

## **Evaluation Report of the**



## **National Multi-Sectoral Collaboration on Behalf of Young Children**

### **PARTNERS:**

**Community Empowerment Project, Al-Nasir  
General Union of Voluntary Societies  
Jordanian Women's Union  
Jordanian Hashemite Foundation for Human Development  
Ministry of Health  
Ministry of Social Development  
Ministry of Youth  
Noor Al-Hussein Foundation  
United Nations Relief and Works Agency  
UNICEF**

**Janet Brown, MSW, Sr. Lecturer  
Caribbean Child Development Centre  
University of the West Indies**

**For UNICEF Jordan**

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# **APPENDICES**

I: Interviews and Meetings Related to Better Parenting Evaluation

II: Reports, Documentation Reviewed

INTERVIEWS AND MEETINGS RELATED TO  
BETTER PARENTING PROJECT EVALUATION

**Interviews Conducted with Technical Directors of Partner Organisations:**

Fawaz Mzraawi, Abu-Thar Al-Gafari Committee, Community Empowerment Project, Al –Nasir

Mohammad Al-Ardah, Former TD, General Union of Voluntary Societies

Samar Al-Shahwan, Jordanian Hashemite Foundation for Human Development

Dr. Randa Bkanean, Dr. Mai Soub, present and former TDs, Ministry of Health

Rima Zaza, Ministry of Social Development (One of two TDs)

Dr.Mahmoud Qadam Al-Serhan, Ministry of Youth

Dr. Nimer Alkhatib, Noor Al-Hussein Foundation

Suzane Hijazy, UN Relief and Works Agency (One of two TDs)

[Jordanian Women's Union not seen]

**Other Persons Providing Information, Feedback re Project Evaluation**

UNICEF Staff:

Frank Dall, Regional Education Advisor)

Misrak Elias, Representative for Jordan

Maha Homsy, Project Officer, Education

Ban Hantouli, Programme Assistant

Rawan Ababneh, Community Empowerment Assistant

Muna Idris, Assistant Project Officer, Monitoring and Evaluation

Amira Barghout, Financial officer

Dr. Maha Shadid, Community Empowerment programme

Lara Hussein, Programme Asst. (Health)

Hind-Lara Mango, Communications

UNICEF ECC Consultants:

Yousuf Mahmoud, Work and Development Society

Muna Ghosheh

Related Meetings, Activities Attended

**Project Steering Committee of Technical Directors**, July 19, facilitated by Jamal Salal; all partner organisations present, represented by one or two technical directors

July 24: Meetings at Abu-Thar Al-Gafari Committee offices:

a) **Community Empowerment Team** re Al-Nasir projects, ECC-SGD

Persons present:

Fawaz Mzraawi, Director, Abu-Thar Al-Gafari Committee

Yousef Mahmoud, ECCD consultant  
Muna Ghosheh, ECCD consultant  
Mustafa Muhsin, male BP trainer  
Rawan Ababneh, UNICEF Community Empowerment Asst.  
Ban Hantouli, UNICEF Programme Asst.

- b) **Discussion with mothers, young single women** who had taken the Better Parenting Course: shared perceived gains, reflections on experience
- c) **Discussion with training team members (3)** who have taken and implemented the BP training, and who have also been trained as health educators for this community. I was to have observed their parent training session but it was over before we finished above meeting with former participants. They described the session and showed visual aids they had made for use in session. I conducted a brief exercise on perceived areas of family influence for mothers and fathers with this group.

July 27: Observed **training of all health workers from three health centres in Al-Nasir** Area with Yousef Mahmoud, Muna Ghosheh. Training conducted by Suzane Hijazy (UNRWA) and Mustafa Hasan, trained facilitator from Al-Nasir area. Participants included 2 doctors (one a dentist), and approximately 20 nurses (2 male) and midwives , 1 lab technician.

July 26: **Facilitator Training, Karak**  
Approximately 40 trainees, 6 trainers were present for a one-week course for new facilitators. We observed session on use of BP content/materials for 3-4 year olds, conducted by Eaatimaad Abu-Afeefeh (UNRWA).

Also met briefly with Consultant for UNICEF, Natasha Shawareb, evaluating Trainers for the purpose of designing next Training of Trainers course for August 2000. Discussed were concerns for improving knowledge and comfort with participatory methodologies among trainers.

July 27: **National Team on ECCD Strategies**, 5 members present of 10:  
Dr. Munther Masri, National Centre for Human Resources &  
Development, Chair  
Zahia Innab, Director, Channel 1, JTV  
Dr. Zuhair Zakaria, Counsellor  
Dr. Hala Hamad, , ECD Specialist  
Maha Homs, UNICEF (member)  
Misrak Elias, UNICEF (guest)

# APPENDIX II

## REPORTS, DOCUMENTATION REVIEWED

### UNICEF documentation:

1. Master Plan of Operations between the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and UNICEF for the years 1998 – 2002.
2. The Situation of Jordanian Children and Women: A rights-based analysis. UNICEF, Amman, September 1997
3. Overview of the Early Childhood Project, Jordan [date]
4. Better Parenting Project: Concept paper, 1996
5. UNICEF Activities in Early Childhood Care: A Review of 1999 Annual Reports (UNICEF HQ)
6. A Future Global Agenda for Infants and Young Children: Objectives and Proposed Areas of Action (UNICEF HQ)
7. Fact Sheet One: Rights of Children and Women: The Situation in Jordan
8. Scripts for Eight Fact Sheets on status of women and children in Jordan
9. Memorandum of Understanding for the Better Parenting Project between UNICEF and X: a model agreement for review
10. Srour, Nadia: Three evaluation reports on Better Parenting Project:
  - a) Efficiency of “Towards Better Parenting” educational program, in raising the level of mothers’ awareness in the areas of childcare, growth and development
  - b) Better Parenting Implementation, Phase I, August 1997
  - c) Better Parenting Program: Implementation, Evaluation and Future Plans, Third Phase, December 1997
11. A National Program for Implementation, Evaluation and Future Aspirations (Three sub-reports: August 1997, November 1997, December 1997).
12. Power Point slide copies from ECC-SGD Workshop on Tools for Assessment, December 1999
13. Power Point slide copies from presentation on ECC-SGD: A Comprehensive Approach to programming for Young Children, November 1999.
14. Gender Socialization in Early Childhood: Mainstreaming Gender in Early Childhood Care for Survival, Growth and Development (Final Draft), UNICEF Programme Division, New York, December 1999.
15. A Working Paper on Home and Community Health Care to Enhance Child Survival, Growth and Development, Programme Division, New York, December 1999
16. Child Development in UNICEF Programming: A Contribution to Human Development through Early Childhood Care for Survival, Growth and Development, (Working Group, ECC-SGD) Programme Division, September 1998.
17. McDonald, K. Supporting the Central Role of Families: The case of UNICEF Jamaica, December 1999

### Other Reference Materials

1. Directory of Non-Governmental Organisations in Jordan, Global Development Forum, 2000
2. Landers, Cassie. Four Facilitators Guides for use with Animated Videos: Basis for development of BP materials and films in Arabic
3. Video films and booklets developed for parents and facilitators for BP (viewed for images only)
4. Jordan 1999-2000, Country Profile. The Economist Intelligence Unit
5. Jordan Country Study on Biological Diversity, UNDP, UNEP (Year not stated, but since 1996); Chapter 2: An Overview of Jordan

## **THE BETTER PARENTING PROJECT**

### **Amman Jordan, August 2000**

#### **1. BACKGROUND**

##### **1.1 The Context for the Better Parenting Initiative**

The Better Parenting Project was initiated by UNICEF with local partners in six countries within the Middle East Region in 1996, resulting from a workshop on this topic among these countries. The project as developed in Jordan sought to address the needs of parents of very young children for basic information and support in their tasks of child-rearing, specifically in the areas of health, nutrition and social-emotional development. A national survey conducted by UNICEF on the knowledge, attitudes and practices of Jordanian parents related to early childhood care indicated that "the majority of young parents lack the necessary information and skills for providing a stimulating environment at the home, especially in areas related to social and emotional development".<sup>1</sup>

Particularly targeted were urban and rural families disadvantaged by conditions of poverty, no or minimal employment, and low literacy/educational achievement. Just over 50% of Jordan's estimated 5 million population<sup>2</sup> are children 18 years or under; an estimated 18-20% of the population hasn't yet started primary schooling (900,000 - 1,000,000 children). Just over 1/5th of the population is below the Jordanian poverty line. Jordanian family size is generally large (average 6 persons, with 40% having more than 8 members per household), and the largest households are more numerous among the poorest families. Thus we can extrapolate that more nearly a quarter of Jordanian children in the birth to age 6 age group fall within this project's target population (or approximately 225,000 - 250,000 children).<sup>3</sup>

International research in developed and developing countries have provided incontrovertible evidence that early interventions in support of healthy physical, mental and social development have long-lasting positive effects on children's all-round development, on their performance in school, on their relationship with others, and on their productivity well into adult life. Not only are these early interventions long-lasting, they are much less costly than repairing problems that develop as a result of delayed or damaged development.<sup>4</sup>

Further context for this project lies in the emergence of a Plan of Action for Early Childhood from a National Seminar for Children in 1992. High priority was given in this Plan to three major objectives:

- a) increasing kindergarten enrolment from 18% to 50% by 2000;
- b) developing relevant legislation in support of early childhood needs; and
- c) promoting family and community integration in early childhood programmes.<sup>5</sup>

By 1996, it was evident that the goal of 50% kindergarten (KG) enrolment was not likely to be achieved for a number of reasons. Among the most obvious reasons were the lack of family demand for these services, due largely to low participation of women in the labour force (16% in 1996<sup>6</sup>); and the fact that there was only private sector investment in expansion of services, thus rendering most services beyond the reach of low-income and poor families. Kindergartens, now serving approximately 25% of the age group, only enroll children from 3 years, 8 months old. Nurseries for younger children are fewer in number than KGs, and they too are overwhelmingly in private hands, reported to be of widely varying quality.<sup>7</sup> Thus most young children remain within their home environments, in the care of mothers and other family members.

While the first two goals of the National Plan of Action remain relevant and active pursuits in which UNICEF collaborates in a number of ways, UNICEF has responded more specifically and significantly to the third, with concern to support the majority of young children who remain outside the reach of organised group care during the day--by developing a programme which targets these children's primary caregivers within their homes and informal community settings.

## **1.2 The Pilot Project**

In early 1996 a UNICEF programme team adapted materials developed by UNICEF internationally<sup>8</sup>, focussed on child development issues for parents of children from birth through age 6. With the help of Jordanian consultants these materials were adapted culturally as necessary, translated into Arabic, and produced as four video presentations, four accompanying parent booklets, and three Facilitator guides to the use of these materials.

A pilot programme began in June 1996 to test the effectiveness of these tools in engaging parents to reflect on, and strengthen or change their child-rearing practices. The pilot consisted of three stages of activities, each evaluated in several aspects by Dr. Nadia Srour, an Assistant Professor in Special Education at Jordan University<sup>9</sup>. In phase one trainers were trained by a team of UNICEF consultants in the use of the new "Better Parenting" materials, and these trainers in turn trained facilitators who delivered the 8-session programme in ten centres in the greater Amman area. The second phase of this cascade model of delivery was conducted in 12 centres in greater Amman and districts in southern Jordan; phase three took all but one of 19 programme series to northern Jordan. All three phases involved trainers and facilitators nominated by Ministry of Health, Ministry of Social Development, the Queen Alia Fund for Voluntary Work (now the Jordanian Hashemite Fund for Human Development, JOHUD), and the General Union of Voluntary Societies (GUVS). These facilitators were generally drawn from the communities/districts in which they subsequently conducted the parenting education programmes. In all, the Pilot phases trained 44 facilitators, and 900 women attended the parenting series of sessions.

