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A Manual on Priorities for Action on Issues of Child Rights

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This manual is dedicated to

Contributing to respecting and realizing the rights of the Palestinian children
Making their voice heard ... working for them ... to realize their dreams of a more prosperous life for a new Palestine

Why is this manual?

It is to:
highlight major problems, from which the Gaza Strip children suffer, fill the gap of identifying needs, on which programs and projects are established, assist in cooperation and interrelation between the institutions working on children, and assist in providing effective mechanisms to implement children's rights programs.

For whom is this manual?

It is for :
institutions working on children's rights and development, providers of basic services for children, all Palestinian actors desiring to improve the Palestinian future through investing in children, planners and policy makers and actors in the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), and workers and others generally interested in children's right area.

Content

| | |
|--|----|
| Introduction..... | 5 |
| Objectives:..... | 5 |
| How this manual was prepared? | 5 |
| The situation and problems of childhood in the Gaza Strip | 6 |
| Priorities issues on which children like to be acted on for their best interest..... | 18 |
| Priorities action on child rights issues8 | 18 |
| Proposed projects | 23 |
| Principles of priority action on issues of children's rights | 29 |
| Recommendations | 32 |

Introduction

The Palestinian society encountered several calamities and pressing and harsh conditions in all aspects of life. Those conditions had acute and negative impacts on the nature of the life of the society and all its individuals. Naturally, children are among those who have been most affected. They suffered from all forms of violence, persecution, and injustices that the Palestinian people experienced.

Studies, realities of life of Gazan children, and experts' opinion indicate that children's suffering outreached every aspect of their lives—psychological, social, economic, environmental, health, educational, entertainment, cultural ...etc. This is fundamentally a result of the traumatizing experiences which children lived during the Intifada, the consequences of the Israeli pullout from Gaza, or military operations launched; especially since the start of Operation Summer Rains in June 2006. Such experiences still interact with and influence children in many ways. They provide explanations for many psychological, social and developmental problems of the children who had to live such traumatizing experiences.

Under such pressing conditions, the Palestinian society has been engaged in a new reality. Needs and priorities have increased and shifted. This lead to adopting more emergency programs, or 'healing programs', along with development programs 'structural programs' as priorities have changed from development to healing. Response to children's emergency needs became critical. There is a growing need to rearrange priorities according to emergency conditions, which seem to be endless, or to make them suitable at least.

The Palestinian population in the occupied Gaza and West Bank has reached 3,888,292, of whom 1,442,814 people in the Gaza Strip. Children under 18 years old are 838,000 in the Gaza Strip. In Gaza and the West Bank, children count 2,121,132.¹

Statistics and numbers provided by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), and UNICEF's and UNRWA's analyses of children status in Gaza Strip indicate deterioration and general decline of the status of child rights. This decline includes services provided for children and entertainment and knowledge means either during or after the Intifada. This prompts studying the reasons and elements leading to such deterioration and researching into methods of advancing the Palestinian child to the best developmental levels and into programs and projects implemented by children institutions, and its health, educational, psychological and social impact on children. Additionally it prompts researching into the impact of economic, social, political and cultural situations, and how they formed a challenge for the Palestinian children's development.

Therefore, we have a problem that can be classified among the most sensitive problems of the Palestinian society. This is because children are the most important elements of the process of human development and that the modernization of a society usually begins with the development of skills, values and building capacities of children. This is what the international community asserted in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, of 1990, and what the Palestinian legislature sought by enacting the Palestinian Child Act No. 7/2004.

In the light of the above, Al Mezan Center for Human Rights compiled this manual, in cooperation with Save the Children, and in consultation, cooperation and coordination with several governmental and non-governmental organizations working on children—as well as experts, specialists and activists in the field. The manual attempts to present an analysis of children issues and includes the rights enshrined in the international law as well as a prospective vision for child future.

We hope this manual will be a useful guide for decision-makers, child policy-makers, planners, specialized bodies concerned with children, those others working in children programs in NGOs, independent researchers, specialists, facilitators and volunteers. We hope it would benefit everyone interested in children's lives, their status in this particular stage of the history of the Palestinian people, and foreseeing their immediate and future needs. This is as an initial step to compose a comprehensive scenario and constructive vision for the future of the Palestinian life. This first begins with healing programs, and then constructive programs (developmental programs) aiming for realizing full rights for children in a way that contributes to support decision making processes for decision makers, and institutions working on protecting and advancing children. This would help them perform their duties towards the Palestinian children through relying on data, facts and experiences as well as problems and challenges that actually encountered the implementation of the programs sought to provide either developmental or healing services for children.

Objectives:

This manual is the outcome of a research extended over four months. It is aimed to be a document to assist and guide institutions working on children before and after the implementation of children projects in the Gaza Strip. It aims to:

- provide a database for institutions in order to implement more effective projects in the field of child rights,
- identify more needs to achieve a stronger cooperation with institutions working in the field of child rights, and raise children awareness of their rights through the duties of institutions related to children,
- and focus on child rights by training on human rights and collaborating with governmental and legislative institutions.

How this manual was prepared?

This manual was based on a study that adopted the analytical descriptive method, which sought to describe and analyze children's reality in the Gaza Strip. It included the violations children experience, their problems, needs,

¹ For more details on public census, health, education, and protection, please refer to: UNICEF, Children Statistics: Together for Children, July 2006.

projects implemented for them, providers of basic services such as health, education and social care, as well as an analysis of the variables connected to children's issues. This is to have an insight of the children's most important issues and variables influencing them and their needs. The aim is to establish a database that reflects the reality of child rights in order to build more effective programs to address child issues in the Gaza Strip in the following years. This is in addition to exploring the changes of children's life regarding violations, rights and renewing needs, according to child rights' standards. The accredited document for analysis and measurement is the Convention on the Rights of the Child. At all stages of research, the team based its work on participatory methods and activities in which children, parents, teachers, activists, experts and officials were directly involved.

Collection of the required data and information was carried out as follows:

1. Referring to available literature related to the field of children.
2. Monitoring and following up the activities of the governmental and non-governmental organizations operating in the field of children.
3. Field visits, and observations in ministries and government bodies, local and international institutions, and places of children gatherings.
4. Interviews and meetings with experts, specialists, activists, volunteers working with children directly, children policy makers, parents, teachers and psychologists.
5. Meetings and focus groups with social, psychological and media experts working in children institutions.
6. Focus groups—to identify violations, needs and priorities—with children, custodians (fathers, mothers and senior siblings), teachers, volunteer specialist activists and experts.
7. Office analysis: after collecting basic data from the field, we have carried out the following:
 - a. Conducting a final analysis and sorting data.
 - b. Consulting with experts and specialists in the field of children on the manual's outcome.
 - c. Examining how the manual is connected with the concerned organizations' plans and programs, and the scale of its benefit and use.

The situation and problems of childhood in the Gaza Strip

In order to understand the situation of the Palestinian children, factors—social, economic, health, educational, psychological, and cultural—influencing their lives must be considered. Below is a review of the most important issues that emerged during conducting the study, which aimed to identify the needs that require focus in the following years, if the situation of children is to be improved.² Problems and concerns of children were categorized into seven major topics. They were identified in consultation with experts, specialists and institutions working with children as follows:

1. Educational problems
2. Health Problems
3. Psychological problems
4. Media problems
5. Cultural problems
6. Entertainment and amusement problems
7. Legal problems (rights problems)

(1) Educational problems

- Difficult curricula, lack of ability by teachers, families or students to deal with them.
- Lack of utilization of modern methodology that suits the Palestinian recently-developed curricula.
- Inappropriate and discouraging studying school environment.
- Teachers' understanding of the students' psychological conditions is still incomplete.
- Poor communication between schools and students' families (integrated relation among student, school and family)
- There is neither adequate extracurricular education along with school curricular education nor entertainment activities supporting the learning process.
- Applied educational methodology does not suit the characteristics of the Palestinian children.
- Poor planning and implementation overwhelming the higher education administration.
- Efforts to reconsider curricula are still limited in spite of demands by education experts, teachers, custodians and students themselves.

² For more information on health, social, educational and cultural situations of children, refer to Palestine Children Report, Issues and Statistics, Annual Report 2005, Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics.

- Continuous adoption of 'auto pass' policy.³
- Most schools lack green areas and suitable playgrounds. Playgrounds are very close to classrooms. Other schools' parks are closed for students. Other schools suffer from small spaces.
- The use of modern technological educational methods is still limited.
- Schools do not perform their educational roles to the best they could, despite that they are part of the social structure.
- The policy of physical and psychological punishment in schools.
- Order and hygiene among children are absent in schools.
- Schools are not separated from factions' influences, interventions and disputes.
- Poor achievements and concentration by a high rate of students; over 25% in some classrooms.
- Poor governmental follow-up and monitoring on kindergartens.
- Lack of appropriate attention to and appreciations of teachers.
- High implications that refer to children's and families' misdirection towards schools.

The most important educational problems for children that are priorities and need action:

- Curricula (textbooks) are too big and difficult. Children, teachers and families are aware of this fact.
- School and classrooms environment and their inappropriateness for education.
- Poor methodologies and extracurricular activities.

These problems face several challenges that hinder the achievement of a tangible progress in children's right to good education:

- The education administration is aware of the curricula problems but tend not to admit such problems.
- Poor government trends to provide a suitable educational environment for children.
- Lack of original desire to development, modernization, and use of modern technologies.

Opportunities and prospects that might be available or made available to manage and tackle such challenges:

- Preparing a public petition after mobilizing stakeholders (parents, teachers and children) and sending it to the ministry of education in order to work on solving curricula problems.
- Actual awareness and implementation of children's rights by all actors.
- Employment of new graduates in schools and decreasing the number of service years for teachers.

These opportunities and prospects need to be developed in order to be a tangible reality. 'Real' mechanisms to transform such opportunities and prospects into executive reality:

- The Supreme Council for Children needs to more responsible for its tasks and duties, especially at the level of raising awareness.
- Exert pressure on the Legislative Council to follow-up the implementation of child law, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, including children's right to education.
- Activating the governmental and non-governmental monitoring role to ensure the provision of good educational services, and reconsidering the educational policies currently adopted.

