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## Eye to the Future II

### Final External Evaluation Report

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Ritesh Shah, Independent Evaluation Consultant

Eye to the Future: Building Skills and Attitudes that Promote Academic Success, Resilience and Conflict Mitigation in Gaza funded by the Palestinian Community Assistance Program (PCAP) USAID-funded project through Mercy Corps

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## Abbreviations and Acronyms

<b>Acronym</b>	<b>Full name</b>
<b>ACA</b>	Al Atta' Charitable Association
<b>ARS</b>	El Amal Rehabilitation Society-Rafah
<b>CARE WBG/CARE</b>	CARE West Bank-Gaza
<b>CBCL</b>	Child Behavior Checklist
<b>CBO</b>	Community based organization
<b>E2F/E2FI</b>	Eye to the Future, Stage I
<b>E2FII</b>	An Eye to the Future: Building Skills and Attitudes that Promote Academic Success, Resilience and Conflict Mitigation in Gaza
<b>Edgework</b>	Edgework Consulting
<b>FY</b>	Fiscal Year
<b>HDA</b>	Human Development Association
<b>INGO</b>	International Nongovernmental Organization
<b>JRS</b>	Jabalia Rehabilitation Society
<b>M&amp;E</b>	Monitoring and Evaluation
<b>MCRS</b>	Maghazi Community Rehabilitation Society
<b>MSC</b>	Most Significant Change
<b>NGO</b>	Nongovernmental Organization
<b>PCAP</b>	Palestinian Community Assistance Program
<b>PM</b>	Project Manager
<b>PMEP</b>	Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Plan
<b>PONAT</b>	Participatory Organizational Needs Assessment Tool
<b>PSCF</b>	Palestine Save the Children Foundation
<b>SGCBO</b>	Sub-Grants and Capacity Building Officer
<b>UNWRA</b>	United Nations Works and Refugee Agency
<b>USAID</b>	United States Agency for International Development
<b>USD</b>	US Dollars

## Acknowledgements

The evaluator would like to express gratitude to the children, mentors, parents and community leaders who took the time to provide stories of change as part of this final evaluation report. Their often poignant and personal stories of change are the real “proof in the pudding” on the strength of impact of the E2FII program on the lives of the children of Gaza and their broader communities.

This data collection would not have been possible if not for the cooperation and assistance of the project coordinators at each of the E2FII sites, and the translator employed by CARE. Together, they ensured that people were organized, available and able to converse freely. Thank you for your support!

The evaluator is also grateful for the open lines of communication, tireless assistance, and responsive and receptive feedback provided by the E2FII program staff from CARE throughout this final evaluation exercise. The support provided to the evaluator by the E2FII project consultant was also much appreciated.

## Executive Summary

This report presents an external final evaluation of the *An Eye to the Future: Building Skills and Attitudes that Promote Academic Success, Resilience and Conflict Mitigation in Gaza* (E2FII). This \$2.65 Million USD project was funded by a sub-grant received by CARE West Bank Gaza (CARE WBG) under the USAID Funded Palestinian Community Assistance Project (PCAP) managed by Mercy Corps. The project was funded for 23.5 months—August 1, 2011 to July 15, 2013—with eighteen months of active program implementation. Six different CBO partners in the communities of Southeast Rafah, Al Qarara, East Jabalia, East Gaza Valley, East Deir Al Balah, and Beit Hanoun operationalized E2FII. The goal of the project was to shift child and adult attitudes and behaviors in ways that contribute to a more peaceful internal environment and lay the groundwork for children’s educational development and socialization, including addressing conflicts without resorting to violence. This final evaluation was commissioned to Ritesh Shah, an independent evaluator from New Zealand and completed in April/May 2013.

### Objectives and methodology of the evaluation

The objective of the final evaluation was to assess whether the set targets and anticipated outcomes of E2FII were achieved, and to determine the mitigating factors that may have impacted on these results. The final evaluation also needed to gauge the relevance, efficiency and sustainability of E2FII’s impacts on its primary beneficiaries (2,400 children between the ages of 9-12), as well as CARE’s six implementing partners and the broader communities they serve.

The evaluation methodology was comprised of three stages: (1) Desk review of relevant documentation; (2) Fieldwork in Gaza; and (3) Synthesis, Analysis and Reporting. As part of the desk review, the project’s Quarterly and Annual Reports to Mercy Corps, program manuals and training materials, and a substantial body of monitoring data collected from children, parents, mentors and CBOs were reviewed in detail. This was followed by nine days of fieldwork in Gaza in late April/early May 2013, during which time Most Significant Change (MSC) methodology<sup>1</sup> was used to collect stories of impact from project beneficiaries and those involved in project implementation, and to observe E2FII activities at each of the six sites. In addition to the 66 MSC stories collected, the consultant also conducted a number of individual or group interviews with the E2FII program staff from CARE WBG, the E2FII project consultant from Edgework Consulting, the PCAP Mercy Corps Grants Director and Grants Manager, and CBO management teams.<sup>2</sup>

### Summary of key findings

In general, the evaluation found that the E2FII had met and/or surpassed most of its anticipated outcomes and objectives, and provided unforeseen additional benefits to the project beneficiaries and the broader communities served. The evaluation also notes that the program design and approach had created clear pathways and opportunities for the impacts noted to be sustained in the short to medium term.

Academic data such as school certificate scores and internal assessment tests, alongside stories of

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix D for details regarding how MSC was utilized in this project. In total 39 stories of change from project beneficiaries (children, mentors, parents and community leaders), 25 stories from CBO senior managers/project support team members (project coordinators, assistant project coordinators, psychosocial workers, and teacher coaches), and two stories from the E2FII leadership team (CARE and Edgework) were collected. Through two iterations of selection panels—one comprised of project support team members and CBO management representatives from all six sites, and the other comprised of the E2FII Project Manager and the two Sub-grants and Capacity Building Officers (SBCBOs) from CARE, the project consultant from Edgework Consulting, and the Mercy Corps PCAP Grants Director and Grants Manager—several stories of significant change were selected to be featured in the evaluation report. The full catalogue of stories is included in Appendix C

<sup>2</sup> Usually comprised of the CBO chairman, CBO accountant/finance manager, CBO administrative head, and the E2FII project coordinator

change collected from parents and children, suggest clear improvements in academic performance as a result of participation in the program. E2FII was also successful in equipping children with important study skills, enabling some to become what the program labeled “stress tolerant learners.” There was also clear affirmation in data collected and analyzed that E2FII had contributed to the project’s main goal of fostering a more peaceful internal environment and laying the groundwork for children’s educational development and socialization, including addressing conflicts without resorting to violence. Specifically, a number of stories discussed how children had learnt to apply problem solving, confidence and communication skills acquired through their participation in E2FII to resolve disputes or interact with peers and/or adults in ways that were constructive and non-violent. In many instances the stories also discussed how these lessons were now being shared with peers and family members who had not participated in the E2FII, extending the program’s sphere of influence into the wider community. Data from the Parent and Child Reports of the first cohort support these anecdotes and suggest significant reductions in aggressive risk behaviors such as being withdrawn, creating social problems, breaking rules, and being physically or emotionally aggressive.

The evaluation concluded that these outcomes were of relevance and importance to the children themselves, and to their caregivers, teachers and wider community. Many caregivers felt it had provided their children with necessary coping mechanisms to address ongoing difficulties of living in a conflict-affected society. Additionally, E2FII’s unique academic support approach provided a form of assistance that was otherwise lacking in the six communities served, and was noted as being highly valued and necessary given the educational and social context in which they learn. Community leaders felt that E2FII was indeed the ‘right response at the right time,’ for the children of their community.

Additionally, the evaluation finds that the project has successfully created a group of 120 capable and skillful mentors who could masterfully implement conflict mitigation and academic support programs. MSC stories collected from mentors document increased professional competence, greater interest in working with children, a better understanding of how to deal with children’s academic and social problems, and the application of problem-solving skills in personal decisions and actions. For the project support teams—project coordinator, assistant project coordinator, teacher coach and psychosocial worker—who supervised these mentors at each site, E2FII has given them important management and leadership skills, and instilled in them a sense of confidence, responsibility and pride towards their work. These young adults have a toolbox of knowledge and skills that prepare them well for their future professional and personal endeavors.

Finally, CARE’s participatory approach to working with its CBO partners was identified as having important impacts on their ability to effectively develop and manage programs within their folio, and to more efficiently operate their organization as a whole. The success of the E2FII program has afforded these organizations much closer ties with their respective communities, and greatly increased their visibility and reputation with relevant stakeholders.

### **Sustainability of impacts**

The evaluation found that children continue to apply lessons learnt from the program to various circumstances in their life, and have also begun to disseminate messages from E2FII to their peers and family members. Opportunities also exist for the skills that children learnt through the program to be maintained through the peer and mentor relationships they formed as part of their cohort group. Additionally the Graduate Club program has created an important venue for children to become leaders in their own right, and given them confidence to organize activities and events which reinforce the E2FII program philosophy and create meaningful change in their communities.

The job and life skills gained by the mentors and project coordinators places them in good stead to find future employment in other programs of psychosocial, educational or play-based support, especially now that they are well connected into the life of the community and the CBOs they worked for. Many of the CBOs note that they will increasingly rely on this group of skilled young professionals to continue to operate E2FII activities and work on other program activities run by their organizations. It is hoped that the CBOs will do all it can to continue to leverage on and utilize this skilled workforce within current and future activities it is involved in.

The evaluation concludes that the skills, knowledge and resources that the CBOs gained through the capacity building activities are ones that will continue to impact their day-to-day functioning and long term aspirations. Improved management and finance systems, new communication and outreach strategies, and more highly developed program management skills have provided them with a solid foundation on which to continue to improve their service delivery and be responsive to their constituents' needs. Equally important, the CBOs have come to see the value of E2FII's unique program methodology, and it is amply evident that they will continue to promote this approach in their future activities.

### Project efficiency

The evaluation found that CARE utilized its human, financial and material resources efficiently and effectively, despite numerous constraints it faced. Considering that E2FII trained and employed over 120 mentors and 24 project support team members, built the capacity of its partners, and worked with over 2400 children, their caregivers, and community leadership—the evaluation concludes that CARE made full and creative use of all available project resources. A combination of well-coordinated and collaborative project management, and well considered contingencies for the constantly changing context of Gaza contributed to this.

### Key enablers

Overall the E2FII has shown remarkable success in meeting needs of the six communities it operated in, and having strong and sustained impacts on its primary beneficiaries. The evaluation believes this is due to several enabling factors in the design, implementation and ongoing management of the project. This includes:

- **A formalized academic focus:** A key difference between E2FII and its predecessor program was the explicit inclusion of academic tutoring in the daily schedule, and the introduction of study skills into the intentional programming curriculum. This alteration to the curriculum acknowledged the important role that parents place on a child's academic success, and engendered greater initial community buy-in to the program.
- **The E2FII program approach and logic of intervention:** E2FII helped to demonstrate how a program approach, which builds strong personalized relationships, fosters mutual respect and cooperation, and creates an emotionally and physically safe space for children to take risks in are important precursors for any type of meaningful change in the context of Gaza. What made E2FII different to the myriad of other programs operating in Gaza is its explicit focus on blending academic and psychosocial support. The curriculum rightly acknowledged that addressing children's wellbeing is tantamount to their successful educational development and socialization.
- **A truly collaborative partnership with the CBOs:** Through a simplified grants process with the six CBOs that participated in E2FII, CARE helped to ensure that ownership of the activity was vested at the community level rather than seen as externally imposed. This was coupled with a capacity building approach that let the CBOs take leadership and steer their professional development process throughout the project.
- **The localization of all project activity:** A key aspect of the E2FII design was to give preference to mentors who lived within walking distance of their site of work, and to target

children from the same communities. This has proven to be a key aspect of the project's success, given the ongoing relationships and communication that occur between mentors, families and children.

- **Technical support on site:** The psychosocial worker and teacher coach at each site provided important support to mentors, individual children and caregivers through their specialized knowledge and skills. They were instrumental to each site effectively coping with the acute educational and behavioral needs of particular children they encountered.
- **Close engagement with the families of the children:** Involving the caregivers of the participating children in the program was vital to guaranteeing that the messages at the core of E2FII were reinforced, supported and nurtured in children's homes.
- **A clear developmental approach for project staff:** Two cycles of mentor training, regular communication between the CBO project teams, ongoing support and monitoring of the mentors from the project teams, and of the project coordinator/assistant project coordinator from the SGCBOs, and external visits, feedback and support from E2FI super mentors/project coordinators, and the project consultant from Edgework Consulting, helped to ensure that the professional needs and development of E2FII program staff were well considered throughout.
- **Involvement of community leadership:** The inclusive involvement of community leaders was essential to enhancing the credibility of the program model in the community at large, and engendering widespread enthusiasm and support for its approach.
- **Thinking about sustainability from the outset:** The simplified grants and capacity building activities, the establishment of Graduate Clubs for children, the involvement of community leadership and caregivers throughout, and most importantly the significant resources invested in developing a cadre of professionals who may be able to undertake the management and/or delivery of other psychosocial and academic support programs in the future have set a strong foundation on which the six participating CBOs will continue to meaningfully contribute to the wellbeing of their respective communities and constituencies.
- **Flexible and proactive project management:** Despite the numerous constraints faced by the E2FII program due to the operational and political context of Gaza, CARE was able to work constructively to address these challenges, and where necessary, rectify unforeseen obstacles in ways that did not take away from program delivery.

## Recommendations

### *For CARE*

- CARE WBG could consider assisting the six CBOs (through technical support) in training all E2FII mentors and project teams on marketing their professional skills (i.e. writing a CV, interviewing techniques, scholarship possibilities, etc.) prior to cessation of the project. By preparing them for future employment and/or educational opportunity, CARE and the CBOs can help ensure that these talented young men and women present themselves as best they can in a highly competitive and limited job market.
- Given the imminent hand over of E2FII to the six CBOs, the CARE project team and Edgework may want to ascertain how particular components of the project's M&E system can continue to be utilized independently by the CBOs. Given the current scale and complexity of the system, it will be important for CARE and Edgework to present to the CBOs a streamlined M&E system that is user-friendly, using forms of data that are easy to analyze.
- CARE WBG may want to (re) examine whether and how core objectives and principles of E2FI and E2FII fit align with its new programmatic approach on gender and economic empowerment in Gaza. It is the firm belief of this consultant that particular dimensions of this project—specifically the livelihood and professional development opportunities it provides to young adults, and the gender-awareness impacts which many mentors and community leaders note about the project, as well as the program methodology itself—lend

themselves easily to the organization's strategic vision and direction in Gaza. Whether E2F is supported as a stand alone program or incorporated into one or both of these broad programmatic areas is something that should be given serious consideration, based on the important rights-based and development-focused outcomes that E2F produces.

- Based on its collective experiences from E2F and E2FII, CARE WBG has the ability to critically assess its relationship with the various partners (donors, funders, and subprime partners) it has engaged with on both projects and the possibilities and limitations which each of these partnerships has afforded. As CARE WBG considers its partnership strategy for the coming years, this assessment may help to inform with whom and how the organization engages in Gaza in the future.
- Through its participation in coordination, cluster forums, and meetings organized by UNICEF and Mercy Corps, CARE WBG has the opportunity to share the results of this evaluation with other key actors who are involved in the education and psychosocial sector. If CARE WBG decides not to continue some form of E2F in the future, it may be that another INGO or multilateral would choose to pick this project up based on the successes it has already exhibited.

#### ***For the CBOs***

- The six CBOs should work closely with CARE WBG to ensure that financial reporting obligations under their sub-grant agreements are fulfilled with minimal additional delay.
- Using skills gained from the "Getting to Grants" training, and referencing the positive impacts noted in this evaluation regarding their activities with E2FII thus far, the CBOs should either individually or collectively prepare funding proposals and submit them to interested donors to continue E2FII programming in their communities.
- Working with CARE WBG, the CBOs should collectively develop a professional development plan for its E2FII staff to support their transition to other forms of paid employment in their community or within the organization itself.
- In the interim, the CBOs should continue to think about how E2FII program delivery can be reconfigured in its design and scale to suit existing resource constraints. Where possible the six CBOs should discuss creative solutions to this challenge jointly and ascertain how they might best support each other in this endeavor.
- As the CBOs move forward with E2FII, they should formally engage with key education stakeholders in government and within UNWRA to coordinate efforts and ensure that key messages from the project are being supported, transferred and reinforced in formal educational settings.
- The CBOs should make every effort possible to continue to utilize and market the skills of its mentors and project support team staff in a continuation of E2FII or other associated activities of the organization.
- The CBOs should continue to support the Graduate Clubs of the first two cohorts by offering a dedicated space, time and resources (mentor support or other small material support) for these groups to meet on regular occasions. They should also expand the Clubs to allow children from the third cohort to benefit from this aspect of the program.

## Background

For over 60 years, the inhabitants of Gaza have lived in what can only be described as a chronic and complex emergency environment. In this context, there is real concern about the impact that these conditions have on children. The children of Gaza are readily identified in research as being at increased risk of developing anxiety, depression and other behavioral problems, including symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder.<sup>3</sup> Youngsters who are traumatized, violent, and see violence modeled as a solution, are unable to constructively engage in their communities. Without the intentional encouragement and reinforcement of pro-social skills, they are likely to engage in high-risk behaviors and suffer difficulties in school and in social relationships. Yet in Gaza, key institutions that effectively socialize children into society—the school and the family—face tremendous pressure and are unable to adequately protect and provide for its future generations. Endemic poverty, large numbers of children in any one household, rampant unemployment and internal/external conflict all contribute to this situation. Many caregivers are simply unable to provide the necessary attention, support or role modeling required of children. Schools, which should serve an important protective function for children and support their resilience, are unable to act in such a way due to the effects of conflict, funding limitations, large class sizes, and the politicization of educational institutions.

E2FII was intended to fill a critical gap in the myriad of psychosocial, recreational, educational and conflict mitigation activities that have and continue to be offered to the children of Gaza, and align with the broader Palestinian Community Assistance Program<sup>4</sup> objective of addressing the social recovery of the children of Gaza. It built on the successes of its predecessor, E2FI, but was designed to more formally provide academic support to participating children and equip them with life-long study skills. Specifically, E2FII aspired to “create a unique hub for learning and skill development” in each of the communities it operated in, and to allow participating children to: (1) receive regular academic enrichment support in four core subjects (English, Arabic, Science and Mathematics); (2) gain important study, problem solving and conflict-mitigation skills; and (3) build positive peer relationships.<sup>5</sup>

CARE WBG identified five communities (Southeast Rafah, Al Qarara, East Jabalia, East Gaza Valley, East Deir Al Balah), all situated along the eastern border of the Gaza Strip, to participate in E2FII. These communities were selected because of their acute needs, created by ongoing conflict and sustained violence, as well as the fact that they have traditionally been underserved by other activities and organizations. CARE selected five CBO Partners<sup>6</sup> it would work with to implement E2FII. Each of these partners was chosen based on their specific and relevant capabilities in relation to this project. A small project team from CARE’s Gaza office, along with a technical specialist from Edgework Consulting<sup>7</sup>, provided ongoing capacity-building and technical support to these CBOs

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<sup>3</sup> See Quota, S., Punamaki, R. L., & El-Sarraj, E. (2003). Prevalence and determinants of PTSU among Palestinian children exposed to military violence. *European Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 12(265-272).

<sup>4</sup> The Palestinian Community Assistance Program is a \$100 Million USD package of assistance to the citizens of Gaza, that was funded by USAID, and awarded to Mercy Corps in a cooperative agreement signed in 2010. The goal of his program is to promote a multi-sector strategy to help families in Gaza meet their immediate and long-term needs, as well as to contribute to ongoing economic and social recovery. Mercy Corps implemented some program activities directly, but also awarded \$15 Million USD in sub-grants to several INGOs.

<sup>5</sup> E2FII Technical Application (6 July 2011), p. 3

<sup>6</sup> They are: El Amal Rehabilitation Society-Rafah (Southeast Rafah); Human Development Association (Al Qarara); Jabalia Rehabilitation Society (East Jabalia); Maghazi Community Rehabilitation Society (East Gaza Valley); Palestine Save the Children Foundation (East Deir Al Balah)

<sup>7</sup> Edgework Consulting specializes in research-driven, interactive and “play-based” curriculum for children in youth. Based in the United States, Edgework Consulting helped CARE WBG to develop the caring mentor framework and intentional program design of E2FI. In E2FII, Edgework led the curriculum and program adjustments of this original design, and continued to provide M&E assistance as well as technical assistance and mentoring.

throughout. In late 2012, CARE WBG, added a sixth implementing partner (Al Attaa' Charitable Society), and was able to implement an additional third cohort in Beit Hanoun,<sup>8</sup> owing to cost savings within its overall budget.

By the end of the project, it was expected that 2400 children ages 9-12, including 120 children with hearing difficulties, would have participated in E2F in three different cohort groups of six months duration each. Low child/adult ratios were to be maintained throughout all the cohort groups to guarantee that children received sufficient guidance, attention and modeling to affect change. At least 16 young adult mentors and a project support team comprised of a project coordinator, assistant project coordinator, teacher coach and psychosocial worker, were to be carefully selected and thoroughly trained and supported at each site to become skilled at promoting resilience, academic tutoring, conflict mitigation and study skills with children. Parents and community leaders were to be integrated and involved into the program as a way to ensure that the project's unique messaging had wider influence and reach.

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<sup>8</sup> In CARE WBG's original proposal to Mercy Corps, the intent was to have eight implementing partners—the five noted already plus three CBOs (Al Attaa' Charitable Society, Beit Lehia Development Association and Eastern Gaza Society for Family Development) who had successfully participated in E2FI. Budgetary limitations did not allow the three CBOs who had been part of E2FI to continue in E2FII, and under a Mercy Corps request, these three CBOs were dropped from the amended proposal that was submitted and approved in July 2011. Al Attaa' Charitable Society was later invited to implement one six month cohort as part of E2FII because of "their ability to mobilize more children, and the excellent implementation and performance exhibited by ACA," according to the October-December 2012 Quarterly Report.

## Impact and relevance of the E2FII program

This section explores the extent and relevance of impact that E2FII program had on the multiple beneficiaries identified in its original proposal—children, young adult mentors, parents, community leaders and the CBOs. A summary table of the total numbers of particular beneficiary groups the program served is presented in Table 1 below.

