



Finnish Psychologists
for Social Responsibility (FiPSR), Finland

The National Institution
of Social Care and Vocational Training (NISCVT),
known by the Palestinian name
Beit Atfal Assumoud (BAS), Lebanon

Overview of the 28 annual progress reports of sponsored children with multiple special needs (MSN in the school year 2021-2022, compiled by MSc Imen Belhaj, psychologist and Sirkku Kivistö, specialist in health psychology 27.3.2023.

Tiivistelmä 28 erityislapsen tilanteen kuvauksesta kuntoutuskummeille tulleista raporteista. Raportin ovat laatineet psykologit Imen Belhaj ja Sirkku Kivistö

Kuntoutuskummit tukevat Beit Atfal Assumoud -yhteistyöjärjestön perheneuvoloiden hoidossa olevia erityislapsia, joille turvataan erityisopetus- ja kuntoutuspalveluja. Vuonna 2022 UNRWA pystyi ottamaan vastuun neljän kuntoutuskummilapsen koulutusmaksuista, mutta ilman kuntoutuskummeja muut lapset olisivat jääneet ilman oikeuttaan opiskella ja saada tukea kuntoutumiseensa. PSV on yhteydessä sveitsiläisiin ja italialaisiin, joilla myös on kuntoutuskummitoimintaa (PSV 17 lasta, Italia 3 lasta, Sveitsi 8 lasta). Tässä raportissa on yhdistetty näiden maiden saamat kuntoutuskummilasten edistymisraportit.

Beit Atfal Assumoudin (BAS)

perheneuvoloiden henkilökunta on tehnyt suuren työn, suorastaan läpimurron, neuvotellessaan erityislasten koulutusmahdollisuuksista. Raportin liitteenä on lista kouluista, joissa kuntoutuskummilapset ovat opiskelleet. Erityisen ilahduttavaa on, että mahdollisuuksia on auennut eri puolilla Libanonin, ei yksin Beirutin ja Saidan alueilla.



World Autism Awareness Day, mothers committee on streets

Perheneuvola seuraa ja tukee koko ajan erityislasten ja heidän perheidensä tilannetta. Raporteista tulee esiin että perheneuvolat erityisesti sosiaalityöntekijöiden avulla ovat luoneet hyvät suhteet erityislasten tukipilareiden, perheen, koulun ja perheneuvolan välille eli edistäneet tavoiteltua yhteisöperusteisen mielenterveystyön mallin toteutumista. Perheneuvolojen omien arvioiden mukaan sekä lasten tilanne on kohentunut, he ovat edistyneet kouluaineissa ja sosiaalisissa taidoissa. Valitettavasti Libanonin hallinto- ja talouskriisin takia perheille ei ole avautumassa työmahdollisuuksia, joten kummien tuki erityislasten koulutukselle on edelleen tarpeen. Noin 4 viidestä lapsesta oli tuen piirissä jo aikaisemmin. Viidennes lapsista oli 2022 uusia tuensaajia. Vuonna 2022 kuntoutuskummilasten määrään tuli lisäys, saatiin uusi tukiryhmä ja tuen piirissä on nyt 18 lasta. Enemmistö on poikia. BAS palvelee resurssiensa rajoissa sekä Libanonissa asuvia palestiinalaisia, Syyriasta paenneita palestiinalaisia ja syyrialaisia sekä köyhiä libanonilaisia lapsia. BASin mielenterveysohjelman ja erityislasten koulutushankkeen koordinaattori on maisteri Khawla Khalaf, El-Bussin (Tyyroksen) perheneuvolan johtaja.



International cooperation to advocate the right to education and rehabilitation of the children with multiple special needs (MSN)

Since several years Finnish, Italian and Swiss networks sponsor the children with Multiple Special Needs (MSN) in Lebanon refugee camps. These partners advocate the right to education and rehabilitation of the multiple special needs (MSN) children. The children get the service through the mental health program of Beit Atfal Assumoud (BAS). Family Guidance Centers (FGC) cooperate with families, assess the child's situation and refer the children to special schools or institutions and invite donors. In the school year Sept 2021 – June 2022 there were 28 children with MSN who got their tuition fees, medicines and school transportations shared by 176 sponsors or groups of sponsors. The social workers of FGCs compiled progress reports of the sample 28 of 114 children in special schools to the sponsors using the 24-items questionnaire. There were 13 social workers (community workers), and total number of FGC multidisciplinary staff was 43. This document is an overview of those feedback reports to sponsors. Contact persons in the sponsorship network: Sirku Kivistö, Finland, Monica Musri, Italy, and Ursula Hayek, Switzerland

Some sponsors and sponsored children keep contact by mails.

