

## **Distance Learning Program/DLP (Ya..noon)**

Ya..noon is a television series for adult learning and civic education targeting both young and adult men and women, and deals with such issues as early marriage, endogamy, inheritance, pregnancy, children, gender, nutrition, education, rights, refugees, immigration, environment, water, agriculture, democracy, participation, Jerusalem, imposed siege, and land.

This program encourages female and male viewers to help build a contented Arab household that is more just and coherent. It also encourages participation in the development of an Arab society based on human principles, empowerment and equality for all.

This Palestinian production was carried out despite the Israeli imposed closure, barriers, checkpoints and suppression during the Palestinian Intifada (uprising) for independence.

The programme consists of seventeen episodes, which is being aired on local, national, and Arab television channels.

Its also used by government and non-government organizations for civic education, inside and outside Palestine.

Ya..noon was designed to:

- Provide men and women with the opportunity to learn according to their own schedules, and in their own environment within the household and with friends, despite the increasing family burdens they have to shoulder.
- To provide educational material based on principles of developed learning to complement the tutorial curricula taught in literacy centers, and for the use of the organizations working in the field of civic education.

- Ya..noon is the name of a village located in the north of the West Bank, subjected to continuous attacks by Israeli settlers and to constant efforts to expel its people.

### **Concept**

The underlying idea for this project was to produce a drama series for television viewers that offers training in language skills while dealing with life issues and challenges from a development and gender perspectives. The viewer

wishing to learn by watching the series can be helped by a member of the family, without resorting to conventional methods, followed by literacy courses. The series are based on linguistic applications, presented in the “My First Reading” textbook produced by the Literacy and Adult Education Unit at Birzeit University.

## **Project’s Stages**

### **The First Stage**

#### **1. The Advisory Committee**

An Advisory Committee for the project was formed of:

- Dr. Cairo Arafat, Director of The Secretariat of the National Plan of Action for Palestinian Children
- Ms. Hiyam Abu Gazaleh, Adult learning specialist
- Dr. Ahmad Baker, Birzeit University
- Ayesha Bakeer, Head of Adult Learning Department-Ministry of Education
- Dr. Nader Said, Development Studies Programme Director
- Ms. Nibal Thawabteh, Media and education specialist

The committee’s mandate was to:

- follow-up on the project activities,
- provide input through the various stages,
- Review the scripts from an educational point of view,
- Review the scripts from a development and gender perspectives.

Many meetings were held with Ms. Hiyam Abu Gazaleh to discuss the project and issues related to adult education and distance learning. Other experts from varying backgrounds (education, media, gender, adult education, distance learning) were consulted.

#### **2. The Production Company**

- Many production companies were contacted and were asked to prepare a proposal for one episode.
- Six advertisements were published in the local newspapers, to encourage the local production companies to submit a tender to produce the episodes.
- A workshop was held with the production companies to clarify the aims of the episodes.
- The Birzeit University Media Center was consulted regarding technical aspects of the production of the episodes.
- A committee to select the most qualified production company was appointed by Birzeit University President. The committee selected

Ramatan Production Company (Gaza), based on the technical criteria provided by the Media Center.

- The Development Studies Programme's technical adviser, Dr. Nabil Al Khateeb, was present at the first meeting with Ramatan for further assurance of quality work.
- The tightened closure and the increased restrictions on movement between West Bank and Gaza forced the cancellation of the contract between DSP and Ramatan.
- A production company based in Ramallah was selected for relative ease in finding resources. This company was Smart Frame, which we held with, several meetings to discuss and follow up on the development of the project.

### **3. Scenarios**

Several meetings took place with the team responsible for writing the script, and the director of the program, to discuss the educational and technical aspects of the episodes.

All the scripts were extensively reviewed by the Advisory Committee, and by The Ministry of Education through its representative on the Advisory committee.

Due to the limited experience in Palestine in writing these type of scenarios, and the new ideas the project represented, a committee of three scenarists was formed to ensure quality and continuity.

### **4. Pilot episode**

A pilot episode was produced to ensure that the production company was following the technical and the educational criteria in the production, and to avoid any gaps in the scenario, acting, and production.

