**January 15, 2020**

**Final Results Progress Report**

**Drama 4 All: Virtual Drama and Theatre**

**Yes Theatre for Communication among Youth**

Wasim Ahmaro

Yes Theatre Chairman

Yes Theatre for Communication among Youth (YT)

Hebron

Palestine

**Content**

**I. Introduction**

**I.I Yes Theatre in lines ............................................................................**

**I.II Basis for Report ..................................................................................**

**I.III Overall Goal and Program Purpose ..................................................**

**I.V Activities Implemented ...........................................................**

**II. Progress Report**

**II.I Introduction.......................................................................................**

**II.II Narrative and Analysis of Results and Implementation...............**

**II.III Partner Cooperation and Interaction...............................................**

**II.IV Deviations............................................................................................**

**II.V Risks and Proposed Solutions.........................................................**

**II.VI Summary ............................................................................................**

**Structure of the Report**

This report contains an overview of the implemented activities, their outputs, and analysis of the activities of joint project between Yes Theatre and CCFD covering the period from January to December 31, 2020. The introduction section offers an overview of the partners’ organizations, basis of the report, overall goal and program purpose as well as the activities implemented as a part of Virtual Theatre and Drama.

The Program Progress component represents a factual report, based on the suggested logical framework in January 2020. This section will outline what has been achieved in each of the program's outcomes with an in-depth critical analysis of each result. This section includes information about the local community discussion that was raised as a part of this project. This section also identifies deviations, an overview on risk analysis and partner interaction and cooperation.

The summary section will provide an overview of this reporting period and address the main achievements of Yes Theatre and partners.

I. Introduction

I.I Yes Theatre in Lines

Yes Theatre for Communication among Youth (YT) is a Palestinian Non-governmental Organization that was established in 2008. Yes Theatre believes that theatre and drama can positively influence the children and youth to create a change in their society. Therefore, it works to inspire Palestinian children and youth in general and these in Hebron in Particular to try outing and developing creative and constructive reactions to the challenges in their daily lives.

Yes Theatre works in the field of youth theatre and drama education in the Palestinian Territory. The founding members of YT have 17 years of experience in implementing drama and theatre projects and programs with youth inside and outside schools, in cooperation with the Palestinian Ministry of Education, UNRWA and with other original bodies in Hebron. At that time, YT was, and is still, the only organization working exclusively for children and young people using theatre and drama as tools of expression, relief, social change and development.

YT works in harmony with the educational system and youth-oriented organizations so that together both the formal and informal education circles will be improved. Towards this same aim, YT also helps to optimize the existing potential of education workers to create jobs in the field of drama and drama-education.

The philosophy of YT regarding drama and theatre work is that, by its nature, theatre and drama require teamwork, commitment, spontaneity, creativity, and openness to new ideas. Therefore, drama and theatre work are strong cultural tools. Both, on a grass-roots level, for the development of the basic conditions for a peaceful environment in Palestine and for the respect of human rights.

Through its performances inside and outside Palestine, YT sheds the light on the social problems in the Palestinian society. YT is working to contribute to the empowerment of rights holders to know about and claim their rights. Also, the main mandate of YT is to contribute effectively to social change and development through the efficient use of drama and theatre. Yes Theatre main tools are artistic performances specifically speaking to issues relevant to the Palestinian society, drama workshops, and theatre performances, capacity building for teachers in theatre based techniques, advocacy plays and activities of cultural exchange. It annually reaches as audience of 16,000 school students and hundreds of public audiences. The core programs of YT are Play4Kids, Kids4Kids, Yes4Youth, Yes4Future, Puppets 4 Kids and Storytelling.

I.III Basis for Report

As a basis for this report, YT administrators and trainers have presented monthly narrative and financial report for the period starting January to December 2019.

