



CWS

Winter Story 2015

ACTION AGAINST POVERTY



By Gillian Southey, CWS communications coordinator.

Nour feels better about herself after counselling. She finds it hard to concentrate on her studies because of her injuries.

There is much to do

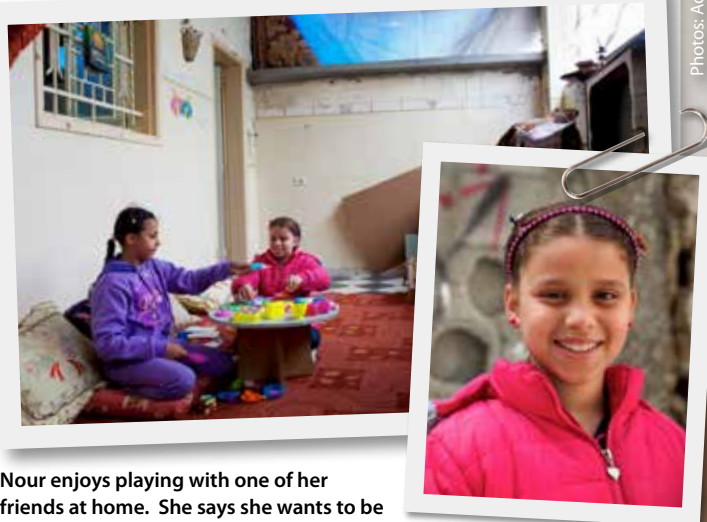
A year ago Nour lived in fear for her life – for 50 days she sheltered with her family from the bombs that punctuated daily life in Gaza. In the few hours of ceasefire, they would go out for what they needed and then return to huddle together as though they could somehow protect each other from the attacks. And one night a bomb hit the neighbourhood, sending shrapnel everywhere, causing widespread panic.

The only person who was not screaming was Nour (now aged 10). According to her mother, it was a while before they realised she had been injured. She bled a lot and the family worried they had lost her. Unable to get an ambulance because of the continued attacks, her father carried her to the nearest hospital. She remembers the blood all over his shoulders and then waking up to find her mother beside her. In an effort to remove the shrapnel from her brain, she was transferred to a hospital in Jordan but the surgeons were unwilling to risk operating - she had only a five per cent chance of surviving. They sent her home, saying she would have to go further afield for the delicate surgery needed.

Coming home after the trauma of hospital was another shock for Nour. She says she felt like a stranger. "The house was damaged with bullet holes in the ceiling," she added. Much of her neighbourhood suffered the same – Shijai'a was one of the areas more heavily bombed.

The shock of coming home was only the beginning. Nour lives with a constant headache and it hurts if she coughs or sneezes. Living on antibiotics and painkillers takes away some of the physical pain but not the trauma of what she experienced.

She is grateful for the help of Budour at the Shijai'a



Nour enjoys playing with one of her friends at home. She says she wants to be a doctor or a lawyer to help her people.

Health Clinic run by the Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees (DSPR), a long term partner of Christian World Service. Budour, a trained counsellor, talked with Nour and invited her to join one of the groups she runs for young girls damaged by their experiences. They play fun games, talk and learn techniques to manage pain. Nour's mother says the sessions helped her express herself. Before these sessions Nour could not talk about what had happened. At first she drew pictures of mothers and injured people from her time in hospital, but now her mother says she is drawing cheerful stuff like houses and trees.

"I feel better at school and I'm back to being myself. I want to be a doctor to cure the little children I've seen in the hospital and who are suffering a lot. I'd also like to be a lawyer to defend my country and let everyone know how

Photos: Act for Peace/R.Wainwright



a member of

actalliance



Members of one Eco club get Neem seedlings to plant in the school grounds. Drought resistant and fast growing, the Neem tree provides food, medicine and pest resistance. Photo: SAND

proud I am of it," she says.

Nour is one of an estimated 350,000 children struggling to live with trauma from the violence that rocked Gaza in July and August last year. Crippled by the war and the blockade that prevents the importation of building materials, Gaza's 1.8 million residents have few resources for the rebuild. Widespread damage to farmland and small businesses means families can no longer feed themselves and 80% depend on aid. The United Nations reports 100,000 people are homeless.

In May the World Bank warned that Gaza's Gross Domestic Product is a quarter of what it would have been and unemployment, at 43%, is the highest in the world. To make matters worse the United Nations Relief and Works Agency set up to assist Palestinian Refugees is facing a severe funding crisis so financial and other assistance is being reduced.

It makes a longer term solution to the situation in Gaza more urgent than ever but there is little sign of progress on the political level. DSPR Gaza provides a vital lifeline to the three neighbourhoods in which it works. Whether

providing medical care to mothers and babies, educational training for school leavers, relief packages to the hungry, activities for children whose only playground is a bombsite, or psychosocial care, DSPR Gaza is helping people put their lives back together. Last year they provided psychosocial care to more than 10,000 people.

While multiple conflicts make it difficult to untangle what is happening in the Middle East, many of the victims are children. The damage will undoubtedly be something they will have to deal with throughout their lives.

Children will also have to deal with the changing climate. Global warming is making life more precarious for those living on marginal land and with few resources. CWS partners like SAND Trust in South India are doing their best to give them skills to survive. According to Subbu Subramanian of SAND, environmental and ecological issues used to be the concerns of intellectuals, "but they have become everybody's issues". SAND is improving farming skills, working to end child slavery and setting up Eco clubs for the poorest children. They are not waiting for someone else to fix the climate but are planting trees, avoiding wastage and cleaning up their communities. **There is much to do and you can be part of positive action. Please support the Winter Appeal .**

You are invited

To celebrate 70 years since the launch of the first Christmas Appeal, CWS has organised two lectures by well know business journalist and prominent Anglican Rod Oram. He will be speaking at ChristChurch Transitional Cathedral at 6:30pm on October 13 and St Matthew's in the City in Auckland at 5:30 pm on October 29. Please come and bring your friends and family.

Thanks to our colleagues at Act for Peace in Australia for sharing Nour's story.

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