



**UNIVERSITY OF PELOPONNESE  
FACULTY OF HUMAN MOVEMENT AND  
QUALITY OF LIFE SCIENCES  
DEPARTMENT OF SPORTS ORGANIZATION  
AND MANAGEMENT**

MASTER'S THESIS

“OLYMPIC STUDIES, OLYMPIC EDUCATION, ORGANIZATION AND  
MANAGEMENT OF OLYMPIC EVENTS”

**Sports As An Instrument For Social Change In Time of Crises  
With A Focus On Children:  
The Case of Syria**

**Ghada Ahmad Saleh**

**Supervisor:**

Dr. Susan Brownell,

professor

Sparta, 27 May 2014



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It was approved by the Advisory Committee on the .....

Susan Brownell

PhD.

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Konstantions Georgiadis

PhD.

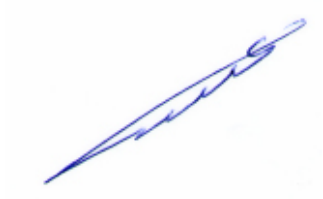
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Benoit Seguin

PhD.

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Sparta, 27 May 2014



*Ghada Ahmad Saleh*

*Master's Degree Holder of University of Peloponnese*

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## **List of Abbreviations**

IOA	International Olympic Academy
IOC	International Olympic Committee
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
RTP	Right to Play
SOC	Syrian Olympic Committee
TRC	Temporary Residential Center
TRCSAM	Temporary Residential Center Summayya-Al-Makhzoumieh

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## **Abstract**

The purpose of this experimental research was to show whether sport is an instrument for social change in time of crises, with a focus on children, using a case study in Syria. The research was applied to families and their children, my target group who were forced by terrorists to leave their houses and live inside a school as a Temporary Residential Center Summayya-Al-Makhzoumieh (TRCSAM) in Damascus, provided by the Syrian government.

The research was under the name of "Challenge 2013", as an individual initiative by me to introduce some help as a sport activities program to these families and their children.

There were forty families inside the TRCSAM. All the families came from the countryside of the cities in Syria: Damascus, Aleppo, Homs and from other cities in Syria. All the families were living in the countryside. Now the countryside became dangerous due of terrorists invaded the countryside and forced these families to leave their houses. The program was divided into groups according to the age of the participants (group A from 3-5 years, the number of boys and girls was 20 ) (group B from 6-7years the number of boys and girls was 5) (group C from 8-13 years the number of girls was 16 and boys 30 ). See Appendix 2-List of photos , In addition to some mothers and some girls aged about 14-18 from TRCSAM. Regarding research method and collected data were through:

- 1- some literature reviews that related to the topic I wrote about and that I searched in the websites, some booklets and journals, scientific articles, and other materials provided me with other experiences and knowledge that I benefited from.
- 2- Interviews were essential in "Challenge 2013" to be more confidence of myself and my work and to give my target group (children and their mothers who were



sample participants) and volunteer coaches a chance to talk about their participation in the program and to express about their feelings and experiences at time of and before of “Challenge 2013”. All interviews I made with the participants were through video camera. I was recording what I was asking them about of what was related to their participation and their feelings and they were answering directly. I made an interview with: the president of Syrian Olympic Committee, three main volunteer coaches participated in "Challenge2013" from 6 coaches, three volunteer assistant coaches (students/ girls/ from the institute of physical education), some mothers and some children. The interviews had a big role in making the experimental research successful. See Appendix 1-List of interviews.

3- Also I depended on my private observations to my target group and how did they behaved at time of and before of the program. The duration of the program started from 1/5/2013 until 1/11/2013. The variables assured that that sport and physical activity could be:

- 1- part of daily life for most participants who lived inside TRCSAM;
- 2- A big role in enhancing skills training and developing self-control, cognitive skills, motor and mental coordination in children, and cooperation and confidence among participants. Also the variables in the research introduced important data and outcomes made me more informed on how to develop and broaden the research to include other residential centers.

## **Introduction**

### **The major problems I faced during my work on this thesis**

I believe that the introduction is a little bit longer than usual, but I found it necessary to give as possible as clear idea about the situations in Syria and the difficult situations which I worked in. Syria was facing the “*takfiri*” extremist mentality. They were responsible for the abduction, torture and murder of a lot of Syrian people. That affected the entire society. Terrorism knows no borders and has no home, it is an international blight that strikes Syria and in future could strike anywhere and at any time. I hope through my research to be a bridge to relay the truth about terrorism and in order to relay reality as it is and confront attempts of media falsification and misdirection about how Syria faced multifaceted war targeting which aims to deplete its people's resources and undermine its integral role in the region. I expressed a defiance of terrorism through my experimental research. I conducted my research despite the daily explosions that killed hundreds of Syrian people who are my people, and the terrorists' mortar that attacked more innocent lives in Syria and especially Damascus, and mortar shells that hit various areas in Syria and our city-Damascus and caused hundreds of citizens innocents of injuries and martyrdom. And also despite what I suffered, and the psychological situation I was in, it was not easy to watch my Syrian people, my friends and my relatives cut through their necks by swords like sheep, and burnt alive and killed by terrorists in front of TV screens and on YouTube videos. The major obstacles I personally faced, and most Syrian people faced for more than three years, were:

Difficulty of local transportation and switching off electricity, due to terrorism and inhuman explosions. So the government took several local procedures to protect our life from terrorists. For example the duration from my home until work was usually half an hour, but due to busy traffic and local security procedures, it sometimes took more than three hours a day. Most Syrian people were suffering from no electricity. We lived with electricity just for very few hours day and night. See Appendix 2-List of photos (figure#16)

Also a big problem during applying the program, was moving some families with their children to other centers, and new families were coming to TRCSAM. This moving was for many reasons, one of these was that some families were searching for another Temporary Residential Center (TRC) that had closed relatives to them, another one that these families did not have a good feeling with each other in TRC's. This case had a very bad effect on my target group. Every few weeks I missed one family who was training with me because this family changed TRCSAM and moved to another center, at the same time I should accept new children from other centers to my target group. Especially since my research was an experimental one, I should work with the same group for a long time for evaluating the effect of sport on my target group. But this case was outside my control. At the same time that situation made children miss each other after they were living and playing with each other for a long time, and suddenly they separated and moved to another center. Sport made them close to each other, they became one team. Through a discussion with some boys and girls who were talking about their sadness due such moving, they dreamed one day to play as one team until they grew up, and some of them were dreaming to gather with their friends to play again together. Sport changed their life to be more social and to love each other more and to love sport more. Sport made them more united.

It was an ugly situation that I worked in. But I believe that the sound of sport and the smile and laughter of our children inside the TRCSAM had more power and was louder than the mortar shells. I hope and dream that the "Challenge 2013" will still continue. I hope peace and security will prevail in Syria and everywhere in the world.

### **The journey of surfing for literature review/ theoretical framework**

I tried to search for previous research, references' scholars and case studies that related to the topic I was writing about. Here I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Susan Brownell, who helped me to search for Right to Play programs (a non-profit organization), and other references and literature that emphasized the crucial role of physical activity and sport at the service of our community. I tried to follow these literatures and make sure if sport is an instrument for social change through "Challenge 2013".

### **Definition of sport**

"What is sport'?

In the area of sport and development, 'sport' is generally understood to include physical activities that go beyond competitive sports. "Incorporated into the definition of 'sport' are all forms of physical activity that contribute to physical fitness, mental well-being and social interaction. These include: play; recreation; organized, casual or competitive sport; and indigenous sports or games."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>) Sport and Development(

## **Sport as a social responsibility and as an instrument for social change**

"The goal of Olympism is to place sport at the service of harmonious development of man, with a view of promoting a peaceful society concerned with the preservation of human dignity."<sup>1</sup>.

Mr. Pierre de Coubertin through all his life concentrated on social change through sport and Olympic Games. "In de Coubertin's view, the Olympic Games were not simply to be an athletic event, but the focal point for a broad based social movement, which, through the activity of sport and play, would enhance human development and international understanding."<sup>2</sup>

Pierre de Coubertin thought that elite sport would inspire sport for all. "In order for a hundred people to take part in physical culture, it is necessary for fifty to take part in sport; in order for fifty to take part in sport, twenty must specialize; in order for twenty to specialize, five must be capable of astonishing feats of prowess."<sup>3</sup>

Also a message by Dr. Jacques Rogge, president of the international Olympic Committee, "we all know that, beyond physical well being, sport can play an important role in shaping a safer, more prosperous and more peaceful society. We all know about the enormous potential of sport, its global reach, its universal language, its impact on communities in general and young people in particular. Therefore the international Olympic Committee and the Olympic Movement as a whole, strongly feel a social responsibility to bring sport and its inherent values of sport to all fields of society"<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> (Olympic Charter, 2011)

<sup>2</sup> (Jackson, 2001)

<sup>3</sup> idib

<sup>4</sup> (Committee, The Contribution of the International Olympic Committee to the Millennium Development Goals, 2010)

**Case studies in sport as a social responsibility and as an instrument for social change, by Mr. Alexander Cadenas<sup>1</sup> and Right to play (NORAD)**

Mr. Alexander Cadenas said : "The use of sport to bring about social change has been recently promoted by a variety of international actors, notably the UN, international development agencies, FIFA and the international Olympic Committee among others."

He added that sport can also serve as a 'classroom' where participants learn about social skills such as teamwork, leadership and cooperation, thus providing an ideal environment to foster healthy individual and collective development<sup>2</sup>.

Mr. Alexander Cárdenas gave an example about current initiative football for peace and conflict resolution in Sierra Leone, the football festival in the Bo Region of Sierra Leone has been one of the few activities to bring people together during the war. Football in post-conflict Sierra Leona has been instrument in bringing life back to normality after or even during conflict.

Mr. Alexander added that "ones of the characteristics and benefits of sport are: sport is universal: sport, games, and physical activity in general are activities present in virtually every society across the global. The popularity of sport transcend political, national, and ideological frontiers and it is a practice enjoyed by spectators and athletes alike. The other characteristic is that sport's potential to inspire and motivate: by shining light on what people can do, sport inspires and motives individuals. In addition, sport promotes self-esteem, physical and mental health and fosters positive connection with others<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> (Gadenas, 2013)

<sup>2</sup> (Cardenas, Peace Building Through Sport? An Introduction to Sport for Development and Peace, 2013).

