

# Tamer Institute for Community Education

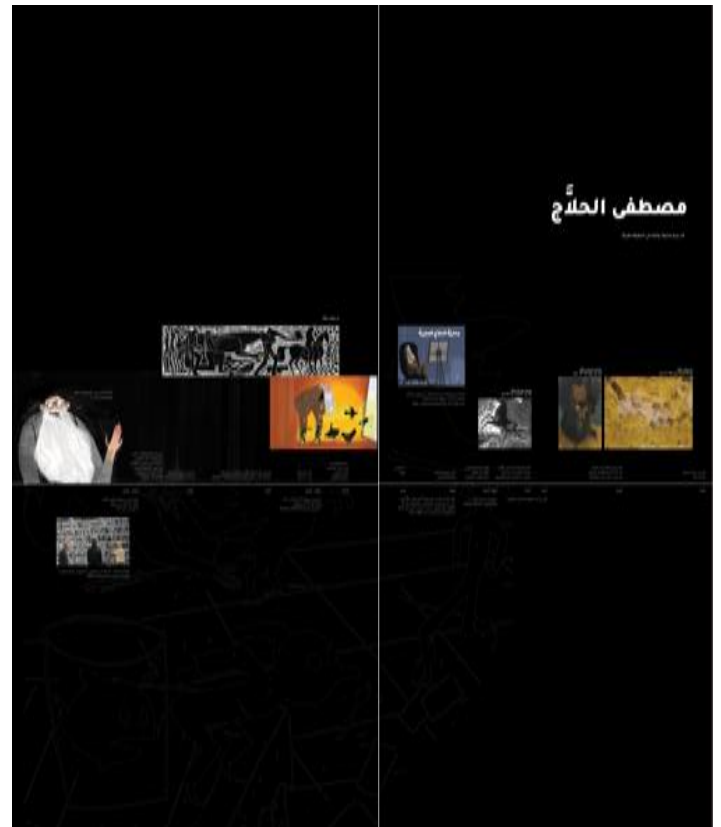
## Annual Report

2019



“1989 marked the birth of Tamer Institute, and like any child, we started to crawl on all fours, then slowly grew with every rich interaction experienced with children, youth, teachers and librarians, and eventually learned to stand up and walk, leaving behind big footprints in the public space.”





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2019 celebrated 30 years since the establishment of Tamer Institute. Ever since 1989, Tamer has been working in the Palestinian community through promoting reading, writing and expressive arts in general among children, youth and those working with them including librarians, parents and teachers.

This year was a remarkable year for Tamer, as the institute managed to purchase a new headquarter in the city of Ramallah. An old house that belonged to Akram Nouri's Family; the estate is set on 920 m<sup>2</sup> of land in the middle of Ramallah city. 60% of the price of the house was paid off through Tamer's funds collected from international and national prizes that we won for astonishing books and programs, donations from Palestinian businessmen, as well as books sales. We are hoping to collect the rest of it through the support of our friends in raising funds from Arab and regional parties who are passionate about supporting culture in Palestine. This new headquarter will be a hub for all Tamer's activities, gathering children and youth, artists, teachers, librarians, under the same roof.

Tamer's institute launched the National Reading Week in cooperation with the preparatory committees including schools, community libraries and cultural institutes. This year, our reading campaign was titled "The Jar that Became a Galaxy", inspired by children, who are the base of Tamer's experience; whereas 1989 marked the birth of Tamer Institute, and like any child, we started to crawl on all fours, then slowly grew with every rich interaction experienced with children, youth, teachers and librarians, and eventually learned to stand up and walk, leaving behind big footprints in the public space. Today, Tamer continues to celebrate the children of Palestine, and continues to be celebrated by them. This bond is not defined by years, but by the experiences created alongside those who have walked down the path of Tamer's mission, believing in it and continuing to carry it to this day.

Furthermore, this year also proved outstanding in terms of Tamer's production; as we cooperated with a group of creative Palestinian graphic artists who not only contributed, but more so founded a flourishing visual arts scene both in Palestine and globally; and shed light on the Palestinian cause to the world through art and creativity which fosters waves of solidarity for Palestine. This year, Tamer published a group of books that are meant to contribute in the

formation of the national and humanitarian identity of our children and youth living under siege; “Jerusalem and I” by Hala Sakakini is an example on these books. Moreover, as always, Tamer continued providing an opportunity for new young writers and illustrators to work on their art, build their capacity, and publish their work.

As for this organic and smooth transition from being the jar, the hub for art, to expanding that art into a wide and colorful galaxy, to the child and the idea behind all this passion for art, Tamer thoroughly relies on our national partnership. One which comprises of a network of community libraries, school libraries, youth centers, initiatives, and ministries, among other supporters, whom continue assisting us in creating safer learning environments and freer communities for children in Palestine. As well as children all around the world who are witnessing extremely hard living conditions in these last few years. The responsibilities are immense, but we at Tamer are committed to continue the growth process of raising hope with the smile of every child; we plant the seeds of change and love in their imagination and hope for a better future for us all.

We express our gratitude to all our partners, friends, staff and everyone who believes in Tamer.

Renad Al-Qubbaj

## **Tamer Institute for Community Education**

TAMER Institute for Community Education is an educational non-governmental organization established in 1989, as a natural and necessary response to the urgent needs of the Palestinian community during the first intifada (uprising). The most important of them is acquiring means to help people learn and become productive. Focusing principally on the rights to education, identity, freedom of expression, and access to information, Tamer works across the West Bank and Gaza Strip, primarily targeting children and young adults to encourage and deepen opportunities of learning among them. Our program aims to contribute to enhancing reading, writing and all forms of expression among children and young adults. It also aims to contribute to a Palestinian environment that is supportive to learning processes, and to support the literary and scholarly productions on child culture in Palestine.

## **Vision**

Towards a Free and Safe Palestinian Learning Society

## **Mission**

To Encourage and deepen opportunities of learning among children, young adults and those who work with them.

## **Strategic Goals**

Tamer has been working towards achieving the following four strategic goals as a part of its strategic plan for the years 2016–2020

Reinforcing reading, writing and all forms of expression among children and young adults

Supporting the literary and scholarly production on child culture in Palestine.

Supporting and formulating the Institutional Capacity of Tamer Institute.

Contributing to a Palestinian environment that is supportive to learning (including solid policies and infrastructure that are suitable for children's growth).

## General Assembly and Board of Directors

### First: Board of Directors

Tamer's board of directors held 6 official meetings during 2019 to discuss progress within the different programs, and projects and to endorse the financial and executive plan of the year 2019. The board decided on the disassembly of the saving fund, to transfer the institute's percentage of savings to salaries of the staff who are members of the fund and to purchase the new headquarter. In that context several meetings were held with the estate's (new headquarter) owners; the market value of the land and house was estimated; we contacted the estate's owners through Tamer's lawyers to review the draft of the MOU with all parties.

The decision to purchase the new headquarter was discussed at previous meetings conducted by the general assembly and the board of directors throughout the years. This decision aims to support the continuity and stability of the institute. Owning a headquarters ensures spatial stability, which strategically plays into increasing the overall productivity of the institute, as well as cut down on the admin and operational costs of functioning from two separate locations over the past years. Moreover, this new found stability will better support Tamer towards achieving



its mission and vision of a safe learning Palestinian community, through continuing to conduct reading, writing and expressive arts activities to promote creativity among children and young adults, and to establish more partnerships with school and community libraries all over the West Bank and Gaza and support these learning and knowledge hubs. We believe that Tamer's new location is accessible to all our target groups, from children, to young adults, to adults, which will also help us, implement our activities on a larger scale, as well as support researches and educational experts through providing a space for them to meet and brainstorm together.

The BoDs members also had a major role in joining the discussions and meetings of the steering committees of the different projects implemented by Tamer such as "Tales from the

Palestinian  
Graphic Art"  
series project,  
Leaving No Child  
Behind project  
(supporting  
literacy and  
numeracy of  
children ages 6–  
9), the reading  
committees and  
the publishing  
unit.





