



TAMKEEN

**West Bank and Gaza Civil Society and Democracy
Strengthening Project**

Impact Assessment of Tamkeen Grants to Al-Amal Rehabilitation Society

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ACRONYMS

CSO	Civil Society Organization
D&G	Democracy and Governance
IR	Intermediate Result
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PLC	Palestinian Legislative Council
Tamkeen	West Bank and Gaza Civil Society and Democracy Strengthening Project
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

SECTION I

Introduction

This report presents the findings of an impact assessment led by evaluation specialist Dr. Sanaa Abou-Dagga. The West Bank and Gaza Civil Society and Democracy Strengthening project, known as Tamkeen, commissioned the services of Dr. Abou-Dagga to assess the impact of two grants awarded to Al-Amal Rehabilitation Center, a civil society organization (CSO) providing a broad range of services to the hearing-impaired in the southern Gaza Strip.

Tamkeen is a five-year project dedicated to increasing the participation of Palestinian CSOs in public discourse. This focus is drawn directly from USAID's strategic objective 3, "more responsive and accountable governance," intermediate result (IR) 3.1, "increased participation of CSOs in public decision making and government oversight," sub-IR 3.1.2, "CSOs effectively aggregate and articulate citizen issues," and sub-IR 3.1.3, "CSOs effectively disseminate information to citizens on public issues."

Al-Amal Rehabilitation Center is one of more than 75 Palestinian CSOs that have received grants from Tamkeen as part of the project's efforts to strengthen civil society. This evaluation study examines the impact of two grants made to Al-Amal between June 2001 and June 2003 for early detection of hearing problems among children in southern Gaza. As Al-Amal embarks on the second renewal of this grant, the study sheds light on the impact of the first two grant-funded projects and provides recommendations aimed at maximizing the impact of follow-on activities.

The evaluation process began in late 2003, and writing, reviewing, and editing the findings took place in the first half of 2004. Political instability, road closures, and curfews imposed by the Israeli military in Gaza caused some delays in completion of the study.

The report begins by describing the two Tamkeen-funded projects and outlining the purpose of the study, followed by a description of the methodology used to assess impact and a presentation of the findings. It concludes with a set of recommendations to help guide follow-on efforts. Annex A presents a survey of community attitudes toward the hearing-impaired. Finally, all the individuals consulted for this study are listed in Annex B, along with a list of the documents reviewed as part of the assessment.

SECTION II

Focus and Methodology of the Evaluation

A. Background

Located in southern Gaza, the Rafah and Khan Younis governorates have a total population of 250,000 inhabitants. Two-thirds are refugees who have largely depended on UNRWA services since 1950. Living conditions in these densely populated areas are extremely difficult due to lack of infrastructure and resources.

What is now known as Al-Amal Rehabilitation Center was established in 1991 as the “Rafah Rehabilitation Center.” It began operations the following year, starting with a local community initiative. In 1998, it became registered as a local NGO under its current name. Today, more than 45 employees and volunteers work at the center.

Since its inception, Al-Amal has gained wide recognition in Rafah. Its main mission is to empower hearing-impaired children to participate in society as full and equal members. Among its objectives, the center seeks to:

- Develop and improve services for deaf children in Rafah and other parts of Gaza
- Promote the full integration of deaf children into the local community
- Expand job opportunities for the disabled
- Raise awareness of the needs of the disabled
- Build linkages with other like-minded organizations to share information and expand services to hearing-impaired children
- Contribute to community development through partnerships with local committees

Among its standing services, the center operates a school for the deaf, an audiology clinic, vocational training and rehabilitation services, a child development club, and a home visit program. From 2001 to 2003, Al-Amal obtained Tamkeen funding to run early intervention programs for children with hearing and speech difficulties.

B. Description of the Projects

The first Tamkeen grant to Al-Amal was implemented in Rafah from June 2001 through June 2002. The second grant was implemented in Khan Younis from June 2002 through June 2003. The exhibit below captures grant details, objectives, and target beneficiaries.