General suggestions to overcome the educational problems of the Palestinian children:

- Preparing guides for teachers on various children issues and children rights.
- Conducting studies to help make curricula suitable for students, taking into account the Palestinian culture and natural, social, cultural and political environment.
- Designing remedial programs to be implemented jointly by all parties concerned with children.
- Drawing the attention of researchers, specialists and academic staff to research into the educational issues of children.
- Full development of school and classrooms environment, in a way that students would feel that their school is their favorite place to be in, not the opposite.
- Sustaining and encouraging students to do research and gain skills of collecting data and self-learning.
- The provision of leisure and sports places and make them appropriate with education.

(2) Health problems:⁴

- The limited number of primary care centers. Children do not receive full health care because of the lack of physicians specialized in pediatrics, and the limited number of primary care centers and lack of medical equipment in such centers.
- Poor health awareness of families, in spite of awareness campaigns.
- Poor attention to raising children's awareness of health issues, increasing their vulnerability to infection with different diseases. This is as a result of poor performance of health administration in schools.
- Lack of focus on receiving technical assistance from specialized international actors such as World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF, and Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), other than medical assistance.
- Increase of the number of children suffering from problems related to mental health.
- A considerable number of children suffer from malnutrition, increasing cases of anemia, nearsightedness,

³ Under this rule, a student can be failed once over the 12-year basic schooling. Students and parents know about this rule and it is widely believed it is cause for lack of achievement at schools.

⁴ Al Mezan added that attention must be directed to the essential determinants of health, such as water, sanitation, environment and nutrition. Without tackling these issues, it is difficult to adopt affective strategies to health-related problems.

and teeth diseases.

- Poor health care for children in marginalized areas results in the emergence of parasitic diseases.
- High rates of children deaths as a result of lack of medicines, and lack of a strategic storage of vital medicines and treatment.

The most important health problems of children that are priorities and need action:

- Malnutrition and misunderstanding of correct nutrition by families.
- Lack of health awareness resulting from poor health education of families and their carelessness of children's health.
- Poor quality of health care provided for children through primary care centers.

These problems face several challenges that hinder the achievement of a tangible progress in children's right to good health care:

- Families not having the necessary health education and awareness.
- Lack of protective health culture of families.
- Lack of a health system that is capable of managing health institutions.
- Prevalence of chaos and neglect in providing health services required for children.

Opportunities and prospects that might be available or made available to manage and tackle such challenges:

- Building a national awareness program that ensures outreach to families, and continuity of this program on the long run.
- The capability of health services providers to provide better health services through increasing the budget specified for health sector, and qualifying specialized, professional and efficient podiatrists.
- Personnel capable of planning and programming to improve the current health situation.

These opportunities and prospects need to be developed in order to be a tangible reality. 'Real' mechanisms to transform such opportunities and prospects into executive reality:

- Designing a plan in which government, private and national institutions and health experts participate.
- Advancing experts, and delegating physicians abroad to qualify them to manage health services sector with the highest possible quality.
- Restructuring the health sector administration.

Suggestions to improve the health situation of children:

- Health insurance for families and children.
- Addressing the necessary awareness and guidance on health for families.
- Actual observance of children rights by the different stakeholders.
- Permanent provision of basic medicines.
- Preparing more programs aiming to support food, especially children food, with basic vitamins such as iodine and iron.
- Raising health education among families, and guiding them towards the methods of healthy nutrition of their children within comprehensive awareness programs.
- Paying more attention to school health.
- More attention by the government to qualify and increase the number of physicians and nurses specialized in pediatrics.
- Conducting studies in the children health sector to discover the real situation of health conditions of children, in order to deal with it perfectly.
- Provision of necessary budgets to implement development plans of health service provided for children, and developing and upgrading manpower.
- Cooperation between the Ministry of Health and other different sectors such as education, media, and social affairs to identify the urgent priorities of children (school health, nutrition through schools, special classes on health and psychological guidance ... etc).

(3) Psychological problems

- Lack of feeling of security and stability because of continuous fear by children.
- Discrimination between boys and girls results in psychological damage for girls.
- Prevalence of violence culture among children: such culture that children absorb all along their growth and education due to wrongful social practices.
- Lack of social workers and psychologists with effective programs and tools in schools.
- Lack of cooperation of parents and custodians with psychologists in regard to psychological of their children.
- Negative impact of family problems on children's physiological condition.
- Feeling of inferiority because of suppression of children's freedom of expression.
- Negative influence of media on children's trends and behavior.
- Prevalence of fanaticism and tribalism among students at schools.
- Lack of inclusion of all students suffering from psychological problems in programs of psychological stress release.
- Punishment and collective punishment of children in schools.
- Lack of mental atmosphere and conditions appropriate for children to learn their lessons.
- Inability of psychological supervisors to cover all cases that need assistance and psychological support because each supervisor works for more than one school at the same time.

- Tolerance values, although included in school curricula, are essential to enhance the children's daily behavior at school, street, home or other educational institutions, but are lacking.

The most important psychological problems of children that are priorities and need action:

- Lack of security and social stability.
- Negative psychological effects resulting from domestic and school violence and discrimination against the two genders.
- Under-average concentration and attention, and poor achievement.

These problems face several challenges that hinder the achievement of a tangible progress in children's right to psychological care:

- Current pressing circumstances: unemployment, poverty, domestic problems, tension and child problems.
- Families unawareness of methods of dealing with their children positively.
- Negative accumulated psychological effects left by the Israel occupation's practices.

Opportunities and prospects that might be available or made available to manage and tackle such challenges:

- Provision of qualified psychologists to help treat psychological problems of children such as fear, deprivation and depression.
- Potential entertainment opportunities in order to amuse the children under continuous violence against them, and to relieve their pressure through the positive investment of resources and management of funds according to their needs.
- The Israel pullout from Gaza helps provide means of comfort, entertainment and security for them.

These opportunities and prospects need to be developed in order to be a tangible reality. 'Real' mechanisms to transform such opportunities and prospects into executive reality:

- Increasing programs and activities that would help children get rid of their psychological problems.
- Preparing media programs able to sensitize, guide and support them psychologically.
- Sensitizing families to the healthy methods of dealing with children and considering psychological aspects.

Suggestions to improve the health situation of children:

- Sensitizing families to the importance of considering the psychological aspects of children's life.
- More attention by schools to provide children with psychological support and guidance.
- Sensitizing the local society to the risks of exacerbating the negative psychological effects of children.

(4) Media and communication problems

- Lack of any media specialized for children in all national mass media; TV, radio and papers.
- Very poor attention by all national mass media to children's issues.
- Non-attractive children programs in the local TV drive them to watch violent programs on satellite channels.
- Prevalence of cultural disorientation of children due to the rise of the number of hours spent watching general satellite channels.
- Children are sated with cultural values either contrary to the prevailing Palestinian culture, or irrelevant to the life the Palestinian child life, exacerbating children's internal conflict because of what they watch on TV and what they actually live.
- The content of the media message directed to children is characterized by being general and not specified or classified, which minimize its effects.
- Lack of interest of producers of children's programs in seeking help of experts, specialists, children's institutions, or even relying on the findings and recommendations of the limited studies carried out on children.
- Children's targeted media, though small in size, does not aim for development or seek to achieve strategic goals. This is due to lack of comprehensive planning for children.
- Poor participation of TV production companies in producing programs and episodes for children.

The most important media problems of children that are priorities and need action:

- Poor type and content of media message directed to children.
- Providing media messages is not carried out according to children's media needs, and does not consider their right to learn.
- Contradiction of values, traditions and norms, which had negative effects on the behavior of children and family.

These problems face several challenges that hinder the achievement of a tangible progress in children's right to access knowledge the way it suits them:

- Those who work on formulating media messages targeting children are not qualified and specialized.
- Lack of studies, researches and serious concern of relevant institutions to create targeting media for children.
- Duplicity of the existing values and communication contents provided by mass media.

Opportunities and prospects that might be available or made available to manage and tackle such challenges:

- There are academic media departments able to graduate specialized cadre that is capable of preparing workers in the field of children's media.
- There are government and private media institutions that have enough resources to address children professionally and appropriately.
- There is a general desire among academics and professionals to evolve children's media life. It is possible to

coordinate work between universities, government institutions, and civil society's institutions working in the field of children.

These opportunities and prospects need to be developed in order to be a tangible reality. 'Real' mechanisms to transform such opportunities and prospects into executive reality:

- Commissioning a civil society institution to make a strategic plan based on the creation of a strong media system for children in cooperation with media department in universities, and national mass media (papers, magazines, radios and TV).
- Organizing debates and workshops for specialists in order to interpret children's needs into reality, and identifying the role of all mass media in the participation of meeting such needs.
- Coordination between institutions working on child rights and media production companies to produce materials special for the Palestinian child, within an integration mechanism, and sending them to mass media to include them in their agendas.

Suggestions to overcome media problems of the Palestinian children:

- Issuing specialized publications and magazines for children.
- Preparing TV and radio programs for children.
- Creating a media specialist position and School Media Management in schools.
- Reserving a corner or page for children in Palestinian papers and magazines, or issuing a weekly supplement for them.
- Activating the role of directed mass media stemming from the Palestinian context.

(5) Social and cultural problems

- Cultural institutions' attention to children is limited and depend on their available resources and specified programs.
- Children's dependence on seniors to acquire knowledge without self-reliance.
- Children's lack of interest and awareness of the importance of reading and books (reading habits of families do not encourage children to read).
- Schools and homes do not encourage children to develop their creativity, skills and talents.
- Poor adoption of national cultural and heritage in education and learning.
- Lack of a national theater targeting children.
- Most of theater productions are generally restricted to a limited number of institutions working in theater.
- Theater activities do not integrate with other educational, learning and enlightenment activities and programs.
- Poor school libraries in terms of the number of books, resources, areas and activities.
- Lack of a clear mechanism to provide school libraries with educational and enlightenment resources.
- There are a few books, knowledge resources and stories for children, however, their promotion programs are limited.
- Poor children-directed media production from the Palestinian life, which increases reliance on imported media materials that reflect different background.
- The programs and activities directed to children by political factions only promote themselves, leaving undesired effects.
- Children dispute among political factions to decide on their trends as a result of the pressures they receive, influencing their emotional stability.
- Absence of healthy sexual concepts for both genders, and absence of the role of schools, families and the rest of social education institutions in this subject.

The most important cultural and social problems of children that are priorities and need action:

- There is no dialogue, accepting the other concepts, and tolerance culture among children.
- Ineffective, wrong education methods within family (lack of dialogue, child participation and violence).
- False perception of awareness on the level of social structure (religious, cultural and political)

These problems face several challenges that hinder the achievement of a tangible progress in children's right to learn:

- Families, schools and factions do not invest and reinforce cultural and social awareness of children.
- Poor understanding of families of cultural needs.
- Lack of comprehensive cultural vision on the public, political, factional and social levels.