I.III Overall Goal and Program Purpose

With funding from CCFD Foundation, Yes Theatre for Communication among Youth has developed Virtual Theatre and Drama program to **“*contribute to the improvement of psychosocial well-being of Palestinian children during COVID19”.***

The program is unique in that it gathers the energy and commitment of a group of partner organizations in Hebron District to foster the professional dialogue dynamics necessary for improving the psychosocial well being of Palestinian children and youth through the medium of theatre. This is achieved through an array of activities at promoting healthy psychosocial development, provide additional tools to community workers, and support early learning and provide much needed recreational activities to low-income families. In addition, the project contributes to fostering social change through the use of drama and theatre. It contributes to develop the foundations for ***“Providing Palestinian children with a safe space in which that they can express themselves and improve their life skills during COVID19”***

This is achieved through a wide range of interrelated activities that mainly target Palestinian children, youth (males and females), teachers, parents and social workers, notably in less privileged areas. ***In addition, Virtual Theatre and Drama aims at establishing a strong network of Mental Health Services Providers, International NGOs and CBOs which have a collective voice able to influence official plans and policies based on knowledge and research, and attract more funding to support social change and development within the Palestinian society.***

It is very important before going through this report to provide and clarify a working definition of “psychosocial wellbeing” in correlation with the program goals, purposes, specific outcomes, outputs and indicators.

The Oxford English Dictionary provides a brief working definition of “psychosocial wellbeing” as *“pertaining to the influence of social factors on an individual’s mind or behavior, and to the interrelation of behavioral and social factors”.*

This definition implies that psychosocial factors can be seen as: (1) mediating the effects of social structural factors on individual outcomes, or (2) conditioned and modified by the social structures and contexts in which they exist.

The term “psychosocial” is widely used in literature in connection with health outcomes. The roots of “psychosocial health” lie in the World Health Organization’s (WHO) definition of health as “a state of complete physical mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease and infirmity”. It is worth mentioning that Yes Theatre considers “psychosocial health” as group indicators that reflect social context, recognition of individuals’ experiences and quality of life.

To further elucidate the role of psychosocial factors it is important to make a distinction between macro, meso and micro levels as a useful sociological framework. Yes Theatre regards psychosocial as a meso-level concept, just as religious institutions, the family, the work place, and the club is meso-level social formations. These exist at a level below and are modified by macro-social structures that relate to ownership and control of land and business, legal and welfare structures, as well as distribution of income and other resources between groups and individuals.

A central constituent of a psychosocial explanation of health is that macro and meso level social processed lead to perceptions and psychological processes at the individual level. These psychological changed can influence health through direct psychobiological processed or through modified behaviors and lifestyles.

However, not all processed form macro through meso to the individual micro level are psychosocial. Many psychosocial exposures such as unemployment (so called ‘stressful life-event’) and social networks/supports need not to necessarily invoke psychosocial processes or require psychosocial explanations.

Unemployment that leads to loss of income and an inability to buy material necessities of life does not constitute a psychosocial explanation of health. However, a psychosocial process is operating when unemployment leads to loss of self-esteem and feelings of worthlessness that affect health via direct psychological processes or through modified behaviors and lifestyles. In other words, unemployment for a person does not constitute a deterioration of his/her psychological well-being because the person cannot buy things but because it has a negative effect on the person’s satisfaction with life as a whole, on his/her level of self esteem, confidence and civics.

In addition, social networks may provide instrumental and material benefits and opportunities as well as close person-to-person social contracts and emotional support; yet only the latter path seems to qualify as a psychosocial process. In other words isolation does refer to psychosocial wellbeing because the person involved is not connected to other people in the community and cannot access emotional process.

Based on this logic we can speculate that the Israeli occupation has an effect on the psychosocial wellbeing of Palestinians not because it limits their capacity to trade, move or access opportunities but because it pushes people to live a stressful life, to be disconnected, to lose their identity, hope, self esteem, confidence, the understanding of their value as human beings and active leaders of change in their society overall. It is important underline that occupation does not necessarily mean that all Palestinians are stressed, negative and hopeless but that in order to preserve their psychosocial wellbeing, Palestinians have to make an effort to counter the occupation’s intrinsic negative effects. In other words, those who possess the appropriate life skills are able to oppose and counter the negative effects of occupation on their psychosocial wellbeing. Those who don’t possess the appropriate life skills are negatively affected by the occupation as a default socio-economic, political, cultural and unnatural reality or status quo. Psychosocial processes can be mostly evoked in the presence of conscious individual level changes such as perceptions of stress or social isolation. In this regard the vast majority of Palestinians are negatively affected by the occupation as a factor, especially the youngest generations that do not possess the appropriate levels of life skills and critical thinking to analyze and act upon it positively and proactively. This is reflecting the main theme of Kids 4 Kids, projects and activities.

