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Youth as a Strategy for Community Mental Health in the West Bank

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A. Introduction

1. Community Mental Health through Youth Empowerment

The political context of prolonged conflict, warlike conditions and Israeli Occupation in the West Bank area of Palestine have created an extreme challenge to usual development strategies. Leadership suppression, lack of mobility and communication, economic stagnation and land confiscation have led to an unprecedented instigation of tension, frustration and hostility. In turn, a politically divided and humiliated population in Palestine, and its supporters externally, have begun to give up hope. Families look inward to maintain whatever values they can....communities and businesses become overly competitive in the shrinking world of resources that are available.....bureaucracies become barriers rather than coordinators.

In the earlier days of post-1967 Occupation, Palestinian society faced similar obstacles in the lack of internal and external political recognition, an international community dominated by US-USSR proxy partner tensions, and disarray in Palestinian politics. However, at that time, there was hope; and there were also significant innovations created by Palestinians to cope with their immediate situation. These advances in development were supported principally by Arab 'steadfastness' funds, European non-governmental organizations, the UN and European governments, as well as some American support, mainly through non-governmental organizations. A principal achievement during this period of hope was the creation of a strong non-governmental sector that was able to provide essential services to newly isolated communities in the West Bank and Gaza. Such NGOs relied significantly on local community participation, as is common in many poor countries in their early stages of development. However, such local engagement and innovation did not survive the next four decades of Occupation by Israel.

By the turn of the century, part of the NGO sector had shrunk due to the cessation of funding (as was the case with the women's movement's nursery schools and kindergarten schemes. Other parts of the NGO sector had institutionalized in order to survive and had become swollen, bureaucratized and unable to initiate change due to overwhelming demand, and restrictions on utilizing its dwindling supply of financial and human resources. Oscillation between development and emergency work, lack of political progress and despair were key factors in this contraction of the impact of NGOs, with the exception of emergency periods when their role was instrumental in sustaining population needs. At the same time as NGOs struggled, improved electronic communication throughout the region created a society that was increasingly aware of external conditions of achievement elsewhere

Along with other civil society institutions, youth in Palestine adopted the issue of basic human rights and social justice as the basis for their participation in political life. This participation in turn was violently suppressed through severe restrictions on movement within the West Bank and between the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and Israel which led to high levels of unemployment, especially among youth (Batniji¹). Another round of despair ensued as youth found that education, the traditional avenue of personal and social progress in Palestine, was unable to guarantee a future for them.

¹ Batniji R, Rabaia Y, Giacaman R, Nguyen-Gillham V, Sarraj E, Punamaki RL, Saab H, Boyce W, Summerfield D. Batniji R, Rabaia Y, Giacaman R, Nguyen-Gillham V, Sarraj E, Punamaki RL, Saab H, Boyce W, Summerfield D. Health and Human Security in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. *The Lancet* 2009 373:1133-1143.

The Palestinian Adolescents Coping with Trauma (PACT I) project was designed to address some of the psycho-social consequences of these conditions in youth. These consequences included psychological trauma induced equally from individual and community level violence and from humiliation at increasing restrictions (Giacaman²). By studying, and acting on, the core concerns of Palestinian youth in their communities, it was hoped to increase their self-esteem, resilience and hopes for their future (Giacaman³).

Having determined that youth alienation and withdrawal was a key block to long term social development in Palestine, models for a locally relevant and preventive response were needed. In particular, rural areas in the West Bank demonstrated extreme conditions of isolation, conservative values (especially for girls), and lack of opportunity for a decent future (Nguyen-Gillham⁴).

The Palestine Medical Relief Society (PMRS), a well-established NGO operating in the northern West Bank was approached about a partnership for the next stage in PACT II. The PMRS program of Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) for those with physical and sensory disabilities had long proven itself a competent and trusted provider of home-based supports, referral services and advocacy for the rights of those with disabilities. Its community based rehabilitation workers (CBRWs) were well accepted in local communities and provided a pool of experienced, and self-reflective, persons who might be able to address the psycho-social situations of local youth. There were few, if any, alternative organizations in the area that had a community based approach to programme implementation, sufficient geographic spread, reputation, skills and approval of the communities, as well as the vision and capacity to enlarge its work to include youth. A key aim was to focus on developing the potential for collective resilience, rather than providing individualized psycho-social support that was not familiar in the local culture, and neither comprehensive in coverage nor sustainable.

In PACT III, ‘Youth as a Strategy’ (YaS) was conceived as a way to combine the psycho-social interests of youth and persons with disabilities for purposes of satisfying funding envelope guidelines. A key question at the time was whether to propose a theoretical model for YaS and how to develop a concrete plan for this combination that could be easily understood and followed by CBRWs. However, in the interests of community development philosophy that espouses that the local community must decide what to work for, and how to achieve it, a decision was made to provide only a developmental set of resources (ie., trainings) to CBRWs. CBRWs would then approach their villages and negotiate particular methodologies to achieve an improvement in youth mental health, while maintaining the existing focus on disability.

² Giacaman R, Abu-Rmeileh NME, Husseini A, Saab H, Boyce W. Humiliation: the invisible consequence of war for Palestinian youth. *Public Health* 2007 121: 563-571.

³ Giacaman R, Shannon H, Saab H, Arya N, Boyce W. Individual and collective exposure to political violence: Palestinian adolescents coping with conflict. *European Journal of Public Health* 2007, 17: 361-368.

⁴ Nguyen-Gillham V, Giacaman R, Naser G, Boyce W. Normalizing the abnormal: Palestinian youth and the contradictions of resilience in protracted conflict. *Journal of Health and Social Care in the Community*, 2008; 16(3):291-298.

This report describes the variety of approaches to youth involvement that have been developed over the past two years, and analyses the critical characteristics of YaS that can be tested for effectiveness and efficiency in the future. The report combines information (in Arial 10) from earlier formative (2007) and monitoring (2009) assessments that contribute to understanding the YaS model in Palestinian society. Thus, PACT projects are described from a retrospective focus on the development of YaS practices and principles.

The field methods used are based on an understanding of ‘strategy as a tool for development’. A conceptual model for YaS is presented, along with potential indicators for its continued evaluation. A discussion examines the questions ‘Why does YaS work?’ and ‘What needs to be considered in refining or expanding YaS?’ Resources are suggested for trainings in YaS planning. An emerging vision of YaS is presented including options for operational objectives and a research agenda for the future.

2. Community Based Rehabilitation and its Relationship to Youth Mental Health Development in Palestine

Youth, mental health, persons with disability, rehabilitation...the connections are not immediately obvious to those in the development sector. We begin by examining the conceptual basis for understanding these links and draw on an earlier formative assessment.

(from Peter Coleridge – Palestinian Adolescents Coping with Trauma (PACT) Phase II, Formative Assessment, October 2007)

A major achievement of the social mobilisation approach to development and services in Palestine from the 1980's was the creation of a national CBR (community based rehabilitation of disabled people) programme. This now works throughout the West Bank and Gaza through a network of fieldworkers trained in and committed to a community mobilisation approach. In December 2004 ICPH and the CBR programme decided to work together on a project to add a psychosocial component to the CBR programme.

Starting in 1988, a coherent and interlinked network of CBR programmes throughout the West Bank and Gaza had been initiated. While independent and implemented by different organizations, these programmes have a high level of coordination among each other, developing one of the best examples of large-scale CBR anywhere in the world.

It has scored very significant achievements. Most notable is the success in uniting a wide array of Palestinian NGOs with very diverse backgrounds and attitudes in a national approach to disability. This national approach is based on the rights of disabled people, and the practical steps that must be taken to ensure these rights.

These practical steps entail chiefly the creation of a network of field workers who operate at the community level in both towns and villages. Their task is to ensure that disabled people get the care and treatment they need, both at home and in the relevant referral centres; educate the community to understand the needs and rights of disabled people; change negative attitudes in the family and in the community about disabled people; and generally mobilise the community behind ensuring that the rights and needs of disabled people are met.

This clarity of purpose has been achieved in the CBR programme in the West Bank and Gaza, and the result is that this programme is one of the most important achievements of the Palestinian development community in the past 20 years. Those who developed it (which includes ICPH at Birzeit University) are justifiably proud of this achievement.

What is the business of CBR as an approach?

Community Based Rehabilitation is a strategy, within community development, for the inclusion and full participation of disabled people in all aspects of community life. To this end CBR draws on and mobilises the resources of disabled people themselves, services such as education and health, and all other social activities at all levels in the immediate and wider community.⁵

In the CBR Guide developed by WHO and other agencies the social goal of CBR is stated as follows:

'The Goal of the CBR social component is for 'people with disabilities to live as equal citizens within the community, to enjoy health and well being, to participate fully in educational, social, cultural, religious, economic and political activities.'⁶

'CBR programmes can play an important role as both a catalyst and vehicle for social inclusion and social changes. CBR taps into a wide variety of community development networks, engaging with different sectors across government, faith based groups, DPOs, NGOs, community based organisations and self help groups. It has links with a diverse range of social programmes from income generating activities to legal protection, maternal and child health care to youth clubs, adult literacy to agriculture. Through these linkages and referral processes CBR can be a powerful tool to ensure the meaningful participation and social inclusion of all members of the community. An important role of CBR programmes is to support people with disability and their families to engage with and hold their communities to account.'⁷

The concept of CBR has progressed since it was first developed in the 1980's. It is clear from this quotation that CBR is not meant to be working quietly and unseen on the margins of the community but in the mainstream, connecting with all the other communal activities and services that are going on. This implies a focus which is not confined to disabled people, but which embraces all aspects of communal life and community development. However, such a focus does not imply removing disabled people from the centre of its attention: on the contrary, the purpose is to ensure that disabled people's rights are met, and that they have equal status in the community. In order for this to happen a CBR programme needs to have its horizons set on all aspects of community life.

All the evidence points to a simple fact: the more a CBR programme reaches beyond disability the more effective it is in breaking the isolation and stigma attached to disabled people. A CBR programme which confines itself primarily to home visiting actually perpetuates the isolation and marginalisation of disabled people. CBR needs to include a community development component, in addition to facilitation of specialized services.

The WHO guidelines do not address explicitly the question of whether CBR should take on issues not directly related to disabled people, such as general mental health. Nevertheless, a logical conclusion to be drawn from the quotation above is that all social and community issues are grist to the CBR mill. In the case of the PACT programme there is no reason to argue that an extension of focus to include mental health is against CBR principles. The involvement of CBR workers in a broader range of issues of concern to wider circles of the population, would contribute to an enhancement of their status in the community.

Thus, Coleridge concludes that there is the possibility of conceptual coherence between the needs of persons with disabilities, a community approach to this problem, and the general mental health needs of youth in Palestine. However, there were certain operational questions identified in a funders report⁸ about the disability work of CBR North that had implications for its effort to be successful in assuming a role in youth mental health:

⁵ A summary of the position adopted by WHO, ILO, UNESCO and UNDP in a Joint Position Paper on CBR, 2000.

⁶ WHO; ILO; UNESCO position paper on CBR 2004: p4

⁷ WHO, ILO, UNDP, UNESCO: *CBR Guidelines* (2008).

⁸ *Evaluation of the CBR Program in Palestine – from the perspective of people with disabilities themselves.* Diakonia/NAD December 2005.

- a) It found that the CBR programme had not changed its approach, methods or coverage in 15 years of operation. To quote from the report: 'An area of concern is that the CBR program has not developed its methods much in the 15 years of existence. It remains in the same place, run by the same organisations, **providing the same services that are becoming routine.**' (Emphasis in the original).⁹
- b. Field workers (almost all women) were not themselves empowered because important decisions were made by their managers, who are mainly men, a situation which deserves reconsideration. This situation is demoralising for the CBR workers, who are, on the evidence seen by the consultant, articulate and committed.
- c. It found that children and adults who are deaf, or who have intellectual disabilities, were not being helped by the programme. It recommended communal activities for children with these impairments in community centres.
- d. It found that counselling and psychosocial support are one of its most valuable interventions and should be further developed. It is not specific whether this psychosocial support should be limited to disabled people and their families, or extended to non-disabled people. But the evaluation report recommends: 'The program should collaborate with programs within and outside the partner organisations to develop competencies [in psychosocial support and counselling].'¹⁰ But it also notes: 'While doing so the CBR program must be careful not to lose its focus on children with disabilities.'¹¹

Thus, a disability development funder concluded that improvements were necessary in CBRN innovation, staff empowerment, communal activities and psycho-social support. Crucially, for the PACT initiative, would inclusion of youth psycho-social health activities assist or hinder the CBR programme?

We now examine the youth mental health development work of the PACT programme.

⁹ Ibid. p.26

¹⁰ Ibid. p. 28

¹¹ Ibid. pa. 28

B. Palestinian Adolescents Coping with Trauma Programme¹²

1. Project Description

The formal goal of the PACT programme states:

“Our long term Programme Goal is to assist Palestinian youth in coping positively with chronic and cumulative traumatic events, within a communal context, and helping young people in realizing their potential towards peacebuilding principles.”

The overall objectives of the PACT programme in Palestine include:

- Strengthening communal and individual resistance and resilience to trauma and distress, especially among youth.
- Strengthening community understanding of the symptoms of trauma, especially in the youth population.
- Decreasing inappropriate diagnosis and treatment of symptoms of trauma based on a biomedical model of the ‘trauma industry’.
- Developing the capacity (knowledge, skills, practices) of CBR workers so they are able to offer a more effective and holistic level of social support and care to the community.
- Developing community based problem solving and mobilization through working with young people.
- Strengthening social networks in the targeted communities as primary strategies of managing the social suffering of war.
- Increase the collaboration between schools and CBR workers in order to coordinate efforts to work together on solving youth and community problems.
- Ensuring technical and managerial capacity for operations and for the further training of CBR workers for the purpose of future model replication by focusing on handing over to CBR workers and supervisor.

These objectives have been addressed by implementation of three PACT projects funded by IDRC from 2002-2009. See Appendix for summaries of PACT I & II Aims, Results, and Main Recommendations.

PACT III - Youth as a Strategy in CBR

Expanded interventions - 2007-2009

Aim

The overall Program Goal is to bring the PACT model into sustainable practice. We aim to closely monitor and document the YaS phase of PACT to identify some of the factors that facilitate community, and especially young people’s, involvement in psychosocial support projects and conversely some factors that function as barriers in communities. Furthermore, we aim to study the process of project systemization, mental health network development and policy responses to the model.