Opportunities and prospects that might be available or made available to manage and tackle such challenges:

- There are cultural and social institutions that culturally and socially support children.
- Targeting and guiding families to achieve coherence within each family.
- There are highly qualified cadres and studies on children that are able to address such challenges.

These opportunities and prospects need to be developed in order to be a tangible reality. 'Real' mechanisms to transform such opportunities and prospects into executive reality:

- Interrelation among the institutions concerned with children, and activating collaboration among them in order to create appropriate mechanisms for families in order to raise the cultural and social awareness of children and enhancing positive values.
- Promoting the culture of tolerance and dialogue and discarding violence through supporting education institutions, factions, and government and children institutions via suitable means to access all families.
- Acting according to the findings, recommendations of debates, workshops and studies, and the

dissemination of information on children.

Suggestions to overcome the cultural problems of the Palestinian children:

- Emphasis on the political and social participation of children.
- Encouraging volunteering values among children (voluntary work).
- Attention to and increasing children mass media.
- Provision of awareness and education centers e.g. libraries.
- Enforcing laws related to children.

(6) Entertainment and amusement problems

- Adequate sports centers are very few. Children's participation in their activities is limited, although there are many children who have great sports talents and ambitions, let alone the absence of those centers' cultural role.
- Attention to sports activities in schools is very poor.
- School competition in scientific subjects and extracurricular activities (educational activities) is poor.
- Schools are not well-qualified in terms of equipment, area, sports specialists ... etc in order to have model sports activities, from which children would benefit.
- Summer camps' activities are only seasonal. Similar activities should be available all the year.
- Girls, and boys alike, can not easily and freely practice sea sports because there are no special halls for such sports or because of the prevalence of the cultural shame, taboo, and wrong.

The most important entertainment problems of children that are priorities and need action:

- Lack of (inaccessible) sports centers, playgrounds and areas suitable for children to play.
- Children do not have the opportunity to have enough time to play and entertain themselves.
- Entertainment means are limited to watching TV.

These problems face several challenges that hinder the achievement of a tangible progress in children's right to entertainment and amusement:

- Poor attention of competent bodies to child right to entertainment and amusement.
- Families' misunderstanding of children's entertainment needs.
- There are not enough funds to provide entertainment facilities.

Opportunities and prospects that might be available or made available to manage and tackle such challenges:

- There is a public desire to provide better entertainment for children. This would help invest public and private properties to prepare areas suitable for children's amusement.
- It is possible that the private sector and civil society institutions cooperate to provide appropriate places for entertainment and amusement.
- There is a considerable number of university students ready to do volunteer work.

These opportunities and prospects need to be developed in order to be a tangible reality. 'Real' mechanisms to transform such opportunities and prospects into executive reality:

- Development and rehabilitation of existing entertainment and amusement places.
- Partnership and cooperation agreements to be concluded between the government sector, civil society institutions and private leisure centers to facilitate providing entertainment services for children.
- Coordination between civil society institutions and government institutions to invest public spaces and build entertainment facilities on them.
- Assisting schools to increase the time of entertainment and amusement and the number of their entertainment facilities.

Suggestions to overcome amusement and entertainment problems of the Palestinian children:

- More government attention to children's entertainment facility.
- Sensitizing families to the importance and need that children have a good opportunity of entertainment and amusement, and helping their children to minimize watching TV.
- Broadening sports centers' activities to accommodate as many children as they could to join.

(7) Legal/rights problems:

- Lack of commitment to the implementation of children related laws, either the relevant International Law or Palestinian Child Law.
- Some articles of the Palestinian Child Law still need amendment.
- There are no obvious documented cases of violation by the government to child rights. However, there is clear shortage of the sufficient provision of such rights.⁵
- There is no clear mechanism obliging schools, families, national institutions, and the rest of educational institutions to implement child rights.
- There is no disagreement on the law's articles and Convention on the Rights of the Child because they are perceived as superior. However, there is disagreement on their implementation and prioritizing them.
- There are many weakness points in the Palestinian Child Law.
- Violation of child rights is basically related to considering children inferior. They are considered objects for

⁵ Al Mezan noted that violations include acts of commission as well as omission. Lack of adequate services and policies enabling of children rights are violations of those rights.

families, teachers and seniors to express their emotions.

The most important problems related to legal rights that are priorities and need action:

- There are no guarantees for children that would ensure the realization of their full rights.
- There are weakness points in the Palestinian Child Law.
- All actors related to children are not committed to the implementation the child law.

These problems face several challenges that hinder the achievement of a tangible progress in children's legal rights:

- Poor awareness of the importance and necessity that children should enjoy their full rights.
- Poor accountability and control on all those who violate children's rights.
- There is no 'supreme' governmental body to pay attention to and supervise child rights, and to ensure their application by everyone.

Opportunities and prospects that might be available or made available to manage and tackle such challenges:

- It is possible to exercise pressure on the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) to accelerate making the necessary amendments on child law.
- It is possible to activate the Supreme Council for Children and Mothers, or establishing a governmental body to supervise the follow-up of the application of child law.
- There is enough number of institutions that are capable of helping identify the various weakness points of the child law.

These opportunities and prospects need to be developed in order to be a tangible reality. 'Real' mechanisms to transform such opportunities and prospects into executive reality:

- Mobilizing human rights institutions in order to form a pressing force on the PLC and identify the necessary amendments of the law.
- Mobilizing children's institutions to form a pressing force to form a governmental body to supervise children.
- Engaging the widest possible range of actors related to children in order to help ensure the realization of all child rights.

Suggestions to improve the legal problems of the Palestinian child:

- Quick amendment of the law.
- More attention by the government to child rights.
- Establishing an institution to watch any violations of child rights.
- Sensitizing families and workers with children to the importance of preserving child rights.
- Public awareness of the importance of working on the application of child rights.
- The actual application of child rights.

Children's issues, needs and priorities⁶

The following is a presentation of the most important problems and violations, from which Gazan children suffer, as well as children's needs and issues they like to be acted on for their best interest, according to what they identified themselves.

1. **Violations that children experience**
2. **Children's needs in the light of problems and violations**
3. **Priorities issues that children like to be acted on for their best interest**

First: violations that children encounter

1. **Violation of the right to protection from forms of violence, physical and mental abuse, negligence and maltreatment:**
 - Verbal and physical violence among children, children's violence against teachers and vice versa, and parents' violence against children.
 - Prevalence of physical punishment and cursing as a kind of punishment and not depending on methods of giving advice, sensitizing and guiding.
 - Children's feeling of injustice at home because of some decisions of the family.
 - Fighting among children, disputing on objects with playmates and children's abuse to each other.
 - Families maltreatment of children and forcing them to do things they reject.
2. **Violation of the right to participation and nondiscrimination:**
 - Participation in classroom activity and other school activities are not available for all students.
 - Discrimination between and children on the basis of classroom achievement. Discrimination in the method of punishment according to the state of distinction or when treating students according to political affiliation, friendship or kinship.
 - Discrimination against girls is demonstrated in preventing girls from participating in outdoor activities, early marriages, ignoring their opinions and considering boys opinions. Disrespect and devaluation of girls. There are certain restrictions imposed on girls and not on boys.
 - Families discrimination against children within one family.
 - Lack of engaging children in activities that serve their interest. No opportunities for them to get involved in children's programs and activities.
3. **Violation of the right to appropriate and directed education:**
 - Difficulties in lesson achievement because of the difficult curricula.
 - Rise of the number of students in one classroom.
 - Homes are far away from schools.
 - Incapacity of schools basic facilities (classrooms, chairs, boards, windows, doors ... etc)
 - Methodologies are conventional and do not help students learn well.
4. **Violation of the right to enjoying the highest attainable levels of health:**
 - Unhealthy drinking water inside schools (considerable number of schools do not have potable water)
 - Trash and garbage around schools.
 - Lack of clinics in schools.
 - Environment surrounding children is not clean.
 - Poor health care of children, at family level.
 - Children's carelessness of themselves and their hygiene.
5. **Violation of the right to freedom of expression and freedom to seek, receive and impart information from various sources:**
 - Lack of libraries to enhance and encourage students to read.
 - Poor attention by schools to develop student's self-expression talents such as painting, acting, arts and sports.
 - Poor encouragement of children to develop and strengthen their talents and creativity.
 - Poor family encouragement of children to develop their talents and creativity.
 - Lack of appropriate scientific and literature sources of information available to families.
 - Poor attention to enlightenment, health awareness, cleanliness and education.
6. **Violation of the right to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities provision of leisure places:**
 - Lack of leisure places. Alleys and local neighborhoods are not suitable for playing.
 - Lack of sports centers and playgrounds for boys and others for girls.
 - Lack of entertainment places and activities within schools.
 - Girls denied the right to practice some sports games by family and school.
7. **Violation of the right to strengthening and respecting child rights:**

⁶ This part of the manual is based on focus groups with children, parents, teachers, child workers and experts.

- Families' and teachers' lack of awareness of the essence of child rights.
- Poor building, strengthening and development of children's capabilities.
- Poor attention to sensitizing children to their rights.

8. Violation of the right to adequate life standards:⁷

- Living in insecure and unhealthy environment.
- Lack of attention to children's issues and problems.
- Lack of families' compassion, warmth and attention.
- Families' inability to meet all children's needs (mainly because of poverty).
- Families inability to secure living conditions suitable for children.

Second: children's needs

(1) Children's needs from the government

1. Right to health care:

- The provision of free health care for children under 18 years.
- Health care for students such as dental and ophthalmic care as well as awareness campaigns.
- Attention to cleanliness of environment and places of trash cans.

2. Right to education:

- Provision of free education for students
- Development of education and reconsidering curricula
- Provision of modern education (utilization of technology in education)
- Building modern schools

3. Right to protection from violence (armed disputes and social reintegration):

- Protection from and preventing all forms of lawlessness.
- Protecting children from all forms of armed violence.
- Protecting children from involvement in armed struggle.

4. Right to granting aid and assistance when needed:

- Taking care of poor families and their children.
- Providing assistance for poor families.
- Helping poor and needy children.