OVERALL Statistics for All Cohorts															
CBOName	Children			Parents			CommunityLeaders			Childrenwithhearingdifficulties			TrainedMentors		
	Male	Female	TOTAL	Male	Female	TOTAL	Male	Female	TOTAL	Male	Female	TOTAL	Male	Female	TOTAL
JRS	240	251	491	52	67	119	9	12	21	11	19	30	10	10	20
MCRS	245	246	491	29	93	122	19	0	19	1	1	2	7	13	20
PSCF	299	199	498	2	101	103	20	0	20	5	5	10	8	12	20
H.D.A	262	239	501	26	80	106	14	4	18	5	5	10	9	11	20
ARS	258	251	509	63	97	160	13	7	20	26	18	44	9	11	20
ACA	74	93	167	15	20	35	19	4	23	3	3	6	10	10	20
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1378</b>	<b>1279</b>	<b>2657</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>458</b>	<b>645</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>120</b>

Table 1: Summary of project beneficiaries served

### Children

During the E2FII's eighteen-month period of implementation, it served a total of 2657 children in three different cohort groups. While data from the final cohort is still not finalized, it would appear that E2FII exceeded its target of reaching 2,400 children through its efforts, with relative gender parity amongst all six of its implementing partners. In working with these children, E2FII had two broad objectives: (1) improve their academic performance; and (2) improve their wellbeing, suggested by reductions in aggressive and rule-breaking behavior, and improved coping mechanisms to stressors they face academically and socially. Specific to the children with hearing difficulties, the primary aim was to ensure that they were actively engaged and involved in all activities of the program. Each of these objectives is explored in brief below, against primary and secondary quantitative and qualitative data collected and reviewed as part of this evaluation.

#### *Impacts on academic performance*

E2FII's curriculum included 60 minutes of dedicated time in the schedule each session where participating children were divided into pre-determined learning groups (often by grade level), and the mentors, under the direction of the teacher coach, led academic enrichment activities for the group. E2FII's curriculum also included a series of "LearnSmart" lessons. These lessons aimed at teaching students to become what the program's designers labeled "stress-tolerant" learners. The premise behind the introduction of modules on topics such as managing distractions while studying and time management during studying/exams was that children in Gaza needed particular tools and techniques to manage disruptive symptoms such as anxiety, apathy or distractibility, that are likely the product of the context they live in. Providing students with the skills to be "stress tolerant" was seen as vital to these children's academic improvement. Key outcomes that were expected from these activities was that 60% of participating children would exhibit improvements in their academic learning, and that 50% of participating children would exhibit improvements in their well-being, in part measured through becoming more stress tolerant learners.



Academic data collected from the participating children in the first two cohorts suggests that cumulatively, E2FII had a positive impact on their academic achievement over the course of the six-month intervention, and that the project met its intended targets. Average school certificate scores in the four core subjects, showed improvement for children in both cohorts, but in Cohort Two, the

magnitude of improvement was noted to be much lower.<sup>9</sup> In addition to students' school certificate scores, a battery of internal assessment tests were administered to all participating children in each of the four core subjects. These assessments, written by the Teacher Coaches in alignment with the Palestinian curriculum, were conducted at the commencement (pre-data) and conclusion (post-data) of each cohort. The results from the first two cohorts suggest marked and significant improvements<sup>10</sup> with most children across all project sites. Regression analysis of academic data suggests that the program's biggest impact was on those students whose scores were the lowest to start, indicating that academic support had its biggest impact on children who were traditionally deemed as struggling in school. Several stories of change, particularly those relayed by members of each CBO's project team or community leaders were indicative of this type of impact on particular children or groups of children.<sup>11</sup>

CBOs Name	COHORT ONE		COHORT TWO	
	Percent of participants with improvement in school certificate	Percent of participants with improvement in internal assessment score	Percent of participants with improvement in school certificate	Percent of participants with improvement in internal assessment score
Palestinian Save the Children Foundation	73.9%	81.6%	25.0%	98.8%
El Amal Rehabilitation Society	64.7%	94.7%	90.1%	98.8%
Maghazi Community Rehabilitation Society	72.3%	100.0%	26.2%	94.6%
Human Development Association	85.1%	93.4%	98.2%	92.4%
Jabalia Rehabilitation Society	71.5%	98.8%	88.0%	97.6%
<b>OVERALL AVERAGE</b>	<b>73.5%</b>	<b>93.7%</b>	<b>59.9%</b>	<b>96.4%</b>

Table 2: Academic data from first two cohorts

A number of stories of change reflected on the importance and relevance of these achievement gains to the lives of the students. For example, the story of one girls' struggle with Mathematics, as relayed by the child's mother, highlights the importance that E2FII's academic support had on her daughter's self-confidence.

<sup>9</sup> The average improvement of each student in Cohort Two was 2.4 points (out of 100), which is considered statistically significant for the population sampled. That stated there was a very high standard deviation with this average, suggesting that some students showed much larger improvements and others much less (including a relatively high number of students whose average scores actually declined by the end of their participation in E2FII). According to one of E2FII's SGCBOS, some of this may be explained by the fact that in Cohort Two, for example, students completed one year of schooling, and commenced a new year during the period of participation. In many instances, families provided the school certificate from the end of the previous school year as the pre-participation data, and the school certificate from the subsequent year in the post-participation data collection round. The sentiment from CARE's partners is that this may have led to drops in achievement scores, particularly when children were still uncomfortable with a new grade-level curriculum and its content.

<sup>10</sup> The average improvement of each student in Cohort Two is much greater, 23.5 points (out of 100). Despite the high standard deviation (13.4 points), this magnitude of improvement is both statistically and practically significant. That stated, it was observed in site visits that students' school certificate marks often varied substantially to marks on these internal assessments, with the majority scoring lower on the pre-participation assessments than their school certificates reflected for the four core subjects. When one project coordinator was asked why this might be the case, he noted that children appeared to often underperform on the initial internal assessment out of fears that if they scored too highly, they wouldn't be able to participate in E2FII.

<sup>11</sup> See for example Story 3, 11, 15, 16, O, P

**Samasalem**

*My daughter was a good student in school except for Mathematics. Each time that she would have to take an exam in Maths she would fear it. She refused to ask for help at home because she felt no one could help her. Her teacher at school was unhappy with her marks in Maths and became upset at my daughter. Then she started to attend E2F. One day I came to visit my daughter's mentors. They showed me a mathematics exam with a high mark, and it was that of my daughter's. They had been using participatory and fun methods to teach her the subject and had been successful. I was overjoyed that the program provided by daughter with the academic assistance she needed in Maths and were working hard to improve her marks in the this subject. This encouraged me to keep sending her to the program and also motivated her to keep attending and participating in all the other activities the program offers. Later, when I went to visit my daughter's teacher, he noticed that her marks were improving in a remarkable way, and was confident that she would achieve full marks by the end of the year. He also noticed that she was participating more in class. Her success in mathematics has given her greater confidence to become a pharmacist later in life. E2F has given her the motivation to dream bigger.*

A Stress Tolerance Survey was administered to a representative sample of children in each cohort group to quantitatively measure changes in children's attitudes towards stressors in an academic setting. Children were asked to indicate levels of agreement on a Likert-like scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) to the statements listed in Figure 1 below. As the figure suggests, the sample from Cohort One tended to feel less anxious towards examinations, more able to ask for academic assistance, and less distracted by the end of their participation in E2FII.

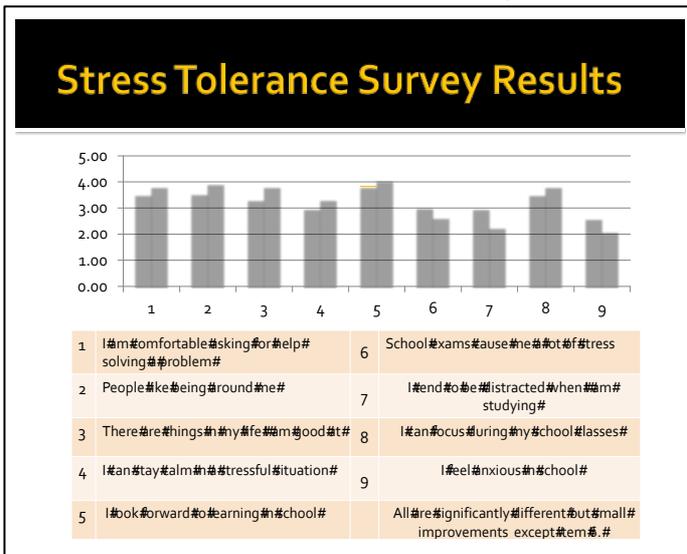


Figure 1: Stress Tolerant Survey Results Pre/Post for Cohort One

This would indicate that the LearnSmart curriculum had some degree of impact on the attitudes of the children.<sup>12</sup> Individual stories of change, such as the story below, narrated by one E2FII participant, reinforce the relevance and importance of some of the core messages of this curriculum to improving children's academic confidence and capability.

<sup>12</sup> In the End Line report for Cohort One it is suggested that 37.5% of children demonstrated an improvement in their attitudes to academic stressors. It is assumed that this figure is reported based on improvements in overall mean scores across all nine items on the survey. This type of aggregation may not be appropriate given the fact that: (1) these statements appear to measure different types of stressors, with some specific to academic issues, and others more general in nature; and (2) the survey was an experimental instrument, without any exploratory factor analysis done to see if these various statements fit together in terms of internal validity and reliability.

### **My life before and after**

*Before the war I was a very good student in my class, but after the war I found it harder to stay at the top of my class. I had a hard time concentrating, especially during exams, and would get very worried. I would rush through the questions, hastily marking answers, because I felt the pressure of time. I would worry that I could not complete all the questions in front of me. I was making many mistakes because I was not able to focus. During E2F I learned the smart study skills. In one of the sessions they taught us how to handle exams. They told us to focus on the question itself, and to ignore the pressures of time and the teacher standing in front of us. We learned to do the questions that are easy for us first, skip the hard ones, and then come back to the difficult ones at the end. Now when I go to take exams, I can concentrate better and answer the questions that I know with more comfort. When I have questions in school I ask the teachers' help, and this is something I never used to do before. Now I am getting better scores in school again and it means I can succeed later in life and make a meaningful contribution to my family and community.*

E2FII's explicit focus on academic support in the six communities it worked with was perceived as relevant, timely and necessary by many of the stakeholder groups spoken to as part of the evaluation. Several mentors in their stories of change noted that the program provided support that neither the schools, owing to large class sizes, nor families, owing to their own difficulties academically, could provide. This was echoed in some of the stories relayed by parents as well. Most of the CBO management teams felt that this academic focus provided important community buy-in to the program at the outset, given that all families stand equally concerned about their children's academic success and place great value on learning. One community leader, in his story of change<sup>13</sup> noted that the program *"has given our children to experience a motivating and quality educational experience that will make them more productive in the future."* Another community leader, expressing concern about the growth of for-profit tutoring business in his community following implementation of the Palestinian curriculum in schools, felt that E2FII had *"relieved some of the economic pressure that faces the families of our community,"* by providing a quality, free alternative program of support.<sup>14</sup> In sum, the addition of structured academic support to the original E2FI curriculum provides strong evidence of how E2FII built on the original project's successes, but acknowledged and responded to acute community concerns and needs in a tangible way; and how doing so strengthened community engagement and the overall efficacy of the project.

#### ***Impacts on children's well-being***

In addition to its attention to improving children's academic performance, E2FII had the objective of strengthening children's psychosocial wellbeing, by improving their ability to deal with adversity (i.e. build resilience), and redirecting anti-social behaviors. These objectives were to accomplished through E2FII's unique approach of: (1) building vital connections and a sense of community amongst the participating children and their mentors; (2) developing a unique program culture with specific routines and traditions that would allow children to feel safe to take risks; and (3) delivering a series intentional programming activities that would teach, reinforce and allow children to practice problem-solving, pro-social and conflict-mitigation skills in a fun and non-threatening fashion over the six month period.



<sup>13</sup> Story V

<sup>14</sup> Story P

Data from the first cohort's CBCL<sup>15</sup> assessments (pre and post), would suggest that the program had a significant impact on particular dimensions of children's well-being, particularly their internalized and externalized antisocial behaviors.

	Before	After
Internalizing Symptoms (Child Report)	193/291 (64%)	32/271 (9%)
Internalizing Symptoms (Parent Report)	227/288 (79%)	96/315 (30%)
Externalizing Symptoms (Child Report)	130/291 (43%)	18/271 (5%)
Externalizing Symptoms (Parent Report)	214/288 (74%)	77/315 (24%)

Table 3: CBCL Parent and Child Report Data for Cohort One

Further analysis done by CARE/Edgework suggests significant reductions in reports of aggression, withdrawn behaviors, anxiety, inattention, and somatic complaints. Numerous stories collected from children, parents and mentors document these types of behavioral change and the profound impact that E2F had on the children in this regard. One story, narrated by a member of a project team from one of the sites of implementation and selected by the CARE WBG Project team, project consultant and representatives from Mercy Corps, is reflective of this.

#### From Impossible to Possible

*In one of the cohorts we had a group of children who came to E2F from a neighborhood where all of the families had been kicked out of their homes by the Israeli forces during the 2008 war. When these children came to E2F, they came with a lot of behavior problems, including aggression and violence towards others. On their first day, they ended up destroying three pieces of playground equipment. They formed a gang inside the center, and would bully children when they tried to play on the playground. The mentors, along with the psychosocial specialist conducted a number of interventions with this group but struggled to make progress. We grew increasingly frustrated. We sought the assistance of Lou when he came to visit. He said that the behaviors of the children were positive—our challenge was to harness their organization and leadership skills towards constructive rather than destructive behaviors. With this advice, I introduced these children to the game of dominos. They happily played with the dominos that day, but every day after that, I reduced the amount of time I would allow them to play dominos. Eventually we reached a point where I would not give them the game unless they agreed to obey the team rules. They agreed and became much more cooperative in our group. Later, we asked this group of children to participate in a reactive theatre on how to treat the maintenance man, and they did an excellent job portraying both the negative and positive ways to deal with him. We also asked these children to assist their mentors with academic instruction given that they were good students. They started to take their responsibilities seriously and began to see the importance of acting as good role models if assuming a leadership role. To continue their progress we placed them into the Graduate Club together. Harnessing their leadership skills they have conducted two community activities as part of the Club. One was they cleaned up the backyard of the school, and the other was a project to raise children's awareness of crossing the road safely. It makes me incredibly proud to see a group of children from my neighborhood shift from being troublemakers to role models and leaders. They are now a team working for constructive change in their community.*

<sup>15</sup> The Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL) is an extensive questionnaire in which the parent and child rate him/herself or the participating child on various internalizing and externalizing symptoms. These include anxiety, social withdrawal, somatic complaints, destructive behavior, thought problems, attention problems, aggressive behavior, etc. The CBCL was originally developed by Thomas M. Achenbach and is one of the most widely used standardized measures in child psychology for evaluating maladaptive behaviors in children. At the time this evaluation was written, a finalized analysis of CBCL data was only available for Cohort One.

In selecting the story, the panel felt that this narrative best reflected the overall premise or theory of change of E2FII—namely that through individualized and ongoing attention to the issues facing a group of children from Gaza—destructive behaviors can be transformed towards constructive ends. The panel also reflected that the story demonstrated impact on more than just the individual level, and suggests how peer influences can be a positive force for change in the community. Most importantly, the story reveals an all too common narrative for the children of Gaza, of how a society deeply impacted by violence, instability, and conflict can deeply impact children’s wellbeing and the safety of those around them. But, as the panel reflected in discussion, *“these children face real challenges, but a program such as E2FII suggest there is hope.”* The project consultant noted as well that, *“This group of boys had found a way to take care of each other, a protective act, even though it hurt others. It was a very difficult situation and it is incredible to me the change [the program] was able to make in those boys.”*

Another story, that was shortlisted by the above panel, and selected as one of two stories of significant change by the CBO panel, specified in detail the profound impact that E2FII had on one girls’ anti-social behaviors, particularly her sense of self in terms of gender identity.

**My daughter has returned**

*My daughter used to behave like she was a boy. She hated playing with girls or playing games other girls her age might normally play. Anytime she would spend time with the other girls she would fight with them. When I used to buy her brothers clothes, she would ask to wear those clothes rather than ones that I would buy specifically for her. She would play marbles with the other boys in the street. She would identify herself as a boy, once telling the census worker when he came around that she was a boy. All of these behaviours started to have an impact on her academic performance. When she first came to E2F the psychosocial specialist noticed these same behaviours. The specialist came up with a plan to purposively place her in groups with other girls during academic learning and other program time. This helped her to become more interested in spending time with them, and to act more like they did. Now my daughter is much less violent to other girls. She prefers to act like a girl, and has many more girlfriends. She shows more interest in what her older sister does. She enjoys wearing high heels or coloured scarves. Her academic marks have greatly improved. E2F has restored my daughter to the person she should be, and relieved some of the stress and worry that I had about her acting against her nature.*

The panels selected this story for a number of reasons. For one, they felt that it provided a clear example of how E2FII successfully addressed one child’s violent and maladjusted behavior. They noted that these issues would have caused significant problems for the girl and her family as she entered adolescence and beyond, had it remained unaddressed. The CBO panel suggested it was also a clear indication of how the program’s focus on psychosocial support was vital to supporting the academic success of children, and how similar to many other children, anti-social behavior often stood in the way of improvements to school performance. The CARE/Mercy Corps panel felt that it was a clear indication of how the program, by acknowledging and addressing the anti-social behaviors of girls as well as that of boys, met a need that may otherwise remain ignored in a deeply patriarchal society.

**Impacts on children with hearing difficulties**

Given the explicit focus of E2FII to purposefully include 120 children who suffer from hearing difficulties in the program, impacts and relevance of E2FII on this particular population are briefly examined. As part of this process, a number of these participating children and/or their caregivers were interviewed. Out of this process, several stories of significant change emerged, one of which is presented below. Narrated by the participant’s mother, the anecdote describes how the program’s model of social inclusion has a powerful impact on her son as well as his broader peer group.

### A smile of hope

*My child is deaf and goes to a school for deaf children. While he had some friends at school, there were few children who were willing to play with him and he felt isolated and alone in his disability. When he came to E2F he found everyone around treated him normally rather than strange or different, and he felt included in the groups of the normal children. He was treated as an equal amongst his peers. The fact that he was part of the larger group allowed other children to learn more about what it is like to be deaf, and they grew interested in communicating with him and the other deaf children. They even learned some basic sign language. Now I see my son playing with the children of our neighbourhood. They have come to accept him, despite his deafness. He is now a friend to all of them, and they treat him with kindness and respect. This has helped him to overcome the sadness and isolation he used to feel from other children.*

The CBO selection panel felt this was a story of significance because it reflected the success of E2FII's social inclusion model, on all children, and specifically how his peers in the program became interested in communicating with him by learning sign language. They noted that it was a clear indication of how children with hearing difficulties could be integrated successfully into mainstream programming, with positive benefits for all involved. Of importance to this particular child was the opportunity it afforded him to meet other children, and overcome the isolation he faced because of his disability. This type of impact was mentioned by more than one parent as a significant benefit of their child's participation in E2FII. For example, another mother<sup>16</sup> noted that while in the past, her daughter "...wanted to go out and meet new people and have new experiences but felt trapped," E2FII had allowed her child to, "see new places, and learn new activities."



In total the program worked with 102 children with hearing difficulties over the three cohort groups, which is less than its target of 120 children. It would appear, based on interviews with E2FII project support teams and CBO management across the six sites that there are several reasons for this. According to CARE WBG, the main reason for not achieving the target was that the actual population of such children, ages 9-12 in the communities served, were not large enough. The CBOs management teams felt that the selection criterion limited how far and deep they could cast their net in recruiting children by factors such as age and distance from project location. As a way to better facilitate the participation of these children in the third cohort, CARE funded transportation costs for children with hearing difficulties to travel to the E2FII site. Additionally, while two of the CBOs were specialized in dealing with hearing impaired children, and operated their own schools for deaf children, the other CBOs found it difficult to work with this particular population due to their relative inexperience in addressing the specific needs of these children. While their CBOs sought outside assistance and support, at least two project coordinators acknowledged that it was a constant challenge to effectively integrate and include these children in all activities, despite the fact that all sites had at least one mentor trained in sign language. Finally, many of these children attend special schools with hours that are different to the UNWRA or government schools. This clash of timetables limited possibilities for children with hearing impediments to participate in E2FII, particularly the morning shifts that operated at all sites.

Despite these challenges, most CBOs felt that the incorporation of children with hearing difficulties was a positive experience, and provided strong evidence of the value of social inclusion considerations in their current and future programmatic decisions. And for those CBOs whom had

<sup>16</sup> Story C

greater experience in working with children with hearing difficulties, the general sentiment was that E2FII's explicit integration of children with hearing difficulties into mainstream activities was greatly appreciated and valued, as it provided them with a novel and successful approach to working with a population they had long served.

### Mentors/E2FII Project Team

Another key objective of E2FII was to build the knowledge and skills of the mentors and project team members, so that they could: (1) successfully deliver intentional programming activities to children by making vital connections and creating a unique program culture; and (2) effectively provide academic support to children. To ensure these objectives were met, CARE WBG provided ongoing professional support to these young adults in a number of ways.



Prior to the commencement of activities with beneficiaries, 100 potential mentors<sup>17</sup> and 20 members of the E2FII project support teams from each site were given extensive training in delivery of the International Programming curriculum of the E2FII program by the project consultant from Edgework and 'super mentors' from E2FI. Once active project implementation began, CARE WBG continued to support the mentors and project teams in a number of ways. Regular field visits and coordination meetings were organized by CARE WBG for the project support teams to exchange information and share experiences, and CARE WBG supported ongoing coordination visits and meetings between the teams to facilitate this dialogue. CARE WBG also facilitated a series of follow up and monitoring visits in the early days of implementation by E2FI super mentors and project coordinators, allowing these 'experts' to provide invaluable problem-solving advice, based on prior experience, to early teething problems that were faced by many of the E2FII project support teams and mentors. CARE WBG also organised several "Mentors Joint Activities" for the technical teams (mentors and project support team) to identify common practices and areas for improvement. Such events also provided the teams an opportunity to exchange successful techniques and methods across the five locations and according to one quarterly report were, "extremely welcomed by the attendees" and was a "forum of information exchange and acted as self-improvement exercise."

