



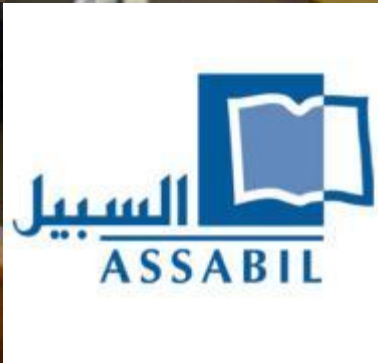
Arab Children's Literature Regional Program

Final Report: September 14, 2010 through June 30, 2011

Country: Lebanon

Name of Host Institution: ASSABIL, Friends of Public Libraries Association

Partner Organization: IQRA' Association



ANNA LINDH FOUNDATION



EUROMED



A program supported by the Anna Lindh Foundation and financed by SIDA.

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ASSABIL, Friends of Public Libraries Association

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The ALF Program for the Promotion of Children’s Literature in Lebanon

ASSABIL Friends of Public Libraries Association was contracted by the Anna Lindh Foundation on July 28, 2010 to prepare, coordinate, and implement the foundation’s program to promote Arabic children’s literature in Lebanon.

This final activity report highlights what ASSABIL and its partner institution, the IQRA’ Association, have achieved in the scope of this program in the period between September 14th, the date of the approval of our activity agendas and June 30th, 2011 in the following areas:

- Coordination and Supervision
- Training
- Activities
- Equipment and Hardware
- Books and Publications

The report is completed by the mid-term narrative report covering in detail all activities implemented between September 14 and December 31, 2011.



Project Strategy and Objectives

The main objective of the National Work Plan in Lebanon is to promote reading and increase the number of young readers. Our goal is to instill in the next generation a love of reading that will endure throughout their lives.

Reading is so important. It helps children develop vital language skills, introduces them to new worlds and different points of view, and encourages debate and critical thinking. Reading is a tool that can be used to learn about people and places from other parts of the world and to improve understanding of and concern for humanity. Reading stories that are set in other places and time periods can give children a deeper understanding and acceptance of others through identification with individual characters and their worlds and cultures.

It is for those and many other reasons that we consider reading to be crucial not only for the personal development of each one of us, but also for the development of society as a whole.

Public libraries and public schools throughout the country as well as the ASSABIL Resource and Training Center serve as a platform through which we introduce many children, teenagers, parents, and adults to the world of stories and imagination and promote Arabic children's literature.

The primary objectives of the National Work Plan are as follows:

- **Develop a love of reading and of books** among children of all ages in all regions of Lebanon.
- **Encourage and train professionals** working with children to become active promoters of "reading for pleasure" and "love of books."
- **Change the widespread negative perception of reading and books** into one that views reading and books as a pleasant, playful, creative, and stimulating activity that is important for everybody's personal development and the development of society as a whole.
- **Encourage the exchange of ideas, reflection, and debate** among professionals working in the field on both a local and regional level.
- **Promote the production of high quality children's books** for young people in Arabic.

Target Groups

In accordance with the main strategy and project goals, the work plan targets primarily **girls and boys as well as teenagers** who benefit directly from a variety of reading promotion activities in public libraries and public schools throughout the country. The second target group that we are addressing is **professionals working directly with children and teenagers** that have the potential to encourage among them a love of reading. Finally, the program targets **professionals who are involved throughout the chain of production of books**: authors, illustrators, publishers, editors, distributors, booksellers, and staff at the ministries and in other institutions. Everyone working on the production and distribution of Arabic children's literature will be invited to participate in the development of debate and exchange activities on different topics related to Arabic children and youth literature at the ASSABIL Resource and Training Center.

Implementing Partner Institutions

The program is implemented in Lebanon by two associations: ASSABIL, Friends of Public Libraries Association and the IQRA' Association. Both associations were involved in previous phases of the program; their activities in 2010 - 2011 are a continuation of the previous programs.

ASSABIL, Friends of Public Libraries Association

ASSABIL is a non-governmental association founded in 1997 to establish and promote public libraries in Lebanon that are free and open to all. ASSABIL believes that public libraries play an important role in the development of individuals and societies. Free and unlimited access to information is an essential prerequisite for the development of a well-informed citizenry and democratic society. Public libraries are also important public spaces: places where everyone is welcome and where people from different socioeconomic, religious, and political backgrounds can meet one another and exchange ideas.

What ASSABIL does

- We establish and manage Beirut's Municipal Public Libraries (Bachoura: 2000; Geitawi: 2004; Monnot: 2008; Tariq el-Jdideh: expected opening 2012).
- We established and operate two mobile libraries in Beirut and its suburbs.
- We coordinate and support a network of public libraries throughout Lebanon.
- We organize activities for people of all ages.
- We manage a Resource and Training Center.
- We provide consultancy services to those working in libraries and to individuals and associations interested in establishing new libraries.
- We publish materials related to the establishment and management of public libraries.

IQRA' Association

IQRA' Association is a non-profit, non-sectarian, non-political association founded in 1994 and officially established in 1998 holding the registration number 29/AD, dated February 16, 1998. The association is divided into an Executive Board, a General Assembly, and five committees: Schools, Activities, Culture, Media, and Finance. IQRA' Association's mission is to reinforce and encourage a lifetime reading habit among underprivileged Lebanese children as well as to raise awareness of the importance of reading as a route to self improvement.

Books stir the senses, inspire the imagination, and spark a love of reading that can last a lifetime thus bringing hope, joy, vision, and promoting literacy.

IQRA's Objectives

- Reach out to elementary public school students in all areas of Lebanon.
- Equip classrooms with class libraries containing books in Arabic and English/French.
- Foster interest in literature, books, and reading for fun.
- Cooperate with concerned local and international bodies to raise public awareness of the importance of reading.
- Encourage creativity and improve reading and writing skills.

1 Coordination and Supervision of National Activities

ASSABIL as the Host Institution of the program in Lebanon was responsible for the coordination and supervision of the activities detailed in the National Work Plan.

For this task, a team of 3 coordinators, with responsibilities for the general coordination, activity coordination and network coordination respectively, worked together with the ASSABIL and Iqra' teams, the many partner libraries and other participating institutions and individuals.

Partner Institutions and Cooperation with local stakeholders

While, IQRA' Association is the only 'official' partner institution in the program, ASSABIL was actually partnering with a number of institutions including **public libraries all over Lebanon, public schools, publishing houses, universities, cultural centers, as well as different municipalities and ministries.** In general, we were able to involve as many partners as initially planned in our work agendas. While the planned cooperation with Asala Publishing for the Arabic Book Fair, failed, we were nevertheless able to have an information and activity booth at the Fair in December 2010. In addition, new cooperation opportunities came up with other institutions such as the Goethe Institute, with whom the Resource Center was organizing joint activities for professionals in February, March and April 2011; the Taoun Association for whom ASSABIL is establishing a specific training program for the public libraries in Palestinian Camps in Lebanon.

Our approach to this task was very participatory, aiming to integrate as many stakeholders as possible in the brainstorming, preparation, and implementation of the different activities, thereby paying attention of not imposing only our own ideas, methods and strategies, but to leave as much space as possible for partners and participants in the program to contribute with their know-how, experience, and way of doing things.

Over the course of the project – during the preparation and the implementation phases – several meetings took place between the program coordinators contracted by ASSABIL to implement the program and representatives from these different partners in the program. Continuous follow-up and updating on each others activities was assured through very regular e-mail and phone contacts.

Informing about the program and its progress

As the Host Institution, ASSABIL's tasks included the regular information of all stakeholders on the ongoing program activities. To that aim, ASSABIL regularly announced upcoming activities in all participating partner libraries on posters and flyers displayed in the libraries; some particular activities are also advertised on special posters that are distributed in the communities (e.g. storytelling). Formal and informal partner institutions (e.g. Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Education, public libraries, publishing houses, Cultural Centers etc.) have been kept informed on the progress and implementation of the activities that concerned them in particular in a series of coordination meetings, through a newsletter that was sent out to our mailing list in January 2011, and the forwarding of information mails regarding the regional activities not only to local partner institutions but also to newspapers and magazines.

2 Training

The training of professionals was a major component of the work plan. Training for professionals is one of the pillars in the work of ASSABIL and IQRA' Associations in our efforts to provide our projects with long-lasting effects.

The goal of the trainings implemented in the scope of this project was to ensure that librarians, teachers, and social workers active in the field of reading promotion in Lebanon are equipped with the necessary skills and methods as well as general knowledge of children's literature and reading that will allow them to encourage a love of reading among children. In this way, we hope to change how children perceive books that are now often associated only with painful learning, homework, and tests.



