

Report on the Activities of
World Day for Prevention of Child Abuse
“Together, Let’s Protect Children from Violence”



19 - 24 November, 2008

Gaza Community Mental Health Programme

Gaza Community Mental Health Programme (GCMHP) is a member of the Women's World Summit Foundation (WWSF) that includes 922 member organizations in 135 countries worldwide which are concerned with the issues of women and children.

As a member of this coalition, GCMHP celebrated this anniversary of "World Day for Prevention of Child Abuse" by organizing a series of activities throughout three consecutive days 19, 23, and 24 November, 2008. The activities were held this year under the title "Involving Children and Youth in the Anti-Violence Activities".

GCMHP's Gaza Community Center initiated the activities of the World Day for Prevention of Child Abuse with a public meeting entitled "*Together, Let us Protect Children from Violence*" on November 19th, in Early Childhood and Education Programs Kindergarten in Al-Shate' Refugee Camp with the participation of 75 women including: teachers and housewives from the region.

Ms. Rawya Hamam, psychologist at GCMHP, talked about the negative behaviors that parents act with their children and their negative mental consequences that may continue for long time. Ms. Hamam illustrated her speech with examples. Then, she talked about some positive behaviors in the children-parents relationships that in turn strengthen the emotional relations between them, and children



will positively interact with these behaviors, such as: making the children feel that their parents love them; giving them good example; providing them with training about what they will do as order; enhancing their self-confidence; and dealing with them in wisdom and equity rather than violence and discrimination.

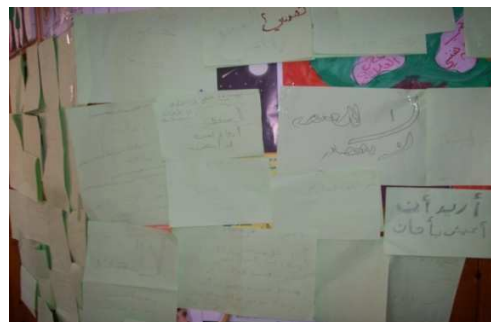
At the end of the meeting, Ms. Hamam called the mothers to protect their children from violence and abuse, and to deal with them as individuals who have the right to live in a peaceful environment, and enjoy love and understanding in order to grow up without any long-term psychological problems.

On November 23rd, GCMHP's Deir El Balah Community Center organized an open day in cooperation with Social Rehabilitation Center in Al Maghazy area, middle Gaza Strip. Around 100 children attended the event that was opened by Ms. Samah Mahmoud, psychologist at GCMHP. Ms. Mahmoud talked about violence definition that was presented by the children who



expressed the concept of violence. The children talked about violence that is being practiced by some children against each other, physical or psychological violence committed by the adults against the children, as well as violence committed by regimes against individuals. One of the children expressed his anger and resentment: “siege and cutting off electricity are violence...”

In the open day, the children formed four groups where they painted portraits by colors and clay. Every group exemplified a story expressing their rejection of all forms of violence and the type of society they aspire to live in. Here is a story of a group as expressed in their portrait where a child is walking and his parents shouting at him, and his teacher beating him. The street looks dirty, and the trees without leaves. The child walks along leaves expressing his rights such as “I have the right to play”, “I have the right of expression”... then, the group drew a heart surrounding the child where his family and teachers around him. In the last portrait, the scene changes dramatically into happiness as the street is clean, and the trees covered with green leaves. At the end of the street, the child appears cheerful.



Having finished painting, the children joined a team of singers from “Palestine Aviner Association” to sing together songs calling

for the rights of the Palestinian children who are forbidden from most of their rights. Innocently, they requested to live like all children worldwide.

Then, the children watched a toy show “The Rabbit and Squirrel and Uncle Fahim”. Then they discussed what they have just watched in the show about the different attitudes and behaviors of people toward the others and their respect to each others, the way of rejection and guiding the others politely without violence so as to live a happy, healthy, and quiet life.



The children took a break to enjoy happy moments and relief what they feel without connecting this to the World Day, the children were involved in a number of games and entertainment competition to show their talents of singing, folklore dancing, and acting. The disguised characters decorated the scene and increased happiness and joy among children.

At the end of this day, GCMHP distributed presents to the children to encourage them to participate in other activities and event related to their life and welfare.

On November 24, Ms. Enas Jouda, Mental Health Professional in GCMHP’s Gaza Community Center, participated in a one-hour joint radio episode at Alwan, Al-Majd, Al-Manar radio stations. Ms. Jouda talked about protection of children from all forms of violence and called the audience to respect and accept children and to deal with them without violence. She also called the parents to deal with children in a way that respect the children’s value, self confidence and independence. In addition, she addressed the children calling them to know their rights and to defend them peacefully by dialogue and accepting and respecting the others’ opinions. Ms. Jouda added that there are mutual roles between the children and the society, emphasizing that as the children should enjoy their rights, they have to do their duties towards the others like all individuals in the society.

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