CARE WBG collected several types of data to monitor mentors' individual and collective growth, and report against its target indicators.<sup>18</sup> To measure mentors' knowledge, CARE WBG administered an examination to mentors and project staff at the conclusion of Foundation Training. The exam was comprised of a series of MCQ and open-ended questions related to the E2FII approach and curriculum. The vast majority of individuals (96.5%) achieved 80% or more overall on this test. The Project Coordinator and Assistant Project Coordinator also administered a mentor performance assessment at the outset. Each mentor was individually assessed in several skill areas.<sup>19</sup> Data from this initial assessment suggests that most mentors began their time in E2FII deemed "skilled"

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<sup>17</sup> From this pool of prospective candidates, the top 80 individuals (16 mentors/site) were selected to implement E2FII at their respective program site.

<sup>18</sup> This included a Mentor Performance Assessment, a Mentors Knowledge Assessment, a Mentors Self-Reported Change Assessment, and site observations. According to the original M&E plan for E2FII, the performance assessment was to be conducted at the outset and conclusion of the project, the self-assessment at the end of the first year of the project, and site observations nine months into implementation. Later, CARE WBG was asked by Mercy's Corps DME team to alter this plan and as a result, the self-assessment was dropped. Instead, the knowledge assessment will be administered again in the last month of implementation along with the individual performance assessment, as a way of CARE WBG reporting against the indicator regarding mentors' knowledge and skills.

<sup>19</sup> This included: the ability to form professional and meaningful relationships with each and every participant; the ability to create an environment and climate in the program that promotes responsibility, relationships, pro-social behavior, etc.; the ability to design activities that are child-centered and outcomes focused; and the ability to use the academic tutoring skills.

according to the tool's specified criteria (71.25%).<sup>20</sup> That stated, the data highlighted significant variations amongst the CBOs, as the table below suggests.

Data	Result (by Site)				
	East Jabalia (JRA)	East Gaza Valley (MCRS)	Dear El Balah (PSCF)	Rafah (ARS)	Al Qarara (HDA)
Percentage of skilled Mentors	100% (n=16)	0% (n=0)	56.25% (n=9)	100% (n=16)	100% (n=16)

Unfortunately, at the time of the evaluation, the final mentor performance and knowledge data had not been collected, collated and analysed, thus no further comment can be made regarding whether E2FII met its stated target of 80% of mentors being skilled and knowledgeable, and whether all sites had met the expected target. However, site observations conducted by the E2FII project consultant and 'super mentors' from E2FI, nine months into project implementation suggest that all sites were effectively meeting project expectations.<sup>21</sup>

The project consultant, in his report, notes that, "all five sites are performing at a truly high level...the level at which [they] are performing would be considered 'exceeding minimum standards' for an out of school program, not just for Gaza, but comparatively to other similar programs globally." The E2FII project teams were noted by the consultant to be: (1) creating activities that are tailored to the age group of the children; (2) teaching academic material using experiential methods with examples that are age appropriate; (3) demonstrating knowledge of and care for all the participating children as individuals; and (4) building a collection of positive and unique traditions internal to their program site. These observations were independently verified and affirmed by the evaluation consultant during visits to each of the sites in April 2013. Evident at each location was the professionalism, knowledge and skill that mentors and project support team members exhibited in their operation and management of E2FII.

Many of these young adults came to the job with strong potential, enthusiasm, and interest, but little experience, and faced a steep learning curve in early days of the program. In the course of eighteen months, a significant impact for many of these individuals was the development of their own professional competence and capacity. This transformation was one that was readily identified by several mentors and project support team members interviewed as part of the evaluation. Many reflected that the most significant impact for them, as part of their time in E2FII, were changes they observed in themselves. Some, felt they had gained valuable skills and knowledge on working with children, teaching children academic material, and/or managing or working with colleagues in a professional and collaborative fashion. More than one mentor reflected that E2FII had helped them to "become a much better teacher who can make a difference in the lives of children."<sup>22</sup> One story of change, narrated by a teacher coach, quite clearly demonstrates improvement in the mentors' ability to tutor children.

<sup>20</sup> According to a report produced by the Project Consultant in which data from all five sites was collated (*Summary of Key Data from the Mentor Assessment Time 1*), a total score of 40 or more is considered 'skilled' by E2F's standards for each mentor. Percentages noted in the table are those that achieved that minimum score or above.

<sup>21</sup> Edgework Consulting (2012). Trip Report: PCAP Eye to the Future II Site Visits and Refresher Training Consultant Report (October 9-18, 2012)

<sup>22</sup> Excerpt from Story AL

**Treating people with love will allow others to love and trust you**

*When I started working with E2F, I found that many of the mentors were having a hard time absorbing the messages and tools I was sharing with them on how to improve their teaching. While they understood the theoretical knowledge I taught them, they struggled to implement these ideas into practice. I could see that I needed to go about training the mentors in a different way. I came up with the idea of developing a 22-hour training course that would focus on improving mentors' teaching practices. I designed the course around the many questions and issues that the mentors were struggling with regarding academic learning time, and the training gave them the space and time to ask, test and explore what I was teaching them. Each training session I would start by acknowledging something good that one of the mentors had done during academic learning time, and tried to positively reinforce good teaching practices I was observing. A focused some of the training time on discussing how to help children with special learning difficulties, given that this was a struggle for many of the mentors. At the end of the trainings, I found the mentors successfully applying much of what I had taught them. They started using participatory and active learning methods, student-centered approaches, and practical examples from the real world environment. Now, they are equally experts to me as a teacher, and sometimes I find that I have little criticism of what they are doing.*

Similar to the narrative of the teacher coach above, strong evidence existed across the project support teams, that E2FII provided clear opportunities for these individuals to develop their project management and leadership skills. For example, one project coordinator<sup>23</sup> discussed how, *“using principles from the program’s curriculum...I found I could begin to change my own behaviors and ultimately the relationship between the staff and I...being a project coordinator provided other learning opportunities as well, such as facilitating meetings for large numbers of parents or community leaders where they may be conflicting viewpoints and ideas. I now feel I have a new set of skills that I can take into both my professional and personal life.”* Stories such as these provide clear evidence of how E2FII had given the young adults participating in the project new professional skills and knowledge that will be of great benefit as they look to secure future employment—as teachers, social workers, project managers, or community leaders.

Other mentors and project coordinators noted that the impacts of their participation in E2FII were much more profound, and extended to their lives outside the program. Mentors discussed how their involvement in E2FII had improved their social relations with peers or family members, assisted them in addressing adversity they faced within the home or community, or given them new skills as parents or caregivers.<sup>24</sup> The story below is a prime example of such impact.

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<sup>23</sup> Excerpt from Story 5

<sup>24</sup> See stories N, T, 20, 22

### **The honest smile**

*Before starting E2F as a mentor, I used to be very withdrawn and introverted. This is mainly because I come from a family where it is expected that women stay in the house until they are married. Naturally, I started this job with many fears and doubts. I didn't know how I would handle the challenges of standing in front of large groups of people, and of working with men or people from different cultures or backgrounds to my own. On the first day of training, I was given the super mentor prize. Somewhat surprised, Lou told me it was because of my honest smile. This reward was highly motivating and made me realise that I had something to contribute to the program. It was encouraging to know that someone else had confidence in my potential. It gave me the strength to cope with the challenges I would continue to face during training and as a mentor. The principles of the program, specifically that of acting towards the children in a kind and compassionate way, made it easy to work with them, and was also rewarding personally, as they would show that love and care back. Because of E2F I find I have many more skills, but am also a more confident and loving person. I have new bonds with my colleagues, the children I have worked with and their families. These connections have broadened my world. My family notices these changes and loves the person I have become.*

The project consultant, in reading this story commented that<sup>25</sup>, “We can’t underestimate the impact that this program has had on the Mentors...[they] are acting differently in their lives, changing their families and modeling behaviors of tolerance, love and support that are highly needed in these families and communities. It is a lovely example of how the learning to care for children actually changes you more than you expect.” While such impacts were not specified objectives of the E2FII, they are important outcomes for this cadre of young adults, and for the families and communities they live within.

### **CBOs**

A key component of the E2FII design was the intention that each of the CBOs would manage a functionally independent program by handling all day-to-day functions of the project. CARE invested significant resources and attention to ensuring this could occur. At the outset of the project, CARE provided specific training on developing skills and knowledge to produce responsive, simplified technical proposals to calls for tender<sup>26</sup>, and to meeting compliance and documentation requirements that were part of a USAID-funded project.<sup>27</sup> The SGCBOs from CARE worked alongside the CBOs to recruit and select mentors and participants using the stated criterion in the E2FII Guidebook. CARE WBG also provided extensive assistance to the CBOs in preparing their sites for delivery of the program in mid-late 2011. It worked with each of the five partners to identify facilities that were accessible and safe for children to reach on foot. CARE carried out a site and technical assessment of each facility, identifying and then conducting renovation work, and procuring supplies, resources and playground equipment to ensure each facility would allow the CBO to create and carry out the E2FII activities in a child-friendly environment.

<sup>25</sup> Email comments provided by Project Consultant as part of his participation in the selection panel (Personal communication, 3 May 2013)

<sup>26</sup> All CBO partners (19 individuals in total) participated actively in a two-day training course on ‘Getting-to-Grants’ in November 2011. Each partner drafted a simplified grant proposal application at the end of the training. Working closely with the five partners’ project coordinators, these proposal application drafts were then reviewed and developed into a final form, which together with the partners’ budgets and CARE-approved IP and PMP, constitute the basis for the sub-grants agreements.

<sup>27</sup> All partners attended the Compliance and Finance training session that was held in CARE’s Gaza office in November 2011. The training aimed at familiarizing the CBO staff (primarily the accountant and the Project Coordinators) with USAID Mission Order 21 and Gaza related Mission Notices such as chain of custody, VAT exemption, “Contact policy”, Procurement and Compliance. A second training session for sub-grantees was conducted on December 19, 2011 to ensure better understating of the Chain of Custody requirements, and to answer any relevant questions related to procurement, compliance and finance.

CBO management noted that the support CARE WBG provided in the establishment phase of the project had significant and lasting impacts on their organization's operation and future activity. For one, the process of employing staff through a transparent and methodical process involving recruitment, short listing, interviewing and selection, was a one that many felt they had or would plan on using when recruiting staff for other projects. Additionally, more than one CBO noted that the "Getting to Grants" workshops had helped them to respond better to Requests for Proposals and they now understood better the key components that they needed to include in their tenders. One CBO manager noted, *"We now know how to write proposals in a more professional way."* Another CBO felt the initial training which CARE provided in terms of financial reporting and compliance matters was necessary given the tight timeframes and stringent requirements which were imposed on them. As the financial manager from this CBO noted, *"it really pushed our capacity and was a challenge but we learned a lot through the process."* The support CARE provided in infrastructure improvements was also greatly appreciated by the CBOs, and many felt they now had a safe and child-friendly site, from which they could continue E2FII activities quite easily.



Beginning in January 2012, CARE commenced a longer-term capacity-building program with its five partners using the Participatory Organization Needs Assessment Tool (PONAT). Existing capacity of each of the five CBOs in the areas of program delivery, human resources, management, finance, and external relations was assessed at the outset. The PONAT process uncovered that many of the CBOs were weak in particular domains such as program development, sustainability of program delivery, management information systems, personnel management, advocacy and budgeting.<sup>28</sup> From this process, each CBO determined the areas of organizational need they wanted to focus on and make a priority as part of an Organizational Development Plan. Activities included in plans from the various CBOs varied and ranged from the development of management information and financial systems, to the creation of websites for advocacy purposes. CARE provided financial resources and technical support to each of the CBOs to procure external training and professional consultancy services to achieve these objectives. By October 2012, most capacity building activity had concluded. CARE WBG expectation was that through this process, a 30% improvement in the management capacity of the CBOs would be observed. This was to be determined through a post-PONAT assessment in April/May 2013. Data from this post-PONAT assessment, was not available to the evaluator at the time that this report was written, thus no comment can be made on measurable improvements in capacity. That stated, more than one CBO felt that the PONAT process had led to tangible changes in their practices and capacity as an organization. One CBO team, in their story of change<sup>29</sup> noted that, *"Along with CARE we were able to produce new administrative and financial manuals, improve our evaluation system and improve how we file and manage our documentation. Today, we have a computerized management and information system. This has greatly improved our employees' efficiency and given them easier access to a wealth of data...we have designed a website for our CBO which allow us to publicize our achievement...[and] promote our contributions and successes."* Many of the organizations noted that a significant impact of their participation in E2FII was an improved relationship and greater visibility within their constituent communities. Some noted that E2FII helped them to connect more closely with neighboring educational institutions. A manager from another CBO reflected, *"In the past it was really difficult to engage teachers and school directors from our UNWRA schools, and it was very hard for us to work with children in the schools because of permissions and paperwork. The program has allowed us to build trust and confidence with those working inside these schools. Now they come to visit our program and are curious to*

<sup>28</sup> PCAP E2FII Project PONAT Baseline Report (25 April 2012)

<sup>29</sup> Story 23

know how we have been so successful with their students.” Others noted that E2FII had allowed them to work in a new geographic community, or with a different target population. One of the stories of change, narrated story by a group of managers from one CBO noted that,<sup>30</sup> “When we started E2F we recognized that we wanted to work with some of the marginalized populations that surround our project site...there were a lot of concerns from the community [when we first started]... But as the program started to show successes...the community’s interest and engagement changed as well. They could see that we were doing more than playing with children, but also teaching them important academic and social skills.” More than one story of change from CBO staff captured the sentiment that the E2FII program, through the way that it connected community, CBO staff, and children to each other, helped to raise the profile, visibility and reputation of the CBO in the communities they served, as the story below suggests.<sup>31</sup>

#### **Overcoming adversity**

*When we started E2F, we were thrust into the middle of a rivalry between the two biggest families in our neighborhood. It was a challenge to start work as this battle outside flared on, and we as the management thought twice about whether we could continue on or not. In the end our society decided, given that the program is focused on conflict mitigation and problem solving skills, that we had an important role to play in addressing this problem. We felt that if we were exited the community we would have undermined the important responsibility when we elected to be part of E2F. Recruiting sufficient numbers of children for the first cohort provided difficult because of this rivalry. Families were skeptical of sending their children, particularly because they knew that we would be mixing members of the two clans together. They were afraid that violence would enter onto our site. Through our persistence, and particularly the hard work of the mentors, who went around the neighborhood speaking to individual families, we met the target numbers for our first cohort group. The first cohort went well, but unfortunately in the middle of the second cohort tensions between the two clans flared up again when one of the groups conducted a public revenge killing towards the other group. We had to stop the program for one week for children of the two families because the tensions were so high. We persisted after the tensions settled down. In the coming months, we were able to bring children, mentors, parents and community leaders from the two clans together and have both sides work on the four problem solving skills of resolving disputes. We became the only place where the children could safely and openly discuss the trauma that they faced because of the violence they were witnessing outside. In E2F we managed to bring these two clans together and discuss an issue that they were both interested in—the future success of their children. Through this the rivalry that existed outside was dissipated inside our walls. As a CBO this was a great success. It gave us the confidence to work effectively in a deeply divided and marginalized community.*

In essence, E2FII helped to provide a needed injection of social capital to communities that have been divided by internal and external conflict, political divisions and economic hardship.

Finally, an important impact of relevance and value to all participating CBOs was the opportunity E2FII afforded them to extend employment to bright, motivated and educated young adults from their community, who otherwise may have remained unemployed. They noted that the skills and knowledge gained by the mentors and project support teams would continue to be of use to their organizations. Their sense was that these individuals were now capable and competent individuals who could readily transfer their skills, and help to strengthen and refine other activities the CBO managed.

## **Parents**

A key component of the E2FII program was the involvement of families of participating children. “This collaboration helps form an important ‘network of concern, protection and support’ that is

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<sup>30</sup> Excerpt from Story 9

<sup>31</sup> See Stories 1, 13, 17, 26

essential for working with children affected by significant disruptions to their development,” according to E2FII project documentation.<sup>32</sup> In each cohort, the mentors and project support team put strong effort into engaging the families of each child through: (1) individual meetings at the outset to orient them to the program expectations and goals, as well as better understand the situation of the family and child; (2) monthly group meetings during the cohort to update parents on activities that have occurred, and receive feedback from them on any concerns/issues they had; and (3) parent-child participating events where parents were invited to join in with their children for specific program activities. Additionally, mentors, psychosocial workers and teacher coaches maintained regular contact with the parents of children who were on individualized academic or behavioral interventions. 645 parents or caregivers of participating children were noted as participants in these meetings, which exceeded CARE’s specified target of 500. That stated, a much larger number of mothers/female caregivers than men were involved in E2FII parent meetings and events (see Table 1), a matter that CARE suggested was an ongoing challenge in its project proposal—and it would appear, remained unresolved at E2FII’s conclusion.<sup>33</sup>



Stories of significant change collected during the evaluation, provide clear evidence that (1) caregivers and mentors came to enjoy a close relationship with each other during and after a particular child’s participation in the E2F; and (2) caregivers often incorporated and considered advice from the E2F program staff, which had important impacts on the home life of participating children and their siblings. For example, a mother with a child who suffered from physical and emotional trauma as a result of *Operation Cast Lead*<sup>34</sup> discussed how the mentors helped her to deal with his situation more effectively: *“The mentors also helped me to deal with my son better by sharing some of the skills and approaches they were using with him. I have been able to use these techniques at home with him and my other children. As a result, he has learned to be more open with me about his worries.”*

These open lines of communication and the active involvement of caregivers in program activities created an environment in which E2FII came to be seen as a vital resource to parents who were struggling with their children. One mother<sup>35</sup>, with three deaf children who participated in the program noted that, *“...the program has helped me to deal with the unique needs of my children. It has given me hope and confidence in dealing with them, and also knowledge that there people I can go to in the community who care about my children’s success and well being.”*

Also significant were impacts that E2FII had on changing practices of violence and abuse inside the home environment. In some instances, it was the children themselves who changed this situation, by sharing key messages on conflict resolution and problem solving with their parents. This impact is noted in one story, narrated by a child’s mother<sup>36</sup>: *“...my son began to see that his father’s behaviour was not the only way that a male adult could act...he started to question his father’s actions at home and asked if they could resolve issues through conversation rather than violence. Rather than getting angry, his father was proud that his son could speak with such confidence and determination.”* In other instances, the mentors themselves played an active role in altering

<sup>32</sup> PCAP E2FII Annual Progress Report (October 1, 2011-September 30, 2012), p. 10

<sup>33</sup> The proposal notes that, *“actively involving fathers has proven more difficult [in E2FI]. E2F-II will face the challenge of identifying a successful approach for increasing fathers’ engagement in parent-related activities.”* (p. 11)

<sup>34</sup> Excerpt from Story K

<sup>35</sup> Excerpt from Story R

<sup>36</sup> Excerpt from Story AA

patterns of abuse or neglect in the home environment, as one story<sup>37</sup>, recounted by an E2FII mentor suggests: “[The child] shared how her older siblings were treating her as a slave and forcing her to complete all the household duties. They took advantage of her being only nine and would command her around. If she didn’t obey they would beat her, and the parents would do the same. I called the mother in and found out that they were busy running a business at home and did not have time to manage all the duties of the house. In subsequent meetings with the mother, I got her to understand that asking a nine year old to take on all the household duties and attend to her studies was impossible. These demands were affecting her daughter psychologically and academically. Eventually the girl started to come to the program with a smile on her face. She shared how her mother was demanding less of her in terms of house chores, and was asking that she focus on her studies instead.” Such stories suggest that E2FII lived up to the expectation, stated in the project proposal<sup>38</sup> of creating an “open and expressive learning environment...in which mentors and parents can learn from each other.”

## Community leaders

### A change for the better

*In our community we live in a valley where generally it is not accepted for boys and girls to mix. The boys are told from a very early age by their fathers to avoid playing or mingling with girls, and to keep their sisters away from boys. For many children this makes them incredibly conservative and shy around those of the opposite sex. Inside the program, many boys arrived and refused to sit in a group with girls, and would complain to their mentors about having to interact with girls. Many of our families were also unsure that it was appropriate to mix boys and girls together. As community leaders we worked with our families to convince them that it was important that the program mixed boys and girls together, and that by doing so it would have long-term benefits for our community. We thought the program’s structure of requiring children from both sexes to interact together through in activities and groups, and conduct celebrations and ceremonies as one unified cohort were important in terms of making our children less afraid and more tolerant of each other. This approach provided important to changing the way that the boys viewed the girls. After eighteen months, E2F has created a radical change in our community in terms of the relationship between boys and girls. The children no longer see it as shameful to interact with the opposite sex and accept their peers, whether they are boys or girls, as members of their family. They have let down their armour and have learnt to deal with each other in a way that is respectful and kind. For the boys in our community, it has helped them to overcome their shyness and fear of others, and learn important social skills. The program has changed the way that our children think about others and allowed them be more tolerant and social.*



A key aspect of the E2FII program design was the involvement of community leaders<sup>39</sup> throughout the 18-month duration of the project. They were invited to periodic meetings, and an invitation was extended to them to observe program activities in action. In total 121 community leaders participated in the E2FII program, exceeding the intended target number of 100. The objective of involving these individuals was to ensure that they “provide the messaging, support and social capital for similar future initiatives in their community.”<sup>40</sup> Stories of change collected from these community leaders suggests that

<sup>37</sup> Excerpt from Story AC

<sup>38</sup> E2FII Technical Application (6 July 2011), p. 8

<sup>39</sup> This includes CBO directors and/or head of board working in these communities, heads of tribes, and other respected professionals and officials.

<sup>40</sup> E2FII Technical proposal (6 July 2011), p. 8

many have: (1) come to understand and value the program’s approach of blending academic and psychosocial support through its intentional programming activities, the unique program culture it creates, and the caring adult relationships it fosters with children; and (2) serve as advocates of E2FII’s approach within the community.<sup>41</sup> In these stories, including the one featured above, it is clear that involvement of community leadership had in fact met CARE’s objectives for including them—namely to ensure that these influential members of the community provided crucial support and reinforced the program’s messaging in challenging circumstances. What the story suggests, according to the CARE/Mercy Corps selection panel, is that that CBOs used these community leaders strategically to engender greater community trust to an approach that may have appeared alien at first, and through the advocacy of these leaders, began to productively challenge long-standing cultural norms.