Trainings implemented in the scope of this program:

Training/Trainers	Date Place	Implementing Institution	Number of Participants Profiles of Participants	Reporting Period
2A Reading Strategies for Reading in Small groups				
Part 1: Mrs. Eviouloua K. El Assad (Sessions 1, 2, 3)	25,26 Sept., 2010 Bikfaya	Iqra' Association	25 Reading Experts	Mid-Term Report
Mrs. Leila Kansso Nasser el-Din (Session 4)	15 Oct., 2011 Iqra' Office		15 Reading Experts	
Part 2: Mrs. Joumana Behlok, Ms. Zoubeida Sobeh (3 sessions)	3 days at each school		14 School Teachers	
Part 3: Follow-up training for the summer camp (3 sessions)	During Summer Camp		34 reading experts	Final report
2.B Arabic Children's Literature for Librarians				
Part 1: Mrs. Hala Bizri (Session 1), Mrs. Joumana Behlok (Session 2) Mr. Karim Dakroub (Session 3)	24-28 Jan., 2011 Broumana	ASSABIL	16 Librarians	Final Report
Part 2: Mrs. Cosette Azzi	20 April, 2011 Monnot, Beirut		7 Librarians	
2.C Training of Trainers for Ministry of Education				
Mrs. Joumana Behlok (3 sessions)	13, 20 Jan. 2011 28 Feb. 2011	ASSABIL	14 Pedagogic Trainers MEHE	Final Report
2. D Capacity Building for Network Libraries				
Part 1: Activity Programming in a Network: Mrs. Michele Warde-Fawaz, Mr. Ali Sabbagh	4 Oct., 2011 Bachoura, Beirut	ASSABIL	25 Librarians	Mid-Term Report
Part 2: Marketing of Public Libraries and Books: Mr. Michel Choureiri and Ms. Cosette Azzi	20 Dec. 2011 Monnot, Beirut		10 Librarians	Mid-Term Report
Part 3: Community Outreach, Mrs. Hala Makarem	28 Feb., 2011 Geitawi, Beirut		9 Librarians	Final Report
Part 4: Final Wrap-Up	4 April 2011		25 Librarians	Final Report
10 Trainings in 18 Training Sessions	19 Training Days		205 Participants	

2.A Reading Strategies for Reading in Small Groups Implemented by: IQRA' Association

The overall objective of IQRA's program was to install dynamic class libraries so that elementary students at public schools in underprivileged communities all around Lebanon will be encouraged to read with joy. The association was targeting first, second, third, and fourth grade students from three public schools: Laylaki Public School, Al Wata Public School, and Bekaa Elementary School

*Reading for kids and **Reading strategies for reading in small groups has proven to be effective in changing children's attitudes** and reading abilities. It encourages the development of knowledge, skills, and values and a love of reading. Being part of the 'Read to succeed' project demands an acquisition of knowledge, skills, and competencies through training on practical skills and knowledge that relate to our techniques and goals.*

This training implemented by IQRA' was divided into three parts:

Part 1: Directed to the reading experts who were working with children in small groups on reading strategies.

Part 2: Directed to school staff member who are considered to be the main partners whose involvement is essential to ensure the sustainability of the project.

Part 3: In Spring 2011, a continuation of this training was organized by Iqra' Association in preparation of the Summer Camp for illiterate children of 4 public schools that took place in June 2011. In the scope of this project Iqra' added a third session in the form of a continuous follow-up training for reading experts and school teachers during the summer camp

Training Part 1:

General Objective: acquisition of knowledge, skills, and competencies through training on practical skills and knowledge that relate to our techniques and goals.



- Two intensive training days, conducted in three training sessions took place on September 25 and 26, **2010**.
- Place : le Couvent des soeurs Antonines - Bekfaya.
- Trainer: **Mrs. Evienoula K. El Assad**, M.A (Educational Psychologist).
- Participants: **25 reading experts** who will be working with children in small groups to develop reading strategies.

See mid-term report for a detailed account of this training.

Training Part 2:

- Place: At each of the three schools.
- Trainer: Mrs Joumana Behlok and Ms. Zoubeida Sobeh.
- Participants: School staff (Teachers and Librarians).



IQRA' organized three training sessions at the Al Wata Al Musaytbe Public School, the Laylaki Public School, and also at the Hay Al Omariye Public School using almost a training kit that was almost identical to the one used for Training Part 1. While Iqra's trainers faced some difficulties in the first training sessions in fall (see mid-term report for a more detailed account), the second and the third training sessions were more successful; the trainer was capable to build a positive environment and to communicate easily through showing the teachers our understanding of their problems and our willingness to create solutions through our sessions.

Training Part 3:

- Place: 4 schools where the summer camp was implemented:
 - Hay Al Omariye public school (Beccaa)
 - Laylaki Public School (Mount Lebanon)
 - Al Nour Public School (Tripoli)
 - Ras Beirut Pulic School Al Oula (Beirut)
- Trainer: Mrs. Maysa Boubes - Balanced Literacy Coach.
- Participants: 35 reading experts and school teachers

To prepare the Iqra' summer camp for illiterate children, Iqra' Association organized a 4 days training in May 2011 for 36 participants. Reading experts and public schools teachers were trained on implementing the "Balanced literacy program" with Mrs. Maysa Boubes. Mrs. Boubes had received her training from Colombia University of New York (Teacher's college) and implemented this program herself as a grade one teacher for 6 years at the American Community School.

In the scope of the Anna Lindh Program for the promotion of Arabic children's literature Iqra organized a follow-up training in the form of 3 training sessions held directly at the schools during the summer camp (1 for Beirut and Mount Lebanon schools, 1 in Beccaa, and 1 in Tripoli). These sessions were follow up sessions, during which the trainer supervised the implementation of the program, discussed the challenges faced by the teachers and experts, and reviewed possible mini lessons to be presented during the reading and writing workshops.

The follow up training sessions were very helpful, as they provided the venue for teachers to refresh their theoretical understanding after trying to apply the newly acquired skills.

2.B Arabic Children's Literature for Librarians

Implemented by: [ASSABIL](#)

Training Part 1:

A 5 day intensive training took place for 16 participants at the Crillon Hotel in Broumana, Mount Lebanon.

The general objectives of the training were the following:

- Improve general knowledge of librarians about Arabic children's literature.
- Provide librarians with tools and skills to use Arabic children's literature to transmit basic competences and values to children.
- Provide librarians with practical tools and skills to implement playful storytelling activities at their libraries.

The training was given by 3 different Trainers in three main training sessions:

Session 1:

The first session of this 5 day training was given by Mrs. Hala Bizri and focused on the topic:

Arabic Children's literature:

The image of the child in story characters

The general objectives of this session were for the librarians to:

- Familiarize with Arabic children's literature in particular with Lebanese publications
- Develop a critical view on picture books for children.

During the training, Mrs. Bizri first presented some picture books that have become 'classics' and introduced the world of Lebanese publishing houses and the specificities of each one of them. In a second step discussions focused on the quality of the layout, the edition and the printing of the picture books and how the publishers' and authors' motivations and engagement is reflected in the publications.

The librarians then focused their minds on how text and illustration influence on the child and shape their identity. In an exercise each one was encouraged to make their own observations and commentaries on the illustrations of the heroes of the stories discussed; on how society is pictured through the description of places, family, traditions. Critical reviews were then produced for the books discussed.



Reactions from the librarians and trainer

The trainer was generally satisfied with the level of the participants and observed that all participants were able to follow the training content throughout the day. The participants were concentrated and active. Even though developing a critical view on books and discussing about them seemed to be new approaches for some of the participants, they all seemed to be very interested.

Session 2:

The second session (day 2 and 3 of the 5 day training) was given by Mrs. Joumana Behlok and focused on **Popular Fairy Tales**.

The general objectives of this session were for the librarians to:

- Gain the necessary knowledge to classify books by type
- Ask relevant questions in relation to the set aims
- Gain knowledge on popular fairy tales and their impact on the child
- Acquire knowledge on the structure of fairy tales, the characters and symbols
- Acquire skills that allow them to let children discover basic competences from fairy tale characters.

During the training, Mrs. Behlok started off with a revision of the librarians' competences on how to prepare for reading or telling stories to children. The types of books and the different types of questions were the subject of subsequent discussions, as were the theoretical explanations on the structures, characters and symbols of fairy tales and the content and objectives of the latter.

Throughout both training days an important focus was put on the practical exercises for the librarians. Everybody got hands on training on reading and telling stories, sorting books according to their type, the type of questions and directly put into practice what they had just learnt.

Reactions from the trainer

Mrs. Behlok reported to be happy with the interest and motivation of the participants. According to her, the difference in knowledge and level among the group that was formed of beginners as well as experienced librarians rather stimulated than disturbed the group dynamic. However, it seems that a follow-up session on practical exercises on storytelling is needed once or twice a year.



