



**Information and Research Center
King Hussein Foundation**

**مركز المعلومات والبحوث
مؤسسة الملك الحسين بن طلال**

REGIONAL TRAINING ON RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

Amman 22-25 November 2009

Feedback on the IRC Child Watch Workshop

As the workshop began, the convergence of diverse Arab nationals, and the excitement that commenced thereof, was indeed a great way to begin. After a fun means of introduction to one another, the participants slowly began to build rapport with the group as a whole. Taking into consideration the time frame of the workshop, the four days meant that the participants would be spending the majority of their waking hours together; which in retrospect allowed for the close interactions and relations formulated between them.

Profile of participants



Around 20-25 researchers participated in the workshop, from different Arab regions (Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Palestine, Gulf area, Oman, Yemen) with little expertise and experience in quantitative and/or qualitative research. The condition upon which the participants were selected was based on their interest in research, specifically child research methodologies, as all of them work in organizations dedicated in full or part to children.

The workshop was lead by Dr. Mohammed Shahin, with a guest appearance by Dr. Faisal Awartani, and revolved around *the methodologies of child research*.

Specific Objectives



- To share experiences, knowledge, and information with the participants attending in this program from different Arab region
- To provide an opportunity for participants to contribute towards the identification of key areas and issues relating to child needs in need of investigation
- To provide hands-on training of the application of the methodology and tools in research
- To engage the participants in practicing research methodologies by conducting group work, and field work

In preparation for the workshop



- Development of the workshop program was conducted in consultation with experts in the field of research methodology
- Identification of key organizers to facilitate the workshop in collaboration with child organizations in the Arab region whom conduct child research
- Development of training material (research documents) prepared by the main trainers

The Workshop (Completed Tasks)

- Led the training workshop in collaboration with the Information and Research Center King Hussein Foundation (IRCKHF) and a lead researcher
- IRCKHF led the coordination of the overall organization of the workshop, including the logistical arrangements, working closely with the participants and the lead researcher to coordinate specific tasks
- Developed the workshop agenda in consultation with lead researchers
- Developed the training modules in collaboration with the lead researchers
- Coordinated the preparation of the necessary documents/material for the workshop.
- Coordinated the facilitation of workshop sessions and working groups
- Coordinated the preparation of the workshop report and the compilation of workshop papers for future publication
- Prepared an evaluation form (completed by the participants at the end of the training to assess the content, process, etc)

Main activities conducted over first three days



Workshop days were divided into two sessions, the first being theoretical, the second practical
Capacity building exercises were applied under supervision of lead researchers
Brain storming and lectures were conducted during the theoretical part
Group activities were implemented during practical session

With regards to Dr. Faisal Awartani's presentation, unfortunately, although the enthusiasm and brief encounter with Dr. Faisal was compelling, the content was too technical to be covered in such a small time frame, and the potentially extremely beneficial information was unable to be absorbed by the participants, much to their dismay.

On the other hand, both trainers made sure the material was catered to the participants of the workshop- a point which received great feedback by almost all of the participants involved. Furthermore, methodologies were explained in detail, as in the example of proposal writing, which all of the participants were asked to complete. The process was discussed in small groups, and then analyzed by the workshop as a whole, giving a thorough explanation which served to be quite experiential for those with little previous knowledge on the matter.

Day Four: Focus Groups



The most exciting and fulfilling part of the workshop was the ability to conduct focus group sessions with students from the Jubilee school on the Day 4. Despite organizational obstacles faced, including lack of coordination, improper physical set up, and an unvaried target group- the process of actually conducting the sessions were the most rewarding.

Four focus groups were created, dividing the participants amongst them to conduct the focus group session regarding citizenship among children, in collaboration with the Jubilee School. This was done in order to provide the participants an opportunity to apply what they have learned theoretically and analyze their performance in their separate groups, and with the workshop team as a whole.

Lessons learned

- Working in the field enabled the participants to recognize their challenges, strengths, and weakness in relation to focus group methodology
- Good training material is lacking but is essential in Arabic language
- Field work is an excellent experiment and more hands on practical training is necessary
- Workshop equips participants with vital information on research methodology
- Allows for the ethics in child research to be covered
- Equips participants with skills to write research statements
- Conducting focus group discussion for some participants was a first time trial and was considered a rich experience

Quotation from participants

- “This workshop was a challenge although I work with children. However, working in focus group discussion with them gives me chance to exchange ideas amongst ourselves”
- “I am surprise with the level of intelligence of children...they encourage me to work with them “
- “I loved doing the workshop”
- “Our country does not have training programs like this”
- “This training workshops exceeds my expectations “
- “This training workshop was wonderful , because it includes practical sessions”
- “I hope we are provided more training”
- “This is the first time I conduct focus group sessions”

Feedback/Notes about the workshop (needs/comments that will be taken into consideration in future planning)

- Increase the training days
- Focus on sampling (types, design)
- Analysis of data methods needed
- Conduct a joint Arab research projects with all participants in attendance
- Increase practical application, decrease theoretical materials
- Extend the workshop period to six or seven days
- Reduce training days from 9-5 to 9-3
- Training needs more implementation activities similar to the focus group
- Theoretical material was boring and too long
- Dr. Mohammad Shaheen was good lecturer using amusing ways to present information
- Materials which Dr. Faisal presented were very useful. But he was very fast in presenting it.
- There were varying levels of expertise on research methodologies among the participants
- The discussion which was conducted after focus group session needed to be longer to allow for a more thorough discussion of the feedback and reporting sills

Ending Comments:

Overall, the workshop, in consideration of it being the first of its kind, and the first hosted and organized by the IRC, was a success. Each participant was able to benefit in some manner, and take home with them not only new information, but a renewed motivation towards the profession of field research, a perspective on their work through theory, and new encounters that undoubtedly will enrich them with the very cross-cultural communication which all aim to achieve in this line of work.