## Second: General Assembly

The general assembly conducted its annual meeting on 20/5/2019 during which the members endorsed the financial and administrative reports for the year 2019; as well as the extension of the contract with Ernest &Young as an external auditor for the institute's financial and accounting records based on the BoDs recommendation. The general assembly also endorsed expanding the membership to include 10 new members to give the opportunity for a wider representation of youth and women. Furthermore, members Denis As'ad and Abdulsalam Khaddash were honored for their support to Tamer.

### **The first strategic goal: Supporting the literary and scholarly production on child culture in Palestine**

**The publishing unit:** the literary and scholarly production under the publishing unit is still one of the most influential and brightest aspects of Tamer's work. It is present with every look, every book page flipped, and every interaction children have with these books, whose availability in school and community libraries we try our best to ensure.

During 2019, Tamer published 13 new books; 4 of which are translated; as well as reprint 6 older publications. The new books address the topic of active learning concept, and aim to reinforce imagination and creativity among children and young adults. They highlight themes related to national identity, visual art, diversity of thoughts and perspective, among other issues that promote a healthy mental and behavioral growth for children, as well as present values that emphasize the importance of positive community interaction. As mentioned above, 2019 publications also included reprinting a group of books released by Tamer in previous years like: "Red Sky in the Morning".

74 texts from 56 participants, 37 females/19 males, were submitted to the publishing unit in 2019. Participants were from different counties including Palestine, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Syria and Arab writers living in European countries. Total number of participants other than the

Palestinians is 16. As for the Palestinian participants, 33 are from the WB, 4 are from Gaza and 3 are from the 1948 area.

The reading committee that reviewed texts and provided feedback throughout the year included: Laila Al-Batran, Walid Ihshayyesh, Ra'ouf Karai, Samar Qotob, Ala' Qaraman, Ruba Toutah, Hala Shrouf, Sawsan Abo Al-S'oud, Alice Yousef, Yahia Ashour, Sadeq Al-Khdour, Amer Shoumali. The committee reviewed the different aspects of the drafts submitted in terms of coherence, sequence of events, presenting unconventional ideas in creative ways, and suitability for the targeted age groups.

Tamer would like to express its gratitude to all the reading committee members who voluntarily reviewed the submitted texts and provided feedback and recommendations to the publishing unit's staff at the institute.

## First: Tamer's Publications during 2019

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### "Shams/Sun"

Sondos Abdelhadi

Year of Publication: 2019/2020



### "Reesha/Feather, the Cat"

Haifa' Sawarkeh

Illustrated by: Amaal

Year of Publication: 2019/2020



### **"The Best Scarecrow Ever!"**

Sheren Jaber

Illustrated by: Abeer Khatib

Year of Publication: 2019



### **A Shelf full of Questions**

Book idea and production: Nakheel Teams at

Tamer Institute for Community Education

Designed by: Haneen Nazzal

Year of Publication: 2019/2020



### **The Purple Girl**

Ibtisam Barakat

illustrated by: Sinan Hallaq

Year of Publication: 2019



### **Samya's Colorful Sky**

Huda Al-Shawwa

Illustrated by: Samya Halabi

Year of Publication: 2019



### The Jar that Became a Galaxy

Ibtisam Barakt

Illustrated by: Walid Taher

Year of Publication: 2019



### Hallaj's Wonderous Mural

Rana Anati

Illustrated by: Mohammed Mu'ti

Year of Publication: 2019



### Mr. Lion and the Apple Thief (translated from Danish)

Jan Oksbol

Translated by: Elizabeth Moysturb

Year of Publication: 2019



### The Bull that Stole the Kangaroo's Boots

Khaled Jum'a

Illustrated by: Khaled Jaradeh

Year of Publication: 2019



**"The Grandma, the Wolf" (Translated from French)**

Janin Tayson

Illustrated by: Daniel Maja

Translated by: Isam Al-Batran

Year of Publication: 2019



**"It's me but not me" (Translated from Swedish)**

Anna Hoglend

Translated by: Jasem Mohammed

Year of Publication: 2019



**Art-Introduction to Art for Children**

Heather Alexander

Illustrated by: Meredith Hamelton

Translated by: Samar Qutob

Year of Publication: 2019

## Second: Reprinting

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During 2019, Tamer Institute reproduced and reprinted 6 books of the institute's publications released throughout the past years. Below is a list of the reprinted books:

<b>My Code Name is Butterfly</b>	<b>Bethlehem Dragon</b>
<b>Red Sky in the Morning</b>	<b>The Tied T, Flying</b>
<b>Small Piece of Land</b>	<b>The Last of the Closed Doors</b>

### Third: Tamer's Books Translated into other Languages

During 2019, 7 of Tamer's publications were translated into 6 different languages, in cooperation with different publishing houses.

<b>The Book</b>	<b>Target Language</b>
The Secret of Oil	Turkish, Italian, Danish, Indian
Ajeebe's Trips to Wonderous Lands	Catalan
Come, Play with Me– Zameem, Tales from Palestinian Popular Heritage– School Gown– Rain Singer	Irish

### Fourth: Book Launching

In 2019, Tamer Launched 7 books including a series titled "Tales from the Palestinian Graphic Art" which includes 4 books; Tamer also launched the following 3 books:

1. The Bull that Stole the Kangaroo's Boots by Khaled Jum'a; illustrated by Khaled Jarada.
2. The Best Scarecrow Ever
3. It's me but not me

4. "Tales from the Palestinian Graphic Art"/ The Purple Girl was launched again in Amman in cooperation with Haya Cultural Center with both the writer, Ibtisam Barakat, and the illustrator, Tamam Al-Akhal, attending the event.



Tamer launched an interactive exhibition for the book series "Tales from the Palestinian Graphic Art"; different activities were implemented based on the life and graphic style of the artists presented through the book series. The event was executed in cooperation with the Palestinian Museum and in partnership with Qattan Foundation and the Swedish Agency for Development and Cooperation, Sida. Artists Samya Al-Halabi and Fera Tamari, and writers Ibtisam Barakat and Huda Al-Shawwa attended the event. It should be pointed out that this



project was initiated through inviting all Palestinian and Arab writers to submit scripts addressing the lives/biographies of artists who contributed to establishing the Palestinian visual art; the main goal of the project was to produce inspiring stories highlighting the essence of the artists and their



artistic perspective.

Through this series, Tamer aims at presenting Palestinian artists who established the Palestinian visual art to children, through presenting personal stories from their lives. The books and accompanying exhibition aim to develop the visual arts perspective for both children and young adults, as well as celebrate Palestinian artists and their regionally and internationally recognized achievements. We wanted to represent visual art works to children through picture books, therefore the series of books is in fact a work of art that motivates children to read and learn about the artists presented through the stories and their art styles.

The life stories of the artists and their artistic styles were the themes of the activities implemented in the referred to exhibition; whereas spaces were created for children to observe and interact with these stories and individual styles in making artworks. For instance, the interactive exhibition, portrayed certain major events in the lives of artists Tamam Al-Akhal, Samya Al-Halabi, Fera Tamari and Mustafa Al-Hallaj, based on their personal stories. In presenting these stories, the exhibition addressed the circumstances the artists lived through, growing up, studying and working.

On May 20<sup>th</sup> 2019, the exhibition was moved to Jerusalem in cooperation with the Palestinian Art Court for 2 weeks. In July 2019, it was moved to the occupied Syrian Golan in cooperation with Fatih Al-Teacher Center for Art and Culture to provide a chance to as many children and youth as possible to engage in this experience.

## **Fifth: Hosting Artists**

1. **Hosting Anna Hogland:** Tamer hosted the Swedish Artist, Anna Hogland, who is considered one of the most well-known children's books illustrators in Sweden. Her book "It's me but not me" won the best picture book prize in Sweden and the national prize **Snöbollen**. Tamer translated the book and arranged a book launching with the author attending the event in 2019. Alongside the launch, a series of workshops we conducted between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> of March 2019, giving Palestinian writers, illustrators, librarians and children, the opportunity to meet the author and learn more about writing and illustrating for children's books. 30 participants between 26045 years of age, from the WB, including Jerusalem, joined the training workshops (4 males and 26 females). Anna Hogland also conducted activities with children in Betounya/Ramallah and Bethlehem (at Laje' Center); where she introduced her books to

children and asked them to try and think of alternative scenarios of how her stories would go in their imagination.