In Phase One, the programme participants (all women, mostly mothers) were given pre-test questionnaires on their child-rearing knowledge and practices before attending eight sessions in which a portion of a video film was shown, printed materials were distributed, and the film and materials were discussed by the women. Post-test questionnaires

probed the extent to which these women's knowledge had increased, and whether behaviour in relation to their children had changed. In a summary report of the evaluation components, evaluator Dr. Nadia Srour states that, for the 112 mothers who attended every one of the eight sessions (out of the 214 who attended some),

*the findings demonstrated that the program had a statistically significant effect on creating differences in the performance of mothers, as measured against the pre- and post-participation evaluation tools. Improvement was observed in the level of the mothers' knowledge in the areas of child growth and development....The program also contributed towards improving the mothers' patterns of parenting. No differences were found in the performance of literate or illiterate mothers.*

*The results also demonstrated that the program was both effective and suitable, that it led to raising the level of mothers' awareness in the area of early childhood upbringing, and that it could be implemented in Jordanian communities at the grass-roots level. The method of selecting the female trainers and the suitable centres for where the training is to be conducted, as well as the strategies for the training of trainers and program implementation, need to be taken into consideration.<sup>10</sup>*

In Phase II, the percentage of women who attended all workshops increased as did the numbers of women who started late and did not fill out pre-test questionnaires, but who continued to attend for the balance of sessions. In response to complaints about the length of the questionnaire forms and time required to complete them, the forms were amended and shortened; for Phase III these forms were reduced further to almost half the length of Phase II.

Phase III introduced other changes based on the experiences of the first two phases. One was the appointment of four Liaison Officers to supervise and monitor the training, one officer from each of the participating agencies. The performance of these Liaison officers differed (according to the Srour report); what seemed significant was that the *mothers' gains in knowledge, and behaviour changes in parenting attributed to the sessions, varied directly in relation to the level of Liaison Officer inputs.* For this Phase of the project, MOH monitored 6 centres, MOSD 3, Queen Alia Fund 5, and GUVS 5. Quoting from Dr. Srour's Phase III report: "Looking at average improvements within each group of centers, the MOH distinguished itself. The average improvement level (maternal patterns) at these centers was 9 grades, compared to 2.33 for MOSD, 5.09 for the Fund, and 7.89 for GUVS."(p. 18) The implications in this for the importance of ongoing supports for the facilitators in the field should be examined more closely. The quality of the training inputs from the four supporting organisations (not commented on by Dr. Srour) is also likely to have played a significant role in these results.

Also in Phase III, graduations and certificates for the mothers completing the full course were proposed and welcomed. This public recognition of the investment of these mothers and of the community facilitators seems also to have helped raise the profile of the project generally, and to increase demand.

The conclusion of the Phase III examination of the pre-and post-test questionnaires of the mothers again stated that:

*"the ...results prove our belief in project effectiveness in educating women and increasing their awareness in early childcare. This is expected to reflect positively on child rearing and development practices and to contribute to the achievement of the objectives of early childhood projects. Such projects aim at preparing children in a positive and healthy manner, protecting them from frustration and strengthening their abilities to lead productive lives (p. 13).*

Among the several recommendations from Phase I was the first mention of expressed interest from participants to include fathers in the Better Parenting programme. This recommendation was not acted upon, however, in the latter two pilot phases, and did not reappear in the recommendations at the end of the third phase. Based on this evaluation, which included many specific recommendations from facilitators, parents and the participating agencies at the time, the Better Parenting Programme was incorporated into UNICEF's 1998-2002 Five-Year Country Programme to extend coverage of the programme and, it was hoped, to deepen its impact.

### **1.3 Better Parenting Programme from 1998 to the Present**

In UNICEF Jordan's Master Plan of Operations<sup>11</sup> for the five-year cycle beginning in 1998, four areas of activities were specified to build on the work of the previous Pilot phases of the Better Parenting Project:

1. Identify and assess knowledge gaps and skills among different targeted groups including parents, social services providers and decision makers;
2. Support advocacy events and the development of relevant information material targeting decision makers and parents and caregivers within the CRC context;
3. Continue the development of training material to be used by participating partners with community outreach facilities (MOH, MOSD, MOY) and NGOs to enable them to adopt and incorporate the better parenting strategies and methods; and
4. Support the formation of core teams of trainers/supervisors from line ministries and NGOs for resource centers development including for children with disabilities.

The impact of the programme was to be measured by the following indicators:

- Existence of a qualified core team of trainers within all participating partners;
- Number of outreach facilities implementing the better parenting strategies and methods;
- Number of parents and other caregivers aware of and practicing better parenting skills.

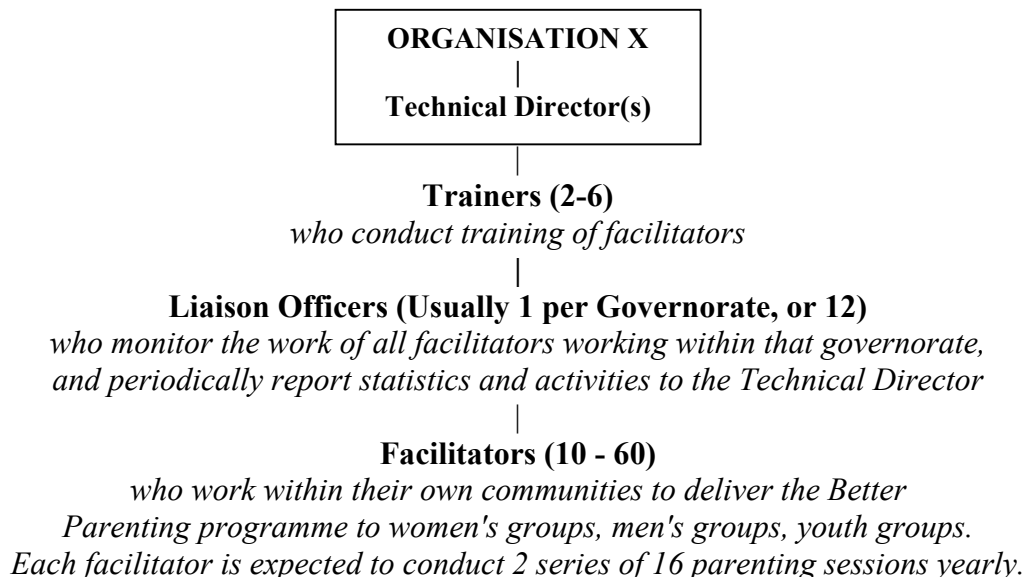
To achieve the above activities and ensure that the programme was extended more widely throughout the country in a planned and effective manner, a Project Steering Committee was established with some of the former participating organisations plus new

organisations holding a national outreach objective. Ten partners were thus designated, with one or two technical directors from within each organisation serving as Steering Committee representatives, and holding responsibilities for monitoring and periodic documentation of Better Parenting Activities within their organisations. Collectively they develop an annual plan of expansion activities; in monthly meetings they review progress of the overall programme and address specific problems as they arise. A list of the current Partner Organisations and their technical directors follows. It should be noted that the Jordan River Foundation was active at the outset, but has not been so more recently. It is presumed they may return to more active participation in the future.

PARTNER ORGANISATIONS	TECHNICAL DIRECTORS FOR BP
Community Empowerment Project, Al-Nasir Local Area Committee	Fawaz Mzraawi, Abu-Thar Al-Gafari Committee
General Union of Voluntary Societies	Hashem Al-Qdah (formerly Mohammad Al-Ardah)
Jordanian Women's Union	Nemah Al-Kudsi (formerly Hikmat Halaseh)
Jordanian Hashemite Fund for Human Development	Samar Al-Shahwan
Ministry of Health	Dr. Randa Bkaean (formerly Dr. Mai Soub)
Ministry of Social Development	Rima Zaza, Hana Al-Eter
Ministry of Youth	Dr. Mahmoud Qadam Al-Serhan
Noor Al-Hussein Foundation	Dr. Nimer Alkhatib
United Nations Relief and Works Agency	Suzane Hijazy, Randa Halaweh

#### 1.4 Implementation Structure

The project's implementation structure takes advantage of the existing outreach activities of all the participating partners, while providing training inputs that strengthen the capacities of these partners at organisational and at field operations levels. The programme implementation structure for each partner organisation is basically the same:



At the time of this report, the Steering Committee Partners have been actively developing this programme within their own organisations for 2 1/2 years, and are now at the mid-point of UNICEF's mid-term review of their five-year Plan of Operations. The trainers and liaison officers are generally paid staff of the participating partner organisation, with other agency responsibilities. The facilitators are either volunteers or paid staff of the partner organisation. A rough calculation for this report indicates that the Better Parenting project currently consists of 11 Technical Directors from 9 organisations, 33 trainers, 86 liaison officers, and 305 facilitators, all of whom who have received training specific to their functions.

## 1.5 The broader UNICEF context of ECC-SGD

In developing the Better Parenting Project, UNICEF Jordan did not lose sight of the fact that this programme cannot by itself satisfy all the intersecting needs of young children and their families in present-day Jordan. Subsequent to the regional encouragement of Better Parenting initiatives in 1996, UNICEF internationally developed new policy guidelines urging country programmes to strive to integrate elements resourcefully on behalf of young children, on the basis that "health, nutrition and education interventions provided early in life significantly improve disadvantaged children's educational and economic productivity".<sup>12</sup>

UNICEF's guidelines for **Early Child Care for Survival, Growth and Development (ECC-SGD)**<sup>13</sup> define this policy as "an integrated approach to programming for young children 0 - 8" which "combines interventions in health, nutrition, hygiene, and cognitive and psychosocial development". In a discussion paper on this new approach (September 1998), a UNICEF Working Group of multi-disciplinary specialists provides the definitions and contexts for understanding this focus on integrating supports for very young children:

*The term Early Childhood Care [is used to mean] the set of practices and actions that affect child development, including growth and survival. Good care not only protects the child from harm, it also produces an "enabling" environment for extending survival while promoting growth and the psycho-social and cognitive development of the child.*

*The most immediate and important environment for care is **the home and the family**. The broader environment of **the community** in which a child lives becomes increasingly important as a child becomes older. Both family and community environments have physical and social dimensions. Thus good care means establishing environments that provide access to safe drinking water, follow adequate sanitation and waste disposal practices, avoid food contamination, are free of indoor air pollution, are disease-free, protect children from injury and include adequate space for various forms of exploration and learning. "Enabling" family and community environments also provide food, health care, love and affection, interaction and variety of stimulation, conditions for exploration and discovery, and established forms of cultural socialization and introduction to skills that will promote later learning and living.*

*The child also lives in an environment provided by **a national context** with its particular policies, laws, services and social institutions. Finally, a cultural viewpoint or **ethos** helps to determine beliefs and practices of child care that are followed by families, communities and societies.*

*From these distinctions flow a complementary set of programme approaches focussing, respectively, on (1) family conditions and practices, 2) community conditions and practices, 3) social policies, laws and institutions, and 4) cultural values and beliefs. **A complete early child development programme agenda and strategy must consider actions at all of these levels.***

