

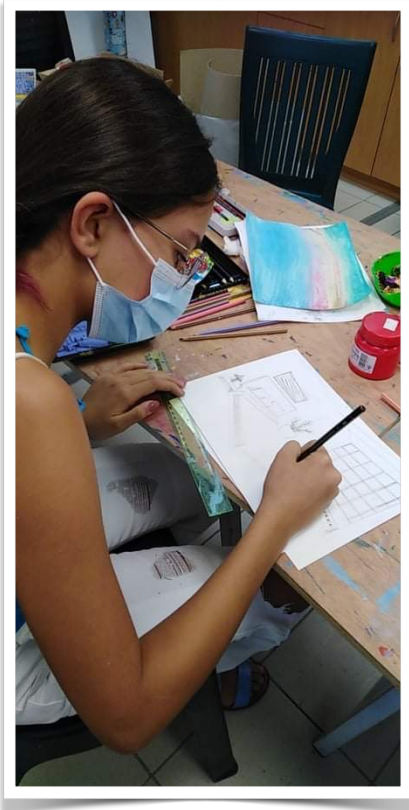
# Qesati Report



# My Story Project

## Questi

This project was launched during the Corona pandemic, as the idea came up with the intention to let the children learn and make use of time while they're staying at home during the quarantine. My Story project aims to teach children how to write a short story and draw the events of this story. In the first months, most of the meetings with the children were through Zoom. The project started with 15 participants from different areas of Bethlehem governorate as well as the neighboring governorate.



After a few months, some children withdrew, and the number decreased to 10 because of the differences in skills and capabilities. Some children preferred to spend their time on other things, and this is understandable because not all children have the same talents and abilities.

The content of the stories focused on writing stories about the time of corona pandemic and how the children experienced this period while being home quarantined. The children wrote stories about their experiences and while some

stories were fictional, they all shared the same content.

After completing the writing of the stories, all these stories were sent to a designer in order to transform the writing and the stories into a small book which eventually would be the final product of this project.

Each session was an hour and a half on the Zoom app, and there were some individual classes with the children. Also, there was a need for traditional classes.

The writing of the stories was supervised by Tutor Osama Awwad and the drawings were supervised by Dalia Murra, and Issa Majed Rishmawi proofread the stories.



### **Osama's experience**

My experience was somewhat different at the Diyar Theater and Academy this time. All face-to-face meetings turned into remote meetings through Zoom, which gave us a new opportunity to learn new

techniques about sharing ideas and communicating them to children. Explanation methods for children is just different on Zoom, as one needs to make more effort to keep the children engaged. It's almost impossible to receive the children's attention the whole time.



There were some problems with the internet connection during the corona pandemic period. Some children missed the classes, which created a challenge to transfer the image to them later. Other children, due to poor internet connection, couldn't turn on the camera, and so I couldn't know if they were behind the screen or not the whole time.



At the beginning of the project, there were ice breaking exercises to introduce the children to each other. Afterwards, the children received the required material through exercises and tryouts. This created a challenge for them and encouraged them to participate in the classes, especially the ones who were quiet most of the time. Occasionally, there was an opportunity for parents to intervene to assist, especially if we were giving them exercises that they had to hand over in the next class.

Writing stories needs the talent to think and create events. In the beginning, it was difficult for some children to write, but after many exercises, they all seemed to interact and participate, as stories were written in stages and drawings as well were drawn .in different stages

Later, we met the children face-to-face, but every child at a different time so that we could complete the writing and finish the stories. We welcomed the children separately, while remaining compliant with public health and safety requirements.

### **The experience of Ms. Dalia Murra**

From my first online experience with children in My Story project, I did not expect to reach such results through online trainings at Zoom, which requires creativity in the art of drawing for children that accompanies the written word. Expression needs word and image.