2. **Britta Bitsch & Jim Hojberg:** In November, 2019, Tamer hosted Britta Bitsch and Jim Hojberg, librarians with over 40 years of experience, with the intent of introducing librarians from around the world with local librarians from Palestine, to learn from their experiences. With was in light of the continuous effort invested in building the concept of libraries as a “Third Place” in Palestine, through thinking of new activities they can implement at their libraries. The beautiful interaction between the guests and our librarians was very impressive; the participants told us how they were influenced by the new perspective on libraries the guests brought with them. Jim and Bitta consider the role of a modern library to exceed the classic role of promoting reading; but more to provide a safe space for children where they can interact with each other and with their surroundings through various activities like, playing, reading, holding discussions, making friends, discovering, and exploring among others. Throughout the workshops done with our network of libraries across the WB, the pair gave insight on the concept of learning through play, and focused on the importance of providing visual means of learning, like images and toys, when working with children, as to entice their imagination and creative thinking abilities. As an example of learning through play, a game of Lego was played with children at different community and school libraries in the Network in Ramallah, Jericho, Nablus, Jenin, Tulkarem, Hebron, Bethlehem, Al-Ram and Jerusalem.



3. **Hosting Patricia Joy Chamberlan:** moreover, Tamer hosted British expert in fine arts Patricia Joy Chamberlan in Palestine for 3 weeks. During which many sessions were arranged, each being 2 hours, with children from 3 different locations in the WB which are: Al-Jahhaleen Beduin, Bethlehem and Hebron. The sessions aimed to provide a space for children to express their feelings and ideas concerning the Israeli occupation, as well as providing children with art tools to illustrate using different techniques and to encourage children to cooperate with each other towards producing a collective work of art and an exhibition. By the end of the 3 week period, the participating children succeeded in holding an art exhibition presenting their art work.

Each one of the targeted locations addressed a different topic based on the issues children of the area were most affected by as told by them. For instance, in Hebron, the workshops focused on the concept of home; children were asked to illustrate what home means to them. Through this activity, the artist intended to present new concepts of “home” which go beyond the classical physical meaning of the word.

5. **Samya Al-Halabi:** Born in Jerusalem in 1936 during the British Mandate of Palestine, Samya Al-Halabi is a Palestinian artist based in New York, who’s considered one of the biggest contemporary artists in The Arab Region. Within the scope of the “Tales from the Palestinian Graphic Art” series launch, and In cooperation with the MoE, Halabi visited Palestine In April 2019, and conducted many activities with children. As well as held many workshops, through Tamer, with students and 30 art teachers from different governorates in the WB, as a part of the launching event of the series (picture)

6. **Ibtisam Barakat:** A Palestinian–American writer, translator, artist, teacher and recipient of several prizes, with works focused on confronting social injustice, especially in the lives of youth; several of which were translated in many languages. Tamer hosted Ibtisam in 2019; where she

conducted many workshops with the librarians discussing methods of writing poems, articles, and fiction and nonfiction short stories, as well as book reviews. The author urged the librarians to write their personal stories and produce a collective work of their personal experiences as humans.



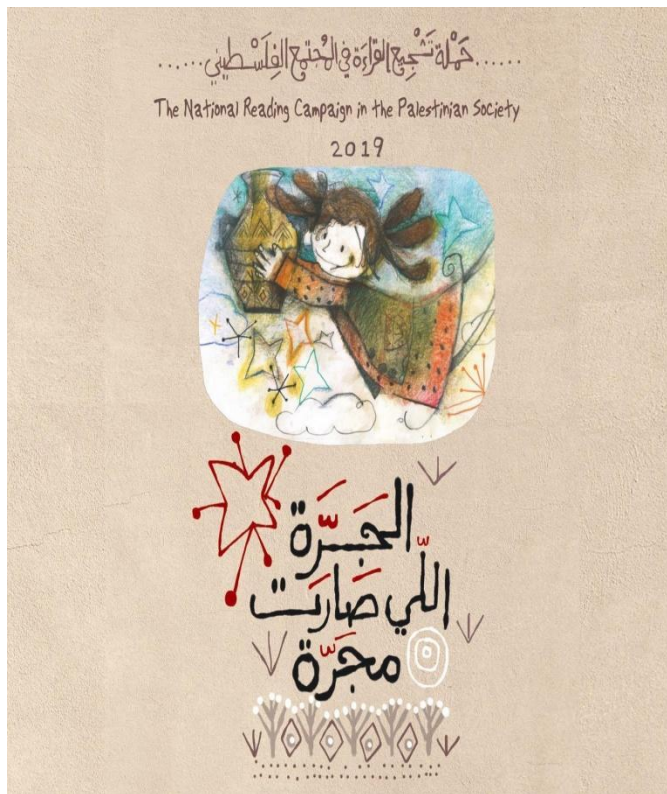
7. **Fera Tamari:** Founder and director of the Virtual Ethnography and visual gallery in Birzeit/Palestine. The artist participates regularly in academic and art forums, and events locally and internationally. Since 1974, she has participated in many collective exhibitions besides hers. Her exhibitions present a profound understanding of memory and identity. In April, 2019, Fera implemented two workshops with children in utilizing clay to make shapes, in Ramallah and Bethlehem.



## Second strategic goal: Reinforcing reading, writing and all forms of expression among children and young adults.

### First: Promoting Reading Campaign in the Palestinian Community

2019 was the year celebrating 30 years of Tamer's ongoing contribution in the development of the Palestinian community. This year's reading campaign was hosted under the slogan "The Jar the



Became a Galaxy", inspired by one of Tamer's own publications. It was launched in celebration of Tamer's work and experience with everyone throughout the years, from children, to youth, to adults, and the Palestinian community as a whole. And it played as reminder that it is not the number of years that matters the most, but the idea and the mission of Tamer that continues to grow and flourish with every experience shared with our partners.

The analogy of "The Jar that became a galaxy" comes from observing children as vessels carrying experiences and worlds within themselves. We see in children jars

filled with tales of myths and prophets, colors, memories made and yet to be made, laughter that echoes into the universe, and many dances. We see the Earth through their eyes, the land, the sky, times, places and cultures yet to be discovered, and many things still unbeknownst to us, all of which, when compiled, make up the galaxies within them. Our children have yet to visit places, cultures and people from history, like Isis of Egypt, the Phoenicians, Isfahan of Persia, and above all, Palestine, to collect stories through which they can live and travel from one world to another and from one experience to the next.



Tamer member Hani Bayyari Says: “I feel like the time spent during the campaigns is amazing; seeing as how it opens up a discussion on action and what it means.”

Tamer conducted the following reading campaigns throughout 2019, reaching out to 60,386 beneficiaries.

## 1. The National Reading Week

On the 6<sup>th</sup> of April, 2019, Tamer launched the Reading Campaign in the Palestinian Community under the title “The Jar that Became a Galaxy”; we called for parents and all of our partners to create more and more galaxies for our children in this universe. The National Reading week was held from the 6<sup>th</sup> till the 12<sup>th</sup> April. A wide variety of activities were implemented all over Palestine, where participation throughout the community noticeably reflected a deep understanding of the campaign’s philosophy and context.



At least over 820 activities were implemented, targeting parents, children and others groups, with one of the most important activities being the launch of the graphic tales series for children, referred to earlier as “Tales from the Palestinian Graphic Art”. The event took place at the Palestinian Museum in Birzeit; with Minister of Culture, Dr. Atef Abu Seif attending the event along with representatives from the ministry of culture and other partners. Throughout the week, 25,568 children, young adults and parents

benefited from the 829 central and subsidiary activities that were conducted by 276 partner libraries and institutes.

