The Grand Challenge of Coming of Age:

An International Comparative Analysis of the Transition Needs of Adolescents and Youth with an Intellectual Disability and Autism in the USA and “Arab Countries” with a Focus on Stakeholder Agency, Awareness Raising and International Cooperation
Highlight the Palestinian Experience @ Palestinian Happy Child Centre
Socio-Economic Reality

- More than half of the Palestinian population (53.3%) is under 18 years old.
- 49% of them are female.
- 51% of them are male.
- Around 12% of children (under 18 years old) live with unemployed heads of households.
Children with Special Needs

- Movement disorders are the most commonly reported disabilities for children (23%) followed by mental (15%), speech (10%), multiple (10%) and sight (9.5%) disabilities.
- 60% of the disabilities among children are caused by congenital factors.
- 22% of the disabled children between the ages of (10-17 years old) were reported to be illiterate. While only 4% of overall child population (10-17 years old) were illiterate.

The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) 1997
Challenges

- Poverty
- The Wall
- Checkpoints
- Internal Fighting
West Bank Closures
Internal Fighting
Palestinian Children need Protection
Palestinian Children in Pictures
I'd give half of my life to someone who makes a crying child smile.

Tawfiq Zayad
The Palestinian Happy Child Centre (PHCC) was established in 1994 as a grass roots NGO by a group of dedicated professionals and volunteers.
Mission

It’s mission is to promote the welfare and well being of young children with special needs in Palestine.
Scope of Work

PHCC

Child

School & Community

Family & Parents
PHCC's Organizational Structure

Board of Directors

- Director
- Deputy Director & Program Manager
- Senior Pediatrician
- Head Of Department
- Financial Auditor
- Accountant
- Office Manager

Happy Child Project

- Epilepsy Project
- Screening & Clinical Care
- Child's Rights
- Hope Project
- Psychosocial Intervention
- Accident Prevention
- Applied Research - Evidence Based Studies
- Capacity Building & Training
Culturally Sensitive Authentic Model!
Screening & Child Development Project

Physiotherapy

Occupational Therapy & Special Education

Cochlear Implant

Psychosocial Intervention & Behavioral therapy
Autism Spectrum Disorder
“ASD”

Multidisciplinary, Comprehensive Approach
Since its establishment, PHCC has provided services to 36,800 children throughout the West Bank & Jerusalem.

- Villages: 55%
- Cities: 29%
- Refugee Camps: 16%

22% from Jerusalem
PHCC Children’s Integration into Regular KGs & Schools
2002-2011
Palestinian Ministry of Health
New Policy

- Early Detection of Child Developmental Disorder, including Autism Spectrum Disorder “ASD”
- October 1st the Palestinian MOH started a pilot screening project for early detection of developmental disorders through the immunization program!
Outline

- Intellectual Disability and Autism described as a Grand Challenge in Global Mental Health:
  - Developmental disability in the USA
    - 1 in 6 children
  - Autism in the USA:
    - 1 in 88 children
    - 1 in 54 boys
    - 1 in 254 girls
Deficit in research, planning and provisions for adolescents and adults with intellectual disabilities

- Approximately 50,000 adolescents with autism will turn 18 in 2012
- “Compared with youth with other disabilities, young adults with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) face a disproportionately difficult time navigating work and educational opportunities after high school.” (Paul Shattuck, University of Washington)
- Lifespan approach to intellectual disability and autism an imperative
Lifespan approach to intellectual disability and autism an imperative
Objectives:
International comparative analysis of transition needs of adolescents and young adults with an intellectual disability and autism in the USA, Palestine, UAE and Qatar.
Potential Research Topics

- Lifespan goals of stakeholders
- Attitudes towards intellectual disability and autism within each group
- Concerns of all stakeholders
- Needs to transition from child based services to needs of adolescence and adulthood
- Best practices
- Local initiatives which enable community and family collaboration and participatory engagement to organize community based lifespan solutions