

Week 1

I am back! After a long night of traveling, I'm back in Gaza. So nice to see the management and team of the Open Studio and all the other great people I met during my last visit. So many familiar friendly faces. Because of the summer camps there is a whole new group of children, but the energy and enthusiasm for joining the activities is as big as ever.

The team shows me what they have done with the children in recent months and I am impressed. I briefly engage with each activity, I teach a group of children to create pop-up cards and start preparations for the new film of the Making & Sharing project.

I am very happy to be back here until the 2nd of August, to be making, sharing and participating in the activities of the summer camps.



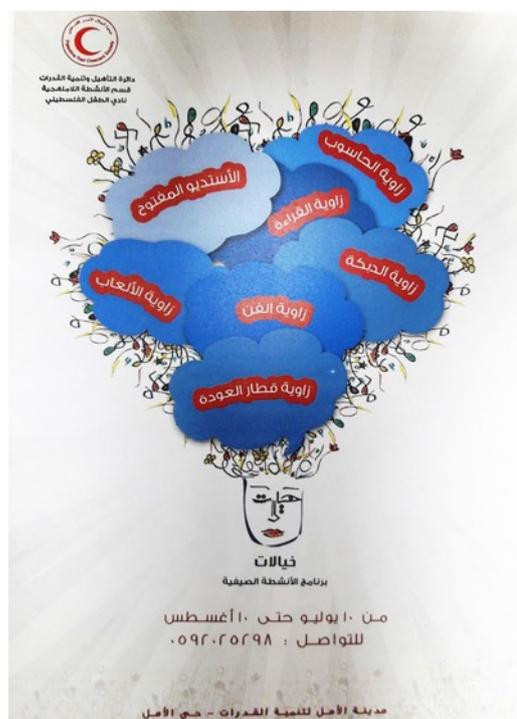


Week 2

The work and life here are again very intense. The summer camps are really promising. The team made many nice plans and ideas and the new artist of the Open Studio, Mahmoud Alhaj, has designed a super nice flyer.

This week we also arranged a breakdance workshop by two guys from [Myuz GB Crew](#). The incredible amount of energy of the children was given complete freedom under the guidance of these two breakers. I think the new movements they've learned will be seen around the building for quite some time. It was really a party to see so much enthusiasm and enjoyment.

The work is going very well, but outside life is hard. It's been only 2.5 months since I last visited Gaza, and I'm shocked by the difference. For a large part of the working population, a huge wage reduction has been implemented (up to 70%!). In addition, the amount of electricity has decreased from 8 hours a day to only 2 to 4 hours a



day. It is extremely hot and humid. The people are tired, very tired. Refrigerators do not work and thus the, already scarce, food is thrown away or eaten rotten. In many households there is a lack of drinking water. Air conditioning or even running a washing machine has become a dream. Hospitals are fully or partially closed and the sewage system is partially out of order. An epidemic outbreak is just around the corner. Everyone lives with fear for a next war. The people of Gaza are sitting at home, in the dark, and just living through another heavy day. This collective lock-down is terrible. There is a limit to how much people can handle, and the edge seems dangerously close.

In the Open Studio we are dancing, playing, making and singing. We are creating a happy dream on a hot volcano!





All loaders plugged in, waiting for the electricity to come to charge everything.



Week 3

The summer camps have started! The flyer does his job and every day we see more children in the Open Studio. There are activities both in the mornings and in the afternoons. Many things are happening: arts & crafts, sports and games, computer courses, stories are written, books are made, there is dancing and singing.

I myself have started shooting for the new movie. We have rewritten a classical Palestinian fairy tale and the children are going to tell this through different theater techniques.

To start this project, I called upon a talented youth theater group from Gaza City "[Sirb Center](#)".

They were immediately excited about the project and have given a fantastic workshop in the Open Studio. The children started a little shy, but the boys from Sirb got them out of their shells. With the use of masks made by the children, a very nice piece of theater was created.

The rest of the week we made dolls for puppet theater and we did exercises in pantomime.

A club of young girls proves to be very talented in embroidery, sewing and crocheting (a much practiced traditional craft in Palestine). In-between classes I taught them how to crochet using only a rope and their fingers. The trick was immediately shared with other girls and one of the teachers made an activity around it. Suddenly crocheted bracelets and necklaces are appearing everywhere. Making the world a little b more fun sometimes can be very simple.





Week 4

Four out of five chapters for the new Making & Sharing film have already been completed. After the good start and the preparations of last week, we managed to finish three more chapters this week.

Time flies! Next week, only two more working days before my departure and one more chapter to film. It's a tight schedule!

At the end of the week, our hard work was rewarded with a wonderful day in an amusement park.

