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Final External Evaluation Report

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An Eye to the Future: Building Skills and Attitudes that Underwrite and Promote Conflict Mitigation in Gaza

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

Acronym	Full name
ACS	Al Atta' Charitable Society
AIDA	Association for International Development Agencies
AOTR	Agreement Officer's Technical Representative
BLDA	Beit Lahia Development Association
CARE	
WBG/CARE	CARE West Bank-Gaza
CBCL	Child Behavior Checklist
CBO	Community based organization
CITW	Children in the Wilderness
E2F	Eye to the Future
E2FII	Eye to the Future, Stage II
EC/Edgework	Edgework Consulting
EGS	Eastern Gaza Society for Family Development
FY	Fiscal Year
G2G	Getting to Grants
INGO	International Nongovernmental Organization
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MSC	Most Significant Change
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
PCAP	Palestinian Community Assistance Program
PM	Project Manager
PMEP	Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Plan
PONAT	Participatory Organizational Needs Assessment Tool
SGCBO	Sub-Grants and Capacity Building Officer
T1	Time 1 (at outset of program participation)
T2	Time 2 (at completion of E2F program)
T3	Time 3 (nine months after completing E2F)
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USD	US Dollars

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This data collection would not have been possible if not for the cooperation and assistance of the three project coordinators and the translator employed by CARE. Together, they ensured that people were organized, available and able to converse freely. Thank you for your support!

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1. Executive Summary

1.1. Introduction

This report presents an external final evaluation of the *An Eye to the Future: Building Skills and Attitudes that Underwrite and Promote Conflict Mitigation in Gaza* (E2F). This \$1.1 Million USD project funded by USAID operated over the course of three years, between July 1, 2009 and June 30, 2012. The objective of the E2F was to shift the attitudes and behaviors of children in ways that contribute to enhancing a peaceful internal environment and provide a foundation addressing conflicts without resorting to violence. E2F was developed and managed by CARE in partnership with both international and national organizations. The two main collaborators international include Edgework Consulting (EC or Edgework) and Children in the Wilderness (CITW). This final evaluation was commissioned to Ritesh Shah, an independent evaluator from New Zealand. It was completed in May/June 2012.

1.2. Objectives and methodology of the evaluation

The objective of the final evaluation was to assess whether the set targets and anticipated results of the E2F were achieved, and determine the mitigating factors that may have impacted on these results. At the same time, a specified function of the final evaluation was to ascertain the effectiveness of actions taken in response to recommendations stated in the mid-term evaluation, conducted in January/February 2011. The final evaluation also needed to gauge the relevance, efficiency and sustainability of the E2F to the targeted beneficiaries, as well as the three partner CBOs and the broader communities. Lessons learnt and recommendations for future action from this exercise are intended to inform the design, implementation and management of other related activities in the future.



Presentation of the Evaluation Findings and Recommendations-CARE Office

To address these objectives, the evaluation methodology was comprised of three stages: (1) Desk review of relevant documentation; (2) Field work in Gaza; and (3) Synthesis, Analysis and Reporting. As part of the desk review, the project's Quarterly Reports to USAID, the midterm evaluation, program manuals and training materials, and a substantial body of monitoring data collected from



MSC Stories' Collection at ACS

children, parents, mentors and CBOs were reviewed in detail. This was then followed by a week of field work on Gaza in late May, during which time Most Significant Change (MSC) methodology was used to collect stories of impact from project beneficiaries and those involved in project implementation.¹ MSC is a qualitative approach in which those interviewed are asked to identify the impact that in their opinion is most important to them as the result of the intervention in question. They then narrate the change, in the form of a story, describing what things were liked before, what things are like now and why this change is important to

¹ This time period was chosen by the consultant, despite his awareness that at this time E2F program activity would not be occurring as scheduled at most of the CBOs due to it being the examination period. For this reason, he was only able to observe intentional programming activities at BLDA for a short period of time. A weeks' time in Gaza was all that was feasible for the consultant given the 20-day period of work for the evaluation, and other commitments he had.

them.² In total 48 stories of change from project beneficiaries, 12 stories from CBO senior managers/project coordinators, and 4 stories from CARE, USAID and Edgework were collected. Through two iterations of selection panels, first at the CBO level, and followed by a final panel with CARE E2F staff, two USAID representatives and the project consultant from Edgework, several stories of significant change were selected to be featured in the evaluation report. In some instances, interviews were also conducted with key informants, such as CARE E2F program staff, the project consultant, the USAID AOTR, CBO senior managers and the project coordinator from each respective CBO.

1.3. Summary of key findings

In general, the evaluation found that the E2F has met and/or surpassed many of its anticipated results and targets, provided unforeseen additional benefits to the project beneficiaries and communities it served, and created potential for long-term sustainability of the outcomes noted.

1.3.1. Impact and relevance to project beneficiaries

Stories of change collected from children, parents and mentors provided clear affirmation that the E2F had in fact contributed to the project's main goals of improving children's' attitudes and behaviors in ways that favor a more tolerant, diverse and peaceful society. Specifically, a number of stories discussed how children had learnt to apply problem solving, confidence and communication skills acquired through their participation in E2F to resolve disputes or interact with peers and/or adults in ways that were constructive and non-violent. In many instances the stories also discussed how these lessons were now being shared with peers and family members who had not participated in the E2F, extending the program's sphere of influence in the communities it served. Data from the Parent and Child Reports are consistent across the various cohort groups in supporting these anecdotes and suggest significant reductions in aggressive risk behaviors such as being withdrawn, creating social problems, breaking rules, and being physically or emotionally aggressive.



Conflict Mitigation Session at ACS

The evaluation concluded that these outcomes were of relevance and importance to the children themselves, and to their caregivers. Many caregivers felt it had provided their children with necessary coping skills to address the acute trauma created by Operation Cast Lead, and the ongoing difficulties of living in a conflict affected society. Community leaders concurred with this and felt that the tools provided by E2F to the over 2400 participating children were ones that would help them to be future leaders, and resolve conflicts with the community without resorting to violence. In this way, the E2F was indeed the "right response at the right time," for the children of Beit Lahia, Beit Hanoun and Eastern Gaza City.

A review of mentors' skills assessment data completed by project coordinators on two occasions, mentor self-assessment data, and their own stories of change confirms that the E2F had by in large, created a group of 85 capable and skillful mentors who could masterfully implement conflict mitigation programs. By the end of FY2, most mentors had achieved the status of "skilled" according to the mentors' skills assessment. Self-assessments as well as MSC stories collected from mentors document increased professional competence, greater interest in working with children, a better understanding of dealing with difficult child behaviors, and the application of skills such as time management, communication and problem-solving in personal decisions and actions. These young

² In Appendix F, this approach and the sampling procedures are explained in much more detail.

adults are now well poised to train others on the E2F program philosophy and approach, and have a toolbox of knowledge and skills that prepare them well for their future professional and personal endeavors.

Finally, CARE's participatory approach to working with its three partners CBOs was identified in the evaluation as having important impacts on the senior management teams' ability to develop and manage programs within their folio, and to more efficiently and effectively operate their organization as a whole. Stories of change collected from CBO senior management provide clear indication of how the PONAT process, in which the CBOs received tailored support and training on improving organizational deficiencies, allowed them to better meet compliance requirements, align program activities within a cohesive organizational strategy, and engage more effectively with both donors and constituents. The success of the E2F program has also afforded the CBOs much closer ties with their respective communities, and greatly increased their visibility and reputation with community leadership and families in their immediate surrounds.

1.3.2. Sustainability of impacts

The evaluation found that there is potential for some of the impacts from the E2F program to be sustained in the medium to long term. For the children, reductions noted in the Parent and Child report in terms aggressive risk behaviors were maintained nine months after children in the first cohort completed participation in the E2F. The sustainability of the messaging of E2F was also readily apparent from speaking to several children from earlier cohorts who gave examples of how they continued to apply lessons learnt from the program to various situations in their life. In the medium term there is hope that the pro-social skills that children learnt through the program will be maintained through the peer and mentor relationships they formed as part of their cohort group, given that the all of the participating children and mentors live in close proximity to the E2F sites.

Additionally, for the small group of children who were able to participate in the pilot Graduate Club program, there is potential for the children themselves to maintain such associations on a more formal basis and continue to organize activities and events in which they mutually reinforce the E2F program philosophy. Nonetheless, the continued context of conflict and violence in which the children continue to be raised, and the difficult transition into adolescence and adulthood that these children face, present long-term challenges to this impact, particularly without more formalized support for all participants.



Club Graduates at EGS

The job and life skills gained by the mentors and project coordinators places them in good stead to find future employment in other programs of psychosocial, education or play-based support, especially now that they are well connected into the life of the community and the CBOs they worked for. CARE has acknowledged the training and experience mentors have gained in E2F through two certificates, one awarded for training graduation that was signed by CARE, and Edgework Consultancy and another certificate of acknowledgment and experience was signed by CARE and the mentors respective CBOs. Yet, an expected outcome of training these young adults, according to the project proposal³ was that it would create "...a knock-on effect as these young people move into their careers in the classroom," or other careers that involve working with youth. At the time of the evaluation in late May, however, few examples were found of E2F program staff whom had managed to secure positions in schools or otherwise, where they would continue to utilize their skills and abilities as skilled youth workers and implementers of conflict-mitigating intentional programming. For this reason, the evaluation believes that the CBOs and CARE should

³ Technical proposal, pp. 10-11

do all it can to continue to leverage on and utilize this skilled workforce within current and future activities it is involved in.

The evaluation concludes that the skills, knowledge and resources that the CBOs gained through the capacity building activities are ones that will continue to impact the day-to-day functioning and strategic directions of each of the three organizations. Improved management systems, new communication and outreach strategies, and revised and/or revamped organizational policies provide a solid foundation for the CBOs to continue to improve their service delivery and be responsive to their constituents' needs. It also poises them well to continue to manage and operate some form of the E2F program, despite their own perception that this may not be possible independent of external support.

1.3.3. Project efficiency

The evaluation found that the E2F utilized its human, financial and material resources efficiently and effectively, despite the numerous constraints that the political context of Gaza presents to doing so. Considering that the E2F trained 85 mentors, and employed over 70 of them, built the capacity of three partners CBOs, and worked with over 2400 children and their caregivers, the program made full and creative use of all available project resources. A combination of well-coordinated and collaborative project management, and well considered contingencies for the constantly changing context of Gaza contributed to this.



E2F Children benefited from a Cost-Share at ACS

1.3.4. Program responsiveness

In general, the evaluation found that CARE considered and addressed particular recommendations from the midterm evaluation in an appropriate fashion. Specifically CARE: (1) encouraged E2F program staff to collaborate across the various sites of implementation; (2) initiated a no-cost Graduate Club for a small group of children from the first three cohorts; (3) secured additional cost-share funds to continue capacity building activities with CBOs, provide clothes and school supplies to participating children in the final two cohorts, and to maintain the playground equipment at each site.

The E2F program design was found to be responsive and open to feedback from mentors, community leaders and parents throughout all three years of its operation. Several examples were found of ways in which the program structure, activities and initial design were modified in response to concerns raised in focus groups with these parties, including increased focus on academic support during examination periods, the incorporation of local cultural activities, events and games in intentional programming activities, and the creation of single-sex cohort groups.

One recommendation, which CARE did not respond to, but which this evaluation felt it should have, is the monitoring system in place to measure progress against its chosen indicators and targets. An issue uncovered during the course of this evaluation was the misreporting of several outcomes against the PMEP indicators. The evaluator is sufficiently convinced that this was not a willful or negligent decision on the part of CARE. However, it became apparent that the complexity of the tools, the myriad of data it produces, and the multiple ways in which such data has been analyzed and internally reported has led to misunderstandings and miscommunication between Edgework Consulting, who has done most of the analysis and interpretive work, and CARE who has then reported on this data to USAID in Quarterly Report and through Geo-MIS. As acknowledged by the project consultant, the monitoring tools chosen to track progress against each of the project

indicators have not always been a perfect fit and may have contributed to this ambiguity as well. Nonetheless, the reporting errors are easily remedied, and do not detract substantially from the impacts that have already been reported, or the accuracy of such analysis.

1.4. Key enablers

Overall the E2F has shown remarkable success in terms of meeting a clear need of the three communities it operated in, and in having strong and potentially sustained impacts. The evaluation believes this is due to several enabling factors in the design, implementation and ongoing management of the project. This includes:

- **The localization of all project activity:** A key aspect of the E2F design was to employ mentors and project coordinators who were within walking distance of their site of work, and recruit children from the same communities. This has proven to be a key aspect of the project's success, given the ongoing relationships and communication that occur between mentors, families and children.
- **A truly collaborative partnership with the CBOs:** Through a simplified grants process to its three CBOs, CARE helped to ensure that ownership of the activity was vested at the community level rather than seen as externally imposed. This was coupled with a capacity building approach that let the CBOs take leadership and steer their professional development process throughout the three years.
- **Cost-share activities:** Additional financial support secured by CARE through cost-share activities was invaluable to effective program delivery, building trust with the community, and increasing potential for program impacts to be sustained.
- **Close engagement with the families of the children:** Involving the caregivers of the participating children in the program was vital to guaranteeing that the pro-social messages at the core of the E2F were reinforced, supported and nurtured in children's homes.
- **A clear developmental approach for project staff:** Three cycles of mentor training, ongoing support and monitoring of the project teams from the SGCBO, and external visits, feedback and ongoing communication from the project consultant helped to ensure that the needs of E2F program staff were well considered throughout.
- **Involvement of community leadership:** The inclusive involvement of community leaders was essential to enhancing the credibility of the program model in the community at large, and engendering widespread enthusiasm and support for its approach.
- **Being responsive to community needs and concerns throughout:** CARE and the CBOs demonstrated great flexibility throughout the three years in listening to and addressing community concerns, enhancing community trust and support for the program and its approach.
- **Thinking about sustainability from the outset:** The simplified grants and capacity building activities with the three CBOs, the involvement of community leadership and caregivers throughout, and most importantly the significant resources invested in developing a cadre of professionals who may be able to undertake the management and/or delivery of other conflict mitigation programs in the future are vital to this.
- **Flexible and proactive project management:** Despite the numerous constraints faced by the E2F program due to the operational and political context of Gaza, CARE and the USAID local team were able to work constructively to address these challenges, and where necessary, rectify unforeseen obstacles in ways that did not take away from program delivery.
- **The E2F program approach and logic of intervention:** The E2F helped to demonstrate how a program approach, which builds strong personalized relationships, fosters mutual respect and cooperation, and creates an emotionally and physically safe space for children to take risks in are important precursors for any type of meaningful change in the context of Gaza.

1.5. Recommendations

For CARE

- CARE should rectify reporting errors that have been identified in this evaluation report. Specifically, errors identified for several indicators (% of children who demonstrate improvements in attitude, % of children who demonstrate improvements in their life and social skills, and % of capable, skillful, knowledgeable mentors) need to be corrected in Geo-MIS and prior Quarterly Reports to ensure that outcomes are being reported in a consistent fashion (i.e. same outcomes and same time periods across all three fiscal years), and in line with the stated guidelines in the M&E guidebook.
- Future monitoring systems that are developed by outside consultants, and implemented by CARE need to be clearly understood in terms of their design, function and purpose by program staff, particularly when the tools selected provide multiple ways of reporting against project indicators.
- In a similar vein, clear and open lines of communication need to be maintained between the consultants involved in analyzing and summarizing significant findings from monitoring data, and CARE staff responsible for reporting on these findings to donors and senior management.
- CARE needs to better ensure that monitoring tools and systems are well suited to reporting against project indicators and targets in an efficient fashion, which does not take undo time away from program delivery. The evaluator does not believe that instruments such as Child and Parent Report were the most practical or user-friendly tools available to measure changes in pro-social behaviors and attitudes for a program such as E2F, given their length, and the time involved in administering, collating and analyzing data collected. While time was not available in this project to develop, pilot and refine project-specific monitoring tools for the behavioral and attitudinal change indicators, it is the firm belief of the evaluator that for future projects, such an investment of effort at the outset may be worthwhile.
- If at all possible, the evaluator recommends that long-run programs operated by CARE WBG which offer young adults a formal program of professional training, and ongoing on-the-job support be formally accredited through a recognized university or training institute. Such efforts are aligned with CARE WBG's new strategic directions of ensuring economic empowerment, creating sustainable solutions, and leveraging resources effectively within Palestinian society.
- CARE may need to, in future projects, think about how to better prepare its local partners for the transition to autonomous and self-sufficient program delivery, given the difficult transition that its current E2F partners are currently facing in this domain. Potentially this could be accomplished through collaborative succession planning in which the CBOs are asked to assess and identify, with facilitation from CARE, what aspects of project activity they are capable of continuing based on each CBOs' existing human, financial and physical resources.
- CARE could better utilize the expertise of some of the more skilled mentors and the project coordinators in E2FII. Whilst it has done so on a limited basis, the evaluator believes there is ongoing potential for these individuals to be involved as paid 'advisers/trainers' who could provide monitoring support across the 5 E2FII sites, and be involved in subsequent rounds of follow-up training which are built into the E2FII project design. Ultimately, the cadres of skilled professionals that CARE has/is developing through E2FI and EF2II should allow for most training and monitoring activities to be conducted by local Gaza staff.
- Given the remarkable impacts of E2F on children's behavior, and the unique project design and approach it employed to do so, CARE should continue to publicize its success within the context of Gaza, through press releases, video clips, short concept notes and academic

conferences/publication; and share the impacts and lessons learnt from E2F with other INGOs and donors working in the region through AIDA. The evaluator believes this ongoing knowledge exchange is crucial to facilitating learning and connecting actors at the local, regional and international scales.

For the CBOs

- In the absence of funding from other donors, the CBOs should continue to think about how E2F program delivery could be reconfigured in its design and scale to suit existing resource constraints. Where possible the three CBOs should discuss creative solutions to this challenge collectively.
- The CBOs should make every effort possible to continue to utilize and market the skills of its E2F mentors and project coordinators.
- The CBOs should continue to support the Graduate Clubs, which incur very little ongoing cost, by offering a dedicated space and time for the groups to meet on regular occasions.
- The CBOs should use relevant MSC stories and their sites' MSC brochure in future funding applications. These stories of impact are powerful firsthand accounts of the E2F's/CBOs' successes from the perspective of various stakeholders in their community.

2. Background

For over 60 years, the inhabitants of Gaza have lived in what can only be described as a chronic and complex emergency environment. In this context, there is real concern about the impact that these conditions have on children. The children of Gaza are readily identified in the research as being at increased risk of developing anxiety, depression and other behavioral problems, including symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder.⁴ Research has also linked this environmental context to the development of aggressive behavior, particularly when it is reinforced in the community through the normalization of violence, radicalism, and retaliation.⁵ The acute trauma created by *Operation Cast Lead* in late 2008/early 2009 exacerbated such concerns. A survey conducted by CARE in the immediate aftermath found that 95% of caregivers reported fear and signs of distress amongst their children, with more than half all children reported to be suffering from bed-wetting, general weakness, nervousness, increased aggressiveness, sleeplessness, nightmares, and headaches/stomach aches as a result of the conflict.⁶



Gazan Children in their way to School

Youngsters who are traumatized, violent, and see violence modeled as a solution, are unable to constructively engage in their communities. Without the intentional encouragement and reinforcement of pro-social skills, they are likely to engage in high-risk behaviors and suffer difficulties in school and in social relationships. They are also more likely to exhibit aggressive and violent behaviors themselves. Ultimately, this is a significant threat to any hope of a more peaceful future for the citizens of Gaza.

The E2F program was intended to fill a critical gap in the myriad of psychosocial, recreational, educational and conflict mitigation activities that have and continue to be offered to the children of Gaza. Clear from the outset of the program was the idea that it would: (1) focus on promoting behavioral change in children, rather than purely psychosocial support; (2) address and give attention to the acute needs of children following *Operation Cast Lead*; and (3) ensure that all activities were aligned with the goal of promoting pro-social behaviors. As the project proposal (p. 8) clearly states, “the objectives and goals of the [program] are not psycho-social or recreational programming for youth—those attributes are means to the end.” By continuously building and reinforcing pro-social skills the hope was that children would gain the ability to “return to ‘normal’ development despite significant disruptions and trauma.” Ultimately, at each site the goal was to create a place, curriculum, program, cadre of trained adults, and a dynamic network that “reinforces the pro-social skills that are critical to conflict mitigation and management.”

The E2F was implemented in areas deemed as some of the most conflict-affected in Gaza following *Operation Cast Lead*, namely Beit Lahia, Beit Hanoun and several neighborhoods of Eastern Gaza City

⁴ See Quota, S., Punamaki, R. L., & El-Sarraj, E. (2003). Prevalence and determinants of PTSD among Palestinian children exposed to military violence. *European Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 12*(265-272).

⁵ See Dubow, E., Huesmann, L. R., & Boxer, P. (2009). A Social-Cognitive Ecological Framework for Understanding the Impact of Exposure to Persistent Ethnic-Political Violence on Children’s Psychosocial Adjustment. *Clinical Child Family Psychology Review, 12*(2), 113-26.

⁶ Technical proposal, p. 3



Gazan Children at School

(Shejaiya, Zeitoun, Shaath, Tuffah and Darraj). By the end of the program it was expected that 2400 children, ages 9-13 would have participated in E2F in different cohort groups of six months duration each. Low child/adult ratios were to be maintained throughout all the cohort groups to guarantee that children received sufficient guidance, attention and modeling to affect change. Mentors and three highly qualified project coordinators were to be carefully selected and thoroughly trained and supported to become fully conversant in developing and/or managing conflict mitigating intentional programming.

