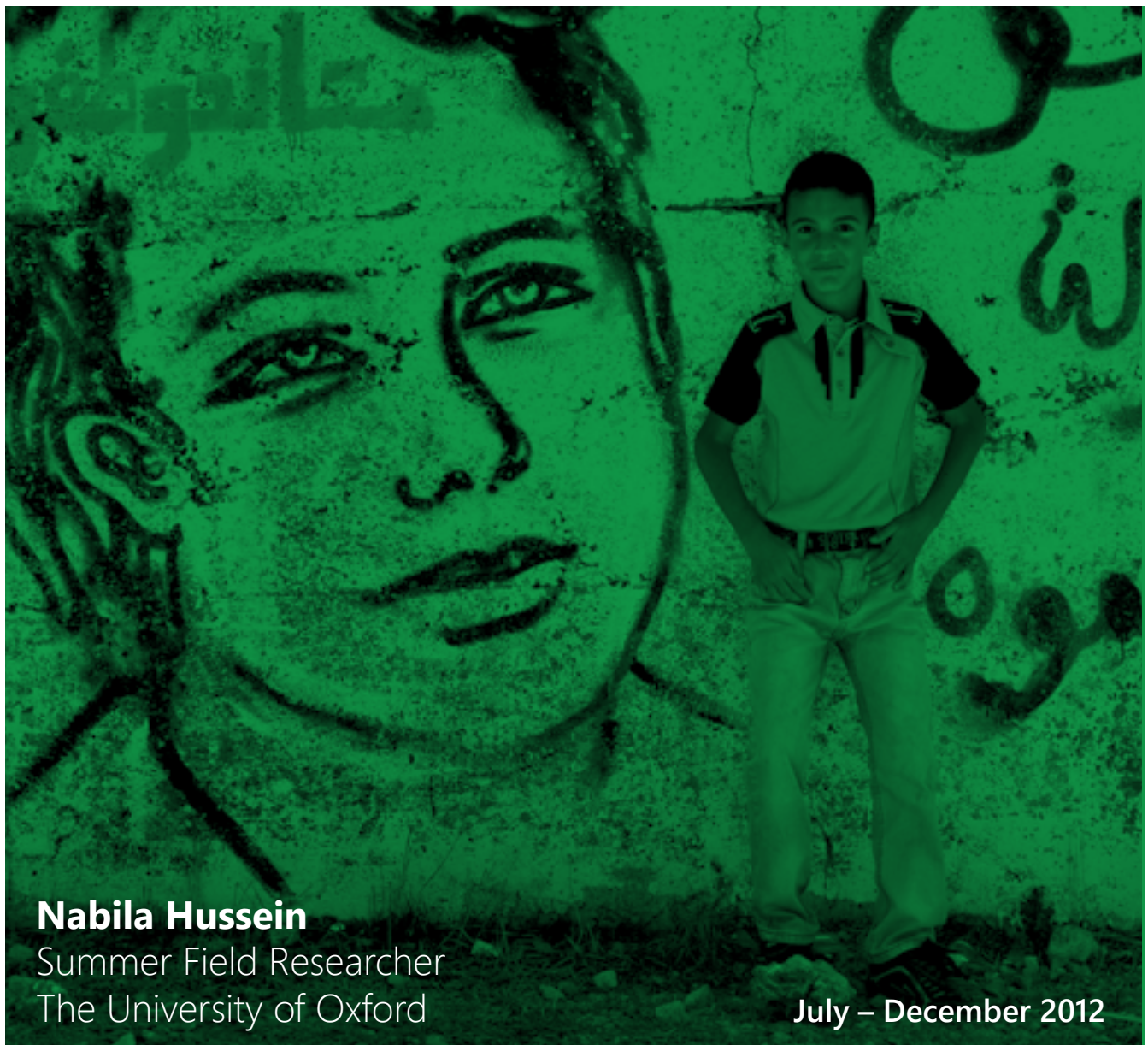


Generations For Peace
Programmes in the West Bank:
**Monitoring & Evaluation
Capability and Programme
Impact
Executive Summary**

