

Jordan River Foundation

The Jordan River Foundation (JRF) is a local Jordanian Nonprofit and Non-Governmental Organization that was established in 1995 and is chaired by Her Majesty Queen Rania Al Abdullah since its inception. The Jordan River Foundation is committed to facilitating the development of beneficiaries and communities to address their specific needs while ensuring the provision of economic growth, employment generation opportunities and the promotion of a civil society engaged and contributing to their community development. The Foundation dedicates its resources to awareness, education and capacity building through its two programs, and focuses on the inclusion of all sectors of society, specifically women and youth, in its interventions to cultivate a thriving and participatory civil society.

Mission Statement

The Jordan River Foundation's mission is to promote, in partnership with stakeholders, the development of a dynamic Jordanian society, by supporting sustainable social, economic and cultural programs that empower communities based on their needs and priorities.

The JRF has two main areas of concentration:

- Economically empowering and supporting individuals and communities through the development of income generating projects. This is done through the **Community Empowerment Program** (CEP) and the Capacity Building and Business Development Services (CBBDS)– *details of these programs have not been included in this capacity statement*
- Protecting the rights and needs of children through intervention, prevention and awareness services provided by the **Child Safety Program** (CSP).

The Foundation has thus far reached out to thousands of people throughout the 12 governorates of the Kingdom. Although much has been achieved over the past years, the social and developmental needs of the community are still at high demand. The Foundation intervenes by working hand-in-hand with the government in facilitating the implementation of national initiatives, in partnership with a wide range of stakeholders that contribute to sustainable development initiatives in Jordan.

Work at this large scale would not be possible without the strong partnerships between the Foundation and local government agencies, in addition to local and international organizations in implementing social and economic development initiatives. These partnerships have proven very successful and effective in terms of exchange of experiences and funding acquisition, and JRF will continue to cultivate such partnerships for the effective and comprehensive provision of its initiatives.

The Child Safety Program

The Jordan River Child Safety Program was launched in 1997, as a result of Her Majesty Queen Rania Al-Abdullah's relentless efforts to place the issue of children's welfare at the forefront of national policy agendas. Her Majesty's conviction that the well-being of future generations should be of primary concern of Jordanian society has been the driving force behind this key initiative. The Program's objectives include securing children's rights and safety and enhancing positive child-rearing practices.

CSP program addresses issues on three fronts:

- 1. Prevention**
- 2. Awareness**
- 3. Intervention**

This program known as a "facilitator of change", a first of its kind in Jordan and the Arab world, faced many challenges upon its establishment because of the sensitive nature of the subject. However, today and through ground-breaking efforts, the Foundation continues to bring child's rights issues to the consciousness of Jordanian citizens and decision-makers.

JRF has touched the lives of countless children and their families with a host of creative and innovative preventative, educating approaches; mothers learning healthy childcare practices, fathers gaining insights to alternative means of disciplining, youth gaining insight on conflict resolution and working through differences, and children empowered with awareness and self-protection skills.

The CSP is now realized nationally, regionally and internationally as an Arab model for child safety. The program has established itself as a culturally appropriate model integrating international best practices and results of evidence-based research.

Child Safety Program Components

I. Prevention

CSP prevention activities aim to

1. Create strong community networks
2. Increase public awareness
3. Promote healthy families to protect children and enhance their welfare

Prevention efforts are conducted at two levels – primary and secondary. Work at the primary level began through a national campaign to raise society's level of awareness about child abuse issues, and address the social denial associated with this issue in a culturally sensitive manner. At the secondary level, the Foundation established Queen Rania Family and Child Center to support and promote the healthy development of children and families.

A. Primary Prevention

In 2004, the outreach efforts of JRF were expanded and awareness sessions were conducted in most of the Kingdom's governorates. These awareness sessions targeted local community members, professionals in education, health, law enforcement and

The Center combines awareness, early childhood development, parenting, children's self-protection and professional training to build and strengthen the skills of local community members. Target groups include children, youth, parents and expecting parents, caregivers, local community organizations, counselors, professionals, paraprofessionals and university students seeking practicum opportunities with emphasis on early childhood development, social services, counseling and psychology.

Through its awareness and training programs, the QRFCC provides a variety of preventive and awareness-raising programs that appropriately fulfill the needs of various community groups.