#### *a) Evaluation of the pilot episode*

The first pilot episode was completed, and evaluated by:

- Adults in Al Ama'ri refugee camp (35 participants)
- Representatives of specialized educational and media groups in West Bank (20 participants)
- Representatives of specialized educational and media groups in Gaza (15 participants)
- Tutors /facilitators selected to implement the program in the villages (14 participants)
- DSP staff (8 participants)
- Advisory Committee (6 participants)

*b) Follow up*

Several meetings were held with Smart Frame Company to discuss the evaluation report for the pilot episode and clarify their role in producing the program.

## **The Second Stage**

### **The episodes**

#### **a) Evaluation**

After the shooting was completed, a committee comprised of Smart Frame, DSP and Dr. Mahmood Al Atshan, Director of Arabic Literature Department at Birzeit University, evaluated the academic part of the episodes in order to make adjustments for the final version of the episodes.

#### **b) Advertisements**

Three video advertisements were produced by Smart Frame Company, to promote the program. They were aired on national, satellite, and local televisions.

#### **c) Conference**

The Development Studies Programme announced the completion of the Adult Distance Learning Program (Ya..Noon) through a national conference held on 6 January 2003 at Best Eastern Hotel in Ramallah.

The conference was attended by seventy-seven representatives of educational and academic institutions in Palestine, in addition to four members of the Advisory committee, teachers from the experimental period, the series production team and nine actors and actresses in the Ya..Noon episodes. Selected clips of the program were presented.

Dr. Nader Said, Director of DSP, and Mr. Dan Richards and Mr. Chris Doyle of Friends of Birzeit University (UK), spoke at the conference. Ms. Ilham Abdul Qader, gave a speech on behalf of Dr. Na'im Abu Al-Hummos, Minister of Education and Higher Education.

The conference also included speeches from Ms. Hiyam Abu Ghazaleh, member of the program Advisory Committee, Ms. Khawla Abdul Mu'ti, facilitator in the experimental period, Mr. Hayyan Al-Ju'beh, Director of Ya..Noon episodes and representative of Smart Frame Company, the executive production company of Ya..Noon. The speeches were followed by a discussion on the production and a reception.

#### **d)The experimental period of Ya..Noon**

DSP had implemented an experimental period in five selected villages to evaluate Ya..Noon from the point of view of the adults themselves.

The closures and the checkpoints prevented the teachers/facilitators from two villages from participating in the final phase of the project. The two villages were literally blocked.

##### **\* Selecting the Teachers/Facilitators**

Contacts were made with educational institutions, youth clubs, and women's organizations for proposing teachers/facilitators in the experimental period.

##### **\* Training of the Teachers/Facilitators**

A training course with ten workshops was conducted for fourteen teachers/facilitators from seven villages between August and October 2001.

##### **\* Villages**

DSP had originally selected seven villages to be involved in the experimental period.

The following villages were part of the experimental period:

Shuqba, Kharbatha Al Mesbah, Ebwein, Deir Qedees, and Beit Leqia.

##### **\* Graduation**

A graduation ceremony was organized for the trained teachers and facilitators. National newspapers and television covered the ceremony.