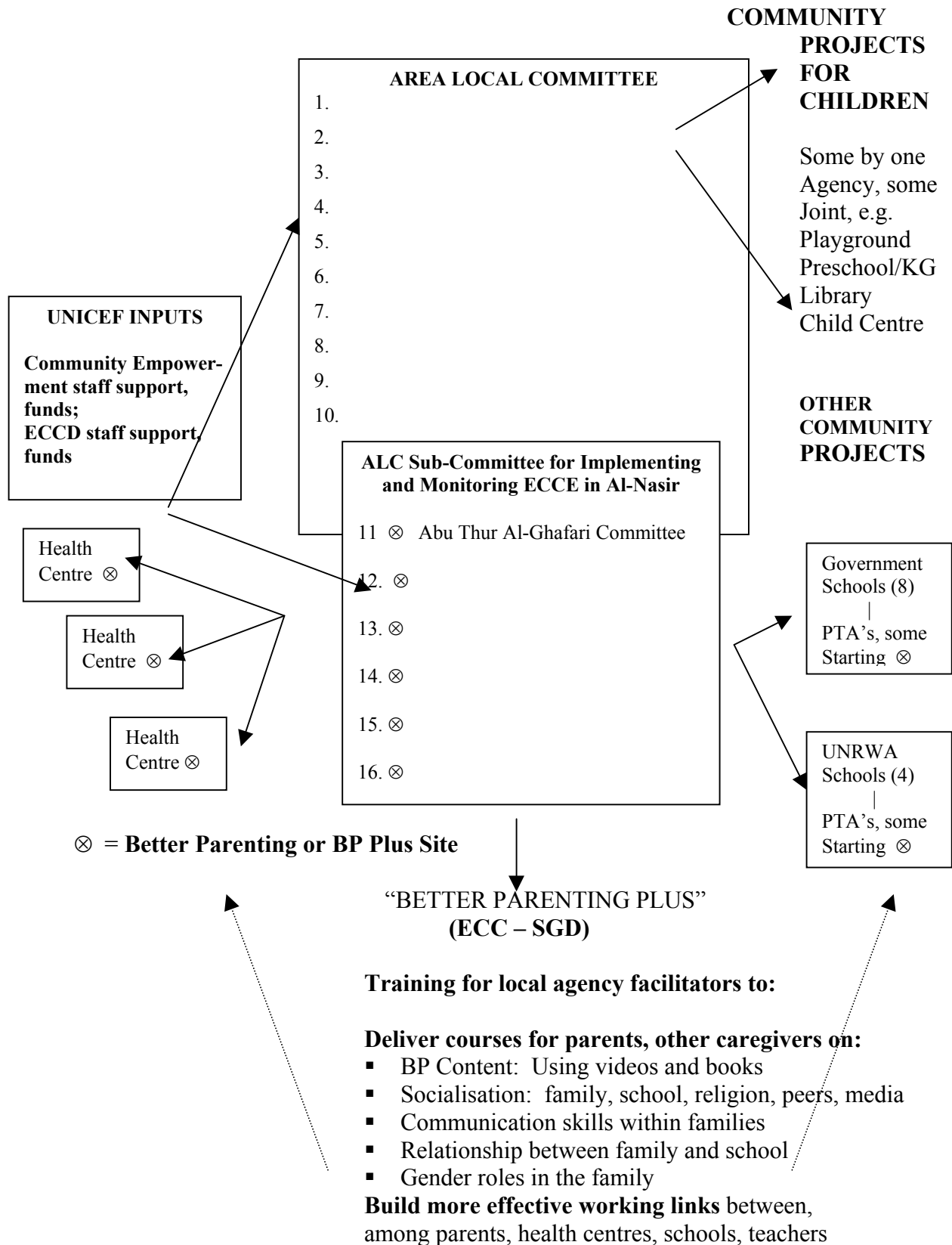
Thus UNICEF Jordan, along with other UNICEF Country programmes around the world, were challenged to examine their programmes targetting the needs of young children to assess whether present interventions addressed these four levels of interventions, and if so, whether they were interwoven effectively for the greatest overall benefit.

Although the Better Parenting Project could be said to have *content* which integrates all the above elements for the benefit of supporting and increasing parental knowledge and good practices, *the programme does not of itself deliver the integrated interventions*. It was thus decided in mid-1999 to try to more fully implement the ECC-SGD guidelines within one of the Better Parenting projects, already embedded in a multi-agency community setting with community outreach goals--the Community Empowerment project in which UNICEF supports the activities of the Area Local Committee (ALC) in Al-Nasir. The Abu-Thar Al-Gafari Committee has to date coordinated the Better Parenting programmes in the area and serves as the Technical Director on the BP Steering Committee. The Al-Nasir community of an estimated 39,000 persons contains three health centre facilities and 12 schools: 8 government schools and 4 UNRWA schools. The Community Empowerment initiative had already provided agency capacity building and assisted increased collaboration among the many and disparate agencies and societies working within this community. The Area Local Committee of 16 NGOs (11 locally based, 2 international and 3 community action committees ) meets regularly to plan collective responses to community needs, which were also identified by the ALC through several Participatory Rapid Assessment (PRA) exercises.

UNICEF's objective, arrived at with the ALC, was to provide supports for a specific focus on the needs identified for young children in the Al-Nasir community, within the Committee's other broader objectives. The structure devised for this approach (at this writing) is visualised in the diagram on the following page.

UNICEF has provided two short-term consultants, one from an Al-Nasir organisation (Work and Development Society) and one external to the community, to guide the development of this model of integrated initiatives, to more effectively link health, nutrition, early education and parent education delivery at the community level, through improved local networking and planning, with children's needs as a central focus. Although this initiative is only a little over one year old at this writing, it is a deliberate attempt by UNICEF to test the more integrated ECC-SGD approach in what it is hoped will become a model for extending this approach more widely throughout Jordan.

## 1.6 Diagram of the Al-Nasir Community Structures for Community Empowerment and the Germinal ECC-SGD Approach



## **2. TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR BP EVALUATION CONSULTANCY**

The author of this report was contracted to undertake two main tasks for UNICEF Jordan within a two-week period to be spent in Amman:

- I. To evaluate the implementation and management of the project and its outreach;
- II. To identify the steps needed to ensure the better parenting [programme is] the nucleus and starting point (if feasible) for the more comprehensive ECC-SGD framework.

The Tasks and Responsibilities agreed to in this contract were the following:

1. Become familiar with the project background, development, objectives, activities and plans for the programming cycle 1998 - 2002.
2. Become familiar with the ECC-SGD UNICEF programming framework.
3. Evaluate how successful the project was in achieving its objectives including evaluation of the implementation process and assessment of the efficiency of each organisation in organizing the community-based activities, and identify gaps that exist and give recommendations on ways to tackle them.
4. Examine the existing impact evaluation processes that are in place for the ECCD project and suggest ways of improving them.
5. Undertake field visits to meet with stakeholders such as UNICEF counterparts in this project, in addition to meeting with NGOs, parents, and community leaders.
6. Identify future activities needed to build on the better parenting project in order to ensure that the overall programme is more in line with the ECC-SGD framework.

## **3. THE EVALUATION PROCESS**

As this request was primarily for formative evaluation purposes, to assist shaping the commitments UNICEF has already made to this project till at least the end of the Five-Year Country Programme in 2002, it was important to draw on as many sources of information as was possible and available during the course of the two-week visit before shaping impressions into proposals or recommendations. Before arrival, the consultant had received from the Jordan office a background document on the Better Parenting Project, and from UNICEF HQ brief background documents on the ECC-SGD guidelines, which were reviewed prior to arrival. Additional background information was obtained via persons within the Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development.

The period of the Amman visit was from July 19th through August 2nd. In order to achieve the objectives of the evaluation, the UNICEF office arranged for a series of interviews with partner organisations, relevant UNICEF staff members, and other meetings bearing on the evaluation. The time was regrettably short for including all the persons and organisations with whom it would have been desirable to meet, especially representatives of agencies completely external to the Project but who could have provided reflections on its effectiveness, reach or organisation from outside those most

intimately involved. Perhaps the Mid-Term Review of UNICEF programmes will provide opportunity for such useful external feedback.

Appendix I outlines all the individuals and organisations contacted for this evaluation, as well as relevant meetings attended during the two week period in Amman.

In addition to personal contacts, the consultant gave as much time as possible to reading relevant background documents available in English. There was of course a limitation of language in accessing a number of documents that would have been very useful, e.g. written reports from partner organisations, other research documentation that was available only in Arabic. The UNICEF staff's assistance in obtaining translated documents and translating generally for meetings and some documentation is deeply appreciated, especially since for the BP project staff this period of work was an otherwise demanding one. Appendix II lists documents read in support of this evaluation exercise.

Extremely helpful to the evaluation exercise was the preliminary presentation of findings to representatives of the Partner organisations, the Early Childhood Task Force, UNICEF staff, and selected other interested persons, whose queries, insightful feedback and professional reflections considerably strengthened the sections on recommendations and future directions which follow from the findings.

## **4. FINDINGS OF THE EVALUATION PROCESS**

### **4.1 Scope of the Better Parenting Project**

It was important to gather from the implementing partners the reach of this project over the period since they began their training and delivery activities. The following tables were fine-tuned by UNICEF staff after the preliminary report, since there were some contradictions and gaps between figures provided in interviews and available statistical reports at UNICEF from partners, as well as unavailability of some up-to-date figures..

The total numbers of trainers, liaison officers and facilitators generally reflect the accumulation of persons trained and active since the beginning of the 1998 broadened Better Parenting project, although no doubt some were involved in the pilot phases, and others have dropped out over the project period. The consultant, with the help of the staff team, obtained figures on the numbers of BP courses conducted, and men and women for the full year 1999, and for the year 2000 to date. The first table on the following page provides the numbers of trainers, liaison officers and facilitators, indicating how many are employees of their organisations and how many are volunteers. The second table indicates the numbers of sessions held and number of male and female participants attending these sessions, as reported by the partners.

Table One: *Numbers of Trainers and Facilitators, Employed (E) and Volunteer (V)*

Partners	No. of Trainers (E)				Liaison Officers (E)				Liaison Officers (V)				Facilitators (E)				Facilitators (V)				
	1999		2000		1999		2000		1999		2000		1999		2000		1999		2000		
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	
Abu Thar Ghafari			2	2	1		1									6	4	6	4		
MOSD	4		4		7	1	7	2					6	2	9	7					
MOY	3	3	3	3		12		12			2	6	25	24	27	28			12	15	
MOH *	4	3	2	3	4	8	4	8					19		31						
NHF	2		2		4	1	7	1					18		23						
JWU *					1		5						12		24						
JOHUD	4		4		14		14						10		31			8	19		
GUVs	3		3		1	3	1	3	6		6							32	32		
UNRWA	3	2	3	2	6		7											11	2	14	2
<b>Totals</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>21</b>	

\*Persons not classified as employed or volunteer

Table One shows us that, if MOH and JWU figures represented *employed* persons, 85% of liaison officers are employed, 16% volunteers; on the same assumption, 64% of facilitators are employees, 36% are volunteers. If the MOH and JWU figures represent *volunteers*, then the totals would change to 70% employed liaison officers, 30% volunteer liaison officer, 44% employed faciitators, and 56% volunteer facilitators.

Table Two: *Number of Participants, Number of Sessions*

PARTNERS	Participants				Sessions			
	1999		2000 (to July)		1999		2000 (to July)	
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
Abu-Thar Ghafari	80		135		5		9	
MOSD	215	25	255	25	9	1	10	1
MOY	2000	300	2400	350	100	10	120	15
MOH	354	24			22	1		
NHF	400		1000		16		40	
JWU	72		100		4		4	
JOHUD	473		75		22		3	
GUVS	1370		650		43		22	
UNRWA	600	120	152	16	43	8	9	1
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>5564</b>	<b>469</b>	<b>4767</b>	<b>391</b>	<b>264</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>17</b>

In Table Two, figures indicate that while 30% of liaison officers and 20% of facilitators are male, male participation was 8.4% in 1999 and 89.2% for 2000 to date.

Thus, over the period since Better Parenting was initiated in 1996, with some partners beginning their activities only in 1998, the overall project has considerably extended its reach via the agency of umbrella national organisations, governmental and non-governmental. At the end of the Pilot project, approximately 900 women had participated in BP courses. The totals for 1999 show a total of over 6000 participants, with over 8% of these being men.

