

Capoeira al-Shababi Achievements

mid-year
Report 2018





The Context

There are approximately 265,000 child refugees in Jordan who have escaped the war in Syria. UNICEF collected data indicating that **50% of children** suffer from nightmares, sleeping disorders and other forms of psychological distress since the conflict began*.

A recent International Medical Corps study shows that 27% of Jordan's refugee camp Syrians suffer from a **loss of interest**, 23% have symptoms of **anger** and 22% a feeling of **hopelessness**. 23% also reported having **reduced functioning in daily activities** due to their emotional distress.

Children and youth are most affected by the problems and stressors faced in the Syrian refugee community. Children residing in refugee camps have little to occupy their time with and little educational opportunities. Many also face child labour and early marriage.

Finally, the lack of awareness of mental health and the taboo against mental health disorders further antagonises the situation.

*International Medical Corps, Assessment Report, Understanding the Mental Health and Psychosocial needs, and Service Utilization of Syrian Refugees and Jordanian Nationals, 2017, (16)

Our Story

Capoeira al-Shababi is a youth initiative founded by three capoeira players in Jordan wanting to bring hope, happiness and community support to youth most in need. With up to 10 years of experience practicing Capoeira and years of working voluntarily to bring the joy of Capoeira to distressed communities, the Capoeira al-Shababi founders decided to dedicate their lives to establishing an organisation that can bring **sustainable support** to youth in the region.

We believe that Capoeira is **resilience**, training the capacity to keep moving, training and learning. Capoeira is **family**, bringing different people together to share the art. Capoeira is **freedom**, to be whomever you wish to be and to accept others as they are. Capoeira is **hope**, giving you the space to build your dreams for the future.



Capoeira al-Shababi believes every child deserves a space to heal, a community to fall back on, and a family to support them through life's challenges.



Summary

Between November 2017 and April 2018, Capoeira al-Shababi has reached over **250 youth** with recurrent sessions of psychosocial support (PSS).

We have worked in three different community centres:

- Relief International Youth Centre, District 8, Za'atari refugee camp
- Lutheran World Federation Peace Oasis, District 5, Za'atari refugee camp
- Lutheran World Federation Community Centre, Irbid, Sareeh

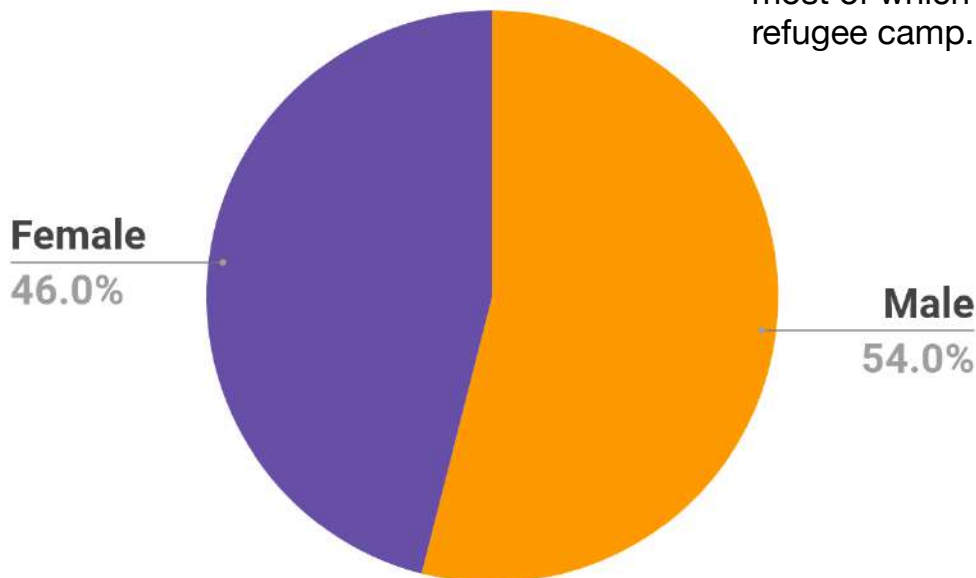
Capoeira al-Shababi specialises in supporting the **psychosocial well being** of children aged 8-18 with stress-releasing activities involving movement, music and play based on the Brazilian martial art Capoeira.

We also focus on **youth empowerment** by building the capacity of young men and women to conduct sessions of Capoeira for psychosocial support in their own community.