Session 3:

The third session (day 4 and 5 of the 5 day training) was given by Mr. Karim Dakroub in the shape of a hands-on training on **producing puppets and telling stories with puppets**. The workshop started off with a series of exercises not only for hand and arm movements needed to play with puppets but also exercises to train the imagination of the librarians and to remember to big stories of their childhood. Each participant was asked to remember a figure that was important to her/him in these stories. In groups of 3-4 participants the chosen figures were used to create a story in form of a puppet-show. In the following sessions Karim Dakroub trained the participants on the production of the puppets that transformation of the simple story to a puppet show. This story was then presented to the group including the puppet play, the decorations, stage and scenes etc.

The training session was met by great enthusiasm by the participants, organizers and trainers, who enjoyed the production of their own story character as a puppet.

General observation and recommendations after the training

The organization of a 5 day intensive training outside of Beirut was a first experience for ASSABIL and for some of the participating librarians as well. The general feedback was very positive from the trainers and the librarians alike, since such a format allows to go much deeper into a topic, to continue discussions after the training hours per se - during shared meals, during casual chats in the evenings - and also to better network with librarian colleagues from different regions.

Following the positive results of last winter's training, ASSABIL has already planned 2 other intensive training sessions in this new format for the fall of 2011 in order to work intensively with the librarians and assure more long-lasting results: The librarians role in promoting Human Rights values through activities in Libraries, and the librarians contribution to fight illiteracy amongst school students and parents.



Training Part 2:

The training on the new 101 book exhibit was given by Ms. Cosette Azzi at the Monnot Library on April 20, 2011. 7 Librarians of the ASSABIL network of Partner Libraries participated in the training.

The general objective of this training were for the librarians to create activities inspired from the text and / or illustrations of every book and discuss and develop ideas on how to display the 101 books exhibition in the library for schools reception. During the training each group of participants worked on a few books and then took turn in sharing ideas and activities with the others.



2.C Training of Trainers for Ministry of Education Implemented by: ASSABIL

A 3 day (January 13, January 20 and February 28 (*the last training day, could not be held as planned on January 27 due to general uncertainty in the country given the resignation of the government end of January 2011*). Training of Trainers was organized for the professional trainers of the ministry of education, those responsible for the trainings of the librarians of public primary and secondary schools all over Lebanon on three days:

This training was accompanied by a donation of 750 copies of the book '99 recipes to enhance the flavor of reading' by Nawal Traboulsi and Marie Rivière to the Ministry of Education (500 copies in Arabic, 250 copies in French). These copies are being distributed by the 14 trainers trained in the scope of this program to public schools throughout Lebanon.

The general objectives of this session were for the librarians to:

- Be able to give a hands-on training for librarians on the activities presented in the book 99 recipes to enhance de flavor of reading.
- Understand the objectives of the recipes
- Be able to present chronologically images to small readers and be able to ask relevant questions to get the right answers.
- Acquire the competences to modify the recipes to changing circumstances.



General observation after the training

The trainer observed the positive attitude of the participants who were able to get to know a maximum of activity recipes presented in the book. The participants therefore felt to leave the training with a lot of information and new skills in their baggage. It was regrettable, that due to restricted places in the training, only a part of the trainers for primary schools could be trained (8 out of 18), however, it was agreed that the trained trainers will pass what they learnt to their colleagues as well.

For ASSABIL this first organization of a Training for Trainers for the Ministry of Education is a very important step and a clear development to a cooperation on a new level with the Ministry. The direct contact with the Ministry's trainers is a great new cooperation that can help us in new trainings and projects. Also, the tight cooperation with the department of cultural affairs inside the Ministry, who is organizing the book distribution to the public schools and who has very recently finished a survey on the needs of schools and school libraries throughout the country, is something that ASSABIL will push further in future activities.

2.D Capacity Building for Network Libraries

Implemented by: [ASSABIL](#)

In order to improve the quality of services offered by the libraries of the ASSABIL network of partner libraries, ASSABIL organized a series of training days for librarians to enhance their practical skills in the areas of library marketing and the promotion of reading, and to encourage cooperation and exchange among network librarians.

The following two training days have been held before December 31 and have been documented in the mid-term report.



October 4, 2010:

Activity programming in a network: the ALF program for the promotion of Arabic children's literature

Trainers: Mr. Ali Sabbagh and Mrs. Michele Warde-Fawaz.

Participants: 25 librarians from the ASSABIL network of partner libraries and from libraries affiliated with the Ministry of Culture.

December 20, 2010:

Marketing of Public Libraries and Books

Trainers: Mrs. Michel Choueiri and Ms. Cosette Azzi.

Participants: 10 librarians from the ASSABIL network of partner libraries.



Between January 1 and June 30, 2011, the following two training days have been held in the same training program:



February 28, 2011:

Community Outreach for Librarians

Trainer: Mrs. Hala Makarem.

Participants: Approximately 10 librarians from the ASSABIL network of partner libraries (the number of participants was lower than initially expected; around 6 librarians cancelled their attendance to the training either on short notice or without alerting ASSABIL).

Hala Makarem, an activities and group trainer on community work, has facilitated an interactive workshop day for the librarians of Beirut, Sin el Fil, Zouk, Nabatieh, Tyre, Beit Meri, Jezzine and Byblos. During the day, the participants took part in multiple brainstorming processes on different topics:

- What does community outreach mean?
- How can we start implementing community outreach activities?
- How can we invite the public?
- How can we arrange the library space for community outreach activities?

- How can we involve the community members in the planning process?
- Etc.

The training was received with great enthusiasm by the participants, who lauded the numerous new working methods that they were directly introduced to and even experienced themselves some (multiple spaces were set up, multiple brainstorming formats were used –Flipcharts, discussion tables, group formation and discussion was enhanced through small games).



April 4, 2011:

Wrap-up Session and Outlook for Ongoing Activity Programs in the Network

Trainers: Mr. Ali Sabbagh and Mrs. Michele Warde-Fawaz

Participants: 25 librarians from the ASSABIL network of partner libraries and from libraries affiliated with the Ministry of Culture.

This training day, marked the closure of the network activities and was a follow-up meeting for all libraries who participated in the program to share their experience and together develop a set of lessons learnt and ideas on how to continue the program activities in their libraries in the future.

Part 1: General Evaluation of the ALF Program

The Story Hour: Statistics; problems and challenges, proposals and long term strategy

We were very happy to announce that more than 500 hours of storytelling were done in the last 6 months and more than 8000 kids have benefited from them. Glad that all libraries participated (except Jezzine) and mentioning that they all had good training on the art of storytelling.

A very interesting discussion followed, all librarians shared their experiences in organizing this activity, the many challenges they faced and their determination to continue no matter what. They talked about the promotion of this activity using the poster designed for the story hour.

Some libraries who were successful in attracting a huge number of kids gave their testimonies on the way they made these hours amusing and thrilling which made the kids want more and come back every week (Bin Jbeil, Baakline, Nahr Ibrahim). They talked about advertising the story hour not only in their villages but also in the whole region (Bint Jbeil)

Some libraries talked about the disparities in the age groups which made them work harder and divide the groups etc...(Bint Jbeil). Some mentioned the fact that they were alone in their library so often they had to interrupt the story hour to answer the phone, or attend to another reader (Beit Mery). Some mentioned the fact that they lacked storybooks, that their readers were tired of listening to the same story (Hermel) other that they tell the story differently each time and to each age group (Baakline).

We also talked about the language of the storytelling, the implications of the parents, the importance of continuing this tradition even without funding etc..

A series of essential summary points were set:

- regularity of the storyhour
- the qualifications of the storyteller
- having a good collection of stories
- establishing a good promotion of the storyhour (in schools, with parents, general public)
- organizing and preparing activities around books
- taking advantage of special occasions (Halloween, mother's day..)
- knowing your public
- involving parents
- always having new ideas
- securing a comfortable space for the story hour

The reception of schools

Discussion on challenges librarians face cooperating with public schools: general demand for a new decree from the ministry of education and if possible finding ways to fund transportation of pupils to schools. We presented the request from the Ministry of Education: Give the names of the schools we all work with, and those we give donations of books to and give the names of the schools that are not cooperating.

The Trainings:

Discussion of the various trainings offered this year with the ALF program:

- The 5 training days in January 2011 on children literature with Joumana Behlok, Hala Bizri and Karim Dakroub (15 participants)
- The training on working with the communities with Hala Makarem (10 participants)
- The promotion of books and libraries (marketing your libraries) with Cosette Azzi and Michel Choueiri (12 participants)

We also discussed the future trainings of 2011:

- Fundraising small projects with Najwa Bassil?
- understanding comic books with Sophie Armache?
- presenting the new ALF 101 books exhibit with Cosette Azzi
- presenting the interactive scientific 2010 exhibits

The participants were generally very happy and satisfied with the trainings and suggested new ones:

- a training on illustration: general presentation of the various basic techniques of illustration that could allow them to better talk about an album.
- a training on books : how to differentiate the various genres of books (novel, short story, play etc..)
- a training on new activities around books

- a training on Educational Toys
- a training on the Hakawati tradition
- a training on ways to implicate parents
- a training on computer and Internet
- a longer training on Classification
- a training on ways to use Oral culture and traditions (iddiyat)

The bookclub

Participants of this year's bookclub described their work and regretted not having met more. They have expressed their wish that in the future, more sessions be added. Discussion followed on the possibilities of having these discussions about books and presentation of books done on a more regular basis and maybe by region or by email

The Workshops

To present ways in promoting libraries as public spaces, Assabil described the three workshops done in Beirut: The photography workshop in Monnot, the Puppets workshop in Bachoura, The Rap song creation workshop in Geitawi. Other libraries presented similar examples in their libraries (Mtein, Hermel, Nahr Ibrahim etc..)

