

Perseverance, audacity and resourcefulness

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With perseverance, audacity and resourcefulness, the Tamer Institute has, for two decades, stimulated Palestinian children's and young adults' love of reading – and their creativity. Under difficult circumstances, the Institute carries out reading promotion of an unusual breadth and versatility. In the spirit of Astrid Lindgren, the Tamer Institute acknowledges the power of words and the strength of books, stories and imagination as important keys to self-esteem, tolerance and the courage to face life.

The citation of the jury

Non-for profit organisation based in Ramallah, founded in 1989.

The Tamer Institute for Community Education in Ramallah is an independent organisation that carries out reading promotion work for children and young people in West Bank and Gaza. It was founded to give children access to books and alternative learning as children's and young people's schooling, leisure time and lives suffered from the troubles in the area. The Tamer Institute also hands out reading passports. Holders get a stamp for every book they have read. This is a clear symbol of the fact that there are no borders for those who can read books. As Astrid Lindgren said: "Good children's literature gives the child a place in the world and the world a place in the child".

The Tamer Institute is the hub of a network that works with writing workshops, storytelling, drama and literary discussion for children and young people. They supply libraries with children's books and they train librarians and parents. A national reading campaign is organised every year, culminating with National Reading Week. In 2008, the campaign reached 52,000 children in refugee camps and remote villages and communities, who took part in literary discussion, drama and drawing and writing workshops.

The Tamer Institute also carries out youth activities. The young people, who have often participated in Tamer's work since they were children, publish their own newspaper, Yara'at, among other things. They use it to publish their thoughts, poems and stories. When the Tamer Institute was founded, there were virtually no Palestinian children's books. The organisation has now published more than 130 titles and several of the children who attended the Tamer Institute's writing workshops have started to write their own books as adults.

Despite difficult circumstances, the Tamer Institute works tirelessly on many levels to create a better situation for Palestinian children and young people via literature. Their conviction that words can tear down walls has resulted in innovative reading promotion activities of an unusual breadth, for which reason the Tamer Institute has been awarded the 2009 Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award.