Exhibit II-1. Comparative Overview of Al-Amal Projects Funded by Tamkeen

	Rafah Project	Khan Younis Project
Grant Title	Early Intervention Program for Children With Hearing and Speech Difficulties	Advocating Early Intervention for Children With Hearing and Speech Difficulties
Grant Amount	\$98,000	\$99,460
Date	June 12, 2001 to June 15, 2002	June 12, 2002 to June 15, 2003
Grant Objective	Conduct screening tests for early detection of hearing and speech problems among at least 5,000 children at 35 kindergartens and 15 elementary schools (first-grade classes) in Rafah, and provide suitable treatment to 300 needy cases.	Conduct screening tests for early detection of hearing and speech problems among at least 8,700 children at 30 kindergartens and 50 elementary schools (first-grade classes) in Khan Younis, and provide suitable treatment to 300 needy cases.
Sub-Objectives¹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early detection of hearing/speech problems and impairment • Establish and build a strong network with kindergartens, elementary schools, the Rafah municipality, and relevant NGOs to address hearing problems in Rafah • Offer and develop speech therapy for identified cases • Improve hearing levels among identified cases • Raise public awareness of the needs of hearing-impaired children • Develop capacities to detect hearing and speech difficulties • Establish a network and coordinate with the Ministry of Education, UNRWA, and NGOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early detection of hearing problems • Establish and build a strong network with kindergartens, elementary schools, and relevant NGOs to address hearing problems in Khan Younis • Offer and develop speech therapy training for 30 teachers • Improve hearings level among identified cases • Promote children's rights within the local community • Raise public awareness of the needs of hearing-impaired children • Develop capacities to detect hearing and speech difficulties • Establish a network and coordinate with the Ministry of Education, UNRWA, and NGOs
Targeted Groups and Beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3,000 children at 35 kindergartens and 2,000 first-graders at 15 elementary schools in Rafah • 100 children with hearing aids and 200 with speech difficulties • Families, schools, kindergarten staff, and communication specialists • University graduates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3,100 children at 30 kindergartens and 5,600 first-graders at 50 elementary schools in Khan Younis • 300 children with hearing problems • Families, schools, kindergarten staff, and communication specialists • Elementary school teachers

¹ Sub-objectives were extracted from the grant application forms submitted to Tamkeen.

The exhibit above demonstrates that the two projects were largely similar in scope, particularly in terms of funding amount, key objectives, and targeted groups. They did differ in some respects, namely the number of beneficiaries and one of the sub-objectives. Unlike the Rafah project, the Khan Younis initiative included promotion of children's rights as one of its goals, which is in line with Tamkeen's efforts to further democratic values in combination with service delivery.² Neither project clearly specified democracy and governance indicators.

C. Purpose of the Evaluation Study

As specified in the scope of work developed by Tamkeen, the evaluation study sought to answer the following questions:

- Did the Rafah and Khan Younis projects have a positive impact on the lives of the hearing- and speech-impaired?
 - Did the projects help change community attitudes toward the hearing-impaired? If so, how?
 - Did the projects advance integration of the hearing-impaired into the local community? If so, how?
 - Did the projects contribute to an increase in sign-language users?
 - Did the projects facilitate early detection of hearing impairment and provide adequate, high-quality interventions among children?
 - Did the projects promote networking and coordination among CSOs working in the disability sector? If so, how?
- Did the grantee's advocacy efforts lead to any policy changes? If so, which ones?
- Did the grants contribute to achieving the sub-IRs stated in the scope of work? If so, how?
- What could the CSO change in the next iteration of this grant to increase impact in terms of services provided, advocacy work, and results achieved?

² Based on a review of the grant application and final report for the Rafah activity, promotion of children's rights was not part of the project's stated objectives.

D. Methodology of the Evaluation

The following matrix (Exhibit II-2) was developed and used to guide the evaluation study.