Parents and community leaders were to be integrated and involved into the program as a way to ensure that the pro-social and conflict-mitigating messaging had wider influence and reach. Moreover, CARE was to work alongside local CBO Partners to implement E2F in each respective community, and support them throughout with various capacity building interventions.

CARE WBG was the prime applicant on the USAID grant and as recipient of the funds was responsible for overall management of the E2F, primarily through key staff in its Gaza field office. CARE's 3 Palestinian CBO Partners—Eastern Gaza Society for Family Development (EGS), Al Atta' Charitable Society (ACS) and Beit Lahia Development Association (BLDA)—were purposely chosen because of their strong networks of relationships and excellent reputation in the communities of need identified. Technical assistance was also provided by two international organizations—Edgework Consulting and Children in the Wilderness (CIW). Both had previously implemented camp-style intentional programming activities in Africa and Southeast Asia

3. Impact and relevance of the E2F program

This section explores the extent and relevance of impact that the E2F program has had over its three-year duration. And, given that E2F is shortly concluding, this section affords particular attention to the depth and sustainability of the impacts that are noted.

3.1. Children

During the E2F’s three years of funding from the USAID grant, it served a total of 2452 children in five different cohort groups.

CBO Name	Children		
	Male	Female	TOTAL
ACS	436	402	838
BLDA	369	445	814
EGS	386	414	800
TOTAL	1191	1261	2452

Table 1: Number of E2F participating children by CBO site

While data from the final cohort is still not finalized, it would appear that the E2F program is on track to achieving its target of reaching 2,400 children through its efforts, with relative gender parity amongst all three of its implementing partners.

3.1.1. MSC Data

In working with over 2,400 children, the E2F aimed to improve children’s attitudes and behaviors in ways that favor a more tolerant, diverse and peaceful society. Qualitative accounts of impact, provided by children and their caregivers through their MSC stories provide ample evidence of such improvement. One example of this is the story the *Kind Boy* narrated by Mohammed an 11-year-old boy from Beit Lahia.⁷

The Kind Boy

Whenever I used to play games with my friends I would also get angry. For example, when my friends and I played football, I would get angry whenever one of my friends wanted to count a goal that I didn’t think should count. I would call them a cheater and often start to punch them. Many of friends became angry with me because of this. And, when I first came to the Eye to the Future Program, I faced the same problems when we used to play team games. But the mentors would step in and show me how to resolve problems in a new way using the four problem solving skills. This taught me to think before taking action. After the program I can now solve problems during games with my friends without shouting or hitting using words. I have learned to apologize for mistakes I make when I lose my temper. And now, I have more friends because of this. I have learned that making trouble is not worthwhile.

⁷ This story was chosen by the BLDA management team and CARE/USAID panel as one of the featured MSC for the E2F program.

In selecting this story of change, the panels felt that this story of change spoke directly to the core



Informal Time At ACS

objective of the program, namely to redirect aggressive/violent behaviors by acquiring pro-social skills. And, the boy, the panels felt, could clearly identify what had changed through his participation in the E2F. The final selection panel felt that this story demonstrates a clear example of how the program's curriculum, and the vital connections alongside this, helped the child to minimize his violent behaviors and control them through his utilization of the four problem solving skills, both during the program and after. This, the panel felt, had led to better actions and results for both the child, and the peers

that surround him. This story, both panels reflected, was indicative of many other stories of change for boys that they had heard during the project's three years, from parents, children, community leaders and mentors alike.⁸

The redirection of boys' aggressive behaviors and tendencies through E2F's explicit focus on teaching pro-social behaviors was seen as critical to addressing a longstanding and acute community need. Several community leaders spoke of the fact that while there were a number of recreational, educational or psychosocial activities for children in the community; little effort had been given in any of them to addressing the violent tendencies of children. The important difference of the E2F program, according to one community leader⁹ was the explicit emphasis on helping children to "learn how to problem solve", which he felt was "something they can remember and apply for the rest of their lives." And, clear in speaking to many community leaders was that the intervention, and in particular the reinforcement of pro-social behaviors and skills imparted through the intentional programming activities, was seen as helping pre-adolescent boys and girls to "...be leaders of the future in our community, and [helping] to plant the seeds of change," as a community leader from Beit Hanoun commented in her story of change.¹⁰

A key impact, noted by girls and their parents was allowing them to figuratively speaking, 'come out of their shell', and improve their self-esteem and self-confidence through their utilization of the communication and pro-social skills learned in the program. Many of the stories of changes, such as the one featured below from Beit Lahia and narrated by the child's mother, reflect this type of impact.

The Confident Girl

My daughter used to be different to other children I knew. She liked to keep to herself most of the time. She didn't like to go on trips with her friends, or go out with the rest of the family. She preferred to stay at home by herself. She was shy, and was afraid to ask questions in school. She didn't have any friends. When my daughter joined the Eye to the Future Program, I shared with the mentors the problems she was having. The mentors treated her as part of the family, and made a very good bond with her. They loved her, and to me this is what really caused the change. And my daughter has become much more open to others around her and gained confidence in herself and her opinions. As an example, she has gone and complained about one of her teachers to the headmaster, and as a result has managed to remove this teacher from the class. I am so proud of my daughter and the new confidence she has in life! Everyone should join the Eye to the Future program.

⁸ Other forms of data collected throughout the three years of the E2F, in the form of parent/student/mentor focus group feedback, and success stories of individual children featured in Quarterly Reports and included in the Geo-MIS reporting, reinforce the belief that such a narrative of change was commonplace.

⁹ See EGS 14 in Appendix for full story

¹⁰ See ACS 15 in Appendix for full story

The BLDA selection committee selected this story of change because of the important impact it highlights for this girl. They felt it represented the story of many other girls who had undergone similar changes.¹¹ This type of impact for girls was seen as a particularly relevant and important one for girls on the cusp of adolescence according to a number of CBO staff, community leaders, mentors and caregivers spoken to.

Yet, evident from speaking to some of the community leaders and project coordinators was the challenge they faced early on of community resistance to sending their daughters to the program. In some circumstances, this led to the site creating special girls-only cohorts, while in other cases, community leaders and the project coordinators met with parents and other concerned members of the community to describe the potential benefits of the program approach, as described in the story below.



Interactive Theatre At BLDA

My Childhood is My Right (Community leader, Al Ataa' Charitable Society)

Beit Hanoun is a conservative community where pre-adolescent girls are generally not given the opportunity or permission to participate in social and community activities. Many are forced to stay at home instead. In response, some of these girls become violent because they have no place for the energy they have as they are still children and need to play. Others become withdrawn and depressed because they don't get the same opportunities as other children. As community leaders we have been conveying to our families and the broader community that girls at this age are still children who need to have their space of play and entertainment. The Eye to the Future Program was a wonderful opportunity to show our community this in action. At first, we had to convince many of our families to send their girls. We knew the program was about combining educational, behavioral and play activities together, but sold it to the parents of girls as mainly educational to get them to agree to enroll their daughters. Once it began, the community could see quickly that the girls who attended were thrilled with the opportunity to participate. These girls were given the chance to make more friends and be a part of a new family consisting of the mentors and the children. The fact that the program was able to attract a sufficient number of girls throughout all five cohorts shows that the community has accepted a social program such as this for their daughters. It has created a step forward in our community, but there is still more to do.

The CBOs, E2F project teams and community leaders worked hard to foster a public perception that the E2F was an acceptable, relevant and necessary program for girls to participate in. And clear from the stories of change of many of these girls, as well as their parents and mentors, was the positive impact that the program had on this vulnerable population as a result of their participation in the program. Thus, the internal culture of the program, the strong mentor-child-parent relationships, and the intentional programming activities were of importance and relevance to the needs of boys and girls living in Gaza. Its different approach, and its attention to the needs of individual children (whether male or female) served to counter dominant paradigms in Gaza, according to a number of MSC stories collected from community leaders and CBO management.¹² According to one community leader from Beit Lahia¹³, "Programs such as these bring needed and necessary new life and new ideas into our community."

¹¹ See EGS 5, 6, 10; ACS 1, 5, 8; BLDA 3, 4, 7 in Appendix for stories of change similar to this one.

¹² See ACS 13, 14, 16; EGS 14, 15; BDLA 14, 15; F7, 9, 14 in Appendix for full stories

¹³ Excerpt from BLDA 15

3.1.2. Data from child and parent reports

On the Child Report, children responded to a number of statements about their own behavior using the CBCL. Four separate subscales were examined—withdrawal¹⁴, social problems¹⁵, rule breaking¹⁶, and aggression¹⁷—and explored in terms of change in two ways. The first, was to compare mean scores of the above behaviors before/after the intervention, and the other was to compare the percent of children who have clinically significant symptoms in at least one of the above areas before/after program participation. As the table below suggests, either way, the data suggest dramatic and significant improvements in children’s self-reported behaviors that are risk factors for conflict.

Sub-scale	FY 1		FY 2	
	% with lower scores at T2 than T1	% who no longer had clinically significant symptoms at T2	% with lower scores at T2 than T1	% who no longer had clinically significant symptoms at T2
Withdrawn	62	91	78	95
Social Problems	66	84	79	85
Rule Breaking	51	96	79	92
Aggression	43	92	77	92
MEAN AGRESSION RISK INDEX	72	85	77	89

Table 2: Percent of children who demonstrate improvements in their life and social skills in favor of a more tolerant, diverse and peaceful society based on Child Report data

Parent responses to the CBCL from the Parent Report independently verify the improvements noted from the Child Report CBCL, though in lower magnitudes of change, particularly in terms of percentages of children who no longer have clinically significant symptoms.

Sub-scale	FY 1		FY 2	
	% with lower scores at T2 than T1	% who no longer had clinically significant symptoms at T2	% with lower scores at T2 than T1	% who no longer had clinically significant symptoms at T2
Withdrawn	57	87	75	56
Social Problems	60	73	76	68
Rule Breaking	62	90	75	69
Aggression	65	75	75	74
MEAN AGRESSION RISK INDEX	69	63	50	59

Table 3: Percent of parents who report that their children are able to communicate experience, exhibit positive behavior towards pro-social change with their siblings and friends, and utilizing skills in conflict mitigation situations from Parent Report

Several parents and community leaders in their stories of change discussed the significant impact that Operation Cast Lead had on the psyche of the children due to either the loss of a close family member, personal trauma during bombing or the general sense of insecurity created by the period.¹⁸

¹⁴ Withdrawing from peers increases risk of affiliating with unhealthy role models. It also indexes and increases stress, and in this sample was found to correlate with aggressive behavior ($r=0.42$, $p<.001$)

¹⁵ Children who report that they are not liked or unaccepted by their peers are at risk for aggressive behavior. In this sample, social problems were found to correlated with aggressive behavior ($r=0.57$, $p<.001$)

¹⁶ Children who report that they break rules often may be at risk for aggressive behavior, as disregarding rules may be linked to poor self-control or no fear of consequences for breaking such rules. In this sample, rule breaking correlated with aggressive behavior ($r=0.69$, $p<.001$)

¹⁷ Children were asked to report on whether they were involved in frequent fighting, arguing, yelling, swearing, picking on other children and having a temper.

¹⁸ See for example BLDA 7, 8, 16 or EGS 6, 8 in Appendix

In such stories, the narrators discussed how the program has significantly assisted their children or the community’s children in coping with the trauma of the conflict. In some cases, parents described how particular symptoms that the conflict created (i.e. bed wetting, withdrawal, aggression, depression) have been greatly reduced by their child’s participation in the Eye to the Future Program. These observations are also borne out in the Parent Reports of each of the cohort groups, where behaviors associated with trauma are significantly reduced after participation in the program, as CBCL Scores from the Parent Report in Cohort Two suggests.

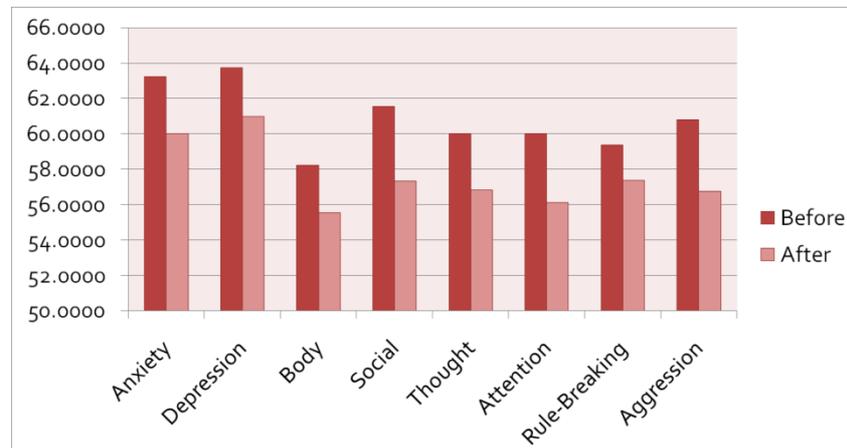


Figure 1: Changes in CBCL Mean Scores from the Parent Report, Cohort Two, for eight behaviors associated with trauma

As relayed by a community leader in Beit Lahia,¹⁹ *“The Eye to the Future program has helped me and my family, as well as other families, cope with some of the worry and fear that the current hardships of our life cause.”*

Children’s attitudes towards aggression were measured in the Child Report through the *Normative Beliefs About Aggression Scale*²⁰. In FY1, 35%²¹ of children showed reductions in their mean level of acceptance to aggression. Interestingly, Edgework’s analysis revealed that in FY1, mean scores on beliefs about aggression had not decreased at all as a result of the E2F, and in fact had increased amongst the sampled children, and at every one of the three sites.²² In FY2, a greater percentage of children (59%) were found to have changed their attitudes. In the area of beliefs, it could be assumed, but not confirmed, that the E2F had impacted some children during the program, and had perhaps sustained these changed beliefs nine months later, but had not continued to lead to positive trends downwards as was the case with aggressive risk behaviors.²³ Nonetheless, ambiguity remains around the relevance and usefulness of data measuring beliefs about aggression as a proxy for understanding future action that children may take.²⁴

¹⁹ See BLDA 16 in Appendix for full story

²⁰ This scale is one that has been well validated. The project consultant and an M&E expert he consulted felt that measuring changed beliefs about aggression was the best fit in terms of then relating it to the outcome of a more tolerant and peaceful society. In this scale, the children were asked their opinion about whether aggression is an acceptable response to a number of different situations.

²¹ Reporting on Key Indicators FY01 (June 4, 2011).

²² Further analysis by Edgework found that means scores on beliefs about the acceptability of aggression in response to either strong or weak provocation, and as a form of retaliation increased as two of the three sites (EGS and BLDA), while they decreased at ACS. At all sites, mean scores at Time 2 increased in terms of the acceptability of aggression towards other males and other females.

²³ The reason this is an assumption is that it is possible that different children could have had declines in their mean scores at Time 2 than those in Time 3.

²⁴ As noted by the project consultant in his reporting of these data, there may be a fundamental tension between beliefs about aggression and aggressive behavior, particularly in an environment such as Gaza where the endorsement of attitudes in favor of aggression is protective and is perceived as reducing the risk of victimization. And, statistical

3.2. Mentors

From the outset of the E2F, a key objective of was to build the knowledge and skills of the mentors who would work with the children throughout the three years, and ideally provide them with an entryway to future livelihood opportunities. Over the course of three years, CARE data suggests that 85 mentors/project coordinators (47 males, 38 females) were trained in delivery of the International Programming curriculum of the E2F program.

While some of the mentors had come from a background of working with children, or had completed university degrees in education, the program's focus was novel and unfamiliar to most of them at the outset. For example, one mentor described in his MSC story, how despite having experience working in the Summer Games activities for a number of years, he had no knowledge or confidence of dealing with children's behavioral or psychological needs.²⁵ Systems of regular monitoring support provided by CARE, the iterative cycles of needs-based and site specific training²⁶, and constructive and detailed recommendations on areas for program improvement²⁷ were extremely relevant and important to improving the skills, ability and confidence of the mentors.



Mentors' Foundation Training

Several MSC stories from mentors described their transition from being timid or lacking in confidence at the outset of the E2F, to feeling competent and proficient.²⁸ For example, one mentor²⁹ in his story of most significant change described how,

"After these three years I can now say that I have become a role model...I have learned to be more patient and to slow down because I am dealing with children who need to be spoken to and acted within a particular way...I feel I have improved my skills and abilities through the E2F program, and it has changed my perspective on life and given me a way to look at what is happening around me in a more reflective way."

This increased professional confidence and competence was also commented on by CBO management, as well as by the project consultant from Edgework whose story of significant change, selected by the final selection panel, focused on this.

examination of the relationship between aggressive attitudes and aggressive behaviors, or behaviors that are risk factors for aggressive action (such as withdrawal, social problems, rule-breaking) was found in this data set to not be strongly correlated. The consultants' review of the literature suggests that changes in behavior may in fact, precede changes in attitude, and given the short duration of the E2F project, sufficient time may not have passed to note changes in attitude.

²⁵ See BLDA9 in Appendix for full story

²⁶ Most mentors attended three separate training activities during the life of the program—a Foundation training of four days duration in September/October 2009, a second training in July/August 2010, and a third training in April/May 2011. Most training activities took place with mentors at each CBO, rather than in a large group setting, to tailor attention to the specific needs and issues of each site. Prior to the second and third rounds of training, a training needs analysis was carried out to ensure that particular concerns and challenges faced by mentors were being addressed. Training topics and sessions were then designed accordingly.

²⁷ The project consultant visited each site twice during the life of the program—in July/August 2010 and again in April/May 2011. Each site was provided with specific recommendations for project performance. This feedback was noted as useful, relevant and constructive according to all three of the project coordinators spoken to.

²⁸ See EGS 9, 11; BLDA 9, 10, 11; ACS 9 in Appendices

²⁹ See EGS 11 in Appendix for the full story

Working Extremely Hard to Become a Benefitted Youth Worker

The mentors for E2F came to the first training before the program started with very high motivation. Some of them had prior experience working with children, others had studied education-related fields in university and many had degrees and background that were not directly related to working with children (history, English, computer science, engineering, etc.). The outcomes we aspire to in E2F hinges on the mentors' abilities to utilize certain skills and approaches on a consistent and high level. It was evident at the outset that their will was extremely high, but they would have to truly take their skills to a completely new level. The Project Coordinators and CARE staff was instrumental in helping to coach and push mentors to meet the high performance expectations of the project. Between the two site visits and program evaluations I conducted there was marked improvement across all areas for the vast majority of mentors. It has been quite remarkable to witness their growth over the past 2+ years. They not only are truly gifted in their youth work skills, but they can beautifully and clearly articulate the "why" and the "how" of what they are doing that is having such a significant positive impact on participants. To me, this is the sign of the most effective youth workers- the ones who don't just perform, but can talk about what they do. Having trained mentors and seen youth programs around the world, I can honestly say that this group of mentors, on average, is quite possibly the most sophisticated and skilled youth workers I have ever worked with. I have no doubt if they ever met up with youth workers from other projects or even other countries, they would be surprised at how good they are in comparison. They have become true agents of behavior change and positive role models, not only for the children they work with, but also for their peers, families and communities. This group of mentors has the potential to become a powerfully positive cohort of future leaders, not just for E2F, but also for the Palestinian people.

In choosing this story, the panel felt that was the clearest indication that the program had provided the mentors with specific skills which they applied and put to good use professionally, and whose efforts were visible to someone who had seen the mentors' evolution throughout. Important about this story as well, according to the panel, was the fact that it demonstrated how the E2F program



Preparation Session for a Group Of Mentors At ACS

had helped to change mentors' underlying thinking, with many now asking why and how so that they are not just "performers but caring adults." According to the panel, what is clear in this story is that the program has in fact achieved its ambition of training a group of young leaders who will continue to promote messages of the E2F program well into the future.

Such anecdotes are also supported by the collation of results from the site observations conducted by the project consultant. Comparisons of data between the first and second visits show marked improvements at all three sites in terms of the three pillars of behavior change underpinning the program philosophy—namely intentional programming, vital connections and culture building. Improvements were also noticeable in terms of documenting and keeping to the schedule and program, and in site-based monitoring and evaluation practices.³⁰ This improved professional capacity is also demonstrated in analysis of mentors' skills assessment data.³¹ In FY1, just over 60% of the mentors were skilled across the three sites, but by FY2, with additional training, support and experience, nearly 90% of mentors employed were sufficiently skilled.³² Of note in this analysis is the difference between the three CBO sites, with the mentors in EGS lagging behind in

³⁰ See Appendix E of E2F Eighth Quarterly Report for more details

³¹ Mentor Skills Assessments is a more formal observation of the skills of each mentor on specific aspects of the three foundational pillars of the program, namely Vital Connections, Culture Building and Intentional Programming. Each mentor is assessed by his/her project coordinator at least once per cohort and given a score from 0 (Failure) to 3 (Excellent). For mentors to be considered "skilled" they must have a total score of at least 30.

³² According to the SGCBO, a third formal assessment is currently occurring and data will be available shortly on this.

terms of skill nearly 18 months after program delivery commenced.³³ This varying level of reported mentor skill, however, did not have direct bearing on the impacts noted in the Child and Parent Report data or in MSC stories collected from EGS in comparison to the other two sites.

