

teachers and supervisors working in the kindergartens set up by different associations and organizations. The center is affiliated with the Kanafani Foundation, but has its own board, of which I am a member, for planning the program. Besides raising the level of preschool education, this center also has the function of increasing cooperation between the different kindergartens in different places in Lebanon. We hope we can contribute to greater unity in the curriculum and attitudes of these kindergartens in this way.

COPING WITH THE WAR SITUATION

Acutally in Lebanon, all children live in fear, and this was the case even before the 1982 invasion. Almost all our facilities have been damaged at some time; some have been completely destroyed. In times of war in one area, the Palestinian camps of another area will become overcrowded from families looking for a safe place.

Prior to 1978, we had a project for a children's home in Burj Al Shemali in South Lebanon. After the 1978 Israeli invasion, we were not really able to use this home. In the 1982 invasion, the Rashidieh kindergarten was destroyed, as was the one in Burj Al Barajneh, while the one in Ain Al Hilweh was badly damaged. As of 1982, 42 kindergartens and nurseries had been established by different groups. We were able to carry out repairs quite quickly after 1982, but this was not the case for all. Repairs were still being made in 1984 for the damage inflicted in 1982, and since then there have been other sieges and destruction affecting a number of the camps.

Now in 1989, there are more than 50 kindergartens and nurseries operating. I think it is very important to stress that in spite of all the war and destruction in Lebanon, it was possible to establish kindergartens, clinics and other social institutions. This was the case all during the civil war, and even after 1982. Life still goes on. When a kindergarten is hit, you have to find a way to repair or rebuild it. Generally, it is possible to get financial support for this, but due to

the situation, it is sometimes impossible to bring in building materials in large quantities for repair. For example, in Rashidieh, we were not able to do the necessary repairs, but then with the help of UNRWA, we got building materials, so the kindergarten is now repaired and operating. Most organizations have put a great deal of effort into reestablishing their kindergartens.

In view of the situation, all the kindergartens should have shelters, but this is not always possible if one is established in an abandoned house. However, if we build the building ourselves, we make sure that there is a shelter. Also, in times of war, we don't have all the children at the kindergarten, because the parents are afraid to send them.

As part of our relief work for displaced families in the war situation, we started mobile kindergartens for more than 150 children in the Sidon area in December 1986. The staff brought materials with them and worked with the children in the areas where their families were temporary living. Meals were also provided, and this program continued until most of the displaced families were able to return to their former houses in the camps.

In 1985, we started a project for home-based kindergartens in the Sidon area. In this program, a young mother or girl receives seven or eight children in her home. We found young mothers who had no income; perhaps her husband is dead, and she has small children of her own. In this way, she can take care of her own children and receive others, while also having an income. We now have five of these home-based kindergartens operating, and we consider it a successful project. The mother comes to the regular kindergarten for a month or two to see how we work and get training before she starts the work in her home. We have continuous follow-up, and there is a supervisor who buys materials, and spends a week at each home-based kindergarten in turn.

FUNDING

The Ghassan Kanafani Cultural Foundation is a non-profit organiza-

tion and that is why we have to ask people and organizations to help us. The children do pay a symbolic fee if the family can afford it. Of course, we don't refuse a child if the family cannot pay; on the contrary, we take the children from hardship families first. But most families can pay a small amount, and we have always felt it is important that they pay something if they can to increase family involvement with the kindergarten, so that they feel a sense of responsibility.

Our main funding, however, comes from soliciting contributions from individuals and organizations abroad. It has been possible to raise funds from international NGOs for establishing kindergartens. The project for physically handicapped in Mar Elias is sponsored by the Swedish Save the Children, while the project for mentally handicapped in Ain Al Hilweh is sponsored by the Norwegian Save the Children. In both cases, these organizations paid the costs of building and establishing the project, as well as covering maintenance. We were very lucky in this case, as it is generally very difficult to get organizations to cover operating costs. Our main sustenance since 1975 is fundraising, and we get contributions from many friends in Europe. Of course, we always need more contributions. Having a continuous program means that continuous funding is needed. We have to pay basic salaries, and with the economic situation in Lebanon, these should actually be increased, but until now we haven't been able to do so. We as a foundation are a source of employment for many people as well as serving the children.

Anyone wanting more information about the Foundation or wishing to make a donation is encouraged to write to its address:

GKCF
P.O. Box 135/375 Chouran
Beirut, Lebanon

The Foundation's bank account is as follows:

Acc. no. 67 00800/301971-3
Arab Bank
Ras Beirut
Lebanon

Democratic Palestine, June 89