Programme
Research

1



Nabila Hussein

Summer Field Researcher
The University of Oxford

July – December 2012



© GFP 2012 | The West Bank, Palestine | Photo by Richard Julliant

Research Conducted

Founded by HRH Prince Feisal Al Hussein of Jordan and Sarah Kabbani in 2007, Generations For Peace (GFP) has since become an internationally renowned non-profit organisation. Encouraging youth leadership, community empowerment, active tolerance, and responsible citizenship, GFP seeks to equip conflict-ridden communities with the tools to create for themselves a long-term and sustainable change.¹ The potential for GFP to make real, tangible change is undeniable. However, for its potential to be met, and for this organisation to continue to be as successful as it has been to date, it is essential that GFP begin to effectively evaluate its Pioneers, Delegates and programmes.

This project was conducted as a qualitative case study, a research strategy that affords the ability to utilise multiple methods of data collection. For this research I distributed questionnaires, conducted interviews, held focus groups, and made ethnographic observations both to carry out my own M&E and to gain insight into GFP Palestine's M&E preparedness.

The questionnaires, interviews and focus groups centred around three larger concerns:

1. Do the Pioneers, Delegates, and partners/stakeholders have a clear, shared, precise and focused articulation of the GFP role and approach in Palestine?
2. Do the GFP Pioneers and Delegates in Palestine have an agreed upon means of data collection, assessing outcomes and impact, and measuring sustainability and cost-efficiency?
3. What are the current mechanisms for reflection and learning conducted by the Delegates, Pioneers and stakeholders?

Findings: M&E Capability and Programme Impact

Conflict Assessment

While conflict assessment as a concept was foreign, the Palestinian Pioneers and Delegates interviewed and who completed questionnaires demonstrated a clear understanding of the conflicts they are facing.

The regions assessed during this visit were Jenin, Bethlehem and Qalqiliya: three Palestinian cities that face very unique day-to-day challenges. Thus, despite similarities between the programmes they conduct – in that most of them are sport-based – the challenges they wish to overcome through these programmes are distinct. For Qalqiliya, the most pressing issue for GFP volunteers was gender inequality whereas for Jenin and Bethlehem the main concerns were the environment and a lack of deference for diversity respectfully.²

¹ For more information please visit the website: www.generationsforpeace.org

² See the full report for graphs and additional evidence.

According to a Delegate from Qalqiliya, the reason for gender inequality, and the overall conservative attitude, in Qalqiliya is the hardship that the city's people faced during the Second Intifada. Prior to the Intifada approximately 80% of Qalqiliya's labour force worked for Israeli agricultural companies; however, with the construction of the Israeli-West Bank Barrier in 2003, these workers were separated from the agricultural lands upon which they once worked rendering them unemployed. This provides insight into why a lack of job opportunities and the Israeli Occupation are high on the list of Qalqilian qualms. An employee of Qalqiliya Women's Association (QWA) explained that, "as people had no jobs they had extra time on their hands... they started interfering in other peoples' lives and practising stricter and more traditional forms of Islam." This comment, along with those of several other interviewees, not only speaks to the conservative attitude prevalent in Qalqiliya, it speaks to two further issues the residents of this Palestinian city wish to address – the limited privacy and a lack of respect for diversity. Whatever the reasoning behind these concerns, the condition in Qalqiliya is clearly unique from that of Jenin and Bethlehem.

The Pioneers interviewed in Jenin claimed an unhealthy and unhygienic environment to be their greatest drawback. The director of one of GFP's local implementers, Charitable Association for the Care and Needs of Students (CACNS), claimed that the many refugee camps in Jenin attribute to the city's waste management trouble. A local Pioneer elaborated upon the issue by stating that, due to more immediate concerns – including villages on the Israeli border, military presence and several camps – waste management is not prioritised in Jenin. The lack of a "safe, clean and secure" environment was thus the greatest challenge the Pioneers of Jenin faced, and wished to see it mitigated by GFP.