Objectives of the Center:

- To spread awareness and increase knowledge about child safety and protection from abuse.
- To activate the roles of Jordanian community members and institutions to promote child rights and safety.
- To disseminate child safety programs and infrastructures at a national level.
- To strengthen positive family dynamics and relations, hence secure a more positively stimulating environment for children to grow and to learn
- To empower community members with skills needed to protect children against abuse and to promote developmentally appropriate practices.
- To empower children to protect themselves from abuse by providing them with much needed knowledge and skills.

Main Activities of the community center:

1. Children's Programs:

Children's programs are based on a participatory approach to learning where all senses are involved in the learning process. Children are not taught through lectures but rather shown how each of them can be a self-learner, capable individually of deducing knowledge through interaction with real life experiences and situations. Children are provided with interactive programs implemented through interactive mediums. Key concepts highlighted through the activities of the interactive mediums are self understanding, self expression, the privacy of the body , discovering abilities and unleaching capacities.

Follows is a brief description of the Interactive Mediums:

o Interactive Library:

The interactive library is a child friendly model of an environment that would replace the traditional criteria and specifications of children's libraries and the traditional pursuit of knowledge therein. The space within the interactive library aims to fuse communication with reading, playing, conversing, writing and expressing through various forms of art and play. Adults in the interactive library primarily cater to the needs of children, through children's areas of interest using developmentally and culturally appropriate means.

Activities

1. "Together We Build our Country"
2. "We are Different but yet Alike"
3. "Stop Bullying".

government employees. Religious leaders, an integral segment of Jordanian society, were sought out and attained as allies in promoting child rights and protection.

In the delicate context of a culture that rightfully prides itself on the obligations and responsibilities of family, the Foundation launched a National Awareness Campaign that focuses on promoting child protection at a primary level. The Campaign consisted of two components that were simultaneously implemented; the parenting program on TV and the Ajyaluna Campaign.

The Ajyaluna Campaign –translated as “Our Generations” – was implemented throughout 2004-2005, and tackled child safety issues by promoting dialogue, awareness and understanding through an educational media campaign that targeted all levels of the Jordanian society. The campaign used various awareness tools that included, press advertisements, billboards and unipoles, TV and radio spots, lectures, press conferences, salhouf (a puppet show for children) and awareness caravan.

The TV program “Beit Sgheer” – literally meaning “Little House,” highlighted positive parenting practices founded on the principles of child development. The Program included 13 episodes, each highlighting the needs of a particular developmental stage for children from birth to eight years, and consequently emphasized the developmentally appropriate practices within this group. By reaching literally millions of Arab mothers and fathers locally and regionally, the Jordan River Foundation’s long-term positive impact of protecting child’s rights will be broadened and deepened significantly.

B. Secondary Prevention- The Queen Rania Family and Child Center

The Queen Rania Family and Child Center (QRFCC), a community center which was inaugurated on July 5, 2005 is pioneering a new innovative approach to an Arab model of a community center, which provides integrated services and support to children and families.

Jabal Al Nasser is located in the eastern part of the capital, Amman; and has a population of more than 200,000 inhabitants from Palestinian and Jordanian origins; approximately 50% of which are under the age of eighteen. Many areas within Jabal Al-Nasser did not enter into the organization of lands and therefore; many houses were built illegally and unsystematically. This resulted in a distorted infrastructure and lack of properly organized space; creating a multitude of economic, social and cultural challenges. Jabal Al-Nasser represents an area of multiple challenges and risk factors such as poverty, high unemployment rate, over populated area, lack of basic services and lack of educational and recreational centers.

QRFCC adopts an ecological model of comprehensive and integrated services to incorporate the cultural context, community, family and the individual (parent/child) in the “process of change” and securing child safety.

A multifaceted and comprehensive approach is used to address the multiple risk factors associated with child rights, while identifying protective factors that enhance family functioning. The Center demonstrates multiple models to families and children for healthy interaction that meet the needs of a multicultural diverse population and provide hands-on training for different professionals (e.g. teachers, counselors and nurses).