The promotion of the libraries and their activities

Discussion on various ways of promotion: posters, flyers, word of mouth, schools etc...

We ended this section by presenting an updated essential booklist of children's books and a list of new acquisitions at the Assabil Resource center. These lists will be sent to them by email.

Part Two: General Evaluation of the libraries following the visits by our team

We described the goal of the visits done in the last 6 months to 17 libraries. Even though we recognized the specificity of each library and promised to send each one an evaluation of our visit; we gave them our general observations: our assessment of the book collections, the organization of activities or lack of, the assessment of the needs of the various communities surrounding the libraries, the role and rights of the librarians and their relationships with the institutions in charge (associations or municipalities). We also requested to have them send us if possible monthly report (1 page) of activities so that we can follow, fundraise and advertise for these libraries.

Part Three: Presenting three successful experiences

- How a new library has managed to attract big crowds to its storyhour : the case of Nahr Ibrahim
- Programming reception of schools in libraries by defining a general theme: the libraries of Beirut. Nada Abboudi and the topic of discovering the world (stamps, postcards, the silk road, the spice road etc..)
- Organizing activities in public libraries by Rima Charara a laureate for the best librarian 2009 from the Bint Jbeil Library

General observation after the training

It was the first time that ASSABIL integrated, in a series of rather technical trainings, 2 sessions of a common network training to encourage the cooperation between the network libraries, to train all the librarians of the participating libraries on the project activities, requirements, reporting formats, and the general objectives and expected outcomes of a project, and then, in the final stage, to as a network reflect on what has been done, what could have been done differently, what worked, what worked less than expected, and what worked much better than anybody would have imagined.

These introductory and conclusive training sessions had a great impact in relation to the smooth organization and closing of the activities, which clearly and very much improved in comparison to our previous experience in the first phase of the ALF children's literature program in 2008-2009.

To train the network libraries and their librarians on proper activity programming, the coordination in the network, the build the reporting skills of the librarians and well as to build their capacities in methods and approaches to activity evaluation, is surely something that ASSABIL will integrate in future training sessions as well.

3 Activities

Reading promotion activities for girls and boys as well as teenagers are the main component of the work plan implemented by ASSABIL and IQRA' Association. The activities conducted in public libraries, class libraries, and at ASSABIL's Resource and Training Center seek to introduce children and teenagers to the world of books, stories, and reading for pleasure.

In the following pages, we provide a report on all activities implemented since September 2010.

3.A Read to Succeed – Small Group Reading in Schools Implemented by: [IQRA' Association](#)

The Read to Succeed project focuses on establishing and energizing class libraries so that elementary students at public schools in underprivileged communities all around Lebanon will be encouraged to read for pleasure and develop a love of reading that will last through adulthood.

The children are usually divided by academic ability, reading levels, or strategic/skill-based needs (five students per group). IQRA' have found that all students need educational support to expand their reading competence across a greater variety of increasingly challenging stories from their class libraries or while visiting public libraries. Thus, it takes a lot of planning and organization by the reading experts and teachers to successfully implement independent/guided reading so that it meets the needs of all learners. Different sets of activities are organized for public school students from grades 1, 2, 3, and 4.

Small group reading sessions in classrooms for grades 1, 2, and 3

In each classroom the students were divided by reading levels. IQRA' Association provided qualified evaluators to make a detailed assessment of each of the students in grades 1, 2, and 3.

As of the end of May, the project accomplished the following:

- ☑ 4 English reading experts and 5 Arabic reading experts accomplished 16 visits to the Laylaki Public School including 1 public library visit for each section.
- ☑ 4 French reading experts and 4 Arabic reading experts accomplished 16 visits to Wata Al Musaytbe Public School including 1 public library visit for each section.
- ☑ 4 English and Arabic reading experts accomplished 16 visits to Hay Al Omariye Public School – Al Bekaa.



Because the number of students at Hay Al Omariye Public School is fewer than expected, it was decided that there was no need for a fifth reading expert at the school, so this individual was assigned to the Arabic group at the Laylaki Public School (the biggest school in the project) instead. The public library visits of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd grade at Hay Al Omariye Public School were canceled. Parents did not allow the school to take children out of their village. The team of experts implemented small group reading sessions in all the classrooms instead of the library visit. There are a total of 297 students from Grades 1, 2, and 3 at the three schools participating in the program.

The reading sessions at the three schools are divided as follows:

- 1) **Morning Meeting:** During the morning meeting, children gather for a song and a story and share their thoughts with each other and with the team. This meeting sets the tone for respectful learning and establishes a climate of trust. It also motivates children by addressing their need to feel a sense of significance and belonging, and it merges social, emotional, and intellectual learning.
- 2) **Read Aloud:** Reading of stories by writers from different countries and publishing houses. Young people have a "listening" level that significantly surpasses their "reading" level. When stories are read aloud to students, they are engaged with texts that they might not be able to read themselves. By doing this, the reading experts expand their imaginations, provide new knowledge, support language acquisition, build vocabulary, and promote reading as a worthwhile and an enjoyable activity. All students benefit from being read to; listening to a fluent, expressive, and animated reader can help students make connections between the written and the spoken language.
- 3) **Vocabulary and Word List:** Limited vocabulary prevents many students from comprehending a text and makes reading difficult and frustrating for them. This activity aims to improve students' vocabularies through stories, which could in turn increase their comprehension levels. The word lists, which include the words that appear most often in Arabic, English, and French, help students recognize words in the stories, which gives them more self confidence to read.
- 4) **Alphabet and Phonics:** Some of our students in the three grades do not recognize letters. These students (who are unable to read) are grouped together and assigned to reading experts who go over the alphabet and phonics activities and teach them to read using simple books and stories that are appropriate for their reading levels.
- 5) **Reading Strategies**
 - Independent Reading (just the right book)
 - Guided Reading
 - Sharing Response

By providing small groups of students with the opportunity to learn through various reading strategies and with the guidance of reading experts, they are able to gain the skills and knowledge required to read more interesting texts on their own. Guided reading aims at encouraging a long-term independent reader.

The expert refers to the student's assessment sheet to set his/her reading level and choose the right books for him/her to read.

Feedback/ Assessment meetings

Continuous feedback/ assessment meetings took place at the IQRA' office including group and individual meetings with (and between) reading experts.

Due to changes in the team of reading experts (three of the reading experts left the team because they found full-time work and one expert was dismissed because of her low performance) additional training as well as follow-up visits were necessary, especially for the team working with the Hay Al Omariye Public School in the Bekaa.



School staff: Teachers and librarians contribution

The teacher in each classroom conducted the reading session with the group of five-seven non-reading students applying IQRA's methodologies and focusing on students' individual needs to achieve the necessary skills needed to become independent readers through guided reading.

Each teacher created a system for borrowing books that students were using to check out books weekly from their class libraries. The librarian at Laylaki Public School has become part of the team. She participated in the teachers' training and helped to organize the class libraries. There was no librarian in the other two schools. However, half way through, one of the teachers at Wata Al Musaytbe Public School who participated to the training part 1 – Mrs Rajaa Bchara - became the librarian. This helped a lot in reorganizing the class libraries and reactivating them.

Exploration of Books from the Region for 4th Graders

Accompanied by the two experts assigned to each school, 4th grade students from Laylaki Public School (3 sections) visited the Haret Hreik Public Library twice; 4th grade students from Al Wata Al Musaytbe Public School (2 sections) visited the Bachoura Public Library three times. The visits were successful; students were very enthusiastic about visiting the library and participated eagerly in the activities. The following topics were discussed during the visits:

- ☑ The Public Library:
 - What is a public library?
 - How should one behave in a public library?
 - How are books organized in public libraries; what classification system is used; how do I find books?
 - Dialogue about reading.
 - Who visits a public library?
 - How do I visit the library?
 - The role of computers at the library.
 - What are the conditions for borrowing books from the library?



- ☑ Read and research about communities in the Mediterranean region:
 - Different Lebanese cultural aspects (traditional dress, Lebanese cuisine, social life, economic life, values, festivals, Phoenician script).
 - Lebanon's position on the Mediterranean Sea.
 - Mediterranean countries surrounding Lebanon (their characteristics, history, civilization).
 - Checking out books about these topics.