In six months Capoeira al-Shababi has conducted **4,220** services of psychosocial support to children and youth

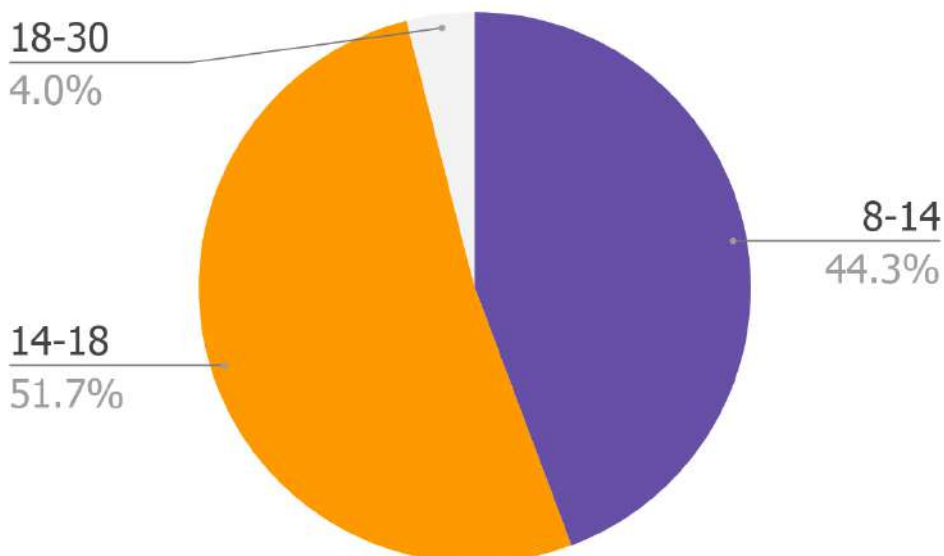
Gender

97% of the youth we have supported since November are Syrian refugees, most of which reside in Za'atari refugee camp.



Ages

Our programmes for youth aged 18-30 involves Training-of-Trainer sessions to empower them to become role models in their community.



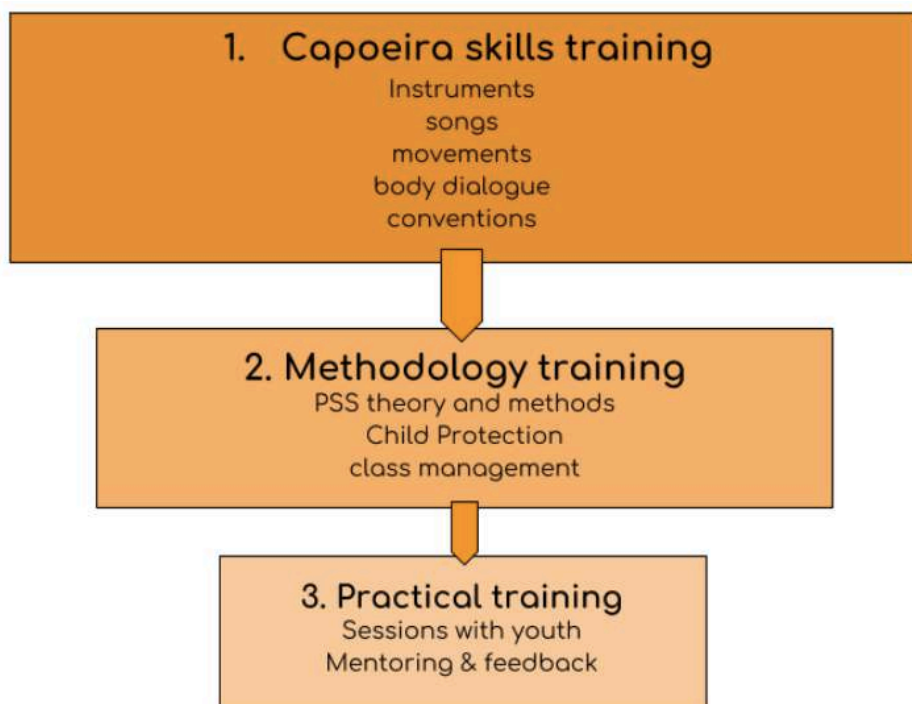
Our Approach

- 1** body-based stress relieving activities to reduce immediate symptoms of emotional distress
- 2** create safe spaces that foster trust, dialogue and social support
- 3** empower self-confidence and self-reliance to persevere and achieve goals
- 4** train youth to provide PSS and become role models in their own communities
- 5** create peaceful and resilient communities



