IMC’S YOUTH EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM (YEP) AND THE SAFE SPACE SUPPORTING IDPS IN THE OUTSKIRTS OF DAMASCUS.

Dr. Andria Spyridou
MHPSS Coordinator
Syria
IMC’S YEP CURRICULUM

YEP is a structured PSS group intervention for adolescents.

**Overarching goal:** Improve wellbeing by increasing confidence, self esteem, friendships, resiliency and social support that empower teens by providing a safe place to talk about their concerns and collaborate on a community service project. Decrease negative feelings (i.e., decrease feelings of boredom, hopelessness, isolation, depression, anxiety etc...)

**Overview of program:** Groups of 10 same sex teens to meet at the home of the same sex group leader (adult) for 2 hours a week for a period of 16 weeks. During each session the leader will introduce a topic, present some info on the topic as appropriate and lead a discussion about the topic, appropriate in home activities and journaling will also be incorporated. Some time each session can be used to talk about and plan for the big end of the program community service project. Leaders will be nonjudgmental, there for support and be a good role model for teens.
IMC’s YEP in the Middle East

- Syria
- Lebanon
- Jordan
- Turkey
OVERVIEW OF YEP CURRICULUM

Week 1, Topic: Introductory Session, introduce community service project

Week 2, Topic: Values

Week 3, Topic: Parents talking to parents about difficult topics

Week 4, 5 & 6, Topic: Communication (3 weeks) with parents, peers, community, awareness building, relaxation, who do you feel safe talking to
OVERVIEW OF THE YEP CURRICULUM

**Week 7, Topic: Relationships:** How youth can select friends, more on communication & how to deal with others, partner selection, romantic relationships?

**Week 8 & 9, Topic: Self esteem building (2 weeks)**, what are you good at?

**Week 10, Topic: Identity**

**Week 11, Topic: Future Goals**, what want to do with your life, how to get there?

**Week 12, Topic: Role models**, who in your life do you look up to and admire?
OVERVIEW OF YEP CURRICULUM

**Week 13, Topic: Youth and Community**, youth respect for others

**Week 14, Topic: Final project planning**, how will project go? benefits of the project for the youth, their families and their community?

**Week 15, Develop the Community Service Project with the art trainers and the Pss counselor.**

**Week 16, Topic: Post Project evaluation**, wrap up, fill out POST evaluation questionnaires
IMPROVEMENT IN WELLBEING

Methodology: The youth are assessed upon entry in the program and again once they have concluded it.

The areas that are assessed are:

Perceived Social Support (PSS)
Community Connectedness (CC)
Relationships with the parents (RP)
Self-Esteem (SE)
Depression self-reported symptoms (DS)
Anxiety self-reported symptoms (AS)
Positive Emotions (PE)
Negative Emotions (NE)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location:</th>
<th>Recreational Activity Center, Jaramana</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Period</td>
<td>January 2016 - November 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Participants</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvement %</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSS</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CC</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RP</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DS</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AS</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PE</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NE</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average of Improvement</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
YEP IN JORDAN

EFFECT OF YEP ON YOUTH:

- Fig. 2.0 – Positive psychosocial sub-scores before & after YEP
- Fig. 2.1 – Negative psychosocial sub-score after YEP
HOW THE YEP LINKS TO THE TWELVE CORE LIFE SKILLS OF THE LSCE?

Active Citizenship

- Children and Youth from different backgrounds (eg. social, religious, places) are brought together in a safe space in their community where they can participate in different activities.

- They learn to be co-exist and contribute to the group in a respectful way, while they cultivate their emotionally intelligent behavior and develop empathy as a core life skill.

Learning

- They learn new skills and at the same time develop creativity in a collaborative environment.

- In the selection process of the activities, material and methodology to be implemented they develop critical and purposeful thinking.

- Throughout the program they explore different ways of resolving problems that may arise within the group, or existing one in their personal lives.
HOW THE YEP LINKS TO THE TWELVE CORE LIFE SKILLS OF THE LSCE?

**Personal Empowerment**

-During the YEP the participants will be dedicating three sessions to **understand the importance** of **communication** and develop **effective communications skills** a key to **active citizenship**.

- They will practice **self-management** skills that can be implemented to improve the **relationship with friends, parents**, and to raise awareness on different topics in their own communities.

- As a consequence youth will be empowered into being actively engaged and in **full consciousness** by (i) maintaining good mental health while enduring challenges and adversity from daily or exceptional stressors (Waugh et al., 2011)
HOW THE YEP LINKS TO THE TWELVE CORE LIFE SKILLS OF THE LSCE?

Employability

**Decision Making**

-The participants during the YEP become owners of their projects and have a series of decision that are asked to make throughout the program.

**Negotiation**

- Children have to find their place in the group, in their communities and in their families. In the YEP children are requested to explore negotiation skills, closely related to the communication skills as well.

**Cooperation**

- Participants in the YEP, have to cooperate with each other and with their art trainers and counselors in order to reach their project goals and become active members of the group.
VIDEO PROMO RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES CENTRE

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1W2r1v51J1ICP9Ry81ub8RXLvFK7gwMjj/view
FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

- How can we improve our youth programs to make them meet the LSCE Core Life skills?
- What methodologies we shall use in order to strengthen the evidence base of our programming?
- What should be done to ensure ownership of the youth empowerment programs to the youth?