5. Right to access ro information:

- Familiarizing children with our homeland and Palestinian cities.
- Acquiring information and ideas with methods suitable for children.
- Increasing the times of PC and internet usage in schools.
- Establishing school theater and holding debates on topics related to children.

6. Right to fullest possible social integration and individual development, including his or her cultural and spiritual and physical development:

- Respecting children's right to receive appropriate and directed education that is capable of strengthening and developing their mental capabilities.
- Respect of children's culture, level and need for development.
- Enacting laws that ensure children's right to practice their rights.

(2) Children's needs from institutions concerned with children

1. Right to participation and social welfare:

- Ensuring the participation of all children in their programs, activities and social events.
- Taking care of and developing children as well as achieving their objectives and ambitions.
- Considering children's rights and dealing with children according to their humanitarian rights.

2. Right to directed education:

- Assisting in developing education and teachers to achieve good and desirable education for children.
- Implementing free educational programs to support school education.
- Training and teaching students how to use PCs.
- Working with children in schools.
- Establishing schools everywhere to make them accessible by children in remote areas.
- Establishing special areas for children, parallel to homes, for reading and studying.

3. Right to play

- Provision of games and amusement tools for children.
- Participation in collective games at the level of clubs.
- Establishing forums and children playgrounds.
- Provision of toys as a form of aid to poor children.
- Assisting in convincing families that amusement is important and necessary for children. 'It does not matter where to play, the most important is to play'.

4. Right to learn and to access information

⁷ Al Mezan noted that this problem is linked to general problems of poverty and unemployment in OPT, mainly owing to occupation, deterioration of the economy, closures and sanctions.

- More attention to sensitizing children to important topics concerning them, e.g. human rights and child rights.
- Producing useful TV programs.
- More attention to educating children.

(3) Children's needs from a family:

1. **Right to an environment that enhances children's health, self-respect, and dignity.**
 - Observing their dignity, esteem and respect, and not degrading them.
 - Not using beating as a means of punishment.
 - Encouraging children's belonging to families.
 - Taking care of and bringing up children well.
2. **Right to freedom of expression and views:**
 - Listening to children's opinions and suggestions in issues related to them.
 - Frequent and continuous meeting between families and children and exchange of views.
 - Families' understanding of children's problems and attempting to solve such problems in way that suits them.
 - Helping children to have independent opinions.
 - Limiting families control of children and interfering in their desires.
 - Not enforcing children to do things they do not like to do.
 - Sensitizing families to the importance of children's involvement in expressing views and sharing their ideas positively.
3. **Right to thinking and emotions:**
 - Granting girls the right to choose their spouses.
 - Allowing girls to behave freely as boys do.
 - Not pressuring and influencing children's thinking to think the same way their families do.
 - Not influencing children to affiliate to a specific faction.
4. **Right to care and guidance:**
 - Providing advice and guidance to children, and not treating them violently.
 - Providing atmosphere of love and compassion at home by families.
 - More care by fathers and mothers.
 - Family should take care of children and all aspects of their life.
 - Providing incentives and rewards.
5. **Right to entertainment and practicing recreational activities:**
 - Entertainment and recreation.
 - Giving children the opportunity to watch children programs on TV at home.
 - Allowing children to join school trips and paying their fees.
6. **Right to appropriate life standard for children's physical, mental, spiritual and social development:**
 - Providing suitable healthy, psychological and educational atmospheres at home.
 - Providing equipment and tools that help teaching and educating children: libraries and PCs.
 - Considering children's mental state.
 - Treating children as if they are aware of what is going around them.
 - Providing children's needs of amusement places, toys, PCs, libraries, pocket money and places of their own at home.
 - Taking good care of homes' hygiene and provision of healthy environment suitable for children's growth.
 - Providing children's basic needs of stationary, pocket money, clothes and personal belongings.
7. **Right to participation and non-discrimination:**
 - Justice and equality when treating children.
 - Involvement of children in making decisions related to them.
 - Granting children more freedom and limiting restrictions.
 - Non-discrimination between boys and girls.

(4) Child needs from a school:

1. **Right to protection from all forms of violence and physical and mental abuse.**
 - Ceasing to use of physical violence (beating) and verbal violence (insult, offending, and degrading).
 - Respecting and taking care of students.
 - Respecting children's feelings and considering their conditions.
 - More approach by teachers to students.
 - Teachers' good treatment of children.
2. **Right to amusement, entertainment and spending spare time:**
 - Increasing the number of sports activities.
 - More attention to useful and amusing games that would help children develop physically.
 - Providing playgrounds at schools to give children full opportunity to play.
 - Increasing free time at schools to alleviate the pressure of studying.

- Holding entertainment programs for children in spare time.
 - Carrying out schools trips free of charge.
 - Holding entertainment and cultural activities beside classes.
 - Providing integrated games with enough numbers for all children in a school.
 - Focusing on sports activities and distinguished sports children.
 - Adding new sports such as tennis, gymnastics and chess.
 - Holding sports competitions among school students.
 - Building rooms for amusement in schools.
3. **Right to live in healthy and clean environment:**
 - Clean school environment and provision of trash cans.
 - Painting, cleaning and decorating walls with portraits and drawings.
 - Improving food quality in schools' cafeteria.
 - Developing the decorative school environment: green areas, gardens, tree-planting, and flower planting.
 - Improving and developing schools facilities and providing classrooms with ventilation and heating systems.
 - More care of the hygiene of restrooms.
 - Providing clean drinkable water.
 4. **Right to adequate education:**
 - Providing schools with PCs to assist in education.
 - Provision of a library with wide range of books.
 - Provision of good education suitable for different levels (considering individual difference among students).
 - Employing teachers trained to deal with children and capable of teaching students in a loving and friendly way.
 - More concern on PC, sports, drawing and arts classes.
 5. **Right to protection from any arbitrary or illegal procedure:**
 - Protecting children's rights within schools.
 - Protecting children from violence and maltreatment.
 - Provision of suitable atmosphere in schools to prevent fighting there.
 - Enacting laws to protect children in schools.
 - Enacting a law to prevent beating and insulting in schools.
 6. **Right to social and school care and welfare:**
 - Sensitizing teachers to the necessity of respecting children's rights.
 - Provision of free transportation for school students when needed.
 - Preventing teachers from smoking in schools.
 - Provision of psychological and social care for children.
 - Provision of free meals in schools.
 - Sensitizing children to the importance of cooperation and tolerance.
 - Sensitizing children to the necessity of respecting teachers.
 7. **Right to learn and acquiring information:**
 - Providing school libraries with stories and new books.
 - Preparing board magazine to be produced by students themselves to demonstrate their creativity.
 - Increasing the times dedicated to PC and library usage.
 - Familiarization with suburbs and areas.
 - Organizing exhibitions of children's drawings.
 8. **Right to participation and freedom from discrimination:**
 - Engaging all children in all school activities.
 - Bringing justice and equality in classroom participation.
 - Non-discrimination between distinguished and normal students in treatment and participation.
 - Sticking to developing capabilities and talents of all students with no exception.
 - Non-discrimination between disabled and healthy students.
 9. **Right to rest, leisure and play:**
 - Increasing amusement opportunities within schools.
 - Increasing time allowed to amusement in schools.
 - Non-replacing sports classes with others, or dedicating them to other activities.
- (5) **Children's needs from mosques:**
1. **Right to asking for information and learning:**
 - Learning about tolerance from religion and Quran teachings.
 - Increasing appropriate awareness sessions for children.
 - Access to book and resources with diverse opinion.
 2. **Right to participation and non-discrimination:**
 - Participation in all mosque activities.

- Non-discrimination among children within mosques.
 - Engaging everyone in sports activities of mosques.
 - Participation in trips.
 - Participation in competitions.
 - Bringing justice and equality in treatment.
3. **Right to freedom of expression and views:**
- Non-interfering in children's views and not pushing to polarize them.
 - Freedom from factionalism and political affiliations.
 - Giving children the chance to express their problems and issues.
 - Publishing children's creativity in mosques' board magazine.
4. **Right to education:**
- Giving the opportunity of PC education.
 - Broadening the range of intensive classes.
 - Holding private tuition free of charge.
- (6) **Children's needs from clubs and associations:**
1. **Right to participation and freedom from discrimination:**
- Playing football should not be exclusive to club members.
 - Engaging children in all games.
 - Allowing girls to participate in their activities.
 - Establishing junior teams within clubs.
 - Allowing boys to play in clubs.
2. **Right to rest, leisure and play:**
- Allowing children to benefit from club services with no fees, especially in Ramadan.
 - Clubs to be available for children to benefit from their services at all times.
 - Free subscription to clubs.
 - Provision of sports like tennis, volley ball and jogging for children.
 - Provision of sports equipment and clothes.
 - Taking care of juniors.
 - Provision of tennis tables for children (different tables from those for seniors).
 - Establishing clubs for children under 18 years old.
 - Allotting places suitable for reading and studying within clubs.
 - Adding games for children.
 - Provision of cultural and entertainment activities in clubs.
 - Assisting in recreation.
- (7) **Other needs (any party could realize these needs).**
1. **Right to entertainment and provision of amusement places:**
- Provision of entertainment places such as playgrounds, parks and theme parks for children to spend spare time and recreation.
 - Provision of trips and sports activities.
 - Building parks in all suburbs.
 - Securing playing in allies and public spaces.
 - Provision of benches within suburbs and public spaces to sit on in breaks.
 - Distributing playing time among all children.
 - Provision of amusement equipment such as balls, rings for baseball, and goals for football.
 - Taking care of children's entertainment needs.
2. **Right to learn and access information:**
- Provision of educational places such as libraries and intensive classes centers.
 - Amending curricula to suit all levels.
 - Improving education level.
3. **Right to participation and freedom from discrimination:**
- Engaging children in all events: festivals and celebrations.
 - Allowing children to express their views in mass media.
 - Ensuring children's involvement in subjects related to them and their future.
4. **Right to enjoying appropriate health and to clean environment:**
- Living in appropriate, healthy living standard.
 - Organizing health awareness campaigns on first aid, preserving cleanliness and other topics.
 - Provision of suitable health care for all children.
 - Taking care of suburbs' cleanliness.
 - Paving, cleaning and lighting allies to make it suitable for playing.
5. **Right to protection from any arbitrary or illegal procedure:**
- Preserving children's life.
 - Preserving and protecting children's rights.
 - Punishing anyone who abuses children.