Anecdotal accounts from most of the partners indicate that there is increasing demand for Better Parenting workshops. Not only are parents who have not participated in a workshop series enquiring about access, there are reports of parents who want additional workshops after their series has ended, on topics beyond those covered in the series, or in greater depth. The Ministry of Social Development has extended training to KG and nursery teachers during summer breaks; there are requests from private as well as government schools for this activity to be extended to them.

Despite the demonstrated increase by 1999/2000 in service delivery by coordinating partners, persons at the preliminary feedback meeting were quick to note that 6000 persons still constitute a small percentage of the perceived needs for this type of intervention programme, and urged the Steering Committee to continue pressing for expansion of service coverage.

#### **4.2 Impact on Parents, Other Participants, Children**

All participating partners (individually and in the Steering Committee meeting collectively) confirmed that the Better Parenting project is welcomed by parents, has gained wide acceptance in most communities, and is seen as being of benefit. There seem to be minimal areas of resistance to either approach or content, particularly when facilitators show sensitivity to cultural/religious traditions related to gender roles and male-female participation, or to other traditional child-rearing practices in structuring the formats of delivery and discussion.

While there is more pressure from partners and from parents for more involvement of fathers in BP courses, there was no consensus as to whether facilitators should encourage men and women to discuss some parenting issues together. Most supported traditional practices separating men and women for sessions as culturally appropriate and more comfortable for participants; others however noted that facilitator training is mixed and not seen as a problem, and thought more facilitators should propose mixed groups so that parents could discuss their child-rearing strategies together. One sheik was reported to have held Better Parenting programmes in the mosque for men, who were asked to subsequently bring their wives. Both husbands and wives who attended were given certificates on course completion.

The impact evaluations conducted by Dr. Srour within the Pilot project gave sufficient indication that parents gained considerable knowledge through these sessions, and reported changes in some practices with their children. The consultant unfortunately had only one opportunity to obtain direct feedback from parents; another opportunity was missed because of the delayed closure of a previous meeting. These women were far too

few to be considered a significant “sample”, although the positive enthusiasm and specific contributions of the several women who attended this feedback session was encouraging. Of supporting interest were accounts of facilitators who spoke of parent enthusiasm, of changed parent behaviours, and the slow growth of interest and participation from men. There was insufficient information available during this time to assess parent drop-out rate from this programme. When partners were asked, drop-outs were described as minimal. If this were to be documented, it would provide an important indicator of parent support for the programme.

**Thus the consultant takes as a “given” that the product being delivered to parents has been widely valued, and is in increasing demand.** However, the kind of impact assessment that is now called for, it is suggested, is one which measures the ultimate objective of the programme—the impact on the outcomes for the children. This is a much more complicated type of impact to measure. To do it quantitatively in a truly scientific way, is a major and costly undertaking. A number of less costly approaches could be considered to obtain substantive measures of impact on child outcomes which could guide further programme development.

- 1) Presently baseline data gathering tool(s) for the Al-Nasir community are being developed in order to provide benchmarks for eventual evaluation on a number of indicators. It is therefore logical that a longer-term follow-up measurement project against these indicators could be fruitful for Better Parenting initiatives. The consultant had no opportunity to talk with the researcher for this activity, so cannot comment further on possible specific measures envisaged which might be useful to maintain for such a follow-up. If through this exercise a simplified selection of key indicators (ones clearly responsive to specific programme inputs, and measuring both health, behavioural and cognitive changes) could be extracted for use in other communities, this could provide a simpler pre-test instrument for regular on-going use within the BP programme by all partners. The most responsive items from the pre- and post-test instrument designed, amended and shortened for the Pilot phases should inform this exercise. Baseline data on all participants (numbers of children, ages, level of parenting education, household composition, etc.) at the start of each course is being done, but to date it is not known whether or how this data has been analysed for any programme evaluation or development purposes.
- 2) A qualitative case-study approach could be helpful in gauging more specifically how mothers and fathers apply the knowledge gained in the Better Parenting sessions within their home settings. The case studies should be done with a cross-section of parents from more than one community. Factors related to quality of trainer-facilitator inputs would have to be considered in such a study as well, in order to relate the impact on parents with the style, skills and content of presentation.

If budgets allowed, the establishment of a control group of cases, matched with a case study group who experienced the BP training, would be the foundation for a subsequent longitudinal study of parent training effects over time.

- 3) A sub-committee of partners could design formats for conducting focus groups with selected beneficiaries of the BP programme, to examine specific programme objectives. Focus groups would be constituted variously—a group of fathers, one of unmarried women, one of male adolescents, one of grandmothers, etc. Some groups could be of persons who had completed the BP programme, others of prospective course participants. Each would address issues specific to their grouping, e.g. fathers could be asked to describe a programme that would best support their roles within the family; unmarried adolescents could discuss the skills they perceive they would need to become a good parent. Each partner organisation could conduct one or more such focus groups and share the outcomes at Steering Committee level. Focus groups could inform new and perhaps controversial programme directions, e.g. sounding participants on whether they would find it beneficial to have joint men/women meetings sometimes that would allow married couples to discuss with each other the difficulties they share as parents. Focus groups could also be helpful before any extensive new interventions or expenditures, for instance on the production of new materials. Feedback from parents themselves should ensure that new content in fact reflects the concerns as well as changing practices and attitudes of parents.
- 4) Is it known what Grade One teachers (or KG teachers) generally expect of children in terms of pre-academic skills, social skills, motor development, etc.? Are they welcoming or discouraging of children who have been encouraged to ask questions, to explore their world, to use materials creatively? A small study that examines the congruence or dissonance between parental expectations and teacher expectations, and both these sets of expectations in relation to the BP principles on how children learn best at which developmental stages, could prove useful in addressing contradictory messages that may affect programme impact. Preschool and primary school personnel could also be involved in assessing the perceived impact on children and their parents of the Better Parenting programme as compared to families from similar backgrounds not so exposed. Teachers in the process would have to become familiar with the BP content and objectives, thus promoting more congruent delivery of positive child development messages.
- 5) Whatever impact assessment research is undertaken, it is important to whenever possible build in opportunities to take back the findings to the persons who gave the information. This not only values the contributions which participants make to the programme, but it reinforces the importance of data gathering, connects participant inputs to programme outcomes, and can reinforce programme messages. A related reminder is to not ask for information for which there is no intended use—a waste of participant as well as programme personnel time.

### **4.3 Assessment of the BP Content and Training Tools**

From almost every source, beginning with a few comments from parents and facilitators from Phase I (reported by Srour), concerns were raised about the content of the training books, videos and facilitator guides. Overall, the existing content was not strongly criticised *per se*. Parents have found the books relevant and useful, language is

considered to be clear and at appropriate levels (except for those parents with very low literacy), and the videos are generally seen as helpful and illustrative. Most criticisms or suggestions have related to adding content, reducing repetitiveness, improving guidebooks for the facilitators, or changing images to make materials more relevant to the expressed needs of parents. Comments gleaned during the evaluation are summarised below:

**From Pilot phase** (reported by Srour):

Parents:

- More pictures needed
- Growth and development information should be in simple tables with illustrations
- Wider and more comprehensive topics
- Shouldn't have baby bottle or pacifier displayed ( a reference to a cover graphic)
- Most effective picture: crying baby being carried by its father
- More pictures of different socio-economic environments, rural settings
- A self-test of questions at the end of book would be helpful

**Trainer(s):**

- Video redundant in many shots
- Content needs more discussion on child behaviour, problem-solving, risks to children, dealing with sibling jealousy, detection of health problems, and simple home remedies

**Since the 1998 programme:**

These comments were obtained from the Participating Partners as a group and individually; most of the following comments were mentioned several times.

**Presentation issues:**

- More pictures needed, particularly representing different socio-economic groups and settings
- Some cognitive content needs to be simplified for some parents (and even for some facilitators)
- More materials, images needed which focus directly on father's role
- Greater clarity of content, particularly on early brain development

**Content issues:**

- Need more focus on psychological development of children (raised several times)
- Need greater concentration on all relationships within the family, not just parent/child
- Role of eldest child in child-rearing is not dealt with but culturally significant
- Issue of violence in the family and its effects needs tackling
- Need content on behaviour management, problem-solving skills
- Children's Rights (CRC) content should be added
- Include more materials on Women's Rights
- More information to assist groups with issues of emotional abuse, neglect of children (including relevant referral information)

- Clearer information/referral sources re disabilities (strong need perceived in field for this)
- Need content on gender socialisation in the family, wider society
- Single parenting support information
- Family planning information more explicitly available
- Material being strongly requested by parents on adolescence. Partners debated this, some feeling that staying with younger age group was more important, that expansion of age group coverage could stretch facilitators too thin; others disagreed because there is little available elsewhere to help parents with this age group.

This interest in expanding the content for relevance and broader applicability of the Better Parenting project is seen as significant for a number of reasons:

- Parents themselves are engaged and wanting more
- Parents are probing beyond the initial content with facilitators, and facilitators need more materials to support these developments
- The issue of father participation, not even posed for inclusion at the beginning of this programme, has emerged strongly as a desirable outcome for this project
- The need to expand the BP model into other integrated areas of concern to families is being strongly signaled by this feedback.

#### 4.4 Quality of Training Inputs

The issue of differential quality in training delivery was raised for both the Master Trainers and for the Facilitator-trainers of parents. It is stating the obvious to say that the measure of real impact on the parent, and subsequently the children of that parent, rests significantly on the quality of the training received. Most criticisms of both levels of training relate primarily to reliance on more traditional ways of teaching/lecturing (didactic practices of teacher-pupil interaction, uni-directional instruction), rather than on newer approaches that treat participants as both learners and sharers of valuable experience, who can contribute to the collective learning of all, including the facilitator. This kind of learning environment devolves from more current theories of adult learning, and relies heavily on participatory methods to involve men and women in reflective discussion that may provide debate or challenge to either traditional or new ideas, and give opportunity for individual differences and ideas to be freely expressed. Such an approach requires the creation of a non-judgmental climate in which there is not just one answer to a problem but perhaps several, and participants are empowered to make decisions appropriate for themselves, not just take advice.

A current evaluation of trainer inputs is underway to address these very concerns, so the issue was not given much focus within this evaluation. However, three suggestions/comments seem relevant.

- 1) One suggestion supports that of several partners and UNICEF staff that **facilitators would be greatly aided by a Manual that gives them more specific guidelines to participatory methodologies and activities**, and different ways to introduce the same material (depending on the size, gender, ages, literacy level of

group members). Such a manual can be added to when there is new material available. This Manual would therefore not deal necessarily with *content* of courses, but with approaches for making basic material more relevant, more engaging for participants, and less redundant for training personnel. Gaining confidence to train in this new way takes time and support; the Manual would provide one key element of this support.

- 2) The second suggestion relates to the concern also expressed by several persons that the **liaison officer function needs to be strengthened** to do more than just reporting. This function should become more of an encouraging, supporting role to the facilitators in the field who need feedback, ideas, praise, and reflection on their work with someone who is closer to their community experience, perhaps, than "Head Office" personnel. The Phase III evaluation comments on the role played by faithful liaison officers and the resultant differences in participant outcomes underscore this point. More on this idea will be developed in the recommendation section of this report.
- 3) In this kind of work, volunteers and paraprofessionals are often stretched thin, and may not have the enthusiasm and stamina to keep on conducting Better Parenting programmes season after season. **Some turnover is to be expected and planned for.** If regular renewal of facilitators is done, by training new ones and offering refresher training to those already trained, the problems of turnover should be minimised, and facilitators who are not willing or capable of continuing can be easily replaced by newly trained energies.