<sup>3</sup> (Cardenas, Sport, Conflict and Reconciliation. Exploring the Use of Sports for Peacebuilding and Conflict Resolution, 2012)

## **Right to play (NORAD)**

"Review of Right to Play" is a report by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) and Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Right to Play is an athlete-driven international organization which uses sport and play as a development tool for children and youth living in the most disadvantaged areas of the world. The policy of RTP is to recognize a fundamental duty of care towards children and acknowledge its responsibility to keep children safe while engaged in the programs and activities. The headquarters of the organization is in Toronto, Canada. RTP is active in 23 countries. The UN recognizes play as the right of every child. Play is NOT a luxury; it is a tool for education and health. In article 31 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, in Child Friendly Language: "You have the right to play and rest"<sup>1</sup>.

The goal of RTP is to have communities conduct RTP activities on a sustainable basis, without external support. One of the forms of the program of RTP is sport works that concentrate on children. These programs are applied through international volunteers who teach RTP modules to local coaches in the world, and then these coaches start training the children and youth in their societies and contributing to sustainable changes and implementing programs based on the need of these societies. RTP develops communities by engaging local staff and volunteers and partnering with local organization to build infrastructure. RTP empowers and educates tomorrow's leaders and improves their academic performances and encourages them, and increases their participation and attendance in schools. One of these case studies is a sport program that was applied in Primary schools in Dar es Salaam. The team of RTP collaborated with the schools and other partners in Dar es Salaam to deliver a training program and provide the schools with equipment, make weekly visits, and conduct regular evaluations of the programs. Also the

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<sup>1</sup> (Trainer Manual for Creating a Safer World ,Child Rights, Participation, and Protection)

schools agreed to participate in implementing the activities of RTP about forty-five minutes for twice a week. The policy of RTP is the spirit of volunteerism and there is no monetary compensation for the teachers who would be teachers volunteer with RTP team. The only benefit for the teachers through this sport project is to have the knowledge and experience for them and for their countries. So the volunteer teachers who agreed to participate in this program would attend the program one hour earlier in the morning, since it is too hot for sport activities in the afternoon, according to the team of RTP. It is a good chance for these volunteer teachers to receive a RTP T-shirt and receive the benefit of training with the team of RTP. This experience gave them the chance to receive equipment such as parachutes, balls, and nets during their training to the children at the school. "The head teacher at Mikumi mentioned the fact that attendance was higher on days with RTP activities, and that the sport activities improved the self-confidence of the children. According to the report: several of the teachers said that their relationship with the students had improved after they became coaches"<sup>1</sup>.Also children enjoyed the RTP games. RTP had the power to transform a child's life. Through the programs children fostered the physical, mental and social development and learnt important values and life skills. But the challenges of RTP lies in that teachers expected more benefit from RTP, not just voluntary work, and to be outside the school system, they wanted another parallel institution.

Also RTP shade light on great stories that talked about courage characters who accomplished and played a big role in affecting not only in their own lives, but in the lives of those around them. One of these characters was a female Coach, Gaelle, in Gashikanwa, Burndi. Gaelle knew that play could teach children about tolerance. she saw that the power of Right To Play programs on little ones. Through playing, children will

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<sup>1</sup> (Review of Right to Play, Organisational Performance Review, 2006)



learn the way to be tolerant and to respect each other and will perceive that diversity as an opportunity, not as a problem. Through her experience, Gaelle used training to foster peace between groups feuding over land- current residents and repatriates returning to their homes after years of conflict. So Gaelle with other Coaches visited some householders to convince parents to attend community parent meetings, through these meetings they talked about issues which children suffered about and how play activities could play a big role to face such issues. Parents realized more to the role of sport in encouraging peaceful relations and cooperating between diversity societies. It was a hard work to convince the parents who had differences among each other to make their children play together through sport activities. But day by day the parents were able to shed some light on the problems that faced their children and to put aside their differences. They began to teach their children to behave peacefully. “I realized I had to do something to contribute towards bringing pack positive and social interactions to my community in such circumstances,” Gaelle said. Coaches like Gaelle are behind such peace, and through her involvement in such programs, parents realized that sport activities played a big role in making societies more peaceful, and how much sport could to promote positive community action, like fetching water for a grandmother in the village. Through sport activities minor conflict now dissolved in peaceful discussions and negotiation<sup>1</sup>.

After researching in the above literature reviews and case studies I concentrated on being more realistic in achieving and meeting their objectives with "challenge 2013". I hope my small experience, the “Challenge 2013” will meet the objective of RTP's big project regarding the right to play for children and meet Mr. Alexander 's articles through sport activities and its positive effect on them. "In terms of the social aspect of child and youth

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<sup>1</sup> (Right to Play)

development, one of the main areas that have been under consideration: is inclusion and community building; the role of sport in inclusion has shown to be strongly linked to building social cohesion and social capital among young people and adults in communities. Sport has been used as a practical tool to engage young people in their communities through volunteering,"<sup>1</sup> .

Since I believe that sport is one of the rights for the children in my country, Syria, I thought to apply such sport activities program in the TRCSAM, especially in the horrible situations that Syria and Syrian people currently faced. During the time of conducting the “Challenge 2013” I was trying and trying to make sure that sport has a positive effect on the life of my target group. So here I would like to talk about my story with the "Challenge 2013".

### **"Challenge 2013"**

The story of my journey to the “Challenge 2013”

The journey of implementation of the “Challenge 2013” was similar to a successful mountaineer climbing up a mountain. The journey was hard. It was by my determination, commitment, and perseverance. It began when I worked at the Syrian Olympic Committee (SOC). During my work I became acquainted with a lot of information and knowledge about the Olympic Movement, including the programs of Olympic Solidarity and International Olympic Academy. As an employee in SOC, I had the chance to read most booklets and magazines emails that we received from the International Olympic Committee (IOC), International Olympic academy (IOA), other national Olympic Committees in the world, and to surf in the websites of IOC and IOA and organizing

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<sup>1</sup><http://www.sportanddev.org>

committees for Games and other sport websites. Also the world sessions, training courses and seminars I attended improved my performance in SOC and developed my management skills. Day by day my ambition began with a dream. The first dream came into reality when I was nominated by SOC to attend the Master's degree program 2011-2012 in Olympia- Greece. After I took advantage of this scholarship, I was willing to utilize this program for its usefulness especially in implanting sport programs in schools. I completed the course and came back home. But this was not enough; it was just the beginning of an ambition. I drove this ambition in a direction at the time that Syria and the Syrian people began to face terrorism. Day by day and year by year, bad events negatively affected Syrian people, especially children. I thought that I had a responsibility towards my country and the families that were forced by terrorists to leave their houses.

"The IOC and the sport movement in general have a social responsibility- to provide access to sports practice, and in so doing to spread the values of sport to all sections of society. Jacques Rogge, IOC president <sup>1</sup>.

All the time I was thinking about how I could help these families and their children! What kind of help has no one introduced to them before? At the same time I was thinking of a topic for my thesis, and here the dream goal inspired me to achieve things that no one had before. Here I believed that sport could introduce something good for these families. Eventually I found a topic for my thesis, at the same time it could be an experimental research program that I could apply to these families and their children.

I began asking myself if this research could introduce fun and happiness, benefit, and health through sport activities. So the "Challenge 2013" that I applied in TRCSAM was an outcome and a performance of the above scholarship. But to apply this research, I

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<sup>1</sup> (Committee, The Contribution of the International Olympic Committee to the Millennium Development Goals, 2010)

needed to cooperate with some stakeholders whose official approval was needed to enter the place of research, which was TRCSAM. These stakeholders were:

- 1- The Syrian Olympic Committee gave me all official approval to conduct my research and later provided me with some sport equipment and facilities.
- 2- The office of government in Damascus was responsible to help the families that were forced by terrorists to leave their houses. It introduced to these families local schools as temporary Residential Centers. These schools were the most peaceful places for these families and for their children. Also the government was responsible to give official approval to students and individuals who had the desire to help and support these families through human, social, psychological, and sport activity programs.
- 3- The Syria trust for development was responsible to cooperate with individuals who wanted to introduce social and other initiatives that aim to develop these families and their children. The web site is [www.syriatrusr.org](http://www.syriatrusr.org).

### **The objectives of the “Challenge 2013”**

After reading the literature review and case studies above I should investigate whether sport activities in TRCSAM could:

- Change TRCSAM into an active school.
- Making sport as an activity of daily life for most participants in TRCSAM.
- Change some bad behaviors in children at TRCSAM such as fighting, selfishness, disorganization, noisiness, and to see if it makes a difference in leading the children toward self-control, team spirit, friendship and organization instead.

- Enhance skills training, knowledge, cognitive skills, motor and mental coordination in children.
- Bring women to practice sport and raise their awareness of fitness and health.
- Create an atmosphere of fun and happiness.
- Attract more volunteers for the “Challenge 2013” program.
- Attract media to support such sport initiatives.
- Build new relationships among the team of the “Challenge 2013” itself based on team spirit and the exchange of knowledge and experience.

The question was, how to achieve such objectives? Did I succeed in achieving all these objectives or fail?. What were the obstacles I faced throughout my research?

In this experimental research I utilized two research methods: participant observation and interviews with some participants and some volunteers who participated in the “Challenge 2013”. So the analysis of success and failure will examine the details of the program of sport activities that were applied by every volunteer coach separately and by me. But before that, it is very important to talk about the atmosphere among my target group, which will lead later to a step by step to description of achieving the objectives of the “Challenge 2013”.

### **The atmosphere of my target group during the current events in Syria**

It was very important and necessary in this research to look at the atmosphere that surrounded Syrian people in general and those who lived in TRCSAM in particular. Syria and the Syrian people were attacked and invaded by terrorists. These terrorists were supported by some European countries, and some Arab Gulf and neighbor countries. They were supported by money, guns, and developed weapons to kill Syrian people and

to destroy everything in Syria: humanity, infrastructure, hospitals, schools, houses, factories, churches, mosques, and sport complexes. They stole from ruins and destroyed all fields of life. They killed children and human beings, under the name of democracy and religion and human rights. The daily life of Syrian people included: daily explosions, and terrorists' mortar attack claimed more and more innocent lives. Also numbers of mortar shells hit various areas in the cities and countryside and caused every day the martyrdom of hundreds of citizens and hundreds of injuries of scores of others. The target group in this research (the children and their families) were Syrian people forced by terrorists to leave their houses and their areas. They left leaving behind them their burnt and destroyed houses with the furniture, children's books, childhood's stories and beautiful dreams, good memories in their houses where they lived, and the streets where they were playing with each other. Now the neighbors, families and relatives are living separately. The fathers lost their jobs and now they are living without any resources for living since most factories were destroyed by terrorists. The children lost their toys; their friends who were living close together for a long time and lost their school friends. Now some of these families left; some are living in another place and some of them are living outside the country. As a result of these ugly events, every family began searching for a more peaceful place to live in. The only peaceful places for these families are the temporary residential centers, that the government provided to them, instead of their destroyed houses.