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<sup>41</sup> See Stories 13, G, H, O, U, V, AM

## Sustainability

### CBO

From the outset of E2FII, CARE WBG embedded in the design of the project a series of mechanisms to ensure that impacts and outcomes noted in the previous section would continue beyond the 18 months for the CBOs. CARE's vision<sup>42</sup> was that "the E2FII facilities—will become hubs for a growing network of people whose relationships and mutual impacts endure." Specifically, CARE's extensive investment in building the capacity of its partner CBOs, both in terms of its human resources (mentors, project teams, and CBO management), and infrastructure was intended to ensure that it would position these organizations to better serve their communities. Additionally, E2FII aimed to provide these CBOs a model of how they could engage with their communities in a novel fashion. Evident from the stories of change, and the impacts which CBOs noted about their participation in E2FII in Section 3.3 is that many of these objectives had been realized.

In turn, each of the CBO's was readily able to articulate how they would continue to use the knowledge, skills, and resources gained through their participation in E2FII. Many noted that they would attempt to continue E2FII program as a stand-alone activity, given that "the program is a complete package that is especially targeted to vulnerable border populations...we would like to keep its integrity in this way rather than strip it apart," as one project coordinator noted. One CBO had already prepared a funding proposal to another donor to do this, and others were planning on developing proposals shortly. Irrespective of whether funding to continue was available or not, the CBOs felt confident they could continue to operate E2FII at much lower costs, by having mentors volunteer their time, involving smaller numbers of children in each cohort, or shifting the project to another one of their sites. That stated, and based on the story of change from the one E2FI CBO that had attempted to do this in the past<sup>43</sup>, it may prove to be a greater challenge than anticipated.

Other CBOs felt that they would take elements of E2FII, such as its curriculum, or the approach of assigning children to one or two caring adults for an extended period of time, and embed it in other existing or planned activities of their organization. The skilled workforce (i.e. mentors and project support team members) from E2FII was expected to play a key role in transforming and improving these other activities. As one CBO manager noted, "we now have qualified people to lead these programs." One key component of E2FII, which many CBOs felt they could easily support were the Graduate Clubs that had been established. CBOs felt that if children in these clubs were willing to take initiative and lead activities independent of their mentors, they would attempt to support these ideas with whatever resources were needed. One CBO management team went so far as to suggest that they would draw on the Graduate Club's child leaders to orchestrate activities for younger children in their organization.

### Mentors/project team

As detailed in Section 3.2, CARE invested heavily in its mentors and project support teams who formed the backbone of the project. A key objective of E2FII was to create a cadre of skilled young adults who were well trained in pro-social intentional programming methodology and could take these skills into other professional settings, such as schools, community centres or CBOs/INGOs operating in the region. As noted in that section, many mentors value and recognize the teaching and mentoring skills they have gained; and many project support team members now have greater confidence and ability to coach or train colleagues, and manage a program of immense complexity. As formal recognition for the skills and knowledge these individuals have gained, the CBOs will provide the project teams with experience certificates and appreciation letters at the program's conclusion. The hope is that they can market and continue to utilize such skills in other professional

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<sup>42</sup> Technical proposal, pg. 15

<sup>43</sup> See Story 1

settings. While outside the official scope of the project, the evaluation consultant believes that professional development support should be provided to all E2FII staff by the CBOs, with CARE WBG technical and financial assistance, on how to do so.

### Project beneficiaries (parents, mentors, community leaders)

MSC stories collected from children and parents (all from the first two cohorts ending in June or December 2012) suggests that children continue to remember and apply the skills and approaches they have learned in E2FII, five to 11 months after their formal involvement in program activities have ended. Collectively, these narratives are testament to how E2FII participants continue to apply problem-solving, conflict mitigation and study skills in the academic and social settings they find themselves in. Some stories suggest that children have widened the sphere of influence to their siblings, relatives and peers.<sup>44</sup> Additionally, with all of the mentors being from the community as well, and ongoing connections between the former E2FII participants and their mentors, there was evidence that the mentors continued to informally support these children through these enduring relationships. Through this expanding web of influence, there is some optimism that the integrity of E2FII messaging can be maintained for the children, despite the adverse context most continue to live within. In combination, the program has achieved the broad objectives, presented in the project proposal<sup>45</sup> of creating a “network of concern, protection and support,” with participating parents, children and community leaders mutually reinforcing messages from the program.



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In response, however, to concerns noted in the E2FI midterm evaluation that graduates of the program may experience an “impact drop”, CARE WBG included in the E2FII design a six-month long “Graduate Club” to reinforce key skills and strengthen key outcomes from the program. In establishing the Graduate Clubs the intent was to: (1) provide the participants with a meaningful dose of reinforcing messaging and skills; (2) empower graduates to further integrate what they had learned into their daily lives; (3) provide them with opportunities to learn and practice leadership skills and; (4) ultimately, create groups of children who have the skills, tools and motivation to continue on their own with minimal supervision.

231 children from the first cohort participated in the first phase of Graduate Clubs, which concluded in February 2013, and 277 children from the second cohort commenced their participation in the Clubs in December 2012, and will complete the six months in June 2013. Children were selected to participate in the Graduate Club through a competitive process based on their prior performance in the E2FII and the expressed interest and availability of both the parent and child. The expectation was that “these groups will both provide a powerful leadership experience for the alumni and extend the reach of the intervention beyond the graduates to siblings and other young people in the community.”<sup>46</sup> Several examples were given of ways in which this had occurred, such as establishing academic tutoring groups for peers in their school, planning and implementing road safety campaigns, and conducting community clean ups and advocating for improved waste management services with the municipality. For this reason, the management team at one CBO felt that “*the Graduate Club creates a pathway for some of these talented children to take a leadership position in youth-led programmes...we plan to use some of the children from Graduate Club to lead some of our*

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<sup>44</sup> See for example Stories L, Z, AA

<sup>45</sup> Technical proposal, pg. 8

<sup>46</sup> Technical proposal, pg. 10

other activities in the future.”

## Project efficiency

Overall, this evaluation finds that the E2FII was run with appropriate efficiency, particularly when the contextual factors of operating such a program in Gaza are considered. A combination of well-coordinated and collaborative project management, well considered contingencies for the constantly changing context of Gaza, and effective use of project resources were found to ensure minimal delays in project implementation. That stated the evaluation found that the partnership relationship between USAID, Mercy Corps, CARE and the six implementing CBOs was not without its challenges.

## Project management and coordination

For the Mercy Corps PCAP Grants Director and Manager, a key enabler to the success of the project was the excellent management, oversight and facilitation provided by the PM and SGCBOs from CARE. Mercy Corps felt that of its PCAP partners, CARE was “*one of the best INGOs*” in terms of management and oversight of the PCAP grant. Specifically they commended CARE on its ability to work efficiently within the project budget, meet Mercy Corps deadlines in a timely fashion, achieve expected project objectives/outcomes, and act in a responsive fashion to requests from Mercy Corps and USAID. Throughout all stages of the project, the PCAP Grants Director and PCAP Grants



Manager felt that the CARE team worked diligently to give the local CBOs a leadership position in shaping and managing the project.

The SGCBOs from CARE were found to play a critical role in ensuring that on day-to-day basis, each E2FII implementing partner was well-supported. E2FII Quarterly Reports suggests high levels of involvement by the SGCBOs in supervising, monitoring and providing technical support to the CBOs through frequent site visits and ongoing meetings and communication with project coordinators. For all six of the project coordinators, the support provided to them through the SGCBOs was seen as invaluable to effective implementation and delivery of the program.

Similarly, the Project Consultant from Edgework Consulting was found to provide ongoing and well-appreciated support to the E2FII CARE Project Team and the CBO-based program staff (mentors and project coordinators), despite the fact that he was not based in Gaza. The consultant was open and receptive to receiving direct email queries from mentors and project support team members and was in communication with many of them throughout the project.

The evaluator also found that the four project support team members employed by each CBO—namely the project coordinator, assistance project coordinator, psychosocial worker, and teacher coach—provided valuable and necessary inputs into the project. The project coordinators, along with their associate, helped to ensure that the mentors could effectively utilize the program methodology and consistently follow the specified structure of activities/schedule included in the E2FII curriculum. They provided ongoing professional support to their mentors, and fostered a sense of cohesiveness amongst the program delivery team. The coordinators also were also critical to engaging caregivers and community leaders in the activities of the E2F program and served as advocates for the program philosophy with the community at large.<sup>47</sup> Psychosocial workers and

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<sup>47</sup> This is evident in Stories 6, 8, 10, 16, 18, 19, 24

teacher coaches played a key role in providing necessary technical support and expertise to mentors, and were instrumental in building the capacity of the team in regards to effectively providing academic and social support to the participating children. For individual children, with acute academic or psychosocial needs, the teacher coach and/or psychosocial workers, created individualized plans and worked effectively and tirelessly to improve their circumstances.<sup>48</sup>

One area where poor management was noted was in regards to payment of E2FII project teams and associated suppliers in each CBO. Under the subcontracting arrangement, the CBOs had sole responsibility for administering their respective programs, and being reimbursed afterwards by CARE for the costs incurred as part of this program administration. As a goodwill gesture, CARE agreed to advance payment on salaries, utilities, rent and communication one month in advance, out of acknowledgment of the cash flow problems that face many of these CBOs. For the CBOs to continue to receive this advance, however, they needed to submit a quarterly report to close all previous advances for the above costs, and request reimbursement for other expenses, such as the costs of the meals they were providing to the children.<sup>49</sup> Many CBOs failed to adequately comply with this condition, or submitted incomplete paperwork that was then returned to them to redo. This led to a situation, at the time of the evaluation, where most CBOs had fallen significantly behind in paying their staff, suppliers and landlord. While not necessarily a fault of CARE, this situation suggests that CARE's support to the CBOs may have been insufficient to the demands of the financial reporting mechanisms required under the sub-grant agreements. As noted by one individual from Mercy Corps, while CARE's capacity building support to CBO's was extensive, it was not always sufficient to the immense management demands that E2FII placed on them.

### Factors impacting project efficiency

As a USAID-funded project under PCAP, E2FII was subject to Mission Order 21, which requires vetting regulations and anti-terrorism certifications and mandatory provisions, as well as Gaza specific USAID regulations such as the chain of custody (CoC), VAT exemption and the no-contact policy with government. Given that CARE WBG had well-developed systems and procedures for ensuring compliance with these regulations, the majority of procurement activity for E2FII resources and supplies was done by CARE WBG, rather than the CBOs. The CBOs were required to procure a relative small amount of items for their activities, namely the weekly hot meals for children, food/transportation for excursions, and office and kitchen supplies. Nonetheless, these regulations added significant administrative costs and were incredibly time-consuming for both CARE and the CBOs. For the CBOs, CoC requirements severely restricted their ability to source items from local suppliers, and forced them to procure items from greater distances, and often at higher costs. Additionally, CARE noted that, "the lengthy process of procurement demanded by the CoC requirements...put the entire team under tremendous pressure [at the outset of the project]," particularly given the short timeframe for implementation that was afforded to CARE under the PCAP grant.<sup>50</sup>

Of greater significance to CARE was the fact that over the course of eighteen months, three different project implementation plans had to be submitted and approved by Mercy Corps due to the November 2011 Congressional freeze and subsequent reauthorization of USAID budget to the West Bank and Gaza for FY 12 in April 2012. The demands of developing three separate implementation plans, and the stress caused by having to anticipate project close down shortly after initial implementation began in 2011, placed significant strain and stress on CARE program staff involved in E2FII.

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<sup>48</sup> This is evident in Stories 2, 3, 4, 7, AI, 11, 12, 14, 15, M, 25

<sup>49</sup> As specified in subgrant agreements, Clause 5

<sup>50</sup> E2FII Quarterly Progress Report August-December 2011, p. 13

USAID's no-contact policy with government offices and officials in Gaza made it untenable for CBOs and their staff to work directly with government schools attended by the children participating in E2FII, despite the clear need for interaction given the project's academic focus. Some parents and mentors saw the lack of interface between E2FII and government schools as an obstacle to effectively promoting and sustaining the program messages in the community at large, and of more closely linking activities of E2FII with that of the school. Nonetheless, the evaluation found that in several instances local community leaders and parents helped to broker informal information sharing between local E2FII staff and the schools, and share the program philosophy and approach with those working in schools.

It would appear that Mercy Corps' management of E2FII has at times been less than ideal, and led to inefficiencies in program operation. For example, the evaluator uncovered a number of changes to E2FII's original M&E system, which was originally approved by Mercy Corps in late 2011.<sup>51</sup> Conversations with the external project consultant and the CARE E2FII Project team revealed that many of these changes were brought about because of new reporting demands or conflicting and/or contradictory information that came from Mercy Corps' DME team subsequent to this.<sup>52</sup> These additional requests from Mercy Corps have been time-consuming and burdensome to the project consultant, CARE's Project Management team and the Project Coordinators at each site. On more than one occasion, data presented to Mercy Corps along the parameters of the originally approved PMP has had to be reexamined or reanalyzed in light of these requests<sup>53</sup>, and in some cases new measures developed.<sup>54</sup> The imposition of new M&E requirements by Mercy Corps has led to an even more complex and time-intensive M&E system than was in place for E2FI. This of concern given that the M&E system under E2FI was already noted as burdensome and in need of being reviewed and streamlined.<sup>55</sup> The consequence is that project coordinators and assistant project coordinators spend more time than they should addressing M&E requirements (by their own estimates 0.4-0.6 FTE), detracting from time they could be attending to the other duties specified in their job descriptions.

Additionally, there was a strong sentiment at the level of the CBOs<sup>56</sup> that Mercy Corps' relationship with them was unproductive and antithetical to the partnership arrangement they had in place with CARE. As one CBO manager described, *"They [Mercy Corps] were always acting as detectives and trying to find mistakes...we always felt under scrutiny when they visited us. They would often provide advice that was opposite to what CARE was telling us, and made us feel like we weren't*

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<sup>51</sup> Based on the original PMP which was approved by Mercy Corps in October 2011.

<sup>52</sup> Examples that exist of this include: ongoing debates and discussion about how children's well-being can be measured using data collected through the academic scores, Child/Parent reports, and stress tolerant learning survey; whether data on well-being or academic progress should be reported in the aggregate or by magnitude of change; how the outcome on mentors' skills and knowledge should be measured, with Mercy Corps now requesting CARE to repeat a mentor knowledge assessment that was originally administered at the end of the Foundational Training, rather than to utilize the mentor self-assessment tool as was indicated in the E2FII M&E Plan.

<sup>53</sup> For this reason, CARE WBG has yet to receive final sign off on its end line report Cohort One which was written in late 2012, and a Cohort Two report has yet to be completed by CARE, despite the cohort ending more than five months ago.

<sup>54</sup> A prime example of this is the well-being indicator which is an aggregate score comprised of the % of children reporting improvements in rule-breaking and aggression from the Child Report, % of children demonstrating improved resilience (through a tool that was used in E2FI but which the Project Consultant admitted lacked methodological robustness and validity) and a Stress Tolerant learning survey (which measures different constructs that cannot be easily aggregated into a composite score without conducting factor analysis). The consultant does not feel that averaging improvements across these very different measures is methodologically sound, particularly without confirmation that there is a high degree of correlation and association between these constructs. Additionally, without a clear understanding of how children's well-being is defined, and how such a construct can be measured, the consultant does not feel that the approach that is currently being undertaken by CARE, which is assumed to be under Mercy Corps guidance, is a valid measure or proxy of improvement.

<sup>55</sup> See for example, E2FI Midterm Review, pp. 13 or E2FI Final Evaluation, pp. 27

<sup>56</sup> It is important to note that this viewpoint was not shared by CARE WBG

*doing the job right.*” While CARE attempted to instill a sense of collective endeavor in its management relationship with its partners, some CBOs felt that Mercy Corps focused its attention on compliance related matters which appeared to some E2FII project teams as an approach of unnecessary micromanagement.<sup>57</sup>

Finally, ongoing tensions between Israel and Gaza have had an impact on E2FII’s program activities. In March 2012 all E2FII centers faced one to two days of closure due to escalations in cross-border violence. In November 2012, the deterioration in the security situation in and around the Gaza Strip during the Israeli Operation “Pillar of Cloud” led to a one week closure of all program centers.<sup>58</sup>

It should be made clear, that despite these challenges, CARE WBG and its CBOs dealt with the above adversities in a professional and proactive fashion, and ensured that clear contingencies were in place at all time. While it may have greatly added to their administrative burden and responsibilities, the issues had no bearing or impact on the outcomes that were ultimately noted with project beneficiaries.

### Utilization of project resources

The E2F project operated with a total approximate budget of \$2.65 Million USD. 53% of this total budget (\$1.41 Million USD) was directed to the six sub-grantees (CBOs) to pay for operational costs (salaries, rent, utilities, excursions, meals) associated with implementation of E2FII at their respective locations. CARE staff salaries and benefits amounted to 14% of the budget (\$379,433 USD). Supplies which included the playground equipment, and associated resources that were procured for the CBOs at the outset of implementation (\$373,832 USD or 14% of budget) were the other significant project expenditure. It is apparent that the E2F functioned extremely efficiently within its budget parameters, given that it trained and employed over 100 young adults, worked effectively with over 2400 children and their families, and significantly increased the capacity of its six partner CBOs. The PCAP Mercy Corps team felt strongly that CARE had been extremely efficient with its budget, given that through cost-savings it had been able to increase the targeted number of beneficiaries, incorporate an additional CBO partner, and provide greater services to children (i.e. offering more hot meals a week) than was originally suggested in the E2FII proposal.

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<sup>57</sup> Mercy Corps explained that the intent of its monitoring visits was focused on helping CARE WBG and the CBOs to see the “big picture” that they might otherwise miss because they were both directly involved in program implementation. Regular monitoring visits involved documentary review, as well as observation of program activity, with feedback reported to CARE WBG for them to then address with their partners. That stated, there appeared to be instances where these parameters were blurred, according to CARE and CBO staff spoken to. At the same time, it would appear that many CBOs did not have a clear sense of the purpose of Mercy Corps’ monitoring visits, a matter which could have been resolved through better channels of communication between Mercy Corps, CARE and the CBOs.

<sup>58</sup> According to the October-December 2012 Progress Report, several centers suffered broken windows as a result of the Operation which CARE WBG quickly repaired.

## Appendix A: MSC Brochure from CBO Selection Panel

A final evaluation of the Eye the Future II Program was commissioned by CARE West Bank Gaza to determine the impact, effectiveness and sustainability of the program. An important aspect of the evaluation was to document the changes that this program had brought about to the participating children, mentors, parents, and community leaders of Southeast Rafah, Al Qarara, East Jabalia, East Gaza Valley, East Deir Al Balah, and Beit Hanoun. The main evaluation tool used to do this is known as Most Significant Change (MSC). This reports on what was found from this.

39 stories of change were collected from children, mentors, parents, and community leaders who were participants in the Eye to the Future II Program across these communities. To everyone who contributed their honest opinions and time to share their stories, thank you!

These stories were then shared with a selection panel comprised of 17 members from the management teams of all six CBOs who administered the programs in their respective communities. The panel reviewed, debated and discussed all of the stories extensively before settling on two stories of significant change. The panel discussed the reasons why they chose these stories as part of the selection process. The stories and the selection panel's discussion are presented below.

### A smile of hope



*My child is deaf and goes to a school for deaf children. While he had some friends at school, there were few children who were willing to play with him and he felt isolated and alone in his disability. When he came to E2F he found everyone around treated him normally rather than strange or different, and he felt included in the groups of the normal children. He was treated as an equal amongst his peers. The fact that he was part of the larger group allowed other children to learn more about what it is like to be deaf, and they grew interested in communicating with him and the other deaf children. They even learned some basic sign language. Now I see my son playing with the children of our neighbourhood. They have come to accept him, despite his deafness. He is now a friend to all of them, and they treat him with kindness and respect. This has helped him to overcome the sadness and isolation he used to feel from other children.*

#### **The panel selected this story because:**

- It suggests how the program was able to successfully involve a child with hearing difficulties with other children in the community
- It shows how we as CBOs have met our responsibility to work with children with disabilities as part of our program activities, in a way that is inclusive and positive for all participants
- It suggests how the project transformed this child from being meek and shy to being a leader.

### My daughter has returned

*My daughter used to behave like she was a boy. She hated playing with girls or playing games other girls her age might normally play. Anytime she would spend time with the other girls she would fight with them. When I used to buy her brothers clothes, she would ask to wear those clothes rather than ones that I would buy specifically for her. She would play marbles with the other boys in the street. She would identify herself as a boy, once telling the census worker when he came around that she was a boy. All of these behaviours started to have an impact on her academic performance. When she first came to E2F the psychosocial specialist noticed these same behaviours. The specialist came*

up with a plan to purposively place her in groups with other girls during academic learning and other program time. This helped her to become more interested in spending time with them, and to act more like they did. Now my daughter is much less violent to other girls. She prefers to act like a girl, and has many more girlfriends. She shows more interest in what her older sister does. She enjoys wearing high heels or coloured scarves. Her academic marks have greatly improved. E2F has restored my daughter to the person she should be, and relieved some of the stress and worry that I had about her acting against her nature.



**The panel selected this story because:**

- It suggests how E2FII successfully addressed one girls' violent and maladjusted behaviour, which would have caused greater problems in a few years time for the girl and her family had they not been addressed.
- It demonstrates how E2FII's impacts are more than just on the children, but their families as well
- It clearly shows how addressing children's psychosocial and behavioural needs have a strong impacts on their academic growth and development.

**Lessons learned from all the stories**

According to the selection panel a number of lessons can be learned from all the stories they were presented with. They are that:

1. There are common problems and issues that face the children of Gaza. The stories suggest the strong need and value for the type of assistance that E2FII provides to them.
2. The stories provide us with real and tangible evidence of our successes across all three cohorts and in the variety of marginalized and divided communities we serve. These successes have helped us to resolve the impacts of ongoing conflict in our communities.
3. There is real power in E2FII's unique curriculum, which focused on shifting the behavior of children towards non-violent actions and providing academic support at the same time.
4. The strength of E2FII is its comprehensive approach in which we work with the child, family and community at the same time.
5. These stories gave us confidence and strength that it is possible to continue to make a difference in the lives of the children of Gaza, and in doing so, solve critical problems of our community



## Appendix B: MSC Brochure from CARE/Mercy Corps Selection Panel

A final evaluation of the Eye the Future II Program was commissioned by CARE West Bank Gaza to determine the impact, effectiveness and sustainability of the program. An important aspect of the evaluation was to document the changes that this program had brought about to the participating children, mentors, parents, and community leaders of Southeast Rafah, Al Qarara, East Jabalia, East Gaza Valley, East Deir Al Balah, and Beit Hanoun, as well as the six participating Community Based Organizations (CBOs) that implemented E2FII in these communities. The main evaluation tool used to do this is known as Most Significant Change (MSC). This reports on what was found from this.

