



This boy was killed two days after the picture was made. In his pocket there was a paper on which he wrote announcement of his death

Dear Friends,

I would like first of all to thank all of you, who made it possible for me to be here with you.

For this presentation, I have prepared a well structured power-point presentation, filled with information about the impact of violence on the Palestinian children. While attending different sessions and feeling the environment in the conference, I felt that what I want to share with you actually is some information about the situation, but more the hopes and dreams of the Palestinian children.

When we talk about the situation in Palestine, it is the situation that is there for many years with a big number of violence waves. This last however was really of special meaning. This one was not predicted as the Palestinian community and institutions were more involved in building the civil society in the Palestinian territories. On the other hand, people were having a lot of hopes that the peace process will keep going and people in the area will see the shore that is being seen in Ireland. The last wave of violence was a drastic break to the peoples dreams of having peace.

While talking about the impact of violence on children, I have decided to share with you some of the personal feelings and desire for better future of our children. I shall start my presentation with an example of a child who all of the sudden developed all the symptoms and signs caused by exposure to violence. This child is my three years

old son Nashat. At the beginning of the Intifada, Nashat was two and a half years old. My son is lucky for two reasons one is that he doesn't look like me. He is beautiful, all his mother, he is also lucky because he has such a loving father that he gives him all the love and time, exactly as recommended by the beautiful presentation about time yesterday. Nashat is however unlucky also for two reasons, first because he can not get an answer to his question why when he comes to the TV and see the violence. He is unlucky also because his loving father is not able to promise him a better future than this waiting for him.

When talking about the impact of violence on children, I shall talk about the health and the psychological effect of violence on the Palestinian children.

Health impact has two areas. Direct impact in the form of children being the direct victims of violence. Since the start of the Intifada, 125 children were killed, more than one thousand was injured with more than one hundred with life-lasting disability. Indirect health impact was in the fact the due to closures in the Palestinian areas, infant mortality has grown with 50%. This was an indicator, where Palestine ranked well in comparison with similar communities. Indirect health impact was in the vaccination coverage. Palestine had 98% vaccination coverage prior to the Intifada. This has went down of about 13% with expected raise in the pattern of infectious disease incidence. A study conducted on children with Type 1 diabetes showed that all of them had severe disturbance in the control of the disease, one of them died, and three where hospitalized for ketoacidosis (a serious complication of diabetes).

Psychological impact of violence manifested in the stead increase of the psychosomatic disorders presenting in the primary care centers. Examples are (bed-wetting, agitation, night-mars, and irritability). Psychological impact of violence was extremely demonstrated by the changes of the pattern of playing and drawings of children.

A study conducted in Gaza and when asking children (**what you will be in ten years from now**), high percent of the children (up to 80%) answered (**I shall be dead**).

This is the sad part of the story, and even there is no happy one, but the remedy measures that took place in Palestine have helped in improving the situation. Remedy measures took place at three levels:

- The level of the community and grass-root organizations: At this level, different voluntary organizations conducted massive community-oriented activities with drawings and games for children and parents. These activities covered most of the Palestinian communities affected by the violence.
- The level of institutions and Ministries: At this level, a national effort started from day one to deal with the short-term and long-term effects of violence. This has resulted in a nation-wide programs targeting different community groups with focus on children at schools.
- The level of international organizations working in Palestine: Example are Save the Children Federation, Defense Children International, UNICEF, etc. These organizations have shown a great deal of flexibility and were able to modify their community development programs to answer the new agenda and to get involved in the planning and implementation of short and long-term programs in

partnership with both the grass-root organizations, and also the institutions and Ministries.

Different long-term remedy programs are focusing on improving the community and individual positive coping with violence and building the community capacity to deal with crises.

All the above mentioned remedy programs have contributed and are contributing to the palliative treatment of the impact of violence. We all know that the causative treatment (having peace that we were talking about in the session of peace education yesterday) is the only one that could bring better future to our children and enable us see the shore. This is the hope that I want to share with you and the dream of the Palestinian children that I wanted to present to you.

Thank you