○ Drama Workshop:

Drama is a significant educative medium through which children can get in touch with their inner self and realize their capacities. The main objective of the drama workshop is to help children realize and connect with their inner selves and consequently reach a level of harmony between the child and him/her-self. Activities of this workshop encourage children to understand and express their inner thoughts and feelings through sound (words) and movement (body).

Activities

1. "Who am I"
2. "Being Intimate with Your Child".

○ Drawing and Arts workshop:

For children who are at risk of being abused or have experienced abuse, trauma or loss, drawing helps to externalize painful emotions and events that are difficult to verbalize and is an effective mean through which children are able to convey the complexities of unspoken fears, anxieties, painful experiences, repressed memories or guilt. Drawings expediently bring out issues to the surface, thus accelerating the helping professional's ability to prevent at-risk children from being abused and to intervene and assist troubled and abused children.

Through the programs designed for drawing exercises, children learn that painting and everything their pencils and crayons illustrate have value. This approach further fosters their self-confidence and allows them to master a skill through which they can, without limitations, communicate and interact with others. Children active in the Arts Workshop are also given the opportunity to participate in national, pan-Arab and international competitions and exhibitions, thus appreciating their work and enhancing their sense of achievement.

○ IT training program:

The IT training program does not only include learning computer skills and the use of various computer programs but also uses the computer as a tool through which children and youth learn how to interact positively with each other within the group, to express themselves and to think creatively. The IT training program includes learning about the different parts, processes and functions of this machine as well as learning to use Microsoft Office and the various programs which would promote self expression and emphasize the learning process.

Different than other IT centres, the main objective of this IT lab is not only to teach children basic computer skills and applications, but rather to express themselves verbally, pictorially and symbolically in a fluent manner through the use of new technology.

○ Fit for Life

"Fit For Life" provides a wide variety of first class indoor and outdoor recreational and physical education opportunities to challenge and stimulate children and young girls to contribute to their physical and psychosocial well-being. The sports activities are offered parallel to inner-self empowerment programs to shape young women and turn them into individuals who are internally and externally empowered.

Activities include

1. Physical activities and Physical Fitness

2. Basic Life Skills
3. Who Am I

2. Parenting Unit:

Many Jordanian parents lack parenting skills and education about parenting practices and children's developmental stages, which leads in many cases to child abuse and maltreatment hence QRFCC complements its prevention activities with children through the Parenting Unit. The parenting Unit provides training programs which promote improved child-rearing practices and positive family dynamics

Training programs for parents and primary caregivers conducted by the parenting unit include:

Activities include

1. Entering the World of Early Childhood: Developmentally Appropriate Practices and Better Parenting Training Program for caregivers of children from birth to eight years of age
2. Dealing with Our Adolescent Children
3. Concepts of Child Safety

3. Youth Programs

QRFCC provides programs that empower youth, strengthen their sense of identity, increase their awareness, enhance their skills and activate their role and participation in their communities and in the society at large.

In 2007, QRFCC expanded its Youth Summer Voluntary Program – YSVP; in which seventy youth volunteers from different parts of Amman (the capital of Jordan) worked alongside fifty other youth volunteers from Jabal Al-Nasser community in Eastern Amman to rehabilitate three schools and two public parks in their community, in addition to supporting children's programs at QRFCC.

Building on the success of this volunteering youth initiative that was launched and supported by Her Majesty Queen Rania Al-Abdullah, and translating the vision of the participating youth to reach out and emulate this experience in other disadvantaged communities across the country, QRFCC is planning with the participation of the youth to expand their work in Jabal Al-Nasser Community, as well as reach out to other local communities across Jordan.

4. Community Mobilization Unit

The Community Mobilization Unit aims to enhance the level of community awareness about child safety and activate the role of local communities in preventing child abuse. This is achieved through formulating community based child safety committees in the north, center and the south of the Kingdom. The community based committees include representatives from governmental and non-governmental organizations in each community as well as community figures.

Since 2006, the CMU formulated four committees; in the north (Ajloun-Kufranja); Center (Amman-Marka) and (Birein – Zarka) and South (Aqaba-Wadi Araba) of Jordan.

Each of the committees collaborated in identifying the needs and priorities of its area in relation to child rights and safety. Accordingly, work plans have been prepared and endorsed.