¹² The information in this section is taken from PACT proposals and reports.

Specific objectives

With continued collaboration with the CBR North team through supervision and in-field observation of the process, the project will specifically:

1. Deepen and consolidate the community processes being established by working closely with CBR North to improve the psycho-social status of the populations living in villages and urban sites located in the Nablus and Jenin Districts (number of villages will depend on their size, accessibility and political context).
2. Train and mentor selected CBR supervisors to guide and train CBR workers in community organization skills – training of trainers in substantive and managerial aspects. With time, these CBR supervisor-trainers will themselves be responsible for leading the program through a process of documenting and assessing the problems, as well as programmatic design and implementation.
3. Proceed with the data collection and analysis of the model of youth psychosocial health as a strategy for community development vis-à-vis other approaches to dealing with trauma.

Expected implementation steps - October 2007 – September 2009

1. Initial assessment for deepening and expansion purposes.
2. Employment and training of YaS supervisor/coordinator (to take over the managerial and training role played by ICPH).
3. Continue capacity building of ICPH staff and CBR North staff.
4. Deepening and broadening of activities in the 6 locales where the program is now operational.
5. Gradual expansion to at least one more locality (urban) entailing: rapid assessments, community consultations and activity initiation.
6. Designing outcome mapping tools to monitor progress and training CBR supervisors and workers
7. Consolidation, documentation, dissemination and final evaluation of project, although documentation will also be ongoing throughout.
8. Qualitative research methods during the course of the PACT III implementation:
 - Focus groups with young girls and boys
 - Focus groups with mothers
 - Interviews with key persons in the communities (teachers, community leaders, representatives of NGOs)
9. Ongoing mapping of psychosocial health services provided by other agencies or institutions

Expected outcomes

Results and benefits for the community will include:

- Raised levels of understanding within the communities of psychosocial and mental health issues, especially among youth and children.
- Greater emphasis on providing youth and children with the space to express themselves, share their experiences and work collectively in problem solving in ways that do not pathologize the individual.

- Increased sense of empowerment within and the capacity of the CBR team to assist the community in responding to needs and problems.
- Decreased numbers of inappropriate referrals for misdiagnosed psychosocial problems.
- Increased community and young people's sense of control over problems they face by organizing and mobilizing their resources and assets.
- Increased cooperation with the schools and benefiting from principals, teachers, and student committees. Schools adopted as an asset in community work rather than as a separate entity exclusively in charge of education.
- Trained supervisor and CBR workers able to manage the program and train others in psychosocial support within a community development perspective.

Specific research outcomes and potential impacts – see Section C.2 Key Findings

2. Summative Developmental Evaluation

The expected community and research outcomes described above, and their value, are documented in various PACT reports to partners, funders and policy makers. The importance of a summative evaluation at this time is to assess the cumulative consequences of the PACT program.

In the spirit of developmental planning, there is also a unique need and opportunity for developmental evaluation in PACT (Patton¹³). This approach assumes that evaluation should build on project experiences, including evaluative efforts, in order to constantly adjust the practices and objectives that are necessary to achieve project goals. The purpose of developmental evaluation is to identify further efficiencies to be gained in the interactions of concept, practice, outcomes and impact.

In most other cases in which a series of external consultants are called in to sequentially evaluate a project at its different stages, consultants inevitably fail to fully understand decisions taken previously, and thus may reject the recommendations of others. This practice leaves project managers exposed to conflicting advice from consultants that may be difficult to reconcile. For innovative projects, this standard practice of evaluation can be particularly damaging.

Additionally, Pawson and Tilley¹⁴ argue that evaluation of social and educational projects has been largely unsuccessful because it focused on whether projects work, instead of on why they work.

This summative developmental evaluation does not replicate, but takes advantage of, earlier formative (October 2007, Peter Coleridge) and monitoring (July 2009, Viet Nguyen-Gillham) assessments. These reports have contributed particularly to conceptualization and implementation issues of YaS in PACT III and are quoted below in *italics*.

¹³ www.scribd.com/.../Michael-Quinn-Patton-Developmental-Evaluation-2006

¹⁴ Pawson, Ray and Nick Tilley. (1997) *Realistic Evaluation*. London, Sage.

Scaling up the PACT approach beyond its current sites is anticipated as an important next step and one which requires considerable investment in human, organizational and research resources. Planning of such efforts requires a well-defined and testable model. This summative developmental evaluation provides key information regarding critical elements of a model for community psycho-social health intervention in the West Bank that is both contextually sensitive and practically feasible within the many constraints of the Occupation.

3. Formative Assessment of Pact II - Key Issues (Peter Coleridge, October 2007)

The Coleridge report includes three sections of key importance – the meaning of mental health and psycho-social support; youth motivations to participate, and; formative issues in the integration of CBR and community mental health. Conclusions were also provided.

Meaning of Mental Health and Psycho-Social Support

The concept of mental health espoused by PACT is not widely understood in Palestine, although the strategy of group formation and animation is widely used outside Palestine throughout Asia without referring to it as 'mental health'. Both those who are already working in mental health in Palestine and those who are new to it tend to equate mental health with mental illness. The idea that mental health is a social and political issue, and must be approached through communal and community based programmes aimed at building social fabric and social capital, is not generally understood. There also continues to be some confusion in the CBR programme itself about what is meant by psychosocial and community support, most notably in the division of opinion between those responsible for the programme, whether as managers or donor representatives.

Youth Motivations

When the youth groups were asked: '**Why do you come to this group?**' there was a difference and an important similarity in the responses from the boys and the girls. The Huwwara boys said:

"There is a real problem of boredom in this village. We have little worthwhile to fill our time. We were interested in using our time better, to do something for the community. We get to know each other better. We can learn from each other and relieve each other's pressures. We learn how to help people who are in particular need. This group is important: it does make a difference in our lives."

The issue of free time and what to do with it came up repeatedly during the interviews (as it had done in earlier surveys by ICPH). The overriding impression is that these are young people with a real ambition to do something useful with their lives, but they find they have no role, no responsibilities, and often no respect. They joined the group in order to find these essential ingredients of life.

The Huwwara girls, on the other hand, replied:

"It provides a neutral and respectable meeting place where our families do not object to our coming. It gives us an opportunity to get out of the house, and so gives us personal psychological relief (tafreegh nafs) from the boredom and pressure from being cooped up at home. "

"It also gives us self-confidence, because if you are at home all the time you become shy. In the group you learn to express yourself."

These responses reflect the conservatism of the target communities which means that young unmarried girls are not allowed out, except to go to school and to visit relatives. But their parents had enough confidence in the field workers to allow their daughters to attend the group, held in a neutral space (the local community centre and library).

For both boys and girls the primary reason for joining the group was because it provided space for them to be themselves and to find themselves. This is immensely important. To be in a group where you are not only accepted but respected, where you know you will be listened to, and where you can gain confidence to express

yourself, is a necessary precondition for maturity, and may well not be found in all families. To provide such a space and opportunity is a major achievement of the project so far.

Some of the Faqou'a girls however expressed some disillusionment:

"We want a course. We don't want to always be here. We want to see new faces. We got nothing out of this. We did not even get a diploma to show to our parents. They want to know when we are starting the course or something. Every time we tell them we 'talked'."

This view reflects the fact that generally groups are formed in these villages to hear a lecture or take a course. The idea that you can just sit and talk is new. There is a tendency always to look to outsiders to provide the input: the course, the lecture, the instruction. The girls in Faqou'a are younger than the Huwwara girls or boys, and this showed in their generally lower maturity. A major achievement of the project will be when the groups become self-supporting and self-motivating – ie, self-help groups".

Formative Issues

The following 6 questions were addressed in the formative assessment:

1. What is the PACT programme?

Is PACT a mental health programme? Definitely. Is it a youth development programme? YaS it is. Is it a community development programme? Certainly....'Community development and mental health are therefore, following the logic of this argument, one and the same thing. Community development means that the people living in a particular community have their physical and emotional needs fulfilled. The process of achieving that fulfillment is the process of enabling its members to develop in relationship to each other, and to solve their problems together

2. Is CBR a suitable programme for psychosocial support to young people? Are the CBR community support workers able to provide psychosocial support in the communities?

The PACT programme guidelines do not address explicitly the question of whether CBR should take on issues not directly related to disabled people, such as general mental health. Nevertheless, a logical conclusion to be drawn from the quotation above is that all social and community issues are grist to the CBR mill. In the case of the PACT programme there is no reason to argue that an extension of focus to include mental health is against CBR principles. The involvement of CBR workers in a broader range of issues of concern to wider circles of the population, would contribute to an enhancement of their status in the community. So, in relation to whether extending the scope of the Palestine CBR programme to include mental health issues is acceptable to the donors and planners, the answer from this evaluation is a resounding YaS, provided it does not lose its focus on disability. The training needs to focus on developing the CBR concept to be less home-based and more focused on group formation and the establishment of communal activities, not simply on adding an element of psychosocial support.

3. Is the methodology they use (youth groups and keen observing) efficacious? What could be an alternative methodology?

In the PACT II Community Psycho-Social Support Groups, the topics chosen for discussion are generally safely 'out there' rather than problems of a personal nature. Use of free time, feeling stuck at home, use of the internet, drug abuse, early marriage, and how to help people in the community, have been the principle topics. These are not personal mental health problems, but social topics of interest and concern to young people because they have an effect on their lives. The danger now is that the expectations raised by the success of the groups will not be met and disillusionment will set in. A way has to be found to prevent this happening.

The skills required to activate and animate youth groups include:

- Knowing how to use group dynamics effectively
- Motivating people, especially in a group situation
- Using a range of techniques to animate a group
- Thinking developmentally
- Being a role model

CBR workers can be the animators and provokers of such a process, not the leaders. The leaders should be young people themselves.

4. Does the community support component help inclusion of disabled in the community? Does the community support program threaten to derail the CBR program, taking attention away from disabled people and their families?

The objection of the central CBR manager is that this is a youth development programme, entirely necessary in itself, but not strictly the business of CBR. This objection can be overcome if the programme is seen as a way of recruiting youth into the process of community development with a focus on disabled and other marginalised people (which is the business of CBR), rather than as a target group in themselves.

5. What is the best formula for incorporating community support work into the CBR mandate (PACT III)? Should the work of forming and animating youth groups be the task of specialist field workers or the task of every CBR worker?

It should be the aim of the whole CBR programme to rebalance its focus by reducing its emphasis on home visiting and increasing its community mobilisation efforts. It can do this through establishing community centres as described above, and by the establishment of local CBR committees which include both men and women. Group formation of mothers and other interest groups, already being done in some villages by some CBR workers, needs to become a general strategy. However, the focus must not be only on women. A way must be found to bring men (especially fathers) into the picture, and male field workers are important to do this. The use of specialist field workers who continue the formation and animation of youth groups is justified for a further period of experimentation, but eventually group formation (not only of youth groups) should become the responsibility of all CBR workers, operating with a wider horizon than they do at the moment.

6. How far should the youth groups be taken? Should they have a limited lifespan, or be encouraged to form their own identity and purpose?

If youth development is taken to its logical extension it would include: sports and other outdoor activities such as hiking, artistic activities including music, visual arts and drama, real opportunities for volunteering, discussion groups which provide a gateway to these activities, to other activities not yet thought of, and so to 'community development'.

These activities require working with teachers and reactivating youth clubs, working with women's groups to pay attention to the needs of young women, training youth leaders to take command of their own groups, helping them to organise the kinds of activities listed above, creating situations where they can volunteer, and so on. In other words the task is to promote youth activities dedicated to a positive, problem-solving, can-do approach to life.

7. What should be the ICPH role in PACT III?

ICPH has five important roles to play:

1. Definition, development and refinement of the concept.
2. Communication of the concept and building alliances.
3. Training, coaching and the transfer of knowledge.
4. Assessment and evaluation of the programme and learning from experience.
5. Access to expertise and other similar programmes.

ICPH does not, however, have a role in managing the project. This must be in the hands of the CBR programme completely. ICPH states that after PACT III, at the end of 2009, it will withdraw from the programme, leaving the CBR programme to carry it itself. But this would be a mistake. Because it is dealing with a new concept which needs extensive work to be refined in the Palestine context, it will need several years before it can be considered mature enough for ICPH to hand over. ICPH itself has written that a ten year period would be realistic.¹⁵

Formative Assessment Conclusions

Young people need:

- to be challenged both mentally and physically,
- to acquire skills,

¹⁵ The psychosocial/mental health within CBR programme. ICPH 2007

- to serve, which gives them a feeling of self-worth through having a role.

The PACT programme is seen as a way of recruiting youth into the process of community development with a focus on disabled and other marginalised people (which is the business of CBR), rather than as a target group in themselves.¹⁶

Too many programmes funded by international donors have a limited lifespan dictated by short-term budgeting horizons. To qualify for such funding, programmes are often required to have reached a point of conceptual maturity before they even start where they can encapsulate their ideas into a log frame with specific objectives and indicators. However, as is clear from this review of the PACT programme in Palestine, the development of an innovative idea is a process of trial and error. The programme has moved through several phases of conceptual development, and will continue to evolve.

4. Project Progress - Mid-Term Monitoring Report – Key Issues (Viet Nguyen-Gillham, July 2009)

By June 2009, the PACT III project reported significant advances. Outcome Mapping was used to document progress or achievement of most specific objectives. It was also used to organize ICPH understandings of contributing factors, lessons learned and adjustments or actions required. One objective (Decreased numbers of inappropriate referrals for misdiagnosed psychosocial problems) was dropped due to difficulties in gathering data.

In July 2009, Viet Nguyen-Gillham conducted a mid-term monitoring study of PACT III to review the progress that had been made in developing the project ‘Youth as a Strategy’ through analysis of outcome mapping, interviews and observation. Mid-term findings, project progress and recommendations are extracted below.

The following questions were addressed in the Nguyen-Gillham report:

- What has been the process of planning and implementing youth as a strategy groups in these two regions?
- What is the level and extent of progress that has been made in both regions, in terms of staff and youth development?
- What are the quantitative and qualitative indicators of progress and success in implementation?
- Are there differences in implementation in one region compared to another and if so, what would account for these differences?
- What is the impact on youth in their involvement in youth as strategy?
- What role has CBR management played in the progress in youth as a strategy in these two regions?
- What is the role of ICPH in the capacity building of CBR workers in youth as a strategy?