Exhibit II-2. Evaluation Matrix

Evaluation question	Information source	Method for collecting information	Indicators
<p>Have the first two iterations of the grant had a positive impact on the lives of the hearing impaired and those with speech difficulties? Sub-questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did the grant help positively changing community attitudes toward the hearing impaired? If so, how was this achieved? • Did the grant improve the integration of the hearing impaired into the hearing community? If so, how was this achieved? • Did the grant contribute to an increase in sign language users? 	<p>Community members</p> <p>Project reports and documents; Al-Amal staff; MOHEH representative</p> <p>Project reports, documents; Al-Amal staff, community representatives</p>	<p>Short structured surveys, interviews</p> <p>Document analysis; Structured interviews with Al-Amal personnel and MOEHE representatives</p> <p>Document analysis; Structured interviews with Al-Amal staff and community representatives</p>	<p>Positive attitudes shown</p> <p>Change in the number of hearing impaired integrated in various institutions and in the community</p> <p>Change in number sign-language users</p>
<p>Did the grant facilitate early detection of hearing impairment and provide adequate (and high quality) intervention among children?</p> <p>Did the grant contribute to increased networking and coordination among CSOs working in the disability sector? If so, how was this achieved</p>	<p>Project reports, documents; Al-Amal staff; target beneficiaries</p> <p>Project reports, documents; Al-Amal staff; community representatives; government representatives</p>	<p>Document analysis; structured interviews with Al-Amal staff and target beneficiaries</p> <p>Document analysis; structured interviews with Al-Amal staff and representatives from the community and government</p>	<p>Increase in the number of cases detected; number and quality of interventions</p> <p>Evidence of increased coordination among CSOs working in the disability sector</p>
<p>Have any policy changes resulted from the grantee's advocacy work? Which ones?</p>	<p>Project reports and documents; key figures in the education and health sectors</p>	<p>Document analysis; structured interviews and focus groups</p>	<p>Changes in policies towards hearing impaired children or initiating new policies</p>

Exhibit II-2. Evaluation Matrix (continued)

Evaluation question	Information source	Method for collecting information	Indicators
Have the grants contributed to achieving Tamkeen's USAID and sub-IRS stated at the beginning of this SOW? If so, how was this achieved?	Project reports and documents; Al-Amal staff; Tamkeen staff; Community representatives	Document analysis; structured interviews and focus groups	Congruence between Tamkeen's expected results and projects immediate results
What could the CSO change in the next iteration of this grant to increase its impact in terms of the service provided, advocacy work, and achievement of the Immediate result and sub-results?	Project reports and documents; Al Amal staff; Tamkeen staff; community representatives	Document analysis; structured interviews	Suggestions and recommendations

SECTION III

Evaluation Results

As described in Section III, the evaluation sought to answer four key questions. Below, we present the findings of the study for each question and any associated sub-questions.

A. Impact on the Lives of the Hearing-Impaired

Question 1:

Did the Rafah and Khan Younis projects have a positive impact on the lives of the hearing- and speech-impaired?

In general, both projects had a positive impact on the lives of the hearing- and speech-impaired. More specifically, they helped to change community attitudes toward the hearing-impaired, increase the number of sign-language users, facilitate early detection of hearing impairment, and provide adequate, high-quality interventions among children. Each of these points is discussed in further detail below.

Sub-question 1a:

Did the projects help change community attitudes toward the hearing-impaired? If so, how?

The evaluation process included several structured interviews with beneficiaries in Rafah and Khan Younis; a focus group meeting with selected community members (teachers, headmasters, disability specialists, parents of deaf children, officials at the Rafah Education Directorate, doctors, members of community committees, and Al-Amal staff); and a short survey of 30 community members in Rafah and Khan Younis to collect baseline data on attitudes toward hearing-impaired children (see Annex A for survey questions and results).