**The Impact of COVID19 on the Palestinian children and youth**

The COVID-19 pandemic and resulting economic downturn have negatively affected many people’s mental health and created new barriers for people already who have mental illness and substance use disorders. According to some of the Palestinian psychologists, nearly half (65%) of adults in the Palestinian Territories may report that their mental health has been negatively impacted due to worry and stress over the virus. As the pandemic wears on, the mental health burden will likely increase as measures are taken to slow the spread of the virus, such as social distancing, business, school closures, and shelter-in-place orders to more excellent isolation and potential financial distress. Though necessary to prevent loss of life due to COVID-19, these public

health measures expose many people to experiencing situations that are linked to poor mental health outcomes, such as isolation and job loss. Additionally, feelings of anxiety are increasingly common: people are fearful of themselves or loved ones falling ill and uncertain of the pandemic’s repercussions.

During this unprecedented time of uncertainty and fear, it is likely that mental health among people with these conditions will be exacerbated. Also, epidemics have been shown to induce general stress across a population and may lead to new mental health disorders and illnesses.  In response to the current coronavirus crisis, the Palestinian government is requiring closures of non-essential businesses and schools, prohibiting large gatherings, and requiring quarantines for travelers, in addition to encouraging social distancing. Also, the Palestinian government has declared mandatory stay-at-home orders for all but non-essential workers. Some of the Palestinian psychologists have brought attention to the widespread experience of loneliness as a public health concern in itself, pointing to its association with reduced lifespan and a higher risk of both mental and physical illnesses.

The older people are more likely than people of other ages to develop the severe illness if they contract coronavirus. Due to their increased vulnerability to the virus, this population must practice social distancing, among other safety measures. These measures may limit their interactions with caregivers and loved ones, which could lead to feelings of loneliness and anxiety and general feelings of uncertainty and fear due to the pandemic.

To help slow the spread of coronavirus, the Palestinian government has closed schools, affecting 1 million students, and, subsequently, their parents or guardians. These closures could affect families beyond a disruption in their child’s education. Many Palestinian psychologists have stated that students’ mental health issues may increase among students due to fewer opportunities to engage with peers. With long-term closures of childcare centers and schools, many parents are experiencing ongoing disruption to their daily routines. Some of the Palestinian women say that the coronavirus has negatively impacted their mental health, and it influences their relationships with their husbands and kids. The percentage of unemployment in Palestine rose. A lot of families lost their income. These families have reported negative mental health impacts from worry or stress. The people who have chronic illnesses such as chronic lung disease,

asthma, severe heart conditions, and diabetes are among those with a high risk of severe disease from COVID- 19. Research shows that mental health disorders are common comorbidities among patients with these and other chronic illnesses. The Palestinian population has been exposed to traumatic events, including imprisonment, torture, and human rights abuse, house demolition, land confiscation, movement restriction, domestic violence, and the indignities of unemployment and under-employment. All of these factors have an immense psychological impact. Yes Theatre works to contribute effectively to the improvement of mental health status through drama, drama therapy, puppets, and psychological interventions. Yes Theatre believes that project has created an alternative space to target Palestinian children and provide with debriefing activities and sessions during the Pandemic. The project is designed to improve the psychosocial well-being of children in such a way that can help them survive mentally during the big challenge that all of us live in the world.

I.IV Activities Implemented

The below summary serves to give a broad overview of the activities implemented during this reporting period and their specific outputs. Further discussion and analysis of these activities can be found in the Program Progress section of this document.

***Program Description:***

**Drama Workshops**

Drama Workshops are given to children in groups of 15-20, aged 10-14. These workshops consist of 15 sessions of 3 hours each and take place on 5 consecutive days over 3 weeks. This gives children the time for concentration, commitment, and development of their ideas. No two workshops are ever the same as the theme of each workshop comes from what is on the minds of the participating children. At the end of each workshop, a presentation is given for family members, friends, and the school from which the children come. As a rule, drama workshop leaders come from the pool of YT actors and drama-teachers. Drama workshops are designed in such a way to reach marginalized groups and areas (Area C).