Whereas Qalqiliya and Jenin also list "a lack of respect for difference" as a high ranking challenge, economic and social discrimination was the most pressing problem in Bethlehem. The overwhelming majority of participants felt that discrimination was a challenge GFP could assist in alleviating. Because Bethlehem is a contested region – each socio-religious community feels it has legitimate rights to both the land and the various holy shrines within Bethlehem – the city's residents are constantly at odds. The participants echoed each other in saying that "stereotypes about other religious communities in Bethlehem – whether Muslim, Christian, or Samaritan – are very strong and people are unwilling to look past them." Thus, the specific change the residents of Bethlehem wish to see through GFP is the eradication of the city's religious, social and economic division.

Indicators

When asked whether they understood what an indicator was, the responses given by the Pioneers and Delegates of Qalqiliya, Jenin and Bethlehem were very telling. The numbers suggest that 75% or more Pioneers and Delegates in Palestine are familiar with this important M&E tool. However, when asked to provide examples of indicators used to assess their GFP interventions the responses given demonstrated an incomplete understanding of the term indicator. In Qalqiliya, 33% of those who completed questionnaires understood feedback of participants to





© GFP 2012 | The West Bank, Palestine | Photo by Richard Julliard

be an indicator of success; however feedback cannot be considered a reliable and feasible marker for measuring development. Thus feedback, as well as “happiness of participants”, due to its general nature, cannot be used as an indicator expected to reflect changes connected to an intervention. The questionnaires completed in Jenin revealed a similar understanding: happiness and feedback constituted 83% of the responses. Thus, although all those who completed questionnaires in Jenin claimed to know what an indicator was, less than 20% could correctly identify one. Unfortunately, the Pioneers and Delegates in Bethlehem were equally ill informed regarding indicators. As was the case in Qalqiliya and Jenin, the volunteers in Bethlehem mistook objectives – such as the happiness of participants, unity and cooperation – for indicators. In the future, for successful monitoring to be conducted on the ground in the West Bank, the Pioneers and Delegates of Palestine require in-depth sessions on selecting SMART (simple, measurable, achievable & agreed by all, relevant and time-bound) indicators.

Qualitative Data Collection

Beyond collecting quantitative data – which GFP has emphasised since its inception – the volunteers in Palestine practise few processes of qualitative data collection. Unfortunately, surveys surrounding Pioneer and Delegate satisfaction and the recording of most significant change stories by the participants are completely absent. While pictures are taken and interviews are conducted with participants, this data is not organised nor stored.

Although the Pioneers and Delegates in Palestine rarely use interviews, surveys and questionnaires effectively, they excel in the use of another qualitative method, ethnographic observation. When asked, “how do you know that your programme has been successful?” over 20% of those who completed questionnaires in Qalqiliya, Jenin and Bethlehem admitted to the use of observation. Interestingly, even those Pioneers and Delegates who did not outright state observation referenced a specific observation, such as “happier participants” and “increased cooperation”, as the answer to the aforementioned question. If this information is considered, the percentages of Pioneers and Delegates who consider observation an important means of monitoring progress during an intervention increases to 66%, 90% and 76% in Qalqiliya, Jenin and Bethlehem respectively. When asked to give an example of an observation, one Bethlehem-based Pioneer discussed how she regularly observes improved interactions amongst participants: “you know you are making progress when the children are interacting better amongst themselves.” Also, a Pioneer from Jenin claimed to have witnessed a decrease in the level of discrimination between participants by the close of the last programme implemented.

Methods of Assessment (Lessons Learnt)

Of those interviewed in Qalqiliya and Jenin, 100% said that collecting feedback from both participants and parents was necessary and claimed that they sought out comments to improve future programming. In Bethlehem, three of the four volunteers interviewed understood the importance of feedback to the betterment of GFP interventions.

The majority of those interviewed, from all three cities, mentioned group evaluation as the primary “lessons learnt” mechanism in Palestine. When asked to give further information on this approach, a Pioneer from Jenin stated, “At our first meeting we plan the activity we wish to do... then, after the programme itself – we discuss what the good things and bad things that happened were; what did people have to say? Did we achieve our goals?” This explanation was echoed by all of those who were asked to elaborate on group evaluation, confirming that an organised process of feedback collection is ongoing in Qalqiliya, Jenin and Bethlehem. In fact, during my time in Jenin I was too fortunate to have observed a post-intervention evaluation session and was very impressed with the professionalism I witnessed.