IQRA's team was unable to identify a public library in the Bekaa Valley that was willing to participate in this program, so a change in the program was suggested to the management team of ALF in order to have one session at the public library and three sessions at the school for the 4th graders of the concerned school. But the parents in Beccaa did not accept sending their kids out of their village, so the 4th visit was canceled too, and one of our experts implemented 6 reading sessions that include storytelling, art activities and independent reading with the fourth grade students using books from the 101 exhibition 2007.

At Wata Al Musaytbe Public School, grade 4 students were late in their curriculum program, so the 4th visit to the public library was canceled by the principle.

After achieving 3 Library visits at al Wata School, and 4 Library visits at Laylaki Public School, the 4th grade students participated into two art sessions at their school, to create posters illustrating the topics they read about at the library.

Evaluation

Evaluator: Ms. Amina Kleit

Number of evaluation Visits:

- 8 visits to Hay Al Omariye Public School.
- 4 visits to Laylaki Public School.
- 4 visits to Wata al Musaytbe Public School.

Objective:

Monitoring and supervising the following:

- The common understanding of the process and its objectives.
- The level of communication between the school's administration and the team.
- The level of communication between the experts.
- The involvement of the teachers in the program.
- The parent's participation.
- The activation of the class libraries (application of a borrowing system, the class libraries status...)
- The application of the agreed upon methodologies within the small groups.
- The implementation of the agreed upon activities.
- The classroom environment.
- The kid's general improvement.

Note: The evaluator participated with the project coordinator at the assessment/feedback meetings to discuss her comments with the experts.

Since the project “Read To Succeed” was implemented for the first time at Hay Al Omariye Public School, and due to the changes that took place within the team, eight monitoring visits were scheduled to ensure the correct implantation of the project. Based on these supervisions, 2 of the experts were excluded from the team due to their low performance, the evaluator pinpointed to us the needs of the school in term of equipment to insure proper implementation of the project, she also noted that administration and the teachers have become more aware of the Association and its mission.

The evaluator highlighted the interest of the administration, the involvement of the teachers and the enthusiasm of the students. The class libraries were always organized by the students themselves, no books lost was recorded. The director was very cooperative, doing his best to provide the team with all the support they need, especially making connections between the parents and the association. The parent’s non-interest shown on the beginning of the project vanished, around 20 parents attended the parent’s meeting, and many of them- even none-readers - started hearing their children reading at home.

At Wata Al Musaytbe Public school the biggest concerns were related to the teacher’s involvement in the program, with the absence of a real coordination from the side of the director. This problem was handled by the evaluator, project coordinator and trainer, who were able to create a positive environment between the teachers and the Association, through focusing on communication to avoid misunderstandings.

The students at this school were very excited and cooperative; the ongoing sessions were very successful.

The Laylaki Public School, the biggest school in the project, provided the team with enough space to implement the reading sessions; the evaluator through the visits suggested a strategy to organize libraries and to implement a borrowing system that suited the context and the school conditions in Human Resources and material. The administration was very cooperative with this issue; the reading sessions were very successful.

Monitoring the process and the teams’ work was very crucial in the course of the project; the evaluator was the focal point between the field and the Association, providing the coordinator with continuous objective feedback based on the school visits, and supervising the good implementation of the project.

Documentary

Director: Mr. Ashraf Mtaweh.

Producer: The documentary is funded by SIDA through the Anna Lindh Foundation that is covering the cost of the director and the editor; the IDEAS Production Company covered all the technical costs of the movie, plus the salaries of the team.

The script and the shooting schedule have been finalized and the team is started filming by January 2011.

Film and Topic Description

The documentary tells the story of two children studying at Laylaki and Wata AL Mousaytbi Public schools. They both come from poor communities, living with their parents in small apartments and unorganized neighborhoods. Those students, from the second and third grade, suffer from reading difficulties, which are not being addressed due to the lack of professional programs, specialized in fixing such problems. Both children find themselves unable to read from their text books, and gradually lose the basic information needed for their academic development. Due to those reading difficulties, the kids start hating school. It's a place where they are required to understand and memorize text they can't even read.

The story line of the documentary starts when Read to Succeed becomes active. The documentary introduces each child's case and sheds light on the changes through follow up encounters. At the start of the project, the student's reading level is assessed, and then a plan is set to help them improve through reading leveled books from the class libraries.

During the project, an assessment is made regularly to check the technical improvement achieved. The documentary shows this improvement through comparing the child's reading abilities and their life improvement between the start and end of the project as a result of introducing just the right level book into their lives.

Showing the improved reading skills of the kids is not the only concern of the documentary. In fact, it is a small part of what we search for. The documentary searches and shows the essence of the project; the real change made in the lives of those kids when they start reading. Those changes were witnessed during the past couple of years when the project was executed at the same schools.

A great change in the children's relationship with school is noticed as his reading skills improve. It has evolved from a place of difficulty to a place where challenges are surmountable thus allowing for positive feelings towards school. Learning to read is now provided in an entertaining manner, through colorful books that suit every child's needs, the students are happy to take on the challenge. Student's academic level, is expected to improve with the support and guidance of the school teachers. Moreover, the child start showing interest in reading, he reads stories at home, billboards in streets...etc

On the other hand, the children's relationship with their families is changed. Parents are encouraged to assist their children during this stage. They find the project and its teaching methods (Guided reading/ not from the curriculum + the class library functions + the availability of the book) a solution to their kids' learning problems.

The children's relationship among each other also changes. No one is now treated as a weak student, all are equal and all can read, each one has his own level. This equality among class students gets them closer, and they start helping each other to improve more. (Methodologies – Right book to the right student; kids can read; we encourage them; a way to promote reading). The relationship among expert readers and students is one to be followed. Expert readers are education professionals trained to assist the students in need. Every improvement is considered an achievement to the expert, thus they work passionately to help the students improve. From previous years, it is clearly noticed that a personal relationship, aside from the project, is present between many of the experts and students. Many Experts tell beautiful stories about students they have met before and they still meet regularly.

Calendar



The calendar is a product of the children's impressions and serves as a tool for visibility for our association and our donors. It includes a small description of Iqra Association, and a summary of each of our projects, and the dates of our activities. This calendar contains drawings done by the 3rd grades students at Wata Al Musaytbe Public School, Laylaki Public School, and the 4th grade students at Hay Al Omariye Public School. The drawings and comments drawn and written by the kids were inspired from the readings of a selection of the 101 book exhibition organized by the Anna Lindh Foundation in 2007.

This calendar will be distributed to the 106 schools participating in Iqra' association's programs, and to all members, volunteers, experts, partners and donors, it will be also sent with all Iqra' Association correspondences. Within the printing budget, Iqra' Association printed 2000 calendar instead of 1000.

Final Event

The final event was presented by the Mini studio team. Two performances were presented:

- ✓ Laylaki Public School and Wata Al Musaytbe Public School Final Event:
 - Place: "Al Madina" Theater – Beirut
 - Participants: Grade 1, 2 and 3.

- ✓ Hay Al Omariye Public School:
 - Place: The Palestinian Cultural Center – Saadnayel
 - Participants: Preschool, grade 1, 2, 3 and 4.

The final Events were successful, the performance was written in cooperation with Iqra' Association, the scenario and songs and characters were chosen in a way that suit the project's objectives. Every Child left the theater with a meal and a book. The events were co-sponsored by the Mini Studio team, Iqra' Association mentioned their logo on the calendar in return.



Summer Camp:

With the class library came so many well organized and studied projects geared to encourage both students and teachers to activate those libraries. To mention some of the on going programs: “Ktab wa Mishwar”, “writing short story contest”, “Atfalouna Yaktobon”, “Al-Kabeer Yaqra le Al- Sagheer”, “Read to Succeed “and “The Arab Book Fair”. Due to our volunteers’ dedications and concerns, these programs shed light to different obstacles that are hindering reading skills from developing and thus leading our students to be non readers and/or fail school and then drop out at very early years of their lives. One of these obstacles is their inability to read at their grade level. To help students overcome this obstacle, we developed and implemented the above programs that proved to be effective. However, the problem of some students was beyond the capacity of what the above project could offer. This called for the thought of the intensive Reading Summer Camp that is directed to help struggling students close the gap and thus become more independent readers who will be able to sustain school days with the ambition to continue their higher education.

Our ultimate goal is providing outstanding and efficient programs to the elementary public school students. Of course, as we have worked to develop programs that aim at improving reading abilities, we have also remained firm in our mission: to provide class libraries as the key to any successful reading program.

Camp duration: The camp took place from May 30, 2011 until July 1st 2011.