## 4.5 Financing and Costs of Project

- 4.5.1 **Financing Design:** This project was designed to make the best use possible of existing staff and volunteer teams, already deployed throughout their individual partner organisations' networks of services throughout the country. The organisations recruited by UNICEF as partners in this undertaking were expected, therefore, to subsume some of the operating costs of the Better Parenting programme within their regular activities and budget lines. UNICEF, on the other hand, was to ensure that participating staff were not "out of pocket" by their participation, that BP facilitators within the field, many of them agency volunteers unpaid for their other agency activities, were given some remuneration for these additional duties. UNICEF also was responsible for covering the costs of all training inputs for the staff persons involved, thus "exchanging" capacity building benefits to the partners for their cooperation in staff deployment within this project.

While this design has generally worked to strengthen organisations' staff capacities, and to deliver the wider coverage noted in the section on project scope above, there is still debate on how effectively it is working, particularly as agencies look ahead to the time when it is expected that they should absorb the ongoing operating costs of the project. Some Partners are in fact covering much of the personnel costs of this project, and the actual amounts paid over to them for

trainer and facilitator payments, travel assistance and report-writing "insurance" are not large. But from the first meeting of the Partners, the issue of whether the agencies could carry the programme without these subsidising inputs from UNICEF was a lively debate. Before this issue is dealt with further under the issue of future sustainability (below), it seemed important to first examine what are the real costs of the programme, and what would be the expected toll for individual partners to continue if UNICEF funds were no longer available.

**4.5.2 Set-Up and Evaluation Costs:** The initial costs of the Better Parenting project consisted of production of the four 32-minute training videos, three facilitator booklets, and the publication of large numbers of four-booklet sets for participants. Such one-shot costs can be high, and should not be considered along with recurrent costs, but sources of funds for such outputs will need to be considered when discussing recommendations for the production of additional materials.

The consultant has also not included the costs associated with the initial or present evaluation projects, as these are also non-recurrent, and could in the future be obtained from sources external to the partnership. It was evident that the evaluation of the Pilot project phases provided important indicators of project impact on parents to provide firm support for extension of the project into the Five-Year cycle of activities. Evaluation costs will of course need to be considered again, as recommendations for future improvements and extensions of the project are weighed.

**4.5.3 Financial Arrangements for Project Partners:** Each partner organisation's participation in this project is confirmed yearly in a Memorandum of Understanding with UNICEF which spells out specific responsibilities of the partner and of UNICEF, and sets specific targets to achieve during the course of the year. It is on the basis of this signed agreement that an agreed sum is available to an organisation to claim against the following expenses:

- Payment to Technical Directors for Annual and periodic reporting responsibilities
- Payment to Trainers within organisations for the time spent in preparation and/or delivery of the training activities (if outside working hours)
- Payment to Liaison officers to cover additional transportation costs
- Payment to Facilitators on completion of an 8-session series (Year One) and a 16-session series (Year Two).
- Occasional costs of hall rentals if agency space is inadequate; sometimes this is considerable
- minimal hospitality on training sites

The MOUs have proven to be problematic for some, primarily those with more bureaucratic procedures or levels required to confer. At the programme review meeting of the Steering Committee (19/7), financial procedures were called "complicated" (three times), "take too long", and (for one) "lack clarity". The Ministry of Health was particularly frustrated when delays in signing the

Memorandum meant that MOH facilitators had to wait for payments for up to one year. The former Technical Director in fact shut down the programme as a result of this long delay; it is only now re-starting within a different division of the Ministry, with a new MOU about to be signed.

4.5.4 **Cost Benefit Analysis:** The actual UNICEF expenditure inputs under the several partnership agreements during the 2 1/2 years of the post-pilot activities total \$US\$153,580. to date, broken down roughly as follows:

Facilitator, Parent Training Workshops:	130,816.
Material Supports (video supplies, Stationery, translation, etc.)	14,420.
National Seminar (for raising public awareness)	8,344.
<b><i>Sub-total</i></b>	<b><i>153,580.</i></b>
Plus UNICEF overhead expenses for portions of technical and admin support	42,550.
	=====
<b>Total cost, 2 1/2 years of BP</b>	<b>196,130.</b>
<b>Average cost per year</b>	<b>78,452.</b>

Thus one way to see these costs for ten partners, should UNICEF no longer fund the project, **is less than \$US8000 per year, or JD 5492** per partner. For some partners this would be more of a hurdle than for others.

Another way to examine relative costs of this project is to examine the cost-per-participant. Using the above total figure of \$US78,452.per year average, and the total of all participants reported by all partners during the year 1999 (6000), we can see that a rough cost per participant is **\$US 13.08 or JD 9.15**. If we use the national average of 4 children per household, (knowing that four children is a modest average for the poorer communities served in this project), the estimated cost per child reached by this project is therefore **\$US3.27 or JD 2.29** per child.

These figures relate to the programme costs external to the partners' contributions, the "out-of-pocket" costs which UNICEF has to date assumed. **It might also be useful for advocacy purposes if the in-kind contributions of the Partner organisations were also able to be costed in this analysis exercise.**

Costing analysis allows partners to consider options for other means of support for this programme in the absence of UNICEF contributions, including the option of cost-sharing with parents, and/or lobbying for Government budget lines for this programme. For example, if accurate information on Government expenditures on Education were available, the costs to government per child for primary or secondary education could be compared with the costs per child of educating a parent in ways to better prepare that child for formal schooling. The consultant did an extremely rough calculation from very

limited information available. The annual government recurrent expenditure for 1997 was JD1446 million (total budget). If we subtract figures for national defense and security (431 m) and for external and internal debt repayments (240 m), there is \$JD775 million left for all other government expenditures. If we took a modest 10% of this for Education, and divided this by the estimated numbers of children within the age group 6 through 18 (those in primary and secondary school), a very crude figure of \$JD 51.67 per child emerges, or about \$US73.50. If the Education sector gets more than 10% of this amount, the average investment per child would of course be greater.

It would serve the Steering Committee to provide the figures for such analysis of current government expenditure, in order **to provide a case for increasing or altering investments government makes in its human resource development.** The major international banks and donors have greatly increased their investments in early childhood education on the basis of just such analyses—in recognition that the costs of early supports to good care and development services for children are much less than costs later, spent for remediation services in education, health, and in the juvenile and adult justice system. In fact, studies elsewhere have shown a financial return to the society of at least \$7US to every early childhood investment to disadvantaged populations of \$1US; this is even greater where the recipients are children born into the serious disadvantages of poverty.<sup>15</sup>

#### **4.6 Current Management Issues Raised by Partners**

The fact that eight National agencies (3 Government, 5 Non-Government), and one community umbrella agency (established as a UNICEF national pilot programme) have remained together for well over two years, collaborating on delivering the Better Parenting project with UNICEF as the tenth partner, is quite remarkable. These "umbrellas" are of widely differing sizes, and their mandates and resources are equally varied. They carry a considerable amount of the hidden organisational costs of this national exercise, even if not on their books as Better Parenting, and they have individually achieved most of the targets which as a group they establish yearly within a national plan of activities.

That is not to suggest that there are not reasons for grumbling, reasons to wish that collaboration was easier or less time-consuming, but there are few models anywhere that can bring such disparate players together without these difficulties. The partners in this endeavour should congratulate themselves for having reached this mid-way point—not only for collectively extending the reach of this programme from the 900 participants in the pilot phase in 1996-1997 to at least 6000 participants during 1999, but also for maintaining a commitment to this collaboration, even as UNICEF inevitably phases out its financial and technical support roles.

All the partners with whom the consultant was able to meet (all but the Jordanian Women's Union), were most generous with their time, and their candour was very much appreciated. All were asked to comment on the strengths and weaknesses of the overall project from their points of view, and what scenarios they might envision for the future, particularly in terms of a viable management structure for this National multi-sectoral

project. All spoke without hesitation of the *need* for the programme, and that the project activities had made this more clear and urgent.

There was understandable reluctance, however, to discuss the nature of project management if UNICEF's contribution in both funds and technical support were absent. Both UNICEF roles as "carrot" and "stick" were seen as central to the programme's success to date. Some expressed concern that their own Ministries or agency administrations were not sufficiently convinced of the value of the Better Parenting project to continue to support it without UNICEF inputs; others had full agency backing but little hope of financial underpinning for expenses picked up by UNICEF to date. No one would venture a choice as to which of the partners might have the resources or leadership capacities to take on the major responsibility of coordination of this project.

However, despite some statements expressing ambivalence, all generally believed that the partners would either continue the programme *as it is* within their agencies, or would continue on a more limited basis, anticipating some drop-out in terms of trainers and/or facilitators. Some partners more than others feel they have fully internalised BP as a viable programme; several fear the loss of facilitator commitments if payments are no longer there, as these workers are often low-salaried or volunteer workers for whom the funds, however small, signal value.

In their suggestions for strengthening the programme, they were more definitive. Two mentioned the need for a Procedures Handbook for partner agencies to aid in orienting new staff and volunteers to the project, or to serve as an advocacy tool within their own organisation's management. Several supported the idea of a Facilitators Manual with more guidance on ways to make training more effective, more engaging, and more appropriately suited to different groups of participants.

There was acknowledgement that selection and support of each agency's Technical Director often spelled the difference between success and difficulties. That person plays a pivotal role in convincing management within their department, ministry or agency of the importance of participating in this project, and is equally key in supporting the activities in the field through staff and volunteer deployment. Perhaps Technical Directors need to provide each other greater support in this role.

There were several comments individually and in the Steering Committee's project review meeting calling for greater coordination among partners, particularly at the governorate level. This concern, as well as others of the technical directors' suggestions, will be picked up further in the recommendation sections below.

## **5. Broadening the Programme Approach**

The consultant was asked to comment on whether the BP approach should be re-configured to more closely mirror the ECC-SGD model (refer to pages 6-7 of this report). The recommendation sections will address this more fully, but as findings, the following observations are offered.

The BP programme has successfully begun to address child-rearing practices that are concerned with the physical, social and emotional development of children in relationships with family members. The programme evaluations have pointed some directions for making content of the parenting sessions more culturally relevant, for targeting men more effectively, for better equipping community-level facilitators, for addressing other cultural issues. The BP programme has already been used in a limited way to better equip some KG teachers to deal with young children; the Al-Nasir project is testing ways to more effectively use a broadened BP content at the community level with health and education personnel, linking the programme to other child-focused community activities (e.g. playground, library, etc.) But as pointed out above, the project is not yet effectively integrating its efforts with those of other relevant delivery and advocacy systems.

In that regard, the programme's multi-sector, government/NGO partnership structure uniquely positions the Steering Committee players to model advocacy efforts to effect national policies and legislation, *drawing on the voices and the activities of participants* from many fields in which they operate the BP programme. Lessons learned from the community empowerment approach in the Al-Nasir community should also inform this advocacy, as well as lessons learned from the ECC networking activities with other delivery systems now being undertaken in that same community.

However, commitment to sustaining the programme is critical to moving in this direction. If the Steering Committee can collectively commit to ensuring sustainability of their multi-sectoral approach to programme planning and delivery, they would be well positioned to broaden the programme approach to the more integrated ECC-SGD model. At the same time, the move to a more integrated approach, in the directions suggested in the recommendation sections, should help ensure sustainability of this major early childhood intervention in the long-run.

## **6. Stakeholder Consultation on Preliminary Evaluation Report**

On August 2, the consultant had opportunity to obtain feedback on preliminary report of the evaluation findings and recommendations from the Project Steering Committee members, members of the National Task Force on ECCD, and UNICEF staff members. This was an invaluable aspect of the process, providing clarifying comments, questions which focussed thinking, a sense of consensus of some key recommendations, and some specific recommendations which have been added to those of the consultant. The stakeholder group had two opportunities during the presentation to discuss the report—after the general findings were presented, and again after major recommendations were given. This exercise informed the organisation of the final sections on Recommendations.