Those consulted expressed positive attitudes toward the hearing-impaired. This was the case both in Rafah and Khan Younis, particularly among individuals involved in the projects in one way or another. Al-Amal seems to have succeeded in raising people's awareness of issues affecting the hearing-impaired. This is especially significant given that the public's attention is largely devoted to broad national issues related to the current Intifada and deteriorating economic conditions.¹

Al-Amal educated project participants and community members on issues affecting the disabled through meetings, training, publications, interactions with specialists, and visits to the center. These activities helped to equip participants with the knowledge and tools needed to interact more effectively with hearing-impaired children.

One kindergarten teacher commented: "I had a child with some hearing problems. I never knew how to deal with him. However, after attending the center workshops and training sessions, I was able to deal with him and his problems, and was able to help... In addition to that, I've taught what I learned from the center to other teachers at the kindergarten."

¹ No prior studies on community attitudes toward the hearing-impaired were available. This could be attributed to the difficulties of conducting research in a volatile political environment.

Through interviews with Al-Amal staff and community members, it became evident that project staff served as change agents in some way. They worked hard to deliver services while making a concerted effort to improve attitudes toward the disabled.

Sub-question 1b:

Did the projects advance integration of the hearing-impaired into the local community? If so, how?

The Rafah and Khan Younis projects indirectly helped to improve integration of the hearing-impaired into the local community through detection of new cases, professional treatment, specialized education for deaf children, and awareness-building.

In southern Gaza, 21,933 children were tested for potential hearing problems. Of those, 2,274 were referred to audiology clinics and 681 to hearing doctors or clinics for treatment. Another 102 received high-quality hearing aids.

As stated by those consulted for this study, training and workshops targeting parents, teachers, and other community members improved awareness of the needs of hearing-impaired children, resulting in wider acceptance and integration of deaf children in society.

During a focus-group meeting, a hearing-impaired teenager recounted his experiences at the school for the deaf run by Al-Amal and talked about his desire to pursue his education beyond the ninth grade. A sign-language teacher served as an interpreter for the audience, which included the head of the Khan Younis Education Directorate. Education officials agreed on the need to expand educational opportunities for deaf children, but said this required thorough planning and considerable resources.

In an individual interview, Inaam Hamdan, coordinator of the Ministry of Education integration program, said there were several examples of successful integration of hearing-impaired children in government schools. “Children with moderate hearing problems are able to live a normal life at school and home after getting hearing aids,” she stated. “But fully integrating hearing-impaired children in the schools is not possible now because of the limited resources we have. When we talk about integrating a hearing-impaired child at school, we are talking having a new culture that supports that. There is the need for teachers who know how to use sign language, school students who use the language, a curriculum that supports this, in addition to appropriate teaching and evaluation methods.”

Ms. Hamdan added that last year, several summer camps integrated special needs students, with encouraging results. “Hearing-impaired students were able to communicate effectively with other children,” she said. “We noticed that many students in the camps tried to use sign language to communicate with their friends and showed interest in learning it. This encourages us to work more on this issue.”

Sub-question 1c:

Did the projects contribute to an increase in sign-language users?

Al-Amal organized two training sessions to teach sign language in Rafah. The first attracted 40 participants, including hearing-impaired children, teachers, and clinic staff. The second targeted the children’s parents, drawing 50 participants.

Since the scope of the Rafah and Khan Younis projects was broad, involving many schools, kindergartens, and community groups, the level of awareness toward the needs of hearing-impaired children was high, generating considerable interest in sign language.

A member of the project staff indicated: “Since we started the projects, more people are asking us to organize training activities on how to use sign language.” She added that most of the requests have come from “those who live or interact with someone having a hearing problem.” The director of one of the project’s, Ibrahim Makawi, explained that “the center is getting several requests from the community to teach sign language, and we are now planning to have four training workshops on sign language in the next iteration of the project.”

Though this was not part of the projects’ stated objectives, the evaluation study indicates that grant-funded activities contributed to increasing the number of sign-language users.