## 2. Nawwar Nisan Festival

Tamer participated in the planning of Nawwar Nisan Festival, an annual festival that has been taking place since 2012. This year, the festival's theme was the environment; it aimed to spread awareness on the importance of protecting the environment, adopting behaviors that work towards that, and enhancing levels of knowledge on the topic within the Palestinian Community. Workshops targeting both children and adults were executed, in addition to activities addressing certain environmental issues like recycling, renewable sources of energy, and protecting ecological systems. Many theatrical performances, art exhibitions and scientific experiments were held to promote environment-friendly practices.

Tamer also hosted the British musician and storyteller, Michael Loudre, who presented, with his band, an interactive scene titled "What Happens to Animals when the Giant Flood Attacks the Forest?"; children and parents loved the show and enjoyed it.

 <p>نوّار نيسان ٢٠١٩/٤/٢٠ - ١٨</p>	<p><b>الخميس 18\4\2019</b></p> <p>10:00 - 2:00 مؤسسة تامر للتعليم المجتمعي رام الله النخلة</p> <p>ورشة إعادة تدوير لنكتشف محيطنا، النباتات والأشجار في البلدة القديمة، أين هي؟</p> <p>3:00 - 4:00 المحكمة العثمانية</p> <p>اطلاق كتاب الثور الذي سرق جزمة الكنغر للكاتب خالد جمعة</p> <p>4:00 - 5:00 المحكمة العثمانية</p> <p>اطلاق سلسلة كتب حكايات من الفن التشكيلي الفلسطيني على هامش معرض حكايات من الفن التشكيلي الفلسطيني</p>
	<p><b>الجمعة 19\4\2019</b></p> <p>10:00 - 1:00 جبل النخلة</p> <p>ورشة فنية عين ترى... يد تصنع</p> <p>10:00 - 5:00 المحكمة العثمانية</p> <p>معرض حكايات من الفن التشكيلي الفلسطيني</p> <p>11:00 - 3:00 جبل النخلة</p> <p>بسكيت في الجبل</p> <p>2:00 - 5:00 جبل النخلة</p> <p>ورشة فنية عين ترى... يد تصنع</p>
 <p>وطاح الزنجبيل والخبز</p>	<p><b>السبت 20\4\2019</b></p> <p>10:00 - 1:00 مؤسسة تامر للتعليم المجتمعي رام الله النخلة</p> <p>ورشة فنية، طين وفخار</p> <p>عرض تفاعلي: ماذا يحصل للحيوانات عندما يأتي الفيضان العملاق؟</p> <p>2:00 - 4:00 المحكمة العثمانية</p> <p>معرض حكايات من الفن التشكيلي الفلسطيني</p> <p>5:00 - 7:00 حديقة متحف محمود درويش</p> <p>الحزبة في الموروث الشعبي والفني الفلسطيني، يوم العائلة</p>





### 3. Daddy Read to Me Campaign

Since its launch in 2010, “Daddy Read to Me” Campaign still proves itself an ongoing open invite to found new common grounds in father–child relationships, and make way for new prospect in them. Tamer believes that establishing these connections between fathers and their children has exceptional potential to allow for a new perspective of the world as a whole, one that is kind and beautiful. A perspective formed from all the questions, answers, smiles, stories, conversations, and imagination carried over to us by our children.

“Children’s laughter, every action they take, motivates us, both children and adults alike, to keep moving forward in spite of all the difficulties we face. We, as adults, are not the only ones endeavoring to give them happiness; they too make us happy with their spontaneity and beaming energy. They lift away some of our lives’ burdens and remind us of the beauty that surrounds us.”

In 2019, 31,004 children, 1,964 fathers and 1,680 mothers participated in activities implemented by 252 partner institutes, inspired from “\*Reesha\*Feather, the Cat”. Below are some quotations from what fathers said about the campaign this year:

“We had a great chance to bond with our children, with ourselves, and to release our stress and anxiety.”

“[The kids] were so happy; my daughter kept saying ‘it was fun, right? Will you always come?’”

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#### 4. I Donated a Book Campaign

This initiative aims to promote values of volunteer work within the Palestinian community. Every year, hundreds of Palestinian youth participate in the initiative's activities. This year, we called for children to join the campaign as well; they brought books from their homes to their school libraries. Furthermore, 170 young adults joined the campaign's activities and went around collecting what ended up being 2,750 books.

This campaign provides an important opportunity to support several libraries, since the campaign focuses on enriching the marginalized community libraries with books.

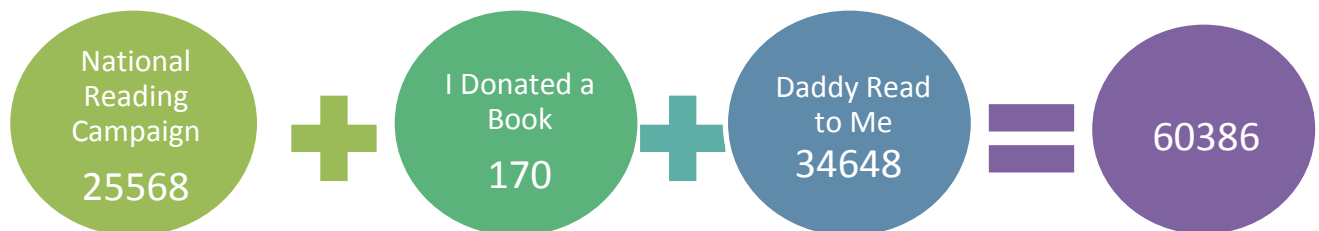
For example, in Gaza, the Culture and Light/ Althaqafa wal Noor community library was in the spotlight of the campaign. This library has undergone very difficult circumstances; through the campaign, we called for people, especially youth to visit the library and support the working staff there. The librarian tears, when she saw so many young people donating books to the library, were unforgettable.

Nader Sahouri, one of the youth members participating in the campaign, said: "Reading changed my life; it opened up the world for me; provided new places to see, new people to meet, and new ideas to know. I was never much of a reader before, until I found a book that changed my mind on the matter. The opportunity I received may be one that others never get

to have. Therefore, by donating books, I believe I can create this opportunity for others to find one book that can change their life. Giving my books to someone else is the simplest way to spread the spirit of reading.”



The following diagram is a summary of the number of beneficiaries of 2019’s reading campaigns:



## Second: The Youth

This year was without a doubt one of the best in terms of working with youth, due to the beaming energy we felt with them; especially from the youth teams’ engagement in a critical thinking track, through the “Questions and Wonders” learning path. The final product of that engagement was an exhibition they organized, presenting the most critical questions for them about issues like education, society, gender, curricula, etc. Moreover, the youth teams were active in several other initiatives, such as joining “Novell Gaza”, celebrating Yara’at’s birthday,

and participating in the “I Donated a Book” Campaign. The teams partook in many activities that focused on enhancing skills like self-expression, communication and group interaction.

In 2019, Tamer provided different opportunities for the youth to be engaged in activities they leaned for and desired, such as writing, playing music, and illustration among others. Open dialogue has always been Tamer’s approach when designing activities and programs the youth; starting from reading campaigns, to cinema clubs, to training programs that aim to build young adults’ capacities in different fields, like creating initiatives such as the child protection initiative. Not to mention the youth teams’ regularly set meetings all, where they read books, recited poetry, and sang songs reflecting on their experiences. Here’s what a couple of our youth had to say about their experience with Tamer in 2019:

Mohammed Murtaja, 16 years old: “I feel like I’m getting new idea, and more awareness with every passing second I spend at Tamer.”

Ahmad Al-Qrenawi, 21 years old: “Whenever we knock Tamer’s door, we knock the door of truth. Everything we’ve experienced here is the result of a genuine connection the institute created with its youth.”

Diagram () below presents the main goals of working with the youth in 2019

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#### Youth Activities in 2019:

##### 1. Participating in Novell Gaza III Project



Novell Gaza presents a very important opportunity for youth to get their voice heard at a global level. The book, whose first volume was released 5 years ago in association with Novel Gaza Sweden, presents real-life stories of Gaza's youth and young adults. The last volume of the book

presents photos of the city in addition to the written stories.