### **The atmosphere of my target group inside TRCSAM**

I came to the TRCSAM on the first of May 2013, it was summer. It is a school holiday in Syria. I collected data in this TRCSAM through my conversations, discussions and meeting with the families and through my observations to the behaviors of my target group . All members of the family lived together in the same classroom of school and

sometimes with other relatives such as a grandmother, a grandfather, uncles, aunts and their children. Every classroom contained two or three families. The classroom itself was used as a house for living, cooking, eating, sleeping, reading, studying, playing, and for visiting relatives and friends. This was the daily routines for all families. This school was turned into a temporary residential center for these families who were coming from different cities and rural areas and from different backgrounds, cultures, traditions. But most these families were conservative socially in their behaviors. They did not care to sportive life, since their children practice play at the garden of their houses that were living in or in the street. Most children in the countryside play football at streets. In addition to that these families who came to TRCSAM were not rich enough. They lived the usual life that every family live in the countryside, and some of these families did not care to educate and teach their children at age 13 years old. They interested to search for private job for their children especially boys and girls to help their mother in housekeeping. They did not believe in educating and teaching. Also the sport sessions at school were just two sessions. They were not enough for children to have the knowledge and skills in sport. And now families were living together in the same classroom. There was not any private life for these families. It was very hard for them to make warm relationships at the beginning of their arrival at the residential center. So here the social community such as some governmental and nongovernmental organizations, especially the office of governance in Damascus was responsible for supporting and supervising of these families with free ( food, clothes, medical care and medicine), in addition to some individual initiatives that provided these families with financial and some social support. But despite of all this support, children lacked sport activities. According to teaching and educating children, there were some schools very closed and connected in building to the

TRCSAM, this case made the families to have a good feeling that their children in safe and closed to TRCSAM.

### **The situations of children and the major problems that the parents faced with their children in the TRCSAM before sport activities**

At the first week of my visiting to the center, I could not forget the way the children were talking to each other. I felt a real depression and sadness from what I heard of such hard and harmful expressions from children and kids during their fighting with each other such as: I will kill you, cut you, bleed you and throw you in the fire, and so on. The current events in Syria put the children into a strange situation that led them to watch on TV videos showing some killing by the terrorists and how they were walking and carrying the guns on their shoulders and what they did with these weapons! So the children at TRCSAM tried to imitate the terrorists' behaviors and the way they talked with each other. I was so sorry and sad that such behaviors became familiar among the Syrian children. Also, some of these children lost their fathers in these events and some did not know if their fathers were dead or alive. Some of these children who lost their fathers or lost a close relative such as uncle, aunt, and other relatives became more aggressive towards their friends and others at TRCSAM. They missed the love and care of the people who gave them this love. These children missed their houses, toys, close friends and their private life. Most children told me about their beautiful previous life and how much they dreamt to come back to their homes and their previous lives. Every family and every child had his/her private problem. Some mothers through discussions about the behavior of their children, stated that the background they came from negatively affected their children, where some fathers did not believe in sport and did not agree that women or girls should practice sport, others refused to teach their children anything, some did not give any kind of love to their children. The situation inside the TRCSAM was very bad.



All the time there was shouting and fighting among the children. They tried to imitate their fathers by fighting and dominating each other. These conditions negatively affected the behavior of children. Mothers began trust me and provided me with these data that related to the problems they faced with their children.

Other mothers stated that some of the current bad behavior of their children was acquired here in TRCSAM from contact with each other. Their children played in the playground of the school, shouting and fighting for no real reasons. Their situation and existence in the classroom/home was miserable during the whole day. Children could not stay for a long time inside this small classroom all day, especially when it was summer holiday. They needed to play, to practice sport; they needed a way to express their hidden feelings. This was one direction. The other direction was that other members of the family could not endure the existence of the children among them all day; all of them were living in this small room. Here in this small class, the mothers were responsible for housekeeping and cooking. This miserable situation led the children to constantly be in the playground without any oversight from their families. Most of the time the children were meeting with their families just to eat and sleep. The role of parents in bringing up their children disappeared. During my conversations with the mothers, most of them told me that the bad behaviors among their children did not exist before coming to the residential center. In the past they were able to control their children, but now they could not. They needed other persons from outside the school who had the experience and specialized in resolving such problems. Here I should note that most mothers were not well educated, they came from different backgrounds. They suffered that their children did not listen to them at all and day by day they were distant from their children. Children did not think of studying or reading any book. They just wanted to play football in the playground or to be outside of the class. Also they could not go outside of the school due explosions that may

kill them in any time. In this case mothers did not watch the children in the playground, they were busy with housekeeping. Most mothers did not have any hope of resolving these problems. The only thing they dreamed of was to come back to their houses that they were living in peacefully before these terrorists came and destroyed everything. These families were living peacefully in their houses, practicing their daily life, going to work, going to school, going to university, and so on. I am sure that the classrooms and the playground of the school missed the laughs and shouting of its real pupils, sitting at their desks and reading their books, their childhood that was stolen by terrorists. Here I felt that I had the responsibility toward my country. After I listened to the mothers inside this school, I decided to help them. Although people inside the school lived very closed to each other, they were not close. They felt that they were alone. I came back home and began thinking of how I could help these children to avoid such behaviors. I asked myself what the right way to direct these children is. How do I help to solve all these problems that the mothers talked about? They needed something to change their lives in a way that is completely different from any other social community support. I thought that sport activities could help, in addition playing is one of their rights in life, and this right of playing will make them happy and they will live the childhood stage. In addition I will experience myself if I could be in touch with RTP's sport activities program through the "Challenge 2013". The time I told the mothers that I am coming to this school to provide and support their children with sport activities, they were very happy, where no one before thought of supporting their children with sport activities. So day by day during my visiting to TRCSAM, mothers were happy that their children were happy also and enthusiastic for sport activities and they were always looking forward to the sport sessions.

## **My first experience in “Challenge 2013” was cultural**

The first program at TRCSAM was cultural: my story with volunteers began through the cultural program with Dar rabee publishing house. During my stay in TRCSAM in May 2013 I thought to do something useful to the families who were living inside this center, especially children. So the idea began of a cultural program through encouraging children to read some stories, since they were on summer holiday . The aim of the program was to invest the summer time in reading. But there was not a library at TRCSAM. So I surfed the internet searching for a public house for children in Syria. Then I found Dar rabee publishing house. Then I called the office in Damascus and talked to the director and told him that I work as a volunteer in TRCSAM for helping the families there, especially children. So I needed their cooperation with me in this program in producing some books and stories that provided our children with knowledge and fun. I was lucky when the director Yassin Al Lahham was very enthusiastic about the idea and promised to introduce free different stories for all ages at the center. After that I started a program for children for reading these stories according to the age of children. The plan was to put tables and chairs at the playground of the school for children for three days a week<sup>1</sup>, and then children began reading as a group. The aim of this program was to make the children live as a team and exchange knowledge. They began exchanging stories among each other. Sometime I was discussing with them about what everyone was reading and what do they learn from the story they read. Also during this program some girls aged about 13-17 began helping the kids in drawing and painting. And to make the program more

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<sup>1</sup>See:

[https://www.facebook.com/ghada.saleh.33/media\\_set?set=a.10152062675604726.1073741831.580854725&type=3](https://www.facebook.com/ghada.saleh.33/media_set?set=a.10152062675604726.1073741831.580854725&type=3)

enjoyable I took the children to practice reading on the grass in Al-Jalla sport complex, which is very close to the TRCSAM<sup>1</sup>. See Appendix-2 List of photos (figure#3&4).

The aim of this is to increase their motivation for reading. It was a new experience to children to practice reading outside the center. Also I was lending the girls aged about 14-17 some stories to read for investing the time in useful things and gaining knowledge. In this case I encouraged them to read more and more. I was happy that the girls were interested in and still asking me to lend them new ones. I was happy that I succeeded in this new experience. The children were active and happy during this program. To be more certain I asked the children if they liked the program or not, and most of them told me please give us more and more stories. This program created some kind of social life among children. Also the mothers were very satisfied with someone taking care of their children and teaching them useful things they like. These children always had the desire to do something, but they needed to be motivated by things they like. I hoped that I could change something inside these children and lead them to create what they like. In this cultural program I needed more volunteers to help and work with me. It was very difficult to work alone and to achieve the required aim of such program. It was a great experience for me and I took a lot of benefit and lessons for the next experience, to surround myself with a volunteer team.

### **The steps of applying the “Challenge 2013”**

During the first two weeks of working as a volunteer in TRCSAM, I was watching and analyzing the behavior of the children. During that period I played some small games with them. But because I lacked the experience of a coach, I searched in YouTube for

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<sup>1</sup>See

[https://www.facebook.com/ghada.saleh.33/media\\_set?set=a.10152062675604726.1073741831.580854725&type=3](https://www.facebook.com/ghada.saleh.33/media_set?set=a.10152062675604726.1073741831.580854725&type=3)

videos for kids' athletics. Here I was lucky to find a lot of videos from which I can learn to teach kids. So the next day I went to TRCSAM and gathered the kids ages 3-6 years to give them a sport activity lesson. This was the first experience for me to teach this kind of activity. It made the kids happy and active. Until now I can still remember the laughter of the kids and I feel the happiness on their faces. After that most of the boys and girls in the center gathered and began practicing sport with the kids and a few mothers joined us and began sharing their kids in their sport. Also the girls aged about 14-17 tried to share us, but with shy faces, because tradition prevented them from practicing sport in a public place. When I finished the lesson, most of the children told me that they did not want to stop practicing the sport activity. Also the mothers expressed their feelings and thanked me a lot and stated that this activity changed or moved something inside their inner feelings into a beautiful feeling. They stated that although a lot of social support was provided to them, this activity was the most beautiful to them. For a long time they had missed hope and happiness. I was really satisfied and happy that I could introduce some happiness and hope to these families and their children. So when I came back home, I thought to put together a plan for sport activity for these families. The first thing I thought was that alone I cannot cover sport activities to all residents in TRCSAM. This is one side, the other side is that I lacked the experience as a coach of physical education and the technique of sport and games or such activities. So I thought to ask some coaches and sportive individuals to join to me and form a voluntary team to help and train these families and their children sport activities. But it was very difficult due to current events in Syria, this is in one side. The other side is, for a coach to get to such TRCSAM, it took sometimes more than two hours, due to security procedures, in addition to explosions that were everywhere. So I introduced myself to the president of the SOC in Syria, explaining to him that I was working experimental research for my thesis. Then I told him a lot of