Kuva, ote kuntoutuskummilapsen kirjeestä tähän? voi olla myös muualla, mihin parhaiten sopii

Background – gradually improved possibilities for children with MSN to get education- thanks to the FGC staff efforts

The mental health programme of Beit Atfal Assumoud (BAS) started by the name Family Guidance Center (FGC) in Beirut 1997. In 2009 FGCs invited sponsors to assist those families who lacked money to pay the special education tuition and rehabilitation service fees. At that time only 7 children had got a place in three institutions. The FGC staff negotiated with special schools and institutions to open the doors to Palestinian and other disadvantaged children. It resulted into a breakthrough. In school year 2021-2022 there were 33 schools and institutions offering educational and rehabilitation service (Appendix). UNRWA has agreements with some specialized schools in Lebanon, most for children with mental retardation, Down's syndrome and development delay. In the reporting year UNRWA took over to cover the costs of 4 of our sponsored children. FGCs give credit to Ms Taghrid Awad, head of UNRWA disability program. Despite the limited financial resources of UNRWA she tries her best to get some of the fees covered.

The sponsored children with multiple special needs (MSN) in care of 5 Family Guidance Centers (FGC) of Beit Atfal Assumoud (BAS) 2021-2022 – total number of beneficiaries

The 114 children with MSN and their caregivers benefitted the service 2021-2022 in local FGCs: Beirut 39 children, Saida 20, El-Buss 15, Beddawi 21, Nahr el Bared 19. The number of the special schools available by area were: Beirut 18, Saida 5, El-Buss 3, Beddawi 4, Nahr el-Bared 3 (list of schools, appendix). By gender the children (n=114) were 68 % boys and 32 % girls. Most of them (82 %) were continuing their education and treatments as old beneficiaries while 18 % were new beneficiaries. By nationality they were Palestinians living in Lebanon (PRL) 91 % and displaced Syrian children 9.

Sample of the total number of MSN children – 28 individually sponsored children – description of the group

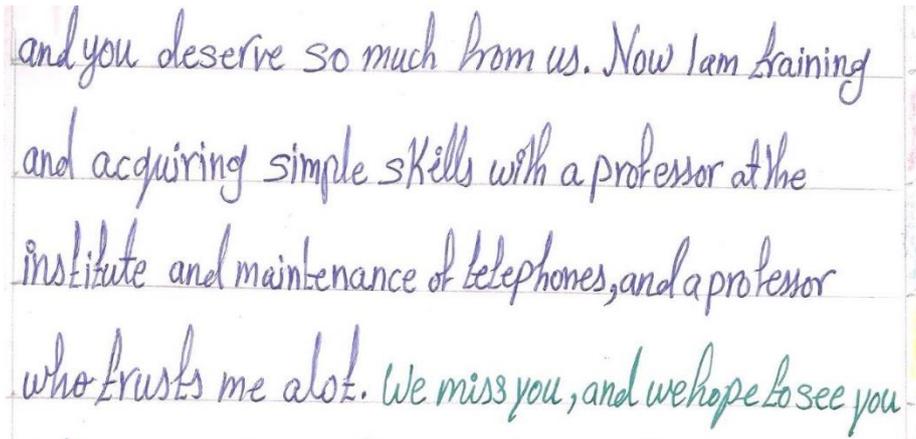
The FGCs invite sponsors for families who are in most need of support for tuition fees. During school year 2021-2022 we had with Italian and Swiss friends 28 individually sponsored children. The sponsorship support covers tuition fees, medical tests, medicine. Earlier the parents paid the transportation costs by themselves, but now there is also need to support the school transportation costs. If the tuition fee is negotiated lower than the donation, some other child can benefit of it.

Most of the sponsored 28 children are in primary school age (6-12 y). In FGC Beirut and FGC Saida are one child in pre-school age (<6 y) and 4 in secondary school age (15-18).

The sponsored children were in care of 4 FGC so far: FGC Beirut 15, FGC Saida 7, FGC El-Buss 5, FGC Nahr el-Bared, 1 total 28. Happily, one new sponsorship is agreed in FGC Beddawi for the year 2022-2023.