Queen Rania Family and Child Center – The Training Unit

Launched in 2006 as the first regional training unit specialized in the area of child safety, QRFCC training unit aims to enhance the capacity of national and regional professionals in addressing child abuse and promoting child safety in their own fields and communities.

QRFCC's Training Unit provides the following services:

1. Development of Training Manuals:

The Unit develops tailored training manuals and packages in the areas of child safety, youth empowerment and family dynamics and welfare that meet the requirements of the target groups addressed and the topic at hand. The Center benefits from the efforts and outcomes of other CSP components, which include awareness, prevention and intervention efforts, hence provide training packages that are based on international best practices, yet tailored to the national scene.

The Unit also cooperates with a network of consultants from various professions that are consulted and included in the Center's efforts to develop training material, hence ensure the quality of its manuals and packages. Partnerships with similar international organizations have also been established. The Center signed a memorandum of understanding with NSPCC (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty against Children) in UK, to allow for exchange of knowledge and know-how related to training in the area of child protection and safety.

Training Manuals that have been developed thus far include:

1. Concepts of Child Safety – UNICEF Manual
2. Case Assessment and Management
3. Building of “Support Groups” for community workers
4. Towards an Empowered Generation (youth training program)
5. Inner ME, Outer ME (a program for working with Children)
6. Together We can Build our Country (a program for working with Children)
7. We are Different but yet Alike (a program for working with Children)
8. Who Am I? (a program for working with Children)
9. Salhouf Tales Series (a program for working with Children)
10. Developmentally Appropriate Parental Practices with Newborn Children and related Concepts of Child Safety
11. Entering the World of Early Childhood)Developmentally Appropriate Practices and Better Parenting Training Program for caregivers of children from birth to eight years old)
12. Training of Trainers Program – UNICEF Manual

2. Capacity Building:

Under capacity building, the Unit provides training programs to individuals and organizations in various areas that are not limited to the ones developed in-house. The Center provides two categories of training programs: administrative and technical training programs. Examples on administrative training programs include strategic planning, proposal writing, and monitoring and evaluation. Training on technical topics includes child safety, risk assessment, and better parenting. Please find attached a detailed document on the training programs provided by the Training Unit.

Professionals in social work, psychology, counseling, community work, education, and other fields related to child and family work among the target groups addressed in the Training Unit's training programs.

3. Consultancies

Organizational consultancies are also provided nationally and regionally to family and child related organizations. Organizational consultancies range from consultations on specific areas of the organization's work, initiating a new service or program and emulating the models and activities of the Child Safety Program to those organizations.

II. Intervention

In August 2000, Dar Al-Aman emerged as the primary focus of the CSP's intervention endeavors. Her Majesty Queen Rania Al-Abdullah's conviction that the well-being of future generations should be of primary concern to Jordanian society has been the driving force behind this key initiative. A sense of urgency shaped these first efforts to address the multi-faceted needs of these vulnerable members of society.

Unique to Jordan, Dar Al-Aman is a therapeutic center for child victims of maltreatment. It houses up to 32 children from infants to early adolescence. The practical experience and research that has resulted from this intervention has shaped subsequent activities to address root causes of maltreatment and to build healthier families and communities.

The treatment of children is conducted through comprehensive psychological, academic, medical, social work and overall day-to-day needs and services. The treatment focuses on healing the emotional scars that children have harbored as a result of maltreatment, promoting healthy changes in behaviors where children are empowered with various means of expression rather than through violence, knowledge of their rights, and respect of the rights of others.

Simultaneously, psychosocial services are provided to the families of Dar Al-Aman children. The goal of psychosocial activities is to promote changes in attitudes toward child rearing, teaching of healthy parenting practices, promoting knowledge of child development and enhancing respect of rights and equality within the family. In order to integrate children back with their families in a safe and healthy situation. Since its establishment, Dar Al-Aman served 144 residing cases and 91 day cases.

Details of services provided at Dar Al-Aman:

1. Psychological Services:

Once a case of child abuse have been detected, investigated and referred to Dar Al-Aman, the Psychological team at Dar Al Aman would devise a rehabilitation plan for each child depending on his/her situation. The treatment plan provides accurate and

compassionate diagnostic, assessment and treatment services and seeks to coordinate the efforts of various staff such as caregivers and teachers working together on behalf of the abused child. The plan includes mental health, nutritional health, medical treatment, education and behaviour modification.