During 2019 the youth involved in the third volume of the book partook in several activities and coursed that contributed to the book's contents, starting with an English creative writing course conducted by Laila Shiqaqi from Ramallah, followed by a photography course, and the participation in hiking trips where they took amazing pictures.

Coinciding with the opening of the "Questions and Wonders" exhibition, Tamer announced the results of the texts and photos that will be published in the book. The announcement began with a pre-recorded opening speech by Dr. Atef Abu Saif, the Palestinian Minister of Culture, in which he spoke of Tamer's experience working with youth, in the kids' and their families' presence. The attached photo is that of one of the participants at the moment of announcing the results of whose works will be published in the book, a moment that will forever be etched into the participants' memories.

The following is a quote from Dr. Abu Saif's speech:

***"Tamer Institute is an esteemed establishment, and it had been an honor of mine to have served amongst its staff at different times. It has contributed aplenty to the Palestinian culture. To the young generation I say, you are very lucky to be a part of Tamer, for it has a beacon of light to young writers for over 20 years."***

## **2. Participation in "Question and Wonders Project" funded by Rosa Luxemburg**

It's safe to say that this was the most important experience in working with the youth in 2019. As Tamer's youth was able to embark on an important path to broaden their critical thinking abilities. The path came from Tamer's deeply embedded belief in the power of questions in initiating conversations and discussion, and opening a path of exploration of the world around us. It began with the youth teams asking about the self, and then progressed into asking questions of thought, like beginnings and ends, moving towards touching on current issues, like education in Palestine, women's status, the city, the public space and more. Throughout this experience, the youth participated in different workshops where they created their own questions and manifested them in stories, poems, illustrations and even songs.



To celebrate this experience, Tamer documented its output in a book titled “Questions and Wonders”; as well as published the texts through the Yara’at annex. Moreover, the institute celebrated the experience with an exhibition that presented the questions of the youth in an artistic way.

Hani Al-Bayyari, Tamer staff member, on describing the exhibition: “This exhibition is the window to the world that our youth seeks, a window to their identities, to all the ambitions, passions, dreams and more. It is their eyes while reading their poems, capturing their photos, and putting their finishing touches on their paintings. ‘Questions and Wonders’ exhibition is a question that blossoms and never withers in the minds.”





### 3. Yara'at Annex

Throughout 2019, Yara'at team members continued to meet regularly in the youth's hall at Tamer. They discussed books, read their poems, and planned for different activities; one being releasing an issue of the Yara'at annex. During 2019, 2 annexes were released; the latest focused on presenting the outputs of the participants through the different activities like questions and wonders learning path, the illustrations of Banafsaj and the photos after the Novel Gaza III. From the Editorial committee of Yara'at:

“Yara’at resembles nothing but itself.

It is a nation of a people amongst nations.

They stand, every morning facing one another;

And they sing:

Yara'at is like spring; it blossoms.

Yara'at is the most beautiful thing about November."



In a meeting with the team members, following the closure of “Questions and Wonders” learning path, one of the youth members said: ***“finding an answer, is reaching an end. However, Yara’at is a never-ending experience. Through Yara’at, we were able to embark on a critical thinking path that made a crucial contribution to the way we think; it provided rich material for discussions utilizing questions as a primary tool to build the experience.”***

#### **4. Other Youth Activities**

- Celebrating Yara’at’s 26th birthday: the youth team members of Yara’at arranged a literary and musical gathering to celebrate the 26th birthday of Yara’at, coinciding with the results’ announcement of the Novell Gaza competition, and the launching of “questions and wonders” exhibition. During the event, they read their texts, they sang songs that they wrote; their parents attended the event along with a variety of culture lovers from different age groups.
- Joining the launching of the musical album “Sharafat”: the team wrote the lyrics of the album within the project “Together, we Create”, in partnership with Edward Said Conservatory for Music. The youth teams participated in 3 different launching events of the Album, where they recited the lyrics to the audience before each song was played.
- Participating in the different activities in the Reading Campaign: the youth teams had a major contribution in planning for “I Donated a Book” Campaign. In Gaza, the youth worked together to help revive the Noor/light library which is one of the oldest community libraries in the city. Meanwhile, in the WB, they collected thousands of books from each governorate. During the National Reading week as well, the youth teams organized a literary and musical evening; their relatives, colleagues and families attended the event.
- Summer camps for the youth teams and Nakheel: Tamer implemented 2 summer camps for the youth in Gaza and the West Bank to improve their capacity in arranging different initiatives; it was an opportunity for the youth to meet each other and establish new friendships with their peers. The camps focused on providing the youth with opportunities to learn and be engaged in new experiences rather than training them on utilizing specific tools.

### **Impressions From the Youth Teams**

*Yousef Masri (from Hebron's Nakheel): "Summer Days were very exciting and thrilling, we were engaged in activities that opened our mind to different ideas. It was way beyond amazing to me."*

***Sulafa Abu Al-Rub: (From Tubas & Jenin Nakheel): I was very lucky to participate in the summer camp this year. I remember the first day of the camp very clearly, I woke up very early in the morning, took a deep breath, closed my eyes and listened carefully to nature; it crept deep into my soul, fed it a trance of happiness, and raised within me a gut feeling that I'm about to be a part of an extraordinary experience that I will never forget. I reached the bus station, only to find one already waiting for me. I raced, as is my habit, to sit by the window seat, feeling the early morning breeze blending with the sound of my favorite music, reviving what's left of my soul from the ashes. Without even realizing it, time had passed, and as I looked through the window I could see crowded buildings one after the other and long lines of cars waiting to pass. But soon enough, I saw the last of the city, as Nijmeh/Star Mountain where the camp was held, appeared. Three days of camping passed us by in an instant, but what we took from it was not to be taken lightly, especially what we learned about the concept of initiatives, what it means, and its principles and how it works. We discussed models of initiatives and even had the chance to meet people who successfully created their own initiatives, and through turmoil managed to evolve and be their own success stories. During the camp, we were able to meet many people from different areas of our homeland, with whom we shared the most beautiful and fun moments of our lives, until they become an integral part of it. It's hard to recall our arrival at the camp, but I will never forget our departure from it. We said our goodbyes with fake smiles on our faces, choked with our desire for more days to spend together.***

- Regular meetings of Yara'at, Voices and Banafsaj: Yara'at is the team that is interested in reading in Arabic; Voices from Palestine is the youth team interested in reading and writing in English; while Banafsaj is the youth team interested in graphic art. The members of each team meet once a week; during their gathering, they read and discuss books together. Sometimes they work on improving their capacity in criticism (artistic or

literary), while other times they host other people who might be a source of inspiration for them to learn.

- Partaking in the theatrical performance: “The Most Gorgeous Journey” based on Tamer’s publication of the same name that documented the life of Palestinian poet Fadwa Touqan. The participants adapted the book into a play, performing it on the stage of the Palestinian Red Crescent Association – Gaza, following an intensive training in theatrics.



From the Theatrical Performance: “The most Gorgeous Trip”

**Third Strategic Goal: Contributing to a Palestinian Environment that is Supportive to Learning (including solid policies and infrastructure that are suitable for children’s growth)**

### First: The Community Libraries’ Network

During 2019 the performance of the Community Libraries’ Network noticeably improved, which was not only evident in the work done, but also a promising sign for future planning of the network’s activities. The following is a general overview of the most prominent stops in our work with the network:

- **The Librarians’ Learning Paths (capacity building program for librarians):** since early 2019, we started setting a general framework of an accumulative constructive learning path, through which we set certain learning goals for each month, so that by the end of the year we’d reached specific learning objectives.

Three day meetings were set with the network’s members in both Gaza and WB to discuss the concept of liberating art, and how libraries can be a third place present in the cultural scene of society; and play as big a role in the life and growth of a child as home and school, with less authority and more freedom. On top of that, an intellectual course was organized with the librarian discussing “the origin of tales”, where the librarians delved into the origin of tales, their importance, and the social and cultural context it was made to serve. This course also aimed to prompt librarians to seek the origins of knowledge and not accept them as postulates. Simultaneously, another path with school librarians was organized on the mechanics of book discussions.