**Storytelling sessions:**

Storytelling is a communication method used to organize and interpret collective and individual phenomena as well as to make sense of personal and shared experience dialogue. These sessions are given to children, their parents and the entire community as a tool to prepare them for the return of young person, support the re-integration of children and reduce stigma. In these sessions, children and parents will tell stories about their own experiences with Yes Theatre guidance. Each session will be ended up by a discussion in which learned lessons will be documented.

**Capacity Building Program/Yes 4 Youth:**

The capacity building program will be conducted by YT in cooperation with the Palestinian Ministry of Education and Community Based Organizations. 20 social and youth workers will be selected to qualify as drama teachers, actors and animators. These trained youth will be also provided with practical experience during the project. They will accompany YT trainers during the implementation phases of the main-sub projects to measure and track personal and behavioral changes of the participant children. In addition, they will document learned lessons to be used for sharing and disseminating knowledge at the local and international levels.

***Project Expected Results/Implemented Activities***

R1: Level of self-confidence, self-expression and constructive relations of Hebronite children and youth with their peers and families are improved.

R2 Local and international communities are sensitized to the problems of Palestinian Children and youth during the spread of COVID19

II. Program Progress

II.I Introduction

The following analysis intends to show how the YT staff, supported by YT partners and volunteers, during this reporting period, contributed to the Overall Objective and Program Purpose. Each member in YT staff was requested to submit: two reports: a progress report covering the period from January to December 2020, and a monitoring report which include their analysis regarding the generated outputs and outcomes.

In order to achieve an easier comprehension of the narrative analysis, the project’s purpose is presented separately with its specific strategies and interventions.

III. Implemented Activities

The below summary serves to give a broad overview of the activities implemented during this

reporting period and their specific outputs. Further discussion and analysis of these activities

can be found in the Program Progress section of this document.

**Project Expected Results/Implemented Activities**

**Drama Workshops**

15 drama workshops were implemented with children (8 virtually and 7 physically). These workshops targeted 300 children (66% girls and 34% boys). 8 workshops were conducted in the presence of mothers.

**Storytelling sessions:**

**20 storytelling sessions were implemented with children.**

Storytelling is a communication method used to organize and interpret collective and individual phenomena as well as to make sense of personal and shared experience dialogue. These sessions are given to children, their parents and the entire community as a tool to prepare them for the return of young person, support the re-integration of children and reduce stigma. These sessions were live streamed on Yes Theatre Facebook page. Each session ended up by an interactive discussion by the storyteller and the children.

**Capacity Building Program (Youth Power)**

Project Expected Results/Implemented Activities

**100% of the trained community and education workers are employing drama and theatre in their working with children as an educational and recreational tool:** The professional practical experience that offered by YT to the trainees indicate that the majority of them are able to employ drama and theatre in their working with children. The trainees receive training in virtual facilitation techniques.

**Advocacy Campaign:**

An advocacy campaign was designed in order to sensitize the local and international communities to the problems of Palestinian children face during COVID19. This campaign was supported by 30 Facebook sessions in which YT psychologist provided consultancies to the general public.

**Indicators of Joint Cooperation** It is important to note that YT partners have been active with cooperation and collaboration during this reporting period. The nature of cooperation took various forms, including, nominating teachers to participate in training sessions, select schools to attend performances and conduct lectures for officials in the Palestinian Ministry of Education and UNRWA.

This is indicated from the examples below: - The Palestinian Ministry of Education and UNRWA have to nominate the teachers who attend teachers’ training program - The Palestinian Ministry of Education and UNRWA has to send official letters to the Educational directorates. These letters ask the officials at the directorates to facilitate the work of YT in Kinder gardens.

**II.IV Deviations** No major deviations can be reported. Nonetheless, please note some of the minor deviations during this reporting period.

**II.IV Risks and Proposed Solutions**

**The financial situation of YT**: YT conducted an organizational restructuring during 2020. This process reflected positively on the financial situation of YT. It was expected to end up the year with a deficit. The re- planning of activities and the restricted expenses plan was very effective in achieving this result.

**COVID19:** YT decided to leave its location and signed an agreement with Hebron Municipality to activate one of its community centers. This center is very big with so many training halls and rooms. This is very helpful in terms of conducting YT physical activities taking into consideration the safety procedures and protocols.

**IV. Summary**

Yes Theatre for Communication among Youth is committed to serve the Palestinian people during COVID19. Also, YT management believes in doing its best to keep YT staff regardless the available financial resources.

We will do it.