Sub-question 1d:

Did the projects facilitate early detection of hearing impairment and provide adequate, high-quality interventions among children?

Evaluation results indicate that the Rafah and Khan Younis projects facilitated early detection of hearing impairment and provided adequate interventions for children with hearing or speech difficulties.

The Rafah project surveyed 4,470 kindergarten students² and 4,770 first-graders at elementary schools for possible hearing problems. Based on survey results, the project administered hearing tests for 1,845 children. Of those, 1,182 were referred to audiology clinics, 308 were referred to hearing doctors for treatment—with doctors reporting a 20-percent increase in patient visits, and 47 children received 52 high-quality hearing aids.

In Khan Younis, Al-Amal surveyed 6,325 kindergarten students² and 6,340 first-graders at elementary schools. Hearing tests were administered for 1,886 children. Of those, 1,092 were referred to audiology clinics, 373 were referred to hearing doctors for treatment, and 40 received 50 high-quality hearing aids.

Al-Amal also trained teachers on early detection of hearing impairments. Some 30 teachers received 40 hours of classroom training, followed by a three-day practical training program.

These figures clearly indicate that the Tamkeen-supported projects provided a much-needed service to children with hearing problems. Al-Amal staff and community members agreed that this element of the projects was particularly successful, so much so that they plan to continue and expand early detection efforts. Several schools have already contacted the center to request assistance in early diagnosis of hearing difficulties for the 2003-2004 academic year.

² This figure covers all kindergartens in the area (i.e. kindergartens officially recognized by the Ministry of Education and those awaiting recognition).

Sub-question 1e:

Did the projects promote networking and coordination among CSOs working in the disability sector? If so, how?

As the only CSO serving the hearing-impaired in southern Gaza, Al-Amal has built a solid reputation as a service provider. This has served it well in efforts to build relationships with like-minded organizations. CSOs working in the disability sector formed a national committee to advocate policies in favor of surveying all kindergarten students for potential hearing problems. However, the deteriorating political situation made it difficult for this committee to make significant headway.

Some community members said Al-Amal had successfully facilitated the integration of students with special needs in other areas. That being said, networking and coordination among CSOs working in the disability sector in Gaza remains weak overall.

B. Policy Changes

Question 2:

Did the grantee's advocacy efforts lead to any policy changes? If so, which ones?

Based on discussions with Al-Amal staff, including the center's manager, the director of the deaf school, and the project director, it was clear that they are well aware of the need to advocate policy changes to promote better integration of hearing-impaired children in the school system and society at large. They pointed out, however, that advocating policy changes is a major challenge for the following reasons:

- The unstable political situation has created urgent national priorities, making it difficult to capture the attention of the legislative and executive branches with regard to the interests of the disabled.
- Policy changes take time. The grants' limited timeframe is insufficient to produce meaningful results.
- Poverty, insecurity, and lack of resources create an environment in which new ideas are unlikely to prevail.

Despite these challenges, Al-Amal was able to advocate a significant policy change requiring hearing tests for every first-grader in the Gaza Strip. To make this happen, the center worked through a national committee specifically established to push for this policy.

Committee members include representatives from the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Social Affairs, representatives of the Palestinian media, the Jabalia Center for Deaf Rehabilitation, the National Center for Community Rehabilitation, Atfaluna Society for Deaf Children, Al Haq fi Al-Haya Society, and Al-Amal Center for Rehabilitation.

The policy has been adopted by the school system in the Gaza Strip. The success of Al-Amal's advocacy efforts can be attributed to a number of internal and external factors:

- There is a real need for early detection of hearing problems in Palestinian communities.
- Al-Amal produced impressive results in two of the most crowded areas of Gaza—Rafah and Khan Younis, demonstrating the feasibility of early detection programs and providing a model for replication to other areas.
- Al-Amal helped to build support for the policy through outreach to a wide range of stakeholders and meetings with relevant officials.
- The center contributed to educating local community members, including parents, teachers, and school counselors, through meetings, workshops, and publications that helped build support for the policy at the grassroots level.
- Al-Amal devoted considerable administrative and financial resources to promote adoption of the policy.
- The center carried out advocacy work with a great deal of transparency, building on its solid relationships with NGOs and government bodies to generate support for the policy.
- Al-Amal staff established a council for the parents of deaf children to assist with lobbying efforts. The council submitted letters of appeal in support of the policy to the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Palestinian National Authority, and UNRWA.