## 7. PROPOSED DIRECTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the next four sections, the consultant's recommendations are presented after a brief introductory discussion in each section of the major issues or questions which emerged from the findings. Stakeholders agreed on the importance of these questions in informing the recommended future directions for the Better Parenting Project.

Additional recommendations or comments relevant to each section, offered by participants from the stakeholders meeting, are added in italics to each section. A final section adds comments or recommendations not specific to the four major sections.

### A. Major Question One: *How can ownership of this tested and valuable intervention programme move effectively to Government at the level of policy and deliberate investment, while remaining in partnership with NGOs for national implementation?*

**Discussion:** The National Team on ECCD, under the patronage of Queen Rania, has been working for several months on a Strategy document which will propose some specific directions in support of broad early childhood development, which will of course address the need for parenting supports. There is presumption here that after a National Consultation later this year on this set of strategies, the National Team will develop, as well as entertain, specific proposals for implementing priority strategies. Parenting supports are clearly an area in which the National Team has strong interest, in keeping with their overall concern for targeting early childhood development.

The Queen has stated that she is not interested in creating a new organisation, but in strengthening existing structures to deliver the new policy proposals. It therefore seems more than opportune to suggest that the Technical Steering Committee work on clarifying its vision for BP/ECC, engaging its own organisational directorates as appropriate in the process. Thus the Steering Committee would be proactive in readying a proposal for the National Team, suggesting policy directions for the government based on the experiences of Better Parenting project implementation, and outlining its vision for future directions.

## Recommendations for Moving to a National Structure of Management for the BP/EEC Programme

<i>Consultant's Recommendations</i>	<i>Stakeholder Comments/ Recommendations</i>
<p><b>A.1 The Technical Steering Committee (TSC) should recognize its ownership and investment in BP/EEC as a long-term one</b>, understanding that UNICEF's role will be required to diminish over time. The investments of partners is already substantial, and the potential benefits to all partners from greater collaboration and convergence of objectives should make the alternatives of abandonment or benign neglect unthinkable. Adoption of a revised Plan of Action based on this evaluation and further discussions of proposed directions for the future could signal this new commitment to full ownership.</p>	<p><i>There appeared to be general consensus on this direction for the Steering Committee.</i></p> <p><i>The Committee was assured that they would have a full discussion of the final report as a first step to their beginning work on a Plan of Action.</i></p>
<p><b>A.2 It is recommended that the TSC undertake the development of a programme proposal to the National Team on ECCD</b>, with UNICEF as liaison, that would outline national objectives, structure and budget for the BP/ECC programme, to be directed by a focal agency or multi-sectoral secretariat within the government of Jordan, in partnership with NGOs for delivery of the programme. The roles of government in ensuring policy inputs, and the joint roles of Governments with NGO partners in ensuring funding inputs, quality delivery, extension of access, and coordination of programme elements, would be spelled out in such a proposal. It is assumed that UNICEF would provide technical assistance to this task, and that the National Team would assist the proposal to reach its ultimate objective of Government endorsement and pursuit of appropriate resources.</p>	<p><i>There was general agreement on the goal to target greater government investment in the development of the BP programme, and the need to improve the programme's advocacy efforts.</i></p> <p><i>To convince government to increase its contributions to such a programme, the proposal of the Steering Committee would need to supply the international research evidence demonstrating the benefits to the economy and national development from investments in early childhood interventions. Most politicians and senior civil servants know little about the value of early interventions to brain development, preparation for formal schooling, relationship formation, etc.</i></p>
<p><b>A.4 It should be a target of the TSC to have such a directorate and implementation structure in place prior</b></p>	<p><i>The question of whether the new BP directorate should reside within government or within a less bureaucratic</i></p>

<p><b>to the end of UNICEF's five-year cycle</b>, giving consideration to the role the TSC may wish to request that UNICEF play in support of this new national structure. This timetable gives the TSC a year and a half at the outside, in order to meet UNICEF's new planning and budgeting cycle deadlines.</p>	<p><i>NGO was raised, but there was agreement that this issue needed further debate, and should come from the Steering Committee as part of its vision and proposal development to the ECCD National Team.</i></p>
<p>A.5 It is strongly recommended that <b>the Ministry of Education be immediately brought in to the Technical Steering Committee as a partner</b> in this new direction. In an integrated delivery system concerned with the whole child, it is anomalous that the education component is missing from the planning team. This is a timely move since the Ministry has taken on board targets in relation to preschool education, and many KGs are in fact already benefiting from the BP/ECC programme</p>	<p><i>General consensus. UNICEF can assist the Steering Committee with this direction.</i></p>

**B. Major Question Two: *How can this intervention programme become more holistic in its approaches to children's needs and more integrated and effective in its delivery modes?***

**Discussion:** This section spells out proposed directions for making the Better Parenting programme more holistic in its approaches, while at the same time strengthening its outreach structures for firmer coordination of activities and closer support of facilitators in their roles.

The Better Parenting project is by its design a programme which already integrates a considerable amount of information of concern to parents and caregivers—it addresses health issues, nutrition concerns, child-rearing practices, and developmental activities for children essential to the child's whole and healthy start in life. In some districts the programme has also brought in KG and nursery school teachers and caregivers for training, thus integrating these personnel into the wider circle of persons relating to very young children. So it is not a major step to see how the needs of young children and their families could be more fully met if the services at community level were better coordinated, and linked cooperatively in the delivery of some services, addressing both gaps and overlaps in service reach.

The Al-Nasir diagram on page 8 of this report is referred to in suggesting that that community, through its Local Area Committee, and its Sub-committee for ECC development, has provided the Better Parenting Project with a model and a

process for moving in this more integrated direction. In simple terms, they have pulled together those agencies most directly involved with young children's welfare, who have all experienced the delivery of Better Parenting programmes, and who have come collectively to see the benefits of collaboration in assessing and meeting community needs. In this the Local Area Committee has been strongly assisted by UNICEF's Community Empowerment programme and technical team, applying the principles of personal and collective empowerment to the skills-building activities within this community.

**But how can this model and process be applied to the Better Parenting programme as it now is structured?**

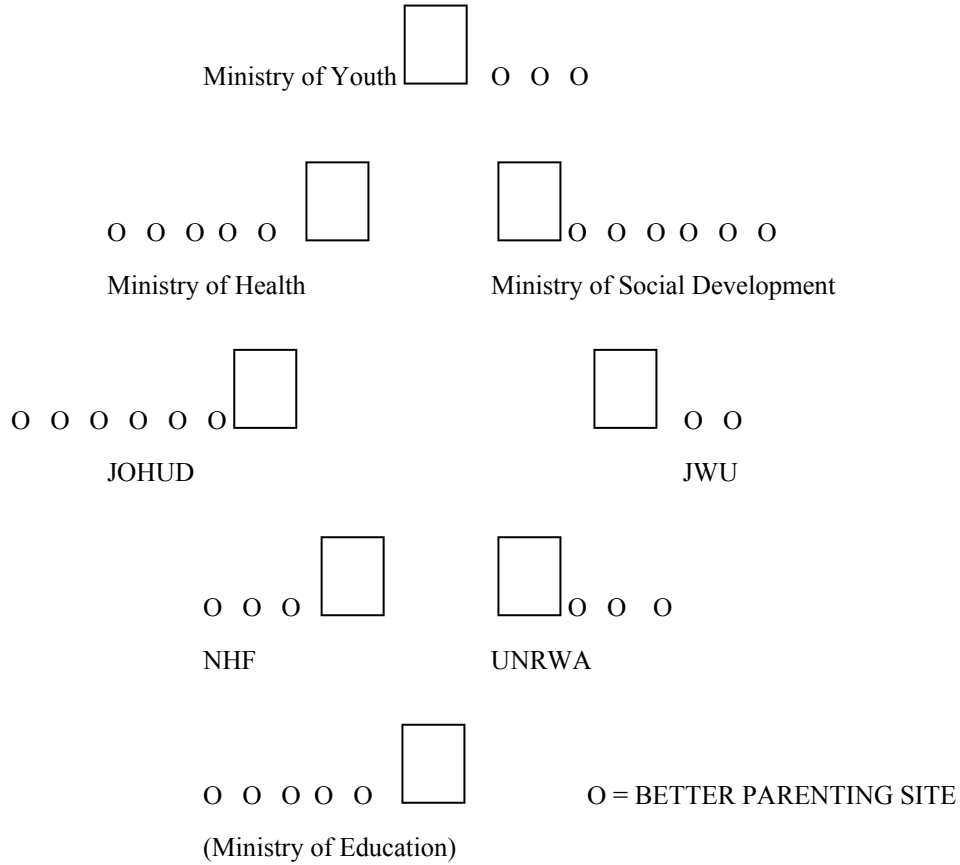
The multi-sectoral structure of the BP project rests not only in its partnership of Technical Directors from the various national agencies for oversight and planning, but it exists even closer to the ground in the nature of the monitoring system devised. One liaison officer for each national agency is designated at the governorate level (refer to diagram on page 6). In other words, each partner has a Better Parenting officer with specific responsibilities for local monitoring and support in each governorate. That person has not only participated in the Better Parenting training course for facilitators, he or she has also received training in order to fulfill the responsibilities of a liaison officer—to visit training sites, to keep records of courses conducted, and to troubleshoot and/or support as necessary.

This “layer” of structure was put in place when the Better Parenting programme moved out of the Greater Amman region, in Phase III of the Pilot programme. It will be noted again here that there seemed to be a direct relationship between the quality and regularity of the liaison officer inputs to the outcomes of the mothers participating. However, during the course of this evaluation exercise, the liaison function was indicated by several as being weak. It varies of course by agency, but overall, the potential role of this officer in providing real supports to community-based facilitators, has yet to be fulfilled. It should also be recognised that there are few supports in place for these agency representatives of Better Parenting, most at some distance from the “hub” of the project and the national organisations in Amman.

Given these two circumstances—that of the growing commitment of partners to expand the content and scope of the Better Parenting programme as a more integrated delivery system, as well as that of the existing governorate structure of Better Parenting officers and multiple sites within each governorate delivering Better Parenting activities, the diagram (*on page 28*) for the creation of BP/ECC Councils at the governorate level is proposed for discussion, and is further explained in the recommendations below. *Note: The acronym BP/ECC is used to designate the ECC-SGD approach, incorporating and expanding the Better Parenting programme. Section D below deals with the need to find a more user-friendly name for this expanded approach. The acronym BP/ECC is thus used only as an interim designation.*

<i>Consultant's Recommendations</i>	<i>Stakeholder Comments/ Recommendations</i>
<p>B.1 It is recommended that the Steering Committee <b>Partners apportion responsibility among themselves for oversight of governorate development and coordination of the BP/ECC programme.</b> This could be done by assigning one or two governorates to each partner, based on selection of the most effective local BP teams or sub-directorate capacities, or by apportioning by some other formula related to agency size, population of governorates, etc.</p>	<p><i>There seemed to be general support for a gradual phased development of the governorate councils proposal. It was suggested that this move should give the programme greater visibility and provide more status to the roles played by agency trainers, liaison officers and facilitators at the local level. Better coordination with local programme implementation sites should follow, and there could even be a healthy "competitiveness" among governorates for programme reach and quality. The phased approach would give opportunity for later Council developments to learn from the experience of earlier Councils. One person suggested that developing the enhanced BP programme might be easier outside metropolitan Amman.</i></p>
<p>B.2 The Steering Committee should set a <b>timetable for phased development of governorate level BP/ECC Councils</b>, e.g. 2 in 2000, 4 in 2001, 6 in 2002, or whatever is deemed achievable based on agency readiness, UNICEF and other available resources, etc. Each Council would consist of all liaison officers for Better parenting project sites within the governorate, and any other local agencies (government, NGO, or community-based) with relevance to the needs of young children and their families in that area.</p>	
<p>B.3 In each governorate targeted for development of a Programme Council, it is suggested that a <b>local Coordinator be appointed and given a part-time "honorarium" by UNICEF.</b> This person should be an already active and respected member of one of the Partner agencies working within the area, who would be designated by that agency for these new responsibilities. The inputs of this person would be more demanding during the initial stages of the programme (thus the honorarium), but the tasks should eventually be part of his or her regular job performance, or perhaps eventually rotated or shared among other participating partners at that level.</p>	<p><i>UNICEF inputs and funding from other sources (including eventually from government as per section A) must be considered in the speed of the phased development .</i></p>

# GOVERNORATE X



## GOVERNORATES (by population %)

Amman	]	
Madaba	]	40.7%
Zarqa		15.4
Irbid	]	
Jerash	]	23.3
Ajlum	]	
Balqa		6.8
Karak		4.1
Tafeeleh		1.5
Maan	]	
Aqaba	]	3.9

## Proposed BP (or ECC) Council for each governorate

Convened by ONE Partner (on rota?)  
8 Liaison officers, all partners  
2-4 other key persons?