Third: priorities issues on which children like to be acted on for their best interest

1. **Right to protection from violence, abuse and negligence:**
 - Protection from all forms of violence, abuse and insult.
 - Provision of peace and stability and granting children all of their rights.
 - Sensitizing families and teachers to respecting and protecting children's rights.
2. **Right to participation and freedom from discrimination:**
 - Non-discrimination among all children, in treatment and participation in schools, homes and clubs.
 - Engaging all children in school activities and programs of institutions.
 - Pressing on families and schools in order to achieve a wider participation of girls through institutions that look after their affairs.
3. **Right to adequate education:**
 - Decreasing the volume of curricula and their difficulty.
 - Changing methodology in schools to be desirable.
 - Building more schools and training and education centers as well as decreasing the number of students in a classroom.
4. **Right to rest, leisure and play:**
 - Building more entertainment facilities and playgrounds.
 - Building parks close to residential areas.
 - Increasing the time of amusement and entertainment in schools.
5. **Right to social and healthcare healthy growth:**
 - Meeting the basic needs of children.
 - Considering mental conditions of children.
 - Sensitizing families to understanding of children's needs.
6. **Right to learn and access to information:**
 - Establishing school libraries and providing them with new books.
 - Providing more opportunities to use PCs and the internet.
 - Acquiring information and knowledge from families and schools.

Priorities action on child rights issues⁸

1. **Right to protection from violence, abuse and negligence**
 - **High priority projects that need to be acted on in the coming two years:**
 - Sensitizing families to the risks of domestic violence on children.
 - Listing regulations and taboos by the Ministry of Education with the aim of protecting children from school violence and obliging teachers to abide by them.
 - Taking care of homeless children via accessing them and building special institutions for rehabilitating them.
 - Protection from the violence of occupation through the assistance of, and pressure practiced by, UNICEF, Save the Children and the UN.
 - Protection from absconding schools through direct sensitization, rehabilitation and meeting children needs in cooperation with families.
 - Establishing special centers to protect children living in hard conditions.
 - **Projects must be launched:**
 - Sensitizing families and teachers to the risks of violence.
 - Protection from schools absconding and taking care of homeless children, and those who are living in hard conditions.
 - **Mechanisms to ensure the participation of a wider range of children in the proposed projects:**
 - Working with government institutions and schools.
 - Cooperation between national institutions to access the targeted children.
 - Accessing children's places of gatherings such as clubs, mosques, public spaces, allies and children playgrounds.
 - **Bodies to be mainly responsible for implementing such projects:**
 - Ministry of Education
 - Ministry of Social Affairs
 - Children institutions in cooperation with volunteers.
 - **Potential obstacles to the implantation of such projects:**

⁸ High priority projects were identified in the light of the priorities which children themselves identified and with the help of experts.

- Mismanagement and ill-cooperation.
- Misunderstanding of projects' objectives by actors and partners.
- Poor funding.
- Traditions and norms.
- **Mechanisms to overcome the potential obstacles:**
 - Identifying clear mechanisms and roles for partners in the projects.
 - Engaging wider sectors of society.
 - Dependence on volunteer work (involvement of young volunteers).
 - Dependence on self-funding.
 - Dependence on national expertise.

2. **Right to participation and non-discrimination**

- **High priority projects that need to be acted on in the coming two years:**
 - Sensitizing all actors dealing with children directly to children's rights.
 - Projects that include educational and entertainment activities in places accessible to children in all regions.
 - Organizing children campaigns with the aim of influencing decision makers in order for children to have all their rights realized.
 - Increasing the number of places of entertainment, clubs, playgrounds, parks and summer camps.
 - Developing projects on the basis of child-to-child strategy.
- **Project must be launched:**
 - Sensitizing all actors dealing with children directly to children's rights.
 - Increasing the number of places of entertainment, clubs, playgrounds, parks and summer camps.
- **Mechanisms to ensure the participation of a wider range of children in the proposed projects:**
 - Cooperation and interrelation among institutions working in the field of children.
 - Organizing public meetings with children's families in their areas of living, and promoting the importance of children's participation.
 - Provision of entertainment and awareness activities that attract children.
- **Bodies to be mainly responsible for implementing such projects:**
 - NGOs concerned with children.
 - Formal organizations working in the field of children
 - Schools and places of children's gatherings
- **Potential obstacles to the implantation of such projects:**
 - Poor funding.
 - The political situation and subsequent effects.
 - Lack of specialized, efficient professionals.
- **Mechanisms to overcome the potential obstacles:**
 - Qualifying specialized professional cadres.
 - Searching for self-funding sources.
 - Setting alternative action plans to cope with different political changes.

3. **Right to appropriate education**

- **High priority projects that need to be acted on in the coming two years:**
 - Provision of appropriate, educational environment for classrooms.
 - Training teachers to be able to use modern methodologies.
 - Reconsidering curricula in order for them to observe individual differences among children.
 - Looking after children of special needs through the provision of their own facilities and activities.
 - Focusing on extracurricular activities as a supporting element for the education process.
 - Adding modern technology in the education process (PCs, illustration means, projectors, film materials and assisting tools).
 - Preparing special programs for children with low education achievement within or outside schools in cooperation with schools and teachers.
- **Project must be launched:**
 - Provision of appropriate classroom environment.
 - Training teachers to enable them to use modern methodologies.
- **Mechanisms to ensure the participation of a wider range of children in the proposed projects:**
 - Activating cooperative and partnership work among all workers in the field of education (the Ministry of Education, schools, children's institutions, etc...)
 - Various program are to observe all levels and ages.
 - Activities and programs should be desirable to children.
- **Bodies to be mainly responsible for implementing such projects:**

- The Ministry of Education and Education Department in the UNRWA
- Children's educational institutions
- International institutions concerned with applying children's rights.
- Human rights institutions concerned with education issues.
- Universities and academic experts.
- **Potential obstacles to the implantation of such projects:**
 - Lack of cooperation by stakeholders of education issues.
 - Lack of required finances to fund those projects.
 - Difficulty to practically implement such projects because of the absence of full planning at children's level.
 - Difficulty to implement such projects in the absence of qualified cadres.
- **Mechanisms to overcome the potential obstacles:**
 - Developing actual mechanisms to oblige the concerned parties to play their roles.
 - Funding such projects with the help of national institutions and partnerships in case the donor institutions do not respond.
 - Qualifying the cadres participating in the implementation of programs with children.
 - The baseline of such projects should be a comprehensive national plan to advance children.
 - Using mass media to promote the importance of participation of such projects.

4. **Right to amusement, entertainment and spending spare time**

- **High priority projects that need to be acted on in the coming two years:**
 - Restructuring school positions to be like a club containing sports, cultural and recreational activities to meet children's needs and desires. It should include classroom committees comprising children themselves to ensure their participation in activity building.
 - Forming clubs for children with various activities (cultural, entertainment and sports).
 - Mobile cultural and entertainment activities: theater, library and PCs.
- **Project must be launched:**
 - Extracurricular activities within schools.
 - Establishing clubs for children in all suburbs and promoting them and their programs in schools.
- **Mechanisms to ensure the participation of a wider range of children in the proposed projects:**
 - To include all stages of childhood (age categories)
 - To include all levels of education
 - To include all geographic areas
 - To include all classes of children
- **Bodies to be mainly responsible for implementing such projects:**
 - The Ministry of Education
 - The Ministry of Youth and Sports
 - The Ministry of Culture
 - Civil society institutions, and most importantly clubs and national societies
- **Potential obstacles to the implantation of such projects:**
 - Lack of funds.
 - Qualified personnel required to manage such activities.
- **Mechanisms to overcome the potential obstacles:**
 - Provision of financial support from several donors.
 - Possibility to implement as many activities as possible with schools' available assets.
 - Qualifying workers in such projects through specialized courses provided by experts.
 - Granting undergraduate volunteers some incentives such as tuition fee exemptions, and giving them priority of employment.

5. **Right to social and health care and healthy bringing-up**

- **High priority projects that need to be acted on in the coming two years:**
 - Preventive health care for children by sensitizing them to attention to public health
 - Focusing on health environment within schools.
 - Establishing clinics in schools and contacting families in regard to children's health conditions.
 - Sensitizing families via different means to the importance of health care for their children.
 - Connecting children of the same generation together as well as their reality and culture.
 - Focusing on poor children and ensuring that they receive the necessary social care.
 - Helping integrate children with special needs in social life.
 - Accessing children who need social and health care.
- **Project must be launched:**
 - School health and social care projects.
 - Sensitizing families via different means to the importance of health care for their children.
- **Mechanisms to ensure the participation of a wider range of children in the proposed projects:**

- Coordinating and correlating with institutions working in the field of children
- Depending on schools and educational supervisors in schools to identify those in need.
- Organizing meetings with families and sensitizing them to the importance of their children receiving health care.
- Coordinating and correlating with educational and national institutions and families.
- **Bodies to be mainly responsible for implementing such projects:**
 - The Ministry of Health and its facilities, the Ministry of Education (health management) schools, kindergartens, the Ministry of Social Affairs and its institutions.
 - Health and social NGOs.
 - State institutions working in the field of children.
- **Potential obstacles to the implantation of such projects:**
 - lack of response and cooperation of families.
 - High cost of such projects.
 - Scarcity of specialized professionals: social workers and specialized physicians.
- **Mechanisms to overcome the potential obstacles:**
 - Coordinating and correlating with the concerned parties.
 - Making action plans capable of taking care of and educating children on health issues.
 - Sensitizing children to the importance of their participation in such programs.

6. **Right to learning and acquiring information**

- **High priority projects that need to be acted on in the coming two years:**
 - Establishing libraries in all regions.
 - Establish a TV channel for children within a national media project for children.
 - Reassessing and amending the Palestinian curricula.
 - Establishing educational institutions based on special needs.
 - Establishing computer labs in schools and improving school and classroom environment.
- **Project must be launched:**
 - Establishing more public and mobile libraries to ensure all children would benefit from them.
 - Starting to plan for a national media project for children.
- **Mechanisms to ensure the participation of a wider range of children in the proposed projects:**
 - Forming representative groups for children to participate in the planning process.
 - Training children and building their capacity as well as empowering and giving them a chance to media participation.
 - Variety of activities according to children's needs and desires.
- **Bodies to be mainly responsible for implementing such projects:**
 - The government.
 - Civil society institutions.
 - Private and state media institutions .
- **Potential obstacles to the implantation of such projects:**
 - Lack of financial resources.
 - Lack of specialized cadres.
 - Law and the prevailing culture.
- **Mechanisms to overcome the potential obstacles:**
 - Establishing an administration or special unit for children in all concerned ministries.
 - Seeking the assistance of Arab and international cadres.
 - Forming pressure groups in order to amend and apply the law.

