

SEMINAR ON THE PROVISION OF HEALTH
SERVICES FOR THE PRE-SCHOOL CHILD

Mogadishu, 21 - 26 July 1974

22 July 1974

COUNTRY REPORT ON THE PRE-SCHOOL HEALTH SERVICES
IN JORDAN

by

Dr Tawfiq R. Lubani*

It is well known, that the physical and mental welfare of the mother and child is the corner-stone of the family and the foundation of society. It should be the most important factor in any population policy.

The Government of Jordan, during the last 20 years, paid much attention to child welfare. In accordance with that, the Government issued "The Child Welfare Code" No. (31) for the year 1972, which includes child welfare from the date of birth up to 18 years socially, educationally, and physically.

The main field of activity for the pre-school children in Jordan is the field of the maternal and child health services.

The aim of this project, which was established in the year 1954, is the health projection for all Jordanian mothers and children - this includes the promotion of health, the preventive and curative care in all their aspects. These services are free of charge according to the national health insurance of Jordan, which is established since 1965.

The international organizations such as UNICEF, WHO, played an important role in the progress of this project by their valuable help and advice.

The total No. of the Government MCH centres now is 26 centres. For a population of 1 660 000 (that of East Bank) 167 MCH centres (1: 10 000 population) are needed, 124 more than what exists.

* MCH Medical Officer, Ministry of Health, Amman, Jordan

At present Amman has 7 Governmental centres and 2 UNRWA centres only.

Amman alone needs 50 centres for its 1/2 million population.

The main difficulties met within this field of services are: shortage of midwives, smallness of budget and traditions.

In spite that the national growth rate of our population was estimated to be 3-2% in 1969, family planning is still not a Governmental policy. It is practiced on a personal and elective basis - the majority of the middle class mothers and some from refugee camps, by oral contraceptives from pharmacists, and use them without medical advice or supervision.

Only since two years the national Jordanian Family Planning Association was established with the help of the I.P.F.F. in the East Bank. It has now only three clinics all over the country, which is not enough, of course, to face the huge N.G.R.; and Jordan, as a country of limited resources, must have an efficient family planning programme.

Organized rural health centres still do not exist in Jordan, but we have general clinics in most of the villages of Jordan, and the Ministry of Health is trying to develop these clinics to health centres because of the usefulness from many sides.

The number of maternity hospitals in the East Bank is five, while, there is only one children's hospital; but there are more than 20 general hospitals distributed all over the country and these include the most important departments.

These are the health services provided by the Ministry of Health for the pre-school children.

The family and child welfare section in the Ministry of Social Affairs has the responsibility to take care of the children, whether they are waifs or delinquents and facilitate their admission to various residential institutions. In addition to that, the section undertakes the placement of poor or illegitimate children in foster homes so as to compensate for their lack of love, care, sympathy and compassion.

All the social institutions in the country were combined in one, which is called Hussein Institution. This institution includes the babies' home, the mabarat Al-Amira Alia and the mabarat Al-Amira Basma.

The babies' home care for children from birth up to three years of age, provides for them accommodation, feeding, educational and health services.

The other two institutions care for children over 6 years of age by the meaning of accommodation, feeding, educational or training and health services.

The Day-care nurseries, which are about 17 and the kindergartens, which are about 200 in the country are non-governmental establishments, but they are controlled technically either from the Ministry of Education or from the Ministry of Social Affairs. The age to be acceptable in the Day-care nurseries is up to 7 years, while in the kindergartens the acceptable age is 7-6 years.

Nutritional rehabilitation is carried out by the section of relief of the Ministry of Social Affairs with the full co-operation of CARE. It has been responsible for (138) feeding centres in the East Bank, which took care of (16111) children suffering from malnutrition. Also the child health centres run by the Save the Children Fund provides foodstuffs for about (4950) in (30) centres distributed mainly in the southern parts of the country.

In addition to that the Governmental MCH centres provide foodstuffs for the children registered in these centres such as milk, C.S.M., baby food....etc.

For handicapped children we have in Jordan the following services:

1. Socially - these are divided into:
 - a) Institutional care, where there exists now 14 governmental institutions and 14 nongovernmental.
 - b) Family care - which provides assistance for children in foster homes.
2. Physically - for these services we have the following institutions:
 - a) Hope institution - cares for deaf children from 3-15 years of age. Its capacity is about 100 children.
 - b) Sunshine institution for blind children (the same age) with a capacity of 50 children.

- c) Paralyzed and crippled home: It takes care of such children of both sexes between 4-15 years of age. Its capacity is about 40.

3. For mentally handicapped children, in addition to the psychiatric hospital in Amman there are other two societies, which care about such children, one of them is Jordanian and the other is Swedish.

These are the social welfare services existing in the country bearing in mind, that this is very few, but we are hoping to improve these services in the future.