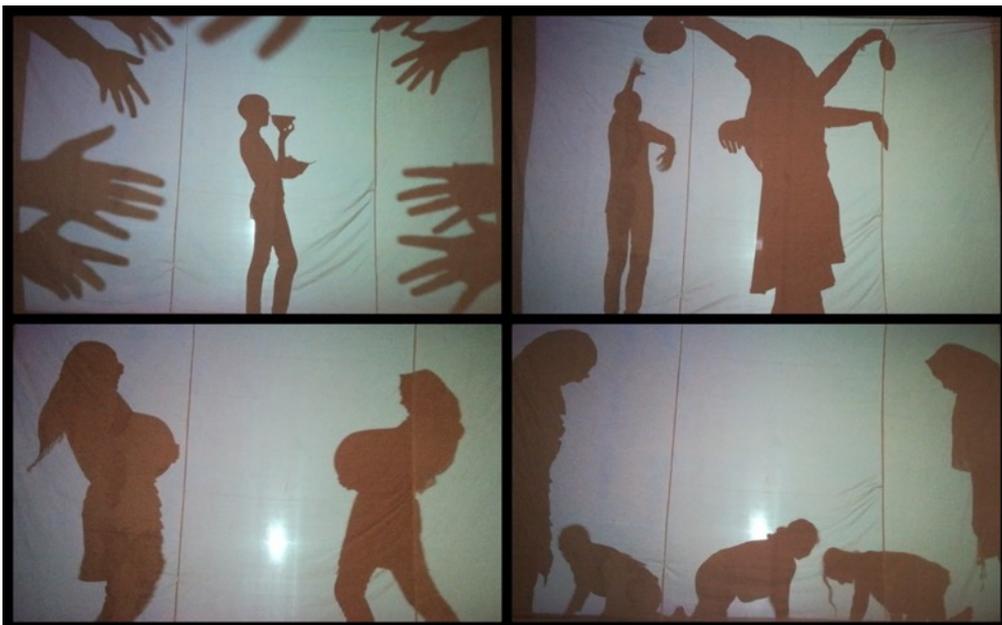
We did a lot, we created a lot, the result... a lot of photo's!



Pantomime theatre



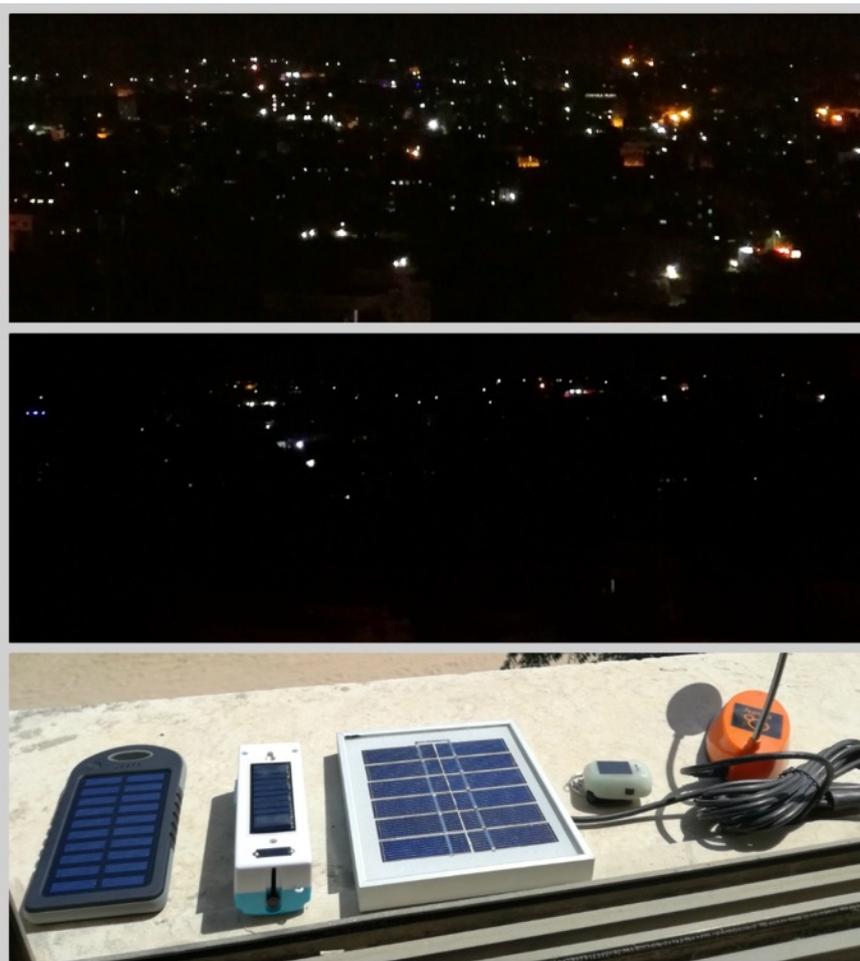
Scary monster puppet theatre



Shadow theatre



Dancing in the bus, a carousel, a ferris wheel, bumper-cars, a nice lunch and everywhere happy smiling faces!



Khan Yunis with electricity and Khan Yunis without electricity. With 37 degrees outside, at least there is no lack of sun to load the flashlights and powerbanks.

Week 5

The last two days in the Open studio were entirely dedicated to musical. Artists Mumen and Mahmoud converged the text of our story into a song and the children were spending the days rehearsing together. After some voice and face exercises, we started recording. With sweat beaming on our foreheads and 5 minutes passed-time, we barely succeeded to film everything. That was really a tight schedule. The next morning there was a short moment of farewell. It was a great time working with this team again. I am really gonna miss them.

Before returning home I spend a few days in Ramallah. There, I presented our project to the Dutch Representation and to various people at the Red Crescent Headquarters.

Also, we planned to do some recordings. One of the teachers at the rehabilitation department in Ramallah offered to be our sign-language translator for the two films that are made. And I recorded two highly concentrated kids doing the voice overs for the new film.

During my last day in Ramallah, I decided to take part in a workshop in Afro-Dabke (a combination of traditional Palestinian dance and traditional African dance). After a heavy month of hard work and limited freedom of movement, this was a welcome activity.

After dancing away my last bit of energy, I took the plane. Tired but very satisfied about all aspects of this trip.



Much love from Gaza and see you at the next blog!



Project Making & Sharing is a concept from

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To further develop this project and to ensure the future of the Open Studio, we need your help.

For more information, please visit our website or contact us.