

Jordan 2021

(apologies for the length of this newsletter – I got completely carried away!)

Hi Everyone! Do you remember us? Well, here we are alive and kicking. Yes, we are very much alive after this strange shift in all our paradigms. Even climbing to the top of arches on a recent trip. See photo below.

Have we been busy? Oh, yes, but it seemed so lifeless to report without pictures because we couldn't visit the various projects underway....

So here we are, Jeff, one of DACF's officers and I, back from a first major trip for the



Jeff at top and Mujin at bottom at a natural arch in Jordan's Wadi Rum.

foundation in a very long time. We were visiting CRP (Collateral Relief Project www.collateralrepairproject.org) a refugee support program in Jordan, well-known to Jeff who was based in Amman, Jordan for three years. We have been funding them in incremental amounts for the last 5 years and, though Jeff visited 2 years ago, it seemed a good idea to go together to see what's what. So, I went into this visit full of questions.

CRP's aim is resilience and transformation in the refugee communities. Basically, they take a whole lot of vulnerable, shell-shocked

people (especially Somalians, Sudanese, Iraqis, Yemenis, Syrians), provide them, if necessary, with food/monetary assistance and then encourage them to engage with various tools to help the move on with their lives, often to new countries: mental and bodily health, livelihood training, personal growth, resulting, hopefully, in emancipation from suffering and trauma. How is this done?

There are many strings to the bow, but the first one is EA = Emergency Assistance. This is a small amount of money -- depending on the size of the family (average is around US\$50 a month which buys food for about 2 weeks for a small family) -- which is either in cash or on an ATM card with no obligations or strings attached. Then come the classes which all of the members of the 400 or so families supported are invited to and encouraged to join.

(Mawan, an Iraqi man who is now helping the EA program, actually said that it took him time to join in the classes.) Finding the benefits, many join many classes and many graduate at the end of the course -- and many are on waiting lists.

Ok, so who teaches? We forget that refugees are/were professionals and so many teach in exchange for emergency assistance! In Jordan, refugees are not allowed to work officially so CRP seems very savvy at stretching the buck by using the talents of some of the community. Sounds mean? No not at all! They are proud and happy to put their talents to work, and in the process strengthen their resilience and begin to transform from aid recipients into contributing members (and leaders) at CRP.

So, we started off with our first guide, an Iraqi refugee from Basra, who took us around CRP's Hashemi Center, a compound of three buildings all meshed together consisting of offices, meeting rooms, offices, kitchens, kindergarten and day-care centers, sewing and handicraft facilities, beauty training center, barber shop, counselling rooms with big comfy

sofas and chairs and an art center. We ended up in the office of Amanda Lane, the executive director.



Mujin, Amanda Lane & Sarah Harpending at CRP. November 2021

We spent a long and fruitful moment discussing everything with Sarah Harpending, Samir Al Kurdi, Amanda Lane and Jeff. A major topic was how monetary assistance leads to resilience. After a long perusal around the fact that it doesn't actually, Samir Al

Kurdi of CRP explained that, basically, when a refugee can function and is then empowered to address the many traumas that they have been through, they become members of a community. Thus, aid leads to reaffirmation, which leads to community which leads to re-establishing wholeness, leading to resilience.

(Watch a clip of CRP Executive Director Amanda Lane explaining the organization's approach to fostering transformation and resilience at www.douglasacampbellfoundation.org)

Then came my personal bugbear. Quite honestly, I feel that something like Yoga, as fine as it is, comes way down the list of necessities. So, I found myself very skeptical of its place in the program and felt it a waste of time and money. What an awakening! CRP started with Yoga some time ago and guess who goes to Yoga classes? Men! Why? Because it begins to address the deep trauma lodged in their bodies. Talking is great and the simple form of counselling that CRP offers is wonderful. But they have found over the years that Yoga and exercise really help more.



Mujin and Jeff meet with Sudanese refugees who have benefitted from services at the Downtown Center.

So, we left for the downtown center after an amazing meal with staff. The Downtown Center building dates from the very early 1900s, with a courtyard and high ceilings and so on. Oh, how it took me back to the past in other Muslim cultures! (Stories for another time...) The center is mainly for the Sudanese 90% -- who live in the area -- though there are also families from Yemen, Syria, Somalia, Iraq, and Chad. Approximately 14% of these families are female-headed households. Here,

gender-based violence classes and women's empowerment take place. We met two graduates (going on to be trainers). The classes are a huge success as they open new ways of living and interacting with others. The results of a feedback survey were unexpected in that the second reason for taking the course was a chance to make new friends from different ethnic backgrounds! No one expected this to come so high on the list!

And then there is Super Girls. And what a great meeting they had that day! A traditional



storyteller had been invited to tell them – actually act out – a traditional narrative. (*Please visit our site to see a short clip: www.douglasacampbellfoundation.org.*)

Sadly, the much-awaited visit to Bangladesh and Moanoghar School has had to be postponed – no need to explain! And we are anxiously waiting to visit our classes in India and all the girls (we did have a zoom party) in Cambodia. So, watch this space.

We close with this sunset in Wadi Rum.



Take care and be safe, mujin and Jeff