Rights that still need more action in order to realize within future projects:

- Children's right to survive and live in a secure environment that preserve their dignity: preserving children's lives by taking care of their interests, bringing them up healthily, and keeping them away from negative effects, which are basic obstacle to their natural bringing up.
- Children's right to live in a healthy environment: more attention to children's health at all levels.
- Right to freedom of expression, thinking and belief: families, schools and all parties should give children the opportunity to express what goes in their mind the way they like, and express themselves and their rights in a democratic way.
- Right to education aiming to develop children: establishing the biggest number of educational institutions for children, and focusing on sports, entertainment and drawing classes.
- Right to appropriate care, healthy bringing up and development: enhancing children's love and belonging to their families through strengthening their relation with their families and their love to school and teachers, as well as their right to development. Children's right to development.
- Right to amusement and entertainment: establishing gardens and parks for amusement and spending free times in healthy places, and developing performance in summer camps through varying their activities and dependence on directed and targeting amusement.
- Right to participation and freedom from discrimination, and bringing justice and equality: through providing

good opportunities for children to integrate effectively in society, and granting them their full right of participation in the fields that concern them and their future.

- Right to appropriate standard of life: through families' care for an appropriate standard of life for children's humanity and childhood, and ensuring the provision of basic components to ensure that children live in an appropriate environment.

Proposed projects

The following part focuses on proposing a number of actions and projects that seem to be needed in the light of the needs identified by children themselves, and in the light of programs, analyses and visions proposed by experts. These programs are needed to achieve long-term objectives. They are adjustable projects and can be tailored to suit the actors ready to implement any of them. There is a number of considerations before initiating those projects. The most important ones include:

1. Many projects can be implemented with full volunteer efforts.
2. Since most of the projects need funding, it is possible—at least partly—to depend on local sources of funding efforts such as donation, society contribution, volunteer work, and families' contributions in establishing projects for their children.
3. Using convincing strategies is very important and essential to the implementation of many projects because they depend on working in suburbs, alleys and public spaces as well as encouraging families to donate money, land, and rooms in their houses or free spaces in alleys.
4. Most projects need to be launched within a national campaign. Therefore, using public mass media in promoting such projects is essential.
5. Creating a database to include all regions including suburbs, allies, public spaces, and the nature of each region, and identifying leaders and influential persons in each region.
6. Forming a national committee to supervise regional committees, and suburbs committees, and their subcommittees 'suburb committee' or 'ally committee'. Such committees would comprise qualified persons and volunteers believing in children's issues and the importance of working for them.
7. Developing the activities of each suburb according to the needs identified in the region.
8. Committing to absolute professionalism in implementing such projects to ensure better implementation, no violation of children's rights, avoiding society diseases such as nepotism, patronage and favoritism as well as realizing private interests, enhancing the value of work for children and sensitizing to such factors and linking them to the future.
9. National projects or projects whose results are thought to be not guaranteed and have high risks should be commenced partly to make sure of their effectiveness and that they can be launched on a large scale. This is essential to identify challenges, weakness points and difficulties they could encounter.
10. It is necessary that children get involved in planning projects that target them because they are the most capable of understanding what they need and which strategies they respond to, and identifying which mechanisms they feel they would best suit them.
11. All proposed projects can be developed and tailored.

General suggestions and recommendations on future projects

- Implementing projects in a way to ensure the involvement of all categories and regions.
- Persons with expertise must supervise projects.
- Excluding factional mandate away from projects.
- Identification of mechanisms to evaluate for which projects were designed.
- Projects should be able to meet real needs.
- Implementation of projects according to the needs specified by the target groups themselves.
- Focus on advancing coverage of projects and dissemination of their outcomes and impacts.
- Focus on education via TV.
- Involvement of the largest number of actors related to children in the projects.
- Dependence on the principle of enhancement when dealing with children.
- Establishing effective mechanisms to ensure the continuity of projects.
- Focus on accomplishing long-term projects.
- Ensuring continuity and sustainability of the projects upon finishing them.
- Not having enough of discussing and analyzing needs only.
- Projects are to engage different classes of society.
- Projects are to be based basically on the humanitarian needs of children.
- Implementing projects that are compatible with the Palestinian context and children's needs.
- More focus by the concerned ministries to facilitate projects' implementation.

▪ Projects:

| Title | Idea | Objectives |
|-------------------------------|---|---|
| Schools exhibitions | Organizing periodical school exhibition—say monthly—where children exhibit their scientific, cultural, artistic, literary and creative productions. This idea can be developed to make schools or children compete. | Raising interest of children and guiding such interest, isolating children from depressing and discouraging variables as well as increasing and guiding children's ambitions. |
| School magazine 'board | A magazine in each classroom to be displayed on a classroom wall. Children are free to write, draw or do | Strengthening the status of freedom of expression for |

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| magazine' | whatever they like. No topics should be blocked for any child as long as it meets publication standards set according to ethical and literary standards and respecting the other. It should be supervised by students in the classroom themselves. | children. |
| Child-to-child | Children train and teach each others through their involvement in raising awareness on children's rights, and sensitizing their peer children and guiding them to topics related to their daily life such as freedom of expression and creation of a developed mentality for children. | Assisting in innovation apart from family to build up a future character that enjoys a degree of understanding, response and decision making. |
| Fellow-education (supportive education) | Children would help their colleagues of lower achievement, bearing in mind that the assisting student would earn be rewarded. | Helping children depend on themselves and enhancing their self-confidence. |
| Mobilizing public opinion on issues of children's rights | Widening the range of interest in children's issues in the different sectors of civil society. This can be achieved via public mass media, using awareness and guidance means, and different means of pressuring and publishing. | Mobilizing more sectors to interact in children's issues |
| Child media 'TV and radio production' | Producing local TV and radio children programs, which children would co-produce. Those programs are to discuss their issues. | Filling the gap in TV and radio programs presented to children and improving them professionally |
| Children's tribunal | Establishing an imaginary tribunal whose members are children themselves. Its role is to prosecute the competent bodies that fail to provide their services or violate their rights among issues which children would identify themselves. | Shedding more light on children's issues |
| School clinic | Establishing school clinics or at least one or more mobile clinics to cover all schools in the country, and providing families with full reports on children's health conditions as well as advising them to take the necessary health procedures. | Achieving the highest level of health care provided to children |
| Providing schools with potable water | Identifying schools that are not provided with potable water, and others that lack potable water tanks. | Provision of basic needs for school children |
| Supporting extra-curricular activities | Developing school competitions at the level of all sports, organizing national competitions at school level, which suit each education level, seeking the help of Palestinian athletes, organizing and broadening the base of group voluntary work, activating school media, celebrating international and national events, and inventing activities related to legacy, painting, sculpture, acting, sports, music, school trips, summer camps and scouting. | Developing and improving supportive school activities |
| Rejecting violence 'tolerance' | Violence has been practiced at many levels and everywhere. Therefore, there is a need to create regulations and mechanisms alternative to physical punishment in schools and homes. This could be achieved by using different raising awareness methods, and setting a list of regulations and laws that prohibit the use of violence against children in schools and the whole society. | Directing children's energy towards useful directions in order to discharge their energy in useful activities or at least not harmful, and ending the culture of violence. |
| Developing methodologies | Applying acknowledged modern methodologies and creating other new, cheap methods to which teachers commit. | Making the education process attractive, and getting rid of methods that alienate children's education |
| Updating education media | Providing schools with supportive education means, such as illustration instruments, projectors, and PCs, according to a plan to provide all schools with necessary media. | Supporting the Palestinian curricula with necessary education instruments to achieve better results. |

| Title | Idea | Objectives |
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| Strengthening teachers | Trained volunteer university students to visit schools, enter each classrooms and work on developing children at many levels: developing characters, attributes and positive values of children in many topics such as optimisms, hope, future, social activity, need to exert efforts for the future, success value and cooperation with teachers. All this should occur in presence of the teacher in order to learn from the facilitator new methods of how to deal with children. | Capacity building for school children, and developing them and assisting teachers in preparing children to learn. |
| The teacher is my friend | Organizing a visit or more to students' houses, and speaking to their families on the importance and need to take care of children, following their studies, paying them more attention, and listening to their families' views on their problems and needs as well as allocating a part of the visit to speak to children. | Motivating families to participate more in strengthening schools efforts in building and developing children |
| School dialogue | In view of the absence of the culture of dialogue, tolerance and accepting the other, lack of specific policies to reinforce such values, debates and meetings between students are to be held in order to enhance the values of dialogue, convincing and peaceful opposition, as well as discussing topics concerning them such as their problems and school troubles. | Involving children in discussing their issues and needs and developing the culture of dialogue. |
| Schools committees 'public relations' | There are many shortage places from which schools suffer. There are simple programs that schools administration can carry out themselves, but they need a little coordination, correlation or cooperation with social associations; private, national or governmental. Here it becomes necessary to have public relation coordinator or to form a school committee to take care of communicating with the civil society, in order to strengthen cooperation with society, businessmen and national organizations. | Developing children at all levels, developing school, and widening the cycle of correlation and advocacy with schools. |
| Working with children | Involvement of national figures: politicians, sportsmen, and artists, in working with children or at least allocating part of their time for children. | Granting more confidence and closeness between children and celebrities, in order to help build a model or role model. |
| National program for Palestinian children | Searching into available resources, such as national organizations, mass media, TV production companies, high rate of young people in the Palestinian society, readiness of families and teachers, expertise in the field of children, available funding resources, and international organizations that show clear interest in children's issues. It is essential that such policy result in a number of applicable programs to be discussed in the PLC. | Designing a clear policy for the Palestinian children, which all parties working with children would follow. |
| The school mosque | Mosques represent considerable religious and educational values in the Palestinian society. Dozens of children go to mosques in each region. They are considered the only place to go to in some areas, or the only social institution desirable to children. It can be invested 24/7 to carry out educational, cultural, entertainment, creative, artistic and sports programs and activities. Through this project, great benefits could be made, including healing and constructive benefits. | Investing one of the largest and widespread institutions all over the country in order to provide more services for children. |
| My school is beautiful | Decorating schools and their facilities with self efforts by children themselves. They would participate in decorating their schools under artistic supervision by a committee to be formed to follow up this project in each school. | Preparing the best places to teach children, and make them more suitable and more attractive. |
| My school is a game | Transforming schools into what looks like a big gaming place, which children would consider as the best place, through adding more games, giving all children the chance to join and benefit, helping them spend enjoyable time | Encouraging children to love their schools, teachers and lessons, self-disciplining and reducing children's pressure |

