

How has the Circus Smile Programme of RED NOSES been a source of building self-confidence and spreading smiles in underprivileged areas?

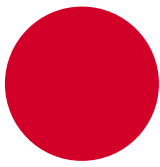
Combining circus and smiles together is a fabulous tool that RED NOSES provides for children in marginalised areas. This unique programme aims to give a positive touch and to enhance the lives of young individuals in these regions.

RED NOSES Palestine (RNPS) which is a subsidiary organisation of RED NOSES International (RNI), the headquarters for the largest clown doctor group in the world, conducted recently a 4-day workshop of Circus Smile to a group of children in Am'ari Refugee Camp in Ramallah. Noticing the impact this workshop has created on children, was the main reason behind writing this article.

Before exploring the Circus Smile workshop and its impact, it is worth mentioning that RNPS is an organisation utilising art of clowning to bring humour and laughter to people in need of joy. For the past 14 years, RNPS has been making a difference for patients, their families, and medical staff in many healthcare facilities in Palestine. RNPS empowers vulnerable audiences, such as children in hospitals, the elderly in geriatric centres, patients in rehabilitation centres, youth with mental and multiple disabilities, and in other marginalised communities.

RNPS offers various programmes that target different groups mainly children. Among these, Circus Smile stands out as unique one, targeting children who are considered less fortunate to live in marginalised areas that have limited access to services and activities.





Last July, RNPS implemented the Circus Smile workshop for a group of children from Am'ari Refugee Camp in Ramallah for four days. The workshop was organised in cooperation with the Palestinian Circus School (PCS) as part of the school's summer camp for children, and in partnership with the DROSOS Foundation. These workshops are implemented in marginalised areas to give a positive touch and to enhance the resilience of children in these regions, to teach the children teamwork, discipline, patience, confidence in standing on stage in front of the audience and to feel proud of doing something significant. Moreover, it teaches them to express their feelings through arts and to reinforce resilience within their social circle.



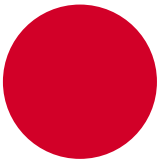
The workshop is led by two professional healthcare clowns, known for their ability to draw smiles on the children's faces even in the most challenging of circumstances. With years of experience in both healthcare and performance arts, these clowns have presented a programme that is educational and entertaining at the same time. RNPS approach is rooted in the belief that laughter is a powerful healer and that every child deserves the chance to experience joy and express themselves creatively.

During the training journey, children come across and learn about the world of arts and its dimensions, realising abilities and talents they might have had, but have never been given an actual opportunity to discover.



One of the healthcare clowns who presented the recent workshop, Alaa Abu Gharbieh stated "the tools we use and the methods we follow suit various age groups that motivate many things for the participating children such as movement, teamwork, paying attention to the surrounding environment, and most importantly we merge between circus art and humour".

"Our goal is to reach more places where such a programme and activities are needed because children can express themselves, as we have seen in this workshop left an impact on them. All of the children were engaged and happy." added the second healthcare clown who conducted the workshop, Motasem Abu Hasan.



The workshop was designed to teach the children various circus skills, starting from juggling and acrobatics to clowning and performance techniques, the children are introduced to a world of wonder and creativity. The content of the workshop was carefully structured to ensure that every child can participate, regardless of their prior experience or physical abilities.

Circus Smile has already had a profound impact on the participants, who have shown remarkable growth in self-confidence and social skills. The programme has provided them with a safe space to express themselves, make new friends, and experience the joy of performing.

The Artistic Director of RNPS, Daoud Totah, believes that “the success of Circus Smile has sparked interest in expanding the program to other refugee camps and communities in need. By spreading joy and building confidence, Circus Smile aims to create a brighter future for children who have been affected by conflict and displacement or migration”.

Circus Smile is a testament to the transformative power of creativity, humour, and engaging in the community. Through the dedication of the healthcare clowns and the enthusiasm of the children, the programme has succeeded in bringing light and laughter to the children. As they continue to grow and thrive, the lessons and memories from Circus Smile will remain with them, reminding them that they are capable of achieving great things, no matter the circumstances.