By gender they were boys 21 and girls 7. Ten of children were new beneficiaries in the school year 2021-2022, others have been sponsored longer time.

By nationality they were Palestinians living in Lebanon (PRL) 26, Palestinian displaced from Syria (PRS) 1, Syrian (S) 1.



and you deserve so much from us. Now I am training and acquiring simple skills with a professor at the institute and maintenance of telephones, and a professor who trusts me a lot. We miss you, and we hope to see you.

The MSN program is mainly for special education for children who are not able to go to public school. Nearly all, except one disabled girl, have got a place suitable for his/her situation. Some special schools have therapy service in addition to special education to support the child comprehensively (speech therapy, psychomotor therapy, psychotherapy, physiotherapy). 7 children benefited 1 extra therapy, 10 children 2 extra therapies and 5 children in more than two extra therapies. For 4 children there were no extra therapies (2 missing information).

The follow-up of progress in Family Guidance Centers (n=27)

The FGC interventions consist of psychiatric consultations, sessions with therapists and home visits by social workers

* For 13 children 1 psychiatric consultation, for 9 children 2 or more consultations, for 5 children no consultation

* For one child 2 therapist consultations 2, for 3 children 4 or more times

* 140 home visits by social workers, in some families weekly, meetings in the center if covid prevented the home visit

Improvement in the child's situation during the school year period 2021-2022, assessed by the FGC team (n=26)

very good improvement 3 children

good improvement 22 children

fair improvement 1 child

The improvement of child's social situation towards supportive environment, assessed by the social worker (community worker) of FGC (n=27)

very good improvement 6

good improvement 19

fair improvement 1

The FGCs are in crucial position to refer the client families to benefit other program and services of Beit Atfal Assumoud (e.g. dental care, cultural activities, learning support, vocational training etc). About 15 families of 28 could use some of those activities.

Discussion

The social workers and FGC teams have succeeded to build good contacts with the main partners around the MSN children: family, school, FGC. Also cooperation with special schools and institutions is good. The home visits and meetings in the FGC by the social workers are in crucial role concerning the progress of the situation. Thus, the biopsychosocial community-based approach is progressing like stressed in the Strategic Plan for the Mental Health for Beit Atfal Assumoud, NISCVT (2020-2024).

Appendix

List of special schools offering service for children with MSN, referred by the FGC & parents School year 2021-2022

FGC Beirut 18 special schools

Rweiss International School
Al Moasat Association
Ali Al Hallaq School for Education
MIS School
Manarat Al Uloom School
Dar Al-Hlem Association for Learning Difficulties
Caritas Lebanon - Palace of Modern Sciences for Education
Al Hanan for children with Special Needs
ECOLE DE CULTURE GENERAL
The Ghassan Kanafani Cultural Foundation
Al-Mabarat Schools - Mabrrat Al-Mam Al-Khouni lukio
Al-Mabarat- Al-Imam Al-Hassan High School
Dr. Mohamad Khaled Social Foundation
Social care institutions in Lebanon - the Islamic orphanage
Synod of Churches for Social Service in Lebanon
Dar Al-Hlem Association for Learning Difficulties
Lebanon International College
Rehana International Development Program

FGC Saida, 5 special schools

Lana Al Mostakbal
Lebanon International College
Happy Home
Saida International School
Social care institutions in Lebanon - the Islamic orphanage

FGC El-Buss, 3 special schools

Al Hanan for children with Special Needs
Lwah School of Excellence
Mousawat

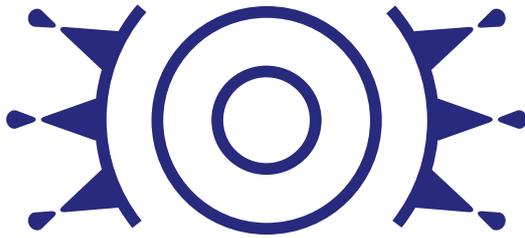
FGC Beddawi, 4 special schools

Community Based Rehabilitation Association CBRA

Sarait Association for Social & Psychological Care
Al Muna Center for Deafness and Intellectual Development
Social care institutions in Lebanon / the Islamic orphanage

FGC Nahr el-Bared, 3 special schools

Community Based Rehabilitation Association CBRA
Sarait Association for Social & Psychological Care
Social care institutions in Lebanon - the Islamic orphanage



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