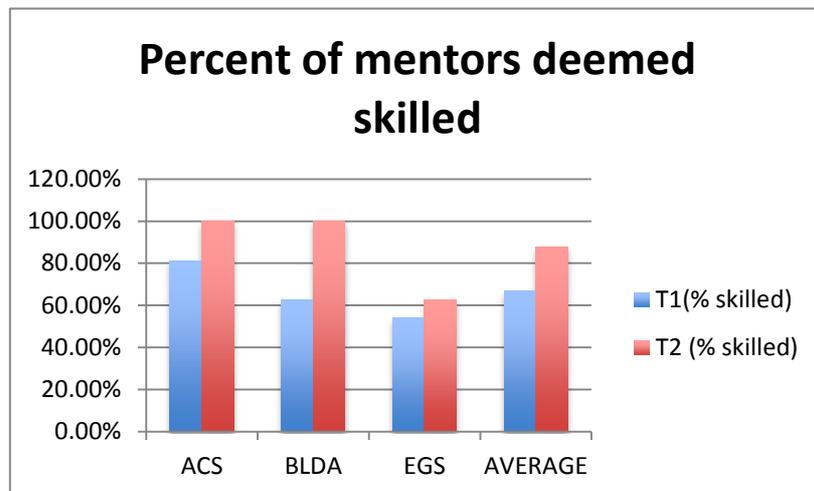


Figure 2: Mentors skills assessment data average by CBO site and aggregate

Analysis of the Mentor Self-Assessment data³⁴ suggests that in several domains, mentors reported significant changes in their attitudes and approaches to working with children. The data suggests they had become much more child-centered, more supportive, more positive and more intentional about their interactions with children. They also appear to have achieved a deeper understanding about what they can specifically do to make a difference in child’s life and how they are perceived as role models. Mentors reported having a higher sense of efficacy about the impact they can have on the children who participate in the program, and on their belief that they can make a difference to reducing violence in their community.

Many mentors felt that the skills and techniques taught to children were equally important to their own lives as well. Mentors were able to apply particular concepts from the E2F curriculum to personal challenges they faced, as one of the two stories selected by EGS Senior Management, *Breaking the Record*, suggests below.

³³ While T3 Skills Assessment data was not available to confirm this, the project consultant and CARE E2F staff noted that the mentors from EGS had shown significant improvements in the past 12 months, having considered and incorporated the feedback from the T2 Assessment.

³⁴ Taken from Results from the Self-Reported Change Mentor Self-Assessment: Gauging how Mentors’ attitude and behavior toward children and their work has shifted over the first 10 months of the “Eye to the Future” program (Edgework Consulting: January 3, 2011). This was conducted in November 2010, after the mentors had been working with the children for approximately 10 months and had attended 2 trainings. The Self-Assessment is made up of 25 statements about perceptions of changes in their skills, understanding and attitudes directly pertaining to the E2F’s intervention approach and theory of change that mentors must respond on a scale of responses ranging from “much less than a year ago” to “much more than a year ago”.

Breaking the Record (Ola, female mentor)

Before I became a mentor in the Eye to the Future program I wasn't punctual at all. I was always running late, mainly because I didn't manage my time well. Being a mentor has forced me to change because the children would always show up on time, which meant I had to be on time as well. And the program structure required us to manage a tight schedule, and I had to use every minute wisely. This made me think about how I was wasting so much time in my life outside and not focusing on any one activity well. I used some of the concentration skills we taught to our children and applied it my own life. Now I am more able to manage my time, whether it is getting dressed, surfing the Internet, or studying, because of the skills I have learned through being a mentor. Everything I do in my life is happening much faster because I am managing my time so much better in everything I do, even if it is only setting the dinner table! This is important to me because now I want to complete my Masters Degree and managing my time will help me to achieve this goal.

Stories from other mentors discuss how their involvement in the E2F has improved their social relations with peers, addressed personal losses suffered during *Operation Cast Lead*, and given them new skills as current and future parents.³⁵ While these were not specified objectives of the E2F, they are important outcomes for this cadre of young adults, and the communities they live in.

3.3. CBOs

An important precondition to the E2F's success hinged on whether CARE's three partner CBOs had the necessary skills and tools to implement and managed high quality conflict mitigation activities. CARE acknowledged that capacity would need to be built at the outset of the project, through specific training on developing skills and knowledge to produce responsive, simplified technical proposals to calls for tender³⁶, and to meet compliance and documentation requirements that were part of being sub-grantees to CARE and USAID.³⁷ Throughout FY1, such support was offered to the CBOs in the form of training workshops. A total of 22 separate individuals from the three CBOs were trained as part of the first year of the E2F program. Those participating in these trainings felt it provided a useful introduction to meeting the compliance demands of the E2F sub-grants, and to building internal organizational capacity.



Senior Management Training At BLDA

Throughout the three years, CARE worked in real partnership with each of the CBOs through the PONAT process. As part of the PONAT process, a general survey, focus groups and a climate questionnaire were completed. The results were then discussed with the CBOs' management team and organizational development plans to address particular needs were developed. The CBOs determined which areas of organizational need they wanted to focus and make as a priority, ensuring buy-in and ownership. CARE then worked to match resources and expertise to these identified needs through by providing in-house support or procuring consultancy services that were supported through the sub-grants. Under the PONAT process, activities included the development of

³⁵ See ACS 9, 12; BLDA 10, 11 in Appendix for other examples of this, narrated by mentors

³⁶ In October 2009, CARE ran a Getting to Grants training. This was a three day training aimed at providing participants with adequate skills and knowledge to develop technical applications based on well stated objectives, verifiable results, detailed and structured implementation plans, and to link the applications to the project goals. The training also assisted the CBOs in designing and developing a budget that was reasonable and within required parameters. 15 key staff members and volunteers from the three partner CBOs participated in this course in October 2009.

³⁷ In February/March 2010, CARE conducted two separate orientation and training sessions for key CBO staff (accountant, project coordinators and heads of organizations). The objective of this training was to familiarize these individuals with the financial controls and project documentation that were required per CARE and USAID procedures in receiving the sub-grants. 12 participants from the three CBOs took part in this training.

new strategic plans, the production of new management manuals, the creation and implementation of new financial reporting practices, and new communication and outreach strategies through new or improved websites or publicity materials.

Because of the participatory nature of the process, the SGCBO from CARE felt that, “*the CBOs have really been trying to use the tools and ideas they have gained from the training and capacity development activities because they perceive benefit and apply what they have learned.*” This is evident as well in the story of significant change featured on the next page.

The Association Now Has a New Identity, BLDA Senior Management Representative

For many years, our association had a simple two-page strategic plan consisting of a mission, vision, objectives and goals. The problem was that these statements were not written professionally and very few of the people within the association, and in the broader community knew what they were or used them in their work. The work we were doing was ad hoc, and there was no clear way of understanding of how these activities fit into our strategic plan. Out of one of our PONAT assessments, we agreed that there was a need of our association to develop a new and more comprehensive strategic plan. We had several meetings with the Board of Directors, employees and community leaders to discuss what this plan was going to look like. From these meetings we as a Board of Directors produced a draft, and we had meeting with a consultant brought in as part of the PONAT activity, who helped bring this draft into final form. Out of this we developed a 40 page strategic plan that provides a clear road map for what our work now and into the future will look like. We produced a new mission, vision and project objectives that are more attuned to the current economic, social, political and cultural situation in the community. The key difference with this strategic plan is that everyone involved in the association now has an understanding of this document, and it is not just a piece of paper. And the mission and vision statement are ones of higher quality. They know what the mission and vision of our society are and use it in their daily work. We are now more able to assess our ability as an association to support particular projects and have a clear set of standards by which we look at making such decisions. It provides us a sense of where we are and where we want to go in the future. and to take all action with this in mind.

Whilst the E2F program was directly relevant to addressing capacity needs of the three CBOs, it also helped to strengthen the relationship between the CBOs and its constituent communities. More than one story of change from CBO staff captured the sentiment that the E2F program, through the way that it connected community, CBO staff, and children to each other, helped to raise the profile, visibility and reputation of the CBO.³⁸ For example, one senior manager at BLDA described in his narrative how³⁹, “*Our CBO is now part of celebrations and social occasions in the community, and we are seen as a trustworthy party in terms of solving community problems. The association has become a second home for the community. People come to us seeking assistance in solving disputes within the community. It gives us pride that the E2F program has helped us to gain the trust of the local community, and donors, for the hard work we do.*” In essence, the E2F has helped to provide a needed injection of social capital to communities that have been divided by internal and external conflict, political divisions and economic hardship.



Staff Training Session at ACS

³⁸ See for example F6, F20 in Appendix

³⁹ See F20 in Appendix for full story

3.4. Parents

A key component of the E2F program was the involvement of families of participating children. Such involvement, according to the project proposal⁴⁰, was critical to “reinforc[e] and disseminat[e] the ‘message’ of the [E2F]” and ultimately, “create greater opportunities for behavioral change within the family and in the community at large.” And the Intentional Program Curriculum⁴¹ stated that it was absolutely “vital to the success of our program that we create regular and meaningful ways to involve parents in our program.” In each cohort, the mentors and project coordinator put strong effort into engaging the families of each child through: (1) individual meetings at the outset to orient them to the program expectations and goals, as well as better understand the situation of the family and child; (2) monthly group meetings during the cohort to update parents on activities that have occurred, and receive feedback from them on any concerns/issues they had; and (3) parent-child participating events where parents were invited to join in with their children for specific program activities.



Parents Monthly Meeting At ACS

Stories of significant change collected during the field work, provide clear evidence that (1) caregivers and mentors came to enjoy a close relationship with each other during and after a particular child’s participation in the E2F; and (2) caregivers often incorporated and considered advice from the E2F program staff, which had important impacts on the home life of participating children and their siblings. For example, a father from EGS⁴² discussed in his story, how he worked collaboratively with the mentors to address his son’s issues with concentration:

“...So together the mentors and I discussed my sons’ situation and they then brainstormed ways that they could help him to focus more.. The nice thing about this program is that when I came here to speak to the mentors, I could share with them these problems at home.”

And stories from mentors suggest they were able to change parenting practices away from using violence as a disciplinary technique, as the story⁴³ relayed by Mohammed, a mentor at ACS described:

“...I found out that the father was also trying to redirect his son, but because he was so wild and uncontrollable, the father resorted to beating him. The father and I discussed and agreed to follow procedures at home and in the centre based on positive discipline techniques rather than violence. The father learned to praise his son when he did things right and when he behaved for several days in a row he would sometimes buy him a gift as a reward.”

And similarly, parents came to feel comfortable through the constant interaction the program afforded, to elicit advice and assistance from the mentors, as another father⁴⁴ who was struggling to reconnect with his son recalled:

“...I came to meet the mentors. I shared with them the many problems I was having with him. The mentors told me I should try to praise him more when he does things that are right, and speak to him in more kind ways. I started applying the things they taught me, and I could see my son responding to this. Now my son will come up to

⁴⁰ Technical proposal, p. 9

⁴¹ In Chapter 12 Parent Connection Program, p. 1

⁴² See EGS 8 in Appendix for full story

⁴³ See ACS 10 in Appendix for full story

⁴⁴ See BLDA 8 in Appendix for full story

me and ask for help on his lessons at school without fear. I have learned to praise my son more and now he is closer to me. The Eye to the Future program has helped me reconnect with my child.”

3.5. Community leaders

A key aspect of the E2F program design was the involvement of community leaders⁴⁵ throughout the three-year duration of the project. They were to be invited to periodic meetings and particular events/performances at each CBO as, “a way of disseminating the bottom line message—that Gaza’s children need to taught behaviors and attitudes that will mitigate, not fuel conflict.”⁴⁶ The E2F program, through each of the CBOs, worked with a total of 70 different community leaders. Stories of change collected from some of these community leaders and CBO management suggests that some have come to (1) promote the social model of the E2F program and (2) enhance the credibility of the program itself in the community.⁴⁷ A clear example of both of these qualities is the story *My Childhood is My Right* featured earlier in this section.



Community Leaders Meeting At BLDA

⁴⁵ This includes CBO directors and/or head of board working in these communities, heads of tribes, and other respected professionals and officials.

⁴⁶ Technical proposal, p. 9

⁴⁷ See F7, F20; EGS 14, 15; BLDA 15; ACS 13, 14, 15, 16 in Appendix for examples of this.

4. Sustainability

Given the impacts of the program noted in the previous section, part of this section explores the likelihood and feasibility of such impacts being sustained in the short to medium term. As part of this exploration of sustainability, the long-term viability of the program operating autonomously by the three partner CBOs, as well as its underlying approach continuing to be supported and promoted by the cadre of E2F skilled mentors, is also examined.

4.1. Sustainability of impacts on participating children

Nine months after the first cohort graduated from the E2F, another Parent and Child Report was administered to the participating children and their caregiver. The aim was to uncover changes in the aggressive risk behaviors and attitudes of these children, and determine whether impacts and changes documented at Time 2 were sustained through Time 3. The data provided strong evidence that in many areas, the messages from the E2F continued to have impact on the children. For example, CBCL data from the Child Report suggested that a higher percentage of children at Time 3, than Time 2 had mean scores on all the sub-scales of aggressive risk lower than the baseline. This was despite the children having completed the E2F nine months earlier.

Sub-Scale Area	% with lower scores at time 2 than time 1	% with lower scores at time 3 than time 2	% with lower scores at time 3 than time 1
Withdrawal	62%	66%	81%
Social Problems	66%	73%	88%
Rule-Breaking	51%	70%	82%
Aggression	43%	73%	87%
MEAN SCORE	72%	N/A	85%

Table 4: Comparing CBCL Scores for Cohort One over time from Child Report

Parent reports on the CBCL showed a similar trend, with the aggression sub-scale being the only one with a higher percentage of children with lower scores at Time 2 instead of Time 3.

The fact that children continued to exhibit and practice changed behaviors as a result of the E2F, even after their participation in the program had ended, was also confirmed in most of the MSC stories collected. Children and parents from earlier cohorts discussed how the pro-social skills learnt and the confidence gained through participation in the E2F are maintained in interactions with peers, family and the community at large.⁴⁸ And the project consultant believed, and some of these stories confirmed, that the participating children had begun to widen the sphere of influence of the E2F to their siblings and peers, which was part of the design of the program.

The USAID AOTR in discussing sustainability noted that another important aspect of the E2F was inclusion of the parents, which has and will hopefully continue to create a mutually reinforcing environment in the home for the pro-social and positive discipline messages imparted through the program. As the narratives in Section 3.4 describe, the seeds of a more enduring positive culture have been planted at home as a result of the E2F program. Such stories provide evidence that the program may well in fact have achieved the underlying idea, presented in the project proposal⁴⁹ of creating a “*growing network of people whose relationships and mutual impact endure*”. This is vital to the sustainability of impacts for the participating children. Additionally, with all of the mentors being from the community as well, and ongoing connections between the former E2F participants and their mentors, there was evidence that the mentors continued to informally support E2F

⁴⁸ See for example EGS 1, 3, 5; ACS 1, 2, 3, 7, 8; BLDA 2, 3, 5, 6 in Appendix

⁴⁹ Technical proposal, pg. 8

children through these enduring relationships. Through this expanding web of influence, there is some optimism that the E2F culture can be maintained for the children.



Conflict Mitigation Session At EGS

Yet mentors, project coordinators and CBO management still believed that over time, these impacts would diminish. All of them were cognizant of the difficult conditions and community pressures that children continue to live within, and the fact that the culture of schools does not reinforce messages of the E2F. Within such environmental constraints, there was a sense that these negative influences may eventually break down the positive and protective barrier that the E2F had given these children to deal with the challenges they faced. And given doubts regarding whether the Graduate Clubs would continue to function in one year's time without continued support from the CBOs, there does not appear to be great confidence that the children themselves can maintain the E2F culture without additional assistance.

As the project consultant conceded, the six months of participation in the E2F are a *“brush by experience”* in the lives of the children. They are about to enter into the vulnerable period of adolescence where action is needed to sustain and cement the efforts of the E2F. The next stage would need to assist these children who now have a toolbox of pro-social skills, to acquire necessary livelihood and employment skills so that they would not end up as one of the many vulnerable, unemployed, at-risk youth of Gaza in the 15-24 year age group, according to the project consultant. Without this next step, he stood worried that their optimism towards life, which many of them exhibited in the Child Report, would wane by the time they reached the later stages of adolescence, and be replaced with depression. For this reason, this evaluation believes strongly that the CBOs should continue to consider how to best support the over 2400 children who participated in E2F, over the short term through the continuance and expansion of the Graduate Clubs, and in the medium term through new initiatives and activities that provide them additional skills and prepare them well for their entry into adulthood.



Conflict Mitigation Session At BLDA

4.2. Sustainability of E2F as an approach to working with children

There is hope that the toolbox of skills that mentors gained through E2F may allow them to find jobs within other programs of psychosocial, educational, or play-based support to children, and to continue to promote the E2F approach, given that they are now more connected into the life of their community and the CBOs they worked for. An expected outcome of training these young adults, according to the project proposal⁵⁰ was that it would *“leverage a knock-on effect as these young people move into their careers in the classroom,”* or other careers that involve working with youth. The SGCBO from CARE believes that some of the more qualified individuals, such as the project coordinators or super mentors, may even be able to gain employment within the management structure of various NGOs or CBOs. However, there has not been any formal support provided to the project coordinators or mentors on how they can effectively market such skills to future employers, through activities such as CV writing workshops, mock interviews, or workshops on job networking. And without formal accreditation for the skills and knowledge the mentors have acquired, it may be difficult for their skills to be recognized in institutional settings such as schools.

⁵⁰ Technical proposal, pp 9-10

A way of sustaining the skills that mentors from E2F have acquired is to grant them opportunities to train and teach other young adults about the program approach and theory of action. The E2F project proposal⁵¹ makes clear the intent that *“intensive training throughout project life will create a cadre of skilled professionals, who will then be positioned to train others.”* When the project coordinator from ACS was asked if mentors could assume the role of trainers, he felt confident that super mentors and project coordinators in particular, were *“extremely talented”* and would be well prepared to help implement and support future programs such as E2F. In establishing E2FII at five new CBOs through the USAID funded Palestinian Community Assistance Program (PCAP) grant through Mercy Corps, CARE has the opportunity to do so with the E2F mentors and use them as ongoing site coaches, project support staff, and program/mentor evaluators. While CARE has done this once, the evaluator feels that their skills and abilities have been underutilized thus far.⁵² It is this evaluator’s belief that the E2F project staff could continue to assume an increasing and larger role in the training and ongoing support provided by CARE to E2FII mentors.⁵³ It is the hope of this evaluator, that over time cadres of skilled mentors from E2F and E2FII can replace the role of an international project consultant in developing and implementing future conflict mitigation programs across Gaza. Ultimately this will be a key component of a sustainable and effective program approach.



Conflict Mitigation Session At ACS

The final MSC selection panel comprised of the AOTR from USAID, the Gaza field officer for USAID, the SGCBO and the project consultant felt that in part, it is the CBOs responsibility to continue to utilize the skilled, capable workforce they now have. The hope of this panel was that the CBOs would be creative in how they mobilize resources as to not lose this pool of human capital within their organization. Yet, increased CBO capacity and connectivity with their constituencies does not seem to have translated into greater confidence on their part to continue to operate E2F independent of additional external support.⁵⁴ Discussions with senior management at all three sites inevitably turned to the future of the program, and their fear that they would slip backwards in terms of the gains they had made with their community without additional financial support. Lacking in such conversations was creative thinking about how E2F could be changed from its current structure or approach so that it was manageable for the CBOs, alongside their respective communities, to operate and resource independently (perhaps along the lines of the Graduate Clubs, through voluntary contributions from families, or by reducing the sizes of each cohort group).



Closing Circle At BLDA

⁵¹ Ibid, p. 11

⁵² The E2FI project manager felt that the E2FII program’s focus on education precluded E2FI mentors from developing and delivering relevant materials and training modules at the outset, despite the fact that E2FII maintains at its core the E2F curriculum and methodology, which is about building vital connections, having caring adult relationships, and developing intentional programming activities—areas which E2F mentors are now extremely skilled at.

⁵³ According to the E2F Project Manager, selected mentors from E2F will be used to assist the project consultant in delivering the refresher training courses and conducting site visits for E2FII.

⁵⁴ Two of the three CBOs discussed how they had attempted to seek funding from other donors to continue E2F, but after several rejections they had come to believe that the project was not a current priority of these agencies. And the other CBO, had explored seeking money locally but decided against this after realizing that it would mean aligning the CBO with a particular political faction. For its part, CARE unsuccessfully sought to continue E2F activities under PCAP/E2FII, and included the 3 CBOs as partners in its initial proposal to Mercy Corps in 2011.

5. Project efficiency

Overall, this evaluation finds that the E2FI was run with appropriate efficiency, particularly when the contextual factors of operating such a program in Gaza are considered. A combination of well-coordinated and collaborative project management, excellent and thorough project documentation, well considered contingencies for the constantly changing context of Gaza, and effective use of project resources were found to ensure minimal delays in project implementation. However, the M&E system of E2F was an overly complicated, burdensome and time-consuming process against the PMEP outcomes and targets for which it was developed. From a research perspective it may have provided robust and important mental health data on the participating children, but it also produced a multitude of potential outcomes to be utilized against the PMEP indicators. This led to unnecessary miscommunication and confusion in ongoing reporting.

5.1. Project management and coordination

For the USAID AOTR, a key enabler to the success of the project was the excellent management, oversight and facilitation provided by the PM and SGCBO from CARE. Throughout all stages of the project, she felt that they worked diligently to give the local CBOs a leadership position in shaping and managing the project. In particular the lead role they were afforded, in terms of writing and administering their own sub-grant created a sense of ownership over the program activity, and helped each CBO to mold the E2F program to the challenges and opportunities of their context. This sense of ownership was readily apparent in speaking to CBO management and community leaders who discussed the E2F program as “their program” rather than an initiative of CARE or USAID.