details about the position of families inside the TRCSAM and that I need some support from SOC. To my surprise I received a lot of official approval by him, and the big support to these families was giving them the chance to enter free the sport complex in Damascus and to practice the sport they like. This chance was for all ages, boys and girls and the big chance for mothers was to go to the gym. Also I was provided with some equipment such as balls for the football team and basketball team, small balls for kids for training, ropes, and some nets. At the same time I asked if it were possible to send two coaches to train the girls in basketball, and the boys in football. After a few days I began my initiative of sport activities at TRCSAM with a coach for basketball and a coach for football. I was happy and lucky that my first step of my dream had started. At that time I named the initiative "Challenge 2013", as an individual initiative by me. The program was divided into groups according to the age of the participants (group A from 3-5 years) (group B from 6-7years) (group C from 8-13years) in addition to the activity of fitness for the mothers. Then I put a plan and some objectives for sport activities and training according to data I had from both the mothers themselves, the participants and through my observations to the behavior of the participants and through the interviews I made with most participants. During that time I contacted the coach of basketball and the coach of football and other coaches and new volunteers to provide them with all the information related to the topic of my thesis and to the position of the participants and with the objectives I put, especially that they would be responsible for the technical side of training. Then the two coaches showed their desire and readiness to start training these participants of sport activities to achieve the aim of the project and so that the participants could benefit from the good effects of training on their behavior, health, mental health, and skills in training. Since it is my experimental research, I had taken upon myself the big responsibility of the "Challenge 2013" by attending and watching all sport activities

and training programs during all the period of the program. I put myself as a volunteer to this research, at the same time as a volunteer to help these participants regarding everything related to their sport activities. As an organizer of this program, I co-ordinated with the coaches of basketball and football and other volunteers regarding the organization of the participants and the time of training, preserving a field for playing in Al-Jalla sport complex. I choose Al-Jalla sport complex because it is close to the TRCSAM. Especially in such events in Syria, I should take into consideration the safety of the children. Since the participants lacked the organizational side, I was responsible to move children from the TRCSAM to Al-Jalla sport complex and to be with them at the time of their training. Before the time of training, I was finishing my work at my office in the secretariat of SOC and went to the TRCSAM to gather the children and prepare and took them to the training session in Al- Jalla sport complex. During training I was attending and watching the sessions and observing their performance and behavior and then according to this performance I was evaluating whether sport achieved the required aim or not. Here during the break, I discussed with the coaches the position of the participants and their level of training and the effect of sport on their characters, behavior and on their performance.

### **Kids' Athletic Program**

In June 2013, I thought to make a special sportive day for our children in TRCSAM. So I asked a friend to me a person from the national athletic Federation who has great experience with kids. After I told him about my program, he was enthusiastic and suggested to hold a festival for kids. After one week the Kids' athletic festival was held and by volunteers coaches Fayad Bakour and Ayaman Katreep, from the national athletic Federation. They were successful to change the school from a static life into an active life. The target groups were all the children in the school. The aim of this program was to

make children recognizing the sport of Athletics and have a real experience through their participation in athletic competition and to know that in sport there is always a win, the win is to play and practice sport. In the festival all children had the chance to participate in most games. They competed and learned the value of cooperation; this was when everyone helped the coaches in carrying the tools of festival and put them in the playground. Their participation in most games assured that their confidence with themselves and their skills in playing will be better. They learned to respect the rules of every game. These helped them to be more relaxed and exercise self-control especially with difficult exercises that required repeating again and again. During all the games in the festival, the coach did his best to teach children to stand in line until their turn came. When they knew they lacked something, it motivated them to repeat the exercise more than once to achieve the required aim. They needed training in an organized way. But at the end of the festival all children were glad and active. Especially during the discussion with children they always remembered that day, and they always asked to repeat the festival<sup>1</sup>. See Appendix-2 List of photos (figure#5,6&7).

But unfortunately coach Fayad was injured when terrorists shot his feet during the current situation in Syria. That ugly event made us put off the next festival until he recovered.

**Basketball program in May 2013 with the volunteer coach, Mr. Hayatham Al-Jmail national basketball Federation.**

It was applied to 16 girls whom aged about 8-13 years.

Before the training sessions, the coach of basketball, Hayatham had put together a plan for girls for two months, two sessions weekly for 2 hours indoors in Al-Jalla sport

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<sup>1</sup>See

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complex, because it was summer time. In general the training was very fruitful since the coach had good knowledge in training this age. After his knowledge of the position of girls and their background, in addition some girls were not well educated to the level that they did not know the right from left side. He put a plan for teaching them some skills relating to motor and mental co-ordination through a basketball. After one month of training, the girls had knowledge of when they should be inside and outside the lines of the basketball field and other skills. Through discussion with the girls, they said that it was the first experience to them to enter a basketball field and to train indoors. So it was very enjoyable to make girls train indoors in Al-Jalla sport complex. It was a new positive climate that could help them to learn more about new skills in basketball. In some difficult exercises, Coach tried to repeat the same exercise more than once, once verbal and another time with visual explanation. Through my observation, I noticed that this way of teaching made girls more confident and their performance became better. Therefore they became more aware of team spirit among each other. Also during the exercise, Coach taught them some conditioning skills through a basketball. Every session, the coach tried to hold a small competition among girls themselves. This made them more happy and more active. The coach asked the girls about their coming to train, if they were happy or sad, or why they choose basketball, or do they prefer to train inside of doors or out of doors or do they prefer the playground of the school? All these questions were asked of the girls just for having information related to the aim of my research. It was very important also to encourage girls to play with some encouraging words by the coach such as, good, perfect, go ahead, nice, very well, good basketball and others. Coach Hayatham taught me that to succeed in my program, I should teach the children how to love sport and accustom them to play sport. He also taught me to build a bridge with persons who share with me the same objective, this objective is providing our children

with good benefits. We should invest in our children and give them the chance to play well, and it is our mission to create the chance for our children to play, and then they will express their feelings and desires. During the whole program I was asking children questions and interviewing them and their parents about their feelings toward sport. On the side of behavior, Coach found during the training sessions that some girls were selfish, so he tried to solve this case through team spirit. He taught them that in such basketball games, there is no room for selfishness, especially during of competition. So day by day, the girls became aware of this case through training.

Unfortunately after one month, the coach apologized because he would be busy travelling outside for training the national team. Although this was a very short time of training with coach Hayatham, he made a very good impression among the girls. Through sport, he changed some of their bad behaviors. Training sessions were rich and a new experience for these girls. Girls were active, and through sessions they had knowledge of sport technique and skills, in addition they became more enjoyable. Girls learned team spirit, and basketball skills, and above all these, the girls experienced a new atmosphere that was different from the school that they were living in now, and different from the playground at school<sup>1</sup>. See Appendix-2 List of photos (figure #8&9).

I thanked coach Hayatham for giving me and girls some of his time and a lot of his knowledge and experience that were very useful to girls and me (see Appendix 1- List of interviews). In Al-Jalla sport complex girls experienced a new positive climate full of trees, football and a basketball fields, and a swimming pool, where they could watch people of different ages playing sport in an open place. And in addition to all these, girls felt that they were free, far of the shout and fight of their small sisters and brothers, they

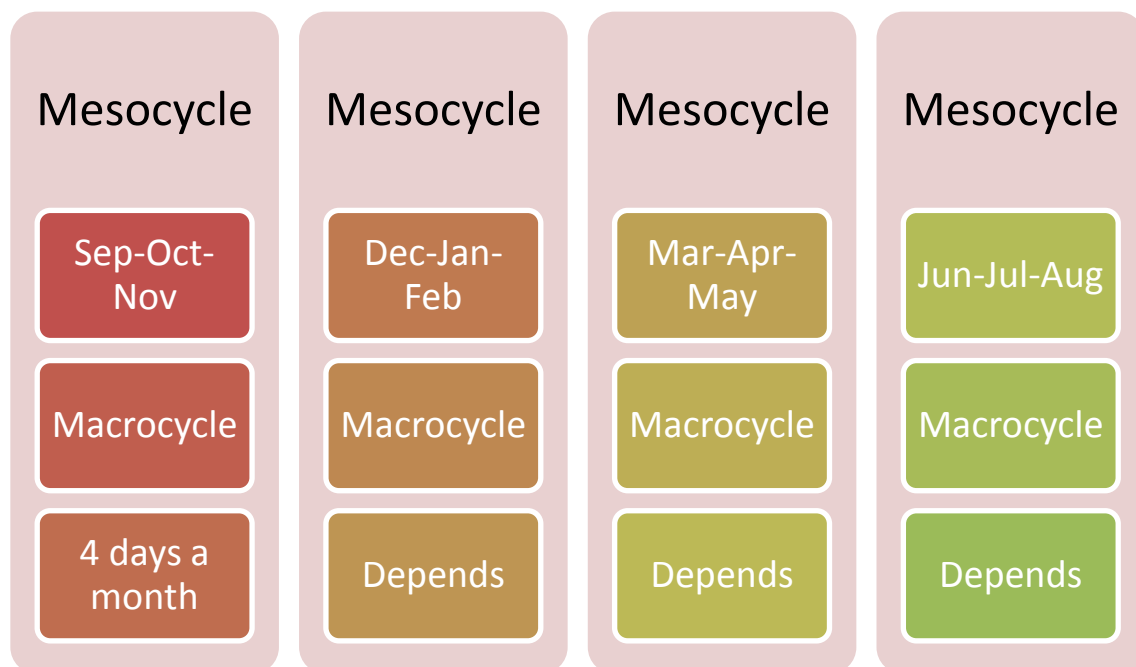
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<sup>1</sup>See [https://www.facebook.com/ghada.saleh.33/media\\_set?set=a.10152064259039726.1073741834.580854725&type=3](https://www.facebook.com/ghada.saleh.33/media_set?set=a.10152064259039726.1073741834.580854725&type=3)

are now in a team sport. Children recognized to a sport complex that most of them visited for the first time, since most of them were living in the countryside and did not see any sport complex, and when they came to TRCSAM, they were not allowed to go outside due of events in Syria. It was not safe to go outside. So Al-Jalla sport complex had a very great effect on their performances. It was a great chance to be outside of TRCSAM. Then after one month of training, the girls stopped going to the sport complex. It was very difficult to find a new coach, due to events in Syria, the same problem of local transportation, traffic and explosions all over. This case caused sadness to the girls, although every time I went to the school I practiced some sport activity with girls such as small competitions and playing with the rope, but this was not enough. They liked to go outside of TRCSAM and to train in basketball. They loved Al-Jallas port complex and to play in an open place. Through interviews with the girls they expressed the level of positive effect of sport for them. The girls expressed their willing to help and teach the kids aged about 3-6 of their brothers, sisters and the kids of their neighbors and began to teach them some of the exercises that they learnt from coach Hayatham. It was a new experience and a new chance for them to be more confident of their new skills and the feeling that they are small volunteers and able to teach and help others. They became aware of the meaning of social participation through sport. Sport changed them into positive and active persons. But I still searched for a new coache . Eventually I met a friend by chance; I knew before that he was busy in training a team for basketball. I explained to him about “Challenge 2013” and the objective of my topic and how the girls now were very enthusiastic to play basketball, but now they were without a coach. Then he accepted this responsibility to train girls voluntarily.