Mid-term Findings:

- **Problems in planning.**

The terms of partnership also extend to the sharing and dissemination of information between ICPH and CBR. Since the youth as a strategy project is premised on a complex interaction between youth, disability and community, both parties would have much to gain from being able to access each other’s production of data and statistics. How to think about planning continues to be a problem even though it is integral to the effectiveness of their groups. Although the majority of workers are eager to implement new ideas, the consultant is given the impression that formulating, designing and planning a project and issues of community development continues to be a somewhat vague if not haphazard process. There are still questions asked about what constitutes planning, how to think about making a plan, or even the differences between short and long term planning. CBR

¹⁶ We must thank Will Boyce for the conceptual breakthrough that gave birth to this idea.

management in conjunction with ICPH can make a difference to staff efficiency by putting together a manual or organising more training and forums for the sharing and dissemination of information. As a research institution working with CBR, the lack of knowledge about disability is a limitation and considerable area for improvement within ICPH.

- **Implementation issues.**

There seems little doubt that the three CBR supervisors appear invested in the 'youth as a strategy' project. The CBR supervisors, with their long years of experience, have a solid understanding of group work and development, technically and theoretically. Nonetheless, what they understand about the 'youth as a strategy' project particularly its intricacies and complexity, can be described as fragmented if not somewhat lacking in depth and coherence. Although one of the supervisors has more direct experience in community work, her model is based on the coordination of events and activities for the community by the CBR worker rather than the community mobilizing itself. The willingness of each CBR worker to open herself to risks and innovation has implications for the implementation of a project still in its infancy and in need of constant and consistent nurturing. This is a systemic challenge that CBRN will have to confront and negotiate with in order to take the youth as strategy project forward in the coming months.

Given their patchy and inconsistent awareness, it remains to be seen how much support and guidance CBR workers in the field can expect from their supervisors. It is difficult to assess if the inconsistency related to leadership is a consequence of ambivalence that this is a top down project from ICPH. In Jenin, after nearly a year, the 'Youth as a Strategy' project continues to exist as a sub-project rather than being integrated or mainstreamed into the regular CBR disability work. For temporary absence, who will take the place of these workers and how will they manage these groups? Similarly, for CBR staff who have left, what will happen to group continuity and the momentum to start new groups? Nonetheless, it draws attention to the need within CBR for an internal mechanism for first delineating, then auditing the role of supervisors (CBR supervisors, focal person for YaS and regional YaS coordinators) themselves in this project.

- **Identification of target group, effectiveness and impact issues**

How should youth/communities be selected? These youth might be a self selective group of 'good young people' (and primarily female in Jenin district) when in fact, youth as strategy should be finding ways to engage other marginalized youth, who find it just as tough as the disabled to gain community acceptance. The key question then, is how to reach out and involve this group. It also raises the serious question of who is taking care of the young men and their interests, especially those who are disabled.

Some of the Nablus workers seem very adamant in their opinion that the youth groups actually improve the CBR work; lighten the burden of the CBR worker and help her to achieve more disability activities and integration of persons with disabilities in the community.

Some CBR workers assess that, in contrast to boys, girls work in a quiet way. This means that CBR workers need to be alert to the fact that the boys might dominate in mixed groups.

- **Future evaluation indicators**

The fact that in the past year, 8 CBR workers in Jenin and 8 in Nablus have been hired by their municipalities with half the salaries paid by CBR and the other half by the municipalities bodes well for a positive reception of the youth groups. These partnerships create a built-in incentive for CBRW to spread the programme focus to broader community issues - which is achievable IF there is youth support

Summary of Project Progress at Mid-Term

The PACT projects have illustrated an interesting, and perhaps rare/unique, example of community developmental thinking, youth potential, and broad community interactions that are possible, and perhaps essential, in areas of prolonged conflict.

The explicit focus of the three PACT phases has changed due to the ability of Research-Action-Research...to respond to the limited opportunities, multiple needs, constraints and realities, and potential for innovation in West Bank communities.

From an initial focus on exposure to Occupation-related trauma and mental health of youth, the project adapted to a focus on psycho-social support for youth in remote rural communities that also had long-standing community based services for persons with disabilities, but also had consensus that youth were a priority. After further study and experimentation, the project has adapted again to focus on youth development as a strategy for community based actions, including actions intended to benefit persons with disabilities. This has required recognition that a focus on youth in general removes their designation as an exclusive target group. The reasons that, instead, youth can be conceptualized as a strategy for development are that: the youth population continuously changes and replaces itself; youth require challenges and rewards to optimize their development, including their resilience to external conditions; youth are looking for leadership opportunities, as well as opportunities to benefit their communities and create a valued role for themselves.

The limitations of community based services which focus primarily on 'individuals with special needs' are also evident. These individuals do not continuously change, but often have life-long needs. Consequently, agencies need to manage their focus and create additional, community-based, ways of including them in society. This is theoretically achieved through volunteer strategies, that is, encouraging ordinary persons to assist in the individual inclusion process. Volunteers also have the ability to organize community events that benefit all, and include those in need as well.

In many societies, finding and maintaining a volunteer base for this purpose is difficult. Insufficient attention has been given to an organized approach to volunteerism, especially in countries with significant under-development due to conflicts, that benefits volunteers as well as the persons they serve. The PACT projects represent the synergy that is possible between project purposes that might initially seem exclusive, i.e., the needs of persons with disabilities and the development of youth. In some ways, each project strategy can act for itself, as well as for the other project. Youth development can be a strategy for community inclusion of those with disabilities. The disability context can be a strategy for youth contribution and leadership training. Both can benefit from each other.

The PACT Youth Development 'Strategy' is operationalized through Youth Action/Support Groups (YASGs). There are a number of YASG cycles that occur. Initially, CSW facilitators from the communities organize youth discussion groups on topics of their choice (e.g., use of free time, community facilities, internet skills, early marriage, etc.). These open and non-judgmental discussions create youth to youth trust, an essential beginning. Youth can then participate in more formal (i.e., planned meetings and topics). Youth Action/Support Groups that identify priorities for youth development and youth contributions to their communities. These action-oriented meetings create community trust and interest. Individual, or groups of, youth then participate in volunteer support activities for individuals with disabilities, family members, or community programs. These activities are required and create experience for youth in new areas and a sense of responsibility. In turn, youth also can participate in youth development activities that benefit themselves, according to their own priorities and available resources, and act as motivators. Both types of activities are facilitated by specialized CSW staff. Regular CBR staff participate in any training required for the youth about disability issues. They also identify and monitor the individual and family support volunteer activities. Finally, YASGs engage in discussion and self-study about their interests and activities with the aim of developing leadership skills that allow them to facilitate younger youth who entering the program.

This model could work similarly as development strategy for a Disabled Persons' Organization. It could also be expanded to support the needs of those in communities with mental illness and their families.

The CBR program in the northern West Bank is an ideal organization to participate in the strategy as it:

- a) has established infrastructure and management
- b) has a good reputation in the communities for being responsive
- c) has relationships of trust with persons with disabilities and their families
- d) has identified broader community development as a priority in its context
- e) is one of the few sustainable programs in the area and can guarantee continuity.

Mid-term recommendations

From youth:

Training courses e.g. groups, community development, computer training, needs of the disabled

- Financial and moral support
- Exchanging visits between groups
- Increasing the size of groups
- Breaking down the barriers between group members
- Visiting government, local and private institutions to establish trust and support for activities
- Respecting confidentiality within groups
- Establishing trust among group members
- Establishing mutual respect between worker and the group
- The spirit of volunteering
- Getting new girls to join the groups
- Doing recreational and cultural activities to discover new talents
- Support talented and creative people to encourage them

From ICPH:

- Putting mechanisms in place for the sharing and dissemination of data and statistics
- The hiring of male workers for groups in Jenin
- Exchanges between CBR workers in Jenin and Nablus
- Including new community support workers in groups for observation
- Forums and further training in project design and planning
- Further training in community development for CBR workers and youth
- Further ICPH staff development in training curriculum]
- Development of youth skills and knowledge e.g in disability
- Auditing of supervisors
- Addressing the developmental gap between regions

5. Meanings of YaS and Issues to be Resolved in this Report

Initial Interpretations of YaS

Peter Coleridge - 2007

YaS requires a fit between CBR and youth psycho-social development -

The mission of the local CBR program is to help disabled and non-disabled people to look at disability from a different perspective. Many of the informants in Peter Coleridge's book 'Disability, Liberation, and Development' emphasize that rather than focusing on the dis-ability it is necessary to perceive the abilities, and the power that people have.¹⁷

YaS demonstrates community support for young people -

As the work on the ground moved on, the terms 'mental' and 'psychosocial' were dropped. We came to understand that what people/youth want to do to in order to enhance their psychosocial health is in fact to support each other.

Project progression -

The concept of YaS is not difficult to understand. It is however a developmental concept, and needs constant refinement. The process of refinement should identify the scope, nature and features of the problem, and how to approach it. It is an ongoing process of consultation with communities, testing ideas and strategies, feeding back to communities, and refining strategies further.

¹⁷ Coleridge P. (1993) *Disability, Liberation and Development*. Oxfam, Oxford.

Viet Nguyen-Gillham - 2009

Since joining the youth as a strategy groups, what has it meant for the young people themselves as group participants? What difference if any has it made to their lives and their perceptions of change within their communities?

Based on the sessions with the youth, the critical message here is that being a member of the youth as a strategy group has fulfilled a dual role: for many girls, participation has proved to be a process of self discovery and learning. Knowledge is power in that through the groups, they feel empowered to do something or to change a person's life. Being with a group and through the group made it possible for them to contribute and engage in a meaningful way within the community particularly as females.

Knowledge is power in that through the groups, they feel empowered to do something or to change a person's life. Being with a group and through the group made it possible for them to contribute and engage in a meaningful way within the community particularly as females. These young people may not be able to change the whole community but they can make a difference to the lives of a marginalised group. Representatives at the Nablus meeting mentioned the satisfaction at putting smiles on the faces of the disabled or that helping builds their confidence. One young man said that he will gain credit in his afterlife! Or as one young man in Nablus summarised his feeling, anyone can become disabled in life with the implication that we are lucky we are not disabled and we should help if we can. This narrative of purposefulness resonates with the reasons given at a meeting held in Kufur Dan in June 2009. The words used most often were 'to support' and 'care' and 'to meet the needs of this minority group'. In this context, young graduates with a specialisation in disability are valuable resources from this project which should not be neglected.

The youth as a strategy group, on the other hand, is not only non-hierarchical where youth have access to the CBR worker and Naeemah, but real implementation and work is actually being accomplished. This highlightst the message that young people are looking for meaningful engagement, a sense of purpose and ownership.

Other young people also indicated that the group offers each person a chance to develop his or her talent and skills. The fact that there is a place and role for every member means that the group is based on a sense of mutual co-operation, and not competition. At the same time, groups themselves are sometimes competitive which can be productive.

The consultant is not in any way advocating for all CBR workers to be implementing the youth as a strategy project in uniform ways such that 'one size fits all'. 'Youth as a strategy' is a set of values and best practices rather than a formula or precise toolkit for community development and mobilisation. Ultimately, the CBR project may be broad based enough to accommodate a range of skills and strengths among its workers, some of whom might decide to follow more traditional CBR work, others who are better at organising community events and still others who enjoy the challenge of developing 'youth as a strategy' and expanding its potentialities.

What is innovative, however, about CBR and 'youth as a strategy' is the integration and mainstreaming of youth with disabilities into a larger framework of community advocacy and mobilisation. This goes beyond the integration of participation into everyday functioning to an integration of people with disability into the development of community life.

Young people lie at the heart of the project and vast sources of potential remain untapped within the youth population. So while the CBR programme is the motor, young people themselves are the fuel and the drivers. At this point of the project, it is still too early to assess the impact of the youth work, both for the young people or the community. It is possible, however, to surmise from the responses of group members that this project provides a conduit for channelling personal values and energies into positive and productive actions. The group is a vehicle for community transformation and the championing of the rights and interests of the disabled and other marginalised groups.

Issues to be Resolved in this Report

The three main issues to be clarified in this summative developmental report are:

1. What is the conceptual model being used?
2. How does the YaS model work? This is a complex question and requires analysis of:
 - Does YaS always work? (scope)
 - When does it work and when not? (nature)
 - Why does it work? (features)
3. Can strategy and strategic thinking help to define the model?

C. Methods and Findings

1. Methods

The **Terms of Reference** for this consultancy were developed by ICPH in conjunction with the Consultant. The ToRs specified:

1. The consultant will work closely with ICPH and the CBR teams and in line with the interim evaluation conducted by Dr. Viet Nguyen-Gillham during July 2009, to address/answer the following issues:
 - a. To what extent has the project achieved the expected results as specified in the PACT III proposal?
 - b. What are the facilitators and barriers to implementing ‘Youth as a Strategy’ for CBR, community and youth development work?
 - c. What are the constraints and opportunities of participatory action research (or research-to-action) in the local Palestinian context?
2. We also hope that the consultant, who is an expert in both the fields of disability and social policy evaluation will be able to provide some guidance to both the ICPH and the CBR teams for further development of the ‘Youth as a Strategy’ approach.

ICPH, CBRN and the Consultant agreed that a considerable part of #1 had been achieved in July 2009 and through subsequent outcome mapping documents and reports. Repetition of these exercises would not be necessary, although verification of findings would be done. The principal part of the consultancy would focus on #2 for the following purposes:

- a. Clarification of the YaS concept and field practice for CBR North
- b. How and why does the model work?
- c. Understanding key elements of the YaS concept in preparation for continued research-action stages by ICPH

The following methodology was used:

1. Review of project documents – IDRC proposals and monitoring reports; Diakonia/NAD evaluation of OPT Rehabilitation Programme; ICPH Outcome Mapping documents
2. Interviews with key CBRN (4) and ICPH staff (3)
3. Workshop (November 7, 2009) at Birzeit University with youth group members (154) and CBR staff/trainees (17). Administration of ICPH surveys to youth and CBR staff.
4. Field visits to: Anabta, Burqa’, Beita, Huwarra, (Nablus area)

Al Shuhada, Seelet & Harethiyeh, Maythaloona & Aqaba, Seer, Faqaa (Jenin areas)

5. Field interviews with:
 - Youth group members (68) and CBRWs (10)
 - Parents (7), community members and institutional partners (9)
 - Family home visits (5)

6. Meetings with CBRWs (42; Jenin= 19, Nablus= 23), supervisors (3) and YaS staff (3)

Analysis

Quantitative survey data are presented descriptively. Further quantitative analysis can be undertaken with the ICPH survey datasets.