##### **\* Implementation of experimental period**

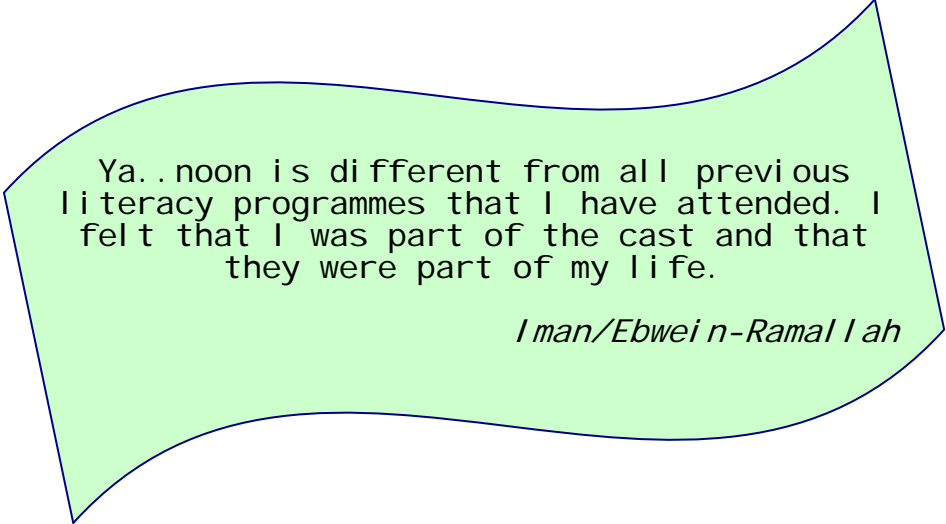
Seventy-five participants evaluated the episodes in the selected villages of Ramallah region, made up of four groups of women and one group of men. The results of the evaluation were encouraging. Seven women decided to continue their education, through attending literacy centers. Most of the participants asked for a completion for the program.

### **The Third Stage**

#### **1. Dissemination**

I.The episodes were broadcasted on ten local television stations throughout the West Bank on seventeen consecutive nights in May 2003:

- Al Amal –Hebron
- Watan – Ramallah
- Al Quds Al Tarbawi- Ramallah



Ya..noon is different from all previous literacy programmes that I have attended. I felt that I was part of the cast and that they were part of my life.

*Iman/Ebwein-Ramallah*

- Nablus- Nablus
  - Base- Nablus
  - Al Salam- Tulkarem
  - Al Nur- Jericho
  - Farah –Jenin
  - Qalqilia- Qalqilia
  - Bethlehem- Bethlehem
- II. The episodes were broadcasted on national Palestinian television (Palestine Broadcasting Corporation) and by Palestinian Satellite Channel, starting from the first of April, every Tuesday at 3 p.m., targeting audience in the West Bank and Gaza, with a repeat at 12 midnight to reach Palestinian refugees and other Palestinians and Arabs around the world.
- III. Distance Learning Forum (Syria)
- DSP staff members presented a paper about Ya..Noon, as a pioneering distance learning program via television, at the "Distance Learning Forum" in Syria, in June 2003.

The Ya..noon experience proved to be a unique one. DSP staff was asked for additional exchange of experience with Arab organizations working in the same field.

## **2. Distribution of Ya..Noon**

The episodes were distributed to:

- The Ministry of Education with its 65 literacy centers
- The Educational institutions

- Community and national organizations
- Women institutions
- Local and national television stations
- Arab institutions such as the Arab Network for Literacy Program, based in Egypt

In selecting institutions that will keep Ya..noon, DSP took into consideration regional distribution, marginalization, and the institutions ability to work with women and adults.

Copies of Ya..noon are available in the institutions (WB &Gaza) listed in the following table:

<b>Region/Ramallah</b>	<b>Institutions (9) copies</b>
Ministry of Education	AL-Mawrid Teacher Development Center
Tamer Institution for community work	Arab women Union
General Union for Palestinian Women	In'ash Al Usra society
Center for Applied Research in Education	Women's Center/Al Ama'ri Refugee Camp
District Office of Ministry of Education	
<b>Region/Gaza Strip</b>	<b>Institutions (10) copies</b>
Al Najda society	Union of Women's Struggle
Family Development Society	DSP office
Al Majd Women Society	Al Mahaba and Al Amal society
District Office of MOE/North Gaza	District Office of MOE/Khan Younis
District Office of MOE/Gaza City	District Office of MOE/Rafah
<b>Region/Jerusalem</b>	<b>Institutions (6) copies</b>
Arab Woman Welfare Society	Al Amal Charitable Society
Women's Studies Center	Jerusalem Ladies Association
District Office of MOE	District Office of MOE/South Jerusalem
<b>Region/Tulkarem</b>	<b>Institutions (3) copies</b>
Child Care Society	Arab Women's Union Society
District Office of MOE	
<b>Region/Hebron</b>	<b>Institutions (5) copies</b>
Union of Charitable Societies	Children's Art Center
Al Watan Social Center	District Office of MOE/North
District Office of MOE/South	
<b>Region/ Jenin</b>	<b>Institutions (4) copies</b>
Jenin Charitable Society	Palestinian Federation of Women's Action Committee
District Office of MOE/Jenin	District Office of MOE/Qabatia
<b>Region/Jericho</b>	<b>Institutions (3) copies</b>
Children of martyrs Society	YMCA
District Office of MOE	
<b>Region/Bethlehem</b>	<b>Institutions (2) copies</b>
Women's Center for Social & Legal Counseling	District Office of MOE
<b>Region/Qalqilia</b>	<b>Institutions (2) copies</b>
Al Murabetat Charitable Society	District Office of MOE
<b>Region/Salfeet</b>	<b>Institutions (1) copy</b>
District Office of MOE	
<b>Region/Nablus</b>	<b>Institutions (1) copy</b>
District Office of MOE	