- **Field Activities:** the community libraries conduct various activities in partnership with Tamer; these activities are planned, in many cases, according to the framework of the projects implemented by Tamer. The said activities focus on utilizing different expressive arts tools in working with children, young adults, youth teams and parents.

- **Providing Stationary, Books and Logistic Support to Libraries:** as a part of building the capacity of libraries, Tamer provides some logistical support to the libraries on a regular basis. This aims to help the libraries better serve the beneficiaries from the different activities that they plan for and implement. In 2019, Tamer provided books, stationary and other resources to support the community libraries.

- **Engaging the Community Libraries’ Network in Tamer’s Projects:** Tamer worked on engaging the community libraries in the implementation of different projects where possible, so that the librarians can get the chance to utilize their skills and knowledge in implementing various art/reading/writing– related activities.

## **Second: Leaving no Child behind Project**

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“Leaving No Child Behind” is a strategic 5-year project that’s funded by Save the Children International SCI, and is implemented both in the West Bank (WB) and Gaza Strip (GS). The first period of the project, running for 2.5 years (2019–2021) targets 26 basic education schools (15 in the WB and 11 in GS). The second period, running over the course of 2 more years (2022–2023) will target another 24 schools. The schools currently targeted are geographically distributed as follows: 15 public schools in WB (Northern Hebron (4), Southern Hebron (4), Salfit (4), and Jerusalem (4)), and 11 UNRWA schools in GS. The project aims to create a safe learning environment for children, ages 6–9, with focused on 1<sup>st</sup> graders who find themselves in an unfamiliar environment as they are experiencing school for the first time; to help them cope with this new place and system, with all that accompanies it from feeling of fear and anxiety. It is a project meant to assist them to feel free to learn and interact with each other while having access to quality educational resources/tools. The main objectives of the project can be summarized with the following:

- Improving the levels of learning for students in math, reading and writing through employing expressive arts and storytelling in the education process.
- Ensuring a safe and violent free environment for children.

The project works predominantly on all vital aspects of a child’s environment, primarily at home and at school. Therefore, parents, teachers, community members and peers, are all targets in the different activities of the project, to ensure a complementary work approach so that a child can enjoy a safe interactive learning environment at home, school and the community at large. The initial tracks of work were formed with parents, as they are children’s first known social and educational surroundings, a track for working with teachers is in the making for the next step of the project. Moreover, as the project relies heavily on the concept of safe learning environments, children have been involved in the process of development of a Code of Conduct for each of their schools, through the project’s activities with them.

Through the project “Tri – Learning (Literacy, Numeracy and life skills)”, Tamer Institute will focus on two main objectives: access to quality education and Learning, as well as a protective environment reaching the most marginalized children, including children with disabilities. The program will be implemented at different levels of national, institutional, community and child levels.

Parents from 15 schools in the WB were targeted with 3 sets of workshop series. The first set of workshops titled “**Psychosocial Support**” aimed to introduce the project to parents and highlight the main goal of the project. These workshops were the building block to facilitate the parents’ acceptance and embrace of the Code of Conduct that their children will come up with at their school. The second category of workshops titled “**Protection through Stories**” aimed to provide parents with tools to better communicate with their children and understand their point of view, through analyzing children’s books that address the issue of child protection. Parents discussed books like “Silly Lilly” and reflected on their own experiences as children and how that can help them better understand their children. The third set of workshops titled “**Home–Based Supportive learning**” aimed to provide parents with interactive games that they can use at home to improve their children’s literacy skills. It should be pointed out that almost the same groups of parents participated in all 3 sets of workshops, once a month on average. In Gaza, over (906) parents from 11 schools participated in “Home–Based Supportive Learning” following the same approach in the WB. Groups of parents were engaged in 5– 8 supportive learning sessions in Gaza. They also participated in Hiking trips “Tejwaal” to get to know their communities.

(2325) children, from grades 1–4, participated in **extracurricular sessions** aiming to develop the Code of Conduct at their schools in the WB. The sessions were implemented through Tamer’s field network of facilitators, Librarians and Palestinian artists/authors such as Lara Nassar and Ahlam Besharat. Through the sessions children participated in story readings, discussions and expressive arts activities. Children were given the space to express their fears, anxieties and struggles at home and school. The outputs (e.g. paintings, photos observations, quotations, comments of children) of the mentioned sessions were documented and will be the foundation of the Code of Conduct that all children, ages 6–9 will establish at their schools. The form of expressive arts (stories, illustration, theatre, music, etc.) that the children like the



most will be the tool through which they will present their own Code of Conduct. It should be pointed out that both parents and children targeted in this project also joined the reading campaigns implemented by Tamer, i.e. The National Reading Week, Daddy Read to Me Campaign and I Donated a Book Campaign.

3640 **children's books** were purchased and distributed to the targeted schools in the WB and GS (140 book titles). The purchased books will be used in extracurricular activities that will target children, grades 1–4 from the targeted schools. These books are especially important when the literacy and numeracy boost training is implemented with teachers, since they will use the copies available at the school's library. 1470 books (49 titles) were also purchased to be used for parents' supportive learning trainings and PDEP and for teachers' literacy boost and PDET trainings that will be implemented during 2020. Tamer will also distribute children's books to the targeted schools' libraries which will be used during the sessions with children, parents and teachers for developing and adopting the Code of Conduct.

#### *Success Stories from the Project:*

- The team of facilitators working in this project started as volunteers with Tamer under previous projects. Tamer invested in them and built their capacity through different trainings, and now they are like enlightening pillars in their community; some of them are now educational supervisors at the MOE and they have major contributions to the development of their communities through enriching the cultural scene by supporting children, young adults and their parents. Through building the capacity of the field staff, Tamer contributes into the sustainability of development in these communities.
- “I was so used to yelling at my child she was getting low grades at school. After participating in the project's workshops with mothers I was called by the school principle to reprimand my child, but all I did was smile at my daughter's face and tell her that she can do better; and that she can get better grades next time. I am a mother, not a teacher, my job is to love and embrace my child.” Said one of the mothers, at a focus group to evaluate the Home-based supportive learning session.



– “My son used to tell me time and again stories about things that would happen to one of his classmates, but I never listened. After being in the workshop I realized that maybe he meant himself, so I made the effort to be more attentive and listen to him. Perhaps he has issues he’s having a hard time expressing.” Said one mother

after participating in the Protection through stories workshop.

### Third: Safe Zones Project:

This project essentially works on providing safe zones for children to grow, learn and express themselves, using tools such as stories, expressive arts and activities like creative writing, visual arts, drama and cinema; as well as life skills that contribute in enhancing children’s mental and social wellbeing. The employment of these tools assists in implementing case management activities, and allows case managers, along with facilitators, librarians, and teachers, to discover the needs of different groups; and to redirect them to competent bodies by passing them through case management procedures approved by the institute and its partners, known as “referral and transfer”.

The project boosted partnerships with community institutes, whereas the implementation of project



activities was done in accordance to a new methodology that reflected Tamer’s identity without

diminishing the partners'. That also went without affecting the goal of building a network with a different sector of institutes; whereby Tamer collaborated with 5 civil institutes, 17 libraries from the library network, and 24 schools and kindergartens, which were selected based on specific criteria and within the child protection policy.

During 2019, the project worked on enabling skills of using expressive arts in protection and mental health guidance, as well as giving an introduction on case management, to groups of librarians, psychologists, and social workers in partner institutes and organizations. Moreover, project intersected with Tamer's projects and programs in general; for instance, our Nakheel groups played an important role in spreading protection culture in the community. Whereas during the "Summer Days" camp, the participants were trained on concepts of childhood protection, and accordingly the Nakheel groups implemented 5 different initiatives within their communities.

Tamer had envisioned incorporating children's literature in psychologists' work with children, in private and group counseling, on behavioral issues children may face. Such as employing "Al-Mared" to help children in overcoming fear, "The Mayor with the Large Ears" to tackle bullying, and "My Body is mine" and "My

heart is a Forest" to raise awareness on sexual harassment.

