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Tuesday March 26, 2013

IY Spotlight: West Bank (Part 1)

Hello Cheri,



Carolyn and Two Preschool Teachers

Recently, Carolyn Webster-Stratton (developer of IY) travelled to the West Bank. While she was there she had the opportunity to visit a school where the Incredible Years programs have been implemented with great success. She visited with the social worker who introduced Incredible Years to this area and blogged about her experiences. This will be a two part series spotlighting Dr. Webster-Stratton's trip and time spent with the Holy Child School. Continue reading for an excerpt of Carolyn's experiences.

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Holy Child School

Today was the day I had been really looking forward to on this trip because I had been invited to visit a school in West Bank that was using the Incredible Years Parents, Teachers and Child Programs. Diane, a truly amazing and dynamic social worker, has single handedly introduced the IY programs to the Holy Child School. I first met Diane three years ago when she came for two of my parent and teacher training workshops in Seattle.

As soon as she told me of her plans for program delivery in West Bank I knew I wanted to visit her and see first hand how the Incredible Years programs could work

within a different cultural and religious context.



Three Primary Grade Teachers

While there has been successful delivery of the Incredible Years in countries such as Norway, UK, New Zealand and Denmark (where there is substantial government support), this case is different in that program delivery is entirely dependent on donations for annual operating costs. The Holy Child Program (certified by the Palestinian Ministry of Education) is a service of the Bethlehem Holy Child Program Corporation. The beliefs and teachings of the Roman Catholic Church provide the framework within which the services are offered even though the majority of the children are Muslim. The goal of the school is to provide an alternative education for children who suffer from untreated, complex mental health issues and exposure to intergenerational trauma. It provides individualized programs for each child and seeks to highlight a rich cultural heritage as well as partnerships with local providers.

After researching evidence-based treatment programs for children with social and emotional problems, Diane chose the Incredible Years Programs to deliver at this school. Employing the assistance of an Arabic interpreter, she began by training the preschool and primary grade teachers (of students ages 4-12 years) the IY Teacher Classroom Management Program. She met weekly with the teachers for 4–6 hour workshops for 9 months and also provided classroom coaching. At first the teachers found the child management strategies and principles to be foreign and difficult. However, as they continued to implement the strategies they began to see positive changes in their students' emotional regulation and academic learning.



The teachers were next introduced to the IY Child Dinosaur School program, integrating aspects of the both the Child Treatment and Prevention models. The teachers worked together as a team to incorporate all aspects of IY emotional, social and persistence coaching, praise, and incentives during their academic teaching.



Calm Down Thermometer in Arabic



Primary Grade Teacher with IY Posters

Incredible Years Teacher and Child Programs

On my first day at the school I visited all 6 classrooms (each had a ratio of 5 students to 1 teacher). *Wally Problem Solver*, my puppet dressed in the school uniform, accompanied me to the classrooms to find out what the children had learned about emotional regulation and compliment the students for their focused work activities. I noticed that all the classrooms had IY rules pictures, show me five posters, feeling cue cards and calm down thermometers on their walls as well as small dinosaur chip bags for children to earn rewards. The posters and cue cards all had Arabic translations added to the English words.

The children were well behaved, polite, and delighted to hear Wally talk in English. In one classroom a girl demonstrated (in Arabic) the calm down strategies and acted out each step of going from being hot and angry to taking deep breaths and thinking happy thoughts. As she brought the arrow down on the calm down thermometer into cool blue, her facial expression changed from anger and fear to happiness.



At the end of the school day the students participated in Dinosaur school circle time. The children from all the classroom

time. The children from all the classrooms ages joined together for this event. They sang Dina's feelings songs and yelled out the emotion words in both Arabic and English.



Children receive buttons for completing Triceratops Feeling Unit of Dinosaur School

They played "Pass the Hat" and when the music was stopped the child holding the hat pulled out a question that presented a problem scenario and asked them to name how the character felt. They cheered each other as they came up with the answers. I noticed that all the children were actively engaged and happily involved in this circle time. While one teacher led the games, another teacher was enthusiastically passing out stickers for appropriate responses and the third teacher was running the *Dina Greatest Hits* music CD. They ended the session by singing one of Dina's feeling songs in English! I thought perhaps I could be hallucinating or dreaming ~ was this really happening? Stay tuned for my experience with the Mother's Group here in West Bank!





Program Administrator and Counselor with Wally in the garden



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The bottom graphic features the text "Watch us on YouTube" in white on a red background, above a photo of a woman and a child. Below the photo is the "The Incredible Years" logo and a "NOW" badge.



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