39 stories of change were collected from children, mentors, parents, and community leaders who were participants in the Eye to the Future II Program across these communities, from which six stories were “shortlisted” by the CBO selection panel and included in this selection panel. An additional 25 stories from management teams across the six CBOs were also considered.

The selection panel was comprised of six members—three representatives from the E2FII team from CARE, two representatives from Mercy Corps and one representative from Edgework Consulting. The panel reviewed, debated and discussed all of the stories extensively before settling on one story of significant change. The panel discussed the reasons why they chose this story as part of the selection process. The story and the selection panel’s discussion are presented below.

### From Impossible to Possible

*In one the cohorts we had a group of children who came to E2F from a neighborhood where all of the families had been kicked out of their homes by the Israeli forces during the 2008 war. When these children came to E2F, they came with a lot of behavior problems, including aggression and violence*



*towards others. On their first day, they ended up destroying three pieces of playground equipment. They formed a gang inside the center, and would bully children when they tried to play on the playground. The mentors, along with the psychosocial specialist conducted a number of interventions with this group but struggled to make progress. We grew increasingly frustrated. We sought the assistance of Lou when he came to visit. He said that the behaviors of the children were positive—our challenge was to harness their organization and leadership*

*skills towards constructive rather than destructive behaviors. With this advice, I introduced these children to the game of dominos. They happily played with the dominos that day, but every day after that, I reduced the amount of time I would allow them to play dominos. Eventually we reached a point where I would not give them the game unless they agreed to obey the team rules. They agreed and became much more cooperative in our group. Later, we asked this group of children to participate in a reactive theatre on how to treat the maintenance man, and they did an excellent job portraying both the negative and positive ways to deal with him. We also asked these children to assist their mentors with academic instruction given that they were good students. They started to take their responsibilities seriously and began to see the importance of acting as good role model if assuming a leadership role. To continue their progress we placed them into the Graduate Club together. Harnessing their leadership skills they have conducted two community activities as part of the Club. One was they cleaned up the backyard of the school, and the other was a project to raise children’s awareness of crossing the road safely. It makes me incredibly proud to see a group of children from my neighborhood shift from being troublemakers to role models and leaders. They are now a team working for constructive change in their community.*

### **The panel selected this story because:**

- It suggests how E2FII has had sustainable and growing impact beyond the six months through the Graduate Club activities.
- The story is a true testament of the mentors' dedication and persistence to dealing with difficult situations they often faced.
- The story is emblematic of E2FII's overall theory of change, and the expected outcomes we had hoped for.
- The story highlights all the various components of E2FII's design and the importance that each component had to the outcomes that are noted in this story
- The story provides a vivid and clear example of the political context of Gaza at present, in terms of war and internal/external conflict, and the impacts this has on our children.

### **Lessons learned from all the stories**

According to the selection panel a number of lessons can be learned from all the stories they were presented with. They are that:

- The restructure and redesign of E2FII program helped to bring it to further success and ensured greater sustainability and buy-in from all stakeholders.
- The program was a success in part because of the excellent training and ongoing support that were given to the mentors and project teams.
- The stories give us wider knowledge of the program's success and impact beyond that of our specified indicators and intended outcomes.
- The stories also gave us a meaningful opportunity to learn from different beneficiaries on their perceptions of the real value and impact of E2FII.
- The stories suggest tangible impacts at individual, group, community levels; but also a variety of different impacts at each of these different levels.
- The stories suggest a real sense of ownership from community leadership, project teams, and CBOs involved in the project—this is a critical dimension of E2FII's longer-term sustainability. We have learned from E2FII, the value of involving all stakeholders in a participatory fashion in the design and implementation of the program.

## Appendix C: Full set of MSC stories collected

### *#1: Facing and overcoming the challenges (CBO Management)*

The big challenge in our society is maintaining the community's trust and interest in the activities we operate. When our involvement in E2FI came to an end, we made a decision to continue to run the program but using our mentors on a voluntary basis. While the mentors were motivated, they also had to support their families, and often we would find that they were unable to make the same level of commitment to our program. We were struggling to maintain the integrity of the program, and we were worried that we would lose the impact and community interest that this activity had created in the past. When CARE offered us a role in E2FII it was a blessing to our society and the community. We were able to pay our mentors again. This allowed them to focus their full attention on the quality of the program. The program's unique approach of blending psychosocial and academic needs together, better served our community's children. The addition of the academic component in E2FII allows us to seem responsive to community feedback, as this was an aspect of E2F that they thought was lacking. Now, when a parent leaves a child with us in our society, they have complete trust in the work we do with their children. Our success from E2F and E2FII has helped our society to gain credibility amongst donors, who can see we have a good track record, excellent reputation, experience with a number of different populations and types of program, and most importantly, an ability and interest in sustaining our hard work.

### *#2: A challenge and a desire (E2F Project Team)*

At the beginning of E2F, we had one mentor who had experience in teaching and advising children, but struggled compared to the others. In academic support time, she would lecture to the children to the entire time. She wasn't able to teach the students in any other way. She realized she was not as successful as the other mentors in engaging the students and sought the assistance of the project support team. What was remarkable about this mentor was that she was motivated herself to learn and change. She read the program's curriculum inside and out. The project team identified and discussed her weaknesses. We encouraged her to observe and learn from other mentors, particularly in specific teaching situations she found challenging. From these observations, she learned to use puppets and drama to deliver academic material. The support of the project team and the long-term nature of this program have been key to her success. I can now, without a doubt, call her a super mentor. She is now a role model for the other mentors, and others now seeking her advice and follow in her footsteps.

### *#3: Overcoming Learning Difficulties (E2F Project Team)*

There was one girl in our program who scored well in most subjects except for Arabic. This suggested to me that she was willing and motivated to learn but hadn't received much individual support, either at home or in school. Through working with her individually, I came to realize that she struggled to write. The girls' mentor and I created a plan to improve her writing skills. We identified two other children who had a similar problem and created a group that would meet during informal time. We taught this group of children to write words by sounding them out. We used one of the computer programs to make the children aware of the connection between the sounds and corresponding letters and words. After three weeks of meeting as a group, this child was much more comfortable with her writing. Her teacher noticed the change and visited us at the center. She told us that the girl was much more confident academically and, as a result, was more actively participating in classroom activities. More recently, when her mother visited us at the center she was overcome with joy and told us how we had rescued her child off a sinking ship.

#### *#4: From Better to Best (E2F Project Team)*

At the start of the cohort, there was one very bright girl who had some interesting behaviors. She would attach herself to the male mentors, and refuse to work with any of the female mentors. This became a problem during group activities because she refused to participate in anything that a male mentor was not involved in. She began to form an unhealthy attachment to one male mentor in particular. She would wait for this mentor to hold her hand and walk her home, not letting go until she reached her house. I discovered that this girl's father was not giving her any attention at all and tended to ignore her presence, reducing her self-esteem and threatening her academic confidence. This girl was searching for male role models who would acknowledge her abilities and treat her more kindly than her father. While the attention she was given by this one mentor was boosting her confidence, it was also causing problems for our program. As a solution, the mentors and I began to demonstrate to her that we are equally members of her extended family and can all act as role models and brothers and sisters to her. Slowly she came to be less attached to just one mentor and saw all these adults as caring for her and her success. This intelligent girl is now able to succeed academically, but also able to express herself with confidence.

#### *#5: Self Improvement (E2F Project Team)*

When I started my role as a Project Coordinator for E2F, the relationship between the mentors and I was very formal. I felt like a manager to them rather than a peer. I perceived that this dynamic was unproductive to our daily tasks, as it was important to work cooperatively and as one team. Using principles from the program's curriculum, specifically the conflict resolution, communication and smart learning skills, I found that I could begin to change my own behaviors and ultimately the relationship between the staff and I. Through my interactions with the mentors, I came to realize I had as much to learn from them as they to learn from me. For example, they taught how to relate better to the children as a caring adult and address children's psychosocial needs and their academic difficulties at the same time. Being a project coordinator provide other learning opportunities as well, such as facilitating meetings for large number of parents or community leaders where there may be conflicting viewpoints and ideas. I now feel I have new set of skills I can take into both my professional and personal life.

#### *#6: A hopeful smile (E2F Project Team)*

At the start of E2F, we had one mentor who would shout at children when they didn't respond correctly to the questions he asked and lose his temper with the other mentors often. After observing these behaviors I realized I had to intervene and redirect his action. To start, we met and I told him how he needed to work with the children differently. I gave him some suggestions on ways to redirect their attention in a more nurturing and positive ways. I suggested that above all, it was important that the children were being treated with care and love. I recommended that he apply the four problem solving skills to his own actions as a mentor, as a way of calming down before taking action. In the coming weeks, I would sit and observe his lessons and provide feedback. We started to meet on a regular basis and discuss ways that he could improve what he was doing. Gradually this mentor evolved into a completely new person. He is now one of the most beloved mentors by both the children and peers. He is open with the children and plays with them. He is no longer the tough and nervous teacher that he used to be. While E2F has its focus on changing the behaviors of children, this story suggest that the same model can also be applied to adults as well.

*#7: Treating people with love will allow others to love and trust you (E2F Project Team)*

When I started working with E2F, I found that many of the mentors were having a hard time absorbing the messages and tools I was sharing with them on how to improve their teaching. While they understood the theoretical knowledge I taught them, they struggled to implement these ideas into practice. I could see that I needed to go about training the mentors in a different way. I came up with the idea of developing a 22-hour training course that would focus on improving mentors' teaching practices. I designed the course around the many questions and issues that the mentors were struggling with regarding academic learning time, and the training gave them the space and time to ask, test and explore what I was teaching them. Each training session I would start by acknowledging something good that one of the mentors had done during academic learning time, and tried to positively reinforce good teaching practices I was observing. A focused some of the training time on discussing how to help children with special learning difficulties, given that this was a struggle for many of the mentors. At the end of the trainings, I found the mentors successfully applying much of what I had taught them. They started using participatory and active learning methods, student-centered approaches, and practical examples from the real world environment. Now, they are equally experts to me as a teacher, and sometimes I find that I have little criticism of what they are doing.

*#8: Too smart for her own good (E2F Project Team)*

In our program we had one girl who would dominate all the activities and become upset whenever she was not selected to participate or answer a question. She was incredibly intelligent but refused to share the stage with other children. She would sulk, become jealous and even punch children who were selected instead of her. Obviously this created problems for the entire group and for all the other mentors. We told her it was important to learn to let others participate and suggested that for every one time she participated she would need to let others participate ten times. We provided incentives for her to follow this rule—such as making her leader of her peer group, and later on leader of the opening circle. By giving her the role of the leader we thought it was also a good way for her to learn what it is like to be a mentor and manage the needs of all the children equally. Now we find this girl as a much more empathetic person, who is willing to share attention with others. She is more aware of when other children are not recognized, and brings this to the mentors' attention. Her case made me aware that the issues of children are varied, and while we become used to children who are shy or withdrawn, or struggle academically, dealing with an intelligent children who has behavior problems is also an important part of our program. If we hadn't done something she would have become an intelligent person lacking any sort of empathy, and may have lacked the tolerance to be successful in life.

*#9: A hopeful start to a promising future (CBO Management Group)*

For many years, we have attempted to expand our reach into new communities but often have come across challenges that have made this quite difficult. When we started E2F we recognized that we wanted to work with some of the marginalized populations that surround our project site. But when we first arrived in the area with the new project, there were a lot of concerns from the community. They saw us installing the swings and play equipment and they thought that we were only creating a play space. This made it difficult in the first cohort to recruit sufficient numbers. But as the program started to show successes, particularly as the marks of students in school improved, the community's interest and engagement changed as well. They could see that we were doing more than playing with children, but also teaching them important academic and social skills. The school began to encourage parents to send their children to us, and we even had visits from UNWRA education officials. Community leaders began to become advocates for us, as did parents of the

children from our first cohort. This has greatly strengthened our relationship with this population of beneficiaries. Today, they see us as an association that can work effectively with their children and address their concerns in partnership.

*#10: A challenge and a success (E2F Project Team)*

At the beginning of the program, I had one mentor on my team who had very little patience or tolerance for others. He would lose his patience easily, and shout at his colleagues and the children. He appeared to be under a lot of stress. I could see that this mentor had really good qualities in terms of being a good teacher and facilitator; he just had very poor communication skills. And the children loved him, because he acted like a big kid himself. I decided to intervene. I sat down with him to discuss what I noticed in terms of his behavior and how it was not setting the right tone for how we were to act as role models. I reminded him that the focus of the program is to treat the children and other mentors with respect and to value and listen to their opinions. He told me he didn't think he could change his behaviors. I sought the assistance of a psychosocial specialist. I realized we needed to approach this mentor's problems in the same way that we deal with the children—with careful attention, respect and patience. I would sit in on the sessions he was teaching and quietly remind him when he started to act in a way that was against our program culture. And the psychosocial specialist found out more about this mentor's life, particularly things that were going on personally that were creating the stress and anger he exhibited in front of us, and began to spend time working through those issues with him. Over time, he became a much more calm mentor, who has much more patience with the children and his colleagues. He is more of a role model to the children now. This is an important change because his actions had the potential to jeopardize the entire program culture. It was important to change his behavior to protect the messages we want to convey to our children and community.

*#11: I will succeed despite all the odds (E2F Project Team)*

As I was administering the pre-test to the children during one of the cohorts, I noticed one child holding a pencil and not answering a single question. When I asked this boy why he wasn't answering any of the questions, he told me that he couldn't write. He couldn't even write the alphabet. So, I started to ask him questions on the paper aloud and he could correctly respond to most of them. It made me realize he was an intelligent boy who had received no support to help him academically in the past. So I developed a plan to help this boy. I started by teaching him to write the alphabet, but in a more interesting way, by either drawing the letters in the sand, using song, playing games on the computers or through flash cards I made up. I made myself available to him each day and he started to visit me at home for assistance with his homework. I rewarded him with little incentives for his efforts, such as notebooks or stationery that his family could otherwise not afford. I reinforced his diligence by giving him the super child award more than once. I noticed with these efforts, matched by his own desire to learn, he started to show academic progress. Where before he had been scoring 5/20 he was now scoring 12/20. When administering the post-test, I offered the boy the option of me reading out the questions aloud to him. He refused saying he could now read and write the answers himself. This made me so proud. It was a success not only for him, but a personal success as well. It made me realize the important difference I could make with children.

*#12: Living with hope (E2F Project Team)*

In the first cohort there was one girl in our program who appeared to be constantly depressed. She would come to the program each day with her hair in a mess, and her clothes dirty and wrinkled. She remained withdrawn from all the other children in her group and would chew on her fingernails in

silence. She would avoid making eye contact with anyone. I met with this child individually, and tried to gain her confidence and trust. At first she resisted, perhaps out of fear, but after a few days, she opened up and told me that she hated life and did not want to live. She expressed that she wanted a life like the other girls where they could afford food and clothes, but that it was not possible because her father was sick and did not work. She also confided that her father was beating her and her mother, and would insult her with words that no child should hear. She was living in a house with other relatives who were also violent towards her and her mother. She felt powerless. When I tried to contact the parents, the father picked up the phone and insulted me. Despite the lack of support from home, I persisted and started to conduct some relaxation sessions with her, to calm her nerves and get her to release the stress. By getting her to relax and draw, she started to change. I also worked with her group of peers, and without naming her issues, encouraged the children to support the girl to make new friends and be welcomed into the group. Slowly the child opened up to other mentors and peers, and began to participate more constructively in the activities of the program. In my last session with her, I encouraged her to work on her appearance, by wearing clean clothes and tidy hair. The next day, the girl came to the program with nail polish on her fingernails, her hair pulled back nicely, and wearing a clean pair of blouse and trousers. The moment she entered into the building, everyone around her started to compliment her on her appearance. Her face lit up with the biggest smile I had seen and inside my heart was bursting with pride. I felt that I had done something positive by giving this girl something to be proud of, and restoring her joy in life.

#### #13: *Overcoming adversity* (CBO Management)

When we started E2F, we were thrust into the middle of a rivalry between the two biggest families in our neighborhood. It was a challenge to start work as this battle outside flared on, and we as the management thought twice about whether we could continue on or not. In the end our society decided, given that the program is focused on conflict mitigation and problem solving skills, that we had an important role to play in addressing this problem. We felt that if we were exited the community we would have undermined the important responsibility when we elected to be part of E2F. Recruiting sufficient numbers of children for the first cohort provided difficult because of this rivalry. Families were skeptical of sending their children, particularly because they knew that we would be mixing members of the two clans together. They were afraid that violence would enter onto our site. Through our persistence, and particularly the hard work of the mentors, who went around the neighborhood speaking to individual families, we met the target numbers for our first cohort group. The first cohort went well, but unfortunately in the middle of the second cohort tensions between the two clans flared up again when one of the groups conducted a public revenge killing towards the other group. We had to stop the program for one week for children of the two families because the tensions were so high. We persisted after the tensions settled down. In the coming months, we were able to bring children, mentors, parents and community leaders from the two clans together and have both sides work on the four problem solving skills of resolving disputes. We became the only place where the children could safely and openly discuss the trauma that they faced because of the violence they were witnessing outside. In E2F we managed to bring these two clans together and discuss an issue that they were both interested in—the future success of their children. Through this the rivalry that existed outside was dissipated inside our walls. As a CBO this was a great success. It gave us the confidence to work effectively in a deeply divided and marginalized community.

#### #14: *Persistence overcomes adversity* (E2F Project Team)

In one of the cohorts, we had a 12-year old deaf girl who was incredibly withdrawn and introverted. She refused to leave her home to be social with others. She had no concern for her appearance.

When this girl came to the program, she was unwilling to participate in the opening and closing circles and would sit on the side in silence. I began to investigate the reasons behind these behaviors. I visited her home to speak to her mother, and I also visited her school. I discovered that the girl was ashamed of her disability, and her mother was equally ashamed of it. With this knowledge, I developed a plan. I started relaxation sessions and the girl started to use these times to draw out the things that were causing stress in her life. I invited the mother to attend these sessions so she could learn to communicate with her daughter in a calm and patient way. Another part of the plan was to involve this girl, as much as possible, in the activities of the group. The mentors worked hard to ensure she wouldn't feel different or ashamed of her deafness, and rewarded her with the super child award when she willingly participated in opening and closing circles. I went and sought outside support to provide this girl with a hearing aid. This allowed her to partially hear again. These actions began to give the girl new confidence. She is now willing to branch out and make friends. She participates willingly in social activities, and enjoys going on the excursions. She is giving more attention to her appearance, and is more confident to venture out into the community herself. Her mother also has new skills and knowledge on how to cope with her daughter's hearing impediment. This girls' disability no longer stands in the way of her bigger dreams in life.

*#15: A story of a successful girl* (E2F Project Team)

There was a ten-year old girl who came to our program without any ability to read or write. In the diagnostic testing that I administered, the girl appeared to be suffering from learning disabilities. This was confirmed by her academic marks at school showing she was getting marks of 8/20 or less. After making contact with the family, I developed a specialized learning plan for her. I created flash cards with the alphabet on them and encouraged the mentor to use these cards regularly so that she would learn to recognize the letters. The mentor began to spell out words with the cards and slowly the girl learned to write these words by herself in her notebook. We taught her multiplication tables through singing songs and playing games as a way to ensure that she would stay interested but also remember what she was learning. We rewarded every small success with a star on her shirt, and all the mentors made sure to complement her on these successes. These activities had a big impact on the girls' ability to write and read. More importantly she gain academic confidence. She no longer needs specialized support, and is now one of the best students in her cohort group. She often has the answers when other students are struggling and is always willing to participate. It has been remarkable to see this girl progress from someone who was illiterate to someone who is now capable of teaching her own children to read and write in the future. It makes me feel good to be a change-maker that contributes to the future success of our country.

*#16: Climbing the mountain* (E2F Project Team)

There was a boy in the fourth grade who came to our program lacking basic skills in counting or writing. We learnt from the parents that he had sustained a head injury from a fall earlier in life. This prevented him from remembering things. The mentors and I worked together to teach him how to count and learn the alphabet. After two months, we began to lose hope as he continued to forget anything we taught him an hour later. The other children grew frustrated that he was constantly forgetting things, and began to tease or exclude him from their activities because of this. The mentors, similarly annoyed, came to me asking if they could keep him out of the group activities because of these problems. Rather than allowing this boy to be withdrawn from the group, I persisted. With his mentor, we began to teach him to count on the swing. He started to learn the numbers this way. We began to use motivational techniques to get him to memorize things. We would reward him by giving him time to color or play games if he succeeded in small academic tasks. The mentor, who was a friend of his teacher, worked closely with her to ensure that he was being

supported at school in a similar way. By the end of the six months, the child was able to pass some of his subjects for the first time. His mother came to us overjoyed with joy and we continue to hear of his successes from his family. On a personal note, this story is the inspiration that keeps me motivated for the work I do, as it reminds me of the real impact we can have in children's lives.

*#17: I was, I am still and I will always be human (CBO Management)*

We were a well-known independent CBO who had good relationships, well-run programs, and strong partnerships with organizations and political leadership across our community. Sadly and without any warning, internal security forces came to our society, took our keys, and locked the doors. We weren't given any reason for this. All our projects came to a halt and there were no other CBOs to take our place. For nearly a year and a half we fought to reopen our doors. After a trial at which many community members came to our defense, the judge by court order mandated that we be allowed back into our facility. After five months, we received our keys. When we entered our building we noticed that everything that been taken. We had also lost many of our important staff members. Our CBO literally had to start from scratch. In late 2010 were given an opportunity to be part of E2F. This program has allowed us to reconnect with our community in many ways. Through our process of recruiting children, we have been able to meet many of the families of our community. With the families and children who ended up participating in our three cohorts, we have built strong and enduring relationships. We have managed to offer employment to a group of 22 highly skilled and educated young adults from the local community and this is of great important given the economic situation we face. And the academic progress we have shown with the children has allowed us to rekindle connections with our schools. Our success in E2F has restored our track record of success and the good reputation and relationships we enjoyed prior to our closure. Based on this, we are confident of being able to offer other programs for our community's children and attract significant numbers of participants for these new projects. E2F came at a critical time in our society's history.