Play, story telling and art therapy are all forms of psychological interventions employed with children. Multiple resources and educational games are used as a third object to facilitate therapeutic interactions with children. Play therapy and creative arts have been proved to be highly effective in dealing with children's behavioural and psychological problems.

Active play is an essential part of therapy at Dar Al-Aman in order to build healthy minds and bodies that can greatly contribute to the healing process for victims of child abuse. Hence, the well-equipped playground at Dar Al-Aman facilitates the employment of team-building activities such as group sports to develop the social interactive skills among the children and enhance their sense of achievement.

2. Social Services:

Social services mainly focus on the child's family in an attempt to involve family members in the rehabilitation process and eventually reunite families and children. Regular visitations to the families are conducted to assess the family dynamics and devise a treatment plan that is in line with the child's therapy. Family visitation and rehabilitation is conducted in cooperation with the psychological team. The family is encouraged to creatively challenge problematic behaviours and to engage in behaviours which build on their strengths and interests, and at the same time preclude abuse giving way to more adaptive healthier alternatives. Parenting & communications skills are considered within the treatment plan.

In cases where direct families could not be treated, children are united with substitute families from within their extended families who also undergo assessment and receive intervention services in order to facilitate the child integration with his/her new family.

Upon reunification, children and families remain under supervision for at least one year, whereby social workers supervise the reintegration of the child into the family, and the progress achieved in the family dynamics and other protective factors.

3. Educational Services:

Children in crisis often fall behind academically; academic challenges could be either a result or a cause of child abuse. In that realm, education is considered a significant component of the rehabilitation process at Dar-Al-Aman. A group of professional teachers tend to the needs of the children after school hours to support their progress and enhance their sense of value and achievement and address any special needs the children may have developed because of previous neglect or trauma. A special room at the center serves as a "classroom" where the children spend time everyday, according to their age and educational level. Individual tutoring rooms are also available for individual children's needs.

Academic achievements play a significant role in the rehabilitation process of Dar Al Aman children and in restoring their self worth and value. Attending school and school

activities also present a connection with the local community and therefore, facilitates children's reintegration into their communities and environments.

School-age children are enrolled in neighbouring schools and receive additional assistance in the centre, however; children below six years of age enjoy a specialized Early Childhood Development Unit (ECD) that have been developed within the centre premises to offer this significant age group with developmentally appropriate activities. Early years are considered to be a critical period in the child's life from a developmental perspective. During this period, there is an opportunity to lay the foundation for emotional control, mathematical and language abilities, and the ability to form social attachments. When this period ends, it becomes more difficult to develop the learning capacity of children. The ECD unit does not only prepare the children for school but more importantly provides them with a combination of positive characteristics to become socially and emotionally healthy, confident, and friendly in addition to contributing to their rehabilitation process.

Dar Al Aman Library:

Libraries are considered to be positive motivators for children to read, think, and imagine through the exposure of different educational materials that helps build their personalities, opinions and creativity.

The library of Dar Aman is considered different from any other traditional library, it will allow children to interact with each other as well as the community around and their families too, so it's a joint library which will teach them the socially appropriate behaviours. The library will also encourage the children to participate in their school activities.

Story telling is the major activity that will take place due to its importance, story-telling assists in the rehabilitation process since it allow to:

- Identify child's language and pronunciation skills
- Measure child's degree of involvement and emotional interactions for specified objectives of the nature of abuse and to indirectly abstract information regarding child's psychological welfare.
- Employ indirect emotional therapy techniques through using story characters.
- Measure child's oral memory
- Measure child's memory of character names and places
- Use story telling as an educational strategy for composition, grammar and comprehension.
- Motivate children to engage in drawing, imagination and role playing activities

Playground:

Active play is also an essential part of therapy at Dar Al-Aman in order to build healthy minds and bodies that can greatly contribute to the healing process for victims of child abuse. Hence, the well-equipped playground at Dar Al-Aman facilitates the employment of team-building activities such as group sports to develop the social interactive skills among the children and enhance their sense of achievement

4. Medical Services:

All cases of abuse require medical attention ranging from malnutrition to significant surgeries. Minor bruises, injuries and illnesses are treated at the center by the resident nurse. Nevertheless, and due to the severity of cases transferred to the center, a large percentage suffers from severe physical and sexual injuries. Thus, children are treated at hospitals and special clinics. Some cases require plastic surgery to remedy signs of physical abuse such as burns, nose restructuring, scars, fractures, lip injuries in addition to physiotherapy and teeth implants. JRF partners with a number of public and private health clinics and hospitals aiming to provide its children with quality medical services.

