one for each level supervised by one animator. The scholastic year starts in September and ends in June, 5 days a week from 8am to 1pm. summer activities take place in July for 3 weeks.

General Objective

Develop the skills of children at intellectual, conceptual, mental, physical and psychological levels, and providing their mothers with educational and social skills to know how to deal with their children's problems.

Specific Objectives

- Contributing to the increase of children pre-school educational level.
- Exposing children to their social, cultural, and natural environment.
- Enlisting parental participation.
- Raising Mothers and Community awareness on child development needs and health issues.

Activities

In the Kindergarten

Children are engaged in both curricula and external and recreational programs. These programs are in tune with the children's age. For example, proper pronunciation and annunciation, recognizing the different shapes and colors, learning the alphabet and numbers are a basic component of the program targeting the 3-years old children. These skills are further enhanced in the upper KG classes. An introduction to the English language is included in the program targeting the 4 and 5-years old children.

Extra-Curricular Activities Learning is not limited to classroom activities. The animators take the children outdoors, exposing them to their surroundings. For example, learning about the different vocations by visiting the workplace, learning about the nature through field trips. Recreational activities, such as celebrations, art, dance, and sports are also an integral part of the educational program.

Moreover, the children are introduced to their rights through various activities. Examples: in celebration of the Palestine Child Day plays relating to Child's Rights are performed. Themes of the daily classroom discussions revolve issues relating to Child's rights (freedom of play, of expression, having a clean environment, having a shelter, getting an education, etc.)

Summer Activities

Children between 6 and 14 years old participate to summer activities. They are divided into age groups. Each group is named after a theme related to child's rights. Other activities include puppet shows, singing, dancing, trips, cleaning campaigns, cultural and historical sessions and sports.

Parents Participation

The program aims also at strengthening parental participation and involvement in the education of their children. It is achieved through periodic workshops on pertinent pedagogical and social topics as well as on issues of health and hygiene. Mothers are also encouraged to attend the Kindergarten's classes, observing and participating in its teaching program.

Workshops are organized by animators and doctors on topics whose women feel concerned about: women rights, rights of the Child, children psychology, discrimination against women, domestic violence, dental care, reproductive health or early marriage.

The Parental Committee is enabling parents to intervene in community matters that concern them directly. The initiative encourages parents to adopt a wider range of community issues that affect their children's education and their future.

Social follow-up of children's families attending Kindergarten

The relationship with the community is consolidated further through regular home-visits. Carried out by Najdeh's KG teachers, those home-visits are to investigate and resolve with parents outstanding learning or social problems affecting their children. Solutions to the family's social and economic problems are examined, focusing on the mother's situation and needs. Where necessary, mothers are encouraged to participate in other projects available through Najdeh and other institutions. Some serve educational purposes, others are social visits, and the rest are follow-up visits.

Beneficiaries:

Due to the harsh situation that the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon are enduring, the majority of the population served is Palestinian, at 85% with the remained being of Lebanese, Syrian and other origins. Priority is given to children who already have sibling enrolled in the Kindergarten. Children are then chosen on the basis of their socio-economic conditions.

Since the beginning of the civil war in Syria and the settlement of Syrian refugees and Palestinian refugees from Syria, some of their children are attending Nahr El Bared Kindergarten. Indeed, 1 000 families from Syria settle in Nahr el Bared Camp.

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