### Possible Functions:

- Coordinate BP monitoring, reports
- Provide regular support to facilitators
- Disseminate all resource materials
- Promote Needs Assessments (PRA)
- Promote child-responsive projects
- Network with other area agencies
- Manage BP finances at Gov. level
- Serve as collective child advocates

<p>B.4 It is recommended that <b>UNICEF also supply additional technical Assistance with specific skills in community empowerment approaches</b>, as well as commitment to the goals of the ECC holistic development model. This person would extend and support the work of the local coordinator. This external technical assistance would be available to each of the developing BP/ECC Councils on a part-time basis.</p>	<p><i>Query: Was the Community Empowerment/ECC approach (Al-Nasir) too new to be seen as a “model”? Has it in fact proved to be successful? Response: The model was chosen not on the basis of proven success (it was much too early for this), but on the design of the process for greater local engagement in linking the delivery of relevant services to children and their families. The process seemed to be a way to address some of the identified weaknesses in the present BP delivery system as well as broaden the scope and content of the BP programme.</i></p>
<p>B.5 <b>Possible functions of the BP/ECC Council</b> are listed on the diagram, page 28. These would alter depending on local priorities and issues. An <b>initial workshop at the Governorate level</b>, convened by the Partner agreeing to oversight responsibilities there, should be held <b>with all key stakeholders in the region</b>, explaining the new approach, getting feedback on opportunities and obstacles, discussing specific community needs, and outlining a Plan of Action to begin this coordinated approach to BP/ECC.</p> <p>The Plan of Action should spell out the agreed membership, functions, and chairmanship of an initial Council, and the tasks to which it would address itself, with responsibilities assigned and agreed to among its members. It is recommended that UNICEF support the costs of these initial workshops, and that a Memorandum of Understanding be signed between the Council/local coordinating agency and UNICEF concerning the agreed terms and targets.</p>	<p><i>There was a suggestion that the present Al-Nasir team might serve as “ambassadors”, presenting the new approach and its benefits and implications at the initiating workshops at the governorate level. A related suggestion was to capture the present Al-Nasir experience on photos and video in order to make it come alive for advocacy and public education purposes.</i></p> <p><i>It was suggested that the project might want to take on a multimedia person (with digital cameras) to capture the faces and on-the-ground processes involved in the new integrated approach. Such documentation could help sell the programme to decision makers as well as assist with general public education and awareness-raising objectives.</i></p>
<p>B.6 Wherever possible, <b>funds required from UNICEF</b> for the fulfillment of this Memorandum of Understanding <b>should devolve as a responsibility of the coordinating member or another designated local member</b> to facilitate prompt access of funds and materials and promote local</p>	

<p>accountability.</p>	
<p>B.7 It is recommended that in keeping with the ECC-SGD guidelines for holistic programmatic approaches, UNICEF (and other possible funders) work with interested Steering Committee partners and/or other relevant stakeholders on <b>selection/development of new materials reflecting the integrated nature of supporting children's total development:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Existing materials should be obtained from other local and external sources, adapted/translated as needed.</li> <li>◆ New materials should be developed where called for, based on identified needs, and when no other existing relevant materials can be found, as in the case of materials needed specifically to address men's family roles.</li> <li>◆ Relevant UNICEF materials and resources should be integrated in support of the wider programme scope, i.e. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ CRC and Women's rights components linked</li> <li>▪ New Adolescent programme could provide level of support to develop pre-parenting materials and materials to help parents with raising adolescents</li> <li>▪ Health materials developed for other programmes should be utilised</li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ Partners need to examine own resources re broadening support, e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GUVS ensure links with agencies serving disabilities</li> <li>• New NGO directories made widely available for reference/referral</li> <li>• MOH provide information/materials related to specific health questions, (HIV-AIDS, breastfeeding, specific child ailments)</li> <li>• Family planning NGOs provide materials for use in BP/ECC programme</li> <li>• MOY provide materials relevant to youth issues</li> <li>• MOE re education, youth materials</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><i>One-time funding will still be required for materials production in the new project approach. UNICEF and other external funders should be seen as important continuing resources for these supports.</i></p> <p><i>The need for this approach for new materials evoked no debate; it seemed to be recognized as a given.</i></p> <p><i>Concern was expressed that the content of the BP programme should reflect the latest international research on early childhood development, especially recent findings regarding early brain development and theories of early attachment. Response: The BP materials were in fact developed in 1996 on the basis of the latest research, but much has been added to this literature within the last five years. It was recommended that project materials should be regularly updated to include the latest research information.</i></p> <p><i>A participant queried whether the programme had yet developed <b>cultural products from parent contributions</b>. This notion of parents being active contributors to the project, not just recipients, is central to the points raised regarding the quality of the training inputs. A more reciprocal approach to learning can provide many opportunities for local development of teaching/learning materials, drawing on the experiences and stories of the participants.</i></p>

- C. **Major Question Three:** *How can trainer and facilitator investments be more substantially recognized and supported within his national framework of services, so that these key personnel continue their participation not primarily "for the agency", "for UNICEF", or "for the JDs", but primarily for themselves (who benefit from new skills, new confidence, new experiences) and for their communities' benefit ?*

**Discussion:** Trainers and Facilitators, well-equipped and well-motivated, are the bedrock of this, and most, effective community-based interventions. There has been a reiterated prediction from some of the partners that when UNICEF funds to pay for the training and facilitation services of those within the BP system are no longer available, Partner agencies will be unable to support such payments in the future, and the trainers and facilitators will just quit. This in fact may be true for many such persons, if they have perceived this task as (1) primarily outside their substantive work domain, and/or (2) primarily a supplemental income task, not personally satisfying in itself. Even if payments were to continue, there would inevitably be some drop-out of facilitators for other reasons.

Therefore the continuation of an effective BP/ECC programme is highly dependent on finding ways to secure the motivated and positive participation of experienced and new trainers and facilitators on other than remunerative grounds.

An enthusiastic trainer or facilitator, not motivated by money alone, most often continues for the following reasons:

- ◆ Parents themselves are responsive and appreciative, and make the facilitator feel good about herself/himself
- ◆ Benefits are seen within families and among children as a result of the person's contributions
- ◆ The community gives respect to the role played
- ◆ The agency which recruited/commissioned the trainers and facilitators gives recognition of their efforts as integral to their organisation's programmes, in ways that have meaning other than remuneration, e.g. public praise, certification for new skills, pride in this aspect of the agency's programme, occasional gifts or tokens of recognition, opportunities to take further courses, staff development activities to enhance work.

The challenge of the balance of the five-year programme and beyond, therefore, is to create the conditions for trainers and facilitators which will maintain motivation to improve and extend their project-related skills and activities, seen by their agencies as a substantial and recognized part of their agency work. Within the context of a more integrated multi-sectoral approach, it would be possible to create opportunities for further training and for other empowering activities at the community level which could be linked as further supports to facilitators, as they not only benefit from gains in new confidence but also in new and marketable skills. The role of the liaison officer in supporting and encouraging facilitator performance is critical to this development, and training for these functions needs to be strengthened.

## Recommendations for Recognition and Strengthening of Trainer and Facilitator Roles

<i>Consultant's Recommendations</i>	<i>Stakeholder Comments/ Recommendations</i>
<p><b>C.1 Training for new facilitators and refresher courses for continuing facilitators should be an on-going feature of the BP/ECC programme.</b> Funding for this may still come from UNICEF for a time, but it is appropriate to consider that this is a function that should eventually be part of Government's undertaking to ensure its human resource development cadre is as well-equipped in this area of policy implementation as in other areas in which government invests training funds. Government budget lines and/or government-secured funds for this function would further legitimate the efforts of all those workers who appear to have "tacked on" Better Parenting work to their "real" work.</p>	<p>This proposal was welcomed and discussion was lively, fueled in part by fears expressed by some agencies that their facilitators, often volunteers, will not continue without the remuneration made available by UNICEF. While this is not a fear shared by all partners, some of whom provided assurance of built-in sustainability of the BP programme, it is an understandable fear, particularly for agencies which have not "bought" the BP programme at the highest level.</p> <p><i>Most participants seemed to see the recommended expanded BP/ECC programme at the governorate level as offering more support and incentive possibilities for facilitators. Assessment of facilitator performance, culling of the best ones, recruiting new facilitators with high potential, and "marketing" their new communication skills and knowledge base within wider options than just BP, were all seen as potential positive outcomes of this approach. One person suggested that many schools would be glad to have persons trained in more innovative teaching techniques as well as child development knowledge and skills; the facilitator role could thus clearly be seen as part of a career path for some recruits with consistent and continuing application.</i></p> <p><i>A parallel situation was noted by one stakeholder, when UNICEF support for preschool training ended, and fears of collapse were proven unfounded; the programme continued under the auspice of the Ministry of Education, taking on new forms as it developed.</i></p>
<p><b>C.2</b> When the programme becomes a nationally endorsed one, operating as an "arm" of government policy, a goal might be to have <b>a national cadre of trainers and facilitators</b> that are in fact paid for this role. Alternatively, there could be <b>scholarships or other forms of incentives</b> available to facilitators after serving for a period of time and meeting certain standards of service delivery.</p>	

<p>C.3 Ways to <b>publicly recognize the work of these lynchpins of the programme</b> should be found at the community, governorate and national levels, through the BP/ECC “certificate” ceremonies, in local and national press, in special events to say “Thank You” for national service, with monthly or annual “Facilitator of the Governorate” (or agency) awards, etc. Governorate Councils would be key to realising this objective.</p>	<p><i>Appeared to be heartily endorsed. It was noted that the broader approach being developed in Al-Nasir supported future sustainability by developing greater personal and collective ownership of the processes and products of the project. The impact on facilitators, for instance, promotes their continuing commitment even without remuneration, because the approach changes the way they think about themselves and their community, building self-esteem and community pride.</i></p>
<p>C.4 <b>More aids to support facilitators on the job</b> are needed to provide the confidence-building tools and to strengthen participatory methods of delivery. This report strongly supports the previous suggestion for developing a more user-friendly, step-by-step <b>guidebook or manual for facilitators</b>. Tools and activities therein can be adapted for different content and for differing genders, ages and levels of literacy, and should reduce/remove the criticisms that training activities are too often delivered in didactic mode. Facilitators can be trained and supported in seeing their work with parents as mutual sharing of experience and ideas; they do not have to feel that they must <i>know</i> everything before they can be effective facilitators.</p>	<p><i>This was endorsed by participants, and was also recommended by several stakeholders during their interviews for this evaluation.</i></p> <p><i>It was noted that UNICEF has invested in training facilitators within several projects—the Family Protection Committee, the Human/Child Rights Committee, and the ECCD team were mentioned. Can common skills be seen as emerging in a “facilitator cadre” that could link these activities more effectively? And could the production of a manual take some generic approaches that could be applicable to more than one programme?</i></p>
<p>C.5 <b>Further training and specific tools to assist liaison officers in their monitoring and support tasks</b> should be adapted/devised in order to help these officers provide specific guidance to facilitators in useful and measurable formats. Of course the liaison officers will need their agencies’ support for and recognition of these functions within their employment expectations, and more collective support from each other at the Council level, if they are to remain motivated and productive in these functions.</p>	<p>An earlier Technical Committee member suggestion for a “Procedures Manual” for agencies participating in the BP project is relevant here. The consultant strongly supports this. Such a Manual within each participating agency (with copies available to all key players at all levels) serves both as an advocacy tool, and an aid to continuity of supporting systems and documentation</p>

**D. Major Question Four:** *By what name should this new national (holistic, integrated) programme be called?*

The final question related to the shape and direction of the “new” or expanded national programme for young children involves what the programme should be called. The name "Better Parenting" has a five-year history and positive associations at the community level, but has been more narrowly implemented than the more integrated vision proposed. It also carries the subtle judgment that those parents who come to the programme are not good enough parents, they need to become “better”. Even when this may be true for many parents, the name doesn’t capture the notion that the learning experience should be mutual, that all parents have experiences to share with others, and from which others can learn.