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| | within schools, providing appropriate numbers of instruments and games, and increasing the number of rewards and positive enhancement. | in order to relate them more positively to their schools. |
| Legitimate games | Providing games that families think they are children-friendly (some of them prohibit them) in a way that suit religious, competitive, moral and educational standards, and investing them in reinforcing their positive values and developing children's skills, or transforming such games to sports on which children compete. | Legitimizing activities rejected by families and liked by children. |

| Title | Idea | Objectives |
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| School's Human Rights Committee | Establishing a school committee to advocate human rights, comprising students themselves. Its mission is to watch cases of children's rights violations at school and send periodical or emergent reports to the school's administration or to a special committee comprising guardians, teachers, representatives of national institutions, and a representative of the Ministry of Education. This committee should be entitled to establish committees to investigate cases of violations of children's rights at school, or assigning one of the concerned human rights institutions to investigate such cases. The committee's duties include watching cases of collective punishment, insulting children, physical violence, psychological damage to children, neglect, and all forms of abuse. | Development of children's involvement, improvement of children's rights in schools, and teaching children human right. |
| School cinema | Providing schools with VCRs and playing educational and cultural movies periodically. This should ensure exposing all children to targeting contents according to a specific educational program. It is a means to support education because cinema is very attractive to children. | Reinforcing positive concepts of children, and participating in providing them with more enlightenment. |
| School theater | Establishing one or more theater troupes at school level, and showing targeting plays with scientific, cultural, literary, artistic, educational, guiding and health contexts. School children would act in such plays and the audience would be their classmates. | Sensitizing children to basic issues and evolving children's taste. |
| Mobile theater | Establishing more than one mobile troupe, showing periodically targeting theater plays in all schools in Gaza according to a program known to children. This program would contain very important contents, such as values belonging, tolerance, dialogue, thinking, importance of freedom, and other values. | Enlightening and educating children on important issues. |
| Mobile library | Establishing a mobile library comprising books, stories, audio-visuals, and education materials. It is to access all districts and allies, and include programs interesting and adorable to children. They are meant to support their positions towards schools, families, friends and schoolmates. | Realizing knowledge needs of children, and filling the shortage of libraries close to children's places of gathering. |
| Public library | Establish simple libraries in each region and district, which children visit to read, do homework and increase their knowledge. Such libraries can be established in empty rooms in the houses of citizens, in case there are no empty spaces in the area. They can be established in a simple place where the people of the area collaborate to establish with humble and simple resources. A supervising council from people of the same area can be established. | Increasing the knowledge of children, and filling the shortage of public libraries and their remoteness from residential areas. |
| My clown friend | Volunteers (clowns) are to visit districts according to a program and a geographic plan, including access to all districts and allies. Volunteer clowns are to show children a purposeful story. They would discuss it and its purpose. It would include rights issues, educational topics and psychological support. The project must be packaged with | Achieving a type of purposeful amusement for children, and creating topics and stories about which children talk. |

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| | amusement and fun. | |
| Child club 'small club' | Establishing small clubs in districts (a club in each district), at least a cultural and social club that would include games that suit the available areas. It is important to convince the people of the area that it is important to establish a club there. It could be established on a free land or in other areas available for public use. It is preferred that this project be implemented within a national program. | Filling the current shortage in the number of clubs, and tackling the problem of clubs remoteness from children's areas of gathering, and that not all children benefit from the services of the existing clubs. |
| Young people and children | <p>Recruiting the largest number of young volunteers to be trained on how to work with children, enhancing their capabilities, and helping them in meeting the challenges of the future. This can be done through assisting them in their education and how to respect others, and teach them human rights, and child rights and driving them to participation and production and active involvement in society.</p> <p>The strategy of implementing this project depends on young volunteers adopting a certain number of children, no more than five, from his/her region, district, or alley. S/he would be a sibling, friend, supervisor and tutor. S/he has to spend a specified time with children. Young people should be motivated towards this project as a national duty.</p> | Assisting children to bring them up in a healthy way in order to help them proceed to construct themselves. |
| Model districts | <p>Establishing children committees at district level in order to think about the district's issues and problems. They would work on correcting wrongful things with the help of families and a district's consulting committee to be formed to assist them. The project will take care of districts' beauty and supervise, preserve and develop the facilities that provide services to them.</p> <p>Holding seasonal competitions for the best model district, which achieved tangible results reflected positively on children's development.</p> | Children beatifying the surrounding environment, in order to have an environment suitable for their bringing up and getting them used to the values of self-reliance. |

| Title | Idea | Objectives |
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| Children's database | Carrying out periodical and seasonal researches and polls for children examining many of their issues by bodies specialized in research and statistics. Surveying children to ensure they enjoy their rights, and surveying present and emergent cases such as poor school achievement of children, abuse cases and their rate in schools and other educational institutions, and children's participation in classroom and extracurricular activities as well as other issues. The aim of this project is to provide a database of children and their issues that would help the institutions carrying out projects provide projects based on real data. | Provision of a database and statistics that would help planners and children's policy makers. |
| Education/ teachers know children's rights | Many teachers are unaware of children's rights. This could have negative effects on the relation between teachers and children, and result in high risks of children's rights abuse. It is believed that familiarization and belief in children's rights would help ending such violations. A program for teaching teachers children's rights is essential. This should include all teachers with no exceptions. Emphasis should be placed on the negative effects that could result from children's rights abuse, discrimination among children, and practicing violence against them. | Improving the status of children's rights in schools. |
| Disabled-friendly schools | Children with special needs, such as deaf, blind, and disabled, suffer from inaccessibility to education. Some could not access schools, and others need education that suit their disabilities. Therefore, it is necessary to establish a school that would provide primary education to such children as well as preparing specialized teachers. Such schools must be spread over all districts to allow disabled | Integrating disabled children in to society |

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| | children to have access to education. | |
| Education/ families know children's rights and child development and protection | <p>Teaching families children's rights and methods of healthy education and enhancing the values of belonging, work and ethics.</p> <p>Training families on how to help children study their lessons, and follow their children's school, educational and development affairs.</p> <p>Emphasizing the importance of dialogue and discussion with children in order to reinforce the value of freedom of expression, and means of spending less time watching TV and encouraging reading and developing capabilities.</p> <p>Helping families prepare entertainment programs for their children through preparing a number of guidelines for families to help them deal with their children or through establishing a training program for families all over the country, from district to another and from ally to another. This program is to be accompanied by a national awareness campaign. Public mass media could be used to achieve this goal.</p> | Improving the status of children and advancing them in all aspects. |
| National campaign for children's rights 'media campaign' | Starting to manage a media campaign, in which all mass media would participate to raise awareness on children's rights. All forms of public awareness are to be used. | Improving children's life and supporting children's rights |

Principles of priority action on issues of children's rights

☒ Priorities on which children's programs focused⁹

- Right to adequate education: active learning and education, through intensive classes, education by participation, education by playing and rights education package through curricula.
- Right to healthcare and adequate standards of physical and mental health: through food programs, vaccination, integration of the level of nutrition improvement, treatment, health rehabilitation programs for those with special needs, and mental treatment programs. On the mental health level, it is through support and psychosocial debriefing programs, through psychological support and assistance in schools, help in correcting behavior, psychological debriefing, and discharging potential energies.
- Right to play and entertainment: entertainment and amusement through games, entertainment activities and competitions, and providing places for playing and summer camps.
- Right to participation: through encouraging and developing children's creativity through reading, drawing, story writing and integrating children in social life through children's parliaments, municipality councils, and imaginary models in social topics.
- Right to knowledge: sensitizing and training children through health, legal, environmental, civil awareness programs carried out in cooperation between schools and institutions.
- Right to development: developing skills and capabilities, and giving children the opportunity to express their creativity and talents through reading, writing and drawing.

☒ Consideration of children's right by children institutions and institutions working with them

- Poor commitment by some institutions to consideration of some of children's rights such as their right to participate and express their views.
- Qualified and trained specialists are highly efficient and consider children's rights when dealing with them in the projects.
- Considering full rights of children depends on the motives of volunteers to join this work. Therefore, humanitarian motives for volunteers must be developed.
- In some programs, it is noticed that there is maltreatment by facilitators against children, which results in enhancing negative values and behavioral patterns of children. Therefore, a strict follow-up should be applied.
- Facilitators, trainers, volunteers and specialists, who are trained to work with children and on their rights, are more capable of considering children's rights.
- Some institutions violate children's rights in activities or when applying such rights. Such institutions need to be reformed.
- Considering children's rights during the implementation of activities should accompany the achievement of objectives set for a project.
- Not considering individual differences in some projects and institutions is a violation of child right to equality. This is basically because projects do not depend on any studies to identify the needs and priorities accurately.
- Focus is on the achievement of programs objectives (education, entertainment and mental guidance). Other important rights are neglected such as the rights of freedom of expression, participation and equality.
- Sometimes some institutions' staff do not consider any of child rights, which they are responsible for preserving or working on.
- Dealing with child rights as an undividable entity, and not only working on the rights to which an institutions commits itself.

☒ Considering projects for children with special needs (disabled)

- Interest in integrating children with special needs into society is obviously limited, especially with their healthy mates.
- There is more focus on the provision of projects for children with special needs than projects aiming to integrate them into children's society.
- There is poor interest in training facilitators on how to deal with children with special needs.
- Dealing with normal children and others with special needs the same way in projects.
- Participation by those with special needs in children's programs is limited if compared with the volume of this category in the Palestinian society.
- Children with special needs should not be involved without considering their actual needs.
- Identifying actual and clear objectives when working on their integration.
- It is necessary that institutions should consider children with special needs and taking into account their

⁹ Al Mezan noted that child protection by law and community represents an additional pressing priority.

integration into society into their general program.

- It is important that institutions working with children, regardless of their activities, consider the involvement of children with special needs. Such involvement should not be exclusive to specialized institutions.