*#18: From impossible from possible (E2F Project Team)*

In one the cohorts we had a group of children who came to E2F from a neighborhood where all of the families had been kicked out of their homes by the Israeli forces during the 2008 war. When these children came to E2F, they came with a lot of behavior problems, including aggression and violence towards others. On their first day, they ended up destroying three pieces of playground equipment. They formed a gang inside the center, and would bully children when they tried to play on the playground. The mentors, along with the psychosocial specialist conducted a number of interventions with this group but struggled to make progress. We grew increasingly frustrated. We sought the assistance of Lou when he came to visit. He said that the behaviors of the children were positive—our challenge was to harness their organization and leadership skills towards constructive rather than destructive behaviors. With this advice, I introduced these children to the game of dominos. They happily played with the dominos that day, but every day after that, I reduced the amount of time I would allow them to play dominos. Eventually we reached a point where I would not give them the game unless they agreed to obey the team rules. They agreed and became much more cooperative in our group. Later, we asked this group of children to participate in a reactive theatre on how to treat the maintenance man, and they did an excellent job portraying both the negative and positive ways to deal with him. We also asked these children to assist their mentors with academic instruction given that they were good students. They started to take their responsibilities seriously and began to see the importance of acting as good role model if assuming a leadership role. To continue their progress we placed them into the Graduate Club together. Harnessing their leadership skills they have conducted two community activities as part of the Club. One was they cleaned up the backyard of the school, and the other was a project to raise children's

awareness of crossing the road safely. It makes me incredibly proud to see a group of children from my neighborhood shift from being troublemakers to role models and leaders. They are now a team working for constructive change in their community.

*#19: Being a manager doesn't mean being a boss (E2F Project Team)*

As a member of the project team of E2F, I was given the new experience of being a manager. Immediately I noticed that CARE management treated us in a way that suggested we were equal and partners to them. I also noticed that they seemed excited and passionate about what they did. I found this very strange as in my previous work, managers used to treat me as a subordinate and dictate what I do. There was often little interest or passion in the work we did. This approach made me to think about my own role as a manager. I realized that I needed to work with the mentors in a way that was not threatening or imposing but rather collaborative. To learn about how to do this, the program manual was useful and slowly I became more comfortable with being a manager who is not imposing but collegial. E2F taught me about a different way of managing a program, one where everyone works towards a shared goal and acts in a way that models the way we want others to treat us. It gave me the skills to manage people in a way that builds teamwork and passion for ones' job.

*#20: From darkness into light (E2F Project Team)*

In my family I have a nephew who was born with one ear. This boy and I are very close—he is like a son to me. At a very young age, he was made to feel very self aware of his appearance and would wear a hat to cover his ears. When we would visit doctors, he would refuse to take this hat off, and cry if anyone tried to remove it. He constantly asked me about why he looked the way he did. I didn't have the courage to tell him the truth so I would tell him that I myself was born this way and that one day his other ear would grow just like me. I kept this lie going for many years. I felt that this was the only way I could keep his hope up and ensure he wouldn't fall into despair. When he came to E2F I began to see the consequences of my lies. His mentors would tell me that he would weave intricate stories and live in a dream world. I realized this was unhealthy for him and would create problems, socially and emotionally, later in life. I started to look in the curriculum for how I could resolve the hole that I had dug. I found two sentences that really stuck. They were: "be realistic" and "any child can succeed." I decided to go home and tell him the truth. I admitted my lies to him. I asked him to accept his deformity, and that for now it wasn't going to change. I told him that "God created you this way and you should accept it." Inside E2F his mentors reinforced this message and told him that they loved him just the way he was, whether he had one ear or two. A few months later we went to visit a team of visiting doctors. They asked him to pull his hat off. This time he pulled it off without any fuss. When he pulled off the hat, he shared how his mentors loved him the way he was, and he felt comfortable with how he looked. E2F gave me the strength and support to tell my nephew the truth and explain his physical deformity in a way that he would come to accept it.

*#21: The Star (E2F Project Team)*

In one of the cohorts we had a child who was so violent that few of the mentors had the stomach to handle his behavior. Many refused to deal with him and it was proposed that we remove him from the cohort. One day, I went out to observe this boy. I had this image of the boy as a big bully, but when I located him in the group, he was a short, skinny and unkempt. As I sat observing him, I noticed that he had made an intricate star with a palm frond. I decided to put this boy on the spot and asked him to show the rest of the group how to make these stars. While he was reluctant and looked at me with scorn the entire time, he complied. In the closing circle that day I complemented

this boy on showing his group how to make the stars and asked him to show the other groups. After all the children made these stars I hung them in the backyard. Each day after that, I would compliment this boy on how he had contributed something of positive value to our community. He began to see that there were people who acknowledged his creativity and cared for him. He saw that he had a space to express his feelings and the challenges he was facing academically and emotionally. As he opened up more and more, the entire team worked with him quite closely and he made significant progress. He began to cooperate with his peers and mentors. Towards the end of the program, we invited the mother to come to see her son and she was shocked by what she observed. For me this story is important because it signifies both the power of the program and the importance that a caring adult can have in changing the life of a single child.

*#22: A smile in a sea of tears (E2F Project Team)*

After my engagement to one man was broken off, my father obliged me to marry someone else. Together we had four children. But no matter what I did, I found it difficult to not see my husband as someone who I was obliged to marry. This made me emotionally unstable, and I worried about my children's future. I was increasingly afraid that I wouldn't be able to be a good mother to my children, particularly because my husband was not that supportive. At the same time I discovered that I had a tumor, which sunk me further into depression. I would have recurring nightmares of me being on a sinking ship with my children drowning alongside me. When I started the E2F training I was in the darkest of despair. But those four days of training, and particularly the Smart Learning and Problem Solving Skills that it introduced to me, gave me the strength to forget my problems at home and begin to think positively about my life. As a teacher coach for the program, I grew very close to the mentors and our relationship as a family put a smile back on my face. After spending so many years taking care of others, it was the first time that I had other people care and support me. I began to notice tremendous progress and growth in the skills of the mentors to teach the four academic subjects, and many of them attributed this change to my hard work. These successes, relationships and new skills have given me the confidence to be a better mother to my children. E2F literally turned my life around and gave me the strength to continue on at a very difficult point in my life. It has allowed me to see I can achieve something of great value and given me courage and conviction to be a survivor against my illness.

*#23: Towards a better society (CBO Management)*

We are an older CBO that was established in 1991. It was at that time that we set up our systems for management. In the coming years our CBO grew and grew and the size of the projects we were managing grew as well, but we didn't have the time or capacity to update the systems we were using to administer these projects or to effectively learn from the success and failures of our past projects. Through our involvement in E2F we had the chance to develop our capacity using PONAT. It allowed us to establish our own capacity building program and receive training in more than one field. Along with CARE we were able to produce new administrative and financial manuals, improve our evaluation system and improve how we file and manage our documentation. Today, we have a computerized management and information system. This has greatly improved our employee's efficiency and given them easier access to a wealth of data. Through PONAT we have designed a website for our CBO which allow us to publicize our achievements. E2F has helped our CBO to promote our contributions and successes, provided us mechanisms to learn from our past failures and increased our sense of confidence as an organization. It has improved our accountability to those we work with and those who support our work.

*#24: How to create a successful mentor (E2F Project Team)*

When we started E2F I had a mentor on my team who was not interested or committed to implementing the academic program. He would play games with the children, but did not seem to focus his attention on the students' academic needs. I discovered that he was avoiding teaching his group because he did not have a specialization in any of the four areas that we teach the children. He came from the background of being a sports coach. I felt it was important to find a place in the program where I could utilize his skills and talents. I sat down with him and discovered that he was extremely skilled at signing. I assigned him as an assistant for the deaf children. The assistance he provided these children gave him a sense of purpose and belonging within our community. He started to feel valued by the other mentors and myself. As he spent more time as an assistant, observing the approaches of other mentors, he gained greater interest in teaching the students the academic subjects himself. From time to time he started teaching students and showed greater interest in individually assisting students during revision periods. Through E2F this mentor gained important skills, but more importantly confidence to step outside his comfort areas. Personally, this story is important because it is an example of how I could find hidden qualities and virtues in a person and bring them to the surface and make them shine.

#### *#25: Enjoying team time (E2F Project Team)*

When we started E2F, the curriculum included in it a series of questions about the personal background and circumstances of a child, as well as questions on how they would respond to particular social settings and problems. The mentors were supposed to verbally ask and discuss these questions with their groups over the six months. The mentors and I didn't think this was a particularly effective way to do things, as not all children felt comfortable responding to these questions in front of others, nor did they all have the same confidence or ability to share their ideas aloud. I decided to create a journal for the children, where they could write down their responses and then share them with the group. The journal became a piece of documentation that would allow us to track the progress and growth of each child. It was also something tangible they could take with them when they finished as a reminder of the important skills they learned during our six months. We discovered that the journal was also helpful to maintain contact with the children's families and bring to light some of the hidden issues and concerns that were inside their child's head. When Lou visited the site, he evaluated this document and decided that it would be a formal component that would be introduced into all the other CBOs. It became a useful tool for all the E2F mentors. For the psychosocial specialists it helped to quickly review the needs of 170 children and to identify those children who needed the most individual support. I feel proud to have contributed to the entire curriculum of the program and to have created a tool that allows the children to express their feelings in an easier way.

#### *#26: Big steps forward (CARE Project Team)*

When E2F first started, it became clear that across all of our implementing partners there was a lack of management skills for a program of this size and nature. But one CBO in particular, and the issues they faced exemplified these challenges. I noticed that the project coordinator wasn't taking responsibility for the staff and admitted that she didn't know how to handle her job. The program was not following a daily schedule, and mentors were not clearly assigned or allocated to specific responsibilities. Children were not being followed during informal time and were left to their own. I decided to give special attention to this CBO and began to visit the project team on a regular basis. I also met with the CBOs management and expressed my concerns, and they assured me that they would begin to follow up on these issues. During my field visits I would sit with the project team and review the curriculum. From this we began to plan out how different elements of the program structure would be established and managed. We reviewed the different roles that the project team was supposed to play within the project. After each visit, I would provide the project team with

clear and specific feedback on management and delivery issues. When I received their first project and financial reports, I had to make a number of suggestions and improvements using track changes and send it back to them. But every time after that, the reports had fewer and fewer issues I needed to have them fix. At the end of the first cohort, I received one of the best narrative reports I ever received from any of our partners from this CBO. It was informative, clear and followed the guidelines set out. In the coming months, I witnessed numerous examples of the project team exhibiting creativity, innovation and initiative within their own activities and in collaboration with our other implementing partners. They submit their reports on time and often with very little that needs changing. In my opinion this CBO has shifted from being one of the worst to the best of our implementing partners for both project management and technical delivery. They have excelled with all the objectives we set out for E2F, in terms of improving the capacity of the CBO, the project team and the mentors, and also having a deep and significant impact with the children, their families and the wider community they serve. They are a CBO who could be long-term strategic partner for CARE.

*A: Slow Down Before You Decide (E2F Participant, female, 13)*

My best friend and I started E2F together. We were placed into the same group. One day she started to insult me and push me around. I decided I wasn't going to talk to her anymore because she was being so mean. Our mentor could see we were fighting and helped us to resolve our differences. He reminded us to use the four problem solving skills to figure out how we could solve our dispute. He sat with us while we spoke. I told my friend how when she constantly puts me down it made me feel angry and not want to be her friend. She understood why I was acting the way I was. Our mentor made us laugh during the conversation and helped us to solve our differences. He helped us to become good friends again. Now, we can communicate with each other and share special secrets.

*B: Playing together and giving chances to other (E2F Participant, male, 12)*

One day my friend and I were playing on the swing on the E2F playground. There was only one swing free and we had to share it, but my friend grew impatient and started to insult me. Eventually he pushed me off the swing. I defended myself and pushed him back. We both fell to the ground and started to punch each other. Our mentor came over and stopped the fight. He told us that we needed to play in turn, listen to each, and give opportunities to other children to play on the swing. He reminded us that good friends do not fight. He stated that it was important to speak to each other calmly when we have a problem. After our discussion, I learned that my friend needs some time to settle down when he is angry before we communicate. Our mentor taught us to settle our disputes through words rather than by fighting. Now when my friend and I play together, we can solve our differences peacefully.

*C: A story of happiness (Mother of E2F Participant)*

Two years ago our daughter was forced to move from a school for the deaf in Gaza City to a school in Jabalia because our family was unable to pay for the transport fees. This transition was very difficult for my daughter. At her new school, she was teased by other children and felt ignored by her teachers. Though she is a bright child, she grew frustrated and would return from school sad. She wanted to go out and meet new people and have new experiences but felt trapped. I decided to send my daughter to E2F because I thought it might help to improve both her behaviours and studies. The mentors encouraged her academically by rewarding her when she succeeded on exams she gave her, and this made her more motivated to study and compete with her peers at school for high marks. They also helped her to express the sadness and anger she felt inside. She really enjoyed the trips that were part of the program. It allowed her to see new places, and learn new

activities. During E2F she became a different person, mainly because her mentors and peers gave her the attention she needed. She is much more cheerful and cooperative at home, and more motivated to excel academically at school.

*D: Samasalem (Mother of E2F Participant)*

My daughter was a good student in school except for Mathematics. Each time that she would have to take an exam in Maths she would fear it. She refused to ask for help at home because she felt no one could help her. Her teacher at school was unhappy with her marks in Maths and became upset at my daughter. Then she started to attend E2F. One day I came to visit my daughter's mentors. They showed me a mathematics exam with a high mark, and it was that of my daughter's. They had been using participatory and fun methods to teach her the subject and had been successful. I was overjoyed that the program provided by daughter with the academic assistance she needed in Maths and were working hard to improve her marks in the this subject. This encouraged me to keep sending her to the program and also motivated her to keep attending and participating in all the other activities the program offers. Later, when I went to visit my daughter's teacher, he noticed that her marks were improving in a remarkable way, and was confident that she would achieve full marks by the end of the year. He also noticed that she was participating more in class. Her success in mathematics has given her greater confidence to become a pharmacist later in life. E2F has given her the motivation to dream bigger.

*E: The Sparkling Future (Mentor)*

In the first cohort we had a very intelligent girl who has scoring well at school, but was withdrawn from everyone around her. My assistant mentor and I noticed quickly that anytime one of her peers or the other mentors tried to speak to her, she would run away. She was afraid and viewed most people as strangers who she could not trust. After contacting her family, we found out that her father had been killed by one of the relatives, and that the girl was living in constant fear because of this. To break this fear, we involved her in opening and closing circles and team time to reduce her shyness. We made her a leader not only in our own group, but other groups as well, to reduce her fear of strangers and to make her feel more comfortable around others. We gave 'kilos' to her for making connections with new peers and mentors, and rewarded her with the superchild scarf on more than one occasion. Later on, the assistant mentor and I visited her house as a surprise, and the girl, instead of being shy came over and sat with us. She shared how she was making new friends in school. She had become a much more confident and social girl.

*F: The life I love (Mentor)*

Recently I graduated from university with a degree in education. My position as a mentor with E2F was my first job once I finished. I quickly discovered that my studies were not enough to be successful with these children. When I acted like a teacher, the children sat as they do at school, passively listening and not participating. Watching these children look at me with fear as a teacher, made me realise I needed to change the way that I approached them. I went back and reviewed the core principles of the program, particularly those about what it means to be a caring adult and build strong relationships with the children. I realised how important it was to make children be comfortable with me first, in order for them to be more spontaneous and participatory. I started to play and sit with the children during informal time. Over time, the children opened up to me and started to confide their secrets, their wishes and their hopes. E2F has helped me to become a caring adult, and understand that having this quality is essential if you want to be a teacher who makes a real difference to lives of children. I realised the greatest reward as a caring adult is having the trust and confidence of the children you work with.

G: *A Child from Gaza* (Community leader)

There was one child in our neighbourhood who was very withdrawn. He would always play by himself, and never join in the games and activities of the other children. A lot of this was due to his home environment, where he was often ignored because he is part of a big family of eight children. We convinced the family to enrol this child in E2F. At first he refused to participate in the activities of the group and would isolate himself out. The mentors worked hard to involve him in opening and closing circles, and rewarded him with trips and other incentives as he started to participate more. Gradually, we noticed that this child was more open to his relatives and his friends. He began to play with the other children of the neighbourhood. He became excited when it was time for him to attend E2F and made sure he was never late for the start of the activities. He became very close to his mentors and his peers, and even after his six months ended, he continues to visit his mentors and participate in activities from time to time. The love, care and attention that the mentors of E2F have shown to this child and others, provide them with a rare opportunity to flourish in our challenging community context.

H: *E2F as the solution to our community's problems* (Community leader)

Our schools in Gaza are overcrowded. Teachers do not have the time or the energy to give to children. They tend to focus on their academic progress, rather than their emotional needs. They never try to find out why children are not succeeding at school, particularly when they are withdrawn or shy. This is a problem because many children have suffered from the wars we face in Gaza and the violence and fear that they bring about. Many of our children are intelligent but are dealing with trauma. When E2F came to our community, I was amazed by the level of care that the mentors gave to each child. They learned every single detail about the children in their care. They related to the children by being children themselves, and worked hard to gain their trust and confidence. They also made learning fun. E2F has given our community's children a distraction from the violence that surrounds them and an opportunity to cope with the traumas of past wars. All of these efforts have made the children of our community more open to the adults around them, and given them the confidence and enthusiasm to succeed in school. E2F has become an important part of our community and a second home to many of our children. It has helped us to heal our children of the traumas they constantly deal with.

I: *The intelligent but worried child* (E2F Participant, female, 12)

I used to like being in school, but each time I had to take an exam I would grow nervous and afraid. My hands would shake and I would start to sweat. I would grow so worried that I wouldn't be able to answer any of the questions...I would just freeze! It was so bad that on the mornings that I had exams, I would wake up in a panic and rush over to my books to try to learn the material all over again. During E2F the mentors gave me particular techniques to manage this stress. I learned about the four problem solving skills of slowing down, taking a deep breath, looking for alternatives and making a decision, and this had helped me to approach exams in a much more calm way. I also learned that when I come to a question that I don't know, it is better to skip it and return to it later, than to become stressed and frozen in one place. Now I feel I am much more comfortable when I go to take exam. Thanks to E2F, I have become a much more confident and calm student.

J: *Overcoming my fears* (E2F Participant, male, 11)

I used to be a very good student at school, but after the 2008 war I had an injury to my head because of a rocket from the Israelis. The rocket flew right into our house and knocked me over. I

was covered in rubble and trapped. When I went back to school I had forgotten everything that I learned before. My friends would laugh at me because I had visible injuries to my head. I lost my confidence and concentration as a student and I started to hate everyone around me. I started to refuse when my parents demanded I go to school. I became withdrawn and violent towards my family and friends. All I wanted to do was be alone. I heard about E2F from my friends, and it sounded like the program could help me with my problems. My mentors helped me to deal with the physical deformity caused by my injury and to understand that it was not my fault and I should not be ashamed of it. They treated me like a child of theirs and I felt like they were my second mothers. They also taught me to understand a situation from all perspectives, and that before I jump into any hasty decisions I should analyse all solutions before taking action. These problem-solving skills have helped me to become more patient with those around me and myself. And the study skills the mentors taught, particularly how to manage my time and deal with the stress of exams, have helped me to feel more confident in school again. I enjoy going to school again and spending time with my friends and family. I feel better about myself despite the injuries I still have.

*K: From despair to hope (Mother of E2F Participant)*

During the war in 2008, my child suffered from severe injuries to his head after a rocket from a tank hit our house. His skull was shattered and he had to undergo a number of operations both in Gaza and in the United States to fix the damage. He became quite self-conscious of his injury and grew afraid of venturing outside. He started wearing a hat to cover his head, and would refuse to take it off. He became emotionally unstable, and would cry without warning and beat his siblings. He also lost his concentration and ability to study, and began to struggle in school. It was painful to watch my son in despair and I felt powerless to change the situation. I heard about E2F and immediately went to register my son thinking that they may be able to help him with these problems and rescue him from the sinking ship he was on. The program helped my son to overcome his shyness and the fears he had about his injury. He became less withdrawn and started to speak with me and the other members of our family. He picked up skills on how to make good decisions and communicate with others about the things that are bothering him. The mentors also helped me to deal with my son better by sharing some of the skills and approaches they were using with him. I have been able to use these techniques at home with him and my other children. As a result, he has learned to be more open with me about his worries. I feel that my son is moving from better to best because of E2F.

*L: A change for the better (Mother of E2F Participant)*

After the war, my daughter started to ignore everything that I was asking her to do, and she became very withdrawn. I would call her name once, twice, three times, and she would ignore me. Instead she would stay in the dream world she was in. She would talk without any logic, and seemed distracted all the time. All of this had an impact on her studies, and her academic scores declined. After a few weeks in the E2F program, I noticed that my daughter started to change. The activities, games and lessons of the programme helped her to be a different person. She is now much more calm, and also more open to listening to what I am saying. She is more loving with both me and the other members of her family. Her thoughts are more organised. She has become a mediator in family disputes. For example, her brothers were fighting one day. She told them to stop, take a deep breath, listen to each other, and then make a decision. I asked my daughter what was she talking about, and she replied, "the four problem solving skills." She regularly shares the lessons she has learned from E2F and the others in our family about the important lessons she learned. She is also doing better academically. She appears more motivated as a student. E2F has helped my daughter gain important social, psychological and academic skills that she needs to succeed in life.