The qualitative analysis initially identified preliminary codes for interview responses (see Appendix, Details of Findings). The key discrete categories emerging from the coding are presented below and, from a qualitative perspective, represent first level identification of themes related to facilitators and barriers in implementing YaS. To further analyse the thematic data validly would require interactive questioning of respondents, second level clarification interviews, tape-recorded transcripts and familiarity with Arabic. Further qualitative analysis is beyond the methodological scope of this report but could be done in the context of a research project.

2. Key Descriptive Findings

The findings below refer to the issues specified in the TOR.

TOR

1. (a) To what extent has the project achieved the expected results as specified in the PACT III proposal?

Survey Findings

Youth (154) – majority between 17-22 years

Topic	Measure	%
Demographics (approximate)	Gender –proportion girls	65%
	Disability	10%
	Activity in other youth groups	45%
	Attending school	60%
Village facilities (16)	Boys club	80%
	Girls club	15%
	Boys sports	75%
	Girls sports	22%

	Boys internet	79%
	Girls internet	12%
Primary reasons for volunteering	To help persons with disabilities	37%
(13% of youth gave more than one reason; all answers included)	To volunteer in the village	34%
	To receive training	22%
	To fill time	7%
Important or very important benefits to youth	Being useful	88%
	Participating in team work	86%
	Developing independent ideas	80%
	Volunteering	79%
	Attending weekly meetings	73%
	Learning about disability	71%
	Receiving training	67%
	Getting out of the house	54%

CBR Workers (17) – majority with 10-13 yrs experience

Topic	Measure	%
Youth help CBRW ‘a lot’ in	Community activities	90%
	Youth engagement	84%
	Community needs	84%
	Integrating persons with dis.	74%
	Home visits	42%
	Overall	68%
ICPH courses help ‘a lot’	Focus groups	90%
	Support groups	90%
	Youth work	84%
	Listening skills	74%
	Community organizing	68%
	Knowledge of youth and	58%

Achievement of Expected Results

The above key survey findings are interpreted in terms of the Expected Results and Benefits of PACT III:

- Raised levels of understanding within the communities of psychosocial and mental health issues, especially among youth and children. **(Partial Achievement – From discussions with parents, teacher, municipal authorities and community members it is evident that there is some degree of increased understanding about psycho-social issues. The importance of understanding these issues among the youth involved is higher (71%), but they recognize the need for more knowledge about disability)**
- Greater emphasis on providing youth and children with the space to express themselves, share their experiences and work collectively in problem solving in ways that do not pathologize the individual. **(Established Achievement – Especially in the Nablus area villages, although also emerging in Jenin area, the youth groups value taking initiative through volunteering (79%), having independent ideas (80%), and useful collective action (88%).)**
- Increased sense of empowerment within and the capacity of the CBR team to assist the community in responding to needs and problems. **(Variable Achievement by region – Over 80% of CBRWs report that they are now more capable of addressing community needs. This appears to be stronger in the Nablus area villages.)**
- Decreased numbers of inappropriate referrals for misdiagnosed psychosocial problems. **(Unknown Achievement - This result may not be applicable or measurable within the PACT framework.)**
- Increased community and young people's sense of control over problems they face by organizing and mobilizing their resources and assets. **(Established Achievement – Youth place high importance on organizational meetings (73%), problem-solving in teams (86%) and increasing their knowledge about disability (71%).)**
- Increased cooperation with the schools and benefiting from principals, teachers, and student committees. Schools adopted as an asset in community work rather than as a separate entity exclusively in charge of education. **(Variable Achievement by village – Support has been gained from, and benefits perceived by, some teachers. Cooperation with the school system as a whole is relatively undeveloped.)**
- Trained supervisor and CBR workers able to manage the program and train others in psychosocial support within a community development perspective. *(Established Achievement –* **Psycho-social training by ICPH is valued by CBRWs, for example in listening skills (74%) and support groups (90%). Community development skills such as focus groups (90%) and community organizing (68%) are also valued.**

TOR

1. (b) What are the barriers and facilitators to implementing ‘Youth as a Strategy’ for CBR, community and youth development work?

A. YaS Implementation Issues

How are new YaS members recruited and community projects initiated?

Necessary Conditions

Only if gender restrictions in community are not too severe

Only if topic of 'helping the disabled' is accepted in community

Recruitment Methods

Youth-to-youth

CBRW-to-youth whom she knows in the community

Youth with a disability; youth from families with disability

Intra-family (eg one extended family in Shuhada) recruitment

Recruitment of pre-existing youth group

Facilitation

Useful to have a group title for legitimacy (e.g., Psycho-Social Support Group, YaS Group)

Do need CBRW facilitation to initiate the group

Don't always need CBRW as much after group established

Duration of YaS groups – youth perspectives

Until skills develop

For self-fulfillment

Replacement by other youth - 'The group is like a circle; older members recruiting and training newer members'

If not meeting other groups

If marriage or employment (a woman had 2 children and moved to another village, but still attends meetings, with her children, when she returns for health appointments)

If no employment available

Can continue with mentoring role even if not attending group regularly

Expansion into new groups – the 'seed' group can organize new groups, eg child volunteer groups

Generational – "We hope our children will be in the group"

The sections (**Barriers, Facilitators**) below identify the key discrete categories emerging from codes developed from the youth/facilitator group interview data and, from a qualitative perspective, represent first level identification of themes. (Detailed questions, codes and categories are provided in Appendix. Transcripts of notes made during the interviews are available.) Analyses of these sections are utilized in TOR 2. (b) – How and why does the model work?

B. Barriers in YaS - (see Appendix for details)

Youth needs

Training

Materials

Information and communication

Problems (obstacles) for youth

- Economic
- Social/cultural
- Political

Facilitators' issues

- Problems of some youth
- Needs of youth

Facilitators' needs

- Training
- Information
- Management support

C. Facilitators of YaS - (see Appendix for details)

Personal qualities (character, capacities) of youth

- Self
- Peers
- Community perceptions
- Cognitive
- Personality
- Beliefs
- Capacities

Skills of youth

- Artistic/expressive
- Technical/developmental
- Supportive/promoting

Ideas (knowledge, imagination, ambition) of youth concerning

- Community
- Persons with disabilities
- Youth ambitions

CBR benefits

- For CBRWs
- For persons with disabilities
- For youth

Facilitators' ideas for YaS

- Community outreach
- Youth responsibilities
- Group structures

Disadvantaged youth

Family and Community Perceptions of YaS represent both the social context for the programme and some demonstration of its impact.

D. Family and Community Perceptions of YaS

Parents/Relatives

The purpose of YaS is acceptable:

- Allow youth participation since helping PWD
- Allow girls since helping familiar persons (advantage of village level groups vs city groups?)

The outcomes of participation are valued:

- Boy's personality – more dependable, less shy; “I felt he became a man’
- Girl's personality - “My daughter was a bit shy and a loner – she became a leader”
- Development of parent-youth relationship –“I got to know things about my daughter I did not know”

The methods of YaS groups are responsible and open:

- Adults usually know CBRW who may have worked with a relative with disability (Does there need to be a pre-existing connection of the family/youth to person with a disability and CBRW?)
- Adults have too many responsibilities and less time (especially in Occupation conditions; true also for youth?) and less energy to volunteer. They can and should support youth volunteers. “I wish we adults could do the same as they do”

Community Members

There are contrasting views, but generally there is slowly growing acceptance of YaS.

Pro:

YaS is accepted since the CBR program is available to all persons with disability in community and YaS is seen as linked tightly with the program (Would it be more difficult if there is no CBR program in community or if the program was directed only to certain segments?)

Youth volunteers represent ‘honest, self-less’ interest in PWD, apart from the CBRW who also has an employment responsibility to visit the PWD.

YaS provides an opportunity for youth with/without disabilities to know each other.

It is better for gender mixing to occur in the village under supervision, rather than unsupervised at college.

Con: Some criticism of YaS is reported, but it is hard to determine if this is based on traditional gender views or petty local disagreements.

A family itself usually knows about the criticism and reacts accordingly. If there is an honest objection, a parent would defend giving assistance to PWD. A parent would also support their own child's involvement in the process. (ie, social/religious/charitable views of disability have their use).

One gender view is to separate younger girls from older boys or girls to protect their reputation.

Municipal authorities

Mayor (Anabta) – Youth can have an ‘age-appropriate’ place and can undertake youth-appropriate activities. (ie open to participation, within the context)

- Would like to see expansion of CBR home visit model to support prisoners’ families with practical tasks that replace the usual role of the imprisoned person. (This suggestion would create broader impact...but this would also make the program more ‘political’...)
- Youth would need training if to do supportive counseling with families. (This would increase the need for professional/NGO involvement)

Mayor (Beita) – Town politicians are showing inter-party cooperation on practical development issues and YaS fits that approach.

- Town is co-funding a CBRW position for 5 years.
- Mayor asks for/receives YaS cooperation/assistance when needed.
- Mayor sees YaS members as true volunteers being diverted from political involvement.

School Teacher – There are some unexpected, positive effects of YaS participation on certain boys at school. Suggestions include:

1. Reach the majority of dis-affected youth in some way.
2. Start with males before they are 12 years old
3. Focus on developing ‘loyalty’, or respect/responsibility, for self, family, school, and community.

Women’s Centre members

WCs are primarily social-occupational improvement organizations for housewives in traditional families. Members feel young girls have different interests (marriage, employment) and would not fit in as WC members. However, some women would consider certain supports and exchanges:

- Allow girls to use building for meetings
- Provide Leadership skills training
- WCs could provide training in First Aid.
- YaS girls could provide computer training.

3. Youth as a Strategy Project Concept Model

TOR

2.a Clarification of the YaS concept and field practice for CBR North

The formal goal of the PACT programme involves youth empowerment:

Our long term Program Goal is to assist Palestinian youth in coping positively with chronic and cumulative traumatic events, within a communal context, and helping young people in realizing their potential towards peacebuilding principles.

A classical def’n of empowerment is:

"The expansion in people's ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was

previously denied to them." (*Malhotra et al*¹⁸.)

Can strategy and strategic thinking help to define the model?

Laura Paquette has provided a summary of strategic concepts and workshop materials that may be useful.¹⁹

Definition of Strategy

Strategy is an imaginative idea that orchestrates and/or inspires sets of actions (i.e., tactics, policies, programmes, plans) in response to a given problem.

Nature of Strategy

Strategy is an idea about the means to an end. It is half thought and half action.

Tactics and Strategy

One needs to distinguish tactics and strategy by focusing on the element and frequency of 'change'. Tactics (and activities in YaS) are constantly adjusted; strategies are not. Strategy is about the longer term or the bigger picture – not micromanagement of details.

The Consultant's experience in community health development suggests some additional points that may be relevant in Strategic Thinking:

- Any social context requires a strategy
- Strategy is a 'benefit' and strength of a project
- Strategy can have multi-sectoral development impacts
- Strategy can be used in communications to link and inform communities' efforts

In applying these concepts to YaS, one could pose the following:

Problem in Palestine – youth need development; a youth cannot develop by him/herself without support

Conditions in Palestine – conflict, occupation, resource issues, power struggles

Purpose of Strategy in Palestine? - The aim of social strategy in a conflict context is not power, but synergy to overcome the problem in these conditions.

Strategy in YaS

While YaS tactics and practices vary from helping PWD, youth and communities AND simultaneously integrating mental health (social support) into CBR, the core concept of YaS is more subtle and extends beyond a 'service' model approach. The dynamic is 'Helping Youth Help the Community'.

¹⁸ Malhotra, A, Schuler, S R & Boender, C (2002). *Measuring women's empowerment as a variable in international development.* Final version of a paper commissioned by the Gender and Development Group of the World Bank. www.worldbank.org/po9verty/empowerment/events/feb03/pdf/malhotra

¹⁹ Paquette, Laura. *Strategy and Ethnic Conflict*, 2004. Westport Conn; Praeger.

The Basic Social Idea in YaS

– create a cycle of support within communities

Social Support may be

- simultaneous and identical,
- balanced but different, or
- reciprocal over time.

Social Support may be:

- constant, or
- intermittent.

Social Support may be:

- of one type, or
- changeable.

(See Appendix for illustration of YaS as a Psycho-Social Support Strategy)

What is the conceptual model being used in YaS?

Based on continual refinement by ICPH and CBRN, the current conceptual model for YaS can be summarized in terms of inputs, activities, outputs and outcomes (Figure 2). See **TOR 2.(c)** for key features of the model.