☒ **Actual and possible participations by institutions in improving children's life**

- Familiarizing children with their rights. However, work with entities that can carry out this task still needs capacity-building.
- Realizing developmental, knowledge, and educational needs of children. However, inaccessibility to the largest possible sector of children is still an obstacle to the wide realization of such needs.
- Entertainment and amusement programs and psychological debriefing participate in achieving positive side effects on children's capabilities.
- Working with children who show aggressive behavior.
- Educating and sensitizing children in several fields: health, rights, education, behavior, knowledge ...etc.
- Occupying children's free time in useful and fruitful activities for children.

☒ **Bases to identify children's needs before the implementation of projects**

- By children themselves through means of expression: acting, drawing and writing that express them and their needs.
- Facilitators, trainers, volunteers and specialists on needs through working with children.
- Evaluating activities and programs implemented with children. When measuring, children's needs become clear.
- Studies of purposeful institutions to identify children's needs; studies prior to the implementation of projects.
- The real economic, social, political, security and cultural situations that prevail in the Gazan society.
- According to the needs identified by funding bodies.
- According to the needs of institution and the type of projects implemented in certain periods of time.
- Observing the daily life styles and patterns of children, and following up their behavior.
- Carrying out experimental researches aiming to discover the potential needs of children.

☒ **Methods of gaining work experience with children**

- Direct work with children.
- Evaluating activities carried out with children.
- Benefiting from unsuccessful experiences.
- Desire to development leads to the treatment of negative aspects and errors and looking for gaining experience and knowledge.
- Supporting and reinforcing relations, and correlating between staff and institutions working in the field of children in order to exchange experiences.
- Referring to experts to seek assistance in identifying issues related to working with children and in order to acquire the best helpful methods to influence children.

☒ **Methods of detecting problems from which children suffer**

- Experience from direct work with children (direct contact) as well as implications emerging as a result of the implemented projects. Giving children the opportunity to express their suffering through sessions of psychological debriefing.
- Activities desirable to children: drawings, acting and expressing by writing.
- Observing children's behavior when they deal with their mates.
- Free discussions and direct dialogues with children.
- Direct follow-up of children and acknowledging their troubles and suffering.
- Workshops for staff, experienced with children, in institutions providing services for children (health, educational and social activities) to study children's problems and what can be done.
- Meeting children in schools, through free discussions, interviews and focus groups.
- Depending on researches, interviews, questionnaires and polls.
- Carrying out field tours from house to another, to be informed by families on children's problems, and from ally to another.
- Studying certain cases from particular categories and regions (social research).
- Psychological and social guidance reports by social and psychological specialists.
- Statistical implications of the PCBS.
- Studies of researchers and specialists in the field of children, academic studies, and findings and recommendations of children conferences.

☒ **Challenges of working with children**

- Violent nature of children when dealing with their mates.
- Poor cooperation and response of children's families.

- Influence of bureaucracy and classic systems on the interest of governmental institutions.
- Poor understanding by schools of the nature and importance of children's programs.
- Many school teachers are not qualified to carry out the programs' activities.
- Facilitators work partly within a specific project and their work terminates with the termination of the project.
- Staff working in some projects are poorly experienced and not specialized.
- Relations between specialists transform into convenient relations. This has negative effects on the required care of targeted children and consequently on the desired results.
- Lack of specialty and dependence on volunteer work.
- Norms, traditions and sometimes the prevailing culture.
- Difficulty in dealing with children because of the psychological and social backgrounds and pressures, from which children suffer.
- Difficulty in dealing with children of remote and rural areas, especially for unspecialized volunteers.
- Places of carrying out activities—schools and homes—are different environments for children, which does not help achieving objectives.
- Accumulated experiences of children involved in more than one project are similar, which results in confusing children who do not have similar experiences before and influence the achievement of positive results.
- Time allocated for implementing some projects is short, which does not help achieving objectives as seen by facilitators.

☒ Suggestions for management of the challenges of working with children

- Long-term behavioral treatment programs to ensure achieving the desired objectives.
- Sensitizing the local society to the importance and need to work for children, in order to support facilitators and specialists.
- Clarifying the role of the children's institutions of the local society for families.
- Helping families understand the importance of encouraging their children to participating in children's programs.
- Assigning a supervisor for activities in each school, who would be capable of understanding the importance of institutions' work with schools.
- Establishing special facilities for children in each school.
- Sensitizing teachers to the need to work with children according to the standards of human rights and child rights.
- Integrating programs between schools, families and social institutions.
- No duality in dealing with children by families, schools, and institutions working with children.
- Identifying needs and targeted sectors for each region alone.
- Focus on programs aiming to evolve ethics and more concern on this aspect.
- Workers on children's rights has to commit themselves to carry out a work that targets children away from media purposes.
- Training facilitators, trainers, and specialists on methods of how to deal with children.

Recommendations

1. Institutions, volunteers, facilitators and specialists are to focus more and more on the commitment to absolute professional rules in dealing with children.
2. Qualifying young cadre in the country in order to work with children, enhance their values of volunteering and engage them in working with children.
3. Enhancing their positive values on the necessity to work for children in Palestine, and emphasizing the importance of working with children.
4. Increasing the volume of correlation, coordination and cooperation between institutions, experts, and governmental institutions especially those providing basic services.
5. Establishing an independent ministry for children, or at least integrating it into the Ministry of Women Affairs. Its duty is to care for and follow-up children's affairs.
6. Commitment by institutions to the actual priorities of working on children's issues, and not according to priorities of the funding bodies.
7. Commitment by institutions to their range of work and specialty, and not working in projects outside their interest, specialty or general program.
8. Adopting a rescue plan to help children get out of their successive crises, and to build up children capable of encountering future challenges, within an integrated and comprehensive national project. It is to be adopted by a body that is able to lead the institutions working with children towards a clear future destination. All society sectors and children would participate in its building and development and identifying mechanisms of its implementation and roles assigned to each institution or body alone.
9. Forming a coalition or network that would include institutions working in the field of children. It should work on identifying available resources and organizing needs and urgent priorities, within a program created by experts of such institutions under a convention to which all institutions commit. It would identify clear mechanisms of exchanging expertise and getting rid of all weakness points that characterize institutions' work, organizing roles and getting rid of all forms of unprofessional competition, which is reflected negatively on the outcome of such institutions.
10. Providing technical assistance for the Supreme Council of Mothers and Children, in order to reactivate it to be entitled to supervisory tasks that were assigned to it according to the Law of Palestinian Child no. (7)/2004.
11. Establishing a pressing group or coalition of representatives of factions, institutions working with children, national figures, young people and volunteers. Those people would share a feeling of belonging to children's issues. They should have previous work with children, and be fully aware of the importance, need and urgency to work on children's issues. The government should be pressured in order to adopt clear, real and logical policy to deal with children's issues. The funding bodies should be pressured in order to direct funding clearly, to ensure the achievement of tangible results and effects in a certain time.
12. Exercising pressure on political factions in order to stop their violations of children's rights related to freedom of expression and belief and engaging them in armed struggle. It is necessary that children be excluded from factional competitions. Factions should focus on education, entertainment and knowledge.
13. Creating a monitoring body to watch the work of institutions working on the field of children. Its mission is to follow-up the implementation of their programs and ensure that they commit to the professional standards. It should follow-up spending the money and management of projects budgets.
14. Increasing the government attention to the methods of institutions working with children, in order to put an end to the violations which children experience either on the level of NGOs working in the field of children, or governmental organizations providing basic services.
15. Commitment to transparency and clarity when dealing with the funding bodies, not exceeding the limited budget, and the need to commit the funding body to work according the best interest of children, and not according to their funding policy, as well as working on the basis of needs and national objectives.
16. The roles of institutions working in the field of children should be identified. They should integrate to achieve greater interest for children that eventually aim to achieve the highest rates on the levels of their development in all aspects.
17. Establishing more effective mechanisms to target children to participate in projects. Those mechanisms should ensure equal opportunities for all children involved and consideration of individual differences in addition to giving those with special needs greater opportunity to participate.
18. Two types of projects should be distinguished from each other: constructive projects and healing projects. It is necessary to start with healing projects in order to prepare children for the construction process through constructive 'developmental' projects.

19. follow-up of the results and effects of projects, and not leaving children to face daily challenges they live on the level of families, schools or other educational institutions.
20. Examining priorities of projects according to children's priority issues, and starting with the more urgent projects and others that are identified according to the priorities which children identify themselves.
21. Limiting factional interventions in education, polarization and influencing ideologies as well as keeping children away from influences that affect their childhood.
22. It is necessary that institutions pay more attention to researches carried out on children. Communication between institutions and academic sector should be emphasized for the benefit of both parties in order to achieve better achievements. Researchers' attention should be drawn to achieving more researches on urgent issues and directing the purposes of their researches towards scientific directions.
23. Assisting children to start identifying and planning for projects they like to be implemented for them, with technical assistance by institutions working with them, especially those projects needing communication, in order to ensure the achievement of high quality results.
24. Training teachers to present curricula appropriately because the new Palestinian curricula is difficult and teachers still present them inappropriately. It is necessary to train teachers on the suitable methods of teaching such curricula as well as methods of education and dealing with students.
25. Overcoming routine and bureaucracy of ministries providing basic services, schools and institutions working in the field of children.
26. Sensitizing guardians to the importance, necessity and need that their children participate in the programs of the institutions that work in the field of children.
27. During the changing process, it is not advisable to clash with society, its traditions, norms and social patterns. Society's needs should be considered when working with—and planning to work with—children.
28. It is necessary to search into less costly projects or depend on local or self-donations, especially at times of crises.
29. Broadening the utilization of mass media in order to promote children's issues, and increasing the society's concern and make them greater issues with priority of all classes of society.
30. It is necessary to correlate institutions in the one region in order to identify its needs and programs that should be worked on because each region's needs differ in regard to some rights.
31. More focus on programs of simulation models such as children's parliament and municipality councils, and broadening their range.
32. Increasing the number of programs that target the largest possible number of parties related to children such as teachers, families and children themselves.
33. Directing more projects towards education, especially curricula, school environment, methodologies, and means used in teaching.
34. Paying more attention to educational and family care projects, and discarding all forms and levels of violence at the levels of family and school.
35. Paying more attention to projects aiming to increase the culture of human rights and child rights for all parties related to children: commissioned people, teachers, psychological and social supervisors, families and university students 'volunteers'.

We hope this guideline would participate in achieving a better
standard of life for our children, in an environment that meets their needs
and ensures their rights, and give them the chance to grow healthily,
for the sake of building the future of Palestine