*M: A beautiful life without violence (Mentor)*

In the first cohort, I had a boy in my group who had many behaviour problems. He was uncooperative and refused to be part of any large group activities. He was constantly causing problems with other children, specifically pulling chairs from underneath them before they sat down and destroying puzzles and games that others were working on. He would push his friends from the swings and would not allow anyone else to play on the playground equipment he was using. One day during informal time, I asked a group of children, including this boy, to draw a picture of what they were feeling at that time. This child drew a picture of a woman hung to a fan with holes where her eyes should be. When I asked him to talk about his picture, he said, "this is my mother and I hate my mother." Later, I found out he was living with his grandparents instead of his mother and father. At a very young age he had been abandoned by his parents and was angry at being left by them. The psychosocial specialist and I realised that we needed to develop a plan together to deal with his violent and anti-social behaviours, and to help him cope with the anger he felt inside. My role as part of this plan was to spend time with this boy during informal time. I would sit with him and talk, with hopes that he would begin to open up to me and see me as a safe person to come to. I treated him with extra love and kindness. I also tried to direct him to activities he loved, such as being on the computer, and would sit and encourage him as he played. I worked hard to redirect his violent behaviours during formal learning time, for example, using reactive theatre and the problem-solving sessions to get him to think how he might deal with a situation in a different way. The love of the mentors and the support of his peers gradually helped this child become less violent. Now when he plays with the children on the playground during informal time, he discusses with them how they will share the equipment. He is willing to follow the rules of the games, and participate fully in all the activities at the program. His grandmother notices that at home he has become more calm and willing to play peacefully with the children of the neighbourhood. Even his peers notice these differences and give him praise for this change. This boy has gained skills that will remain with him for the rest of his life.

*N: A small chance that changed my life (Mentor)*

When I joined E2F I was a recent graduate who didn't have many of the skills that were necessary for taking on the job of a mentor. I was very shy and I knew it was going to be a challenge to stand in front of large numbers of children and other adults. Having grown up around all men, I was also unsure how I would relate to the women in the program. In the first training program with Lou, he noticed that I was really shy and wasn't choosing to participate. He worked hard to convince me to come out of my shell. Later that day, I received the supermentor award from Lou for making efforts to be less shy. Receiving this reward really helped to motivate me to continue on and overcome my shyness. When we started working with the children, the team had meetings on how we would conduct our work. Even though I didn't have as much experience or knowledge as the other mentors, I took the risk to ask questions and raise concerns, and the project coordinator took notice of this. I started to become more open and ask for assistance from all the colleagues in my programme, particularly the female mentors. Slowly this started to influence my life outside. I have learned how to hold a conversation and encourage others to join in. Now, I love meeting new people and being social. I have changed from a withdrawn person with poor social skills, to an outgoing person who has the motivation and skills to succeed in life.

*O: The miracle turnaround (Community leader)*

In our community there was one boy who was incredibly careless towards his education. He lacked motivation or enthusiasm to succeed in school, and was also violent to his peers. As a result, he was unable to pass the first semester of the year. This failure put a lot of pressure on the boy both

psychologically and emotionally. He was encouraged to attend E2F. The mentors began to spend time with this boy to find out why he lacked motivation for his schooling, and better understand the reasons for his academic failure. They involved him in different types of activities and taught him important study and psychosocial skills. The mentors also worked closely with this boy's teacher so that he could receive individualised support at school. We notice now that this child is more motivated to go to school. His scores are gradually improving. This is even being recognised by the school, where two weeks ago, he was acknowledged by the principal in front of all the other children and teachers as being one of the students who has most improved. This academic success in school is also helping with his other behaviours, including his tendency towards violence. He now has something to motivate him through his studies, and distract him from boredom. What E2F has shown is that it is important to deal with academic and psychosocial skills at the same time. Too often in our schools and society deal with one or the other. This is not enough, and E2F has shown us how we can successfully redirect our troubled children.

P: *Learning better* (Community leader)

Nine years ago a new Palestinian curriculum was introduced. This new curriculum has placed tremendous pressure on the families of our community. They struggle to understand the large amount of new content and material that is in it. It makes it very difficult for them to effectively help their children. The result is that there has been an increase in the number of profit making tutoring businesses in our community. Parents unable to help their children at home are sending their children to these centres, despite the high additional financial costs they imposed on these households. Many of these centres, however, do not have real concern for the children, and are not suitably qualified to work with the children. Teachers at our schools also suffer from trying to help the children, both by their own lack of knowledge of this new curriculum as well as the large class sizes they face. All of this means that our community is struggling to support our children academically. With E2F things have started to change. The program has qualified and prepared mentors who can focus on the individual academic needs of children. They work with the children in small groups using approaches that motivate them to be leaders and improve their marks. They also provide an important outlet for the recreational and entertainment needs of our children. Community leaders are able to bring teachers from the school and the mentors of E2F together to align their activities and learn from each other. You can see the difference that this program has had when you look at the marks of the participating students. Most have seen their scores improve dramatically. Many of the profit-making tutoring centres are now closing because the students have an alternative place to come. This relieves some of the economic pressure that face the families of our community. This is an important community change because it shows how an outside program can work effectively with our children and schools to relieve some of the pressure that the new curriculum has created on our teachers, families and children.

Q: *The path to success* (Father of E2F Participant)

My daughter started E2F suffering academically. She was distracted in her studies, and lacked concentration. This created stress for her when it came to taking exams. She came to the program and the mentors, psychosocial worker and teacher coach sat down with her to diagnose the core issues behind her struggles as a student. During her time in the program she was able to learn important skills about studying, such as how to manage her time, being more focussed, and dealing with the stress of exams. She also received academic support on her school material. All of this was done in a loving and caring way that motivated her further. As she started to succeed in school, the mentors would acknowledge her growth, and this encouraged her to continue to do better. Now she is a better student who knows how to focus and study effectively. Her confidence has reduced the stress that she used to face before exams and she goes into these situations in a much more

calm way. As a family, it has helped us to understand the reasons why our daughter was struggling in school, and gives us tools to keep her on the track to success.

R: *A smile to the future* (Mother of E2F Participant)

My daughter used to be a very shy and withdrawn child. Whenever I would ask her to go outside the home, she would resist. If I persisted and dragged her out, she would shout and scream on the streets and I would feel embarrassed by her behaviour.

She didn't want to come out because she was ashamed of her deafness. She was easily frustrated by her lack of ability to communicate with other children and would shout in anger. The other children wouldn't know how to deal with this behaviour and would tease her in response. Her frustration about her inability to communicate became violent from time to time, and she would take out her anger on me and her brothers and sisters. When I sent her to E2F, the teacher coach and psychosocial worker worked with her on an individual basis. They taught her to slow down and showed her how she could communicate with the other children in a way that she wouldn't be laughed at. She noticed how all the mentors dealt with her in a calm and patient fashion, and this helped her to see how she should act as well. The psychosocial worker helped my daughter to understand her changing body and accept the normal process that was occurring, rather than being afraid of it. This was a great relief to me as a mother because I didn't know how to communicate this to her. As a result of the program, my daughter is able to participate in life outside the home. She knows how to conduct herself in social settings, and communicate with others. She is more confident. As a mother of three deaf children, the program has helped me to deal with the unique needs of my children. It has given me hope and confidence in dealing with them, and also knowledge that there are people I can go to in the community who care about my children's success and well being.

S: *A child without fear* (Mentor)

In our first cohort we had a boy who suffered from frequent bed-wetting. When he came to E2F, the project team created an individual plan for this boy. We agreed that we would use a unified approach of giving him extra attention to forge a caring relationship with this child. The hope was that he would come to trust us as safe adults who he could share his secrets with. It took a while, but eventually the child opened up and began to trust us. He shared why he was so fearful. We found out that one of his relatives had been physically and emotionally abusing the boy and he had become scarred by the experience. When we spoke with his mother about this, she was relieved to find out the reason for this boy's fear, and immediately addressed the issue by speaking with the relative. The abuse stopped. For the remainder of the program, we continued to show the boy how conflicts could be settled in nonviolent ways. We demonstrated how other issues in life could be solved by going to adults he trusted and had confidence in. Over time the bed-wetting stopped, and he lost his fear. By the end of the program, the boy, as well as his parents, came to see me as part of his family, and continue to turn to me for advice, support and encouragement with their issues. The program's approach of forging strong relationships through caring adults has been key to this boy's success and to the potential for creating a more peaceful society in the future.

T: *An improved personality* (Mentor)

When I started E2F I lacked self-control. I would lose my temper quickly and become easily stressed. Looking back on this now, I think a lot of these behaviours were the product of the war in 2008 as well as my frustration at not getting a job after graduating from university. I remember during the training program, I learnt about the four problem-solving skills. While the purpose of learning these skills was to teach them to the children, I began to apply them to my own life. By stepping back from situations that cause me stress, seeing the big picture, and evaluating the full range of

choices before taking action, I began to manage the stresses in my life without being brash or hasty. I began to apply these skills to working with the mentors and the children, and found that I could deal with them in a way that was supportive, constructive and caring. This change has been important to me because I am now more confident and calm in dealing with issues in both my personal and professional life. I have new skills that prepare me well for my life ahead.

U: *The best future* (Community leader)

In the past, our community's children lacked academic motivation and tended towards violence. They would walk around with knives or other sharp weapons and give little attention to their schoolwork. Most of the projects that worked in our community during this time focussed on giving material handouts to the children rather than supporting them academically or psychosocially. When E2F came to our community it was the first of its kind. While at first, the community was slightly sceptical of what this programme could achieve, enthusiasm for the program quickly spread as children gained skills. We could see that participating children were dealing more peacefully with their peers, and were succeeding in their school subjects. This created enthusiasm across all parts of community for the program, and parents started to send their children from near and far. The program has given the children of our community a motivation to succeed in life, both academically and socially. The children who have completed E2F are now role models for others who have not.

V: *Working and educating towards the future* (Community leader)

In the past in our community, children would attend school but with little success. They would come home from school and immediately have to tend to family obligations. There was little concern from the families of the community about whether their children did well in school or not. At the start of E2F, this proved to be a problem for the program, as recruiting willing participants was difficult. As community leaders, we began to promote the importance of this program to our children, parents and teachers. We distributed leaflets and spoke to many people individually. As a shop owner, I would tell all the families who entered shop that they should send their children to their program for its benefits both academically and psychosocially. As the first cohort progressed, teachers began to notice that children who had previously not been literate were reading, and others who had been failing all subjects were achieving well. This visible success led to the school encouraging other children to attend. Now families in our community seem more interested in their children's academic future, and the demand for a program such as E2F has increased tremendously. They themselves advocate for their children to attend, and are willing to bring them great distances to attend each day. E2F has given our children an opportunity to experience a motivating and quality educational experience that will make them more productive in the future.

W: *From Shyness to Confidence* (E2F Participant, male, 12)

I always wanted to be a leader in the school assembly but was too afraid to stand in front of others. The one time that I has tried to participate, I became so scared that I couldn't get the words out of my mouth and when they did come out, no one could hear me. When I came to E2F, the mentors helped me to deal with this fear. For example, they taught me how to focus on something other than the audience that I am front of as a way over dealing with my nervousness in public speaking. They gave me opportunities to practice speaking in front of others in the program as a group leader. Slowly, I was able to overcome my shyness. Since finishing E2F, I now have no fears of participating in the school assembly. I have even started presenting at bigger cultural shows in my community. E2F has given me new confidence, and allowed me to experience new things.

X: *Being organised is a foundation for the future* (E2F Participant, female, 11)

I used to have a messy room where everything was all over the place. It was so bad that I would put something down and couldn't find it in my own mess. My father used to complain all the time and would constantly ask me to tidy up. I would just ignore him. In E2F the mentors taught me to organise my life better. Through the smart learning skills I learned how important it is to manage my time better, prepare a good workspace for me to work in, set a schedule or plan for studying, and to ask for help when needed. I realised through these lessons that I needed to have a tidy room that could allow me to use my time well, and study effectively. Now I keep my room clean as I can see that it helps me to be a better student. I am a much more organised person and this skill is something I will continue practising in the future.

Y: *My life before and after* (E2F Participant, male, 12)

Before the war I was a very good student in my class, but after the war I found it harder to stay at the top of my class. I had a hard time concentrating, especially during exams, and would get very worried. I would rush through the questions, hastily marking answers, because I felt the pressure of time. I would worry that I could not complete all the questions in front of me. I was making many mistakes because I was not able to focus. During E2F I learned the smart study skills. In one of the sessions they taught us how to handle exams. They told us to focus on the question itself, and to ignore the pressures of time and the teacher standing in front of us. We learned to do the questions that are easy for us first, skip the hard ones, and then come back to the difficult ones at the end. Now when I go to take exams, I can concentrate better and answer the questions that I know with more comfort. When I have questions in school I ask the teachers' help, and this is something I never used to do before. Now I am getting better scores in school again and it means I can succeed later in life and make a meaningful contribution to my family and community.

Z: *My role as a leader in life* (E2F Participant, female, 11)

When I first came to E2F I was a very shy girl who was afraid of interacting with others. I wouldn't participate in the activities and I would just observe. I thought that many of the things that mentors did were strange and the way they acted quite different to what I was used to. Often, I would sit there sulking. One day the mentor asked a question and I responded without even thinking. The mentor, a bit surprised, showered me with praise because it was the first time he had heard my voice and seen me participating in the group. He continued to motivate me to answer questions and started to delegate responsibilities to me as a leader of our group. A couple weeks later, my friend and I were pretending to start the opening circle and convinced many of the other children to join in. When it came time for the mentors to start the real opening circle, the mentors let us continue on and lead the group. I was surprised that rather than scolding us, they encouraged us to run the circle. For me this was a turning point. In the coming weeks the mentors continued to reward me for developing my leadership skills. This continued on when I joined the Graduate Club, At first I was afraid to take on the responsibility of being a mentor myself and leading activities with other children, but the mentors gave me multiple opportunities to practice and improve my skills. Because of these experiences, I now run academic support sessions for a group of four girls at my school. E2F has helped me to use my leadership skills in all parts of my life.

AA: *Building a new person* (Mother of E2F Participant)

My son used to be a very timid, introverted person. When someone new would approach him, he would blush and find it almost impossible to get the words out of his mouth. He had few friends outside the home. Part of this behaviour was due to the fact that his father was trying to protect my son from the bad influences of the community, and would beat or shout at him when he would ask

to go outside. He came to accept that this was a normal part of how his father should treat him, but it made him very withdrawn. He also began to think that it was acceptable to punch others when he grew angry or upset. He came to E2F and saw that violence and shouting were not the only way to deal with others. The male mentors treated him with respect, kindness and care, speaking to him as an adult rather than a small child. They showered him with praise and affection and my son began to see that his father's behaviour was not the only way that a male adult could act. They redirected his violent behaviours without shouting or resorting to violence and this was a surprise to both my son and I. My son grew to love the way that these mentors treated him, and especially the individual attention they gave. He appreciated that he could share his secrets with the mentors and that they would keep them in confidence. He started to question his father's actions at home and asked if they could resolve issues through conversation rather than violence. Rather than getting angry, his father was proud that his son could speak with such confidence and determination and it made him less afraid of sending my child outside into the community. For my son, E2F has allowed him to stand with conviction and express his ideas without fear. He is now able to engage in positive relationships with other children and be part of the community outside the home.

*AB: My son's path to poetry* (Father of E2F Participant)

My son is a poet. He has always been very eager to share these poems with others but in the past, was too shy to do so. When he first came to E2F, he told his mentors that he wanted to read a poem during opening circle. When we went to share his poem he stared at his paper the whole time and read it without any feeling. The other children grew restless and bored. Afterwards the mentors spoke with him about his performance and gave him clear suggestions on how to read his poems better. They told him to read the words with emotion by using his voice and intonation, and use body language to make the presentation more interesting. They encouraged him to focus on something else besides the audience in front of him. To practice these skills, the mentors kept giving him opportunities to share his poetry in front of the group. Each time they would provide constructive feedback afterwards. At the end of E2F, my son stood up during the Closing Ceremony to present a poem. He shared this poem with such emotion and conviction that when he finished, the audience showered him with applause for minutes. Because of E2F he has gained the confidence and skills to share his poetry with others. He has learned to overcome his fear and is more able to achieve his aspirations and dreams as a poet.

*AC: The smile of a girl* (Mentor)

In one of my cohorts, I had a girl who was incredibly timid. When she first arrived, she would sit in silence, and isolate herself from all the other children. I would often find her staring blankly into space and unfocused on the activities of the program. At first, she was unwilling to open up to me, and it was very difficult to get any information out of her. I could see she lacked trust in me. To gain her trust, I treated her like an old friend, and would use the informal time, as well as the beginning of our formal learning times to welcome and joke with her. She started to smile, but would still say nothing. One day I asked her why she always looks so glum, and she replied, "it is because no one loves me at home." She shared how her older siblings were treating her as a slave and forcing her to complete all the household duties. They took advantage of her being only nine and would command her around. If she didn't obey they would beat her, and the parents would do the same. She had become meek and powerless. Following that moment, I would spend time with the child each day, reinforcing the message that there were people that loved her at home. I called the mother in and found out that they were busy running a business at home and did not have time to manage all the duties of the house. In subsequent meetings with the mother, I got her to understand that asking a nine year old to take on all the household duties and attend to her studies was impossible. These demands were affecting her daughter psychologically and academically. Eventually the girl started

to come to the program with a smile on her face. She shared how her mother was demanding less of her in terms of house chores, and was asking that she focus on her studies instead. Inside the program we gave this girl leadership roles. Eventually she gained strength and was able to express her opinions and participate more fully in the program. She no longer stands there meek and powerless. This increased confidence has spilled over into her academic life, where started improving in school. E2F helped to rescue this particular girl from the injustices she faced at home, and opened up new doors for her to the future.

AD: *The honest smile* (Mentor)

Before starting E2F as a mentor, I used to be very withdrawn and introverted. This is mainly because I come from a family where it is expected that women stay in the house until they are married. Naturally, I started this job with many fears and doubts. I didn't know how I would handle the challenges of standing in front of large groups of people, and of working with men or people from different cultures or backgrounds to my own. On the first day of training, I was given the super mentor prize. Somewhat surprised, Lou told me it was because of my honest smile. This reward was highly motivating and made me realise that I had something to contribute to the program. It was encouraging to know that someone else had confidence in my potential. It gave me the strength to cope with the challenges I would continue to face during training and as a mentor. The principles of the program, specifically that of acting towards the children in a kind and compassionate way, made it easy to work with them, and was also rewarding personally, as they would show that love and care back. Because of E2F I find I have many more skills, but am also a more confident and loving person. I have new bonds with my colleagues, the children I have worked with and their families. These connections have broadened my world. My family notices these changes and loves the person I have become.

AE: *A Change for the Better* (Community leaders)

In our community we live in a valley where generally it is not accepted for boys and girls to mix. The boys are told from a very early age by their fathers to avoid playing or mingling with girls, and to keep their sisters away from boys. For many children this makes them incredibly conservative and shy around those of the opposite sex. Inside the program, many boys arrived and refused to sit in a group with girls, and would complain to their mentors about having to interact with girls. Many of our families were also unsure that it was appropriate to mix boys and girls together. As community leaders we worked with our families to convince them that it was important that the program mixed boys and girls together, and that by doing so it would have long-term benefits for our community. We thought the program's structure of requiring children from both sexes to interact together through in activities and groups, and conduct celebrations and ceremonies as one unified cohort were important in terms of making our children less afraid and more tolerant of each other. This approach provided important to changing the way that the boys viewed the girls. After eighteen months, E2F has created a radical change in our community in terms of the relationship between boys and girls. The children no longer see it as shameful to interact with the opposite sex and accept their peers, whether they are boys or girls, as members of their family. They have let down their armour and have learnt to deal with each other in a way that is respectful and kind. For the boys in our community, it has helped them to overcome their shyness and fear of others, and learn important social skills. The program has changed the way that our children think about others and allowed them be more tolerant and social.

AF: *I became a girl* (E2F Participant, female, 12)

I used to beat up other girls. When a girl would insult me, I would punch them or pull their hair. I preferred to play boys' games like marbles in the street. When I came to E2F, the mentors spent a lot of time with me. They taught me the four problem solving skills of slowing down, taking a deep breath, asking questions and then taking action. Before I make any decision now I count to ten, and consider all my options. I do not play marbles in the street anymore. I prefer to play with other girls and get along much better with them. I have many more girlfriends. E2F has helped me to act more like a girl.

*AG: A change in a child's life* (E2F Participant, male, 11)

I used to spend most of my time at home watching TV. When the electricity would go off, I would get very bored. My father didn't want me to go onto the street and play with the other children because he thought they were naughty and would be a bad influence. Because of this I had few friends and would get very lonely and sad. When my father heard about E2F they decided to send me here. I spent a lot of time with the mentors and the psychosocial assistant. I enjoyed using the self-expression notebook, and I was able to start to draw some of the problems I was facing inside my family. The mentors and psychosocial assistant helped me talk about these issues in a confidential way. The program allowed me to make many new friends through the constant interaction we had during games and other activities. Because of the program I feel I can deal with some of the troubles I have at home. I can express my feelings and opinions more openly and I have many new friends.

*AH: A view to the future* (Father of E2F Participant)

For most of his life, my son was a very polite, considerate and tolerant child. Then his mother left the home permanently. He started to exhibit violent behaviours inside the home with his siblings and outside. His new behaviours surprised and worried me. I heard about E2F and felt it was important to send him to the program. When he came to E2F, the mentors showed him care, respect and love. They acted like second parents and new friends to him. As a result, he was able to open up to them and the mentors made sure to let me know what he was doing and saying with them. They showed me several pictures he had drawn of his family. In each of them he had drawn and then erased his mother several times. This helped me to understand that he missed his mother dearly, but was also very angry towards her for leaving. The program has helped my son to express the feelings around his mother leaving, and given my son and I the opportunity to discuss these issues openly. It has helped him to overcome some of the sadness he feels inside. His new found emotional stability has allowed him to continue succeeding academically.

*AI: My daughter has returned* (Mother of E2F Participant)

My daughter used to behave like she was a boy. She hated playing with girls or playing games other girls her age might normally play. Anytime she would spend time with the other girls she would fight with them. When I used to buy her brothers clothes, she would ask to wear those clothes rather than ones that I would buy specifically for her. She would play marbles with the other boys in the street. She would identify herself as a boy, once telling the census worker when he came around that she was a boy. All of these behaviours started to have an impact on her academic performance. When she first came to E2F the psychosocial specialist noticed these same behaviours. The specialist came up with a plan to purposely place her in groups with other girls during academic learning and other program time. This helped her to become more interested in spending time with them, and to act more like they did. Now my daughter is much less violent to other girls. She prefers to act like a girl, and has many more girlfriends. She shows more interest in what her older sister does. She enjoys wearing high heels or coloured scarves. Her academic marks have greatly

improved. E2F has restored my daughter to the person she should be, and relieved some of the stress and worry that I had about her acting against her nature.