Classrooms equipment and materials: balanced literacy approach is a wholesome program that meets the child where he is and moves with him according to his learning needs. To insure no biased performance results, the environment of the class, the availability of learning materials, and the tone of the class should be well designed to insure safety and raise self confidence (Refer to information on balanced literacy online)

Supplies purchased:

- 1) Carpet for circle time
- 2) Fan for a balanced class temperature, that will allow better learning and concentration
- 3) CD player for stretching time and activity time
- 4) Word hanging and flip charts
- 5) Stationeries
- 6) Bags and zipped folders for independent reading books and word study
- 7) Lots and lots of titles of books/stories that are leveled. This is a mandate of such program. Again, we had lots of leveled titles that are appropriate to use. The Arabic books we had to depend on leveling criteria provided by Dr. Hanada Tameer and implemented by Ms. Eva Assad. We equipped the classes with at least 4 levels of different titles, starting with Emergent Reader Level.

Teacher's qualities:

- Loving, caring, understanding with experience in teaching beginning readers, trained in balanced literacy and in usage of provided classroom material.

Photocopying:

The photocopying includes copies of all the reference documents for each of the teachers, photocopies of the assessment forms, photocopies of the lesson plans and paper for students, parent's letters, results reports...

3.B Reading Promotion in Public Libraries Implemented by: ASSABIL

Through a series of reading promotion activities at 25 public libraries in Lebanon, ASSABIL sought to make books and reading more accessible to children of all ages in all regions of Lebanon, to encourage a love of reading and stories among the young, and to create a positive attitude towards reading among the young, their parents, their teachers, and school directors.

This activity focused on three types of activities: regular weekly storytelling sessions, regular class visits to the public libraries, and creative workshops for teenagers; in June 2011 a new project activity was added in the form of reading promotion activities with our mobile libraries in public spaces and community centers.

Weekly Storytelling Sessions at 25 Public Libraries in Lebanon

Professional storytellers and librarians have told stories during weekly storytelling hours at **25 public libraries** in Lebanon to encourage children to playfully and often creatively discover the world of imagination, stories, and fairytales.

Our aim with this program was to make storytelling hours a regular event for many kids who attend every week. These storytelling activities are their entry to the public libraries where they are introduced to a love of books and become regular users of the libraries as spaces where they can find books for leisure as well as for their homework and research and where they can participate in numerous different cultural and intellectual activities.

During the months of September through June 2010, **580 storytelling hours** were held at 25 public libraries and at the booth that IQRA' and ASSABIL Associations shared at the Arabic Book Fair in Beirut in December 2010, as well as at a public event at the Souq el-Tayeb in Beirut. In total, **9,568 children** have participated in this activity. (See table below for detailed numbers per Library)



In order to publicize the activities, ASSABIL hired Mrs. Michele Standjovsky to design an announcement poster for the storytelling activities to be distributed in all participating libraries and villages. The poster has been designed to allow each librarian to fill in information about the place and time of the event at each library before distributing the poster in their communities.

Libraries	Total # of Activities per library	Total # of Participants per library	Average number of participants per activity
Bachoura	30	715	24
Geitawi	27	407	15
Monnot	29	259	9
Aaley	16	223	14
Akkar el-Atiqa	18	427	24
Amioun	12	270	23
Baakline	24	485	20
Barouk	27	554	21
Batroun	24	192	8
Beit Meri	18	66	4
Bint el-Jbeil	24	686	29
Bourj el-Chemali	25	371	15
Btekhney	15	237	16
Dbbayeh	21	444	21
Habbouche	26	418	16
Hammana	8	69	9
Hassan Kanafani	26	411	16
Hermel associative	27	429	16
Hermel Municipal	24	796	33
Jbeil	6	59	10
Joun	20	246	12
Mtein	22	252	11
Nahr Ibrahim	13	470	36
Sin el-Fil	22	358	16
Srifa	18	265	15
Tripoli	25	224	9
souk el taye b	1	60	60
Arabic Book Fair	32	193	6
Total	580	9586	17



Workshops for Children and Youth

ASSABIL has conducted three creative workshops for children and youth at the Beirut public libraries in Bachoura, Geitawi, and Monnot. These workshops are part of ASSABIL's efforts to attract young people and youth to our libraries and reach out to the young as a space of free expression – not only in words, but also in pictures, music and illustration.

- ☑ A **Photography Workshop** was facilitated by the Zakira, the Image Festival Association with 8 youth at the public library of Bachoura. The youth explored with their cameras the topic 'Texts in the city' and produced a series of wonderful pictures.

ASSABIL has printed a selection of 20 pictures to be used in circulating exhibits all around the city's public spaces and public libraries. The exhibit was first shown at the inauguration of the 'Festival Culturel des Espaces Publics' organized by ASSABIL on June 21, 2010.



- ☑ Lebanese **Rapper Edward Abbas** from the group Fareeq el-Atrash worked with 5 youth at the Geitawi Library on the production of a text and rhythms of a rap song. With the assistance and input of Edward Abbas, the girls wrote the lyrics of their own song and recorded a finished Rap Song which tells the story of their daily live at school with a certain sense of humour and rebellion.



- ☑ **Finally, a Puppet Workshop** for 17 children aged 12-13 was held with Walid Dakroub at the Monnot Library. The children, were introduced to the production of paper puppets, on how to adapt a story into a puppet show, how to produce the stage and scenes etc. In a follow-up workshop, these same children, produced a puppet show called 'The fisherman and the golden Fish' which will be performed to the public at the Horsh Beirut on July 5th during ASSABIL's 'Festival Culturel des Espaces Publics'.



Receiving School Classes at Beirut's Public Libraries

ASSABIL has hired an expert librarian, specialized in receiving school classes who was responsible for welcoming school classes to the Beirut Municipal Public Libraries throughout the school year 2010/2011. In addition to this expert, the librarians also conducted activities for school classes on Mondays when the library is closed to the general public.

From September through December 2010, the Beirut Municipal Public Libraries welcomed **240 school classes**. In total **3,736 pupils** participated in these activities. Thanks to the extension of the program period, we were able to receive quite a few more classes than initially expected (our aim was 120), since we had additional working months for the class receptions.

The work with the public schools around the libraries puts the public library at the center of the educational system; the goal is not to replace the school program but to supplement it and make it more pleasurable, to introduce pupils to the concept of reading for pleasure, and to suggest different ways that older children might conduct research.

ASSABIL believes that our work with schools in Lebanon is particularly important. In many parts of Lebanon and especially in Beirut, public libraries were established in part because of the alarming state of school libraries. In fact, many schools (public and private) don't have libraries at all. In addition, many of the school libraries that do exist are very poorly equipped and have little of interest to students.

It is ASSABIL's belief that modern societies need strong and dynamic libraries. The new curriculum that Lebanon adopted requires that students be educated in an active learning environment in which they are encouraged to do research. This is not possible in the vast majority of schools today because very few of them are equipped with libraries or similar facilities.

In partnership with the Ministry of Education, ASSABIL has been working for many years to improve this situation. The work and activities of the mobile libraries are an important part of this project.

Although ASSABIL usually organizes the activities program in consultation with school teachers and directors to ensure that the activities respond to the particular needs and wishes of the different classes (topic, type of activity, etc.), ASSABIL sometimes selects a particular theme or topic. In all cases, our goal is to transmit to pupils a love of books and of reading for pleasure.



Reading to Discover the World

The topic chosen as the focus for this year’s activities is “discovering the world”. The activities conducted under this topic will take children of all ages on a journey through time and space, books and stories, to savor spices and food, look at postcards and postage stamps, and other interesting artifacts along the way. ASSABIL’s Ressource and Training Center is currently in the process of developing the collected materials for these activities and producing a ready-made kit that can be borrowed by the librarians for their activities with school classes.

Little engineer

In a very different set of activities for school classes, ASSABIL cooperated with the Association ‘Little Engineer’ who is organizing fun activities for children using Lego. With their toolkits, using documentary and fiction books as support materials, the librarians use these activities to encourage among the children a hands on interest in documentary books on engineering and construction issues. A fun way to promote a different kind of books, which otherwise often is more difficult to access.

Reading Promotion Activities in Public Spaces and Activity Centers in June 2011

Thanks to the extension of our contract period, ASSABIL was able to organize a continuation of the reading promotion activities for children even after the end of the school year and the end of the official visits of our mobile libraries to the schools. Opening to the general public, the mobile libraries have received 17 groups of children, in public spaces, community centers, the Iqra’ summer camp and few schools that were still open. In total, 357 children benefitted from those activities.

Publication of Promotional and Awareness Materials

In addition to the posters that have been produced to advertise the storytelling activities, ASSABIL has designed and printed the following promotional and awareness materials in the scope of this program:

- Illustrated book bags
- Prints of photographs resulting from the photography workshop
- Recommendations of books resulting from the book club organized by the Resource Center
- Newsletter
- Brochure advertising our activities and the library services for public and private schools



3.C Consolidation of the Resource and Training Center Implemented by: ASSABIL

ASSABIL's Resource and Training Center was established as a place where everybody working in the field of children's literature, public reading, publishing, and public libraries can get advice and find information on issues related to public reading and public libraries as well as Arabic children's literature and reading promotion.