Academic Session At BLDA

The SGCBO was found to play a critical role in ensuring that on day-to-day basis, the program ran according to plan. E2F Quarterly Reports suggests high levels of involvement by the SGCBO in supervising, monitoring and providing technical support to the three CBO through frequent site visits and ongoing meetings and communication with project coordinators. For all three of the project coordinators, the support provided to them through the SGCBO was seen as invaluable to effective implementation and delivery of the program. Similarly, the Project Consultant was found to provide ongoing and well-appreciated support to CARE E2F and the CBO-based program staff (mentors and project coordinators), despite the fact that he was not based in Gaza. The consultant was open and receptive to receiving direct email queries from mentors/project coordinators and was in constant communication with many of them throughout the three years of the project.

The evaluation also found that the tireless and dedicated commitment of the three project coordinators over the three years was instrumental to the program’s success. In particular, the project coordinators served several important functions without which the program may not have achieved the outcomes later noted. For one, all of them worked hard to assist and provide professional support to their mentors, and to build strong relationships amongst the program delivery team. The coordinators also were also critical to engaging caregivers and community leaders in the activities of the E2F program and serving as advocates for the program philosophy with the community at large.

5.2. M&E tools and the reporting of data

Edgework Consulting was given responsibility for identifying a set of M&E tools and measures that would effectively measure the program’s stated objectives and indicators. The Child and Parent Report, which was to be the main source of data for PMEP Indicators 1, 2, and 9 was developed

using a battery of well-established mental health assessment tools, including the CBCL.⁵⁵ According to the project consultant,

“We opted for the CBCL since it is such a validated and established tool, versus trying to create a custom tool that would more directly address the indicators but potentially be much less valid. So, we had to draw specific outcomes out to best match the indicators.”

Whilst the Parent and Child reports produced ample evidence of impact, they were complicated⁵⁶ and time-consuming measures⁵⁷ that provided much more data than was necessary to evaluate the program’s outcomes against the specified indicators. The myriad of data produced from the reports created a situation where in FY1, a number of different outcome measures were reported on against particular PMEP indicators by the project consultant. That year, the advice given to CARE was to choose the highest of the reported positive outcomes in its reporting to USAID for each indicator. Subsequently, in FY2, Edgework provided only one number to report against each indicator, which for at least three indicators was either a different outcome measure⁵⁸ or different time period⁵⁹ to that reported in FY1. Whilst this is an important error in need of rectification, and is noted as such by both CARE E2F staff and the project consultant, it does not detract from the validity or strength of the impacts documented in Section Three of the report.

The evaluator is sufficiently convinced that this was not a willful or negligent decision on the part of CARE. However, it became apparent that the complexity of the tools, the myriad of data it produces, and the multiple ways in which such data has been analyzed and internally reported has led to misunderstandings and miscommunication between Edgework Consulting, who has done most of the analysis and interpretive work, and CARE who has then reported on this data to USAID in Quarterly Report and through Geo-MIS. As acknowledged by the project consultant, the monitoring tools chosen to track progress against each of the project indicators have not always been a perfect fit and may have contributed to this ambiguity as well. Nonetheless, the reporting errors are easily remedied, and do not detract substantially from the impacts that have already been reported, or the accuracy of such analysis.

⁵⁵ A decision was made by the project consultant and CARE to use the Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL) in the Child and Parent Report as it has been tested with several thousand children and parents across a number of different cultures, and was deemed as a reliable and valid measure of mental health symptoms such as anxiety, depression, somatic complaints, and aggression. Three additional questionnaires were also incorporated: the Normative Beliefs about Aggression which assesses children’s approval of aggression; the Youth Life Orientation Tests which measures whether children have an overall positive outlook on life and the future; and the Peer Network and Dyadic Loneliness Scale which measures the relationships children have with their peers.

⁵⁶ For example, the Child Report had a total of 96 statements/items that children needed to read through and respond to in a number of different forms. This would have required careful explanation and close observation to administer successfully with a minimum of errors.

⁵⁷ One project coordinator discussed how administration of these reports, took on average a week to complete with the children, taking time away from program activity.

⁵⁸ A clear example of this exists for Indicator 1. In FY1, the project consultant provided two sets of potential data against which CARE could report to USAID. One was the percentage of children (53%) whose mean scores had decreased in regards to statements on aggression being acceptable in response to weak forms of provocation (teasing, name-calling). This sub-scale was the one that showed the highest decrease in aggressive beliefs that FY. This was the number that was then reported in Geo-MIS and in the Quarterly Report. The other, which should have been the one reported, was the percentage of children whose overall attitudes about aggression score had decreased (35%). In FY2, Edgework only provided data to CARE on the second of these two measures (59%), and this was subsequently reported in Geo-MIS. Thus, each of the first two fiscal years has reported on this target against a **different** outcome measure.

⁵⁹ This issue exist for both Indicator 2 and Indicator 4 as currently reported in Geo-MIS. Data reported for each of these indicators in FY 1 and 2 is from two different time periods. For example for Indicator 2 in FY1, the 92% reported in the PMEP comes from **Time 3** data from the first cohort (collected nine months after the end of the intervention). However, in FY2, when similar data was not provided to CARE, **Time 2** data is used (89%). Either Time 2 or Time 3 data needs to be used consistently across all FY for both indicators.



Children Feedback on E2F At BLDA

It is the firm belief of this evaluator that these errors are primarily due to two factors. One is a lack of appropriate communication between the project consultant and the CARE E2F team on the data that were being reported. The project consultant was surprised when reporting errors were noticed by the evaluator in the course of this final evaluation, given that he had never seen or been told of what was being stated in the Quarterly Reports or what data was being inputted into Geo-MIS. More frequent communication between both parties throughout the data analysis and reporting stages may have prevented this. The other issue is that the CARE E2F team responsible for using and reporting monitoring data did not appear to have sufficient understanding of the myriad of tools and measures which are part of the E2F M&E system to

discern how numbers produced by Edgework are derived. Whilst CARE had contracted Edgework for the purposes of analyzing monitoring data, it is the belief of this consultant that in addition to producing a summary of the analysis, Edgework needed to fully explain the nuances of particular outcome measures, and which of these data are most robust for the sake of project reporting. This needed to occur through ongoing dialogue rather than through a complicated series of graphs/tables, which was how most analysis was presented back to CARE.

The M&E Guidebook developed by the consultant provided a useful start to such understanding, but was not sufficient on its own⁶⁰, and needed to be followed on with training by the consultant on the M&E system in place for both the CARE E2F team and the project coordinators. Whilst the budget for E2F did not allow for this, this should be accounted for in future work for CARE where complicated and multi-faceted M&E systems are developed and utilized as part of project activity.

Shortly after the midterm evaluation, the *E2F M&E Guidebook* was produced and distributed to the three CBOs. This guidebook had been in production for several months already at the time of the review, and had been developed and adjusted by the project consultant in consultation with project coordinators/mentors and CARE E2F staff. Through this process, modifications to the frequency and timing of particular instruments, such as the Mentors Skill Assessment, and to the required sampling quantity for other tools, such as the Parent/Child Report occurred. As such, there was not a perception from CARE that further reconsideration of the M&E system was needed, nor was it seen as practical or feasible given that the program was already well into the third cohort.⁶¹ Nonetheless, this evaluator agrees with the perception of some of the CBO managers and project coordinators spoken to that monitoring task as part of E2F may be overly burdensome, complicated and time-consuming to be effectively used for program learning.

5.3. Factors impacting project efficiency

Evident in reviewing project documentation and in speaking to the CARE E2F team, as well as the AOTR from USAID was the fact that the context of operating the E2F in Gaza presented a number of challenges to project efficiency.

⁶⁰ An example of insufficient understanding of the M&E Guidebook was discovered in how the CARE team had reported on Indicator 3: Percent of skilled mentors. As currently reported in the PMEP, this is reported as 81% for FY1, and 80% for FY2 and 3. According to the former SGCBO this percentage is based on the percentage of mentors that were employed (48) out of those that were initially trained (60) in FY1. Yet the M&E guidebook clearly specifies that reporting for Indicator 3 should be based on (1) data from mentors who are currently employed in the E2F, rather than all of those that participated in initial training; and (2) evidence from tools such as the mentor skill assessment, mentor profiles or mentor self assessments that provide information on the *actual and/or demonstrated* skill level of mentors.

⁶¹ Based on personal communication with PM and SGCBO at CARE

The E2F PM waited several months⁶², and the first SGCBO, two years, for permits to be approved by Israeli authorities to travel to the West Bank/Jerusalem to attend training on Geo-MIS and USAID compliance matters, and to meet with colleagues at CARE and USAID offices. Whilst this impeded the PM and SGCBO from being well-versed in using the Geo-MIS from the outset, a combination of training by distance and one-on-one support with USAID experts ensured that activities and progress towards indicators were entered in a timely fashion into the database.⁶³

Despite the efforts of CARE and the USAID AOTR, the vetting process took a significant amount of time and caused delays to the planned start date for implementing the first sub-grant period of 18 months covering the first three cohorts. As there was no flexibility for a no-cost extension of the USAID grant, CARE and the AOTR agreed to shorten the second round of sub-grants to 10 months, which in turn shortened the duration of the fourth and fifth cohort groups from 6 to 5 months each. This was seen as the best option by all parties, and was discussed amongst CARE, CBO teams and the Project Consultant, who worked closely to adjust the program timeline and delivery to meet the new implementation timeframe without sacrificing program quality.



Conflict Mitigation Session At BLDA

USAID regulations required CARE and the three sub-grantees to maintain evidence of a “chain of custody” for all items procured using funds from the USAID Grant. This required proof of how these items were obtained legally through transfer into Gaza from Israel, or that the products were manufactured, grown or produced in Gaza. According to the SGCBO, this was a significant challenge for the CBOs as many were unaccustomed to having to produce such documentation and to require its suppliers to provide such evidence.

The current political context of Gaza also made it untenable for CARE to work directly with the schools attended by the children participating in E2F. Some parents and mentors saw the lack of interface between E2F and the schools as an obstacle to effectively promoting and sustaining the program messages in the community at large. Nonetheless, the evaluation found that in some instances local community leaders and parents helped to broker informal information sharing between local E2F staff and the schools, and share the program philosophy and approach with those working in schools.

Finally, while the past three years in Gaza have been relatively “peaceful” following Operation Cast Lead, ongoing tensions between Israel and Gaza persist. In March 2012, a flare-up in conflict, known as *Operation Returning Echo*, led to rocket and bombing activity occurring in Northern Gaza, with some civilian casualties. In these areas, the E2F program had to be shut down for several days until the safety of the children and the mentors could be guaranteed and families felt safe to send their children outdoors again.

⁶² Permits to travel to Israel/West Bank for the E2F PM were granted intermittently. In 2010 and 2011, the Quarterly Reports note that the PM again waited several months to gain the necessary permits.

⁶³ As an alternative, in November 2009, the PM and SGCBO ‘attended’ a training session on Geo-MIS via teleconference, which the PM noted in the E2F Second Quarterly Report was “*very helpful; however, it was not as practical and useful as attending a complete face-to-face training day.*” USAID on its part, provided additional guidance and instruction through its M&E officer, acknowledging the specific support that the PM and SGCBO would need to update planned and achieved activities in Geo-MIS. When the permit for the E2F PM was issued in early 2010, USAID provided him with face to face coaching on the Geo-MIS in which he was introduced to some of the systems’ functions and became better positioned to updated the database and orient the E2F SGCBO on these functions.

5.4. Utilization of project resources

The E2F project operated with a total approximate budget of \$1.3 Million USD. \$1.1 Million of this came from the USAID grant, which funded the bulk of program activity over a three-year period between July 1, 2009 and June 30, 2012. An additional \$218,103 USD was made available to the E2F through cost-share activities. 45% of this total budget (\$600,000 USD) was directed to the 3 sub-grantees (CBOs) through two rounds of simplified grants of 18 months and 10 months duration. CARE staff salaries and benefits amounted to \$325,042 USD (24%) and the contractual expenses which included the bulk of the cost-share procurement activity, as well as the contracting of the external consultants involved in the project (\$223,108 USD or 17% of budget) were the other significant project expenditure. It is apparent that the E2F functioned extremely efficiently within very tight budget parameters⁶⁴, given that it trained and employed 85 mentors, worked effectively with over 2400 children and their families, and significantly increased the capacity of its three partner CBOs. The USAID AOTR felt strongly that US government funds used for the E2F had been “*money well spent*,” and achieved results that far surpassed what were expected given the budget.



Mentors Joint Activity

Cost share funding helped to pay for a range of additional activities and resources, such as the construction and maintenance of playground equipment, clothing and school supplies for participating children, laptops, the establishment of the pilot Graduate Clubs, and necessary renovations to the E2F project sites. All of these additional inputs were well utilized and vital to the E2F’s overall success.

⁶⁴ Given that by early June 2012, 99% of the funding from both cost-share and the USAID grant had been expended, with little deviation from budgeted costs, it would appear that the program was extremely efficient in terms of the financial and human resources that it required.

6. Program responsiveness

Part of the task of this final evaluation was to assess the degree to which CARE and the three CBOs had considered and addressed recommendations from the midterm evaluation (conducted in February 2011) for the remaining period in which the E2F operated.

6.1. Collaboration across the program locations

One of the recommendations of the midterm evaluation was for the CBOs to share experiences and best practice with each other. After the midterm review, the project coordinator and a select group of mentors from each CBO began to attend the weekly planning meetings of other CBOs at least once a month. This allowed the project coordinators and mentors to share best practices and experiences with each other, and collaboratively improve and adapt the Intentional Programming Curriculum to their local context. Mentors also began to ask their project coordinators to observe their colleagues in action at other CBO sites, and when possible did so. In many cases, they would conduct these visits in their own time to support their colleagues and learn from their expertise.



Mentors Joint Activity

And when the E2FII project commenced late in 2011, some E2F mentors and project coordinators from the various program sites were deliberately mixed and given roles as training teams for the new E2FII mentors. In April 2012, CARE organized a Mentor Celebration day where all the mentors and project coordinators gathered, and participated in a series of activities in which they reflected on their experiences of the past three years. According to the project coordinator from ACS, such events and activities helped to foster a feeling of connection across the E2F sites, and by the end of the three years, the E2F program staff felt like they were “family to each other.”

6.2. Introduction of non-cost extra curricula activities

A key recommendation of the midterm evaluation was for CARE to introduce no-cost extra curricula activities such as sport, theater and music teams, and various graduate clubs. Following this recommendation, CARE pursued and obtained additional cost-share support from CARE USA’s Emergency Pool Fund to establish a no-cost pilot Graduate Club at each CBO to children who had participated in the first three cohort groups. In establishing the Graduate Clubs the intent was to:



Club Graduates at EGS

(1) provide the participants with a meaningful dose of reinforcing messaging and skills; (2) empower graduates to further integrate what they had learned into their daily lives; (3) provide them with opportunities to learn and practice leaderships skills and; (4) ultimately, create groups of children who have the skills, tools and motivation to continue on their own with minimal supervision. 30 children per CBO site were selected to participate in the six-month program through a competitive process based on their prior performance in the E2F and the expressed interest and availability of both the parent and child. Two mentors were employed per CBO site to run the Graduate Club sessions. A clear leadership structure was established within each club, with four specified roles that children were rostered and rotated through.⁶⁵ The Graduate Club mentor supported the children with each

⁶⁵ They were: (1) Club Leader—who was responsible for reserving space for the meeting, announcing the time/location of the meeting, planning the activities and agenda, and facilitating the meeting; (2) Time Keeper; (3) Note Taker; and (4) Motivator—who was responsible for the opening game and keeping motivation high during the meeting through songs/cheers.

role prior to and during the sessions. Over time, the expectation was that the children would learn, through the skills learned and the roles they assumed, to operate meetings on their own. Conversations with children who had participated in these activities, as well as mentors who were either facilitating or had observed Graduate Club sessions, confirmed that children had in fact assumed leadership over the meetings over time.⁶⁶

6.3. Curriculum modifications

The midterm evaluation also recommended that those involved in E2F review the Intentional Program Curriculum in light of their experiences and lessons learnt from the first two cohorts, and adapt it accordingly. By in large, no significant modifications or alterations were made to the core set of curriculum activities, or to particular aspects of the program culture. The sense from the mentors and project coordinators was that most, if not all the activities were relevant, effective and engaging to the participating children. Each CBO site, however, did adapt the structure and/or schedule of the formal program time in response to community or parental concerns. For example, the E2F daily schedule was modified during examination periods so that academic support was given a much greater allocation of time within the three-hour daily sessions. In other circumstances, single-sex cohort groups were established at some of the sites. Additionally, the design of the Intentional Programming Curriculum was such that it would easily allow for the mandated activity areas—such as Confidence Club, Team Time, Interactive Theatre, Opening/Closing Circles—to be modified and adapted to the local context.⁶⁷



Academic Session At BLDA

6.4. Supporting the community and CBOs

The midterm evaluation was particularly impressed with the institutional support and capacity building activities provided to the three partner CBOs that CARE worked with. Given this success, the evaluation team advocated for the continuance of capacity building and technical assistance to partner CBOs. With the availability of additional cost-share funds from DEC, and following on the results of the post-PONAT assessment, CARE was able to provide support for the CBOs to receive additional training and/or support to address outstanding needs of each organization.⁶⁸ The DEC funds also helped CARE to address another recommendation from the midterm evaluation, that of continuing to assist project beneficiaries (namely the children) with valuable supplementary items. In this case it meant that CARE was able to provide clothes, school bags and school supplies for

⁶⁶ At the time the evaluation fieldwork was conducted, no Graduate Club sessions were scheduled due to it being the examination period in schools. One of the project coordinators noted, that although children did appear to take leadership of the activities over time, not all groups had gained equal ability or skill to assume such positions into the future. A Leadership Skills Checklist, completed by mentors as part of the M&E activities of the Graduate Club, confirms this observation. At BLDA, it appeared that one group was identified as competent and/or independent in most skill areas, while at ACS, the group was only at the level of competence and/or independence in half of the areas. This was in part due to how different CBOs selected the children, with some selecting children based on their natural leadership skills, while others purposively chose children who they thought had potential, but not innate leadership skills.

⁶⁷ In reviewing the Intentional Programming Guide, this is readily apparent. In Chapter 8 of the guide, it is made clear that the mandated activity areas “...have been selected because they represent a diverse range of activities that will appeal to children with different interests...that allow for a broad range of freedom in activity selection and design by the Mentors...[and] have many ways that our key life skills can be integrated into them.” Most of the sites recited verses from the Koran as part of their daily opening/closing routines. Others, as part of drama activities or particular “theme days”, incorporated local music, dance and art traditions into them. Additionally, familiar games from the community were adapted and used to reinforce particular learning outcomes as part of teamwork activities.

⁶⁸ ACS used these funds towards training on using public relations and media for advocacy, managing and utilising a Management Information System, and improving their planning skills. EGS received training on principles of management and leadership. And BLDA was given support to develop their strategic plan for the next three years (see MSC Story F17 in Appendix).

children in the fourth and fifth cohorts. According to one of the mentors at EGS, *“this activity came on time actually; as it is very cold now and the weather is very cold...it is also the start of a new semester.”*⁶⁹

7. Recommendations

For CARE

- CARE should rectify reporting errors that have been identified in this evaluation report. Specifically, errors identified for several indicators (% of children who demonstrate improvements in attitude, % of children who demonstrate improvements in their life and social skills, and % of capable, skillful, knowledgeable mentors) need to be corrected in Geo-MIS and prior Quarterly Reports to ensure that outcomes are being reported in a consistent fashion (i.e. same outcomes and same time periods across all three fiscal years), and in line with the stated guidelines in the M&E guidebook.
- Future monitoring systems that are developed by outside consultants, and implemented by CARE need to be clearly understood in terms of their design, function and purpose by program staff, particularly when the tools selected provide multiple ways of reporting against project indicators.
- In a similar vein, clear and open lines of communication need to be maintained between the consultants involved in analyzing and summarizing significant findings from monitoring data, and CARE staff responsible for reporting on these findings to donors and senior management.
- CARE needs to better ensure that monitoring tools and systems are well suited to reporting against project indicators and targets in an efficient fashion, which does not take undo time away from program delivery. The evaluator does not believe that instruments such as Child and Parent Report were the most practical or user-friendly tools available to measure changes in pro-social behaviors and attitudes for a program such as E2F, given their length, and the time involved in administering, collating and analyzing data collected. While time was not available in this project to develop, pilot and refine project-specific monitoring tools for the behavioral and attitudinal change indicators, it is the firm belief of the evaluator that for future projects, such an investment of effort at the outset may be worthwhile.
- The evaluator recommends that long-run programs operated by CARE WBG which offer young adults a formal program of professional training, and ongoing on-the-job support be formally accredited through a recognized university or training institute, if at all possible. Such efforts are aligned with CARE WBG’s new strategic directions of ensuring economic empowerment, creating sustainable solutions, and leveraging resources effectively within Palestinian society.
- CARE may need to, in future projects, think about how to better prepare its local partners for the transition to autonomous and self-sufficient program delivery, given the difficult transition that its current E2F partners are currently facing in this domain. Potentially this could be accomplished through collaborative succession planning in which the CBOs are asked to assess and identify, with facilitation from CARE, what aspects of project activity they are capable of continuing based on each CBOs’ existing human, financial and physical resources.
- CARE could better utilize the expertise of some of the more skilled mentors and the project coordinators in E2FII. Whilst it has done so on a limited basis, the evaluator believes there is ongoing potential for these individuals to be involved as paid ‘advisers/trainers’ who could

⁶⁹See http://www.carewbg.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=103:dec-gaza-children-project&catid=44:success-stories&Itemid=107

provide monitoring support across the 5 E2FII sites, and be involved in subsequent rounds of follow-up training which are built into the E2FII project design. Ultimately, the cadres of skilled professionals that CARE has/is developing through E2FI and EF2II should allow for most training and monitoring activities to be conducted by local Gaza staff.