**Basketball program in September 2013 with the volunteer coach, Mr. Nabil Hamam, national basketball Federation.**

It was very important to inform coach Nabil a lot of details regarding the new behavior of girls and their position and the level of their skills in training after one month of training with coach Hayatham. It should be a co-ordination and cooperation between both of us, because we were working for “Challenge 2013” and to achieve its objectives. Coach Nabil was very cooperative in this regards. So he put together a new plan for basketball training. Since he involved himself in this program, he tried to put the best standard in this program’s training. He worked according to a specific plan that concerns mental, conditioning, skills, and, in the first place, social behavior. Due to the current circumstances in Syria, this plan might have undergone many setbacks. However he tried to keep in line with most of this plan. The estimated time for this plan was one year starting from the first of September 2013; it consisted of one macrocycle which in turn consisted of many smaller cycles.



Unfortunately Coach stated that we were unable to do more than one macrocycle every week due to the current circumstances. Coach in this macrocycle tried to cover the duties of practice and at the same time tried to communicate and develop the children on many levels. For example, through training, the children became more organized in learning to take turns and to listen to the instructions of the coach. Below details the macrocycle:

1. Warming up and stretching for 20 minutes.
2. Mental and physical development (coordination, balance, speed improvement for 20 minutes.
3. Skill improvements (dribbling, ball handling, passing) 60 minutes.
4. Match 20 minutes.

During the macrocycle Coach tried his best to be as an identity agent who is communicating with the children, who had different backgrounds, characters, self-esteem, individual differences concerning physical, psychological and mental abilities. Since basketball is a team sport, it involves lots of contacts on many levels whether socially or physically. Children who had a positive attitude to sport were showing immediate good confidence and good interaction with the coach. Such interaction is a good sign, it enhances the children's positive attitude, leading to better outcomes like concentration and attention, which in turn brought us nearer to our targets. As an identity agent, our duty through a team sport, we have to teach children to respond to the rules and routines which are very important factors in forming characters. Children should respect the commands of the coach and do such commands accurately in order to reach the aims. We had to teach the children that these rules can be applied outside the sport; in our normal life with parents and elderly. As players or students, children are always demanded in sport to listen to their coach in certain situation and they have to learn exactly what are

asked to do, of course this can happen by perseverance, it isn't important how difficult, we have to teach children to cope with stress, setbacks, and down emotions. By putting them in hard sporting conditions, we are making them more apt to endure, and although it might become boring, we have to encourage them by explaining the benefits of what they are doing. Coach also tried his best to apply the plan he put together. By repeating the efforts required, the girls could have some skills and knowledge regarding basketball. And to make girls more active and love to basketball, coach Nabil insisted that it was very important that the training sessions were in Al-Jalla sport complex, in the basketball field/outside field<sup>1</sup>. See Appendix-2 List of photos (figure#10).

It was a good chance for the girls to be in a new place, in an open place, not in the courtyard of the TRCSAM where they were living. The outside field gave them more chance to be active and concentrate on the instruction of the coach and they loved sport more. Al-Jalla sport complex was a new positive climate. This was clear during the interview with the girls. Most girls stated that they preferred the outside field. And the presence of the coach according to them was very important, he provided them with his skills and knowledge and new movements that they lacked. The coach taught them to love each other more and to be one team during the session and outside. All the points mentioned above were clear through the interviews I made with the girls and mothers, where most mothers stated that their daughters became more organized with their time, more comfortable and more active, they felt that they were birds. Sport changed a lot of their bad behavior. Sport now is very important to their girls. They are very enthusiastic about the sport sessions. Sport became one part of their daily lives. The role of coach

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<sup>1</sup>See

[https://www.facebook.com/ghada.saleh.33/media\\_set?set=a.10152062664114726.1073741829.580854725&type=3](https://www.facebook.com/ghada.saleh.33/media_set?set=a.10152062664114726.1073741829.580854725&type=3)

Nabil had a very positive effect on girls (see Appendix 1-List of interviews, an interview with coach Nabil).

### **The ladder exercise**

Once I told coach Nabil that while I was surfing in YouTube for videos for kids' athletics, I found the ladder exercise. I liked it very much and I tried to buy the ladder from the sport shops, but I failed. Then coach smiled and told me that he had a friend who is a teacher in the institute of physical education in Damascus, Mr. Abdalla Hashem, and he had a ladder. It was a great chance to me to get the ladder, but the greatest one was when I met Mr. Abdalla Hashem. After that we met together, Mr. Abdalla, coach Nabil and I, and began to talk about "Challenge 2013". Then Mr. Abdalla was enthusiastic to join to us as a volunteer. He showed his desire to introduce to my target group, the children, his knowledge and experience. So he suggested that we could develop children with a test program, a flexibility test, mental and motor coordination test. I lacked this experience, but I surrounded myself with people who had good experiences and pushed me forward. Then we became one team and the program grew. After that we continued together and began to think about the next step. Then the next week we made a test program for all children. It took about four hours. It was a great experience for all the children. It was like a competition, where every child, a girl or a boy, wanted to show that he/she is the best. They lived the spirit of competition. This test motivated them to practice sport more, to repeat the exercise more than once until they success and to achieve the required goal. They began to cheer on each other. The test was enjoyable, cheerful and fun. This test changed their situation from playing without rules to sport with rules, and they became more aware to the meaning of skill training and speed. Physical activity was building on cognitive knowledge and experience. Children should think and practice and try again and again to achieve the goal. Mr. Abdalla made the test of flexibility with very simple

tools such as a carton, a big stone and a plastic box, a wooden piece to record the level of children's flexibility and some tennis balls for a coordination test<sup>1</sup>. See Appendix-2 List of photos (figure# 11,12, 13& 14).

He taught the children to throw a tennis ball with the right hand and catch it in the left hand, and used some basketballs for conditioning and coordination (see Appendix 1- List of interviews, an interview with coach Abdalla Hashem).The children began asking for more and more activities. They did not want to stop testing. This test made them aware of the importance of repeating of the exercise. Also this test made the girls cooperate and help each other to compete against the boys, at the same time; there was a competition between girls and boys. The result of the test showed that most children lacked mental and motor coordination and flexibility. But socially the test gathered the boys and girls at the same time and the same place in a competition. It was a very new experience that taught them the meaning of fair competition that depended on the level of skills and knowledge of everyone. It was a good lesson for everyone to learn the importance of training and the role of sport as a positive side in their life. All children were happy and enthusiastic about the results for each other in the test program. Then coaches Abdalla, Nabil, and I and coach Ahmad from the national football Federation, who joined our team later, suggested that we should concentrate on the ladder exercise and make children, boys and girls train on the ladder two days a week. See Appendix 2-List of photos (figure#10&11). Through the ladder children would develop and build foot speed, quickness, and agility and coordination, and speed up their reflexes. I remembered the

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<sup>1</sup>See

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first time when the children saw the ladder, they were astonished and said it is easy, but when the coach began to do some of ladder exercise, some of them turned back and said, no, it is difficult. Here the spirit of competition between girls and boys appeared on their faces and they began to laugh and shout in a friendly way. As a first experience the girls showed more success in the ladder exercise. The level of coordination among girls was better than the boys. So it was good for the boys to train and train to be better<sup>1</sup>.

### **Program of kids aged between 3-6 years old**

Once I told coach Abdalla that I was trying to gather new volunteers for joining to our team to be coaches for children and kids aged between 3-6 years old in the TRCSAM. He was enthusiastic about the idea, so his suggestion was to ask his students in the institute of physical education if they had the desire to join our program. After that I met the students and explained to them information about the program and what the coaches and I were doing and about the aim of program. Most of them expressed their desire to be volunteers. So Miss Ala'a and Miss Thouraya joined as new volunteers in "Challenge 2013". Through an interview with them later, they stated that this new experience improved their skills through training sport activities for kids and they had a new experience in volunteer work and to work among a volunteer team. They experienced the social responsibility towards these families and their children, especially in such situations as our country faced. Then two girls started to train kids two days a week in some sport activities and small competition that suit their ages that made kids active and happy. See Appendix-1 List of interviews with these two volunteers and Appendix-2 List of photos (figure #15). It was a good chance to make kids feel that they were as important as other children who practice sport. The third volunteer started to train ladies in fitness

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<sup>1</sup>See

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sessions. Two other students started to train boys and girls in sport activities. Their role was as assistants to main coaches. They helped the coaches by training children two sessions per week in conditioning and coordination exercises. The kids were very glad, every time I entered the TRCSAM with the volunteers, they were shouting: sport, activity, they called to each other that Miss Ghada and Miss Ala'a and Miss Thouraya are here, come to play, and began saying we want to run and make races. The kids liked the running races. They liked to compete among each other. They expressed happiness that they wanted us to come every day to come and play with them. The interaction of volunteers with kids was great and very positive. The interaction made volunteers more responsible to our kids. This responsibility led them to be more innovative and learn new tools for new training and new exercises, all these to avoid boring through daily exercises among the kids. Kids need new exercises<sup>1</sup>.