Youth as a Strategy Project Concept Model

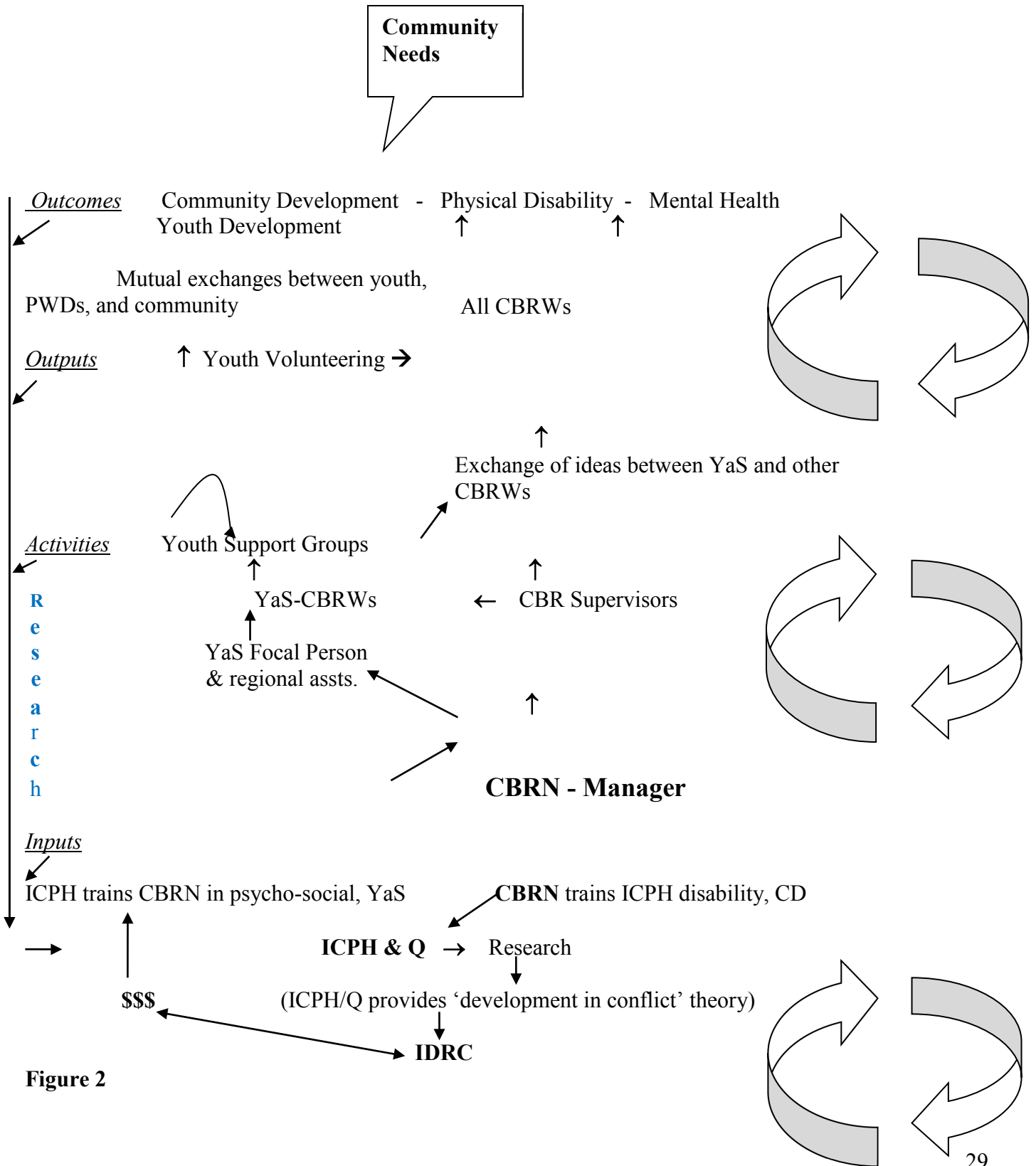


Figure 2

4 Discussion & Analysis

TOR

2.(b) How and why does the YaS model work?

In the absence of solid, detailed research of effectiveness, this question is better posed as “How and why could the YaS model work?” The issue remains to be demonstrated scientifically, however the evaluation data, observations and Consultant’s experience can be used to pose some possible explanations for YaS apparent success to date.

We might assume that community social support has just developed automatically in these communities, with some facilitation provided by CBRN/ICPH. However, it is important to consider common views about the elements of YaS (disability, youth, CBR, community) in the light of field observations and not take for granted that the social support concept is always possible. This approach may help to understand the model more fully.

1. Why might disability be a good focus for youth psycho-social health development?

Disability is visible, recognizable and there is community consensus that it occurs, even if hidden away. There are still significant stigmatizing and non-inclusive socio-cultural traditions (both religious and secular) associated with those with disabilities. Individual disability is comparatively permanent in nature, with life-long needs for support. Community levels of disability are consistent and everyone may be affected at some time.

Disability is clearly the cornerstone of the Youth as a Strategy project - as one youth group in Nablus stated in the course of this evaluation: “*the priority is for the disabled people in the community, supporting and integrating them with the non-disabled people*” Earlier, a youth in Jenin stated: “*We get to know the disabled in the community... we get to know them, solve the problems of the disabled and their families, make them feel better, to clarify and correct the beliefs that they are marginalised people.*” (mid-term monitoring report Viet Nguyen-Gillham, July 2009)

There is a visible, dynamic impact in youth helping PWD that challenges community perceptions and normalizes what is often seen as unusual and different. Disability is often hidden and has powerful negative imagery of both shame and uselessness....youth are openly countering this image by interacting with disability. Community acceptance of youth involvement is also derived from the impact of the CBR work itself. Such help increases the self-esteem of those with disabilities which gains the attention of the community. This results in increased community respect for persons with disabilities.

Helping persons with disabilities has a maternal, selfless, care-giving ethical value that is linked to traditional religious values. Such work demonstrates the religious value of helping PWD, who are seen as unfortunate, but blameless, due to God’s will. Helping such persons is viewed as ‘charitable’ and worthy of support. Other marginalized persons such as drug addicts are not viewed in the same way.

Disability is a relatively non-contentious sector in Palestinian rural areas. There is little competition for attention to disability from other NGOs. Training youth as leaders in their own communities via CBR is

both unexpected and useful in the community. CBR work can have social and communal benefits that can be enjoyed by all – e.g., integrated summer camps for children.

Thus, disability may be viewed as a worthwhile and acceptable focus for youth development work (i.e., ‘disability as a strategy for youth development’).

2. What might make youth a key agent for disability development?

Youth are a large, and increasing, proportion of the West Bank communities. The community feels it has a responsibility in helping youth to develop appropriately. It also senses that youth can be a resource in the development of the community, especially in areas that adults do not know much about. Youth are relatively untainted by political factionism and their self-organization may be seen as neutral in the community.

Youth is a universal stage of life that all adults have experienced and can identify with. There may be a trans-cultural element of adolescence reflected in the following typical exchange:

“I’m bored...there’s nothing to do.”

“Why don’t you do something rather than sitting?”

There is also an age-bias evident in the belief that it is ‘good for youth’ to help others, while elders ‘do not have the time’.

Volunteering is a form of psycho-social support that is acceptable to youth living in traumatic conditions. Youth realize the limitations of psychological counseling and want to go ‘beyond talking’.

Youth have the opportunity and free time to volunteer, if given the chance. As well, this activity allows gradual independence and separation from parents which is a key developmental goal at this age. Providing assistance to the community creates a sense of responsibility in youth. Movement restrictions in the West Bank limit freedom, but simultaneously create more time for youth involvement. However, one needs to realize that with lessened restrictions on mobility, youth may choose to take advantage of other new opportunities for themselves.

Youth have the motivation to volunteer. True motivation comes from within and involves the elements of autonomy, mastery and purpose. From an internal perspective, youth use the experience to learn about themselves and to feel more mature. Youth are lively and want to express their enthusiasm. Discussions between youth develop inter-personal trust. From an external perspective, youth have idealistic hopes that they can improve society’s acceptance of persons with disabilities. As well, they are very motivated to meet other youth, especially the opposite sex. Youth feel they are able to incorporate personal change into their lives, and can identify with the problems of other youth (able-bodied and disabled). They are highly motivated to increase their skills through self-study and discussion in order to become leaders – boys especially like ‘the freedom to lead’.

Youth actually have the means to be very successful in group volunteer work. Being part of a formal group increases youth credibility with adults. The activities of youth support groups create trust within the community. When volunteering with other youth, there is a synergy of both physical energy and

cooperative interaction that amplifies the effort. Few resources, other than their time, are required – youth do not need to replace a salary or only perform housekeeping duties. By volunteering, youth demonstrate a critique of the social status quo and ageism biases in the community.

Youth know the limitations being placed on them by adults and devise ways of expanding their boundaries. Group discussion and training topics in YaS have been on expected, non-contentious and respectable issues in the community such as health, computing skills. Male group members demonstrate respect for female members (“*they treat us like sisters*”) and both genders use this as evidence of their maturity. Finally, a less obvious dynamic is that proposing inclusion and mixing of PWD in society suggests the possibility of similar models for gender mixing.

Which youth should be involved? In theory, ‘problematic’ youth should also benefit from these groups. However, CBR workers feel that they are establishing something new in the community. In order that the community will ACCEPT this innovation, it is [at this time] important to work with youth who are not perceived as problem makers, since these could affect the ‘image’ of the group.

A key issue for the future is how to handle youth with more problems, and their effect on group dynamics. Groups of older, more experienced youth may be able to integrate younger youth with such problems. Other groups in the community might also be approached to form groups, for example women without children at home; retired men.

Thus, youth may have unique qualities and opportunities to participate in community development (i.e., ‘youth as a strategy for disability support’).

3. Why is a community-based program important both for youth development and inclusion of persons with disabilities?

Parents want to demonstrate their responsibility for guiding youth. Youth want to demonstrate their value and worth. These aims are best achieved when there is interaction in the family concerning locally relevant issues in the community.

YaS may be accepted since the CBR program is available to all persons with disability in the community, not just to certain persons or groups. Youth development projects may be more difficult to implement if there is no CBR program in the community, or if the program is directed only to a certain segment, for example Intifada-injured.

There may need to be a pre-existing connection with the family of a person with a disability, or with the CBRW, for youth involvement to occur. If so, it is a limitation of the idea in the early stages. However, this limitation might require a ‘seed’ model of YaS, starting with those youth most likely to participate or families most likely to allow youth involvement, in order to demonstrate the concept.

The presence of familiar CBRWs definitely improves the involvement of youth, who are seen by adults as only ‘semi-independent’ and still needing supervision. Successful CBRWs try to achieve a balance between ‘supporting/restricting/protecting’ youth and ‘directing/leading’ youth with responsibilities for the programme.

The fact that many of the CBRWs are young females facilitates their own understanding of youth concerns, as well as their tendency and capacity to provide psycho-social support to youth. If more problematic youth become involved, it may become more difficult for CBRWs to manage the gender dynamics.

A cycle of community Psycho-Social Support may emerge as a highly visible impact:

1. CBRW supports youth members/group
2. Youth support each other in the group; support PWDs outside the group
3. Youth support CBRWs work in disability
4. Youth support the community; the community supports the youth

Thus, the local, inclusive community-driven nature of CBR may facilitate both youth and disability development (i.e., ‘Community Based Rehabilitation as a strategy for youth and disability’).

4.Can YaS become a strategy for community development?

The Basic Social Idea in YaS is to create both a balance of support and a cycle of support within communities. Is this always feasible? What might be the factors that influence program activities and impact?

a) What differences between communities promote the variety of YaS activities and outcomes?

Rural (vs urban) village life and economy. “It’s a village...everybody knows everything that is going on”. Villagers know each other, know PWD, know youth – this makes adult assessment of the risks and advantages of the youth programme easier than in larger towns.

Location of villages. Village differences in terms of conflict and development (including values), history, isolation and rehabilitation service availability, size and critical mass of cooperating institutions to support CBR may affect development of YaS.

Family socioeconomic range (uniform vs unequal). Community volunteering doesn’t require money, but youth from more advantaged families may have other opportunities available. Mixed SES villages may have more difficulty in mobilizing cross-SES involvement.

Types of disabilities in the community. It is easier to mobilize youth involvement for children or the elderly with disabilities as these are seen as more vulnerable or having greater needs for social support outside the family. Intifada-injured persons may have different expectations of community support that cannot be achieved through youth support alone.

b) What differences between CBR programs promote the variety of YaS activities and outcomes?

CBR program context - established or recent duration; office settings in institutions or in the community.

CBRW staff - age, gender, background and experience

Youths involved - gender, ages, educational levels, problems

Management practices – CBR supervision, training and facilitation

c) Partnerships in YaS - What makes YaS a potentially key component of community development in Palestine?

YaS has been responsible for creating Local Resources

Youth volunteers with a specialization in disability are a valuable resource for the CBR project which should not be neglected.

Similarly, CBRWs with experience in mobilizing community members are a valuable resource for general community development.

YaS has the potential of Demonstrating Partnerships in the region

Links between ICPH and CBRN should be conceived not just as an academic-community based partnership. They can also be conceived as demonstration of a physical-psychosocial partnership leading to a more holistic approach to health and health services. They should also be conceived as demonstration of a link between health and other sectors; between volunteer and professional groups; between north and south West Bank; etc.

YaS could contribute to National Priorities

There is scope for the expansion of the project at both the national and international levels, which needs to be considered strategically in terms of the potential for (re-emergence of) Palestinian leadership in development models. However, it is also important to consider the relatively unique, and unfortunate, situation of Palestine in the world and to challenge assumptions that because YaS is working there now, it is readily transferable to other settings. Premature transfer or expansion could be a risk for the much needed reputation-building of Palestinian institutions.

TOR

2.(c) Understanding key elements and indicators of the YaS concept in preparation for continued research-action stages by ICPH

Key dynamic elements of the concept model

There are cycles of support at multiple levels in YaS:

- inputs – ICPH and CBRN have mutual exchanges in training; ICPH and IDRC exchange financial and intellectual resources with each other
- activities – youth support each other; youth and CBRWs support each other; CBR staff/supervisors problem-solve and learn together
- outputs and outcomes – youth volunteer work supports persons with disabilities who contribute to broader community work; Community members work together with youth volunteers on common issues

The **Research** process and communication of knowledge at each level in YaS reinforces future model development.

Potential categories/indicators of success in YaS

The following categories and potential indicators of success are derived from the evaluation interviews and reflect, as a whole, the overall YaS strategy of synergy in cycles of support, as well as particular desired outcomes in YaS. These indicators could be tested through improved reporting from the YaS groups.

Youth

Reputation - # youth groups approached by organizations to help implement projects

- # groups receiving legitimacy and municipal invitations as a structured group

Motivation - lack of requests for financial compensation

- # youth meetings without facilitator, continuity of meetings
- # youth planning their groups' sustainability

Independence - #youth with disabilities taking ownership of ideas, recruiting others

- # youth attending inter-regional CBRW meetings concerning YaS

Mutual support - # intra-regional meetings with youth group representatives for activities, reports, problem-solving, expansion ideas

Community

Acceptance - Parental mention of youth participation in group to others in the community

- Community 'acceptance' (lack of complaints/gossip; more respect)
- Immediacy of community support
- Social offers to youth group from the community

Involvement - # community events

- Attendance at community events
- Repetition of events – continuity
- Feedback from community participants

Benefits - Ongoing use of skills transferred to community

- Use of centre by community
- # communication links between villages re CBR issues

Persons with Disabilities and CBRWs

Social acceptance - # and % PWD included in groups and events

- # and % repeating participation
- # PWD more visible in communities
- # children with disabilities being supported at school by sub-groups of youth

Social skills - # CBRWs encouraging youth with disability taking responsibility and increasing self-confidence

- # PWD transmitting information to CBRW through youth group member

Municipality

Structural - # CBR workers (e.g., 8 in Jenin and 8 in Nablus) hired by their municipalities with half the salaries paid by CBR and the other half by the municipalities

Attitudes - # municipal staff with disabilities

Schools

Systemic involvement - # youth working with school CBR committees

TOR

1. (c) What are the constraints and opportunities of participatory action research (or research-to-action) in the local Palestinian context?