- Given the remarkable impacts of E2F on children's behavior, and the unique project design and approach it employed to do so, CARE should continue to publicize its success within the context of Gaza, through press releases, video clips, short concept notes and academic conferences/publication; and share the impacts and lessons learnt from E2F with other INGOs and donors working in the region through AIDA. The evaluator believes this ongoing knowledge exchange is crucial to facilitating learning and connecting actors at the local, regional and international scales.

For the CBOs

- In the absence of funding from other donors, the CBOs should continue to think about how E2F program delivery could be reconfigured in its design and scale to suit existing resource constraints. Where possible the three CBOs should discuss creative solutions to this challenge collectively.
- The CBOs should make every effort possible to continue to utilize and market the skills of its E2F mentors and project coordinators.
- The CBOs should continue to support the Graduate Clubs, which incur very little ongoing cost, by offering a dedicated space and time for the groups to meet on regular occasions.
- The CBOs should use relevant MSC stories and their sites' MSC brochure in future funding applications. These stories of impact are powerful firsthand accounts of the E2F's/CBOs' successes from the perspective of various stakeholders in their community.

Appendix A: MSC Brochure from EGS Selection Panel

A final evaluation of the Eye the Future Program was commissioned by CARE West Bank Gaza to determine the impact, effectiveness and sustainability of the program. An important aspect of the evaluation was to document the changes that this program had brought about to the participating children, mentors, parents, and community leaders of East Gaza City—specifically Shejaiya, Zeitoun, Shaath, Tuffah and Darraj—where the program operated in two different centers. The main evaluation tool used to do this is known as Most Significant Change (MSC). This reports on what we found from this.

16 stories of change were collected from children, mentors, parents, and community leaders who were participants in the Eye to the Future Program run by Eastern Gaza Society. To everyone who contributed their honest opinions and time to share their stories, thank you!

These stories were then shared with a selection panel from Eastern Gaza Society. The selection panel was comprised of six members, which included: three members of the Board/Senior Management of EGS, two super mentors, and the project coordinator for the Eye to the Future Program for EGS. The panel chose two stories, one narrated by a mentor, and another by a community leader, which they felt reflected the most significant changes that had occurred to the mentors and children, respectively, over the past three years. The panel debated and discussed each of the stories extensively. The panel discussed the reasons why they chose these stories as part of the selection process. The stories and the selection panel's discussion are presented below. The time and effort the panel contributed in reading through and selecting the stories is greatly appreciated.

Breaking the Record

Before I became a mentor in the Eye to the Future program I wasn't punctual at all. I was always running late, mainly because I didn't manage my time well. Being a mentor has forced me to change because the children would always show up on time, which meant I had to be on time as well. And the program structure required us to manage a tight schedule, and I had to use every minute wisely. This made me think about how I was wasting so much time in my life outside and not focusing on any one activity well. I used some of the concentration skills we taught to our children and applied it my own life. Now I am more able to manage my time, whether it is getting dressed, surfing the Internet, or studying, because of the skills I have learned through being a mentor. Everything I do in my life is happening much faster because I am managing my time so much better in everything I do, even if it is only setting the dinner table! This is important to me because now I want to complete my Masters Degree and managing my time will help me to achieve this goal. (Mentor, EGS)



EGS – Al Shejaeya Centre

The panel selected this story because:

- What this story shows us is how a mentor in our program was able to overcome her own personal challenges and background, and apply what we were teaching to her own life. In doing so, she surprised us all in terms of what we expected her to be and became a superb mentor.

- This story of growth is not just a story of this mentor, but of all the mentors at Eastern Gaza Society, as well as the project coordinator. Everyone has had to change, and be reflective about their own flaws through being involved in this program, but in the process improved for the better and moved closer to achieving their real potential in life.
- The story shows how the life skills we taught in the program, such as time management and concentration, are equally practicable and applicable to the lives of adults, as they are the children, for whom these lessons were initially designed.

The peacemaker

There was a boy in our neighborhood. He didn't listen to anyone, and didn't speak to anyone either. The only language he knew was his hand. He would beat up his brothers and sisters, as well as the other children in the neighborhood. His mother was pulling her hair out in frustration trying to understand what she could do to help this child. I told her that he might be able to be involved in the E2F program. He joined. Through his participation in the sessions, he became more relaxed and you could see this in his gestures and movements. One day, several months later, I was walking home and saw two boys fighting on the streets. I thought it was going to be this same boy getting involved again in fighting. But instead, he was there trying to break up the fight and encouraging the other two boys to settle their dispute with words rather than violence. He was being a peacemaker! His mother and the entire neighborhood remain surprised by these changes but are also proud of the person he had become.



Participant Children At ACS

The panel selected this story because:

- It represents an important concern in our community, that of our children being violent, and how the Eye to the Future program changed this for one child. It is a clear story of change regarding how a child, who was once aggressive, was able to learn new skills in the program, and apply it to his life.
- The story shows how violence affects our community in different ways. This child created problems for only within his family, but also in the areas outside the home.
- It is a story of change and success that we can be proud of within Eastern Gaza Society. In the end, this boy had changed his behaviors and was now trying to be a positive influence on others in the community.

Lessons learnt from all the stories

According to the selection panel a number of lessons can be learnt from all the stories they were presented with. They are that:

- We can create change in our community
- We are able to make others respond to and be connected to goals we are wanting achieve as an organization
- A caring adult can be a positive role model in the lives of children in our community and create change in our children's' lives.
- We can still survive and even thrive despite all the obstacles we face in Gaza
- We can change children's behavior to be better
- We can create a future generation that is distinctive and better than those that have come before us
- We can improve the lives of our community's children for the better

Appendix B: MSC Brochure from ACS Selection Panel

A final evaluation of the Eye the Future Program was commissioned by CARE West Bank Gaza to determine the impact, effectiveness and sustainability of the program. An important aspect of the evaluation was to document the changes that this program had brought about to the participating children, mentors, parents, and community leaders of Beit Hanoun where the program operated in two different centers. The main evaluation tool used to do this is known as Most Significant Change (MSC). This reports on what we found from this.

16 stories of change were collected from children, mentors, parents, and community leaders who were participants in the Eye to the Future Program run by Al Ataa' Charitable Society. To everyone who contributed their honest opinions and time to share their stories, thank you!

These stories were then shared with a selection panel from Al Ataa' Charitable Society. The selection panel was comprised of six members, who included: two members of the Board/Senior Management of ACS, three super mentors, and the project coordinator for the Eye to the Future Program for ACS. The panel chose two stories, one narrated by a community member, and another by a parent, which they felt reflected the most significant changes that had occurred over the past three years due to the program. The panel debated and discussed each of the stories extensively. The panel discussed the reasons why they chose these stories as part of the selection process. The stories and the selection panel's discussion are presented below. The time and effort the panel contributed in reading through and selecting the stories is greatly appreciated.

Life Goes On

The ongoing conflict has taken a tremendous impact on my two sons. Just before the war in 2009 started, their older sister fell ill and died because of the blockade and her inability to get treatment in time. Then the war started and they grew so afraid. One of our sons began beating his brothers and sisters but denying that he was doing this. Our other son became very withdrawn and shy. After the war ended we thought they were physically ill because they were wetting their bed and vomiting often. We then heard about the Eye to the Future program and that it provides educational, psychological support and play at the same time. While my sons did not want to come at first, I insisted they try it out. After the first day, I could see that my two boys came back with a big smile on their face and were enthusiastic about what they had experienced in the program. They insisted on returning the next day, which was unusual for them at that time because they were still reluctant to leave the house. In the following weeks, they would often come back from the sessions sharing the activities that had done with their younger siblings. They would also encourage their younger siblings to study and play together. I began to find drawings in which they showed themselves living in better future, with a house and a big garden, besides their beds. Gradually it was clear that they were becoming more positive about their lives. They began to love school because they had more confidence and more aspiration in terms of their studies. The bed-wetting and vomiting completely stopped. The program helped them to have a deeper perspective on life, and cope with the loss of their sister as well as the trauma of the war. It helped them understand that life can go on.



Academic Session At EGS

The panel selected this story because:

- It demonstrates quite vividly how the Eye to the Future program touched not only the participating children, but also their families, in a positive way
- It is a hopeful story in which two children overcome the adversity of the past through the program. It is very clear in this story that the program is given credit, according to the parent, for the change that comes over these two boys.
- It shows how the Eye to the Future program addresses the specific needs of our traumatized children who have recently suffered from the violence of war, and the losses they suffered.

The change in our children's behavior towards a better community

We live in a border area that creates all types of problems for our community and our children. The children here live in constant fear and do not have the space or place to be children. Many are violent and do poorly in school. Others do not obey their parents, and beat up on their brothers and sisters. This creates worry for many of our families who would do anything to help their children have a better life. The Eye to the Future has been a good start to making this happen. Through the activities here, several children have dramatically changed from being violent and upset all the time to being more relaxed and focused on improving their talents. It has also created a safe place for the children in our community to play and learn together. As important, it has created opportunities for many of our youth to improve themselves professionally and financially as mentors. The program is a step forward for Beit Hanoun because it is working with our future leaders and citizens.

The panel selected this story because:

- The community leader who narrates this story is clearly proud of the program and what it has achieved. The way he describes what we have done shows a clear understanding of what our objectives were behind the program when we started. Ultimately this is a sign that we have been successful in engaging our local leaders, and getting to them to take ownership over this project
- The story identifies the impacts that the program has had on the community for both the children and the mentors.
- The story makes it clear that when the program started, it was filling a need that was largely unmet in our community in terms of addressing the environment of violence and fear that many of our children live in.
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Conflict Mitigation Session At ACS

Lessons learnt from all the stories

According to the selection panel a number of lessons can be learnt from all the stories they were presented with. They are that:

- The stories make it clear that Al Ataa' Charitable Society has managed to gain strong community support for the work we have done in this program, and that we have the backing of parents, children, mentors and community leaders to continue with this work.
- We have been more than achieved our project objectives, and there are many success stories to back this up.
- While we have been effective in the short term with the small number of children we have worked with, there remains more to be done. Our impact so far is just a drop in the bucket, given we have reached only 850 children out of the 5000 that live in Beit Hanoun. New generations of children ages 9-13 in our community will continue to need such a program.

- It will be very disappointing if we stopped work on this program now when the current round of funding runs out. The stories show that we have begun to make bridges for the children between the world they currently live in, and a world that is full of hope and possibility. If we stop now, those bridges may be destroyed again.
- Based on our successes we now face the risk of letting down on our community if we don't follow up on this achievement with something more that works not only with additional children, but also with those that have participated in the program already.

Appendix C: MSC Brochure from BLDA Selection Panel

A final evaluation of the Eye the Future Program was commissioned by CARE West Bank Gaza to determine the impact, effectiveness and sustainability of the program. An important aspect of the evaluation was to document the changes that this program had brought about to the participating children, mentors, parents, and community leaders of Beit Lahia. The main evaluation tool used to do this is known as Most Significant Change (MSC). This reports on what we found from this.

16 stories of change were collected from children, mentors, parents, and community leaders who were participants in the Eye to the Future Program run by Beit Lahia Development Society. To everyone who contributed their honest opinions and time to share their stories, thank you!

These stories were then shared with a selection panel from Beit Lahia Development Society. The selection panel was comprised of six members, which included: two members of the senior Management of BLDA, two super mentors, and the project coordinator for the Eye to the Future Program for BLDA. The panel chose two stories. One of these stories was narrated by a male participant and is about a self-perceived change resulting from the program. The other was from the perspective of a parent who noted the changes in her daughter. The panel debated and discussed each of the stories extensively. The panel discussed the reasons why they chose these stories as part of the selection process. The stories and the selection panel's discussion are presented below. The time and effort the panel contributed in reading through and selecting the stories is greatly appreciated.

The Kind Boy

Whenever I used to play games with my friends I would also get angry. For example, when my friends and I played football, I would get angry whenever one of my friends wanted to count a goal that I didn't think should count. I would call them a cheater and often start to punch them. Many of friends became angry with me because of this. And, when I first came to the Eye to the Future Program, I faced the same problems when we used to play team games. But the mentors would step in and show me how to resolve problems in a new way using the four problem solving skills. This taught me to think before taking action. After the program I can now solve problems during games with my friends without shouting or hitting using words. I have learned to apologize for mistakes I make when I lose my temper. And now, I have more friends because of this. I have learned that making trouble is not worthwhile.



Opening Circle At EGS

The panel selected this story because:

- The change that is reflected in this story speaks directly to the core goals of the program—redirecting negative behaviors, in particular violence, of children using peaceful means
- The story is powerful because it presents the thoughtful reflection of a young boy, in his own words, of the change that occurred, and is clear in identifying what this child was like before, what changed, and the specific interventions that helped in making this change (learning the problem solving skills and the team games)
- It is an illustrative and typical case of many boys' behavior, and the changes that came about for them through the program.

- The story suggests that the boy is now more understanding of those around them. This has positive ramifications not only for the boy himself, but also for his friends, family and broader community to which he belongs.

The Confident Girl

My daughter used to be different to other children I knew. She liked to keep to herself most of the time. She didn't like to go on trips with her friends, or go out with the rest of the family. She preferred to stay at home by herself. She was shy, and was afraid to ask questions in school. She didn't have any friends. When my daughter joined the Eye to the Future Program, I shared with the mentors the problems she was having. The mentors treated her as part of the family, and made a very good bond with her. They loved her, and to me this is what really caused the change. And my daughter has become much more open to others around her and gained confidence in herself and her opinions. As an example, she has gone and complained about one of her teachers to the headmaster, and as a result has managed to remove this teacher from the class. I am so proud of my daughter and the new confidence she has in life! Everyone should join the Eye to the Future program.

The panel selected this story because:

- It discusses a different type of problem than many other stories we considered as part of the panel. In this story it presents a story of a girl who is shy and withdrawn. This was very typical of many girls when they entered the program, and we saw many of them change to be more confident over the six months.
- The story is one of real success. The girl not only gained confidence within the program, but going forward then applied her confidence to a real world situation outside.
- The story supports a key tenet of the program, which is that of the caring adult. It is clear in this story that it is because of the connection and relationship that the mentors made with this girl that the change began. They then built on this connection to have her gain confidence through the intentional programming activities. In this way, the mentors are the soldiers leading the charge in this story.



Closing Circle At BLDA

Lessons learned from all the stories

According to the selection panel a number of lessons can be learned from all the stories they were presented with. They are that:

- They are affirmation that our hard work has not been in vain. As a collection of stories, they suggest that our program model built on caring relationships, intentional programming and vital connections with the community is a real success from many different dimensions.
- The stories show how mentors have had a significant role in the children. The mentors have gained this capacity through ongoing professional development and training, and it needs to continue, if mentors are to be role models and change-makers for the coming years.
- Many of the stories that involving our community's families and leaders in the project has been vital to the project's success. The stories suggest that the leaders have helped the Association to spread its ideas. The community leaders have greatly assisted us in connecting us to the Beit Lahia community.
- Intentional programming activities are a good way forward for the Association in working with our children. It is clear that such programs help us to discover the real problems that

our community suffers from, and then to target our action around addressing such problems.

- Having a clearly written and structured curriculum that is well prepared has been a great tool to achieving our goals in this program. The curriculum clearly identified a need of our community and provided a set of useful tools on how to resolve them. We can continue to use the principles of this curriculum and apply it to other programs we do in the Association, in areas such as sports and education.

Appendix D: Full set of MSC stories collected

BLDA1: *The Settlement* (Malak, 11, female)

Before I started the Eye to the Future program, my older brother and I would fight over the computer almost every day. We would end up shouting at each other until our parents would calm us down. My parents often tried to make things better between the two of us, but I would still feel angry and upset with my older brother afterwards. I then came to the Eye to the Future project. Here I learned about the four problem solving skills. I started to use these skills at home. When we would fight, I would tell him to count to ten together and breathe five times. We would then calmly discuss how who was going to share the computer and how we would take it in turns. I am happy because now I can resolve the problems with my older brother without getting fights with him.

BLDA2: *The Kind Boy* (Mohammed, 12, male)

Whenever I used to play games with my friends I would also get angry. For example, when my friends and I played football, I would get angry whenever one of my friends wanted to count a goal that I didn't think should count. I would call them a cheater and often start to punch them. Many of friends became angry with me because of this. And, when I first came to the Eye to the Future Program, I faced the same problems when we used to play team games. But the mentors would step in and show me how to resolve problems in a new way using the four problem solving skills. This taught me to think before taking action. After the program I can now solve problems during games with my friends without shouting or hitting using words. I have learned to apologize for mistakes I make when I lose my temper. And now, I have more friends because of this. I have learned that making trouble is not worthwhile.

BLDA3: *Self confidence* (Sharaf, 11, male)

I used to be a lazy, unconfident girl who never liked to study. I didn't look after my hygiene and appearance, and I never listened to my friends' advice. Then I came to the Eye to the Future program. I learned how to solve problems from the four problem solving skills. I learned from Confidence Club how to feel comfortable to ask and respond to questions. I took part in the interactive theatre. And I applied the concentration skills to my own studies. After the program I feel I am more confident, less nervous, and more loved by my friends both inside the program and in the outside world. I have taught my friends and brothers and sisters the things I learned in the program. I have turned from having middle scores to being one of the top five, and this has been a surprise to me. My family and teachers are now very proud of me!

BLDA4: *The Leader* (Ma'ather, 13, female)

I used to be very timid around older people, both in my family and outside. It was mainly because I was afraid that they would hit me because they are older. I also didn't feel confident enough in myself to speak to them. The Eye to the Future program gave me confidence to speak and be heard by everyone. I felt comfortable to be myself here because the centre was close to my house and I knew the children and the adults who would be here, because they were my neighbors. Activities like interactive theatre helped me to get over my shyness, particularly of older people, and made me feel like I had a voice. Now I feel that I am an important leader. I feel more confident in myself, and to express my opinions to older people without fear. My friends now consider me a role model.

BLDA5: *My daughter after the change* (Etaf, mother)

My daughter is a big girl for her age is very self aware of this. She carried a feeling that she was tougher and stronger than everyone around including me. I often grew angry with her because of her stubbornness, and would shout at her when she wouldn't listen. When she joined the Eye to the Future program, I met with the mentors and shared with them the problems I was having with my daughter. They invited me to come and see how they worked with my daughter. I saw that they treated her as if she were their friend. This appeared to make her more willing to listen to what they had to say, and her stubbornness began to disappear. The mentors also helped me to deal with her at home. They taught me the importance of making time each of all of my children, including my daughter. They taught me how to speak with my daughter in a way that she would listen, by relating to her as a friend. Now my daughter and I are much closer to each other, and talk more openly. Our relationship is much stronger.

BLDA6: *The Confident Girl* (Halima, mother)

My daughter used to be different to other children I knew. She liked to keep to herself most of the time. She didn't like to go on trips with her friends, or go out with the rest of the family. She preferred to stay at home by herself. She was shy, and was afraid to ask questions in school. She didn't have any friends. When my daughter joined the Eye to the Future Program, I shared with the mentors the problems she was having. The mentors treated her as part of the family, and made a very good bond with her. They loved her, and to me this is what really caused the change. And my daughter has become much more open to others around her and gained confidence in herself and her opinions. As an example, she has gone and complained about one of her teachers to the headmaster, and as a result has managed to remove this teacher from the class. I am so proud of my daughter and the new confidence she has in life! Everyone should join the Eye to the Future program.

BLDA7: *The Story of the Sad Girl* (Nae'e'ma, mother)

During the war my daughter suffered greatly. At the time, I was pregnant and could not take care of her myself. So I sent her and my mother to the school shelter, which ended up being bombed. She lost part of her sight because of the bomb, but her behavior also turned for the worst. She returned home suffering from bed wetting, lying, stealing, beating other children, and not obeying adults around her. She was also struggling in school. I felt like I had lost control of my daughter, and I myself was finding it increasingly hard to deal with her. It made me depressed to see my daughter this way. I took her into the hospital to find out if she was suffering from any health problems. They told me she was healthy but was perhaps suffering from psychological issues created by the war. I sent her to the Gaza Community Mental Health program for help but it was not enough. Two years later, I heard about this project and that it was focused on changing behaviors of the children. I registered my daughter and got in touch with the mentors. We discussed the issues my daughter was having. The mentors then put great effort into working with her. They spent a lot of time finding out who she was, and helped to teach her right from wrong, and be more positive about life. They would redirect her behaviors when she used to steal things, and discuss with her why it was not appropriate in Islam. They supported her psychological needs by loving and caring for her, and provided assistance that even the Gaza Community Mental Health could not provide. She is now not wetting her bed at all, and she is much better at listening and obeying what I am asking of her. For me to see my daughter healing psychologically after the war has helped me to accept what happened to her during the war, and it has also helped with my own stress and worry caused by the war. My daughter still feels sad for the loss of sight in her eyes, but now she has hope that things will get better.

BLDA8: *My son before and after the war* (Ayman, father)

After the war, my nine-year old son was wetting his bed and had many nightmares. He became withdrawn from everyone and would refuse to go outside. He also began to steal cigarettes from my pocket and smoke them, and sell things from our house on the street. I would get angry with him for this, and sometimes hit him. Gradually he became very afraid of me, and would not talk to me at all. And when I would try to help him with lessons at school, he would just stare blankly into space. My son was growing more and more distant from me. I sent my son here to the program and I came to meet the mentors. I shared with them the many problems I was having with him. The mentors told me I should try to praise him more when he does things that are right, and speak to him in more kind ways. I started applying the things they taught me, and I could see my son responding to this. Now my son will come up to me and ask for help on his lessons at school without fear. I have learned to praise my son more and now he is closer to me. The Eye to the Future program has helped me reconnect with my child.