Case management also interfered in cases of children skipping or ditching school, and in that regard, case managers have succeeded in interfering with 56 children during 2019; and they were able to return

26 of them under the age of 15 back to school. Meanwhile, they also managed to integrate the other 30, over the age of 15, in vocational training centers. This interference was of utmost



importance, because in many cases those children were a source of income for their families, either through child labor or through beggary.

Furthermore, in regard to the “Read to me Daddy” reading campaign, the project work on strengthening bonds between parents and their children through the implementation of interactive activities; such as storytelling and art activities that parents and children can do together. As well as other activities that aimed to raise awareness on the concepts of child protection, familial relations, and children’s share in those relationships and their needs. The effect of this work was evident in the parents’ positive interaction with case managers, and their willingness to enroll their children in activities in different location centers. During this year 7244 children benefited from the project’s activities, 46% of them being female and 2595 parents participated in activities, 27% being fathers.

#### A success story from the Safe Zone project:

The Safe Zone project is buzzing with different success stories, especially in regards to protection cases and case management. Some children go back to school after a long absence, some relieve mental distress, some overcome fear and some survive violent living situations. As for parents, it’s worth mentioning that many become more caring for their children, and they create safe and common grounds together with them.

One of our most notable stories of 2019 is that of A.Q, a 16 year old boy who lives with his family, that’s facing very difficult circumstances. In a general overview, his father suffers from a mental illness causing to display violent behavior against A.Q, and as a result of this, the boys psyche was negatively affected. This negative effect of the ongoing situation at home eventually caught up to him in school in multiple aspects, whereas his academic performance was getting worse, and he was also displaying violent behavior with other kids at school, which led to his expulsion from it. All of this in turn resulted in A.Q ditching school all together, and because of the difficult financial and mental situation in his family, he chose to work in a local bakery, where he got involved with what can only be called bad company.

Moreover, the boy was a participant of the grand return marches, and received an irreversibly nerve damaging bullet to his right arm. His injury only contributed to him further distancing himself from society, he started developing real issues with communication and self-expression, in addition to facing difficulties in self-care. This further developed to concentration difficulties, continuous insomnia and troubled sleep.

The designated case manager worked on building an entire plan for interference with the both the child and his family. The plan included working, along with his team, with the father on awareness workshops, and with the child, as well as his siblings, through several expressive art activities, implemented at community libraries. The integration achieved through these activities enhanced the mental wellbeing of the child, and raised the family's awareness on what had occurred. The team's interference doesn't end here, but carries through to communicating with the Ministry of Education to arrange for the boy's return to school. For the time being, the team is still following up on the child's progress.

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#### **Forth: Supportive Learning/ My Future:**

Tamer continued working on creating and constructing new experiences in learning for the children in the "My Future" program, who were orphaned by the 2008 attack on Gaza, through employing arts and games in supportive learning methods. The activities implemented contributed in enhancing the academic performance of near 950 children involved in the program, with a 97.33 % success rate in general, and 97.5 % success rate for children with learning difficulties.

Additionally, in 2019, the project worked accumulatively with gifted children in theatre, music and technology. It worked with focus on developing and reinforcing ever growing talent, through providing specialized training for each talent every year over the course of several years. The final output included a theatrical production based on several of Tamer's publications such as "The Bull That Stole the Kangaroo's Boots", "The Colossus and Qanan" "Auntie Olive and the Olive Tree", "Mirro's Neighborhood", "Mara and Things", "Zaloota", and "The Little Secret".



Alongside that, the output also included a choir singing 3 folkloric songs, and the development of two mobile applications using the App Inventor program.



Invitation card to the play “Neighborhood and Neighbors”

#### Success story:

The work put into the “My Future” project is not restricted only to enhancing children’s academic performance, but also revolves around instilling faith in talent, and providing an opportunity to experiment with and develop them. This is how it all began with children back in 2015; we worked solely on that aspect, of reinforcing their talents and developing their skills, and strengthening their faith in themselves as capable and deserving individuals, instilling in them that they are the first blossoms in our flower garden.



Khawla Al-Ashi, now 15 years old, was only 10 when she drew the picture on the right. Aside from Khawla’s excellent academic record, she also participated in several creative writing



workshops organized by the institute. She later joined and became an active member of Yara'at, and in the last meeting we attended, the team was undergoing a training in creative writing based off of one of her own writings. Khawla has become a real talent in both writing and drawing, and has shown great interest in the English language, on top of always aiming to be academically brilliant; all of that had erupted from her participation in the project, and she hopes to continue partaking in this experience to broaden her mind and sail off into new horizons.

In the words of Khawla as written in one of her latest scripts: "In order for us to be very happy, we must love plenty."

This isn't only Khawla's story, but also Roa'a Hassouneh's, who became a member of Yara'at's editing committee; as well as the story of Ziad al-Labban and Noor al-Najjar from Purple, and the story of all the children from the play "Neighborhood and Neighbors", and many more.

### Fifth: Third Place

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The "Libraries as a Third Place" project aims to restore the primary role of school and community libraries as learning hubs for people to go to, with plenty of material and intellectual resources available to help them fulfill that role. Considering the current state of libraries, with lack of resources to play this role, the project aims to:

1– Enable librarians with the tools and skills needed to vitalize their libraries to be spaces of interaction and intellectual exchange through:

- Conduct workshops for librarians focusing on knowledge-based skills: through discussions that widen the intellect and provide food for thought for teachers/librarian teachers.
- Conduct workshops for librarians to enhance inclusive (pedagogical) skills: through dialogue, research and experimentation of inclusive methods than can be practiced by librarians before implementing them with children.

- Conduct awareness sessions on Child Safeguarding for librarians, including elements of Tamer's Child Safeguarding policy.
- 2– Support the infrastructure of learning in school and community libraries as inclusive third places through:
  - Producing and providing high quality children's books to the libraries.
  - Purchasing different types of books and making them accessible to children considering inclusivity.
  - Conducting physical interventions at the libraries to make them more friendly to children with disabilities (fully equipped or reachable)
- 3– Improve networking between community and school libraries through creating shared projects between both places.
- 4– Enhance the connection between youth and libraries, and reestablish their essential role in their communities' socio-cultural development. Tamer motivates youth and librarians to utilize different types of expressive arts to address crucial issues in their communities, and find methods of critiquing and bringing awareness to them. The institute also holds youth summer camps on civil engagement, led by the community librarians and other members of society. Furthermore, Tamer works on engaging children, young adults and other members of the community with youth-led initiatives.
- 5– Ensure that school libraries are present in children's lives on a bigger scale, through leading projects and the implementation of different activities at schools.
- 6– Increase the participation of community members and children in the different activities held at the libraries, through conducting more workshops by the librarians targeting parents and children and utilizing expressive arts tools that focus on comprehensive skills. These workshops are intended to enhance awareness of children's rights – especially their right to education, non-violent interaction and useful usage of the internet and social media, along with conducting the reading campaigns and building social coherence.
- 7– Build the capacity of school librarians in reading and discussing stories with the children and young adults.

- 8- Create awareness at the policy makers' level of the importance of libraries, through advocating for enabling the libraries to perform their role in community development and assigning full-time qualified librarians to work at the community libraries.

During 2019 a lot of parents, children and librarians were targeted in this project through expressive arts activities (story discussions, movie discussions, joined activities between children and parents, networking activities with the community and school libraries). This created an opportunity for children to interact with each other and to enjoy a new space where they can express themselves.



Beneficiaries of the Project’s Activities during 2019								
Targeted Children				Young adults and Youth members		parents	Young adults with disability	
Male	Female	children with disability		male	female		male	female
		male	female					
5616	7687	400	268	157	302	2106	15	40

The project targets 30 community libraries and 60 school libraries in the WB and GS.

Through the project, librarians were targeted with learning paths to build their capacities so that they can activate their libraries and turn them into learning and cultural hubs, through which we ultimately aim to contribute into enriching the cultural scene in these communities.