Some of the difficulties I faced while giving the training online:

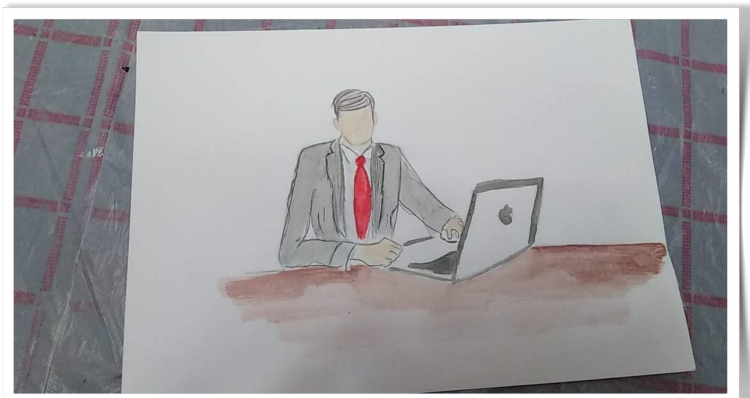
- General problems with internet connection, in which students could not attend properly, or other problems such as no sound or image at the call, or leaving the meeting and coming back later.

- Drawing, in particular, needs practical training on the ground, in order to apply some techniques.
- The online sessions also make the learning process less cooperative, less motivating and more challenging, especially in regards to the drawing aspect.

Children do not understand words written with specific symbols on paper, that's why they are fascinated by browsing story books full of colors and graphics.

The plan that I worked on was about exposing the children's hidden abilities of drawing, even in a simple way, using the geometric perspective, correct proportions, and trying to work on showing expressions, building characters, and showing texture, according to the abilities of each child separately.

In the beginning, children tried to draw in any way possible until they discovered their own drawing technique, so several art schools were used by the participants, such as the abstract school, the expressionist school, and the realism school. All stories were completely handmade.



Pastel colors, gouache colors, acrylic colors, watercolors, soap colors, flowmaster colors, wooden colors were all used in an attempt to create the desired effects according to the vision of

each child, and this helped them discover the types of colors and how to use them.

It is worth mentioning that drawing is one of the children's performance skills, through which the child expresses his internal struggles. The child expresses his feelings through drawing, and at the same time drawing is considered one of the fun activities for children.

One of our objectives was to give the space for children to let off steam by drawing using specific strategies to let them express things that they cannot communicate to us and help them get rid of the pressures and challenges they're facing, especially because of the Corona pandemic.

As a team consisting of Osama, the children and I, we enjoyed the spirit of teamwork and started the project with ice breaking games, meaningful criticism, sharing ideas, considering different opinions on several topics and stimulating the children's imagination, which helped to develop and refine the children's different skills and progress their abilities level.

Also, one of the most important factors of success was the good communication among the team of My Story project. We were always ready for any assistance or inquiry outside the previously specified times for the zoom meetings.





What distinguished My Story 2020 project from others was the simulation of the story in reality, for example, a child among the participants got infected with the Corona virus. The Corona pandemic is like a test from nature, and through the My Story program, we are working to raise awareness regarding the coronavirus, and draw attention to precautions and warnings.

Many thanks to Mr. Osama Awwad for sharing his experience with the Zoom application, as he was our guide and trainer on this program, especially after we faced many difficulties at the beginning.

The main goal of documenting this journey of pandemic stories is to share it with others in order to give them hope for a cure, to reassure them that they are not the only ones, and to advise about taking appropriate precautions to reduce chances of being infected or spreading the virus.

### **The experience of the student Jocelyn Khair**

My Story program is an online workshop in which we used to take classes on Zoom to learn more about drawing and story writing. My experience, though it was online because of the situation and home quarantine, was a great one. I got to know new friends and I learned how to write stories in a different way but at the same time they were understandable and appropriate for all ages. I also learned how to express something in drawing.





Although we faced difficulties with communication with each other, whether it was from technical problems or social problems, but thank God, every one of us wrote his story and drew it. It was an amazing project that we could consider an achievement for the year 2020.

### **The experience of the student Rita**

During my break from school homework and social responsibilities due to the Corona virus all over the world, I tried to find a way to nurture and grow my talent and spend time on something useful.



I found an announcement about My Story workshop to be held on Zoom, because the Ministry of Health prevented face-to-face meetings due to the virus. Despite all that, Mr. Osama was an expert in organizing the sequence of the meetings. He started

teaching us how to write a story and introducing us to the basics of the story, the narration, the characters, etc. I also learned with Ms. Dalia about the types of colors and how to combine them.

I, Rita, can say that I learned a lot from these meetings, and I completed writing my story titled "The Love Box". I enjoyed a lot and I hope I'll have the opportunity to participate at another new workshop in order to develop my knowledge and improve my writing and drawing skills.

Osama Awwad  
Diyar Theater



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