BLDA9: *A message to myself* (Saeed, mentor)

Prior to joining the E2F program, I had worked with children for some time in the Summer Games project. In that program I helped to run activities for the children, but these activities did not follow a curriculum, and were only about having fun. I had no experience of how to address the behavioral or psychological needs of the child. In the Eye to the Future program I learned how to do this. Through the trainings, I learned how to build connections with children based on strong relationships. I learned how to work in teams. I learned how to listen and work with parents to discuss their children's problems. And I was given responsibility for planning and leading activities with the mentors and parents. I now have much more confidence in leading intentional activities with children. This is the most important change to me because if I can manage dealing with children's emotional and psychological needs at work, then it also benefits how I relate to my community and to my family as well.

BLDA10: *My Future Life* (Samar, mentor)

Before the program, I used to be a very shy person who was timid in public and very afraid to meet new people. I didn't have more than two friends and most of my social network was my family. I lacked confidence in myself. So I started the program quite fearful of running activities for children. Slowly I learned how to work with children and not be afraid of this. I learned to lead meetings of mentors and families. I built strong relationships with the parents of the children I worked with, as well as the other mentors in the program. These professional responsibilities gave me new confidence in my personal life. I now have new friends. I have become more social. I now can manage my life better and deal more effectively with the different kinds of pressures I face. The Eye to the Future program has given me the confidence to be an effective change-maker in my community.

BLDA 11: *Me: Now and Before* (Mohammed, mentor)

Before the E2F I was a short-tempered person who had a hard time accepting criticism. I would often get angry in heated discussions and insult friends whose points of view I didn't agree with. Often after I would lose my temper I would think back on my actions and feel badly about what I had done. I knew my actions led to many of my friends avoiding being around me. The Eye to the Future Program helped me to change the situation I was in. I learned from my colleagues how to work more constructively and cooperatively with others. In training, I learned when discussing something, I should not be so persistent about my own ideas, and that I should listen to other peoples' points of view. I applied these skills to my dealings with my own friends and family. I now listen with respect to the opinions of my friends and acknowledge their point of view. Now my friends are more open

to me, and people now see me as someone they enjoy being around. The Eye to the Future program has helped create a positive pathway in my life, both professionally and personally.

BLDA12: The caring mentor (Noura, mentor)

In the third cohort I had a boy who acted like a gangster. He would gather a group of boys who would go around and beat up other boys in the program, and outside as well. He would never follow the rules. He would often disrupt what we were doing and encourage the others in his gang to do the same. The other mentors and I became frustrated with this boy and had many meetings trying to figure out how to address this problem, and we even brought the issue up in our training session. From this, we decided that we would give him the role of leader of the group. During the sessions that he was leading, the children quickly began to misbehave. He got annoyed and wanted to beat up the children who were not listening to him. We stepped in as mentors and reminded him that we did not use violence when dealing with bad behavior and that he had to figure out how to solve the problem in a positive way. At the end of the day, we asked him how it felt when the other children started to be disruptive and make noise. He reflected that being a mentor was a very difficult job, particularly when the children were not cooperative. He began to feel badly for his actions of his past. In the days that followed, this child calmed down dramatically, and began to use his leadership skills in a positive way. He would redirect children who were being disruptive and ask them to follow the directions of the mentor. He became a much less angry child, both inside the program and in his home life. As mentors, we learned how we could deal with such children in the future, and the boy learned how he could use his leadership skills for positive purposes rather than negative ones.

BLDA13: Be Kind to Your Children (Ameen, community leader)

My son was someone who lacked confidence, particularly when speaking with me as his father. When I was around, he would be very withdrawn and quiet, but when I wasn't around he would beat up on his brothers and sisters. It hurt me to see my son so meek in front of me, and I was yearning for a better relationship with him—one like a brother or a friend. So, I sent my son to the program hoping something would change. The mentors cared and praised him and he became more confident. And this confidence spilled over into life at home. He became more willing to speak with me, and feels safer to ask me for whatever he needs. I am proud that he can now speak up to me with confidence and respect.

BLDA 14: I Have the Right to Live (Mervet, community leader)

My daughter did really well in school, but tended to be very meek. She lacked the courage to ask the teacher when she didn't understand something, and this meant that sometimes she ended up struggling more than she needed with her schoolwork. At the beginning of the program, noticed that my daughter would sit alone during informal playtime, observing but not participating. At first she would come home, the same as always, but slowly she began to share the activities she would be involved in, the drawing she drew, the games she played, the educational lessons she learned here, and the leadership roles. She became very close and open to many of the mentors and peers that were with her in the program. She began to build new friendships. I was so proud to see my child making these steps forward, and also the way she connected to her mentors and friends. This program was really valuable to my daughter and the other children of our community because it has helped them to fulfill their rights to be well treated and cared for.

BLDA15: My hope in life is for this program to continue (Akaber, community leader)

Our children in Palestine have suffered a lot from the pressures of wars, invasions and bombings, as well as the difficult curriculum that is taught in schools. We were really in need of a program that could help our children step forward in their lives. The program came to our community and

brought a number of great changes, mainly due to the hard work, diligence and dedication of the mentors and BLDA. Through their efforts the children of our community became more aware of their rights, and how to solve problems on their own. It created a safe place for the children to learn and play, and at the same time, it relieved some of the stress of reinforcing school lessons at home. The Eye to the Future program has also broken traditional family routines in our community and made people think about how their children should be treated. Programs such as these bring needed and necessary new life and new ideas into our community.

BLDA16: Bringing life back to the ones who have lost life (Jamal, community leader)

In the last war with Israel, I lost my 24-year old son to the conflict. This loss was devastating for one of my younger sons who later attended the Eye to the Future program. After he lost his brother, he became withdrawn and afraid of the outside world. He isolated himself at school and at home. He became so depressed, that I thought that my son's childhood had lost forever. I decided to send him to the Eye to the Future Program. At first he was afraid and withdrawn. But slowly I could see life come back into my child through the love, passion, dedication and diligence of the mentors and project coordinator. Now when my son thinks about his martyred brother, he remembers the good memories he had with him, but is also able to get past the sadness and continue on his life with joy and passion. The Eye to the Future program has helped me and my family, as well as other families, cope with some of the worry and fear that the current hardships of our life cause. It has sent life to the hearts that have been killed in conflict and brought them back to life.

EGS1: Cooperation (Nejma, 11, female)

My sister and I used to fight over the chair at home. When I would get up, my sister would take my chair and then not give it back to me. So, I would hit her to get my chair back. Then I came to the Eye to the Future program. I learned to slow down and think before I act, and not insult other people. I shared these lessons with my sister at home. Now, when we want to sit in a chair at home, I would first ask for permission to sit in the chair from my sister, and when I ask nicely like this she gets up. And my sister does the same. We don't have to fight for the chair at home anymore.

EGS2: The Four Skills for Solving Problems (Maram, 12, female)

Before I came to the centre I didn't know the Four Problem Solving Skills. So, I used to make fights and insult people, particularly with my cousins. When I came to the centre. I learned the four skills and started applying them in my life outside. So, for example, I found my cousin beating his younger cousin on the street. I shared with him the four skills that I learned here and told him that he should slow down, deeply breathe, ask questions, and decide on what action he was going to do next. He thought about what I said to him and decided to apologize to his younger cousin. And, with my cousins, I have learned to breath deeply and think before I do something. Also when I do something wrong, I know to apologize now.

EGS3: Don't Shout (Waseem, 13, male)

When my sister used to ask me to tidy the room, I used to shout and say no because I didn't want to help out around the house. The Eye to the Future Program taught me to think about my actions and why I was doing this. I learned that when I treat my sister this way, she might hate me because I am being mean to her. And I didn't want my sister to hate me. So, now when my sister asks me to tidy the room, I do it, and sometimes I say to her I can't because I have to study. But I do this in a nice way instead of shouting.

EGS4: *Sharing between good friends* (Mohammed, 10, male)

I was playing with my friends with a tennis ball and racket, and another boy came and asked if he could play with us. We told him that after one of us loses he could take one place. He didn't accept this and started to ruin our game. So I got angry and had a fight with him and hit him. After coming to the program, the same issue occurred again. This time we told him in a nice way that he could play the game but that he needs to patiently wait his turn. And when he didn't listen, I didn't get angry but convinced him with my words that the game would be better if we took turns and waited patiently. This worked. When I lost, I left the game and he took my place. We didn't have to fight and the game happily continued.

EGS5: *The Dream* (Sohad, mother)

My daughter used to be shy and wouldn't share her dreams and ideas with anyone. She just didn't know how to express them. She was shy with her teachers and whenever I would visit them they would tell me that despite being excellent in her studies she was very quiet. During the Eye to the Future program, my daughter learned many topics and she used to come home and discuss them. She always had lots of questions and things to say. I used to have to ask her to be quiet sometimes because she wouldn't stop, but she said that she had a right to share these ideas and thoughts and so wouldn't stop. The mentors, recognizing that she had big dreams and goals, gave her a leadership role that has helped her confidence even more. Having finished the program, she continues to share her ideas. At school she is more talkative and confident as well. Now that she can express her dreams, they have become a lot bigger. She wants to be a space scientist now.

EGS6: *The Spirit of Change* (Abeer, mother)

My daughter, used to be naughty and make troubles with her cousins. She used to hit them, as well as her brothers and sisters. She would fight whoever was around, whether they were older or younger. She didn't use her words at all. She was shy and withdrawn, particularly with men, and the only thing she knew how to do is respond with fighting. She wouldn't even go to the supermarket or shop to buy things for me. I was convinced that this program would be beneficial to her because she was eager to be part of this, and she already had the spirit of sharing in her. The mentors were close to her and she loved them, and this helped her become even more interested in what they had to teach. She would come home and repeat everything she learned from her mentors. After learning the skills in the program, she has learned to slow down and think before she acts. She has also become more professional, in that she is able to express things in a way that is articulate and shows that she is really thinking about things. I am impressed by the way she responds to things I ask her now, in a way that is very thoughtful. These days she isn't fighting with her brothers and sisters that much. And she'll go to the supermarket and buy things and isn't afraid to do that. Because of the close relationships she had with mentors here, she is now willing to trust and be open to her teachers at school as well.

EGS7: *The Suffering of the Palestinian Children* (Mamdouh, father)

Our Palestinian children are different to other children around the world. We don't have spaces for playing like gardens or parks so they play on the streets, which are unsafe, and so I don't allow my children to go outside. They only leave the house when visiting relatives, visit the beach occasionally, or go to school. The Eye to the Future program was a fantastic opportunity for my children to use their time in a useful way, rather than just playing on the streets. It is a space where children and mentors can come together and play and learn. I am glad that our children have a safe space that is away from the noise, the pollution and the problems of the community. My only hope is that there is such a space for me to send them during the upcoming summer vacation!

EGS8: *The problems of less concentration* (Rebhi, father)

My son was a boy who wouldn't listen. He didn't have good concentration or patience. So I would ask him to bring three things but he would only hear the first two and forget the third when he returned. I could never get him to listen to a full sentence before he would just run off and do his own thing! The mentors faced the same problems with my son at first. So together the mentors and I discussed my sons' situation and they then brainstormed ways that they could help him to focus more.. The nice thing about this program is that when I came here to speak to the mentors, I could share with them these problems at home. We could work as a team to figure out how to solve these issues together. The mentors would develop activities to address my son's problems with concentration. The sporting and educational activities of the program taught him to react to situations around him and to be part of a team. This has improved his concentration, even though it still needs some work. At home he now pays more attention to the things I say, and actually listens and responds to what I am asking.

EGS9: *Breaking the Record* (Ola, mentor)

Before I became a mentor in the Eye to the Future program I wasn't punctual at all. I was always running late, mainly because I didn't manage my time well. Being a mentor has forced me to change because the children would always show up on time, which meant I had to be on time as well. And the program structure required us to manage a tight schedule, and I had to use every minute wisely. This made me think about how I was wasting so much time in my life outside and not focusing on any one activity well. I used some of the concentration skills we taught to our children and applied it my own life. Now I am more able to manage my time, whether it is getting dressed, surfing the Internet, or studying, because of the skills I have learned through being a mentor. Everything I do in my life is happening much faster because I am managing my time so much better in everything I do, even if it is only setting the dinner table! This is important to me because now I want to complete my Masters Degree and managing my time will help me to achieve this goal.

EGS10: *The Shy Girl Goes Wild* (Abedallah, mentor)

In one of our cohorts we had a shy child, so shy that when we clapped for her on the first day in the opening circle she became so afraid that she just ran home. The second day the mother came back with the daughter to try to get her to stay and participate. That day we engaged her in the activities and acted like she hadn't run away the previous day. I sat with her and tried to make her feel more comfortable to join the activities and be part of the group. During the activities I asked her about her favorite game, which was hopscotch. I told her I didn't know how to play the game and asked her to show me how to play. This broke the ice and began a relationship between her and I, and helped her to trust me and the other mentors in the program. She became attached to us as mentors, and then eventually to her peers. We concentrated on her problem solving skills and gave her the role of a super child to motivate her. After she learned these skills and became more confident, she began to open up to us and discuss some of the issues and problems she was having at home with her mother. She even asked us to help by inviting her mother in to discuss the problems openly with our assistance. By the end of the program, she did not want to leave. She visits us every two days to say hello and is constantly asking if there is any way she can return to our program and spend more time with us as mentors.

EGS11: *Last man standing* (Atta, mentor)

I used to act in a way that didn't pay attention to the consequences of my actions. I lived in the moment and didn't think before I acted. I wasn't slowing down before I made a decision. I was also not open to people and lacked confidence in how I dealt with others. I didn't feel I had any skills to solve the problems I faced, or that others around me were facing. Being employed as a mentor in

the Eye to the Future program forced me to explore these issues in myself, particularly my ethics and values, and the way I acted around my colleagues. I knew the children were watching me and I knew I needed to change because I had to be an example to them. After these three years I can now say that I have become a role model. I have become more responsible, and better able to know what my own limits are, even when I make jokes. I have learned to be more patient and to slow down because I am dealing with children who need to be spoken to and acted with in a particular way. I have learned to work as part of a team, and now have good friendships with many of my male colleagues. I feel I have improved my skills and abilities through the E2F program, and it has changed my perspective on life and given me a way to look at what is happening around me in a more reflective way. I now have much wider experience in dealing with all kinds of people, especially the bad ones!

EGS12: *Hope in Life* (Samah, mentor)

In the second cohort I was working with a particularly difficult girl. This child's mother came to us complaining that her daughter was misbehaving and causing problems at home because the father had left the household. She was also violent. She was aggressive to me as her mentor, and to the other mentors and children as well. In the first few weeks of the program, I had more than one conversation with this girl, discussing her issues and problems and redirecting her behaviors towards one that weren't so violent or aggressive. The mother was not involved in these conversations and didn't know what the two of us were discussing. Gradually the girl became less aggressive and started to speak before she acted. She also began to respect her peers and other mentors and was listening better to directions. The mother noticed these changes at home with her behavior, and was so pleasantly surprised that she came to thank me. The mother and child continue to visit the centre now and say hello, and every time the mother thanks us for the work we did with her daughter. For this child her life is much better having participated in the E2F program, and it has also improved the life of her mother and the rest of her family.

EGS13: *The Peacemaker* (Ena'am, community leader)

There was a boy in our neighborhood. He didn't listen to anyone, and didn't speak to anyone either. The only language he knew was his hand. He would beat up his brothers and sisters, as well as the other children in the neighborhood. His mother was pulling her hair out in frustration trying to understand what she could do to help this child. I told her that he might be able to be involved in the E2F program. He joined. Through his participation in the sessions, he became more relaxed and you could see this in his gestures and movements. One day, several months later, I was walking home and saw two boys fighting on the streets. I thought it was going to be this same boy getting involved again in fighting. But instead, he was there trying to break up the fight and encouraging the other two boys to settle their dispute with words rather than violence. He was being a peacemaker! His mother and the entire neighborhood remain surprised by these changes but are also proud of the person he had become.

EGS14: *From Pain to Hope* (Mohammed, community leader)

Children in Gaza face a different life to almost any other group of children in the world. They live under occupation, are confronted with violence from outside and also from violence between political factions in their community. Many have lost a father or brother due to the violence, and it creates an environment full of sadness and loss. They are denied a number of different human rights and suffer greatly because of this. This leads to violence in how our children deal with each other. Many are beating each other, stealing, or not sharing what they have with those around them because they are afraid or shy to do so. Through the activities of the *Eye to the Future Program*, we have begun to address the needs of our children. For example, they learn how to problem solve. This is something they can remember and apply for the rest of their lives. Through

other activities, the children have gained confidence to speak up, apologize for mistakes they have made, and modify behaviors that are not appropriate. Equally important, the program brings together children whose families belong to different political factions to play and learn. It makes me proud to see our community being united. The program is not only changing the children but the families and community as a whole, and making it a better place to live. It gives us hope that we can create future leaders and promote a less violent society in the future. However we are now worried because the program is coming to an end. Our children and community need something ongoing to ensure that we don't lose what we have gained.

EGS15: *Towards a Better Future* (Mustafa, community leader)

In the past teachers would say that the children of our community were not committed to attending classes and were often absent. Many of these same children used to get low marks, sometimes even zeros. Then the *Eye to the Future* program started. At first, many of the parents in our community were skeptical that focusing on the behaviors and attitudes of their children would have any impact at all. Yet, when they would go to see their children at the closing ceremony many were surprised by the enthusiasm, motivation and behavior of their children. This has helped many of the children become more committed at school, and also improved their academic scores. Now we have confidence and faith in programs like Eye to the Future, as we have proof that children can benefit from fun activities that focus on the daily problems we face in our community.

EGS16: *Let me dream* (Ayeda, community leader)

After the last war in Gaza we had many problems that affected our children due to the violence they had just faced. And because there were not many opportunities for children to discuss and confront this trauma, it created new and ongoing problems for them. We had children wetting their beds, children who were too afraid to speak out, or were too timid to speak in public. The Eye to the Future program started to change this situation. For example, there was a girl in our community who became very shy and withdrawn after the war. She had become fearful, but had no place to discuss these fears in an open way. Through her participation in the E2F program, the mentors helped this girl to open up again and share her feelings. This was typical of the E2F program, which focused on the attitudes and beliefs of the children. Through the program, many children became more aware of themselves and their surroundings and were able to acknowledge their own feelings for the first time. For the girl in this story, the program led to a dramatic change in her personality. She has gone from a shy, introverted girl, to one who is able to speak her mind and be social with others.

ACS1: *Participating is the core of happiness* (Heba, 11, female)

Before I was in the E2F program, I did not really want to play with others and was shy with my colleagues and friends. I just wanted to be by myself. Then I came to the E2F program. At first it was hard for me to join others in the group and to share, but with the help of the mentors and the other children who were in my group I found it easier to participate in the games and activities. Over time, I got used to sharing with my peers. I became much more confident, and I am now willing to learn new things with my friends. This also changed me at school, because I have more friends now than before. Thank you Eye to the Future program!

ACS2: *Nothing stays the same* (Ahmed, 13, male)

In the past, when someone would talk to me in a way that I didn't like, I would beat him up. Many of my friends became afraid of me or didn't want to play with me anymore. When I came to the E2F program, I brought this anger with me, and I was making troubles with my group and beating up other the children. The mentors began to pay attention to me more and they helped me figure out solutions to my issues. They taught me the four problem solving skills. Through this, I realized that I was not acting the way I should have in my past, and I went back to some of the people I had hurt to

apologize and settle our disputes. I feel I am more calm now and don't like to fight with others. I really appreciate the help the mentors gave me, because the skills they taught have helped me get my friends back.

ACS3: Healthy foods (Amani, 13, female)

Before the program, I used to eat only one meal a day. I didn't like to eat. My mother would get frustrated and shout at me to eat more. I came to the Eye to the Future program and I learned about healthy eating. I found out that healthy foods strengthen my body and boost my immune system. I started to apply these lessons and eat more than one meal a day. I also shared these lessons with my sisters and brothers who began to eat more as well. Because I eat more I feel I am more active and healthy now.

ACS4: Learning to behave well (Mohammed, 12, male)

I used to get angry when I saw other people fighting. I would enter into the fight and beat up the bully. I wanted to teach him a lesson that they should not beat up someone who is smaller or weaker than them. The mentors started to discuss what I was doing and they taught me that if I wanted to resolve disputes, I don't have to step in and use violence to resolve a fight. They showed me how instead, the fight becomes bigger. I learned the four problem solving skills. Now when I see a fight going on, I just go and start talking with them, and I share the four skills. I try to convince them that they can solve their issues with words rather than with violence and solve what they are fighting about peacefully.

ACS 5: Having Fun (Abed, father)

For a long time my two daughters were struggling in school and constantly worrying about their studies. Unfortunately, neither my wife nor I had sufficient education to help them with their schoolwork. They were constantly studying and did not have time to play and be sisters with each other. Or, their stress causes them to fight with each other and disobey their mother. When my daughters first heard about the Eye to the Future program, they were reluctant to participate because of the pressure of their schoolwork, the bombing that was still going on at the time, and worries that it was going to put economic pressure on us to get to/from the site each day. But I encouraged them to go, and told them that I would drive them by my motorcycle each day. When they saw that many other children were involved in this program and struggling with similar issues to them, they started to enjoy the program. And my daughters really loved the fact that they were cared for and received clothing as part of the program. I find my two daughters now are open to each other and talk to each other, and they are no longer afraid to go out together. The program helped them to find a connection to each other so that now they are helping each other with their own schoolwork. They have come to love school more and they are now living a more normal life in where they share, entertain and learn with each.

