

Fighting Fear

Palestine
2013



TraumAid International



Rebuilding lives, community and hope
following large scale disaster.

TraumAid International (TAI) is an **organisation** that seeks to **empower** the displaced and traumatised to **rebuild** their **lives**, **restore** their **dignity**, **reestablish** a **safe** and **functional** **community** and **break** the **cycle** of **violence** that often **ensues** in the aftermath of **war** or **large scale disaster**.

The Philosophy of TraumAid International

- We believe in the resilience of the human spirit.
- We believe that trauma is most overt in disaster-affected communities, but is covertly present in all communities.
- We believe that through collaboration with disaster-affected communities, we gain a globally-beneficial understanding of trauma.
- We believe that imposed trauma interventions are dangerous and ineffective.
- We believe in holistic interventions that break the trauma cycle and promote optimal long-term functioning.
- We believe in adapting trauma recovery principles to suit the specific needs and experiences of individual communities.
- We believe in teaching conceptually about the impact of trauma and empowering communities to develop their own solutions.
- We believe in grounding interventions in research and international best practice, rather than altruism alone.
- We believe in monitoring the effectiveness of any intervention with ongoing research.



The Church of the Nativity, Bethlehem

Life in Palestine

- There are 519,000 Palestinians internally displaced in Israel.
- At the end of 2011 66% of the entire Palestinian population (7.4 million of 11.2 million) were refugees or internally displaced people.
- Food insecurity is high, as is unemployment (44% in Gaza Strip).
- There are over 500 physical obstacles for Palestinians to navigate in order to go about their daily lives, such as road blocks, check points and walls.

See Badil Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights (Vol VII 2010 to 2012).

Life in Palestine

For the past 70 years the ongoing conflict between Palestine and Israel has resulted in generations of children growing up into adulthood with fear as their constant companion. There have been four wars and two intifada (uprisings) during that period of time. Since the second Intifada in 2000 there has been an identified increase in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (Gaza Strip and West bank) of night raids, curfews, poverty, torture, home demolition and diminishing access to paid employment, medical services and education (refer to Veronese et al, 2013). This experience of unpredictability, uncertainty about the future and ongoing violence produces a range of fear related disorders. For example, post traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, depression, aggression, isolation, paranoia, learning difficulties, sleep problems and a wide range of physical illness are all associated with ongoing fear.



The hills around Jerusalem

Fighting Fear

In partnership with and at the invitation of The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL), TraumAid International has been invited to assist in fighting fear and promoting an environment of peace and reconciliation.

After experiencing oppression and powerlessness for so long, reliance on outsiders for help further embeds dependence and frustration. Thus the approach recommended by TAI in fighting fear is to educate and skill at a community level. A recent study from Palestine by Veronese et al (2012) confirms, “to promote positive adjustment to trauma and stress and reinforce protective factors in children, clinical efforts must be directed towards families, groups and more in general towards the entire community”.

The community approach used by TAI in conflict zones has been shown to be effective in: promoting the breakdown of stigma around trauma symptoms; skilling the community in managing their fear and mitigating their trauma symptoms; and empowering the community to bring healing and positive change from within.

Fighting Fear

The first phase of the Fighting Fear Project is to:

- Educate teachers and ELCJHL staff about the impact of ongoing fear and trauma on the individual and community
- Teach skills and strategies to manage fear and mitigate trauma in themselves, their students and the community.
- Collect baseline data and ongoing research into the problems experienced by Palestinians and the effectiveness of the Fighting Fear project.

With the help of Mr Bishara, the project coordinator for ‘Fighting Fear’ and ELCJHL staff, the workshop and teaching content will be tailored to suit the local community and its various social, spiritual and political contexts.

Should this intervention prove to be successful, a number of future workshops and interventions will be organised to reach a large section of both the Palestinian and Israeli community.

Specific Objectives of Proposed Fighting Fear Conference

In partnership with ELCJHL, a trauma management workshop will be tailored to suit the local social, spiritual and political contexts.

The workshop will educate 150 ELCJHL staff on the impact of trauma on the individual and community, the ongoing effects, how to manage fear and mitigate trauma in themselves, their school students and the community.

There will be a research component alongside the workshop to collect baseline data on the trauma levels and specific problems faced by the target population.

Based on the outcomes and research of this initial workshop TAI and ELCJHL will plan future workshops that encompass a broad section of the Palestinian and Israeli community (e.g., Gaza Strip and Israel)

TAI and ELCJHL will coordinate follow up research on trauma levels in participants at 3, 6, 9 and 12 months post conference to determine the effectiveness of the interventions.

The cost of the conference is \$47,741 AUD. This includes facilitators airfares, trauma workbooks, 150 participants accommodation and travel, food, advertisement, media, local facilitators and follow up research at 3, 6, 9 and 12 months.



The hills around Jerusalem



The Dome of the Rock, Jerusalem

How to Support Fighting Fear

If you would like to help fund Fighting Fear there are a number of ways for you to do so. Please note at this time any funds donated towards Fighting Fear are **not** Tax Deductible, however all other TraumAid International projects are.

You can donate through:

- Paypal — Visit our website at www.traumaid.org/Donate.aspx where you can donate via Paypal using your credit card or Paypal account. Simply add Fighting Fear Project in Notes.
- Direct Deposit — Account Name: TraumAid International
BSB: 062 225 Account Number: 1018 3269 Reference: Fighting Fear Project
- For any questions you can contact Benjamin at benjamin.dawson@traumaid.org



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