

Project Proposal
on
Trauma Counseling in Lebanon

UNICEF, Beirut
January 1997

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Funding Proposal
for

Trauma Counseling in Lebanon

BACKGROUND

During the period of 11 to 27 April, and due to the heavy military action by Israel against areas in South of Lebanon, its West Bekaa, Baalbek and parts of the southern suburb of Beirut city, around 300000 people including children and their parents were displaced after being forced to leave their homes and their communities to escape the violence of war and the danger of heavy shelling. Those who could not reside with relatives or friends moved into safer areas in the capital or in the mountains, residing in schools and empty buildings. Immediate survival needs were catered for by national, international and non-governmental organizations in coordination with the local authorities.

Yet, these displaced families and children were facing very difficult conditions with no special attention being given to their emotional and psychological needs. Furthermore, these same people have faced major problems upon their return to their homes when the military hostilities stopped. Some of their physical surroundings and other services were destroyed and a few others lost members of their families. Presently, these people are continuously living with the violence of war and the danger of heavy shelling and are constantly being exposed to related stress. Such stress causes children to develop anxieties, dependencies, withdrawal, lack of concentration and other psycho-social disorders. In addition, this condition could lead to the probability of suffering from long term physical negative effects that might cause to increased susceptibility to illness.

PAST ACHIEVEMENT

Thus, an interim project was planned in coordination with the Ministry of Education to cater for the emotional and psychological needs of these families and their children. This programme consisted of the following:

a - Educational materials

Educational materials and games were distributed to 100 public schools in the South and West Bekaa. The purpose was to facilitate the work of social workers, care givers and parents in organizing leisure and socialization activities for the displaced during their forced stay in an uncomfortable and demanding environment of the displaced. Support was extended to an international NGO (Action North and South) that was supplied with similar kind of educational

materials. These were distributed in the same areas by the NGO staff and through a large network of local NGOs involved in assistance to needy children.

b - Roving Theater

100 theatrical performances were organized for children between 5 and 15 years of age. Around 40000 children were reached in their schools with their teachers and school principles. In some occasions, parents participated in this innovative dramatization of the problems that children of the war-torn areas face, including destruction, losses and displacement. Through the attractive characters of a combined puppet / actor theater with whom children easily identify, the sad event of being displaced is retold in a way that helps the children express their own experience of displacement. The interaction encouraged children to make simple decisions to strengthen their self esteem and sense of accomplishment.

c - Assessment

To assess the nature, magnitude and size of stress disorders, depressions and related war trauma, an assessment was conducted on 500 children as a sample representing the children of the South and West Beqaa. The children with their teachers and parents were interviewed by school health counselors, in their schools. The school health counselors were trained on how to conduct such interviews during a five day intensive training workshop. Also, twenty-five school principals were sensitized to this technique and were provided with the necessary orientation to facilitate interviewing children, their parents and teachers.

PROPOSED PROJECT

Implementing the above mentioned activities have cost UNICEF the amount of \$167000- of which the Italian government has contributed the amount of \$73000- while the Finnish has contributed the amount of \$30000- and the balance of \$64000- to cover part of these activities were taken from UNICEF budget of the current Education Country Programme of Cooperation. Presently efforts are being undertaken to seek international funding to allow UNICEF to plan and implement a new phase for this project. The new phase will involve these children and others in the same area and reinforce building the capacities of local teachers, school counselors and social workers to enable them to become directly involved in intervening with the children. This direct intervention will equip the children with the right coping tools to avoid any future shock that might cause them major disruptions in their normal patterns of emotional, cognitive, and physiological functioning, either immediately or later on in life.

In light of the above, and in accordance with article 39 of the CRC, a programme is needed to intervene for a period of one year to equip the majority of children in the war-driven areas to cope with their emotional and psycho-social needs.

OBJECTIVES

The *general objective* of this project is:

To help in a period of one year around 140,000 children and their parents of the South and West Bekaa, affected by the continuous armed conflicts, to overcome their stress and trauma by providing them with the psychological and coping tools required to help them regain stabilization and possibly a normal life.

The *specific objectives* of this project are:

1- Improve the competence of 300 local teachers, school health counselors and NGOs workers to enable them to intervene with simple programmes with stressed and traumatized children.

2- Develop and extend focused programmes through formal and nonformal channels of learning and communication to help around 140,000 children in the war-driven areas in releasing their tension and stress.

ACTIVITIES

Developing focused programmes

This will be done by developing activities to be infused within the curricula to be part of the normal flow of the children learning process through the framework of their skills acquisition as in communication, decision making, value clarification, conflict resolution and others. To achieve this task effectively, educational psychologists who have the practical experience in developing and teaching similar activities should be identified and called upon. This group of experts will work with the curricula groups working at the Ministry of Education to produce the materials to be an integrated activity within the teaching/learning process.

Provision of education material

Providing educational and recreational materials to enrich the poor environment of these children and to be used as part of the activities to be implemented with the children. In this direction, educational games, molding clay, drawing paper and puppets will be supplied to 150 schools, NGOs, and clubs. These materials will be used by children in their activities in order to release accumulated tension and stress.

Implementation of activities

Through children's activities to be provided by teachers, counselors, social workers and youth leaders, a psycho-social programme focusing on coping skills in communication, decision making, value judgement, and shock-avoidance will be provided including direct intervention in the classrooms when needed and the provision of the roving theater that will involve the children as the major actors in addition to their parents.

Building capacities

Training of around 300 teachers, school counselors, NGO workers and youth leaders to upgrade their level in screening, and assessing traumatized children and in providing intervention programmes to release the tension and stress of these children. Also, specialized training will be provided to curricula developers to upgrade their level in developing the right intervention programmes.

Estimated Budget in US \$

-	Developing materials	\$ 40,000-
-	Building capacities of school counselors, teachers and NGO workers	\$ 40,000-
-	Activities for children	\$ 50,000-
-	Provision of educational materials	\$ 50,000-
-	Evaluation and monitoring	\$ 25,000-
-	Logistical support	\$ 43,050-

	Total	\$248,050-
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