The PACT projects have had ambitious expectations of impact. In considering the evaluation findings, the evidence of innovative project implementation, and clear enthusiasm and acceptance of the project in communities, it is possible to comment on its expected impacts, constraints and opportunities.

It was expected that the PACT Action-Research-Action program would yield valuable long term impacts at different levels:

- At the community level, it will help to bring about a locally developed strategy to enhance psychosocial health in West Bank communities. PACT will promote social cohesion and solidarity within the community; foster problem solving and social action skills in young people, women, men, the disabled, the unemployed and the elderly, and will ultimately work as a mental illness prevention strategy. **(Demonstrated in pilot communities, particularly Nablus region, but constrained rate of development in more isolated communities)**
- At the national level, it will demonstrate the value of working on the capacity of a strong and well established NGO like the CBR North program rather than trying to initiate or change policy in a government that is weak and divided. **(Demonstrated clearly, with CBRN now independently taking the opportunity to manage the project and to seek resources. Constraints on movement remain a limitation in demonstrating effectiveness in other areas of Palestine.)**
- At the international level, we expect that PACT will help to promote an alternative model for psychosocial aid to countries in protracted and ongoing conflict. The model that is developed does not depend totally on biomedical expertise which would need to be imported, but instead develops capacity on the ground. **(In progress, but requires further demonstration that the youth psycho-social health concept is robust and not restricted to the issue of disability)**
- At the level of global health research, we expect that PACT will be a model of working towards social change through combined local and international academic expertise cooperating with an established NGO partner in the field. **(Demonstrated well in PACT I – III. There is an opportunity to expand research partners as the YaS concept is clarified.)**
- At the level of global development, we expect that PACT will make a contribution to the current debate whether ‘aid’ helps or harms²⁰ We make the case that in fact it is the approach and

²⁰ Easterly W. (2006) *Why the West's efforts to aid the rest have done so much ill and so little good*. The Penguin Press, London.

quality of the aid/research that defines how much good it will do. **(Yet to have any impact at this level, and requires credible publications and effective dissemination)**

5. Conclusions and Issues in the Future

YaS is an emerging, facilitated psycho-social phenomenon of youth and community development in the West Bank.

Peter Coleridge summarizes his thoughts about the future of the YaS concept....

The way CBR was developed in Palestine is a good model of what should be done. CBR, a novel concept to many agencies in the 1980's, especially those wedded to institutions, was developed by bringing together all those involved in working with disabled people in the country, and by an arduous process of discussion, experimentation, and demonstration. The result is a generally accepted national approach to disability based on both needs and rights, and a CBR programme with an international reputation.

To include other agencies, and also donors, in the discussion and achieve transparency, good communications, including public relations, are essential. The YaS programme needs to be able to explain itself clearly to all enquirers, and be pro-active in doing so. Clear communication materials need to be developed, in both English and in Arabic. ICPH needs to focus on conceptual materials, including academic articles, while the CBR programme itself needs to produce materials for consumption by other NGOs and the general public (as it is already doing with, for example, its leaflets on women's empowerment). Wide use of the internet in Palestine opens the way for the process followed by the programme to be completely transparent, and for young people especially to contribute to its development through their own contributions on a dedicated website.

If the YaS impacts are to be fully achieved in the future, the two key issues for the partners are:

What is the vision of the future? Replication/expansion? Advancement of the concept?
How can you seize the moment? What will be the 'strategy' for doing this?

Assuming that both expansion and advancement are desirable, four principal needs are clear:

1. A demonstration of concept adaptability – e.g., involve more challenging youth (in Nablus city?) or other potential volunteer groups
2. A demonstration of context flexibility – e.g., expanded health focus (in mental illness?) or education focus
3. Continued analysis of documentation to learn what is happening, why, and for how long.
4. Research on potential mechanisms, for example:
 - What is the importance of youth volunteering as a 'group' in creating an impact in youth mental health?
 - What are the individual and communal resilience dividends?

D. A Vision of YaS and Recommendations

A vision of YaS in the future can be generated by appreciation of some tools for continuous program development and strategic objective-setting (1, 2). In turn, these tools can be used to organize a set of recommendations for the partners (3).

1. Tools for YaS Programme Development in a Learning Partnership

Understand

Motivate

Experiment and Develop

Demonstrate

Understand

Achieve Impact

Promote

Understand

Sustain

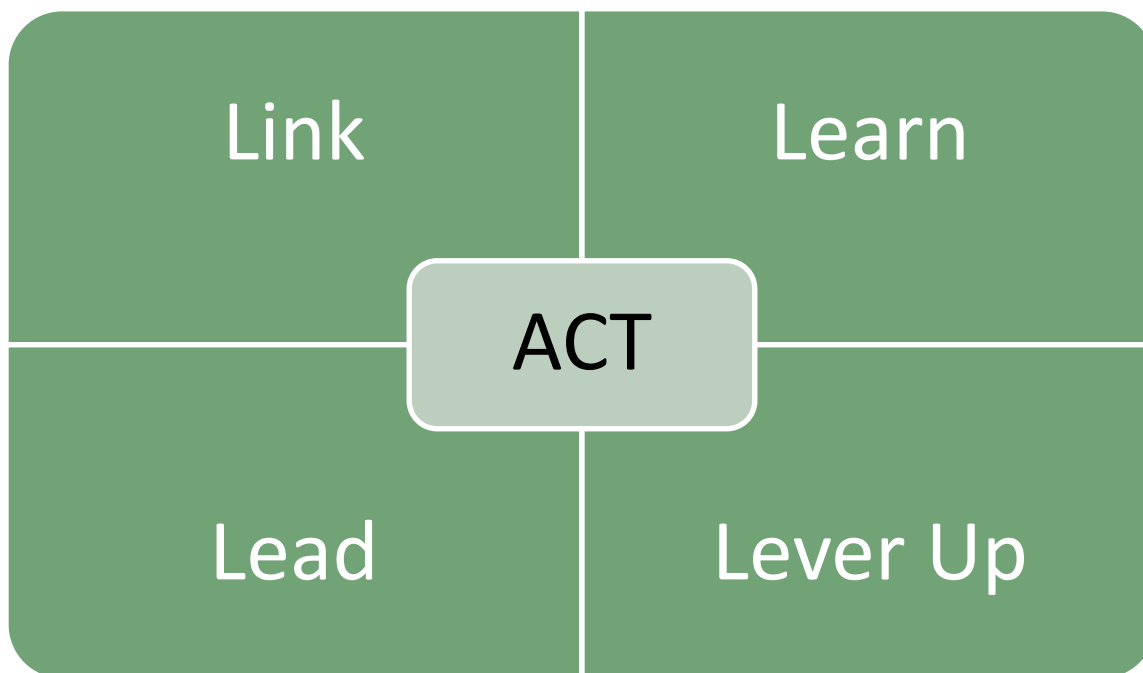


Understanding, through both communication and research, is the basis for development.

2. Strategic Objective Setting For Action - ‘Link, Learn, Lead and Lever up’

Four concepts of action can be used for objective setting in program development:

1. **Link** - Improve linkages with partners with similar values and goals – ie, exchange activities.
2. **Learn** - Increase capacity, experience and benefits to the region – ie, training activities.
3. **Lead** - Understand advantages and restrictions of local/regional/global conditions for leading innovation in socially responsible service developments – ie, research activities.
4. **Lever Up** - Understand and promote local, appropriate community development as leverage for social progress and economic growth – ie, policy activities.



3. Recommendations for Future Operational Objectives in YaS

- A. *Increase identity by creating **Links**
- B. *Strengthen implementation and create **Learning**
- C. *Advance community dynamics by taking the **Lead**
- D. *Expansion and promotion to **Lever up**

- A. *Increase identity by creating **Links** – regarding symbols, name, slogan

Most youth expressed a wish to increase their identification as volunteers in the project. It is likely that this desire is based on the need to increase youth credibility in the communities and for some formalized recognition of volunteer experience that can be used for their own advancement.

There is also a risk that such identification might be used to create a higher status group or club that could exclude others who might want to volunteer. A possible compromise would be to provide some

identification (badge, button, window sign, etc) that would also be provided to CBRN staff, persons with disabilities, families, and local partners as symbols of support for, and membership in, the CBR programme.

Providing a specific name for volunteer youth (perhaps chosen by the youth themselves) would also increase their identification with the programme and their ability to promote it among peers.

Creating a slogan for the YaS initiative is also important. This should be considered carefully to ensure wide-spread understanding of the project goals. For example....

- Youth As a Strategy In Rehabilitation
- Youth As a Support In Rehabilitation
- Youth As a Strength In Rehabilitation

B. *Strengthen the current programme and create Learning – regarding roles of staff, youth volunteers and management

The YaS initiative, being ‘self-developed’, has been successful because the CBRWs and Supervisors are very experienced, know the West Bank context, and are encouraged and able to communicate with each other. Equally, ICPH staff have encouraged self-development and provided key consultations and training in identified topics. Finally, youth have found value and respect through their volunteer activities. Learning by trial and experience has been essential in making this progress.

At this point in the project, it is important to solidify the roles of CBRN and ICPH in joint ownership and development of the YaS concept, but separation of responsibilities. In ICPH, the focus should be on advice, research and dissemination. In CBRN, role clarification is illustrated by a focus on Supervisors, Facilitators, Youth Volunteers and CBRWs in YaS development and tactics.

The current roles of Supervisors in CBR need to be expanded to include responsibilities in YaS that recognize the position of Supervisors in the CBRN organization:

Supervisor Responsibility	CBR	YaS
Manage staff	monitor effort of personnel	coordinate staff training and involvement in YaS
Quality control	rehabilitation case review	monitor YaS group progress
Program direction	negotiate local resources	facilitate YaS into community

Peter Coleridge has noted that one cannot ‘supervise’ (or control) community development; one can only ‘facilitate’ it with cooperating groups. CBRWs have also discovered this principle of community development facilitation, to varying degrees, in their YaS groups. Similarly, CBRN can use the same principle in defining the objectives of the YaS Facilitators and thus strengthen the model of cooperation throughout the programme.

YaS Facilitator Objectives	Current	Future
Increase efficiency, reduce duplication	Direct group work, assist CBRWs, substitute for CBRWs	Continue....
Increase impact	Joint planning and coordination across groups	Act in a consultant role at the request of CBRWs
Increase learning and benefits to the region	Documentation of activities and lessons	YaS promotion
Advance sustainability	Training of CBRWs and youth in YaS, Community Development ²¹ , CBR	Use of own documentation for training Training in Community Mental Health ²²

The additional area for strengthening is in the activities of ‘youth volunteer development’. This planning should include refinement of the usual orientation, training and monitoring of individual youth volunteers. CBRWs should be provided with training on ‘How to Form a Group’, including recruitment tips and communication points for youth, parents, PWD, and municipality. Training could also include marketing and promotion skills.

CBRN itself should have a plan to strengthen the development and organization of its voluntary resources. A Voluntary Resource Development Plan should explore the options, types, and approaches to volunteering that meet CBRN goals. Importantly, ‘voluntary resources’ should be conceptualized as going beyond youth themselves to include persons with disabilities and their families, families of youth, those in other sectors (schools, Women’s Centres, local businesses, local mosques/churches), etc.

Options for volunteering can range from involvement in self-help groups to participation in community development activities. Various structures for coordination and documentation can be explored for each option.

With respect to youth volunteers, especially regarding their particular positions in life and in their communities, a number of models can be considered. One model, advancement through the ranks, would be relevant to the transitional nature of adolescence and the evolving capacities of youth. This model recognizes that youth need to be challenged, and experience success, for optimal learning. Youth volunteers could be classified by age groups:

²¹ Boyce W, Broers T, Cormier I, Jones C, Lauckner H, Paterson J, Ranger MC. An Educator's Manual for Community Based Rehabilitation: Teaching Community Development for the Inclusion of People with Disabilities. (*Manual del Educador para la Rehabilitacion Basada en la Comunidad: Ensenanza de Desarrollo Comunitario para la Inclusion de las Personas con Discapacidades – Spanish translation*). Kingston, Queen's University, 2007. HTML?

²² Shoba Raja, Kate Gibson, Uma Sunder, Michelle Kermode, Saju C Mannarath, Alexandra Devine. An Introduction to Mental Health: Facilitator’s Manual for Training Community Health Workers in India. Leamington UK/ Melbourne Aus. BasicNeeds, /Nossal Institute for Global Health, University of Melbourne, 2009. HTML?

Rank	Age	Activities
Junior	younger < 16 years	learning, observing, assisting older youth
Intermediate	16-20 years	doing, working with PWD
Senior	Experienced in YaS, older > 20 years	training, mentoring, recruiting younger youth

Another model for volunteering, which could be combined with the above, would be relevant to the multiple responsibilities and interests of youth. Since not all interested youth will have the same amount of time available, and activities might not require simultaneous involvement, a core-periphery model can be considered. In this model, some youth would take greater responsibility for the group, and other youth would participate in activities when they were needed.

Either of these models would provide the opportunity for emerging youth leaders to carry the program forward. This is already happening in some areas, and is clearly of interest to youth in other areas. It is important for CBRN and ICPH to understand that youth will lead this type of community initiative in the future. Some youth already have made steps to promote co-operation with municipal authorities and to draw other community members into the effort. A key challenge in the future, as youth groups become more independent, will be for CBRN to devolve the responsibility for YaS to youth themselves.

CBRN should facilitate this process by gradually transforming the role of CBRWs from organizing YaS groups to one of consulting with youth groups, training, and assistance with documentation. These activities would still link with CBRWs' responsibilities with individual persons with disabilities, and it would be up to each community to decide how to do this.

Co-management of YaS by CBRN and ICPH has been an ongoing issue for discussion and negotiation. In June, 2009 Viet Nguyen-Gillham noted that "At any one moment, both partners are trying to figure out who is leading, who should lead, at what pace to adjust their movement, and how to coordinate and flow with the rhythm." The YaS Facilitator faced a similar dynamic with CBRWs and youth but Viet concluded that she "... is learning from the groups and has been impressed with the energy and creativity of the young people.....she is now convinced that if 'you give energy, it will work even if it is not towards the original goal'". In a similar context, this Consultant has preferred to observe the process of youth group action in Palestine rather than assume that a template for strategic action can be pre-planned from the outside.

As CBRN management has become more engaged and supportive of YaS, it is important for CBRN to manage the project 'completely'. This will entail securing a comprehensive YaS funding stream that can be integrated with its main CBR role. Any transfer of funds from ICPH to CBRN will always stimulate a sense of accountability and co-responsibility in their relationship, which is now becoming inappropriate after 4 years of IDRC funding through Birzeit University. CBRN may wish to develop an Advisory Board for YaS which would allow ICPH to provide programmatic input concerning strategy, but leave the tactics to CBRN.