### **Football program with boys aged between 8-13 years old**

Boys at the temporary residential center, at the beginning of “Challenge 2013” were not lucky with a football coach. More than three coaches came for training the boys and then they apologized due to the current situation. This affected the boys negatively. Every time they prepared themselves for playing football with a coach, then the coach apologized for something outside his control. After three months, they were lucky with a new coach, Ahmad Haddad, from the national football Federation. After his knowledge of what happened with the boys regarding changing of more than one coach, he showed his desire and enthusiasm and he did his best to train boys and to make children happy and active. So I provided him with the following information that related to children. Children before that participated in Kids’ athletic festival and experienced the test program with coaches

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<sup>1</sup>See [https://www.facebook.com/ghada.saleh.33/media\\_set?set=a.10152062670019726.1073741830.580854725&type=3](https://www.facebook.com/ghada.saleh.33/media_set?set=a.10152062670019726.1073741830.580854725&type=3)

Abdalla and Nabil. So they experienced conditioning training and mental and motor coordinating tests, in addition the volunteers' assistants from the institute of physical education started training boys in some conditioning exercises for two days a week. So coach Haddad began his program and put together a plan to train the boys. He also cooperated with me to concentrate on changing some of the bad behavior among the boys. Also through his training, Coach Ahmad concentrated on a lot on conditioning exercises and mental and motor coordinating. His training sessions were very active. All children were happy and enthusiasts that they had a coach. Now they were sure that this coach would keep training them. Here I want to mention that coach Haddad was training the men's team in TRCSAM, until they won the cup at the level of the city. Children knew coach Haddad before and he always did what he promised. It was a great chance for them that coach Haddad would be their coach. So it was a good chance for coach Haddad that children/boys trusted in his loyalty to his players and in his training. So he concentrated on changing some social behavior among children through training. His plan was to prevent some boys from playing when they did not listen to the rules of the game, or if they did not have the self-control to stop saying bad words. This way of training was successful. It was clear when interviewed some boys; more than one boy stated that when they started training with coach Haddad, they stopped saying bad words. Sport made them control their tongues, sport made them more organized. Now their playing became better. Coach Haddad improved their skills, and their speed in playing. They became more active. They were more enthusiastic to prepare themselves before playing. Some boys stated if they did not play sport every day, they felt that they would fight with their friends and their families, or feel bored and angry. Sport was the only way to control their behavior. Some stated that they could not do their homework until they played some sport. Sport motivated them to study more. And all children said that two days were not

enough for them. They wanted to practice sport every day or five days. See Appendix-2 List of interviews with boys. All these interviews with boys made me and coach Haddad think to add two sessions training, in this case we got more good objectives regarding improving their behavior, in addition to conditioning and coordinating exercises. Sport made them to think of spirit of one team and be more organized. “*Developing the child as a whole by integrating with a unique manner motor, cognitive, and social parameters*”<sup>1</sup>.

### **Program for mothers and ladies**

The booklet *Women, Sport and Physical Activity: sharing good practice*, gave me a lot of support for my program. The journal concentrated on the importance of educating girls and women and giving them opportunities to participate in sport activities that make the relationships more close with the society. What is necessary to encourage women to practice sport? It is just to give them a chance to go to a field or a gym or give them a ball. In addition some support from the local community. Sport has a big role in changing the image of women in society. I am so glad that a lady journalist from Sana agency covered all my activities and encouraged me in my program<sup>2</sup>.

“Challenge 2013” was an opportunity to create a media acknowledgement by my experimental research. In addition that program later attracted more volunteers to work with me. Now more than thirty volunteers joined me. In this case sport will contribute to improving the health of participants and will change the quality of their life. This was clear when ladies stated in the interview with them. The interviews with ladies made me more responsible to introduce them more support regarding their fitness activities. Really I enjoyed the challenge I did with myself. The big enjoyment that I success in, was

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<sup>1</sup> (Vassiliki Derri, Efthimis Kioumourtoglou, Maria Papadopoulou, 2007)

<sup>2</sup>see the following websites:<http://sana.sy/ara/358/2013/07/16/492726.htm>.

<http://sana.sy/eng/28/2013/07/17/492819.htm>.

<https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.403649413073942.1073741882.131218736983679&type=3>

changing the life of the center into an active center.”*Do not wait until the doors are open for you, open them yourself!*”<sup>1</sup>.

In half of May 2013, and during my daily visiting to TRCSAM for the “Challenge 2013” program, I asked mothers if they practiced any kind of sport in their life, and most of them stated that they did not practice any kind of sport during their life. They focused on cleaning house, taking care of their children and their husbands, especially those women who were living in a very traditional background. Also they expressed about their feelings and suffering they had due to leaving their houses and current circumstances in TRCSAM. Then they expressed their burning desire to practice sport, and to change something in their daily life where they live now. I felt myself responsible to these ladies “*women should step up to accept responsibilities in the field of sport*”<sup>2</sup>. Once I have read the following and I am admire of the idea from Nawal El Moutawaken that “Big successes don’t start in big stadiums, they start with one person, who says: “I can”. This expression motivated me to go ahead on in my program. “*It is never too late to experience how good it feels to do sports*” P.28<sup>3</sup>.

Then I asked mothers if they would like to practice some sport activities. They were happy and willing to start. So I suggested for them to go to a gym in Al Jala sport complex. I will be very happy to see them more physically fit. Women aged more than forty suffered from being unfit or overweight. Here the Syrian Olympic committee cooperated with me and made the facilities of sport available for the families of TRCSAM such as sport infrastructures. Then I put together a program of three sessions for fitness every week. The coach of fitness in Al—Jalla sport complex also was ready to help them and cooperated to encourage them to practice sport, and allowed to some ladies

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<sup>1</sup> (Darleen A. Kluka, Christine Melling, Deena Scoretz)

<sup>2</sup> (Committee, Sport as a Vehicle for Social Change, 2008)

<sup>3</sup> (Report Casablanca)

to bring their babies to the gym just for encouraging them to practice sport. So the fitness coach put for them a program that was suitable to their social background and to their ability to do such exercises. These activities made them more happy and relaxed. Coach taught them the importance of warming up before practicing any kind of sport. Mothers became more knowledgeable of sport. They began waiting for the day of the fitness session to go to the gym. This chance allowed them to go outside the residential center and to walk in a sport complex, around the football field where they will see other people practice sport in the open places and on grass, tress everywhere, at the same time they will recognize to sport facilities and sitting on grass. Psychologically, women who exercised regularly three times a week found themselves more relaxed. After two weeks of sessions of fitness women began talking about the change they felt in their daily life at residential centre, and how sport gave them hope to continue in fitness sessions, and their life became better. This was clear to the fitness coach when she asked them about the changes they feel and by her observation during the sessions. It was a big chance to bring women to practice sport. The fitness coach had good luck that she could change something inside those women and made them aware of the importance of sport and its effect on their life that they suffer due of difficult circumstances they live in. Most ladies stated that their daily life was boring before fitness sessions. Fitness sessions build a bridge between these ladies and society. It opened their minds that when they come back to their geographical backgrounds, they will continue to practice sport. Sport made them aware that they could spend some of their time in practicing sport with a great deal of enjoyment and satisfaction in addition to housekeeping, and could practice sport with simplest equipment.

After two months some mothers found themselves unable to go to the, so I asked a friend, a fitness coach to train them voluntarily. She was very glad to join to me in

“Challenge2013”. So I suggested making a gym inside the school where they lived. Some of the obstacles such kind of fitness required a gymnasium, this was we lack in the residential center, at the same time, the classrooms were just big enough for living not for playing. Then the suggestion was to find a place for sport, the solution was to use one of the classrooms as a small gym. Two ladies suggested using their room for two days a week for one hour. The aim of this action was not to stop the fitness sessions; mothers had the burning desire to continue with sport, fun and enjoyment. Once I have read *“if there were no sports clubs they would have to be invented: the sports club brings people together”*<sup>1</sup>.

The program was a way of changing the image of women in the TRCSAM and in the society (see Appendix-1-List of interviews, with some mothers).

The interview with ladies telling me about their situation before and after sport activity, may be a powerful tool to communicate and to attract stakeholders for giving and encourage teen ages girls and mothers to become more actively involved in physical activity and to increase public awareness of the role of sport in social change. “Challenge 2013” was an attempt to give quality to the life of mothers and girls inside the temporary residence; it was through their participation in sport activities. " the international Olympic Committee strives to promote women's participation in sports activities and in the Olympic Games. Sport, whether completion sport or sport for all, has become a social force with a major impact on the structure of society and the condition of women." <sup>2</sup>

### **Conclusion and Difficulties**

In addition to every coach's experience separately regarding applying sport activities with my target group at TRCSAM, all coaches concentrated on repeating the efforts in difficult

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<sup>1</sup> (The Sport Club, a Living Cultural Asset of Our Time, 2010)

<sup>2</sup> (Jackson, 2001)

exercises until children success and got satisfied and were acknowledge of their performance, especially to those children who have less skills.

This kind of level of training led to a trust by children to their coach, at the same time, it was a training depended on cognitive. Also behavior change required more cooperation and communication between the children and their families and the team of coaches in "Challenge 2013". It was very important to take into consideration the observation and evaluation of the level of development of the children that related to physical activity. This progress supported the coaches with data about children.

In this case more encouragement will be required by the coaches to the children who will be more trust of themselves and of their skills and it will strengthen their knowledge in physical activity and the exercise itself, and will improve their learning, and encourage their will and determination of continuous training. Here in this level of performance, it was very important to continue observation and support of continued physical activity by the coaches. In addition all coaches during "Challenge 2013", concentrated on the importance of team spirit that could be taught in some games such ball games. Where in such games the enjoyable side was very important also, this side increased children's motivation. It was very enjoyable to change to positive climate, such as Al-Jalla Sport complex that led to a very good results and provided children with immediate and positive performance. Coaches taught children how to be attentive for demonstration, especially when the lessons of physical activity required verbal and visual explanations.

To get good results and achieve the objectives of "Challenge 2013", it was necessary to apply skills of training, but it required continuous training and evaluation and cooperation between the coaches, I and the mothers of children. The variables in social values among children and skill training through sport activities, made the experimental research successful.



Through "Challenge 2013" I had the chance to form a small team of volunteers who supported me in this research. The "Challenge 2013" day by day became more successful by promoting the idea of volunteerism among students of physical education. These students need motivation to be volunteers; we should direct them to be a part of their society and make them feel the experience of voluntary work. At the same time they will improve their skills and knowledge and build their confidence. The volunteer coaches and students of physical education and I became one team, a kind of social cohesion." *Sport offers a supreme opportunity to get all members of society, using it as a mechanism to support social cohesion*"<sup>1</sup>.

RTP encouraged me to sharing the experience of engaging local coaches as volunteers in the "Challenge 2013" Sport should be used to promote volunteerism. "Volunteerism provides benefits to the individual, such as self-fulfillment, skill acquisition, and social integration. Sport is a key way to encourage volunteerism with societies and achieve the resulting social benefits"<sup>2</sup>. See Appendix-2 List of interviews with most volunteers.

Through the "Challenge 2013" with the cooperation and coordination with volunteer coaches we tried to develop and improve some personal skills that benefitted most children. The test was a guide to help them to improve their ability and skills. I hope this experience could be a guide to other centers, schools, and to the students of physical education. Through "Challenge 2013" participants, my target group, learnt new skills such as cooperation-communication and assured that "through participation in sport and physical education, young people learn about the importance of key values such as: teamwork, adherence to rule, respect to themselves and others"<sup>3</sup>. Physical education

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<sup>1</sup> (Andrea Grantham)

<sup>2</sup> (Peace)

<sup>3</sup> (Sport and Development)

changed motor skill, development and performance among participants. "Sport as a school for life"<sup>1</sup>.