Training-of-Trainers

Capoeira al-Shababi prioritises building the **capacity** and **sustainability** of our projects with a focus on local needs. That is why we focus on Training-of-Trainers (ToTs) where youth are trained to use capoeira as a tool for psychosocial support. We believe that local role models and community support is the best way to achieve and sustain our mission to create space for healing, social cohesion, peaceful societies.



Capoeira al-Shababi guides the ToT coaches through three stages of training. They are first trained on the **knowledge**, then on **method** and finally given **practical** guidance as they embark on leading PSS sessions with youth.

This carefully structured programme ensures that the coaches gain the necessary psychosocial support themselves before they embark on providing it to their community.

Our ToT project has had huge success, giving both project **sustainability** as well as developing the **resilience** of the coaches.

Success Story:

Our ToT project in Za'atari refugee camp has trained 6 Syrian youth to lead sessions of capoeira for PSS and life skills. After only 6 months they are now independently leading a total of 4 classes, twice a week, with 100 children.

Our ToT coaches are not only trained in Capoeira skills. They are also trained in:

- ✓ How to design games for focus, trust, communication and creativity
- ✓ How to manage disruptive behaviour in children
- ✓ Case referrals
- ✓ Psychosocial support theory and how to adapt it to Capoeira
- ✓ Follow-ups with participants families and home visitations

"I found my place in the community, that I have a talent which is Capoeira. I didn't used to have anything to do, but now I have something that makes me special. I used to think about the past all the time and be sad about it, but now I think more about the future. I feel like I have a future in something and it's called Capoeira."

ToT female coach, 20 years old, Za'atari refugee camp.



ToT coaches Mohammad and Abdallah demonstrating a body dialogue movement to the children in Za'atari refugee camp, Peace Oasis (LWF).



Words from the ToT coaches in Za'atari camp...

“ When I talk about Capoeira to my friends or neighbours, I feel like I am giving something that benefits the local community.

Male, 35 years old



“ Honestly, I didn't believe in myself as much before, I didn't have the courage.

Female, 20 years old

“ I am capable of handling more pressure... whether from the kids, or the house, or work, everywhere... we accept others opinions more, generally speaking. I used to be so intolerant of people before. If there was a situation I didn't used to think, I just reacted straight away, and I would get angry, but I don't do this anymore. Now I understand events and situations better.

Female, 29 years old

PSS and Life Skills

Capoeira sessions use a holistic approach that utilise many different activities with the aim to provide youth with a voice, with friends, and with a space to heal. Here are some examples of the kinds of activities we use...

Music

Instrument practice with 5 different traditional Capoeira instruments

Clapping exercises to increase **focus** and foster group **synchrony**

Capoeira songs include a lead and response which helps grow **group feeling, expression, leadership skills and confidence**

Body Awareness

Warm ups teach students about their bodies, where to stretch, how to notice tension, and how to relieve it

Capoeira games teach **spatial awareness**, and how to move around partners

Strength, self-esteem and positive energy are developed from both body and spatial awareness

Teamwork

Movements and games focus on **partner/group work** and depend on peers to succeed

Trust exercises encourage **bonding** and **positive emotions**

‘Energy Circles’ encourage **support of peers, social cohesion and self-confidence**

Creativity

Activities encourage students to discover themselves, **think independently, and express creativity**

Games encourage students to think of a unique movement, lead their peers and **improvise**

Capoeira allows participants to create their own sequences of question and response, fostering **creative thought**



Capoeira al-Shababi Trainer conducting a warm up with boys from Za'atari refugee camp, January 2018.





Most Significant Change Story,

Written by Capoeira al-Shababi Trainer, April 2018.

Nadine is 15, a Syrian refugee living in Za'atari camp. Nadine had a twin sister who she witnessed die in the war. Her younger sister is mentally disabled since her birth. Their father works on the other side of the camp so he is not often at home, and their mother is busy looking after the family.