The Resource Center's activities and resources are many and ongoing; it is open to the public Monday through Friday from 9 am to 3 pm and offers the following services:

- Library for professionals
- Special collection of recent publications in Arabic children's literature
- Book distribution to public libraries, public schools, community centers, and prisons in Lebanon
- Educational and fun tools and games for children in Arabic
- Publication of awareness materials to promote reading in Arabic
- Production and circulation of exhibits
- Publication of guides for professionals on different topics related to public library management
- Training sessions for professionals in the field of public reading
- Expert advice for associations, municipalities, and other institutions that want to renovate, establish or improve their libraries

Thanks to the support of the ALF program for the promotion of Arabic children's literature, a specialist librarian was hired to help implement the center's various activities. The librarian has been working in recent months on ongoing cataloguing tasks, reorganizing the center's book distribution, updating various reading lists (basic collection for public libraries, thematic lists etc.), suggesting new acquisitions of Arabic children's literature as well as reference books for the Resource and Training Center, and preparing for the Resource Center's activities.

Activities of the Resource Center That Have Directly Benefitted From the Financial Support of ALF and SIDA

Participation at the Arabic Book Fair (December 2010)

See interim narrative report for details.

Book Club

A book club for librarians took place under the guidance of Mrs. Maha Alwan, experienced librarian and trainer from the Mtein Public Library. The book club had the aim to bring together, in three double sessions, 10 librarians from different regions to discuss, become familiar with, evaluate, and discuss Arabic children's books available at the public libraries. Through the book club sessions, the

librarians became familiar with the new titles added to their collections and gained confidence in discussing and evaluating children's books in general.

The results of the bookclub and the comments of the librarians on the books discussed have been published by ASSABIL for a distribution in public libraries to children, parents, teachers, educators and all those interested in a librarian's view of what's new out there for their children to read.

ASSABIL Prize

The ASSABIL Prize 2010, was given in the scope of this program to Mrs. Nabhiha Mheidley, for her book *لائحة مشتريات ياسر*, illustrated by Hassan Zahreddin and published with Dar al-Hadaek.

Four other children's books authors were honored by the jury:

- Hanady Daya et Manal Chama for their book *الهمزة* published with Asala
- Samah Idriss for his book *قصتي* published by Dar al-Adab.
- Sanas Chabani for her book *سلسلة أبصال الفينيقيين* published with Dar el Moualef



In total, the jury reviewed 138 books for this prize. The jury was composed of 5 members, namely Mrs. Joumana Behlok (storyteller and education expert), Najla Jreissaty (education specialist and researcher), Hala Bizri (expert in children's literature and researcher), Hassan Daher (writer and playwright), and Mayda Makdissi (graphic designer and storyteller). The ASSABIL price 2010 was coordinated by ASSABIL's vice-president Mr. Antoine Boulad. The official ceremony took place on June 9, at the newly renovated and expanded Monnot Library.

The Resource Center as a Space for Debate and Reflection

ASSABIL has implemented a series of activities to foster and promote dialogue and exchange among different professionals involved in the production of books. The events were organized and prepared in cooperation with cultural centers, universities, and other institutions and associations working in this field.

The first event – entitled '**Illustrator Breakfast**' – took place on February 26 at the Bachoura Library in presence of Mrs. Ute Krause, German author and illustrator, who was in Beirut upon an invitation of the Goethe Institut. (The Goethe Institute co-sponsored the event by providing for the catering). Two other breakfasts were held in April 2011, for students of library sciences and librarians, and puppeteers. The detailed accounts for those meetings follow below.

Topic of the Breakfast: **Sensitive topics/ Censored Topics in the Lebanese children literature**

Time: Saturday, February 26, 10 am -12 pm
Venue: The Municipal Public Library of Bachoura
Moderator: Mrs. Mayda Freije Makdessi, Assistant professor of Graphic Design at the AUB University and AUST.
Special Guest: Ute Krause
Participants: 13 Illustrators, graphic design and illustration students in the field of book illustrations



Objectives:

The objective of this pilot breakfast meeting was to set a precedent. We believed that holding regular meetings in order to exchange ideas and experiences between people with common interests and worries was essential.

Mrs. Makdessi began the moderation of the illustrator's breakfast by presenting the definitions, the objectives, and an overview to the Lebanese Children literature and its evolution. Then she introduced the main subject of the round table: To discuss the new trends of children's book illustration emphasizing one aspect at this first interactive encounter : **"Sensitive topics/ Censored topics"** in all children literature (especially for **young adults** [ages 13 - 16]). This theme covers many issues in social context such as:

- Gender stereotyping
- Dysfunctional families [divorced, stepparents, and step siblings, death of a parent]
- Puberty issues: girls and their periods and boys' growth into manhood.
- Love
- Politics and Religion
- And other issues that young adults might need to explore or read about.

After consulting all the books that tackled these subjects at the ASSABIL'S Resource and training center, the moderator has selected a few that could serve as a basis for discussion:

- Rania Zaghir, why does the sky rain zucchini, Al Khayat al saghir, 2010.
- Adly Rizallah, The story of two trees, ASSALA, 2004.
- Fatima Sharafeddine, War in my city, ASSALA, 2006.
- Mona Merhej, Mechmech, ASSALA, 2002
- Najla Bashour, Special day , Tala, 2008
- Samah Idriss, The blondy girl, Dar al Adab, [n. d.].
- Samah Idriss, the sanctuary, Dar al Adab, 2006
- Samah Irdiss, a world for all, Dar al Adab, 2006
- Sanaa al Haraka, Valentine day, ASSALA, 2010

The participants discussed the various ways authors deal with these subjects, the illustrations, the relationship between texts and illustrations, the role of the publishers and the degrees of freedom given to authors as well as to illustrators.

In conclusion: even though this meeting was meant to be informal and amicable as a first encounter meeting, the participants had some general observations:

- The participants noted the existence of new concepts of illustrations, new materials used... (Collage, pates a modeler, natural components...)
- The participants noted that there is an evolution in treating these subjects especially with the new publishers.
- The participants noted that there is more freedom treating these subjects when the authors are publishers of their own books (Samah Idriss, Rania Zaghir...)
- The participants noted the strategies used to divert censorship like the use of metaphors in writing and illustration,
- Finally the participants noted the absence of books for teenagers

Topic of the Breakfast: **Between fun and Serious: Cultural practices of the Lebanese youth**

Time: Saturday, April 2, 10 am -12 pm
Venue: The Municipal Public Library of Bachoura
Moderator: Dr Maud Stephan Hashem and Azza Sharara Baydoun
Participants: 15 librarians and prospective librarians (from the Lebanese University)



The breakfast was introduced by Mr. Antoine Boulad, who presented the two moderators of the session. Dr. Hashem is a key personality in the field of information management and libraries in Lebanon. She is a professor at the Lebanese University and the Saint- Joseph University. She was the advisor of the minister of culture from 2002-2005, and she has many of studies concerning public libraries, Reading, publishing in Lebanon. Azza Charara Baydoun, is a sociologist, and professor at the Lebanese University.

Both speakers presented the results of a study published in the volume 14 of Bahithat (Lebanese association of women researchers), on cultural practices among the Lebanese youth. The study used a group of first year students from different universities as the sample population to study reading practices among Lebanese use. Questions addressed in the study include: What is the position of reading among the students? What types of books they read? What are the different hobbies? and a series of questions that relate to the reading practices of youth on the internet: How much time young adults spend on internet? Why do students use the internet? Are there differences in practices between girls and boys? If yes, which? Etc.

The two moderators have chosen some of the points mentioned in their study mostly focusing on where reading takes place for university students, what they read? which language? which books... The two moderators shed light on the importance to know the public of the libraries and how the libraries can attract them...?

In the following discussion participants asked questions related to the methodology, the samples selected, a comparison with other studies, and they opened a new perspectives for the study especially related to the internet, to the future of the books in a digital era.

Topic of the Breakfast: **History, the Evolution, the Problems and the Perspectives of the Lebanese puppets' theatre**

Time: Saturday, April 20, 10 am -12 pm
Venue: The Municipal Public Library of Bachoura
Moderator: Mr. Karim Dakroub
Participants: 7 puppeteers and puppet lovers from Lebanon



A professional meeting was held at the Municipal Public Library of Bachoura with the Lebanese puppeteers in the presence of Sabine Schroeder-Zobel, a german puppeteer invited to Lebanon by the Goethe Institut on April 20, from 10 until 12. Karim Dakroub was hired as the moderator of this breakfast that encouraged discussion and debate around the topic *"History, the Evolution, the Problems and the Perspectives of the Lebanese puppets' theatre"*.

The meeting brought together puppeteers who have been working in Lebanon for long periods, and all very well established. However, it was remarkable that some of them met each other for the first time. The Illustrator's breakfast was a great opportunity to gather them to get to know each other and to discuss issues related to their common interests and work

Karim Dakroub, as the moderator of this gathering, has opened the discussion by presenting the history of puppets play not only in Lebanon, but he gave some examples from Egypt where puppeteers have a long tradition. Followed a brief presentation concerning puppets in Algeria, Syria.