I believe that success is a decision not a gift. The first change in this research was I. Now I am a new person. An active woman who tried despite these difficult situations to conduct experimental research through my target group, to whom I introduced some happiness and good benefit through sport activities. I believe that "children are the real investment of parents, society, nation, and of a world"<sup>2</sup>. I could say that "Challenge 2013" motivated me to continue my research with other residential centers. "Physical activity is considered an important curriculum subject area in terms of developing the child as a whole by integrating with a unique manner motor, cognitive, emotional, and social learning parameters"<sup>3</sup>.

"Challenge 2013" was an opportunity to create a media acknowledgement by my experimental research. In addition that the program later attracted more volunteers to work with me. Now more than thirty volunteers joined me. In this case sport will contribute to improving the health of participants and will change the quality of their life. This was clear through the interviews with ladies. The interviews with ladies made me more responsible to introduce them more support regarding their fitness activities. See Appendix-2 List of interviews with some mothers. Really I enjoyed the challenge I did with myself. The big enjoyment was that I succeeded in changing the life of the center into an active center."Do not wait until the doors are open for you, open them yourself!"<sup>4</sup>.

The Syrian people through history have overcome their difficulties. Through "Challenge 2013" I tried my best to face the takferi groups who were against freedom, democracy

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<sup>1</sup> (htt)

<sup>2</sup> (Sharma, 2010)

<sup>3</sup> (Committee, Sport as a Vehicle for Social Change, 2008)

<sup>4</sup> (Darleen A. Kluka, Christine Melling, Deena Scoretz)

and religion and who fight just for killing humanity and childhood, they do not have any rules. Their rule is killing and destroying all aspect of civilization and destroying man himself. As a woman, my dream is to reach my voice to all women in the world to corporate to fight terrorism in the world and to make the participation of women stronger than any kind of violence. This research made me stronger, more confident in myself, and to search more for knowledge regarding the skills of sport activities and take benefit of other experiences. This program was the beginning of a big dream. So I will still work in this field as soon as possible. I am satisfied with the small results that I have got through my target group in these difficult situations. It was a very short time to get good results. A few months is not enough to get as perfect objectives as I want. Terrorism was a very big obstacle to get the required objectives. Terrorism caused a lot of obstacles for some coaches who had the desire to join to “Challenge 2013”. Difficulty in local transportation, expulsions everywhere, and off of electricity were big obstacles in front my research. The only reality for Syrian people is the absence of security and living the fear and horror of terrorism and war all the time, day and night. This case in its role had a bad effect on the team of boys. More than one coach had changed in a very short time, where some coaches were apologizing of continuing training children due of local transportation that took a lot time to get TRCSAM, and this case had a bad effect on their performance and created some kind of the absence of confidence between me and the team of boys in TRCSAM. As RTP empowers and educates tomorrow's leaders and improves their academic performances and encourages, increases their participation and attendances in schools. I was satisfied that I had a close touch with this field regarding the coaches and students of physical education who accepted to work with me in the “Challenge 2013” as volunteers. See Appendix -2 List of photos (figure#17). Sport had a big role in making a very big

interaction socially day by day among the coaches volunteer and children, my target group, in addition to mothers who participated in this program.

## **Recommendations:**

1. Since I was a graduated of an English Literature Department, it was a very difficult experience for me to make such experimental research related to sport activities. During applying the research I lacked the technical side and cognitive in skills in training. This made my research to go very slowly. So from now I will improve my information and read a lot to enhance my knowledge and cognitive in skills training, and a motor and mental coordination in children. So this experience taught me to surround myself more with people and coaches who have this experience and help me achieve better programs in future
2. Since media acknowledged my experimental research, I should keep in touch with media to attract sponsors, local community and stakeholders for taking care more of sport activities and its positive effects on children who are big investment for the society, and involving women and girls in sport activities that introduce health and social benefit. Also it is very important to connect with social media to spread the idea of voluntary work and shedding light on connection with national federations to exchange their experiences and spreading their games among children and promoting participation in sport in other residential centers.
3. Success in making the women in TRCSAM active and aware to the importance of sport and its good effect on mothers and their life motivated me to shed light on women's sport for improving the health and equality of life of women, their children, families and communities and preparing new plans for developing and widening such program through cooperation with SOC and national federations through holding some sessions for such programs. (see Appendix-1 List of interviews, with General Mouaffak Joumoa, president of SOC)

4. I hope this research could be applied to all Syrian children, women and girls' enjoyment and benefit of all their right to play. But whenever there is no peace, it will not be any place for sport activities and any kind of rights or any kind of culture. During the history of humanity, we saw development and progressive of countries just at time of security and peace. At time of wars, there is only destruction, killing, spreading diseases and violence and criminal life, the only loser is innocent people. During security time in Syria all people were living peacefully and practicing their usual life and trying to build a modern country. Now Syria faces terrorism that destroyed all aspects of humanity and civilization and destroyed all cities. Syria now is just some kind of stone rubble. Most people hope to finish the horror of this ugly war. I hope peace comes to all people in the world. When I compared my very small "Challenge 2013" with RTP's sport activities and Mr. Alexander's articles and other literature reviews I felt that I am satisfied with myself, since my experience is an individual one with some great volunteers, but RTP is a big world organization. But I am happy that I could change a little bit in the life of children in TRCSAM since sport is their right. ( See Appendix 1, List of interviews with my target group, teams of boys and girls and see appendix 2- List of photos).

I hope one day to introduce "Challenge 2013" as a presentation in the most peaceful place in the world, Olympia.

## **Appendix 1- List of Interviews**

I made an interview with General Mouaffak Joumoa, president of SOC who supported me to make my program successful. The number of interviews I made were as following: three interviews with main volunteer coaches, three interviews with volunteer students (girls) from the institute of physical education, four mothers from TRCSAM, eight girls from basketball team aged about 8-13years old, seven boys aged about 8-13 years old from football team.

I thanked Coaches, volunteers and other participants for their joining to “Challenge 2013”

In an interview with General Mouaffak Joumoa, president of SOC, has stated:

It is very well of you/ Ghada/ to make this research at TRCSAM. The school gave you a chance to recognize to some Syrian families that enforced by terrorists to leave their peaceful houses and live inside a temporary residential centre. It is a big responsibility to help and take care of these families from the child to elder. It is a big challenge to you to gather these families who are from different backgrounds and to made them spend beautiful moments among each other through sport activities. Most of these families lack the experience of the importance of sport. And It will be a new chance for them, that a lady will introduce to these families for all ages sport activities. Then they will eager to know more about what could be introduced to them! Then by your believing of your aim and your research, you could introduce to these families some support on the health and recreation sides. So after the test program you made, Syrian Olympic Committee will be ready to support children who have good skills in some games and qualifying them to be national athletes/ players/. It is one of the aims that SOC is trying to manage to. Since you are an employee in SOC and you had the chance to be a researcher in the field of sport, through your target group, in "Challenge 2013" and its objectives that you aimed to

achieve. It is our role in SOC to be commitment to the rules of Olympic Charter that the aim of sport is love and peace. So it is our aim and our role in to support your research to get success and for the benefit of these families. So as a president of Syrian Olympic Committee, I decided to make all sport complexes including fields, inside doors, swimming pools, gyms and introduced other facilities to be available for these families. During the current events, Syrian Olympic Committee and in cooperation with General Sport Federation we decided to welcome and introduce to hundreds of Syria families sport complexes to be available for them as temporary residential centers to live inside in, at the same time these sport complexes will be for recreation for them and for their children. A big example for this support, was in Lattakia, where in one of TRC in Lattakia city, last Summer we hold a big festival for competitions among residential centers . More than thirty games during a half and one month, these families and their children were preparing for this festival. Socially SOC and General sport Federation could change something in the life of these families and improve their health and their psychological side through practicing sport inside the sport complex. These families when they forced by terrorists to leave their houses, they suffered psychologically, so our role to support them and help them. Our role was to hold such kind of sport activities and holding competitions. We believe in the role of sport to change the behavior of some children also who suffered psychologically a lot by leaving their houses. Sport has a big role to build the human being in a good way. It is our aim to play such role. In addition to your role by attracting new volunteers to join to your program to support these families. We are ready to support these new volunteers for continuing in developing and improving your program for other residential centers. Through sport we can introduce to these families something could make them happy and healthy, sure we cannot substitute them



of what they lost, but we will try our best. We believe in your research and we always support you.

**Other interviews with volunteer coaches:**

**The first interview was with Coach Hayatham, basketball national Federation.**

Ques 1- Coach Hayatham, Could you talk about your experience in this program?

Coach Hayatham stated: I would like to thank you for giving me this chance to participate in “Challenge 2013”. It was a very great idea and a social connection. I liked working with a new generation who liked sport as we did. Through sport we could introduce to this group of /girls/ a new society and they will become positive persons. So their love to basketball as an example will create a goal for them in life. Through basketball they will have an ambition, desire and an aim to success in their life. Through sport these girls will have a good role in building their society. Sport is a kind of message. Through sport we make our children positive, not just at time of practicing sport, but also socially. During my training to this group they learnt organization, self-control; love each other, and how to live in one team. The most useful lesson is to teach our children how to help and take care of others when they grow up. Then coach Hayatham hoped to “Challenge 2013” all success.

**The second interview was with the Coach of basketball, Mr.Abdalla Hashem.**

He is a teacher in the institute of physical education in Damascus and a Coach volunteer in “Challenge 2013”. He attended an International Coaching Course in Budapest - Semmelweis University, Faculty of Physical Education and Sport Sciences.

Ques-1 Coach Abdalla, was this the first experience to you as a volunteer? What was your impression about the group you made the test program? What did you introduce in this experience?

Coach Abdalla stated that It was the first experience to him as a volunteer. Coach Abdalla talked that these residents related to a very simple background. Socially they do not have enough the knowledge of how to live. Sport reflected a positive role on how to move. Sport will improve children socially. Coach talked about the test program that was applied to children at TRCSAM. The test measured the level of ability and skill of children. The test of mental and motor co-ordination was like a competition. A Child at the first test took 5 or 6 grades. A test will be as a motive to children to train and become better. This personal motive will lead him to develop his abilities and then skills and then mental skills. The mental and motor ability and co-ordination were very important for children at this age. Especially these children live in a very special situation. They were not sitting in a healthy way, due of their inhuman positions, where no tables, no chairs. This way of sitting will affect negatively on their back. So sport had a big good role to prevent such deformations during sittings. Test co-ordination will create a case of joy among children and at the same time children will develop the two halves of their minds, the right one and the left one. He added that the ladder is a very important tool to apply such co-ordination exercises in addition to other tools. Through these simple tools children will move the left and right legs and in the next step they will co-ordinate left hand with left leg and so on. So the test produced to children some kind of joy and feeling that they compete. In this case we can apply this experience in other temporary residential centers.

