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GLOBAL COMMUNITIES SUCCESS STORY

Al Khansa'a Puts Smiles on Children's Faces

If childhood is the foundation upon which adulthood rests, then carefree play is one of its most important pillars. Providing children with a safe place to play, explore, and interact with others only enhances a child's feeling of belonging, but also contributes to her healthy development.

With a population of 15,000, Ein Al Beyda is a small town within the administrative borders of the Tafileh Municipality. Located 9 km to the south of Tafileh City itself, the town lacks common spaces and playgrounds for children and their

families. To address this challenge, the Al Khansaa' Association for Social Development established an indoor play center for children with the support from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Community Engagement Project (CEP). The center represents a partnership between Al Khansa'a and the Tafileh Municipality which provided the needed space through its Ein Al Beyda Municipal Office.

The head of Al Khansa'a Association, Halimeh Al Shabtat, said that the nature of her job puts her in constant with

mothers in Ein Al Beyda. Over the years, they have frequently expressed the need for an indoor playground – a need confirmed through USAID CEP’s household perception survey and community-wide meeting. This motivated Halimeh to approach USAID CEP and apply for funding.

The center targets children between the ages of 3-13 years old. With a main game hall and two playrooms, the center provides a safe place for children to spend their time in play and laughter. In addition, the center has a cafeteria and seating space for parents where they can socialize while watching their children play. Because the center is indoors, it can be used all year round, regardless of weather conditions.

But providing children with a place to play is not the only benefit of establishing this center. Two Ein Al Beyda community members now have jobs because of the center – not an insignificant value add in light of Tafileh’s high unemployment rates.

Amneh Al Sawalqa, or Um Mo’men (the mother of Mo’men, as she’s known),

thinks that Al Khansa’a’s project through which the center was established is a clear success. *“I think that a project like this is capable of leaving a huge impact on new generations,”* she said.

“I truly feel happy and safe here,” added Mariam Ahmad, Head of the Municipal Office. *“Children here are denied entertainment places, such as this one, as well as outdoor parks. The benefit of a center like this does not end at the entertainment aspect, but it also reflects on intellectual and social development of children! I hope this center is further developed and enhanced in the future.”*

Al Khansa’a Association for Social Development and the center continue serving the local community. While the number of visitors is certainly a sign of satisfaction, nothing measures up to the smiles and laughter of children as they play!

“I’m satisfied and happy here,” said Rinad Al Shabatat, as she interrupted her playing for us – but only for a second.

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