5. Daily Care Services:

Every (5-6) children at Dar Al Aman reside in a home-like apartment with two caregivers. The caregiver resembles the mother and safety figure to the children and attains to their daily needs. The work of the caregiver restores children's self-worth and value as they are cared for dearly and with great love and acceptance. Therapeutic interventions are integrated into the children's daily interactions within the apartment and are closely implemented and reported by the caregiver.

The role of the caregiver is very essential, since she plays the role of a surrogate mother who attains to the child's basic needs of love and care, promote the child's sense of worth and help the child overcome personality disorders, fear and depression. Once trust has been bridged between the child and the caregivers, the child undergoes numerous child-friendly rehabilitation procedures to deal with their abuse and regain their childhood and self-worth.

Caregivers play a major role in building children's self-esteem using activities such as music, art sessions, animal care, recreational activities, social skills and communication skills. These activities are conducted to help the children express themselves in positive, constructive and creative ways and help them build their inner souls, and contribute to their trust of others and their sense of security, all of which facilitate their rehabilitation to become contributing members of society.

III. Awareness

Family Support Unit (FSU):

During the years of operation, both Dar Al-Aman and the Queen Rania Family and Child Center (QRFCC) have touched on a great need for support amongst Jordanian families. Parents have and continue to approach both centers with questions and concerns about their children's development, be it physical, psychological, social-emotional, or educational. In addition, as Jordan River Foundation (JRF) has become known as an advocate for children and families across the country, many families have contacted JRF by email and phone requesting assistance. While JRF is eager to provide families with the needed services, the nature of its existing programs could not meet the needs of these families. Dar Al-Aman, while having the capacity to work individually with families, is restricted to the families of the children staying at the center. On the other hand, QRFCC was not meant to, and thus does not have the capacity, to provide individual consultations to parents. In an attempt to respond to the needs of the public, the idea of the family support line emerged.

The family support line's purpose is to empower the child and family in order to promote and protect the well-being of children in Jordan. This is to be accomplished through a free telephone service based on confidentiality, active listening, and unconditional acceptance. A qualified team of specialists communicates with the caller to provide psychological support and/or consultations relevant to child, adolescent, and parenting issues, and/or referrals to the institutions which provide the required services. The helpline aspires to reach families "at risk" in an effort to alleviate the effect of risk factors on children. Families "at risk" include families facing challenges that impair their parenting, but are not at the threshold to be considered abusive or inept.

In order to build the helpline's referral system, which is the first of its kind in the country, JRF has conducted a mapping of services and has developed a database for all entities providing services in three main domains: health, education, and psychosocial (including legal). JRF has also partnered with a number of governmental, private, and non-profit organizations in order to provide these services. While the FSU/JRF will be handling the calls, callers in need of services will be referred to one of the network partners.

Working on National Efforts

In addition to service provision, CSP strives, through its Centers, to establish culturally appropriate models and consequently assist other organizations nationally in establishing their own centers and building the capacity of their staff.

Building upon the achievements of the CSP, JRF will continue to develop, enhance and improve the quality of its services. In the coming years, this will be achieved through strengthening integration of prevention and intervention services, and enhanced documentation and research. Plans also include refining training materials for various target groups related to child's rights. JRF aims to expand and enhance program-based partnerships with national organizations (such as ministries of health, education, social development and justice, the National Council for Family Affairs and the Public Security Directorate), and enhancing its networks at regional and international levels. As an example, to address the lack of a professional cadre that is qualified to work with children and families, JRF has facilitated an initiative that aims to enhance social work education in Jordan. The initiative includes a twinning between two Jordanian universities and two universities in the UK, and is already under implementation. Finally, JRF intends to continue sharing its insights and supporting advocacy efforts to improve the child protection system in Jordan.