The international UNICEF acronym “ECC-SGD”, and its shortened version “ECC” (used within the new Al-Nasir programme), connote the broader approach, but neither is very user-friendly or sufficiently transparent to immediately convey its major objective. It was confirmed at the stakeholder meeting that this was equally true in Arabic as well as in English.

If the project is to grow and strengthen into a fully national programme, it will be important for it to be known by a name that clearly and strongly conveys the *essential aim, which is to serve the needs of young children in a holistic way within strengthened families and communities, supported by public policies, in ways that effectively link a wide range of governmental, non-governmental and community-based services and programmes.* It should certainly be a name that equally appeals to both mothers and fathers, males and females. And it should be an attractive name and concept that can be easily used for public education campaigns, logos and poster images without cumbersome “translations” of acronyms or lengthy explanations.

**Recommendations Related to the Issue of a New Name**

<i>Consultant’s Recommendations</i>	<i>Stakeholder Comments/ Recommendations</i>
<p>D.1 It is suggested that the Better Parenting <b>Steering Committee</b>, as part of the development of its future vision and proposal to the National Team for ECCD, <b>consider the name change as part of its task.</b> The stakeholders group took up this challenge and began brainstorming ideas. Time unfortunately could not permit this discussion to conclude with a solution. And because the name must work primarily in Arabic, the consultant can offer no relevant suggestions</p>	<p><i>There was insufficient time to explore this issue with stakeholders sufficiently, but there seemed to be consensus that a new name for the new approach was needed. It was agreed that the Steering Committee would work on this at an early date.</i></p>

<p>D.2 It is also suggested that the changes in the programme to a more integrated approach should not in any way be publicly conveyed as an “abandonment” of the Better Parenting programme for something entirely new. The BP materials and approach, as well as its tested experience, remain at the heart of the “new” approach. <b>Thus public education materials, brochures, etc. which use the new name should indicate that the name connotes a programme which includes and extends the BP programme for broader and more effective application.</b></p>	<p><i>There was also consensus that the name should reflect the broadened “enhanced BP” or “BP/ECC” approach. The only suggestion offered within the short brainstorming session was “<b>Together for Children</b>”. It was not explored whether this worked as well in Arabic as it did in English, but this suggestion does capture the child-centred nature of the programme, as well as hint at its collective inputs (parents together, community members and organisations together, government and NGOs together, etc.</i></p>
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## 8. ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

A number of relevant suggestions came from stakeholders either during interviews or in the Preliminary Feedback meeting. Other consultant suggestions didn’t fit specifically under the above major recommendation sections.

### Re Assessing Programme Impact

1. In the findings section 4.3, it was suggested that each agency partner undertake one or more focus groups to ascertain perceptions of the programme among participants; a format for such focus groups could be developed by a sub-committee of the Steering committee. The Stakeholders meeting endorsed the concern to **assess the impact on parents** to inform programme improvements and the development of relevant materials.
2. Stakeholders also strongly endorsed the need to try to obtain more concrete evidence of the programme impact on child outcomes—is parent participation in BP programmes translated into direct benefits in terms of child behaviours, child learning, child health indicators, etc.? It was suggested that such “hard” evidence would strongly facilitate sustainability of the project. Section 4.2 of this report offers some limited suggestions for ways of measuring programme impact and child outcomes.
3. The consultant is very cautious to recommend specific indicators of change to be measured. Experience with a major project in Jamaica to develop measurement instruments to profile children and their learning environments at point of entry to Grade One has been very informative in this regard, indicating how important it is to use instruments that have been normed within the cultural context being examined. The University of the West Indies experience in just completing this major indicators project will be forwarded to the Jordan UNICEF office for reference in this regard.

## Extending Programme Messages

4. In the stakeholder meeting, **the use of media to extend the programme** to more families was suggested as a strategy that could have initially high costs for production of radio and TV programme, but in the long run would be cost-effective in extending the reach of the programme messages to a far wider audience of parents and pre-parents.

## More Actively Involving Fathers, Male Youth

5. There is clear indication that many persons are concerned that the BP (or its “new” manifestation) more proactively target male participation in programmes. The culture-bound nature of this issue suggests many cautions to the consultant offering suggestions. However, with these cautions in mind, the following points are noted:
  - The evaluation exercise revealed that facilitators are getting requests for more content related to husband-wife relationships, and to household relationships generally. Many women are requesting that their husbands and sons participate in parenting education sessions, indicating their concern that men’s contributions to child-rearing be addressed. Whether men are themselves asking for the programme is not clear. A few male facilitators have conducted sessions with fathers; one male facilitator reported on how responsive the men were, although there was not time to obtain details from him. Fifty-six male facilitators have to date been trained in this project, but as yet the numbers of male participants do not reflect this investment (20% of facilitators are male; just over 8% of participants in BP programmes are male.)
  - In the light of the above, the consultant suggests that the Technical Committee discuss where (in what programmes/communities) there might be readiness to experiment with joint male-female BP groups. Although it was made clear that this was generally culturally unacceptable, joint male-female training of facilitators seems to proceed with no problems. This recommendation would address the expressed need for parents to address their child-rearing concerns, and their division of labour concerns, *together*, in contexts in which they can hear each other’s viewpoints, expectations, etc. Very often this lack of basic communication between partners is at the root of conflicting child-rearing practices, of poor marital relations, of in-law conflicts, etc. Experimentation with joint sessions would instruct future developments in this direction.
  - There also need to be **focus group discussions with men**—participants in BP programmes and potential participants—as to their particular interests in parenting issues, e.g.:  
What meanings do children hold for men (which may be different than meanings for women)?  
What roles do they feel are appropriate for them in relation to children?

What should be their role in child care if their wives are working?  
How do they feel about changing status of women globally? Nationally?  
How do men see their roles in relation to raising daughters? Sons?

These focus groups would inform programme content development for materials and discussion guides for men's parenting sessions (as men-only groups as well as male-female groups).

- Venues for men's groups may need to be different from those for women. Where do men feel comfortable being together? Is the mosque an appropriate place? Are there other recreational settings for men in which parenting discussions could comfortably take place?
- Young men's groups should be designed to deal with issues seen as specific to men. These could be designed for boys prior to courtship and marriage, to shape their understanding of the responsibilities of parenthood. The Ministry of Youth seems uniquely positioned to do this; 43 male facilitators (employees and volunteers) have been trained within this Ministry. Their experience, however, in working with unmarried youth, is not clear. Only 25 sessions are recorded for male participants over two years, as compared to 220 for women. UNICEF's new programme thrust directed to adolescents in the new five-year programme could perhaps link with the development of materials and approaches for this group.
- International research literature on the role of fathers in the lives of children could be used to develop discussion materials to enable men to reflect on their importance in the lives of their children, and to take pride in their investments. Approaches to men should *never* be punitive (as if coming from women's complaints) if effectiveness is the objective; punitive approaches only push men further away from the essential debate required to engage them positively in issues of child-rearing, and family communication/relationship strengthening.

## 9. CONCLUSION

The two-week evaluation exercise was too short to accomplish all that the consultant would have wished could have been included in such a review of this very intriguing multi-agency, multi-faceted project. The importance of the multi-sectoral, government/NGO collaboration, however tentative it feels to some at present, cannot be over-stressed, as its success will ultimately spell the success of an expanded national programme.

The feedback session was also too short to have reaped the full benefit of all the valuable reflections potentially available around the table of stakeholders. The consultant is grateful for the candor and insightfulness of those present, and is confident that those qualities, combined with the commitment of the partner organisations and other

stakeholders present, will ensure the pursuit of the general directions discussed in this paper to advance the welfare of young children in Jordan.

The consultant thanks UNICEF and its staff team, and all the stakeholders involved in the Better Parenting programme and its future, for the opportunity to contribute in some small measure to the collective commitment we all share to the wellbeing of our youngest and most vulnerable citizens.

- <sup>1</sup> Overview of the Early Childhood Project Jordan, Background document provided for Consultant preparation, June 2000
- <sup>2</sup> Using estimate based on 1994 Jordan census figure of 4.1 million and World Bank's 1996 estimate of 5.6 million
- <sup>3</sup> Data from *The Situation of Jordanian Children and Women: A rights-based analysis*, UNICEF, Amman, September 1997; and *The Economist Intelligence Unit, Jordan Country Profile*
- <sup>4</sup> Keating, D. and Hertzman, C. (1999) *Developmental Health and the Wealth of Nations*; New York: Guilford press, Chapter 2; Young, M.E. (1996) *Early Child Development: Investing in the Future*, the World Bank, pp. 3 – 13.
- <sup>5</sup> Overview of the Early Childhood Project Jordan
- <sup>6</sup> *The Situation of Jordanian Children and Women*, UNICEF Amman
- <sup>7</sup> Interview with R. Zaza, Ministry of Social Development, July 2000
- <sup>8</sup> Landers, Cassie. (1995) *Facilitators Resource Guides to Four Videos*  
I: Off to a Good Start: The First Year of Life  
II: A Time of Adventure: From One to Three Years  
III: Pathways to Learning: Child Development from Three to Five Years  
IV: Ready for School: Child Development from Five to Seven Years
- <sup>9</sup> Srour, Nadia (1997), *Evaluation of Better Parenting Pilot Programme, Three Phases*, August – November
- <sup>10</sup> N. Srour, *First report, Phase I*, page 3
- <sup>11</sup> *Master Plan of Operations between the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and UNICEF for the years 1998 – 2002*
- <sup>12</sup> Power point presentation on ECC-SGD by Marjorie Newman-Williams, UNICEF HQ, November 1999
- <sup>13</sup> *Child Development in UNICEF Programming: A contribution to human development through early childhood care for survival, growth and development: A paper prepared for the "Tarrytown Group" by Robert Myers and the Working Group on Early Childhood Care for Survival, Growth and Development, Programme Division UNICEF, September 1998.*
- <sup>14</sup> *The Economist Intelligence Unit: Jordan Country Profile*, page 32.
- <sup>15</sup> Berruta-Clement, et.al., (1984) *Changed Lives: The Effects of the Perry Preschool Program on Youths Through Age 19*. Ypsilant, Mich., High/Scope Educational Research Foundation. (cited in Myers, *Toward a Fair Start for Children*, *The Young Child and the Family Environment Project*, UNESCO 1900-1005, page 40)
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