C. Achievement of Sub-IRs

Question 3:

Did the grants contribute to achieving the sub-IRs stated in the scope of work? If so, how?

When asked this question, Al-Amal Director Darwish Abu Sharekh commented: “The answer to this question is not easy, as it is being raised during a very difficult time for the Palestinian people who struggle for their freedom and their right to live a normal life.”

To some extent, the center has advanced Tamkeen objectives aimed at increasing public participation in democracy and governance. First, the Rafah and Khan Younis projects helped to assert and enhance the center’s role in the local community. This relates to sub-IR 3.1.2, “CSOs effectively aggregate and articulate citizen issues.”

Second, the projects helped the center respond to evolving local needs in a creative way. Under the grants, Al-Amal carried out several training activities that were not planned in the original grant proposal. These initiatives relate to sub-IR 3.1.2, “CSOs effectively aggregate and articulate citizen issues” and sub-IR 3.1.3, “CSOs effectively disseminate information to citizens on public issues.”

Third, the grants enabled the center to organize meetings on hearing problems and children’s rights for more than 1,320 participants, including members of the Palestinian Legislative Council, educators, decision makers, and others. These relate to both sub-IR 3.1.2 and sub-IR

3.1.3. The meetings generated public dialogue on legal and social issues concerning the hearing-impaired. This is also supported by the center’s publications on the needs and rights of the disabled.

Finally, the two projects indirectly helped to promote the right of hearing-impaired children to quality health services. Providing such services to those who need them helps to improve their general well-being, thus reducing their sense of marginalization and strengthening their participation in civil society. This relates to IR 3.1, “increased participation of CSOs in public decision making and government oversight.”

It is worth noting that the grants were awarded with a view to combining service delivery with democracy and governance activities, which was achieved to a certain degree.

D. Suggested Improvements for Follow-on Grant

Question 4:

What could the CSO change in the next iteration of this grant to increase impact in terms of services provided, advocacy work, and results achieved?

Al-Amal staff and community members offered several recommendations to increase the impact of follow-on activities:

- Continue supporting project activities such as screening tests and training
- Provide additional tools for use in the field (e.g. a car fully equipped with all the tools required for screening tests)
- Allocate more time and funds for grant-funded activities
- Expand project activities to include more beneficiaries and new targeted areas
- Plan follow-up activities in advance for all project components
- Support networking with other NGOs and government bodies to leverage resources and maximize results
- Plan outreach activities to include more decision makers

SECTION IV

Conclusion and Recommendations

Al-Amal successfully implemented the Rafah and Khan Younis projects in a volatile environment marked by political instability, lack of security, and worsening economic conditions. Tamkeen commissioned this evaluation study to review the impact of the two grant-funded initiatives and to help guide future activities based on lessons learned from these experiences.

Starting in September 2003, the evaluator conducted several visits to the center and used various data collection methods, such as surveys, interviews, focus groups, and document analysis. The evaluator did not encounter any major obstacles in completing the study besides the daily struggle to live and work in Gaza despite severe restrictions on movement, curfews, closures, and violence.