*AJ: A smile of hope (Mother of E2F Participant)*

My child is deaf and goes to a school for deaf children. While he had some friends at school, there were few children who were willing to play with him and he felt isolated and alone in his disability. When he came to E2F he found everyone around treated him normally rather than strange or different, and he felt included in the groups of the normal children. He was treated as an equal amongst his peers. The fact that he was part of the larger group allowed other children to learn more about what it is like to be deaf, and they grew interested in communicating with him and the other deaf children. They even learned some basic sign language. Now I see my son playing with the children of our neighbourhood. They have come to accept him, despite his deafness. He is now a friend to all of them, and they treat him with kindness and respect. This has helped him to overcome the sadness and isolation he used to feel from other children.

*AK: Loving him despite his toughness (Mentor)*

In the second cohort we had a boy who treated everyone and everything around him with disrespect—the mentors, the children, even the equipment on the playground. He was proud of being violent and didn't see any need to change. Later I found out that his mother had left the house and had returned to her family home and his father was in jail. The boy and his two other siblings were sent to their grandmother's but she was old and struggled to take care of them. I decided to use group time to tell stories about myself that were not true, but represented issues from this boy's life. This helped to gain his interest and attention. A couple days later, I asked if he would accept me as his friend, and he said he would, but only if I didn't tell him to stop hitting or being violent with the other children. I felt I had made a small breakthrough. In subsequent weeks, I would sit and talk with him during informal time. I started to give him responsibility for being a leader. I would pretend to leave the room and entrust him to be the mentor in my place. I gave him responsibility for acknowledging the positive behaviours of other children, as a way for him to begin to notice, and hopefully copy these actions himself. Eventually this worked, and myself and the other mentors noticed the difference. While before his progress cards would show a series of bad or violent behaviours, these became isolated incidences and we started to see a number of positive behaviours instead. Today this child has new friendships with other children, and is much less violent. He is able to express his emotions, and has even apologised for his past destructive behaviours. He still comes to visit us at the centre. For me personally, this story is so important because I was the only one that created the change for him. I feel I made a real difference to his life.

*AL: Learning with your five senses (Mentor)*

When I came to E2F I stumbled upon one of the children I was teaching sobbing. I asked why he was so upset and he told me that he hadn't understood the lesson and was upset at himself. I started to explain the lesson to him again using the only way I knew, in front of the board with a pen in my hand, and thought that I had done a good job. But when I asked him if he understood it now, he said no. I tried again and he still didn't understand. I felt frustrated that I couldn't help this child, despite the fact that he was very intelligent. I went home despondent and looked into how I could teach maths to this boy and others in different ways. I discovered that I could use the different senses to teach the children through songs and visual aids. In the coming days I started to use these techniques, and the boy I had worked with earlier, came up to me afterwards one day and said that he had finally understood the material. From that day on, I created a song for each math lesson I was teaching, and developed different activities to instruct the children on the material. I came to

realise that children learn in a variety of ways, and need different techniques to understand a subject like math. In the coming weeks, feedback I received from both children and parents suggested that I had greatly increased children's enthusiasm and interest in math, a subject that many traditionally find difficult. I have become a much better teacher who can make a difference in the lives of children.

*AM: Children's dreams come true* (Community leaders)

We live in a border area, which is constantly in conflict and suffers economically. This environment creates a defensive mindset in everyone's behaviours and actions and makes it difficult for us to promote new activities and projects within our community. Past community projects that were started for the benefit of our children would often fail because we could not attract sufficient number of participants or because there was not sufficient enthusiasm amongst the children or families to continue. When E2F commenced, we were surprised to see that families were eager and willing to send their children to the program. It is because the project deals simultaneously with many of the issues that we face in our community—specifically our children's academic, emotional, and behavioural needs—as well as their basic needs such as the space to act and be children and be fed some meals. For the children of our community, who might otherwise be working in the tunnels after school, E2F has given them a new and rare opportunity to play, learn and be together.

## Appendix D: Detailed evaluation methodology

### *Most Significant Change Approach*

MSC is a participatory, qualitative evaluation method that has gained significant attention within international development circles in the past decade.<sup>59</sup> As an evaluation approach, it provides information that can be used to identify impacts of an initiative and promote ongoing programme learning (such as improving implementation, and identifying and addressing negative or unexpected outcomes). In MSC, project beneficiaries are asked in an interview to identify several changes, from their perspective, that are the result of the initiative in question. From this, each individual selects the one change that they believe is most significant to them, and provide details about this change. Their narrative takes the form of a “story” in which they describe what things were like before the change, what the change was, and what things are like now. They explain, as part of this, why their chosen story is significant to them. The interviewees also give their story a title.

An important difference about MSC in comparison to other evaluation approaches is its ability to capture outcomes that may not be easily anticipated. This is critical in the context of conflict-affected environments where interventions focussed on youth are often found to have numerous unexpected impacts on direct project beneficiaries and the broader communities within which activity occurs.<sup>60</sup> An added benefit of MSC is it provides detailed, specific and clear stories of success that donors increasingly value.

In the case of this evaluation, children, parents, mentors and community leaders at five of the six implementing CBOs<sup>61</sup> were interviewed and asked to provide such stories. The intent of the evaluation design was to conduct at least two interviews with each of these sub-groups to end up with eight stories of change per site (40 in total). Given the short timeframe within which field data is to be collected, sampling was done purposively rather than randomly, with specific individuals targeted according to a specified sampling framework in which a balance of representation in terms of gender and cohort group was indicated, as well as a need to ensure that 10% of the total sample of children with hearing difficulties and/or their parents were interviewed.

Beneficiary Type	Male	Female	Hearing Difficulties	Cohort Group	
				One	Two
Children	6	9	3	9	6
Parents	3	8	3	6	5
Mentors	5	5			
Community Leaders	5	5			

*Final sample of E2FII beneficiaries spoken to as part of evaluation*

The target was met in terms of expected numbers of individuals the evaluator indicated he would speak to, and in some cases, exceeded. In total 39 stories of change were collected from these groups of individuals.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>59</sup> See Davies, R. and Dart, J. (2005). *The 'Most Significant Change' (MSC) Technique. A Guide to Its Use.* [www.mande.co.uk/docs/MSCGuide.pdf](http://www.mande.co.uk/docs/MSCGuide.pdf)

<sup>60</sup> See for example INEE. (2011). *Understanding Education's Role in Fragility, A Synthesis of Four Situational Analyses of Education and Fragility: Afghanistan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Cambodia and Liberia.* Paris: IIEP.

<sup>61</sup> Given their limited involvement in E2FII, Al Atta Charitable Society was visited, but only to collect MSC stories from CBO management and their project support team members.

<sup>62</sup> In several instances, community leaders preferred to narrate collective, rather than individual stories of change.

These stories were then reviewed in a CBO-level selection panel. All 39 stories collected across the were collated together, translated into Arabic, and presented to a cross-section of senior managers and Project Coordinators or their designees from all six CBOs (see below)

Participants Attending MSC Selection Panel on behalf of CBOs		
CBO Name	# of Participants from CBO	Role
ARS	3	CBO Chairman
		Teacher/Coach
		Psychosocial Worker
JRS	3	CBO Executive Manager
		Project Coordinator
		Psychosocial Worker
HAD	3	CBO Board Member
		Project Coordinator
		Assistant Project Coordinator
ACA	3	CBO Chairman
		Project Coordinator
		Assistant Project Coordinator
PSCF	2	CBO Accountant
		Assistant Project Coordinator
MCRS	3	CBO Executive Manager
		Project Coordinator
		Psychosocial Worker
<b>Total Number of Participants for all CBOs</b>		<b>17</b>

Those assembled read through, deliberated on and selected stories, which they believe capture the “true impact” of the E2F project in Gaza. The panel shortlisted six stories, and settled on two stories that, in their opinion, reflect the Most Significant Change as a result of their organizations introducing the initiative. As part of the process, they discussed and justified why they have selected particular stories from all of those considered, as well as what they have learnt from the stories as a whole (see Appendix A).

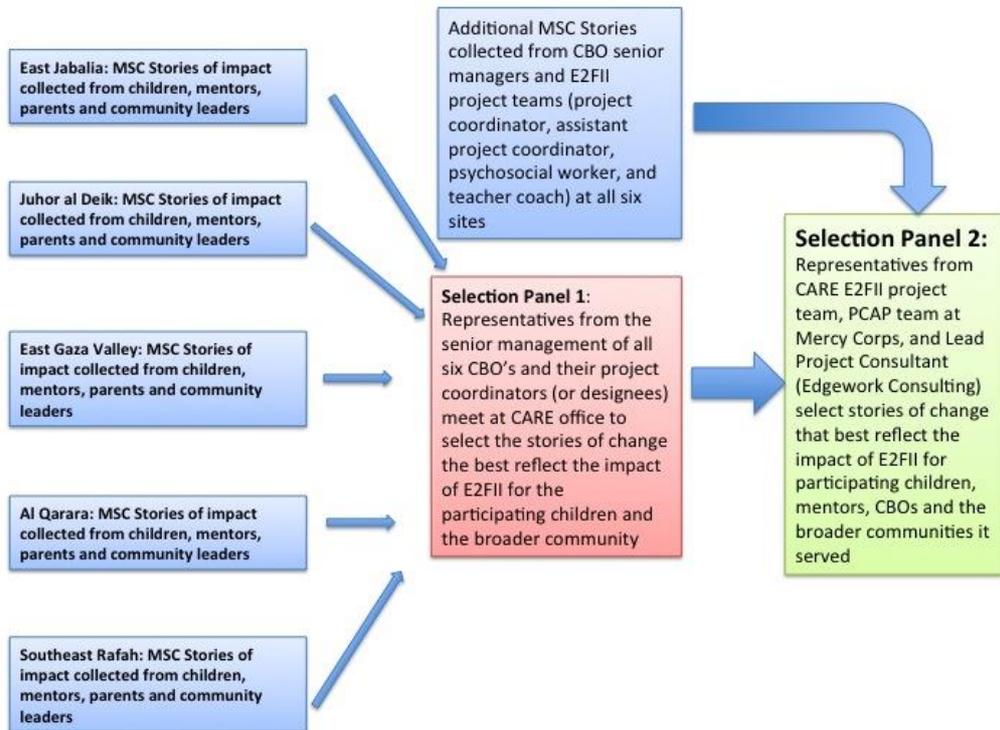
Additional MSC stories were also collected from those involved in program design and delivery, namely: the CARE E2FII leadership team (CARE and Edgework Consulting) and each of the six CBOs’ senior management and project support team. In total one story of change was collected from CARE, one from Edgework, and 25 from CBO senior managers and support team members.<sup>63</sup> MSC allowed for those working within the CBOs to identify the important changes for them in an open-ended fashion. A minimal amount of structure to this process afforded them the potential to speak of factors such as increased institutional or personal capacity, without pre-supposing or pre-empting this impact.<sup>64</sup>

A selection panel comprised of three representatives from CARE WBG, two individuals from Mercy Corps, and one individual from Edgework Consulting conducted analysis of these stories, plus the six

<sup>63</sup> In some instances the Assistant Project Coordinator or Psychosocial Worker were unable on the day of the evaluation visit

<sup>64</sup> This is something that is likely to occur if participants are asked outright about this in the form of an interview question. In general an issue with semi-structured interviews and interview guides in evaluation is that it can lead to undue attention to matters that are ‘important’ for the evaluator, but not those involved in the project itself. See for example House, E. (1980). *Evaluating with Validity*. London: SAGE Publications.

stories shortlisted from the CBO panel. A process similar to that described from the CBO selection panel occurred with this panel as well. From this, one story of significant change was selected and justified (see Appendix B). A diagram outlining how MSC was employed in this evaluation is provided for clarification.



**Other sources of data**

While MSC was the primary evaluation technique to be utilised during fieldwork in Gaza, the evaluation also drew on and utilised project documentation (i.e. project proposal, progress reports, training materials, PONAT assessments, project budgets), and data from the Child and Parent’s Report and Children’s Academic Achievement Reports<sup>65</sup> to further inform the process. These data helped to explore questions of efficiency, sustainability and depth and breadth of impact/relevance that MSC may not capture alone. Combined these data will help to: (1) assess the programmes’ responsiveness in design/implementation to the results of the mid-term evaluation; (2) identify whether established targets and articulated outcomes in the Results Framework were partially or wholly met, with close examination of reasons why this may be (with particular attention to the context of implementation as part of this analysis); and (3) gauge the levels of efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability of the intervention to the CBOs and communities in which the project was carried out. Individual interviews were also carried out with three individuals from the CARE E2FII Project Team (two SGCBOS and project manager), two representatives from Mercy Corps (PCAP Grants Director and PCAP Grants Manager), and the project’s external lead consultant from Edgework Consulting (via Skype and email).

<sup>65</sup> At the time of the evaluation, data from all cohorts was not fully available.

## Appendix E: List of documentation consulted/reviewed

- Quarterly Reports of the E2FII Project (August 1, 2011-March 31, 2013 inclusive)
- PCAP E2FII Annual Progress Report (October 1, 2011-September 30, 2012)
- E2FII Project Budget (actual versus expended as of March 31, 2013)
- CARE E2FII Modified PONAT Baseline Report (25 April 2012)
- PCAP E2FII Cohort One Endline Survey Report
- Office of Inspector General Audit of USAID/West Bank and Gaza's Palestinian Community Assistance Program (February 7, 2013)
- Capacity building plans for HDA, ARS, PSCF, and MCRS (May 2012)
- *Summary of Data from Mentor Assessment Time 1*
- Raw mentor Assessment data Time 1
- CARE PCAP E2FII promotional video  
([http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player\\_embedded&v=JLf8n5b\\_2tM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=JLf8n5b_2tM))
- CARE PCAP E2FII PMP (final)
- PCAP E2FII Program Guidebook, Edgework Consulting
- Graduate Club Guidebook, Edgework Consulting
- *E2FII M&E Handbook*, Edgework Consulting
- E2FII Quarterly Financial Report and Projections (prepared by CARE Finance Officer)
- Raw academic achievement data for Cohorts One and Two
- CARE Technical proposal for E2FII submitted to Mercy Corps July 2011



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## Appendix F: Evaluation Scope of Work

### CARE in West Bank and Gaza

#### **Scope of Work/ PCAP - Eye to the Future: Building Skills and Attitudes that Promote Academic Success, Resilience and Conflict Mitigation in Gaza (PCAP- E2FII)**

##### Scope of Work

##### Evaluation Consultant

##### **Background:**

Mercy Corps under the USAID funded Project "Palestinian Community Assistance Program" (PCAP) has awarded CARE a \$2650, 000 project "An Eye to the Future: Building Skills and Attitudes to Promote Academic Success, Resilience and Conflict Mitigation in Gaza" (E2F). The PCAP -E2F II is a 23.5 month project, which began on August 1, 2011 and will proceed until July 15, 2013. PCAP E2FII project aims to shift children and adult attitudes and behaviors in ways that contribute to a more peaceful internal environment and lay the groundwork for child educational development and socialization, including addressing conflicts without resorting to violence. This will mitigate conflict by building pro-social skills in children who are participating in the structured program. PCAP-E2F project developed child-centered conflict mitigation programs in six areas of the Gaza Strip; by implementing before/after school program dedicated facility within walking distance for the children aged 9-12.

Moreover, the Partners have been supported with various Capacity Building interventions based on the findings of applying the Participatory Organisational Needs Assessment Tools (PONAT) that include but are not limited to development of professional manuals, delivering specialized training and providing continuous technical assistance.

Because of the geographic locations of the communities where the project is being implemented and because of the socioeconomic make up of these communities, the PCAP-E2FII structured program was designed to support participating children to recover from the violence they have experienced and witnessed, build skills and attitudes that Promote Academic Success, Resilience and Conflict Mitigation in Gaza, and inculcate pro-social values and behaviour. To achieve its goals, 100 mentors and 20 project team (Project Coordinators (PC), Assistant Project Coordinators (APC), Psychosocial Workers , and Teacher Coaches) were carefully and thoroughly trained by the project consultant and a low child/adult ratios assured that children receive the kind of guidance, attention, and modelling necessary to effect the desired changes Thus, the PCAP E2FII team selected the most qualified and committed 80 mentors from the total 100 trained in addition to the appointment of five qualified PC, PCA, Psychosocial, and teacher coaches who also received the same training as the mentors.

While developing the Implementation Plan of Fiscal Year 2013, and based on the recommendations from Eye to the Future – phase one (E2F1) final evaluation, we were able to extend the project to Beit Hanoun in partnership with E2F I partner, (AlAttaa Charitable Association (ACA), who started the implementation of one six month program cohort activities on January 1st, 2013 for approximately 160 children.

### **Project Objectives:**

1. Establish and adopt a high quality child-centered, academic enrichment, conflict mitigation and healthy behaviors-promoting program by five community-based organizations in Gaza (East Jabalia, Juhor al Deik, East Deir Al Balah, Al Qarara, and Southeast Rafah); and
2. Develop a nexus of nearly 2400 children, including children with hearing disabilities, who exhibit better school achievements, higher resilience, and conflict mitigating pro-social skills.

Parents and community leaders integrated into the program through dedicated programming, multiplying the dissemination of the conflict mitigation, and pro-social messaging.

As of February 2012, the project has achieved the following:

- ✓ The Refresher Training was completed for the five partner as following (one day as site observation/ Evaluation, and one training days).
- ✓ Three Mentors Joint Activity days were delivered for the partners team during the project life.
- ✓ Two-days “Getting to Grants” Training completed for 19 staff members representing the key staff of the five partner CBOs.
- ✓ The “Foundation Training” courses were prepared and executed for all five CBO’s targeting a total of 100 mentors and five project coordinators, five project coordinators, five teacher coach, and five psychosocial in five separate training courses.
- ✓ 18 months Sub-grant agreements with the five CBOs were signed, other 6-months sub-agreement agreement was signed with ACA;
- ✓ Intentional Program Curriculum was developed, produced, translated into Arabic and delivered to approximately 2500 children age 9-12 in 3 consecutive cohorts.
- ✓ The first and second cohorts were successfully completed and the third cohort was started on Dec. 2012 and ACA new cohort has been started on Jan. 2013.
- ✓ The first Graduate Clubs” activities were started in September, 2012 at the five project locations targeting 230 of the first cohort graduated, moreover, in December, 2012 approximately 285 of the second cohort graduated were participated.
- ✓ Participatory Organizational Needs Assessment (PONAT) implemented and subsequently a series of capacity building interventions were developed and delivered.

### **Objective**

CARE West Bank and Gaza seeks the services of an Evaluation Consultant, individual or firm, to conduct **a final evaluation** of the PCAP E2F II Project covering the period of August 1, 2011 until July 15, 2013. The evaluation is planned to take place in April/May 2013. The objective of the evaluation is to assess whether the set targets and anticipated results of the project implementation during the two year of the project life were achieved wholly or

partially, strengths and weaknesses and challenges that faced the project which might have affected its ability to achieve the desired results. In addition, the evaluation will also gauge the level of efficiency, effectiveness and the level of sustainability of the project and relevance to the target main partners, CBO's and communities. Lessons drawn from the evaluation will be used to inform the design, implementation and management of other related programs in the future.

**Specifically, the evaluator shall:**

1. Review the project's technical proposal, project log-frame, work plan, progress reports, quarterly reports, filed visits reports and other relevant and available documents.
2. Meet with CARE project team, PCAP team at Marcy corps, USAID technical representative, six sub-grantees Senior Management, Project Coordinators; Project Team, representation samples of the mentors, Parents and Community Leaders
3. Carry out a telephone interview with the Project Lead Consultant who lives overseas.
4. Identify and clearly explain whether the project met its goal, objectives and desired results taking into consideration the relevant factors and context affecting project's ability to achieve its objectives.
5. Analyze the project's relevance to the six sub-grantees, effectiveness in meeting their needs and expectations of stakeholders, and implementation efficiency.
6. Identify and clearly explain the extent to which the project has contributed to building the capacity of the six sub-grantees.
7. Assess the impact of the implemented sub grants on the target group including but not limited to participating Children, Parents and Mentors.
8. Draw conclusions and make specific recommendations that will help to improve the design, implementation and management of the similar programs in the future.

**Deliverables**

1. Report outline covering all sections and proposed detailed methodology to be submitted to CARE within five working days of signing contract for review and approval.
2. A draft comprehensive report (max 20 pages) detailing the assessment of project results/achievements based on the logical framework, lessons learned, conclusions and recommendations for future consideration by CARE West Bank & Gaza, Mercy Corps, and the donor. This is due at least three working days before conducting the oral presentation.
3. An oral presentation of the preliminary findings and recommendations to CARE and its sub-grantees at the end of the field work and before the submission of the final evaluation report.
4. Final report taking into consideration comments received from CARE and/or its sub-grantees. This is due five working days after holding the oral presentation.
5. All written deliverables will be submitted in English Language.

**Level of Effort and Schedule**

The evaluation is expected to take place in April/May 2013 for a period of a maximum of 20 working days.

**Qualifications and Requirements:**

- A minimum of five years of experience in evaluating projects. Preferably in civil society, education, psychosocially and with conflict mitigation related skills.
- A bachelor degree in a related field. A master degree will be preferred.
- An excellent command of verbal and written English Language.
- Submission of a detailed evaluation proposal along with at least two related samples of a project evaluation prepared by the consultant.
- Interested consultants/firms should submit their CVs highlighting the above qualifications as well as 3 professional references for which the consultant has done previous similar work.
- Price quote/offer for carrying out the above SOW.
- The execution of this consultancy does not entail any cost for per diem, transportation and or accommodation.

### **Personnel Required & Reporting Relationship**

CARE anticipates issuing one contract to an individual or a firm for this evaluation. The consultant will report directly to Project Manager or his designee.

### **Reimbursement**

Payment is due upon receipt and acceptance of the final report.

### **Location of Work**

The work station for this evaluation is the Gaza Strip.

### **Authorization**

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name:** Yazdan El Amawi

**Title:**  
Gaza Area Manager / PCAP E2FII Project Manager