It will be important for ICPH to obtain independent research funding that will facilitate knowledge development about the program. ICPH staff have unique roles to play in the YaS initiative that are

primarily related to learning about community development and psycho-social health through research. ICPH has identified its need to:

- Develop/adapt measures (could consider existing measures)
- Test the YaS model (could aim for quick impact; consider control communities)
- Create publications and dissemination

ICPH has identified specific research outcomes that could contribute to global health and development research. These outcomes are broad and inclusive, albeit with varying degrees of feasibility. This report concludes that the priority should be put on these key research outcomes that have been initially explored in this report:

- Increased understanding of the (community) factors that support or impede the process of implementing a psychosocial intervention (see TOR 2(b) explanations #3, 4a, 4b)
- Identification of factors and dynamics that operate as obstacles to community and especially youth involvement and those that facilitate community and youth involvement (see TOR 2(b) - explanations #1, 2, 4c)
- The identification of some indicators that can be used to compare a collective - social approach to relieve psycho-social pressures that result from political oppression and economic stagnation with the individual - biomedical approach (see TOR 2(c) Categories/indicators of success in YaS)

If time and resources are available, the following research outcomes could be pursued:

- A contribution to the identification of indicators of mental health among youth living in areas of protracted conflict and violence
- Investigation into broadening of the mandate of a CBR program (focused on disability) to incorporate a community based psychosocial support component in an environment of prolonged and on-going conflict, while promoting peace-building at a community level.
- The exploration of a development model in which the development effort is designed and steered by a local academic institution in cooperation with a local partner in the field, but supported by international funding as well as international academic support.
- Increase in understanding between the theoretical plan (resulting from the pilot) and real world action (or implementation of the pilot) with all its complexities in Palestine.
- A contribution to evaluation theory by investigating the usefulness of specific methods (outcome mapping; developmental and participatory frameworks) for the evaluation of community based psychosocial support as a mental health enhancing mechanism.

C. *Advance community dynamics by taking the **Lead** in socially responsible service developments.

CBRN/ICPH have clearly developed a unique, leading edge programme for community psycho-social health by engaging the interests and needs of youth and of persons with disabilities. They are also developing understandings of the advantages and restrictions of local/regional/global conditions for leading innovation in socially responsible service development. The project concept model continues to be clarified and understood as a community inter-group support approach.

The next phase of the project could advance the model and practice considerably. It could increase development capacity, experience and benefits to the region. This would require CBRN, in particular, to 'seize the moment' to expand the YaS concept to address other social issues such as intellectual and developmental disabilities, mental illness, gender, elderly and socio-demographic differences. This could be done while still keeping the organizational focus on youth and disability. In fact, some of this development is already occurring, but would require further staff training to optimize the benefits and document the results. For example:

Gender

Youth group activities could be used to demonstrate and promote cross-gender co-operation in rural areas, a relatively rare occurrence. Providing gender-separate activities, but coordinated by lead boys and lead girls with the CBRW, could demonstrate such co-operation and lead to some integrated public events.

There is a prevalent view in rural areas that the role of a youth worker cannot be played by a woman for boys, or by a man for girls. However, CBRN has demonstrated otherwise, especially if the CBRW works with both genders. Older female CBRWs have more credibility and authority to work with youth of both genders than do younger CBRWs. However, younger female CBRWs can recruit boys who are younger than themselves.

Older girls and mothers of children with disabilities may form a viable 'young women's group' due to the similarity in ages.

Other Disabilities

There are two tactics for advancing disability issues. One is to deepen the co-operation between youth and persons with disabilities by increasing their inclusion into joint groups (a number of YaS groups already do this, but need to share their experiences with each other). There may also be a relatively liberal attitude to including younger boys with disabilities into an older girls' group

The second tactic is to increase the examples of youth-disability co-operation to include assisting the elderly or persons with mild/moderate mental illness. One suggestion could be for YaS volunteers to tutor children who are slow learners. This would also allow youth groups to make independent contacts with schools and demonstrate the value of youth as volunteers.

The key issue is to find other 'helping relationships' that are possible in the communities and to keep a focus on concrete, achievable and meaningful issues, such as social freedom and participation, that do not require specialist training.

Socio-Demographic Conditions

As in most societies, Palestinians live in a variety of social, economic and demographic conditions. These provide opportunities for CBRN to develop better understandings of class differences (employment, education, poverty), location-based problems (urban settings and gaining attention of youth; small village self-help groups without local institutional supports) and social situations (prisoner families, families with emigrant parent, refugee families) and their effect on the project concept.

ICPH staff could provide training for YaS facilitators, CBRWs and certain youth to document these effects.

D. *Expansion and promotion to **Lever up**

Achieving progress in A, B and C (above) will allow the YaS partners to further understand and promote local, appropriate community development as a lever for Palestinian social policy activities. This necessarily means that every YaS group has to make its own way, depending on place and context, and there are no formulae, just guidelines, to provide to anyone who wants to engage in YaS for social change.

Potentially, expansion of the YaS programme could lead to revival of volunteerism in Palestine and a strategy for broader involvement of community members in Community Based Organizations. Finally, YaS could be a demonstration to the world of Palestinian 'social-civic democracy' – citizen-based democracy with/through a social bond. This concept is based on a communal, not an individual, notion of democratic rights to decision-making. It is achieved by direct mutual assistance and shared responsibility.

Strategically, it might be important to only modestly promote the YaS programme until its success is more demonstrated. Claiming transformative effects of YaS without understanding its causes and limitations could damage its future development.

A Communication Plan is needed to operationalize such programme promotion. The discrete audiences for communication include:

- Project staff and participants
- Local communities
- Other CBOs
- Other regions in Palestine
- Funders and supporters

The tools for reaching each audience need to be customized – since each audience 'learns in its own way'.

Slogans are useful for communication and do not need to be the same for each audience. For example,

'BEYOND TALKING' may be relevant to youth themselves

'BEYOND US/BEYOND OURSELVES'may be relevant to adult community members

'LINKING COMMUNITIES IN DEVELOPMENT'....may be relevant to CBOs

An information brochure template should be created by CBRN for new volunteers and for outsiders, within which local YaS groups could create their own content of activities.

Funding support for the ‘youth-community component’ of CBRN should attempt to link sources in the area of social disadvantage and the focus of youth development.

ICPH should consider an action-oriented research funder that appreciates developmental research, the context of conflict and research capacity building – unfortunately, there are few of these. Among them are IDRC’s peace-building programme and its governance and (mental) health programme.

4. Summary

In PACT III, ‘Youth as a Strategy’ (YaS) was conceived as a way to combine the psycho-social interests and needs of youth and persons with disabilities for purposes of satisfying funding envelope guidelines. This report describes the variety of approaches to youth involvement that have been developed over the past two years, and analyses the critical characteristics of YaS that can be tested for effectiveness and efficiency in the future. The report includes information from earlier formative (2007) and monitoring (2009) assessments that contribute to understanding the YaS model in Palestinian society.

After two years, most of the expected results and benefits in YaS have begun to appear. These include good to excellent progress in community understandings of mental health, youth participation, staff capacity, community mobilization, cooperation with schools, and CBO management.

While YaS tactics and practices vary considerably from helping PWD, youth and communities AND simultaneously integrating mental health (social support) into CBR, the core concept of YaS appears to create a cycle of support within communities, specifically ‘Helping Youth Help the Community’.

Overall, three key project elements of youth (core participants), disability (core focus) and community rehabilitation (core resources and responsibility) have coincided to result in a significant social advance in these West Bank villages.

The **Research** process and communication of knowledge at each level in YaS has reinforced model development and partnership growth. Success indicators are emerging that appear relevant and feasible to implement.

Finally, it is very important to understand that the outcomes of YaS might be context-dependent and/or time limited. The YaS programme is ‘rare’...one should not rely on it to persist....so one should maximize its impact now.

If YaS impacts are to be fully achieved, the key issues for the partners will be: What is the vision of the future? How can YaS seize the moment? What will be the ‘strategy’ for doing this?

Assuming that both expansion of YaS practice and advancement of the concept are desirable, four principal needs are clear:

1. A demonstration of concept adaptability – e.g., involve more challenging youth (in Nablus city?) or other potential participant groups
2. A demonstration of context flexibility – e.g., expand the focus in health (in mental illness?) or in education
3. Increased partnerships with communities - to co-analyse future documentation to learn what is happening, why, and for how long. This is necessary for broader uptake of the strategy in Palestine and elsewhere.
4. Continued research on potential mechanisms – to increase the knowledge base for community health development at a time of scarce resources and significant constraints.

E.

APPENDICES

PACT I & II SUMMARIES

Project Descriptions

PACT I - Palestinian Adolescents Coping with Trauma

Survey of psycho-social status; analysis of conflict context - 2002-2004

Aim

Within the framework of a weak and divided government, the PACT projects aim to promote social change through a partnership between local and international academic institutions, as well as collaboration with the local CBR program with its expertise of local communities. The primary goal of the research is to gain insight into how community based psycho-social and mental health interventions may be developed in conflict areas while maximizing the involvement of youth.

Results

ICPH has built its own capacity in psycho-social mental health, training and mentoring, and fostering community support for meeting local needs. It has been able to provide this support in four locations in two regions of the West Bank. The project has linked up firmly with existing structures of communal support in the West Bank. By 2003, high level CBR administrators were discussing with ICPH the possibility of expanding the CBR mandate to incorporate a social or community support dimension.

Main recommendation

The development of an intervention model based on community support aimed at fostering a sense of purpose, self-confidence and identity in young people. The model should be creative and flexible in order to respond to the volatile political and social climate.

PACT II - Community Psycho-Social Support for Youth

Pilot interventions through CBR organization; community surveys - 2005-2007

Aim

Through partnership with CBR North, the PACT project is looking to contribute to the development of a psychosocial model for youth within Palestine, one that is grounded within the community and its resources. Both the parents and the young people themselves were willing to think of community wide solutions that might help adolescents recover some confidence in themselves and their community. Approach education sector concerning 'psycho-social support' from psychologists; CBRW/youth participation in school health committees.

Emphasize objective evaluation of PACT II in order to maximize its impact. Increase ICPH capacity in research and evaluation skills to improve responsiveness to health information needs of the PA. Disseminate project results through a series of measures.

Results

The CBR North network has expanded from its original focus on physical disabilities to incorporate general psycho-social problems (isolation, poverty), especially in 6 villages of the northern West Bank (see Figure 1). Enthusiasm and support from CBR supervisors is increasing. There is collaborative development of communal and individual action interventions for youth psycho-social and mental health. Some concerns remained: 1. Weak relationships with schools since lack of relevance to major educational achievement goals and impression of transferring problem to the schools; 2. Conceptual issues regarding project purpose - support CBR vs youth self-development vs community development. Lack of clarity on how and why CBR program is involved. 3. Participation of youth is limited in numbers and impact.

PACT II Organizational Structure

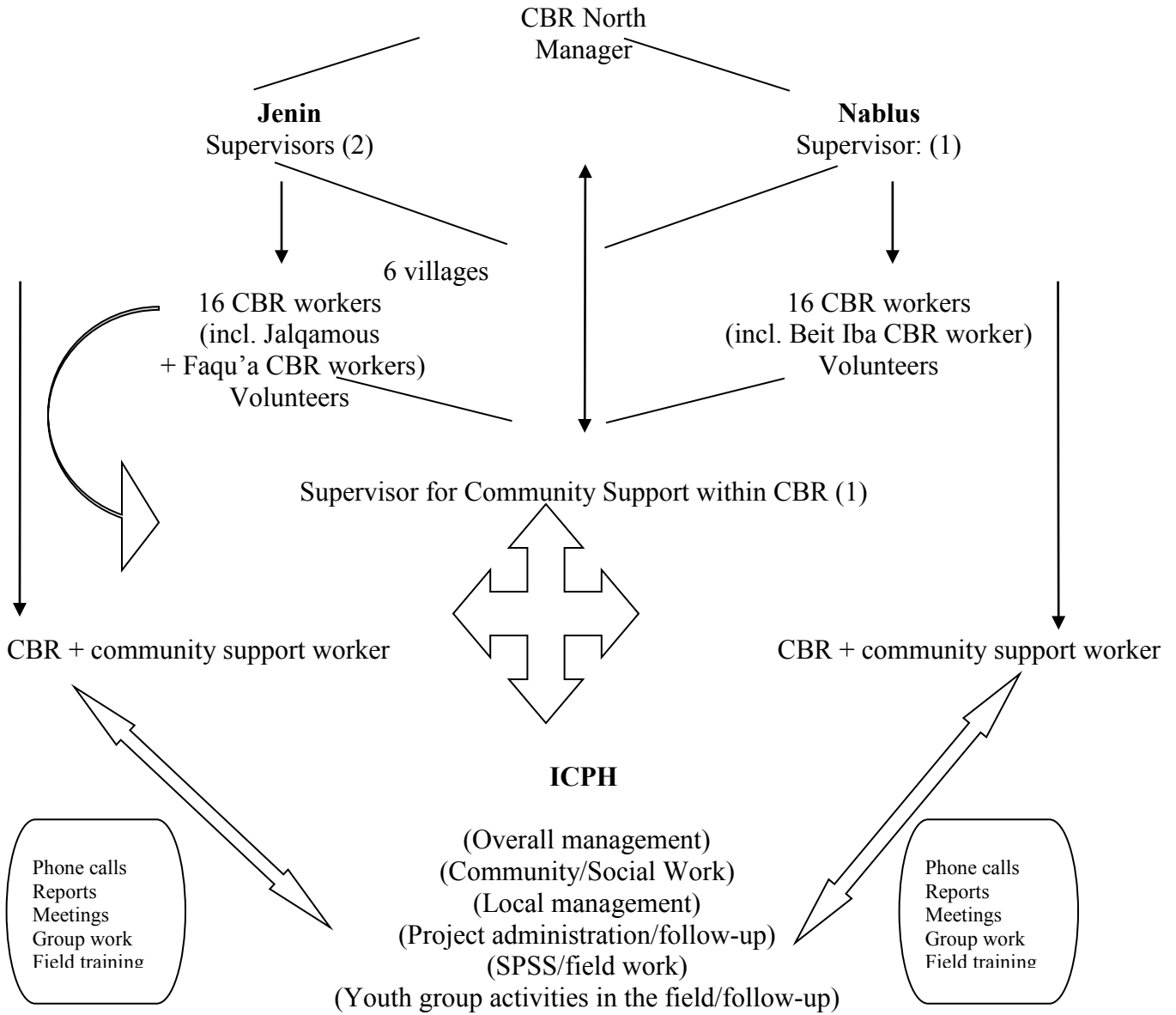


Figure 1.