A. Key Success Factors

Based on evaluation results, the following strengths were instrumental to the projects' success:

- Despite being a small NGO, Al-Amal successfully implemented the Rafah and Khan Younis projects—the largest initiatives managed by the center.
- The number of beneficiaries impacted by project activities exceeded initial targets. In addition, the center designed and implemented activities that were not originally planned, demonstrating flexibility and creativity in responding to community needs as they arose. In doing so, the center made sound use of Tamkeen-allocated resources to provide a broad range of quality services.
- Center staff demonstrated a great deal of professionalism, commitment, and enthusiasm to the projects, ensuring objectives were met despite a highly unstable political environment.
- Al-Amal staff were well-informed about hearing-impaired issues, which enabled them to effectively respond to local needs and to gain the respect of the communities where they worked.
- To a certain extent, the projects effectively combined service delivery with democracy and governance activities.
- The center exhibited a great deal of transparency throughout project implementation, which helped to secure local support and ensure the participation of community stakeholders.
- Tamkeen played an instrumental supportive role in all phases of the projects, from planning to implementation. Tamkeen coordinators in Gaza skillfully supervised and guided grant-funded activities.

B. Recommendations

Al-Amal and Tamkeen should consider the following recommendations to strengthen the center's role as a service provider and maximize the impact of follow-on activities:

- Both the Rafah and Khan Younis projects were highly successful, producing a large return on Tamkeen's investment. It is important to continue supporting such activities with a view to helping the center incorporate this type of work in its regular operations. For this to happen, more funds and time are needed. Five- to ten-year projects with continuous evaluation and feedback would help expand Al-Amal's role as a service provider in southern Gaza.
- Future iterations of the project should be expanded to reach more beneficiaries and other areas of Gaza as there is a real need for such services. At a minimum, successful activities should be replicated to marginalized areas of Gaza.
- Future grant proposals should clearly specify Tamkeen objectives related to democracy and governance.
- To be successful, democracy and governance initiatives require an enabling environment. Producing concrete, sustainable results within one or two years is unrealistic, particularly within the current climate of poverty, uncertainty, and violence. Democracy and governance objectives should be clearly delineated in long-term grant proposals. Indeed, setting clear objectives is key to guiding activities toward desired results.
- Follow-up activities should be planned and budgeted for in advance for all project components. The center should establish a unit dedicated to follow-up work. This would in turn help to continually improve the quality of its services.
- The professionalism of Al-Amal staff is vital to the success of any initiative. The center should therefore invest in continuous professional training, encouraging staff to attend workshops, participate in conferences, and visit other organizations providing similar services.
- Al-Amal should work harder to network with other NGOs and government entities in the West Bank and Gaza to help expand services and responsiveness to local community needs.
- Al-Amal should make a concerted effort to encourage the participation of more decision makers in the center's activities in order to promote policy changes in favor of the hearing-impaired.
- Al-Amal should consider establishing a small research unit to help expand the body of knowledge on issues affecting the hearing-impaired. Research should be linked to the center's development activities. A study on local community attitudes toward the hearing-impaired would be a good starting point.
- The location of the center near a particularly dangerous area of Rafah affects the safety of its staff and disrupts their work. Moving to another location would be

preferable. In addition, the center building is inadequate. Moving to a new building with modern facilities would be beneficial in the long run.

ANNEX A

Survey of Community Attitudes Toward Hearing-Impaired Children

A. Survey Questions

Area: Rafah Khan Younis

Gender: Male Female

Age: _____

Employer: _____

Occupation: _____

Statement	I don't agree at all	I don't agree	I don't know	I agree	I agree to a large extent
Hearing-impaired children are not a problem to society.					
Hearing-impaired children are not less intelligent than other kids.					
Hearing-impaired children have rights like other children.					
Hearing-impaired children can contribute to society.					
Hearing-impaired children can express themselves.					
Hearing-impaired children can express their needs.					
Hearing-impaired children have the right to continue their studies.					
It is important to integrate hearing-impaired children into society.					
Integration of the hearing-impaired is not difficult.					
Hearing-impaired children need special care.					
Learning sign language is important to all community members.					

Do you suggest incorporating early inspection of hearing problems in the school system?

Yes No

If yes, explain how: _____

How do you evaluate Al-Amal's approach to addressing hearing problems in southern Gaza?
What are the positives, negatives?