ACS6: Life Goes On (Mervat, mother)

The ongoing conflict has taken a tremendous impact on my two sons. Just before the war in 2009 started, their older sister fell ill and died because of the blockade and her inability to get treatment in time. Then the war started and they grew so afraid. One of our sons began beating his brothers and sisters but denying that he was doing this. Our other son became very withdrawn and shy. After the war ended we thought they were physically ill because they were wetting their bed and vomiting often. We then heard about the Eye to the Future program and that it provides educational, psychological support and play at the same time. While my sons did not want to come at first, I insisted they try it out. After the first day, I could see that my two boys came back with a big smile on their face and were enthusiastic about what they had experienced in the program. They insisted on returning the next day, which was unusual for them at that time because they were still reluctant

to leave the house. In the following weeks, they would often come back from the sessions sharing the activities that had done with their younger siblings. They would also encourage their younger siblings to study and play together. I began to find drawings in which they showed themselves living in better future, with a house and a big garden, besides their beds. Gradually it was clear that they were becoming more positive about their lives. They began to love school because they had more confidence and more aspiration in terms of their studies. The bed-wetting and vomiting completely stopped. The program helped them to have a deeper perspective on life, and cope with the loss of their sister as well as the trauma of the war. It helped them understand that life can go on.

ACS7: The Kind Boy (Abed, father)

For a long time, my son had behaviors that his father and I were strange. In general, he had a short temper and attention span, would pull his sisters' hair, and wouldn't listen to anything that his father and I would say. In the first month that he participated in the Eye to the Future program, he didn't want to leave home to come to it, and I had to force him each day. However, after a few weeks, he began to participate and enjoy the activities that the mentors had planned for him and the other children. He began to come home each day telling me with enthusiasm about all the different things he had learned and done in the program. He would even teach some of these games to his younger sister. After the program, he has become more open to his father and I, and is listening to what we have to say. He is also much more relaxed around his sister and not pulling her hair anymore.

ACS8: From shyness to confidence (Yasmeen, mother)

After the last war in Gaza, the lives of my many children were badly affected. My daughter, who participated in the program, suffered from the bombing and would often wake up scared and crying in the night. She became nervous and worried, and she started to behave in a violent way with her siblings. We heard about the E2F program that CARE was about to start, and her mother and I were very willing to send our daughter along. At first she was really afraid to participate in the activities, and so either her mother or older brothers would have to sit with her to encourage her to stay. The mentors continually tried to engage her in the group activities and to work with her peers, but she remained resistant. With the continued encouragement of the mentors, her peers, and her family, she grew more comfortable and began to enjoy coming to the program after a few weeks. She began to come home with enthusiasm and share what she was learning with her brothers and sisters. She now hates violence and is the one who is the peacemaker in our home. She is encouraging her brothers and sisters to study harder and participate in their home duties. She is now getting higher marks in school, so high in fact, that she receives the top rank in her class. The program proved to not be just about play, but was educational and life changing for my daughter.

ACS9: A Call to Change (Kifah, mentor)

I grew up in a conservative and sheltered family where I didn't have many opportunities to go outside and experience the world. My father prevented my brothers and I from visiting our relatives and friends. He didn't think it was important we had a social life or that it was important to do anything else besides what he expected of us, which was to study and go to university. This created tensions and problems in my family, and when this happened I tended to withdraw from them and hide out in my room. I would write these problems in a diary but never actually address these problems with my parents. After becoming a mentor in the E2F, I learned how to apply the problem solving and communication skills we were teaching to the children to my own life. I started to talk more with my parents and discuss how the decisions they were making were affecting my brothers and I. Through dialogue, I have tried to redirect their behaviors in an appropriate way that is full of respect and understanding of their beliefs. I feel my family understands me better now, and I understand them better as well. They are paying more attention to my opinions and I feel more

willing and able to share these opinions with them. And as a result, my parents are now supporting the dreams I have for my future. These skills have helped me to feel more respected in my family, and given me a voice that is acknowledged and recognized in my family and community.

ACS10: The Player Who Became A Referee (Mohammed, mentor)

There was a child who was part of my group in the second cohort. After one or two weeks I noticed that the boy was shifting his mood quite dramatically, in a way that sometimes he would be sitting very quietly, but the next, getting very angry. This was particularly true whenever the children played football. When he played, he would get quickly annoyed or angry with all the other players, insult them, and then refuse to play at all. I started to have contact with this boys' father to understand why he was so angry and defensive. I found out that the father was also trying to redirect his son, but because he was so wild and uncontrollable, the father resorted to beating him. The father and I discussed and agreed to follow procedures at home and in the centre based on positive discipline techniques rather than violence. The father learned to praise his son when he did things right and when he behaved for several days in a row he would sometimes buy him a gift as a reward. During program time, I spent more time speaking with the boy and encouraged him to apply the skills learned in the program to control his temper. And during games of football, I gave him the role of the referee, to give him the experience of judging the problems that occurred between players on the game. This helped him to better understand the need for cooperation and teamwork as part of any activity. Slowly, I reduced the amount of time that he spent being a referee and allowed him to play again. When playing, he kept the personality of the referee as a player and began to resolve disputes between his team members. After five or six months I felt so proud to see the boy more relaxed, doing better in school, having less problems with his peers, and not insulting other children anymore.

ACS11: Never Lose Hope (Mohammed, mentor)

There was a boy in the first cohort who came with a bad reputation. He was known to be someone who never listened to other adults, lacked focus on any activity, and who insulted all the other children around him. During the first week I could see this boy was full of these negative behaviors. Soon after, I visited his family and found out that the boy only behaved this way outside and not in the home, because otherwise he would be severely punished. I asked for their help in reviewing the skills he was learning each day. I also asked the father to send his son to the centre one hour earlier so I could spend some one on one time with him. During this hour I would share with him stories from my own childhood so he would be more willing to discuss things with me. I realized through telling him a sad personal story, where he started to cry, that this boy had empathy and didn't actually want to bring harm to other people. So I gave him the role of being the mentor in the third week, so he could experience what it was like when children were disruptive, fighting and not following activities. He slowly began to understand how his actions impacted on me as a mentor and the rest of the group. While this boy still has behavior problems, I feel that as a mentor I achieved a lot with this boy. I was able to get him to listen to other adults, and not insult his peers as much. As a mentor it gave me pride to make a change that others who had tried had failed in doing.

ACS12: A new life (Samia, mentor)

When the Eye to the Future Program started, I was sad and depressed because my father had recently been shot during the Israeli invasion of our city. After his death, I spent a lot of time alone, feeling despondent. I gave up on my studies at university because I didn't see value in life anymore. I became withdrawn and distanced myself from my friends and relatives. However, I was encouraged to apply to a mentor with the E2F program. After the first training, when I understood what the program was about, I felt inspired. I saw that I had the potential to make a big impact on

children who really needed help in our community. But in my case, it was the children who actually ended helping me. As a mentor I heard many stories from them that were similar to my own, and it made me realize I was not alone. The fact that they showed such resilience and strength inspired me to re-evaluate my own life and explore the sadness inside of me. The connections I made with them, and the love they showed for me and the other mentors inspired me to love life once again. It helped me get over the loss of my father. The Eye to the Future program gave me a new lease on life!

ACS13: *The change in our children's behavior towards a better community* (Sofyan, community leader)

We live in a border area that creates all types of problems for our community and our children. The children here live in constant fear and do not have the space or place to be children. Many are violent and do poorly in school. Others do not obey their parents, and beat up on their brothers and sisters. This creates worry for many of our families who would do anything to help their children have a better life. The Eye to the Future has been a good start to making this happen. Through the activities here, several children have dramatically changed from being violent and upset all the time to being more relaxed and focused on improving their talents. It has also created a safe place for the children in our community to play and learn together. As important, it has created opportunities for many of our youth to improve themselves professionally and financially as mentors. The program is a step forward for Beit Hanoun because it is working with our future leaders and citizens.

ACS14: *My childhood is my right* (Husean, community leader)

Beit Hanoun is a conservative community where pre-adolescent girls are generally not given the opportunity or permission to participate in social and community activities. Many are forced to stay at home instead. In response, some of these girls become violent because they have no place for the energy they have as they are still children and need to play. Others become withdrawn and depressed because they don't get the same opportunities as other children. As community leaders we have been conveying to our families and the broader community that girls at this age are still children who need to have their space of play and entertainment. The Eye to the Future Program was a wonderful opportunity to show our community this in action. At first, we had to convince many of our families to send their girls. We knew the program was about combining educational, behavioral and play activities together, but sold it to the parents of girls as mainly educational to get them to agree to enroll their daughters. Once it began, the community could see quickly that the girls who attended were thrilled with the opportunity to participate. These girls were given the chance to make more friends and be a part of a new family consisting of the mentors and the children. The fact that the program was able to attract a sufficient number of girls throughout all five cohorts shows that the community has accepted a social program such as this for their daughters. It has created a step forward in our community, but there is still more to do.

ACS15: *One family* (Maryam, community leader)

In Beit Hanoun our children suffer greatly because of the violence they suffered during the war and the ongoing internal conflict. We have many children who are very violent, short-tempered, and full of insults either physically and psychologically. We needed a program that would address some of these problems and begin to solve them. The Eye to the Future Program did this. During the E2F program the mentors taught our children how to solve problems using the four problem solving skills. This helped them to control their emotions and behaviors and cope with difficult situations they may face in the future. The sports activities and trips helped our children release some of their emotions and feelings in an active way. The mentors and children formed a special bond, particularly in their focus groups. They became more than teachers, but more importantly part of the child's family. All of this helped the children to become more confident, honest and safe to

express their emotions. After the program, the children appear to be more social, less nervous, non-violent, and able to solve their problems independently. The skills that the children gained will help them to be leaders of the future in our community, and it helps to plant the seeds of change for Beit Hanoun. They will be the future leaders for similar programs in coming years.

ACS16: Together we succeed (Asmaa', community leader)

When the Eye to the Future program started, some children had the idea that they were coming to only play, as they do for the Summer Games. Other children thought that this was an educational program and was going to be like school where the mentors were going to relate to them like teacher. For these reasons, the children were quite timid to express their feelings or discuss their problems at the start. They felt afraid. In first few weeks some of the children attending were violent, lying, trying to show off, and some wanted to only be a leader and not a follower in their group. As community leaders we felt we had to work together with the program to change this. We met as leaders in groups to discuss the problems the mentors faced with the children. From this we worked with both the mentors and the families to give the children who were causing troubles extra attention, at home, in the program, and in the society. We also conducted awareness activities inside the society, through posters and signs, which showed how negative behaviors affect the lives of the children and their community. Following up with the mentors, we found out that through these actions the children causing problems were more willing to participate cooperatively and that their behaviors were redirected in a positive way. This program was a milestone in enhancing the concept of social and community participation, and helped to convey to our families the importance of such programs for our community. It is the first of what I hope will be one of many future successes for Beit Hanoun!

F2: Young Gazan Dreamers

Normally in Gaza, children do not have many ways to effectively communicate with their peers, families and teachers. They either become aggressive, and resort to violence (mainly boys), or become shy, withdrawn and isolated from others (mainly girls). Both are extreme responses to the problems they face. After participating in the E2F program, many of them have learned that they can use dialogue when they face such problems, and have also become more confident in standing up for themselves when they are threatened—but through words rather than action. They are now empowered children who are aware of their rights and obligations as citizens in society. This sense of empowerment and confidence is important because it helps them in all aspects of their life.

F3: Working Extremely Hard to Become a Benefitted Youth Worker

The mentors for E2F came to the first training before the program started with very high motivation. Some of them had prior experience working with children, others had studied education-related fields in university and many had degrees and background that were not directly related to working with children (history, English, computer science, engineering, etc.). The outcomes we aspire to in E2F hinges on the mentors' abilities to utilize certain skills and approaches on a consistent and high level. It was evident at the outset that their will was extremely high, but they would have to truly take their skills to a completely new level. The Project Coordinators and CARE staff was instrumental in helping to coach and push mentors to meet the high performance expectations of the project. Between the two site visits and program evaluations I conducted there was marked improvement across all areas for the vast majority of mentors. It has been quite remarkable to witness their growth over the past 2+ years. They not only are truly gifted in their youth work skills, but they can beautifully and clearly articulate the "why" and the "how" of what they are doing that is having such a significant positive impact on participants. To me, this is the sign of the most effective youth workers- the ones who don't just perform, but can talk about what they do. Having

trained mentors and seen youth programs around the world, I can honestly say that this group of mentors, on average, is quite possibly the most sophisticated and skilled youth workers I have ever worked with. I have no doubt if they ever met up with youth workers from other projects or even other countries, they would be surprised at how good they are in comparison. They have become true agents of behavior change and positive role models, not only for the children they work with, but also for their peers, families and communities. This group of mentors has the potential to become a powerfully positive cohort of future leaders, not just for E2F, but also for the Palestinian people.

F5: Own the determination and then dash

When I joined the E2F program, I knew that one of the three project coordinators was struggling more than the others in terms of project management, implementation and reporting as part of the E2F program. I came to quickly see this first hand. In my first month, I faced delays when I asked this PC to send me some documents or when I requested information from the sites. Deadlines passed and I had to call several times to find out that they were struggling with what I had asked of them. And when I went to the site on my regular monitoring visits, I noticed that their compliance and documentation processes weren't sufficient. Compared to the other CBOs, there were very poorly organized. I discovered that one of the issues was that there were communication gap between the PC, mentors and CBO management. So, I started to copy CBO management into messages I sent to the project coordinator. I also began to visit their sites more frequently and worked with the project coordinator to go through their files, page by page. It was an exhausting two months of trying to find the ways that would ensure prompt and regular communication and address their issues with documentation. Now the PC is often the first one to respond to my requests, and their documentation systems on site are much more organized. Now I can say with confidence that the three PCs are equal in their capacity and are all progressing fine.

F6: The Suffering of Gaza after the War

As a CBO, we have been involved in our community for a long time, but mainly through smaller projects and activities that depended on volunteers. We knew as part of our social responsibility to our community that we needed to find ways to provide these volunteers with new skills and financial support for their hard work, which would allow them to enter into the real world after. The E2F program was a key that opened this gate for our CBO. Through the program, 15 of our volunteers became mentors and they gained leadership and management skills, and began to earn a livelihood for their families. The E2F helped us as a CBO achieve a desire of ours to provide livelihood opportunities for the youth of our community. This is an important priority and social responsibility given the current economic hardship that the war has created in Gaza.

F7: We Can Create our Future

When we started the E2F in our community, I was worried that many people would not accept this program. Many are marginalized and suffering as a result of the conflict. They worry about how they are going to feed their children, not about the behaviors and attitudes of their children. Our families are used to sending children like the Summer Games where they would just have fun and play, and receive food as well. But over time, I have come to be convinced that the E2F program is well accepted in our community. When I visit the centers, I find parents speaking to the mentors, which shows me that relationships have been formed not only between the children and the mentors, but also between the mentors and their families. Families have come to us at the CBO asking if their younger children can be part of the project, despite the fact that they are too young to participate. And community leaders and mentors have suggested to us that we expand this program

to other centers, keep the program going for a longer period, and work with more children. Perhaps this is a sign that the community has now accepted the idea that a program that focuses on the behaviors and attitudes of children is worthwhile, and we can do more of this in the future. Across Gaza, many other community groups are now trying to follow in our footsteps in starting programs like this.

F9: A Step Forward

Before the program started, children in our community were often not acknowledged as having specific needs, feelings and rights to be respected. Many were either ignored or treated poorly. The children themselves did not have a sense of self-respect and were often confused in their life. So when the E2F program began, many of the children were shy, withdrawn and often distant to the other peers in their cohort. However, through the sessions, the mentors made the children feel like they belonged to a specific place and that they were well cared and look after, particularly in terms of their feelings. Because they felt safe and cared for, the children became more enthusiastic, confident and full of life. They became willing participants in the activities that were part of the program, and happy to be involved in teamwork. As the children grew more confident, we as a CBO held meetings alongside each cohort group with parents and community leaders to enhance the idea that a child needs to be treated in a specific way that makes them feel safe and cared for. And we supported health checks and educational support for these children within our CBO to demonstrate how these other rights of a child also need to be addressed, alongside their emotional needs. All of this has influenced the attitudes of families in our community. Parents are willing to engage in dialogue with their children and work to better understand the actions of their children. They now acknowledge the feelings and needs of their children more.

F10: Changemakers

In the third cohort, at one of our centers, we had a 10-year old female child who lived on the East Gaza border. During the war her home was bombed. She was a real war victim who had emotional and psychological issues stemming from the conflict. She needed someone who could love and care for her, but the dilemma I faced in choosing whether to accept her or not was recognition that our program is not focused on addressing these types of trauma. However, I decided that even though this wasn't a focus, we would accept the child, because I thought at least we could help build her confidence and assist her in making stronger bonds with her peers. It was a bit of a risk and many around me doubted this decision. In her first days, she was always crying and wouldn't want to sit with the mentors. It was tough breaking the ice with her. Finally, after two and a half months during a team time activity, she came up to her mentor and she said she wanted to talk to her privately. During the conversation we found out that in the past she had seriously contemplated suicide. This scared my team of mentors and me as well, as we thought that perhaps we were out of our depth and it was dangerous to keep working with this girl. Through our CBO, I consulted with a mental health program they had running, and we arranged for her to have access to extra support. Within the program, the mentors and I created a special weekly plan for this child. We would make strong efforts to keep her engaged in activities by giving her more duties and responsibilities within her team. Through these efforts, she learned to work with other children and made some new friendships. By the middle of the fifth month, was taking a lead role in a play that the cohort was involved in. She grew close to many of the mentors. At the end of the six months, when we met with her mother, she was overwhelmed with emotion in sharing with us how much her daughter had improved. Now this girl comes every other day to the centre to say hello to the mentors and spend time with them. It shows that even though E2F was not intended to be a psychosocial support program, we can effectively work with traumatized children, but in a different way.

F11: An Eye to the Future

In Beit Hanoun, there had been a longstanding feud between two families, which had resulted in 22 deaths by the time the E2F program started. The animosity between the families also extended to the children. The children would be aggressive and even attack each the other clans' children with weapons in school, and would refuse to socialize with them or anyone who associated with the rival family. When the E2F program started, our community about whether this program would work if children of the two clans gathered together in the same space. At the beginning of the program you wouldn't find many of the children from these two clans participating in the program. But in subsequent cohorts more than half the enrolled children were from these two clans. And though the small group activities, the games, the teambuilding work, many children from the rival families became friends with each other. Slowly, the old rivalry between these two families began to heal as the parents followed in their children's' footsteps and began to see each other as individuals and people rather than branded by a family name. The program was a step forward in helping Beit Hanoun move away from old family rivalries and move towards becoming a more united community.

F13: Beit Hanoun children have the right to live in peace and love

Beit Hanoun has long suffered from the problems of violence, and the recent war with Israeli just made things worse. You could see the impacts of this violence everywhere you walked in our community—within the family, in school and even on the street. Sometimes problems between two children would expand into a fight between two families. The Eye to the Future program was a necessary and needed healing step to turn things around. In it, the mentors encouraged and supported the children with a lot of care and love. Children learned how to deal and resolve conflicts without resorting to violence. The E2F has greatly affected our community. We find the children much less violent towards each other now. They tend to talk to each other more, and seek the assistance of their mentors or other adults to help resolve conflicts. The program has helped the community of Beit Hanoun become more peaceful and less violent.

F14: We can dream and achieve

When the Eye to the Future Program started, we faced a number of challenges with our mentors. Some of our mentors lacked confidence or skill on how to deal with the difficult behaviors and attitudes of children attending the program. Others came with very strong convictions that it was not right to mix boys and girls together, or felt extremely uncomfortable to work alongside colleagues of the opposite sex. We were worried as a CBO about whether these young adults could rise to the challenges they were about to face. However, they learned through a combination of the excellent training and support provided by CARE, on the job experience, and fantastic support of the other mentors how to face the different types of children and situations they confronted. And mentors from very different backgrounds, perspectives and viewpoints were brought to a common place, to learn from each other and share their experiences of life. They were required to work as part of a team. This helped all of them appreciate the value of working with colleagues, children, parents, and community leaders, regardless of whether they were male or female. The mentors came to not only gain professional experience, but also picked up valuable skills and approaches that they can continue to apply in their personal lives.

F15: The Eye to the Future Program in a few verses

In the third cohort I had a very intelligent boy in the program, but he had many problems in terms of his behaviors. He was stubborn, violent, and would tease the other children incessantly. Because he

was top of this class, he thought he could do whatever he wanted. His family, his teacher, and his friends did not think his actions were a problem because he was still doing fine academically. His parents only sent him to the program to have fun, not because they wanted us to help in redirecting his behaviors. We tried to work with him but he was very skeptical of the advice we were giving him. He was convinced that his behaviors were normal because they are so common in the community. This boy felt that when he came to the centre he was constantly being criticized because he was used to being the star all the time. Every time we would redirect his behavior, he would give counterexamples to why what he was doing was appropriate and would cite examples from the Koran or other religious texts to bolster his case. His intelligence made his arguments very convincing and other children were easily swayed by his debating skills. He was having an impact on the dynamics of the group in a negative way. The mentors responsible for him became very frustrated with him, and in team meetings he became a thorn in our side. We tried to keep him busy and involved in activities all the time with the mentors, so he wouldn't have time to influence the other children. Slowly, we tried to earn his trust. We spent a lot of time building the mentor relationship with him so he would begin to listen to their advice. During interactive theatre class, we would present extraordinary stories to begin to change his point of view, and follow them up with long discussions. We also gave him the role of being a mentor for more than one session so that he could see what it feels like when children are disruptive and do not follow the rules of the activity. After four months of working with this child, he started to understand that his behaviors were being harmful to others, and he began to accept the idea that he needed to change. His family began to notice positive changes at home and became willing to discuss with us what they could do to support these changes at home. He also began to care quite deeply for the mentors, and would defend them when other children would cause problems for him, challenging them to be respectful and listen. At the end of the cohort we felt that this child had become much more accepting to the opinions of others and was willing to concede when he was wrong. I saw the changes even more clearly after six months, when he came to visit us in the centre. He wanted to join us on one of the trips we were about to go on. He was trying to negotiate a change of the date for the trip. When we told him why we couldn't change the date of the trip, he accepted this. If this had happened in the past, he would not have backed down. This story is not about just changing a single child, but also changing a culture, which accepts such behavior. It was great that within the program that we could do this for many children.