While methods of feedback collection are underway in the various cities of Palestine, whether change is actually made post intervention, as a result of this feedback, is uncertain. In Qalqiliya and Jenin, 100% of those interviewed claimed to use feedback for programme improvement, however not one Pioneer or Delegate could give an example of how. In Bethlehem, two out of four interviewees stated that they used the comments and criticisms received during the group evaluations to better their future interventions; however, neither could elaborate. Interestingly, one of the interviewees was critical of group evaluation because the information collected was too superficial, “We need to understand and discuss what they [the participants, parents, partners] liked and what they did not like in order to improve our work and to improve ourselves.”



Concluding Remarks

While the results were not always positive, and much work is needed to ensure that the objectives of GFP are met successfully in Palestine, the overall condition of GFP programming in the West Bank is promising. The passion held by the Pioneers and Delegates is admirable and the reach of the organisation is impressive; the raw material is definitely present in Qalqiliya, Jenin and Bethlehem for exceptional interventions in the future. Regarding their preparedness for conducting M&E themselves, the Pioneers and Delegates of the West Bank have much to learn. While they are better equipped in some areas (utilising observation and organising mechanisms of feedback) than others (identifying indicators and implementing feedback), the GFP volunteers in Palestine definitely require M&E education. However, I would argue that the amount of time it will take for these Pioneers and Delegates to adopt processes of M&E will be little. That the volunteers excelled at conflict assessment, and understood objectives (even if they confused them with indicators), demonstrates their familiarity with monitoring; they may not know the specific labels but the concept is one they are familiar with. The same can be said about evaluation, while the GFP volunteers were unsure how to utilise the feedback they collected, they have promising lessons learnt procedures in place. In summary, GFP does not have to start from square one in the West Bank as much of the groundwork is already in place.

In closing, I would like to commend GFP for opening itself up to external evaluation. This action demonstrates its commitment to thorough introspection; rather than assuming that its programmes are functioning perfectly around the world, GFP is taking the time to learn about its weaknesses so that it can improve upon them for the future. While the headquarters in Amman has a large task before it, educating the Palestinian Pioneers and Delegates on M&E procedures will be no small task, GFP has already taken the first steps to a positive change.

About the Summer Field Researcher

Nabila Hussein is a graduate student reading for her MPhil in Modern South Asian Studies at the University of Oxford. She completed her undergraduate degree in Middle Eastern History and Humanities at Simon Fraser University in June of 2010 and by August 2010 enrolled at the Institute of Ismaili Studies (IIS) in London to pursue the Graduate Programme in Islamic Studies and Humanities (GPISH). Through this institute she undertook field research in several villages of Gujarat, India where her fervour for ground level development work was confirmed. Prior to this research she was also involved with PossAbilities (a Canadian based non-profit seeking to erase the stigma surrounding mentally, developmentally, and physically challenged individuals) to which she attributes the ignition of this passion for development. In 2011 she commenced her Master's degree and hopes that she will gain a comprehensive knowledge of South Asia to add to her familiarity with the Middle East and North Africa. Ultimately, she believes that with this in depth familiarity, she can contribute to development within these regions. For her, only by understanding the situation on the ground can one successfully contribute to real and tangible change.

About the Summer Field Research

Generations For Peace awards two research grants annually to selected postgraduate students pursuing Masters or Doctorate studies at the University of Oxford. The awardees conduct a field research which takes place during the University's summer vacations. The multi-disciplinary field research is focused on an activity or programme implemented in one or more countries in which Generations For Peace volunteers operate. In terms of outputs, each awardee is expected to provide a full research report focused on the local activity/programme, including a detailed write-up of the research conducted and any practical recommendations for the activity/programme organisers; and a supplementary report with further meta analysis and recommendations for Generations For Peace regarding activity/programme adjustment and opportunities for further research. A key objective of Generations For Peace in supporting research grants is to support knowledge transfer and capacity development therefore, it is also expected that the awardees will use their best endeavours to demonstrate (within the limits of practical context of their particular research situation) some knowledge transfer to and capacity development of the local actors.



/generationsforpeace



@Gens_For_Peace



/generationsforpeace



/in/generationsforpeace