What are your suggestions for improving services to the hearing-impaired in southern Gaza?

Additional comments on the two projects:

B. Survey Results

Statement	N	Max	Min	Mean	SD
Hearing-impaired children are not a problem to society.	30	2	5	4.17	0.91
Hearing-impaired children are not less intelligent than other kids.	27	2	5	4.00	1.00
Hearing-impaired children have rights like other children.	29	4	5	4.90	0.31
Hearing-impaired children can contribute to society.	30	4	5	4.67	0.48
Hearing-impaired children can express themselves.	30	4	5	4.77	0.43
Hearing-impaired children can express their needs.	30	4	5	4.70	0.47
Hearing-impaired children have the right to continue their studies.	29	2	5	4.07	0.75
It is important to integrate hearing-impaired children into society.	30	2	4	1.50	0.86
Integration of the hearing-impaired is not difficult.	29	1	4	2.21	0.98
Hearing-impaired children need special care.	30	1	4	2.20	0.92
Learning sign language is important to all community members.	29	1	3	1.86	0.64
Total	23	38	47	43.00	2.37

The mean total score was 43 out of 60, which means a relative weight of 71 percent. This indicates a general positive attitude toward the hearing-impaired.

ANNEX B

Individuals and Documents Consulted

A. Individuals Consulted

As part of this impact assessment, the evaluator consulted the following individuals through interviews, focus group discussions, or surveys:¹

- Darwish Abu Sharekh, director of Al-Amal Rehabilitation Center
- Suha Abu Sloum, manager of the School for the Deaf
- Dr. Ibrahim Makawi, project director
- Said Abu Harb, head of the Rafah Education Directorate
- Abd Al-Majeed Yusef, acting head of the Rafah Education Directorate
- Inaam Hamdan, coordinator of the Ministry of Education Integration Program
- Asharf Abd Al-Aziz, chair of the Department for Educational Supervision at the Ministry of Education
- Jawad Abu Harb, Tamkeen civil society specialist and project coordinator
- Nisreen Al-Najjar, Tamkeen civil society specialist and project coordinator
- Mahmoud Housni, technical supervisor at Al-Haq center
- Saher Ibrahim, headmaster of government school in Khan Younis
- Samia Mohammed, headmaster of Sindibad kindergarten in Khan Younis
- Foud Abu Dubaa, acting headmaster of UNRWA school
- Tagreed lafi, kindergarten headmaster
- Zainab Salem, head nurse at Al-Shouka clinic
- Saher Al-Hems, educator at Tel Al-Sultan Cultural Center
- Najwan Al Nator, educator at Al Rasheed kindergarten
- Ahmad Abu Ziad, school teacher
- Fatema Zuarub, school teacher at Al-Amal center
- Hanaa Abu-Nahla, hearing specialist at Al-Amal center
- Huda Salwma, hearing specialist at Al-Amal center
- Asraf Ibrahim, hearing specialist at Atfaluna Al-Sum
- Dalal Qanan, media specialist at Al-Amal center
- Fayza Marzooq, housewife in Rafah
- Feryal Mohammed, housewife in Rafah
- Hanan Zaloom, mother of a hearing-impaired child
- Buthina Ouda, mother of two hearing-impaired children
- Ibrahim Abu Amra, deaf teenager at Al-Amal center
- Hazem Zuarub, deaf teenager at Al-Amal center
- Gada Zuarub, deaf teenager at Al-Amal center

¹ Attempts were made to consult decision makers in the Palestinian Legislative Council. However, the political and security situation made it difficult to meet with them.

B. Documents Reviewed

The evaluator analyzed the following documents:

- Final reports for the Rafah and Khan Younis projects
- Grant applications for both projects
- Grant agreements for both projects
- Selected progress reports
- All training and educational materials distributed to workshop participants under both projects
- Tamkeen scope of work for the evaluation study
- Al-Amal final report for 2002