Main recommendations

Conceptualize Youth as a Strategy/Support/Strength for community development, focusing on disability and rehabilitation, rather than youth as a target group for intervention.

Organizational requirements - Transfer of project responsibility to CBRN

- Re-organization of CBR personnel
- Project management training
- Reporting and information system re community (psycho-social) support component

DETAILS OF FINDINGS

The findings below identify key thematic categories emerging from the youth/facilitator group interview codes on barriers and facilitators to implementing ‘Youth as a Strategy’.

A. Youth views

What personal qualities (character, capacities) do youth have that others do not?

Self

Self-expressive, spontaneous
Able to give to others, altruistic
Willing to take risks
Patience and endurance
Strength of will
A time before adulthood of fewer responsibilities
Physical energy

Peers

Active and energetic in youth groups; ready to work together, work independently
Interested in friendship, meeting peers, especially opposite sex
Group channels the energy of individuals
First group of girls in village ever to act

Cognitive

Developed minds
Capable of self-learning
Able to change their own perceptions (themselves) through understanding their experiences

Personality

Clarity of values
Motivated to advance themselves
Ambitious and opportunity-seeking
Empathy

Beliefs

Interested in changing regressive parts of traditional culture
‘Not stuck in their ideas like an old person’
Challenge the status quo
Sensitive to community and elderly dynamics
‘Change in ourselves creates change in others’

Capacities

Planning and organization
Able to enter homes

What skills do youth have that could be important in YaS?

Artistic/expressive

Design

Yoga

Media

Drama

Arts/crafts

Traditional dance

Sports

Games

Theatre

Technical/developmental

Computing

English language

Journalism

Sociology

Business

Nursing

Health inspection

Cosmetics

Maternal health

Dental hygiene

Business

Nursing

Health inspection

Cosmetics

Maternal health

Dental hygiene

Supportive/promotive

Primary education

Social work

Community work

What ideas (knowledge, imagination, ambitions) do youth have for the community/PWD/youth?

Community

Have a broad impact in community

Develop/demonstrate better gender relations – eg parallel activities towards common goal and coordinated by CBRW (eg girls design/print/analyse survey; boys conduct survey)

Improve mental health

Reduce parent-youth anger/violence (boys @ checkpoints)

Reduce school pressures

Surveys of: local attitudes towards financial costs (bride price) of marriage that makes it unaffordable;
local needs
Address school attrition, smoking, literacy
Community analysis
Promote village
Communal events (post-Ramadan breakfast)
Disability day/Health days and transfer knowledge to others
Day for women/mothers
Child volunteer program (through summer camps...)
Prisoner family visits
Rent centre for community activities
Bereavement support
Organize kindergarten
Craft courses/exhibits

PWD

Tangible benefits for pwd – education, skills
Inclusion/respect of pwd in community; include women with disability who are inhibited
School integration
House accessibility
Social welfare issues
Support advocacy
Centre for disability
Home support visits
Integrated summer camp for children
Work with clumsy children

Youth

'Fill a void in our lives'
Being consulted as an expert
Communication newsletter with other groups
Networking and gaining experience for jobs
Meeting with other groups, co-planning events
Competing/cooperating with other gender group
Overcoming shyness – "I used to be shy...Through this group I have become a strong personality"
Self-development, group expansion, problem solving, group self-direction
Women's magazine
Exhibition of marketable skills for girls/women
Leadership development
Gives practical work to complement university studies
Exposure to outside villages/towns

What needs to be done to achieve these ideas?

Training

Communication and social interaction

Anti-stigma

Psycho-social Support

Disability/CBR

Leadership

Computer

First Aid

Summer camp counsellor

Group work skills

English language

Independent Self-study skills (how to learn on one's own....different from school learning)

Material

Activity feedback forms

Meeting place for visibility, storing records/materials, security, continuity of work efforts

Village council financial support and youth employment

T-shirts to show group identity

Information/Communication

Information brochure for awareness of group to community/parents/PWD/NGOs

Links with Najah University youth group

Inter-agency awareness and co-operation

Local political support

Municipal letter of introduction

Documentation plan

Register as charity

What problems (obstacles) do youth have in achieving these goals?

Economic

Lack of time available during agricultural periods

Finances for communal events

Small villages cannot qualify for grants for summer school; no partner institutions

Social-cultural

Resistance to girls involvement from older males in family

Malicious gossip from outside institutions

Traditions (male only) of community events

Isolation from other groups

Community attitudes to volunteering

Political

Political agendas of outside groups

Public location to meet that reduces gossip

B. CBRWs Views

What were the workshop highlights?

Mutual support between youth groups
Involvement of PWD at workshop
“The spirit of working together is very clear”
Pride in their group members

What are the key issues in working with youth?

Problems for youth

Low academic achievement for boys
Lack of respect for others
Lack of hope for future
Lack of employment, especially for PWD

Youth ambitions

Want to work on community social issues, using social analysis, taking action
Want to work on CBR as helpers
Community leadership skills
Want to work on issues collectively agreed on
Want to be a part of something ongoing and active in local community

Needs of youth

Need knowledge based courses on CBR, psycho-social support, computing
Need varying degrees of autonomy
Need to feel YaS is credible and will continue
Want to have local credit for the work
Want external exposure to others

What are the benefits of YaS in CBR?

For CBRW

60% of work is with PWDs in homes – now have useful strategy to increase impact
Able to mount larger scale activities and co-planning with other villages’ CBRWs
Able to facilitate some mixed gender activities
Able to gain youth families’ support

For PWD

Youth help with family loan applications
More inclusion of PWD
Allows daily coverage if necessary and this can be shared between youth
PWD are accepting and transmitting info to CBRW through youth

For youth

Training in the field re disability and CBR on home visits
Receiving legitimacy and municipal invitations as a structured group

What do CBRWs need to participate in YaS?

Training

‘How to Form a Group’, including communication points for youth, parents, PWD, municipality;
recruitment tips
Training in marketing and promotion skills

Information

Brochure re YaS for new volunteers and for outsiders

Management

Supervision strategy for CBRW in YaS
1-1 mentoring and problem-solving

What can be done next in YaS?

Community Outreach

Regional YaS magazine
Community employment initiatives, including apprenticeships

Youth Responsibilities

Youth-to-youth training on general group strategy and on specific activities
Youth should take more responsibility for recruitment of other youth

Group Structures and Support

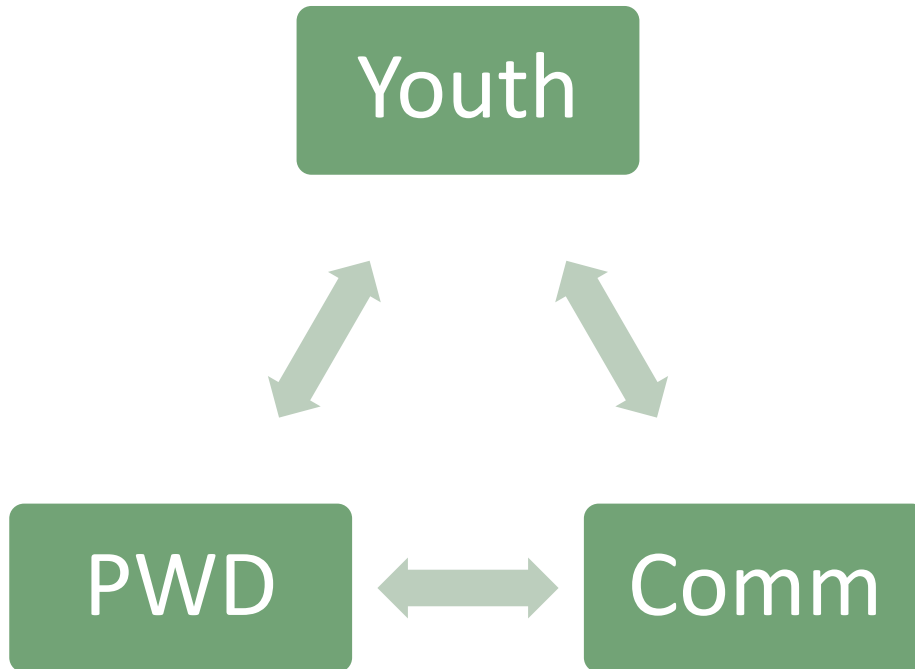
Core and peripheral groups could manage the numbers and customize the involvement
Volunteer Planning and Development Program

Disadvantaged Youth

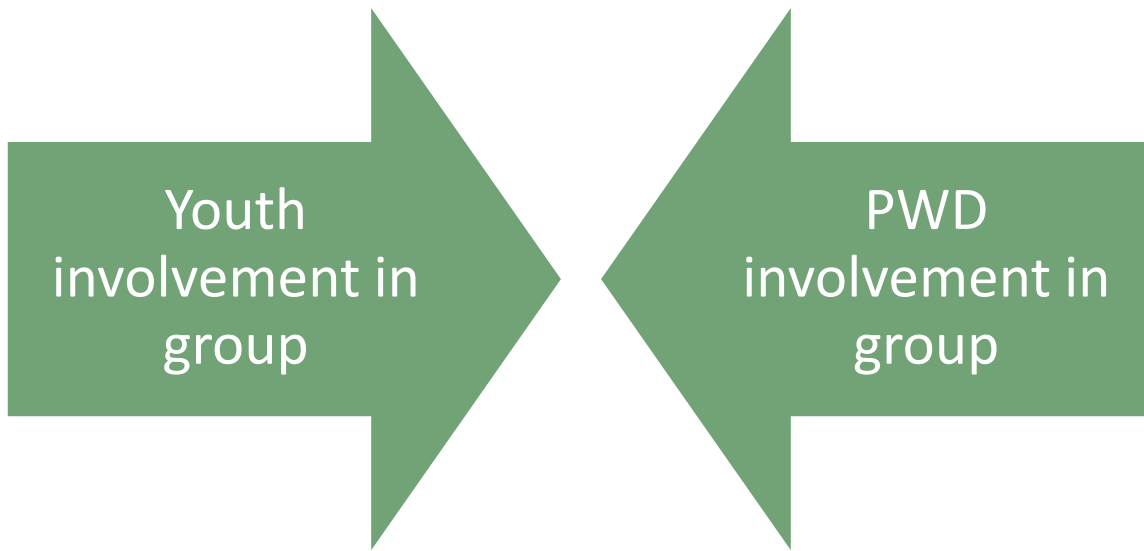
Urban youth groups (?have them come to CBRW with a plan?)
Intifada-injured youth groups as both helpers and as beneficiaries

Dynamics of YaS as a Psycho-Social Support Strategy

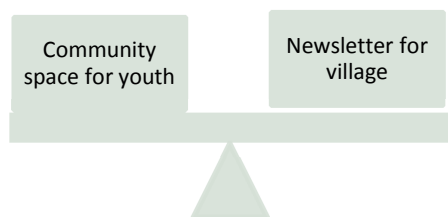
Basic Social Idea – to create a balance and cycle of support within communities;



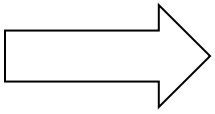
Support may be simultaneous and identical,



Balanced but different,

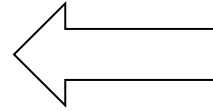


Or reciprocal over time



PWD involvement in planning

Disability Day



Youth organizing

Support may be constant,



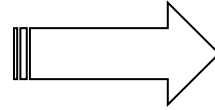
Or intermittent



Summer camp

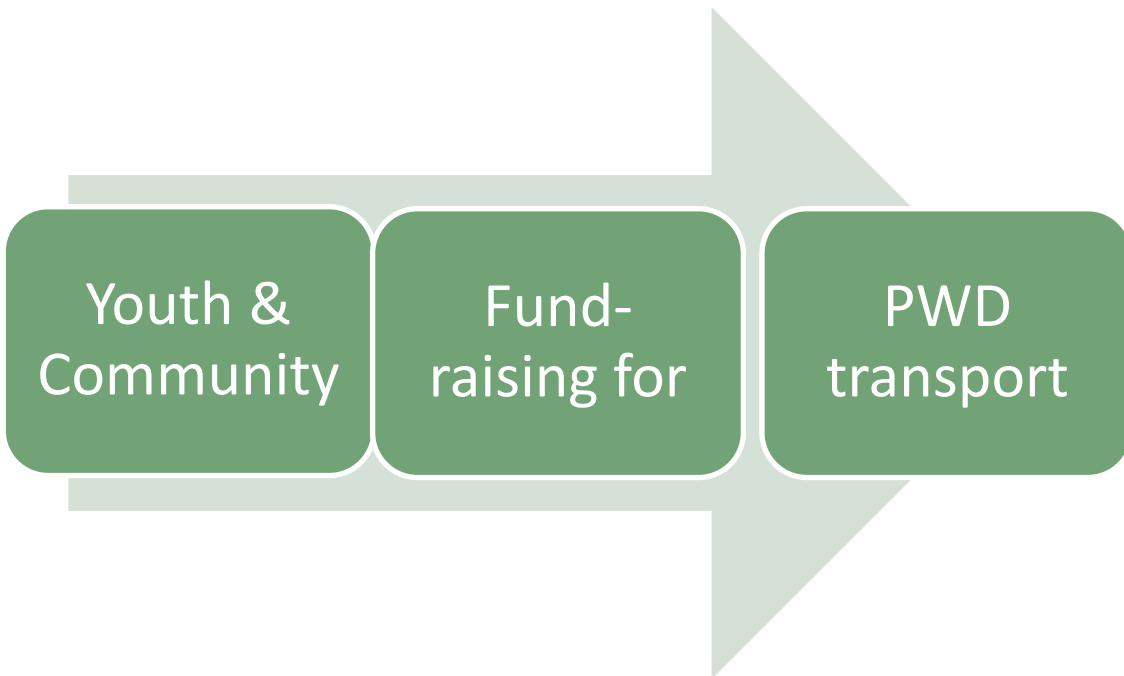


Olive harvest



Eid breakfast

Support may be of one type and have a single goal,



or support might progress over time