F17: The Association now has a clear identity

For many years, our association had a simple two-page strategic plan consisting of a mission, vision, objectives and goals. The problem was that these statements were not written professionally and very few of the people within the association, and in the broader community knew what they were or used them in their work. The work we were doing was ad hoc, and there was no clear way of understanding of how these activities fit into our strategic plan. Out of one of our PONAT assessments, we agreed that there was a need of our association to develop a new and more comprehensive strategic plan. We had several meetings with the Board of Directors, employees and community leaders to discuss what this plan was going to look like. From these meetings we as a Board of Directors produced a draft, and we had meeting with a consultant brought in as part of the PONAT activity, who helped bring this draft into final form. Out of this we developed a 40 page strategic plan that provides a clear road map for what our work now and into the future will look like. We produced a new mission, vision and project objectives that are more attuned to the current economic, social, political and cultural situation in the community. The key difference with this strategic plan is that everyone involved in the association now has an understanding of this document, and it is not just a piece of paper. And the mission and vision statement are ones of higher quality. They know what the mission and vision of our society are and use it in their daily work. We are now more able to assess our ability as an association to support particular projects

and have a clear set of standards by which we look at making such decisions. It provides us a sense of where we are and where we want to go in the future, and to take all action with this in mind.

F19: Uniting the procurement system

Before the E2F program our procurement process was based on a financial manual, which did not provide clear steps on what needs to be done when seeking goods and services. Each project in the association had its separate procurement processes and forms and it was almost impossible to match or align them to each other at the association level. This made reporting and auditing of our finances very difficult. Many times the donors would send back financial reports asking us to redo them because they were not clear or complete enough in terms of compliance. This then delayed payment from them for our project activities and this put a lot of stress on the association in terms of continuing and commencing projects. It also led to doubt from some of the donors that we were able to competently manage our finances. From the PONAT process, we came up with one united system procurement system and one form for each aspect of the procurement process that would be used by all programs. Now it is easier to track the finances of particular projects and write financial reports for the organization and for donors. The new system has helped the association build transparency and trust in terms of our relationships with our partners, and in terms of efficiency of time it takes to receive payments from them. The new system reflects positively on our association and the confidence that donors have and will continue to have in our ability to conduct projects.

F20: BLDA—A second home for each citizen

After the last war on Gaza, the community had a great need for a program that would come to solve some of the problems that came out of the violence inflicted on us. Our children were suffering from many problems because of this violence. When the E2F program started, we had training for 16 of our mentors who were able after that to lead the activities of this program and deliver its messages for the children and their families. Through parent meetings held here at the CBO, and the visits that mentors made to the houses of the children, we could sense that the bond between our CBO and the local community was getting much stronger. We could see this from the passion and willingness of the families to send their children here and the children to keep coming. Many of the parents now come to the association asking if there will be a sixth cohort or not. Our CBO is now part of celebrations and social occasions in the community, and we are seen as a trustworthy party in terms of solving community problems. The association has become a second home for the community. People come to us seeking assistance in solving disputes within the community. It gives us pride that the E2F program has helped us to gain the trust of the local community, and donors, for the hard work we do.

F21: A success story of a project coordinator

I knew that my mission was not going to be easy when I had first been chosen as the Project Coordinator for my CBO. I've known so because the project contains a big number of the mentors and children whom I didn't know a lot about their lives. I faced many difficulties at the beginning of the project when dealing with the mentors, but day after day while dealing more closely with them I learned a lot about the basics that I should follow when dealing with them and with the children as well. The four problem solving skills which are slowing down, deeply breathing, asking questions and after that making a decision; have greatly affected the way I deal with everyone in the program and outside and also with my family members. This helped me create good relationships with the community members. It also helped me in improving my relationships with the mentors and gave me higher self-confidence especially after the mentors have said that they consider me as a role

model for them. Such a program is really great because it changes everybody's lives into the better, children along with the adults.

Appendix E: Detailed evaluation methodology

MSC is a participatory, qualitative evaluation method that has gained significant attention within international development circles in the past decade.⁷⁰ As an evaluation approach, it provides information that can be used to identify impacts of an initiative and promote ongoing program learning (such as improving implementation, and identifying and addressing negative or unexpected outcomes). In MSC, project beneficiaries are asked in an interview to identify at least three positive or negative changes, from their perspective, that are the result of the initiative in question. From this, each individual selects the one change that they believe is most significant to them, and provide details about this change. Their narrative takes the form of a “story” in which they describe what things were like before the change, what the change was, and what things are like now. They explain, as part of this, why their chosen story is significant to them. The interviewees also give their story a title.

An important difference about MSC in comparison to other evaluation approaches is its ability to capture outcomes that may not be easily anticipated. This is critical in the context of conflict-affected environments where interventions focused on youth are often found to have numerous unexpected impacts on direct project beneficiaries and the broader communities within which activity occurs.⁷¹

In the case of this evaluation, children, parents, mentors and community leaders at each of the three sites were interviewed and asked to provide such stories. Four interviews with each of these sub-groups lead to 16 stories of change being collected per site. Analysis by the evaluator of children’s narratives explored the extent to which children express the concept of empowerment through their stories. This was based on whether and how they describe whether the intervention has increased their efficacy for participation, and bolstered their agency, assertiveness and capacity for peer support/engagement in community action.

Additional MSC stories were also collected from those involved in program design and delivery, namely: the CARE E2F project team, E2F external project consultant, each of the three CBOs’ senior management and project coordinators, and the USAID AOTR. MSC allowed those working within the CBOs to identify the important changes for them in an open-ended fashion. A minimal amount of structure to this process affords them the potential to speak of factors such as increased institutional or personal capacity, without pre-supposing or pre-empting this impact.⁷² The full set of collected stories is provided in Appendix D.

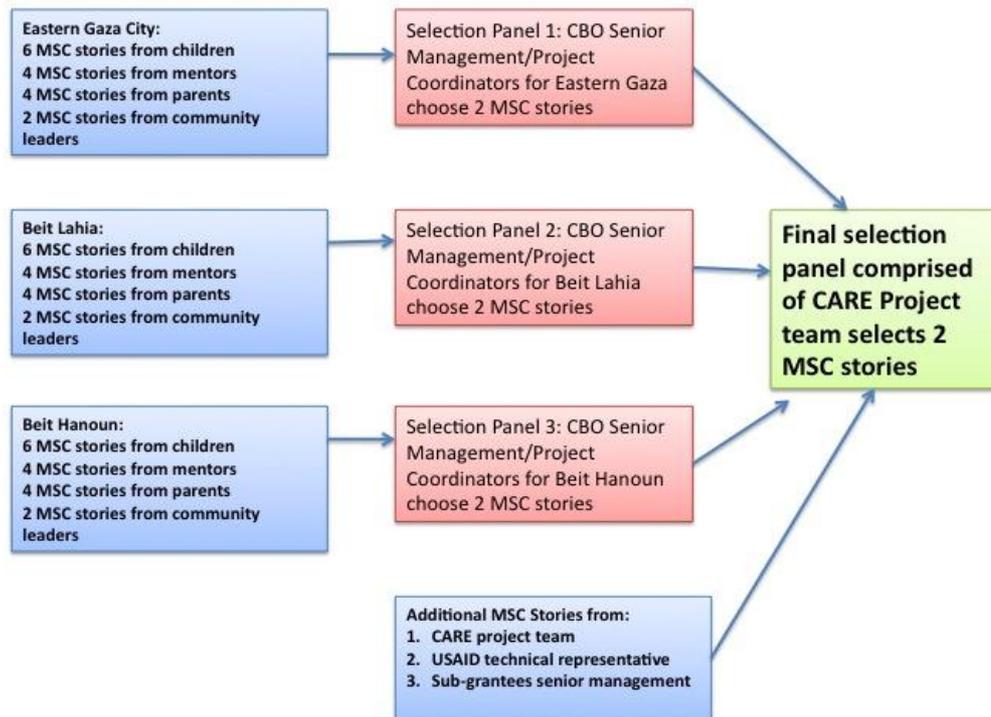
Initial analysis was then conducted by a stakeholder panel comprised of project implementers, who jointly considered the merit of each of the stories of change collected. These panels selected two stories that, in their opinion, reflected the Most Significant Change as a result of introducing the initiative. As part of the process, they discuss and justify why they have selected particular stories from all of those considered.

⁷⁰ See Davies, R. and Dart, J. (2005). *The 'Most Significant Change' (MSC) Technique. A Guide to Its Use.* www.mande.co.uk/docs/MSCGuide.pdf

⁷¹ See for example INEE. (2011). *Understanding Education's Role in Fragility, A Synthesis of Four Situational Analyses of Education and Fragility: Afghanistan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Cambodia and Liberia.* Paris: IIEP.

⁷² This is something that is likely to occur if participants are asked outright about this in the form of an interview question. In general an issue with semi-structured interviews and interview guides in evaluation is that it can lead to undue attention to matters that are ‘important’ for the evaluator, but not those involved in the project itself. See for example House, E. (1980). *Evaluating with Validity.* London: SAGE Publications.

In this evaluation, two iterations of selection panels occurred, first at the level of each CBO, and then at the level of CARE, as the lead agency and USAID, as the project funder. The collated stories from each site were presented to the senior management and project coordinators of each respective CBO, and those assembled read through, deliberated on and selected the stories, which they believe capture the “true impact” of the E2F project in their community. The stories they selected are provided in Appendix A, B, and C. A similar process occurred at level of CARE/USAID, where the selected stories from each of the CBOs, alongside the additional MSC stories collected from the CBO staff were assessed, with two final stories of change chosen and featured in the evaluation report. A diagram outlining how MSC was employed in this evaluation is provided below for clarification.



Given the short timeframe within which data was collected, sampling was done purposively rather than randomly at each of the three project sites. Prior to the fieldwork, each of the CBOs was given a list of the types of individuals the evaluator would like to speak to, and asked to identify and recruit people who fit this criterion. Due to concerns raised on the matter of program sustainability, children and parents were purposively recruited across the different cohorts. Additionally, as much as possible, equal numbers of males and females, in terms of children, mentors, parents and community leaders were recruited for the collection of MSC stories. Below is a summary of the final demographics of those sampled across the different project beneficiaries.

Project beneficiary	Male	Female	Cohort				
			1	2	3	4	5
Child	6	6	2	3	3	3	1
Parent	5	7	2	2	3	3	2
Mentor	6	6					
Community Leader	6	6					

While MSC was the primary evaluation technique utilized during fieldwork in Gaza, the evaluation also drew on and utilized project documentation⁷³ (i.e. project proposal, progress reports, training materials, mid-term evaluation data), and data from pre/post child and parent questionnaires from the first two fiscal years. These data helped to explore questions of efficiency and sustainability (particularly in terms of building CBO capacity) that MSC may not capture alone. Semi-structured interviews with the USAID AOTR, E2F PM and SGCBO, project consultant from Edgework, the three project consultants, and various CBO senior managers also occurred. And as much as possible, program activities were observed in vivo to note the types of interaction that occurred between children and mentors.

MSC data in combination with the above information helped to: (1) assess the programs' responsiveness in design/implementation to the results of the mid-term evaluation; (2) identify whether established targets and articulated outcomes in the Results Framework were partially or wholly met, with close examination of reasons why this was (with particular attention to the context of implementation as part of this analysis); and (3) gauge the levels of efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability of the intervention to the CBOs and communities in which the project was carried out. A summary of the key evaluation questions against the sources of data is provided below.

⁷³ A full list of consulted documentation is provided in Appendix F

Research Question	Potential sources of information										
	Project proposal and ongoing project reporting	Midterm evaluation	Observation of program activities	Interview with USAID Technical Representative	MSC interview with CARE Project Team	MSC interview: with CBO Senior Management	MSC interview: with project coordinators	MSC interview with mentors	MSC interview with parents	MSC interview: with children	MSC interview: with community leaders
To what degree were the set of targets and anticipated results of the project achieved wholly or partially?	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
To what degree can programme outcomes be sustained?	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
What have been the expected and unexpected (both positive and negative) outcomes of this programme?	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
How did the context and/or particular challenges faced by CARE or the implementing CBOs impact on the outcomes of the project in one or more locations?	X	X	X	X	X	X					
How effective has the project been in meeting the needs of stakeholders involved in the project (CBOs, mentors, parents, children)?			X				X	X	X	X	X
How efficient has the programme been in meeting the outcomes observed?	X	X		X	X	X	X				
To what degree has this programme addressed and resolved embedded gender-related constraints related to the context of implementation?	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
How has the project contributed to building the capacity of the three implementing CBOs, and their perceived efficacy in conducting similar or expanded activities of this nature in the future?	X	X	X	X	X	X					
To what degree were main recommendations from the midterm evaluation incorporated into programme design and delivery? What impact (positive and negative) did this have on the efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of the project and its relevance to main partners?	X	X	X	X	X	X					

Appendix F: List of documentation consulted/reviewed

- Revised technical proposal for E2F (May 22, 2009)
- External evaluation report of *An Eye to the Future: Building Skills and Attitudes that Underwrite and Promote Conflict Mitigation in Gaza* (February 2011: Impact Consulting)
- 1st through 11th Quarterly Reports of the E2F Project (July 1, 2009-March 31, 2012 inclusive)
- Three sub-grant applications from EGS, ACS and BLDA
- E2F Project Budget (actual versus expended as of June 1, 2012)
- Pre and post PONAT assessments from EGS, ACS and BLDA
- Analysis of Parent and Child Report data provided by Edgework Consulting (pre/post) for first, second, third and fourth cohorts
- Analysis of mentors skills assessment data provided by Edgework Consulting
- Analysis of mentors self-assessment data provided by Edgework Consulting
- Collation of data from parent, child, mentor and community leaders focus group data from first and second cohorts
- *Summary of Outcomes from "Eye to the Future Project": Year 1*, Edgework Consulting
- Program Impact Summary for "Eye to the Future": July 2010, Edgework Consulting
- Site Evaluation data (2010 and 2011), Edgework Consulting
- *Reporting on Key Indicators FY01*: June 4, 2011, Edgework Consulting
- *Reporting on Key Indicators FY02*: January 28, 2012, Edgework Consulting
- Collation of mentor feedback from training activities
- *E2F Program Design Guidebook*, Edgework Consulting
- *Graduate Club Guidebook*, Edgework Consulting
- *E2F M&E Handbook*, Edgework Consulting
- Collection of reports on cost-sharing project/activities
- Graduate Club project documentation from CBOs
- Collection of public relation and dissemination tools for E2F
- Technical proposal for E2FII
- Revised technical proposal for E2FII (July 2011)

Appendix G: Evaluation Scope of Work



CARE in West Bank and Gaza

An Eye to the Future: Building Skills and Attitudes that Underwrite and Promote Conflict Mitigation in Gaza

Scope of Work

Evaluation Consultant

Background

In July 2009, USAID has awarded CARE an approximately \$1.2 million project “An Eye to the Future: Building Skills and Attitudes that Underwrite and Promote Conflict Mitigation in Gaza” in the Gaza Strip to develop three child-centred extracurricular programs that will mitigate conflict by building pro-social skills in children who participate in the structure program. Eye to the Future (E2F) project has develop child-centred conflict mitigation programs in three of the most violent areas of the Gaza Strip namely, Eastern Gaza City, Beit Lahia and Beit Hanoun. By the end of the program, it is expected that E2F will provide an opportunity for an approximately 2400 children aged 9-13 to participate in a community based effort characterized by intentional programming that integrates behavioral and attitudinal change strategies with fun and constructive activities. Moreover, the Partners have been be supported with various Capacity Building interventions based on the findings of applying the Participatory Organizational Needs Assessment Tools (PONAT) that include but are not limited to development of professional manuals, delivering specialized training and providing continuous technical assistance.

Because of the geographic locations of the three communities where the project is being implemented and because of the socioeconomic make up of these communities, the E2F structured program was designed to support participating children to recover from the violence they have experienced and witnessed, build skills that create resilience for the future, and inculcate pro-social values and behavior. To achieve its goals, 60 mentors were carefully and thoroughly trained by the project consultant and a low child/adult ratios assured that children receive the kind of guidance, attention, and modeling necessary to effect the desired changes Thus, the E2F team selected the most qualified and committed 48 mentors from the total 60 trained in addition to the appointment of three qualified Project Coordinators who also received the same training as the mentors.

As of February 2012, the project has achieved the following:

- The “Foundation Training” and two refresher training courses were prepared and executed for all three CBO’s targeting a total of 76 mentors and three Project Coordinators in three separate training courses.

- Intentional Program Curriculum was designed, produced, translated into Arabic and delivered to approximately 2000 out of 2400 children age 9-13 in 4 consecutive cohorts.
- Three-day “Getting to Grants” Training completed for 15 staff members representing the key staff of the 3 partner CBOs
- Two rounds of 12 and 10 months duration of simplified grants were awarded to the three sub-grantees
- Participatory Organizational Needs Assessment (PONAT) implemented and subsequently a series of capacity building interventions were developed and delivered.
- All sub-grantees were re-assessed in June/July 2011 using PONAT. A developmental plan addressing the gaps was developed and executed under the Disaster Emergency Committee (DEC) funds.
- The program M&E tool was reviewed in terms of content, length and frequency. A modified version was produced accordingly.
- All cost share activities for the E2F project have been successfully achieved and completed as planned. Additional fund was mobilized and utilized to support the E2F children such as clothes and school bags, in addition to contribute to the program sustainability through the foundation of the “Children Clubs”.
- Based on the successful implementation and the archived results, CARE was successful to expand the program to five new locations utilizing the same model and approach with emphasis on education and tutoring.

Objective

CARE West Bank and Gaza seeks the services of an Evaluation Consultant, individual or firm, to conduct **a final evaluation** of the E2F Project covering the period of July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2012. The evaluation is planned to take place in April/May 2012. The objective of the evaluation is to assess whether the set targets and anticipated results of the project implementation during the three year of the project life were achieved wholly or partially, strengths and weaknesses and challenges that faced the project which might have affected its ability to achieve the desired results. Moreover, the evaluation will review the actions taken to address the main recommendation/s from the midterm evaluation. In addition, the evaluation will also gauge the level of efficiency, effectiveness and the level of sustainability of the project and relevance to the target main partners, CBO’s and communities. Lessons drawn from the evaluation will be used to inform the design, implementation and management of other related programs in the future.

Specifically, the evaluator shall:

1. Review the project’s technical proposal, project log-frame, work plan, progress reports, quarterly reports, field visits reports and other relevant and available documents.
2. Review the midterm evaluation report and follow up actions
3. Meet with CARE project team, USAID technical representative, three sub-grantees Senior Management, Project Coordinators, representation samples of the mentors, Parents and Community Leaders
4. Carry out a telephone interview with the Project Lead Consultant who lives overseas.
5. Identify and clearly explain whether the project met its goal, objectives and desired results taking into consideration the relevant factors and context affecting project’s ability to achieve its objectives.
6. Analyze the project’s relevance to the three sub-grantees, effectiveness in meeting their needs and expectations of stakeholders, and implementation efficiency.
7. Identify and clearly explain the extent to which the project has contributed to building the capacity of the three sub-grantees.

8. Assess the impact of the implemented sub grants on the target group including but not limited to participating Children, Parents and Mentors.
9. Draw conclusions and make specific recommendations that will help to improve the design, implementation and management of the similar programs in the future.

Deliverables

1. Report outline covering all sections and proposed detailed methodology to be submitted to CARE within five working days of signing contract for review and approval.
2. A draft comprehensive report (max 20 pages) detailing the assessment of project results/achievements based on the logical framework, lessons learned, conclusions and recommendations for future consideration by CARE West Bank & Gaza and the donor. This is due at least three working days before conducting the oral presentation.
3. An oral presentation of the preliminary findings and recommendations to CARE and its sub-grantees at the end of the field work and before the submission of the final evaluation report.
4. Final report taking into consideration comments received from CARE and/or its sub-grantees. This is due five working days after holding the oral presentation.
5. All written deliverables will be submitted in English Language.

Level of Effort and Schedule

The evaluation is expected to take place in April/May 2012 for a period of a maximum of 20 working days.

Qualifications and Requirements:

- A minimum of five years of experience in evaluating projects. Preferably in civil society or conflict mitigation related area.
- A bachelor degree in a related field. A master degree will be preferred.
- An excellent command of verbal and written English Language.
- Submission of at least two samples of a project evaluation prepared by the consultant. Preferably a civil society or conflict related project.
- Interested consultants/firms should submit their CVs highlighting the above qualifications as well as 3 professional references for which the consultant has done previous similar work.
- Price quote/offer for carrying out the above SOW.
- The execution of this consultancy does not entail any cost for per diem, transportation and or accommodation.

Personnel Required & Reporting Relationship

CARE anticipates issuing one contract to an individual or a firm for this evaluation. The consultant will report directly to Project Manager or his designee.

Reimbursement

Payment is due upon receipt and acceptance of the final report.

Location of Work

The work station for this evaluation is the Gaza Strip.