**At the end of the first phase of the program, I made an interview with coach Nabil Hamam and he stated the following:**

His name is Nabil Hamam. He worked as translator in the Syrian national film organization and a basketball Coach in Quassyoun Sporting Club. He studied English literature in Tishreen University in Lttakia. He is an active coach in the Syrian basketball

federation. He attended an International Coaching Course in Budapest-Semmelweis University, Faculty of Physical Education and Sport Sciences in 2010. His experience of training gave him the desire to be a volunteer in this program. That was his first experience in volunteering and he worked in this program for three months. He liked to work and join to me in this program because he wanted to share in his knowledge and experience with the children concerned. His goal was to develop the social situation and behavior of the children throughout sport. So to achieve this point, he followed scientific methodology in training and psychological gaudiness in interaction with the children. With no doubt, any experience will increase the coaching ability of the coach and enhance his interaction with different social background. The biggest concern was the security state but he said that we were able to overcome it by persisting and the desire to keep going on. Coach Nabil added: to be honest, we had only one training session and it wasn't enough to reach the required targets. We needed at least two more sessions but unfortunately I was unable to do that due to his other attachments. He stated also that this program might be widen by adding more volunteers and doing more activity but in this case we are going to need more materials to provide higher level of training. It is very important for everyone in any program to be in touch with his colleagues because we share more than program, we share the principle of sports and we need each other to better ourselves. he believes that the program for time being has sufficient ideas. However, there is no problem to enlarge this program on Syria level. During our sessions, we tried to teach the children how to respect the surroundings concerning the coaches, the peers, the sport field and even the materials like balls. We were able to introduce them to sport ship and how to accept the lost .there is no always winning and vice versa.

**Regarding the fitness session I made some interviews with some mothers who participated in “Challenge 2013”.**

Ques- could you talk about your participation in the fitness activity:

**The first mother stated** that she loved sport because it was good for her health. Before “Challenge 2013” she cannot practice sport because no one provided them with any kind of sport activity. Now after she had the chance to go to a gym in Al-Jalla sport complex, she became more relax, more active, more social, more happiness and more confidence. Three days a week of fitness changed something inside her feelings. Also playing sport with a coach is a good chance for her to have more knowledge about the importance of sport. The coach has more skills. Sport made her to encourage other ladies in the TRCSAM to practice sport in her room. She was ready and happy to move the session of gym from Al-Jalla sport complex to her room, sure without tools. Due of mothers’ situations and their duties as mothers they stopped going to gym, but they do not stop practicing sport. Socially it was a very good chance for mothers to make a special gym and meet together and practice sport in one of the classes in the TRCSAM.

**Another mother stated** that she did not practice sport in all her life. It is the first time to practice sport and to go to a gym or a sport complex. She lived in countryside. She liked training with a coach. It is a chance to teach mothers skills that they lack. Now she feels that she is a different person, a new character of more confidence. She hopes to still practice sport with other mothers. Her dream is to form a mothers’ team for walking in Al- Jalla sport complex for two days a week.

**A third mother stated** that she belonged to a very traditional background. She was practicing sport in her room. She had six children. She liked biking. But in her village cannot practice sport or biking. She told me a beautiful story that when a visitor comes to her house to visit her husband, she was taking his bike and biking around the house for a few minutes. While she was biking, she felt herself as a bird, a fly. She had a different feeling. When she is angry, she feels that she wants to bike. Here in the TRCSAM she

always feels of sadness, where most of the time was for her children and housekeeping. Now she is happy because the mothers could form for themselves a gym/a small room/ in the TRCSAM. In this gym mothers meet together and practice sport. Sport gave her the feeling that she wanted to face all obstacles. She wanted to continue. She will not remember the house she enforced to leave from. She wanted to think of future for herself and her children. Sport made her optimistic and to think how to rebuild our society. She encouraged her daughters and children to practice sport. Also she talked about the cooperation of the new coach with the mothers to help them to take benefit of her skills and knowledge. The coach gave her new exercises with music and made the gym/room/ more active. Sport in the room changes their life. It gave them some of private feelings that they lacked when they came to TRCSAM. She always encouraged her daughter to play sport.

**The last mother** had two children. She talked about her experience with sport as following:

I missed the sport days in Al Jalla sport complex. Before my coming to TRCSAM , I was playing sport in my room. When I stop playing I feel of boring and angry. Sport made me active. I liked the experience of going to Al jalla sport complex with other mothers. Socially sport gathered us as sport friends.

**Another mother, also Om Ahmad also talked about her experience:** she is happy for being with in this program and with her children; she thanked me and said that in every time I enter the TRCSAM, children became glad of sport lesson, and something changes inside the children. Also she missed the days of al Jalla when they were playing sport in the gym. She stated that she played sport not just for her fat, but for her health. Sport is useful for fitness. She talked about her experience in gym for fitness, the fitness sessions changed something in herself. Psychologically, she felt comfortable. She talked about her

children that they became more active and organized their times. She expressed about the impression of her children When I am coming, they are glad. She liked to wear sport clothes and boots. She encourages all ladies and all children until 80 years to play sport. She thanked me for my taking care of them and for my "Challenge 2013" with them. She hoped to have sport pyjamas and still going to Al-Jalla sort. Clothes are very important to her.

**Interviews with three volunteer students in a second year, from the institute of physical education, whom ages about 20 years, talked about their experience during their joining to "Challenge 2013".**

**The first volunteer student was Ala'a Hasan :**

She stated that this was the first experience to her as a volunteer. She wanted to join to "Challenge 2013" to produce some help to the families inside the TRCSAM by training the kids whom ages about 3-6 years, some sport activities and made them more active and happiness. She added that sport activity was very important for children in addition to music and other fields. About her dream, she hoped to still work in voluntary work with kids and she will encourage her friends in the institute of physical education and other institutes to join to voluntary work by training kids sport activities.

**The second student was Thouraya Al-Mere.** It was the first experience for her in voluntary work. She liked to join to our team to help people who forced to leave their houses and lost their relatives during the events in Syria. The only thing she could give to these kids is training them sport activity that made children happy. She was glad when she observed the happiness on the faces of children when she came to school. She felt this happiness through their positive interaction with her. On the human side she felt that she

should help these families and their children, and we can call other institutes to produce such kind of voluntary work.

**The third student was Nour Heshmeh.** In addition that she was a student in the institute of physical education; she had a certificate as a fitness coach for ladies. Through this experience she was ready to help these mothers because all Syrian people were suffering from those events and we should help each other. So she could produce to these mothers and ladies in TRCSAM fitness sessions. She added that these mothers suffered a lot due of their current situation and through sport she could change something inside their feelings. She was enthusiastic and had a good feeling that she helped these people and to work voluntary. This experience will improve her skills in teaching and how to deal with children. She hopes the peace to come back again to Syrian people.

**Interviews with some participants /team basketball, girls aged about 8-13-years old.**

Aya: I like sport very much. I like basketball, but I prefer karate. After I finished sport, I feel that I am thirsty. When I play, I feel that I am glad. I encourage my friends to play. I like to be one team. I like to continue in sport.

Hiba: I like to play sport. When I was at my village I was playing karate. I like to play basketball, swimming and karate. The first hobby I recognize is karate. I like karate because I can fight. I can move. I like exercise ladder, I like feet movement and we can jump. I like playing with a coach. Without a coach we cannot train. A coach provides us with more movements. Sport is useful for our health; it makes us strong and active. It helps us to think. I like to be a basketball athlete and famous and all my friends in TRCSAM are with me. And I wish to be one team when we grow up.

Aya: I was playing football at my school. But at school we were playing without a coach. Here in the centre we play with a coach, we have balls, and this makes us train and to be better. Also the coach teaches us how to play with the rope.

Rawan: I was playing karate. I used to play basketball. I like the coach and I like to train on ladder. Ladder makes us active.

Aziza: I like sport and I like to still playing.

Deyana: sport is important. I like sport with my friends. I like sport with a coach. A coach teaches us new movements. A coach teaches us how to throw a ball. Ladder is important for basketball. They thanked the coach Nabil. When I play, I feel myself active

Shahed: we were playing sport before entering to the class. Sport makes us more active. Sport in the centre is more active , we play with our friends. She likes coach Nabeel.

Walaa: she was playing football. When we know that you are coming we become active.

### **Interviews with some participants / football team, boys aged about 8-13-years old/**

Shaaban: I like to play football. I want to go to Al- Jalla sport complex. I like to improve my playing.

Hayatham: sport makes me active.

Rawanak: I was playing football. Sport changes my body. I like jumping. I like to attend a competition.

Mohammad: I like playing football. Sport gives us energy. We like ladder. It is useful to our body.

Bashaar: I was playing badminton for years. We like coach Haddad to be with us always. I dream to be a footballer. I like playing in winter. We do not care to the weather. When I



stop playing I feel that I want to fight my friends. Two days a week is not enough for training. Sport makes us active, enthusiasts to compete. I feel better when I play sport.

Abd- Al kareem: when I do not play, I feel boring, and become angry. I like coach Haddad. He makes us more organized.( the role of coach in the identity)

Mohammad: coach makes us stop saying bad words and stop fighting among us. Sport makes us more organized.

## Appendix- 2- List of photos from "Challenge2013"

All photos could be seen through the following web in addition to other photos:

[https://www.facebook.com/ghada.saleh.33/media\\_set?set=a.10150166798649726.317759.580854725&type=3](https://www.facebook.com/ghada.saleh.33/media_set?set=a.10150166798649726.317759.580854725&type=3)



My target group, a basketball team (figure # 1).



My target group, football team (figure # 2).



A photo from a cultural program (figure # 3).



A photo from a cultural program in Al-Jalla sport complex (figure # 4).



A photo from kids' Athletic program in TRCSAM (figure # 5).



A photo from kids' Athletics program in TRCSAM with Coach Ayaman (figure # 6).



A photo from kids' Athletics program in TRCSAM with Coach Ayaman (figure # 7).



Photos in Al-Jalla sport complex with Coach Hayatham (figure # 8).







A Photo in Al-Jalla sport complex with Coach Nabil (figure # 9).



A photo in Al-Jalla sport complex with Coach Nabil, the ladder exercise (figure # 10).



A Photo in TRCSAM with Coach Nabil, the ladder exercise (figure # 11).



from left Coach Hashem, Coach Nabil during preparing for test program in TRCSAM (figure # 12).



Coach Hashem during test program in TRCSAM (figure # 13).



Coach Hashem during test program in TRCSAM (figure # 14).



Program for kids aged about 3-6 years old in TRCSAM (figure # 15).



A photo in my house when electricity was off (figure # 16).

I believe in this expression, "Success is not gift, it is a decision "





From left, Coach Haddad, Coach Nabil and I, Ghada saleh during a discussion talking about my target group at my office in Syrian Olympic Committee. (figure # 17).

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