### 3. Brochure

A brochure was prepared to advertise the program and to be distributed with the episodes.

### 4. Manual

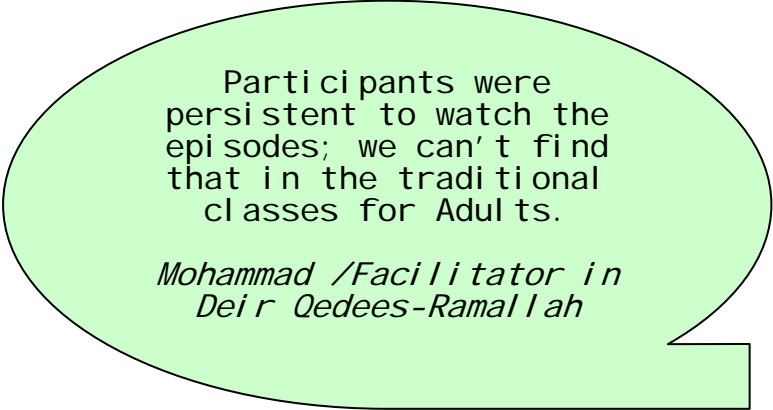
The manual was prepared based on the production experience and the:

- Evaluation of seventy-five participants in the selected villages (one group of men, and four groups of women). The selection of the participants was based on degree of marginalization. We also made sure that all age groups were present.
- Evaluation reports drafted by ten teachers/facilitators in the villages, based on the experience.

This evaluation was carried out through:

A. Written reports about each episode, and a final report on all the episodes.

B. An evaluation workshop during April 2003, in Ramallah regarding the experience of the facilitators in the experimental period, attended by all the facilitators in the five villages.



Participants were persistent to watch the episodes; we can't find that in the traditional classes for Adults.

*Mohammad /Facilitator in  
Deir Qedees-Ramallah*

In this workshop, the teachers confirmed the importance of distance learning in Palestine due to the unsettled political situation and its effects on access to literacy programs, libraries, internet and other educational methods. In addition, they applauded the idea of Ya..Noon, and reported that it encouraged the majority of the participants in the five villages to enroll in literacy centers to learn reading and writing.

C. Evaluation of a number of educational experts and journalists, such as Ms. Hiyam Abu Gazalah, Dr. Elham Abu Gazalah, and Mr. Tahseen Yaqeen.

The manual contains the following:

\* *Preface*

\* *Acknowledgment*

\* *Section one:*

- Introduction about Ya..Noon
- General objectives of Ya..Noon
- Specific objectives of Ya..Noon
- How to use Ya..Noon

\* *Section two:*

- Introduction to the manual
- Working guide
- Final comments

The manual, the brochure and “Qera’aty Al Awlah” textbook (My First Reading), were distributed with the episodes.

## **5. Internet**

Development Studies Program’s Web site contains a section on the activities of Ya..Noon, including:

- a) Introduction about Ya..Noon
- b) Photographs from the episodes
- c) Title song of the episodes
- d) Ya..Noon brochure
- e) Ya..Noon evaluation
- f) The conference on Ya..Noon
- g) The speeches in the conference of Ya..Noon
- h) The manual of Ya..Noon

DSP plan to place all episodes in full on the internet. Go into our website, <http://home.birzeit.edu/dsp>

## **6. Media coverage**

### **A. Radio program (Raise Your Voice)**

Raise Your Voice is a radio show talks about development issues in Palestine, broadcasted weekly on voice of Palestine ( In Arabic).

