



מכון ון ליר בירושלים

THE VAN LEER JERUSALEM INSTITUTE

معهد فان لير في القدس

Excellence • Innovation • Involvement



Promoting Book Reading in Early Childhood in Israeli-Palestinian Society

Developing a book-reading culture in Israeli-Palestinian preschools to increase scholastic achievement

Research has long shown that reading books to children enriches their literacy and language, contributes to their social-emotional development and predicts achievements in school.

The challenge facing Israeli-Palestinian society is to encourage appreciation for early childhood reading and its long-term impact. Through successful cooperation with the leadership of Umm El-Fahm, the second largest Israeli-Palestinian city, the Ministry of Education and Bidayat Early Childhood Center at Al-Qasemi College of

Education, VLJI has established an organizational and professional infrastructure that is fully committed to promoting early childhood book-reading. Book-reading habits in families, educational and community settings have improved, and volunteers working in the community are proud to serve as agents of change. Importantly, the municipality is committed to a continuing program, and the time has come to implement the reading program in other communities. We are looking to adapt the program to suit the needs of the Bedouin city of Rahat located in the south of Israel.

A VLJI Project

Need

Children exposed to reading at home and in school from an early age are more likely to succeed in scholastic achievements. Research has shown that Israeli-Palestinian society suffers from early childhood “reading poverty”: underdeveloped reading habits, limited access to quality books, linguistically and culturally inappropriate instructional materials. Developing a culture of reading requires a holistic approach which includes the training and encouragement of parents, preschool teachers and assistants, caregivers in daycare centers, social welfare and healthcare professionals and the local administration.

Solution

Our reading program, applied successfully in Umm El-Fahm, has demonstrated a significant impact and, with appropriate adaptation to accommodate different populations, it is replicable and has the potential to increase every child’s chance at success.

As one mother put it, *“This was the first time I read a story to my children. I didn’t know that it was such an important and enjoyable thing, and I learned to give them a good time with the story.”*



Background

The Van Leer Jerusalem Institute is committed to promoting humanistic, democratic and liberal values in Israel’s social discourse, bridging the gap between academic research and social involvement to address major challenges in Israeli civil society

For five decades, we have developed and implemented social equality projects and have a deep understanding of Arab communities in Israel. We are therefore uniquely positioned to impact the long-term educational success of Palestinian children.

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In cooperation with Bidayat



Be our partner in this important enterprise.

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