We worked in partnership with Goethe Institute on executing a theatre workshop at Halima Kharisha Girls' School. The track of the workshop aimed to fortify the presence of theatre in schools, as a tool that students and teachers alike can use to express and present their issues in society. It carried within it themes related to how girls are perceived in society, and everyday issues they have to deal with. There were 18 girls participating in the workshop, and they were trained in writing, acting and utilizing the body on stage. The workshop was facilitated by artists Hamza and Sa'ad, who worked intensively in a short time span after Ramadan; in order to put up a final performance before the return of the school year.

During the meetings of the workshop, the girls wrote about everyday occurrences they experience, by answering question the facilitators asked, like "When you ride a taxi or service, what happens? Does the chauffeur bother you? If a guy sits next to you, do they harass you? What uncomfortable situations do you find yourself having to face every day?" among others.

After writing down events that happened to them, they were asked to practice acting out the scenes of these events in front of everyone. The workshop alternated between training on performance with focal of the use of voice, the demeanor, and the physical performance, as and training on writing. Moreover, the meetings introduced theatre from a theoretical aspect, discussing the history of Greek theatre and how Greek tragedy was used to depict the inevitability of fate and the wrath of the Gods. Tragic motifs such as "sin" were discussed through the analysis of Oedipus Coloneus, one of the earliest known Greek tragedies,

authored by Sophocles. Furthermore, the meetings also explored the importance of theatre, and how it aids in providing new angles on self–perspective, and self–critique, as well as how it works on portraying real life issues of society and opens a dialogue for an in depth analysis of them.

At the end of the workshop a theatrical production was implemented, and was seen by teachers and parents, with the attendance of the Ministry of Education. The show became a unique experience for the girls, and succeeded in drastically changing their view on the use of theatre as an instrument of self–expression. With that said, some of the biggest challenges we face as of right now, are adequately developing the skills of those working with the girls in writing and leading discussions; so as to assist the girls properly in writing about their own experiences and leading broader intellectual discussions in their societies.

#### **Fourth Strategic Goal: Supporting and formulating the Institutional Capacity of Tamer Institute**

The presence of fundamental principles in the work of Tamer, such as encouraging questioning, instilling a unifying national identity and respecting differences of all kinds, enriches the capacity and dynamism of the team. They also drive the work force connectively towards a unified goal, and that facilitates work in respect to the overall vision and mission of the institute, and not just the secondary goals or specific project goals. Throughout the year, we work on reinforcing that through deconstructing concepts related to projects, and analyzing them within the frame of the vision and the tools that we know and agree upon. That makes our work in fortifying and developing work force capacity directly proportional to the development of our tools; which in turn makes our existing capabilities beneficial and moldable in any of our work locations to a large extent.

“In other words, the concept of using storytelling as a tool used in community and school libraries, as well as the institute itself, develops gradually. You will find that it has become a common denominator that is utilized differently every time, and that it is the best visual tool used in the field; as well as the closest to the team, maintaining an important level of use as a common base in all project and different

interventions. Storytelling as tool is utilized primarily for enjoyment, extending the imagination and instilling feelings of safety; then on a secondary level can be employed in the holistic approach, gender, protection ... etc.”

To support the consolidation of the administrative approach that is based on reflection and learning, and ensures rights and duties in all aspects of the institute’s work, as well as to spread Tamer’s approach of (Experience and Speech), the institute took the following steps:

### **First: Building Capacities**

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- Fundraising to establish a new work position for follow-up and evaluation coordinator for the entire institute.
- The institute organized a workshop for its crew with a follow-up and development expert, and that is to enhance our already existing follow-up and evaluation policy, and improve the quality of reports. This workshop resulted in better field report modules, and the revision of all follow-up and evaluation tools used for projects.
- Based on a partnership with Save the Children, a gender policy and protection policy audit was executed. The results of the audit were followed up with the construction of a program to enhance concepts and incorporating them practical application.
- The needs regarding the individual capacities of crew members were identified, and based on that, some employees were sent to attend training workshops in revitalization and facilitating.
- The institute worked on improving its publication marketing strategies in locally in Palestine, regionally in the Arab world, and internationally. This was done in contract with a marketing specialist, whereas a study was conducted on the institute’s situation revolving around its publication and sales. Then a plan was laid out for the printing and distribution in Palestine and abroad, siting the best possible websites to promote for the institute’s publications, as well as the best markets to access, and the exhibitions best advised to partake in. In addition to the study, the institute’s website was also evaluated to improve online sales based on user experience.
- The institute worked on developing its official website in terms of design and content, as well as in terms of online sales mechanism. <https://www.tamerinst.org/ar/>



- The institute carried its experience in visual and literary critique to the Arab World through the conference it held in Jordan, where it showcased the experience of working with children and librarians on story analysis and discussion.
- Participation in Arabic and international exhibitions.
- Selling the copy rights to several of Tamer’s publications, as well as translating several others in six new languages.

## **Second: External Participation**

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- Rinad Qubbaj participated in the meet and greet held by the regional Rosa Luxemburg office for Palestinian and Jordanian cultural and educational institutes.
- Haneen Khairy, Tamer’s program coordinator, participated in the Bologna Children’s Book Fair; considered the official leading fair specialized in children’s literature in the world, as well as a place of gathering for all those working in the field. The fair is held essentially to sell and buy copy rights.
- Tamer was represented by Haneen Khairy in a UN “Special Committee” meeting held in Amman, Jordan, to investigate Israeli practices against Palestinian human rights, and against Arab residents in the occupied territories, with focus on children and the right to education.
- Khader Salameh, Tamer’s publication unit coordinator, participated in the Amman International Book Fair, and attended the regional conference for the International Publishers’ Union in Amman during September. The conference discussed the challenges faced by the publication industry in the Arab region, and the effect of technology on the paper industry.
- Rinad Qubbaj participated in the Jordanian School Librarians conference held in Amman, Jordan, as a primary speaker, where she spoke about the work of Tamer with libraries. In addition to that, Rinad also attended the 9<sup>th</sup> international meeting for

UNESCO's collection consultation with NGO's about education 2030 (2030 CCNGO/ED), which took place in Al-Hammamat city in Tunisia from December 2<sup>nd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup>, 2019. This assembly was hosted in cooperation with the International Education Campaign (GCE); and it showcased all the activities that had been executed, as well as the main challenges faces, the progress made, and the opportunities to move forth in light of the latest results of the 2019 UN esteemed political forum.

- Ramzi Boshed, logistics and human resources coordinator, along with Hani Bayyari, Gaza's campaigns coordinator, both participated in the Sharjah Book Fair this year.
- Haneen Khairy participated in a conference titled "Shedding Light on the Invisible", which discussed protecting education in the occupied Palestinian territories. Haneen presented Tamer's approach with libraries through a paper called "The Role of Libraries in Protecting Education as a Third Place."
- Kamel Sulieman, Bethlehem's field coordinator, participated in a workshop with the Arab Forum in Jarash, Jordan, that aimed to develop a deeper concept on adjacency as a tool for education.
- Ahmad Ashour participated in a workshop on overcoming obstacles, conflict resolution and creative thinking, held in Amman, Jordan by GIZ.



### Third: Challenges and Lessons Learned:

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- Lack of face to face communication with the Gaza crew.
- The biggest challenge was faced during November, when the Ministry of Education office in Jerusalem was closed down. This was tackled down with reliance on the firm and steady relationship formed between us and Jerusalem school administrations, by immediate coordination with them.
- The extensive amount of activities included in reading campaigns, whereas the more partners we had from schools and libraries, meant a proportional increase in the number of activities, and in the collective process of planning and following up with them.
- Scarcity of funding for culture in general, and child culture in specific.

### Partners

Taawon Association	French–German Cultural Center	Goethe Institute	Diakonia Sweden
Save the Children	Epi? Palestine	Ramallah Municipality	Bologna Children’s Book Fair
BOOK AID\ UK	TVBIT	Palestinian Ministry of Higher Education	UNICEF
Edward Said National Conservatory of Music	Abdel Mohsin Al- Qattan Foundation	Palestinian Ministry of Culture	PNGO Network
Children’s Cinema Initiative	Danish House – Palestine	SouthMed CV Birzeit University	Save the Children International
Save the Children Germany		Novel Gaza	Rosa Luxemburg Foundation