The participants also contributed enthusiastically by presenting their knowledge in this field, the different activities they participated in, the evolution of their work, the challenges and problems they face etc.

Circulation of 101 Book Exhibit

ASSABIL has circulated the new 101 book exhibit prepared by the ALF project management team with the start of the National Reading Week in Lebanon. Since then, ASSABIL has organized a training session on the new exhibit (see in section Trainings of this report), and has circulated the exhibit in 4 public libraries as well as one book shop in Beirut. The exhibit was met with great enthusiasm by the librarians and the public, who organized a series of activities for school classes and groups of children.

Name of the Library	Dates	# of activities	# of participants
National Library of Baakline	8/4/2011-18/4/2011	43	1187
CLAC Amioun	11/4/2011-19/4/2011	5	113
Public Library of Habboush	26/4/2011-7/5/2011	11	225
Arche de Noé Bookshop	30/05/2011-11/5/2011	n.a.	n.a.
Municipal Public Library of Barja	6/5/2011-16/5/2011	1	33
TOTAL		60	1,558



Preparation of Reading and Document Listings by Topic

The librarian hired for the Resource Center in the scope of this project, has worked on the compilation of **basic collection lists for public libraries** in Lebanon, in addition of **reading lists on special topics** such as

- Tolerance
- Environment
- Discovery of the World

Thanks to the extension of the program, the librarian was further able to compile reading lists for librarians on different topics that are regularly covered in ASSABIL training sessions. Such selective Bibliographies have been prepared for the following topics:

- Arabic Children's literature
- Activities in Public Libraries: working with public schools, storytelling, workshops etc.
- Library Spaces and Architecture of Libraries
- Collection Management
- Cataloguing and Classification
- Management of small public libraries

All reading lists and selective bibliographies are attached in the annexes of this report.

Activities of the Resource and Training Center Supported by Other Funders

Training for Professionals

Between September and June, the ASSABIL Resource and Training Center organized not only the training sessions funded by the ALF program (see section 2 of this report) but also additional training sessions with funds from the Heinrich Böll Foundation, the French Cultural Center, and the Ile-de-France Region:

October 11 and 12, 2010: **“Activities around three science exhibits: (1) Galileo, (2) Children are saving the planet, (3) Science in everyday life”** with Marie and Michel Girod from the French Association ‘A Fond la Science’ (9 participants).

October 30, 2010: **“Basics of cataloguing and collection management for public librarians I”** with Clarisse Chebli (8 participants).

November 2, 2010: **“Picture books as pedagogical tools”** with illustrator Mario Ramos (12 participants).

November 6, 2010: **“Basics of cataloguing and collection management for public librarians II”** with Clarisse Chebli (8 participants).

November 13, 2010: **“Reading promotion for school classes: 99 recipes to enhance the flavor of reading”** with Joumana Behlok (8 teachers and librarians).

November 29, 2010: **“Storytelling techniques”** with Joumana Behlok (10 new librarians from the ASSABIL network of partner libraries).

May 7, 2011: **“Classification Techniques I”** with Clarisse Chebli (12 new librarians from the ASSABIL network of Partner Libraries)

May 15, 2011: **“Classification Techniques II”** with Clarisse Chebli (12 new librarians from the ASSABIL network of Partner Libraries)

May 23, 2011: **“Introduction to Comic Books for Librarians”** with Sophie Armache (18 librarians from the ASSABIL network of Partner Libraries).

New Exhibits Circulated by the Resource Center

See mid-term report for detailed accounts.

Expertise of the Resource Center

The Resource and Training Center has provided its expertise and consultancy services to numerous libraries in the past months. During evaluation visits to all network libraries, ASSABIL has held on-site consultations spontaneously.

Among the main events was the inauguration of the new municipal public library of Saida on April 13, 2011.

4 Books and Publications

4.A

The team of Iqra' Association has selected a series of leveled books for the class libraries. All books purchased were Arabic fiction books for children.

4.B

The book acquisition for ASSABIL was coordinated by the general coordinator of Beirut's Libraries; the suggestions for acquisitions made by the librarians, project staff and the resource center librarian are considered in the choice of acquisitions made.

ASSABIL has purchased **240 titles (in 991 copies)**. All books purchased are addressed to children aged 0-18 years, with the exception of reference and documentary books purchased for the Resource Center of ASSABIL and which are addressed to professionals.

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Copies purchased by ASSABIL</i>		<i>Copies purchased by Iqra'</i>	
	# of copies	% of total acquisitions	# of copies	# of total acquisitions
Fiction	1390	73 %	1612	100 %
Reference Books	521	23 %		
Total	1911	100 %	1612	100 %
Arabic	1340	70 %	1150	72 %
translated	571	30 %	462	28 %
Total	1911	100 %	1612	100 %
Lebanon	1146	60 %	n.a.	n.a
Jordan	100	5 %	n.a	n.a
Egypt	568	30 %	n.a	n.a
Syria	3	0 %	n.a	n.a
Other	94	5 %	n.a	n.a
Total	1911	100%	n.a	n.a

5 Hardware

5.A IQRA' Hardware for Class Libraries

The acquisition of hardware for the class libraries has been re-evaluated since the start of the activities. At Al Hay Al Omariye Public School in the Bekaa, there were almost no bulletin boards, which required that IQRA' set up boards in the classrooms and the hallways. For this reason, in December 2010, IQRA' Association requested that the budget be modified to increase the number of bulletin boards and decrease the number of new bookshelves, which are no longer needed since one of the participating schools is smaller than expected.

In May/June 2011, 10 flipchart stands were bought for the classrooms of the summer camp in the 4 schools.

Implemented by: IQRA' Association							
Name of Beneficiary Library/Public School	Needs in Units						
	Computer	Printer	Tables	Shelves	Fixing existing shelves	Bulletin Board	Flipchart stands
Al Wata School	2	2	2	1	x		
Bekaa School	3	3	3	3		16	
Laylaki				1	x	6	
Summer Camp Schools							10
Total	5	5	5	5	xx	22	10

5.B Equipping Public Libraries and the Resource Center

The program included some equipment and refurbishment of public libraries as well as the creation of a new children's section for the Monnot Library. The new children's section was inaugurated on June 9, in presence of Mrs. Bouchra Itani, member of the Municipal Council of Beirut and president of cultural commission at the municipality.

Other acquisitions included:

- A Photocopying Machine for the Resource and Training Center
- 2 Desktops, and 1 Laptop
- Different equipments for the Bachoura and Geitawi libraries: Fridge, Phones, new toilet seats, new fences, fans, Hoover etc.

Conclusion

Since the first part of the ALF program for the promotion of Arabic Children's literature in 2008, ASSABIL and Iqra' Association were able to implement a large number of activities promoting reading among the young in public libraries throughout Lebanon, in public schools throughout Lebanon and in public spaces in general. On another level, the program has helped us to consolidate long-lasting relationships with local administrations, notably the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Culture, who were involved in the preparation and implementation of the activities as important partner institutions. New relationships and exchanges were also created on a regional level, creating new possibilities of cooperation for future projects and activities.

The intensive work with our network of libraries, some of which are located at a several hours drive from Beirut, has been a great asset to this program and has allowed us consolidating not only our partnership with these libraries but also enforcing the role of the Resource and Training Center as a focal point of information and help for the libraries. The intensive reading program implemented by Iqra' has led to the organization of intensive summer camps for illiterate children for the second time.

Thanks to the support of this program, we were able to considerably expand our training efforts for librarians and educators and reach out to new target groups – teachers and educators – to provide them with skills and knowledge on reading promotion among those who are most in need.

While we were hence able to move a few great steps forward, thanks to this program, it is however to continue our efforts on the long term. Our objectives to create readers, to promote a lasting love of books and reading among the young and the old cannot be achieved on the short term. Project periods of 8-10 months, while they help us considerably in advancing in our efforts are far too short to build sustainable programs of regular activities and promote Arabic children's literature on the long run.

ASSABIL and Iqra's efforts in this direction will continue, and are already continuing, with summer reading camps in public schools, with the organization of numerous cultural activities with our mobile libraries in public spaces and parks around the capital city, Beirut, with intensive training sessions for librarians that are scheduled on different topics this fall, with the continuous reading programs for public school classes at public libraries and at the schools themselves... - all in the pursuit to instill in the next generation a love of reading that will endure throughout their lives.

On behalf of all the children, librarians and educators who benefitted from the activities held in the scope of this program, we would like to thank the Anna Lindh Foundation, the Swedish International Development Agency, all our volunteers and supporters. We couldn't do it without you.



THANK YOU!



**Books
change our
lives!**



**Everything is
possible in
Books!**



**Reading is
discovering
the world...**