Nadine had few friends before the programme, being emotionally unstable and reckless in her relationships. She would control all the energy in the classes and disturb exercises, desperate to be the centre of attention. Any rejection would lead her to sit in the corner of the room, head down and body slumped, refusing to interact with others. Her emotional triggers were so frequent that at times they would occur during every single Capoeira class.

But Nadine is a regular student of Capoeira, and she has been in the programme for over a year now. I came to recognise that to connect with Nadine, you need to meet her at her level. I started to encourage her spotlight in the classes, to joke with her, smile, laugh, to make her feel accepted. We built a strong relationship through Capoeira. I would let her demonstrate exercises with me, and she would help me organise the rest of the students. I was sure this was the only space where her contributions were appreciated, so I stuck to this dynamic.

After her Capoeira anniversary, I decided to invite her and three other girls to attend my ToT classes, believing that their knowledge and commitment deserved to be rewarded. Nadine was shocked. "Me?" she said. After joining the ToT's, her commitment was astounding. In one class, she was struggling with a sequence, and spent ten minutes at the side of the room repeating the movements alone. At the end of this class she told me that she wants to continue training Capoeira so that one day she can teach it to her children.

Nadine still has emotional triggers, but not as frequently. She is more present, able to receive advice from others and to persevere in exercises she finds challenging.

Nadine has made many friends and also developed self-awareness and trust in others. She progressed both in Capoeira, but also in her self-esteem. Nadine found a space where she is empowered, appreciated, and comfortable. She brings other girls to the classes and helps them with the movements. She has a lot to offer, and by the end of the programme I came to rely on her presence as much as she relied on mine.



Capoeira al-Shababi Trainer and girls practicing traditional Capoeira instruments in Za'atari refugee camp, Peace Oasis, January 2018.

Women and Girls

Women and girls in post-conflict displaced communities face a lot of pressure. Having witnessed atrocities and lost loved ones, women are often heading households and caring for many children without the necessary support. Girls also face pressures such as early marriage, and the pressure to conform to strict social standards. This often limits their opportunities for creative play, movement and open dialogue.

Capoeira classes offer a space where women and girls can move, laugh, play and make friends. Increasing body awareness and fitness also helps these women and girls to have a healthier relationship to their bodies, and to themselves. Music is particularly popular and successful with female groups. Capoeira music sessions focus on rhythmicity and reciprocity, which builds social bonds, group feeling and a community of support that can treat the isolation of trauma and stress. Empowering these girls by teaching them to control their bodies and minds goes a long way to fostering the confidence and resilience needed to face the pressures around them.

“ I encourage everyone I see to come to these classes because there are many important things we learn here. Women need to have a new experience, women need to learn how to defend themselves and to control what is inside of them. If I see anyone nervous or angry, I invite them to the Capoeira class, but some of them say no because these movements are not for women... and I tell them no, everyone has to have their movements and everyone should know how to defend herself. ”

Capoeira al-Shababi female participant, 17 years old.



Sidra, 13 years old, lives in Za'atari refugee camp. Practicing the capoeira ritual she takes hold of her friends hands before entering the circle to play.

Peace-building

A background image showing a group of students in a circle, hugging each other, suggesting a supportive and peaceful environment. The students are wearing casual clothing, and the setting appears to be a classroom or a community space.

“I started understanding people more because we are all on the same energy and you feel people’s energy more.”

- Male student, 13 years old

“Many fights have happened with me but I don’t dare to hit anyone anymore. I learned this in the classes, from the whole package... I learned to control myself, and remain calm.”

- Male student, 14 year old

“I used to be angry, but now I’m much happier.”

- Female student, 12 years old

“I might be having a fight with someone in the morning, or just feeling stressed and pressured, but when I come to the class with my friends and I hear Capoeira music and we play together, it is all gone, there is none of that feeling left in me.”

- Male student, 11 years old

Partners



THE
LUTHERAN
WORLD
FEDERATION

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) in Jordan has funded Capoeira al-Shababi's two projects in Za'atari camp Peace Oasis which provided PSS sessions with 100 children and a ToT project between November 2017 and April 2018. LWF has also funded Capoeira al-Shababi's PSS sessions with Jordanian and Syrian children in Irbid, Sareeh in February and March 2018.



RELIEF
INTERNATIONAL

Relief International Jordan funded Capoeira al-Shababi's project with male and female teenagers in Za'atari Camp, District 8, between November 2017 and January 2018.



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