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Director: Ms. Amoun Sleem

THE DOMARI CENTER

MS Amoun Sleem founded the Domari Society in 1999. She decided at the time that something must be done for her poor Domari (gypsy) community. She started food relief efforts and tutoring lessons for children in her own house. In 2005 she opened the Community Center in East Jerusalem, which is a place where women and children come to talk, relax and engage in training courses.

Tutoring lessons for children is one of the main activities in the Center.

OVERALL GOAL

A Domari community with equal opportunities for all, free of racism, honoring the gypsy heritage and culture.

ACTIVITIES

The Domari Center focus on activities for women and children

Activities for women:

- Literacy courses
- Vocational training
- Leadership courses

Activities for children:

- Basic education/tutoring
- Cultural activities for children Empowerment and Self-motivation
- Nutritional support

SOURCES OF FUNDING

The main sources of funding are:

- Stichting Kinderpostzegels, The Netherlands. www.kinderpostzegels.nl.
- Stichting "Vrienden van de Domari. <http://www.vriendenvandomari.nl/>
- Dom Research Center: <http://www.domresearchcenter.com>

In 2016 we were not able to get more donors, as previous donor's withdrawal their funding due to more pressing needs in the Middle East. This particular project hasn't been submitted to other funding sources, as new donors for our children project were hard to find. That's why we ask support for our children program from the Australian Representative Office.

BACKGROUND OF THE DOMARI COMMUNITY IN JERUSALEM

The Domari community is living in the Old City of Jerusalem and in the Shu'afat Palestinian refugee camp in East Jerusalem. They are a small, unrecognized minority of some 3000 people/ 250 families. They are the most socially marginalized, impoverished, discriminated community in Jerusalem. It is a very traditional community, girls marry young and having big families is very common. The Dom community lives for hundreds of years in Jerusalem, and during the centuries they blended in the population by becoming Muslims and adopting the Arab language. The Domari language is still active, but mostly spoken by the elderly, it is unfortunately a dying language.

CHALLENGES OF THE DOMARI COMMUNITY

- Poverty: Almost 80% of the Domari in Jerusalem don't have income sources and depend completely on benefits from unemployment or other welfare payments. Parents often take their children out of school and send them to the streets to beg or sell small items to support the family financially. Even when Dom children stay in school, their parents are unable to assist them financially
- Illiteracy among adults: parents are not able to support their children intellectually, as more than 75 % of the adults are illiterate. They also don't value education as something important, as they themselves are not educated.
- The situation of the Jerusalem education system. It lacks financial support from the Israeli state. The schools are overcrowded and poorly equipped. Many of the schoolteachers in East Jerusalem negatively stereotype Dom children, so do the fellow pupils. Dom children are not encouraged by the schools to be a good student; they are stigmatized from the beginning.

THE PROJECT: TUTORING PROJECT FOR DOM CHILDREN.

Amount requested for this project is \$ 19,590

BACKGROUND OF THE PROJECT

One of the biggest challenges the Dom community is facing is the high dropout rate of schools of Dom children. It is estimated that some 60 % of Dom children do not finish their basic education. Very often the children are not doing well at school, due to stigmatization and no attention of the teachers, no encouragement of the parents or other reasons, and the parents prefer to send their children to the street to beg or selling small items to support the families financially. This will result in another generation of illiterate people, with no opportunities to break the cycle of poverty and marginalization.

BENEFICIARIES

The direct beneficiaries will be Domari or gypsy children from the Dom community in East Jerusalem, both old city and the Shua'fat refugee camp where the majority of the Dom people live.

ACTIVITY: BASIC EDUCATION/TUTORING FOR DOM CHILDREN

Our Educational Program's focus is on basic education for Dom children. The children will receive practical school assistance during the school year. We would like to start ASAP, May 2020 and finish the program the end of December 2020, at the end of the school year.

Tutoring sessions will take place three times a week, for two hours per meeting. We will have 15 children every meeting. From May until December there will be 75 meetings. In July and August 2020 we have a two month summer holiday. The

children will be assisted to manage Math and improve communication skills in English and Arabic, including reading and writing. The tutoring will be conducted by three professional schoolteachers, this to guarantee the best quality of teaching. We will promote the teacher recruitment of at least one woman to have a positive role model for the girl's participants.

NUTRITIONAL SUPPORT

An important element of the tutoring meetings is that we will serve the children a good and nutritious meal. Very often the children arrive at the Domari Center hungry, because there was no food at home.

ACHIEVEMENTS:

As said before, tutoring is one of our main activities, and it had its successes. Two years ago, our first girl participant started her education at the university. She was one of the children who came to the tutoring lessons some eight years ago, as a little girl and now she is in her third year of the university. More children are staying in school to finish at least their basic education, because they get better grades. We have three more girls who almost finished High School and we hope that they also will join higher education. Thanks to the tutoring lessons, more children are doing well at school; therefore they like school more and are able to finish the school.

SUSTAINABILITY

Tutoring lessons for children are one of our Center core activities. So we will always implement them. But if we get this grant, we will be able to implement the lessons with professional teachers. And we will be able to support more children

TIMEFRAME:

1 May 2020- December 2020

Every month 12 meetings of three hours (four weeks) except the months July and August as we will have summer holiday.

EXPECTED RESULTS

The measurable results of this program will be that school performance in the main subjects such as Arabic, English and mathematics of the children will be improved and this shows on their school certificates.

CODE OF CONDUCT CHILD PROTECTION

Since last year, the Domari Centre is working with a Code of Conduct for child protection. You can find it as an attachment.

REFEREES

Hereby I give you some names of people who can vouch for the bona fides of the Domari Center. One of them is Ms. Daphne Straus, she is a board member of the Domari. Her email address is : dafnajs@hotmail.com. Another board member is Michaela Harrari pasos@netvision.net.il . Another external referee is Ms. Annette Selten , program officer in the Middle East of the Dutch children foundation Kinderpostzegels. You can reach her via this email address: a.selten@kinderpostzegels.nl