DSP broadcasted four radio programs concerning adult and distance education on the national radio station (Voice of Palestine) , as follows:

- Developmental Education, Adult learning, Distance Learning on 26 December 2002.

The guests of this episode was Omar Jayousi, Head of Media and Educational Network Center, Muhamad Taha, Educational Center for

Research and Development, Jehan Al Helu, Director of Tamer Institution for Community Education, and Basri Saleh, Director General of Planning at the Ministry of Education.

- Adult Education in Palestine, Problems and Horizons on 2 January 2003.

The guests of this episode was Hiyam Abu Gazaleh, educational consultant, and Refa't Sabah, Director of Teacher's Creativity Center, and Abed Al Salam of the Tamer Institution.

- Educational Reality for Palestinians, on 9 January 2003.

The guests of this episode was Deema Samman, Director of Public Relations and the Educational Media Unit at the Ministry of Education, and Fadel Abu Heen, Lecturer in Mental Health at Al Aqsa University.

- Distance Learning Program (Ya..Noon), on 16 January 2003.

The guests of this episode was Shahnaz Jubran, Project Coordinator, Development Studies Program, Birzeit University, Hayyan Ju'beh, Executive Director of Ya..Noon, Muneera Zuriqi/ Actor in Ya..Noon, and Elham Abed Al Qader, General Education Unit of the Ministry of Education.

#### B. Al Baydar

Al Baydar is a monthly newspaper supplement, issued by DSP, that discusses developmental issues in Palestine, published with Al Ayyam newspaper each month. Ya..Noon was twice featured in Al Baydar, initially to announce Ya..Noon, followed by an article on the objectives, aims, content of Ya..Noon.

#### C. Articles

Nine articles were written on Ya..Noon in national newspapers. Ya..Noon created a great deal of controversy in Palestine and among relevant organizations in the Arab World on the concepts of distance learning, adult education, gender equality, and the role of the media in promoting distance learning.

#### D. Meetings

1. DSP had two meetings with Mr. Jihad Qarasholi, the head of the Palestinian National Commission for Education Culture & Science and with UNESCO, to distribute Ya..Noon in the Arab World.
2. DSP come to an agreement with Palestinian institutions in Lebanon (Al Najda institution, Norwegian People's Aid, and the literacy network) to distribute the program among the Palestinian institutions working among refugees in Lebanon.

**Obstacles in implementing DLP:**

- Difficulties were encountered in finalizing a gender-based script that was satisfactory to DSP mission and values.
- Difficulties and time loss, because of the turnover of the employees in the project.
- The tight closure between West Bank and Gaza Strip, made any face-to-face meetings with Ramatan(ex-Production Co.) impossible.
- The Israeli invasion of Ramallah:
  1. Made the meeting with Smart Frame (the new production company) very difficult. The DSP premises were in the occupied area, and continuously surrounded by Israeli tanks.
  2. The DSP office was exposed to bullets and tear gas fired by Israeli soldiers.
  3. Many tutors/facilitators from the villages were unable to attend coordination meetings because of the siege.
  4. The closures and curfews made it difficult to select and communicate with the potential participants in the villages.
  5. The cast could not easily reach Ramallah for the filming.
  6. The DSP offices, Birzeit University and Smart Frame Office were closed for a couple of months because of curfews.
  7. Distribution of Ya..Noon, was difficult because of the tight closure between the Palestinian cities.

**Achievements (examples)**

- Providing educational institutions, women's institutions and community outreach institutions with a rich product, connecting education with development.
- Creating a constructive debate about adult learning and distance learning in Palestine.
- Producing the first drama on adult education based on the principle of gender equality.
- Reaching every house in Palestine via television in order to promote progressive ideas, democracy and civic education.
- Encouraging the majority of women in the experimental period to attend the literacy centers.
- Introducing production companies in Palestine to the idea of adult learning, distance learning and civic education.